



A SURVEY STUDY ABOUT AWARENESS OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE IN AGE GROUP OF 12-19 YEARS FEMALES IN RURAL VADODARA

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Abstract

Background:

Menstrual hygiene and management (MHM) are an important aspect of a woman's reproductive life. But there is little awareness about the physiological process and maintenance of hygiene in young females. Also, many taboos in respect to this are prevalent especially in the rural areas.

Objectives:

This paper seeks to identify the various practices and challenges that females of the age group of 12-19, face in terms of menstrual hygiene in the rural area in Vadodara district in Gujarat.

Materials and Methods:

A survey was conducted in various villages of Western Vadodara to determine the level of awareness about menstruation, its hygiene and management from March 2022 to August 2022. 795 girls of age group 12-19 were covered during the survey. Data were collected by the predesigned questionnaires survey form.

Result:

It was found that 65.3% girls i.e., every six out of the ten used sanitary pad and 13.8% girls uses cotton cloth. However, it was also found that 20.4% uses both cotton cloths and pad. while approximately 0.5% of girls used other materials which they didn't reveal exactly. When enquired more, it was also found that girls who used sanitary pad had little knowledge about its disposal.

Conclusion: After doing survey it was concluded that with education and awareness through various mediums, the majority of girls have adopted the use of sanitary napkins. But There is a serious need to create awareness about method of disposal of sanitary materials.

Keywords: Menstrual hygiene, Menstruation, Rural, Sanitary, School Girls, Disposal, Awareness.

Introduction

Menstruation is a normal physiological phenomenon that women and adolescent girls experience every month. Ability to manage menstruation hygienically is fundamental to the dignity and well-being of women and constitutes an integral component of basic hygiene, sanitation, and reproductive health services. According to UNICEF Every month, 1.8 billion people across the world menstruate and Millions among these are unable to manage their menstrual cycle in a proper hygienic way [1]. A Comparative Study on Menstrual Hygiene Among Urban and Rural Adolescent Girls of West Bengal concluded that Hygienic practices during menstruation were unsatisfactory in the rural area as compared to the urban area. Girls should be educated about the proper hygienic practices as well as bring them out of traditional beliefs, misconceptions, and restrictions regarding menstruation [2]. National Family Health Survey 2015-2016 estimates that of the 336 million menstruating women in India about 121 million (roughly 36 percent) women are using sanitary napkins [3]. Thus, we can see that despite being an important aspect of health, it is frequently overlooked. Poor menstrual hygiene invariably leads to complicated health issues in the subsequent year of a woman's life. Although it is a normal biological process and a key indicator of reproductive health, it is viewed negatively, shamefully, or as dirty in some cultures. As a result, women's and girls' ability to manage the situation is hampered by a variety of other factors, such as a lack of affordable sanitary materials and disposal options, which leads to unsanitary practices. Therefore, we decided to do a survey about awareness of menstrual hygiene in age group of 12-19 in rural Vadodara.

To tackle this taboo, Government of India had also launched Menstrual Hygiene scheme (MHS) in 2011 with an objective to increase awareness among adolescent girls on Menstrual Hygiene. It was a 360-degree approach to create awareness among adolescent girls about safe & hygienic menstrual health practices which includes audio, video and reading materials for adolescent girls and job-aids for ASHAs and other field level functionaries for communicating with adolescent girls.

As girls become more educated, they are breaking the chains of many taboos associated with menstrual health; however, disparities between urban and rural populations remain. Thus, this study is being carried out to assess about the mindset and practices of people in rural Vadodara.



Image1: Conduction of Survey: Rural Vadodara By Dr.Tulika Jain & Team BHM

Objective of study

1. To study practices on menstrual hygiene in rural Vadodara.
2. To study challenges faced by female in respect to menstrual hygiene.
3. To study attitude of individual on menstrual hygiene.

Method and methodology:

An observational study about awareness of menstrual hygiene in age group of 12-19 years females was done in rural Vadodara from March 2022 to August 2022.

