

Men and Menstruation: A study of knowledge, Attitudes and Experiences

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1. Introduction

Menstruation is a universal phenomena, It is experienced by nearly all women of reproductive age, yet it is rarely been talked about (McPherson & Korfine, 2004). The approximately monthly shedding of uterine lining in most women after a certain age is regarded as both biological and sociocultural because the biology of menstruation cannot be separated from culture and interpretation of it has always been based on ideologies (Kissling, 2002). More studies were found to be exploring the take of women on this subject, but very less is known about how boys and men construct social meaning of Menstruation (Brantelid et al., 2014). Hence the present study is an attempt to explore the knowledge, attitudes and experiences of men towards menstruation.

2. Why Men?

Menstruation is often seen as “female issue” (Fingerson, 2005). It has been associated with symbols of femaleness (Kissling, 2002). However any male who have any interaction with any female in his lifetime deals directly or indirectly with menstruation in a way or the other (Fingerson, 2005). Few studies have found to be examined men’s views on menstruation as most of the literature focuses on girls and women’s experiences (Peranovic & Bentley, 2017). Absence of men from “women’s issues” esp. menstruation, menopause, and reproductive health seems common in education (Power, 1995) in film and television (Kissling, 2002) in family systems (Kalman, 2003) and so in research (Courtenay, 2002). Furthermore, excluding men altogether from such discussions fails to consider the positive influence they may have on women’s health as being their father, partners or friends etc (Brooks-Gunn and Ruble 1986; Kalman 2006; Wong et al. 2013).

3. Method

Participants

The study was conducted among the guest faculty of Hemvati Nandan Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand. The total number of guest faculty is 152 in all the disciplines of H.N.B.G.U, Srinagar campus and out of the total 152 guest faculty 40 are the females which got excluded for the purpose of the study. So the remaining 112 guest faculty (all males) participated in the study.

Procedure

Data were obtained from written responses to a questionnaire. Participants were provided with the questionnaire and got them filled as per their convenience. The questionnaire had questions related to socio economic profile of the respondents and it also had open ended questions where the participants were open to share their views freely.

Because the universe of the study was finite hence all the subjects were studied.

4. Data Processing and Analysis Techniques

After collection of all research related information from the respondents. Further information was scrutinized; tabulation was done by making a systematic order and finally summarizing the matter to find out the response of the respondents. All questionnaires were tabulated in MS EXCEL in a systematic order through each question and responses and summarization of the data done as per the needs of the objectives.

Data collected from respondents and other secondary sources was analyzed quantitatively. Simple statistical technique was used to analyse the data.

5. Findings

Table 1: Age of the Respondents: N=112

Age	Frequency	Percentage
25-30	32	28.57%
26-35	48	42.85%
36-40	21	18.75%
41-Above	11	09.82%
Total	112	100%

Table 2: Marital Status of the Respondents

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	73	65.17%
Unmarried	39	34.82%
Total	112	100%

Table 3: Educational Level of the Respondents

Academic Level	Frequency	Percentage
Ph.D.	47	41.96%
Net.	32	28.57%
Ph.D. & Net	33	29.46%
Total	112	100%

Table 4: Category of the Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gen.	46	41.07%
O.B.C.	22	19.64%
SC.	38	33.93%
ST.	06	05.36%
Total	112	100%

Table 5: Religion of the Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Hindu	104	92.86%
Muslim	08	07.14%
Christian	00	00.00%
Sikh	00	00.00%
Jain	00	00.00%

Total	112	100%
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Table 6: Family Structure of the Respondents

Family Mem.	Male	Female	Total Family	Percentage
0-02	01	01	08	07.14
03-05	02	03	46	41.07
06-08	04	03	41	36.60
09 To Above	04	05	17	15.17
Total			112	100%

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents (42.85%) belong to 26-35 years of age and 28.57% of the respondents fall under 25-30 age cap and only 09.82% were found to be between 36-40 of age.

Table 2 represents Marital Status of the Respondents, which shows clearly 65.17% of the respondents were married and rest 34.82% were unmarried.

Table 3 above shows the Educational Level of the Respondents and maximum number of the faculty members (41.96%) found to be PhD holders.

