

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Regarding Menstruation among Tharu Women of Palia Block, In Lakhimpur Kheri

Paper Submission: 02/04/2021, Date of Acceptance: 15/04/2021, Date of Publication: 25/04/2021

Bhagya Preet Kaur
PDF Scholar,
Dept. of Home Science,
Lucknow University,
Lucknow, UP, India

Savita Ahluwalia
Associate Professor,
Dept. of Home Science,
Mahila Degree College,
Lucknow, UP, India

Abstract

Menstruation is a normal physiological process in females which indicates about beginning of reproductive life of girls, but sometimes due to lack of knowledge it becomes a problematic phenomenon in the Indian society especially for adolescent girls. In India, menstrual hygiene mostly depends upon the educational status, socioeconomic status, and cultural of the family. So the objective of the study was to assess status the Knowledge, attitude and practices regarding menstrual hygiene among Tharu women residing in Palia block of Lakhimpur kheri district.

Methodology

The study was a community based cross sectional study. A total of 400 Tharu women were interviewed using pre tested interview schedule.

Result

Out of total majority 93.5% women had no knowledge regarding organ from where menstrual bleeding occurs. Only 13.1 % women have knowledge that menstruation is a physiological process. Almost half of the respondent i.e. 51% was using used cloth and only 25.2% using new cloth every time in which only 14.5% were using sanitary napkins. Further practices regarding hygiene was also found to be poor as only 42.8% clean their genital area.

Conclusion

The basic awareness regarding menstrual process was insufficient and also there were many taboos associated with menstrual process.

Keywords: Menstruation, Knowledge, Attitude, Practices, Tribe

Introduction

Menstruation is a normal healthy physiological process and not an illness or curse. In a lay man's language menstruation is known as a "period". Menstruation is also called menses or cat-mania and more commonly a period of monthly flow. The word 'menstruation' is etymologically related to 'moon'. The terms 'menstruation' and 'menses' are derived from the Latin *mensis* (month), which in turn relates to the Greek *mene* (moon) and to the roots of the English words month and moon reflecting the fact that the moon also takes close to 28 days to revolve around the Earth (actually 27.32 days). The menstruation is the shedding cycle of the inner lining of the uterus, the endometrium, under the control of hormones of the hypo-thalamus pituitary axis. Thus menstruation is the monthly elimination or discharge of a portion of the endothelium of the uterus that has been prepared to protect and nurture a fertilized egg in the event of pregnancy, It is a monthly bleeding for 3-5 days (some time up to 7 days) occurring regularly every 28 days from menarche till menopause in the women's reproductive life.

Hygiene-related practices of women during menstruation are of considerable importance, as it has a health impact in terms of increased vulnerability to reproductive tract infections (RTI). Women having better knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene and safe practices are less vulnerable to RTI and its consequences. Therefore, increased knowledge about menstruation right from childhood may escalate safe practices and may help in mitigating the suffering of millions of women. In India, menstruation and menstrual practices are clouded by taboos and socio-

cultural restrictions for women as well as adolescent girls. Limited access to products for sanitary hygiene and lack of safe sanitary facilities could prove to be barriers to increased mobility and the likelihood of resorting to unhygienic practices to manage menstruation. Traditionally in India, it appears that there are some strategies: use of old clothes as pads by recycling them, and use of ash or straw, which offers no protection, and endangering menstrual hygiene with long term implications for reproductive health. So there's a need to generate awareness about safe menstrual hygiene practices among female for prevention of RTI and future complications. So the objective of the study was to assess the Knowledge, attitude and practices regarding menstruation among Tharu women of paliya block of lakhimpur kheri.

Methodology

Type of Study

The present study is a cross-sectional community-based descriptive study.

