

Awareness, Acceptance, and Usage of Menstrual Cup Among Women in Jaipur District

Ms. Yamini Shekhawat

Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, IIS (Deemed to be University), Jaipur.

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: A menstrual cup represents an innovative choice in contrast to sanitary napkins, providing a favourable, secure, hygienic, environmentally-friendly, and cost-effective option for feminine hygiene needs. Menstrual cups are changing the way women experience and manage their periods by embracing the concepts of comfort, affordability, and environmental awareness. Therefore, the current study aimed to assess the awareness, acceptance, and usage of menstrual cups among women in the Jaipur district.

METHODS: This descriptive study centered on women aged between 18 and above 45 years who voluntarily participated. Convenience sampling was utilized for participant selection, and data collection occurred through an online questionnaire covering demographic information (age, education level, occupation), participants' understanding of menstrual cups, and their acceptance and usage of them. Our investigation encompassed frequency analysis, content analysis, and qualitative data analysis techniques. Through analysing the data, extracting insights, and making inferences using graphical representations, we gained a comprehensive understanding of the qualitative characteristics of the data.

RESULTS: Among 103 respondents, 38.8% reported having a neutral experience with using a menstrual cup. 29% indicated they were likely to recommend it, while 25.2% reported being very likely to do so. Conversely, 6.8% of participants reported an unlikely experience, while 1.9% had a very unlikely experience with using a menstrual cup.

CONCLUSION: The purpose of the study was to assess the understanding, acceptance, and usage of menstrual cups among women in the Jaipur district. A total of 103 participants took part in the study, and the findings indicated that the respondents exhibited a high level of awareness and knowledge regarding menstrual cups. Although a minority had negative experiences, the majority had a positive perception and preferred Menstrual cups. The study underscored the significance of awareness-raising and educational initiatives aimed at promoting menstrual cups as a practical and environmentally friendly substitute to disposable menstrual products. Such programs are essential for enhancing the acceptance and adoption of menstrual cups among women.

Keywords: Menstrual hygiene, Menstrual Cup, Awareness, Acceptance, Reproductive age.

INTRODUCTION

Every month, millions of women undergo the natural biological process of menstruation. It marks an important turning point in teenage females' growth and maturity. In their lives, the majority of women have 480–500 menstrual cycles. The fact that each menstruator will use and discard between 5000 and 15,000 pads and tampons in their lifetime underscores the seriousness of this issue. Tampons and

disposable sanitary products are favoured by menstruators, but they contribute significantly to waste generation as they are often flushed down toilets or disposed of as solid waste, both of which pose environmental concerns. Menstrual cups are a viable alternative for women who seek unconventional products, which is made up of medical silicone rubber and is inserted into the vagina to collect menstrual blood.

A Menstrual Cup is an innovative substitute to sanitary napkins, designed as a feminine hygiene product. Usually, materials like elastomer, latex, rubber, or medical-grade silicone are used to make it. The cup is designed with a stem that makes it easy to insert and remove, and it has a bell-like shape. This shape allows it to securely seal on the walls of the vagina below the cervix. During menstruation, the cup is worn inside the vagina and folded into a C shape, allowing it to collect menstrual fluid. The cup needs to be emptied around every 6 to 12 hours, tailored to the user's flow. Once removed, it should be emptied into a toilet or sink, followed by a rinse under running water, before being reinserted. At the menstrual cycle's end, sterilization of the cup is recommended, typically achieved by boiling it in water. An outstanding benefit of menstrual cups is their ability to be reused, boasting a longevity of up to 10 years. In a world governed by the certainty of change, adapting can seem straightforward. However, when it comes to evolving consumer preferences, especially within the realm of menstrual hygiene products, the transition towards new trends and products often unfolds at a slower pace. Menstrual cup was initially developed in the 1930s and is now sold all over the world as an eco-friendly and cost-effective method to period care but because of lack of awareness and issues like ignorance and unwarranted reluctance to explore new things are hindering people from having novel experiences. Initially patented in the USA, menstrual cups have since gained global popularity, with nearly 100 brands now offering this product worldwide.

There is a scarcity of information regarding the feasibility and safety of menstrual cups among reproductive women in India. Consequently, many people hold misconceptions, such as the belief that using a cup may cause unmarried women to lose their virginity, surrounding leakage, painful insertion and removal, and discomfort persist due to the lack of awareness among women. Even individuals with advanced education levels often possess limited knowledge about menstrual cups, largely because of insufficient advertising and the enduring prevalence of sanitary pads. Hence, the objective of this present study was to evaluate the awareness, acceptance, and usage of menstrual cups amongst women in the Jaipur district.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Ballal, S., & Bhandary, A. (2020). The research study encompassed 300 women of reproductive age (15 to 45 years) who were studying and working at A. J. Institute of Medical Science Hospital in Mangalore. The primary focus of the study was to evaluate and analyse the level of awareness concerning menstrual cups. The results indicated that among the study population, 82% were aware of menstrual cups, yet only 2.67% reported using them. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize increasing awareness about the utilization of menstrual cups and implementing counselling programs that emphasize good sanitary hygiene habits for females.

Abraham, R., Rajan, M. P., & John, A. (2023) in their research study they demonstrate that the majority of college students were familiar with the concept of menstrual cups. However, their understanding of the various aspects and specific details related to using menstrual cups was insufficient. The paper also indicated that because of prevalent misconceptions surrounding menstrual cup usage, the majority of

college students expressed reluctance to use it in the future. These misconceptions include the false belief that inserting a menstrual cup is painful, that it frequently causes leakage, and that backup protection is necessary.

Meghana, S., & Gomathy, E. (2021) The research study engaged 120 participants aged between 18 and 45, concentrating on evaluating the perceptions, beliefs, and behaviours regarding menstrual cups among women of reproductive age residing in rural regions. The results unveiled that 80% of the participants were familiar with menstrual cup usage. However, the acceptance of menstrual cups remained low due to concerns regarding potential leakage, discomfort, limited knowledge, and allergies. Importantly, the study indicated that a majority of participants expressed a willingness to use menstrual cups if they were made readily available.

