



MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Menstrual hygiene is a crucial aspect of the health and well-being of young people, especially adolescent girls who may encounter various difficulties during their periods. Therefore, the current study attempts to explore awareness, practices, issues, and consequences associated with menstrual hygiene among adolescents. The current research involved 150 adolescent girls using descriptive research methodology to collect the required data. Data analysis was performed using frequency and percentages techniques. It should be emphasized that many participants had moderate knowledge about menstrual hygiene; however, the sanitary pads were the most common products used by the respondents during menstruation. Nonetheless, many participants still encountered some issues related to poor menstrual hygiene, which included financial difficulties, lack of awareness, inadequate hygiene facilities, and menstrual taboos. The research also revealed that inappropriate management of periods negatively influenced the academic performance and involvement in routine tasks as well as caused physical and psychological problems. Thus, the research indicates that it is crucial to promote menstrual health and hygiene among young people, increase access to low-cost hygiene products, and improve sanitation facilities to ensure better menstrual hygiene. It is apparent from the above discussion that the issue requires comprehensive action on the part of families, schools, healthcare providers, and governmental bodies.

Keywords: *Menstrual Hygiene, Adolescents, Menstruation, Awareness, Sanitary Practices, Adolescent Health, Menstrual Hygiene Management, Sanitation Facilities.*



1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of menstrual hygiene has been associated with the proper menstrual hygiene practices among women. Adolescent age is a phase where one undergoes several physical and psychological changes in his or her life, and one of the milestones in the life of young females is their first menstrual bleeding. Menstrual hygiene management involves using clean menstrual absorbent material, proper cleansing procedures, safe disposal of such absorbents, and provision of appropriate information to girls about their menses.

However, the topic of menstruation has remained shrouded with cultural taboos and myths despite the progress that has been made in healthcare and education. The lack of awareness and scientific information concerning menstruation among adolescent girls may result in fear and misunderstanding associated with this process. In addition, factors such as poverty, lack of information, absence of appropriate facilities, and social taboos may worsen the situation for girls.

Adolescent females with poor menstrual hygiene can develop reproductive or urinary infections, experience some discomfort and suffer from severe psychological problems. Poor management of menstrual hygiene has adverse effects on schooling and participation in social events due to embarrassment. In order to ensure that adolescents manage their menstrual hygiene appropriately, schools and families should take necessary steps in disseminating awareness and educating adolescents on the topic.

Many governments, nongovernmental and governmental institutions have launched numerous programs and awareness campaigns aimed at enhancing the menstrual hygiene practices among adolescents. While such initiatives have had certain success, it is clear that there are still gaps in regard to raising awareness, ensuring availability of affordable sanitary pads and social acceptance.

Thus, research on menstrual hygiene practices and attitudes toward them is important because of the following reasons. The study will allow learning what the current level of awareness is and what challenges adolescent girls face while dealing with their menses. Furthermore, the results of the research could become useful when designing and launching future health education programs.



1.1. Concept of Menstrual Hygiene

Menstrual hygiene comprises all the measures that females take to ensure safe and healthy menstruation. These practices include the use of hygienic means of menstrual management like sanitary pads, tampons, menstrual cups or even a clean cloth. Hygiene practices further comprise the washing of the genital area, having access to clean water, proper sanitation facilities and finally safe and hygienic disposal of the used materials.

Menstruation is a physiological phenomenon whereby a woman experiences the shedding of her uterine lining as part of the monthly process known as the reproductive cycle. Unfortunately, despite menstruation being a normal bodily function in females, menstruation is still stigmatized in most of our societies today. This is because of the numerous myths surrounding the topic in many societies. For example, many adolescent girls fear or feel embarrassed when they start menstruating due to lack of sufficient awareness about the topic.

Proper menstrual hygiene comprises the change of menstrual absorbent on regular basis, washing of the genital area with clean water and soap, maintaining proper cleanliness and finally disposing off the sanitary products safely. Poor menstrual hygiene increases the likelihood of various reproductive health problems among young females including urinary tract infections. Therefore, menstrual hygiene is an essential aspect of the reproductive health among adolescent girls.

