

Cross Sectional Study on Menstrual Hygiene

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Abstract

Background

Menstruation as a subject has recently emerged from the veil of taboos and restrictions prevalent among a significant number of women. They often have inadequate and incomplete knowledge of personal care and hygiene during menstruation. To improve and educate target population, the extent of the knowledge gap must be known. There are currently vast gaps in this data, worldwide.

Materials and Methodology

A cross sectional study was conducted among 200 females in the age group of 10-49 years at local schools and those attending OPD at NC Medical College, Israna, Panipat, Haryana, India. A convenient sample was taken and after consent, questionnaire was filled and subsequently analyzed with a proper statistical method.

Results

Results were obtained on a statistical basis.

Conclusion

It appears that further emphasis needs to be given to educate the women to ensure their health and empower them to look after themselves and pass on the knowledge to their next generation.

Keywords: Menstruation, hygiene, knowledge, practice

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I. Introduction

Menstruation is a physiological process, yet is connected with many misconceptions, myths and taboos. Females of all age groups do not possess complete awareness about clean and healthy menstrual practices. Lack of knowledge, socio-cultural restrictions and shyness to talk about it, increase the problems manifold. The unsynchronized learning between culture and hygienic practices disturbs the axle balancing them. Globally, several surveys addressing this issue have been conducted and data from North America, Ghana, Ethiopia, Nepal and countries of South Asia could be found. In India, studies regarding menstrual hygiene have been conducted in Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Karnataka. Very few studies have been conducted in Haryana and data regarding awareness about menstruation is lacking. Menstrual hygiene is however not explicitly mentioned in any of the Sustainable Developmental Goals as adopted by UN but still directly linked in achieving several of the proposed SDGs including SDG3, SDG4, SDG5, SDG6 and SDG8. UNICEF's work in WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) is remarkably included in SDG6.

II. Materials and Methodology

A cross sectional study was carried out in the local schools of Israna and OPD attending NC Medical College and Hospital, Israna, Panipat, Haryana from 15 November 2019 to 30 November 2019. A total of 200 participants were in for this study.

Study Design: Cross sectional study

Study Location: Local schools of Israna and Hospital Israna, and OPD attending NC Medical College Panipat, Haryana

Study Duration: 15 November 2019 to 30 November 2019

Sample Size: 200 participants

Inclusion Criteria:

1. All adolescents and older women (12-49 years)
2. Pregnant women

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Menopausal Women
2. Women having undergone hysterectomy

Procedure methodology

A pre informed written consent was taken from all participants. Questions were asked in their vernacular language from the questionnaire addressed to them. Subsequent statistical analysis was done.

Statistical Analysis: Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 20. Chi square values were obtained and few results were significant.

III. Result

Table no. 1 shows a pie chart depicting percentage of people belonging to rural and urban population in the study.

Table no. 1: shows percentage of people belonging to rural or urban areas

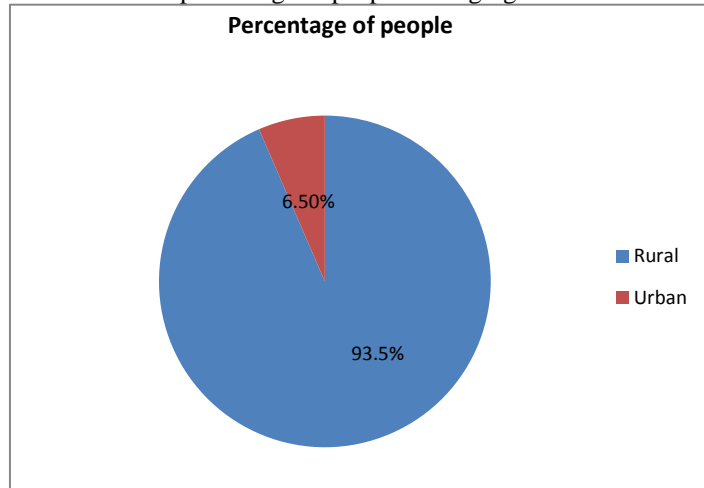


Table no. 2 shows the socioeconomic status of the people under study considered using BG Prasad classification of 51% of the population belonged to Class 4 i.e. Upper Lower Class and 29.50% belonged to Class 5 i.e. Lower Class. 17% population was Class 3 i.e. Lower Middle Class and 2.50% population was Class 2 i.e. Upper Middle

Table no. 2: Shows the pie chart depicting socioeconomic status of the population under study

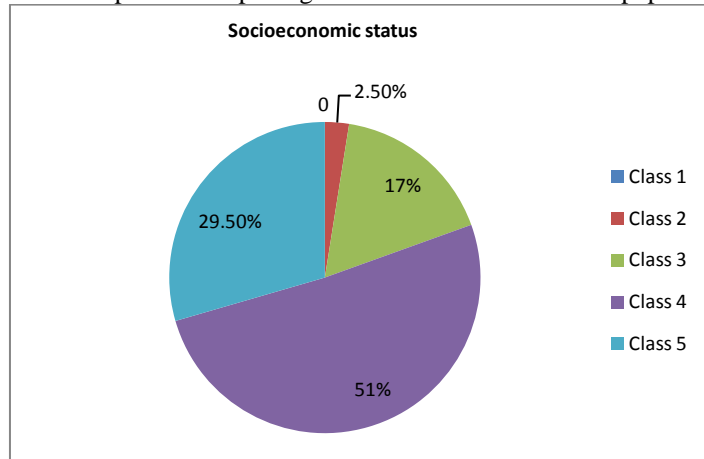


Table no. 3 shows the percentage of people under study who attained menarche at a certain age. 24.50% of people attained menarche at the age of 13 years. 66% of population attained menarche between the ages of 12 – 14 years.