Study Area

The study was conducted in the Plaiya block of Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh. This

Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Tharu tribal women

General information	No. of subjects (n=400) (%)
Age (yrs):	
13-18	133 (33.3)
19-30	133 (33.3)
31-45	134 (33.5)
Marital status:	
Married	298 (74.5)
Unmarried	102 (25.5)
Educational status:	
Illiterate	163 (40.8)
Primary school	43 (10.8)
Middle school	37 (9.3)
High school	85 (21.3)
Intermediate or Diploma	61 (15.3)
Graduate	11 (2.8)

Table 1 shows the general information of the 400 respondents by age, marital status and education status. Out of 400 respondents population 74.5% were married and 25.5% of population was unmarried. Married population was mostly of age group 19-30 and 31-45 years and few of 13-18 years. Unmarried population was of age group 13-18 years. Majority of

district is in the Terai region of Indo-Nepal border and is abound with Tharu tribe.

Objective

To assess the Knowledge, attitude and practices regarding menstruation among Tharu women.

Data Collection

Data was collected through interview schedule. The interview schedule included closed ended questions for the ease of statistical analysis SPSS 2.1 Version. The schedule was prepared in Hindi language and is produced here in English language for ease of understand and statistical analysis.

Sample population: Girls and women's of 13-45years age group were taken as the study population.

Inclusive Criteria

1. Females who have achieved menarche and their age is \leq 45 years of age.
2. Willing to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria

1. Female who had serious systemic diseases or complications.
2. Pregnant women.

the respondents were illiterate i.e. 40.8% were illiterate, 10.8 % of them completed primary classes, 9.3% completed middle school, 21.3% completed high school, 15.3 intermediate or diploma and 2.8% completed graduation. Most of the respondents in age group 31-45 years were illiterate.

Table 2 Socio Economic Status (SES) of The Family

Variable	No. of subjects (n=400) (%)
Occupation of the Head:	
Unemployed	15 (3.8)
Elementary Occupation	43 (10.8)
Plant & Machine Operators, Assembler	33 (8.3)
Craft & Related Trade Workers	49 (12.3)
Skilled Agricultural & Fishery Workers	165 (41.3)
Skilled Workers a, Shop & Market Sales Workers	73 (18.3)
Clerks	15 (3.8)
Technicians and Associate Professionals	7 (1.8)
Education of the head of the Family:	
Illiterate	167 (41.8)
Primary school certificate	81 (20.3)

Middle school certificate	64 (16.0)
High school certificate	36 (9.0)
Intermediate or diploma	31 (7.8)
Graduate	21 (5.3)
Total monthly income of the family (Rs/annum)	
≤ 3,907	69 (17.3)
3,908–11,707	221 (55.3)
11,708–19,515	91 (22.8)
19,516–29,199	13 (3.3)
29,200–39,032	6 (1.5)
Socio-Economic class	
Lower (1)	35(8.8)
Upper Lower (2)	258 (64.5)
Lower Middle (3)	86 (21.5)
Upper Middle (4)	21 (5.3)

Table 2 shows the SES of the respondent's family. SES of the respondent's family was based on occupation, education and income of the head of the family.

Occupation of the Head

Most common occupation was skilled agriculture and fishery worker which contribute 41.3% of the total respondent's population (n). 3.8% of the heads were unemployed, 10.8% had elementary occupation, 8.3% were machine operator, 12.3% had small scale trade and craft work, 18.3% had small shops or working in shops, 3.8% works as clerk and 1.8% worked as technician/associate profession.

Education of the Head

Majority of the heads were illiterate .i.e. 41.8% were illiterate, 20.3 % of them completed primary school, 16% completed middle school, 9% completed high school, 7.8% intermediate or diploma and 5.3% completed graduation.

Total Monthly Income

Total monthly income of the family was divided as per "Kupposwamy" scale. Most of the families had income between Rs. 3,908–11,707 .i.e. 55.3%, 17.3% of families had income ≤ 3,907, 22.8% of families had income between 11,708–19,515, 3.3% of families had income between 19,516–29,199 and 1.5% families had income between 29,200–39,032 rupees per annum.

Socio-Economic Class

Socio-Economic class of the respondent's family was categorized based on occupation, education and income of head of the family. 8.8% of families comes under lower class, 64.5% of families comes under upper lower class, 21.5% of families comes under lower middle class and 5.3% of families comes under upper middle class.

