

## **An Investigation of Menstrual Hygiene Awareness amongst youngsters**

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### **THAKUR COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & COMMERCE**

The Women Development Cell & IQAC-Thakur College of Science and Commerce,Kandivali East in Association with University of Mumbai-organizes-

A National Conference on:- “Women Empowerment and Gender Equality” ~ Contemporary Issues

Sub-Theme:- Women Health Issues

#### **ABSTRACT**

Menstruation is defined as-Periodic,regular,monthly discharge of blood & mucosal tissue from inner lining of uterus. It starts at the age of 10-15 Years & ends mostly by the age of 50-55.It lasts for the duration of 2-7 days,per month. Appropriate personal hygienic care is essential during these days.As far as menstruation is concerned,Indian Society has imposed on women so many strict religious & social restrictions, which are strictly followed in every family.But sad to say that in same way hygienic instructions which are essential to follow are not imposed on women.As a result,due to poor hygienic & sanitary pads disposal practices,there are serious health issues like infections & cleanliness problems at Dumping Grounds & Ladies Public Toilets.It is a known fact that-Rural women suffer a lot during menstruation due to lack of awareness,superstitions & poor access to sanitary pads.But it is surprising to know that in spite of having access to sanitary pads,some young,urban women are found to be highly ignorant about personal hygienic care, needed during menstruation. Sanitary pads vending machines are not available everywhere. Lack of emergency stock,improper wrapping & throwing anywhere at

public place,not changing at required time,purchase of cheaper& lower quality pads,skipping learning & working hours due to sudden,unexpected arrival are some of the cases found.

Thus by this Research Work by knowing various problem areas,proper awareness can be created amongst today's youngster women about Menstrual Hygienic Care.

**Key Words** :- Menstruation,Hygiene,Women,Sanitary Pads

## **AN INVESTIGATION OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AWARENESS AMONGST YOUNGSTERS**

**INTRODUCTION :-** From last few years it has been observed that some urban youngster women do not follow basic hygienic practices during the time of menstruation.It affects not only their own health but also their fellow colleagues,Public Washroom Cleaners & society.It is necessary for every young woman to learn & understand basic,important hygienic practices at the time of periods.Thus this Research Paper will let us know the level upto which basic,crucial menstrual hygiene is followed by urban youngster women.So that accordingly they can be made aware by providing appropriate guidance via experts.

**OBJECTIVES** :-1)To understand behavior of youngster women at the time of arrival of emergency periods.

2)To know whether right quality sanitary pad is being used.

3)To investigate problems faced while using Sanitary Pads.

4)To know precautionary nature towards Menstrual Hygiene.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY** :- A questionnaire was circulated amongst 170 youngster women & survey was conducted amongst them.Questionnaire covered variety of aspects regarding personal hygienic care to be followed during menstruation such as type of pad used,presence and absence of wings to the sanitary pad being used,it's frequency of changing & method of disposal,outfit preference at that time & also issues faced if any while using Sanitary Pad.

**RATIONALE** :- It is well known that-Rural women have many issues regarding personal hygienic care to be followed at the time of Menstruation as they have no or poor access to sanitary pads due to financial limits.But it is very surprising to know that some of the urban women, in spite of having direct access to sanitary pads,money & education, do not follow and know basic hygienic practices which are very necessary at the time of menses.Most of them do

not possess at least one sanitary pad for emergency purpose. In case of emergency arrival of menses, many of them ask their fellow colleagues or go for a vending machine which may not be working or out of stock. Sometimes some women do not possess coin change to drop in a vending machine in order to get a sanitary pad out of it. Chemist shops also may not be nearby for buying the pack of pads. At such time it becomes a very critical situation & then lectures, working shifts are skipped by many youngster women. Thus a question arises in a mind that why these urban youngster women do not carry sanitary pad in their purse. Almost all women have in their purse some make up material, money, comb, public vehicle passes, water bottle, housekeys etc. which are very necessary. Then why not at least one sanitary pad which will save them from Public Place embarrassment? It is also equally important & one should not be dependent on others for it, as asking for it to others could be embarrassing & even irritating too someone. Every young woman who has got her menses should carry at least one sanitary pad in her bag as many of the times menses occur suddenly before expected time. No woman has a fixed schedule for its occurrence & menses may get preponed by few days. One may experience menses much in advance & they may suddenly occur when you are at workplace or college. Everytime one cannot give an excuse for it & skip lectures, exams or working shifts. Thus this Research Work is extremely important to find out loopholes in today's women regarding essential personal hygienic care required during the days of menstruation. So that accordingly today's women can be made aware about it via expert's lectures.

