



Role Of Media In The Socio-Cultural Practices Regarding Menstruation

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Abstract- Socio-cultural is a term used to define social and cultural factors which signify common traditions, beliefs and habits in a population group. Socio-cultural practices involve various forms, such as worship rites, birth, wedding and funeral rituals, traditional legal systems, etc. Additionally, there is an existence of cultural practices regarding menstruation in Indian society. Menstruation is always associated with myths and taboos, like avoiding entering the temple, not attending religious gatherings, not touching males and plants, and the like. These cultural practices hamper women's mental as well as emotional states. These socio-cultural norms regarding menstruation are more myths and less of facts, and the practices are traditionally growing with society. Women are deprived of various opportunities during menstruation and are not treated equally in society as men. That is why menstruation is unwelcome by a majority of women. Media is the most powerful entity in the world, and it can reach a broader audience through its various types such as Print Media like newspapers and magazines, Electronic Media like Television and radio, and New Media like the internet and social media. Therefore, there is no better alternative than the media to raise awareness regarding menstrual hygiene and break the myths and taboos about menstruation as much as possible. "World Menstrual Hygiene Day" is celebrated every year on 28th May worldwide to raise awareness regarding menstruation and provides safe hygiene practices to wipe out the social stigma and burst the bubble of myths and taboos in society. This paper intends to identify the extent of the roles played by different types of media to create awareness regarding menstruation and female hygiene practices during the menstruation cycle.

Keywords: Menstruation, menstruation myths, an overview of various media regarding menstruation.

Introduction

Socio-cultural is a term used to define social and cultural factors which signify common traditions, beliefs and habits in a population group. Socio-cultural practices involve various forms, such as worship rites, birth, wedding and funeral rituals, traditional legal systems, etc. Additionally, there is an existence of cultural practices regarding Menstruation in Indian society. Menstruation is always associated with some myths and taboos, like avoiding entering the temple, not attending religious gatherings, not touching males and plants, and the like.

These cultural practices hamper women's mental as well as emotional states. These socio-cultural norms regarding menstruation are more myths and less of facts, and the practices are traditionally growing with society. Women are deprived of various opportunities during menstruation and are not treated equally in society as men. Women and girls are advised to avoid cultural and religious functions at this time, and has to

abide by these restrictions unwillingly. They are the ultimate sufferer in Indian society. That is why menstruation is unwelcome by the majority of women.

Media is the most powerful entity in the world, and it can reach a broader audience through its various types, such as Print Media like newspapers and magazines; Electronic Media like television and radio; New Media like the internet, social media and so on. Therefore, there is no better alternative than the media to raise awareness regarding menstrual hygiene and break the myths and taboos about menstruation as much as possible. "World Menstrual Hygiene Day" is celebrated every year on 28th May worldwide to raise awareness regarding menstruation and provides safe and hygienic practices to wipe out the social stigma and to burst the bubble of myths and taboos in society.

Aims and Objectives:

1. To identify the existing beliefs and practices regarding menstruation.
2. To identify the role of media in creating awareness regarding menstruation.

Problem Statement

Females are restricted in various social and cultural practices, such as not going to places of worship, not touching plants or male members of the family, purifying the bed on the fourth day of menstruation, and so on. These are some of the practices that have made menstruation unwelcomed among girls and women. Most of these myths and taboos revolve around the question of a girl being pure or impure during menstruation. These taboos still prevalent are not only threats but also severe considerations for the professionals in the health sector.

Menstruation often creates psychological, social, and health challenges for poverty-stricken young women. In India, where menstruation is stigmatized, it can be challenging. The stigma associated with a woman bleeding every month leads to poor hygiene among a large section of rural women. Many restrictions are associated with menstruation that should be followed by women only as they bleed every month. This is how girls and women are deprived of many religious and cultural activities. During menstruation, a woman becomes physically weak due to bleeding, and her energy decreases as well, which is a scientific fact. However, at the same time, society is responsible for making a woman mentally weak by putting her under some limitations surrounded by myths and taboos.

Therefore, media, can create awareness regarding menstrual hygiene among the masses and how different types of media, such as Electronic, Print, Social, Traditional, and New Media, take initiative on that particular topic.

The rationale of the study

Menstruation is a natural process for every woman of reproductive age. However, it has always been surrounded by taboos and myths that exclude a woman from every aspect of socio-cultural life. Such taboos or myths, still present in our societies, impact females' emotional states and mental health.

In Indian society, menstruating women are considered 'Impure'; therefore, they are prohibited from participating in normal life, and they have to go through some restrictions during their periods, such as not entering into the "Puja Room", not entering the "Kitchen", cannot touch the "Holy Books" and "Plants" and so on. While scientifically, menstruation occurs at the end of the menstrual cycle. Because each month, a female body prepares itself for pregnancy. The uterus develops a thicker lining, and the ovaries release an egg that can be fertilized by sperm. Furthermore, if the egg is not fertilized, pregnancy won't occur. And then, the body sheds the built-up uterine lining, resulting in menstruation.

The study endeavours to discover why menstruation is associated with taboos when it is a natural and biological factor and why women are bound to follow such socio-cultural norms regarding menstruation.

Women cannot talk openly about their physical condition during menstruation in the presence of boys or men. Their mindset is shaped so that women feel shame about this natural process.

Thus, there is a need to follow a strategic approach to combating these issues. Since media is a powerful tool, it can ultimately affect the opinions and actions of the community. Hence, the study is done to discuss menstruation-related myths, their impact on women's lives, and how media, the most powerful tool, attempts to shape society's attitude towards a natural process like menstruation.

Review of Literature

1. According to **Amanda Stone**, in the book **"Gender and the Body (2014)**, reformers challenge myths and taboos about menstruation and try to eliminate its social stigma. A woman should be aware of every ingredient that is used in tampons and pads because there are diseases like toxic shock syndrome that can be happened due to constant use of bleached, mass-produced products, and feminine hygiene companies are not legally required to disclose the ingredients as their only aim is to maximize profits. Advertisements send commanding messages about the horror associated with body accidents :

"Advertisements are cultural artefacts that play an important role in the social construction of meaning. Ads for menstrual products have contributed to the communication taboo by emphasizing secrecy, avoidance of embarrassment, and freshness. Allegorical images, such as flowers, hearts, and blue rather than red liquid, have been used euphemistically to promote secrecy and delicacy."

2. In the journal **" Awareness on Menstrual Hygiene Management in Bangladesh and the possibilities of Media Interventions (2021)"**, **AwanAfiaz& Raj Kishore Biswas** surveyed and observed types of menstrual absorbents used by women in Bangladesh. Mass media is the right tool to spread awareness regarding MHM. Most women are engaged with unhygienic traditional practices, while minority women use modern MHM absorbents and have access to the media. There is a scope for interventions to raise awareness using media channels regarding Menstrual Hygiene Management.

3. According to **Malvika Singh & Mamata Mahapatra** in the article **" Menstrual Hygiene Management in India: A Review and Meta-Analysis (2019)**, proper knowledge about menstruation hygiene management is necessary in order to stay healthy and safeguard the bodily integrity of women during period. Media plays a vital role in reaching the common masses. Different types of media like - television, newspaper, internet disseminate information about menstrual products, but menstrual hygiene is a topic where the media is yet to do its best. This article also mentions the social implications of impacting society in useful ways.

4. In the article **"Determinants of Menstrual Hygiene among Adolescent Girls: a multivariate analysis"**, **Sudeshna Ray and Aparajita Dasgupta** mentioned that adolescent girls lack knowledge about the facts of menstruation and proper hygienic practices. A mother plays an important role in freely discussing all aspects of menstrual hygiene with the daughters, then comes to the teachers who can conduct classes on menarche and related topics under the routine school curriculum. The major determinants of menstrual hygiene lie in the mothers' literacy, educational status and exposure to mass media through advertisements promoting knowledge regarding menstruation.

