



RAISING AWARENESS

Menstrual Health



GUIDE BOOKLET

By Leading Lady Empire in Collaboration with Mahwari Justice

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INTRODUCTION

Period poverty is a pressing issue that affects millions of individuals worldwide, and Pakistan is no exception. Defined as the lack of access to menstrual products, hygiene facilities, and education, period poverty has significant implications for the health, dignity, and opportunities of menstruators. In Pakistan, a country grappling with socio-economic challenges, period poverty exacerbates gender inequality and highlights the urgent need for comprehensive solutions..

Estimates suggest that a large proportion of menstruators face challenges accessing menstrual products, with some sources indicating that around 60% of menstruating women and girls in Pakistan struggle with period poverty. This issue is compounded by cultural stigma, lack of education, and insufficient access to affordable menstrual hygiene products.

This is a critical and often overlooked challenge in Pakistan, where many women and girls face significant barriers to accessing menstrual hygiene products and proper sanitary facilities. This challenge not only impacts their health but also affects their education, economic opportunities, and overall well-being.



2 CHALLENGES FACED BY MENSTRUATING GIRLS IN PAKISTAN

Recent research conducted by the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) reveals that many schoolgirls in Pakistan face significant challenges during menstruation, primarily due to cultural taboos and misinformation. Key findings include:

CULTURAL RESTRICTIONS

Many girls are subjected to restrictions such as being discouraged from going out, bathing, or eating certain foods during their menstrual cycle. These limitations often stem from cultural myths passed down through generations rather than scientific knowledge.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Girls often lack accurate information about menstruation and menstrual hygiene. The reliance on outdated beliefs and the absence of proper education contribute to the perpetuation of these myths, affecting their mental and physical health.

IMPACT ON DAILY LIFE

These taboos and restrictions can lead to an "identity crisis" among young girls, impacting their self-esteem and confidence. Furthermore, the stigma around menstruation discourages open discussion, preventing girls from seeking the support and care they need.



3 MAHWARI JUSTICE



MOTTO:

A youth led initiative, changing the conversation around periods. We believe that every person deserves access to safe, healthy periods - no shame, no stigma, and no missing out because of a natural process.

PROJECTS & ACHIEVEMENTS:

Our completed projects include “PadCraft,” which trained five women and a trainee to create safe, reusable pads, promoting menstrual hygiene and economic independence. Our ongoing projects are making significant strides in menstrual health and advocacy. The “Gwadar Mahwari Solidarity” project addresses menstrual hygiene needs in flood-affected areas by distributing emergency kits. “Period Proud” provides essential education and support through engaging sessions, while the “Period Positive Fundraiser” combines art with activism to champion menstrual equity. Additionally, the “Rap Song” initiative collaborated with Sindhi Chokkri to produce a rap in local languages, using music to challenge stigma and connect with diverse communities. Lastly, our “Pink Tax” initiative focuses on eliminating the luxury tax on menstrual products to combat period poverty.

4 LEADING LADY EMPIRE



At Leading Lady Empire, we are dedicated to uplifting and empowering girls and women from all walks of life in Pakistan. Our tight-knit community is built on the foundation of supporting gender equality, women empowerment, and women's rights. Through raising awareness about education in Pakistan and recognizing exceptional talent, we strive to create a more inclusive and equitable society for women and girls to ensure no one is left behind.

Since our establishment and humble beginnings in 2022, we have been committed to being a beacon of hope and change in Pakistan's education community. With our growing impact, we envision significant progress in Pakistan's education development, hoping to witness every girl and woman's chance at life.

We offer free online courses, learning materials, and curriculum filled with engaging activities for K12, under 18, in a diverse range of school subjects. We also separately offer online leadership training workshops and skill development support for women between 19 - 25.

