



**CREATING AWARENESS ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRACTICES IN KERALA:
PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES THROUGH STRATEGIC MOVEMENT FROM SMKC
(SUSTAINABLE MENSTRUATION KERALA COLLECTIVE)**

¹**Baby Niviya Feston**

(Research Scholar Bharathiar University, Coimbatore), Sr. Asst. Professor,

Department of Management Studies, New Horizon College of Engineering, Bangalore

²**Dr. S. Krishnaraj**

Associate Professor, Bharathiar School of Management & Entrepreneur Development (BSMED),

Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

Purpose

-The purpose of this paper to show that how the strategic movement taken by SMKC (Sustainable Menstruation Kerala Collective) developed in Kerala for creating awareness hygiene practices during menstrual cycle of women. It will be role model for all other NGO's or other firms who can also do and lead cleanliness India with regards to waste produces from a menstrual phase of women.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach

- The research is based on secondary data. Researcher collected the information from newspapers and reported information.

Findings

- The paper shows how SMKC ((Sustainable Menstruation Kerala Collective) taken up initiative of waste management produces during menstrual cycle which has not been earlier in Kerala

Practical Implications

- The paper has a practical implication for all other firms/ NGO's/ Organizations in terms of their apprehension with menstrual waste management practices and there by lead 'Cleanliness State' or 'Cleanliness India'

Originality/ Value

- The paper's worth is in enlargement model of SMKC (Sustainable Menstruation Kerala Collective), a strategic initiative from Kerala, a south Indian State

Key Words: SMKC (Sustainable Menstruation Kerala Collective), Menstrual Hygiene, Waste management, Cleanliness State

Back ground of the study

Menstruation Hygiene Management (MHM) focuses on practical strategies for handling with monthly periods. MHM refers to habits women keep clean and healthy during menstruation and how they acquire, use and dispose of blood absorbing materials. To effectively manage their menstruation, adolescent girls and women need access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, reasonable and suitable menstrual hygiene materials and services for their disposal, information on decent practices, and a helpful environment where they can manage menstruation without humiliation or disgrace. Women and adolescent girls are using a clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect menstrual blood, that can be transformed in privacy as often as essential for the duration of a menstrual period, using soap and water for washing the body as vital, and having access to facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials. They understand the basic facts linked to the menstrual cycle and how to manage it with self-respect and without embarrassment or fear.

Purpose of research

a) Objectives of the study

1. To study about 'SMKC (Sustainable Menstruation Kerala Collective), an initiative campaign through social media by all companies/organizations who works for same objective menstrual hygiene.
2. To examine the SMKC's approach of their modus operandi for implementation 'menstrual waste management'
3. To assess the lessons and practices of 'SMKC' and therefore it leads to the progress of other organizations and states.

b) Learning Objectives

1. Learning the nature of Cleanliness Practices and improving the lives of a state by the way of disseminating menstrual waste.
2. Integrate business, cleanliness and menstrual hygiene management.
3. Strategic Movement: Done through social media platform that lead to business growth and development of the country.

Methodology

The methodology of the present study relied on the web based research, review of print literature to understand SMKC s works.

Limitations

The study concentrated only on SMKC. No primary data has collected and depended only on print literatures.

Menstrual Waste

Anyone thought that what happens after disposal of sanitary napkins? There are mainly 3 possibilities

1. In case women select to dispose off a sanitary napkin in a wastebasket, it's probably going to end up in a landfill. There, it will stay for hundreds of years, suppressed under a piling peak of trash. The pad comprises super spongy polymers and a layer of polyethelene (both made of plastic), ensuring that it doesn't decay effortlessly.
2. If the sanitary napkin is charbroiled, it releases toxic chemicals which harm the atmosphere. Because of the fundamentals of plastic used, the pads can combust completely only when heated to a temperature of 800 degrees Celsius for 4-5 minutes. Without this, the plastic won't be burnt totally and will just add to the non-biodegradable waste mass.
3. In case they are flushed down the toilet, the pads are certain to block the drainage. Because of the absorbent gels and material used, these pads collect moisture and waste, do not crumble easily and choke pipes. The obstructions caused often require people to go into manholes and eliminate them with their hands.

SMKC

a) Profile of the company

The Sustainable Menstruation Kerala Collective (SMKC) says, go the bio-degradable and toxin-free way for menstrual waste. Shradha is one of the person who is heading SMKC, and the Collective brings composed various anti-menstrual taboo campaigners from Kerala, like The Red Cycle, #happytobleed and Code Red. They also have on board gender rights and environment activists and organisations. SMKC has also roped in local producers of sustainable menstrual hygiene products like recyclable cloth pads, ecological and toxin-free pads and menstrual cups.