1. **Sample size:** 795

2. **Area under study:** Western rural Vadodara

a) Angadh – Aai Shree Khodiyar English School

b) Mahapura- Mahapura Secondary High School

c) Sevasi – Sevasi High School

d) Umeta – Pragati Vidyalaya, Umeta

3. **Inclusive criteria:**

a) Girls of age group 12-19

b) Menstruating girls

c) Married and unmarried girls

4. **Exclusive criteria:**

a) Female below 12 year and above 19 years

b) Gravida female

c) Non menstruating female

5. According to the objectives a predesigned self-responding questionnaire form in two languages English and Gujarati were prepared.

6. Permission From Ethical committee: Permission from Institutional ethical committee was taken before start of the survey. The team members taken full care of ethical standards during the survey. Feelings of the participants were given a priority while asking the questions. No one was forced to answer. We took forms from those only, who were willing to answer.

7. Before filling the forms, verbal consent was taken and girls were explained about the purpose of the study.

8. Simultaneously with the project, we also tried to increase awareness about the physiological process of menstruation, methods to maintain hygiene, and the nutrition aspect. Our team also tried to satisfy the queries of the young girls, during this project, in order to provide maximum benefit to the humanity.



Image 2: Creating awareness about the physiological process of menstruation

By Dr. Payal, Dr. Jolly & Dr. Satyavati

Details of intervention:

Schoolgirls from various villages in Western Vadodara filled a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire reflects an individual's material use, disposal method, and attitude toward menstruation.

Outcome of the assessment:**1) Age of Respondent**

Age in Years	No. of Respondent
12	5
13	24
14	272
15	214
16	145
17	113
18	12
19	10

2) Knowledge regarding Menstruation

A vast majority 77.4% of girls recognizes menstruation as a monthly cycle but when asked more regarding physiological process they had no knowledge. Around 70 % of girls had no idea regarding menstruation while around 4% described menstruation as taboo. About 2% of girls defined menstruation as disease.

3) Type of menstrual absorbent used

It was found that every six out of the ten (65.3%) girls used sanitary pad and 13.8% girls uses cotton cloth. However, it was also found that 20.4% uses both cotton cloths and pad. while approximately 0.5% of girls used other materials which they didn't reveal exactly.

4) source of information

For most of the girls, their mother is the primary source of information regarding menstruation. About 87.5% of schoolgirls received first-hand information on menstruation from their mothers.

5) Prevailing menstrual hygiene management among girls

Around three-quarters (79.3%) of girls reported that they use same cotton cloth for six months.

And as regards to method of drying cotton cloth about 41.1% of girls reported that they dry their cotton cloth pad in sunlight while around 40.2 percentage girls reported other different ways of drying clothes as directed by their mother/grandmothers. There are around 11.4 percentage of girls who hide reusable sanitary pads beneath another cloth and dry them together.

More than half of the respondent that is 58.8 percentage of girls disposes sanitary pads by burning it while only 30.6 percentage of girls wrapped the sanitary pad in plastic bags and throw it.

6) Complaints associated with menstruation

It was found that 51.1% of girls suffered from dysmenorrhea while 19.9 percentage of girls complained of acne during menstruation.

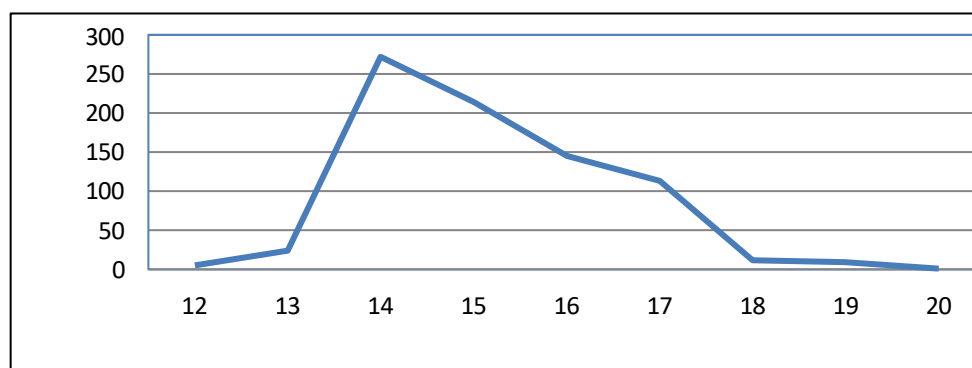
Around 14.4 % of girls complained of other symptoms such as body ache, lethargy, irritability during menstruation. 6.6 % of girls reported that they suffered from leucorrhea before and after menses.

