

# Impact of Socio Demographic Factors on Menstrual Hygiene Practices among the Women of Ranigram Union, Sirajganj Sadar Upazila

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the socio demographic factors that effects on the menstrual hygiene practices among the women of Ranigram Union, Sirajganj Sadar Upazila. Poor menstrual health can create a major determinant of morbidity, and physical, psychological as well as social problems. Poor menstrual knowledge and access to sanitary products, which have been concern of barriers to menstrual health, their performance and consequences, were found. There are some differences in menstrual hygiene practices. For good physical and mental health in women, menstrual hygiene practices play an important role. This study utilized primary data and secondary data to identify the socio economic factors. Women are incredibly susceptible to various physical and mental issues during this period, and socio demographic factor play a crucial function in menstrual hygiene practices; thus, it is very critical to preserve good menstrual hygiene practices. The study reveals that, 97% respondent women said that, menstruation period affects their daily life activities and only 3% said no. Nearly half of the respondents (50%) use old cloths during the menstrual period. Among the respondents (27%) who used sanitary pads, 18% were fully satisfied by using it but 60% of them said it's expensive for buying. For cheapness and availability of material women practices different in hygienic practices in state of sanitary pads. After going through that, the study emphasis on eco-friendly sanitary pads which are not only environment friendly but also cost effective and has health benefits. The government can allocate the necessary budget to provide sanitary pads or towels free of charge to schools. Both government and non-government organizations can also take the initiative to organize awareness programs and campaigns about menstruation in schools and local communities.

**Keywords:** Menstrual Hygiene Practices, Socio Demographic Factors, Sanitary Pads

## INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a normal vaginal bleeding that occurs as a part of a woman monthly cycle. It is very important matter for reproductive group of women and the issues related to it are very common. May 28 is considered as the global Menstrual Hygiene Day (Wash United, 2014). This day is observed mainly to publicly recognize the right of women to hygienically manage their menstruation wherever required. Menstruation is still surrounded by social taboos, supernatural beliefs and misconceptions even if it is a normal physiological process of women (Yalew et al., 2021). The myths and misconceptions regarding menstruation are widespread (Isah et al., 2017). Nearly half of the populations are female in Bangladesh. According to World Bank, about 30% of them are in reproductive age group. National Hygiene Assessment (NHA), a country wide survey on hygiene facilities and behaviors conducted by icddr, indicates that 57% of adolescents and 65% of women are

not informed about menstruation before their experience (Magnum, 2018). Menstrual hygiene materials are those used to catch menstrual hygiene flow. Women follow different types of hygiene practices during menstruation or period, such as Sanitary Pads (Reusable and depositional), Cloths, Tampons, Menstrual Cups, and Old Cloth.

Hygienic practices such as use of sanitary pads and adequate washing of the genital areas are essential during menstruation period. Having a good menstrual hygiene practice will enhance the confidence of females in many aspects. On the other hand, poor menstrual hygiene practices will increase susceptibility to reproductive health related problems (Anchebi T et al., 2017). Menstrual hygiene is an issue that is insufficiently acknowledged and has not received adequate attention. The lack of menstrual hygiene among rural population is alarming, and there is an immediate need for policymaking and awareness programs to be initiated (Balamurugan et al., 2014).

There are numerous issues regarding poor menstrual hygiene practices among women in our society, and the realistic predominant demanding situations of menstrual hygiene exercise are made even more difficult by socio-demographic factors and millions of girls continue to be denied their right to have sufficient information about menstrual hygiene, water and sanitary health, education, dignity, and gender equity. This may result in incorrect and unhealthy behavior during their menstrual period (Chowdhury & Chakraborty, 2017). Menstrual health and hygiene encompasses both Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) and the broader systematic factors that linked menstruation with health, well-being, gender equity, women empowerment and rights. This systematic factor has been summarized by UNESCO as actual and timely knowledge. In Bangladesh, study showed that 72% reported on or more symptoms of Reproductive Tract Infection (RTI) and the prevalence of RTI symptoms is 78.9% (Kafle and Bhattarai, 2016). Sanitary napkins users are mainly students and professionals. With over 45 million women in Bangladesh in the reproductive age group and the fact that disposable sanitary napkins could present an ecological disaster as the pads contain plastic (TNO, 2016), the wide use of sanitary napkins can be a threat to the environment. There is variation in menstrual hygiene practices among women of different age, occupation type and economic status. Most of the time the pricing of sanitary napkin play the key role for the variation of hygiene practices.

