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Growth Mindset: Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Prof. Ruma Agwekar

(B.Sc, ADMS, MBA (Fin.), Dip. EXIM))

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Abstract:

The modern culture has evolved from a culture of cleanliness, good health and hygiene. A culture which is inherited by every Indian woman from birth, as part of their state and as part of their livelihood, it is disheartening that change in the economic scenario, a rapid change in the urban living, consistently developing rural scenario has failed to reflect optimism in menstrual health and hygiene. Menstrual cycle- a very important physiological and biological (a mark of puberty, onset of freedom and independence, a change in the mindset) aspect of the woman has been neglected and illtreated by the norms of the society. The latest statistics reflects the inconsistency and irregularities in menstrual health and hygiene criteria.

A state which claims 100% literacy, illtreats women with Menstrual health, still considers it as low-priority issue. The woman faces obstruction, rejection, shame, jeering on account of the same. Over and above the menstrual health is marred with taboos, bullying, misinformation, and poor access to sanitation facilities and menstrual products. Lack of parental guidance and failure in imparting menstrual guidance results in various health hazards. Various instances and recent happenings relating to menstrual health have questioned the honour of woman. They set bad examples for the scientific and biological concept of the cycle. The happenings highlight the deteriorating psyche and convey misgivings with respect to menstrual health and hygiene.

It is important that parents, educational institutes, administrative and civic bodies show total involvement to eradicate the curse which still hounds everyone's mind and body. It is essential the woman on the onset knows the cultural significance of menstrual health and hygiene, which is inclusive of cultural myth and scientific terminologies.

Keywords: Growth mindset, menstrual health, menstrual hygiene, menstrual products

INTRODUCTION:

Many associate to the menstrual cycle as periods, chums, menses, That, Thing etc For the longest time, the Indian society has treated menstruation as a taboo. The word 'Period' is usually uttered in hushed voices and years of social conditioning have built a culture of silence around what is a normal biological cycle.

Importance of Menstrual Health and Hygiene for Women:

The menstrual cycle provides important body chemicals, called hormones, to **keep a woman**

healthy. It also prepares your body for pregnancy each month. A cycle is counted from the first day of 1 period to the first day of the next period. The average menstrual cycle is 28 days long. Menstrual cycle is an important cycle which starts at the age of 11-12 years in girl. It acknowledges the onset of puberty, adolescence in girls. With the menstrual cycle there are changes in the physiological aspect of the body. It also brings hormonal changes this means change in the mindset of the girl. Every girl thus needs to know the various health, hygiene and cultural aspect of the menstrual cycle. Educational guidance and personal indulgence can help overcome the various social taboos or discrimination.

It is important every woman relates to the menstrual health and hygiene, as a menstrual culture. They need to look at menstrual health and hygiene as an onset of equal rights and freedom, a way to move confidently in the society, (following a path of health and hygiene systematically and scrupulously).

In wider terms an independent woman should consider it as one-step forward to an independent and more empowered world. It is a step forward to good health, well-being and also an elevation in her approach to woman as a kind. It has been observed that many women fail to take it at a point of concern. They neglect the health and hygiene aspect of the menstrual cycle, which may have a bad effect on the generations to come. The inconsistency to follow menstrual culture as a norm also affects the environment and the society as a whole.

India a rapidly growing economy fails to show concern to the fair sex in the rural parts of India. The young girls and women who are an important part of the Indian economy feel neglected or outcasted with limited access to menstrual education and basic sanitary care products, the concept of menstrual hygiene and clean toilets. The topic becomes more relevant when pandemics restricted the movement. The lockdowns intensified the impact of household level taboos and stigmas on women -- making it more difficult to manage menstruate without shame and discomfort in confined spaces.

In India, caste, gender, culture bias and religious taboos on menstruation are often compounded by traditional associations with evil spirits, shame and embarrassment.

Out of a total of ~40 crore menstruating women in India, less than 20% use sanitary pads. In urban areas, this number only goes up to 52%. This indicates that nearly half of even urban-based women use unhygienic methods for period protection, making them vulnerable to health issues.

It is unfortunate many employers fail to give menstruating holidays. They associate it as decrease in productivity and loss in working force. The employees disregard the biological cycle and consider it as an insensitive issue. The employees fail to give importance, in fact many women face inconvenience due to absence of Ladies toilet in the premises.

(A) OBJECTIVE:

1. To Increase awareness in schools, public places for menstrual health and hygiene.
2. To provide for sanitary vending machine at various places to improve menstrual health and hygiene.
3. To Increase awareness amongst parents on menstrual health and hygiene.

(B) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Four schools were selected to offer the Sanitary vending device as the promotional aspect for Menstrual health and hygiene. It depicted an embankment of freedom and independent woman. A talk was given to group of 100 girls. The girls opened to the talk with respect to importance menstrual health and hygiene. Also related freely to the indulgence and offering a fair game to the menstrual health by the parents and the alma mater.

(C) PRIMARY RESEARCH:

Adoption of sanitary napkins is less than 20% in India, whereas adoption of cosmetics like lipstick is significantly higher at 65%: Chetna Soni, P&G

- The lack of menstrual hygiene has always been a challenge in India.
- According to UNESCO and Whisper, 23million girls drop out of school due to lack of menstrual hygiene and awareness.
- Ergo, P&G’s Whisper is on a mission to raise awareness and educate girls on Menstrual Hygiene Management.
- We catch up with Chetna Soni, Category Leader - Feminine Care, P&G Indian sub-continent to understand the state of menstrual hygiene in India and how Whisper is working towards improving awareness among young girls in the country.

Menstrual hygiene management is **an integral part of the Swachh Bharat Mission Guidelines (SBM-G)**. The Menstrual Hygiene Management Guideline is issued by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to support all adolescent girls and women.

