

PROJECT TITLE:
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.

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.

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.

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: Questionnaire and Interview.

TYPE OF DATA:

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

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

CHART 1 : ECONOMIC LEVEL

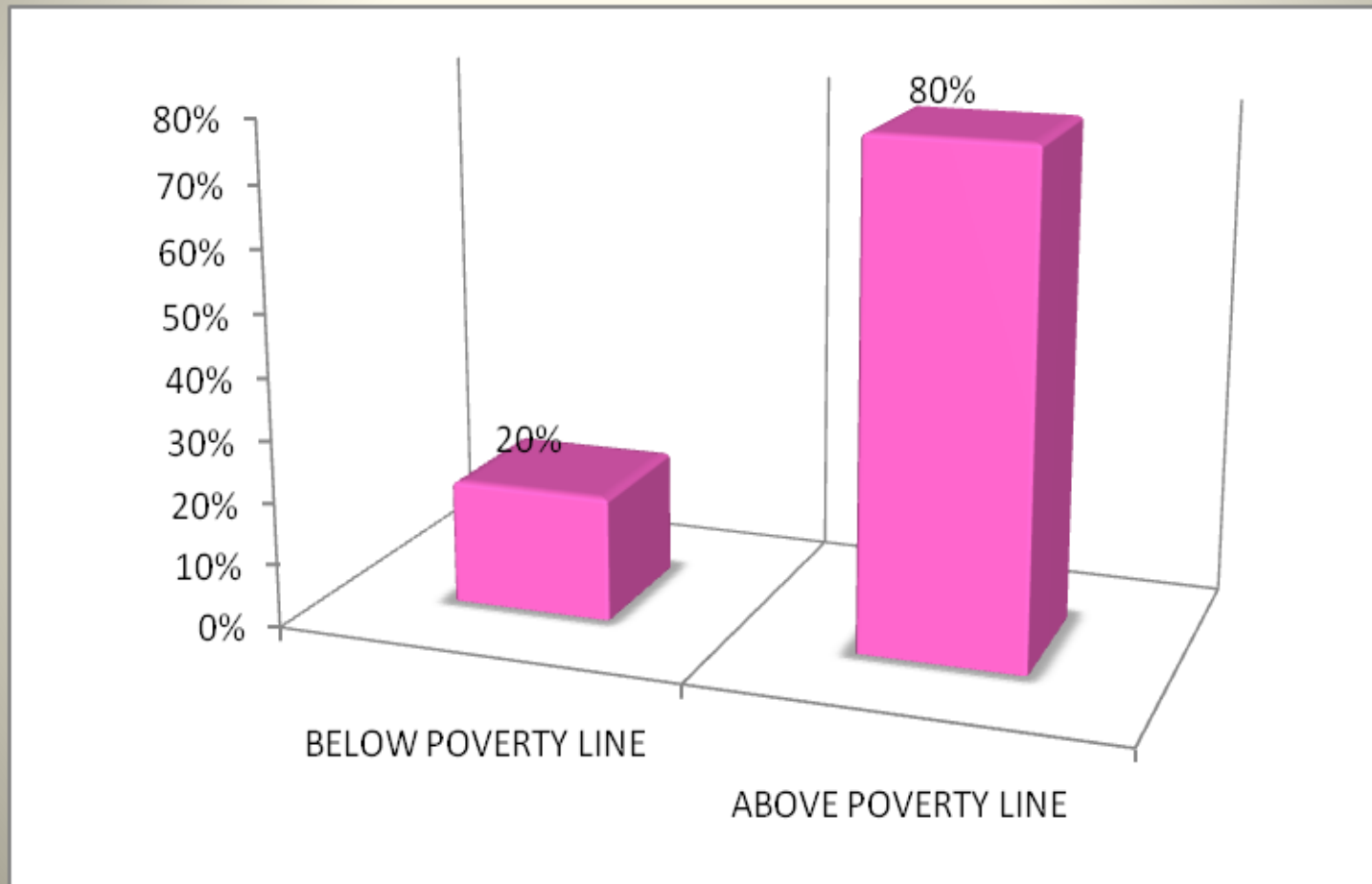


CHART 2 : PERCENTAGE OF GIRLS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