Eti, M., Shreya, M. S., & Sailakshmi, M. P. A. (2019) A research study was carried out among undergraduate medical students (N=372) from Raja Rajeswari Medical College and Hospital to gauge their knowledge about menstrual cups. The outcomes indicated that the students possessed a limited comprehension of the advantages of menstrual cups when compared to sanitary pads. Additionally, the students demonstrated a lack of comprehensive knowledge regarding the materials used in the manufacturing of menstrual cups, the recommended emptying time, and the appropriate sterilization methods. It is noteworthy that none of the students had prior experience using menstrual cups.

Sreedevi, C., Jayasree, A. K., Zachariah, S. M., Divyamol, N., & Deepak, K. S. (2022) The aim of this research study was to assess the perceived advantages and challenges faced by individuals who use menstrual cups as a method for managing menstrual hygiene. The study's results indicate a notable improvement in the ease of insertion and removal of the menstrual cup after the third use and onwards and reported various positive outcomes after adopting the use of menstrual cups, including improved appearance, increased work participation, economic benefits, enhanced health, and increased engagement in social activities.

Pokhrel, D., Bhattarai, S., Emgård, M., Von Schickfus, M., Forsberg, B. C., & Biermann, O. (2021) The research study entailed conducting four focus group discussions (FGDs) with a sample of 28 schoolwomen aged 13 to 19 years in Tokarpa, Sindupalchowk, Nepal. These women were furnished with vaginal menstrual cups as part of the study, which aimed to explore the acceptability and feasibility of using vaginal menstrual cups for managing menstrual hygiene. The results indicated that menstrual cups were considered both feasible and acceptable, offering practical, economic, and environmental advantages. Additionally, the participants highlighted that a significant benefit of using menstrual cups was the uninterrupted attendance of all school classes, without any disruptions related to menstrual hygiene management.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

Raising awareness about menstrual health is crucial, but improper sanitary napkin disposal exacerbates India's garbage crisis. With women using 5000-15,000 napkins in a lifetime, landfills could occupy 288 hectares. This waste harbours bacteria and contaminates the environment for 500-800 years, posing severe health risks due to chemical accumulation. Menstrual cups, offering reusability, affordability, and eco-friendliness, are a better choice. However, their limited popularity may stem from insufficient promotion, prevailing conservatism, and misconceptions about virginity loss in unmarried women.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The aim of the research is to explore the demographic profiles of participants, their knowledge and understanding of menstrual cups, and their adoption and utilization of menstrual cups among women in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Design: The research study is of a descriptive nature.

Sample Size: A sample size of **103** participants were included.

The inclusion criteria for this study consisted of women within the reproductive age range, specifically between 18 and Above 45 years, who were willing to participate. Conversely, the exclusion criteria comprised adolescent women who had not yet experienced their first menstrual cycle (pre-menarche) and women who had undergone surgical or physiological menopause.

Sampling Technique: A Convenience Sampling method was employed to examine women' awareness, acceptance, and usage of menstrual cups in the Jaipur region.

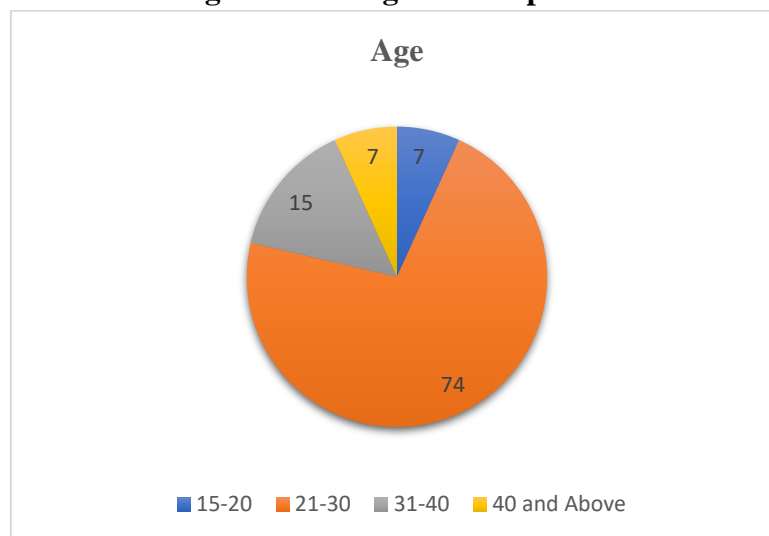
Collection of Data: In this study, data collection was conducted through both Primary and Secondary sources. Primary data was gathered using a self-structured questionnaire, while secondary data was obtained through an extensive review of literature from e-journals and articles.

Statistical Analysis: We used qualitative data analysis methods, content analysis, and frequency analysis in our methodology. Our study avoided hypothesis testing or statistical methods. Instead, we reviewed and analysed the data to identify patterns, themes, and frequencies. We used graphical representations to draw conclusions and extract insights from the data. This approach allowed us to gain deep insights into the qualitative aspects of the data without the need for statistical inference or hypothesis testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

