eco•femme

# Improving Feminine Hygiene in Tamil Nadu, India

Antimicrobial, Environmentally Sustainable Sanitary Pads for Rural Women



Adina Gewirtzman Advisors: Professor Lisa Stoddard, Professor Reeta Rao

#### The Issue

2/3 women in Tamil Nadu, India consider menstruation to be "abnormal."

At least 23% drop out of school because they do not have the education and resources to take care of themselves during menstruation

Cycle of Shame and Education Access

Lack of body and hygiene knowledge

Increased shame and taboo, causing limited reproductive and health education

Body-based shame, psychological impacts

Mold growth and secondary infections

Hiding pads in dark places, poor hygiene



Woman washing a menstrual cloth, used internally

## **Existing Solutions**

EcoFemme: Classroom education about menstruation, distributes reusable pads Indian government: subsidies for disposable pads



Garbage and pollution in an Indian street. Disposable pads contribute to pollution.

## Solving the Problem

Mold and bacteria resistant

Untreated fabric with mold/fungal growth

treated fabric

Includes body and hygiene education



A class organized by EcoFemme

#### Sanitary Pad Design

1

Layer 1: Soft organic cotton, dyed red or black Layer 2: Antimicrobial treated layered cotton

Layer 3: Leak proof polyurethane

## Implementation



Write and translate educational pamphlet about hygiene and menstruation



Source supplies, mass produce chemically treated product in local factories



Partner with EcoFemme to distribute to women in rural Tamil Nadu

#### Sources

Tamil Nadu Industrial Guidance & Export Promotion Bureau. (2009). Textiles.

National Institute of Fashion Technology. (2018).

Programmes. Dare Womens Foundation. (2018).

Projects. EcoFemme. (2018). In Action.

MicroBan. (2018). Antimicrobial Fabric Treatment.

Thank you to EcoFemme, Dare Women's Foundation, Microban and Professors Stoddard and Rao for their help and contributions