It is noteworthy that menstrual hygiene practices cannot be attained without sufficient menstrual education among women. As stated earlier, menstrual hygiene involves hygienic practices such as the use of hygienic pads among others. Without menstrual education, many girls will adopt unhealthy practices which will in turn compromise their reproductive health. Therefore, many organizations should work towards breaking the silence surrounding menstruation and educating adolescent girls about the process.

Finally, menstrual hygiene is an aspect of dignity, equality and respect. Young adolescent girls should be allowed to participate fully in all school activities regardless of whether they are menstruating or not. Lack of proper menstrual hygiene facilities in many public and private institutions limits the participation of many young girls in learning. Therefore, provision of



proper menstrual hygiene facilities in all schools will help to empower young girls and encourage their active participation in learning activities.

In conclusion, the importance of menstrual hygiene can never be understated. Today many governments and nongovernmental agencies are actively involved in sensitizing many people on this issue. In addition, there are numerous initiatives that seek to provide affordable sanitary products to women in order to ensure proper menstrual hygiene practices.

1.2.Objectives of the Study

2. To assess the level of knowledge and awareness regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescents.
3. To examine the menstrual hygiene practices followed by adolescent girls during menstruation.
4. To identify the social, cultural, and economic factors affecting menstrual hygiene management among adolescents.
5. To study the impact of menstrual hygiene on the health, education, and daily activities of adolescent girls.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Deshpande et al. (2018) This research was conducted by the authors to determine the menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls living in urban slums. The objective of this research was to determine the knowledge level of adolescent girls and their menstrual hygiene behavior. It was discovered that many adolescent girls had insufficient knowledge about menstrual practices and hygienic behavior prior to menarche. Many adolescent girls were using unhygienic menstrual products, and there was little access to proper sanitation facilities. Educational and socioeconomic factors had a great influence on the menstrual hygiene practices of adolescent girls.

Prajapati and Patel (2015) A cross-sectional study was conducted among adolescent girls in the urban area of Gandhinagar for investigating the awareness about and practices of menstrual hygiene. It was found from the study that most adolescent girls did not have information regarding menstruation prior to menarche, resulting in feelings of fear and anxiety during their



menstrual period. It was observed that the use of sanitary pads is prevalent but some girls still use cloth due to economic reasons and unavailability of other methods.

Sharma et al. (2015) conducted research that concentrated on menstrual hygiene behaviors among adolescent females and socio-cultural issues that may affect them. According to the researchers, beliefs, myths, and taboos concerning menstrual behaviors still affected the behavior and hygiene of adolescent females. Poor menstrual hygiene behaviors were also linked to various health complications such as infections and menstrual pain. The authors recommended that educational institutions, communities, and health care centers should ensure the creation of awareness about safe menstrual behaviors.

Majeed et al. (2022) This group of researchers conducted a meta-analysis focusing on menstrual hygiene management and factors that influence menstrual practices in Indian adolescent girls. The researchers considered studies carried out in different parts of India and identified some factors influencing the practice of menstrual hygiene management. The factors include economic condition, low awareness, poor sanitation facilities, and cultural stigma. The conclusion drawn by the authors is that menstrual hygiene management is still a pressing health issue among Indian adolescent girls.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology may be defined as a system that is applied systematically to collect data, analyze it, and interpret it within the scope of research. Research methodology ensures that the research process is conducted in a scientific and systematic way. This paper seeks to investigate issues related to menstrual hygiene among adolescent females. The methodology employed in this research is as follows.

3.1. Research Design

This current research used the descriptive research methodology for analyzing awareness, practices, challenges, and effects of menstrual hygiene among the adolescent population. The use of descriptive research was crucial in comprehending the current menstrual hygiene practices among young females.



3.2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This research was carried out among 150 female adolescents who were randomly chosen from various schools and colleges. The technique used in selecting the participants was simple random sampling.

3.3. Sources of Data Collection

Data for this study comprised both primary and secondary types. The primary data was collected through a survey administered directly to the respondent, while secondary data were obtained from journals, articles, government publications, and websites on menstrual hygiene and teenage health issues.

