



# Safe Disposal of Menstrual Waste

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One of the big challenges for girls and women in developing countries is access to safe and sustainable options for managing their menses





## Project overview

- Review of current literature on menstrual practices and disposal
- Data collection on current menstrual practices and disposal in public spaces in India and South Africa
- Develop incinerator technology for safe disposal of menstrual waste



**SEWA**  
Self Employed Women's Association

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*



# What are the types of menstrual absorbents used by girls and women in developing countries?

Use of different types of absorbents reported in Indian studies between 2000-2015:

Absorbent type	Total pooled	Rural	Urban	Slum
Commercial pad (%)	45	32	67	43
Cloths (%)	50	63	27	61
Pads and cloths (%)	13	9	21	10
Cottons/home-made disposables (%)	4	4	4	
Underwear only (%)	6	7	2	

## Poor access to WASH services



- In homes, communities, schools, worksites, girls lack access to:
  - Safe, functional toilets (that provide privacy as well)
  - Sufficient water
  - Facilities to wash and dry cloth/reusable absorbents
  - Disposal options
- Due to lack of appropriate and safe disposal mechanisms hygienic products will be used in unhygienic ways



# How are used absorbents disposed?

Disposal of absorbents reported in Indian studies between 2000-2015:

Disposal of absorbent	Total pooled	Rural	Urban	Slum
In waste bin	45	28	70	51
Throw away in open space, rivers, wells, lakes, roadside, etc.	23	28	15	30
Burning	17	15	23	
Burying	25	33	12	
In toilet (flushing toilet and pit latrines)	9	10	7	



# Incinerator Technologies

- Not a homogeneous category
  - Matkas/ earthen pots
  - Clay/cement incinerators (Ashudinashak incinerator)
  - Simply made brick/tin incinerators
  - Electric incinerators
  - Incinerators for bio-medical waste (High temperature and high volume)
  - Incinerators with waste to energy technology
- Incinerators meet a growing demand, are easy to install especially in institutional settings.....BUT
- All incinerator types are NOT appropriate and safe
  - Inefficient burning
  - Lack of emission control measures results in the release of toxic gases
  - Poor operations and maintenance results in dysfunctional incinerators



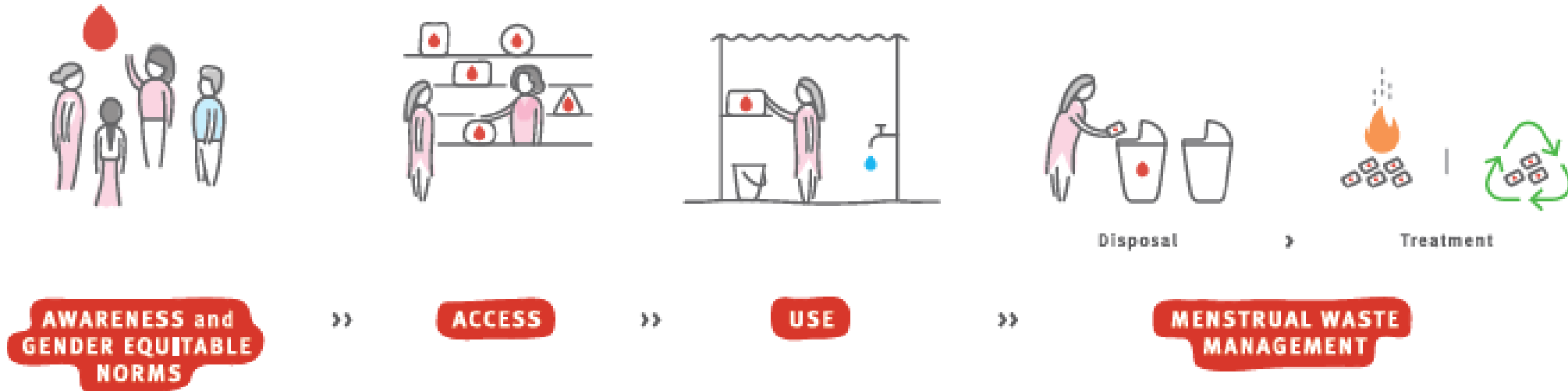




## Key considerations for incinerator use

- Type and composition of product disposed of
- Setting for use and placement of incinerator in that setting
- Volume of product to be incinerated at one go (optimal volume needed)
- Minimum and maximum burning temperatures, and controlled combustion environment
- Emission control measures
- Cost
- Operations and maintenance (financial and human resources)
- Informed and aware users and key stakeholders

# Safe and sustainable MHM



Disposal and treatment of menstrual waste cannot be addressed in isolation

Information and support, availability and use of menstrual products impact waste load and disposal



## Can you help us?

- Do you know of any additional studies on menstrual waste disposal in LMICs?
- Do you know of any examples of incinerator use for menstrual waste disposal in LMICs?



## Gender considerations in BMGF Reinvented Toilets

- How has gender influenced engineering decisions in BMGF-funded reinvented toilets?
  - User surveys
  - Literature reviews
  - Gender balanced teams
- Online survey distributed soon to all grantees
- Follow up interviews
- Results published Feb 2018





Thank you for your  
attention!

Questions?

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