

PadSeva

The Newsletter.

VOLUME 02
MAY 2025



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Understanding how period poverty is experienced unwittingly
- The cost of menstruation in India
- Emerging Solutions to Period Poverty in Different Contexts



Change of flow : Eduaction for Equity

Residing in the heart of Hyderabad's informal settlements, a hushed revolution is underway. For years, adolescent girls in low-income communities have faced the harsh realities of period poverty with limited access to menstrual products



Innovation on the Flow: Fighting Period Poverty with Technology & Data

Recently technology is making a real difference. From pad-making machines to mobile apps, and even AI tools, innovation is helping break the cycle around menstruation and bring real support to the people who need it most.

ABOUT US

About PadSeva

PadSeva is an initiative dedicated to combating period poverty in rural southern India. It was launched as part of the founder's 10th-grade IB MYP personal project, with a mission to provide affordable, biodegradable sanitary pads made from bamboo and raise awareness about menstrual hygiene. The project began with a hands-on approach, as the founder personally visited rural villages, engaging directly with women and girls to discuss the challenges they faced due to a lack of access to menstrual products. During these visits, she not only distributed the biodegradable pads but also conducted sessions on how to use them safely and effectively. Through these interactions, she helped reduce the stigma associated with menstruation, empowering the women in these communities with both knowledge and resources.

Since then, PadSeva has produced 8000 pads, reaching over 9,300 individuals, and has raised \$6,400 to further expand its efforts. The founder now leads a growing team that works on increasing production capacity, raising funds, and establishing partnerships with local organizations to distribute more sanitary products and continue menstrual hygiene education. Looking ahead, PadSeva aims to scale its impact, reaching more communities, refining its biodegradable product designs, and promoting sustainable menstrual health solutions on a larger scale.

Our Team

FOUNDER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Anwitha Srivatsa

HEAD OF DESIGN

Raga Emmadi

WRITERS

Dhanika

Manasvi

Sirima

Ikshitha

Vanshika

Dhakshaa

Abhigna

Abhya

Srinika

Note From Editor-in-Chief

It is with renewed conviction that we unveil the second edition of our newsletter, this time turning our lens toward **“Emerging Solutions to Period Poverty in Different Contexts.”** Having previously examined the multifaceted nature of period poverty and its far-reaching consequences, we now shift focus to the diverse interventions and innovations that are beginning to reshape the menstrual health landscape across varied geographies and social systems.

Period poverty remains a critical challenge—its roots embedded in longstanding gendered inequities, economic instability, and cultural taboos. Yet, in response to this complex crisis, a growing network of solutions is emerging: from policy reforms within criminal justice systems and menstrual equity initiatives in the workplace, to disaster-relief distribution frameworks and athlete-centered access campaigns. These efforts demonstrate that while period poverty is a global issue, its resolution must be deeply contextual, responsive to local needs, and informed by intersectional insight.

This edition seeks to illuminate these efforts, not merely as isolated interventions, but as indicative of a broader paradigm shift. We aim to showcase how grassroots movements, institutional actors, and transnational advocacy networks are collaboratively working toward structural change. By documenting these strategies, we not only acknowledge the resilience of those combating menstrual inequity on the frontlines but also underscore the urgent need for systemic and sustained engagement.

We envision this second edition as both a continuation and a progression—a platform that not only critiques prevailing conditions but also amplifies pathways forward. We hope that these narratives of action and innovation inspire further scholarship, solidarity, and tangible reform. Ultimately, the eradication of period poverty will require nothing less than a collective reimagining of public health, social justice, and human dignity. These emerging solutions are a beginning—one that we must nurture, scale, and refine in the pursuit of menstrual equity for all.

Regards,



MAY, 2025 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM

The Silent Burden: Understanding how period poverty is experienced unwittingly across various regions and ages.

“Women rarely seek care or support to manage menopausal symptoms and conditions, often due to stigma, limited awareness, and a culture of silence about women's bodies and their health in general.”

Period poverty refers to the lack of access to menstrual products, hygiene facilities, and knowledge about menstruation. It is a widespread but often invisible issue, particularly in rural areas where cultural stigma, poverty, lack of resources, and generational differences intertwine to make managing periods a daily struggle.

