

## **Plight of Menstruating Girls in Rural India, Menstrual Myths and Need of Menstrual Leave in India: A Critical Analysis**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Menstruation is a natural process which starts in the female body on the onset of puberty and continues till menopause. However, it has always been surrounded with various myths and taboos. This research article deals with such prevalent taboos. Menstruation, in the real sense is a blessing bestowed on women. Which eventually facilitates reproduction however; it is considered as a curse due to several attached notions. India is a country of diverse religions, beliefs and faith and menstruation is one such phenomenon which undergoes different perspectives. During the menses period females do not only undergo physical pain but also mental agony. Consideration of menstruation as illness or phase of impurity is utterly illogical. This study is an attempt to highlight the ways in which the rural adolescent girls deal with their cycle and maintain menstrual hygiene. The results of the study clearly indicate the fact that girls of rural areas are deprived of basic knowledge about menstruation and thus suffer much more than others.

**Keywords-** Adolescents, Menstruation, Menstrual hygiene, Puberty.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Menstruation is a phenomenon which is unique to the female's body, a biological process that women of reproductive age goes through and have to live with which becomes a part of the life and an integral part of human life. It is a process whereby blood flows from the uterus and exits via the vaginal opening. This is a normal biological process by which the uterus gets prepared for pregnancy and if not conceived, the uterus sheds its lining. The menstrual blood consist partly blood itself and partly tissue from within the uterus. The age at which it generally starts is 10-14 years and continues till the age of 50-54 years. However, this normal process is attached with numerous taboos and various notions. Girls during this period are considered impure and what not. In many communities, girls are banned from entering the kitchen, farms, worship places etc., and in addition to these they are sometimes kept in isolation, are not allowed to move out, so on and so forth. All these beliefs are the result of insufficient knowledge and education and thereby people are still trapped in orthodox illogical beliefs. The major problem lies with girls of families having low income since affording sanitary products like pads, tampons or menstrual cups seems a farfetched dream. They use clothes or plain cotton and other sorts of substitutes for absorbing menstrual flow.

Menstrual hygiene is an area on which not much heed has been paid till date and girls as a result are continuing to suffer. Because of deep-seated stigma and different taboos, menstruation is seldom discussed in Indian families or school and menarche often hits suddenly with hardly any or no knowledge. Due to this, management of menstrual cycle becomes the pre dominant concern for a girl which keeps her miles away from attaining her actual goals of life. The deep rooted silence and ignorance surrounding menstruation is putting several lives at risk.

Menstruation stigma is more or less a form of misogyny. The taboos habituate us to understand menstrual function as something to be kept hidden, to be ashamed of or something shameful. Although menstruation attached taboos are old, however, not all societies view menstruation negatively. Indian society is progressing as evident from Sabrimala Judgement of 2018 "Indian Young Lawyers Association v State of Kerala, 2018 SCC Online SC 1690" wherein the court has discarded the practice followed from several years which refrain females of menstruating age to enter the temple and held it unconstitutional. Different religion adheres to different practices and in majority of them menstrual discrimination can be observed. Judiciary with its active is role trying to inhibit progressive and taboo free society with no menstrual discrimination. With eradication of such discrimination, enhanced sensitivity towards menstruation is expected through which especially under privileged girls can have access to sanitary napkins at a low cost, and they can stop isolating themselves and can continue their education unhindered.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology: Combination of Doctrinal and Non Doctrinal Methodology

Primary and Secondary Source: Primary data has been collected through Questionnaires and as far as secondary sources are concerned; relevant journal articles and books have been scrutinized thoroughly. Studies from various authorised online sources have also been undertaken for this research work

Primary Data Collection Methodology: Structured Pre-designed Questionnaires

Tools and Technique used for Data Collection: Direct Personal Interview

Sampling Method: Data has been collected through purposive sampling method.

Citation: Bluebook- A Uniform System of Citation (20<sup>th</sup> ed.)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The reviews of books and articles by national as well as international authors have been covered. Literature reviewed by the researcher is segregated into two sub headings based on the content.

