

Linkage between Education and Menstrual Hygiene Management: A Study of Adolescent Tribal Girls in Ananthagiri Mandal of Visakhapatnam District in AP

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Abstract: The reports of global poll on menstrual hygiene management highlighting the real challenges girls face, including inability to attend school while on their period due to absence of sanitation services, lack of knowledge of and access to safe, reliable, affordable sanitary products. (UNICEF U-Reports, 2017). In this context, the present study was conducted to assess the awareness of school going adolescent tribal girls about menstrual hygiene practices. It was found that there is close association between education and menstrual hygiene management. The Study concluded that education and awareness play a key role in maintaining menstrual hygiene.

Key words: menstrual hygiene, awareness, adolescent tribal girls

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I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a very crucial transitional stage of girl's life, with acute crisis in which her future is assertive. The girl child until the attainment of womanhood undergoes through different stages of life cycle. The adolescent girls experience emotional challenges and issues of sexuality soon after onset of puberty. Puberty is a unique and distinctive period and is characterized by certain developmental changes that occur in no other time in life span. Most of the girls, especially adolescent girls, are deprived of even primary level education despite of continuous efforts of the government to improve their conditions. Education for women is the best way to improve the health, nutrition and economic status of a household. The growth of women's education in rural /remote areas is very slow. (Sunil Kumar Sain & Sudhir Kaware 2013). Globally, 600 million adolescent girls continue to face huge challenges to access their right to education while 130 million girls are still out of school. Despite efforts to increase the overall enrolment rates of young girls, the number of girls who drop out of school is higher than that of boys and increases in the higher school years (2017 Annual Status of Education Report). Research studies reveal that uneducated tribal girls menstrual hygiene was non sanitary (Sridhar (D.Gauthami.N 2014). Hence education and awareness play a key role in maintaining menstrual hygiene. In this context, the present study was conducted to assess the awareness of school going adolescent tribal girls about menstrual hygiene practices.

Menstrual Hygiene of adolescent tribal girls – A Review

Menstrual hygiene management is a major health issue affecting women and girls of reproductive age worldwide. Globally, at least 500 million women and girls lack proper access to menstrual hygiene facilities. Several factors influence difficult experiences with menstruation, including inadequate facilities and materials, menstrual pain, fear of disclosure, and inadequate knowledge about the menstrual cycle (World Bank 2018).

Sridhar D,Gauthami.N (2014) in their work on "Menstrual health status and cultural practices of tribal adolescent girls" explained that, Adolescence in the life cycle of a *Homosapien* organism is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. The study observed that menstrual health of the tribal adolescent girls and cultural factors on study population. The data revealed that subjects who had illiterate mothers their menstrual hygiene was non sanitary way. Girls in joint families were having sanitary menstrual hygiene. The study concluded that education and awareness play key role in maintaining menstrual hygiene. Hygiene education is supposed to be given at all levels. Bad cultural practices supposed be addressed at community level with intervention. K.Satyamurthy (2014); in his edited book "Health and Hygienic Practices of Adolescent Girls" explained the level of awareness on health and hygiene practices and family orientation school going adolescent girls. The data revealed that almost ninety percent of the girls were aware of the puberty. Sixty-one

per cent girls were restricted to enter into kitchen during the menstrual period. Half of the girls attended the health awareness programmes in Schools. Kamla-Raj (2010) in his work on “*Knowledge of Adolescent Girls Regarding Menstruation in Tribal Areas of Meghalaya*” revealed that most of the girls were in the age group of 16 to 18 years and studying in tenth standard. The mean age at menarche was found to be 12.67 years. It was indicated from the results that the respondents had an average level of awareness of menstrual aspects. Girls did not know about the meaning of menstruation and associated it with bad/unclean blood. Girls were aware about different problems associated with periods, out of which pain in lower abdomen and backache was the common responses. Knowledge of hygienic practices during these times was found to be good. A significant association was found between menstrual awareness and ordinal position of the respondents.