The silence surrounding menstruation contributes significantly to its normalization, preventing open discussions and hindering access to vital resources. This is evident in the fact that a significant percentage of girls in India are unaware of menstruation before their first period, highlighting an unknowing entry into a monthly struggle.

In rural regions, period poverty is often unknowingly experienced and normalized across different age groups. Many girls and women grow up believing that menstruation is something to be endured shamefully. Due to a lack of affordable sanitary products,

many rely on old cloth, newspapers, or even leaves, increasing the risk of infections.

The impact is stark on adolescent girls, with studies indicating that a considerable number of students leave their education upon reaching puberty, often due to the lack of access to menstrual hygiene products and proper sanitation facilities. Not only adolescent females but also senior citizens transitioning into menopause have a lack of access to knowledge about changes in their body's needs, and in most cases, are entirely unaware that this is also a form of period poverty.

Firsthand experiences of women range from Data from the National Family Health Survey-5 reveals stark disparities in the use of hygienic menstrual products between states, with Uttar Pradesh and Bihar showing particularly low usage compared to more urbanized regions. This regional divide underscores how socioeconomic factors and access to resources contribute to the varying degrees of period poverty experienced across India.

Even in a relatively progressive state like Kerala, a study found that a notable amount, almost 26 percent, of young adult females experience period poverty, indicating that the issue persists even in areas with better health indicators.

To address this, innovative solutions are emerging around the world. Community-based initiatives such as training local women to produce affordable, reusable cloth pads or biodegradable sanitary pads, such as PadSeva itself, improve menstrual health while also bridging stereotypical gaps in society. Furthermore, governments and NGOs must invest in improving sanitation infrastructure in schools and communities, ensuring access to clean water and private disposal facilities.

Most importantly, comprehensive menstrual health awareness needs to be incorporated into school learning and public health programs, breaking the silence and stigma surrounding menstruation across all ages and genders.

Only if the silence and normalisation surrounding menstruation are dismantled can access to affordable and hygienic products be ensured, sanitation infrastructure be enhanced, and comprehensive education across all ages and regions in India be provided. Through acknowledging and actively tackling this silent burden, we can ensure the health, dignity, and empowerment of all menstruators.



Writer
Dhanika Narang



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PADSEVA

MAY, 2025 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM

The Bloody Truth: The Cost of Menstruation in India**From biology to budget cuts — the menstrual struggle is real.**

Imagine a world where basic human necessities are taxed. Soap, toothpaste, and medicine are labeled as luxury products and non-essentials under national tax codes—over 10% GSTs are slapped onto the already overpriced boxes. Your parents curse the government as they adjust their budget sheets and slave away at work in hopes of a raise. They panic and argue behind closed doors when they think you are asleep. Your outraged economics teacher hosts debates and plans lectures on the taxes. News websites stir the pot, calling all Indian brothers and sisters to take a stand. And in the slums dotted around the high-rise apartments, 80 million people are slowly dying. People under the poverty line already struggle to afford these products, and now there are taxes too? Forget it. They use cheap, unsafe alternatives—over-the-counter ‘medicine’ from unlicensed dealers, newspapers for toilet paper, and ash instead of soap. Some don’t even bother. Sickness, infections, and diseases are their new best friends. Sounds like something straight out of District 12, right? This dystopia used to be the world of menstruating women.

The “tampon tax” refers to the taxes on menstrual hygiene products like sanitary pads, liners, and tampons. Many countries have faced major backlash for classifying these necessities as luxuries, but India made a huge step forward in 2018 by completely abolishing the 12% Goods and Services Tax (GST) on sanitary pads. This decision was sparked by widespread activism and public protests asserting that menstruation is a biological process and menstrual products are essential. But the battle for menstrual equity in India is far from over.

The tampon tax debate is still relevant because it is a symbol of the fight for women’s rights and period safety.

Removing the tax on pads was a necessary step, but it didn’t solve the deeper systemic problems. India needs to make all menstrual products tax-free and cheaper, integrate them into public welfare programs, and invest in menstrual health education. Menstrual hygiene is a health right, not a market commodity.

