



THE SILENT STRUGGLE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON MENSTRUAL CHALLENGES AMONG UNIVERSITY WOMEN RESEARCHERS

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ABSTRACT

Background

In Middle Income countries the main problems are mainly related to health like physical Health, Mental health, psychological problems etc. mensuration is one of the main challenges in women life. In our countries like India, where mensuration is criticised, it can be particularly difficult. So that why this paper examines challenges related to mensuration for young women pursuing PhD in lovely professional university, Phagwara, Punjab, India. Life course interviews were conducted with 10 young women ages 25- 30 pursuing PhD in lovely professional university. Thematic analysis helps us to recognised to problems and challenges related to mensuration in young women life. And what's problems faced during their mensuration period and what's the issues they are tackling at that time.

Methods

This study aims convenient sampling was applied to select participants. Different approaches are used to collect data and triangulate data: in-depth interviews, observation, Photovoice We analyses the data with the help of content analysis and frequency cum percentage.

KEYWORDS: Health, Menstrual, Women, Problem's, Knowledge about menstrual hygiene; Practice; Hygiene; Peri-pad; Reproductive age; Genitalia Menstruation

Abbreviations: FGD: Focus Group Discussion

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a natural aspect of the female reproductive cycle, which begins when girls reach puberty and are ready for sexual maturity. It is a female-specific issues. A lady bleeds from her uterus through her vagina during her menstruation. While the uterine contraction regulates how much blood is lost, the hypothalamus, pituitary, and ovarian functions determine the monthly rhythm. Three to seven days are the length of the menstrual cycle. The menarche, or the start of menstruation, varies depending on ethnicity and family, but for the majority of girls, it begins between the ages of 10 and 14 and 45 to 55. Geographical conditions, racial considerations, nutritional standards, environmental impacts, and participation in physically demanding activities, among others If the lady does not get pregnant during a certain cycle, 28 days. The age of menarche can be affected by any deviation from the twenty-eight-day rhythm, even if it is only two or three days. In her lifetime, a woman will have about 500 periods. The amount of blood lost is thought to be between 50 and 200 ml. They weren't allowed to contact any men, go get water, go into the kitchen, or worship the gods when they were menstrual since they were thought to be holy. Due to menstruation difficulties, adolescent females frequently go to the outpatient endocrinology clinic. In the countryside, women use homemade sanitary napkins, which are not adequately cleaned, during menstruation. Periodic menstruation is a risk factor. for a number of major illnesses. Because menstrual hygiene and management issues are not currently being discussed in discussions about policies, there is a need for funding and other initiatives. The urethra in females is rather short and prone to ascending infections. Teenage females may experience a variety of issues without completely comprehending the reasons behind them. The importance of menstruation, the emergence of secondary sexual traits, the choice of a sanitary menstrual absorbent, and its proper disposal should all be explained to the girls. Menstrual hygiene education and sex education should both be made mandatory so that people can talk freely about these topics without experiencing uneasy.

OBJECTIVE

1. To assess the experiences of women research scholars during menstrual period
2. To identify issues and challenges faced (including health) by women research scholars due to their menstruation.



MENSTRUATION

A menstrual cycle typically lasts 28 days. The first day of one period marks the beginning of the cycle, which concludes on the first day of the following period. On day 14, the typical lady ovulates. Some women suffer slight lower stomach pain, spotting, or bleeding at this period, while others show no symptoms at all. If a woman engages in sexual conduct just before and during ovulation, she is typically more likely to become pregnant (fertile).

What is a Period?

The endometrium, which lines the uterus, sheds during the menstrual phase of the female reproductive cycle. Throughout a woman's reproductive life, this happens. The endometrium prepares itself to support a foetus with each monthly cycle. Increased amounts of progesterone and oestrogen contribute to the walls' thickening. The menstrual flow, which leaves the body through the vagina during the period if fertilisation is unsuccessful, is made up of the endometrium, blood, and mucus from the vagina and cervix hair. When a female gets her period for the first time can vary depending on stress, exercise, and food. A young lady should speak with her doctor, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, if she hasn't begun menstruating by the age of 15, or if her breast buds, pubic hair, or underarm hair haven't appeared by the age of 13.

How long does a cycle of menses last?

An average menstrual cycle for women who are menstruation lasts 28 days. It begins on the first day of the previous period and concludes on the first day of the subsequent one. But women's cycles can vary in duration, especially in the first year or two after a young woman's first period. Ladies might have

What time does menstruation begin?

A young lady in the United States often experiences her first menstrual period at around age 12. This usually occurs 2 to 3 years after her breasts first begin to develop. She also just became aware of her underarm and pubic During the first few years, there may be cycles as short as 21 days or as long as 45 days. Anything outside of this range, though, might need medical treatment.