Lalitha Bhagavatheswaran and Sapna Nair (2016) in their work on “*the barriers and enablers to education among scheduled caste and scheduled tribe adolescent girls in northern Karnataka, South India: A qualitative study*” found that scheduled caste/scheduled tribe adolescent girls faced numerous barriers to education at macro and micro levels. The main macro level barriers to education included the belief that a girl should stop schooling after reaching puberty, fear of a girl’s reputation being ruined, and lack of a supportive school environment. The main micro level barriers to education included the influence of peers in dropping out of school as well as a girl not valuing education herself. Enablers to education were also identified and included a supportive school and family environment, and positive peer role models. The study highlights the importance of involving multiple stakeholders to overcome the barriers to education, and working to change beliefs and expectations around adolescent girls in this setting.

Swarnalata Das & Sanjukta Mishra (2016) in their cross sectional study conducted in tribal residential school at Bhubaneswar, Odisha titled “*Assessment of adolescent problems in tribal adolescent girls: a cross sectional study*” opined that there is paucity of information regarding the prevalence of behavioral, physical problems in tribal adolescents, more specifically in tribal adolescent girls, who form a different set from the mainstream section. The study assessed psychosocial, emotional and family life knowledge about adolescent tribal girls. Moreover it also investigated the health status and spectrum of various other problems faced by them. The data revealed that most of tribal girls belong to low socio-economic status. Various physical problems and psychosocial problems were found to be significantly higher. Elder adolescents greatly lack information related to proper age of marriage and childbirth. Menstruation related problems and respiratory problems were found to be most prevalent in older and young group respectively. The study concluded that implementation of adolescent friendly effective awareness programme solves the routine adolescent health problems. Sharvanan E Udayar1, Kruthika .K, Prasad V Devi (2016); in their article on ‘*Menstrual Hygiene Practices among adolescent girls residing in tribal and social welfare hostel in Andhra Pradesh: a community based study*’, have explained that Puberty, which was considered as the time of change for the adolescents, was a challenge for young girls because of menstruation. Though it was a natural phenomenon, various myths surround it, because of which girls will be exposed to very little knowledge about menstruation. The study conducted to know the level of knowledge, attitude and practices during menstruation among the adolescent school girls in rural area. The study was among school going adolescent girls residing in tribal social welfare hostels in Kuppam. The study reported that majority of the girls attained menarche at the age of 13 yrs, and 82.3% are having regular menstrual cycle. Sanitary pads usage during menstruation was seen in 78.5%, and disposal of absorbent was by throwing them into the dust bins in 58.0% people. Mother was the source of information about menstruation before menarche for most of them, and restrictions during menstrual period was seen among almost all of them. The study concluded that proper knowledge, attitude and hygienic practices in menstruation are not seen among the study subjects, for whom a suitable planned health education, and provision of adequate sanitary facilities was the need of the hour. The children from the poor scheduled tribes’ families are not being sent to school because of the tendency of some parents to utilize their services in augmenting their family income. Therefore, a provision for educational opportunities forms a very important part of the programme for the welfare of the scheduled tribes. The government has announced free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years, which nowadays encourage parents to send their children to schools with the hope that if their children receive proper education, then their conditions will improve. viability of trained, qualified female teachers and developed infrastructure like separate toilets for girls in educational institutes, drinking water, roads, etc will help to increase the female literacy rates.

To sum up, adolescent tribal girls who had illiterate mothers their menstrual hygiene was non sanitary way. Girls in joint families were having sanitary menstrual hygiene. The study concluded that education and awareness play key role in maintaining menstrual hygiene. Hygiene education is supposed to be given at all levels. Bad cultural practices supposed be addressed at community level with intervention. The studies revealed that the girls attended the health awareness programmes in Schools and almost all the girls were aware of the puberty. A significant association was found between menstrual awareness and ordinal position of the respondents. Age of the respondents and total family income seemed to have good correlation with their awareness regarding menstruation and related aspects.