5. In the article **"Attitudes Toward & Experience with Menstruation in the US and India (2008)"**, **Katherine D. Hoester, Joan C. Chrisler& Jennifer Gorman Rose** found that Indian women have a more positive attitude towards Menstruation than American women. American women reported wrong information, while Indian women were engaged in social and religious reactions regarding menstruation. There is room for improvement in women's health education and suggests interventions that psychotherapists can use to enhance dignity and body image.

6. According to **Natalie Rose Dyer** in the paper **"Reproductive Power; Menstruation, Magic and Taboo, (2010) in Western Culture"**, menstruation is considered a curse or negative periodic disturbance. Women's bodies are revered and protected within a positive understanding of taboo. Therefore we should forge a path through taboo to reveal the so-called monstrous mother of culture who is repressed. She uncovered positive ritual practices surrounding women's periodicity that endangered a sacred connection to the natural world.

7. In the article "**Cultural and Social Practices regarding Menstruation among Adolescent Girls(2011),"** **Anant kumar&Kamiya Srivastava** explains that a normal body function in females, like menstruation, is a major issue to handle for every adolescent girl. Menstruation is indulged in various myths and taboos such as not entering the pooja room, not looking in the mirror, etc. Girls who studied menstruation in school considered it a normal body function, whereas girls from slum areas do not even talk openly about it. There is a need for health and hygiene programs for adolescent girls to make them aware of the fact that menstruation is nothing but a normal biological phenomenon.

8. According to the author **Lauren Rosewarne in the book "Periods in Pop Culture(2012)"**, there are several aims for pop culture ranging from feminist media studies to taxonomy of menstruation portrayals. The negative portrayal of menstruation and how a normal body function is considered disruptive – is also illustrated in this book. Menstruation does have a role on screen, and real-life menstruation is rarely portrayed, and the advertisement is product oriented. The author added :

" I still think of it being sort of dirty or whatever . . . more like afterbirth or something like that . . . not something I'd like to be touching . . . whereas ordinary blood, I wouldn't bother at all."

9. In the article "**The Role of Media in Creating Awareness about the Female Hygiene Practices during Menstruation Cycle in Bangladesh (2018),"** **Hamidul Islam & Stanley Rodrick** endeavoured to examine the role of media in spreading awareness regarding menstrual hygiene. Adolescent girls are not prepared for menstrual hygiene and do not have the proper knowledge to maintain hygiene; instead, they do not try to overcome social taboos and myths. Media is the most powerful tool to shape the opinions and beliefs of the general public. Therefore, media policy is expected to diminish these knowledge gaps among illiterate people. Proper information regarding menstrual practices can be disseminated through media as it is a communication tool that can reach a broad audience.

10. In the book "**Everyday Discourses of Menstruation (2016)"**, the author **Victoria Louise Newton**, addresses the folklore of menstruation and how a menstruating body should be managed during their non-pregnant reproductive years; she believes that there is a need for an open approach to study of the female culture and customs as patriarchy has an influential role in the construction of menstrual taboos. Eugenia Herbert argues similarly :

" Words such as pollution and taboo are loaded with ethnocentric baggage, much of which has undoubtedly now affected 'traditional' understandings of the terms conscious or unconscious pejoratives attached to the notion of pollution have obscured our understanding of what is actually at issue, and this is particularly true in the assumptions about menstrual blood. (1993, p. 86)."

Methodology

Research methods are the process or techniques through which data collection for analysis creates a better understanding and collects new information. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were followed for the data collection. For quantitative data, content analysis is used to interpret patterns and meanings in the data, and for qualitative data, a survey was conducted to compare the findings between the females of the rural and urban areas. Descriptive research is used to systematically describe the phenomenon in women's rural and urban areas regarding menstrual practices. Primary data of this research is collected by conducting questionnaire-based surveys, and secondary data is collected by analyzing articles, books, journals, films, and documentaries that have been made on that particular subject.

Along with that, to analyze the media intervention regarding menstrual hygiene, one month of observation on digital media such as advertisements on 'television', posts regarding menstruation on social media such as 'Twitter' and 'Facebook', print media like 'The Assam Tribune, broadcast media such as 'Films' and 'Documentaries' has been addressed. The collected data from social media is based on the highest likes. Television has been observed to discover how advertisements are created regarding menstruation on different channels, through which different brands of sanitary pads are recognized. The Indian English daily newspaper

'The Assam Tribune' is observed for one month to examine the form of information or advertisements in the newspaper.

Purposive sampling is used as a sampling method. The sample size is 60 to examine and distinguish the knowledge of females regarding menstrual hygiene in rural and urban areas, which are considered. The age group of females in rural and urban areas is limited to 18-28 years. The research and the collection of data are entirely based on students. During the quantitative survey, 60 females were selected purposively, 30 females from the urban area and the rest 30 from the rural area. A questionnaire consisting of 12 questions was distributed among 30 females in the urban area through Google Forms for the survey, and interviews were conducted with the rest 30 females in rural areas. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses recognized the similarities and differences between the areas.

Theoretical Framework:

This paper applies Framing Theory to examine menstruation's social and cultural practices. Menstrual Hygiene Management Theory will also be applied to focus on the health and hygiene of women and girls. The basis of framing theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. Through framing theory, this study will explore the anecdotes and stereotypes individuals rely on to understand and respond to events and determine media interventions regarding the menstrual cycle and women's health and hygiene. Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) theory will signify respect, understanding, and adaptation to existing socio-cultural practices, beliefs and community structures.

What is Menstruation?

Menstruation is one of the aspects of puberty in girls. This phase shows that girls are transitioning into adults and that our bodies can become pregnant. Menstruation is normal vaginal bleeding that occurs as part of a women's monthly cycle. Every month a female body prepares for pregnancy; if no pregnancy occurs, the uterus sheds its lining. The menstrual blood is partly blood and partly tissue from inside the uterus.

Menstruation in the Indian context-

Menstruation is a natural and healthy process for girls and women of reproductive age. While in India, it is still considered taboo in society. In India, menstruating women are considered impure and forced to live under severe restrictions and prohibited from social and religious functions.

In India, cultural norms and religious taboos on menstruation are often compounded by traditional associations with evil spirits, shame and embarrassment surrounding sexual reproduction. In the Indian context, a menstruating woman is unclean, and anyone touching her will also be unclean. Therefore they are restricted from entering the temple, touching the holy basil, pickles and so on.

Menstruation Myth -

Menstruation is an occurrence unique to girls. However, it has always been surrounded by myths that exclude women from many aspects of socio-cultural life. In India, Menstruation has been a taboo until today. Such myths and taboos present in many societies affect the emotional and mental state of a woman or girl. Culturally, menstruation is still considered dirty and impure in many parts of India. After three to four days of a female's menstruation, she must be purified before she is allowed to return to the day-to-day chores of her life.

Many girls and women are subject to restrictions in their daily lives simply because they are menstruating. Not entering the "Puja Room" is the major restriction among girls and women. Cultural norms and religious taboos on menstruation are often compounded by traditional associations with evil spirits, shame and embarrassment surrounding sexual reproduction.

Overview of Films and Documentaries made on menstruation-

- **Padman:** This movie portrays the importance of women's menstrual health. The film's actor is upset when he sees his wife using an unhygienic cloth during her menstrual cycle. Therefore, creating a machine that can make affordable sanitary pads raises awareness.
- **Phullu:** In this movie, when an uneducated trader from a small village visits the city, he learns about the inconvenience caused during menstruation due to the village's lack of access to facilities. Despite public humiliation and family resistance, Phullu decides to create awareness about the issue and promote sanitary pads.
- **Period, End of Sentence:** In this documentary, women in a rural village outside Delhi, India, fight the stigma surrounding menstruation when they learn to manufacture sanitary pads.
- **Menstrual Man:** In this documentary, a poor and uneducated man makes it his mission to provide low-cost sanitary pads and educate about proper hygiene to women across India.

