

# **Menstruation Hygiene Practice Among Adolescent Girls**

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## **Abstract**

*This study was based on menstrual hygiene practises among adolescent girls studying at Yubak Secondary School, Paknajol Ward No. 16, Kathmandu. Unhealthy menstrual hygiene is linked to significant morbidity and mortality due to reproductive tract infections (RTIs) and cervical cancer. This study was based on a descriptive research design. Open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires were used for data collection. The study was among 120 adolescent girls studying in grades 8, 9, and 10. Among them, 21% used to change pads daily, 33% used to change pads twice a day, 33% used to change pads when it got wet, and 13% used to change pads when they felt essential. Regarding the provision of a separate toilet for girls, 96% of adolescent girls said that there was a separate toilet for them. Regarding challenges faced by girls during menstruation at home and school, 38% were facing personal challenges, 38% were facing familial challenges, 8% were facing problems due to superstition, and 16% were found to be affected by sociocultural factors.*

**Keywords:** *Disposal, Adolescent, Menstruation, Hygiene, Cleanliness*

## **Introduction**

Menstruation is a normal process for the discharge of an expired ovum. The first-time menstruation was called menarche (Husney, 2004). Most females face some physical changes in their lives (Shrestha, 2019). Menstruation, if not managed effectively, can interfere with girls' school attendance and participation (Nagar & Aimol, 2011).

WHO (2005) defines adolescence as the period of life between 10 and 19 years of age. Normally, worldwide, two billion individuals are of menstruating age, and as many as 300 million will have their period on any given day (Zivi, 2020). Every day, approximately 237,250 women menstruate in Nepal (Mukherjee, Lama, & Shrestha, 2020). During their menstrual cycle, the daughters are not allowed to touch water, food items, trees of fruits, or religious places, among others (K.C., 2019). According to the WHO/UNICEF joint monitoring programme 2012, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) was defined as women and adolescent girls using a clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect menstrual blood that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary; using soap and water for washing the body as required; and having safe and convenient facilities to

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dispose of used menstrual management materials. They understand the basic facts linked to the menstrual cycle and how to manage it with dignity and without discomfort or fear." Poor menstrual health management in schools has been an issue to worry about, humiliate adolescent girls, and contribute to monthly absenteeism, leading to poor academic performance in schools. A good toilet in school can address menstruating girls specific needs for privacy, space, washing facilities, and the correct disposal or cleaning of menstrual pads (UNICEF, 2010). The issue of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) facilities was not only a health issue but also an issue of human rights. It was a human right for every woman. It was necessary to break the silence on this matter, as it concerns all women everywhere. Stress-free and joyful menstruation was the right of every female, irrespective of culture, age, and education (Ghimire, 2020). The ability of women and girls to manage their menstruation hygienically and with dignity was linked to the achievement of several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) due to the multiple implications menstrual management has for their health and well-being (Patker, 2012).

Menstruation is an initial phase of reproduction that begins at the age of purely in girls. It was not any curse but rather an innate, inevitable future of human civilization (Poudel, 2021). Sommer (2013) studied menstrual hygiene management on the school water and sanitation agenda. The water and sanitation community, in partnership with the education sector, was long overdue to take ownership of the menstrual hygiene management agenda for schools in low-income settings. UNICEF of Nepal (2006) developed the school-led total sanitation approach, which contributed to school and community sanitation. This approach has been replicated and implemented in many countries in Asia and Africa. The program aims to provide a safe and healthy environment in schools so that all students can fully benefit from their educational experience.

**Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to find out and analyze the knowledge and practice regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls.

**Methodology**

For the purpose of this research, the primary data was collected. It was based on a descriptive study design that included numerical data. This research school was deliberately chosen. At Shree Yubak Secondary School in Kathmandu-16, Paknajok, Nepal, the study was carried out. All teenage females in the chosen

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classes 8, 9, and 10 were counted as respondents for the study using the census technique. Data were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire and an observation checklist. The 120 total responders were 33, 37, and 50 in each of the classes 8, 9, and 10. Data were acquired, collected, and statistically analyzed. The research instrument was a pre-made, pre-tested questionnaire. Descriptive, cross-sectional research involving 120 teenage females was carried out.