7) Girls' response to survey

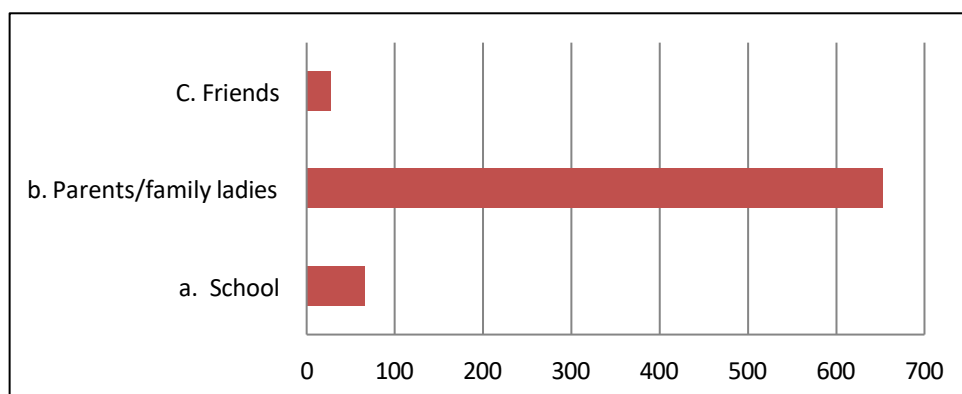
Around 89 % of girls reported that they are uncomfortable talking about their menstruation with other individuals.

Result

- Total number of respondent -795
- Statistical analysis was done by percentages found in the outcome
- **AGE OF RESPONDENT** – Majority of respondent were of age 13-15.



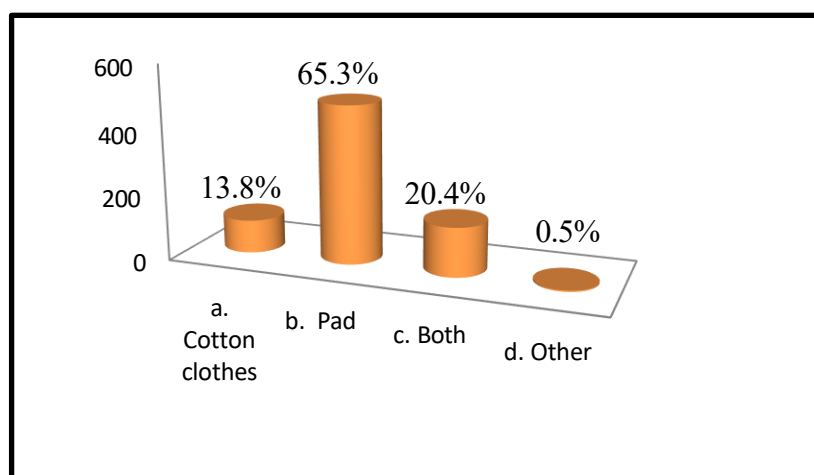
• FIRST SOURCE OF INFORMATION



The survey sought to know the sources of information regarding menstruation to adolescent girls. The above figure revealed that mother often provided them with information after menarche is reached followed by school and friends.

• MATERIAL USED

The survey sought to determine the type of absorbent used by adolescent girls, and menstrual pads were the most commonly reported. The figure below also shows that approximately 20.4 % of girls used both pad and cotton clothes, while approximately 0.5% of girls used other materials.

