

Menstrual Hygiene Management and Social Factors Affecting Menstrual Practices Among Adolescent Girls

By

Ankita Jain

*Dissertation submitted for the partial fulfillment of the
MBA Hospital and Health Management*

Academic year, 2016-2018



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

1, Prabhu Dayal Marg, Sanganer, Airport
Jaipur 302029, Rajasthan
Ph: 0141 3924700, Fax: 3924738
Website: www.iihmr.edu.in

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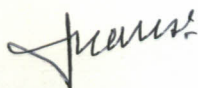
TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that ANKITA JAIN student of MBA Hospital and Health Management The IIHMR University, Jaipur has undergone internship training at NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION, MADHYA PRADESH & MEDISHINE HOSPITAL, RAIPUR from 19/02/2018 to 13/05/2018.

The Candidate has successfully carried out the study designated to her during internship training and her approach to the study has been sincere, scientific and analytical.

The Internship is in fulfillment of the course requirements.

I wish her all success in all his future endeavors.



Dr. ASHOK KAUSHIK

Dean, Academics and Student Affairs
The IIHMR University, Jaipur



Dr. ANOOP KHANNA

Professor
The IIHMR University, Jaipur



shri medishine hospital

श्री मेडिशाईन हॉस्पिटल

॥ हर एक जीवन अनमोल ॥

04/04/2018

CERTIFICATE OF INTERNSHIP

The is to certify that **Miss. Ankita Jain** student of **MBA in Hospital Management** from **The IIHMR University** Jaipur worked as a Trainee in the Department of Quality in **Shri Medicine Hospital, Raipur (Chhattisgarh)** from 19/02/2018 to 04/04/2018.

Her performance during the period in the department was good. She comes across as a willing, sincere and intelligent person who has a strong drive and zeal for learning.

We wish her the best for all her future endeavors.

For, Shri Medishine Hospital

HR Manager



अमलीडीह, न्यू राजेन्द्र नगर, रायपुर (छ.ग.) फो.नं. : 0771-4222999, 4222909

E mail : medishine.health@gmail.com, www.medishinehealth.com



National Health Mission
08, Arera Hills, Bhopal. (M.P)



The Certificate Is Awarded To

ANKITA JAIN

In Recognition of Having Successfully Completed Her
Internship in The Department
of

IIHMR
University Jaipur

And Has Successfully Completed Her Project

On

**"Menstrual Hygiene Management And Social Factors
Affecting Menstrual Practices Among Adolescent Girls"**

Under The Guidance Of

Dr. Dilip Hedau

(Deputy Director of RBSK NHM-MP)

NHM, Bhopal

Internship :- (5th April – 15th May)

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION

Madhya Pradesh

She comes across as a committed, sincere & diligent person who has a strong
Drive And Zeal For Learning

We wish her all the best for future endeavors


(Dr. Durgesh Gour)
DD/HR

NHM, Bhopal
उप संचालक (मानव संसाधन)
राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन
मध्यप्रदेश


(Dr. Brajesh Saxena)
Chief Administrative Officer

NHM Bhopal
मुख्य प्रशासकीय अधिकारी
राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन

THE IHMR UNIVERSITY, JAIPUR

CERTIFICATE BY SCHOLAR

This is to certify that the dissertation titled MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING MENSTRUAL PRACTICES AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS and submitted by ANKITA JAIN 0387 under the supervision of Dr. ANOOP KHANNA for award of MBA in Hospital and Health Management in Health and Hospitals of the University carried out during the period from 19/02/2018 to 13/05/2018 embodies my original work and has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma associate ship, fellowship, titles in this or any other institute or other similar institution of higher learning.



Signature

ABSTRACT:

Background:

Adolescence in girls has been recognized as a special period marked with the onset of menarche. Even though menstruation is a natural process, it is associated with misconceptions, traditional beliefs and taboos. Poor hygiene during menstruation has been associated with serious ill-health, including reproductive tract and urinary tract infections. During menarche, girls experience different feelings like anxiety, fear, shame and guilt because of lack of prior information about menstruation.

Objective:

The aim is to know about the menstrual hygiene management and to find out the various factors like social, cultural, religious which affects the adolescent girls.

Methods:

A mixed-method research was conducted in Panna district of Madhya Pradesh . Simple Random sampling was done. The study was conducted among 200 randomly selected adolescent school girls. Interviews and focus group discussions was done including semi structured questionnaire.

Results:

The mean age at menarche was 13.7 years. About 52% of girls had knowledge about Menstruation before menarche. Their mother, sister or friends were the source of information majorly about menstruation. Girls who were above poverty line mostly used pad and were aware about the hygiene management. It was difficult to afford pads for the girls who were below poverty line therefore they used rags or torn sarees for their periods. Around 94% of girls washed their hairs on a particular day due to their cultural beliefs and the guidance given by their elders. They are not allowed to involve in any social or religious activities such as doing prayers in the temple or cooking food or going inside the kitchen.

Conclusion & Recommendations:

As a conclusion it can be stated that the girls' knowledge about issues of menstrual cycle is influenced by cultural beliefs and practices. A large number of girls feels that it is a dirty thing and needs to be hidden. It can also be concluded that the taboo of menstruation results in silence which leads to lack of correct knowledge of the process. Girls have to follow the various myths and traditions which are provided by their culture which results in stress and tensions. There should be more awareness created about menstrual hygiene and girls should start using pads as a sanitary napkin. Government should make it affordable for the girls who are not able to purchase it. School teachers should play a major role in telling the students about menstrual cycle. The taboo of not cooking food while menstruating should not be there. Proper counselling of girls should be done.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

S.No.	TOPIC	PAGE No.
1	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	6
2	INTRODUCTION	7
3	PROBLEM STATEMENT	7
4	AIM OF THE STUDY	8
5	OBJECTIVES	8
6	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	8
7	METHODOLOGY	12
8	RESULTS & FINDINGS	13
9	DISCUSSION	20
10	CONCLUSION	22
11	RECOMMENDATIONS	22
12	SUPPLEMENTARY	23
13	BIBLIOGRAPHY	25

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Words put on paper are mere ink marks, but when they have a purpose there exist a thought behind them. I too have a purpose to express my gratitude towards those individuals without whose guidance the project would not have been possible.