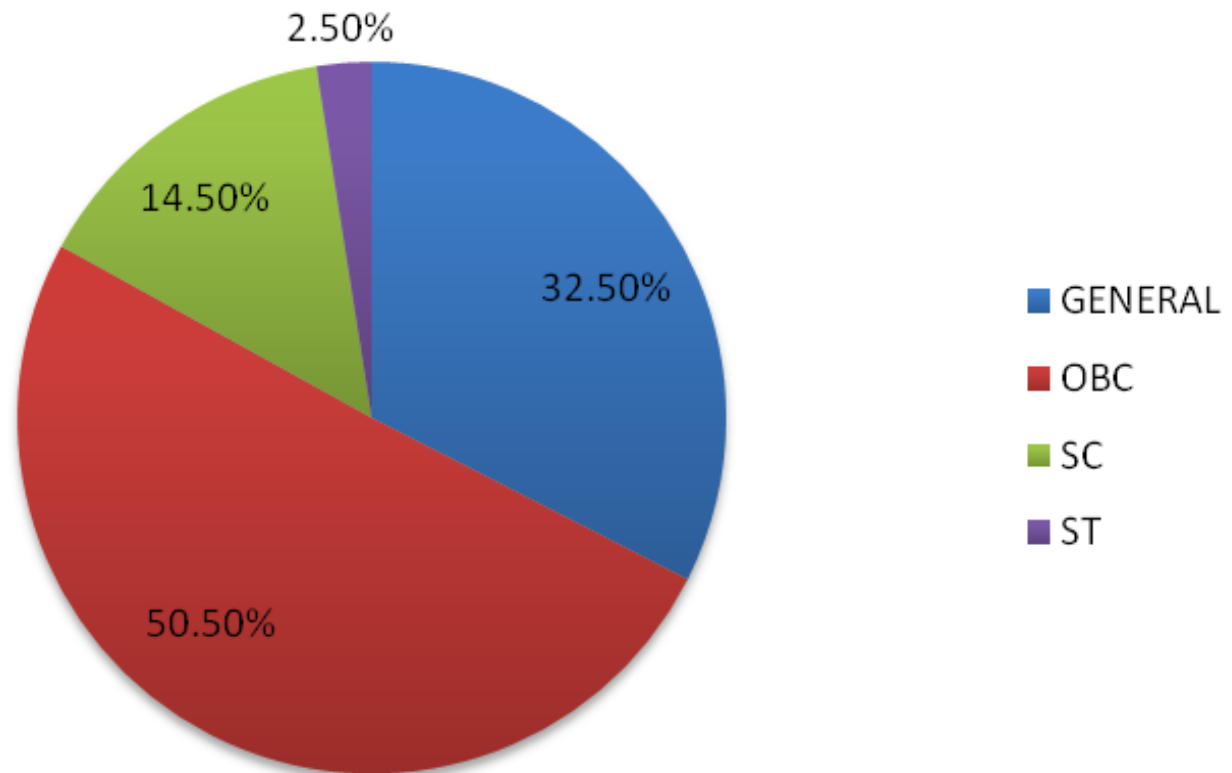


Table 2 Adolescent school girls knowledge about menstruation
(n = 200)

