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Stigma Around the Consumption of Sanitary Napkins and Implications for International Marketing Strategy: A Case Study from Rural India

Women and girls in rural India experience period poverty and are subject to stigma, shaming, and trauma around menstruation, which leads to exclusion and attrition. An acute lack of awareness about the risks of using unsanitary products, the lack of usage of sanitary menstrual products, and the non-availability of resources at the school- and community-level is a challenge for volunteers, companies, community leaders, community institutions such as schools, village governments, and non-profit organizations such as Vimukt India. Can concepts of effective communication, avoidance of ethnocentrism, and application of effective and adaptive international marketing strategy to bottom-of-the-pyramid markets help alleviate taboos and myths around stigmatized menstruation and provide access to menstrual education and hygiene products to girls and women in rural India? This case provides an opportunity for students to explore topics such as self-reference criterion, ethnocentrism, bottom-of-the-pyramid markets, and hierarchy of effects, and also challenges them to effectively apply adaptation of international marketing mix strategy.