

## Assessing Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior of Rural Women of District Muzaffargarh Regarding Menstrual Hygiene

TANVEER IQBAL

Department of Sociology  
International Islamic University  
Islamabad, Pakistan

SUMMERA QAMMAR

Project Coordinator  
Association of Gender and Human Empowerment  
Muzaffargarh, Pakistan

RIZWAN ABBAS

Department of Sociology  
PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi  
Pakistan

ABBAS MEHDI

Department of Sociology  
PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi  
Pakistan

SAAD HAMEED

Department of Sociology NCBA&E Multan  
Pakistan

### Abstract:

*The present study was an attempt to explore the knowledge, practices and behaviors of rural women regarding their menstrual hygiene in District Muzaffargarh. A sample of 400 women was selected through random sampling technique. The data was collected through personal interviews using a well prepared interview schedule. The major objectives of the study were to identify the awareness level and practices of women regarding their management of menstrual hygiene. To identify the traditional and cultural practices of women during their menstruation. To check the facilities available for females in Schools as well as homes to manage their menstruation hygienically. The findings of the results show that the Women of district Muzaffargarh practising unhygienic practices to manage their*

*menstruation. This leads to School dropout ratio, many reproductive health problems, directly indirectly impact on MDGs, development and economics of the country.*

**Key words:** Menstrual Hygiene Management, Non Government Organization, Lady Health Worker, Rural Support Programme, Family Planning Association of Pakistan

## **Introduction**

In Pakistan, the female population is about 52% from which 26% is of reproductive age. The reproductive age started from 12 to 40 years of age. Many females and adolescent girls menstruate every month for 2-7 days. Menstrual period is a normal reproductive process in healthy women. In the menstruation process the blood loss occurs through the vagina. Instead of normal and natural process, the process of menstruation is still considered a secret and taboo topic in many countries including Pakistan. There are lot of socio cultural taboos and myths regarding menstruation. To handle menstruation hygienically and safely, it is necessary that women and adolescent girls from rural areas should have accurate opportunity to use water for sanitation and domestic facilities. Women require some private and personal place to change the clothes or napkin pads, water to wash their body parts after changing the pads or clothes, or for washing the used clothes, for drying the clothes, and also for disposing the used pads or used clothes safely. It is necessary for both Of the sex to pay their attention towards the menstrual hygienic management. Presently, the long term customs and traditions and community myths which are prevailing in many societies force harmfully to the lives of females and adolescent girls.

Cleanliness during menstrual has been mostly unnoticed by WASH sectors and many areas which are focusing on sexual and reproductive health, well being and dignity. Due to these

problems and issues, most of the females and adolescent girls are deprived of their basic rights to avail WASH facilities for their health, education, self-respect compared to male gender equity. If the condition still remain, it is impossible for improvement programmes to accomplish their goals. (Population Reference Bureau 2011)

### **Objectives of the study:**

**Objective 1:** To identify the awareness level and practices of women regarding their management of menstrual hygiene.

**Objective 2:** To identify the traditional and cultural practices of women during their menstruation.

### **Methods of Research**

Quantitative research design was used for the study. The study was delimited to the women of District Muzaffargarh having aged from 10—45 years as a target population. A sample of 400 respondents was selected through random sampling techniques from 20 rural union councils of District Muzaffargarh. A non-random sample is used in which as a researchers, was chooses a person, and happens to come across. Interview schedule was applied as an official document for information aggregation. For data analysis, Chi-square test and Regression analysis was used. Data is also analyzed through SPSS including frequency distribution

### **Empirical Evidences**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is some association between age of respondent and her age of menarche.

**Age of Respondent \* Age of menarche Cross tabulation**

		Age of menarche				Total
		10-12	12-15	15-18	Above 18	
Age of Respondent	10-15	24	16	22	20	82

Tanveer Iqbal, Summera Qammar, Rizwan Abbas, Abbas Mehdi, Saad Hameed-  
**Assessing Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior of Rural Women of District Muzaffargarh Regarding Menstrual Hygiene**

	15-20	16	17	19	14	66
	20-25	19	21	15	22	77
	25-30	25	26	12	20	83
	Above 30	22	22	22	26	92
Total		106	112	95	87	400

Chi-Square= 28.552; p-value= 0.005

The above table shows the results of chi-square test to check that is there any association between age of respondent and her age of menarche. The p-value for this test is 0.005 which indicates that there is some association between age of respondent and her age of menarche.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is no association between "what are the things that you don't do during menses? and what are the things that you do when you have pain during menses?"