Even after the removal of GSTs, women still find themselves emptying their wallets to stay hygienic and healthy. Taxes still apply to the raw materials needed to make these products. This causes manufacturing costs to skyrocket, particularly for smaller manufacturers. This limits the availability of low-cost and locally produced sanitary products in the market (good ol’ corporate sharks). Additionally, tampons and menstrual cups, the more reusable and sustainable alternatives, are still relentlessly taxed, reducing their usage despite the long-term environmental benefits.

Accessibility and affordability continue to be enormous barriers. Although urban areas have better access, rural regions remain isolated and forgotten. Studies show that only 36% of menstruating individuals in India use sanitary pads. Many women still use unsafe alternatives like old rags or ash, thanks to cultural taboos, lack of education, and inadequate distribution.

While India has made progress by eliminating the tax on sanitary pads, the war against social stigma and menstrual challenges wages on. The tampon tax remains a symbol of the gendered disparities in healthcare and access. True progress will come only when menstrual products are **accessible, affordable, and supported** by public policy for all who need them.



Writer
Manasvi Choudhary



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PADSEVA

MAY, 2024 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM

Emerging Solutions to Period Poverty in Different Contexts**Period. Action. Awareness.***“A period should end a sentence, not a girl’s education.”**— The Pad Project / “Period. End of Sentence.”*

Period poverty — a denial of access to menstruation products, information, and proper sanitation — plagues hundreds of millions across the planet. Though a worldwide issue, the fix isn't necessarily so, at least not to the same extent in different locales. Here is what different societies do differently and in vastly unique ways, both high-tech and low.

Cultural Sensitivity in Tackling Period Poverty

In many cultures, menstruation is considered a taboo topic, where people can't express the importance of period poverty freely, which leads to discrimination, shame, and limited awareness. Countries have started to organize initiatives regarding this, such as The Pad Project and Menstrupedia in India. In sub-Saharan Africa, NGOs use community-based storytelling and drama to spread awareness. At the same time, in Western nations, activism focuses on the "tampon tax" and product accessibility in schools, shelters, and prisons.

In many communities and nations around the world, menstruation is surrounded by shame, silence, and restrictions. Cultural practices often reduce the number of things a girl can do in a day, be it cooking, praying, attending school, etc.

Age-Specific Responses

Many young girls in low-income regions have to miss school, a valuable part of their lives, just because of their periods, due to cultural or personal reasons. They might feel ashamed by the stains on their clothes or get teased just because they cannot afford to get pads and toiletries. Some schools in those areas have started to distribute reusable

pads and menstrual cups, which are long-term & sustainable options. Girls aged 15-19 years do not get accurate information about periods from family & friends and rely on social media, which can cause myths or misinformation that could harm them. Social media campaigns could use influencers and humor to break the taboos and spread truthful information.

Adult women, especially in crisis zones or refugee camps, don't have access to pads, soap, clean toilets, or places to change privately, which can lead to infections & discomfort. Organizations like UNHCR, the Red Cross, and UNICEF give out kits that contain pads, cloths, soap, buckets, and leaflets that have information about periods (often in the local language).

Tech Innovations Leading the Way

Period poverty is not just about the lack of menstrual products—it is about the lack of access & knowledge. Nowadays, technology has played a huge part in our lives—from how we are educated to how we manage menstruation. Social media platforms, digital workshops, and even AI chatbots help kids & young teens learn about periods in a safe way. The Menstrupedia Comic in India started as a website and became an offline comic book — now used in over 20 countries to educate with tech-backed storytelling.

Another thing to focus on is how to effectively distribute pads around the nation. Vending machines in schools, offices, public toilets, etc., can make it easy to access them. In schools, they could scan a QR code using their school ID card, making the process very smooth. Technology is also enabling the creation of sustainable products, such as biodegradable pads from banana fibers or bamboo.

Period poverty is not just a health issue; it is a social injustice. Addressing it requires awareness, education, innovation, & empathy—everyone has a role to play.