- a) Study By Authors who have penned down their own experience along with recommendations
- b) Opinions of feminists, health care workers, law graduates and journalists

### **Study By Authors who have penned down their own experience along with recommendations**

In the year 2009, Maisie Hill authored a book “**Period Power: Harness your Hormones and Get Your Cycle working for You**” based on her first-hand experience. Maisie Hill is a highly qualified and sought- after menstrual health expert with over a decade of experience as a practitioner and birth doula. The author through this book points several issues touching the matter of menstruation. The Author draws the attention of the reader on the fact that the hormones released during pre and post menstrual cycle exorbitantly impacts female’s energy, mood and behaviour. Yet all too often women are taught that their hormones make them erratic and melancholic. However, the author refuses to accept any such theory. Instead, the author puts forward her contrary thoughts on the subjects and contends with the belief that women’s hormones are there to serve them and if handled well, these hormonal changes can help women to achieve what they are seeking. She agrees to the fact that women do get hormonal and there is nothing bad in it. Maisie Hill terming it, Period Power has tried to cover everything girls would want to know about taking control of the menstrual cycle. This book outlines the cycle strategy in depth which can be really beneficial for women to perform their best, throughout the cycle. This is a comprehensive guide and includes several tools and methods for menstrual health improvement.

Later, in June 2019, Jennifer Weiss-Wolf authored a book titled as “**Periods Gone Public: Taking a Stand for Menstrual equity**”. In this book the author has similarly shared her experience and plight she has suffered through, and as she shared her journey of Fight for attaining ‘Period Equity’. Meanwhile she also introduced her readers to the leaders and workers who are working rigorously to bring about the changes.

### **Opinions of feminists, health care workers, law graduates and journalists**

In August 2014 Winkler and Roaf through a study titled “**Taking the Bloody Linen out of the Closet: Menstrual Hygiene as a Priority for Achieving Gender Equality**” aimed at highlighting the obligations of states to protect menstruation rights of women enshrined in various international instruments. It highlights menstrual hygiene in the terms of human rights and its violations.

In October 2014 Paria, Bhattacharya et al., through their research titled “**A comparative Study on Menstrual Hygiene Among Urban and Rural adolescent Girls of West Bengal**” aimed to unleash the status of rural and urban girls and give a comparative approach of the same. The paper aimed to highlight how rural girls face more traumatic menstruation as compared to girls of urban area.

Consonantly, Nitin Sridhar, who is an Indian journalist through his study titled “**The Sabrimala Confusion- Menstruation across Cultures: A Historical Perspective**” (2018) has attempted to provide a comprehensive and in depth review about the several notions regarding menstrual cycle prevalent in India and the world over. This book covers vibrant Indic traditions Hindu, Buddha, Sikhs, other religions like- Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It also includes certain ancient civilisation like Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia and Egypt. The author emphasize that Impurity and Sacrality are two sides of one coin when it is about menstruation. These are generally and most often understood as being opposed to each other. In addition to that, this book also gives a comparative study of menstrual beliefs and notions which exists in the modern society together with do’s and don’ts.

Likewise, in 2019 Johnson in his study “**Menstrual Justice**” examined the idea of menstrual injustice in relation with structural intersectionality. The intricacies of the oppression and unequal treatment of men and women can be seen in different systems which may override each other for instance, patriarchy and racism.

In November 2019, Sinu Joseph through her study titles as “**Women and Sabrimala**” tried to bring new dimension into existing beliefs of menstruation. Author of this work is a Women’s health educator and has done in depth research in the field of Menstrual and Reproductive health since 2009. Through this study the author presents the never ending discussion on science behind the imposed restrictions on women to enter Sabrimala temple. This book certainly answers to this question that “Why entry of women of menstrual age is not allowed in the temple”. This work has been done from women’s perspective and inculcates the knowledge of traditional beliefs. Author has dwelt upon the subject which complex in most objective manner. The author has pointed out the traditional reasons for the restrictions perpetuated from the religious beliefs with reasons. The gap which has been recognized in her literary work is that she has inclined her study towards the beliefs, faiths and spirituality and less on scientific reasons.

