



SURVEY REPORT

December 2020

**MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT STATUS
IN THE URBAN SCHOOLS OF INDIA**

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This report is the output of an extensive survey conducted collectively by the students of Amity University, Lady Shri Ram College and Indraprastha College for Women as part of their summer internship project with Pinkishe Foundation in support of its project Sakhi.



Sakhi is a big and ambitious project, that aims to target schoolgirls to ensure a smooth transition of every girl child when she takes the 'first step' of womanhood i.e. onset of menarche (first period).



ABOUT PINKISHE FOUNDATION

Pinkishe Foundation is an 'All-women' Non-profit organization headquartered in Delhi-NCR.

Pinkishe has witnessed a growth from just 2 persons to an all-women community of 200,000+ women and 50+ branches across the length and breadth of India in just 18 months. Pinkishe is one of the fastest-growing women organizations in the country.

Pinkishe is a section 80G and 12A certified "Registered Trust" focused on the development, well-being, pride, and happiness of the Indian Women and Girl Child. It is an ever-growing sorority with scores of common women joining hands every day. The women here come from all walks of life cutting across all socio-economic strata, religions, beliefs and feel confident by choosing to become a proud member of Pinkishe. Pinkishe is running multiple programs for the benefit of girls and women, the flagship of them being PadBank, under which it works on spreading Menstrual Hygiene Education and distributing free reusable sanitary pads to slums and rural areas.





FOREWARD

This report showcases the status of menstrual hygiene management in the urban areas of the nation.

Over the last few years, the focus and advocacy on menstrual hygiene management practises has been continuously growing. Many governmental and non-governmental initiatives including enhanced societal dialogues, public partnership and individual leaderships have been supporting the overall national effort.

We felt an important need to conduct a dipstick and gauge the current status of awareness, practices and gaps to synchronize actions plans appropriately.

In this survey, we concentrated on urban schools across the nation. The fundamental thought behind covering the schools was to get a snapshot of the best-case scenario. Elsewhere, one can safely assume that the situation will be worse and will need greater focus.

I thank the wonderful team of students, their coordinators, Pinkishe Padbank team, various supporting organizations as well as hundreds of student respondents who made this report possible.

I invite all stakeholders to make use of the report. Hope you find it helpful.

Let's find out the as-is situation and move forward from there.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to be "Arun Gupta", written over a dark background.



Arun Gupta

Founder & President
PINKISHE FOUNDATION



PROJECT CHIEF



Mrs. Pallavi Shrivastava
National Head PadBank
Pinkishe Foundation

GRATITUDE

Pinkishe Foundation thanks the following organizations for supporting in this important endeavour through their students.

- Amity University, Noida
- Indraprastha College for women, New Delhi
- Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi
- Society of Menstrual Disorders and Hygiene Management



STUDENT COORDINATOR



Dr. Sudipa Chauhan
Amity University

THOSE WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE

THE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS TEAM

Pinkishe Foundation wholeheartedly appreciates the wonderful effort put in by this awesome group of students. We are particularly pleased by the in-depth analysis, taking into account intricate relationships between different parameters, that the team carried out.



SECTION 1

ABOUT THE SURVEY



SURVEY BACKGROUND

- Survey was conducted to develop insights about the status of menstrual hygiene management and availability of support in urban schools of the country.
- Purpose of the survey was to also determine the extent to which good menstrual hygiene practices are followed by the urban girls, the level of Menstrual Hygiene Education amongst them and the issues faced by them.

SURVEY OBJECTIVE

- To determine if Pinkishe's Sakhi program should include urban schools also in its scope or just focus on the rural and semi urban schools.
- To determine the extent to which comprehensive education and support intervention is required in the urban schools.