Shradha has always held a keen interest in environment and waste management. But her interest in sustainability and menstrual products piqued in 2014 at a conference in New Delhi. She moved to Thiruvananthapuram from Puducherry

after completing her education in 2016. So in December, she began reaching out to people for SMKC through a Facebook group.

The Sustainable Menstruation Kerala campaign has brought together menstrual rights activists, professionals and alternate hygiene products groups organized to push for a sustainable menstruation agenda across the State. They aim to work closely with the current policies in production and disposal, access to hygiene products and human rights associated with menstruation and reproductive health of women. The choice and burden of menstrual hygiene related issues transcends gender differences with its multifarious challenges in health issues and waste management. They support sustainable menstruation through zero waste and circular economies, for the health and well-being of our women, ecology and society at large.

SMKC's goal: To make sustainable menstruation products and practices a reality.

SWAN ANALYSIS for SMKC

Strengths	Weaknesses	Achievement	Next Step
Integrated all the agencies who are working for menstrual hygiene	Less human resource to work for the mission	Positioned well exact goal in the society	Awareness level program for whole state
Made a platform in marketplace for all those who are working for same objective (menstrual hygiene) in different ways	Shortage of experts at operating level rather than partner level	Identified market for their products	Can be introduce technology based products like machines which can be dispose sanitary napkins
Expertise at partner level coordination	Unable to deal with huge demand as the partners of this mission have less in production size of menstrual hygiene materials	Identified market for consultancy in areas other than HRM	Other small consultancies looking to invade the marketplace
Noble Leadership under prominent trust (Thanal) who really worked hard to achieve their motto	Technology based products	Well done with social media platform	Large level campaigns can be promote in state wise and can get help from colleges, organizations vast

Source: Authors of this article (Based on Subhash Sharma (2015)

Epilogues

Shradha Sreejaya, one of the members of the SMKC told The Times of India (August 2017)

"The expo was welcomed by the womenfolk and to our surprise, many men as well. Some of the men queried about cloth pads while some were more interested and asked if it is safe to use menstrual cups. A teenager came to us to enquire about menstrual cups which he wanted to gift his fiancé on her birthday. It is definitely a huge step to hold such an expo, they feel. The students from city schools were given awareness sessions on menstruation. Around 12 menstrual cups which are made of silicon material and almost all cloth pads were sold."

The Trivandrum Municipal Corporation has launched a project called 'cloth pads' to make sustainable menstruation a reality and to ensure that all women have access to sanitary pads.

Cleanliness State based on menstrual waste management Practices

At present, less than 50 percent of girls in India have access to sanitary pads. Even when available, they are made of non-biodegradable material, which makes India more prone to a huge bio-hazard. Hence it is both a health and environmental concern. The civic body plans on addressing this issue by joining hands with Hindustan Latex Ltd (HLL) to produce and distribute cotton cloth pads. HLL spokes person told, "After the onset of puberty, girls are not that mature and shy to go to a medical store and ask

for sanitary napkins. In order to promote the use of these napkins, vending machines will be installed even in schools, so that the student can use one and carry the rest home, in a way cultivating this hygienic practice.”

The vending machines will be installed in public places like railway stations and also in schools and public toilets. Rs 10 will be charged for three pads after the initial 1,620 pads which would be free.

Issues & challenges

1. Lack of sunlight & Water facility
2. Health officials are having less knowledge and interest in women's reproductive health
3. Lack of research in women's reproductive health
4. Many Government officials are men, who can't understand issues which women faces during menstrual cycle

Practical Implications & Future perspectives

1. Bangalore based company, Nisha's company Zuci Fem Care Pvt Ltd, came up with machines that made machine to dispose sanitary napkins. It is a technical move. Like this other companies can 'start ups' in this area.
2. Global orientation
3. Enhancing competitiveness
4. Nurturing business and manufactures for sanitary materials for menstrual hygiene

Conclusions

. Social awareness of menstruation and menstrual cycle as the only concern of women requirements to convert into a collective responsibility of society at large to ensure that the health and well-being of the individual and environment are not harmfully affected due to ill informed selections. A multidimensional methodology should be targeted in finding sustainable social and scientific solutions to the address the various difficulties in the menstrual hygiene management area. While SMKC felt that a complete „switch“ to eco-friendly alternatives like cloth pads and cups are required to realize the greater vision of a „zero-waste“ society, taking into account the sensitive socio-economic barriers and gender imbalance in our country, a move from conservative disposable sanitary napkins to biodegradable napkins can be the leading step towards it.

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