Similarly in June, 2020 a study was conducted and authored by Lucy Peach who happens to be a sexual health educator in Australia. The book is titled “**Period Queen: Life Hack Your Cycle and Own Your Power all Month Long**”. Period Queen has attempted to change the perception of people and to turn what is considered the worst part of a woman’s life into the best one. Through this book the author is trying to encourage people to stop thinking of menstruation as impure or God’s Consolation prize to women for being a women; and to banish the notion that hormones makes females random emotional rollercoasters. The Author also mentions that most of us as young girls are given to discuss about how to manage our periods, mostly as, it is the beginning of a tiresome bloody grind, one of the great taboos. However, the truth we often overlook is that menstruation has several health benefits for women. She suggests women to become experts in recognizing and determining the needs at various different periods of the month and comprehend how each cycle gives a chance to you to nurture the most precious relationship of your life: the one with yourself.

Going ahead, as recent as July 2020 a research on “**Critical Menstruation Studies**” was done by Bobel and Winkler et al. Their work set up inclusive and carefully systematized multidisciplinary and genre- spanning perspective of the plight of field of menstruation studies, figuring new limbs in research and advocacy. It is spirited by the fundamental question: what new lines of inquiry are possible when we centre our attention on menstrual health and politic across the life course? The chapters set up menstruation as a cogent lens that reveals, embroils, unpacks and refines inequalities across the region in having biological, social, cultural and historical dimensions.

Recently in September 2020, Sinu Joseph authored yet another piece of work on the menstruation and titled it as “**Ritu Vidya**”. This work of hers is importantly emerged as a quest to answer the of several menstruation females she encountered during her workshops, seminars or educational meets. This literature does not only confine itself to the cultural beliefs but also deep dive in describing the logical reasoning behind the origin of certain practices. This work does not merely find its relevance for women but also for researchers and menstrual health care workers, the sportswomen and also for the feminists that assumes taboos are to be done away. The gap which can be drawn from Sinu Joseph’s work is that she is justifying few taboos attached with the menstruation, However in the progressive society we need workers to abandon such practices instead.

### **Research Gaps-**

Through the review of literary works done in the field of menstruation, certain gaps has been recognised as follows-

- i. Most of the authors have focused on the taboos prevalent in the society and paid less attention on how such taboos evolved and what is the significance of such beliefs.
- ii. A key gap identified was that in this field most research and surveys are old and out-dated. With the wave of feminism several notions have been discarded which also needs to be discussed.
- iii. Attempts are made to glorify taboos in the name of culture and this research work therefore attempts to eradicate them.
- iv. Also, there is lack of recommendations by the authors and workers on how the current situation can be improvised where menstruation is still considered as taboos, mostly in rural areas.
- v. No work has been done specifically targeting adolescent girls of rural areas.

## **THEORETICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **I. Silenced Culture: Menstruation Myths and Taboos**

Menstruation, from the time immemorial is considered as a taboo. Aristotle said 'menstrual blood was an unrealized foetus'. Culture and religion and religious practices are one big reason to inculcate the thought of menstrual impurity. These examples are evident of the same

- i. One of the ancient roman philosophers, Pliny the Elder taught that "menstrual blood could make seeds infertile, kill insects, kill flower, kill grass, cause fruit to fall etc."
- ii. Native American traditions required menstruating girls to stay isolated and keep distance from the hunter because their proximity undermines the powers of the hunters.
- iii. According to orthodox Judaism, the menstruating girls should not have physical relation with her husband during her menstruating days.
- iv. In Jewish culture, men did not shake hands with the women for a fear that she might be menstruating and thus impure.
- v. In Islam, women during her period days cannot read the prayer, cannot fast nor can step in the mosque.
- vi. In Hinduism also, women are restrained from any area near god such as temple due to perceived notion of impurity.