I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Dilip Hedau who has kindly permitted me to undertake the project in the organization. I am also thankful to Smita Mam and the other members of the organization for their support and providing the required information.

It was a pleasure to be associated with the National Health Mission, Madhya Pradesh. The experience that I have garnered has had a profound impact on my career choices and has helped me realize what is requisite for success in this industry. I carry high regards for the complete team of NHM.

I also take this opportunity to express a great sense of gratitude towards our Dean Dr. Ashok Kaushik and my mentor Dr. Anoop Khanna for providing me vital inputs to co-relate the present project work and hence provide a sound base to the report structure. A special word of thanks also goes to all the teaching and non teaching staff of my institute and my friends.

ANKITA JAIN

**PROJECT TITLE: TO STUDY ABOUT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT
AND SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING MENSTRUAL PRACTICES AMONG
ADOLESCENT GIRLS**

INTRODUCTION:

Menstrual hygiene management has been defined as: ‘Women and adolescent girls using a clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect blood that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of the menstruation period, using soap and water for washing the body as required, and having access to facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials’ (UNICEF and WHO, 2014). However, menstrual hygiene is not just about the management of the menstrual period but also the need to address societal beliefs and taboos surrounding the issue.

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Traditional norms and beliefs, socio-economic conditions influence the practices related to menstruation. For example, according to cultural traditions and practices, a woman should not cook food during her menstrual cycle. Girls in villages from poor families cannot afford sanitary pads which would normally be changed around two to four times a day during menstruation. Instead, the majority of women and girls use rags, usually torn from old sarees and tissue of any kind which is unhygienic. The used materials are washed often with inadequate and unsafe water without soap and used repeatedly.

AIM OF THE STUDY:

The aim is to know about the menstrual hygiene management and to find out the various factors like social, cultural, religious which affects the adolescent girls.

OBJECTIVES:

- To study about various factors impacting menstrual practices on adolescent girls.
- To know about the awareness related to menstrual hygiene management.
- To identify various myths and taboos about menstruation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A study was conducted by **Dasgupta A, Sarkar. (2008)** “Menstrual hygiene; how hygienic is the adolescent girls”. Menstruation and menstrual practices are still clouded by taboos and socio-cultural restrictions resulting in adolescent girls remaining ignorant of the scientific facts and hygienic health practices, which sometimes result into adverse health outcomes. A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted among 160 adolescent girls of a secondary school situated in the field practice area of Rural Health Unit and Training Center, Singur, West Bengal, with the help of a pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire. Data was analyzed statistically by simple proportions. Results shows Out of 160 respondents, 108 (67.5%) girls were aware about menstruation prior to attainment of menarche. Mother was the first informant regarding menstruation in case of 60 (37.5%) girls. One hundred and thirty-eight (86.25%) girls believed it as a physiological process. Seventy-eight (48.75%) girls knew the use of sanitary pad during

menstruation. Regarding practices, only 18 (11.25%) girls used sanitary pads during menstruation. For cleaning purpose, 156 (97.5%) girls used both soap and water. Regarding restrictions practiced, 136 (85%) girls practiced different restrictions during menstruation.

Conclusions: Menstrual hygiene, a very important risk factor for reproductive tract infections, is a vital aspect of health education for adolescent girls. Educational television programmes, trained school nurses/health personnel, motivated school teachers and knowledgeable parents can play a very important role in transmitting the vital message of correct menstrual hygiene to the adolescent girl of today.

A study was conducted by **Rembeck G I, Moller .M. (2006)**. “Attitude and feelings towards menstruation and womanhood in girls at menarche”. To elucidate early adolescent girls' attitudes, thoughts and feelings towards menstruation and their bodies. METHODS: 309 12-y-old girls answered questionnaires. One part of the questionnaire dealt with thoughts and feelings towards menstruation. The other part dealt with thoughts and feelings towards menstruation and sex and ability to communicate on aspects of womanhood. The study reveals that Postmenarcheal girls were less positive towards menstruation than premenarcheal girls ($p = 1 \times 10^{-6}$). Many girls (43%) did not reaffirm the statement "I like my body" and almost one quarter stated being teased for their appearance. Many of the girls claimed that they had been called "cunt" (38%) or "whore" (46%). If called "cunt" or "whore", 17% stated that they felt alone, 76% felt anger and 50% were offended. Mothers were those with whom girls could most easily "chat" about their period. Sixty-seven per cent received information about menstruation from school nurses.

A study was conducted by **Parwej.S, Kumar, Agarwal AK. (2005)** “Experiences in relation to menstruation”. The study finding showed that most of the girls talked about how their menstrual bleeding makes them feel dirty and unclean and reported feelings of embarrassment and shame. During menstruation one was completely shocked; another reported that she was not allowed to enter in the temple and kitchen. Such prohibitions do induce feelings of isolation and shame in young girls.

A study was conducted by **Ei-Gilany AH, Badawai K, (2005)**. “Menstrual hygiene among adolescent schoolgirls in Mansoura, Egypt”. This study among 664 schoolgirls aged 14-18 in Egypt, asked about type of sanitary protection used, frequency of changing pads or cloths, means of disposal and bathing during menstruation. Girls were selected by cluster sampling technique in public secondary schools in urban and rural areas. Data were collected through an anonymous, self-administered, open-ended questionnaire during class time. Use of sanitary pads may be increasing, but not among girls from rural and poor families and other aspects of personal hygiene were generally found to be poor, such as not changing pads regularly or at night, not bathing during menstruation. Lack of privacy was an important problem. But a large majority of girls said they needed more information.