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

CHART 3 : AGE AT MENARCHE

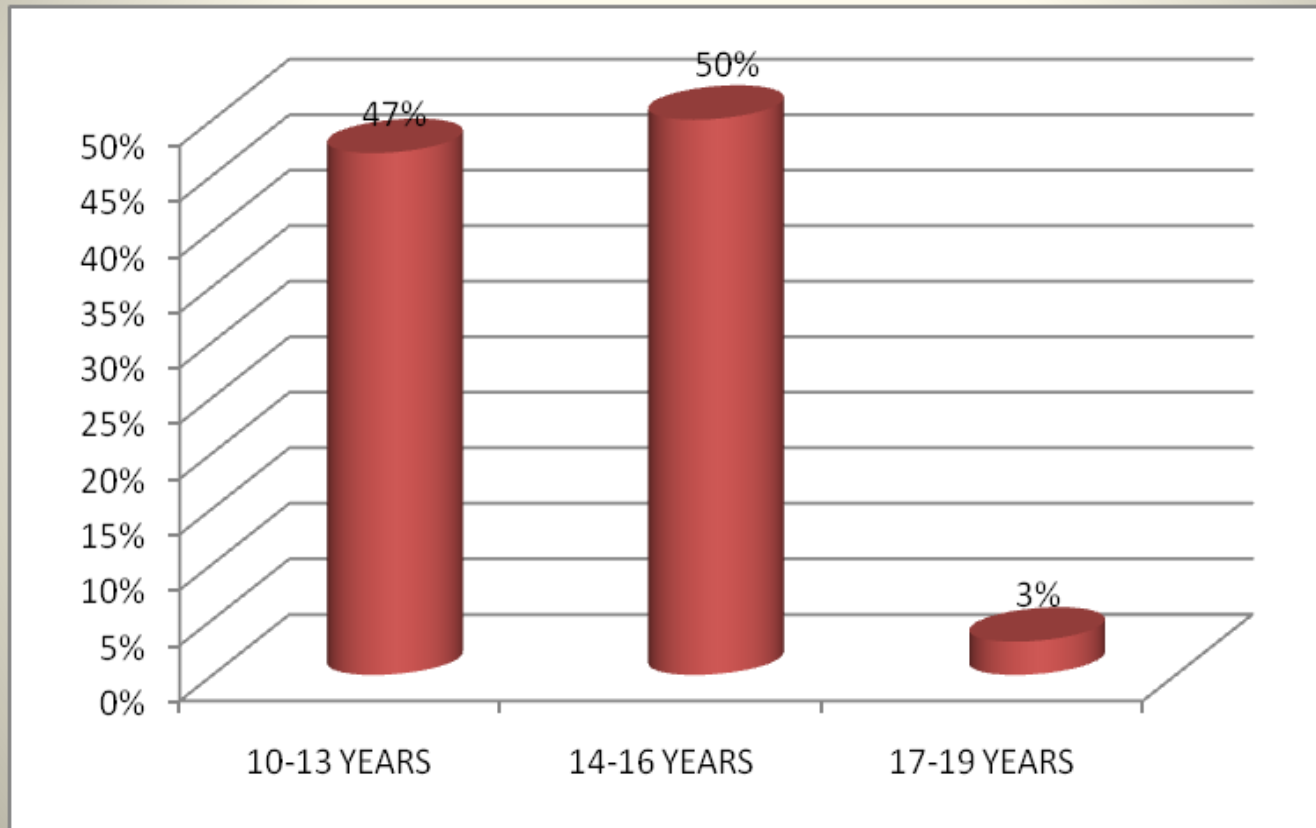


CHART 4 : INFORMATION ABOUT MENSTRUATION
BEFORE MENARCHE

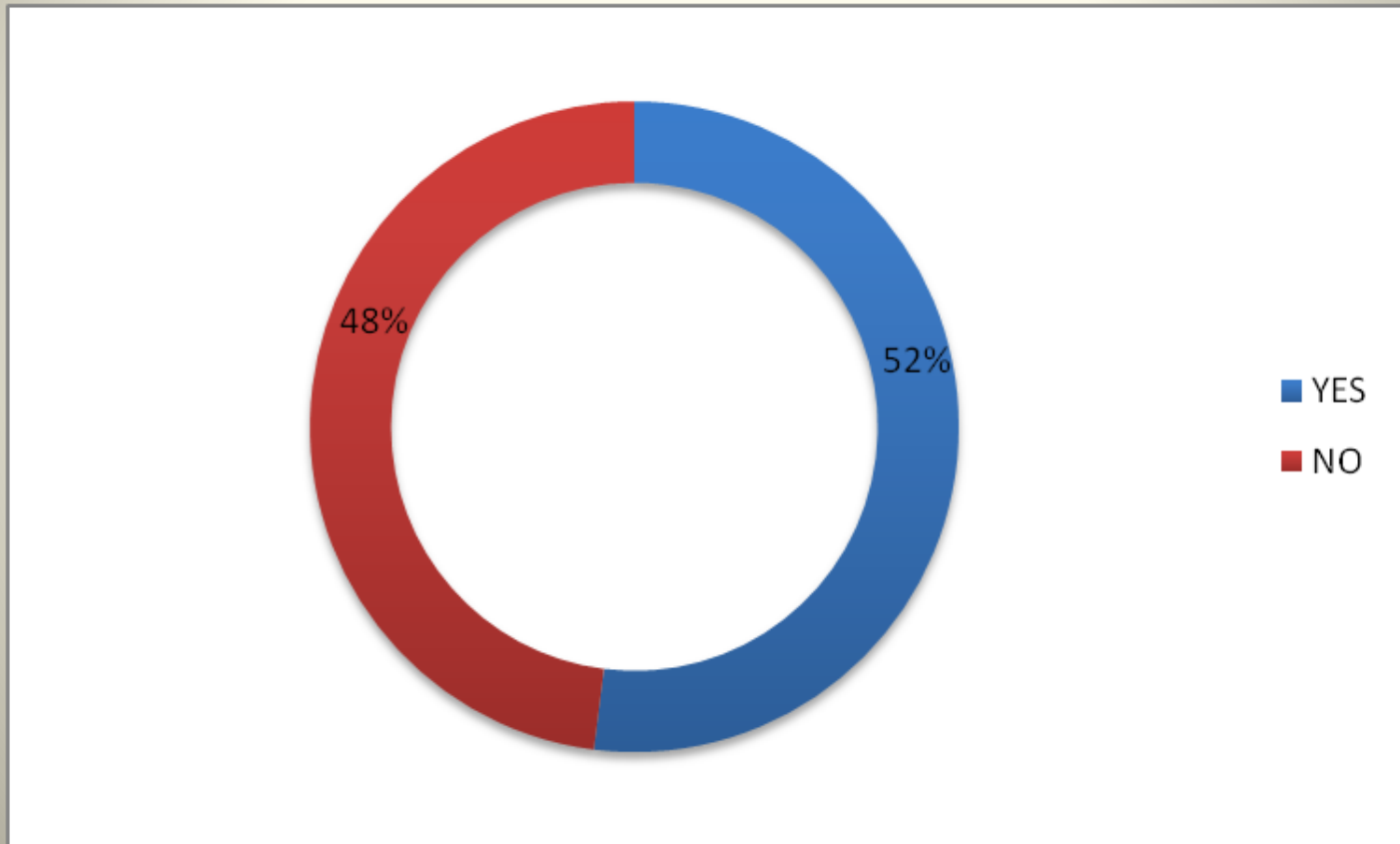