409

CITIES



1229

SCHOOLS



2282

GIRLS

Surveyors

51

Survey
Duration

20

DAYS

Survey
Period

2020

AUG-
SEP

NUMBER OF
QUESTIONS

26

Survey
Mode

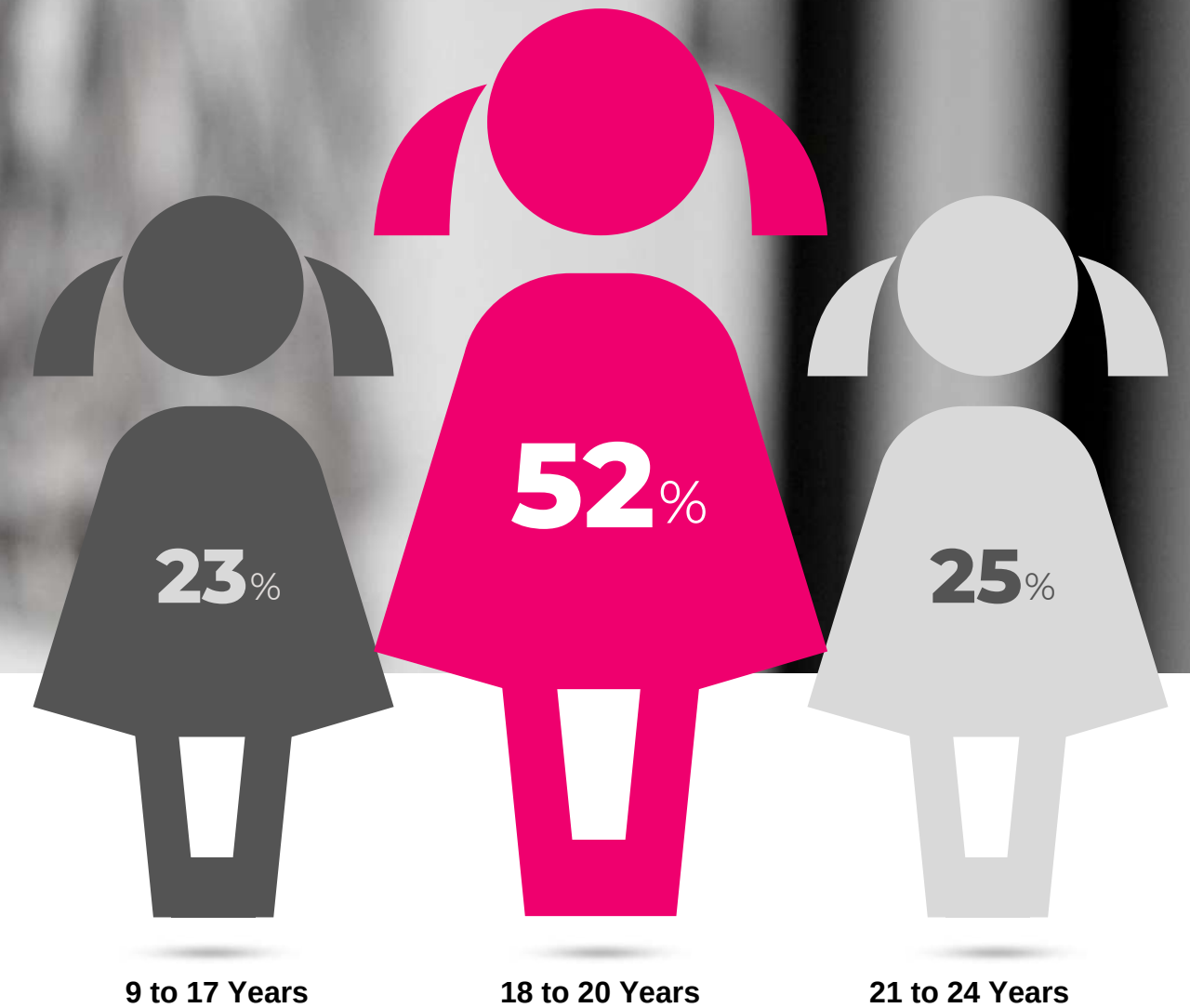
Online

SECTION 2

DEMOGRAPHY

AGE PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

77% of surveyed girls were in the age bracket of 18 to 24 years



The survey results might not represent the changes brought into the schools in the last 1-4 years

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

400⁺

cities covered across India

- All parts of the nation were well represented
- Maximum concentration was in **Delhi NCR and Kerala**

SCHOOL COVERAGE



1200⁺

Schools covered
across India



SCHOOLS WITH MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION

- Kerala School
- Delhi Public School
- Kendriya Vidyalaya
- Somerville School
- Apeejay
- DAV Public School
- St. Mary's School
- SKV
- Amity International
- Ryan International
- Hamdard Public
- B D M International
- Vidya Mandir Public School
- SS Mota Singh School
- Father Agnel school
- Lancer's Convent
- Queen Mary's School
- GD Goenka Public School
- Holy Child School
- Ahlcon International
- SS children academy
- Mount Carmel
- ASN Senior Secondary
- Venkateswara Intl'
- St. Francis De Sales
- Rukmini Devi Public
- Modern Convent
- Salwan Public School
- Little Flower H.S.
- K.V.B.H.U
- Guru Nanak Public
- Amrita Vidyalayam
- Cambridge School
- St Mary's Convent
- St.Mary's Public School,
- Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya
- St Marks Sr Sec school
- Lovely Public School
- New Green Field School
- Guru Harikrishan Public School
- Gobindgarh public school
- Assembly of God Church School

