

Kaysha Org takes On Putting an End To Period Poverty

*"Empowering Through Education:
Kaysha's Mission to End Period Poverty
and Support Indian Girls"*

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES ,
August 5, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It might surprise you to learn that one of the greatest barriers to empowering and educating women is a simple function of biology: monthly menstruation. It is estimated that over 500 million women and girls worldwide lack access to feminine hygiene products. As a result, girls as young as eight years old are forced to miss up to a week of school every month.

Period poverty is a global issue and one felt acutely in India, particularly in rural regions. Nearly a quarter of girls in India drop out of school after they start menstruating, and a whopping seventy percent cannot afford period products like tampons, pads, or menstrual cups. Instead, they are forced to use unsanitary makeshift alternatives or stay at home.

Add to that the social stigma and cultural taboos around periods and the lack of infrastructure in schools, and period poverty becomes one of the biggest hurdles to educating women.

In rural villages in India, the experience for many girls of getting their first period is one of embarrassment and shame. They are not always taught about what to expect, and many schools lack bathrooms with which to deal with menstruation hygienically and privately. According to India's most recent Annual Status of Education Report, only 54% of government primary schools had usable toilets. And girls who get their periods at school are often teased because they are perceived as "unclean."



Kaysha.org

Instead of subjecting themselves to continued humiliation and bullying, many girls skip classes entirely during their periods. They fall behind in their coursework. Eventually, they may drop out of school permanently because they cannot keep up. And how could they?

Misinformation about periods and menstrual hygiene is more widespread than you might think. Even rocket scientists can get menstrual hygiene wrong. NASA infamously suggested that Sally Ride, the first American woman in space, take one hundred tampons for her six-day journey into space.

But knowledge is power. [Education on menstrual hygiene](#) is vital if we want to dismantle the stigma and misconceptions surrounding menstruation. This lack of awareness can lead to anxiety, shame, and even health issues. Integrating menstruation education into school curricula ensures that every girl understands her body and feels confident in managing her menstrual health.

Studies have shown that girls are more likely to stay in school and perform better academically when they have the resources to manage their menstruation. This, in turn, opens up more opportunities for higher education and future employment.

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Our biology is beautiful, and it should not be an obstacle to education, empowerment, and entrepreneurship. We can end period poverty and help keep girls in school—one bathroom at a time.”

Sasha Ponnam

We also know that education is one of the greatest determining factors in alleviating poverty, especially for women. In India, only seventeen percent of women currently contribute to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). That means that a majority of women are unemployed or, more accurately, doing unpaid labor at home. How can a country hope to develop sustainably and equitably when a majority of women are being excluded

from the economy and working life?

Investing in girls' education does more for transforming communities than nearly any other metric. It reduces inequalities, boosts economies, and improves outcomes for everyone—men and women alike.



Founder Sasha Ponnam

Women who receive an education are more likely to earn higher wages, lead healthier, more productive lives, and have greater control over their choices when it comes to marriage and family planning. In other words, educating girls has the power to transform communities socially and economically and to radically benefit the quality of life for women and girls.

Early intervention is the best method for keeping girls in school, enabling them to pursue their education to the fullest, and empowering them to pursue their dreams for their own future. And there is a direct link between menstrual health awareness, feminine hygiene access, and the duration of a girl's education.

A new nonprofit called [Kaysha](#) is tackling period poverty, demystifying menstruation, and creating opportunities for girls in India through education, access, and advocacy. Founded by fourteen-year-old Sasha Ponnampalath, the organization is committed to teaching girls about menstrual hygiene, creating supportive environments within schools and communities, and empowering girls to continue their education.

Sasha first learned about period poverty while doing a research project for school.

"For the first time, I read about unhygienic bathrooms being a reason to drop out of school. The ladies' restroom at my school is pretty unhygienic too, but not so bad it would make me want to drop out of school," she said. "The more I read about lack of access to running water, broken doors, harassment from men, and sometimes no bathroom at all, I realized my so-called 'disgusting' bathroom at school was heavenly."

Sasha decided to turn her questions into action. It started with a single project to build a bathroom in a rural village school outside of Hyderabad. The construction project would give the ten girls in attendance reliable access to deal with their periods safely, hygienically, and with dignity. From there, Kaysha has grown into a force for good, tackling issues like closing the gender pay gap, promoting sports and leadership for girls, and providing mentorship opportunities and peer support groups for girls and women in India.

Our biology is beautiful, and it should not be an obstacle to education, empowerment, and entrepreneurship. We can end period poverty and help keep girls in school by breaking down barriers and building awareness—even if it has to be done one bathroom at a time. [Become a Volunteer](#)

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