Menstrual hygiene practices are influenced by different socio-demographic factors. Although the period of adolescence is a healthy part of life, many adolescents are often less informed, less experienced and less comfortable with accessing reproductive health information and services than adults (Anchebi et al., 2017). Numerous studies performed in various parts of the world showed that socio-demographic elements such as Family type, Age, Education, Religion, Socioeconomic status, Occupation, Marital status

Play a critical role in menstrual hygiene practices among women of reproductive age group. Since mother and elder sisters are most common first informants for pubertal girls, it is necessary to enquire their knowledge and attitude toward menstruation. Female are not aware of menstruation around us. They feel shyness or hesitation to talk or communicate freely with others about it as there is a social obstacle. Focusing among the women of Ranigram Union in Sirajganj Sadar Upozila, this study has examined knowledge about menstrual hygiene practices and its relation with socio demographic factors (Kumar et al., 2017)

## Research Methods

This study is a community based descriptive type of observational study which was conducted on women of Ranigram Union in Sirajganj Sadar Upazila. Primary and secondary sources of data used for the study. To collect primary data, observations, questionnaire survey, KII and FGD conducted. Secondary data were collected from different sources such as Union Parishad office, journal articles, books etc. By a simple random sampling, 100 number of women respondents were selected from the Ranigram union for the study. The number of women respondents calculated by the following Yamane's sample size determination formula:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where, n= Sample size

$N$  = Total population

$e$  = level of precision

In the case of Ranigram Union,

$$n = \frac{9936}{1 + 9936(0.05)^2}$$

There,

$N = 9936$

$e = 0.05(5\%)$

Though the calculation indicates 400 sample sizes, this research has taken hundred (100) samples by random sampling. Collected data were analyzed and processed using descriptive methods manually. Question was pilot tested for reliability and content validity with women from a different area outside in Sirajganj sadar Upozila. Data analysis was used for reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, Developing summaries, searching for patterns and applying statistical techniques, for understanding and interpreting the findings. The collected data was analyzed by using software and Microsoft office word, SPSS, MS Excel.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

According to the field survey, 2024, Among the respondents maximum are in 10-20 age group about 39%. Some of the respondents (30%) were in 20-30 years age group and 30-40 years, 40-50 years age group was respectively 27% and 4%.

Generally starting age of menses in which age is called a set age of menstruation. All the respondents had started their menses from age 10 – 16 years old with a mean of 12 years.

Table: 1 starting age of menstruation

Starting age of menstruation (Years)	Percentage
10	15%
11	20%
12	27%
13	19%
14	11%
15	5%
16	3%
Total	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

