

# Perception of Menstruation among Adolescent School Girls

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## Abstract

Menstruation is a natural physiological process. However, adolescents' perceptions of menstruation are often shaped by socio-cultural beliefs, taboos, and lack of adequate information. When a girl attains menarche, she is taught about menstruation as a pollution, a kind of taboo (Bhorali, D & Thakur, B., 2020). These perceptions can significantly influence their mental health and overall wellbeing.

The present study aims to know the perception of menstruation among the adolescent girls. For conducting the study descriptive survey research method was applied. The adolescent girls studying in class IX were selected as sample by using purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire was applied to collect the required data and data were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The result of the study reveals that the adolescent girls have moderately favourable perception on menstruation. The mean score found for it is 85.8. It highlights the need of menstrual health and hygiene management education among the adolescent girls.

**Keywords:** Menstruation, Perception, Adolescent.

## 1. Introduction

Menstruation is a natural biological process experienced by adolescent girls as part of reproductive cycle. It transforms a girl to a woman. The concept of menstruation is associated with different socio-cultural practices and beliefs. In Assam, most of the societies celebrate menarche, known as Tuloni Biya. It is treated symbolically like a marriage ceremony, different rituals are performed during the celebration such as purification bath, dressing the girl like a bride, symbolic marriage with banana tree etc.

Although menstruation is a natural physiological process, it is often surrounded by various beliefs, myths, and cultural practices in many societies (Deepa, S., et al., 2019). These beliefs influence how menstruation is perceived and understood by individuals.

Perception of menstruation refers to individual interpretation and attitude towards menstruation, including whether it is viewed as a natural biological process, a sign of maturity, or something shameful or impure. The perceptions of Indian women regarding menstruation are changing, 80% female prefer infrequent menses or no menses (Bhatt, 2005). Perception of menstruation can have significant effects on adolescents' mental health, menstrual hygiene practices, school attendance, social participation and their daily activities. Due to misconception, adolescent did not follow proper menstrual hygiene practices

(Ramachandra, R., et al, 2016) which leads to Urinary Tract Infection, Reproductive Tract Infections etc. Positive perceptions of menstruation associated with lower reported pain levels and also reduced disruption to daily activities, including work and academic performance (Dhonnabhain, B & Wallace, H, 2025). Promoting a positive perception of menstruation is very important for improving adolescent girls' health, dignity and educational opportunities.

## 1.1 Significance of the study

Understanding the perception of menstruation is very important as negative perception can lead to anxiety, fear, shame during menstruation. misconceptions may also influence menstrual hygiene practices and overall health well-being. Understanding the perceptions of menstruation will help to identify adolescent's perceptions, create awareness, and promote healthy attitudes toward menstruation. This study will help understand the perception of menstruation in five different aspects i.e. knowledge and awareness, emotional perception, cultural beliefs and taboos, school and social restrictions, and hygiene practices perception. The present study is expected to help educationists, NGOs, and policy makers to take measures for adolescents to make them aware about menstruation.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To know the perception of menstruation among adolescent girls in terms of-
  - a) Knowledge and awareness
  - b) Emotional perception
  - c) Cultural beliefs and taboos
  - d) School and social restrictions
  - e) Hygiene practices perception

**1.3 Delimitation of the Study:** In the present study only 40 adolescent girl students studying in class IX from Don Bosco High School, Damra, Goalpara district, Assam were selected as sample.

## 1.4 Operational Definitions of the Study

**Perception of menstruation:** perception of menstruation refers to the adolescent girl student's perception regarding menstruation in terms of following aspects- a) Knowledge and awareness, b) Emotional perception, c) Cultural beliefs and taboos, d) School and social restrictions, e) Hygiene practices perception.

**Adolescents:** Adolescents refer to the female students studying class IX.

## 2. Review of Related literature:

Dutta, Swastika & Saikia, J.P. (2022) conducted a study on Menstruation Narratives: Experience and perception of adolescent girls. In this study the researchers mentioned that menstruation is referred to as "Suwa" (impure) which refers the waste blood emerges from woman's body. Silence exists because it is associated with a number of societal taboos.