Our mission is to increase access to quality education and vocational training, empowering women and girls in Pakistan to overcome barriers and realize their full potential. By focusing on underserved areas, we aim to provide remote educational resources, practical skills, and support systems that foster personal and professional growth, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and prosperous society. We strive to offer inclusivity to ensure no girl is left behind or misses out on the experience of learning for a lifetime.



5 IMPORTANCE OF MENSTRUAL HEALTH

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Menstrual health is a key indicator of reproductive health. Regular, pain-free periods typically signify a balanced hormonal system and proper functioning of the reproductive organs. Conversely, irregularities, severe pain, or other symptoms can signal underlying issues such as hormonal imbalances, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), or endometriosis. Addressing these issues early can prevent more serious health complications and improve quality of life.



EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

The menstrual cycle can affect mood and mental health due to hormonal fluctuations. Understanding and managing these changes can help mitigate symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) or premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD). Being attuned to one's menstrual cycle can aid in better emotional regulation and self-care, contributing to overall psychological stability.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Menstrual health directly impacts educational and professional opportunities. Inadequate access to menstrual products and hygiene facilities can lead to missed school or work, affecting long-term economic and educational outcomes. Ensuring access to menstrual health education and products is essential for equity and participation in various aspects of life.



EMPOWERMENT

Understanding menstrual health empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their bodies. This includes choosing appropriate menstrual products, managing symptoms effectively, and seeking medical advice when necessary. It fosters a sense of control and confidence in managing one's health.



6 MANAGING YOUR PERIOD



Managing periods effectively is essential for comfort, health, and daily functioning. To manage your period, educate yourself about the menstrual cycle, including what is normal and what might be a cause for concern. Knowledge helps in managing expectations and recognizing irregularities.

The menstrual cycle typically lasts about 28 days, with bleeding occurring for 3 to 7 days. It is a normal biological process that involves the shedding of the uterine lining. Recognizing the normal patterns of your cycle and understanding what constitutes irregularities can help you manage your period better and seek medical advice when necessary.

Track your periods and symptoms with a calendar or a menstrual tracking app. This helps predict when your period will start and track any patterns or irregularities.

Experiment with different products to find what feels most comfortable and convenient for you. Pads are often recommended for beginners, while tampons and menstrual cups might take some time to get used to. To minimize pain, a heating pad or hot water bottle can help relieve cramps and lower abdominal pain. Light exercise such as walking or yoga can help alleviate cramps and improve mood.

If you have questions or concerns, talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent, guardian, or school nurse. They can provide guidance and support. If you experience severe pain, irregular cycles, or other issues, consult a healthcare provider for advice and treatment.



7 TIPS & TRICKS



1. Track Your Cycle.
2. Choose the Right Products.
3. Eat Healthy.
4. Get 8 Hours of Sleep.
5. Practice Meditation.
6. Normalize Open Conversation.
7. Exercise!

FEMININE
HYGIENE
SHOULD
be FREE





8 THE WAY FORWARD

EDUCATE

Provide accurate information and education about menstruation in schools and communities to dispel myths and promote healthy practices.

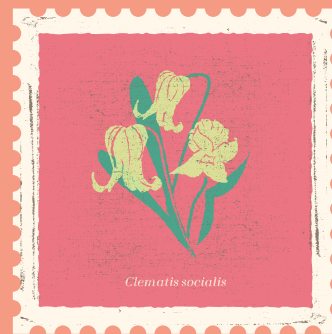


IMPROVE FACILITIES

Ensure schools are equipped with private washrooms, clean water, and menstrual waste disposal facilities.

PROMOTE OPEN DIALOGUE

Conversations about menstruation to replace shame with understanding and empowerment, allowing girls to embrace their menstrual health confidently.



PROVIDE ACCESS TO PRODUCTS

Make menstrual hygiene products affordable and accessible to all, reducing the economic burden on families and ensuring that girls can manage their periods with dignity.

9 CONTACT INFORMATION

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FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61565282462441&mibextid=ZbWKwL>





THANK
YOU

*Leading Lady
Empire -*