

## Overview

[The Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University](#) (GHELI) supports interdisciplinary education about world health through the production, curation, and dissemination of educational public goods. This exemplar work was a final project for “World Health: Challenges and Opportunities,” a General Education course at Harvard College taught by GHELI Faculty Director Sue J. Goldie. For this creative assessment designed with support from GHELI, students systematically analyze a societal health challenge they care about and create a “real world” product intended to influence policy or motivate change.

## Abstract

A set of Instagram graphics to educate about menstrual hygiene in rural Punjab.

## Artist

Simran Kaur (2024)

## Caption

Lack of resources for healthy and safe menstruation is a significant issue in rural Punjab (a region which spans territories in both India and Pakistan). Period poverty is a direct result of root causes including social stigma, low socioeconomic status, and lack of facilities to wash when menstruating. Over 38% of all menstruating women and girls in rural Punjab, India do not have access to safe, clean menstrual products and resort to using cotton, cloth, leaves, ashes, or other unsafe and unhygienic materials. Furthermore, at least 1 in 5 Punjabi Pakistani schoolgirls miss several days of schooling per month due to a lack of a sufficient cleaning facility on site when they are menstruating, and up to 80% of girls in select rural villages drop out of school at menarche. In addition, lack of adequate menstrual hygiene, which includes bathing daily when menstruating, using sanitary menstrual products, and having regular access to a wash facility, can result in serious health issues. These include urinary tract infections, reproductive tract infections, and other related health issues.

## Artist Lens

This extended Instagram post is intended for the audience of menstruating people in rural Punjab, as well as the general public. Members of the general public can donate and support non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are advocating and actively working towards ending poor menstrual hygiene and period poverty in Punjab. Since most Punjabi people have access to social media, by viewing this Instagram post, audiences can educate themselves on the issue of poor menstrual hygiene, learn more about their bodies and menstrual health, as well as support organizations that are working against this issue. The extended Instagram post introduces a highly complex issue in a digestible format consisting of visual aids balanced with shorter sections of text. The format is also easily accessible through various social media platforms. The goal of this post is to primarily educate the audiences while generating a call to action, specifically to mitigate social stigma by means of greater understanding and education surrounding the topic of menstrual hygiene.



# Media

Digital

# ACCESS TO MENSTRUAL HYGIENE & PERIOD POVERTY IN RURAL PUNJAB





# What is menstrual hygiene?

**Menstrual hygiene is defined as “access to menstrual products and adequate facilities for menstrual hygiene management (MHM)”  
(World Bank Group, 2023)**





The infographic features a central title 'COMPONENTS OF ADEQUATE MENSTRUAL HYGIENE' in purple. Three main components are highlighted in colored, cloud-like shapes: a teal shape at the top for 'HAVING ACCESS TO SAFE & CLEAN FACILITIES TO DISPOSE/CHANGE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS', a purple shape at the bottom left for 'USE OF SANITARY PADS, TAMPONS, MENSTRUAL CUPS, OR OTHER DISPOSABLE OR CERTIFIED REUSABLE PRODUCTS', and an orange shape at the bottom right for 'BATHING/SHOWERING DURING PERIOD'. The background is light pink with abstract shapes and purple starburst icons.

