

## Women Reproductive Healthcare and Menstrual Hygiene in Urban Slum

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### ABSTRACT

Women reproductive healthcare and menstrual hygiene are one of the important and essential components for women health which is generally overlooked by our society. Women reproductive and menstrual wellbeing not only impact individual but initially help in the development of society, its economy as a whole. In present time, we can observe various diseases and problems related to women healthcare and menstrual hygiene due late marriages, poor dietary habits, mental pressure and related illness, poor lifestyle etc. Various problems like miscarriages, women facing problems in conceiving babies, late periods or early periods, disturbances in their menstrual cycles. Another major problem related to the women reproductive and menstrual healthcare is the taboo prevalent in our society. People still hesitate to talk about the issues related to women reproduction and menstrual health. Due to this, still many of the women are unaware about various precautions, safety and hygiene measures. This paper will address the importance and problems related to women reproductive healthcare and menstrual hygiene. With the help of questionnaire, we will try to figure out present situation in the society related to above mention topic.

**Keywords:** Reproductive Healthcare, Menstrual Hygiene, Women Health, Menstrual Wellbeing, Poor Dietary Habit, Mental Pressure, Poor Lifestyle, Miscarriages and others

### INTRODUCTION

Women reproductive healthcare and menstrual hygiene are very essential component for women healthcare, which is not important for individual along but also very important for society and its generation. Reproductive healthcare is a state of complete mental, social, physical wellbeing and which does not merely mean absence of disease but also include proper functioning and processing of reproductive system. Reproductive health implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.

Being men or a woman has a significant impact on health, as a result of both biological and gender-related differences. The health care of women and girl is of particular concern because, in many societies, they are disadvantaged by discrimination rooted in sociocultural factors. For example, women and girls face increases vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

Some of the sociocultural factors that prevent women and girls to benefit from quality health services and attaining the best possible level of health include:

- i. Unequal power relationship between men and women
- ii. Social norms that decrease education and paid employment opportunities
- iii. An exclusive focus on women's reproductive roles
- iv. Potential or actual experience of physical, sexual and emotional violence.

Why women reproductive health is important?

A woman's reproductive system external icon is a delicate and complex system in the body. It is important to take steps to protect it from infections and injury, and prevent problems—including some long-term health problems. Taking care of yourself and making healthy choices can help protect you and your loved ones. Protecting your reproductive system also means having control of your health, if and when, you become pregnant. Good sexual and reproductive

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health is important for women’s general health and wellbeing. It is central to their ability to make choices and decisions about their lives, including when, or whether, to consider having children. Sexual and reproductive health is not only about physical wellbeing – it includes the right to healthy and respectful relationships, health services that are inclusive, safe and appropriate, access to accurate information, effective and affordable methods of contraception and access to timely support and services in relation to unplanned pregnancy. According to TIMES OF INDIA “According to data from the World Health Organization, India has a maternal mortality rate of 174 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is significantly higher than many other

countries in the region. Around 50 million women in India suffer from reproductive health problems”

The menstrual health of the women in India According to WORLD BANK “Poor menstrual hygiene, however, can pose serious health risks, like reproductive and urinary tract infections which can result in future infertility and birth complications. Neglecting to wash hands after changing menstrual products can spread infections, such as hepatitis B and thrush.” The social norms that periods are impure and make girls and women unclean has added stigma and led to their social isolation during their menstruation. This also prevents them from accessing services even if they have a health issue related to periods.

**Study Area :**



Study is designed at regional [Lucknow] as well as neighborhood level [Nishatganj and New Hyderabad]. The study analysis the state wise distribution of various indicators related to health, awareness, education of women related data with the help of secondary and primary data at the regional level.

### **New Hyderabad, Nishadganj; Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**

Lucknow the city of nawabs is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. Situated on coordinated 26 degree and 51 min north and 80-degree 57 min east. It is situated on the bank of river Gomti. Total area is about 631 km sq, rank 5<sup>th</sup> in India. The literacy rate of Lucknow is about 85.5% with women literacy rate of about 78% while male has 86%. The total sex ratio is about 914/1000. I have chosen Nishatganj area as my research area as we can see various classes of women groups living here, which include high class women to slum side women.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

The Prime Aim of the research is to understand women reproductive healthcare and menstrual hygiene in Lucknow City, Uttar Pradesh. The specific objectives include:

1. To understand access to reproductive health facilities in urban slum
2. To study relation between age of education and age of marriage.
3. To understand women's awareness and use of menstrual hygiene practices in study area

### **METHODOLOGY:**

The methodology includes the ensuing steps:

The present study based on primary source where survey is done by me in my neighborhood, sample i.e. manual as well as telephonic survey has been conducted of 100 married women has taken which constitute married women between the age group from 25-45, sample method chosen for survey is judgmental and random type, Secondary source of data, the data is collected from the national family

health survey; India {2011}, world health organization [WHO], Centers for disease control and prevention [CDC] etc.

