

MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE AMONG WOMEN POLICE CONSTABLES IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

Dr. S. Selvakumari, MA, M.Phil, PhD¹, Dr. R. Annapoorani², Dr B Seetha Devi³

¹Assistant Professor, Department of sociology, PSG College of Arts & Science.
Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore, Mail- Id: selvisuresh2005@gmail.com

²Head & Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology
Dr SNS. Rajalakshmi College of Arts and Science, Saravanampatti
Mail- Id: drannapooranirr@gmail.com

³Associate professor in commerce, Sree Saraswati Thyagaraja College, Pollachi.
Mail Id: seethadevib@stc.ac.in

Abstract

A group of personnel that represent the government's civil power is called the police. The predominant responsibilities of police include upholding public safety and order, enforcing the law, and ceasing, identifying, and looking into illegal activity. Unfortunately, women were discouraged from entering the male-dominated field of police. When policewomen joined the force, the typical male officer and police chief thought they were a passing trend and a not justified foray into social work. However, this has evolved throughout the years. The law enforcement force currently includes women officers in practically every nation in the globe, including India. On the other hand, some historical conditions have led to the current state of women in law enforcement. All women's lives are significantly impacted by the natural phenomenon known as the menstrual cycle. Women struggle to maintain proper cleanliness and menstrual health while at work. Due to the demanding, 24/7 demands of law enforcement, particularly the police force, women are unable to maintain a regular menstrual cycle. Menstrual irregularities, excessive bleeding, and some serious conditions including fibroids and PCOS (POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME) may also be caused by this. This study's primary goal was to investigate the menstrual health and cleanliness of female police constables. Purposive random sample was used in the study, which included 120 female police constables from the Coimbatore area. Structured interview schedules are the instruments used to gather data. Ultimately, this research indicates that female law enforcement officers encounter several challenges when it comes to maintaining their health. Ultimately, this study concludes that women police officers face several challenges in maintaining their health and cleanliness, including a lack of station restroom infrastructure.

Introduction

Sustainable development, poverty reduction, and family health all depend on women's participation in current work. Women fought for their status in the traditional society as well as their rights. If we went back in time, we could clearly see that women were given a low status in society while men were viewed as the dominant sex and were given many rights. Due to factors like physical health and menstrual hygiene, women were perceived as the weaker sex. The fact that women were granted some equality rights after India gained its independence was a greater accomplishment, and the proportion of working women was also steadily rising. Since then, things have gradually gotten better. These adjustments ultimately result in a decrease in the exploitation of women, as they have been granted equal status as men. Women have been recruited in all posts such as police officers, teachers, doctors, nurses etc., today, men and women in law enforcement have equal opportunities and can achieve many things. Women typically shoulder more responsibility than men do, including caring for their families, juggling work and personal obligations, and other duties. They neglect their hygiene and health by focusing on all of these. They are unable to guarantee a healthy and hygienic menstrual life due to the demanding workload of 24 hours a day. The main issue is that not changing sanitary napkins on time can result in health issues like a urinary tract infection and menstrual irregularities, among others. Further long and strenuous working conditions results in many women in police force developing infections and rashes. Additionally, stress brought on by heavy workloads can occasionally cause menstrual problems like excessive bleeding, irregular menses, unusual spotting, etc. The purpose of the current study is to assess the menstrual hygiene and health of female police constables in the Coimbatore district.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. **Shaima S. Al-harbi, Asmaa S. Al-harbi** - Conducted a study between December 2018 and January 2019 in Saudi Arabia and analyzed 395 convenience sample. This study explored the effect of menstruation on the physical condition, work performance, and emotional disturbance is also observed but they believed that their focus and concentration in accomplishing work-related duties was not diminished.
2. **Gunjan Kumar, Josyula G. Prasuna and Gaurav Seth** – This study was conducted in Dwarka area of southwest Delhi during the period of January 2012 –April 2013. The samples were selected by cross-sectional study conducted among the age group women (15-49 years). Data's were analyzed by SPSS (STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES). Hence, this study had concluded by women should be empowered by providing essential services for menstrual management and disposal which is scientifically sound, accessible, and at cost that company or organization can afford.
3. **Julie Hennegan, Justine N. Bukenya, Fedrick E. Makembi** – This study describes women's menstrual health needs at work in Uganda at Mukono and explores the association between unmet needs and women's work and well-being. Sample size was 500 which were taken from women teachers, women working in public markets and public health care facilities (HFC) in order to explore sanitation needs and menstruation. By this study they have concluded that pain during menstruation associated with lower wellbeing as not being comfortable to talk to someone

at work about menstruation, addressing stigma, and materials and facilities during menstrual cycle.

4. **Marni Sommer, Sahani Chandraratna** – Conducted a study on managing menstrual in workplace: an overlooked issue in low and middle income countries in June 2016 and concluded the study by improving WASH standards that are supportive of MHM for women in workplace.

Objectives:

- To examine the menstrual health and hygiene of women police constables in Coimbatore district.
- To identify the infrastructural facilities and maintenance of washroom in police stations.
- To probe about managing their menstrual time / menopause time with their working environment.
- To know the Awareness about the menstruation cups among the women police constables

Methodology:

The research aims to study on the menstrual health and hygiene of the women police constables in Coimbatore district.. For the purpose of study 120 samples were selected through interview schedule under purposive sampling technique. Descriptive research design is adopted for this study and the collected data has been analyzed and interpreted by using simple percentage method.