SECTION 3

SURVEY FINDINGS



SET 1

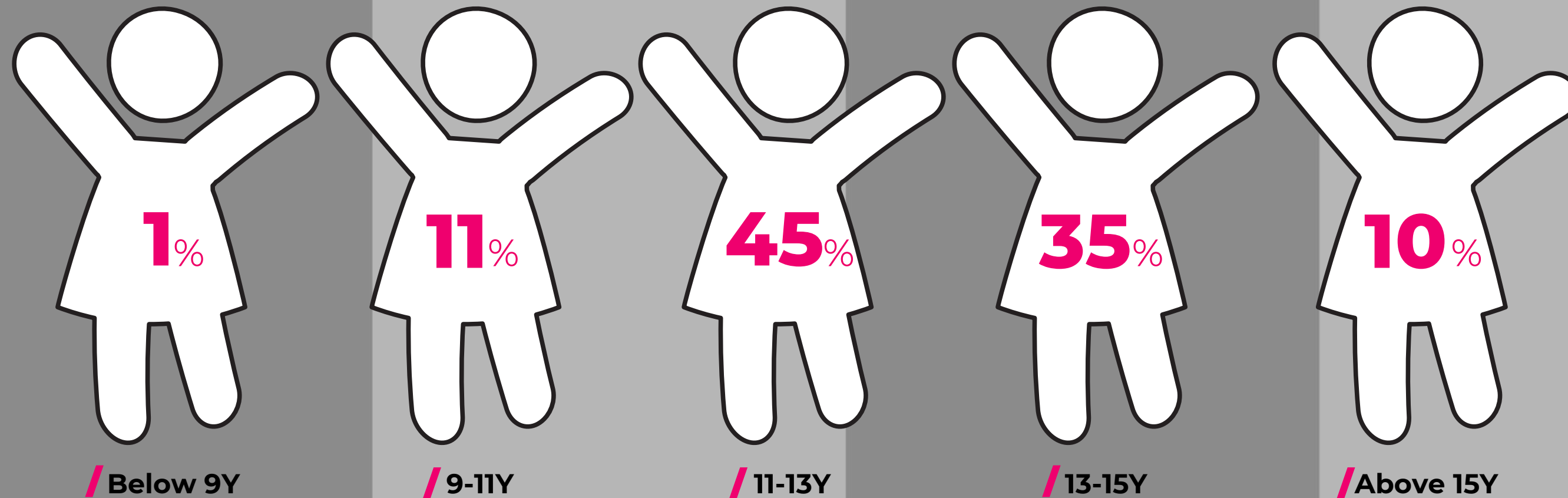
SOME GENERIC FINDINGS

We asked questions to find out about some generic trends.

AGE OF MENARCHE

GENERIC FINDINGS

Q: AT WHAT AGE DID YOU GET YOUR FIRST PERIOD?



12.75 YEARS
is the mean age of Menarche

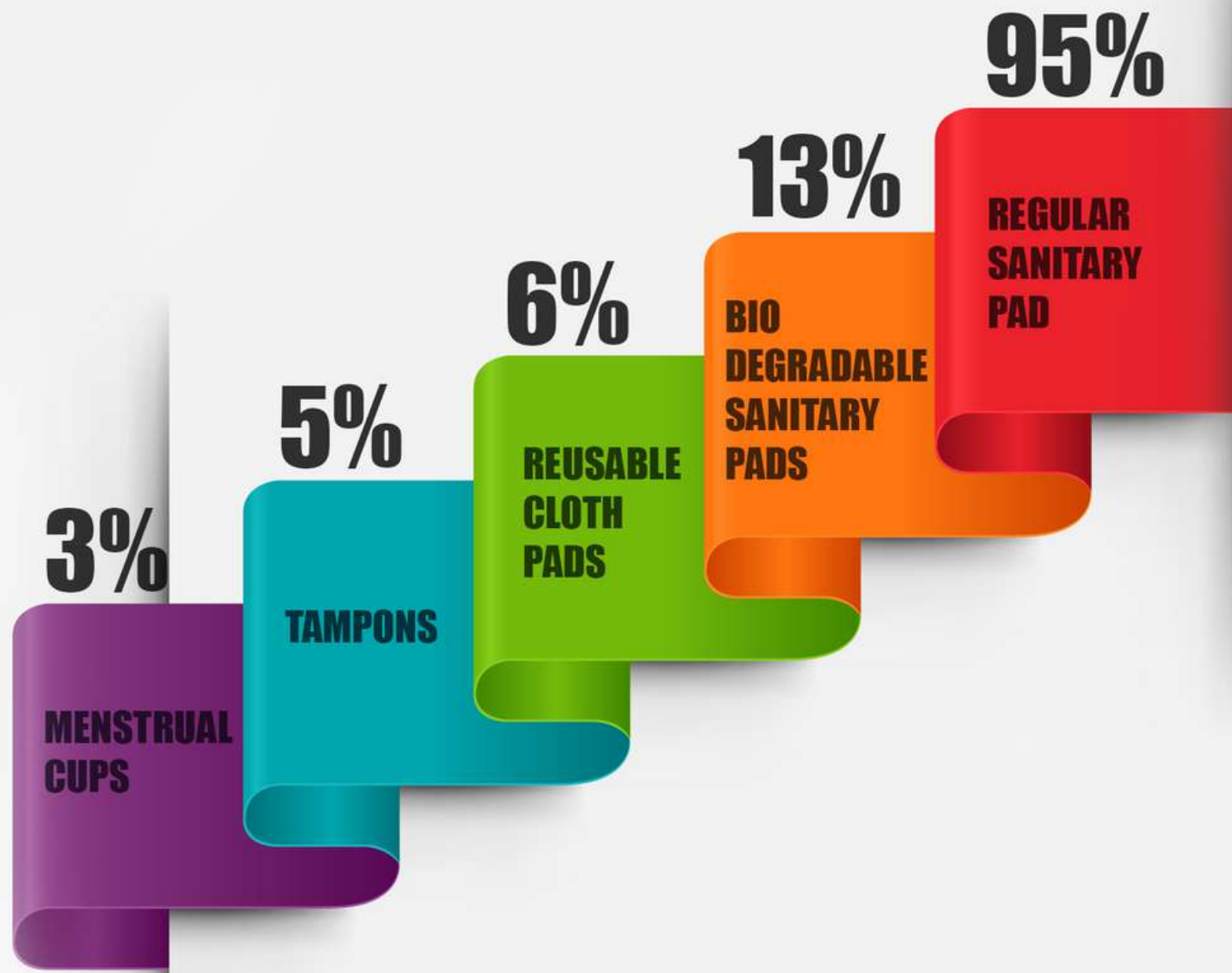
- The Mean age of menarche is in **sync** with most of the recent studies

- When compared with the reports published over last decades, the **Mean age of Menarche has reduced and the spread widened**

MENSTRUAL ABSORBENTS TRIED

GENERIC FINDINGS

Q: WHAT TYPE OF MENSTRUAL ABSORBENTS HAVE YOU EVER USED?



