

# A STUDY OF MIGRANT WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO SINDHUDURG DISTRICT

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## Abstract

Menstrual hygiene management is a major public health concern worldwide, particularly in areas with limited access to resources and information. Migrant populations may confront additional hindrances due to their nomadic lifestyle and unfamiliarity with local facilities. The Kudal taluka of Sindhudurg district experience immigration from nearby states for livelihood opportunities. The present research evaluates the attitude of migrant women towards menstrual product, awareness of various menstrual products available on the market, willingness to pay for sanitary items, and other factors and their impact on the purchasing decisions. Data was collected from 100 migrant women through structured questionnaire and data was analyzed using appropriate statistical tool. The study's key findings shed light on the elements that influence migrant women's menstrual product choices, including cost, availability, cultural attitudes, and personal comfort. The qualitative analysis offers information about factors influencing the purchase decision. The finding reveals that majority of women use traditional product- Cloth during menstruation and economic factor pose hurdle against purchase of menstrual product.

**Keywords:** Consumer behaviour, Migrants, Menstrual product, Purchase decision.

## INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a unique phenomenon of every woman of reproductive age. Though it is a key sign of good reproductive health and a normal biological process, yet menstruation is considered a taboo across the globe and even to date continues to be a topic that is less talked about.

Hygiene practices of women during menstruation are critical and crucial as these can expose women to the risk of Reproductive Tract Infection. Various Studies have found high levels of ignorance towards hygiene during menstruation. Studies have also found that there are certain taboos related to it such as avoiding bathing, consumption of certain foods, no cooking, to be away in some corner of house etc. (**Khanna A, Goyal RS, Bhawsar R**) along with low prevalence of adequate perineal care with soap and water. The per capita consumption of feminine hygiene products in India is mere 0.13 as compared to 10.5 in Brazil, 3.0 in China, 8.3 in Russia, 35.0 in USA and 39.0 in Japan (**Pancholi, B. S., Dr. Naik R. Sandeep, October 2008**).

The women migrants that the study focuses are mostly from Karnataka state. They travel to Kudal taluka and other neighbouring talukas in search of work to earn living. These women are daily wagers who accompany their male partners to earn living for their family. They mostly work at building construction sites to earn money on daily basis almost every day of the month. They are illiterate and are often married at very young age of 14-15 years. The places they reside are not well constructed, they mainly built a temporary hut alongside the road in open space as their home. Due to the lack of clean sanitation facilities women are unable to practice personal sanitary hygiene like changing the menstrual pads, washing perineal area, etc. They mostly resort to traditional sanitary products like cloths, also it is difficult for drying them in sunlight for proper disinfection.

In view of ample scope of study for research of their purchasing decision toward menstrual products the research study was conducted to ascertain consumer behaviour, factors influencing their decision and end purchasing decision. The study also aimed to ascertain the knowledge gap, document existing hygiene practices during menstruation and assess willingness to pay for sanitary napkins among migrant women.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The researcher has undertaken various reviews.

**Anand E, Singh J, Unisa S (2015)** The objective of the study was to explore the determinants of menstrual hygienic practices and its effect on Reproductive Tract Infections (RTI) among ever married women in India. The authors found that only 15% of women used sanitary pad or locally prepared napkins in India. The women who used unhygienic method during menstruation had more chances to suffer from the symptom of RTI and vaginal discharge.

**Caitlin Gruer, Kim Hopper, Rachel Clark Smith, Erin Kelly, Andrew Maroko, Marni Sommer (2021)** The authors undertook qualitative study and inspected the challenges homeless people in New York City faced in accessing menstrual products. According to the authors, street-living individuals reported significant barriers to accessing menstrual products. Those living on the streets were more likely to have to resort to panhandling, theft, or using makeshift materials in place of menstrual products. The literature threw light on the critical importance of expanding and improving initiatives seeking to provide access to menstrual products for vulnerable populations. Though there are policy level efforts to support menstrual product access, individuals with homeless status in New York City, whether living in shelters or on the street, are mostly not able to access the menstrual products.

**Bhattacharya S, Singh A (2016)** The Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS) was launched by Government of India with an aim to impart knowledge about menstrual hygiene to adolescent girl. Under the scheme, the supply of sanitary napkins was proposed in total 107 districts through central supply mode and rest 45 districts through Self Help Group (SHG) mode. SHGs were to manufacture and sell the sanitary napkins. It was branded as “Free-days”. These napkins were sold to the target population at the rate of Rs. 6 per pack of six napkins by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs). The ASHA workers were eligible for an incentive of Re. 1 per pack, and a free pack of “Free-days” per month. The authors have evaluated Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS) in their study and found that 80% women were aware about sanitary napkins, 79% were motivated while the use was only 30%. The ASHA workers were disappointed due to fewer margins of profit and irregular supply. The other stakeholders in the locality were not actively involved. According to the authors, there is a huge marketing potential of low-cost sanitary napkins in rural India. The MHS programme needs involvement of various stakeholders to ensure regular supply of napkins.