Women Sanitary Health in India

In India, women, and schoolgirls in particular, have the difficult burden of preserving their sanitary health while the pandemic is still going on. The "Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin" plan, under which women were to have access to reasonably priced sanitary pads, was introduced by the Indian government in 2018. Government schools now have vending machines that give away free sanitary pads to female students. However, a crucial link in the supply chain for these pads has been weakened as a result of the ongoing closure of such schools during the state-wide lockdown, leading to an unexpected shortage of sanitary napkins. This puts economically vulnerable women at a heightened risk for illnesses and difficulties linked to poor sanitation. What is even more alarming is that the manufacture of sanitary napkins has been severely limited as a result of the n areas like Jharkhand and Maharashtra, lockdown and movement restrictions are still in effect. Even in the most developed cities, the availability of menstrual hygiene products, which includes disposable and reusable sanitary pads, is extremely unpredictable, and it is nearly non-existent in rural areas that are located distant from major supply hubs. Due to the unavailability of public transit, the restrictions on mobility during the lockdown, the raised prices brought on by stocking and black marketing, women who could afford the pads at their regular pricing nevertheless are unable to obtain them. Education about menstrual hygiene is frowned upon in India. It can be awkward for women to ask a male family member—who typically brings home purchases from the market—for sanitary supplies. Particularly in rural places, women are housebound and rely on male or senior female family members to get sanitary items. Women are unable to practise personal sanitary hygiene, such as changing menstrual pads, washing cloth pads, and drying them in sunlight for proper disinfection, due to the lack of clean, private, safe water and sanitation facilities. Girls reduce their food and water intake to reduce potty usage, so they don't have to change pads as frequently because pads are scarce. Over time, these habits can cause serious health problems. The social division that still exists in India today has been made clear by the COVID-19 crisis. Because of this, Indian society has maintained a patriarchal mentality over the years which a difference in rank exists between men and women. Men are recognised as the family's independent breadwinners, while women are seen as dependents whose main responsibility is to take care of the home. As a result, women are unable to become economically independent and must rely on males to buy sanitary items, which are now much more expensive due to a supply shortfall. Due to the economic subjugation and the lack of gender equality, which allows men to assume the dominant role in the home, women's needs are entirely dependent on men. The discrimination continues because economic status also plays a significant impact. The Both gender inequality and the income gap between men and women are serious issues. While upper class ladies can easily have their sanitary goods delivered to their homes, the poor and downtrodden still struggle to make ends meet when it comes to purchasing even the most basic of sanitation supplies. Women have been oppressed as a result of the gender and economic disparity, especially those from rural or marginalised groups who lack access to education and whose maintenance of sanitary conditions becomes a luxury in the absence of awareness campaigns. The government's ongoing disregard for women and girls is evident in its refusal to publicise sanitation awareness campaigns or to include sanitary items as basic necessities in the first place. India's basic hygiene requirements. Although sanitary pads were listed by the government as needs, little was done to balance supply and demand interruptions. Additionally, no initiatives



were made to establish sanitary pad distribution sites to take the place of schools. It must stop immediately when women and their needs are treated with such discrimination. The current crisis has set the stage for future issues that will be considerably more severe. Many sanitary pad manufacturing facilities have switched to producing PPE kits, masks, etc. in order to secure a consistent revenue due to the government's virtually non-existent support. The decrease in dedicated units will probably prevent output from returning to normal and result in a scarcity continuing even after the shutdown is over. Two resolutions that recognised the right to sanitary conditions and clean water for all people were adopted by the UN General Assembly, one in 2010 and the other in 2015. The 2015 resolution placed a specific emphasis on sanitation and urged nations to guarantee that women participate fairly in decisions relating to sanitation management and practises. The Pandemic has had a terrible impact on the menstrual health of millions of girls and women in India, and the future is bleak. Menstrual health should be prioritised by the government, integrated into disaster relief plans, and acknowledged as a fundamental right protected by the Indian Constitution.

Hygiene and the Safety Pad

S.NO	Menstrual practices Variables				
1	i)Practices	A) Use of sanitary pads	B) Pieces of cloth	C) newspapers	
		10	0	0	100%
2.	ii) How often do you changes pads/clothes	A) Once	B) Twices	C) More than four	
		0	3	7	70%
3	Frequency of bathing during menstrual period	once	twice	none	
		3	7	0	70%
4	Where do you discard the pads	Pit toilet	Refuce bin	Flush in toilet	
		0	10	0	100%
5	Care of underwear /panty	Wash and expose to sun	Wash and hide	Hide and discard	
		10	0	0	100%
6	Storage of under wear	Clean and covered	Unclean and uncovered		
		10	0		100%
7.	Pre pain menstrual time	Yes	No		
		10	0		100%
8.	Mood swings menstrual time	Yes	No		
		9	0		90%
9.	Period delay time	Yes	No		
		7	3		70%
total					N=10

Analysis of the Data (N=10)

DISCUSSION

Given the findings in the study and reflecting on the objective of the study, it is dear that menstrual hygiene and management is an issue for women research scholars in lovely professional university. Their perceptions were heavily influenced by today time. Investigator identified the issues faced by the women during mensuration. They have bad experienced before started their cycle i.e mood swings, period delay time has been identified in this study. As observed by the researchers. Menstruation is a very complex process involving many different hormones, the sexual organs, and the nervous system. Regular exercise and keeping fit and healthy can help to regulate the menstrual cycle. The women told the observers which would normally be changed around two to four times during menstruation. Instead, the vast majority of women are using pads during their time. This was the good news because almost all the women much more aware about their hygiene and health. But Most of the women feel upset and tension during the first day of menstruation. These women research scholars of lovely professional university experienced upset and tension during their period.



CONCLUSION

The study has highlighted the issues and challenges faced by women research scholars during their periods (menstruation). But the results were that most of the women were much more aware about their hygiene and they know all the things regarding their cycle and maintain proper balance and using safety pads and proper change the pads during that time. After using the pads they can throw them into a dustbin. Only one thing was bad, that most of the women faced bad experiences during their menstruation.

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