While keeping the above research studies , there arise a research question that do the educated adolescent tribal girls have awareness about menstruation and capable of maintaining menstrual hygiene? Based on this , the present study made an attempt to examine menstrual hygiene practices of adolescent tribal girls studying in Government Tribal Ashram Schools with a view to assess their awareness regarding menstrual hygiene.

Aim

The present study aims to assess the awareness of menstrual hygiene among school going adolescent tribal girls and examine the menstrual hygiene practices among them.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the socio-economic status of the adolescent tribal girls and
2. To study the educational status of the adolescent tribal girls in association with the management of menstrual hygiene
3. To assess the awareness of menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent tribal girls.

Research Methodology

The present study administered both analytical and descriptive type of research methodology. It consists of (1) *Sampling* (2) *data collection* (3) *Tools of analysis of data*.

For the purpose of the present study the sampling of 545 tribal adolescent girls studying in government schools and colleges of Ananthgiri mandal of Visakhapatnam district were taken.

1) Sampling

Sampling consists of 545 respondents of tribal adolescent girls , studying in Tribal Welfare Schools and colleges of Ananthgiri mandal of Visakhapatnam district . In Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh , there are totally 19 tribal mandals. Among them, there are 11 schedule mandals and 8 non-schedule mandals . For the purpose of the present study Ananthgiri mandal was selected and data were collected from the tribal adolescent girls studying in Government Tribal Ashram schools/colleges which are located in the selected areas of Ananthgiri mandal . viz. Government Tribal Welfare Ashram High School (GTWA.H) which was established in 1991 in Gidibadi with the strength of 254 tribal girls , GTW Ashram School which was established in 1986 located in Bheempolu with the total strength of 274 tribal girl students , GTW Ashram School (1) established in 1971 with the total strength of 581,GTWA School G-2 Ananthgiri established in 2004 with the total strength of 428 tribal girl students , Kasturiba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya High School (KGBV), Kotturu established in 2009 with the strength of 198 tribal girl students , Mandal Parishad Upper Primary School (M.P.U.P), Kasipatnam. Established in 1983 with the strength of 63 tribal girls students and Government junior college Ananthgiri which was established in 2001 with the strength of 75 tribal girl students.

2) Data Collection

Data are collected by using Two sets of well administered self-prepared questionnaires. Questionnaire - I is relating to the profile of schools/college and Questionnaire- II is relating to the respondents of adolescent tribal girls who are studying in government schools.

Primary data are ascertained from the tribal adolescent girls studying in Government schools/colleges located in tribal villages of the selected mandal in Visakhapatnam district.

Secondary data are obtained from government reports, journals, articles, books, research papers and web sites. The researcher directly interacted with adolescent girls with a view to obtain in depth insights for their development.

3) Tools of Analysis

For the purpose of the present study , different statistical tools are employed for analyzing the data. The data are coded , tabulated and analyzed in percentages and averages by using the SPSS package . Hypotheses was tested by using the appropriate technique. For easy understanding and assimilation of data, simple graphs like bar diagrams and pie diagrams are used .

4. Parameters of the study

The data was compiled with reference to age, education and occupational status of parents, income , health and nutritional status , life skills and awareness of legal issues

Analytical representation

. Some of the major tribal groups in the Agency tracts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh include the sub castes of Konda dora Goudu , Nayaks ,Thoti, Valmiki . All these tribal people have their own culture, tradition, language and lifestyle. In the study area of Ananthagiri mandal of Visakhapatnam district, majority of the tribals belong to the sub caste of Konda dora . For the purpose of the present study the sub caste of the respondents of Scheduled Tribes has been collected in order to understand their social status and the predominance.

Socio-economic status

A family's socio-economic status i.e household income, earners' education and occupation has a wide impact on an individual/family's health, educational attainment, diet, lifestyle, etc., in relation to others. Hence for the purpose of the present study , an attempt was made to understand the socio-economic status of the respondents who belong to the tribal community ,with a view understand their living pattern.