Table no. 3: Shows a graph depicting the percentage of people and the age of menarche

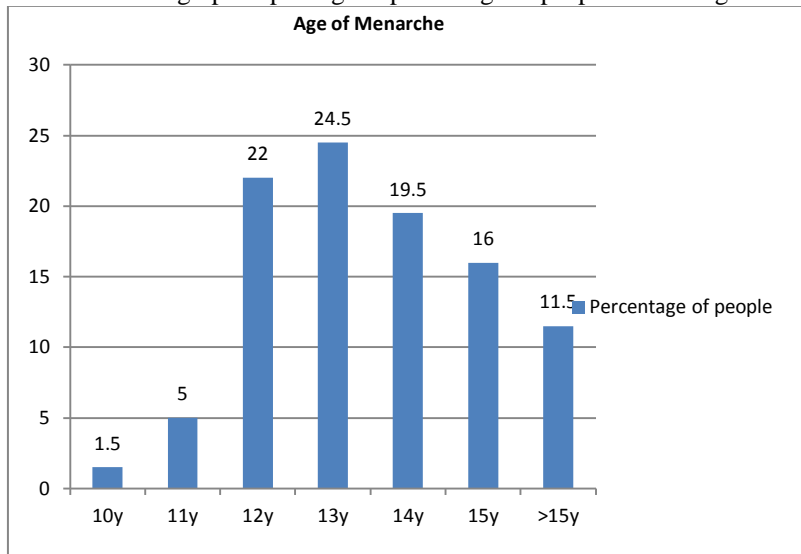


Table no. 4 shows the number of people who gained awareness about menstruation from their mothers, peer groups, relatives or any other group with respect to age at which they gained awareness about the same. 28.4% of population gained awareness from their mothers and 13.7% people from their peer group at the ages of 10 – 20 years. With increasing age, awareness gained from mothers reduced.

Table no. 4: Shows number of people who gained awareness about menstruation from their mothers, peer groups, relatives or others with respect to age at which awareness was obtained

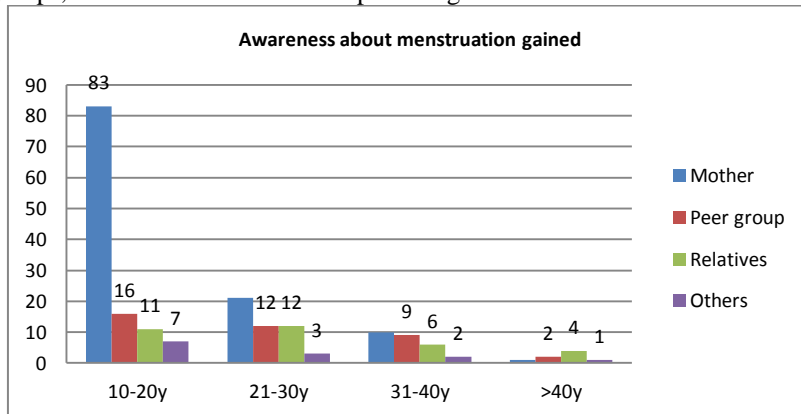


Table no. 5 shows a pie chart depicting percentage of population using either pads or cloth or both during menstruation as an absorbent. 56% of population used pads as absorbents and 16.5% people used cloth. But 25% of population used both pads and cloth as absorbents during menstruation. The chi square value obtained for usage of both pads and cloth was 67.51 which are statistically significant.

Table no. 5: Shows percentage of people using a type of absorbent during menstruation

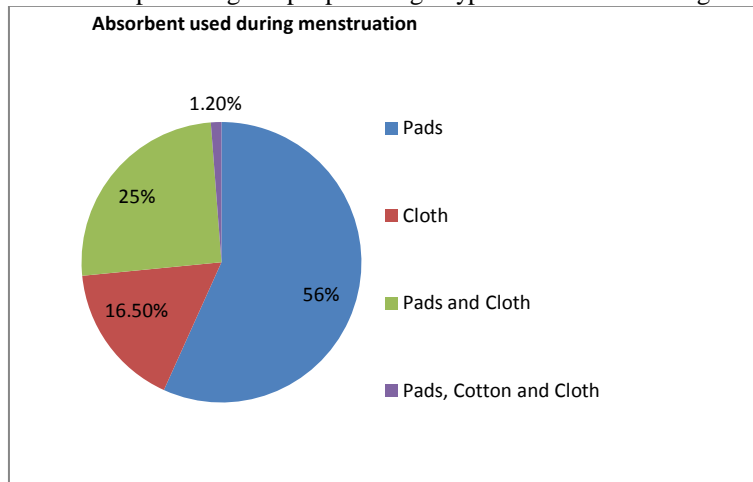


Table no. 6 shows the frequency of pad changing among the pad users with respect to the age of the participant. Maximum frequency of changing pads was twice daily in most of the age groups. None of the participants in the age groups of 16-20 years and more than 40 years change pads 4 times a day.