Writer
Vanshika Kotha



MAY, 2024 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM

Emerging Solutions To Period Poverty

Change of Flow: Educating For Equity

Residing in the heart of Hyderabad's informal settlements, a hushed revolution is underway. For years, adolescent girls in low-income communities have faced the harsh realities of period poverty with limited access to menstrual products, inadequate sanitation in schools, and the inescapable views of deep-rooted stigma that turn a natural process into a monthly burden. Challenges like these unfortunately push many to miss school day after day, sacrificing their education and the potential that each day holds—not just because they lack the will, but because they lack the basic, essential support they desperately need to stand tall and keep going.

Luckily, change is taking root. Through a bold, city-wide initiative known as the Joint Action for Water (JAW), which aimed at improving Menstrual Health Management (MHM), transforming over 200 government schools into empowering, inclusive environments where girls can learn freely, without fear or shame surrounding their periods.

At the center of the initiative was a powerful shift: integrating menstrual health education directly into the school curriculum! Teachers received training to efficiently lead lessons on menstruation and hygiene and to tackle harmful myths that often surround the topic.

The students were no different; they significantly rose as champions of knowledge and empathy within their classrooms, using their voices to spark open, honest conversations to help bring a long-silenced topic into vision.

And for such measures, it's harmonizing that it comes along with promising results: accurate understanding of menstruation rising from 58% to an impressive 87%, and the fading confidence now replaced by the fading, once-unspoken stigma, openness, support, and a sense of shared dignity! It was now that the silence surrounding periods started to dwindle away.

Recognizing that education alone wasn't enough, the JAW team focused on practical, day-to-day needs—starting with the basics, leading them to work to ensure that schools had private, gender-segregated toilets, reliable water access, and proper disposal bins for menstrual waste. For many girls, this seemed like a revelation since this was the first time that they had access to clean, safe spaces where they could manage their periods with dignity without fear or shame. The results were once again highly satisfactory: the use of hygienic menstrual products jumped from 42% to 78%, and school absenteeism during periods dropped from 12% to just 5%! These changes not only improved facilities but also helped girls find their voice and clear their vision.

One of the most significant outcomes of the initiative was visibly the boost in the girls' self-esteem. Now that they had access to improved facilities and the reassurance of ongoing support, many felt much more comfortable and at ease attending school during their menstrual cycles. This newfound sense of empowerment led to greater classroom engagement, improved academic performance, and a deeper conviction in their right to manage both education and health.

The JAW initiative in Hyderabad serves as an influential example of how period poverty can effectively be tackled through a holistic, school-based strategy by an inspiring blend of measures in integrating education, improving infrastructure, and active community involvement, this program has demonstrated that impactful, sustainable change is achievable—even in the most marginalized communities.

As other cities consider adopting similar models, Hyderabad's experience underscores that menstrual health is not merely a hygiene concern but a fundamental issue of dignity, equity, and opportunity.



Writer
S.Ikshitha

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PADSEVA

PADSEVA



MAY, 2024 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM



Writer
Sirima Reddy

Emerging Solutions to Period Poverty in Different contexts

Period poverty isn't about not having access to pads or tampons—it's about missing school, about shame, about being left behind because of something so normal. Across the globe, solutions are being built that combine policy, innovation, and cultural insight to address this challenge with the speed and compassion it requires.

In the past few years, there have been some bold and confident moves towards normalising menstrual care in some countries, such as Scotland, for example was the first country to legally make period products available free of cost to the public. As Scottish MP (member of parliament) Monica Lennon put it, "Access to period products is a basic necessity." This policy guarantees that menstrual products are viewed as essential items rather than luxuries, with supplies made freely available in schools, universities, and public buildings (TIME). In Catalonia, a similar initiative is underway—but with a twist. The government is distributing reusable cloth pads and efficient menstrual cups to around

2.5 million people, if they can do it why not us (AP News). Technology, too, is reshaping how we approach menstrual health. Innovative designs such as the Bfree Cup have been designed to be recycled without boiling and are therefore well suited for water-scarce communities. These types of solutions demonstrate how health and design can be combined. As researchers at McMaster University put it, "Engineering can help solve hidden issues such as period poverty" (Brighter World).