Collection of Data-

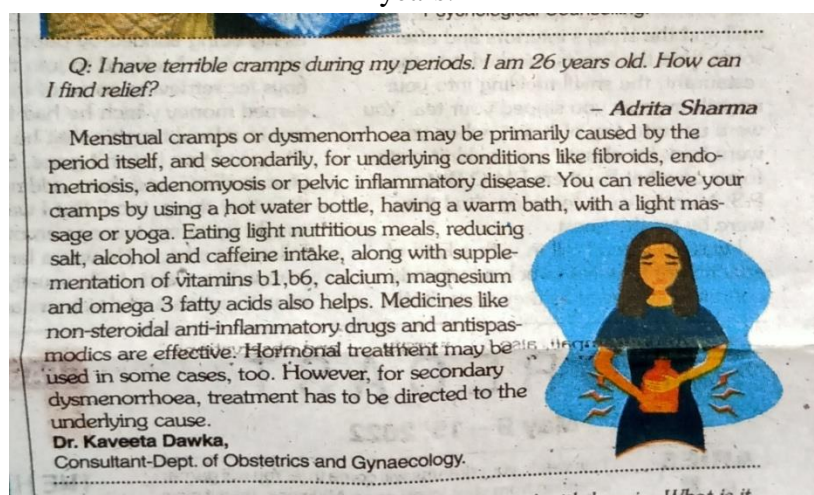
One month of observation on Print Media has been done, from where; the given pictures have been taken to show the initiatives of print media in terms of menstruation.

Source – Print Media.



Date – 9th May, 2022

The above picture is from “The Guardian”. Here the news is about female bodies and their reproductive years.



Date- 8th May, 2022

The above picture is from “**The Assam Tribune**”. Here the news is about how to get relief from period cramps.



Date - 3rd May 2022

The above picture is from “**The Assam Tribune**”. Here, the news is about the distribution of hygiene kits such as sanitary pads, soaps, detergents and dark chocolates by an NGO to make menstrual health and hygiene a habit.



Date - 28th May 2022

The above picture is taken from the newspaper "**The Assam Tribune**". Here the news is about Menstrual Hygiene Day, celebrated every year on 28th May to spread awareness regarding menstrual hygiene worldwide.



Date - 29th May 2022

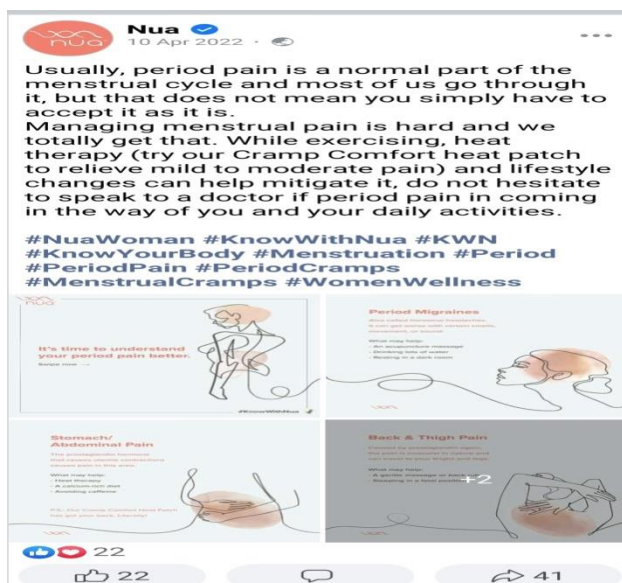
The above picture is taken from the newspaper "The Assam Tribune". Here the news is about the celebration of Menstrual Hygiene Day initiated by The Lions Club of Guwahati, which donated 20 sanitary napkin incinerators at various educational institutions and girls' hostels.



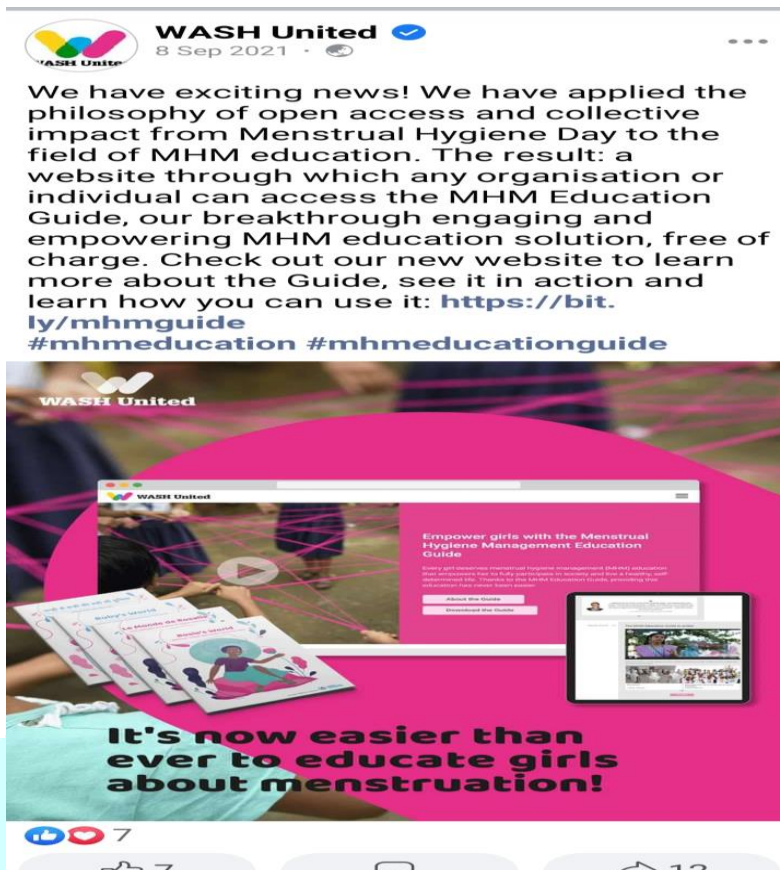
11th June 2022

The above picture is about the situation that every menstruating girl or woman faces during the annual flood of Assam due to a lack of sanitary napkins, yet menstruation is still considered a secondary need.

Some of the snapshots of Menstruation in Social media-



The above picture is a screenshot of a verified Facebook page, "Nua," that talks openly about menstrual hygiene to end the social stigma.



The above picture is a screenshot of a verified Facebook page, “**Wash United**”, that works for the benefit of people, from safe drinking water to sanitation and hygiene, including menstrual hygiene.



The above screenshot is taken from a Facebook-verified page, “**Days for Girls International**”, which talks about the mental health of menstruating girls to eliminate the stigma associated with menstruation.

Source- Electronic Media



The above picture is an advertisement for a hygiene kit called "**Stayfree**" on "**Television**" where the difference between using cloth and a pad is shown. However, the menstrual blood is shown as blue.



The above picture shows how menstruation is associated with shame in India. Menstruation is natural, and the blood is as well. Women do not bleed blue, but advertisers promoting sanitary napkins pour blue liquid to show the consumers.

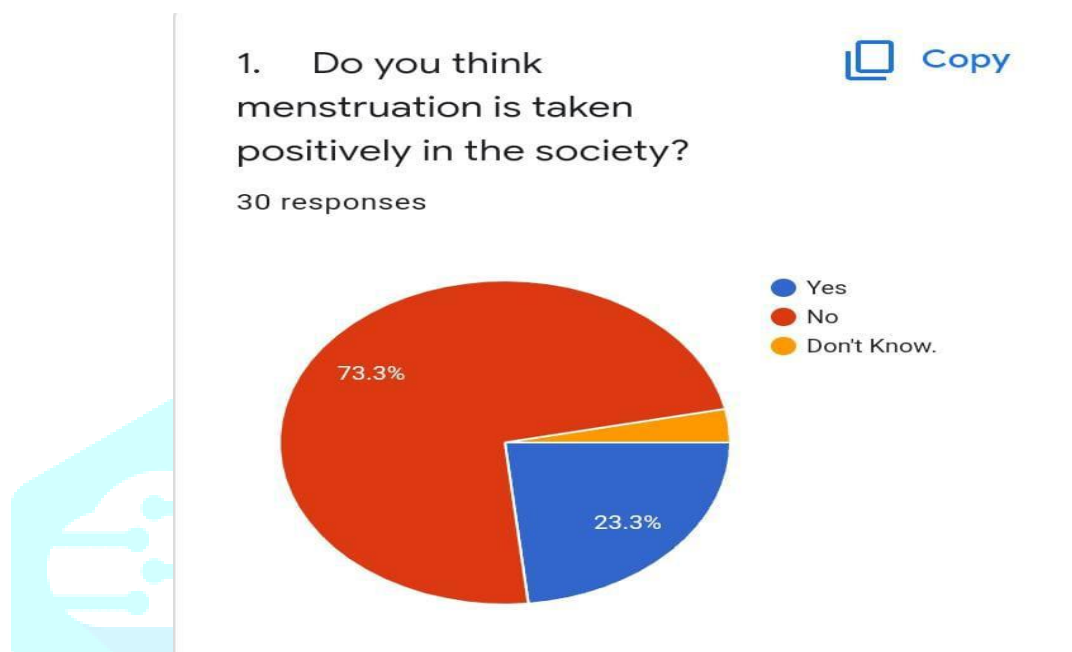


Later on, the genre of Indian advertisements regarding menstruation was revolutionized. The above picture is of a menstrual hygiene kit, "**Whisper**," that shows the colour of blood.