Table no.6: Shows frequency of pad changing in the participants of a certain age group

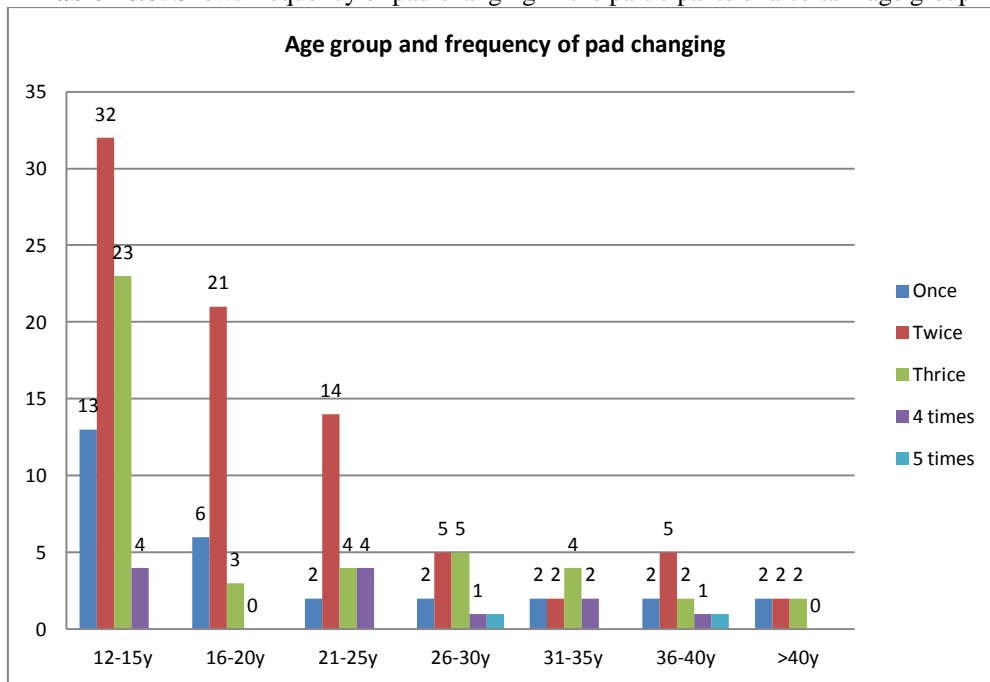


Table no. 7 shows the type of absorbent used by a certain age group. Of all the participants maximum habit of pad usage is seen in the age group of 12-15 years i.e. just after menarche. However in the age groups of 26-30 years and more than 40 years, cloth usage is more.

Table no. 7: Shows the type of absorbent used during menstruation with respect to age groups

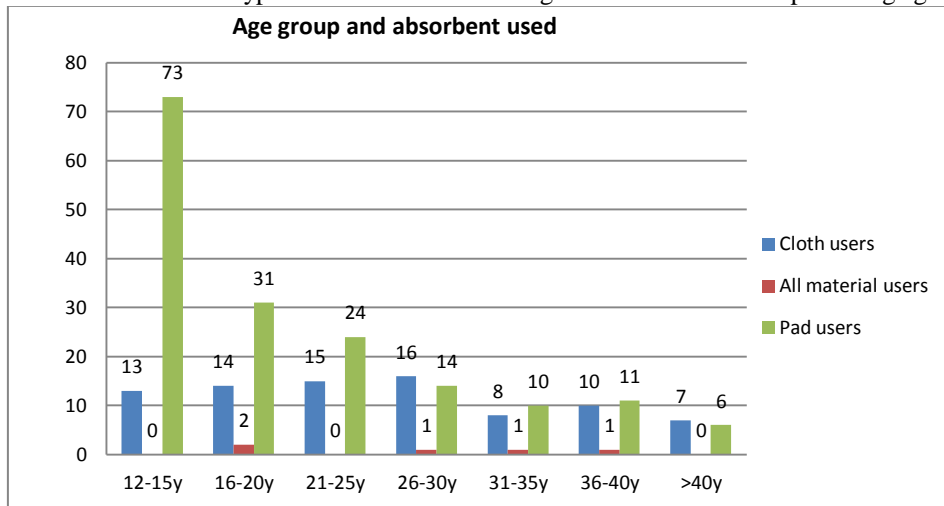


Table no. 8 shows the percentage of population using pads with respect to the education of the participant. 37% of the population who have read till middle school have a habit of keeping a pad for 12-18 hours a day and 16% of them keep it for more than 24 hours while the participants who were graduated keep a pad for 6-12 hours a day.