### **FINDINGS:**

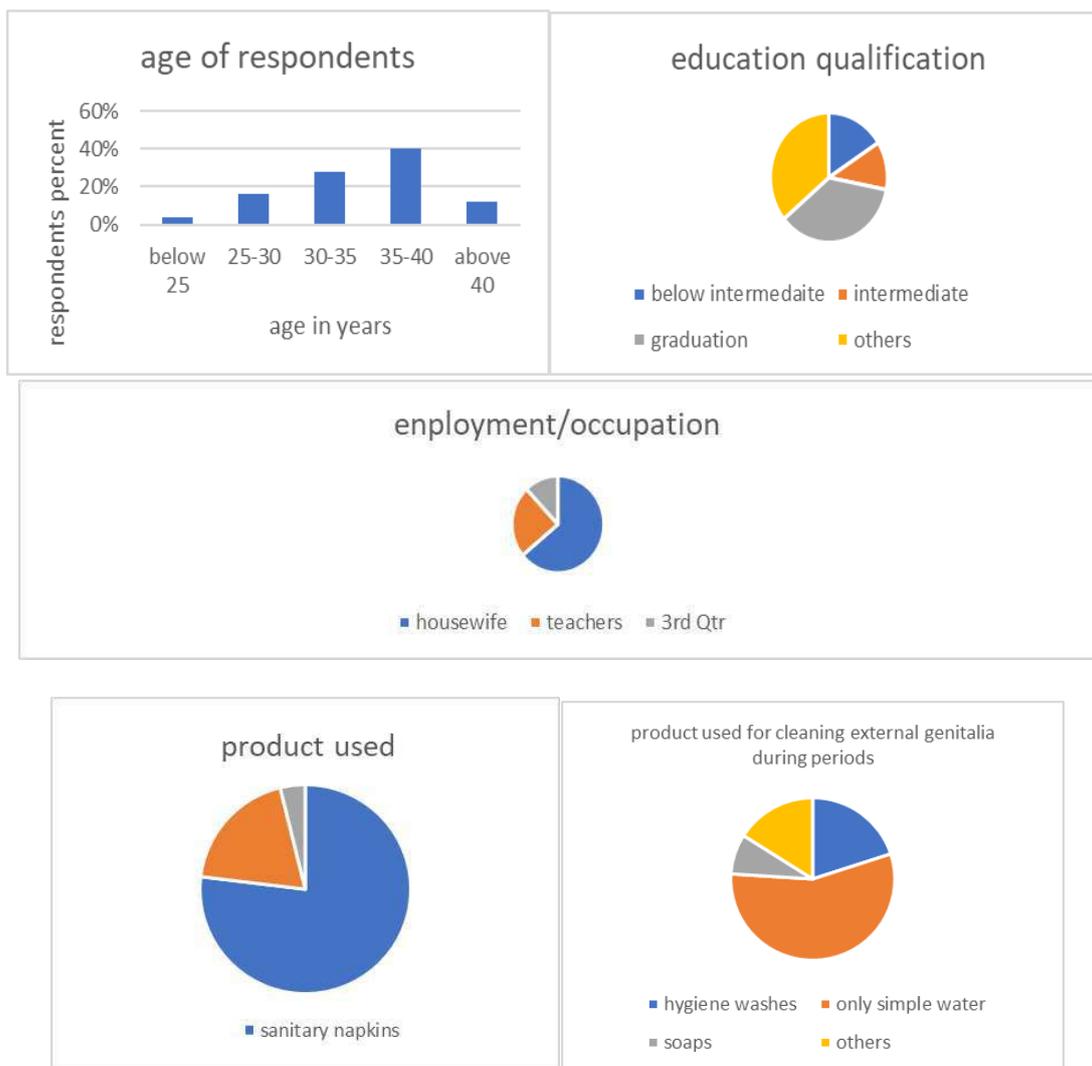
Only less than 18 per cent of Indian women use sanitary pads. The latest National Family and Health Survey found that 58 per cent of young Indian women (15-24 years) use a hygienic method of protection (mostly sanitary pads), a significant increase from the 12 per cent using pads in 2010. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has introduced a scheme for promotion of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls in the age group of 10-19 year in rural areas.

The major objectives of the scheme are:

- To increase awareness among adolescent girls on Menstrual Hygiene
- To increase access to and use of high-quality sanitary napkins to adolescent girls in rural areas.
- To ensure safe disposal of Sanitary Napkins in an environmentally friendly manner.

Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Being a man or a woman has a significant impact on health, as a result of both biological and gender-related differences. The health of women and girls is of particular concern because, in many societies, they are disadvantaged by discrimination rooted in sociocultural factors. For example, women and girls face increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Here I am providing the collected information from my study area i.e. New Hyderabad, Nishadganj; Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

- First of all, findings, lets us compare age-qualification status with that of usage of different products during the menstrual cycle.