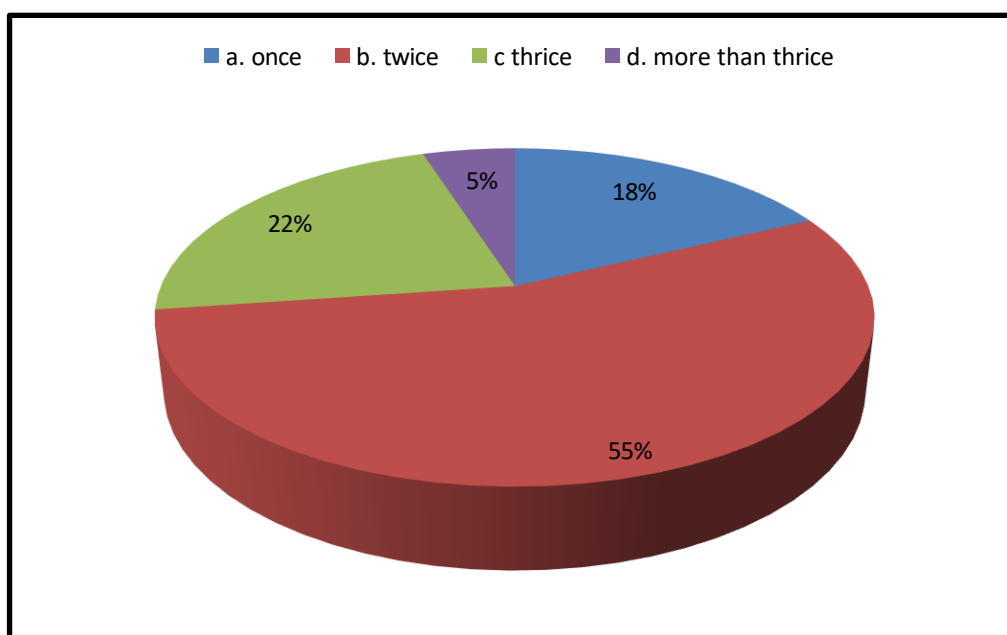


• MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT IN SANITARY PAD USERS

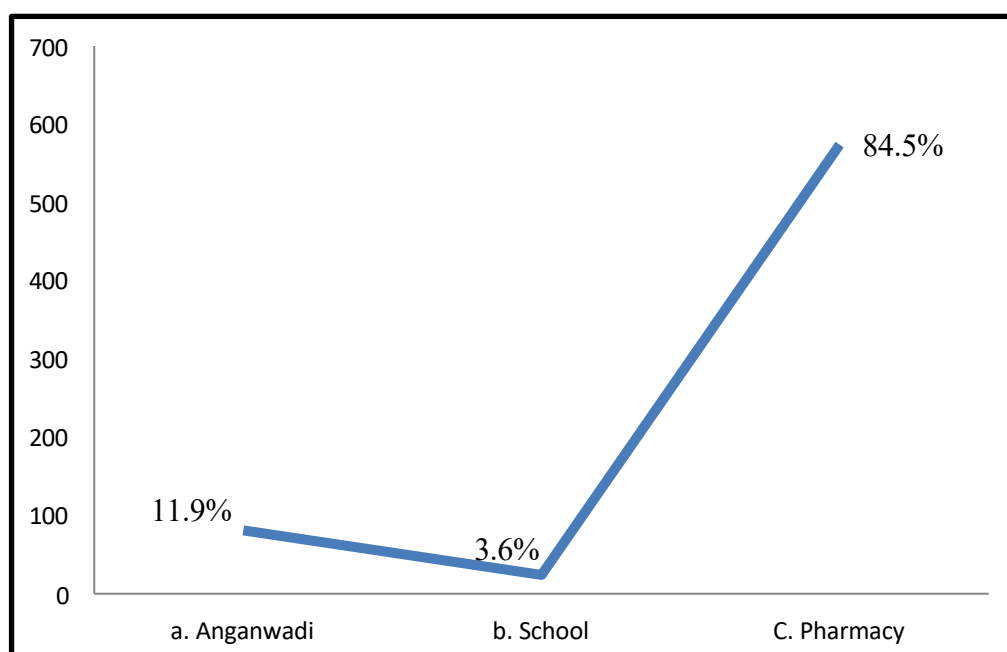
Among sanitary pad users, the majority of girls (55%) change their pads twice a day, with 22 percent changing their pads three times a day and less than 5% changing their pads more than three times a day.