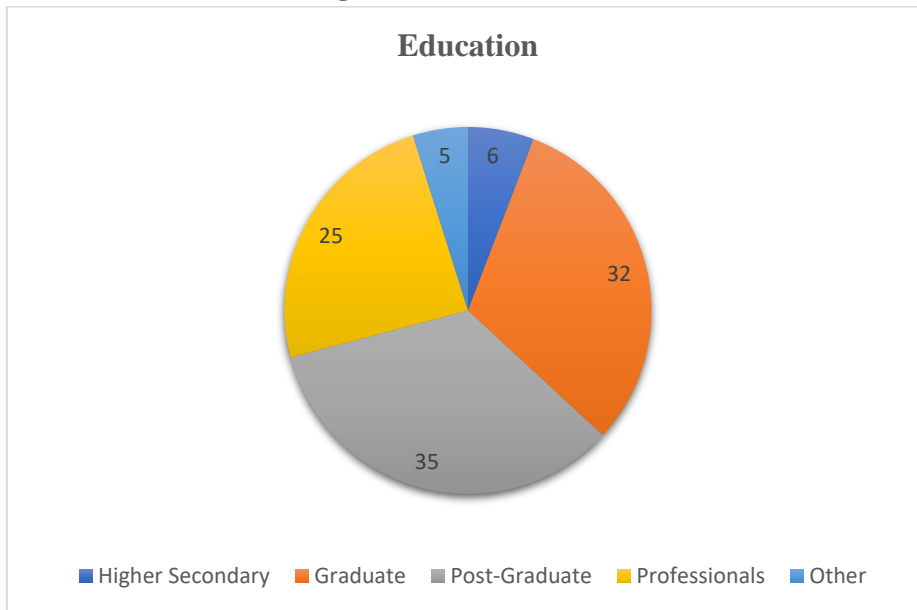
Table No. 1 – Demographic Variable- AGE

Figure no .1: Age 103 Responses



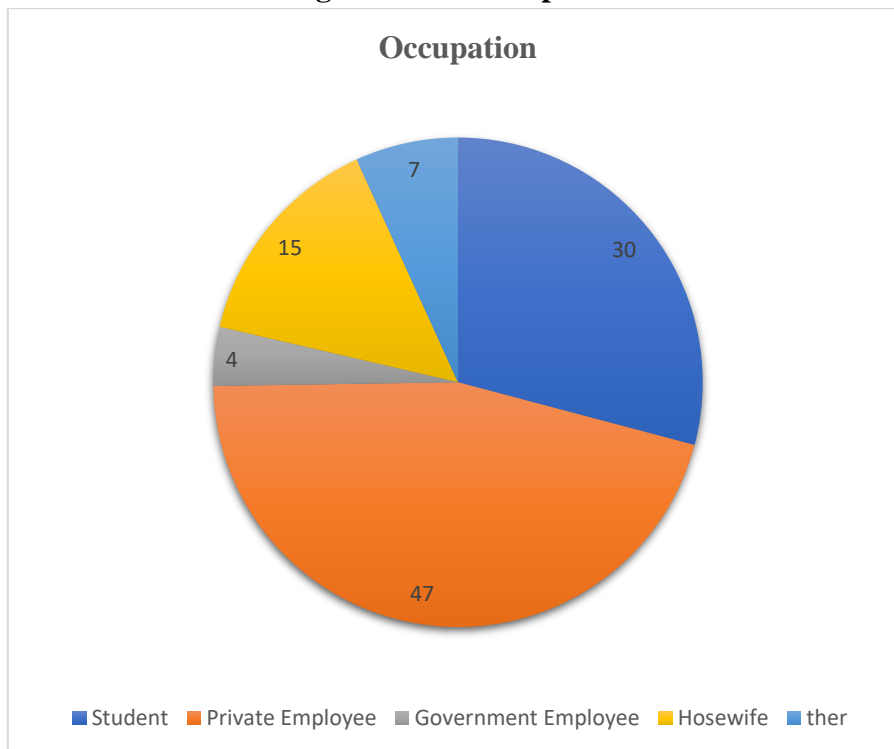
INTERPRETATION: Among 103 participants surveyed, 6.8% are aged between 15-20, 71.8% are aged between 21-30, 14.6% are aged between 31-40, and the remaining 6.8% belong to the age group of 40 and above.

Figure no .2: Education



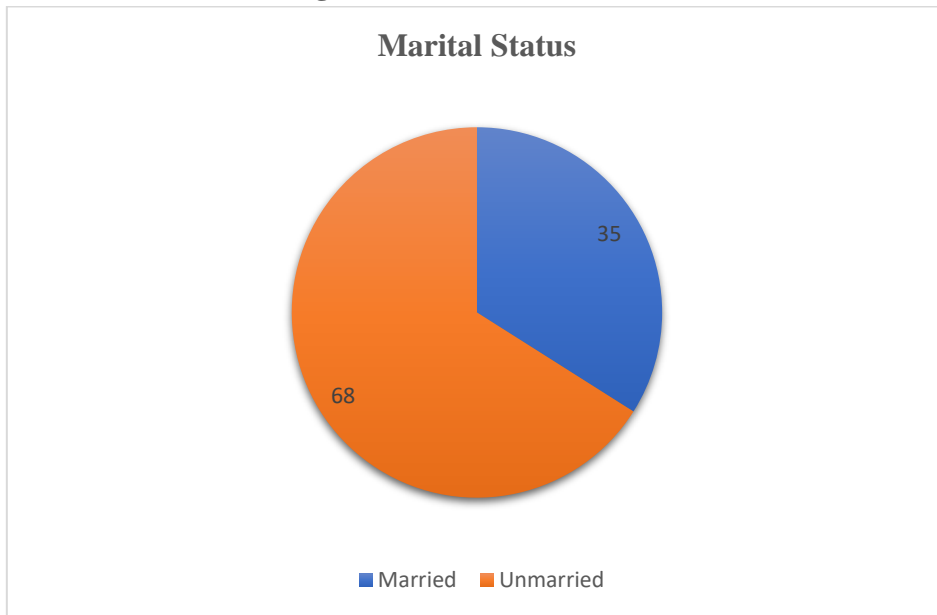
INTERPRETATION: Among the total respondents, 5.8% attained schooling qualifications, 31% obtained undergraduate degrees, 34% achieved post-graduate qualifications, 24.3% were professionals, and the remaining 5.5% were categorized as "other." Hence, the predominant group among the respondents were those with post-graduate qualifications.