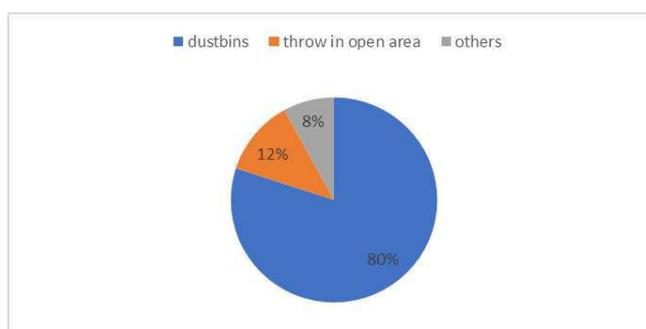
It is clearly evident from the above figures that age, qualification has been influencing the mind and health status of the women in the urban slum of New Hyderabad, still at 21st century many of the women use cloth and simple plain water in their menstrual days. Though many of the women are graduates but still they are using old traditional ways, many of them are using sanitary pads but what is bothering me is the use of cloths, although I am happy to know that

advancement has been arrived to the staircase of the urban slums as few women start using modern methods like menstrual cups.

- Now let's have a look towards some hygiene habits which should be followed during their menstrual days and let's verify whether they are practised in theses urban slums or not

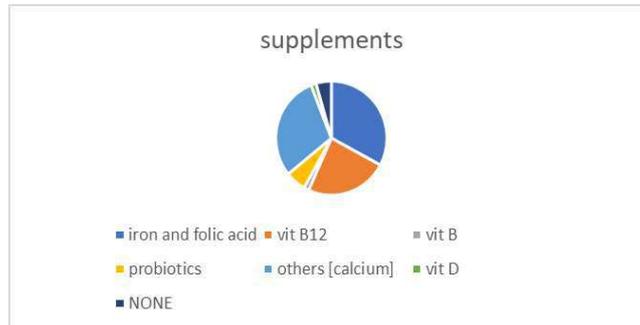
FIG: Do you wash your hands before/after changing your menstrual materials?

Before	categories	percentage	After	categories	percentage
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>56%</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>no</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>0</b>		

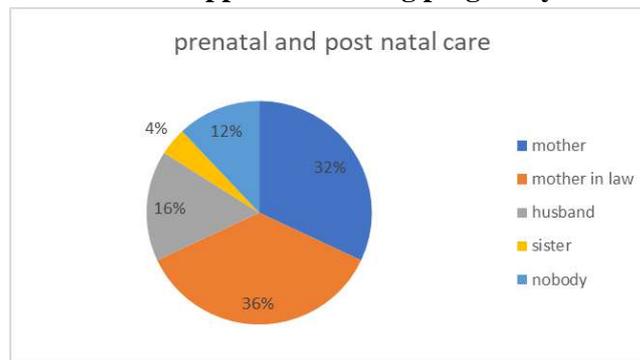


**FIG: where are products disposed**

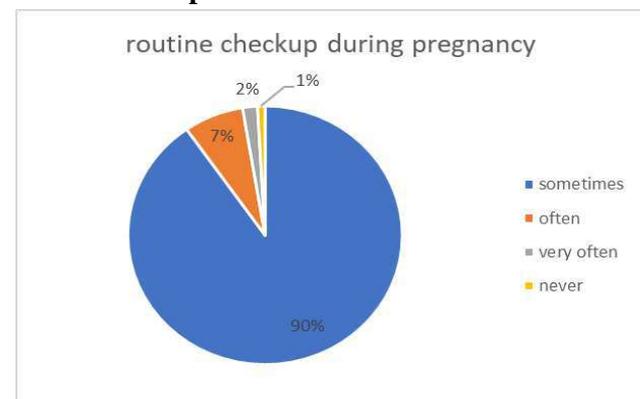
- Let's have a look at some figures which are related to the reproductive healthcare of the women



**FIG: supplement during pregnancy**



**FIG: place of birth of their babies**



From the above facts and figures we can identify that problem is there but we can clearly identify the progress in the urban slums related to reproductive healthcare. According to many of the women they are relies over government hospitals and schemes from

their reproductive treatment and healthcare whereas few of them only have access to private cares. Some of them didn't even know about facilities which are provided by govt for their betterment as they hesitate to know about women related things.

## RESULT DISCUSSION:

The findings underscore the level of improvement seen in the urban slums related reproductive health and menstrual hygiene but taboo is still prevalence in these slums. Still many of the women hesitating to share their problems and they having lack of awareness.

## CONCLUSION:

Women reproductive healthcare and menstrual hygiene are very essential component for women healthcare, which is not important for individual along but also very important for society and its generation. Reproductive healthcare is a state of complete mental, social, physical wellbeing and which does not merely mean absence of disease but also include proper functioning and processing of reproductive system. Reproductive health implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.

The main challenge of this research was the taboo of the women still exist in their mind as many of them still doesn't want to share their opinions about the related topic. Many of them didn't gave their honest revere in their questionnaire too. They fake themselves and tired me and my questions to avoid. With this research paper I wanted to every woman to change their mindset and wanted govt and various NGOs to take initiatives to help in this. I have tries to address all the problems which I posed in the starting of this paper and I have seen various fruitful actions of my survey too but then too we need to take various actions to improve the current situation of the urban slums.

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