3.4. Research Instrument and Data Collection

The structured questionnaire served as the primary tool for collecting data. The questionnaire contained questions regarding awareness about menstruation, menstrual hygiene practices, menstrual absorbents used, difficulties experienced during menstruation, and the effects of menstruation on their day-to-day activities. The data was collected by interacting directly with the participants.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained was classified, tabulated, and analyzed by applying basic statistics like frequency and percentage distribution. The data analyzed was then put in table form.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this research is to study the awareness, practices, problems, and impact of menstrual hygiene practices amongst adolescents. The data for this study were collected from 150 adolescent girls using a pre-designed structured questionnaire. The data collected from the survey were then categorized, tabulated, and analyzed using the simple percentage method. The tables below depict the results of the survey and analysis of the data collected.

Table 1: Awareness Regarding Menstrual Hygiene among Adolescents

Level of Awareness	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
High Awareness	52	34.7
Moderate Awareness	68	45.3
Low Awareness	30	20.0
Total	150	100

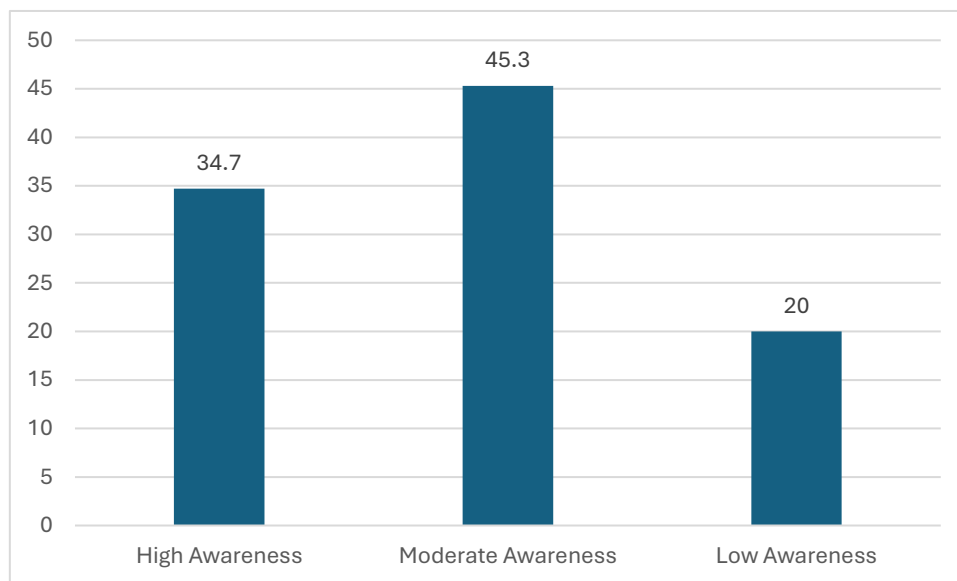


Figure 1: Graphical presentation of Awareness Regarding Menstrual Hygiene among Adolescents

The table below provides information on the awareness of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls. As seen from Table 1, 45.3% of the respondents have moderate awareness concerning menstrual hygiene, making it the highest percentage among all categories. On the other hand, 34.7% of the respondents were highly aware of menstrual hygiene. This shows that many adolescents are knowledgeable about the proper menstrual hygiene procedures. Nevertheless, some adolescents (20%) have little knowledge concerning menstrual hygiene. It can be concluded that while awareness concerning menstrual hygiene is slowly increasing, more health education is needed among adolescents.

Table 2: Types of Menstrual Absorbents Used by Adolescents

Menstrual Absorbents Used	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Sanitary Pads	96	64.0
Cloth	30	20.0
Tampons/Menstrual Cups	14	9.3
Combination of Methods	10	6.7
Total	150	100