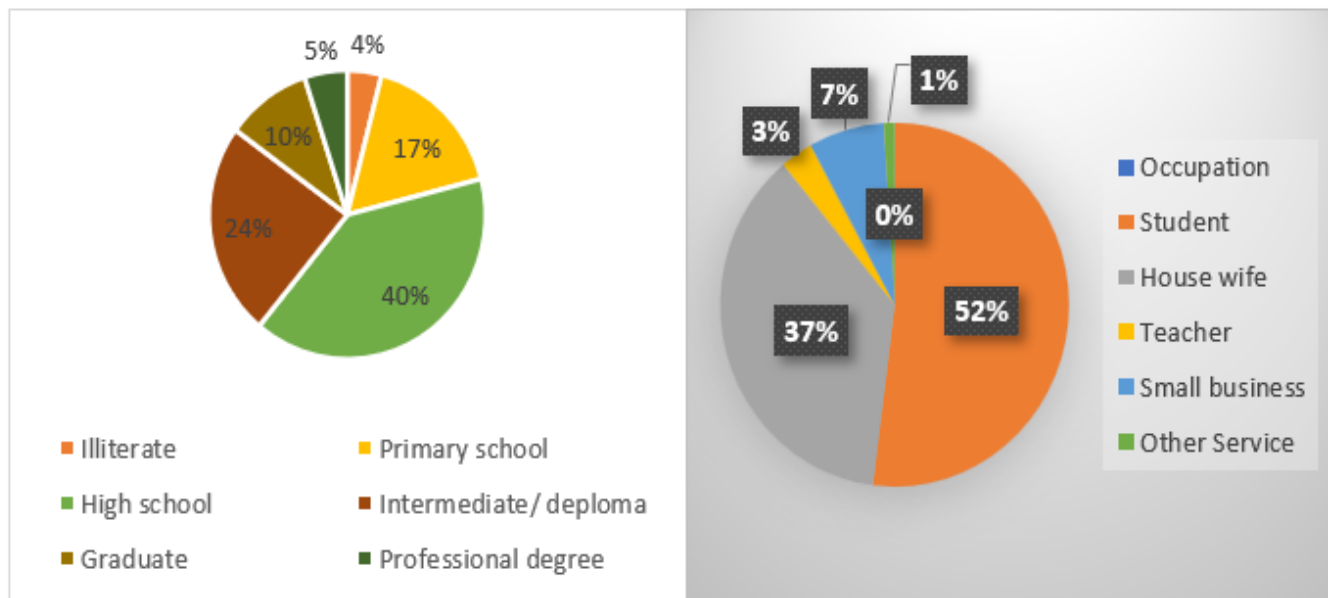
The starting age of menstruation 10 years, responds were 15% , 20%respondents in 11 years old, 27% respondents in 12 years old,19%respondents in 13 years old, 11% in 14 years old, 3% started menstruation in 16 years old.

The above table shows that the majority were falling under age 11-13 years. It is reviled that the earliest age of adolescent to be 10 years old when a girl started menses. However, this varies with others in different cases as someone come under menstruation even at 17 years.