Dutta Daisy (2024) made a study on Psychological and emotional aspects of menstrual health and hygiene management: experiences of adolescent girls from rural Assam, India. It was conducted with a sample of

185 adolescent girls. The study revealed that mostly girls were unaware about menstruation before menarche; their first encounter with menarche was traumatic. Due to lack of adequate knowledge and guidance, several cultural and religious restrictions, feelings of shame and embarrassment, myths and misconceptions associated with menstruation were mentioned.

Das, N. & Tasa, A.S. (2019) conducted a study on Menstrual hygiene: knowledge and practices during menstruation among adolescent girls in urban slums of Jorhat district, Assam, India. In this study the researchers mentioned that educational status of girls and their mothers were significantly associated with satisfactory cleaning of external genitalia during menstruation. Literacy status and awareness are the most important factors affecting the menstrual behaviours.

The above reviews show adolescents are not fully aware of menstruation. And it affects on menstrual hygiene practices.

### 3. Methodology

Descriptive survey method has been applied for conducting the present study. For selecting sample purposive sampling technique was applied. Total sample taken for the study is 40 adolescent girl students. A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire has 5 aspects. These are- a) Knowledge and awareness, b) Emotional perception, c) Cultural beliefs and taboos, d) School and social restrictions, e) Hygiene practices perception. Total No. of items included in the questionnaire is 25.

Against each item 5 possible options were given. These include- strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. The scoring procedure followed for the questionnaire is- for positive statements strongly disagree-1, disagree-2, neutral-3, agree-4, and strongly agree-5 and for negative statements revers scoring procedure was followed.

The result levels are shown below-

**Table: 01**

#### Categorization of perception aspects wise

Aspects	Score Range	Interpretation
Knowledge and Awareness	5-11	Unfavourable
	12-18	Moderate
	19-25	Favourable
Emotional Perception	5-11	Unfavourable
	12-18	Moderate
	19-25	Favourable
Cultural Beliefs and Taboos	5-11	Unfavourable
	12-18	Moderate
	19-25	Favourable
School and Social Restrictions	5-11	Unfavourable
	12-18	Moderate
	19-25	Favourable

Hygiene Practices perception	5-11	Unfavourable
	12-18	Moderate
	19-25	Favourable

Source: As reported by the investigator

**Table: 02**

**Categorization of overall perception**

Score Range	Interpretation
28-65	Unfavourable perception
66-102	Moderate perception
103-140	Favourable Perception

Source: As reported by the investigator

The Table 01 and Table 02 show the score range and interpretation of perception of menstruation.

**4. Data Analysis and interpretation:** The data are analysed and interpreted below-

**1) To know the perception of menstruation among adolescent girls.**

To know about the perception of menstruation among adolescent girls, a questionnaire has been prepared and collected the required data. The questionnaire consists of five (5) aspects. These include- a) knowledge and awareness, b) Emotional perception, c) Cultural beliefs and taboos, d) School and social restriction, e) Hygiene practices perception

**a) Knowledge and awareness**

**Table: 04**

**Showing the knowledge and awareness on menstruation**

SL. No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I was informed about menarche before menstruation.	22 (55%)	4 (10%)	6 (15%)	8 (20%)	0 (0%)
2	I understand that menstruation is a natural biological process.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (15%)	22 (55%)	12 (30%)
3	I know the reason why menstruation occurs.	2 (5%)	20(50%)	8 (20%)	10 (25%)	0 (0%)
4	I received menstrual education in school.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (10%)	24 (60%)	12 (30%)
5	My mother / guardian explained about menstruation to me.	30 (75%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	6 (15%)

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

**Table: 05**

**Showing the mean score and level of perception of knowledge and awareness on menstruation**

Total Score	Mean Score	Result
592	14.8	Moderate

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

Regarding the knowledge and awareness on menstruation, Table 05 shows the mean score found is 14.8, indicates moderate level of perception.

Table 04 reveals, regarding the information about menstruation before menarche the results found were- 55% strongly disagree, 10% disagree, 15% neutral, and 20% agree. The percentages indicate that only 20% adolescent girl students had information before attaining menarche.

