



Study On Knowledge Practices And Restriction Regarding Menstrual Hygiene Among Women And Adolescent Girls District Bijnor , Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Menstruation and menstrual practices still face many social, cultural, and religious restrictions which are a big barrier in the path of menstrual hygiene management. Menstruation frequently poses psychological, social, and health challenges for young women living in low and middle-income countries such as India. Menstruation in the life of women is a process related to their nature. Where menstruation is stigmatized, it can be particularly difficult not only in villages but in cities too many women hesitate to talk about periods. They do not know about what precautions they should take during this time. In this way many women endanger their own health. By maintaining hygiene during periods, one can protect oneself from infection during this period. This paper examines challenges related to menstruation for young women living

in slums in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, India. The present study was carried out on 256 women district Bijnor. The data was collected through personal interview with the help of questionnaire. The results of the present study showed that there were inappropriate knowledge and hygiene practices during menstruation among women only 42.57% women and girls were aware of menstruation before menarche. It was also seen that 92.50% women don't change pads in which leads to the longer gap between changing of pads. Girls and women have very less or no knowledge about reproductive tract infections caused due to ignorance of personal hygiene during menstruation time. Awareness regarding the menstruation and menstrual hygiene practices is important and proper education regarding this should be imparted to the adolescent girls and women in India.

KEY WORDS - Menstruation hygiene and knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Women and men have specific sanitation needs, preferences, access requirements, and utilization patterns and experiences. Women also use toilet facilities to manage their menstruation. Good menstrual hygiene practices means that women and adolescent girls are using a clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect menstrual blood, that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of a menstrual period, using soap and water for washing the body as required, and having access to safe and convenient facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials. Poor menstrual hygiene management can negatively impact the health and psycho-social well-being of women and girls. Menstruation thus reflects the start of the puberty period in the females. The menstrual cycle has three phases, that is, follicular phase (proliferative), ovulation phase, and luteal phase (secretory).menstruation colour depend upon the red, dark red, brown and dark brown sometime small and large clots could be seems during the periods .Menstruation fluids odor have unpleasant smell. Menstruation is regulated by hormones. World Menstrual Hygiene Day was started in the year 2014. The cycle of periods is usually 28 days, and it lasts for five days. This is the reason why this special day is celebrated on the fifth month of the year i.e. 28th of May.

Most menstrual periods last from 3 to 5 days and moreover 7 days. During this time women also have to go through many types of physical, hormonal changes. There are problems such as pain in the waist, legs and abdomen, vomiting, headache, dizziness etc. If period's irregular causes of hormonal imbalance under much health condition fall down like fibroids, polyps, PSCOS menstruation flow can lead anemia. Menstruation has a poor hygiene can neglected pattern it can lead to vaginal infection, sexually transmitted disease. At this time bacteria and sweat pose a threat. If they are left like this for a long time, they can smell terrible. Maintaining hygiene is the best way to remove odor and bacteria.

When periods come regularly, this is called the menstrual cycle. Having regular menstrual cycles is a sign that important parts of your body are working normally. (According to a UNICEF study conducted in 2011) Only 13% of girls in India are aware of menstruation before menarche.60% of girls missed school on account of menstruation,79% faces low confidence due to menstruation and 44% were embarrassed and humiliated over restrictions.

Menstruation wastes are the wastes that are generated by a female in her reproductive system. Present study reflect the women when seeks the information about menstruation women and girls feel shy uncomfortable and reluctant because of misconception and proscription society. The first menstruation (menarche) occurs between the age of 11 and 15 years with a mean age of 13 years (Banerjee et al., 2007) .The main objective of this study was to summarize the concern and possible methods of menstrual waste management in low-income district. The study was aimed to understanding the menstrual practices, product design, demands, and disposal strategies of waste. It includes both a summary of the existing menstrual hygiene needs and management and also an analysis of the current knowledge in the fields of health, sanitation, and solid waste management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in district Bijnor in the state of Uttar pradesh in India. The sample size of 256 women from was selected and the study was carried out from November 2021.the study showed that many household don't have toilet and they dump waste in public opened area. A questionnaire was formulated for the study having questions related with practices and knowledge about the menstruation which includes questions related with restricted activities practiced during menstruation, the age of menarche, type of absorbent used, its disposal and the frequencies of changing them, bathing during menses etc. The data was collected through personal interview.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Participant knowledge about menstruation showed in Table 1. It was seen that 42.57% women knowledge about menarche at the age of 13 where as 30.85% at 12 years of age and 8.20% women had it at 14 years of age. The present study is in the line with the study conducted by Thakre et al. (2011) among the adolescent School Girls of Saoner, Nagpur District in which 47.03% women were at 13 years of age, 26.10% were at 12 years of age when they had menarche. Regarding the awareness about the menstruation before menarche it was observed that there were only 34.76% girls who had knowledge about menstruation before menarche. Raina and Balodi (2014) also reported that there were 34.67% women who knew about menstruation before menarche in their study conducted on adolescent girls of Dehradun, Uttarakhand. There were 59.37% women who observed menstrual cramping and pain and there 36.32% women who were having periods more than 5 days.