Figure no .3: Occupation



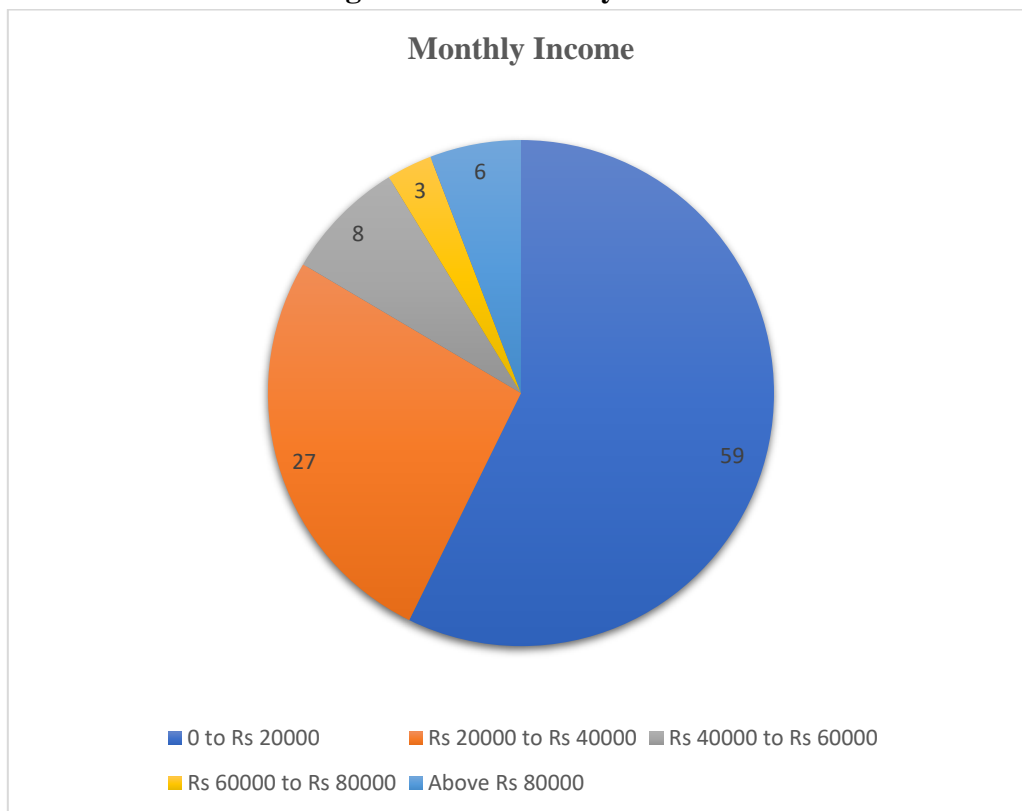
INTERPRETATION: Out of the total respondents, 29.1% are students, 45.6% are private employees, 3.9% are government employed, 14.6% are housewives, and 6.8% fall into the "other" category. Consequently, most of the participants are individuals employed in the private sector.

Figure no .4: Marital Status



INTERPRETATION: Out of the total 103 respondents, 66% are unmarried women, while the remaining 34% are married women.

Figure no .5: Monthly Income



INTERPRETATION: Out of the 103 respondents, 57.3% reported a monthly income of less than 20,000, while 26.2% stated an income ranging between 20,000 to 40,000. The remaining respondents fell into other income brackets.

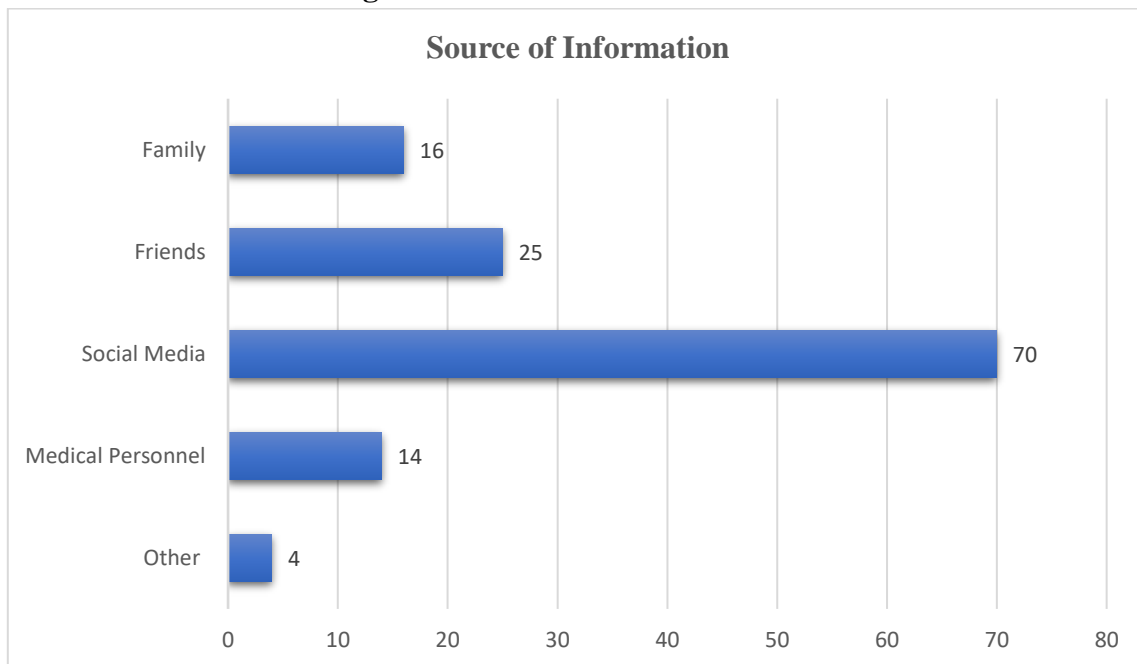
1. Awareness and Knowledge about Menstrual cups among women