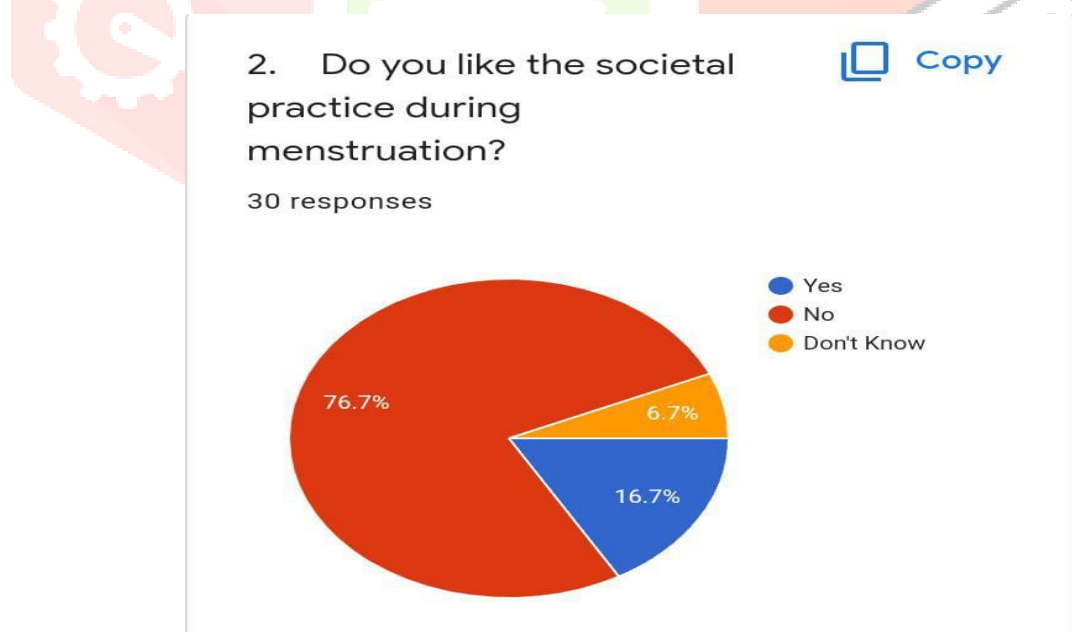
Analysis

The findings and analyses of the data were collected from various sources with the help of percentages, tables, pie charts, and bar diagrams in graphic format. A questionnaire has been formed comprising 12 questions and distributed among sixty females, where thirty responses have been taken from the rural area while the other thirty responses have been taken from the urban area to distinguish the behaviour and beliefs of the people of rural area and urban area.

Responses of females residing in urban areas



The above pie chart shows that 73.3 % of females think that menstruation is not taken positively in society and 23.3 % of females agreed that it is taken positively, and the rest, 3.4 % of females, have no idea about it.

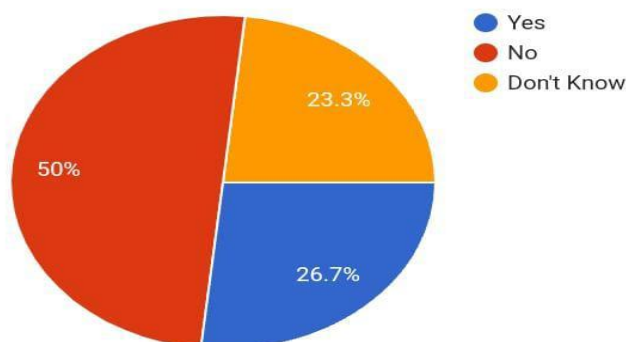


The above pie chart shows that 76.7% of females do not like the societal practice of menstruation and 16.7% of females said that they like the same, and the rest, 6.7% of females, have no idea about it.

3. Should cultural practices followed during menstruation is justified?



30 responses

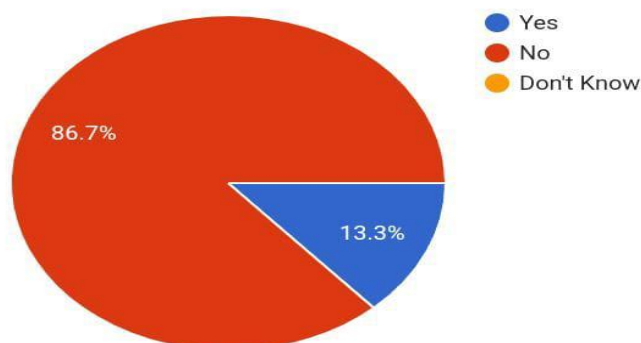


In the above pie chart, 50% of females agreed that the cultural practices followed during menstruation are justified, 26.7% did not agree that it is justified, and the rest, 23.3% have no idea about it.

4. Do you think female bodies are impure during menstruation?



30 responses

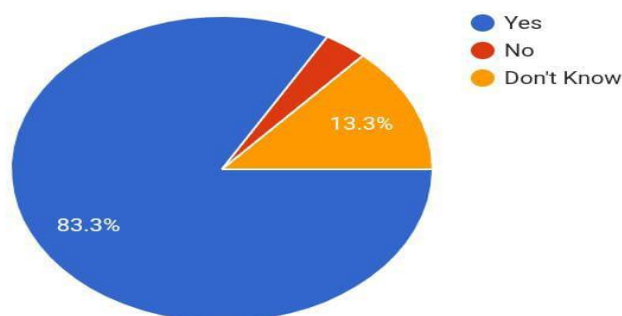


The above pie chart shows that 86.7% of females think their bodies are pure, while 13.3% think that their bodies are impure during menstruation.

5. Do you think menstrual myth and taboos should be removed from the society?



30 responses

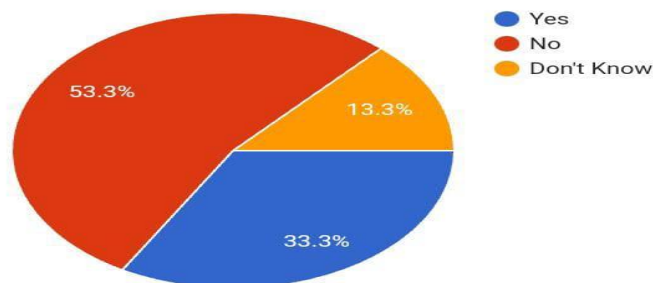


The above pie chart shows that 83.3% of females think that the menstrual myths and taboos should be removed from society and 3.4% of females think that they should not be removed, and 13.3% of females have no idea about it.

6. According to you, does all the brand of sanitary pad is applicable to all category of women who are in the stage of menstruation?