ANALYSIS AND INTREPRETATION:

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON DIFFERENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

S.NO	CHARACTERISTICS	CATEGORY	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	AGE	21- 30	22	18%
		31-40	66	55%
		41-50	32	27%
2.	EDUCATION	Schoolings	21	17%
		Undergraduate	82	68%
		Postgraduate	17	14%
		Below 20,000	4	3%
		21,000-30,000	47	39%

3.	INCOME	31,000-40,000	46	38%
		Above 41,000	23	20%
4.	Type of family	Nuclear family	91	76%
		Joint family	29	24%
5.	Work experience	1-10 years	17	14%
		11-20 years	75	63%
		Above 21 years	28	23%

The above table shows that more than half the respondents (55%) lie in the age group of 31-40. The mean age of all respondents is 33.33. 82% of the respondents were completed their undergraduate degree. Nearly half of the respondents (38%) get the salary of 31,000 to 40,000.

Most of the respondents have confessed that they live in nuclear family rest 24% lives in joint family. 63% of the respondents have the work experience of about 11-20 years.

TABLE 2
MENSTRUAL HYGIENIC AND THEIR PRACTICE

S.NO	CHARACTERISTICS	RESPONSES		PERCENTAGE	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
1.	Proper washroom facilities in the station	67	53	56%	44%
2.	Disposal of sanitary napkins without impediments	54	66	45%	55%
3.	Cramps , Mood swings, Low back pain, Head ache, fainting	100	20	83%	17%
4.	Menstruation extended more than usual days	83	37	69%	31%
5.	Change in menstruation date	102	18	85%	15%

6.	Increase in bleeding, unusual spotting	92	28	77%	33%
7.	Frequency of changing sanitary napkins	77	43	64%	36%
8.	Problems faced during menopause (only 25 women)	9	6	8%	2%
9	Awareness about the menstrual cup	67	33	67	33

As high as 56% of the respondents have said that they don't have proper washroom access to washroom facilities and low maintenance. 44% of the respondents said that they have hesitation in disposal of napkins due to the presence of male police in the stations. 83% of the respondents agreed that they have cramps, mood swings, low back pain, head ache, fainting in menstruation period which is faced by most of the women. 69% of the respondents said that their menstrual cycle is extended than normal days they also added that it may be due to heavy work load. 85%

of the respondents had said that their menstrual dates changes sometimes. 77% of the respondents have noticed that they had increased bleeding and unusual spotting of menses. 64% of the respondents have inference that they have no time to change their sanitary napkins they usually change once or twice. Out of 15 respondents who had attained the stage of menopause 8% had said that they hardly managed their menopause period due to nervous about stains.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

- From our findings we can come to know that more than half of the respondents said that
- there is lack of proper access to washroom facilities and low maintenance.
- Nearly half of the respondents reveal that they feel hesitated to dispose the sanitary
- napkins in the stations due to the presence of male police.
- More than half of the respondents said that they don't have time to change their sanitary
- napkins due to heavy work load as they work 24*7 they usually change once or twice in
- their work time and it is very difficult to manage. Due to lacking of time to change their
- Napkins they face some minor issues such as rashes, itching, skin irritation.
- Few Respondents who have attained the stage of menopause have hardly managed their
- menopause period, they had excessive bleeding and nervous about the stains.
- Most of the respondents have awareness about menstrual cup

CONCLUSION:

From the findings in the study reveals that the women police face some minor biological issues due to menstrual hygiene such as rashes, itch, skin irritation in private areas it is due to insufficient time to change their sanitary napkins and no proper maintenance and facilities of washrooms in station. And nearly half of the respondents have confessed that they are hesitate to change their napkins in the station because there is no proper way of disposal and presence of male police in the station falter them. Few of the respondents who were attained the stage of menopause revealed that they hardly managed their menopause period with their work load because they had excessive bleeding and nervous about stains. Majority of the respondents have felt cramps, mood swings, fainting, low back pain, head ache which were most commonly felt by all women during their menstrual cycle. By that the study can be concluded by all working women would face such challenges in their working place when come to law enforcement which is one of the most formidable jobs women in this job must come across huge challenges which includes lack of taking care of their menstrual hygiene and health, poor infrastructural facilities of washroom in the stations and difficulty in managing their work during the menstrual cycle and menopause period is where hard.

REFERENCES:

- ✓ Colin sumpter, B. T. (May 2012). A Systematic review of the health and social effects of menstrual hygiene management. *Plos one*.
- ✓ Gunjam kumar, J. G. (January 2021-April 2013). Assessment of menstrual hygiene among reproductive age women in South-West Delhi.
- ✓ Julie henegan, J. N. (July 2022). Menstrual health challenges in the workplace and consequences for women's work and wellbeing. *PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH*.
- ✓ Marni Sommer, S. C. (June 6, 2016). Managing menstruation in the workplace:an overlooked issue in low-and middle- income countries. *BMC Women's health*.
- ✓ Shaima S. Al-harbi, A. S.-h. (December 2018- January 2019). Effects of menstruation on physical condition, working performance and emotional disturbance.
- ✓ Shyam sundar Budhathoki, M. B. (February 2, 2018). Menstrual hygiene management among women and adolescent girls in the aftermath of earthquake in Nepal. *BMC Women's health*.
- ✓ Story, F. (May 25, 2018). Menstrual Hygiene management enables women and girls to reach their full potential.