A study was conducted by **Shukla .S (2005)**. “working on menstruation with girls in Mumbai, India”. Menstruation is considered a polluting factor among Hindus. In many places menstruating girls and women are considered untouchable. Such attitudes and practices are unlikely to create a positive self image within girls. Shukla found that girls and women teachers were very knowledgeable about the intricate system of taboos and sanctions that pertained to menstruation but had very little actual knowledge about the biological process of maturation and

normal physiology. This is lack of factual information, compounded by the prevalence of myths, means that girls practical needs related to managing menstruation are often not appreciated (or) appropriately addressed, e.g. Of the provision of adequate sanitary protection .Most girls are left to cope as they can with rags (or) other insufficient protection.

A study was conducted by **Kirk .J, Sommer, M. (2005)**. “Menstruation and awareness; critical issues for girls education”. Lack of sanitary protection during menstruation is often mentioned as a barrier to girl’s regular attendance in school. In many poor families providing adequate clothing for the whole family can be a challenge. Insufficient (or) inadequate sanitary protection can be very embarrassing for a girl attending school during her monthly period.

A study was conducted by **Trinoye OO, opgunghomi A, Ajo AO. (2003)** “Menstruation : knowledge, attitude and practices of students in Taiwan”. The purpose of the study was to explore gender differences in knowledge and attitudes towards menstruation among Taiwanese adolescents. This study was a secondary data analysis of a cross-sectional comparison study conducted in Taiwan. A total of 287 female and 269 male students at a junior high school participated in the study. The results showed that almost all the students had heard about menstruation and most of them had received menstrual information at school. However, their knowledge about menstruation was not accurate. Moreover, the male students expressed more negative attitudes towards menstruation than the female students.

A study was conducted by **Turkan Turan (2003)**. “Determination of knowledge and practices about menstruation”. The data was collected using a 21-item questionnaire developed by the researcher based on information in the literature. The mean age of the girls included in the study

was 12.88 ± 0.94 . More than half of the girls (52%) had begun menstruating and the mean age for menarche was 12.29 ± 0.81 . The majority (90%) had received information about menstruation but 10% had not. A significant difference was found between frequency of changing sanitary pads and the students' income status ($p=0.001$). As their income level decreased their frequency of changing pads decreased. In conclusion the children had a knowledge deficit about menstruation and education needs to be given at their schools and in their families.

A study was conducted by **Rajashree R. Kamble (2001)**. “A study to access the knowledge and practice of menstruation and menstrual hygiene among school girls”. The findings of the study showed that 61.66% of the girls had an average knowledge regarding menstruation on menstrual hygiene and 87.66% of the girls followed correct practices.

METHODOLOGY:

STUDY AREA: Panna.

STUDY DURATION: 1 Month

STUDY POPULATION: Girls of age group 10-19 years.

SAMPLING METHOD: Simple Random Sampling.

SAMPLE SIZE: 200

DATA COLLECTION: Semi-structured Questionnaire.

TYPE OF DATA:

- Collection through questionnaire.
- Interviewing the adolescent girls of the area.
- Information gathered through internet.

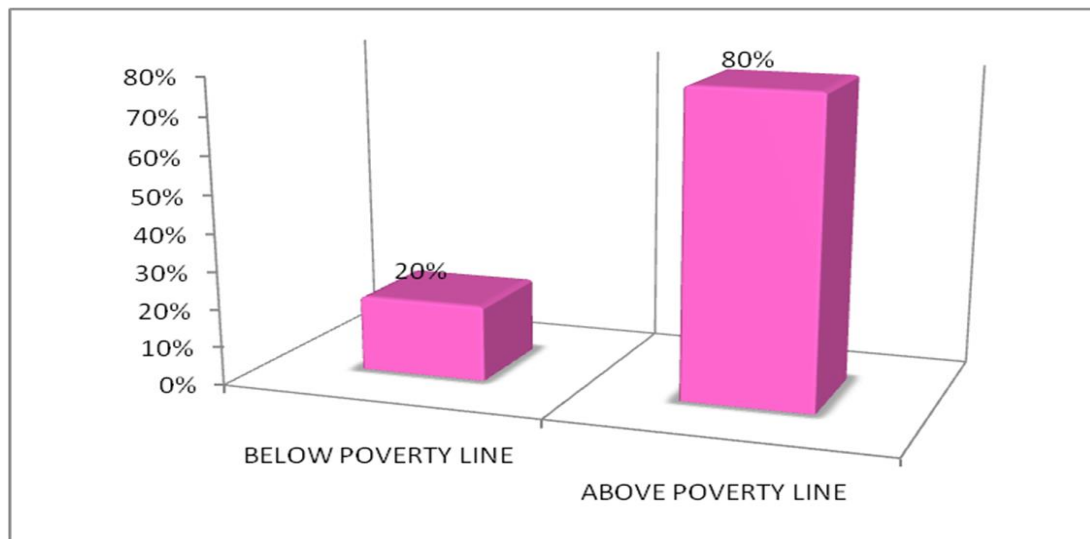
RESULTS:

FINDINGS:

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of adolescent girls

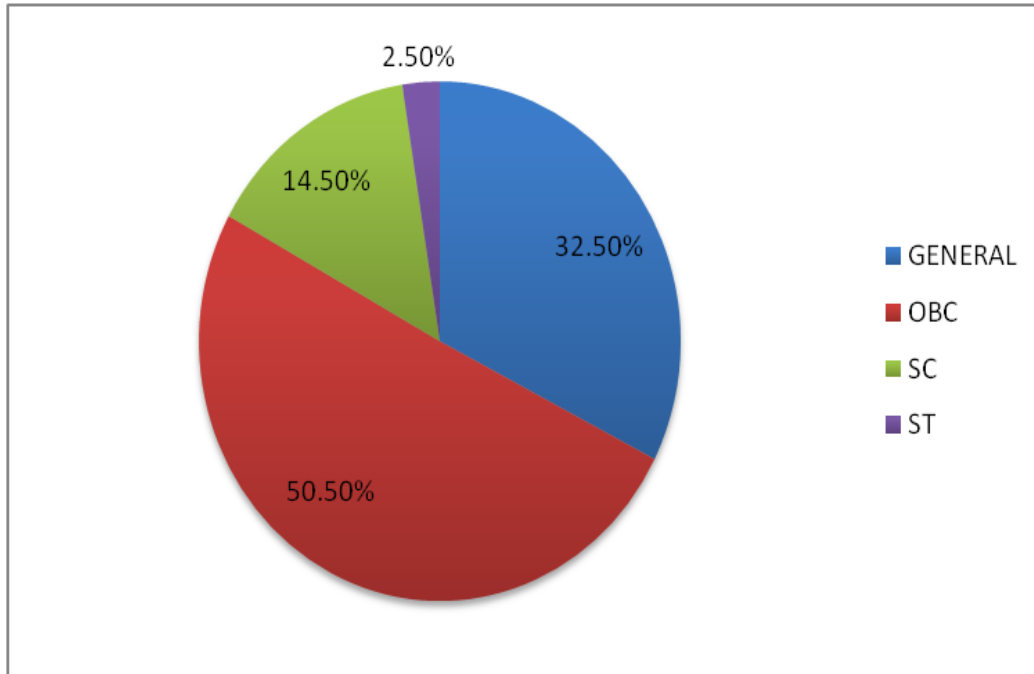
Characteristics of Respondents		Number	Percent
Age Group	10-13 years	24	12
	14-16 years	70	35
	17-19 years	106	53
Category	General	65	32.5
	OBC	101	50.5
	SC	29	14.5
	ST	5	2.5
Grade	Class 8	14	7
	Class 9	28	14
	Class 10	26	13
	Class 11	23	11.5
	Class 12	40	20
	12+	69	34.5

FIGURE 1 : ECONOMIC LEVEL



This figure represents the percentage of girls who are above poverty line and below poverty line.

FIGURE 2 : PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

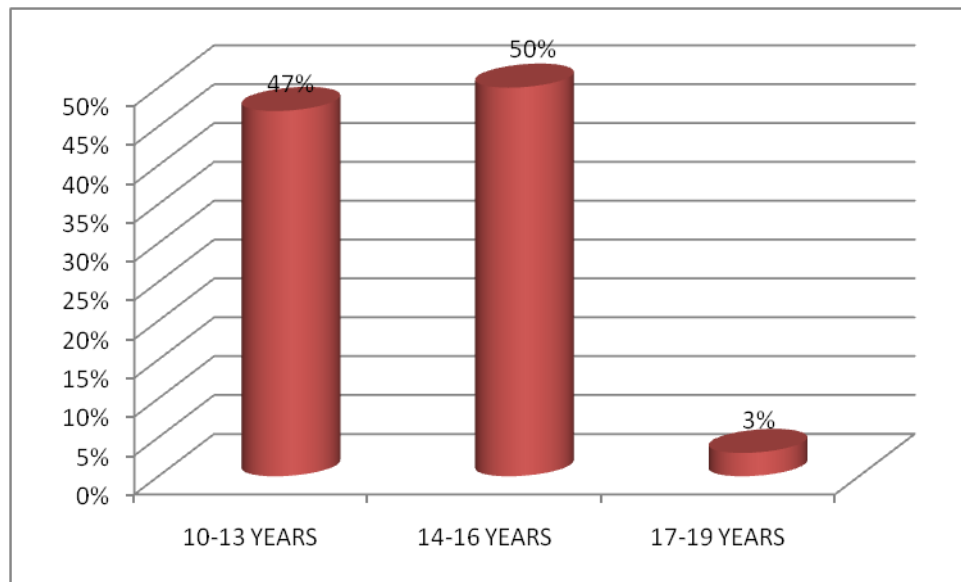


This figure represents that there were 32.50% general girls, 50.50% obc girls. 14.50% sc girls and 2.50% sc girls,

**Table 2 : Adolescent school girls knowledge about menstruation
(n = 200)**

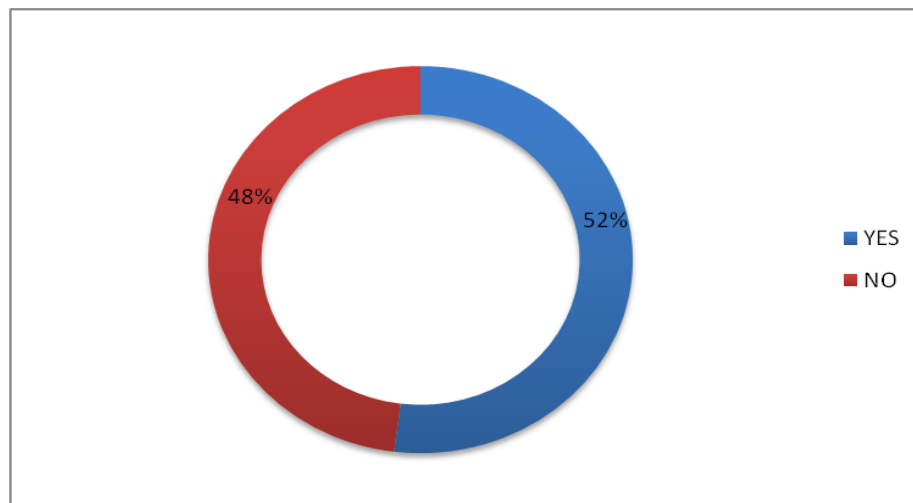
VARIABLE	NUMBERS	PERCENT
Heard about menstruation before menarche	104	52
Feel comfortable to talk about menstruation	32	16
Knew common age range of menarche	70	35
Knew normal menstrual bleeding duration	100	50
Knew duration of a normal menstrual cycle	100	50
Had learnt about menstruation & its hygiene management in schools	4	2
Aware that a girl can go to school during menstruation	190	95

