



MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AMONG KONDH WOMEN OF KORAPUT DISTRICTS, ODISHA

Anthropology

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study is to assess the hygiene during menstruation among the Kondh women of Koraput District of Odisha. Five hundred two (502) Kondh women belong to 15-49 yrs age group standardised as the reproductive age are selected randomly by purposive sampling. The study reveals that the majority of women are engaged in agricultural work with having low educational status i.e. 96.81 %. It is also observed that 28.09% of houses have no electricity connection. 100.00% of women have no facilities for defecation in their houses, for which they have to go open field which is an unhygienic practice. Similarly, women have lack of sufficient knowledge about the menstrual hygiene and 1.34% of women used sanitary pad during menstruation.

KEYWORDS

Low education, sense of hygiene practise and menstrual hygiene, women

INTRODUCTION:

The start of period is known as menarche. Menarche does not happen until all the parts of girls' reproductive system have matured and are working together. Onset of puberty decrease autonomy and mobility with increasing restriction on speech, appearances, conduct and interaction with opposite sex especially in case of girls. Menstruation is much more to the adolescent girl then just and physiological readjustment. These include problem prior to the period, often called the premenstrual syndrome and during the period such as difficulties like backache, body ache, abdominal pain etc., it is a symbol of several maturity of the girl future status as a woman. It is also one of the central processes around which a woman grows.

Menstruation is a normal physiology in females. Poor hygiene during menstruation has been associated with serious ill-health ranging from reproductive tract infection, urinary tract infection, bad odour and many more (Dasgupta et al 2008)

Menstruation is a normal physiological phenomenon for females still it is associated with some degree of sufferings & embarrassment. In spite of relative openness in the society, the menstrual hygienic practices have not changed much. (Dr. Harsha Solanki et.al 2012),

According to the WHO, reproductive and sexual ill health accounts for 20% of the global burden of ill health for women (Patki S, et.al 1993) Menstrual hygiene is another important issue that every girl and women should practice in her life. Good menstrual hygiene is crucial for the health, education, and dignity of girls and women as it is an important risk factor for RTI. There is lack of awareness regarding menstruation, hygiene practices during menstruation and the physical and psychological changes associated with puberty. (Sridhar D et al. 2017) . A key priority for women and girls is to have the necessary knowledge, facilities and cultural environment to manage menstruation hygienically, and with dignity. Yet, the importance of menstrual hygiene management is mostly neglected by development practitioners within the WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) sector, and other related sectors such as reproductive health. Over decades, women have been taught that having periods is shameful. They have indirectly, if not directly, absorbed the messages that menstrual blood is dirty, smelly, unhygienic and unclean. This message may be perpetuated by advertisements for menstrual products or "feminine hygiene" products. Even the term "feminine hygiene" implies that help is needed with hygiene. With all these negative messages it is natural for women to want to hide their blood and throw it away as garbage. To do otherwise is to go against what they have been taught as women. But menstruation is a natural physical process - a harmless by-product of a biological event. (Bhawrdraj S, Archana Patkar 2004).

The wide spread poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, absence of safe drinking water and sanitary conditions, poor maternal and child health services, ineffective coverage of national health and nutritional services, etc. have been found, as possible contributing factors of dismal health condition prevailing amongst the primitive tribal

communities of the country. (Orissa Vision 2010)

OBJECTIVES:

- To know the knowledge of menstrual and sense of hygiene practices among the Kondh women
- To know the Education status
- To know problem during menstruation

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

The present study was conducted among 502 women of Kondh women belonged to reproductive age group 15-49 year from Laxmipur, Dasmantapur and Koraput block to respective village of Koraput district of Odisha. It is situated between 17.40N to 20.70N latitude and 81.24.40E to 84.20E longitude, Koraput is a district placed in the hills amidst dense forests covering a landmass of 8379 sq.km. Most people living in villages and rural area. 63 numbers different scheduled tribes are present in Orissa. Out of which 52 tribes are seen in Koraput District and the rest are found in other part of Orissa. The socio economic status, educational status and life style of different tribes are mostly equal but vary from region to region. The data were collected by random sampling method during 2012-2018. In order to elicit information about their reproductive health status among the Kondh women, such as household demographic and socio-economic status, sense of hygiene knowledge on menstrual hygiene, problem and practices.