### Education and occupation of the respondents

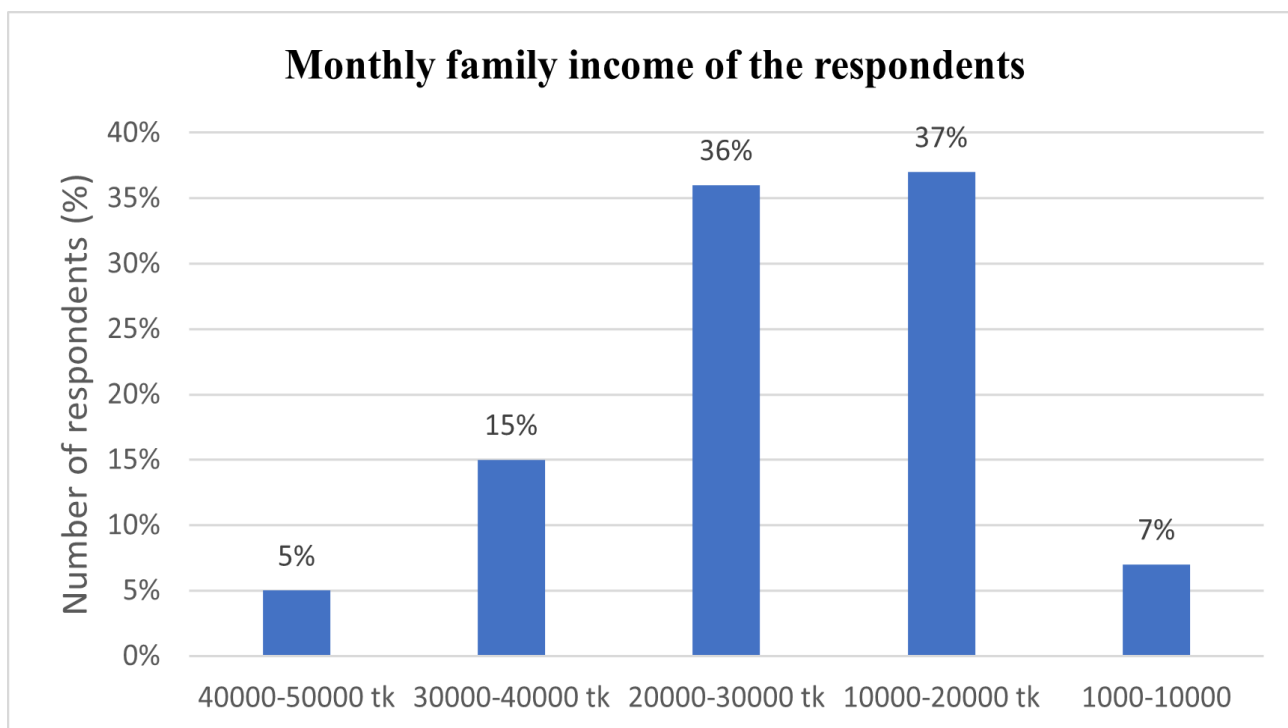
Figure: 1 shows that, most of the Respondents are high school graduate (SSC) 40% and 24% of them completed their Intermediate or deploma. 10% of them are graduate and 5% have professional degree. Occupations of the maximum respondents are student (57%). A few respondents (7%) are engaged in small businesses. Some of them are teacher almost 3% of total respondents.

Figure: 1 Education and occupation of the respondents



Source: Field survey, 2024

Figure: 2 Monthly incomes of the respondents



Source: Field survey, 2024

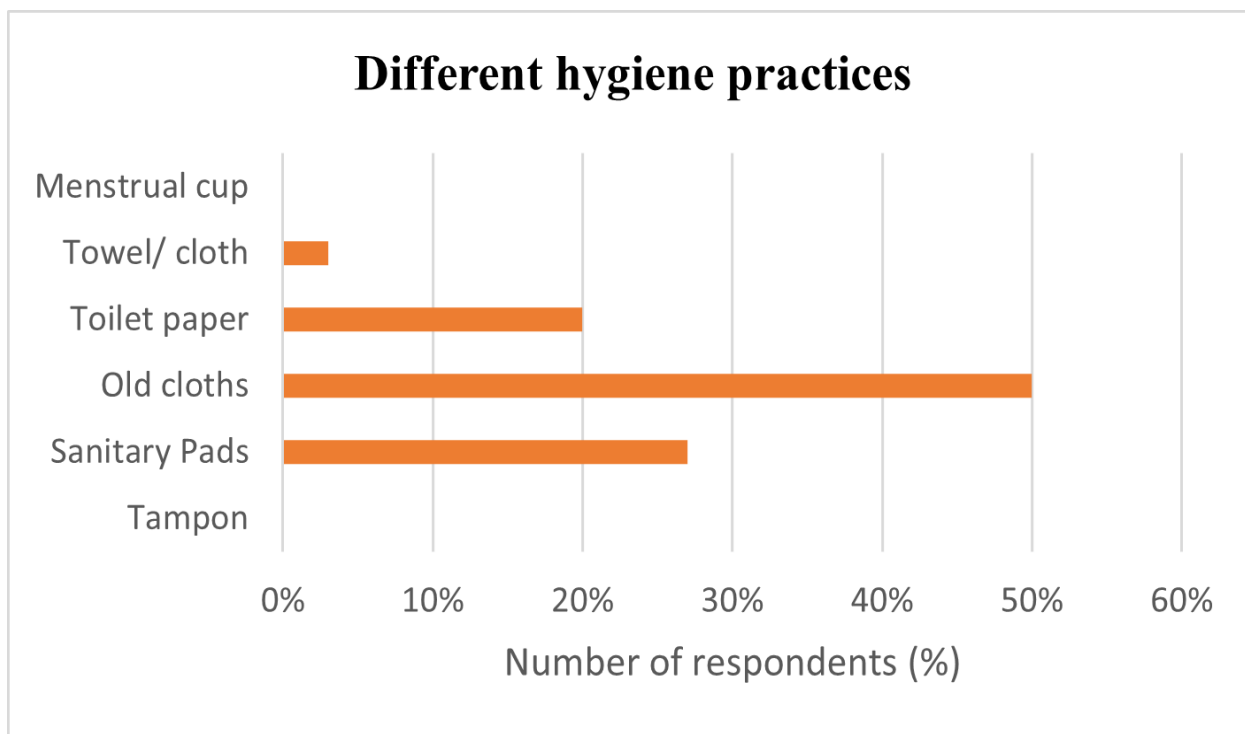
### Monthly family income of the respondents