CHART 5 : SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MENSTRUATION

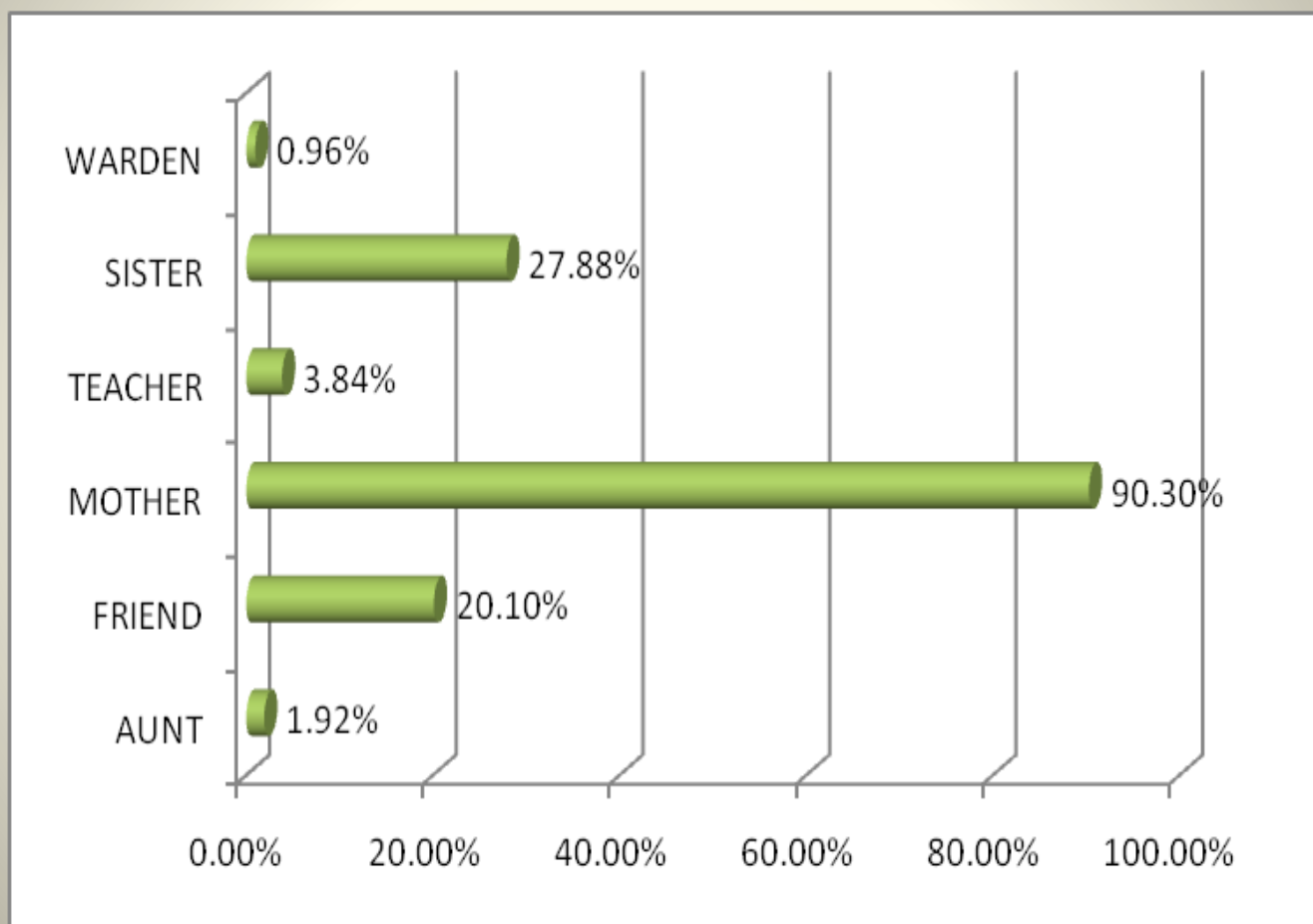


CHART 6 : SANITARY PRODUCT USED AT MENARCHE

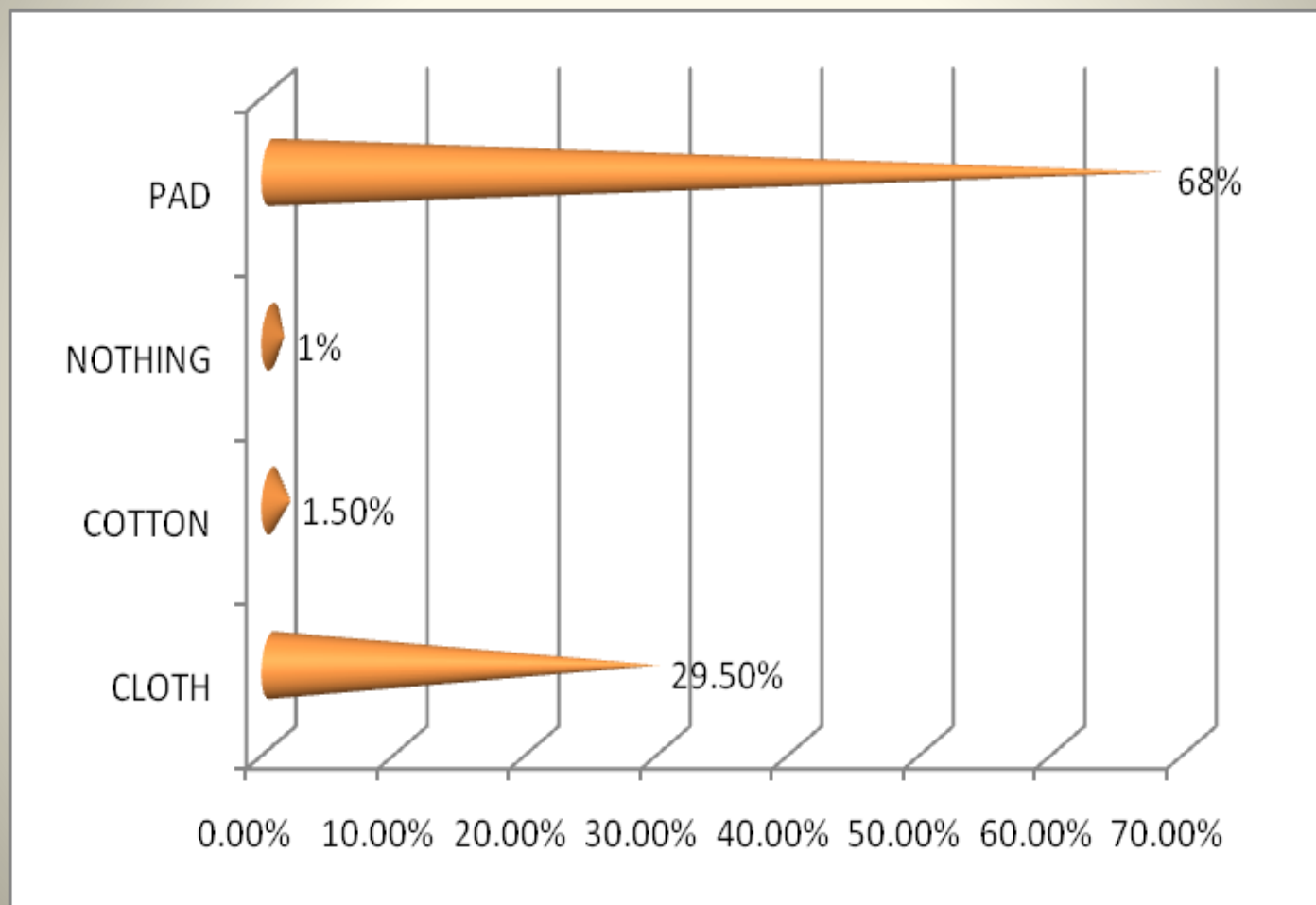


CHART 7 : SANITARY PRODUCT USING CURRENTLY