Menstruation certainly carries with it varying amount of physical pain and more than that it results into mental agony because it becomes reason for their radically diminishing opportunities. Beginning of menstruation is also beginning of restrictions to their will, mobility and behaviour. With menstruation, girls are considered fit for sexual activity and procreating and thus are subjected to child marriage which eventually leads to sexual violence. Isolation, expulsion and prohibition are all result of stagnant thoughts and beliefs. Since girls are considered unclean, dirty and shameful thereby in this state they are taught to keep it secret. Social myths and cultural practices don't let both men and women talk about menstruation and there by discrimination gets broader based on cultural inhibitions and consequent expulsion.

Menstruation is so deeply imbibed in the minds of people as something very impure that sometimes it becomes reasons of grave injustices like an incident which took place in 2020 in a college of Gujarat wherein girls were forced to remove their undergarments in order to prove that they are not menstruating (HT Correspondent, 2020). The institute where it too place is run by Hindu religious group. According to the sect's rules, menstruating women are not allowed to enter kitchen and temple and hostel warden suspected some girls of violating the same and therefore complained. This incident happened in year 2020, in era of strong dialogues on the empowerment of women and smashing patriarchy and yet, this is where some parts of our society at stuck at.

The on-going issue of restriction on entry of menstruating women in Sabrimala temple is being dealt by Supreme Court in 2018 wherein the judiciary is trying to break the orthodox norms and trying to establish equality between men and women however the matter is again to be heard. Judicial activism has indefinite powers to eradicate social inequalities and maintain balance in the nation. Prior to Sabrimala case, similar issue came in front of Supreme Court in case of "Dr. Noorjehan Safia Niaz and anr vs. State of Maharashtra and ors WP 106 of 2014" in which petitioner contented and alleged gender discrimination and denial access of women in Haji Ali Dargah arbitrarily. The court in the said case held that prohibiting women from entering sanctum sanctorum of Haji Ali contravenes and violates Article 14, 15 and 25 of the

Indian Constitution. Steps like these taken from judiciary will slowly and gradually eliminate the existing taboos and will certainly eradicate menstrual Discrimination in near future.

## **II. Approach of International Human Rights Legal Regime pertaining to Menstruation**

Human rights are those rights which a person gets by virtue of being human. Human rights proclaim human dignity and menstruation is intrinsically linked with it. When menstruating girls remain devoid of certain basic human rights such as bathing facilities, safe, effective and accessible means of menstrual hygiene, in such situation women are obviously not able to carry out their menstruation with dignity. The principle of human dignity is also undermined when there is exclusion, shame and teasing because of menstruation. Factors such as gender inequality, poverty, humanitarian crises, patriarchy, and harmful orthodox traditions are all reason of menstruation stigma and thus a threat on enjoyment of fundamental human right by women. Human rights such as right to equality and non-discrimination, access to health and sanitation, right to privacy, right to work, right to bodily integrity are all undermined because of menstruation shame and especially vulnerable women are majorly deprived of these basic human rights.

When considering International Human rights legal regime, no treaty makes any clear reference or provision for menstruation. The prominent Human Rights norms such as International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Convention against elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against women are silenced on menstruation issue which is more notable. However, there have been stresses laid upon right to health in some of the norms.

- i. Article 12 of “International Covenant of Economic Social and Cultural Rights” (ICESCR) provides right to health which does not expressly specifies menstruation but while interpreting it is evident that menstruation is a phenomenon very much comes under the ambit of right to health.
- ii. “The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” (CESCR) in its General comment 10, sets forth The AAAQ Framework in its General comment which puts forward four crucial elements of right to health i.e., Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Quality.
- iii. The CESCR also briefly mentions in General Comment 22 about the need for states to take affirmative actions and measures to eradicate social misconceptions and taboos.
- iv. The covenant also provides for equal rights of men and women and forbids discrimination on the ground of sex (Article 3, International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).
- v. “Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women” in Article 12, provides for equality of men and women regarding access to health care services.
- vi. “Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” in Article 14(2)(h) also mentions that Rural women has right to enjoy adequate living conditions, specifically in relation to sanitation.