Table.1: Distribution of age group among Kondh Women

Age Group	Kondh	Percentage
15-19	37	7.37
20-24	86	17.13
25-29	125	24.90
30-34	105	20.92
35-39	97	19.32
40-44	21	4.18
45-49	31	6.18
Total	N=502	100.0

The women were divided into the reproductive age group (15-49yrs), (7.37) women were in the age group 15-19, (17.13) in 20-24, (24.90)25-29, (20.92) 30-34, (19.32) 35-39, (4.18) 40-44, (6.18)45-49 years.

Table.2: Marital Status and Occupation among Kondh Women

Marital Status	Kondh	Percentage
Married	483	96.22
Widow	16	3.19
Separate/Divorced	3	0.60
Total	N=502	100.0
Occupation		
Labour	46	9.16

Agriculture	436	86.85
Business	0	0.00
Service	7	1.39
Others(more than one)	13	2.59
Unemployment	0	0.0
Total	N=502	100.0

The marital status of these women was 96.22% whereas 3.19% were widow and 0.60% were separated from their husband. The study also shows the result of Occupation of Kondh 9.16% were labour, 86.85% were agriculture, 0.00% are business, %are in services, 1.39% are in unemployment and 2.59% are in more than one work (agr-labour). Kondh women are engaged in agriculture (86.85%).

Table.3: Educational status among Kondh (Men and Women)

Educational Status	Kondh			
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Primary (<5 th std)	12	2.46	7	1.39
Secondary (5-10 th std)	24	4.94	8	1.59
Higher Sec. (>10 th std)	7	1.44	1	0.20
No education	443	91.16	486	96.81
Total	N=486	100.0	N=502	100.0

Table 3 indicates about the education where 91.43 (husband) 96.81(women) were illiterate, where as in husband 4.78% of husband had undergone the secondary education whereas only 1.59% women had undergone the secondary education.

Table. 4 Amities available and Sense of Hygiene status among Kondh Women

Indicator	Category	Kondh (502)	Percentage
Presence of Electricity	Yes	355	70.72
	No	147	29.28
Type of Cooking fuel	Wood/charcoal	490	97.61
	Kerosen	12	2.39
	Gas/heater	59	11.75
Disposal of Solid Wastes	Fixed place/Common place	20	3.98
	Open place/ No.fixed place	482	96.02
Using Sanitary Latrine	Pucca latrine	0	0.00
	Kachha/Pit/drain	0	0.00
	No facility/Field	502	100.00
	More than one	0	0.0
Sense of Hygiene			
Washing clothes	Daily	465	92.63
	After 2/4 days	25	4.98
	Weekly	12	2.39
Taking bath daily	Yes	502	100.00
	No	0	0.00
Number of baths daily	One	501	99.80
	Two	2	0.40
Washing hands before food	Yes	455	90.64
	No	47	9.36
Brushing teeth	Regular	408	81.27
	Irregular	94	18.73
Cutting Nails	Regular(weekly)	411	81.87
	Irregular (monthly)	91	18.13
Using of detergent	Yes	399	79.48
	No	103	20.52
Taking Food after preparation	One hour	40	7.97
	Two hour	218	43.43
	Three hour	128	25.50
	More than three hour	116	23.11
Addiction	Tobacco	234	46.61
	Alcohol	27	5.38
	Rice beer (Handia) (Others)	32	6.37
	No	209	41.63

In Kondh 97.61% of women use wood/charcoal for cooking purpose, where only 2.39% use kerosene for cooking, 96.02% there is no fixed place to throw the solid wastes disposal, only 3.98% use common place/fixed place to disposal of the wastes. There is no sanitary latrine;

women go for defecation to the open field respectively.

It also indicates about the Hygiene status/ practices of Kondh women, 92.63% of women wash their clothes daily, 99.80% women take bath once daily and only 0.40% takes bath twice in a day. 90.64% wash their hand before taking food, 9.36 don't wash their hand before taking food 81.27% brush their teeth regular (guddaku, coal, brush and paste, stick). 46.61% women are addicted to tobacco, Around 58.9% women were abdicated to tobacco and different habit.