"Won't I lose my virginity?"; "I am a virgin, can I even insert these?" - many girls ask!

- More than **9 out of 10** girls have never tried options like menstrual cups and tampons

- Girls fear that inserting tampons or menstrual cups can **damage their hymen**

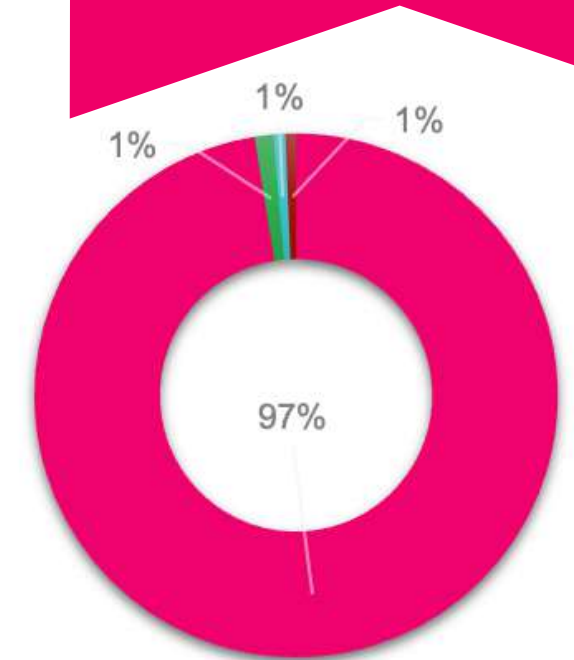
MENSTRUAL ABSORBENTS USED

Q: WHICH MENSTRUAL ABSORBENTS DO YOU GENERALLY USE?

GENERIC FINDINGS

97%

Girls use Sanitary Pads as preferred Menstrual Absorbent Option



■ Regular Sanitary pads ■ Menstrual Cup
■ Tampon ■ Reusable Cloth Pads

- It seems that a lot of girls **switch back** to regular disposable sanitary pads even after trying alternate options

- Reasons for the same may be discovered through **followup surveys**



SET 2

HYGIENE PRACTICES, KNOWHOW AND EFFECTS

We asked questions to determine the extent to which urban schoolgirls follow good Menstrual Hygiene practices and their knowledge levels.

PREMENARCHE AWARENESS

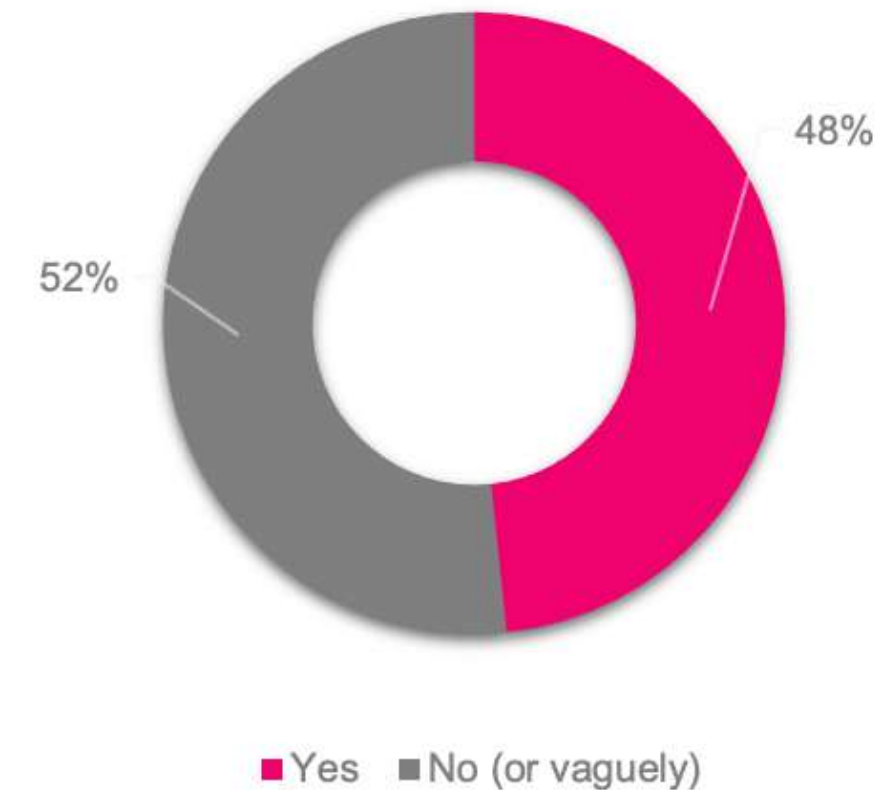
Q: DID YOU KNOW WHAT PERIODS ARE BEFORE YOU GOT YOURS FIRST?

