

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE FIELD OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE INDUSTRY : A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS

Vaishnavi Joshi

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology
Central University of Haryana, Mahendargarh-123031, India

ABSTRACT

India has been developed so far since independence. Women also make a great impact in the technical advancement or entrepreneurship field. Many women become entrepreneur in their respective field. The development has come through technological advancement. Women's menstruation is one of the phenomena, which has a huge cultural and social impact on itself. Many women started their own business in sanitary napkin making. Many small industries making menstrual hygiene related product in which a lot of women in working .Menstruation a topic which is associated with myths and taboos seen drastically changes too. At that time no one wants to talk about on menstruation, women had to feelshame, they cannot talk about on this openly aftermany yearsof this phenomena has seen some changes too. Now people can talk openly about menstruation, women's life has become better too. The hygiene facility, awareness, perception, knowledge about menstruation became clear and specific. The role of women has been increased in every field whether it is social, cultural, political or economical. Through the development process, these cultural taboos and myths are having changes. Due to development, traditional knowledge turning into scientific and rational knowledge. The menstruation phenomena is a biological process which occurs in every women life but it make a taboo for the society women are not allowed to talk about openly but thorough many years scenario has been changed the condition and experience related to

menstruation has come so far too.

The current paper aims to describe that how women entrepreneurship in menstruation hygiene management field brings a huge change in women life and how it will help in women empowerment. This paper consist secondary data.

Key word: Menstruation, Menstruation, Menstrual hygiene management, Women entrepreneurship, Development process, women empowerment

Introduction

Culture and development are two words that have always gone together or been worked upon within the same context. Every phenomenon in the running society or previous society is touched by a cultural and developmental aspect. Menstruation is one of their phenomena. Menstruation is a normal biological process, which differentiates women from men. It is an indication of womanhood. When a young woman menstruates the first time it is known as menarche. Menarche is an indication of the beginning of reproductive capabilities and the time when secondary sexual characteristics developed. Though menstruation is a scientific biological process but it is surrounded by many cultural beliefs, myths, and taboos. Traditional knowledge is the main source of all these beliefs, myths and taboos. The majority of girls came to know about menses after they first attained menarche by their female family members or relatives. This paper discusses all these cultural beliefs, traditional knowledge and developmental strategies related to a menstruating woman. (Kumari, 2017)

Literature Review

The word "menstruation" is related to "moon". The terms "menstruation" and "menses" are derived from the Latin menses (month), which in turn relates to the Greek mene (moon) and the roots of the English words' month and moon. Menstruation is surrounded by many culture belief, myths and taboos, source of all these cultural activities is traditional knowledge. Any knowledge which is originated outside the context of modern western knowledge and transferred by one person to another person orally and written frequently oral known as traditional knowledge.

Traditional knowledge can consist of cultural expression, ecology, construction technologies environment, etc. This knowledge may be written down and transmitted only orally. Individual, community, society as a whole play a role in the transfer of this knowledge. (Lakshmi Poorna, 2014)

Menstruation is a unique phenomenon. It is a natural biological reproductive cycle in which blood comes from the uterus but despite of being a natural cycle it has been surrounded by cultural belief, secrecy in society. The term menstruation is known from many different names in different areas such as in educated and urban areas it is known as 'periods' and 'date', in rural areas it is known as 'Mahima', 'masik'. Some known as its menses also. In daily term girls usually, use 'down' and 'menstruation' term also to refer to this. 'Mahamari' is also a Hindi term used to indicate this.

Culture has a huge impact on menstruation practices all over the world. Despite being a reproductive health function menstruation is still dealt with secrecy in India. The experience of menstruation is different according to cultural practice, popular belief and the information received within that social group a woman lives. These cultural beliefs consist of many myths, taboos, and misconceptions. During menstruation, women are considered to be impure, unclean and dirty that is why they have to follow any restrictions.

Religious belief

There are different views on the origin of menstruation in different religions. In Hinduism, it is assumed that the origin behind these myths is date back to Vedic time. It is assumed that Lord Indra served the head of the second teacher of god vishroopachraya then women got Rajaswaladosha (Menstruation). In Vedas, it has been declared in the Vedathat, guilty of killing a Brahman's murder appear every month as menstrual flow as women have taken upon themselves a part of Indra's guilty. The importance of menstruation and menarche can be gauged by writing in Mahabharat that "each time an unwedded maiden has her monthly course, her parents or guardian are guilty of the heinous crime of the slaying the embryo. (M. Guterman, 2007).

Other religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism menstruating women also consider dirty, impure, unclean. Islam does not

consider menstruating women to possess any kind of "contagious uncleanness".