(D) SECONDARY RESEARCH:

Sr. No	Title	>5%	>10%	>25%	>50%
1.	Parental Guidance		Yes		
2.	Educational Guidance			Yes	
3.	Onset of Puberty				Yes
4.	Use of Sanitary Napkins				Yes
5.	Use of old clothes	Yes			
6.	MH & H				Yes

7.	Old Myths and Culture			Yes	
8.	Neglect Games and Sports				Yes
9.	Neglect Classes				Yes
10.	PMS				Yes

*MHH -Menstrual Health and Hygiene

* PMS - Pre-Menstrual Syndrome

(E) DATA ANALYSIS:

1. The girl student is fairly aware of the menstrual cycle and health and hygiene.
2. The educational institute shows indulgence in imparting knowledge about the menstrual cycle, importance of health and hygiene.
3. The educational institutes intend to follow it as a culture and wants to celebrate it as Menstrual Health and Hygiene Day.
4. Few girls fail to show optimum menstrual health as to given start of year(11-13 Years). It is sometimes later than that. The reason could be lack of proper diet or ailment.
5. The girls show high awareness of Menstrual health and hygiene, use of sanitary napkins, proper disposal and cleanliness.
6. A very small percentage is indulgent in use of old cloth. It can be either a use in urgency or see sanitary napkin as extra expenses.
7. Many houses have myths and taboos which mars the concept of following menstrual health and hygiene.
8. Girls due to PMS, or ill health are unable to follow regular classes or show lethargy in sports and games.
9. Many girls are early dropouts due to start of Menstrual cycle, and thus stay back home or are married off.
10. Many girls stay away from sports and regular exercises due to menstrual health.

(E) CONCLUSIONS:

1. Unhygienic premises:

The differences in the primary and secondary research are tremendous. Even though extra measures are being taken by the civic and administrative services, and also by the educational institutes. The girls fail to keep the toilets clean. They are unable to follow the health and hygiene concept of the menstrual cycle. This is an acute discrepancy which is an illhealth and is a direct cause effect on the onlooker.

2. Women do not follow health and hygiene practices:

Menstrual hygiene is the practice of keeping your body clean during menstruation which can prevent a person from infection in their reproductive and urinary tract. Poor menstrual hygiene management practices such as inadequate protection, insufficient washing facilities may increase susceptibility to infection and may put girls at risk of being stigmatized. During menstruation, women are more vulnerable to the risk of infection (including sexually transmitted infection).

Women face various health and hygiene discrepancies they go through ailments which can be fatal at times.

3. Unclean practices:

The unconcern on the girl's part as to use of clean napkin, soft material or keeping the toilets clean turns out to be a bad practice which can lead to fatal ailments.

4. Lack of Menstrual hygiene:

Lack of following Menstrual Hygiene is a culture which needs to be followed. The hygiene is both external and internal.

5. Lack of parental guidance:

Many of the errors occur due to lack of guidance, it is observed that the rural, Rural -Urban and Urban fail to follow it as a thumb rule. They shy away from the topic and fail to show proper concern to the topic.

6. Lack of health and hygiene guidance from school:

Schools as in Rural India, or the mushrooming Rural-Urban, show massive disturbance in maintaining a clean and hygienic perspective. The toilets are unclean, the dustbins spill over.

7. Menstrual cycle an expenditure:

Many homes fail to view the menstrual cycle as part of giving birth to a child. They consider this as an expenditure. They take it as a wrath of GOD.

8. Unavailability of economical pad:

The educational guidance provided by the civic or administrative bodies, the initiative by the government has failed to regularise the function of sanitary pad, many homes are unable to buy a economical pad.

9. Deteriorating psyche on menstrual health and hygiene:

The rise in atrocities against women, the increasing ferocity, the rage against women only shows deteriorating psyche on menstrual health and hygiene. The guidance is total amiss from the society.

10. Water issues in developing India:

Lack of menstrual health and hygiene is also a direct cause of low water supply or no water supply in many parts of India. Many girls and women thus follow unhealthy and unhygienic

practices.

(F) RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Municipal Corporation should run campaigns, stage road shows on Menstrual health and hygiene.
2. The Municipal Corporation should hold free workshops to guide both girls, boys, men, women in the locality on importance of Menstrual health and hygiene.
3. The lack of economical products is a point of concern. The local market should be tapped and big brands should supply to the market an economical sanitary napkin.
4. The taboos or shaming related to buy the product from the medical store or nearby Kirana store should be driven out. The confidences of the girl and women should be built. It has also to be build up for the male gender.
5. Many girls do not shape up well the sanitary napkin. The research has shown various health and hygiene side effects due to use of sanitary napkins. The big brands should throw special campaigns to show the richness of sanitary napkins. The inconvenience of purchase should be decreased by promoting a rural brand.
6. Regular hashtag campaigns should be thrown by the big brands as P & G, Whisper, Comfy, Nine, Stayfree to break the ice. The Menstrual health and hygiene is thus followed as a culture with one and everybody.
7. The educational institutes can install devices for Good menstrual health and hygiene. They can get inventive with celebrating Women empowerment on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Day.
8. The educational institutes should overcome the discomfort due to ambiguity and disturbance followed by various norms and cultures. They should come above these inconsistencies and follow their own thought process. The discipline should be disclosed to all
9. The civic bodies should take up stricter measures to keep the premises clean.
10. The hospitals should offer free guidance for Menstrual health and hygiene.
11. The work premises should have separate sanitary blocks.
12. The HR at work premises should conduct give guidance for Menstrual Health and Hygiene.
13. A good diet plan and regular health exercises as Yoga should be advised at school, educational institutes and work premises.

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