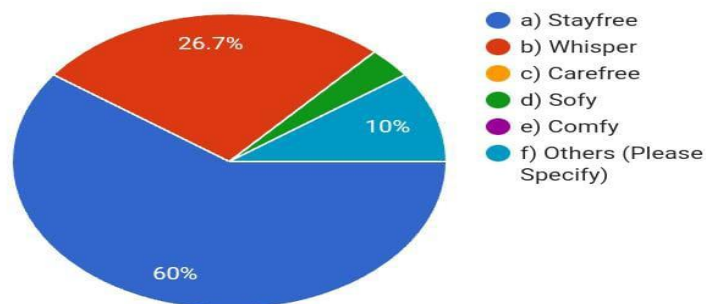
30 responses



In the above pie chart, 53.3% of females did not agree that all the brands of the sanitary pad apply to all categories of women who are in the stage of menstruation, and 33.3% of females agreed with that, while the rest 13.3% females have no idea about it.

7. Which brand of sanitary pad do you use?

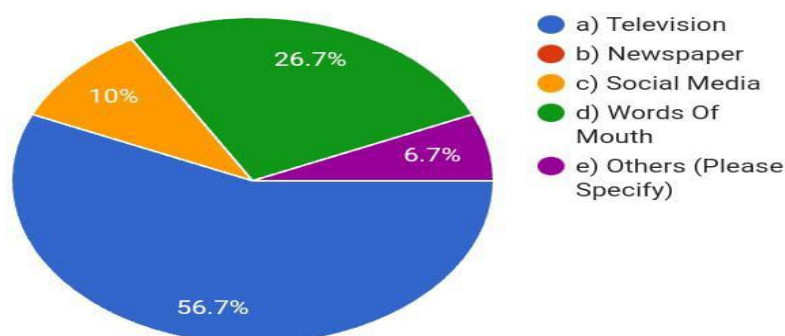
30 responses



The above pie chart shows that 60% of females use Stayfree, 26.7% of females use Whisper, 3.3% use Sofy, and 10% use other sanitary pads during menstruation.

8. How did you come to know about the brand of sanitary pad that you use?

30 responses

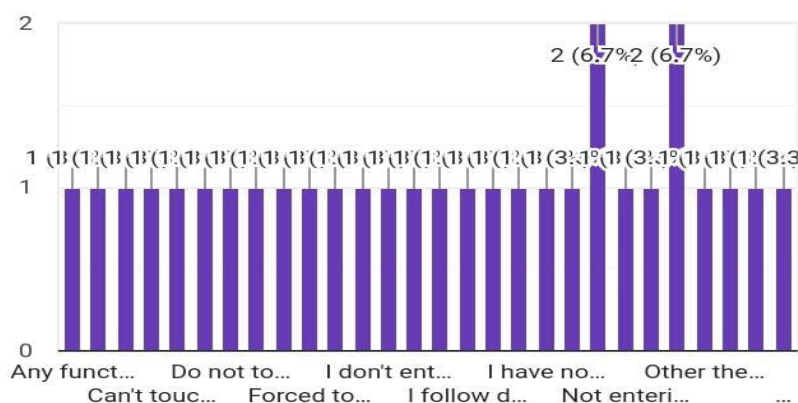


The above pie chart shows how females came to know about their choice of sanitary pad. 56.7% of females came to know through television, 26.7% of females came to know through word of mouth, 10% of females came to know through Social Media, and 6.7% of females came to know through other modes.

9. What kind of cultural practice do you follow during menstruation?



30 responses

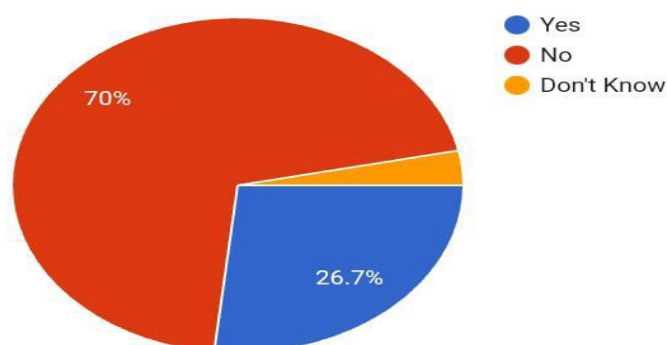


The above bar chart shows females' various cultural practices during their menstruation.

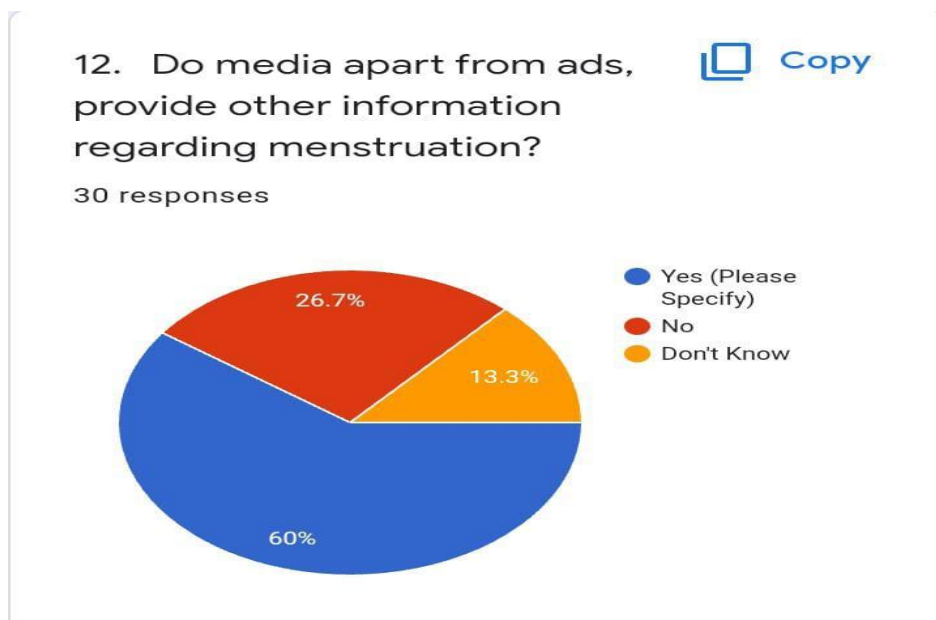
10. Do you feel ashamed of the periods stain?



30 responses



The above pie chart shows that 70% of females do not feel ashamed of their period stain, and 26.7% of females feel ashamed of the stain, while the rest have no idea about it.



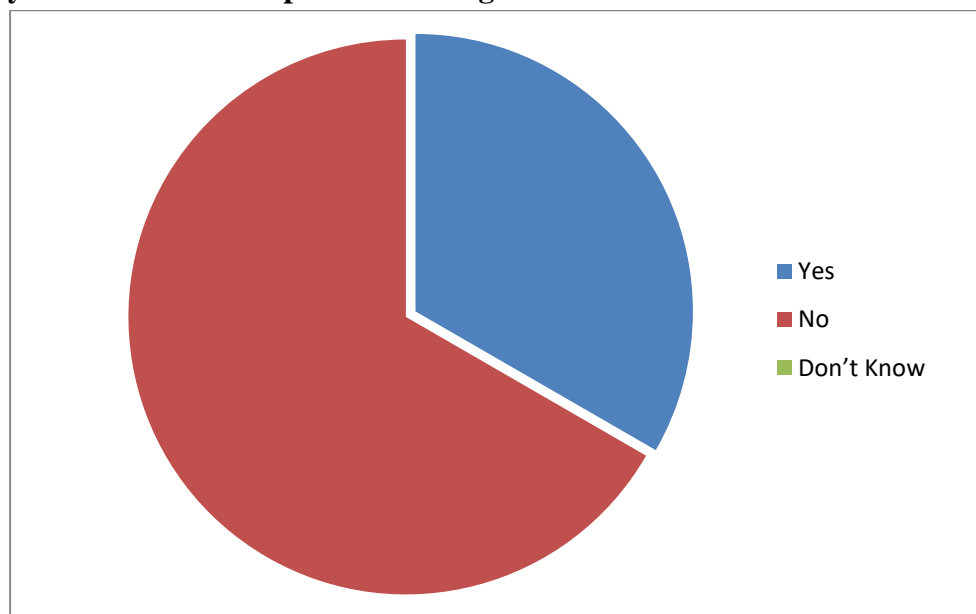
In the above pie chart, 60% of females agreed that media, apart from advertising, provide other information regarding menstruation, 26.7% of females did not agree with it, and the rest have no idea about it.