## **DATA INTERPRETATION & ANALYSIS :-**

1) Pads used during Menstruation :-

<b>NAME OF SANITARY PAD</b>	<b>NO. OF WOMEN USERS</b>
WHISPER	111
STAYFREE	40
SOFY	17
CORTEX	1
EXTRA CARE	1

**Whisper like pad can hold flow for longer duration, it has wings to prevent side leakage & fit properly at a place & has odor control technology. Thus it seems most popular amongst**

**youngsters. Which shows that today's youngsters are selective about comfort level of Sanitary Pads. It shows their alertness towards Hygiene.**

2) Preference to winged pads:-

<b>KIND OF PAD USED</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>
Winged one	154
Non-Winged one	16

**Maximum youngsters use Winged pads. It is a good sign because Sanitary Pads having wings on both sides fit properly at one place, prevent side leakage. As maximum youngsters are using winged pads, they are well aware about the importance of wearing pads having wings on both sides.**

3) Method of Sanitary Pad Disposal :-

<b>NAME OF METHOD</b>	<b>NO. OF WOMEN PERFORMING</b>
WRAP IN PAPER & THROW IN DUSTBIN	167
FIRST WASH & THEN WRAP IN PAPER & THROW IN DUSTBIN	2
FLUSH IN COMMUNE	1

**The appropriate method of disposal of used sanitary pad is to wrap in suitable paper & throw in dustbin. Otherwise it will spread exceptionally foul odor, which can cause health problems to our Safai Workers. Wrapping in paper can at least lock up the odor for some time. Today's youngsters are well aware about it, as maximum of them are using this method of disposal.**

4) Frequency of changing Sanitary Pad per Day :-

<b>NO. OF TIMES</b>	<b>NO. OF WOMEN</b>
NOT AT ALL	4
ONCE	12

TWICE	66
MORE THAN TWICE	88

**As per Scientific Facts, a Sanitary Pad should not be retained beyond 8 hours a day, otherwise it can lead to bacterial infection to Uterus. Thus in a day of 24 hours, Sanitary Pad should be changed thrice a day, i.e. -  $8 \times 3 = 24$ . As maximum youngsters are changing their pads more than twice, they are following Hygienic Practice.**

5) Precautionary nature towards Menstrual Hygiene (Wearing pad in advance when typical period cramps are experienced early morning):-

NAME OF ACTION	NO. OF WOMEN
WEAR IN ADVANCE	118
DON'T WEAR IN ADVANCE	52

**Most of the times before actual menses, period specific cramps develop in lower abdomen. Thus this kind of signal for soon arrival of menses should be understood & to prevent cloth staining & public embarrassment, wearing pad in advance is necessary. Maximum youngsters can be seen here precautionary as they wear in advance.**

6) Choice of clothes during menses :-

KIND OF CLOTHES USED	NO. OF WOMEN
DARK	120
NON DARK	50

**Sometimes in spite of wearing Sanitary Pads, accidental staining can occur. If dark clothes are worn at such times, stains will not be seen easily & public place embarrassment can be avoided. As today's maximum youngsters are following this practice, they are well aware about types of outfit to choose during such days.**

7) Behavior during emergency arrival of menses:-

NAME OF BEHAVIOR	NO. OF WOMEN
Depends on kind of place where you are	1

Go to Chemist to buy	17
Demand to a friend/colleague	17
Go for a vending machine	11
Use one's own emergency stock in purse	124

**It is always better to carry your own stock of Sanitary Pads which suits you the most. As Periods sometimes can come early as well. Vending Machine for it may not be available at the place where you are. Maximum youngsters are carrying their own emergency stock, thus they are careful about emergency arrival of menses.**

8) Decision after Emergency Menses arrival :-

NAME OF RESPONSE	NO. OF WOMEN
SKIPPED LECTURES/WORKING SHIFTS	125
DIDN'T SKIP	45

**This observation is quite disappointing that on the name of menses, duties or learning hours are avoided by many. Today's working women cannot give this kind of excuse every time. In earlier era, women used to sit at one corner of house without working in Menstruation Days. But now, as women are empowered, periods should not be a barrier in their daily work routine.**

9) Problems faced from Sanitary Pads :-

KIND OF PROBLEM FACED	NO. OF WOMEN
NO PROBLEM	19
ODOUR PROBLEM	51
LEAKAGE	40
INFECTION	26
ITCHING	78

BURNING SENSATION	61
COTTON SLIPPING OUT OF PAD	30

**Maximum of youngsters have faced some kind of problems with Sanitary Pads. To avoid odor problem, Pads can be changed more frequently. Extra Large pads can be used to avoid problem of leakage. Cotton Slipping pads should be immediately discontinued as they cause leakage. As far as skin problems are concerned, not to blame the Sanitary Pad, but it could be due to lack of personal skin hygiene or due to problem of sensitive skin.**

**CONCLUSION** :- Today's maximum youngsters are well aware about basic personal Menstrual Hygiene required during periods. But still in order to make each & every youngster well aware about it, guidance lectures of experts are necessary to arrange in every school, college & workplaces. The only objectionable part found was maximum of youngster women have skipped lectures/exams or working shifts due to sudden arrival of menses. It is not advisable.

**SUGGESTIONS** :- Although today's youngsters are well aware about Menstrual Hygiene, skipping of lectures/exams or working hours is not advisable. One should always carry emergency stock & to minimize period pains, advise of gynecologists should be sought. Relevant yogasanas like-Dhanurasan can be performed to overcome the problem of period cramps. After all Menstruation is a part of woman's life. One should learn to live with it.

As far as skin problems like rashes, burning sensation due to use of Sanitary Pads are concerned, advise of skin specialist is essential.

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