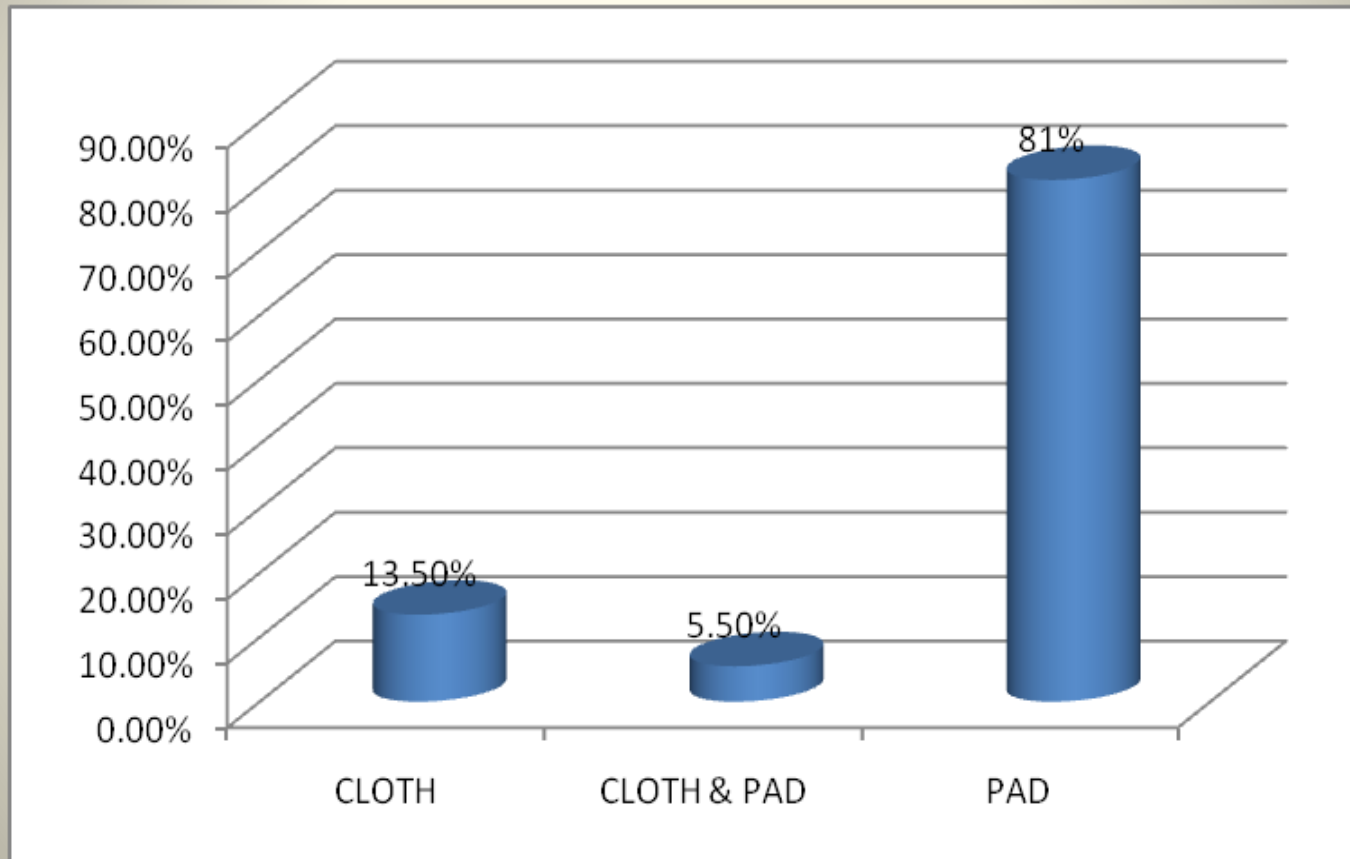


CHART 8 : INTERVAL OF CHANGING SANITARY NAPKINS

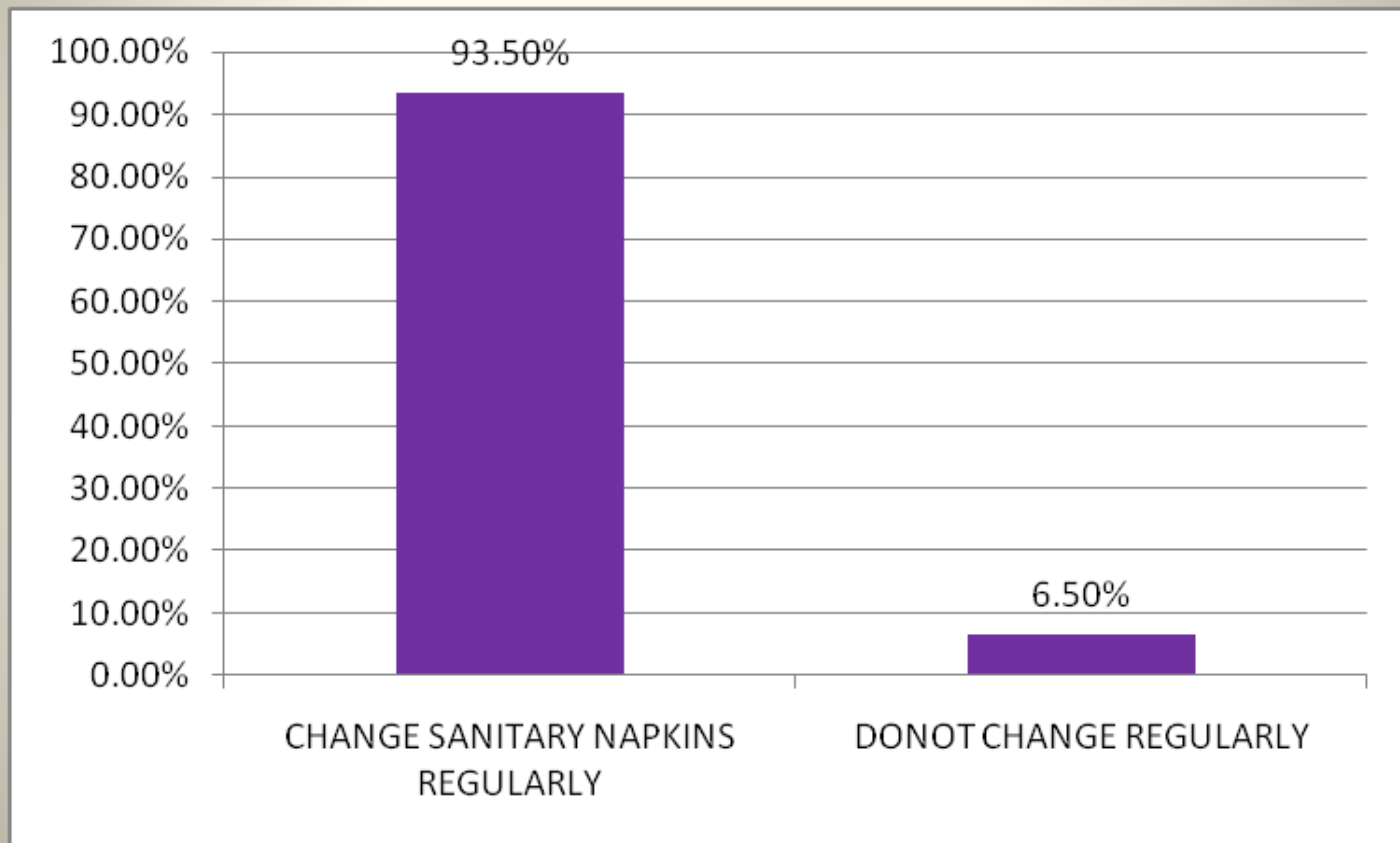


CHART 9 : METHOD OF DISPOSAL OF SANITARY PRODUCT

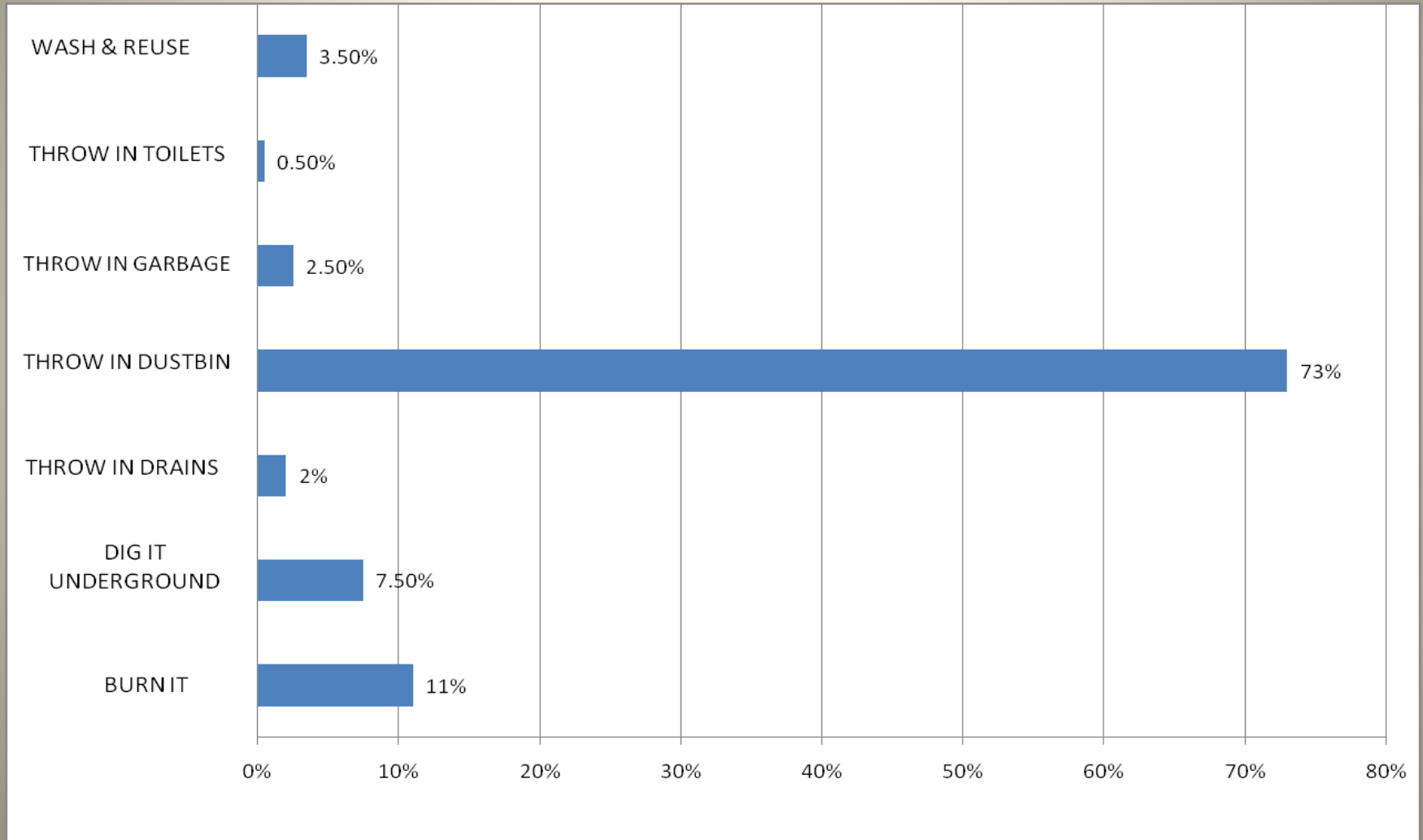


CHART 10 : FEELING DURING MENSTRUATION