Table-1 (a) & (b) give the details of the educational status of the parents of the respondents. The data reveals that out of 545 respondents, majority of the parents of the respondents are illiterates both fathers as well as mothers i.e.53% and 78% respectively. Though a considerable percent of them are educated ,they had completed only primary education i.e. 32% and 16% respectively . Only an insignificant percent of them had completed secondary education i.e. 9% and 4% respectively. It can be understood that despite of the special provisions of the Indian Constitution and continuous efforts of the government for uplifting the Scheduled Tribes for decades, still the second generation of the tribals (parents) are remained as illiterates. At least they are encouraging the third generation to get education by sending their children including girls, to schools and colleges though they are far away from their places which may be due to the awareness creating by the government officials / volunteers about the existing government schemes for education.

Table – 1 (a)
Educational status of the parents (Father)

S. No	Educational status	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Illiterate	290	53.2
2	Primary Education	179	32.8
3	Secondary education	49	9.0
4	Higher Secondary	14	2.6
5	Higher education	8	1.5
6	University education	4	0.7
7	vocational / Professional education	1	0.2
Total		545	100.0

Table – 1 (b)
Educational status of the parents (Mother)

S. No	Educational status	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Illiterate	425	78.0
2	Primary Education	86	15.8
3	Secondary education	22	4.0
4	Higher Secondary	5	.9
5	Higher education	7	1.3
Total		545	100.0

Generally, tribals live in their own local areas as cultivation is their main occupation and some are engaging in food gathering for their livelihood. Majority of the parents of the respondents are engaged in agricultural farming as the main occupation. i.e. 83% and 58% respectively. Interestingly a considerable percent of the mothers of the respondents are home makers (28%) **Tables -2 (a) and 2 (b)** give the details .

Table – 2 (a)
Details of occupation of parents (Father) of the respondents

S. No	Occupation	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Traditional occupation	12	2.2
2	Agricultural farming	455	83.5
3	Cattle rearing	11	2.0
4	Daily wage worker	33	6.0
5	Petty trader	11	2.0
6	Running own shop / own business	10	1.8
7	Private employee	3	0.5
8	Govt. Employee	10	1.8

	Total	545	100.0
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Table – 2(b)
Occupation of parents (Mother)

S. No	Occupation	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Traditional occupation	18	3.3
2	Agricultural farming	316	57.9
3	Cattle rearing	12	2.2
4	Daily wage worker	22	4.0
5	Petty trader	6	1.1
6	Running own shop / own business	7	1.3
7	Private employee	2	0.4
8	Govt. Employee	8	1.5
9	Home maker	151	27.7
	Total	545	100.0

Generally , the tribals who are considered as marginalized group and socially stigmatized are from bottom of the economic hierarchy. Table-3 gives the details of the annual income of the parents of the respondents. It was found that out of 545 respondents, majority of the respondents are from lower income group (93%) whose annual income is below Rs. 1,00,000/- . Only an insignificant percent of the families earn Rs.1,00,000/- 4,00,000/- per annum. (5%).The data reveals that the tribal families are living in a very low economic status and their family income is not at all sufficient to meet their family requirements.

Table – 3
Total Income of the family per year

S. No	Income	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Below 1,00,000/-	509	93.2
2	1,00,000/- to 4,00,000	28	5.1
3	5,00,000/- to 8,00,000	3	0.5
4	above 10,00,000/-	5	0.9
	Total	545	100.0

Since the present study was about the adolescent tribal girls studying in schools/colleges , hence the data relating to their age was considered . Table-4 presents the data of the age-wise distribution of the respondents. It was found that, out of 545 respondents majority of them are in the age group of 13-15 years (68%) , followed by the age group of 15-17 years (24%) and 10-12 years (7%).

Table – 4
Age-wise distribution of the respondents

S. No	Age of the respondents	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	10-12 years	37	6.8
2	13-15 years	374	68.5
3	15-17 years	129	23.6
4	18-19 years	5	0.9
	Total	545	100.0

Table-5 presents the details of the education of the respondents. The data reveals that , majority of the respondents are studying VIII , IX stds.(50%) followed by X std.(33%).The respondents studying intermediate are also included in the present study as they are in the age group of 16-19 years and come under adolescents. (9%). The data made it cleared that since majority of the respondents are studying VIII, IX and X stds they could respond well and could provide the data accurately.