In response to the statement why menstruation occurs, 5% responded strongly disagree, 50% disagree, 20% neutral, and 25% agree. Hence, it is clear that adolescent girls are not aware about the reason of menstruation.

Regarding receiving menstrual education in school, it has been found that they received it from their educational institution. 10% reported neutral, 60% reported agree, and 30% reported strongly agree.

In respect to the statement, mother/guardian explained about menstruation, 75% strongly disagree, 5% disagree, 5% agree, and 15% strongly agree. From these statistical data it is clear that mothers did not explain them about menstruation.

**b) Emotional Perception**

**Table: 06**

**Showing the emotional perception of menstruation**

SL. No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6	I feel scared when I get my period (R)	6 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (50%)	14 (35%)
7	I feel embarrassed about menstruation (R)	14 (35%)	8 (20%)	0 (0%)	16 (40%)	2 (5%)
8	I feel uncomfortable discussing menstruation with others (R)	2 (5%)	14 (35%)	2 (5%)	20 (50%)	2 (5%)
9	I feel confident managing my menstruation	14 (35%)	10 (25%)	6 (15%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)
10	I feel stressed during menstruation (R)	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)	14 (35%)	12 (30%)

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

**Table: 07**

**Showing the mean score and level of emotional perception of menstruation**

Total Score	Mean Score	Result
526	13.15	Moderate

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

Regarding the emotional perception of menstruation, Table 07 shows the mean score found is 13.15, indicating moderate level of perception. Table 06 reveals 85% adolescent girls feel scared when they get period. And 45% feel embarrassed about menstruation, 65% feel stressed during menstruation. It has also been found that 55% adolescent feel uncomfortable discussing menstruation with others.

**c) Cultural Beliefs and Taboos**

**Table: 08**

**Showing the menstruation perception related to Cultural Beliefs and Taboos**

SL No	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	Menstruating girls should not enter religious places (R)	6 (15%)	6 (15%)	18 (45%)	4 (10%)	6 (15%)
12	Menstruation is considered impure (R)	10 (25%)	10 (25%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)	10 (25%)
13	Girls should not participate in festivals during menstruation (R)	28 (70%)	12 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
14	Food restrictions should be followed during menstruation (R)	14 (35%)	8 (20%)	12 (30%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)
15	Menstruating girls should avoid social function (R)	12 (30%)	8 (20%)	8 (20%)	10 (25%)	2 (5%)

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

**Table: 09**

**Showing the mean score and level of menstruation perception related to Cultural Beliefs and Taboos**

Total Score	Mean Score	Result
724	18.1	favourable

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

Table 09 shows the menstruation perception related to Cultural Beliefs and Taboos is found to be favourable. Table 09 shows the mean score found for perception related to cultural beliefs and taboos is 18.1. From the Table 08 it has been observed that a total of 30% adolescent girls disagreed regarding the

statement- menstruating girls should not enter religious places while 45% responded neutral, 10% agree, and 15% responded to strongly agree. It has also been found that 50% adolescent girls think that menstruation is impure.

**d) School and Social Restrictions**

**Table: 10**

**Showing perception of menstruation in relation to school and social restriction**

SL No.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16	I avoid going to school during menstruation (R)	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	14 (35%)	18 (45%)	2 (5%)
17	Menstruation affects my classroom participation (R)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	6 (15%)	8 (20%)	22 (55%)
18	I feel shy interacting with boys during menstruation (R)	20 (50%)	16 (40%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
19	I avoid sports and physical activities (R)	20 (50%)	10 (25%)	0 (0%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)
20	School facilities support menstrual hygiene	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	38 (95%)

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

**Table: 11**

**Showing the mean score and level of perception of menstruation in relation to school and social restriction**

Total Score	Mean Score	Result
710	17.75	Moderate

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

Table 11 shows the level of perception in respect to menstruation in relation to school and social restriction, the mean score found is 17.75, indicating moderate level of perception. Table 10 shows, regarding avoid going to school, it has been found that 35% responded Neutral, 45% Agree, and 5% Strongly Agree. Again, in response to menstruation affects classroom participation, 15% responded Neutral, 20% Agree, and 55% Strongly Agree. These findings show that adolescent girls face problems during menstruation.

