



## Scenario of use of sanitary pads among females belonging to reproductive age group

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### Abstract

Menarche is a milestone as well as one of the most basic characteristic features in a woman's life. Use of sanitary pads during menstruation is an essential aspect of health education. Hygiene-related practices of women during menstruation are also of paramount importance. In this study we took into account various studies concerning with use of sanitary pads among female. In the last section a discussion was also made.

**Keywords:** use of sanitary pads, reproductive age group

### Introduction

According to World Health Organization (WHO) menstruation is a phenomenon unique to the females of belonging to the reproductive group (WHO, 2003) [1]. The first menstruation called menarche, occurs between 11 and 15 years with a mean of 13 years (Banerjee *et al.*, 2007) [2]. As increased burden of reproductive tract infection among women due to poor menstrual hygiene is a concern on public health agenda (Dhingra *Ret al.*, 2009) [3] so clean clothing materials, toilet tissues, sanitary napkins, pads, tampons should be used to manage menstruation (Moronkola and Uzuegbu, 2006; Yagnik, A. S. 2015) [4, 5]. According to a study, rural teenage girls differed from the urban in terms of hygiene and that goes back to lack of resources (Thakre *et al.*, 2012) [6]. However, both sections of girls were found suffering otherwise due to lack of proper information (Gupta & Gupta, 2001; Devpriya Chakravarty, 2016) [7, 8].

A study investigated perception and behavior on the use of sanitary pads during menstruation, considering 140 school girls by cross-sectional population survey of various educational institutions, 56 from primary school and 84 from junior secondary school within the age group of 10-20 years. In this study 64.3% of the girls were found using sanitary pads, 62.3 % had observed having positive self-perception on use of sanitary pads for hygiene purposes while 67.1% were reported feeling satisfied. Sanitary pads were perceived expensive for 66.4% of 140 girls (Adika V.O *et al.*, 2011) [9].

In one of the cross sectional studies, the knowledge attitude and practice of menstrual hygiene among rural women were assessed in the village of Alamadhi, covering 250 subjects. In this study use of napkins and change of sanitary pads 3 times a day was found among 57.6% of women. 42.4 % of women answered that use of cloth was adopted. 86.3 % of women were reported having the habit of proper disposal with 91.2 % of women disclosed having the habit of washing genitals. 15.2%, 37.20% and 52.80% women were observed suffering from urinary tract infection, from white discharge and from lower abdominal pain respectively. 56.40% of women were

restricted from performing pooja during menstruation and 40.60% of women observed avoiding specific food items during menstruation. Some adverse effects viz. staining and development of rashes while using sanitary pads were experienced only by 22.4% and 20.1% of women respectively. Urinary tract infection was observed among 19.8% and 11.8% of women who use clothes and who use sanitary napkins respectively (Seenivasan P *et al.*, 2015) [10].

We came across a study, addressing menstrual health and hygiene practices among adolescent girls in a rural, tribal region of South Gujarat, India. In this community-based study data was collected from 164 adolescent girls from eight villages. According to this study 90% of girls were using old cloths. Choice of 68% and 32% adolescent girls was falalin cloths and sanitary pads respectively (Shobha P S *et al.*, 2013) [11].

The knowledge level regarding menstruation of 150 girls was studied in Dehradun, India. Results of this study disclosed that only 34.67% of the participants were aware about menstruation before reaching menarche and 52% study subjects were not aware of the reason behind occurrence of menstruation. This study also reported that there was a belief among 28.67% girls that menstruation is a curse of God. Only 12% of the girls were observed reported aware that uterus being the source of blood flowing during the menstrual cycle while a majority of girls i.e. 55.33% were not found aware about the same. 59.33%, 62.67% and 9.33% girls reported use of sanitary pads, old cloths and new cloth respectively during menstruation. Considered study found that only 2.67% girls used water and antiseptic for cleaning the external genitalia. If we talk about method of disposal adopted by girls, 56% girls were burnt the menstrual material while 28% don't dispose/flush /hide the material. Majority of the girls i.e. 50.66% reused the cloth during menstruation dried the cloth outside in the sunlight, while 38.67% dried it inside the house and 10.67% girls were found drying it outside but without sunlight (Divya Raina *et al.*, 2014) [12].

In West Bengal, a descriptive, cross-sectional study was found

conducted to identify the issues and challenges of menstruation faced by the adolescent girls. Study resulted that out of 190 respondents, 42% girls were aware about menstruation prior to attainment of menarche. It was also revealed in the study that good menstrual hygiene was more among those whose mothers were literate [AOR 2.3 (1.06-5.01)], girls studying in more than grade X in school [AOR 2.71(1.16-6.35)], having prior knowledge about menstruation before menarche [AOR 2.97(1.29- 6.85)], usage of proper sanitary latrine at home [AOR 3.14(1.42-6.00)] and exposure to advertisements promoting usage of sanitary towels in mass media [AOR-2.52(1.10-5.70)]. In the same study 51.5% of the study population was found washing the reusable cloth in pond water with soap and dried it inside the house where sunrays are coming. As far as disposal of sanitary napkins was concern, 53% of the girls threw them indiscriminately in a pond and 45% in the nearby bamboo garden (Ray S *et al*, 2012) [13]. In another cross sectional study, 995 women of age group 15–45 years were interviewed under the Comprehensive Rural Health Services Project (CRHSP), in Ballabgarh, Haryana. As disclosed by this study, 62% of women were unaware of the reason(s) for menstruation. Only 28.8% of women were reported using sanitary napkins and of those who did not use napkins, only one-fourth (25.3%) were found having a will to buy it. (Misra P, 2013) [14].

In a community based – cross-sectional study in Chennai, a total of 212 females from the rural area and 206 females from urban slum with the mean age of 29.72 and 28.52 respectively were selected. Females selected in the study were belonging to reproductive age (15-44) group. Mean age at menarche computed was 13.5 among the total study population from both the areas. Among 212 study participants, investigated by this study, from rural area 91% females belonged to Hindu religion, 42% were in Class IV socioeconomic status and 73% were from the nuclear family whereas from urban slum 79%, 43.7%, and 70.4% were analyzed belonging to Hindu religion, Class IV socioeconomic status and nuclear family, respectively. The prevalence of better menstrual hygienic practices using the menstrual hygiene index was found to be 63.6% in urban slum and 35% in a rural area, in the study considered. In the same study, 42.5% of rural and 40.3% of urban were observed unaware from which organ menstruation is from. (Priyadharshini M V *et al*, 2014) [15].

## Discussion

On the basis of various studies considered, we came to know that still women are not using sanitary pads and there is a lack of awareness in this regard. There is a need to improve the knowledge, behavior change, and practices during menstruation.

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