



Problems, Awareness And Practices Of Menstruations Among Females Lived In Rural Areas Of Prayagraj District, Uttar Pradesh

Renuka Devi¹, Dr. Rekha Gupta²

¹Research scholar, Department of Economics, University of Allahabad -211007

²Assistant professor, Department of Economics, University of Allahabad -211007

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ABSTRACT

The health of the woman is a very important and crucial issue at all stages of her life as she passes through the transition from daughter to wife to mother. The health requirements at different phases of life vary from each other and therefore need to be addressed accordingly. Menstruation is the most common and natural process faced by every woman but still, there is a need to have awareness about hygienic menstrual practices. Hence this study was conducted keeping in view the problem of rural women regarding hygienic practices. A sample of 22 rural women with a mean age of 29 years was chosen for the study. Semi-structured interviews along with the questionnaire were administered. The result suggested that 23% of women experience irregular menstrual cycles along with physical as well as psychological pain during menstruation.

The societal restrictions are also clearly visible in this study in which 50% of women faced extreme restrictions and the reason was due to orthodox thinking and customs.

Key words: Menstruation, Awareness, Practices, rural females

Introduction

Menstruation is the monthly shedding of the lining of a woman's uterus. In this menstrual blood which is partly blood and partly tissue from the inside of the uterus flows from the uterus and is carried out the body through the vagina. The menstruation cycle is generally called the period. It lasts for about average of 28 days. During this cycle, several chemical changes take place in the female body which is called hormonal changes. These cause changes in women's overall body such as – mood changes, fatigue, pain, bleeding etc. There is no hard & fast rule of menstruation cycle related to age group. The average age among girls is 12-13 years, but it may also begin as early as 8 years or as late as 15 years in some girls. Menstruation is still a taboo in some societies, mainly in orthodox and illiterate families. In our society, people sometimes relate the menstruation cycle with some unnatural disaster or sin rather than caring for the woman or girl. In some cultures, women are forced to go out of the house during their menstruation cycle. Societal factors and unawareness become barriers for females but economic constraints are also problems for them. If they are aware of their period and know how to control then the cost of the pad or cup becomes an issue for them. As we have seen in the movie 'Padman', the cost of the pad becomes a barrier to their menstrual health. Most of the girls in rural areas are not even aware of the changes taking place in their bodies. Because of the shame or taboo related to the menstruation cycle they do not even talk to the female members of their family or society. This happens because of the lack of awareness in schools and homes. In the present time also the menstruation cycle or period is seen as a sin in our society rather than a simple biological process. Because of this lack of awareness and economic issues, they use different types of things instead of sanitary pads or napkins. Such as unwanted or dirty clothes that are not used in the home, leaves of plants and trees and in some cases it is also seen that they use wooden ashes to stop the bleeding. The use of unhygienic stuff during their periods leads to different types of health issues which range from uterus infection to infertility at a very young age among the girls. Protecting our girls and women from this unhygienic practice is in the hands of our society. Our society must change its minds towards women's problems and become tolerant towards them rather than ignoring them. Women mainly girls of the younger ages must be aware of themselves and

the menstruation cycle and become bold to speak about these issues freely. For this, our families and schools must take responsibility.

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadi Pariyojanayen launched on World Environment Day 4 June 2018. The Aim of the scheme are Swachta, Swastha & suvidha, organised by the Union Department of Pharmaceuticals in the vision of Affordable and Quality healthcare for all.

In Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra, 1Rs per packet of pad given that is made from biodegradable materials and provided by Asha workers of the village. The menstrual Hygiene Scheme was launched by the Ministry of health and Family Welfare to promote of menstrual hygiene among the adolescent age group of 10-19 years of girls. The objective of the scheme is to increase awareness among adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene, to increase access and use of high-quality sanitary napkins to adolescent girls in rural areas, to ensure safe disposal of sanitary napkins in an environmentally friendly manner. A Pack of six sanitary napkins which is called Free Days was provided to rural adolescent girls at a subsidised rate and Asha workers will be responsible for distribution.

Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the department of Health and Family Welfare government of Uttar Pradesh running this program for adolescent girls. The programme envisages strengthening of the health system for effective communication, capacity building and monitoring and evaluation. In this program sanitary napkin pads is available at the school level so that girls do not bear any problem in the mensuration cycle. The aim of the scheme is to encourage girls towards hygiene practices.

Review of Literature

Juyal R, kandpal S.D., et.al (2013), in their research on 'Social aspects of Menstruation related practices in adolescent girls of district Dehradun, studied the social and religious barriers related to menstruation among school-going girls. The data was collected from 453 school-going girls using cross cross-sectional study through personal interviews. It was observed from the study most of the girls face many types of social restrictions during menstruation, where maximum restrictions were observed in going to religious places followed by restrictions in touching pickles. Research concluded that girls should be made aware of the physiological basis of menstruation and changes in beliefs and attitudes need to be attained by providing proper knowledge and awareness.