Table 5.Age at menarche and Current status of menstruation among of Kondh

Knowledge variable	Category	Total (502)	Percentage
Age at menarche	10	04	0.79
	11	67	13.34
	12	128	25.50
	13	144	28.69
	14	119	23.71
	15	22	4.38
	16	15	2.99
	17	2	0.40
	Not started	01	0.20
Mean age at menarche	12.88		
Menstrual flow at onset (first) of menstruation	1-2 days	33	6.57
	3-4 days	66	13.15
	5-6 days	239	47.61
	> 6 day	163	32.47
	Not started	1	0.20
Intensity of menstrual flow at onset (first) of menstruation	Normal	369	73.51
	Excess	55	10.96
	Scanty	44	8.76
	Less/Spotting	33	6.57
	Not started	1	0.20
Current status of menstruation	Menstruating	374	74.50
	Non- Menstruating	128	25.50
	(Pregnant women)	27	21.09
	(Lactating women)	85	66.41
	(Menopause(Cease))	15	11.72
	Not started	1	0.78
Menstrual flow	1-2 days	32	8.56
	3-4 days	152	40.64
	5-6 days	159	42.51
	> 6 day	31	8.29
Intensity of menstrual flow (Menstruating women)	Normal	263	70.32
	Excess	53	14.17
	Scanty/Less	53	14.17
	Spotting	5	1.34
Regularity of menstruation	Regular	345	92.25
	Irregular(Oligomenorrhea)	29	7.75
	<28 days	0	0.00
	after 28-35 days	18	4.81
	35-40 days	10	2.67
	> 40 days	1	0.27
Problem during menstruation	Pain in lower abdomen	159	42.51
	Backache	28	7.49
	Pain in leg	6	1.60
	Breast tenderness	0	0.00
	Other and More than 1	13	3.48
	None	167	44.65
Symptoms experienced during menstruation	Pain in lower abdomen	148	39.57
	Backache	22	5.88
	Pain in leg	2	0.53
	Breast tenderness	1	0.27
	More than 1	3	0.80
	None	197	52.67
Number of days pain occurred	2 days	52	13.90
	3-4 days	183	48.93
	>4 days	37	9.89
	None	101	27.01

Medication during menstruation	Yes	6	1.60
	No	367	98.13
Using cloth/sanitary pads	Cloth	368	98.40
	Sanitary pads	5	1.34

Table 5 shows about the menstruation status of women. The mean age at menarche is 12.88.

The above table it is found that the maximum (28.69%) age at menarche is found in the age 13 years and minimum (0.40%) in the 17 years, (25.50%) in 12 and (23.71%) in 14 years.

The current status of menstruation it is found that (74.50%) women get menstruation and 25.50% is the stage of non-menstruation, out of 128 non-menstruation (21.09% were in pregnant status, 66.41% in lactating stage, where as 11.72% were in the stage of menopause).

The menstrual flow was found (40.64%-42.51%) from 3-6 days and 8.56% from 1-2 days.

It is found that the maximum 70.32% have normal amount of bleeding and minimum 1.34 -14.17% faces the problem of excess and scanty/less amount of bleeding. 92.25% have regularity in their period where 7.75% faces irregularity, (4.81% get period after 28- 35 days, 2.67% from 35-40 days, 0.27% above 40 days).

From above table it is found that maximum lower abdominal pain (42.51%) suffered by the women, similarly (7.49%) suffer from backache pain (1.60%) have leg pain and more than one option (3.48%) during menstruation.

Similarly Symptoms experienced during menstruation, it is found that maximum lower abdominal pain (39.57%) suffered by the women, similarly (5.88%) suffer from backache pain (0.27%) have leg pain and more than one option (0.80%) and (52.67%) have no experience during menstruation.

It is found that during menstruation 13.90 % had pain only for two days, where as 48.93 had pain for 3-4 days and 9.89% had pain above 4 days. Only 1.87 had medication during pain occurred during menstruation and 98.13% had no medication during menstruation.

Only 1.34% had used sanitary pads during menstruation whereas 98.40% women used cloth during menstruation.

