



RANGEEN
KHIDKI

Project Period Adda

20th September, 2022

Gyan Bharati Balika Vidyalaya



Rangeen Khidki Foundation conducted its Period Adda Program in **Gyan Bharati Balika Vidyalaya** on the **20th of September, 2022** with **71 adolescent school girls** of **8th and 9th standard** in Kolkata, West Bengal.

The session was conducted in a classroom within the school premises. Among the total number of students, few students (3-4 students) were yet to start their menstruation for the first time. Nonetheless, all of the students present were equally excited to attend the session. As the session progressed the students overcoming the initial reluctance were able to identify the physical changes that they have noticed or experienced while growing up. Some of the students who did not start their menstruation confessed excretion of white discharge, hence the facilitators ensured to equip them with factual information so they are able to understand the changes and adopt healthy hygiene management. Some students seemed curious to understand what 'healthy period' means and how one can track the next period.



With the aid of calendar activity, the facilitators explained the process of menstrual cycle that ranges anywhere from 25-35 days and differs for every menstruator. However, the students seemed lost to the concepts of female anatomy and the number of openings in female bodies. The facilitators ensured to clarify the most frequently asked questions pertaining to abdominal cramps experienced during monthly cycles, irregularity of periods and inform them about the menstruation process and the bodily reactions that one experiences during the course. Efforts were taken to ensure the students also become aware to identify abnormal symptoms in terms of excessive bleeding, unbearable abdominal cramps, irregular periods with long gaps etc and seek medical help when deemed important.



As the discussions veered towards rules or restrictions followed by students during their periods began, majority of the students shared not touching anything sacred or not entering temples as the most prominent norm followed by them as well as by other female members in their family during periods. Apart from the widely practised restrictions or period norms followed by the students, some students also expressed not sleeping on beds during periods, not entering the kitchen, not touching new clothes and even not touching the almirah. These stringent exclusionary norms continue to plague the lives of these young students as they are made to follow these restrictions within a family setting under rigorous scrutiny of elder family members who believe. Due to the embeddedness of notions of pure and profane, some students expressed that they feel uncomfortable in case they do not follow or skip any of the restrictions which they have internalised so far due to cultural or religious influence.

A group of schoolgirls in a classroom, wearing blue and white striped uniforms, are holding up packets of sanitary pads. They are sitting at wooden desks, and the background is a plain wall. The girls are smiling and looking towards the camera.

As stated by a student of 7th standard:

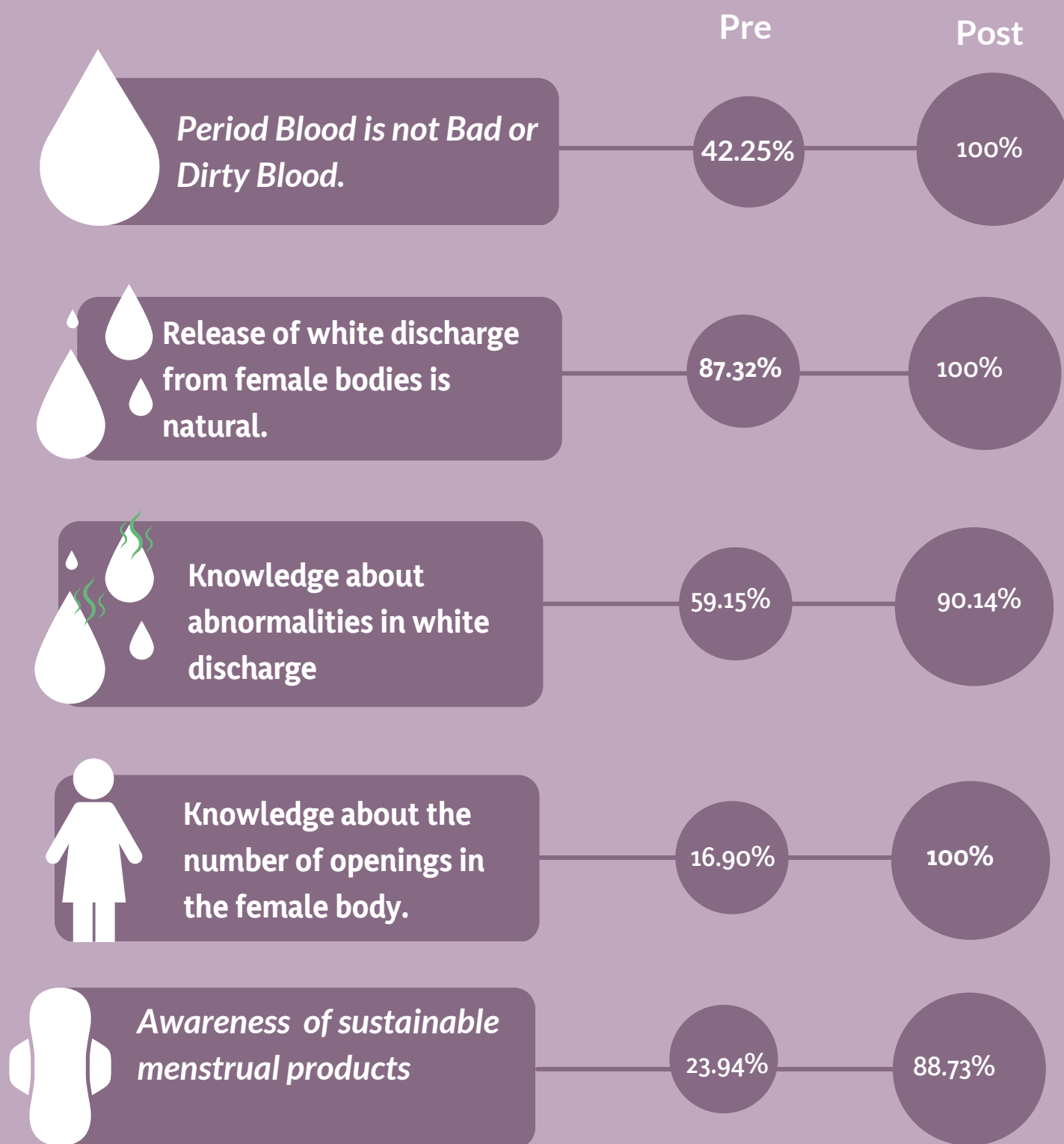
“I learned them from my mother. Sometimes I follow as I feel uncomfortable. Other times I had to follow even when I don't believe in them”.

Further, the lack of discussion on menstruation and shadowing the topic as impure or female problem increases the chances of consumption of unscientific and biased information from online streaming services like youtube and the internet.

A significant knowledge shift was recorded especially regarding the number of openings in a female body, the abnormalities of white discharge and knowledge about alternative menstrual products apart from sanitary napkins available in the market. After the conclusion of the session, the Eco Femme kits were distributed among students who opted for the kits. 56 students opted for the Eco Femme kits.



OVERALL OUTPUT OF THE TRAINING



REFLECTIONS

“We gained more knowledge about periods. We now know about menstrual cups and tampons. And also came to know about cloth pads we can use apart from menstrual cups and tampons. We also came to know why we experience stomach pain during periods”

“We have got to know about a lot of information regarding periods. We have learned to use pads or menstrual cups or tampons for only 4-6 hours. We have also learned how and why periods occur”



“First of all thank you to the teachers / instructors who have explained to us very nicely and politely about the process of periods- how it occurs, what is the exact age of having periods. From this session we came to know about new products in the market as well as their costs. We are now aware of what precaution should be taken and how to maintain nutrition level in our body”

“I liked the session and also came to know that periods is a normal body process”