FIGURE 3 : AGE AT MENARCHE



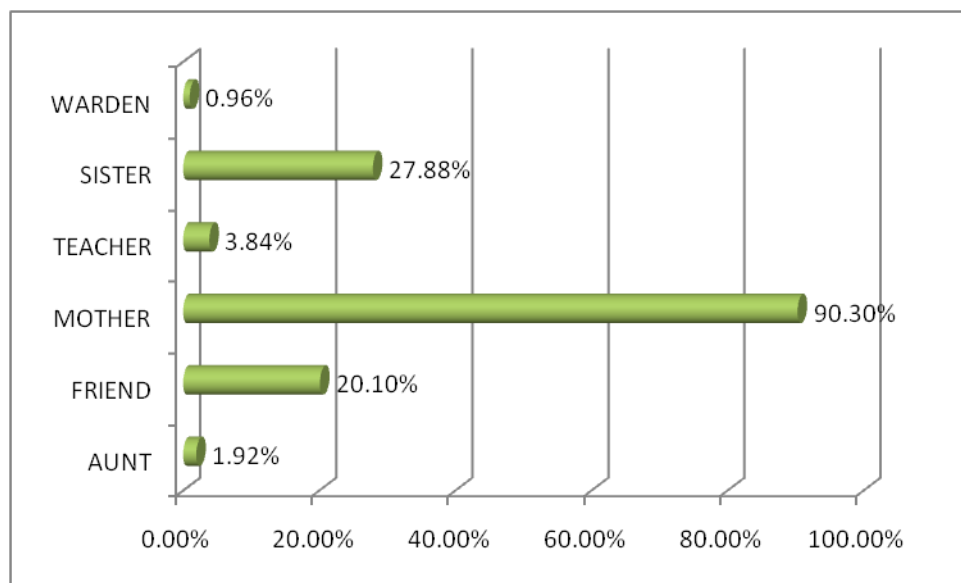
This figure represents that there were 47% girls who had their menarche in the age group 10-13 years, 50% girls who had their menarche in the age group 14-16 years and 3% girls who had their menarche in the age group 17-19 years.

FIGURE 4 : INFORMATION ABOUT MENSTRUATION BEFORE MENARCHE



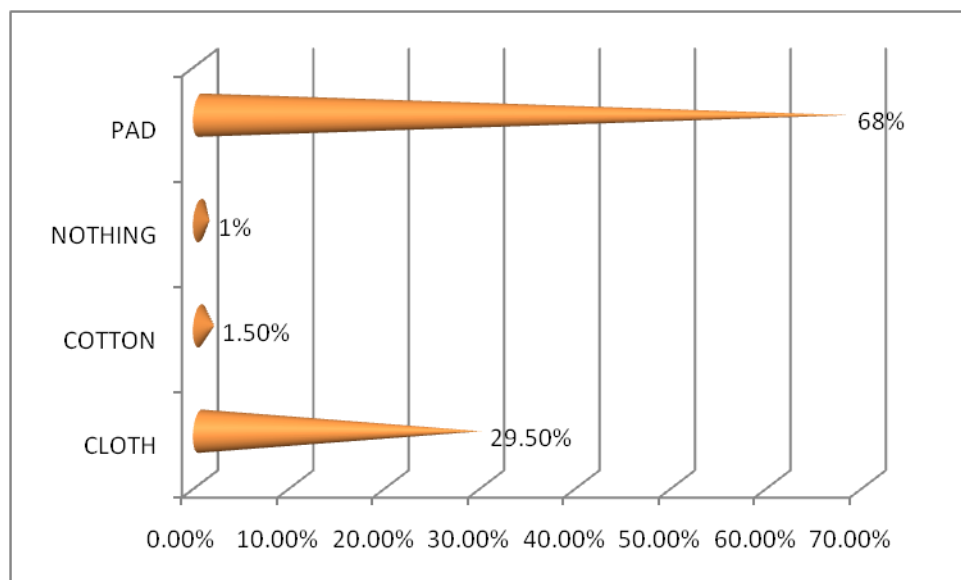
This figure represents that there where 52% girls who had information about menstruation before menarche and 48% girls who did not had information about menstruation before menarche.