Figure no .6: Knowledge about the Menstrual Cup



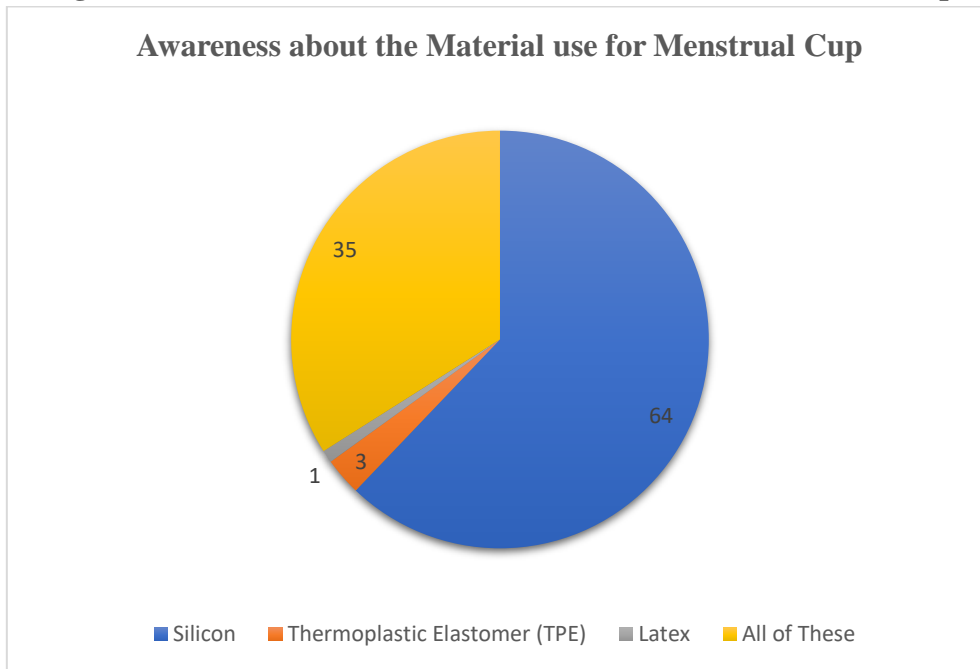
INTERPRETATION: Out of 103 respondents, an overwhelming majority, representing 99%, are knowledgeable about the menstrual cup, demonstrating a noteworthy awareness level for this hygiene product in the market.

Figure no .7: Source of Information



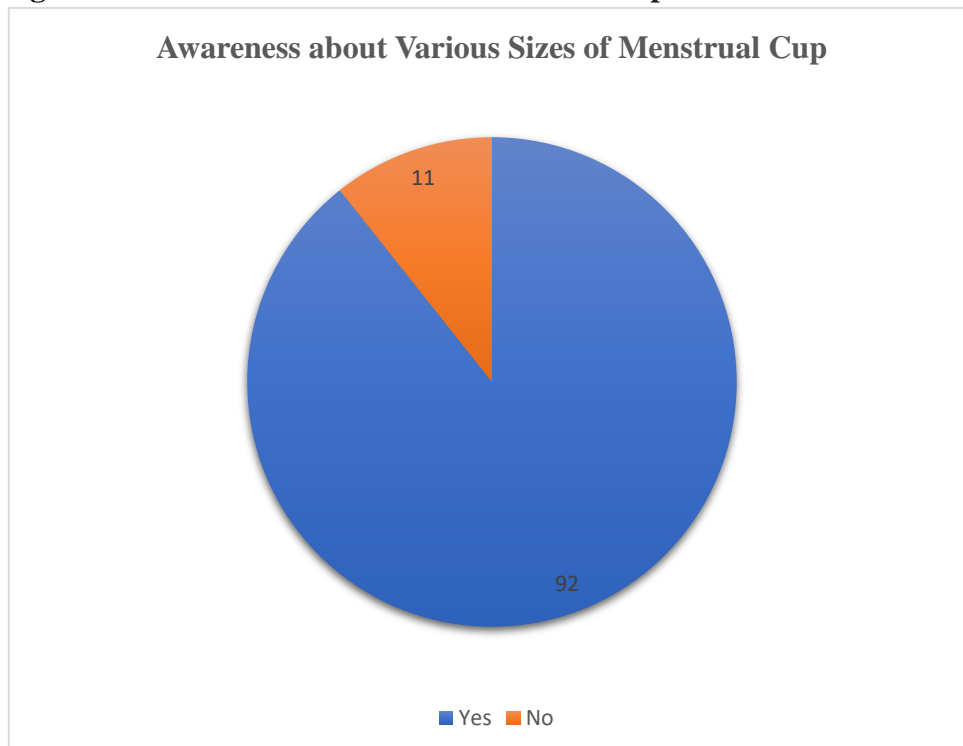
INTERPRETATION: According to the respondents, social media (68%) is the primary source through which women acquire knowledge about the menstrual cup, followed by friends, family, medical personnel, and other sources (see Fig. 7).