Community-based initiatives continue to be essential, particularly in areas where government assistance is scarce or stigma is entrenched and deep-seated. In refugee camps throughout Lebanon and East Africa, The Pachamama Project has been revolutionizing quietly. Volunteers design and distribute thousands of reusable pads, specific to the needs and input of the women who wear them (Tackling period poverty in Lebanon's refugee camps). It's grassroots, it's sustainable, and most importantly, it's collaborative. One volunteer summed it up perfectly: it's about "dignity and choice, not just hygiene."

Cultural taboos also play a huge role. In some rural parts of Nepal, the harmful tradition of chhaupadi—this is a menstrual taboo which isolates women during their periods from taking part in general family activities as they are considered 'impure'—is being challenged by education campaigns and neighbourhood activism and community outreach. In Islamic and South Asian communities, where modesty and stigma often prevent open conversation, organisations are introducing menstrual health education in ways that are respectful, inclusive, and led by women from within those cultures so everyone feels included and not left out or 'outcast'

(Global Period Poverty;PMC). At its core, solving period poverty means creating a world where periods are not a barrier to anyone's education, health, or self-worth. Whether through policy, innovation, or people-powered action, the message is clear: menstruation is normal, and managing it should be, too, its something which can not be controlled and the society shouldn't portray this in a bad way, it happens to everyone, the least we can do is at least help girls and women feel safe and welcome even on their periods and treating them normally is the bare minimum.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PADSEVA

MAY, 2025 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM



Beyond Borders: Innovative Solutions to Period Poverty Across Diverse Contexts

Period-Poverty-the disorder of being unable to procure menstrual products, education, and sanitation- affects millions in varied geographies.

It is usually synonymous with low-income communities; however, it permeates into other sectors and environments as well. Let us understand period poverty as different stakeholder groups implement period poverty projects in innovative ways based on context.

Incarcerated women: menstrual equity in prisons. Women in prison often find it difficult to access adequate menstrual hygiene products. In the United States, reports affirm that women are usually provided with very limited supplies, which forces them to use either makeshift materials, posing certain health-related hazards, or unsafe sanitary methods. Legislation like the First Step Act provides for the purchase of menstrual hygiene products

in federal prisons are free of charge; however, such provision is absent in many state facilities. Advocacy groups are pushing for comprehensive policies to enable menstrual equity in the criminal justice system.

Workplace Initiatives: Advocating for Menstrual Health at Work. Workplace menstrual health is a growing interest amid growing recognition amongst organizations about its impact on employee well-being and productivity. Companies are beginning to implement policies for the provision of free menstrual products, restroom spaces for menstruating employees, and programs educating staff on menstrual health to build more inclusive environments. Not in a human tone, officials for menstrual health, among those initiatives, are founded on the health of employees, gender equality, and the destigmatization of menstruation.

Humanitarian Crisis: Menstrual Hygiene Management in Disaster Relief Activities. In disaster-affected areas, menstrual hygiene products become a critical necessity. ActionAid hands out hygiene kits containing sanitary pads, soap, and undergarments to women and girls in refugee camps and disaster-affected areas. These activities ensure that during an emergency, menstruating individuals uphold their dignity and health.

Athletes: The Issue of Period Poverty in Sports In developing countries that are still developing, period poverty affects female athletes' performance and participation. For instance, in Ghana, the high costs and taxes placed on

Sanitary products have kept some players off the field. Organization like Soccer for Dreamers seeks to provide menstrual cups and educational programs for the menstrual health of athletes and alleviate stigma from the sporting community.

The Digital Platforms: Anti-Period Stigma Effort. Social media is very much a go-to for menstrual health education; yet, content dealing with women's health information is subjected to censorship. Studies reveal that posts about menstruation get censored more than those on men's health. Different advocacy groups demand a fair consideration of health posts on the internet so that the actual information reaches everyone, and the stigma about it begins to subside. Period poverty knows no geographical or socioeconomic boundaries, varying from one group to another in different contexts. The ways to address it must be manifold: a modicum of policy reforms, workplace, humanitarian, sports, and digital advocacy. Addressing period poverty in any way, shape, or form brings us one step closer to getting menstrual equity for all.