Table no. 8: Shows duration of pad usage per day with respect to education of the participant

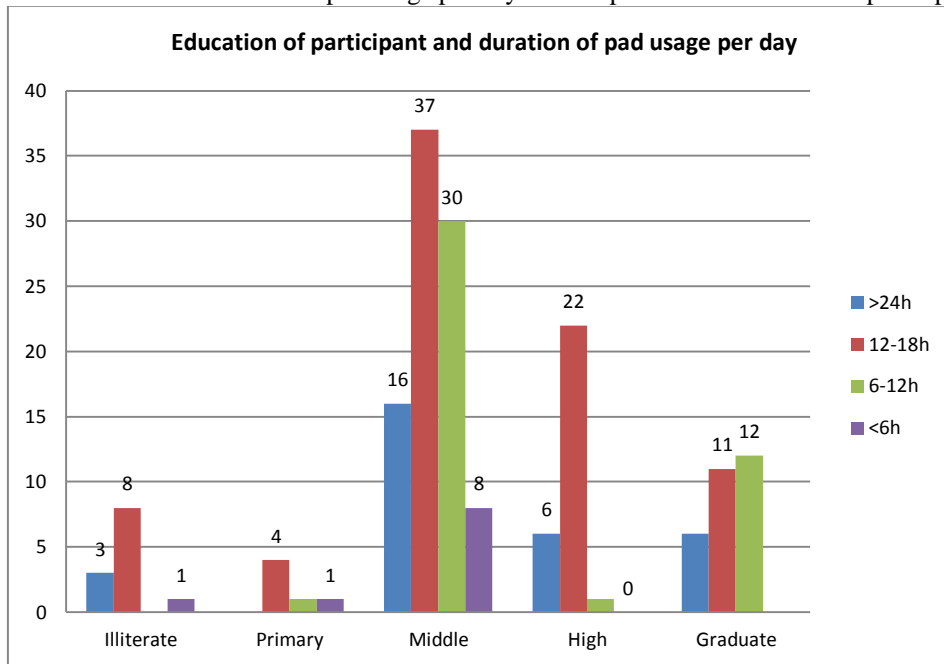


Table no. 9 shows the previous history of discharge per vagina among the pad or cloth users. Among participants using pads, 37% do not complain of any previous history of vaginal discharge while 66% have had previous infection which increased to 72% among cloth users.

Table no 9: Shows number of people using pads or cloth who have had previous history of discharge per vagina

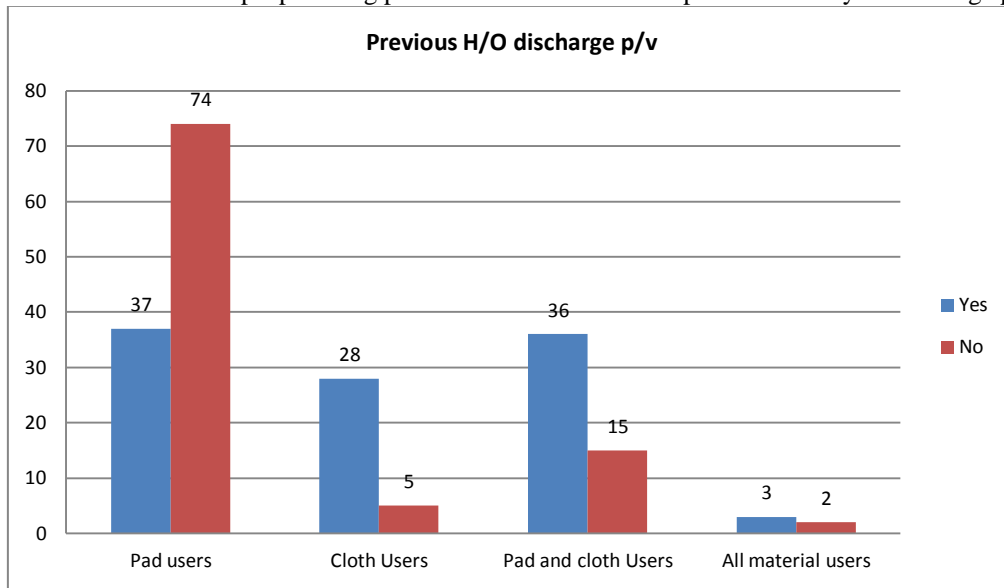


Table no. 10 shows the percentage of people who choose to dry their cloth used during menstruation in sunlight or indoors. 64.10% people dry their cloth in sunlight while 35.80% choose to dry it inside a room.

Table no. 10: Shows percentage of people with respect to the place of drying cloth used during menstruation

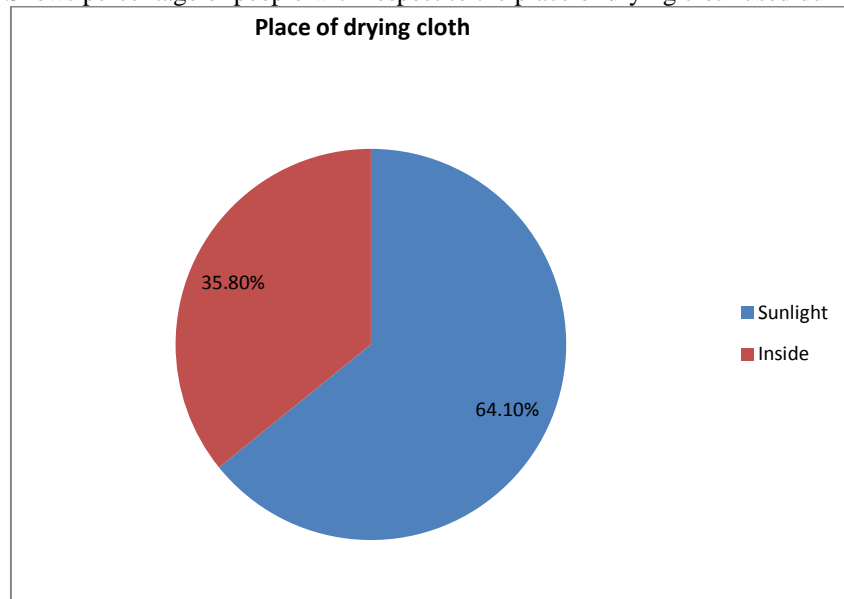


Table no. 11 shows percentage of participants adopting a certain method of disposal of the absorbent used by them. 69% of people throw their pads in dustbin while 10% throw them indiscriminately. 22% people discard the cloth used during menstruation and 16% even reuse it.

