

# A Study of Knowledge and Practices among Adolescents Girls Regarding Menstruation in Government Schools of Amritsar

<sup>1</sup>. Dr. Kritika Bansal

Senior Resident, Department of  
Community Medicine, FMHS, SGT  
University, Bhudera, Gurugram.

<sup>2</sup>. Dr. Shambhavi

PG Resident, Department of  
Community Medicine, FMHS, SGT  
University, Bhudera, Gurugram.

<sup>3</sup>. Dr. Shivesh Devgan

Assistant Professor, Department of  
Community Medicine, SGRD Medical  
College, Amritsar.

## Abstract:-

### ➤ Introduction:-

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adult life during which pubertal development and sexual maturation take place, thus making physiological development a challenge adolescents have to face. There is a substantial lacuna in the knowledge towards menstruation among adolescent girls. Menstrual hygiene and management is an issue that is insufficiently acknowledged and has not received adequate attention.

### ➤ Objectives:

- A) To study awareness regarding menstruation among adolescents.
- B) To study practice regarding menstruation among adolescents.

### ➤ Materials and Methods:

Cross sectional study was conducted by interviewing all the female students who had attained menarche in 8 to 10<sup>th</sup> class by using a semi structured, pretested questionnaire at government schools, Amritsar. Data was analyzed in SPSS 25.

### ➤ Results:

Majority of participants belonged to age group of 10-14 years. 88% belonged to Sikh religion. 65.1% belonged to lower middle SES group (Modified BG Prasad Scale). 47.8% of participants had attained menarche at middle age. Majority of them did not know about menstruation before attaining menarche. Maximum number of participants does not go to temple during menstruation. 90% of participants were using sanitary pad as absorbent during menstruation. Conclusion: All the female participants knew about sanitary pad and all were using sanitary pad during menstruation. Health education and counseling should be imparted regarding healthy practices during menstruation.

**Keywords:-** Adolescent girls, Menstruation, Menarche, Knowledge, Practice.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the landmark phase of the human cycle in which various physiological, psychological and developmental changes occur. In females marked changes is made by attainment of menarche. It is unique to female. Yet, as normal as it is, menstruation is stigmatized around the world. Many girls do not have complete and accurate understanding of menstruation as a normal biological process. Educating girls before their first period and importantly, boys on menstruation, builds their confidence, contributes to social solidarity and encourages healthy habits. Such information should be provided at home and at school.[1]

Over 1.2 billion women across the world do not have access to the basic sanitation, making their periods a monumental challenge every month. In India, approximately 12 percent of 355 million menstruating women cannot afford period products. Whereas in Kenya, an alarming 50 percent of school-age girls have no access to sanitary towels or tampons.[2] Menstrual Hygiene Day is an annual awareness day on May 28 to help break the silence and build awareness about the fundamental role that good menstrual hygiene management (MHM) plays in enabling women and girls to reach their full potential.[3] From a ban on advertisements on sanitary napkins in 1990, to a full-fledged feature film, PadMan, on a low-cost sanitary napkin entrepreneur in 2018, India has indeed come a long way. It was eight years back in 2010, when the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the “Freeday Pad Scheme”, a pilot project to provide sanitary napkins at subsidized rates for rural girls. The scheme was launched in 152 districts across 20 states and sanitary napkins were sold to adolescent girls at the rate of Rs. 6 per pack of six napkins by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs). The estimated cost for the entire scheme was Rs. 70 crore.[4] The Punjab government has also allocated Rs. 10 crore this year for providing free sanitary napkins to all.

Unhygienic period health and disposal practices can have major consequences on the health of women including increased chances of contracting cervical cancer and Reproductive Tract Infections. Lack of awareness about menstruation affects not just the physical health but also psychological and mental health of girls who are found to suffer from depression, stress and low self confidence among other things.[5]

**II. OBJECTIVES**

- To study awareness regarding menstruation among adolescents.
- To study practice and myths regarding menstruation among adolescents

**III. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A cross sectional study was done among 258 adolescent school girls studying in 8 to 12<sup>th</sup> standard at 2 different Government school of Amritsar. A time period of study was September to December 2018. The adolescent female students, who have attained menarche, present in the school and willing to participate in study were included in the study.