**Krishna P., & Raj A. (2022).** In the present study, the authors evaluated the health condition of internal migrants in India. In the study, emphasis was on understanding the health status and access to health care of women. The research found several health problems and morbid conditions like the threat of infectious diseases, work-related illness, sexually transmitted infections (STI) and psychological disorders. Taking women migrants into consideration, critical health issues associated with pregnancy and maternal health, prevalence of anaemia, risk of STI, spousal abuse and harassment in the workplace were ascertained. Authors also identified lack of social security and health care coverage for the migrants.

**Chandrima C, Sheoran G (2007)** The author in the document states that women face double discrimination, being members of specific caste, class or ethnic group apart from experiencing gendered vulnerabilities. Women have low status, little/no control on resources and decision making. About 28% of girls in India get married below the legal age and experience pregnancy. According to the study, women and child migrants are the most vulnerable. Women and children mostly migrate as associated migrants with male of the household. As associated migrants, they suffer greater vulnerability due to reduced economic choices and lack of social support in the new area. In the case of semi-skilled, low-skilled or unskilled women migrants, they end up into the low paying, unorganized sector with high exposure to exploitation and abuse. Many of the low/semi-skilled female migrant’s work in the unorganized sector, in hazardous conditions, live in shanty arrangements and are denied access to health and healthcare.

## OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To understand buying behavior of migrant women towards menstrual product.
2. To analyze impact of various factors like social, cultural, economic etc on the buying behavior of the women.
3. To discover the level of awareness amongst women regarding menstrual products like sanitary napkins and tampons.
4. To suggest measures to create awareness about menstrual products among migrant women.

## HYPOTHESIS OF STUDY

- H1:** Migrant women are well aware regarding menstrual products like Sanitary napkins and Tampons.  
**H2:** Various factors have impact on the purchasing decision towards menstrual products.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** It gives further direction for the implementations of the research. It helps in data collection & organization. It also gives direction for data analysis and data interpretations. The present study focuses on descriptive research design.

- a) **Nature of Study:** Both qualitative and quantitative aspects is covered in the present study.
- b) **Research Plan for Data Collection:** Data is collected from both primary as well as secondary source.
- c) **Research Technique:** Primary data is collected through personal interviews. Secondary sources are magazines, books, journals, existing literature, various websites etc
- d) **Sampling plan:**
  - Sampling Element: Individual migrant woman.
  - Sample Size: - 100 individuals in the age group 15-49 years of age.
  - Sampling Method: The Researcher uses Random sampling method.
  - Place of Study: Kudal Taluka of Sindhudurg district.
  - Statistical Technique: This Research Study uses Microsoft Excel for study purpose.

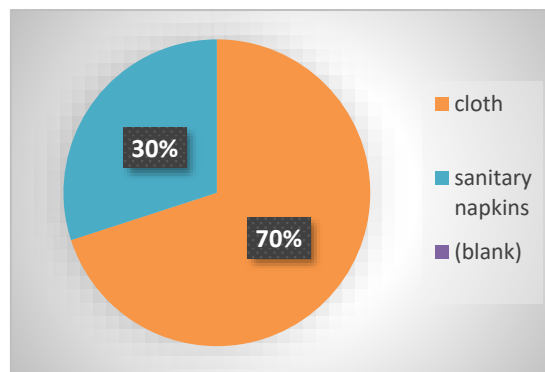
#### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A structured questionnaire was prepared, based on which personal interviews were conducted with migrant women staying in different localities of Kudal taluka of Sindhudurg district. A sample size of 100 respondent is considered for collecting data. Out of the total 100 interviewed respondents, 68 resided in main town area, 19 in the village locality of the Kudal taluka while rest 13 were residing in the peripheral localities to the main town.



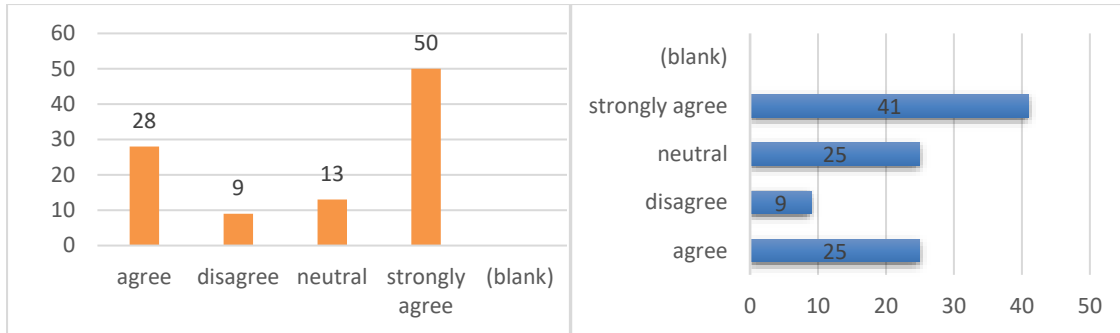
**Awareness about Menstrual product.**  
**Diagram 1.1**

From the above diagram 1.1, it is seen that out of total interviewed women, 72 women were aware about different types of products available in the market. But all they knew were sanitary napkins and few brands producing them. They were unaware about other products like tampons, menstrual cup, period panty etc. Only sanitary napkins were available in their respective locality in different shop establishment. Availability of other menstrual product is found absent. Hence, **Hypothesis H1 is accepted.**