Figure no .8: Awareness about the Material use for Menstrual Cup



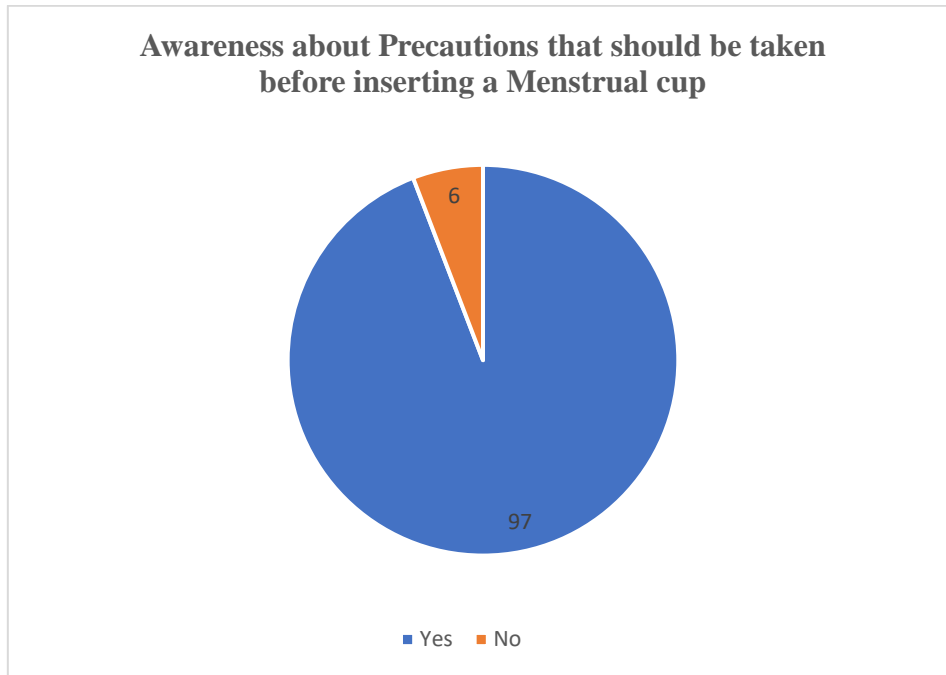
INTERPRETATION: A significant portion of respondents demonstrate awareness regarding the materials utilized in manufacturing menstrual cups, as illustrated in Figure 8. Silicone, Latex, and Thermoplastic Elastomer emerge prominently as common constituents of these cups.

Figure no .9: Awareness that the Menstrual Cups come in various sizes



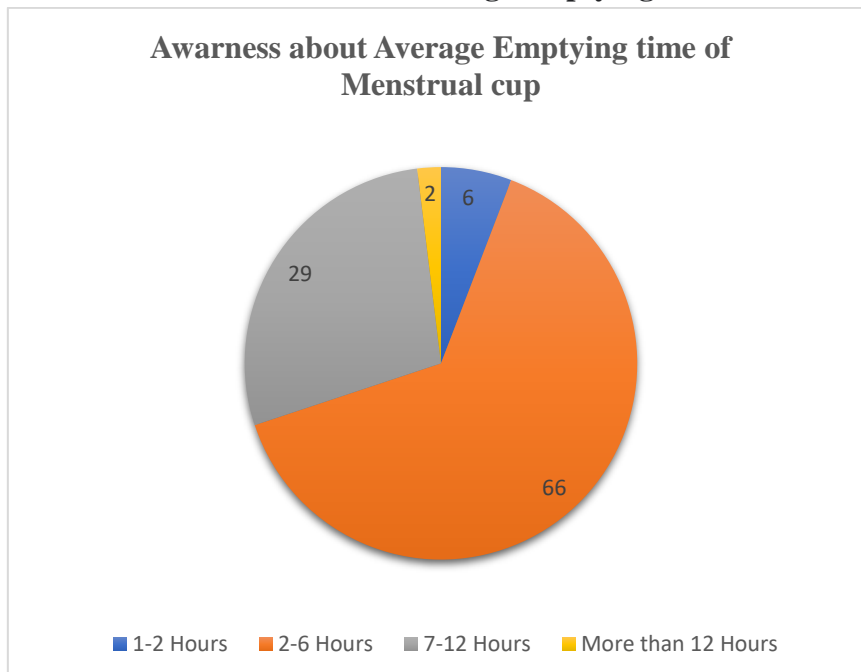
INTERPRETATION: Among the total respondents, 89.3% of women are aware that menstrual cups come in various sizes.

Figure no .10: Awareness about the precautions that should be taken before inserting a Menstrual cup



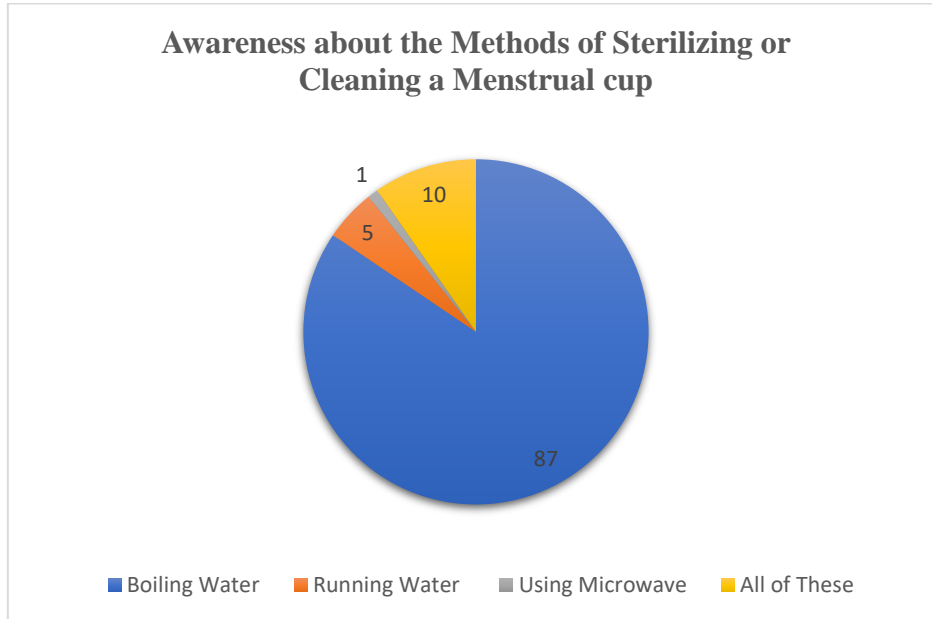
INTERPRETATION: 94.2% of women are aware that handwashing precautions must be taken before using the menstrual cup.