Writer
Dhakshaa Vadaga



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PADSEVA

MAY, 2025 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM



Emerging Solutions to Period Poverty in Different Contexts

A commonly misunderstood concept, known as periods, are a normal vaginal bleeding that occur monthly in women of reproductive age.

Periods need immediate care and attention, otherwise a woman's health can be threatened. There are many parts of the world where people experience a fatal disease known as Periods Poverty. This is when people do not have access to certain period necessities, such as pads. These are absorbent pads worn in underwear during menstruation to absorb menstrual blood and fluids. It is vital to have pads which help to absorb menstrual blood, otherwise a woman's health can be in danger.

In this day and age, we have immeasurable ways to help the ones suffering. Period care is something that should not be ignored. It is an important topic, which we should normalise. We can help the less fortunate by providing them with the necessary materials (such as pads) to make sure they don't put their health on the line. Period poverty affects an estimated 500 million people worldwide. In India, 13% of girls are aware of menstruation before their first period, and

60% miss school due to menstruation. In the United States, a study found that 14.2% of menstruating college students had experienced period poverty in the past year. In the U.S., 1 in 4 teens and 1 in 3 adults struggle to afford period products, particularly among low-income households. In the UK, 3 in 10 girls have difficulty affording or accessing menstrual products.

A 2020 survey showed that 3 in 10 girls in the UK struggled to afford or access menstrual products, and more than half used toilet paper instead. Period poverty like other forms of poverty can be debilitating. It can take different forms and has emotional, physical, and mental health effects on individuals. More than half of the world's population are menstruating people, it is high time period poverty becomes everybody's business.

Since the world is drowning in plastic, reusable environmentally friendly menstrual products need to be explored. This calls for innovation alongside intersectoral collaboration to ensure access to water and sanitation.

Which is why, we at PadSeva are dedicated to ending period poverty by providing bamboo-made, biodegradable pads to underserved communities. Our mission is grounded in the belief that menstrual hygiene is not just a health issue, but also a matter of dignity and equality.

Period poverty is a global issue affecting around 500 million people worldwide, primarily due to lack of access to period necessities like pads. This can lead to health risks, such as missed school and emotional, physical, and mental health effects. With over half of the world's population menstruating, it is crucial to explore reusable, environmentally friendly menstrual products. PadSeva, a company dedicated to ending period poverty, provides bamboo-

-made, biodegradable pads to underserved communities. Our mission is based on the belief that menstrual hygiene is not just a health issue but also a matter of dignity and equality. By providing these pads, we can help ensure that women's health is not compromised.



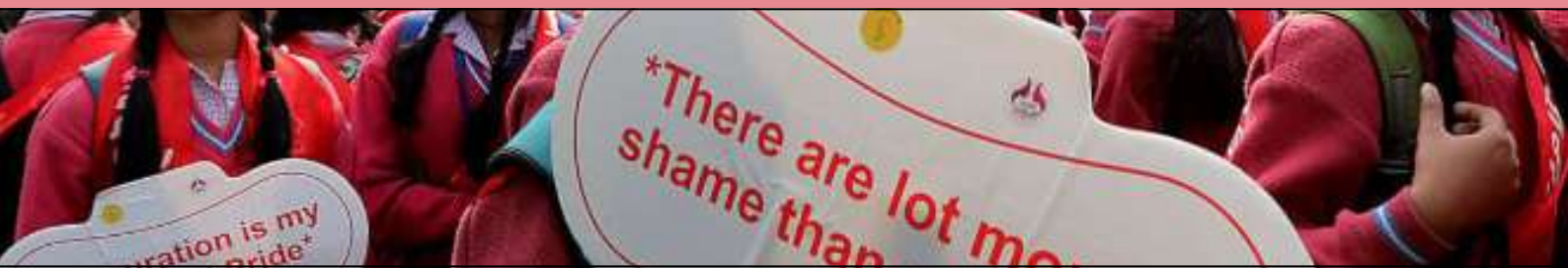
Writer
Abhya Soni



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PADSEVA

PADSEVA

MAY, 2024 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM



The color of shame: How the design of menstrual products ignites period poverty and what we can do?

