

# AWARENESS, PREFERENCE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USAGE OF MENSTRUAL CUPS AMONG GIRLS AND WOMEN

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## Abstract

A menstrual cup is a tool for managing menstrual flow and is promoted as a healthier and more environmentally friendly option to traditional menstrual sanitary products. The purpose of this study is to know the demographic characteristics of the respondents, their awareness, understanding, and usage of menstruation cups, as well as their experiences with and opinions on these cups. Data were collected from women and girls above fifteen years of age and the results show the lack of knowledge about the product and the various reasons for not preferring the product.

**Keywords:** Menstruation, menstruation cups, sterilization, economical.

## INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a physiological phenomenon, regular vaginal bleeding that takes place as part of a woman's monthly cycle. To manage menstrual flow, women use tampons, absorbent pads, and cloths. Most of them find it difficult to wash their clothes or properly dispose of their pads. A menstrual cup is a device for managing menstrual flow and is promoted as a healthier and more environmentally friendly option to traditional menstrual sanitary products. There are few options for managing menstruation, and knowledge, prejudice, expense, and safety concerns can prevent girls and women from using all of the solutions that are available. Lack of accessible, affordable and efficient menstruation products may lead girls and women who are menstruating to leak and chafe, which can have a negative impact on their health. Women who use low-quality materials are more likely to develop infections.

The menstruation cup is not well known. Contrary to throwaway products, menstrual cups are more affordable. In India, the menstrual cup has been considered as a menstrual hygiene management tool. It must be emptied every 6 to 12 hours, washed, and then reinserted since it holds three times as much blood than other products. The cup has to be boiled for five to ten minutes after every menstrual cycle and the lifespan of a cup is 5–10 years.

During menstruation, a menstrual cup is put into the vagina. Menstrual fluid is collected in it. They are often designed like a bell with a stem and made of flexible medical-grade silicone. The stem facilitates simple insertion and removal. The cup's bell shape makes it easier for it to seal on the vaginal walls under the cervix. Depending on how much flow there is, the cup must be taken out, emptied, washed, and then replaced (mostly every 6-12 hours).

Even though menstruation cups offer numerous benefits over sanitary pads, they have not gained widespread acceptance due to lack of awareness and inadequate promotion, particularly in developing nations like India. Moreover, India continues to be a very conservative nation. Unlike period pads, menstrual cups are placed into the vagina. People therefore believe that inserting a cup on unmarried ladies may cause them to lose their virginity. Even those who are highly educated have little to no understanding about menstruation cups because of the poor advertising and popularity of sanitary pads.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kakani, C. & Bhatt, Jalpa. (2017) menstrual cups were evaluated for adaptation and efficacy by novice users who had previously used various sanitary products and traditional menstrual sanitary protection. 158 volunteers of Gujarat Medical Education and Research Society with normal menstrual cycles and ages ranging from 20 to 50 years of age had participated in

this study. Menstrual cups were given to participants to use for three successive menstrual cycles, and a standardized questionnaire was used to collect feedback after each cycle for three cycles.

The results show that the cup was chosen for comfort, dryness, and minimal odour.

Eti, Manorama & S., Shreya & A., Sailakshmi. (2019) undertook the study to evaluate medical undergraduate students' (n=372) understanding of the menstrual cup. The research demonstrates that the majority of students had little awareness of the materials used in cup making, its emptying time, and the sterilizing method of menstrual cups, and none of them had ever used one.

Meghana S and Gomathy E, (2021) undertook a research to determine participant awareness of, concerns about, and attitudes of menstruation cups among women between the ages of 18 and 45. A questionnaire was used to obtain the data. Results indicate that 80% of participants knew about the menstrual cup; the biggest worry was the fear of pain and leaking.