FIGURE 5 : SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MENSTRUATION



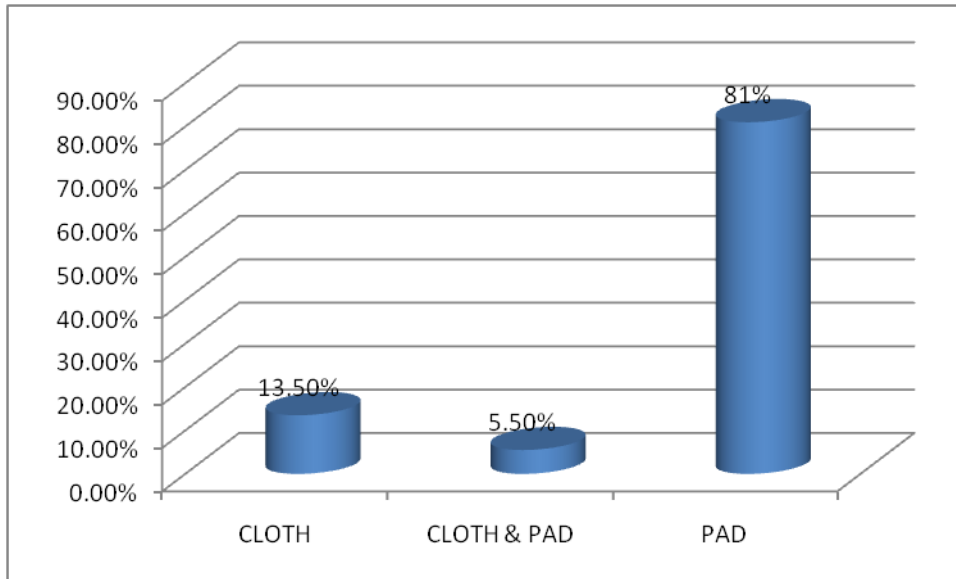
This figure represents the source of information for the girls about menstruation.

FIGURE 6 : SANITARY PRODUCT USED AT MENARCHE



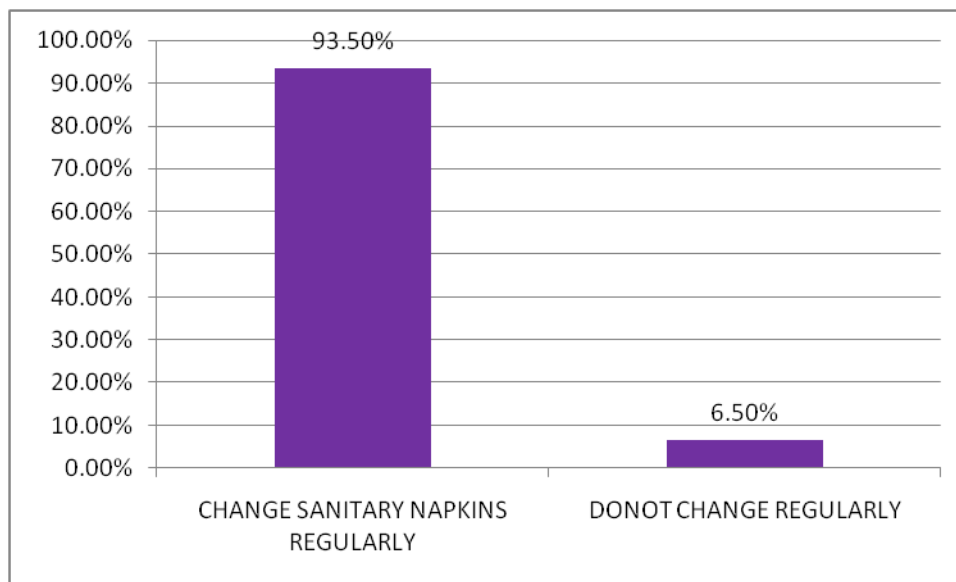
This figure represents the sanitary products used at menarche.

FIGURE 7 : SANITARY PRODUCT USING CURRENTLY



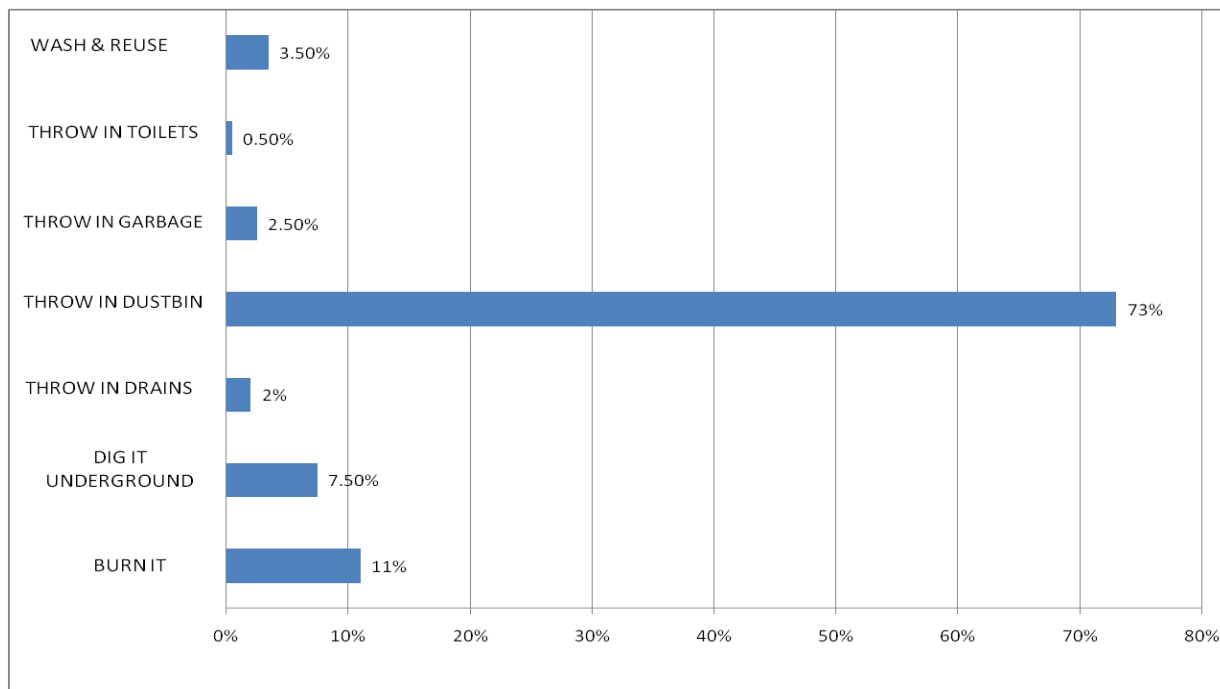
This figure represents the sanitary products used by the girls currently.