**What are the things that you don't do during menses? \***  
**What are the things that you do when you have pain during menses?**

**Crosstabulation**

		What are the things that you do when you have pain during menses?				Total
		Have pain killer	Do "Tokor"	Rest	Nothing	
What are the things that you don't do during menses?	Take bath	26	25	19	24	94
	Take bath with hot water	22	29	26	25	102
during menses?	Drink milk	37	11	42	17	107
	Eat meat	25	32	19	21	97
Total		110	97	106	87	400

Chi-Square= 28.399; p-value= 0.001

The above table shows the results of chi-square test to check that is there any association between "what are the things that you don't do during menses? and what are the things that you do when you have pain during menses?" The p-value for this test is 0.001 which indicates that there is some association between "what are the things that you don't do during menses?"

and what are the things that you do when you have pain during menses?"

**H<sub>3</sub>:** There is no association between "what kind of sanitary napkin do you use during menses? and how many times do you change sanitary napkin in day?"

**What kind of sanitary napkin do you use during menses? \* How many times do you change sanitary napkin in day?**

**Crosstabulation**

	How many times do you change sanitary napkin in day?				Total
	One time	Two times	Three times	Four times	
	What kind of Old piece of cloth	23	40	27	
sanitary Cotton and gauze or	21	33	22	23	99
napkin do new cloth					
you use Commercial sanitary	22	26	20	27	95
during napkin					
menses? Any other	20	32	31	26	109
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>400</b>

Chi-Square= 17.998; p-value= 0.035

The above table shows the results of chi-square test to check that is there any association between "what kind of sanitary napkin do you use during menses? and how many times do you change sanitary napkin in day?" The p-value for this test is 0.035 which indicates that there is some association between "what kind of sanitary napkin do you use during menses? and how many times do you change sanitary napkin in day?"

## Conclusion

The topic of menstruation is a taboo topic. The reluctance to discuss it is so extensive, that it is spoken of very rarely, even among women. MHM is considered to be a totally private and personal phenomenon, which the girls should be able to manage on their own, without requiring the schools to provide them with any additional facilities. Traditional beliefs and practices

regarding menstruation were observed to be very widely prevalent among the adolescent girls, mothers and teachers. These consisted of prohibitions against bathing, using water to clean ones self, restrictions against consuming certain types of food, etc. These practices have an adverse impact on the health of the girls, as they directly affect their hygiene and nutrition. This culturally based reluctance to discuss menstruation leads to issues in many other areas as well.

### **Recommendations**

The education officials and teachers need to focus on the MHM needs of the girls at school level. There is also a need for policy dialogue with senior government policy-makers to prioritize support for adolescent girls in schools for MHM. Furthermore there is a need to advocate at various levels and create awareness and recognition of the MHM related needs of adolescent girls in schools and highlight the urgency of this issue. Capacity building program of education department officials and school teachers on MHM and rights can be started to increase their understanding on the issue and consideration for inclusion of MHM in training module of teachers.

### **REFERENCES**

- Mahon T, Fernandes M. 2009, "Menstrual hygiene in South Asia a Neglected Issue in WASH Programmes: A Report" Water Aid Nepal.
- Khisro N., Rahman A. 2011 "*Paving Way for Menstrual Hygiene Management in Rural Pakistan*" Integrated Rural Support Programme (IRSP) Pakistan
- Israr H., 2010 "Menstrual Hygiene Promotion Needs in Pakistan" Integrated Rural Support Programme (IRSP) Pakistan