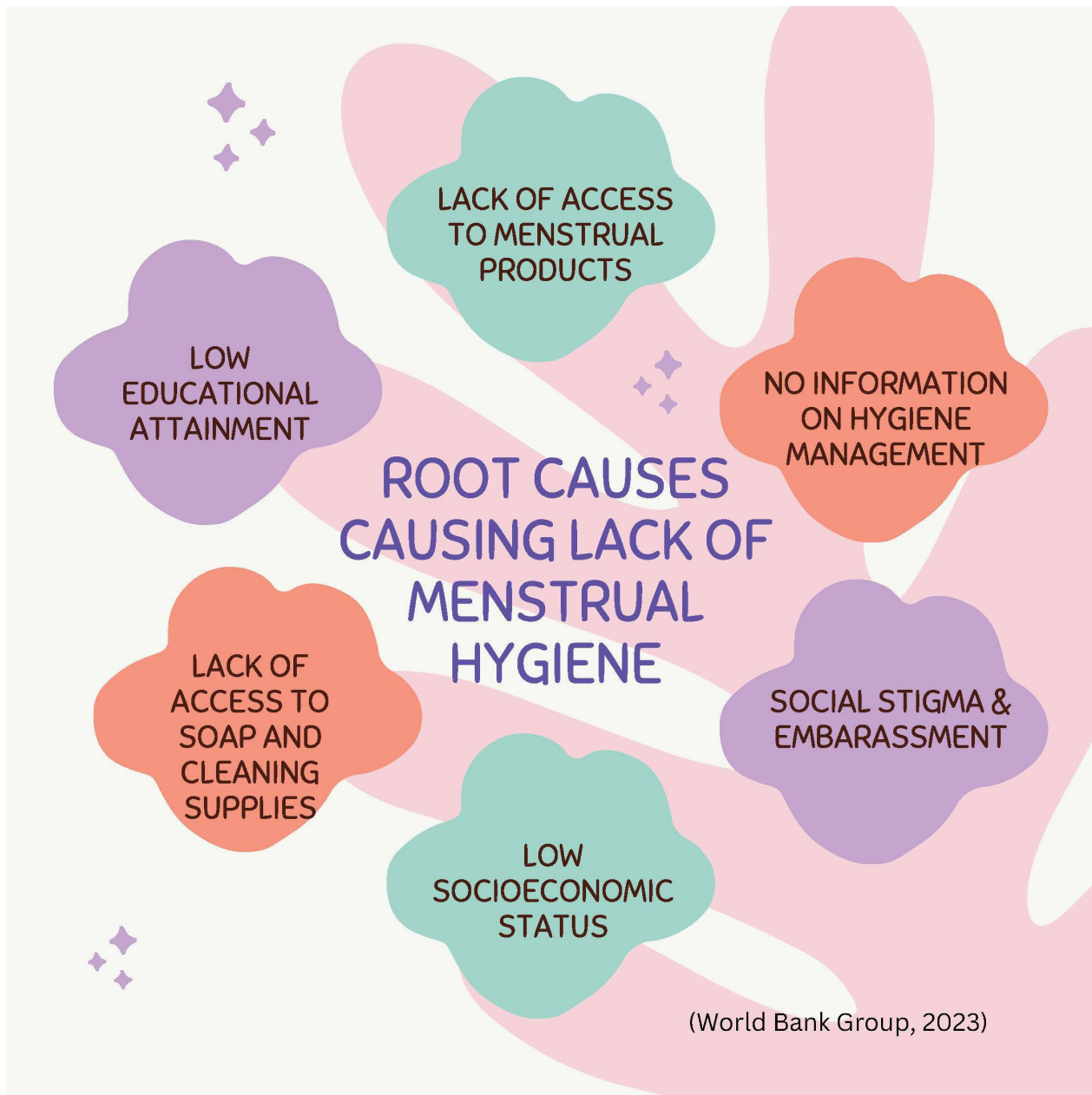
**HAVING ACCESS  
TO SAFE & CLEAN  
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**COMPONENTS OF  
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OR OTHER  
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CERTIFIED REUSABLE  
PRODUCTS**

**BATHING/SHOWERING  
DURING PERIOD**

(Tuli et al., 2017)



## Why is this issue important?



Over 80% of school girls in select rural Punjabi villages drop out because lack of period managing resources



79% of rural Pakistani Punjabi women suffer from poor period hygiene



Lack of proper menstrual hygiene can result in urinary tract infections, reproductive, and other health issues



Poor menstrual hygiene is a direct result of stigma, period poverty, and lack of issue recognition

(Zahra, 2022)

# There is extensive social stigma surrounding menstruation in rural Punjab



In a 2022 study conducted in rural Rawalpindi, Punjab, results found that out of 400 women, “Majority of the respondents 78.7% (n = 315) felt ashamed while buying sanitary pads. Out of 400 respondents, 5.4% (n = 22) were interested in getting awareness regarding menstrual hygiene”

(Malik et al., 2023)

# Rural Punjabi women and girls lack necessary menstrual care resources



Over 38% of rural women and girls use cloth or cotton when menstruating (Dharni, 2018)



