

Menstrual Cycle System: A Step for Motherhood

Sultan Singh

Lecturer in Sociology
G.H.S. Bajana Kalan
Sonepat (Haryana)

Abstract- The menstrual cycle and other changes associated with puberty are controlled by certain hormones released from the pituitary gland in the brain. The cycle prepares a woman for pregnancy. If pregnancy does not occur, the lining breaks down and the blood and cells are discharged out. Menstruation as soon as this name comes to us somewhere, we become silent and shy away from talking about the subject. The first misconception remains in our society, that menstruation is impure. While the truth is that menstruation is a natural somatic process in a woman's life. Because of these, woman is called Janani or mother.

Key Words: Women, Health, Menstruation, Mother, Pregnancy.

Introduction:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined adolescence as the age group of 10-19 years. Adolescence in India has been defined to be a period between 10-18 years. There are an estimated 200 million adolescents in India who comprise one-fifth of the total Indian population (Shanbhag et al., 2012). Each woman tends to have her own rhythm of menstrual cycle. The menstrual flow and bleeding may last for 2 to 7 days. The average blood-loss ranges from about 30 to 180 milliliters (Sheth, 1999 and Singh, 2022). The menstrual cycle and other changes associated with puberty are controlled by certain hormones released from the pituitary gland in the brain. The cycle prepares a woman for pregnancy. If pregnancy does not occur, the lining breaks down and the blood and cells are discharged out. The world changed. Traditions, thinking, changed everything but the tradition of discriminating against women during menstruation and treating them as untouchables in many villages of Malla Danupur in Bageshwar district, Uttarakhand has not changed. In the 21st century, where daughters are touching the sky, in these villages, adolescent girls and women are being kept in animal clusters when menstruation occurs. They have to spend at least four nights in the cowshed. The people of Malla Danupur are in every nook and corner of the country and many are also abroad, but the rural society has not been able to come out of the orthodox tradition even today. Due to the high Himalayas, it gets cold for eight months here. In such a situation, women have to spend cold nights during the laying of straw in the cowshed in limited warm clothes during the menstruation. Women are considered untouchable during menstruation in almost all villages of the mountainous region. Women are kept separately in a room in the house for at least four days. The work is allowed after purification on the fifth day. According to the elders of the village, all the houses have temples of deities. Keeping women at home during menstruation makes the deity angry (Amar Ujala, April, 2018: 9). Menstruation as soon as this name comes to us somewhere, we become silent and shy away from talking about the subject. The first misconception remains in our society, that menstruation is impure. While the truth is that menstruation is a natural somatic process in a woman's life. Because of these, woman is called Janani (Amar Ujala, February 7, 2018: 6).

Research Methods and Objectives:

This research paper employed a qualitative, secondary research methodology to investigate the topic of 'Menstrual Cycle System: A Step for Motherhood'. The choice of this methodology was justified by the need to synthesize existing knowledge and insights from a wide range of sources, including academic literature, newspapers, research papers, books, and data from various regions and contexts. The goal was to provide a comprehensive overview of the complex and multifaceted factors influencing menstrual health. This research paper helps us to understand the meaning of menstrual health and menstrual health problems and its importance for female. By drawing upon existing research and data, this methodology allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the topic and facilitated a deeper understanding of menstrual health. Through this research paper, we can understand the changes in girls' growth, beginning of menstruation and menstruation system as a step for motherhood.

Changes in Girls' Growth at the Beginning of Puberty:

At the beginning of puberty, most girls become taller and grow faster or mature faster than boys of the same age. Differences in the age at which puberty begins and in the rate of development during puberty are entirely normal. Many girls worry because some of their friends are growing and maturing more quickly. On the other hand, a girl who

matures early may feel self-conscious because her breasts noticeably larger than those of the girls her age. Some girls mature several years earlier or even later than others of their age. Whether a girl matures slowly or rapidly, she and other girls go through exactly the same changes as they enter womanhood. She grows taller; her breasts become larger and rounder. The enlarged breasts will allow her to feed babies with milk from her own body.

Beginning of Menstruation:

A major change that takes place during a girl's growth to womanhood is the beginning of menstruation. Menstruation is a monthly discharge of blood and tissue from the vagina. It is a normal part of a woman's life. Most girls start to menstruate when they are about 12 years old, but many begin at an earlier or later age (Sheth, 1999). In India, the average age at menarche in various studies has been reported to be between 12 to 13.6 years of age (Sheila, 1993 and Vaidya, 1998). It is interesting to note that the age at menarche seems to be gradually coming down in most developed societies by about one year in every 100 years, but precisely measuring the age at menarche is not easy on a large sample. The word menstruation, derived from menstrual is or monthly; itself emphasizes its regular monthly occurrence. That the average time interval between the start of one cycle and the next should be 29.5 days, so closely matching the lunar month, is surprising (Kothari, 2010).

Menstruation: A Step for Motherhood:

When a young woman reaches puberty, she starts to ovulate. This is when a mature egg or ovum is released from one of the ovaries. The ovaries are the two female reproductive organs found in the pelvis. If the egg is fertilized by a sperm as it travels down the fallopian tube, then pregnancy occurs. The fertilized egg attaches to the lining of the uterus. The placenta then develops. The placenta transfers nutrition and oxygen to the fetus from mother. If the egg does not become fertilized, the lining of the uterus (endometrium) is shed during menstruation. The average menstrual cycle lasts 28 days. The cycle starts with the first day of one period and ends with the first day of the next period.

The average woman ovulates on day 14. At this time, some women have minor discomfort in their lower abdomen, spotting, or bleeding, while others do not have any symptoms at all (<https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=menstrual-cycle-an-overview-85-P00553>). A woman is generally most likely to get pregnant (fertile) if she has sex a few days before, and during ovulation.