Cultural belief

Myths and Taboos regarding menstruation

Menstruation is a unique phenomenon; it is a biological reproductive cycle in which blood comes from the uterus but instead of being a natural phenomenon it has been surrounded by many myths and taboos. These taboos and myths exclude women from and girls from their daily socio-cultural life. Every cultural has different types of taboos on menstruation according to their cultural beliefs. But some misconception is common in every society such as:

During menstruation women are considered impure and dirty, they are restricted to enter in temple or mosque. Not enter into the kitchen is the most common prohibition usually found in rural areas. Menstruating women are not allowed to touch any kind of holy or spiritual book. It is assumed that menstruating women emit some smell or ray that's why they are not allowed why they are not allowed to prepare or handle the food they can get contaminated. They are prohibited to touch pickle or sour food so that it cannot turn into preserved food bad. (Uskul.A.K, 2014)

In some cultures, women are not allowed to sleep with her husband during their menstruating period due to their dirtiness and impurity. There are some norms and religious myths also associated with this traditional institution like menstruation compound with the evil spirit, shame and embarrassment surrounding sexual reproduction. In many cultures, women bury their clothes after ending their periods to escape from evil spirits. In western as well as eastern society menstrual blood uses for blood magic, it is believed that through menstrual blood a woman can impose her will on a man. (M. Guterman, 2007)

In the Assamese culture when a girl experiences her first menarche, she has to confinement in a room for seven days. She survives only on dairy products, sprouts, and fruits. She cannot comb her hair, cannot visit prayer places, prohibited from cutting nails and reading books and viewing men also. (Kumari, 2017)

How these cultural beliefs affect women's life?

Although menstruation practices in many areas are celebrated as a festival when a girl first experiences their menarche. But except these things, all these taboos and myths related to menstruation harms women in Indian society. These taboos restrict women to participate in daily life routines. It excludes women and girls from their socio-cultural life. These also the sign of violation of human rights and are a form of gender discrimination against women and girl child. It is a process of women suppression, Men become powerful he gets power to exploited women in the name of their high physical capacity. These taboos decrease the morale and confidence of a girl and women in their daily social behaviour, she feels ashamed and hesitates to talk openly over this issue. Due to the lack of information and restriction on openly talk about this, the girl does not follow proper menstrual hygiene practice, which turns leading to negative effects on health, education and the country's socio-economic development.

Why these cultural beliefs exiting and increasing in society?

This cultural belief has a deep route in people's socio-cultural life. There are several reasons behind the exiting of these cultural beliefs.

1.Lack of education: People are not very much aware of menstruation. The reason behind this the not providing the proper education about menstruation. In school teachers feel shy to teach about this in class. They may skip the chapter or just teach carelessly. The source of information among girls is their mother or any other female member of the family.

2. Patriarchal notion: Patriarchy society plays an important role in all these taboos and myths related to menstruation, in patriarchal society men is dominating and women are subordinated and they give an explanation that due to menstruation process a woman is weak and dependent on men. This male dominating mentality and gender discrimination increase the existence of these myths and taboos. (M. Yesmisi, 2014)

Effect of these myths and taboos on women in the context of health issue:

Menstrual Hygiene

During menstruation maintain a healthy practice for health and wellbeing for females is important. The menstrual period is such when females are expected to adopt hygienic practices. The issue of menstrual hygiene is

inadequately acknowledged and has not received proper attention. The use of sanitary pads and washing the genital area is essential to practice to keep menstrual hygiene. But due to lack of education and awareness and stigma about menstruation females are not known about the proper menstrual hygiene practice. The recent movie "period the end sentence" shows how girls are unaware of sanitary napkins. In many areas' girls are generally use clothes which can be reused but harmful to health. Most of the girls are unaware of at what time pad has to be changed, how to wash their genital parts during menstruation and many more. Due to inadequate knowledge of how to maintain proper menstrual hygiene practice female faces any kind of health problems. In which RTI (Reproductive Tract Infection) is the most common health diseases due to poor menstrual hygiene practice. (J. Prajapati, 2015)

Reproductive Tract Infection

Reproductive tract infections, including both sexually transmitted infections and none sexually transmitted infections of the reproductive tract, are responsible for major ill health throughout the world. Endogenous RTI is widespread among pregnant women, mainly due to the overgrowth of organisms normally present in the vagina, as a result of hormonal changes. They can be readily treated, if not, they cause women varying degrees of discomfort from local irritation to pelvic inflammatory disease. (Patil, 2014)

Urinary Tract Infection

Urinary tract infection is the most common type of infectious disease in community practice after respiratory tract infection Urinary tract infections are believed to be among the most common form of infection in girls and women of menstruating age and this is held to be due to unhygienic practices. The exact biological mechanism by which, unhygienic MHM practices affect the exact biological mechanism by which, unhygienic MHM practices affect. (Patil, 2014) These are some disease occurs place due to unhygienic menstrual practices.

Objective

1. To Understand the cultural belief regarding menstruation process and how they affect females socio-cultural and biological life
2. What kind of developmental strategies organize for better

menstrual hygiene practice and how females are benefited by these programs?

Methodology

In this paper qualitative approach is used by the researcher to understanding the socio-cultural belief regarding menstruation. This paper is based on the secondary data in which books, journals, articles, research reports, newspaper, magazine are used for analysis of available literature and correlate with previous findings.