Open your drawer, what do you see? Light shades of pink and blue with often muted tones of neutral tones with soft wrappers whispering “freshness”, “clean”. Anything but red. For a natural occurrence, periods are literally and figuratively wrapped in layers, layers of shame. But what if this minimalist and quietness isn't just for aesthetics, but is hinting as the root issue for period poverty.

Take a look at mainstream advertising, often advertisements rarely use the word blood and avoid using the color red altogether, instead opting for colors of blue while displaying blood. But why is it that this misrepresentation of what periods actually are, is still ascending to this day? Because this isn't just branding or marketing but is subconsciously ingraining the idea that our bodies must be concealed. And the consequences are more than emotional, they're economic.

When menstrual products are wrapped in these ideas, asking for them feels difficult that ignites the uncomfortable stigma around periods. In schools, students often hide pads in their jackets. In public spaces, people are less likely to openly ask for menstrual products, especially those from semi rural/rural regions.

This shame creates silence, silence that protects inequality, and to this design becomes another tool of quiet oppression. According to psychological studies, red is usually associated with visibility and power. Packaging that avoids red actually activates shame based neural responses, reinforcing the idea that periods are embarrassing, dirty, or dangerous.

Whereas, neutral colors with minimal design are passive, not assertive and are often used in contexts where the user is not meant to be seen, but to be blended in. Design teaches us what to value, and when we are subconsciously led to believe that periods are a way of displaying shame and disgust, we are less likely to speak up on it. This way design becomes policy, policy that promotes period poverty.

To dismantle this, we must rethink not just how we can distribute these products but how they're designed. Solutions lie in reimagining menstrual product packaging, going from minimal hidden words to the use of bold, unapologetic visuals and patterns that speak with pride rather than sanitized terms. This aesthetic of design, not only promotes a safer atmosphere around menstruation but helps the younger generation of growing women to flaunt their periods and feel more comfortable with it.



Writer
Abhigna Naik



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PADSEVA

MAY, 2025 | @PAD.SEVA | PADSEVAORG.COM

**Innovation on the Flow:
Fighting Period Poverty
with Technology & Data**

Not having access to menstrual products, proper hygiene, or even basic awareness — period poverty — is a problem that affects millions of people, especially in low-income, rural and remote areas. But recently, technology is making a real difference. From pad-making machines to mobile apps, and even AI tools, innovation is helping break the cycle around menstruation and bring real support to the people who need it most.

One great example is low-cost pad-making machines. In India, groups like Aakar Innovations are setting up units where women can make and sell their own biodegradable sanitary pads (UNICEF, 2021). More than hygiene — it's about giving women in rural areas the chance to earn a living and talk openly about giving women in rural areas the chance to earn a living and talk openly about periods without having any shame. Another big step came from Arunachalam Muruganantham (yes, the real-life “Pad Man”), whose simple yet effective machines have helped thousands of communities produce affordable pads (BBC, 2018).

And then there are mobile health apps. Period-tracking apps like Clue or Spot On might seem like something only metropolitan users benefit from, but when adapted to local needs, they can do a lot more.

In Kenya, for example, the Nia app is being used to provide menstrual education and health information in ways that are sensitive and youth-friendly (Pathfinder International, 2022). This is extremely helpful in places where talking about periods is still considered taboo.

Data science is also joining the battle. Some nonprofits are now using AI and big data to figure out where menstrual products are needed most. In Uganda, one project used satellite data to find schools where girls were most likely to miss classes because of their periods, helping NGOs get pads and education to the right places (UNESCO, 2022).

Of course, not every single technology-driven solution works the same everywhere. Menstrual cups, for instance, are affordable and eco-friendly, but in many regions they're used with hesitation because of cultural norms. That's exactly why awareness campaigns matter just as much as the products themselves. In some parts of Nepal and sub-Saharan Africa, organizations are conducting workshops alongside product distribution to help break myths and start more open conversations (WaterAid, 2021).

In the long run, whether it's a pad-making machine, an AI dashboard, or even a reliable health app, every tool is making a difference when it's designed with real people in mind. Fighting period poverty and breaking the cycle means merging innovation with empathy — and that results in a future worth building.



Writer
Srinika Reddy



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT PADSEVA

PADSEVA