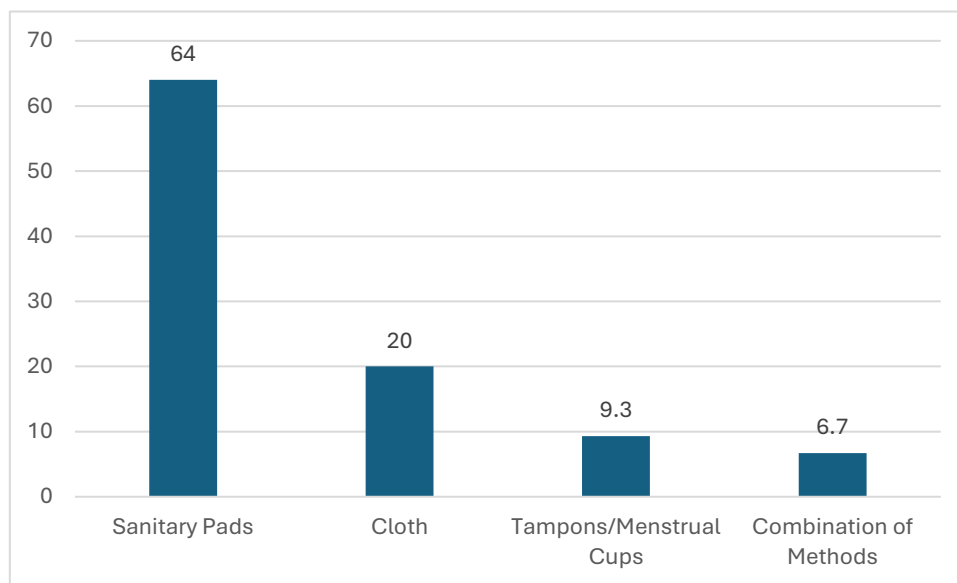


Figure 2: Graphical presentation of Types of Menstrual Absorbents Used by Adolescents

As shown in Table 2, there are variations in the use of menstrual absorbents by adolescent girls when they have their periods. Majority of the respondents (64%) stated that they use sanitary pads. This shows an increase in the acceptance and availability of menstrual absorbents that are hygienic. Approximately 20% of the respondents still rely on cloths for their periods, probably because of their limited financial resources, lack of knowledge, or cultural traditions. Only 9.3% of the respondents use tampons or menstrual cups, whereas 6.7% use a combination of menstrual absorbents.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by Adolescents During Menstruation

Challenges Faced	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Lack of Awareness	36	24.0
Financial Problems	42	28.0
Inadequate Sanitation Facilities	34	22.7
Social Restrictions and Taboos	24	16.0
Health Problems	14	9.3
Total	150	100

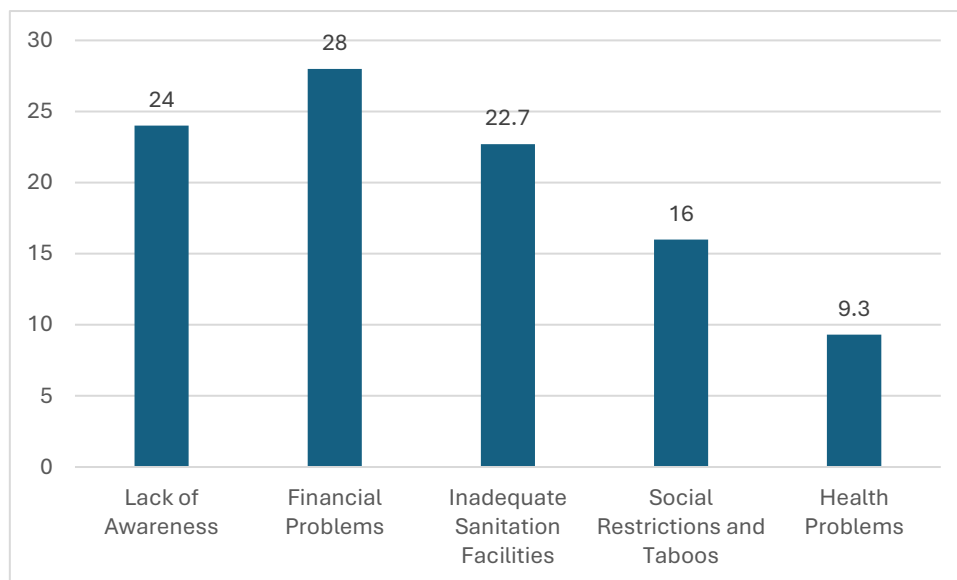


Figure 3: Graphical presentation of Challenges Faced by Adolescents During Menstruation

The table below summarizes the challenges encountered by adolescent girls during their menstrual period. The financial difficulty was found to be the highest challenge encountered by adolescent girls at 28%, highlighting the persistent problem of accessibility to affordable sanitary pads. The lack of knowledge among girls accounted for 24% of respondents, and 22.7% reported difficulties with sanitation infrastructure, such as the unavailability of proper toilets and access to clean water sources. Furthermore, social constraints and menstrual taboos were identified in 16% of respondents, revealing that cultural barriers concerning menstruation remain relevant today. Lastly, 9.3% encountered health issues during their menstrual period.