Lekshmi R.S (2022) undertook the survey to determine the demographics of the respondents, their knowledge of sanitary goods, their affordability, their usage patterns, and how they disposed of their used sanitary items. Data was gathered from the women and girls in the Thiruvallur district. The findings show the habit of using sanitary products and the issues with sanitary napkin disposal.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Raising awareness about menstrual health and hygiene is important although there is always a counterargument that the waste produced by improper disposal of sanitary napkin and the current methods to dispose of sanitary napkins in India will only make the situation with regard to garbage worse in the future. An estimated 200 tones of sanitary napkin trash would be produced per day for a population of 350 million menstruation women in India, assuming that 35% of women use sanitary napkins regularly and an average of 8 pads per month. Plastic pad disposal has grown to be a major issue. Menstrual cups are a more cost-effective choice for the millions of women who cannot access or afford disposable pads since they are reusable, affordable, available, and eco-friendly. Menstrual cups do not enjoy greater popularity despite offering several advantages over other menstrual management products.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to understand the demographic profile of the respondents, awareness usage and knowledge about menstrual cups, attitude preference and attitude towards menstrual cups among girls and women in four districts of Tamil Nadu (Kancheepuram, Coimbatore, Madurai and Thiruvallur).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data from girls and women above the age of 15 was gathered. The purpose of the research was explained to the respondents before they were asked to complete a questionnaire. They were instructed to feel free to react objectively, honestly, and realistically.

Only 389 of the 400 questionnaires that were given out to participants were returned to the researchers fully completed. Following evaluation, the incomplete, inaccurate, and inadequate information in the filled-in questionnaires caused them to be rejected. Finally, 372 completed questionnaires were included in the current study.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic profile of the respondents

**Table 1** Demographic profile of the respondents

Description	Frequency	Percent
Age	15- 20 years	65 17.47
	21-25 years	75 20.16
	26-30 years	61 16.40
	31-35 years	53 14.25

	36-40 years	54	14.52
	40 and above	64	17.20
	Total	372	100.00
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	116	31.18
	Government employee	60	16.13
	Private employee	92	24.73
	Self-employed	43	11.56
	House wife	61	16.40
	Total	372	100.00
<b>Monthly income</b>	Less than Rs.25,000	104	27.96
	Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000	151	40.59
	Rs.50,000 to Rs.75,000	52	13.98
	Rs.75,000 - Rs.100,000	33	8.87
	Above Rs..1,00,000	32	8.60
	Total	372	100.00

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Age of the respondents shows that 17.47% of the respondents are of 15 - 20 years of age, 20.16% of the respondents are of the age category 21 to 25 years of age, 16.4% of the respondents are of the age category 26 to 30 and 14.25% are of 31- 35 years and 14.53% are 36- 40 years of age and 17.52% are of 40 and above years of age.

Occupation of the women shows that 31.18 % of the respondents are students, 16.13% of the respondents government employees, 24.73 % of the respondents are Private employee, 11.56% are Self-employed 16.40% of the respondents are house wives.

Monthly family income of the respondents shows that 27.96% of the respondents had less than Rs. 25,000, 40.95% had Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000, 13.98 % had Rs.50,000 to Rs.75,000, 8.87% had Rs.75,000 - Rs.100,000 and 8.6% had above Rs.100,000.