Table 3: Knowledge of Tharu Women Towards Menstruation

Variable	No. of subjects (n=400) (%)
What was your age at start of menarche? (in years)	
Less than 10	45 (11.3)
10-13	129 (32.3)
14-15	137 (34.3)
above 15	89 (22.3)
From where/when you got the first knowledge about menses?	
Start during first period	256 (64.0)
Family/Neighbour/Friend	81 (20.3)
T.V/ Mobile/ book/ Radio	27 (6.8)
School/institute	36 (9.0)
Perception regarding menstruation	(n=400) (%)
Don't know	32 (8.0)
Related to Child birth	117 (29.3)
Any disease	53 (13.3)
impure blood	109 (27.3)
Curse of God	36 (9.0)
Biological process	53 (13.25)
Origin of menstrual blood?	
Don't know	23 (5.8)
Vagina	130 (32.1)
Stomach	142 (35.5)
Ovary	77 (19.25)
Uterus	28 (7.0)

Table no 3 shows that 34.3 % respondent attend the menarche at the age of 14 to 15 years. 64.0% of respondent got their first knowledge about

menstruation after their menarche. Out of total majority 93.5% respondent have no knowledge regarding organ from where bleeding occurs. Only

13.1% respondent had knowledge that menstruation is a biological process while 29.3% related it to child birth, 8% did not know about cause of menstruation. 27.3% of respondent believe that menstrual blood is impure blood and 9% think it is a course of GOD.

Similar findings were observed in other study such as Shipra Nagar et.al. (2010) reported in their study that mean age at menarche was 12.67 years and the respondent had an average level of awareness of menstrual aspects

Table 4: Attitude of Tharu Women Towards Menstrual Restriction

Variable	(n=400) (%)
Restricted from going to temple?	
Yes	316 (79.0)
No	84 (21.0)
Restricted from entering into kitchen?	
Yes	293 (73.3)
No	107 (26.7)
Restricted from having curd, pickle, imli?	
Yes	306 (76.5)
No	94 (23.5)

Table no 4 shows that out of 400 respondents 79% were restricted from going to temple during periods, 73.3% were restricted from entering kitchen during periods and 76.5% were restricted from having curd, pickle or imli during periods. The figure shows that Tharu womes are facing lots of prohibitions and restriction during menstruation which indicates towards their ignorance, myths and following

age old believes. Another study on practices and myths concerning menstruation and knowledge of diet taboos practiced in society during pregnancy and lactation Puri and Kapoor (2006) The most common practice observed by women was not to enter pooja room during menstruation. 41.5 per cent the study reported that 40% respondent were not to allowed go to kitchen.

Table 5 Showing Menstrual Practices of Tharu Women During Menses

What is used by you during periods?	(n=400) (%)
Ash with cloth	37 (9.3)
Reused old cloth	204 (51.0)
New cloth every time/Homemade pad	101 (25.3)
Sanitary Napkin	58 (14.5)
How many times you change your napkin/cloth?	N=400 (%)
Once a day	57 (14.3)
Two times a day	131 (32.8)
Three times a day	114 (28.5)
According to flow	98 (24.5)
After using napkin/cloth where do you through it?	
In open area/ in flowing water	38 (9.5)
Burn it	110 (27.5)
In dustbin	98 (24.5)
Bury in the soil	154 (38.5)
Do you clean your genital area during periods?	
No	229 (57.3)
Yes	171 (42.8)
How many times you clean your genital area during periods?	(n=171) (%)
Only while bath	112 (65.50)
Every time /during changing the napkin/cloth	59 (34.50)

Table no 5 shows that almost half of the respondent i.e.51% were using used cloth and only 14.5% were using sanitary napkins. Similar findings were found in a study on menstrual hygiene in Kolkata conducted by Dasgupta and Sarkar 2008 i.e. 51.25% of the girls did not know about the use of sanitary pads. A total of 11.25% of the girls used sanitary pads, 42.5% and 6.25% of the girls used old and new cloth, respectively during menstruation. Another study by Shubhakar et al. revealed that 45.74% of the girls used old cloth during menses and reused them after washing.