Menstrual Health Problems:

Menstruation signifies good health if it occurs regularly without any excessive pain. Fatigue or blood loss it is normal for women to experience moderate to mild discomfort a few days before or during menstruation. However a few women suffer from severe symptoms of distress depression, anxiety fatigue, headache, stomach ache, body swelling or pain in their breasts, thighs, back and abdomen, pre-menstrual syndrome (PMC), a disorder characterized by some or all of these symptoms, may occur when progesterone level are low. Normally, women carry on with their usual activities. Generally, the menstrual discharge is absorbed by a clean cloth or sanitary towel, a disposable pad that covers the vaginal opening. Tampon a roll of absorbent material worn inside the vagina is also used. A young woman does not miss her periods unless she is pregnant or is under emotional stress, nor has severe weight loss or abnormal hormonal balance. If she happens to miss her periods frequently or it occurs less than every fifty to sixty days, a doctor needs to be consulting (Sheth, 1999).

Every girl or a woman does not necessarily feel miserable before her periods. And yet, as many as 75 per cent experience some pre menstrual tension (PMS) such as bloating, abdominal heaviness fatigue and breast tenderness more than the physical ailments, an increase in emotional reactivity and the blue mood is distressing about 3 to 7 per cent of women in their 20s and 30s suffer from a severe form of PMS known as pre menstrual dysphonic disorder PMDD sometimes after a pregnancy or going off the contraceptive pill (Sheth, 1999). A District Level Household and Facility Survey (2007-08) conducted in Mumbai by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare reported that around 20 per cent of the women in India had menstruation related problems. Among those women who have reported menstrual problems in India, 63 per cent reported painful periods, 25 per cent reported irregular periods and 14 per cent reported scanty bleeding. Among these, 20 per cent of women who have reported menstrual problems, 22.3 per cent are the adolescent age women. Adolescent women reported menstruation-related problems such as painful periods (79.5 per cent), irregular periods (18.7 per cent) and scanty bleeding (9.6 per cent) and prolonged bleeding (7.2 per cent). So menstruation related problems are more prevalent among adolescent girl (Varghese et al, 2019).

Disorders of the female reproductive system frequently involve menstrual dysfunction. Excessive or scanty bleeding and spotting before periods are some of the common menstrual problem. If a woman has never menstruated right from the time of puberty, the condition is called primary amenorrhea. This can be caused by disorders in the pituitary gland and hypothalamus in the brain. Secondary amenorrhea, the skipping of one more periods, is commonly experienced by women at some time or the other during their lives. Changes in body weight, loss or gain can cause amenorrhea. Deficiencies of pituitary and ovarian hormones can cause amenorrhea.

Amenorrhoea may also occur because of rigorous athletic training. Painful menstruation is called dysmenorrhoea which can be severe enough to prevent one from functioning normally for one or more days each month. Low progesterone levels may be the causes. A low level of this hormone increases the prostaglandin levels which are chemical substances that cause the uterine muscles to contract, resulting in pain. Drugs such as ibuprofen or naproxen which inhibit prostaglandin synthesis can help. Secondary dysmenorrhoea is caused by uterine tumors ovarian cysts fluid containing tumors of ovary pelvic infection intrauterine devices etc. correction of the underlying cause would get rid of the painful menses. Abnormal bleeding includes excessive duration or amount, diminished menstrual flow. Too frequent menstruation inters menstrual bleeding caused by disordered hormonal regulation emotional factors fibroids or uterine tumors diseases (Sheth, 1999).

Conclusion:

Menstruation is a unique phenomenon in a woman's life. It is the mark where a girl enters the womanhood and is blessed with the gift of giving life. However, this gift is always encircled by taboos that isolate women from the social and cultural life. Till date, menstruation is described with code words such as red alert, shark week, on the rag, and so on which proves that talking about it is a taboo in the society. Therefore, such taboos make the period cycle a topic of stigma and shame to be discussed out in the open which leads to a ton of misinformation related to it. Menstruation as soon as this name comes to us somewhere, we become silent and shy away from talking about the subject. The first misconception remains in our society, that menstruation is impure. While the truth is that menstruation is a natural somatic process in a woman's life. Because of these, woman is called Janani.

REFERENCES:

1. Amar Ujala, April, 2018: 9.
2. Amar Ujala, February 7, 2018: 6.
3. Kothari, Bela (2010), "Perception about Menstruation: A Study of Rural Jaipur, Rajasthan" in **Indian Anthropologist**, Vol. No- 40 (1), pp: 43-54.
4. Shanbhag, D. et al (2012), "Perceptions Regarding Menstruation and Practices during Menstrual Cycles among High School Going Adolescent Girls in Resource Limited Settings around Bangalore City, Karnataka, India" in **International Journal of Collaborative Research on Internal Medicine & Public Health**, Vol. No- 4 (7): 1353-1362.
5. Sheila, W. et al (1993), "Menstrual and Gynecological Disorders in 500 school girls in Madras city" in **Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology of India**, Vol. No- 43 (6), pp: 950-955.
6. Sheth, P. R. (1999), **Self Care for Women**, New Delhi: National Book Trust.
7. Singh, Sultan (2022), **Maternal and Child Health in Haryana**, Delhi: Blue Rose Publishers.
8. Vaidya, R. A. et al (1998), "Menstrual pattern and growth of school girls of Mumbai" in **Journal of Family Welfare**, Vol. No- 44 (1), pp: 66.
9. Varghese, Linda et al (2019), "A Study to Identify the Menstrual Problems and Related Practices among Adolescent Girls in Selected Higher Secondary School in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India" in **Journal of South Asian Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology**, Vol. No- 11(1), pp: 13-16.