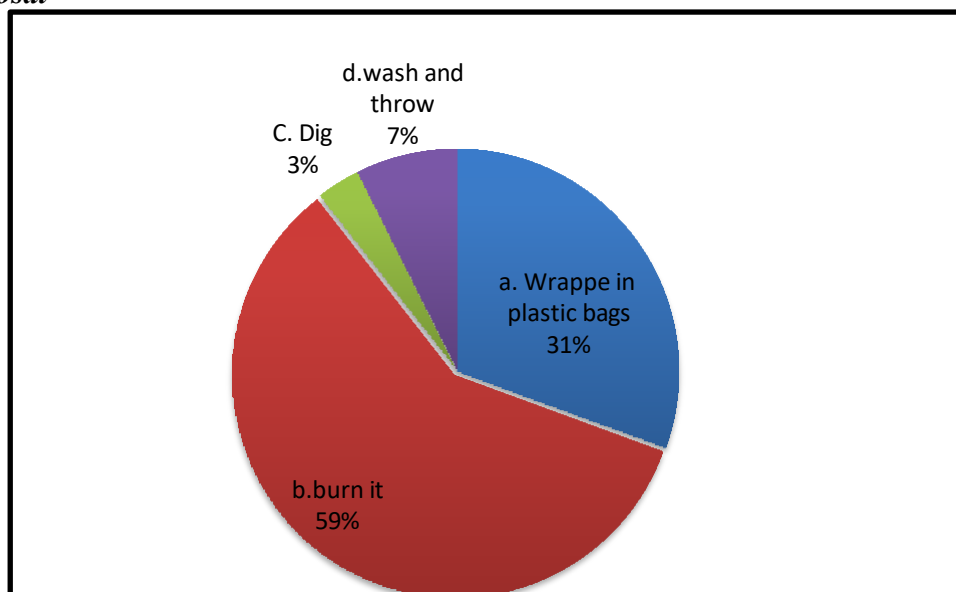
According to the survey, approximately 59 percent of girls burn their sanitary pads after use, while only 31 percent of girls dispose of their sanitary pads by wrapping them in a plastic bag. This practice is frequently the result of myths and misconceptions about the use of sanitary pads.