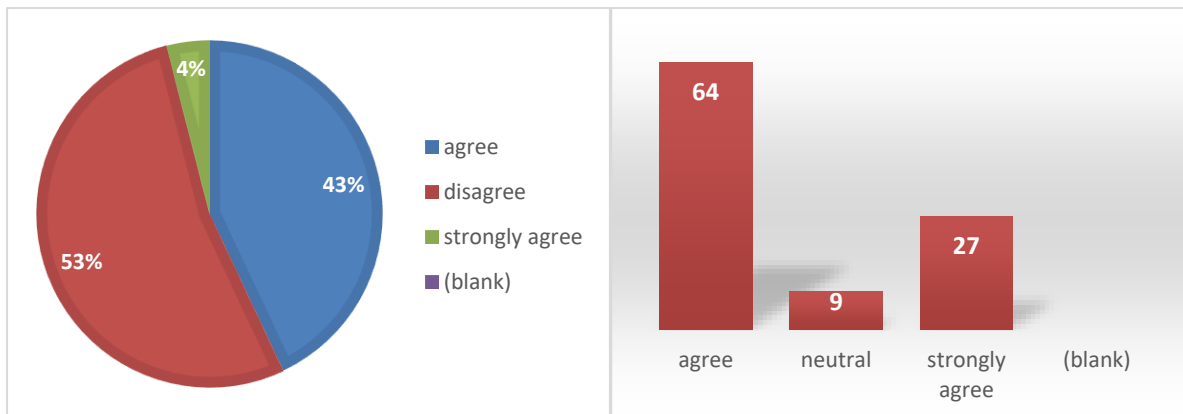
**Menstrual product used by the respondents.**  
**Diagram 1.2**

From the above diagram it can be concluded that out of the total sample, majority (70%) of the respondents use cloth during their menstrual cycle. While only 30% used sanitary napkins. As per the responses, respondents felt no shame and discomfort during purchase of sanitary product.



**Impact of various factors on the purchase decision with respect to menstrual product.**

**Diagram 1.3 Diagram 1.4**  
**Comfort Hygiene**



**Diagram 1.5 Diagram 1.6**  
**Economic factor Social and Cultural Acceptance**

As per diagram 1.3, 41% strongly agreed and 25% agree that the menstrual products are comfortable to carry. They felt more secure with sanitary napkins as the fear of stain was almost negligible with sanitary pads. Sanitary napkins are considered more hygienic as can be seen from fig 1.4.

More than 50 agreed that the products are expensive followed by 27 other respondents who strongly agreed that menstrual products are expensive. They find it difficult to afford expensive sanitary product in their mere daily wage which is irregular and uncertain (Diagram 1.5).

According to the responses from the sample, those who used cloths washed, dried, and stored for reuse. Before discarding the used cloth, the person would wash it thoroughly. Even with sanitary napkins, people would rinse the entire pad with water before putting it in a paper or plastic bag. Few others would wash, dry, and burn them before discarding them. This technique of washing and completely drying would normally take 2-3 days because drying takes time. So, by that time, they would have stocked up on used products. Cleaning was done for a variety of reasons, including the idea that if an animal licks the discoloured pad, it will bring a curse on the female. If discoloured pads reach temple premises by accident, they will cause problems for the entire family, among other things. They believed that menstruation was dirty and unpleasant. Thus, it can be stated that menstruation products are not culturally or societally acceptable among migrants. Thus, all the above factors influence the purchase decision towards menstrual product. Hence, **Hypothesis 2 is accepted.**

## CONCLUSION

From the above research study, it can be concluded that, Migrant women are aware about the menstrual product available in the market. Further, it can also be seen that mere awareness of the product does not ensure its actual purchase and use. Majority of the respondents used cloth during menstruation.

The study also reveals that, benefits of sanitary napkin are known among the masses. Interviewed women believed in it for comfort and hygiene. But actual utilisation is low as seen in the graph due to economic, cultural and social factor.

The economic factor is found to be major constrain for purchase of the sanitary napkin. Other factors like cultural taboo, domination of male member in the family, disposal practise pose another hurdle for use of sanitary napkins.

## SUGGESTIONS

In light of the findings from our study paper titled "A Study of Migrant Women's Attitudes Towards Menstrual Products with Specific Reference to Sindhudurg District," the following recommendations are made to improve sanitary napkin use among migrant women in the region.

1. Establish distribution centers in migrant-populated areas to improve access to affordable menstruation products.
2. Consider subsidising or supplying free sanitary napkins to economically disadvantaged migrant women through government or corporate social responsibility programmes.
3. Collaborate with local NGO and self-help organisations to learn cultural beliefs and taboos surrounding menstruation. Customise instructional materials and product offerings accordingly.
4. Use community-based waste management systems to dispose of old sanitary napkins in an environmentally sustainable way.
5. Train healthcare providers and frontline workers to deliver proper menstrual hygiene advice during routine health visits.
6. Regularly gather feedback from migrant women and community stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and tailor intervention tactics.

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