Table no. 11: Shows percentage of people adopting a certain method of disposal of the absorbent used

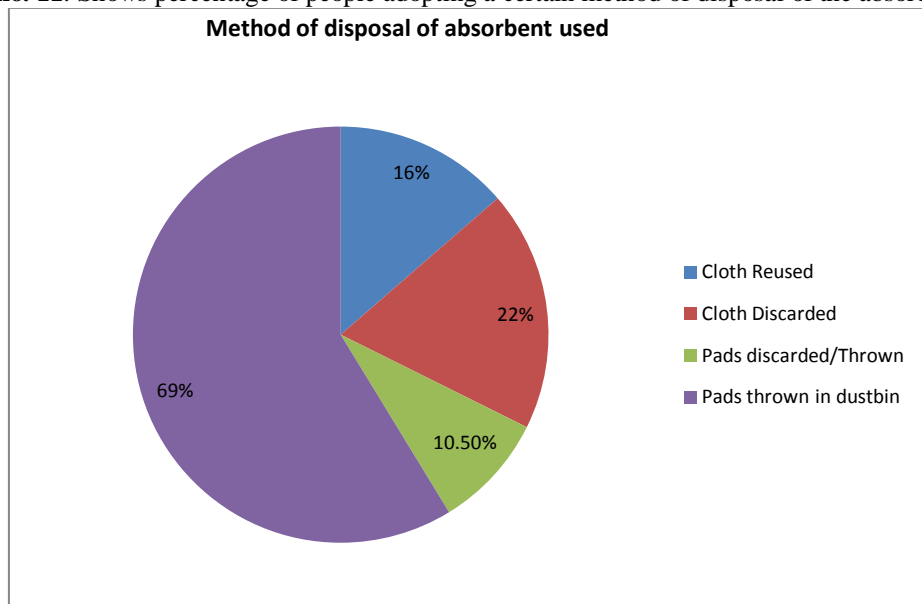


Table no. 12 shows general perception of participants regarding usage of pads. 23% of participants use pads specifically because they do not stain clothes and 20.5% participants use them because they are comfortable, have adequate absorption and allow no staining of clothes. The chi square value obtained for 1,2&3 was 17.07 which was statistically significant.

Table no. 12: Shows percentage of people and their perception regarding usage of pads

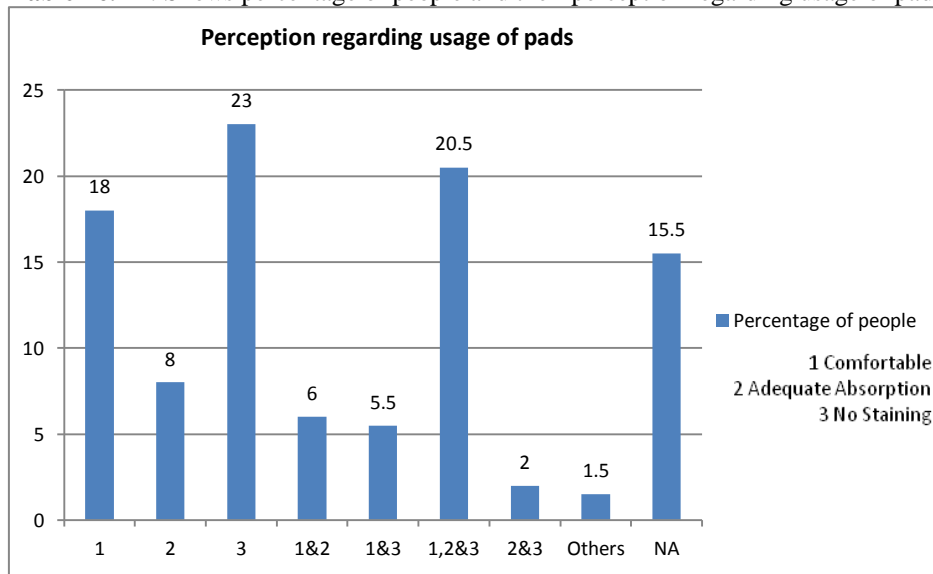


Table no. 13 shows the main reasons of the participants for not using pads. The main reason was that pads were costly for 10% of population, people were shy to use them or had fear of staining clothes and 9% of participants did not even have any knowledge about them.