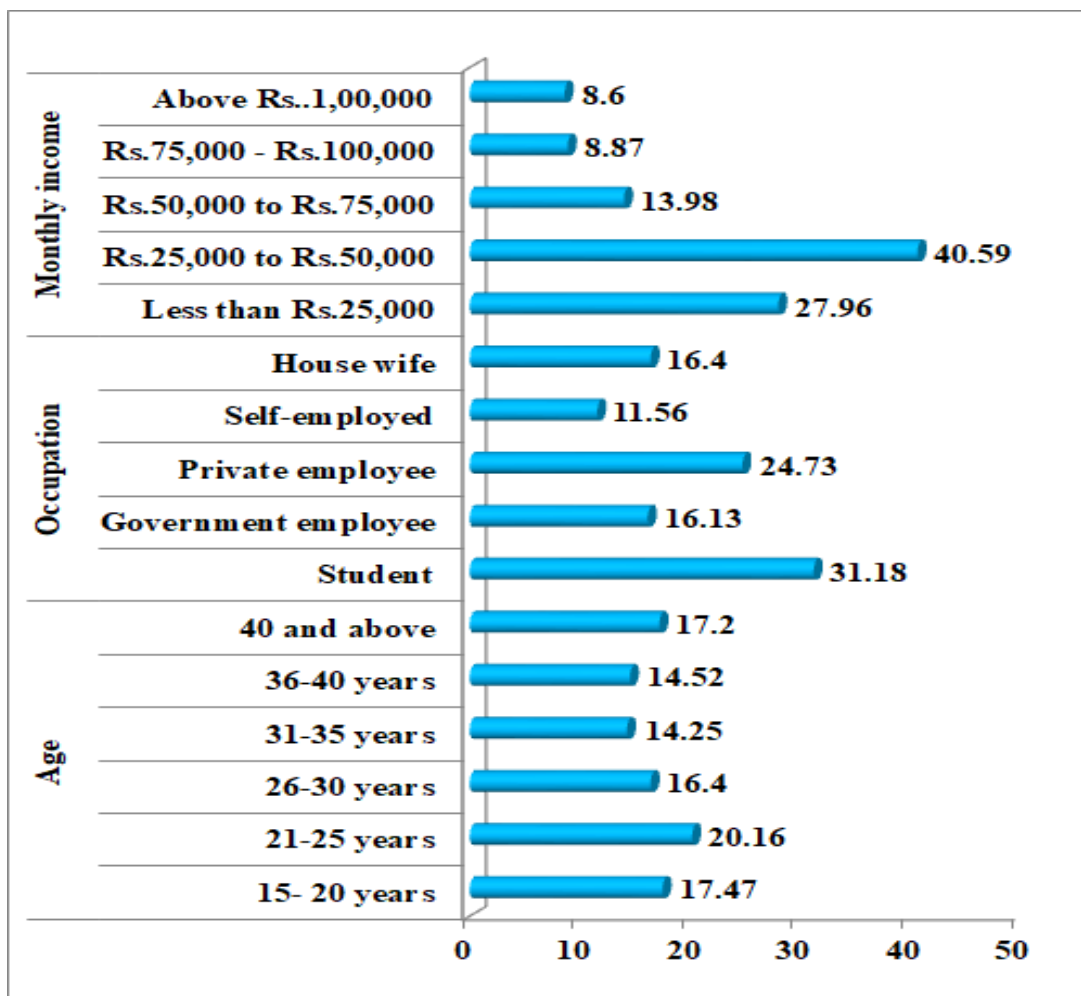


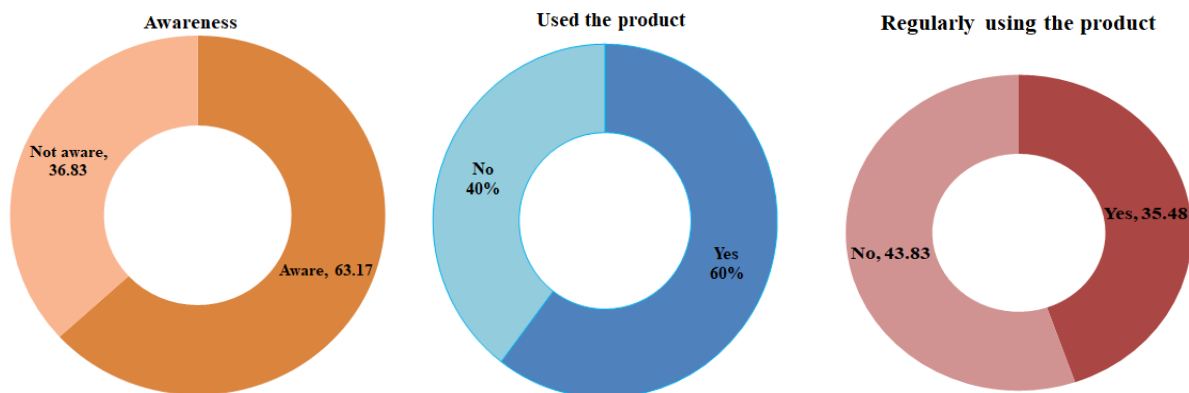
Figure 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

#### Awareness and Usage about Menstrual Cups

Table 2 Awareness Usage and Knowledge about Menstrual Cups

Particulars	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Awareness	235	63.17	137	36.83
Used the product	166	44.62	69	29.36
Regularly using the product	132	35.48	103	43.83

Table 2 shows the awareness and usage about menstrual cups. 63.17% are aware of menstrual cups and 44.62% used the menstrual cups and 35.48% are regularly using the products, whereas 36.83% are not aware of menstrual cups.