By analysing these many provision it can be deduced with its broad interpretation that access to menstrual facility, provisions as to relaxations and forbidding of menstrual discrimination can be well accepted as a socio economic right of very women across the world.

## **III. Menstrual Benefitting Provisions and Menstrual leave: Comparison between Indian and Foreign Legal Framework**

In India, menstruation is one such topic that is not talked about in open and thus people prefer to discuss it behind the doors. In 2018 Ninong Ering, member of parliament tabled a private bill i.e., “Menstruation Benefit Bill” which triggered the discussion on menstruation and the need of having menstrual leave policy very month for working women.

The aforesaid bill aims at providing two days menstrual leave to all the women either working in public or in private sector and set up of comfortable place or room where women can have rest at the workplace during menstruation. The bill does not only cater to women of white collar job but to all the girls and women working in any sector, industry or profession and involved in any job role thereto. The blue collar women worker cannot match the luxury or comfort of White collar Jobbers therefore coverage of blue collar workers in this bill would definitely be a step in right direction. Also, there are certain medical conditions which are associated with the menstruation and needs to be addressed in the bill like menorrhagia, pelvic inflammatory diseases, endometriosis, fibroids etc.

Females goes through the menstrual pain in varying intensity and as different body tends to respond differently due to hormonal shifts, thus it becomes important that this bill passes so that women can be given right to avail leave as and when required. The state of Bihar has already been offering since 1992, two days menstrual leave to the women. It is first state in India to bring such revolutionary change.

The bill has received different opinions from people all the corner and what is more astonishing is that a certain women are opposing this bill. These women counter that, this bill shall inculcate more gender inequality and women may have to encounter biasness while getting hired or less pay etc. This is something which needs to change and women should not be punished for their biological framework. Women bear pain just to stay fit in and fear of being out casted shows that we are still palling the patriarchal cycle for future.

In 2018, another bill “Women’s Sexual, Reproductive and Menstrual Rights Bill” with similar foot line has been proposed by Shashi Tharoor. The bill proposes that there should be availability of sanitary napkins in the girl’s washroom at schools and premises of public authority free of cost. This bill is also pending in the parliament.

In a country like ours where menstruation is being disgusted and heard and talked about with raised brows, execution of policy like menstrual leave has a difficult road to travel.

Most countries do not provide for menstrual leave like India however few nations across the world acknowledge menstrual pain and therefore inhibited provisions regarding menstrual leave in their domestic laws like-

Japan- In Japan, movement began in early 1920s – *seiri kyuka*- in which labour union were demanding menstrual leave for women and subsequently favourable legislation has been enacted in year 1947 by The Japanese Labour Standards (Article 68 , Labour Standard Act, 1947).

Zambia- As of 2015, one day leave is granted to the menstruating women, these leave are called as Mother’s day, which is mentioned in the country’s Labour Laws. However this clause is not absolute and includes clause restricting women from ‘misusing’ it, that is, if women are found misusing the leaves, they can be fired

Indonesia- Women are entitled to two days paid leave per month (Labour Act No. 13, 2003(Indonesia)

South Korea- Women are allowed to take one day menstrual leave (Article 71, Labour Standards Law, South Korea) and if those leaves are not being used, women get paid for them.

Taiwan- The Act of Gender Equality in Employment, gives right to women to get 3 days menstrual leave apart from the sick leave (Article 14, Act of Gender Equality in Employment,2002, Taiwan).

In most country’s legislations, the mention of menstrual leave cannot be found and this suggests that menstrual health of women needs attention globally.

#### **IV. Menstruation Pain Matters: Need Of awareness**

Women and girls make up almost half of the world’s population and are many of them are influenced by poverty, food insecurity, lack of access to health care etc. Female leaders and contribution made by them is vital for finding sustainable tomorrow and strong decisions can be made only when they are healthy. Period pain is no joke and with appropriate treatment and access to healthcare facilities females will be able to thrive.