Table no. 13: Shows percentage of people with specific reasons for not using pads

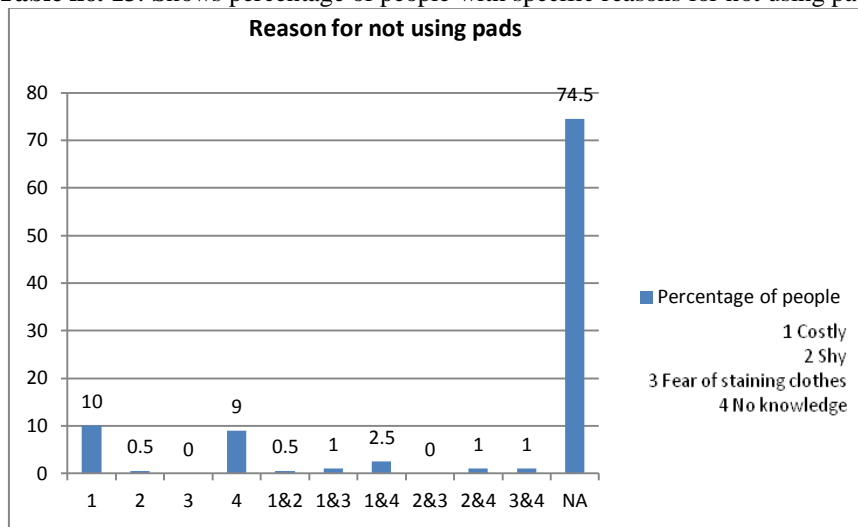


Table no. 14 shows that 78% of participants have availability of girls' washroom at their workplace.

Table no. 14: Shows availability of girls' washroom at workplace

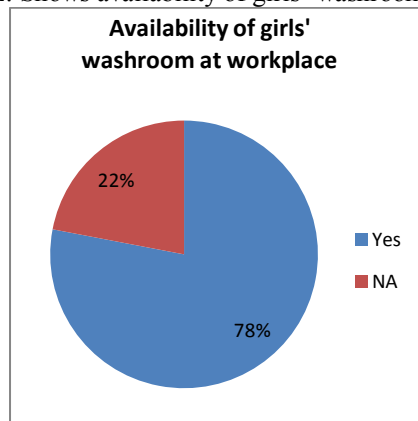


Table no. 15 shows that 50 % of participants using pads feel comfortable in changing pads at their schools or workplace while 24% do not.

Table no. 15: Shows percentage of population who change pads at their workplace

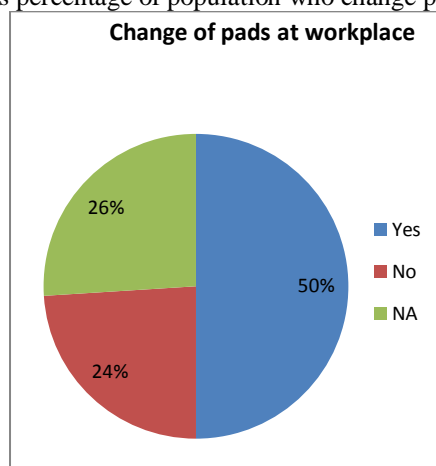


Table no. 16 shows percentage of people who clean their genitalia during menstruation. 68.5% people wash their perineal region with water and only 22.50% clean it using soap and water. Only 1.50% use commercial liquid wash and 4.50% people do not even clean their genitalia.

It is also seen that people who are educated till secondary school or are graduated clean their genitalia with soap and water (n=19). People using commercial liquid wash (n=3) are the ones who have graduated and belong to Lower Middle Class.

Table no. 16: Shows percentage of population cleaning their perineal area during menstruation

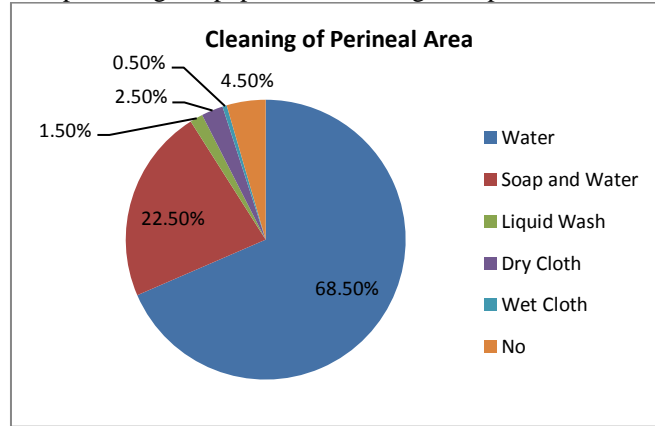


Table no. 17 shows the hand wash habits of the participants. 63.5% of people wash their hands with soap and water after using the absorbent and 16.5% of participants wash them with soap and water both before and after using the absorbent.

There is a definitive co relation between education of participant and their hand wash habits. Majority (n=66) of population who have read till Middle School wash their hands with soap and water after using the absorbent. People washing their hands with soap and water both before and after using the absorbent (n=20) are educated till secondary school or graduated. The chi square values for these co relations are 233.4 and 282.21 and thus are statistically significant.

Table no. 17: Shows hand wash habits of the population under study during menstruation

Hand wash habits	Percentage of people	
	With water	With soap and water
Before using absorbent	1.5	1.5
After using absorbent	14.5	63.5
Before and After using absorbent	2	16.5
No	1	
TOTAL		200

Table no. 18 shows percentage of people following certain customs prevalent in the family. 80.5% of people are not allowed to attend religious/ social functions, 28% of people have to sleep separately, 8% are not allowed to speak to their siblings and family, 26.5% people are not allowed to take baths and 27% population are not allowed to enter kitchen.

Illiterate mothers forbid their daughters to attend religious functions (n=70) which is the most prevalent taboo among families, ask them to sleep separately from the rest (n=38) and do not let them enter the kitchen (n=33) whereas mothers whose education is degree and above have these taboos to a quite lesser extent.