Number of times individual change Pad in a day



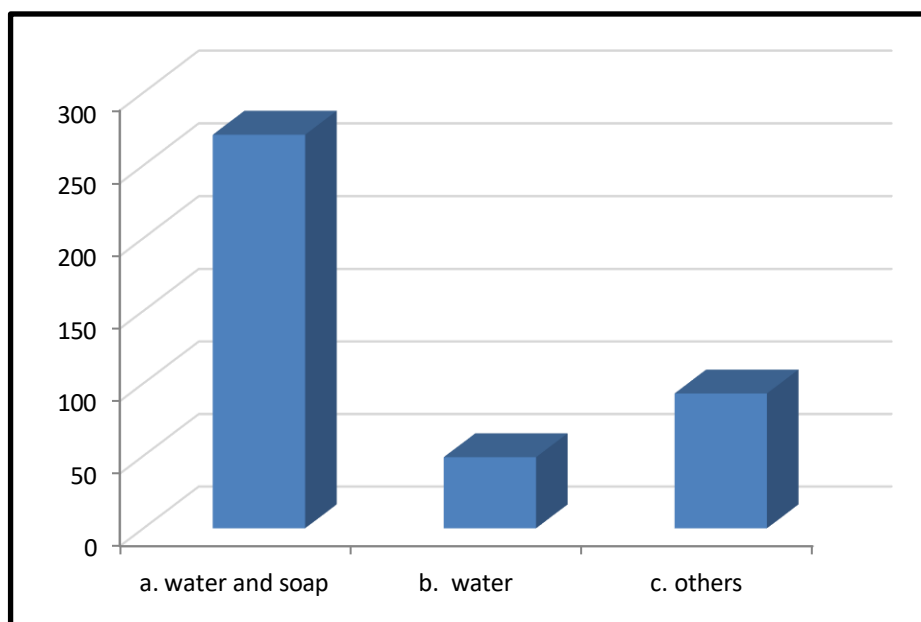
Source of purchase



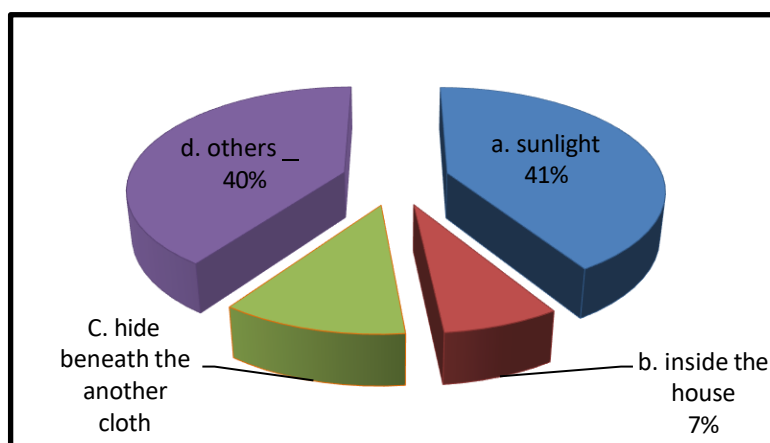
Way of disposal

- MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT IN COTTON CLOTH USERS**

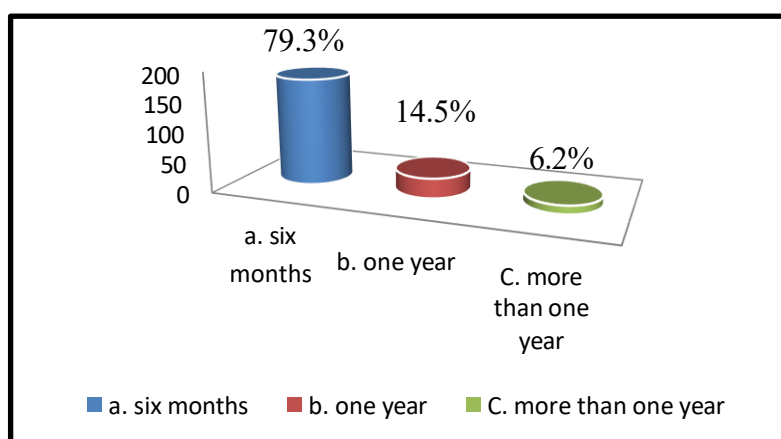
The survey also sought to learn about the method of cleaning cloth pad. Following figure revealed that around 66 percentage of the respondent use water and soap for cleaning their cotton clothes pad followed by around 12 percentage who used water alone. As revealed earlier menstruation still seems a taboo. To further assist the menstrual hygiene practice survey sought to find out the method of drying cloth pad. Around 41 percentages of them reported that they dry their cotton cloth pad in sunlight. Study also reveals that around 12 percentages dry their clothes inside house while 7 percentages of them hide beneath another cloth and dry them together.

Methods of Cleaning Cloth

Method of Drying Cotton cloth

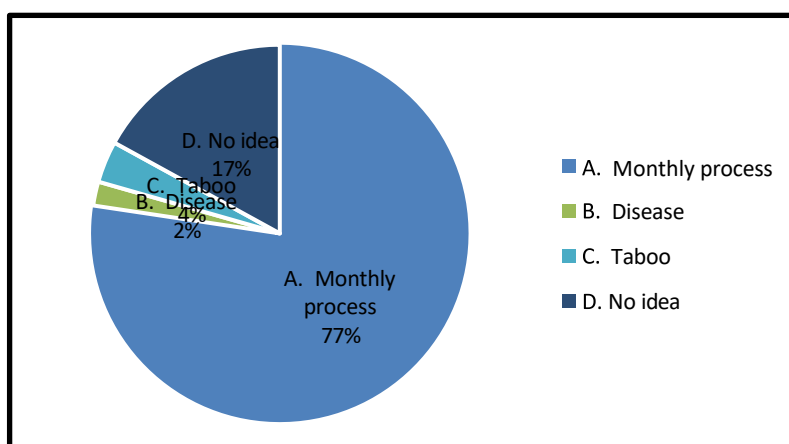


Duration of reusability of Cloth



• KNOWLEDGE REGARDING MENSTRUATION

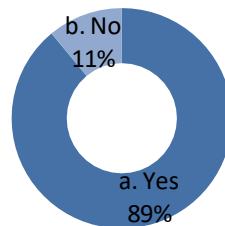
The survey revealed that a vast majority (77%) of girls know the definition of menstruation as a monthly cycle on the contrary there are about 17 % of them who don't know the same. Around 4 % of them define menstruation as taboo or curse followed by 2 % who define menstruation as disease.



