

My Period

My name is Sushila and I work at the sorting plant. We take in rubbish from the rag pickers every day and some that comes from businesses, and we sort it to separate out the wet and dry rubbish. We recycle a lot and we make compost from the vegetables, which we can sell. There are 18 of us working here and we are lucky to have this job.



When I am down I use a cloth because I can't afford to buy pads. I get bad back and stomach pains which makes things difficult, and when I have to do heavy lifting at work it is harder. If I lift heavy things then I lose a lot of blood and have to keep changing the cloth I use. It's not comfortable but I have to work so I do the best I can. The women who work here always know when someone is down because we use cloth and you can see it sticking out through our sari, and everyone teases each other. I don't know why really because we all have it, but still we feel embarrassed when we are down.

The hardest thing when I am down is that I cannot touch anything for the five days I am bleeding and I'm not allowed to eat freshly cooked food. I have one steel plate, one glass and one bowl that I use and I sleep on the floor on a special sheet that I only use when I am down. I always wear the same clothes at this time, too, because what I wear during that time becomes dirty and I can't wear it at other times even if I wash it. I can't touch anyone at home when I am down, but I am allowed to use the same toilet as the rest of my family, which helps because it is just outside the house.

I am glad that my family talks to me when I am down because my sister's family don't talk to her and she is left on her own for her five days. Her husband and his family are a lot more traditional than us.