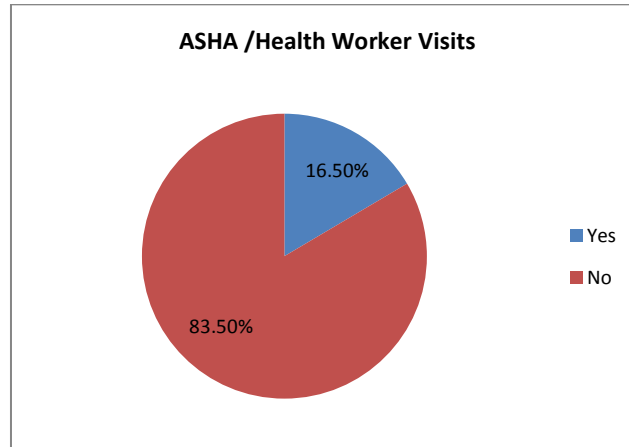
Table no. 18: Shows percentage of people following customs prevalent in the family

CUSTOMS PREVALENT IN FAMILY	PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE
Not allowed to attend religious/social functions	80.5%
Sleep separately	28%

Not allowed to speak to family	8%
Not allowed to bathe/wash hair	26.5%
Not allowed to enter kitchen/cook	27%
No Restriction	14%

Table no. 19 shows percentage of people who have ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) or Health worker visits at their homes. 83.50% of participants do not have regular visits at their homes.

Table no. 19: Shows ASHA/Health worker visits at the houses of the people



IV. Discussion

The younger population is more aware and feel comfortable using pads and change them more frequently. Women of older age group are more inclined towards cloth usage. Participants who are more educated have a habit of changing pads more frequently, washing the hands with soap and water both before and after using pads and washing their genitalia regularly. The families where mothers as well as the participants are more educated show lesser prevalence of taboos regarding menstruation than the illiterate. The participants using pads had significantly lesser history of infection or discharge per vagina. ASHAs, who are the linking chains of rural population with the health schemes of the Government, have not visited the area under study as frequently as they should.

V. Conclusion

This study adds to the current data surrounding menstrual hygiene practices and shows that improved educational interventions reduce the stigma surrounding them. There is a Menstrual Hygiene Scheme under RKSK of RMNCH+A Programme under National Health Mission which envisages that ASHA workers visit the household to disseminate information regarding menstrual practices and supply sanitary pads. However, this has been a weak link in the chain. There is an unmet need for information regarding menstrual hygiene which we hope to address to the population in the following months by seminars and talks. Emphasis needs to be given to educate the women to ensure their health and empower them to look after themselves and pass on the knowledge to their next generation.

References

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मैं जिस प्रश्नोत्तरी में भाग ले रही हूँ, उसके बारे में मुझे द्वारा मेरी भाषा में पूरी जानकारी दे दी गई है और मैं इस में भाग लेने के लिए अपनी सहमति देती हूँ।

हस्ताक्षर

तिथि

नाम आयु

1. घर का पता

ग्रामीण

शहरी

2. बी.जी. प्रसाद वर्गीकरण के अनुसार सामाजिक स्तर

श्रेणी 1

श्रेणी 2

श्रेणी 3

श्रेणी 4

श्रेणी 5

अपना मासिक धर्म कैसा है

3. प्रतिभाषी की शिक्षा

पढ़ लिख नहीं सकती

कक्षा 1 - 5

कक्षा 6- 10

कक्षा 10-12

स्नातक व आगे

4. माता/अभिभावक की शिक्षा

पढ़ लिख नहीं सकती

कक्षा 1 - 5

कक्षा 6- 10

कक्षा 10-12

स्नातक व आगे

5. मासिक धर्म पहली बार होने पर आयु वर्ष

6. मासिक धर्म के बारे जानकारी किस से मिली

माता

सहेलियाँ

कोई रिश्तेदार

अन्य

7. मासिक में प्रयोग की जाने वाली वस्तु

पैड

स्वई

कपड़ा

कुछ भी

अन्य

8. अगर पैड प्रयोग करते हैं तो

बाजार से स्वयं खरीदते हैं हाँ नहीं

सरकार से प्राप्त हाँ नहीं

घर के बने पैड हाँ नहीं

9. क. कितनी देर बार बदलते हैं < 6 घंटे
 6 - 12 घंटे
 12 - 18 घंटे
 > 24 घंटे

ख. दिन में कितनी बार बदलते हैं

10. अगर कपड़ा प्रयोग करते हैं तो

- क. कपड़ा कहाँ धोते हैं गुसलखाना
 तालाब/बावड़ी
 अन्य

ख. दुबारा वही कपड़ा प्रयोग करते हैं हाँ नहीं

ग. कपड़ा कहाँ सुखाते हैं?

- सूरज की रोशनी
 कमरे के अंदर

11. पैड को फेंकने की जगह क्या है?