## Result and Discussion

### Discriminatory practices during menstruation

In the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a prevailing discriminatory practice during menstruation which has been hampering the quality of life of adolescent girls.

**Table 1:** Discriminatory practices during menstruation

Issues of Respondents	Number	Percentage
Avoid cooking and worshipping god	90	75
Participation in recreational activities	18	15
Avoid social gathering	12	10
Total	120	100

The above table shows the prevalence of discriminatory practices in society. 75% of respondents were not allowed to enter the kitchen and participate in religious activities. Similarly, 15% of them did not participate in recreational activities during the period and 10 % of them were used to avoid social gatherings during the menses

### Information regarding menstruation before menarche

During the first time of menstruation, most of the girls reported that they feel psychologically stressed, shy, and nervous with the onset of menarche. Thus we must try to provide adequate information before the onset of menarche: they should know about menarche management through different sources, which is shown below.

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**Table 2:** Distribution of sources of information menstruation hygiene before menarche

Source of information	Number	Percent
Medical Person and Reading materials	50	42
Relatives	25	21
Mother and Elder sister	25	21
Others	20	16
Total	120	100

The above table shows that 100% of respondents had previous knowledge of menstruation hygiene before menarche. 42% received information through Medical Person and Reading Materials, 21% received information through their mothers and elder sister, 21% received information through relatives and 16 % of them received information through other sources.

**Practice on changing menstruation pads**

Personal hygiene must be maintained due to the excessive flow of blood during menstruation. In this period, females used different kinds of absorbents to protect from leakage of blood. The below table shows that time and frequency to change the pad during menstruation, which is shown in the below table.

**Table 3:** Practice on changing menstruation pads

Frequency of change	Number	Percent
Daily change	25	21
Twice a day	40	33
When it gets wet	40	33
Feel essential	15	13
Total	120	100

21% of respondents used to change the pads daily whereas 33% of them used to change twice a day.33% of them used to change the pads when it used to get wet and 13% of them used to change pads when they felt essential to change the pads.

### Different challenges to maintaining menstruation

Menstruation was a regular process that regularly happens in females at the interval of every 28(+/-7) days. Due to various reasons like superstition, socio-cultural belief/practice, lack of education, and lack of awareness on it: adolescent girls are unable to maintain quality of life

**Table 4:** Challenges/problems faced to maintain at home and school in menstruation

Issues of Respondent	Number	Percentage
Personal challenges	45	38
Family challenges	45	38
Superstition	10	8
Socio-cultural factors	20	16
Total	120	100

The above table shows that respondents have been facing different challenges while maintaining menstruation challenges at home and school. In the survey, 38% of respondents were facing personal challenges, 38 % were facing familial challenges, 8 % were facing challenges due to superstition and 16% of them were facing problems due to socio-cultural factors.

### Provision of separate toilets for girls:

Students spend at least eight hours in school. At that time girl students were found to have difficulties maintaining safe menstruation practices. Thus, the Provision of a separate clean toilet for girl students is a must in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It may help to reduce dropout rates of girl students and help them to improve their educational attainment and give them privacy.

**Table 5:** Provision of separate toilets for girls

Separate toilet	Number	Percent
Yes	115	96
No	5	4
Total	120	100

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The above table shows that 96% of respondent told that there was a separate toilet for girls at school. They said that the school had maintained privacy and cleanliness for safe menstrual practices.

### Conclusion

The menstrual hygiene management research was conducted among girls students of grades 8, 9, and 10 of Yubak Secondary School of Kathmandu metropolitan city of Paknajol, ward no. 16. Menstruation is also one of the changes in the body with age in females. Adolescent girls face many problems during menstruation. Maintaining proper hygiene during the menstruation period seems challenge yet. Menstrual hygiene is vital to the empowerment and well-being of adolescent girls. Although this study found that almost all respondents were present in the class during their menses. The experience and practice of using pads, menstrual cleanliness, and pad management used pad disposal of the respondents were also somehow satisfactory. It is crucial to encourage safe and hygienic practices among adolescent girls and try to escape them from traditional beliefs, misconceptions, and cultural beliefs. Although the adolescent girls were trying to maintain hygienic menstrual practices: it would have been much better if there was inter-sectoral coordination between the Nepal government, NGOs and INGOs, and school authorities to attain optimum quality of life.

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