Table – 5
Distribution of the respondents based on education

S. No	Details of Education	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	VI-VII Std	44	8.1
2	VIII-IX Std	271	49.6
3	X Std	182	33.3
4	Intermediate	48	8.8

	Total	545	100.0
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Tables-6 & 7 give the details of knowledge of the respondents about menstrual cycle and management of menstrual hygiene. Noteworthy point is all most all the respondents are having knowledge about menstrual cycle and maintenance of menstrual hygiene as the teachers are creating awareness in regular classes.

Table-6
Do you know about menstrual cycle?

S. No	Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Yes	544	99.6
2	No	1	0.2
	Total	545	100.0

Table – 7
Do you know how to maintain menstrual hygiene?

S. No	Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Yes	545	100.0
2	No	-	-
	Total	545	100.0

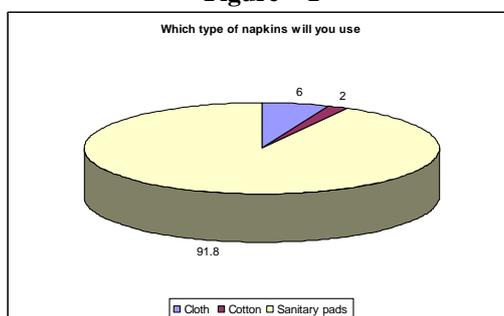
Table - 8 gives the details of the type of napkins used by the respondents during menstruation periods. Noteworthy point is majority of the respondents are using sanitary pads.(92%). It may be mainly because the government has been supplying sanitary napkins to the students at free of cost. Interestingly still a considerable percent of the respondents are following the traditional method of using cloth (6%) .

Table – 8
Which type of napkins will you use

S. No	Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Cloth	33	6.0
2	Cotton	11	2.0
3	Sanitary pads	501	91.8
	Total	545	100.0

Figure-1 depicts the details of the type of napkins used by the respondents

Figure – 1



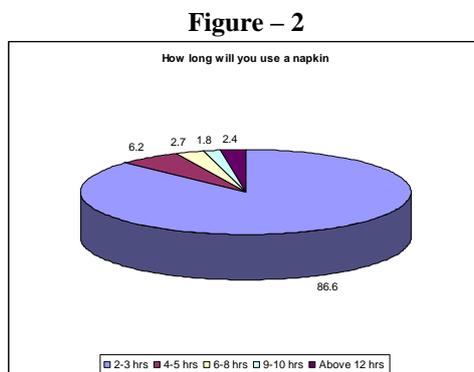
It was found that majority of the respondents are maintaining menstrual hygiene by using sanitary pads for 2-3 hrs (87%) and some of the respondents for 4-5 hrs. (6%) .It shows their awareness in maintaining menstrual hygiene. Table-9 presents the data.

Table – 9
How long will you use a napkin?

S. No	Time interval for using a napkin	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	2-3 hrs	473	86.6
2	4-5 hrs	34	6.2

3	6-8 hrs	15	2.7
4	9-10 hrs	10	1.8
5	Above 12 hrs	13	2.4
Total		545	100.0

Figure-2 depicts the details



The data reveals that regarding the management of menstrual hygiene majority of the respondents are using sanitary pads and still a considerable percent of them are using cloth. And majority of them are changing sanitary pads in proper time intervals. The data reveals that, since the government has been supplying sanitary pads to the school going children with free of cost so that most of the respondents could manage menstrual hygiene with best practices.

II. CONCLUSION

The data revealed that the tribal girls studying in schools and attending to the health awareness programmes are aware of the puberty. A significant association was found between education and awareness of menstrual hygiene among adolescent tribal girls. The study concluded that proper knowledge, suitable planned health education, and provision of adequate sanitary facilities could change the menstrual hygiene practices among tribal girls. The government should take steps to educate the adolescent tribal girls those are not going to school and staying at home and should supply sanitary pads with free of cost.

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