**HYGIENE
PRACTICES &
KNOWHOW**



52%

**Urban Girls did
not know about
periods until
their first one**



- One out of every two girls DO NOT get even basic education on menstruation leaving them exposed to **risk** of shock and embarrassment

- In many cases girls acquire very basic or vague information only leaving them **fearful and confused**

KNOWLEDGE LEVELS

Q: DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE ENOUGH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MENSTRUATION AND PERSONAL HYGIENE YOU NEED TO MAINTAIN DURING YOUR PERIODS?

**HYGIENE
PRACTICES &
KNOWHOW**

54%
said NO!

- More than half the urban girls think they **DON'T have sufficient knowledge** on menstruation and personal hygiene

CHANGING SOILED MENSTRUAL PADS

**HYGIENE
PRACTICES &
KNOWHOW**

Q: IN HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU CHANGE YOUR SANITARY PADS?

Less than 6 hours

68%



More than 6 hours

32%

- 1 out of 3 urban girls reported using sanitary pads for **unsafe length of periods**

- **Education** related to good Menstrual Hygiene best practices is needed even in the urban areas

MEDICAL ISSUES FACED

Q: HAVE YOU FACED ANY MEDICAL ISSUES LIKE RASHES, ITCHING, FUNGAL INFECTIONS, REPRODUCTIVE TRACT INFECTION BECAUSE OF IMPROPER MENSTRUAL HYGIENE?

**HYGIENE
PRACTICES &
KNOWHOW**

56%
said YES!

- More than half the girls report that they faced **medical issues** due to poor menstrual hygiene



SET 3

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE & READINESS

We asked questions to determine what experiences girls go through and their comfort levels with menstruation

FIRST PERIOD EXPERIENCE

**SOCIAL
ACCEPTANCE
& READINESS**

Q: DID THE FIRST PERIOD CAUSE YOU ANY KIND OF EMBARRASSMENT?



YES!

**28% Felt embarrassed on
getting the first period**

- More than 1 out of every 4 girls reported **embarrassment** on getting the first period.
- They suffered the mental trauma of feeling **uneasy and vulnerable** on getting their first period.

pinkish

FACING TABOOS & RESTRICTIONS

**SOCIAL
ACCEPTANCE
& READINESS**

Q: DID YOU EVER FACE ANY SOCIAL TABOOS OR DISCRIMINATION AT YOUR HOME ON ACCOUNT OF MENSTRUATION?

44%
said Yes !

- Social taboos and restrictions are **quite prevalent** in urban areas too.

- Almost half the girls face **taboos and social stigmas** associated with Menstruation.

COMFORT WITH MALES

**SOCIAL
ACCEPTANCE
& READINESS**

Q: WERE YOU COMFORTABLE REVEALING TO MALE FRIENDS ABOUT YOUR PERIODS?

NO!

68% Felt uneasy amongst
male friends and were
not ready to share their
period status



- 2 out of 3 urban girls are **not comfortable** revealing to their male friends about their periods

- Girls strongly expressed **anger** about boys being excluded from being trained on Menstrual Hygiene

MALES UNDERSTANDING

**SOCIAL
ACCEPTANCE
& READINESS**

Q: DID YOU HAVE TO FACE JOKES BY YOUR MALE SCHOOLMATES ABOUT PERIODS?



YES!

20% had to!

- 1 out of 5 urban girls are laughed upon or be **ashamed** on facing jokes by their fellow male friends when they are on their periods.

SUPPORT FROM MALES IN THE FAMILY

**SOCIAL
ACCEPTANCE
& READINESS**

Q: ARE YOU COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING PERIODS WITH YOUR FATHER OR BROTHER?



No!

59% are not!

- Majority of the urban girls are **uncomfortable** discussing periods with males at their home.
- The **male members** of their homes need to **create a comfortable enviroment** and enourage them to discuss periods.