Table 4: Impact of Menstrual Hygiene on Education and Daily Activities

Impact on Daily Life	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
School Absenteeism	54	36.0
Reduced Participation in Activities	44	29.3
Physical Discomfort	34	22.7
No Significant Impact	18	12.0
Total	150	100

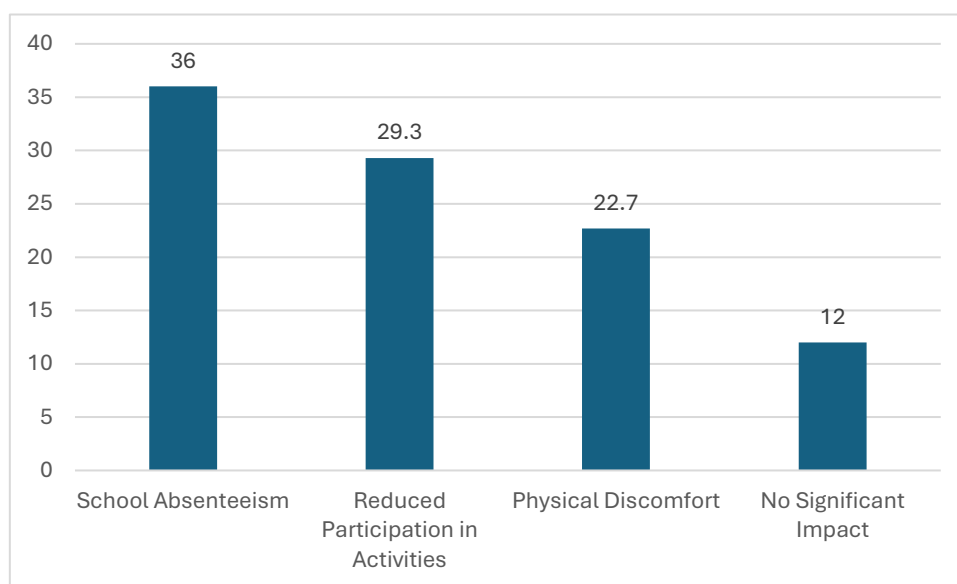


Figure 4: Graphical presentation of Impact of Menstrual Hygiene on Education and Daily Activities

Table 4 shows how menstrual hygiene affects the education and other activities of the adolescent girls. From the data in Table 4, it is evident that about 36% of the study participants were absent from schools due to menstruation, thus, showing that menstruation affects the educational activities of the adolescent girls. 29.3% indicated that they had less participation in social and physical activities owing to menstrual discomfort and embarrassment. About 22.7% felt uncomfortable during their menstrual period owing to physical complaints such as pain, irritability, and weakness. Only 12% stated that their menstrual hygiene had no effect on them at all.

5. CONCLUSION

However, the present study concerning the issue of menstrual hygiene management among adolescents demonstrates that despite the increased awareness about menstrual hygiene among young girls, some problems exist. It appears that the great majority of participants demonstrated moderate levels of awareness and preferred to use sanitary napkins when menstruating. Nevertheless, a considerable number of adolescents still faced a number of problems such as poverty, lack of adequate sanitation facilities, low awareness of menstrual hygiene, and social taboos about menstruation. Moreover, the negative consequences of improper menstrual hygiene management can be observed by the impact of this phenomenon on the schooling, daily activity, and well-being of adolescent girls. Hence, the necessity for further health education and provision of sanitary materials at affordable prices emerges to help women improve their knowledge and overcome taboos. In order to achieve positive outcomes, family support, availability of sanitation facilities, school and governmental assistance should be provided to adolescent girls.

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