There is a correlation between low socioeconomic status and lack of access to menstrual products (Dharni, 2018)



Safe sanitary products are a luxury few can afford, with menstrual products being significantly upcharged



EVERY  
MENSTRUATING  
PERSON  
DESERVES TO  
MENSTRUATE IN A  
HEALTHY,  
DIGNIFIED WAY



# HOW CAN YOU HELP MAKE A CHANGE?



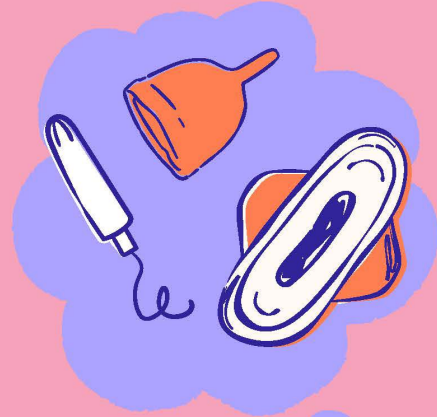
Support greater education surrounding periods to decrease stigma!

- WaterAid: Menstrual Hygiene Educational Initiative

Support the Pushpa Gujral Science City in their initiative to establish ECO Wash Clubs in Punjabi schools.

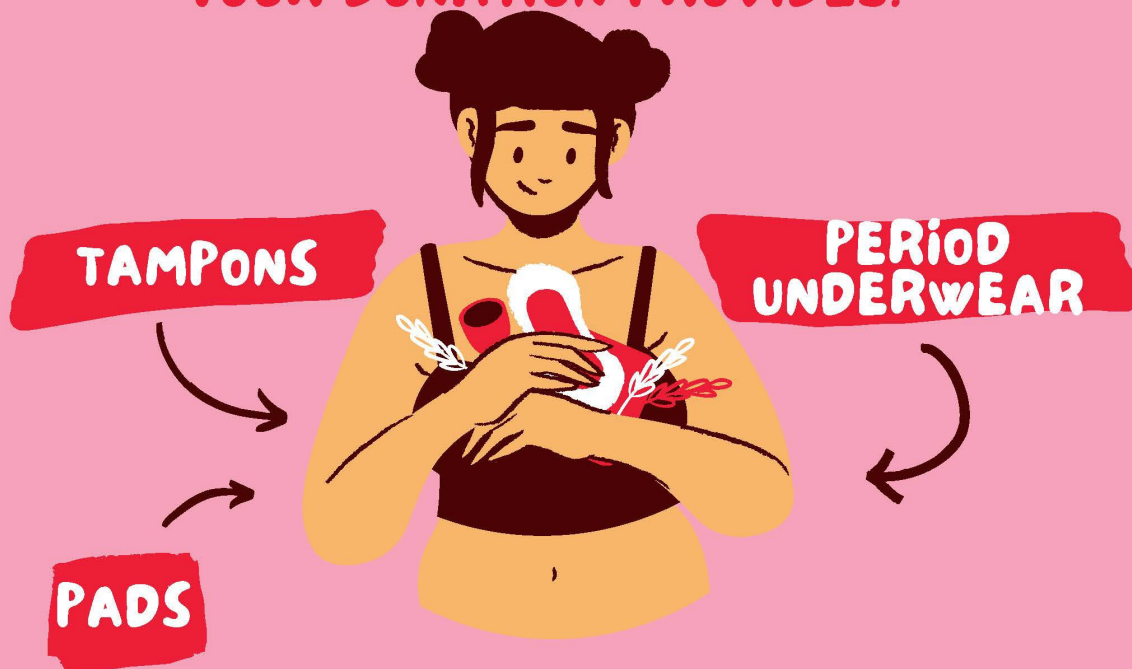
These clubs:

- discuss the importance of hygiene, including menstrual hygiene
- provide free washing resources to students



# END PERIOD POVERTY NOW

YOUR DONATION PROVIDES:



DONATE TO THESE ORGS TO PROVIDE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS:

HERPAKISTAN (PUNJAB, PAKISTAN)

THE PAD PROJECT (PUNJAB, INDIA)

BINTI (PUNJAB, INDIA)



*Not a luxury*