### Knowledge about Menstrual Cups

**Table 3** Knowledge about Menstrual Cups

Particulars	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Menstrual Cups are safe	175	74.47	60	25.53
It can be used by virgins	123	52.34	112	47.66
It is used to collect the blood	235	100.00	0	0.00
Materials used for making the cup	197	83.83	38	16.17
Emptying time of the cup (6-12 hours)	156	66.38	79	33.62
Sterilization of the cup	152	64.68	83	35.32
Cup do not cause any pain	146	62.13	89	37.87
Know how to store it after usage	132	56.17	103	43.83
It is economical	221	94.04	14	5.96
It is eco-friendly	202	85.96	33	14.04

Table 3 shows the knowledge about menstrual cups, menstrual Cups are safe (74.47%), it can be used by virgins (52.34%), says it is used to collect the blood (100%), Materials used for making the cup (83.83%), Emptying time of the cup (6-12 hours) (66.38%), Sterilization of the cup (64.68%), Cup does not cause any pain (62.13%), know how to store it after usage (56.17%), it is economical (94.04%), It is eco-friendly (85.96%).

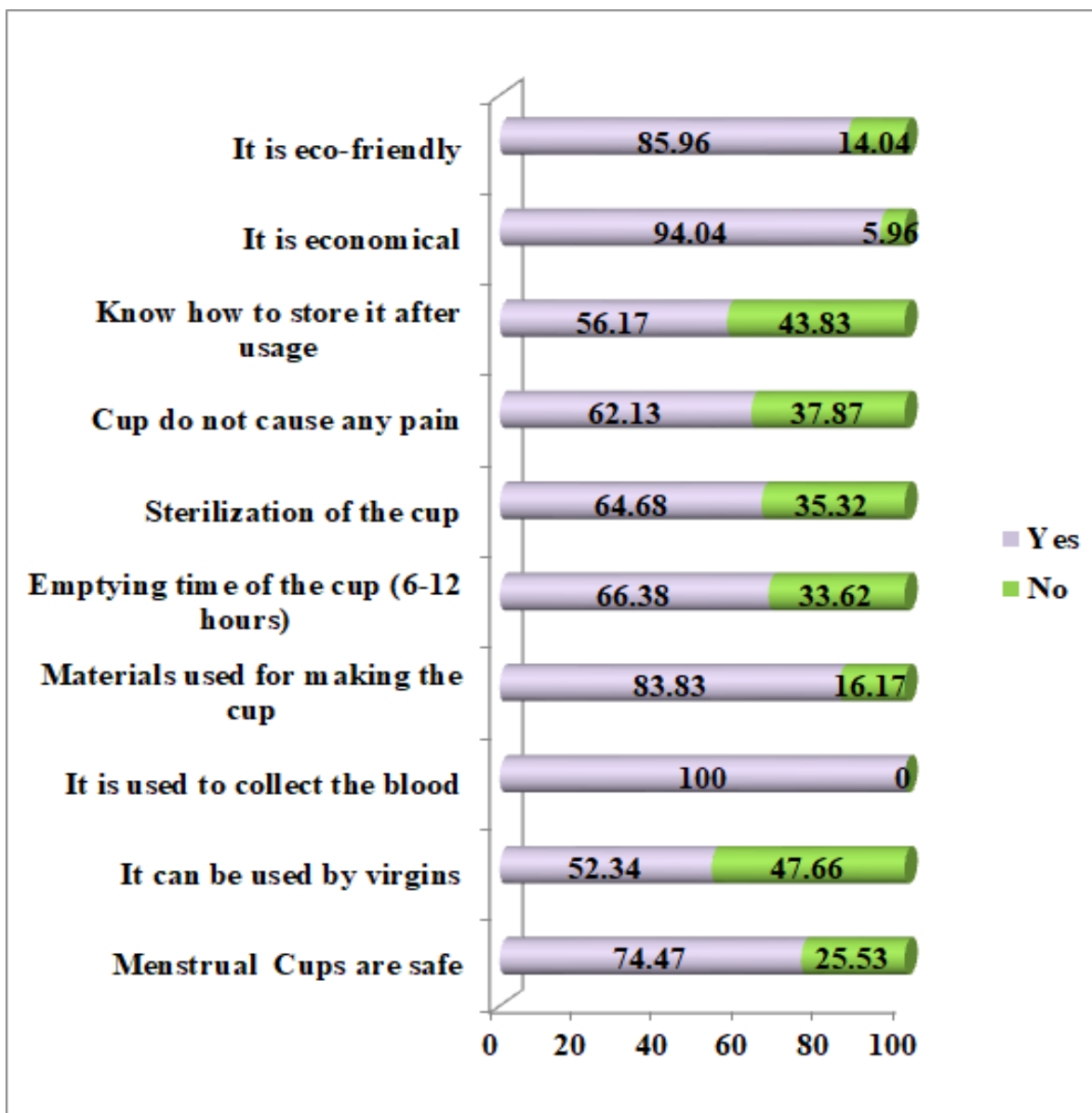


Fig 3 Knowledge about Menstrual Cups

Regular Users of Menstrual Cup Based On Age, Occupation and Family Income

Table 4 shows the regular users of menstrual cups based on age, occupation and family income. Regular usage based on age shows less than 20 years(1.344%), 21-25 years(3.763%), 26-30 years(10.48%), 31-35 years(6.989%), 36-40 years(6.72%), 40 and above (6.183%). Regular users of menstrual cups based occupation of the respondents shows that student (0.806%), government employee (6.72%), private employee (15.32%), self-employed (5.914%) and house wife (6.72%). Based on family income less than Rs.25,000 (10.22%), Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000 (21.51%), Rs.50,000 to Rs.75,00 (1.344%), Rs.75,000 - Rs.1,00,000 (1.882%) and above Rs..1,00,000 (0.538%).

Table 4 Regular Users of Menstrual Cup Based On Age, Occupation and Family Income

Regular Users of menstrual cups		Yes		No		Total
