



MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRACTICES & AWARENESS SURVEY, VISAKHAPATNAM, ANDHRA PRADESH

By

SOOTHE HEALTHCARE IN ASSOCIATION WITH
BHAGAVATULA CHARITABLE TRUST

Executive Summary: Soothe Healthcare in association with Bhagavatula Charitable Trust conducted Menstrual Hygiene Practices and Awareness Survey in ten villages covering one hundred families in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh over a period of three months in 2014 to elicit beliefs & understanding of menstruation & to identify the current menstrual practices among adolescent girls and women in the district.

While higher education and urbanization has managed to influence the communities, a majority of women are still unaware of the importance of hygienic menstrual practices.

59% of the target population was found to be cloth users. 86% cloth users said they are either habituated to cloth or unaware of the implications of unhygienic menstrual practices. 95% of sanitary napkin users expressed cost concerns - they find sanitary napkins expensive. It is also observed that the percentile of women using sanitary napkins aged 30 years and above is merely 1.7%.

Survey clearly indicates a need for **Awareness & Access to Affordable** menstrual hygiene products.

Background:

Menstrual Practices are still clouded by taboos and socio-cultural restrictions resulting in ignorance, ignorance of scientific facts and hygienic health practices among adolescent girls. Reaction to menstruation depends upon awareness and knowledge about the subject. It is the sheer manner in which a girl child is educated about menstruation and its associated changes that may have an impact on her response to the event of menarche.

Although menstruation is a natural phenomena, it is linked to several misconceptions and practices, which sometimes results in adverse health outcomes. 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). The interplay of socio-economic status, menstrual hygiene practices and RTI are noticeable. 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.

Above as background, this study was undertaken with the following **Objectives**:

- (i) To elicit beliefs and conceptions regarding menstruation among the study population and
- (ii) To find out the status of menstrual practices among adolescent girls and women.

Type of Study: Community based descriptive cross-sectional observational study.

Place of Study: Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

Study Population: Primarily Women in the Household

- (i) Total No. of Villages Surveyed: 10
- (ii) Total No. of Families Surveyed: 100
- (iii) Total No. of Families Surveyed From Each Village: 10

Study Tool: Pre-Designed Questionnaire

Duration: 3 Months, March 2014 - May 2014

Methodology: Community Workers, BCT, after explaining the purpose of the study reached out to one hundred families in and around ten villages, with pre-designed, pre-tested questionnaire designed by Community Programme Managers, Soothe Healthcare, topics primarily relating to awareness about menstruation and menstrual practices.

Statistical Analysis: Data obtained were collated and analyzed statistically by simple proportions.



Key Findings:

1. Of the 144 menstruating women surveyed, 59% are using cloth and 41% are using Sanitary napkins to manage their menstrual cycles.
2. 86% Cloth users said they are either habituated or unaware of the implications of unhygienic menstrual practices of which a majority 66% attributed to the 'habit'
3. 95% of napkin users expressed cost as a concern while 14% of non-users cited cost for not adopting sanitary napkins.
4. Only 2% users are found in the 30 or over age group.

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