

- Support and allocate resources for the training of key professionals like education and health personnel, teachers, significant leaders like religious and traditional leaders, in promoting good menstrual hygiene practices.
- Ensure social protection activities exist to support those living in the most vulnerable or marginalized situations like internally displaced people's (IDP) camps.
- Include monitoring and performance indicators on menstrual hygiene in annual and periodic plans.

Aside the responsibilities that cut across the 3 tiers of government, specifically,

The Federal Level should

- Ensure a national bureau of standards monitors the quality of sanitary protection products.
- Support increased availability of affordable sanitary products.

State and Local Government Levels should

- Provide enabling environment for the promotion of menstrual hygiene management.
- Hold sustained dialogues with key stakeholders to create and promote sustained awareness programs to break the silence about menstruation; to challenge negative perceptions; and to confront dangerous myths, taboos, and practices.
- Promote strategies and outreaches that support good menstrual hygiene practices in the home, community, schools, work place and public places.
- Educate the public on policies that support good menstrual hygiene practices in the home, community, schools, workplace and public places.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The international level also has a key role to play. It should

- Undertake advocacy on menstrual hygiene and dissemination of good practice as an international priority.
- Fund programmes to increase knowledge of good menstrual hygiene management practices (water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, health and hygiene promotion, small businesses manufacturing low-cost sanitary products etc.).
- Developing policies that mainstream good menstrual hygiene practices.



GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT



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WHY LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUPPORT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

Menstruation is a normal biological process and a key sign of reproductive health in women and girls. Sadly, in many cultures menstruation is perceived and treated as something negative, shameful or dirty and with continued silence. This is combined with limited access to information at home and in schools resulting in millions of women and girls having very little knowledge about what is happening to their bodies when they menstruate and how to manage their periods safely.

In addition to persisting taboos, women and girls' capacity to manage their periods is affected by a number of other factors, including limited access to affordable and hygienic sanitary materials and safe disposal options. This is leaving many to manage their periods in ineffective, uncomfortable and unhygienic ways. These problems are further worsened by insufficient access to safe and private toilets and lack of clean water and soap for personal hygiene. As a result, menstruating girls and women often feel ashamed and embarrassed. Furthermore, because of long-standing social stigmas attached to menstruating bodies, many women and girls are isolated from family, friends and their communities. Often, adolescent girls miss school while women miss productive work days and fall behind their male counterparts.

To alleviate these challenges, there are four major strategies that governments can adopt. These are, by promoting low cost sanitary pads, designing female-friendly sanitation facilities, increasing access to pain-relief medication, and by providing education and counselling. All tiers of government from the federal to State and Local Governments have a major responsibility of ensuring these 4 strategies for addressing the problem are in place.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES



Across all levels of governments – federal to state and local governments should,

- Prioritize menstrual hygiene management in their annual planning and budgets. Specific responsible Ministries, Departments and Agencies, MDAs with support from Ministries of Water Resources, Health, Education and Women Affairs need to collaborate to take the lead in this.
- Develop and promulgate legislations, policies and strategies that support good menstrual hygiene practices.
- Allocate resources for and build adequate and standard female-friendly sanitation facilities, like, toilets, latrines, bathrooms, waste disposal facilities, etc.
- Allocate resources for programmes and projects related to improving menstrual hygiene practices.
- Support and allocate resources and manpower to promote sustained education and awareness of girls, women, and the general public on menstruation and menstrual hygiene management, breaking the silence about menstruation to challenge negative perceptions and to confront dangerous myths, taboos, and practices.