Table 1. Information about menstruation

| Variables | No. of women (N=256) | Per cent (%) |
|--|----------------------|--------------|
| Age of menarche | | |
| ≤ 11 | 36 | 14.06 |
| 12 | 79 | 30.85 |
| 13 | 109 | 42.57 |
| 14 | 21 | 8.20 |
| ≥15 | 11 | 4.29 |
| Awareness about menstruation before menarche | | |
| Yes | 89 | 34.76 |
| No | 167 | 65..23 |
| Cramping or pain during periods | | |
| yes | 152 | 59.37 |
| No | 104 | 40.62 |
| Periods last more than 5 days | | |
| Yes | 93 | 36.32 |
| No | 163 | 63.67 |

It is evident from table 2 that most of the women i.e 71.87% were using commercial sanitary pads during menstruation while 27.34% were using old cloth which is often reused 0.78%women used menstruation cup. It was seen that 57.81% threw their used pads in routine waste and 42.18 women in India burnt them sometimes resort to using ashes, newspapers, dried leaves and husk sand to aid absorption. Data also revealed that a very big no. of girls i.e. 62.50% women don't change pads during outing due to which a very long gap in changing pads was observed which is not good from the hygiene point of view. It was also observed that 95.31% women washed their hands after changing pads and almost all the girls took bath during periods which is a good sign of hygiene.

Table 2. Menstrual hygiene practices

| Practices | No. of women (N=256) | Per cent (%) |
|--|----------------------|--------------|
| Use of material during menstruation | | |
| Commercial sanitary pad | 184 | 71.87 |
| Old cloth | 70 | 27.34 |
| Menstruation cup | 2 | 0.78 |
| Tampons | 0 | 0 |
| Method of disposal | | |
| Burn it | 108 | 42.18 |
| Throw it in routine waste(wrapped in newspaper ,dig into soil) | 148 | 57.81 |
| Change of pad during outing | | |
| Yes | 96 | 37.5 |
| No | 160 | 62.50 |
| Washing hands after changing sanitary pads | | |
| Yes | 209 | 81.64 |
| No | 47 | 18.35 |
| Taking bath during period | | |
| Yes | 244 | 95.31 |
| No | 12 | 4.68 |

Table 3 inferred that 53 (20.70%) girls and women are subject to not restrictions in their daily lives simply at different side 203 (79.29%) girls and women were following different restriction practices during menstruation. Among these women and girls were restricted to attend religious functions and touching holy books and worship places. The underlying basis for this myth is also the cultural beliefs of impurity associated with menstruation. Study conducted by Thakre et al. (2011) also revealed that there were 94.74% women who were not allowed to attend religious functions. According to study by Kumar and Srivastava in 2011, participating women also reported that during menstruation the body emits some specific smell or ray, which turns preserved food bad. Present study revealed 33.55% women were restricted from household work and 10.15% followed separation practices because myth is also the cultural beliefs that menstruating women are impure., 62.06% women were not allowed to going outside during periods because cultural norms believe that menstrual blood is to be dangerous, and a malevolent person can do harm to a menstruating woman or girl by using black magic. 99.01% women and girls not entering the puja room touching holy books and water is the major restriction. There were 72.41% women who were not allowed to touch pickles and 76.84% women were not allowed to have some specific food items during menstruation It is believed that such foods will disturb or stop the menstrual flow

Table 3. Restriction practices during periods

| Restrictions | No. of women (N=256) | Per cent (%) |
|--|----------------------|--------------|
| Not practiced | 53 | 20.70 |
| Practiced | 203 | 79.29 |
| Practiced for (N=203) | | |
| Attend religious functions | 196 | 96.55 |
| Household work | 68 | 33.49 |
| Separated | 24 | 11.82 |
| Not allowed to go to outside | 126 | 62.06 |
| Not allowed to doing puja | 201 | 99.01 |
| Not allowed to touch pickles | 147 | 72.41 |
| Not allowed to have curd/ rice/sour food products etc | 156 | 76.84 |

CONCLUSION

Results of the present study revealed that Most women and girls had poor knowledge but followed hygienic practices correctly. It demonstrates a need to design acceptable awareness creation and advocacy programs to improve women and girls knowledge during menstruation. There is a need to equip the adolescent girls and women with knowledge regarding safe, hygienic practices to enable them to lead a healthy reproductive life. Lack of adequate information on sanitation and hygiene facilities, particularly in public places like schools, workplaces or health centres can pose a major obstacle to women and girls.

The challenge menstruating girls and women face is often less tangible than simply the availability of infrastructure, and is rooted in social norms and beliefs. In many cultures, menstruating women are considered impure and are systematically excluded from participating in every-day activities, such as education, employment, and cultural and religious practices. Given the multiple challenges women and adolescent girls face, it is evident that promoting menstrual hygiene management is not only a sanitation matter; it is also an important step towards safeguarding the dignity, bodily integrity and overall life opportunities of women and girls. Much more efforts are needed to curb misbeliefs and taboos among the Indian society related with the menstruation which leads to useless restrictions among the women and adolescent girls. Because it is still considered a taboo in Indian society. Education should be imparted on reproductive health including menstrual hygiene to the girls in the schools and education material on sanitary and hygiene practices should be formulated and distributed among adolescent girls and women

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