Unlike other medical conditions, menstrual pain remains unattended because of it being considered less of a serious nature. And this mass unawareness calls for education in the field. One in five girls suffers from menstrual pain known as dysmenorrhea (Pallavi, 2019). Dysmenorrhea is a kind of pain experienced during menstruation due to contractions in the uterus, or menstrual cramps. The two medical conditions related to menstrual pain is-

- i. Primary Dysmenorrhea: For this condition there is no express medical explanation or cause. It happens as soon as the girl starts menstruating and keeps causing pain during the period days of the month.

- ii. Endometriosis: it is a condition when the tissue lining of the uterus grows outside of the uterus and also on the other areas in the body. Although the tissue acts normal during a period, but eventually it has no way to exit the body and therefore causes pain since its eventually trapped in their.

Their cannot be a lucid distinction between these two situations since a girl suffering from Primary Dysmenorrhea might also be suffering from Endometriosis which remains undiagnosed. Both of these situations are not even properly looked upon by the doctors and endometriosis is generally concluded as infertility and most common treatment is removal of Hysterectomy but pain may still persist.

Yet another health issue linked to menstruation is Pre-Menstrual Syndrome also known as PMS which leads to major mood swings, pain in abdomen, breast, joints, pelvis etc. during this period women may also experience constipation, nausea, passive excessive amount of gas, excessive or loss of appetite, general discomfort or discontent, anxiety, acne, depression, insomnia etc. PMS is even recognised by Indian Judiciary as a valid under Section 84 of IPC. An act done by women triggered by premenstrual stress symbol can be discharged claiming benefit of legal insanity under section 84 of IPC or if not properly established benefit of doubt can be given as held in “Kumari Chandra V State Of Rajasthan, D.B Cr Appeal No 44 of 1987 (India)”

In 1980-81, interestingly two British women were able to mitigate their sentence owing to premenstrual syndrome .In Regina vs. Craddock (1981, 1 C.L. 49), Sandie Craddock stabbed a fellow barmaid three times and similarly in Regina vs. English, 10 November 1981, Christine English crushed his lover to death with her car. In both these cases with the aid of testimony of certified Physician, the accused were merely convicted of manslaughter since PMS diminished responsibility and neither of them was punished for murder.

### ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It has been analysed that the situation of girls in Madhya Pradesh rural area is miserable as majority of them lack awareness and education regarding menstruation. They still consider using cloth as a safe precaution and have almost never visited a doctor in case of menstrual health problems.

Analysis of the survey shows that 67.9% girls were not aware about menstruation before beginning of their cycle (Table: 1). When asked about the precautions used by these girls, it was found 44.5% of girls are still using cloth which is not very hygienic and they are also not aware of health problems caused by use of these cloths.

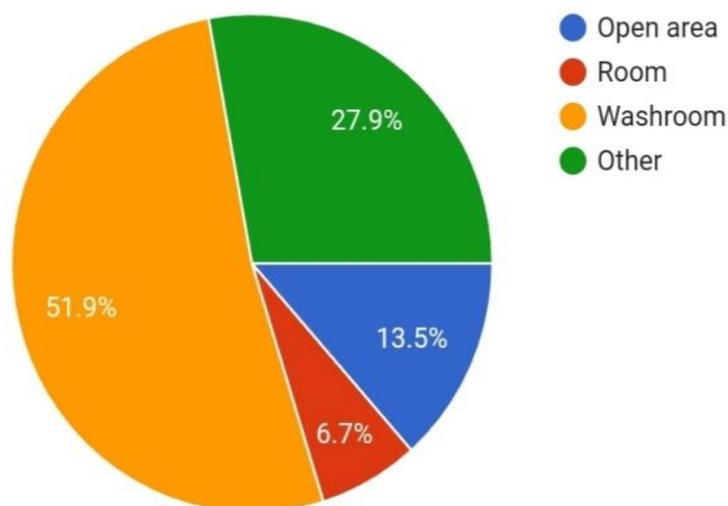
Also, 89.7% girls are experience pain during those days, however 78.8% girls have never visited gynaecologist for any diagnosis or medicinal remedy. What is more disturbing here is that even in 21<sup>st</sup> century 42.7% girls of this village are kept in isolation and 48.1 % girls are not allowed to go to school or college or any other place in that phase.

