



Freedom Cups: Providing Women With Sustainable Menstrual Products



Key Findings

83%

of women who received menstruation cup have made use of it

67%

of the women who received menstruation cup continue to use the cup every month

12 out of 24

women interviewed state improved disposal as a benefit of the cup

11 out of 24

women interviewed state money saved as benefit of the cup

Background

Menstruation remains a monthly struggle for women in India. Approximately 30-40% of women in rural areas in South India use products that are not specifically designed for menstruation such as cloth, and sanitary pads are often expensive and not customized to women's needs. Moreover, women struggle with the disposal of these products, with the unavailability of appropriate facilities resulting in the majority of these products being buried or burned. On top of personal difficulties, menstruation remains a social taboo. In Hindu religion, which constitutes 93.84% of the Virudhunagar district population, it is strictly prohibited to enter temples or to attend religious festivals when you are menstruating. All in all, monthly menstruation considerably limits freedom of movement, daily practices and for rural women.



Menstrual Cups

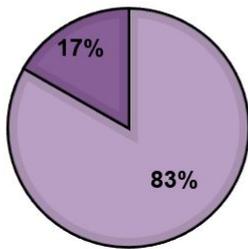
In using a menstrual cup, women will not depend on buying disposable sanitary pads, or to use thick batches of cloth when menstruating. Managing menstruation becomes more safe, affordable and convenient. As a menstrual cup can be inserted for up to 10 hours, school girls particularly will have more freedom by not having to worry about leakage, which makes their menstruation

Results

Looking at gross usage, only 17% of the cohort stated that they do not use the cup at all - which includes individuals who tried to use it once and were unsuccessful. This is compared to an overwhelming 83% of the cohort who stated that they did use the menstrual cup to some degree.

FREEDOM CUP USAGE

■ Yes (variable) ■ No / only once



“With this cup, I do not have to visit the toilet facilities as often, giving me more freedom in my everyday tasks.” - Mareeshwari

Contact us



77 Sekkilar Street
Virudhunagar 626001
Tamil Nadu, India



+91 4562 269236



blossomtrust@gmail.com



www.blossomtrust.org



easier to manage – even when there are insufficient school toilets in which to change. As the cup can last for 10 years, it is a great sustainable substitute for women in rural areas.

Freedom Cups

From November 13th to November 16th 2019, Blossom collaborated with Freedom Cups to provide women in rural India with menstruation cups. For every menstrual cup Freedom Cups sells, they provide a cup for a woman who is unable to afford one. 2-3 meetings were set up each day, each attended by 30-40 women, in the villages surrounding Virudhunagar. Over the course of 4 days, Blossom Trust and Freedom Cups went into 8 different villages and to 1 school, providing nearly 300 women with a menstruation cup.

Breaking the Taboo

Many women initially experienced some fear as to the insertion of the menstrual cups. Flyers were distributed to the recipients of the cups, which detailed the steps of inserting and removing the cup. Next to this the Blossom Field Coordinator remained available for questions and concerns. After three months the project team returned to the villages to monitor the use of the cups and document the actual usage.

Women noted that they often experience a degree of shame while disposing of sanitary napkins, and that the menstrual cups spares them from this. Some specific comments to unanticipated benefits were made, such as “no marks in school uniforms”, that the menstrual cups “do not stick in dresses (like sanitary napkins do)” or that the cup increases movement “especially during rainy season” (referring to the absorptive nature of napkins). This illustrates a wide range of positive outcomes perceived by the beneficiaries.

OVERALL USAGE CUP

■ Yes - always ■ Yes - with other methods ■ Yes - not always ■ No / only once

