

Problem Statement

Lack of proper menstrual hygiene management (MHM) facilities/infrastructures in learning centres leads to absenteeism in adolescent girl students and unhygienic working conditions for the sanitation staff in learning centres of West Bengal.

Objectives of the campaign

01

To generate demand for MHM facilities in toilets of 30 Government schools of Kolkata

02

To generate demand for providing hygienic facilities to sanitation staffs of school
Time Period

03

To bring MHM in the forefront of discussion in social media

Activities

- A survey was conducted on MHM facilities in schools which covered students, teachers & sanitation staffs.
- The toilets were observed, and every existing condition was noted.
- A drawing competition was conducted among students which gave their view on ideal MHM friendly toilet.
- Instagram live sessions were conducted with principals and teachers of Government schools & Colleges



Outputs

- This survey helped us understand user's perception on school toilets especially during menstruation.
- The drawing competition on 'Ideal Toilet' is designed in a way where the students get a chance to express their needs and demands in the form of an art. This resulted in students thinking about the gap in the existing infrastructure. They demanded better facilities through Art.
- We were able to collect 328 data from 5 schools. The management agreed for the survey and the students.
- co-operated with the data collectors and answered all the questions genuinely.
- Instagram live sessions were conducted with principals and teachers of Government schools & Colleges

"Primary survey was conducted with adolescent girl students of class 7 to 11 in 5 out of the 10 target schools of Behala, Kolkata. Team Anahat was able to survey 328 adolescent girl students from class 7 and above. 10 sanitation staffs were also surveyed. A separate survey covering physical observations of school WASH facilities was also done."



A girl from a govt school of Kolkata drew handwashing facilities in her ideal toilet for MHM

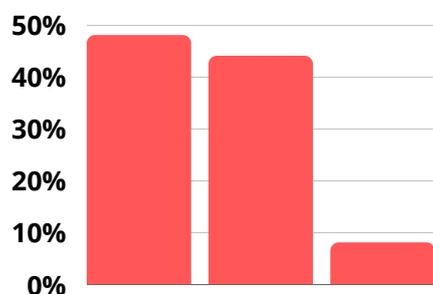


A girl from a govt school of Kolkata drew a sanitation staff in her ideal toilet for MHM

Key Findings

- 60% of the students did not know about periods before reaching menarche 58.4% of students defined periods as "Release of dirty blood from the body" whereas 23% students did not know the definition of periods.
- 14.5% of the students follow norms like 'no head bath', 44.3% said they are not allowed to shampoo their hair, 94.1% were not allowed to enter place of worship or do puja and 38.4% were not allowed to touch pickle during menstruation
- 37.6% students said that they sometimes miss school during periods
- 15.3% said that they do not prefer to attend school during periods while 16.5% said that they do not attend schools during initial days 17.6% said that they prefer to miss school during periods because their school toilets are not in good condition, 25% said that they suffer through pain and hence miss school and 5.9% said they face pad changing problems. The rest stated "Others" as reasons for missing school.
- 45.1% students mentioned that the schools do not have hand washes or soaps in the basins.
- Only 34% of the students said that they eat their iron tablets, rest throw it away or give it someone else.

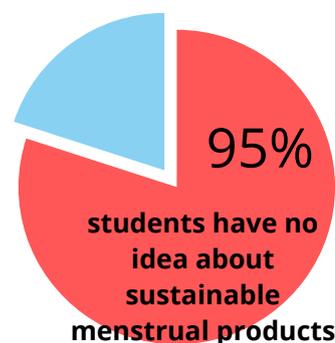
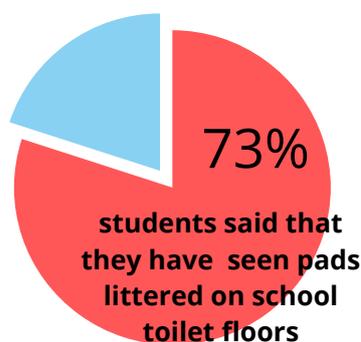
Frequency of changing pad in school



Don't change pad in school, 48%

Change pad in school, 44%

Sometimes, change pad in school, 8%



"41% of the girls said that they found menstruation shameful."

Physical Observation

1. All the 5 schools surveyed had sanitary pad vending machine installed but only 1 school had incinerator which had been recently installed and the school authorities were waiting for installing organization to give them technical guidance on how to use the machines.
2. Around 2 schools out of the 5 schools surveyed reported that their vending machine is not functional at the moment and hence they have been handing out pads to the girls manually whenever required and other 2 schools do not give access of the machine to the students and very few students know that they have a pad vending machine in their school.

Sanitation staffs were rare in schools. Schools are not provided any fund to keep these staffs. They has to keep these staffs on their own. Mostly sanitation staffs comes once in a week or twice in a month to pick up the waste. So there is always a problem of overspilled dustbins in schools.