Figure no .11: Awareness about the average emptying time of Menstrual cup



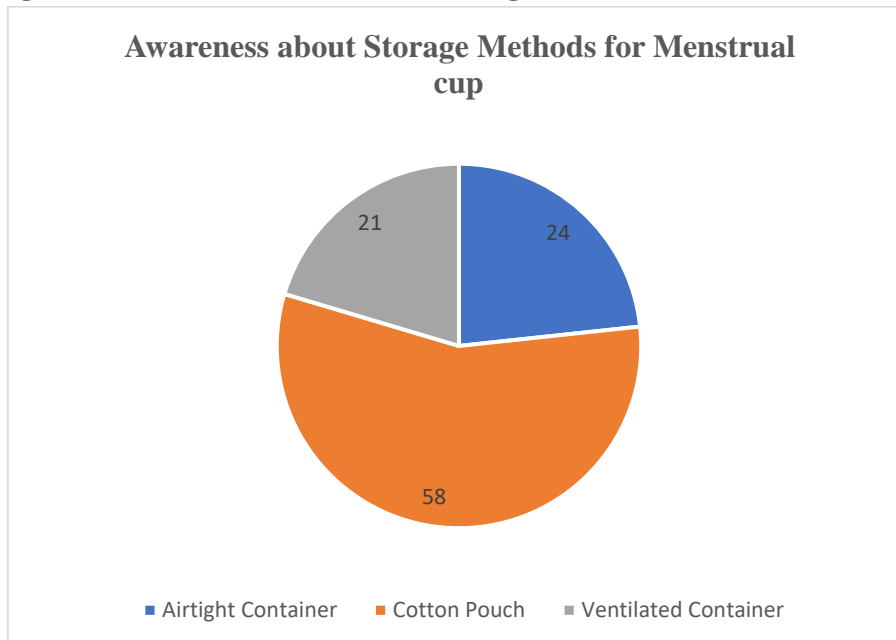
INTERPRETATION: Out of all the respondents, 64.1% are aware that a menstrual cup should be emptied every 2-6 hours on average. 28.2% know that it should be emptied between 7 and 12 hours, while 5.8% know that it should be emptied between 1 and 2 hours. The remaining respondents are aware that it should be emptied after more than 12 hours.

Figure no .12: Awareness about the Methods of Sterilizing or Cleaning a Menstrual cup



INTERPRETATION: According to the majority of respondents, boiling water is the preferred method for sterilizing or cleaning a menstrual cup, with 84.5% of recommendations. Additionally, 4.9% of women opt for running water as a proper cleaning method, while the remaining respondents utilize other methods as illustrated in the (figure 12).

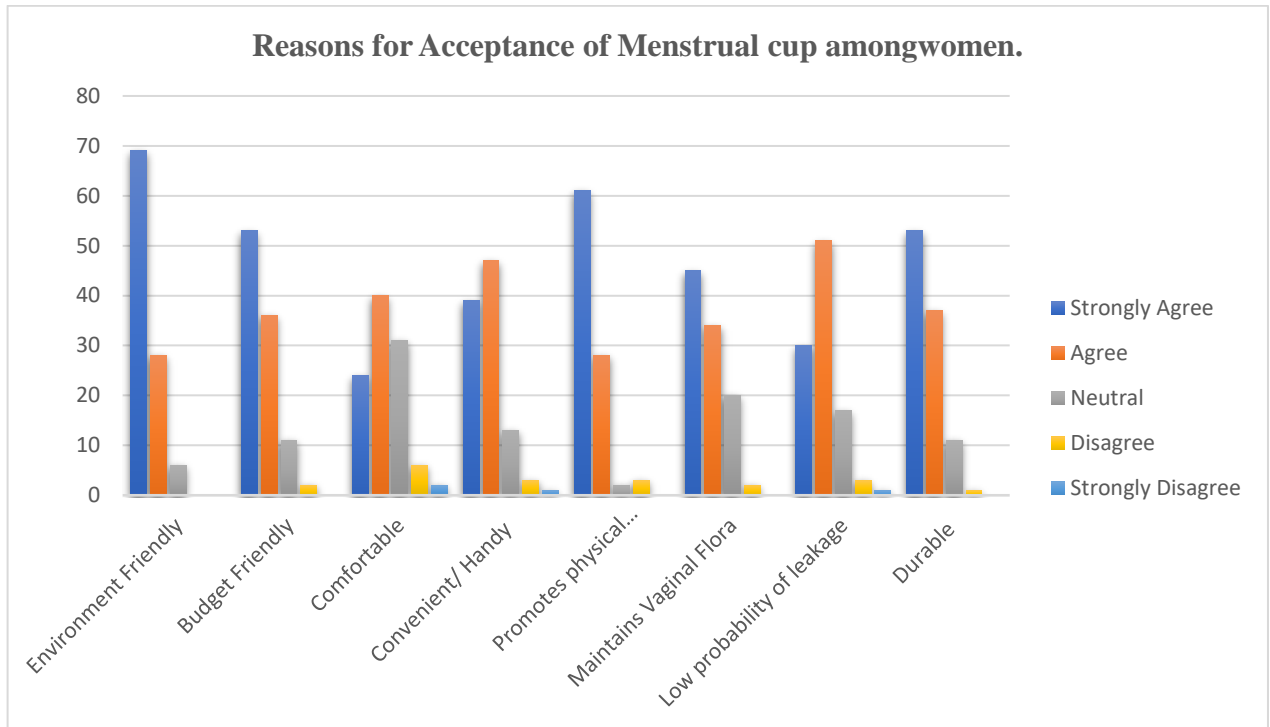
Figure no .13: Awareness about Storage Methods for Menstrual Cup



INTERPRETATION: According to the majority of respondents, the preferred method for storing a menstrual cup is a cotton pouch, with 56.3% of recommendations. Additionally, 23.3% of women opt for an airtight container as a proper method for storing the menstrual cup after usage, while the remaining respondents utilize other methods, such as a ventilated container, accounting for 20.4% of preferences.