- Seymour K. 2010, "Tackling Menstrual Hygiene Taboos 10 Case Studies Bangladesh" UNICEF Bangladesh
- Khisro N., Rahman A. 2011 "*Paving Way for Menstrual Hygiene Management in Rural Pakistan*" Integrated Rural Support Programme (IRSP) Pakistan
- Seymour K., 2010 "Tackling Menstrual Hygiene Taboos 10 Case Studies Bangladesh" UNICEF Bangladesh
- World Population Foundation 2010 "Sexual & Reproductive Health and Economic Status of Adolescent Girls: a baseline study in Sanghar and Gujranwala"
- Khisro N., Rahman A. 2011 "*Paving Way for Menstrual Hygiene Management in Rural Pakistan*" Integrated Rural Support Programme (IRSP) Pakistan
- Wickramasinghe D., "2012 Managing menstrual hygiene in emergency situations: How far from reality? "Paper presented at Asia Regional Sanitation and Hygiene Practitioners Conference Dhaka, Bangladesh, 31 January -2 February 2012
- Israr. H, Khisro N. 2012 "Low Cost Handmade Sanitary Pads! From Design to Production A Step Forward in Menstrual Hygiene Promotion in Pakistan" Integrated Rural Support Programme (IRSP) Pakistan
- Water Aid, 2010. "Menstrual hygiene in South Asia: A neglected issue for WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) programs
- Khisro N., Rahman A. 2011 "*Paving Way for Menstrual Hygiene Management in Rural Pakistan*" Integrated Rural Support Programme (IRSP) Pakistan
- Zinash T. et al. 2011. "Towards a Local Solution for Menstrual Hygiene Management in Schools in Ethiopia: case studies 2011" SNV Netherlands Development Organization
- K B. et al. 2012. "*Improving menstrual hygiene facilities in secondary schools Initiatives from BRAC-WASH Programme in Bangladesh*" Paper presented at Asia

- Regional Sanitation and Hygiene practitioners  
Workshop Dhaka Bangladesh 31 January- 2 February  
2012
- Water Aid, 2010. "Menstrual hygiene in South Asia: A  
neglected issue for WASH (water, sanitation and  
hygiene) programs"
- Israr H., Nasir S., 2011. "*Low Cost Handmade Sanitary Pads:  
from Design to Production*" Integrated Regional Support  
Program.
- PIEDAR 2012, "Strengthening Environmental Clubs in Urban  
Schools: Project Completion Report". UN-Habitat,  
Pakistan.
- Sommer M (2010) Integrating menstrual hygiene management  
(MHM) into the school water, sanitation and hygiene  
agenda, *The future of water, sanitation and hygiene:  
innovation, adaption and engagement in a changing  
world*, Briefing paper, 2011, WEDC, Loughborough, UK.
- UN Millennium Development Goals (2010), available at  
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>  
(accessed 18 July, 2011).
- UN Statistics (2011) *Malawi national statistics office 2008  
census*, Lilongwe, available at:  
[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010\\_PHC/Malawi/Malawi\\_Press.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/Malawi/Malawi_Press.pdf) (accessed 22 August  
2011).
- WHO (2010) *Developing guidelines for water, sanitation and  
hygiene promotion in schools*, World Health  
Organisation, India available at  
[http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/SDE\\_EH-566.pdf](http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/SDE_EH-566.pdf)  
(accessed 19 August 2011). [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) (accessed 20  
Nov 2011).
- Curtis V (2010) *The Handwashing Handbook*, available at:  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWSS/Publications/20389151/HandwashingHandbook.pdf> (accessed 22  
August 2011).



Tanveer Iqbal, Summera Qammar, Rizwan Abbas, Abbas Mehdi, Saad Hameed-  
**Assessing Knowledge, Attitude and Behavior of Rural Women of District  
Muzaffargarh Regarding Menstrual Hygiene**

---

FAWE (2011 *Forum for African Women Educationalists*,  
available at:  
<http://www.fawe.org/activities/interventions/index.php>  
(accessed 11 June 2011).

Aniebue U, Aniebue P and Nwankwo T (2009) The Impact of  
Pre-menarcheal Training on Menstrual Practices and  
Hygiene of Nigerian Schoolgirls, *Pan African Medical  
Journal*, vol 2, no 9, pp 1-9.