Only 28.5 % women changed napkin three times a day which is minimum norms according to American college of obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) guideline. After using napkin/cloth 38.5% women buried in the soil. Finding of the present study revealed that good practices i.e. 90.5% women used healthy practices for discarding their cloth/sanitary napkins. Only 9.5% respondents did not follow healthy disposal practices. Further practices regarding hygiene were also found to be poor as only 42.8% clean their genitals. in which 65.5% cleaned genital area only while taking bath.

Conclusion

The basic awareness regarding menstrual process is insufficient and also many taboos are associated with menstrual process, which need to be corrected. The use of sanitary napkin was found to be much lower in present study. It is often said that motherhood makes a women complete. A woman's body is made ready to become mother through menstruation. But menstruation is still seen as impure, evil, practices. The study concluded that strengthening of Menstruation Hygiene Management programs (MHM) among Tharus in Palia Block is needed urgently. There is a need to impart them accurate and adequate information about menstruation and how to maintain proper hygiene during menstruation.

References

1. Dhingra R, Kumar A, Kour M. et al. Knowledge and practices related to menstruation among tribal (gujjar) adolescent girls. *Ethno-Med* 2009. 3(1):43-8.
2. Dasgupta A, Sarkar M. Menstrual hygiene: how hygienic is the adolescent girl? *Indian J Community Med* 2008; 33(2):77-80.
3. Deo DS, Ghattargi CH. Perceptions and practices regarding menstruation: A comparative study among urban and rural adolescent girls. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine* 2005; 30(1): 33-34.
4. Bhende A. et al. A study of sexuality of adolescent girls and boys in underprivileged groups in Bombay. *Indian J Social Work*. 1994;40:557-71.
5. Shiela W, Malathy K, Premila S. Menstrual and gynaecological disorders in 500 school girls in Madras city. *J Obstet Gynaecol India*. 1993;43:940.
6. K Kamaljit, Balwinder Arora, KG Singh, NS Neki. Social Beliefs and Practices associated with Menstrual Hygiene among Adolescent Girls of Amritsar, Punjab, India. *JIMS* 2012; 25(2): 69-70.
7. Puri and Kapoor Taboos and Myths Associated with Womens Health among Rural and Urban Adolescent Girls in Punjab" *Indian Journal of Community Medicine* vol. 31 no.4
8. Thakre SB, Thakre SS, Reddy M, Rath N, Pathak K, Ughade S. Menstrual hygiene: Knowledge and practice among adolescent school girls of Saoner, Nagpur district. *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research* 2011 October, Vol-5(5): 1027-1033.
9. Thakre SB, Thakre SS, Reddy M, Rath N, Pathak K, Ughade S. Menstrual hygiene: Knowledge and practice among adolescent school girls of Saoner, Nagpur district. *J Clin Diagn Res* 2011;5:1027-33.
10. Venkatesh R, Dhoundiyal M. Perceptions and Practices during Menstruation among Adolescent girls in and around Bangalore city. *Indian Journal of Maternal and Child Health* 2011 Apr-Jun; 13(2): 11.
11. Shipra nagr et.al. Knowledge of Adolescent Girls Regarding Menstruation in Tribal Areas of Meghalaya" studied of tribes and tribal Volume 15, Issue 1 (2010)
12. Singh MM, Devi R, Garg S, Mehra M. Effectiveness of syndromic approach in management of reproductive tract infections in women. *Indian J Med Sci* 2001; 55(4):209-14.
13. Wasserheit JN. The significance and scope of reproductive tract infections among Third World women. *International Journal of Gynaecology & Obstetrics* 1989; Volume 30 (Supplement):145-68.
14. Zhang XJ, Shen Q, Wang GY, Yu YL, Sun YH, Yu GB, et al. Risk factors for reproductive tract infections among married women in rural areas of Anhui Province, China. *Eur J Obstet Gynecol Reprod Biol* 2009; 147:187-91.