Responses of females residing in Rural Areas-

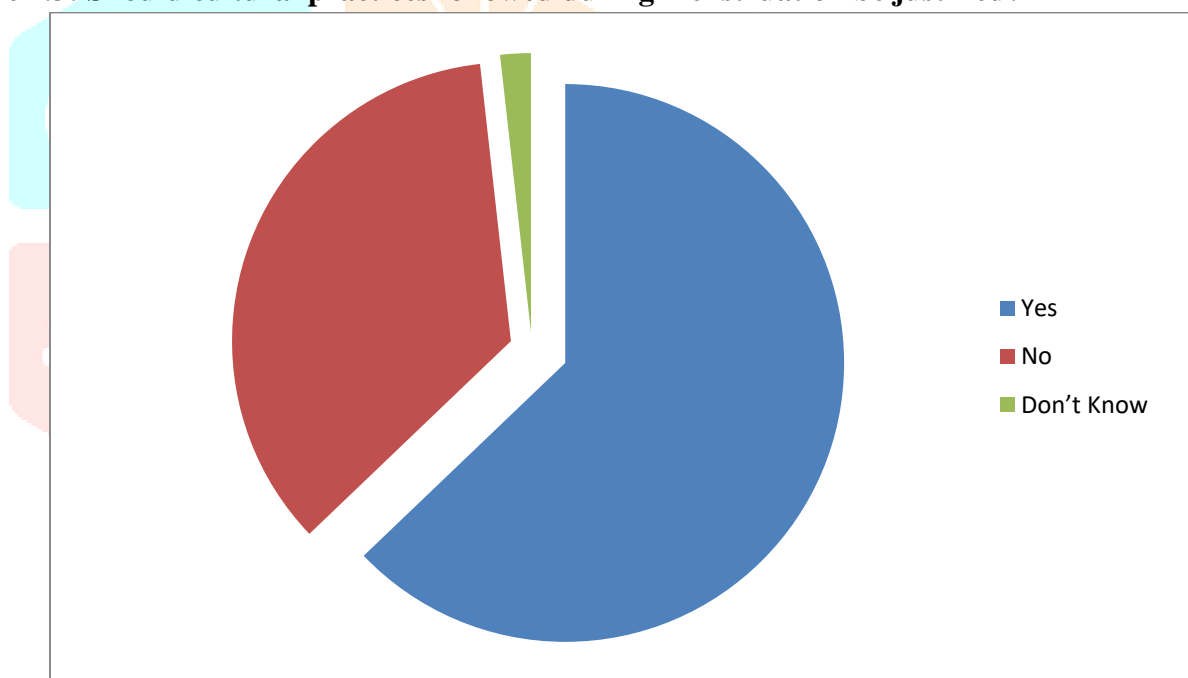
Figure 1.1: Do you think menstruation is taken positively in the society?



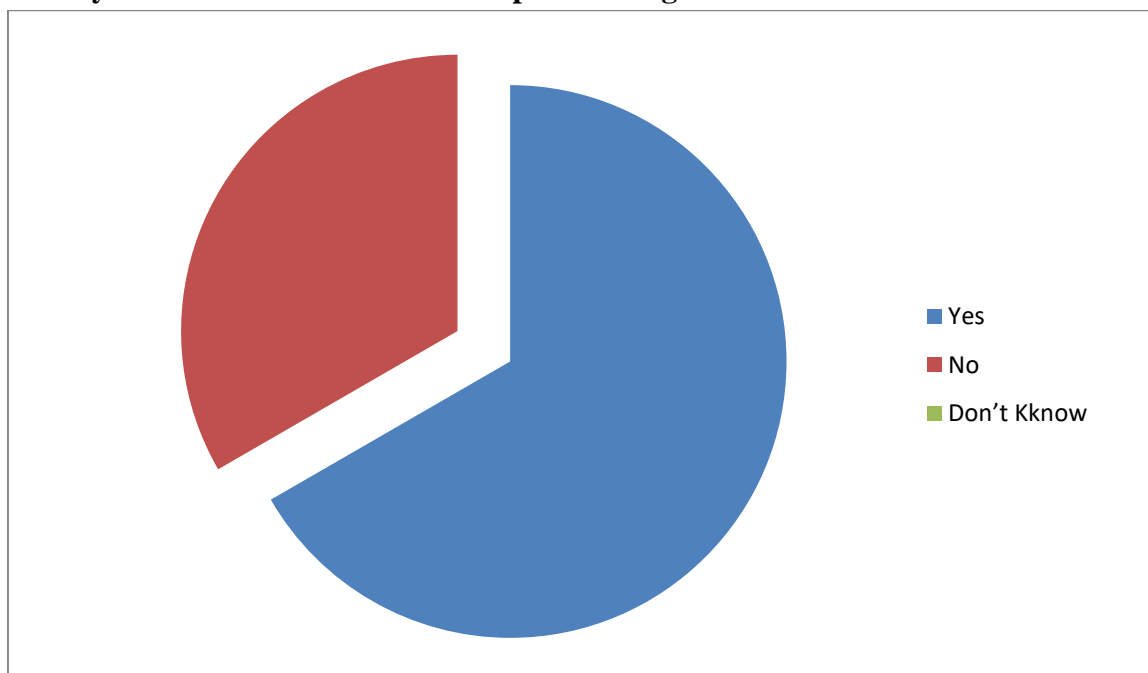
In the above pie chart, 50% of females in rural areas believe that menstruation is taken positively in society, whereas 50% of females believe that it is not taken positively in society.

Figure 1.2: Do you like the societal practice during menstruation?

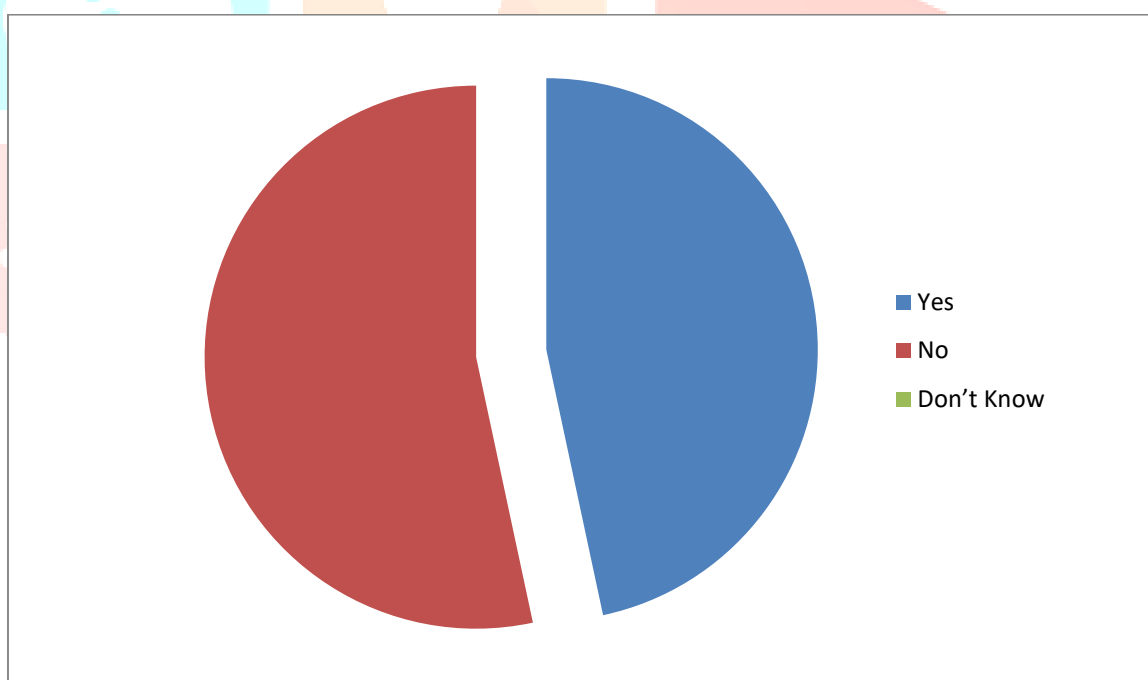
The above pie chart shows that 66.6% of females in rural areas do not like the societal practice during menstruation and 33.3% of females like the practices.