**Table 1: Responses to the questions**

QUESTIONS	Responses			
	1	2	3	4
Were you aware of menstruation before your 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle?	Yes 25.5%	No <b>67.9%</b>	Partial 6.6%	-
What do you generally use to absorb the flow?	Pads 51.8%	Cloth <b>44.5%</b>	Other 3.7%	-
Do you suffer physical pain during periods?	Yes, excessive 19.1%	Casual pain 44.9%	Sometimes 25.7%	Never 10.3%
Do you visit doctor when the pain strikes for obtaining medicinal aid?	Always 7.6%	Never <b>78.8 %</b>	Sometimes 13.6%	-
Are you refrained from attending school/college during your periods?	Yes <b>48.1%</b>	No 51.9%	-	-

Moreover, 37.7% girls do not use and throw the cloth once used but repeat those cloths after a wash. What is more frightening here is that those clothes are not even properly sanitized and remain unhygienic since 51.9% girls use washroom as a place to hang these wet used clothes (Figure:1). The reason is that washroom is the only place where they can hang period clothes without getting anyone to notice it. These facts prove the exiting menstrual shyness which may eventually result in several medical complexities due to unhygienic practices.

**Figure: 1 Responses as to the place where girls hang their used clothes after wash**



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It can be concluded that majority of girls lacks awareness regarding physiological change which happens at the onset of puberty, and when they suddenly start bleeding it comes as surprise or shock. Since the use of cloth is most prevalent in rural areas it can be concluded in this regard that one of the reasons why these girls are still using cloth is that they consider sanitary napkins as a costlier option since they are unaware of the availability of cheap sanitary napkins issued by Anganwadi in every village and this is why every mother is making her daughter use old clothes from the house and not sanitary napkins. It can also be seen that parents in rural areas consider menstruation synonymous to impurity due to which they keep their daughters in isolation for those couple of days and therefore society needs reform in this area. Menstruation is a normal vaginal bleed and a regular event that occurs in every healthy adolescent girl's life yet substantial reforms are needed to promote positive social norms and subsequently enact shift in behaviour and thereby people's attitude. Additionally it is also evident from the study that certain nations have menstrual leave policies and apart from those, other nations including India need to implement and enact provisions pertaining to menstrual leave. In order to attain the true meaning of equality the society needs to overcome from the status quo and banish menstrual shaming. In mid of all the developments and progressiveness this one factor is often ignored. More over equality, women still have to fight for being treated with at least dignity if not equality. They are fighting for not being treated as unclean and dirty while menstruating. India and more specifically rural area of the nation needs change their outlook and get rid of the regressive mind-set once for all.

### Recommendation for reform in law and Policy

Menstruation is something for which no women asks for since it's not a choice and that is why they should not be punished for the same. Equality in workplace is not merely equal pay for equal work but also indicated convenient working environment for both genders. But working for several hours in periods is surely not comfortable for women and thus a question on equality.

Thus, the researcher in light of presents conditions after due analysis recommends that:

- ❖ There should be enhanced involvement of Governmental agencies for initiation of awareness campaign to educate girls about menstruation, to make them understand how harmful repeated use of same cloth can be along with certain other important aspects like how to maintain menstrual hygiene.
- ❖ Government should also initiate free medical camps where these deprived girls could get advice from the doctors.
- ❖ Along with girls, their parents, families and society at large also needs to get educated so that they can stop considering menstruation as taboo and do not restrict their daughters to go to schools and thereby do not hinder their education during those days.
- ❖ Apart from government, other institutions like NGOs can also play a substantial role in promoting menstrual hygiene.
- ❖ Media should also give due coverage to menstrual problems so that every citizen can be acquainted with the sufferings of women and thereby they can promote further reform.
- ❖ The two bills tabled in parliament regarding menstrual leave and menstrual rights should get due attention by the other members of the parliament and should be passed soon.

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