SET 4

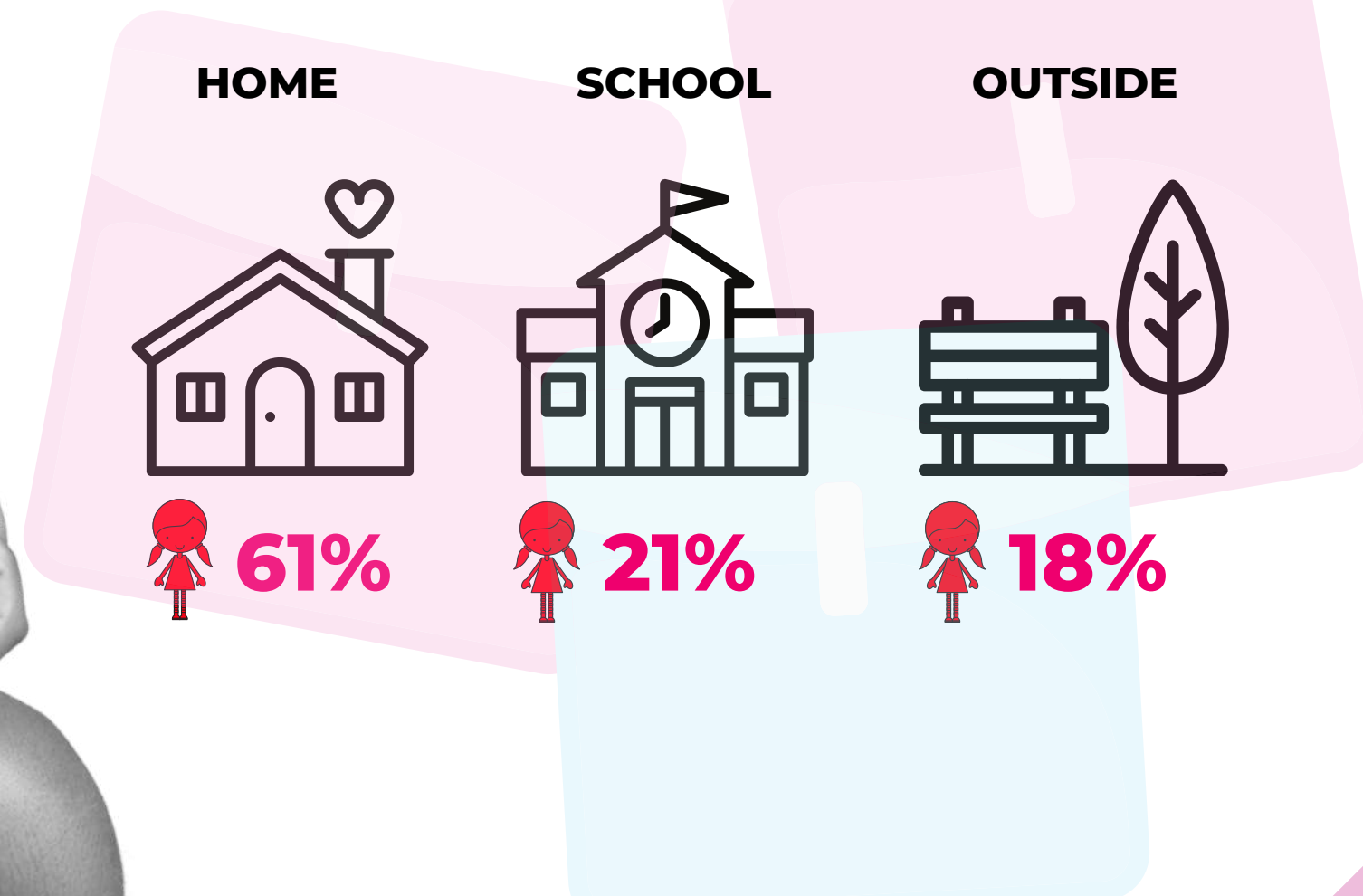
ROLE OF SCHOOL

We asked questions to determine the extent to which schools are playing their role in MHM

FIRST PERIOD

ROLE OF SCHOOL

Q: WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR FIRST PERIOD?