Table 4 represents the data for the Category of the Respondents which shows 41.07% respondents belong to General Category, 33.93% belong to SC (Scheduled Castes) and only 05.36% found to be belong to ST (Scheduled Tribe Category).

Table 5 tells about the Religion of the Respondents, 92.86% of the respondents were Hindu and the remaining 07.14% found to be Muslims.

Table 6 represents total number of members in the respondent's family, and the table can tell that all respondents had atleast one woman member in their family which means

they are dealing with menstruation in one form or the other (Fingerson, 2005).

Table 7: First Information providers regarding menstruation

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Family	16	14.28%
Friends	53	47.32%
Books	19	16.96%
Media	24	21.43%
Total	112	100%

Above data shows that most of the respondents got their first information about Menstruation from Family (47.32%) and Media (21.43%). (Leftkowitz and hernandez, 2007) found out in their study that boys generally learn from their peers and media instead from their parents like in the case of girls.

Table 8: Attitude regarding women being "polluted" or "impure" during menstruation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	23.21
No	65	58.03
Total	112	100%

Table 8 shows the clear majority of 58.03% of respondents saying they don't believe that women is impure while they menstruating.

Table 9: ever buy sanitary napkins for any woman

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	41.96%
No	65	58.03%
Total	112	100%

Table 9 represents that While 41.96 % of the respondents agree of buying the sanitary napkins for any women majorly for their wives or friends but none among them accounted of buying for their mother or daughter.

Table 10: knowledge of restrictions imposed upon women during menstruation

S.N.	Awareness	Yes (Freq.)	Percent	No (Freq.)	Percent	Total	Percent
1.	Specific food restrictions	63	56.25	49	43.75	112	100%
2.	Not allowed to be a part of any rituals	88	78.57	24	21.42	112	100%
3.	not allowed to visit temples	105	93.75	07	06.25	112	100%
4.	Restriction on entering the kitchen	105	93.75	07	06.25	112	100%
5.	Restrictions on bathing	18	16.07	94	83.92	112	100%
6.	Restriction on touching plants	33	29.46	79	70.53	112	100%

Well clearly from the table it can be seen that most of the respondents were aware about the restrictions imposed upon the women while they menstruate by the society in general. And also 92.86% accounted that they don't believe that such restrictions should be imposed upon any woman.

Table 11: knowledge regarding Pre Menstrual Syndrome (PMS)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	24.10
No	85	75.89
Total	112	100%

While 24.10% of the respondents had the idea about PMS, 75.89 clearly denied having any idea about PMS though it plays a great role in any woman's life.

6. Responses on their view regarding Menstruation, being a 21st century male

- **Excerpt 1:** "It's an important part of our lives, because it's not just a woman issue but a human issue".
- **Excerpt 2:** "I have to admit I did not have the correct knowledge about it until I got married but now I have a

daughter too and I believe this subject should be talked about openly”.

- **Excerpt 3:** “I was very young when I encountered my elder sister dealing with it but back then I believed it was a girl thing because I was told by my friends liked that. But Now I feel that this subject is equally important to men like it is to women”
- **Excerpt 4:** “To me Menstruation is not related to me and not affecting my daily life so I don’t feel like talking about it”
- **Excerpt 5:** “because of this we were born, so does my children, we should respect the whole process of menstruation and must include men in every discussion related to it”.

7. Discussion

The findings made in the study on the knowledge, attitudes and experience of Men regarding Menstruation, It was revealed that it is peers and media, the main informants of men regarding menstruation. It was also found out that the majority of the men did not agree that Women are impure while they

menstruate. It was also revealed that though majority of men knew the restrictions imposed by the society on women while menstruating, most of them do not support such restrictions. A good number of respondents agree to have bought sanitary napkins for their wife or friend but none of them accounted to have bought for their sister, mother or daughter. And majority of them didn’t have the idea about PMS which infact is related to menstruation and hence to the overall health of any women.

8. Conclusion

The study overall found out that most of men were not informed properly regarding Menstruation, they were told that it to be a “woman issue” or a “girl thing” but after they grown up and esp. after they got married or had children they got to know the importance of this overall process known as Menstruation and how much bigger it plays a role in everyone’s lives. Furthermore, collectively they were found to be keen to know about the subject more and also many of them suggested some debates or lectures at university levels regarding the topics which affects or are important to the equal sex (women) of our country.

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