Figure: 2 how that most of the respondent’s family is in Lower middle class and upper lower class. 37% and 36% of the respondent’s family income ranges between 10000-20000 tk and 20000-30000 tk. Only 5% of respondent’s family have monthly income taka 40000 to 50000. 15% families are Upper class which monthly income 30000 to 40000 tk.

### Different types of hygiene practices, perceptions and influencing factors

The field study, 2024 shows that 27% of respondent women use Sanitary pads during menstruation for absorbing menstrual blood for safety and easy to use; and 50% of them use old cloth, the most preferred easy way due to availability; 20% of them use toilet paper because they think it is as hygienic as sanitary pad and it is cheap at the same time. The use of Tampons and Menstrual cup is 0% because they are not familiar with them.

Figure: 3 Monthly incomes of the respondents



Source: Field survey, 2024

Table: 2 Causes of hygiene practices

Causes of hygiene practices	Percentage
It is available	37%
It is cheap	41%
I feel comfortable with it	17%
My guardian wants me to do this practices	5%
Total	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Most of the respondents (41%) said that they use cheap and available product for absorber of menstrual blood. The availability and cost play the prominent role to determine a women practices a particular hygiene method. 37% respondents select their hygiene practices on the basis on the availability. Some are select the hygiene practice basis on the comfort ability (17%) and the guardian instructions (5%).

The study found that 50% of women who use sanitary pad they felt satisfied (good and nice) 18% said that it was confusing 32% said that the experience is as the expected satisfaction. From this, we can say that women feel comfortable by using Sanitary napkins and they self-confident of it. So, it can be said that if awareness of using Sanitary napkin may be increased then it draws awareness about menstruation properly.

The table:3 declares that, Over 60% of the women complaining about the cost of buying sanitary pads, they said it is expensive. 27% said that it is too expensive and 11% don't know about the costing.

Table: 3 Causes of hygiene practices

Perception on use of sanitary pads	Number of respondents (%)	Perception of the cost of sanitary pads	Number of respondents (%)
Confusing	32%	Expensive	60%
Expected satisfaction	18%	Too Expensive	27%
Good and fine	50%	Don't know about costing	11%

Source: Field survey, 2024

### Absence in work place during menstruation periods and influencing factors

The study reveals that, almost 50% respondents said that they often miss their work place and 17% said they are absent in work place during menses most of the time. 33% said that they don't miss their work for menstruation period.

The table 4 shows, most of the women says that they feel uncomfortable (32%), and period cause pain (22%) so they often miss their work place. Some respondents (20%) missed work place due to the wash and changing cloths in work place. 9% have not sanitary pads that's for they got absent in the work place.