Figure 1.3: Should cultural practices followed during menstruation be justified?

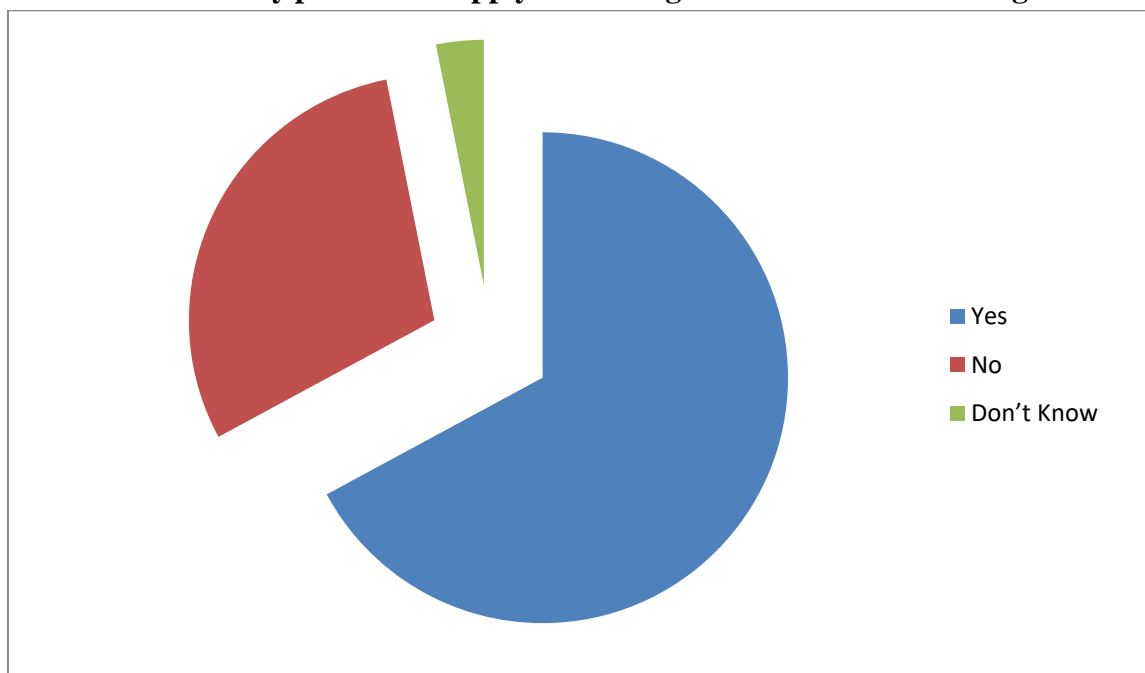
In the above pie chart, 53.3% of females in rural area said that cultural practices followed during menstruation are justified. At the same time, 30% of females think it is unjustified, and 1.5% of females do not know about it.

Figure 1.4: Do you think female bodies are impure during menstruation?

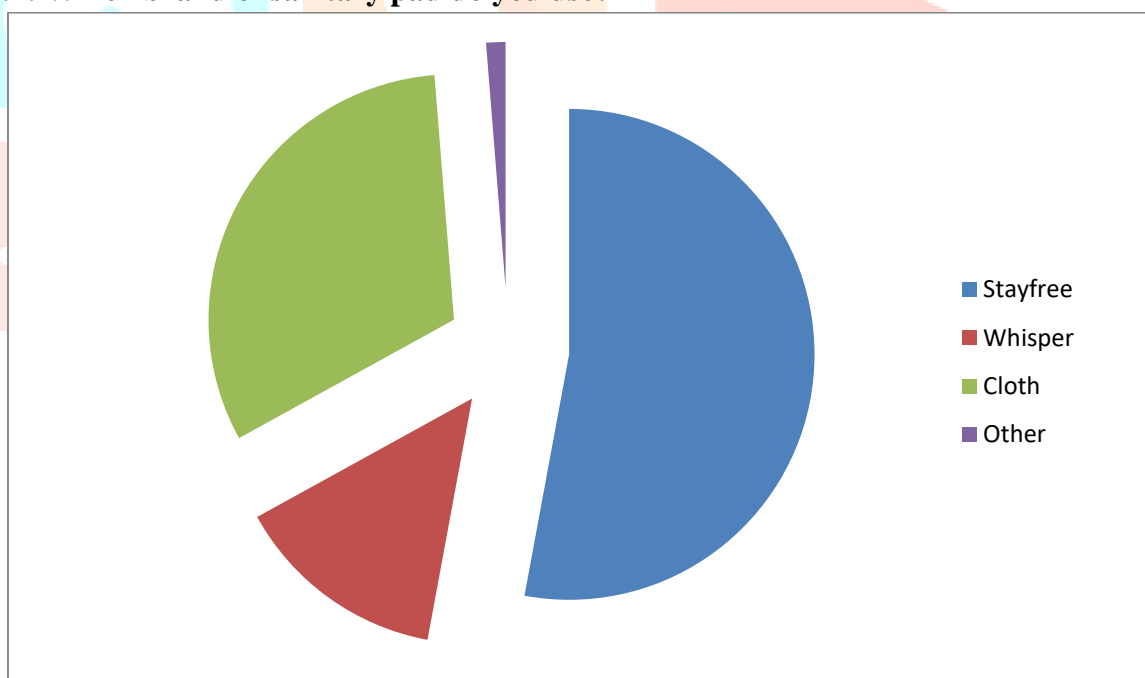
The above pie chart shows that 66.6% of females in rural area believe that their bodies are impure during menstruation, while 33.3% of females do not think so.

Figure 1.5: Do you think menstrual myths and taboos should be removed from society?

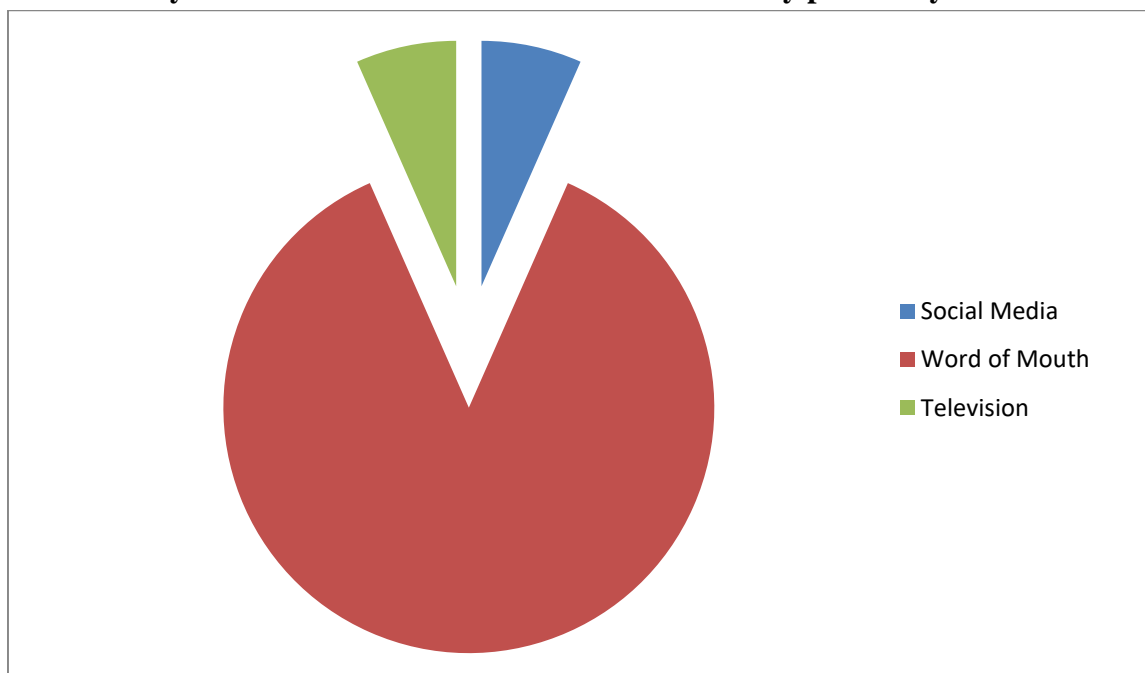
In the above pie chart, 53.3% of females in the rural area think that menstrual myths and taboos should not be removed from society, and 46.6% of females think that these myths and taboos should be removed from society.