Developmental strategy or policies for menstrual hygiene

A development like Globalisation and modernization are expected to influence the behaviour patterns in adolescents. This change is expected to be taking place in all cultures. Consequently, menstruating girls are expected to move from the more conservative and traditional ways of life and thoughts to the more modern pole in their attitudes, values, and behaviour. Government, NGO's, private institutions are making many development policies regarding menstruation.

There are some program running by the different institutions for the sake of menstruation which is following:

1. Innovations is working to create a viable biodegradable napkin; Jayashree Industries is developing machines for manufacturing sanitary napkins which can be operated by women with disabilities.
2. Public Health Foundation of India, in partnership with Water Aid, is currently analysing government schemes that are addressing MHM across various states and government department Foundations focused on health, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, have made research grants to study MHM issues and potential solutions in the developing world. In India, ICMR, a government-funded research institute, is offering funding and capacity building support to researchers to analyse the issue, build evidence of impact and develop new products.
3. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has introduced

- a scheme for promotion of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls in the age group of 10-19 years in rural areas.
4. Various corporates are undertaking initiatives to improve the menstrual health and hygiene status of adolescent girls in rural and semi-urban parts of India. They are currently partnering with state governments and non-profit organizations to create awareness about hygienic habits, supply sanitary pads and provide infrastructures such as clean toilets and incinerators. Some of these corporates such as Johnson & Johnson and Procter & Gamble are from the sector itself and are undertaking these initiatives as part of their business. Others such as TVS and BHEL are doing so as part of their corporate social responsibility programs.
 5. Johnson & Johnson's 'Stayfree Women for Change' campaign, developed in partnership with UNICEF, create awareness on various aspects of menstruation and urges women to test for anaemia during menstruation. This is an example of a successful media campaign that promotes menstrual hygiene best practices while advertising a brand.
 6. Rajasthan to become India's first state to provide free sanitary napkins to a college student. Along with these steps, the Rajasthan government also launched the 'Chuppi Todo' campaign on July 31 to encourage women in rural areas to adopt menstrual hygiene practices and handle their periods with dignity and safety. The state is also observing 'Chuppi Todo' Diwas every three months throughout the state, wherein several activities across rural areas are held to encourage and motivate women to talk about menstrual hygiene in public.
 7. Kishori shakti yojana governs by Ministry of Women and Child Development also seeks to empower adolescent girls, to enable them to take charge of their lives. It is viewed as a holistic initiative for the development of adolescent girls. The program through its interventions aims at bringing

about a difference in the lives of the adolescent girls. It seeks to provide them with an opportunity to realize their full potential. Instead of using the kappa government has launched the sanitary pad vending machine through which females can easily get sanitary pads at a reasonable price.

8. Due to the high price of sanitary pads or tampons and harmful for the environment, there is much organization that is working on producing eco-friendly pads. Some institutions such as Saathi, Carmesi are making eco-friendly pads. Some are also making menstrual cups which is reusable.
9. The ARSH (Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health) Scheme focuses on reorganizing the existing public health system to the service needs of the adolescent. The objective of this Scheme is to meet adolescent's sexual and reproductive health needs while protecting their rights and help prevent girls from having too many children too early in life, which threatens the health of mothers and children and strains young families' limited resources. (USAID, 2015)
10. Media, film and television industries also playing a huge role to empower women about menstruation. Movies like a Pad man, the end of the sentence spread awareness about periods.

Key findings and Suggestion

Conclusion

Menstruation is the basic change during adolescence period a woman has to face. But due to lack of knowledge, it is surrounded by many misconceptions. So, people should consider it as natural phenomena, should talk about this openly. Family members also treat a new menstruating girl carefully, the first menarche should be celebrated as a festival. In school sex education should be compulsory so that everybody takes this as a genuine part of a reproductive system. The notion of patriarchy should be removed over this issue. It should be taught that only because of periods women can conceive. Females should be aware of all the schemes running by the

government regarding menstruation so that they can get all the benefits of those schemes. Media and social media should play a positive role in spreading awareness about menstruation. People should respect it, instead of making menarche an issue of shame for girls in the name of social, cultural and religious beliefs. For the better menstrual hygiene practice government, NGOs and other institutions provide sanitary napkins, tampons, menstrual cups or eco-friendly pads at a reasonable price in urban as well as rural areas. There is a need to encourage safe and hygienic practices among the adolescent girls and bring them out of traditional beliefs, misconceptions, and restrictions regarding menstruation

Though menstruation is a biological phenomenon which a female experience in her life. It is an indication of a healthy reproductive system. It is a natural process to reproduce, giving essence to a new life and thus human existence has been possible through years by years. But the misconception about this, the strong cultural belief leads many taboos and myths which restricted women to their daily. It creates gender discrimination also. But since past years an awareness comes in light about menstruation. People are considering this as a natural biological process, not as something dirty and impure. The government also providing knowledge through media, print media, movies or advertisements. This paper reveals that menstrual hygiene is far from satisfactory among a large proportion of the adolescents while ignorance, false perceptions, unsafe practices regarding menstruation and reluctance of the mother to educate her child are also quite common among them.

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