FIGURE 8 : INTERVAL OF CHANGING SANITARY NAPKINS



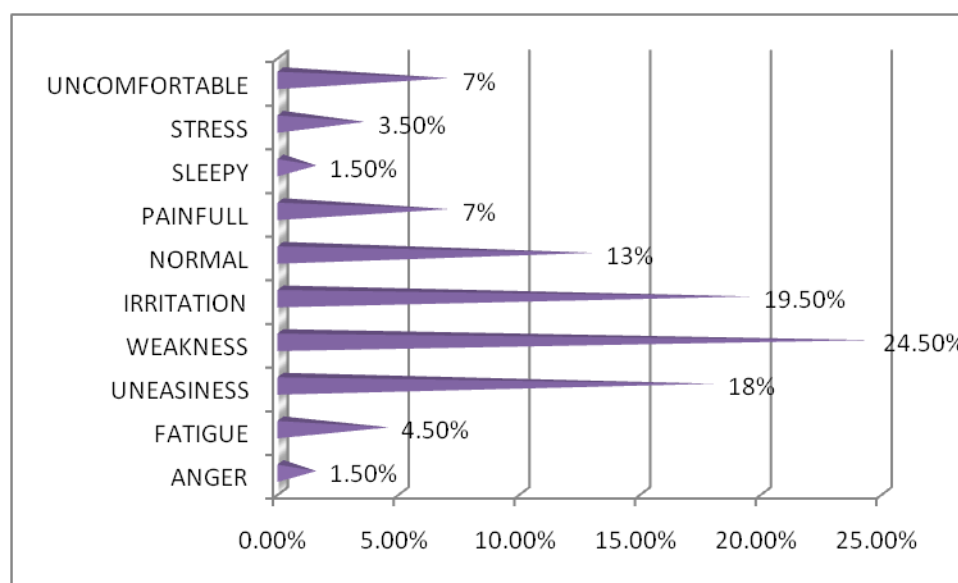
This figure represents the interval of changing sanitary napkins during menstruation. Mostly girls were aware about the management of hygiene during menstruation.

FIGURE 9 : METHOD OF DISPOSAL OF SANITARY PRODUCT



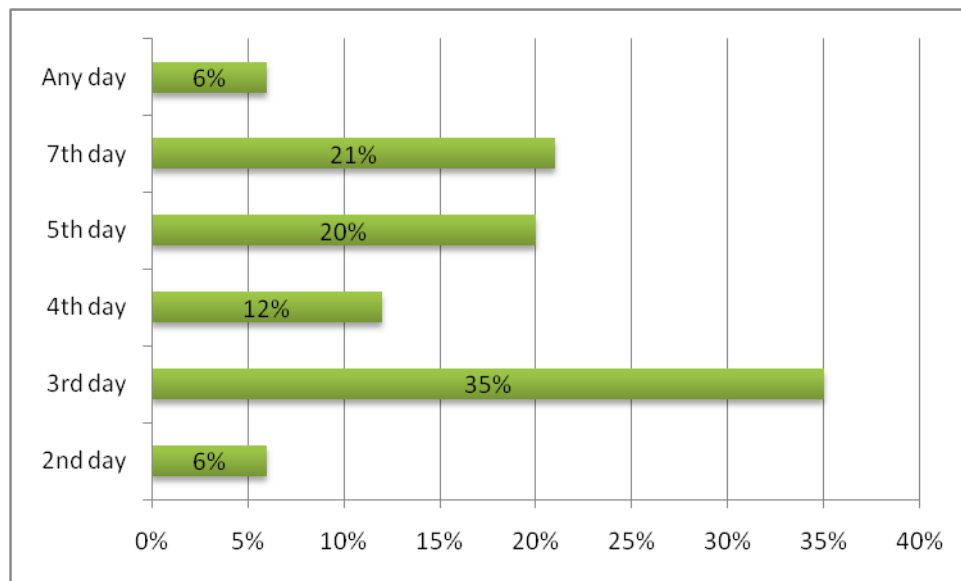
This figure represents the ways of disposing off the used sanitary products by the girls.

FIGURE 10 : FEELING DURING MENSTRUATION



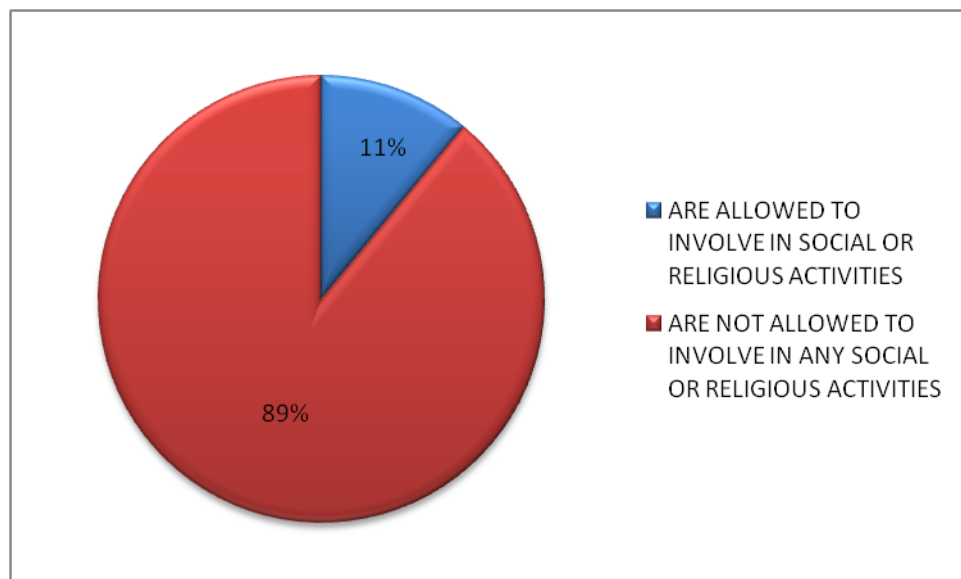
This figure represents the various kinds of feelings through which the girls undergo during menstruation.

