

Menstruation: A Social Dilemma in Developing Countries

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Editorial

Menstruation, as cultural taboo is prevalent in almost every society and country in the world. A stigma of secret discussion among less developed minds leading to misconception about this hidden but most important physiological process. Viewing menstruation as embracing and shameful event forces adolescent girls to hide this issue. Unwillingness to discuss it as a normal process in developing countries leads to perception of uncleanness and poor hygiene practices ending up in many health issues [1]. However, considering it a stigmatized event has opened up gates to multiple problems which are difficult to manage especially in underdeveloped countries. Much of the focus with broad view is needed in light of conducted literature.

A peer literature review of many statistical data has shown shocking results. According to UNICEF report about 1 out of 3 (one third) of girls in Asia know nothing about menstrual bleed While more than 50% do not have access to sanitary pads even in developed country like UK.

UNICEF Pakistan reports 49% girls know nothing about their first menstrual bleed. Around 44% do not have basic hygiene facilities during periods and about 28% miss school because of menstruation. In an study conducted in Pakistan none of the girl mentioned menses as bleed from uterus thinking it comes from stomach or intestine [2]. In India and Nigeria only 11.25% and 32.7% girls use sanitary pads [3,4]. UNICEF states about 48% of girls in Iran and 10% of girls in India believe that menstruation is a disease. Moawed's study showed that 42.5% of adolescent girls changed their pad every eight hours and 65% never cleaned their genitalia during menstruation [5].

Menstruation matter sounds weird to men and boys in community while, we need to break silence and involve males in dialogues about

menstrual bleed. Around 64% of girls feel difficult discussing periods with their male friends [6]. Being a normal physiological process of shedding blood every month for 5-7 days in working environment needs to know about it in detail. Around every tenth women miss working days because of periods. Lack of awareness however, has created myths in minds of male community considering girls impure and unhygienic while menstruating. Involving men and boys in discussing this issue is all need of 21st century to understand and know about periods.

Menstruation though considered as cultural taboo and stigma in society, needs special consideration and engaging community in dialogue to know about while not considering it as sexual and shameful issue. We seriously need community to ask up a question, share experiences, discuss it openly and do not hesitate, because Menstruation and women need attention.

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