2. Reasons for Acceptance of Menstrual cup among women.

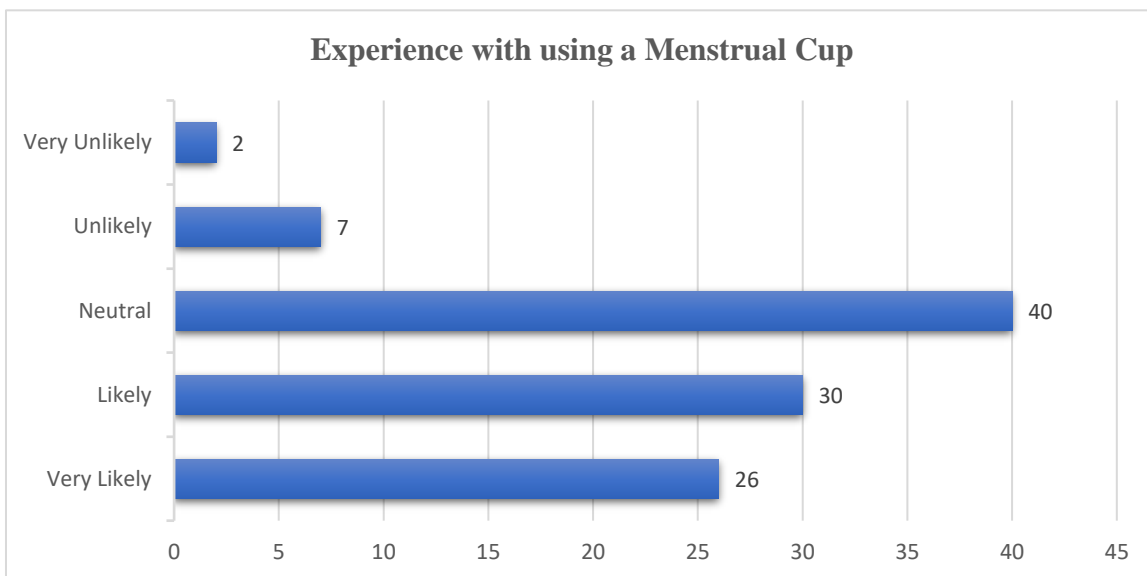
Figure no .14: Level of frequency of Reasons for Acceptance of Menstrual cup among women.



INTERPRETATION: As per the responses from the majority of participants, menstrual cups are affordable, eco-friendly, comfortable, convenient, and encourage physical activities like sports and swimming. They maintain the pH and flora of the vagina, are unlikely to leak, and are long-lasting.

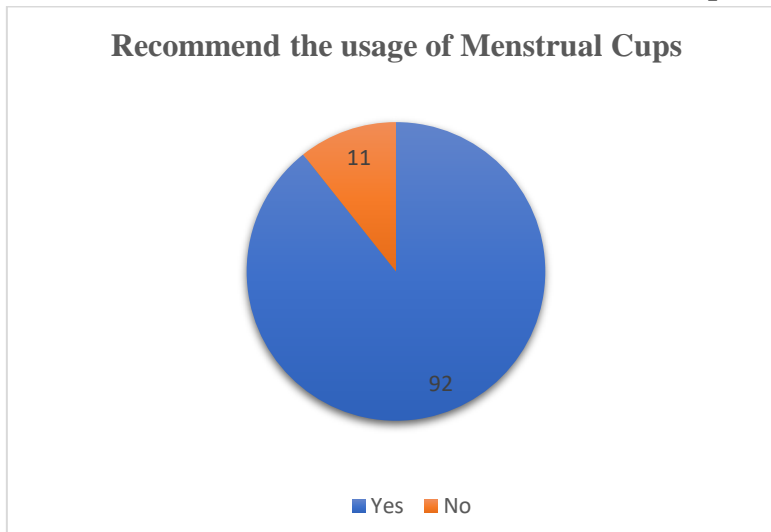
3. User experience and usage of a menstrual cup.

Figure no .15: Experience and usage of a menstrual cup



INTERPRETATION: Among 103 respondents, 38.8% reported having a neutral experience with using a menstrual cup. 29% indicated they were likely to recommend it, while 25.2% reported being very likely to do so. On the other hand, 6.8% expressed an unlikely experience, and 1.9% had a very unlikely experience with using a menstrual cup.

Figure no .16: Recommend the utilization of menstrual cups to others.



INTERPRETATION: Based on the above data, 89.3% of respondents express a likelihood to recommend the menstrual cup to others, while 10.7% are not inclined to do so.

FINDINGS:

- The knowledge regarding menstrual cups among women was found to be very high.
- The primary source through which women acquire knowledge about the menstrual cup was identified to be social media, followed by input from friends, family, and medical personnels.
- The majority of respondents are aware that silicon is the key material used in the production of menstrual cups.
- The above data indicates that a majority of respondents are aware that taking precautions before using menstrual cups is mandatory.
- It can be clearly stated that boiling water is considered as the preferred method for sterilizing or cleaning a Menstrual cup.
- It was found that the majority of women are aware of the recommended emptying interval for menstrual cups, which typically ranges from 2 to 6 hours.
- The preferred method for storing a menstrual cup is typically a Cotton pouch.
- It can be confidently stated that women generally have positive experiences with the use of menstrual cups.
- It was found that approximately 90% of respondents are inclined to recommend the menstrual cup as their preferred menstrual hygiene product to others.

LIMITATION:

- This study is limited to only 127 respondents hence, results cannot be generalized.
- The area of study was confined to Jaipur city, more cities or region can be added for better results .
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- The study is limited to only 103 respondents therefore, results cannot be generalised.
- This study employed Convenience sampling, which is a type of non-probability sampling method.
- The study was conducted exclusively in Jaipur city; including additional cities or regions could enhance the reliability and validity of the results.

CONCLUSION:

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the understanding, acceptance, and usage of menstrual cups among women in the Jaipur district. A total of 103 participants took part in the study, and the findings indicated that the respondents exhibited a high level of awareness and knowledge regarding menstrual cups. Although a minority had negative experiences, the majority had a positive perception and preferred Menstrual cups. The study underscored the significance of awareness-raising and educational initiatives aimed at promoting menstrual cups as a practical and environmentally friendly substitute to disposable menstrual products. Such programs are essential for enhancing the acceptance and adoption of menstrual cups among women.

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