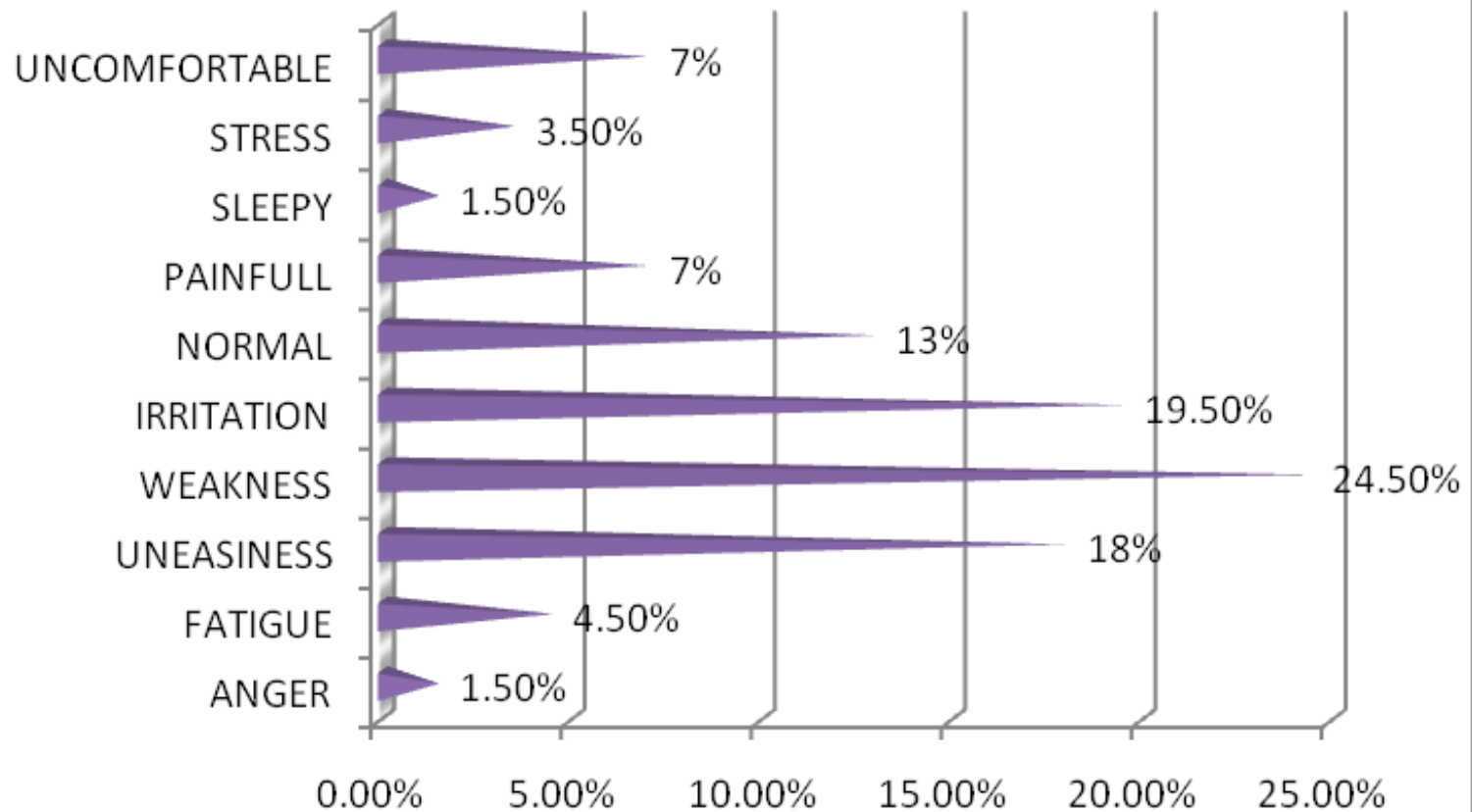


CHART 11 : PERSISTENCE OF MYTH REGARDING HAIR
WASH DURING MENSTRUATION DAYS

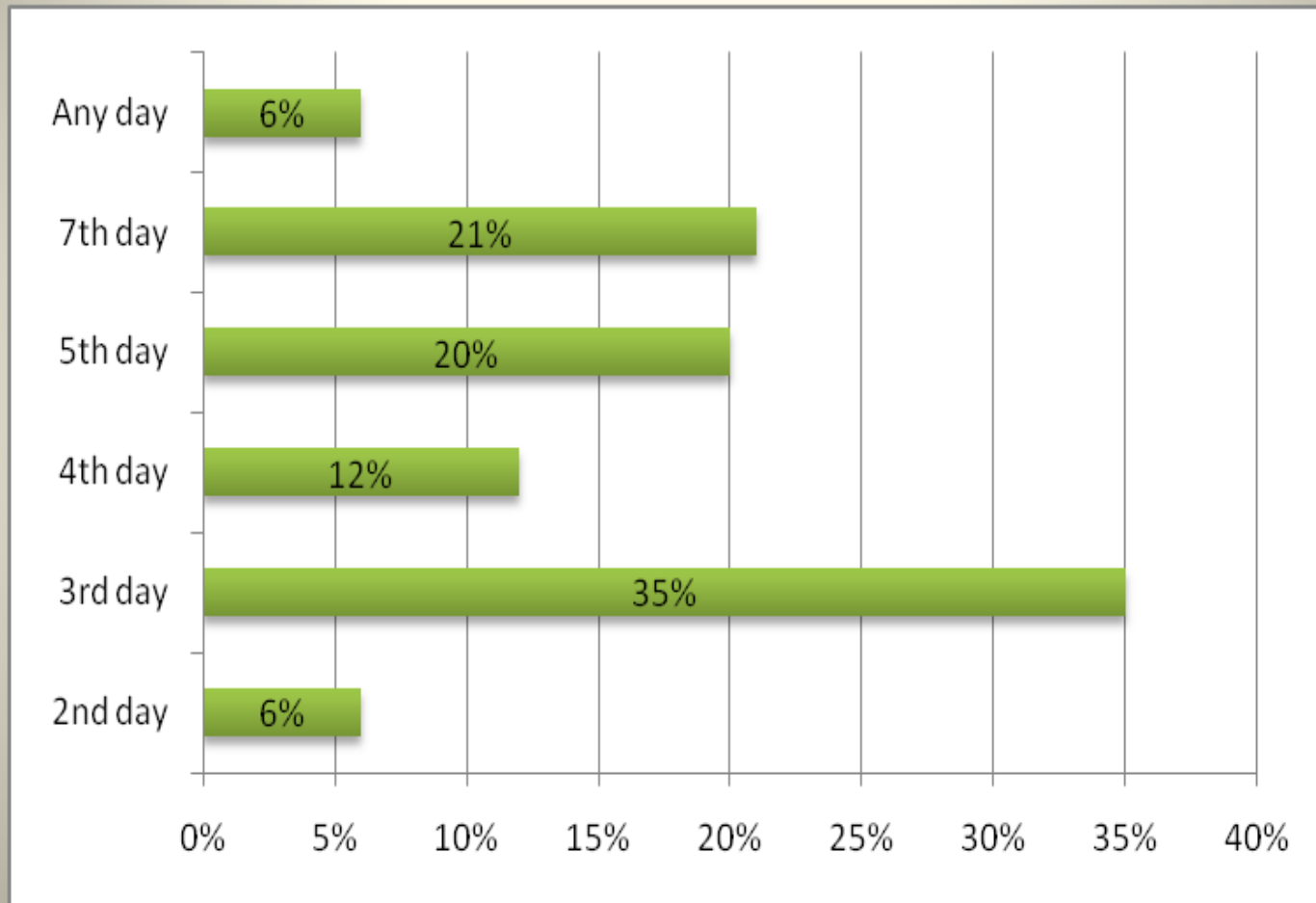
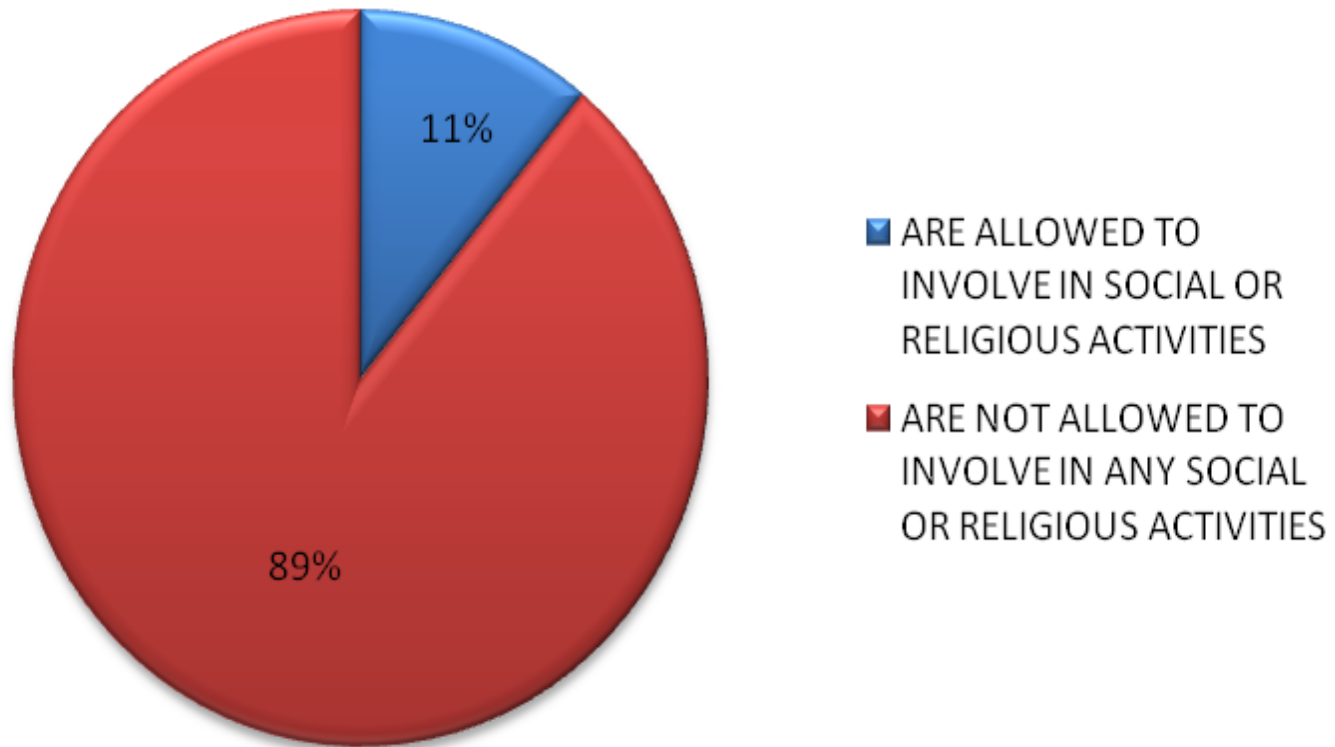


CHART 12. INVOLVEMENT IN ANY SOCIAL OR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES



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.
- 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.
- Around 187 girls were aware about the menstrual hygiene and they changed their sanitary napkins regularly and also took bath regularly for the maintaining 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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. 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.