Table: 4 Causes of absence in work place due to menstruation

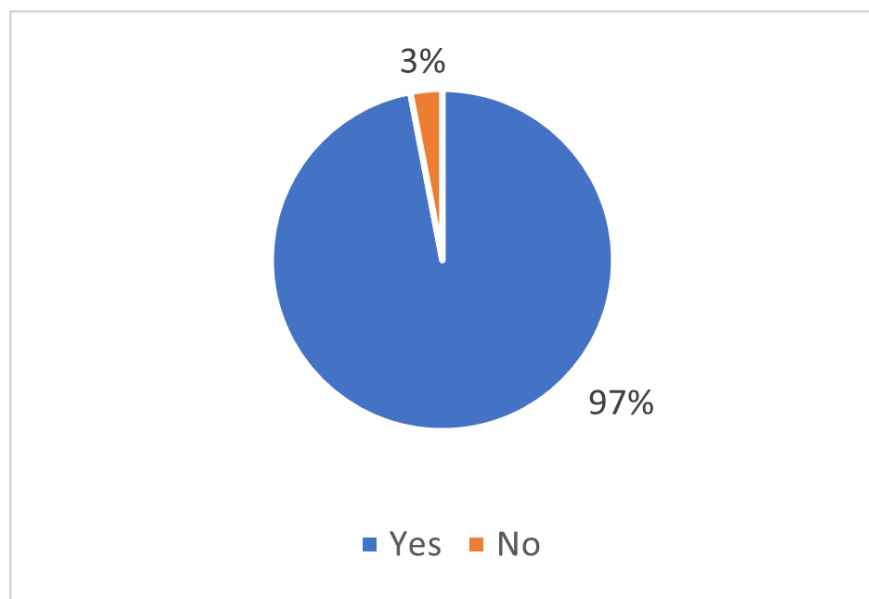
Reasons for absence	Number of respondents (%)
Social barrier	1%
Periods can cause pain	22%
Periods can make me feel uncomfortable and tired	32%
To wash and change at work place	20%
I don't have sanitary pads	9%
Am afraid of staining my cloths	16%

Source: Field survey, 2024

### Effect of menstruation on daily life activities

Menstruation has an effect on women mental and physical health and that adversely affect daily life activities. By using comfortable and hygienic absorber for menstrual blood women can avoid the comfortless situation. The figure:4 shows that, 97% respondents women said that, menstruation period affects their daily life activities and only 3% said no.

Figure: 4 Effect on daily life activities



Source: Field survey, 2024

## CONCLUSION

Menstruation is a common factor and issue in female life. Most of the women are not aware about menstruation hygiene products and menstruation hygiene practices. Many of them are so poor that they have no ability to buy sanitary napkins. Resulting in using other means, these women feel uncomfortable, unhealthy, problems. They become unable to attend their school or work place during menstruation cycle. Even if they attend their work place, they feel too uncomfortable or embarrassed to move freely everywhere. Students feel shyness to stand and answer the question before their teachers. They remain distracted and fail to pay attention attentively to their lesson. House wife and working women of different sector also face difficulty in their daily life activities. Different socio demographic factor affects the hygienic practices of women. Most of the women of low-income family normally use unhygienic practices. That adversely affect their physical and mental health. Women of join family face more difficulty other than the nuclear in the time of their menses. In order to maintain a healthy and happy life good practice of menstrual hygiene is essential. Other family member must have to be helpful during the menstrual cycle of women of the family.

Women especially housewife or who they don't earn are completely depends on their husband or the earning member of the family for money to purchase sanitary pads. Because of the prizing they are not interested about sanitary pads or other hygienic methods like sanitary towel. Government can allot necessary budget to supply sanitary pads or towels on free of cost to school. Government and non-government organization can come forward to arrange necessary awareness program, campaign on menstruation in the school and local area. Every woman should learn about different menstrual material or absorbent.

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