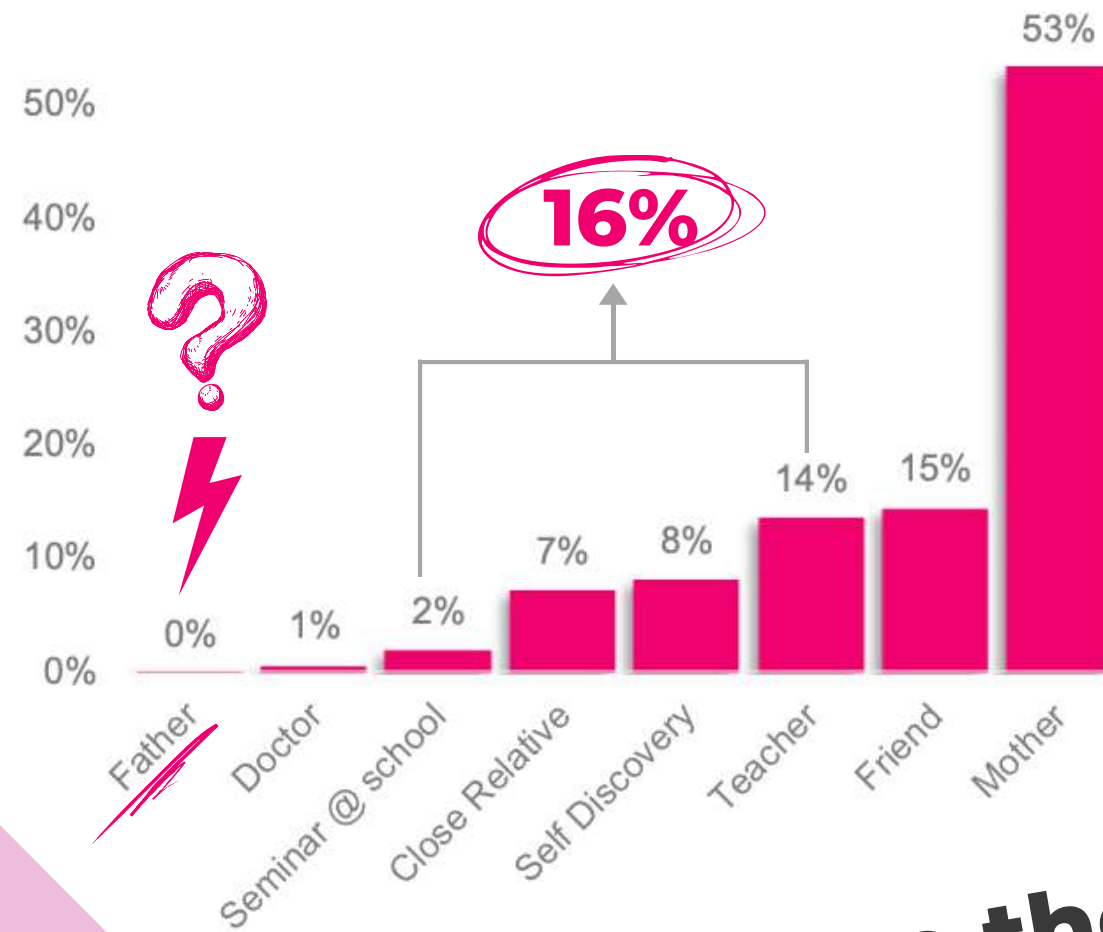


- **2 out of 5 urban girls** are at vulnerable to getting their first periods **outside the comforts of their homes**
- **1 out of every 5** urban girls get their **first periods in their schools**
- Schools must have **adequate facilities and support systems** to take care of such girls

SOURCE OF LEARNING

ROLE OF SCHOOL

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST SOURCE(S) OF LEARNING ABOUT MENSTRUATION?



Schools do not have substantial contribution yet!

Where are the Fathers?



- More than half the urban girls still depend on their **mothers** for period education
- **School intervention is quite minimal** in providing timely education on menstruation
- Father's are **practically absent** from their role of supporting their daughter's transformation to adolescence

PERIOD PREPARDNESS

ROLE OF SCHOOL

Q: DID YOU EVER GET INTO A SITUATION IN YOUR SCHOOL WHEN YOU DID NOT HAVE A SANITARY PAD AND GOT PERIODS UNEXPECTEDLY WHICH WORRIED YOU?

73%

said Yes !



- 3 out of 4 urban girls reported being in situations at school where they **unexpectedly had periods** and did not have sanitary pads which worried them

- Schools must have **support infrastructure** to help in such situations

SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE @ SCHOOLS

ROLE OF
SCHOOL

Q: DID YOU HAVE A DEDICATED TEACHER OR DOCTOR STATIONED IN YOUR SCHOOL WHOM YOU COULD GO TO SEEK HELP IN CASE YOU GOT PERIODS UNEXPECTEDLY?



27%

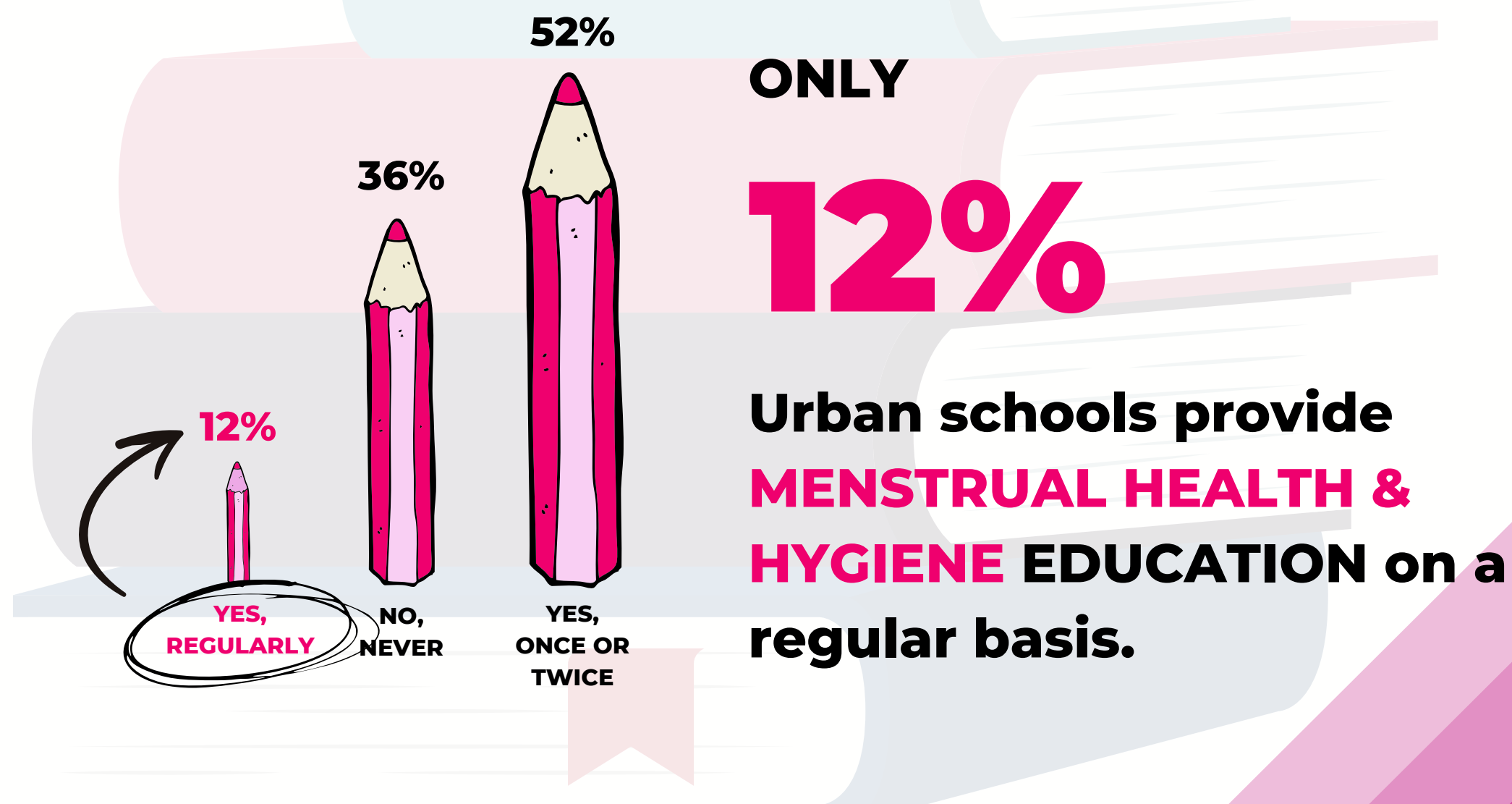
Urban schools
provide **NO** dedicated
support to girls during
period emergencies