- कचरा पेटी
 शौचालय
 ऐसे ही कहीं भी फेंक देते हैं
 जला देते हैं
 अन्य

12. पैड प्रयोग करने पर कैसा अनुभव करते हैं

- आरामदायक
 सही सुखापन महसूस होता है
 कपड़े खराब नहीं होते

13. पैड न प्रयोग करने के कारण

- महंगा है
 बाद में फेंकना मुश्किल है
 शर्म आती है
 पैड के बारे जानकारी नहीं है

खुद की सफाई

14. पैड प्रयोग करने के बाद अंदरूनी सफाई हाँ नहीं

अगर हाँ तो कैसे

15. हाथ धाने की आदत

- पैड प्रयोग करने से पहले हाँ नहीं
 पैड प्रयोग करने के बाद हाँ नहीं
 सिर्फ पानी प्रयोग करते हैं हाँ नहीं
 पानी व साबुन प्रयोग करते हैं हाँ नहीं

16. पहले कोई गुत्तांग से पानी निकलना/खुजली/बदबू आदि की समस्या हुई है?

- हाँ नहीं

आपका स्कूल / कालेज / काम की जगह

17. स्कूल/कालेज/काम की जगह पर औरतों के लिए अलग शौचालय की व्यवस्था है?

- हाँ नहीं

18. स्कूल/ कालेज/ काम की जगह पर पैड बदलते हैं?

- हाँ नहीं

19. मासिक के दौरान स्कूल/कालेज/काम की जगह पर अगर नहीं जा पाते, तो क्या

- कारण है?
 पेट/पीठ में दर्द
 शर्म आती है

- दाग लगने का डर रहता है
- घर वाले जाने नहीं देते
- अन्य

आपका परिवार

20. परिवार किस प्रकार का है
- सकल संयुक्त विस्तृत
21. मासिक के बारे में घर में प्रचलित कोई रिवाज/वहम/वर्जना आदि
- मासिक के दौरान नहाना नहीं/सिर नहीं धोना
- घर के अन्य लोगों से अलग सोना
- कोई धार्मिक/सामाजिक कार्यों में हिस्सा लेने की मनाही
- रसोई में नहीं जा सकते/खाना नहीं बना सकते
- भाई-बहन/परिवार वालों से बात नहीं कर सकते
- कोई अन्य
- कोई भी वर्जना नहीं है
22. मासिक धर्म के बारे में जानकारी देने आशा/स्वास्थ्यकर्ता आते हैं?
- हाँ नहीं

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I, _____, am aware of the study I am taking part in. I voluntarily give my consent to answer the questions of the following questionnaire asked by _____, MBBS 3rd Prof. which has been explained to me in my vernacular language.

Signature

Date:

Name: Age:

1. Residence:
- a. Rural
- b. Urban
2. Socio Economic parameters according to B.G. Prasad classification:
- a. Class I
- b. Class II
- c. Class III
- d. Class IV
- e. Class V
3. Education of the Participant;
- a. Cannot read and Write
- b. Class 1 – 5
- c. Class 6 – 10
- d. Class 11 – 12
- e. Degree & Above.

4. Education of the mother/guardian:

- a. Cannot read and Write
- b. Class 1 – 5
- c. Class 6 – 10
- d. Class 11 – 12
- e. Degree & Above.
- f. Not known.

YOUR PERIOD

5. First period at age Years

6. Awareness about periods given by;

- a. Mother
- b. Peer group
- c. Relatives
- d. Any other

7. Material used during periods:

- a. Pads
- b. Cotton
- c. Cloth
- d. All
- e. Others

8. If pads used:

- a. Bought from market Yes No
- b. Govt. supply of pads Yes No
- c. Homemade pads Yes No

9. (a) Duration usage/pad
- < 6 hours
 - 6 – 12 hrs.
 - 12 – 18 hrs.
 - ≥ 24 hrs.

(b) No. of pads used/day:

10. If cloth used

- a) Place of washing Washroom
- Pond/River
- Others

b) Using it again after one use Yes No

c) Drying of cloth:

- a. Sunlight
- b. Inside

11. Disposal of pads:

- a. Dustbin
- b. Latrine
- c. Discarded/Thrown
- d. Burnt
- e. Others

12. Why do you use pads:
- a. Comfortable
 - b. Absorption is good
 - c. Do not stain clothes
 - d. Others

13. Why don't you use pads:
- a. Costly
 - b. Difficult to dispose
 - c. Shy
 - d. No knowledge

SELF CLEANLINESS:

14. Hygiene of private parts during periods Yes No
If yes how _____

15. Do you wash your hands:
- a. Before using pads Yes No
 - b. After using pads Yes No
 - c. With water Yes No
 - d. With soap and water

16. Any infection/discharge in the past? Yes No

YOUR SCHOOL/WORKPLACE

17. Separate girls washroom at school/college/workplace. Yes No
18. Change of pads at school/college workplace. Yes No

19. If missing school/college work during periods:
- a. Lower back pain/stomach ache during periods
 - b. Shy
 - c. Fear of Staining clothes
 - d. Not allowed in family
 - e. Others

YOUR FAMILY:

20. Type of family:
- a. Nuclear
 - b. Joint
 - c. Extended
21. What customs prevails in your family regarding periods.
- a. I don't take bath/wash hair.
 - b. I sleep separately from other family members
 - c. I'm not allowed to attend social/religious functions.
 - d. I'm not allowed to speak to my siblings/family
 - e. I'm not allowed to cook
 - f. Any other restriction
 - g. I don't have any restriction at all.
22. Does ASHA/Health Worker visit home to give awareness regarding menstrual hygiene? Yes No

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