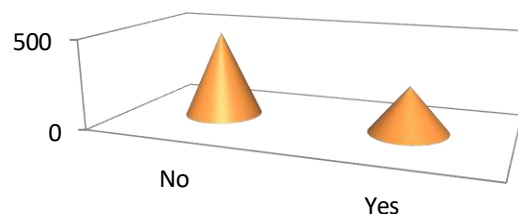
• ATTITUDE TOWARDS MENSTRUAL CYCLE

This section explains about physiological and psychological impact produced as a result of mensuration on adolescent girls more than half of the respondent agreed that they suffered from some symptoms during premenstrual or menstrual period then at other time. Around 18 percentage of girls agreed that they feel uncomfortable talking about my situation with other individuals. Although while giving the answer to the survey less than half percentage of girls were hesitant or shy or anxious.

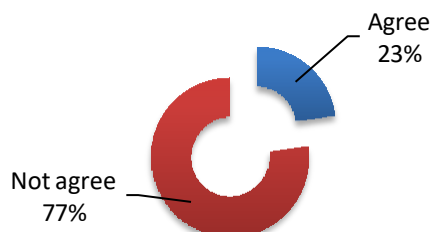
"It is uncomfortable for us women to talk about our menses"



Individual is hesitated, shy, anxious while answering"

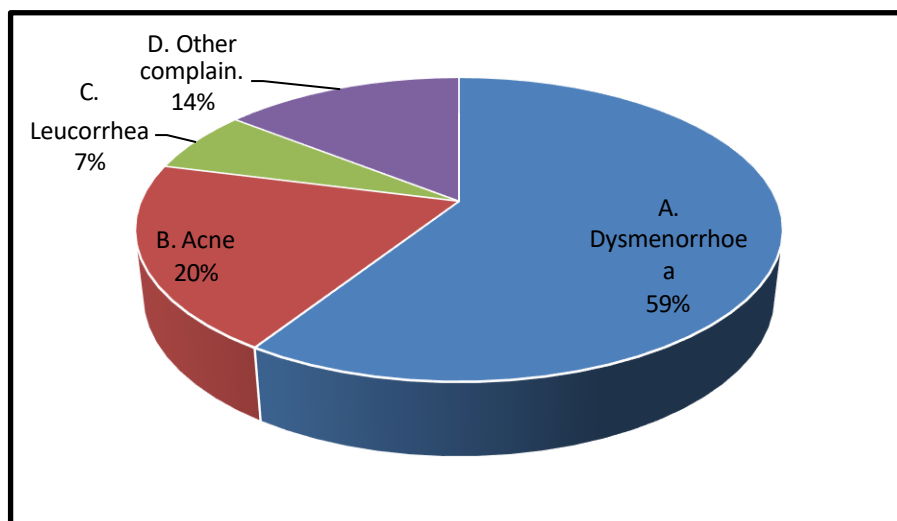


" Women complaining of menstrual distress are just using that as an excuse"



• COMPLAINS IN RESPECT TO MENSES

The following figure shows physiological symptoms experienced by girls before and during menstruation.



CONCLUSION

With education and awareness through various mediums, the majority of girls have adopted the use of sanitary napkins, which is a critical aspect of menstrual hygiene management. However, it appears that girls continue to lack proper knowledge about the menstrual cycle and its hygiene management. Menstruation appears to be a taboo subject, with many myths and misconceptions persisting.



Image 3: Survey & Creating awareness about the hygiene management
By Dr. Payal & Dr. Satyavati

So, through this survey we can conclude following points:

1. There is a serious need to create awareness about method of disposal of sanitary materials.
2. Awareness programs about menstrual cycle should be conducted time to time for the young females in rural areas in order to remove the prevalent myths and taboos.
3. Girls in schools should be made aware about different government schemes.
4. There are still a number of percentage of girls in rural areas who are not using sanitary napkins, they should be made aware of better hygienic practices for menstruation cycle.



Image 4: Concluding Survey: Rural Vadodara
By Dr. Tulika Jain, Dr. Meera Ambaliya, Dr. Rachna Gohil & Team BHMC

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Annexure Questionnaire [English & Gujarati]

Name:

Age:

Education :

Address:

Mobile number :

Questioners:

1.Are you having regular menses ??