- Schools **must provide** this very basic and essential support
- Schools can connect with leading NGOs to **take guidance & support**

PROVIDING MENSTRUATION EDUCATION

ROLE OF SCHOOL

Q: DID YOUR SCHOOL PROVIDE MH EDUCATION ON A REGULAR BASIS?



- **36%** of the urban schools **DO NOT** provide any MH Education

- Schools must take initiative to **make students aware about menstrual hygiene.**

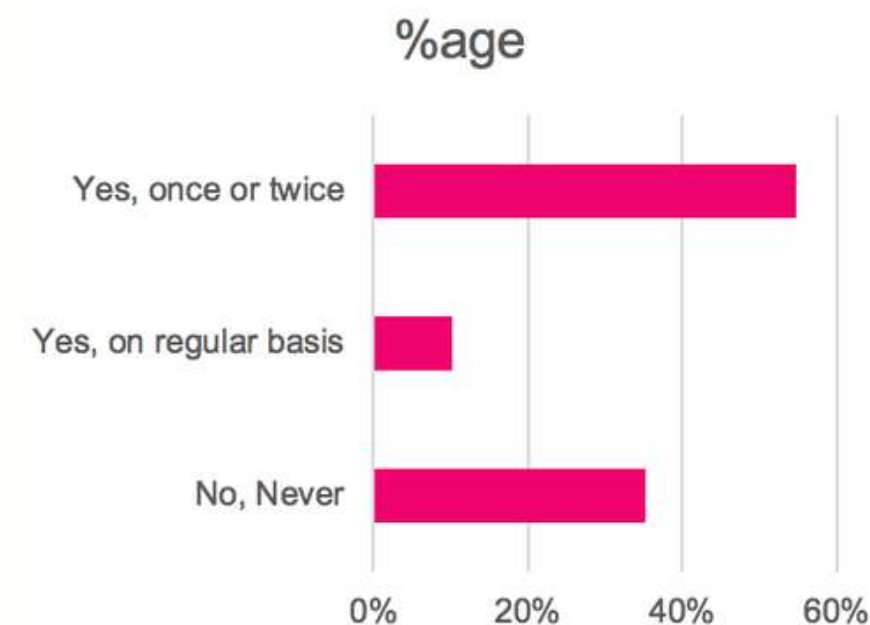
TAKING SUPPORT OF NGOs

ROLE OF SCHOOL

Q: DID ANY NGO/ORGANIZATION COME TO YOUR SCHOOL FOR MH TRAINING?

1 in 3

urban schools do not utilize the services of an NGO or other expert organization for MHE



- Only **12 percent** urban schools use NGO services to prove MHE training on regular basis.

- Schools must either themselves take sessions or take outside help to **make students aware about menstrual hygiene.**

PAD VENDING MACHINES @ SCHOOLS

ROLE OF
SCHOOL

Q: DID YOU HAVE A PAD VENDING MACHINE INSTALLED IN YOUR SCHOOL?

25%
said Yes !

but only **50%**
are operational & reliable

- 1 out of 4 urban schools have shown **wonderful initiative** to install Sanitary Pad Vending Machines in their toilets

- But only **50% of the installed capacity** is reported to be reliable and fully operational

SECTION 4

ACTIONS REQUIRED

PROVIDE DEDICATED SUPPORT @ SCHOOL

**ACTION
NEEDED**

97%

asked for a dedicated teacher/group of senior girl students in schools to provide training and support to all girls during periods?

INTRODUCE DEDICATED STUDY MATERIAL

**ACTION
NEEDED**

82%

said that a dedicated book having all required information on menstruation for self-study to deal with periods will be very handy.

TIME TO ENGAGE BOYS

**ACTION
NEEDED**

TRAIN BOYS TOO

came out as one of the most
overwhelming demands by the girls
who participated in the survey

ENQUIRIES

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