DISCUSSION:

Menstruation is a normal physiology in females. Poor hygiene during menstruation has been associated with serious ill-health ranging from reproductive tract infection, urinary tract infection, bad odour and many more (Dasgupta et al 2008). Among ever married women age between 15-49 years, 15.5 percent have experienced one or the other menstruation related problems, largely irregular periods (36.8 percent), scanty bleeding (26.4 percent), painful periods (26.3 percent), frequent or short periods (13 percent), prolonged bleeding (8.9 percent), inter-menstrual bleeding (8.2 percent) and blood clots/excessive bleeding (5.7 percent) are major problems reported by women in Orissa (DLHS-3, 2007-08). The present result shows that Symptoms experienced during menstruation, it is found that maximum lower abdominal pain (39.57%) suffered by the women, similarly (5.88%) suffer from backache pain (0.27%) have leg pain and more than one option (0.80%) and (52.67%) have no experience during menstruation.

The most common methods used for treating delayed periods was tablet (89%) by injection is invasion or surgical (58%), or surgical methods were tried out by a minority 7% of providers. Out of 618 respondents, 90% gave injections for common ailments 84% provided IV fluids, 61% applied stitches for injuries, and 61% treated complete abortion and 64% treated menstrual problems. (ARTH, Action Research and Training for Health, Udaipur (2005). Only 17.7 used sanitary pads during menstruation, (65.9%) girls used old cloth pieces/home made sanitary pads and (16.4%) used both of the sanitary pads while other study shows disposable pads were used by two-thirds of the selected girls (68.9%) regardless of age while 45.1% reported to use both disposable and non disposable materials (Omidvar S et al). The present study reveals the mean age at menarche is 12.88.

The mean age of attainment of menarche was 13.4 years with Standard deviation of 1.013. Only 44.1% used sanitary pad during the menstrual

cycles. Among those who used cloth, only 31.3% used soap and water to clean them. 56.8% used soap and water to clean their genital organs and 88.8% of the girls took bath daily during menstruation. 66% of the study population had regular menstrual cycles and 61.3% experienced dysmenorrhoea. (Shanbhag D, et.al) (2012). In paper Breaking the Silence: Menstrual Hygiene Management in rural India, it was observed that 89% of the respondents use cloth as absorbents, 2% respondents use pieces of cotton, 7% use sanitary napkin, 2% use ash. 38 respondents from Sheopur of Saharia tribe disclosed that they spend their days of menstruation in the cow shed. 50% of the respondents are not aware about the sanitary napkin Diseases reported were White discharge (48), Leucorrhoea (2), itching / burning (277), ovaries swelling (15), cuts on thighs (9) and frequent urination (4). 37% of the respondents did not have access to a household toilet as a result they are compelled to manage during menstruation at places like bathroom, open area, cow shed, dark room (Ms. Maria Fernandez, 2010). Women over the ages have used materials like grass, sponges, cotton wads and other absorbents to catch the blood. Women over the ages have used materials like grass, sponges, cotton wads and other absorbents to catch the blood (Bharadwaj and Patkar 2004). Menstrual problems and practices among girls of mahila college the aim of the study was on the menstrual pattern, disorders & hygiene practices among adolescent girls. The mean age of menarche was 13.4 +/- 1.2 year. The most common menstrual problem was dysmenorrhoea (50.6%). Though the dysmenorrhoea was common, only 26.7% sought for help either to a doctor or their mother. Remaining accepted it as their destiny. (Solanki, Gosalia, et.al, 2012). Around 14 per cent of women reported suffering from menstrual infections, including white discharge (leucorrhoea), itching/burning, ovaries swelling, and frequent urination. For the absorption of menstrual blood, around 89 per cent of respondents reported that they used cloth, 2 per cent used cotton wool, 7 per cent used sanitary 9 pads, and 2 per cent used ash. Some respondents used paper, whilst others menstruated on the clothes they wore. It was found that among some tribes, women who have their periods spend their days in a cowshed. Of those women who used cloth as an absorbent; over half of them used the same cloth for more than a month. (Fernandes and Mahon 2009).

CONCLUSION

Findings reveal reproductive health problems to be significantly higher among women with Problems like itching or irritation, and pain in legs, lower abdomen or burning while urinating and irregular menstruation were also significantly and use of cloth was maximum without maintaining hygiene. Education and awareness play key role in maintaining menstrual hygiene. Hygiene education is supposed to be given at all levels.

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