**e) Hygiene Practices perception**

**Table: 12**

**Showing perception of hygiene practices**

SL No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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21	Using sanitary pad is important for health	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	22 (55%)	14 (35%)
22	Cloth can be safely used if properly cleaned	8 (20%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	24 (60%)	0 (0%)
23	Menstrual hygiene prevents infections	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	36 (90%)
24	Changing pad regularly is necessary	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	38 (95%)
25	Disposal facilities are important in school	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (30%)	28 (70%)

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

**Table: 13**

**Showing the mean score and level of perception of hygiene practices**

Total Score	Mean Score	Result
866	21.65	Favourable

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

Regarding the perception of hygiene practices during menstruation the result is found to be favourable among the adolescent girls. Table 13 reveals the mean score found for perception of hygiene practices is 21.65. Majority of them have positive perception about it. Table 12 shows a total of 85% reported that using sanitary pad is important for health and 95% beliefs that menstrual hygiene prevents infections. All the adolescent girls (100%) agreed that changing pad regularly and disposal facilities are important for them.

**Table: 14**

**Showing the Mean score of overall perception of menstruation**

Perception of menstruation	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Sum Score	Mean Score	Result
	40	82	106	3432	85.8	Moderate

Source: Based on data obtained from field survey, 2026

The perception of menstruation among the adolescents was measure using five-point Likert scale questionnaire. Table 14 shows the total score obtained from all the respondents was 3432, with an average mean score of 85.8, indicates that the adolescent girl students have a moderate perception of menstruation. The difference between minimum (82) and maximum (106) scores show that perceptions vary among the respondents.

To get a clear picture about the perception of menstruation, the investigator had shown all the data received against each item in the above tables.

## **5. Findings and discussion**

- 1) The perception of menstruation in terms of knowledge and awareness is found to be moderate. The mean score found for this aspect was 14.8.
- 2) Regarding the emotional perception of menstruation, the mean score found was 13.15, indicating moderate level of perception.
- 3) It has been found the mean score 18.1, in response to the perception of menstruation related to cultural beliefs and taboos, indicates favourable perception.
- 4) In respect to School and Social Restrictions, the mean score found was 17.75, which indicates moderate level of perception.
- 5) Regarding the hygiene practices during menstruation, mean score found was 21.65, indicating favourable perception.

From the above findings it has been come to know that adolescent's perception on menstruation is not favourable. Many students have misconception on menstruation and they avoid attending school during menstruation. The adolescent girls also reported that menstruation affects their classroom participation. One major aspect found from the study is that mothers and guardians did not discuss about menstruation with them, which highlights misconception exists in our society, menstruation is not such an issue to make discuss openly for them. It has been found that 50% adolescents believe that menstruation is impure and female should avoid religious places during menstruation. Hence, there is a need to make adolescent girls and parents aware about menstruation and the hygienic practices that should be followed while menstruating. Misconception on menstruation can have negative effect in many areas.

## **6. Some possible Suggestions to Promote Positive Menstrual Perceptions**

- a) Introduce age-appropriate information on biological and hygienic aspects of menstruation for both boys and girls.
- b) Create conducive spaces to discuss about menstruation. Motivate parents to talk about menstruation with their children without hesitation.
- c) Create awareness through social platforms, posters and workshops.
- d) Involve influencers, health workers, and educators to sensitize the parents and adolescents.
- e) Organise health education sessions, seminars, and peer group discussions about menstruation in school.
- f) Provide counselling support to adolescent girls.
- g) implementing policies on menstrual health management.

## **7. Conclusion**

From the above discussion, the perception of menstruation among the adolescents are found to be moderate. It has been found that adolescent girls are not fully aware about menstruation, which can lead to different issues such as- unhygienic menstrual practices, psychological issues like stress, anxiety, depression, low academic achievement etc. Hence, adolescent girls should be aware by taking proper initiatives. Awareness on menstruation will bring positive perception on menstruation. And it will support to keep them mentally healthy. Mental health education should also be provided to adolescent girls to deal with psychosocial problems related to menstruation. Promoting positive perceptions towards menstruation could improve individual overall well-being.

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