Paria Baishakhi, Bhattacharya Agnihotri et.al. (2014), in their research article "A Comparative Study on Menstrual Hygiene Among Rural and Urban Adolescent Girls of West Bengal", compared the awareness level on different aspects of menstrual hygiene between adolescent girls of rural and urban areas. Using a cross-sectional study it was analyzed from the study that 37.5% of girls were aware of menstruation before the attainment of menarche. There was a significant gap between the awareness level of Rural and urban girls. The result reveals that in rural areas most respondents use homemade sanitary pads and reuse the same in the next subsequent periods. The research concluded that rural girls should be educated about proper hygiene practices and misconceptions regarding menstruation.

Raina Divya, and BalodiGeeta (2014), in their research article "Menstrual Hygiene: Knowledge, Practice and Restriction Amongst Girls of Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India, studied the knowledge level of 150 adolescent girls in the charba (Reba) village of Dehradun city of Uttarakhand. Data was collected using personal interview through pre-designed, pretested and structured questionnaires. It was analyzed from the study that only 33.6% of the respondents were aware of menstruation before reaching menarche, 52% of the respondents were not aware of the reason of the occurrence of menstruation, and 28.6% believed menstruation as the curse of God. It was also observed that a maximum, 88% were not aware of the menstrual cycle. When respondent were asked about their awareness regarding menstrual material usage and its disposing method it was observed that 59% were aware of usage of sanitary pads, and 56% of them burnt their menstrual. It was also observed that some girls in the village use cloth as absorbent, where it was found that the majority of girls ie.50% dried their absorbent in sunlight,38.67% dried it inside their home and 10.67% dried it in outside without sunlight. The study recommended that there should be proper formal as well as informal sessions of communication which should emphasis the deliverance of correct information regarding these sensitive issues.

Santrasutanuka (2017), in their research article "Assessment of Knowledge regarding Menstruation and practices related to Maintenance of menstrual hygiene among the women of Reproductive Age group in slum of Kolkata, West Bengal, India", studied the knowledge regarding menstruation among women of reproductive age group and practice of menstrual hygiene among them. The study was conducted using a community-based, observational, cross-sectional study. The results reveal that 65% of women use sanitary pad, 30% use cloth and 5% use both cloth and pad which is a very positive step towards menstrual hygiene. It was also found from the research that some women (37.5%) suffered from Reproductive Tract Infection during menstruation and a maximum number of them dispose of this menstrual waste in municipal vat. It was concluded from the study there should be a proper health education program that should be conducted to educate women regarding good menstrual hygiene.

Tewari Disha, and Tewari Poonam (2020), in their study on 'Assessment of menstrual disorder among adolescent girls' studied the menstrual characteristics of adolescent girls, menstrual (Santra, 2017) disorder

among adolescent girls and changes in menstruation characteristics during stress. Data was randomly selected and statistically analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Result of the study reveals that a maximum i.e. 75% of respondent were suffering from the most common problem of dysmenorrhea, almost 1/3rd missed their periods, 23% had irregular menstruation, 19% prolonged periods, 17% had heavy menstrual flow and a maximum i.e. 89% had two or more pre-menstrual syndrome. The study suggested that there should be a comprehensive health education program on menstrual problems, and activities like meditation; and yoga should be organized for better living.

Statement of the Problem

Menstruation has received growing attention as a public health and development issue with increasing attention as menstruation hygiene can serve as a barrier to gender equality. From the previous studies, it was found that in Uttar Pradesh maximum menstrual-related studies were conducted on adolescent girls, whereas women are found to be neglected. As menstruation is the most common and natural process faced by every woman but still there is a need to have proper Knowledge and awareness regarding it. So this creates a research gap in this area of study. Hence this study was conducted keeping in view creating awareness, imparting knowledge and analyzing the problem of rural women.

Objective

1. To study the awareness regarding menstruation among rural females.
2. To understand the practices during menstruation followed by rural females.
3. To examine the problems rural females have related to menstruation.

Research Question

1. Is there any awareness regarding menstruation among rural females?
2. What are the practices during menstruation followed by rural females?
3. What are the problems rural females have related to menstruation?

Research Methodology

The analysis of the entire study was broadly based on primary data & partially on secondary data. Primary data was collected from females living in Malaka village. Questionnaires were prepared to fulfil my study objectives. A random sampling method was used to collect data; further, the study was conducted with the help of a literature search and questionnaire method followed by an interview to bring out clarity and achieve the study's objectivity. The data collected through a questionnaire was tabulated and analysed with the help of SPSS. The tables are used to make interpretations that make the study easy to understand to mass. At last, the APA referencing style has been used in the study.