FIGURE 11 : PERSISTENCE OF MYTH REGARDING HAIR WASH DURING MENSTRUATION DAYS



This figure represents the myth of washing hair on a particular day during menstruation.

FIGURE 12. INVOLVEMENT IN ANY SOCIAL OR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES



This figure represents the allowance of involvement in any social or religious activities during menstruation.

DISCUSSION:

The study was done on 200 school or college going girls of age 10 to 19 years who falls under the category of adolescence according to WHO. In this study the average age at which the girls had their menarche was 13.7 years. Out of this 200 girls only 104 girls had information about menstruation before menarche while 96 girls did not knew about it before menarche.

The source of information for the girls were their mothers, sister, warden, school teacher, aunt or any friend. Mother had the greatest influence on their daughters whereas their sister or friends also played an important role in informing about menstruation. Some girls (42 out of 104) who had knowledge about menstruation before menarche were not prepared for it and were using cloth or cotton as a sanitary product which is unhygienic and may cause different types of infections which is harmful. These girls were below poverty line so it was difficult for them to afford sanitary products like pads. Some of them used pad but they donot change their sanitary napkins regularly which is also unhygienic which can end into fungal infections. Around 187 girls were aware about the menstrual hygiene and they changed their sanitary napkins regularly and also took bath regularly for the mainataining the hygiene.

There were various feelings which came across the mind of the girls like anger, stress, tension, irritation which made them feel low. The girls also complained about frequent body ache, headache, abdominal pains, vomiting, nausea and dizziness when having period. The dizziness might be due to the loss of blood. There are other discomforts like weakness, fatigue, feeling sleepy and uneasiness quite often also preventing them from participating in classes, which also can lead or contribute to poor academic performances.

Many girls had restrictions in their daily lives simply because they are menstruating. Not entering the “puja” room and the kitchen was the major restriction for the girls during menstruation. Menstruating girls were also restricted from offering prayers and touching holy books. The underlying basis for this myth is also the cultural beliefs of impurity associated with menstruation. It is further believed that menstruating girls are unhygienic and unclean and hence the food they prepare or handle can get contaminated. However, as long as general hygiene measures are taken into account, no scientific test has shown menstruation as the reason for spoilage of any food in making.

Girls also followed some strict dietary restrictions such as sour food like curd, tamarind, and pickles were usually avoided by them during menstruation. It is believed that such foods will disturb or stop the menstrual flow.

Such taboos about menstruation present in many societies impact on girls’ and women's emotional state, mentality and lifestyle and most importantly, health.

The study showed that when girls are inadequately informed about the menstrual process prior to menarche, this will lead to confusion, anxiety and sheer terror. This only can be avoided through adequate information about the process of menstruation timely before menarche.

When the girls were asked why menstruation is kept so secret, they could not name a concrete reason. They just said that they were told by elders that it is a taboo to talk about it, which shows how cultural norms impact negatively on the knowledge of the process of menstruation.

They also have been told to wash their hairs on a particular day to get pure without any explanation given to them. They followed what their elders said. Infact some of their family members made them feel dirty about it and the girls were also not allowed to meet any guests coming to their place.

CONCLUSION:

As a conclusion it can be stated that the girls' knowledge about issues of menstrual cycle is influenced by cultural beliefs and practices. The various myths and taboos affects the mental status of the girls especially during the period of adolescence because this is the time when they start learning about these things. Girls get confused about what to do which results in irritation about menstrual cycle. They suffer from various health issues and mental issues. Very less number of girls understand that it is a physical and natural process which is not to be worried about. A large number of girls feels that it is a dirty thing and needs to be hidden. They keep it a secret as suggested by their elders. It can also be concluded that the taboo of menstruation results in silence which leads to lack of correct knowledge of the process. Girls have to follow the various myths and traditions which are provided by their culture which results in stress and tensions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There should be more awareness created about menstrual hygiene and girls should start using pads as a sanitary napkin. Government should make it affordable for the girls who are not able to purchase it.
- School teachers should play a major role in telling the students about menstrual cycle.
- The taboo of not cooking food while menstruating should not be there.
- Proper counselling of girls should be done.

SUPPLEMENTARY:

INSTRUMENTATION:

Questionnaire

Name _____

Caste _____

Age _____

Religion _____

Below Poverty Line Yes, No Or Don't know

Q.1 At what age did your menstruation started ?

Q.2 Did you knew about menstruation before menarche ?

Yes No

Q.3 If yes, what was the source of information ?

Q.4 What did you used as a sanitary product for your menarche?

Q.5 Which sanitary product do you use now ?

Q.6 How do you dispose used sanitary products ?

Q.7 Do you wash your hands after disposing the used sanitary product?

Always Sometimes Never

Q.8 Do you change sanitary napkins regularly?
Always Sometimes Never

Q.9 Do you take bath regularly during menstruation?
Always Sometimes Never

Q.10 How do you feel during menstruation?

Q.11 What problems do you face while menstruating?

Q.12 When do you wash your hairs during menstruation?

Q.13 Did any situation arrived when you took medicines to extend your period?
Yes No

Q.14 Are you allowed to involve in any social or religious activities while menstruating?
Yes No

Q.15 Do you change your regular diet plan during menstruation?
Yes No

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