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
Age	Less than 20 years	5	1.344	60	16.13	17.47
	21-25 years	14	3.763	61	16.40	20.16
	26-30 years	39	10.48	22	5.91	16.40

	31-35 years	26	6.989	27	7.26	14.25
	36-40 years	25	6.72	29	7.80	14.52
	40 and above	23	6.183	41	11.02	17.20
	Total	132	35.48	240	64.52	100.00
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	3	0.806	113	30.38	31.18
	Government employee	25	6.72	35	9.41	16.13
	Private employee	57	15.32	35	9.41	24.73
	Self-employed	22	5.914	21	5.65	11.56
	House wife	25	6.72	36	9.68	16.40
	Total	132	35.48	240	64.52	100.00
<b>Monthly income</b>	Less than Rs.25,000	38	10.22	66	17.74	27.96
	Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000	80	21.51	71	19.09	40.59
	Rs.50,000 to Rs.75,000	5	1.344	47	12.63	13.98
	Rs.75,000 - Rs.100,000	7	1.882	26	6.99	8.87
	Above Rs..1,00,000	2	0.538	30	8.06	8.60
	Total	132	35.48	240	64.52	100.00

Reason for Preference of Menstrual Cups

**Table 5** Reason for Preference of Menstrual Cups

REASON FOR PREFERENCE	Weighted average	Rank
Comfortable	102.8	1
No leakage	95.8	2
Cleaning	58.4	4
No odor	44.4	5
Easy to sleep comfortably	94.6	3

Reason for preference of menstrual cups (table 5) shows that comfortable is the main reason followed by no leakage, easy to sleep comfortably, cleaning and no odor.

Reason for Non Preference of Menstrual Cups

Reason for not preferring the menstrual cups (table 6) shows that the product has to be inserted inside the vagina, followed by fear of infection and fear of leakage.

**Table 6** Reason for Non-Preference of Menstrual Cups

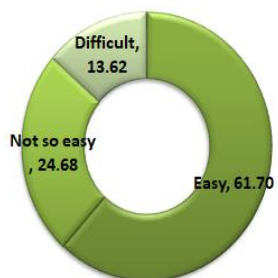
REASON FOR NON PREFERENCE	Weighted average	Rank
Fear of leakage	38	3
Inserting in vagina	100	1
Fear of infection	67.7	2

Attitude towards Menstrual Cup

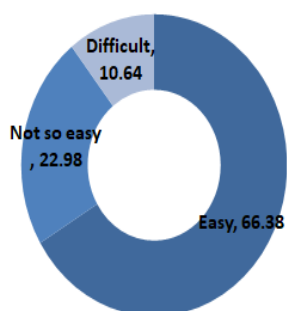
**Table 7** Attitude towards Menstrual Cup

Particulars	Frequency	Percent	
<b>Ease of Wearing</b>	Easy	145	61.70
	Not so easy	58	24.68
	Difficult	32	13.62