➤ *Method of data collection:*

The present study assumes that each individual has her own knowledge and practices regarding issues related to menstruation. The underlying logic behind this assumption is that each individual has her own heredity and environmental factors which vitally determine their personality patterns and value system that ultimately shapes their behavior and practices. Permission was taken from the Principal of the school and information was collected by holding the interview of female students using the structured and pretested questionnaire. Verbal consent was taken from the students who were willing to participate in the study and they were informed about the purpose of study and were also ensured about the confidentiality of their interview.

➤ *Statistical Analysis:*

Data were entered into a computerized Excel (Microsoft Excel 2010) spread sheet and subsequently descriptive analysis was analyzed in SPSS software version 25.0.

➤ *Ethical Consideration:*

Research protocol was approved by the ethical committee of SGRD medical college, Amritsar.

**IV. RESULTS**

Parameter	(n=258) frequency(%)	
Age in Years	10-14 years	154(59.6%)
	15-19 years	104(40.3%)
Religion	Hindu	31(12.01%)
	Sikh	227(87.98%)
SES(BG Prasad)	Upper	0(0%)
	Upper Middle	0(0%)
	Middle	7(2.7%)
	Lower Middle	168(65.11%)
	Lower	83(32.17%)
No. of family member	<4	189(73.3%)
	4-8	48(18.6%)
	>8	21(8.13%)
Type of family	Nuclear	53(20.54%)
	Joint	193(74.8%)
	Extended	12(4.7%)

Table 1:-Socio-demographic characteristics of studied sample

Table 1 shows sociodemographic characteristics of studied sample. It showed that out of 258 participants, majority number of female participants i.e. 154 (59.6%) belonged to the age group of 10-14 years. Maximum number of participants belonged to Sikh religion. According to

modified BG Prasad Classification, majority of participants i.e. 168 (65.1%) were in lower middle class followed by 83 (32.2%) in lower class. In studied sample it was observed that 189 (73.3%) of participants had family member less than 4 and 193 (74.8%) belonged to joint family.

Parameter		(n=258) frequency (%)
Age at Menarche	10-12 years	99(38.3%)
	13-14 years	123(47.7%)
	15-17 years	36(13.9%)
Knowledge regarding menarche before attaining menarche	Yes	116(44.9%)
	No	142(55.03%)
Who told you first about menstruation	Mother/Sister	148(57.36%)
	Friends	38 (14.7%)
	Teachers	72(27.9%)
What you use during menstruation	Sanitary pad	186(72.1%)
	Cloth	20(7.75%)
	Both	52(20.15%)
Who told you first about sanitary pad	Mother/Sister	126(48.83%)
	Friends	37(14.3%)
	Teachers	95(36.8%)
Knowledge regarding reasons for using sanitary pad	Cloth remains clean	12(4.7%)
	Sanitation and hygiene	38(14.7%)
	Both	208(80.6%)

Table 2:- Knowledge and practice regarding menstruation of studied sample

Table 2 shows knowledge and practice regarding menstruation among studied sample. It showed that 123 (47.8%) of participants had attained menarche at early age i.e. 13-14 years. Majority(55.03%) of the female adolescents do not know about menstruation before attaining menarche. Source of information regarding menstruation was mother/sister in majority i.e. 148 (57.4%) of participants. Maximum number of participants were using sanitary pad during menstruation. The female participants were informed about sanitary pad usage in menstruation by mother/ sister in 126 (48.9%) of female participants. Most of the female participants (80.6%) knew that reason for using sanitary pad is both for cleanliness and sanitation and hygiene.

Fig.1 shows the way of sanitary pad disposal, practiced by the study participants. Majority (73.2%) of them used dustbins to dispose off their sanitary pads followed by 13.10% who were disposing in dugged pits, 9.30% were throwing it in open and 4.20% were burning it.