Participants:

Socio-demographic characteristics of participants at baseline (N=22)		
Baseline characteristic	N	%
Age (M=34.23, SD=11.6)		
Education		
Illiterate	1	4.5
Primary	7	31.8
Secondary	3	13.6
Higher studies	11	50.0
Marital Status		
Unmarried	8	36.4
Married	14	63.6
Occupation		
Homemaker	12	54.5
Student	4	18.2
Employed	5	22.7
Occasional labour	1	4.5
Income status		
Less than 2000	6	27.3
2000-5000	8	36.4
5000-10000	3	13.6
More than 10000	3	13.6

Area of the Study

The village of Malaka is located within Soraon tehsil of Prayagraj district in south Uttar Pradesh. The number

of people living in Malaka village is estimated, according to the census 2011, 795 people out of which the male population is 435 while the female population 360. The literacy rate of Malaka village is 58.48%, out of which 68.09% of males and 48.12% of females are literate. The religion of people in Malaka village is Hindu and Islam.

Results

Table 1: what do you understand by menstruation?

		Number of Females	Per cent
Valid	Normal biological process	20	90.9
	Not a normal biological process	2	9.1
	Total	22	100.0

Table 1 exhibits the awareness among women in the rural areas. Out of 22 women who were questioned, majority of the women 90% said that menstruation is a normal physiological process.

Table 2: Awareness of women regarding menstruation

		Number of Females	Per cent
Valid	Previously informed	15	68.2
	Were not Informed	7	31.8
	Total	22	100.0

Table 2 depicts the awareness of women regarding menstruation in rural areas. Where it was found that out of 22 respondents, the majority of women 68% were previously aware of menstruation.

Table 3: Occurrence of the menstrual cycle

		Number of Females	Percent
Valid	Regular	17	77.3
	Irregular	5	22.7
	Total	22	100.0

Table 3 depicts the occurrence of the menstrual cycle, where it was found that out of 22 maximum 77% experience regular menstrual cycle whereas 23% women experience irregular menstrual cycle.

Table 4: Problems faced by women

		Number of Females	Percent
Valid	Physical pain	13	59.1
	Not affected	7	31.8
	Physical & Psychological problem	2	9.1
	Total	22	100.0

Table 4 indicates the problems faced by women of rural areas during menstruation, where it was found that out of 22 respondents 59% of women reported physical pain during menstruation, 32% of women did not feel any pain, whereas 9% felt physical and psychological problems.

Table 5: Responses of women when they were asked about with whom they share their problem

		Number of Females	Per cent
Valid	Doctor	3	13.6
	Spouse	5	22.7
	Peer	2	9.1
	Parents	5	22.7
	No one	7	31.8

	Total	22	100.0
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Table 5 indicates the responses of women when they were asked about with whom they share their problem. It was analysed that out of 22 respondents, 31.8% women reported that they do not share their problem to anyone, 22.7% women share their problems with their parents and equal percentage share their problems with their husbands, 13.6% women consult to doctors, where as 9.1% women share their problems to the peer group.

Table 6: Responses of the women when they were asked about the restrictions

		Number of Females	Percent
Valid	Mild restrictions	10	45.5
	Extreme restrictions	11	50.0
	Total	21	95.5
Total		22	100.0

Table 6 indicates the responses of the women when they were asked about the restrictions imposed on them, where it was found that 50% women faced extreme restrictions and 45.5% women faced mild restrictions during their periods.

Table 7: Responses of the women about the reason of restricting women during their periods

		Number of Females	Percent
Valid	Orthodox/Custom	13	59.1
	Rest	1	4.5
	Religious point of view	1	4.5
	Impurity	6	27.3
	Total	21	95.5
Total		22	100.0

Table 7 indicates the responses of the women about the reason for restricting women during their periods where it was found that 59.1% of women were restricted due to orthodox thinking and customs, 27.3% of women considered it as impurity, 4.5% of women were restricted due to religious point of view and same percentage 4.5% women were restricted due to other reasons.

Conclusion

Based on this study, it can be concluded that the majority of the women (90%) had having clear conception who said that menstruation is a normal physiological process and 68% were previously informed about it. 77% of women were experiencing regular menstrual cycles but 59% of women reported physical pain during their periods. It was also noted in this study that 31.8% of women do not share their problems with anyone and only 13.6% of women consult with the doctors. The societal restrictions are also clearly visible in this study in which 50% of women faced extreme restrictions and the reason was due to orthodox thinking and customs. To eradicate the above-mentioned issues government should introduce policies like Adult Education Programs and awareness by organising seminars and camps in rural areas.

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