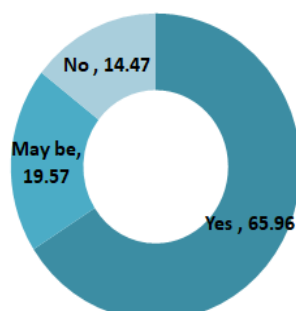
	Total	235	100.00
<b>Removal</b>	Easy	156	66.38
	Not so easy	54	22.98
	Difficult	25	10.64
	Total	235	100.00
<b>Comfortable</b>	Yes	155	65.96
	May be	46	19.57
	No	34	14.47
	Total	235	100.00
<b>Leakage</b>	Yes	33	14.04
	No leakage	202	85.96
	Total	235	100.00
<b>Cleaning</b>	Easy	212	90.21
	Difficult	23	9.79
	Total	235	100.00
<b>Smell</b>	Odor	14	5.96
	No odor	221	94.04
	Total	235	100.00
<b>Vaginal infection</b>	Yes	83	35.32
	No	152	64.68
	Total	235	100.00
<b>Sleep comfortably at night</b>	Yes	161	68.51
	No	74	31.49
	Total	235	100.00



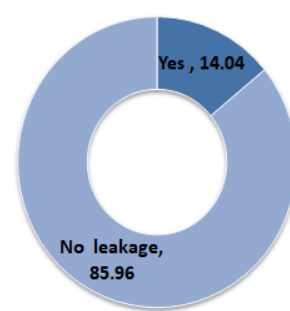
**Ease of Wearing**



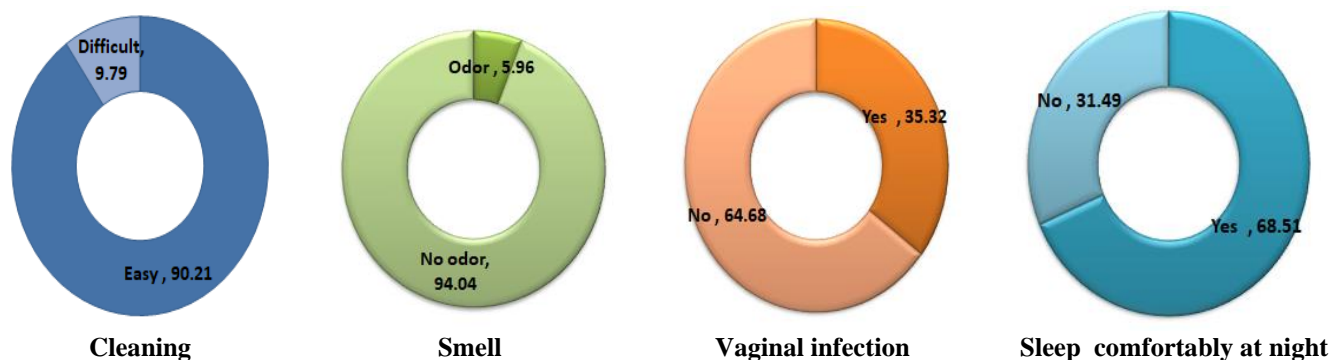
**Removal**



**Comfortable**



**Leakage**



**Fig .4** Attitude towards Menstrual Cup

Attitude towards menstrual cup table 7. Ease of Wearing shows that it is easy to wear (61.70%),

Not so easy (24.68%), difficult (13.62%); Removal of the product shows that it is easy to remove (66.38%), not so easy (22.98%), difficult (10.64%). Comfort ability of the product shows that it is comfortable (65.96%), may be (19.57%), not comfortable (14.47%). About leakage 14.04% says it will leak and no leakage (85.96%). Regarding cleaning majority says it is easy (90.21%) and difficult (9.79%). About smell 5.96% says odor will be there and no odor (94.04%). Vaginal infection will be there (35.32%) and no vaginal infection (64.68%). 68.51

% says the product helps to sleep comfortably at night and not help to sleep comfortably (31.49%).

## SUGRESSIONS

Menstruation cups offer numerous benefits over other products used for menstrual management, they have not gained widespread acceptance due to lack of awareness and inadequate promotion. Creating awareness about the product is the need of the hour and makes the product available in all medical shops. With the help of health workers it is easy to increase the awareness and assist the use of menstrual cups and thus improve the menstrual hygiene at lower cost.

## CONCLUSION

Menstrual cups have been around for a while, but their usage isn't very common in India due to a lack of knowledge and the widespread use of sanitary pads. Menstrual cups eliminate solid waste and are environmentally beneficial since they can be reused. Education, public awareness, and access to eco-friendly measures are urgently needed to successfully manage menstrual waste.

To achieve a pad free country, must run awareness campaigns and continuously spread the message throughout all socioeconomic groups.

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