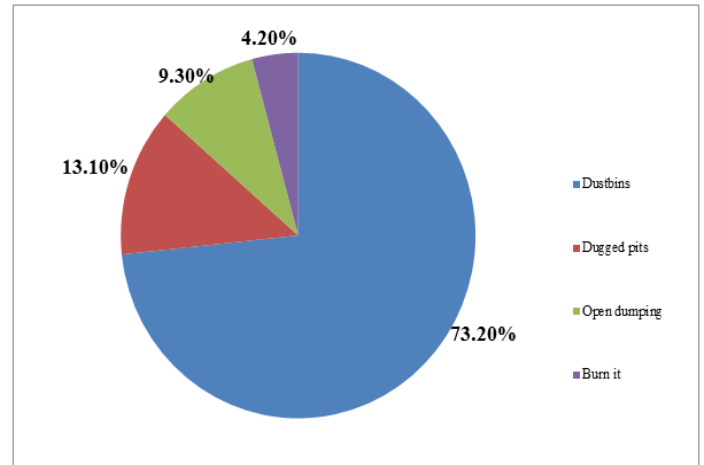


Fig.1:- Disposal of Sanitary Pads

Characteristics	(n=258) frequency(%)	
Go to temple/ holy place during menstruation	Yes	13(5.1%)
	No	245(94.9%)
Not allowed to enter in kitchen	Yes	28(10.9%)
	No	230(89.1%)
Taking hot drinks	Yes	198(76.7%)
	No	60(23.3%)

Table 3:- Myths regarding menstruation among studied sample

Table 3 showed myths regarding menstruation among studied sample. It showed that maximum number of participants had myths regarding not visiting holy places (94.9%) and not allowed to enter kitchen (89.1%) during menstruation. Among 258 participants, 198 (76.7%) of them believe that hot drinks should be taken during menstruation.

## V. DISCUSSION

There are many studies which are conducted on knowledge and practices of menstruation across the nation and beyond it as well. In our study maximum number of participants belonged to age group of 10-14 years i.e.59.6%. In similar study by Mahajan A et al. showed that majority of participants in their study belonged to age group of 12-15 years. [6]Our study showed that maximum number of participants belonged to Sikh religion as study was conducted in Punjab where Sikh population is more than 60% as per NFHS 4.[7] In our study as per BG Parsad SES status 65.11% of participants belonged to lower middle class. In similar study by Omidvar S et al. showed that 43% of participants belonged to low socioeconomic status. Similar study also showed lie our study that majority of participants had family members less than 4.[8]

In our study of 38.3% of female participants has attained menarche at early age, 47.8% in middle adolescence age and 15.7% in late adolescence age. Similar study by Mahajan A et al. and Sapkota D et.al showed that maximum number of females had attained menarche at middle age of adolescence.[6,9] Mothers or sister were the main source of information regarding menstruation in our study. Similar findings were observed by other authors where mother was the first informant. [10]

Majority of female participants do not know about menstruation before attaining menarche. It is because it's a sensitive issue and still in 21<sup>st</sup> century mother or females finds it difficult to discuss among themselves as of myths and taboos they have in their mind. Interestingly similar results are also shown by other studies as well. [10]

In our study maximum number of participants used sanitary pad (92.25%) as absorbent during menstruation. It is because of high awareness among school students due to regular health camps conducted by SGRD medical college Vallah, Amritsar and regular emphasis by school teachers on importance of usage of sanitary pad. Similar results were observed by study conducted by Sapkota D et al. Similar study also showed results like our study that maximum number of participants believed that sanitary pad should be used during menstruation as it maintains cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene. [9]

In our study maximum number of participants disposed sanitary pad in dustbins (73.2%) followed by dugged pits (13.10%) (Khadda khod ke dalte hai). A similar study has shown that majority of the participants were disposing the sanitary pad by burning followed by throwing it in regular dustbins. [9]

Most of the participants (90%) do not visit temple and do not cook food (89%) in kitchen during menstruation. Most of the participants believed that hot drinks should be taken during menstruation. A similar study also showed that 71.78% of the participants do not visit temple during menstruation. Another similar study also showed that 82% of participants are not supposed to enter the kitchen during menstruation.[11]

## VI. CONCLUSION

Much has been done regarding awareness and healthy practices associated with menstrual hygiene but still there exists a gap which has to be filled yet. There are still many taboos which are followed by a number of adolescent girls in the current study. Health education and counseling should be done on a regular basis to increase the use of sanitary pads and to get rid of the social stigma imprinted in their minds regarding menstruation.

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