Yes

No

2.Menarche age

3.How did you first came to know about menses?

a. School

b. Parents/family ladies

C. Friends

4.Material use?

a. Cotton clothes

b. Pad

c. Both

d. Other

5.If pad, how many times do you change a pad in a day?

a. once

b. twice

c thrice

d. more than thrice

6. Method of cleaning cloth

a. water and soap

b. water

c. others

7. Method of drying cloth pad

a. sunlight

b. inside the house

C. hide beneath the another cloth

d. others __

8.for how long do you use same clothes?

a. six months

b. one year

C. more than one year

9. Sources of pad purchases ?

a. Anganwadi

b. School

C. Pharmacy

10.Way of disposal ?

a. Wrappe in plastic bags

b. burry

C. Dig

d.wash and throw

11.complaint with respect to menses

A. Dysmenorrhoea

B. Acne

C. Leucorrhea

D. Other complain.

12. What is menses?

A. Monthly process

B. Disease

C. Taboo

D. No idea

13.It is uncomfortable for us women to talk about our periods

a. Yes

b. No

14. Was individual hesitated, shy, anxious while answering?

Yes

No

15. Women complaining of menstrual distress are just using that as an excuse

Agree

Not agree

નામ:

ઉંમર:

અભ્યાસ:

ગણ:

મો. નંબર:

Image 5: Survey Form: English Version

૧)તમને દર મહિને માસિક આવે છ?

૧. હા

૨. ના

૨)પહલી વાર માસિક કેટલી ઉમરે ક્યારે આવ્યું હતું?

૩)તમને સૌપ્રથમ વાર માસિક વિષે કેવી રીતે ખબર પડી હતી?

૧.શાળા

૨.ઘર/મહિલાઓ

૩.સહેલી

૪)કંઈ વસ્તુ વાપરો છો?

૧.કોટન કપડું

૨.પેડ

૩. બનને

૪.અન્ય

૫) દિવસ માં કેટલા સમય પેડ બદલો છો?

૧. એક

૨. બે

૩. ત્રણ

૪.ત્રણ કરતા વધારે

૬)કપડું કેવી રીતે ધોવો છો?

૧. સાબુ અને પાણી

૨.પાણી

૩.અન્ય

૭) કપડું અથવા પેડ કેવી રીતે સાફ કરો છો?

૧. સૂર્ય પ્રકાશ

૨. ઘર ની અંદર

૩.છુપાવી દેવ છો?

૪. અન્ય

૮)કેટલા સમય સુધી એક જ કપડું વાપરો છો?

૧. ૬ મહિના

૨. ૧ વર્ષ

૩.એક કરતાં વધારે વર્ષ

૯)પેડ ક્યાં થી લઉં છો?

૧. આંગરવડી

૨. શાળા

૩. દવા ની દુકાન પરથી

૧૦)પેડ ને કેવી રીતે ફ

૧. કોઠારી માં વીતી ને ફેંકી દેઉં છો

૨. બાંશી નાખો છો

૩. દાંતી દેઉં છો

૪. ધોય ને ફેંકો છો

૧૧) માસિક ની સાથે વીજી કોઈ તકલીફ થાય છે?

૧. પેટ માં દુખવું

૨. ખીલ

૩. સફેદ પાણી પડવું

૪. અન્ય

૧૨)માસિક સું છે?

૧. દર મહિના ની પ્રક્રિયા

૨. રોગ

૩. અંધશ્રદ્ધા

૪. ખબર નથી

૧૩)સુ મહિલા માટે માસિક વિશે વાત કરવી યોગ્ય છે?

૧. હા

૨. ના

૧૪)સુ કોઈ સર્મ , ડ્રસ્ટું હતું માસિક વિશે વાત કરવા માં?

૧. હા

૨. ના

૧૫)સુ મહિલા ને માસિક દરમ્યાન જે તકલીફ થાય છે તે ખાલી એક બાહાનું છે?

૧. સહમત છું

૨. સહમત નથી.

મારું નામ _____ છે. હું આ વર્ગ માં _____ અભ્યાસ કરું છું.આથી હું જણાવતું છું કે હું મારી સહમતી થી આ ફોર્મ ભરી છું.

Image 6: Survey Form: Gujarati Version