Figure 1.6: Do all the sanitary pad brands apply to all categories of women in the stage of menstruation?

In the above pie chart, 67% of females in rural area think that all brand of sanitary pad applies to all categories of women who are in the stage of menstruation, while 30% of females think that all brand of the sanitary pad does not apply to all categories of women while 3% females have no idea about it.

Figure 1.7: Which brand of sanitary pad do you use?

The pie chart above shows that 53% of females in rural areas use Stayfree, 32% of females use cloth, 14% of females use Whisper, and 1% use others.

Figure 1.8: How did you come to know about the brand of sanitary pad that you use?

The above pie chart shows that 86% of females in the rural area came to know about the sanitary pad they use, through word of mouth, 7% of females came to know through Social Media and 7% of females came to know through other means.

Figure 1.9: Do you feel ashamed of the periods stain?

The above pie chart shows that 73% of females in the rural area feel ashamed of the period's stain, while 27% of females do not feel ashamed of the stain.

Figure 1.10: Do media, apart from ads, provide other information regarding menstruation?

The above pie chart shows that 23% of females in rural areas said that media, apart from ads, do not provide other information regarding menstruation, while 77% of females have no idea about it.

Findings

The following results have been found from the above analysis and discussion on socio-cultural practices regarding menstruation and media intervention. A huge difference is identified among the responses of females of rural and urban areas, which are mentioned below.

- After analyzing all the collected data, it is found that menstruation is not taken positively in society. 73% of females from urban areas and 50% of females from rural areas believe that menstruation is not taken positively in society. In terms of ratings, respondents in the urban area are higher than in the rural area because only 23% of females in the urban area believe that menstruation is taken positively in society and that 23% of females are either illiterate or traditionalist.
- Most females do not like the societal practices that must be followed during menstruation. However, 33.3 % of females who belong to rural areas responded that they like the societal practices during menstruation. While conducting the Interview with the females from rural areas, most of them said that the practices are well justified, should exist in our society, and should be followed by all girls and women. Moreover, after investigating their status, it is found that the respondents are illiterate and are ready to take these old and traditional beliefs forward. At the same time, literate females in rural areas responded exactly the opposite of the elders.
- Most females from rural areas think that their bodies are impure, while the majority of females from urban areas think that their bodies are pure. There is a clear difference between the females of the rural and urban areas and their way of looking at things. Females from urban areas are mostly educated and have access to different media types. However, females in rural areas are unaware of the scientific fact about menstruation; therefore, they follow the cultural belief that women are impure during menstruation as they bleed those days.
- Menstruation is always associated with some myths and taboos in Indian society. These myths and taboos affect women's mental and emotional states as they are excluded from engaging in religious functions and are considered impure or sinful if they do not follow such restrictions. In this study, the collected data shows a vast difference in how menstruation is taken between rural and urban areas. Because most females from urban

areas want menstruation-related myths and taboos to be removed from society, most females from rural areas are not ready to remove these myths and taboos from society. While conducting interviews, the women are asked why they do not want the taboos to be removed, they could not give any valid reason to the question, yet they want these taboos to exist in society.

- After analyzing all the media advertisements and surveys, it is found that Stayfree is the most popular hygiene product among females and is used by many. Many other brands of sanitary pad, like Whisper, Sofy, etc., are also used in urban areas; along with that, a few numbers of females in the urban area uses menstrual cups as hygiene kit. However, in rural areas, few numbers of females are seen using cloth instead of using sanitary pads, as they are unaware of menstrual hygiene. Some cannot afford sanitary pads, while the rest are not concerned about their menstrual health. Most females in the urban area came to know about their choice of sanitary pads through television, but most females in rural areas came to know about sanitary pads through word of mouth as they lacked media access.
- After conducting interviews and surveys, it is found that females in rural and urban areas follow plenty of cultural practices regarding menstruation. Although these practices vary from culture to culture or religion to religion, they are all similar. Some of the practices that still exist in our society are as follows-
 1. Not allowed to enter the kitchen.
 2. Not allowed to enter the temple.
 3. They cannot touch the holy books as they are said to be impure during those days.
 4. Not allowed to touch pickles, as food is considered sacred, and a woman's impurity can destroy its goodness.
 5. Not allowed to sleep with men during periods.
 6. Plants like basil or flower should not be touched.
 7. Sexual discourse should be avoided as it will lead to heavy menstrual bleeding.
 8. Cutting nails and washing off the hair on the fourth day to purify oneself.
 9. Sprinkle 'Ganga Jal' around the house, and so on.
- Menstrual bleeding is normal during the period, and blood stain is also normal. However, the females in rural areas are not taking it normally. The result shows that 73% females of in rural areas feel ashamed of the period stain. However, in that case, the results of both urban and rural areas are almost similar, as 70% of females in the urban area feel ashamed of the period stain. This is because society made a natural process like menstruation a matter of shame and did not even talk openly about it. When a girl is said to keep these things secret from an early age, she is normal to feel embarrassed about them.
- After observing various media types for one month, it is found that there is a very less number of advertisements shown on media regarding menstrual hygiene. After analyzing the contents or texts mentioned in the literature review, it is found that all the advertisements in media are mostly product-oriented and have less information about menstrual health and hygiene. As media is the most powerful tool, it can make females aware of how to deal with menstrual health. The woman should be aware of every ingredient used in tampons and pads because there are diseases like toxic shock syndrome that can happen due to the constant use of bleached. However, the companies are not legally required to disclose the ingredients as their only aim is to maximize profits.

Conclusion

The study concludes that cultural and social practices regarding menstruation depend on a girl or woman's education, attitude, family environment, culture, and traditional beliefs. This study aimed to identify effective means of communication and strategies for combating menstrual myths and taboos. Based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data, it can be concluded that media is the most important tool in this 21st century, and it has the potential to develop human perspectives through various interventions and lead to future success

so that today's generation may not carry this outlook on life to the next generation. To sum up, this paper intended to identify the extent of roles played by different media types to create awareness regarding female hygiene practices during the menstruation cycle. The study highlights and suggests the need for female health and hygiene programs. The study's findings unfold many practices, social restrictions, myths, taboos, and misconceptions associated with menstruation. In the end, another probable untapped arena of this research was to analyze the perceptions of female hygiene product manufacturers regarding the effectiveness of different media types in raising awareness about female hygiene practices. From the study, it has been found that, apart from advertisements in media, neither Television nor Newspaper publishes or broadcasts anything regarding menstrual hygiene management.

Notably, movies and documentaries played a vital role in breaking the stigma associated with menstruation. After analyzing the overviews of the films and documentaries in chapter three, I have concluded that women residing in villages across India lack knowledge and information regarding menstruation and how to maintain hygiene. For example, the movie 'Padman' shows the societal barriers in India regarding Menstruation and attempts to make menstruation taboo-free and hygiene affordable.

Suggestions

- After conducting the research and analyzing the data, we can suggest that there is still room for improvement in Indian society regarding menstruation. Because females from rural areas are unwilling to change their perception of menstrual myths and taboos, and they want these taboos to exist in society because they lack knowledge about the scientific fact behind menstruation. Therefore, campaigns should take place in rural areas to raise awareness.
- Another notable thing I have reached so far is that advertisement regarding menstruation is product-oriented; they do not provide any information on menstrual hygiene or how to deal with menstrual cramps. Their only aim is to sell the product and maximize profit.
- While conducting the survey, many females in urban areas said that they use the 'Menstrual Cup' as a hygiene kit, but they do not have proper knowledge about how to clean the menstrual cup. Therefore, electronic media should provide information on how to maintain the cleanliness of such kits.

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