



**Review Article**

**MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT IN ADOLESCENCE: EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS AND THEIR IMPACT**

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**ABSTRACT**

Menstrual hygiene is a vital yet frequently overlooked component of adolescent health, particularly in socio-culturally sensitive settings. Inadequate awareness, prevailing taboos, and lack of structured guidance often result in unhealthy menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent girls, leading to adverse physical, psychological, and social outcomes. Health education plays a decisive role in enhancing menstrual hygiene awareness, correcting misconceptions, and fostering healthy practices among adolescents. Ayurveda, the traditional system of Indian medicine, offers a holistic understanding of *Rajasrava* (menstruation) by emphasizing the balance of *Doshas*, proper regulation of *Apana Vayu*, adherence to appropriate *Ahara-Vihara* (lifestyle practices), and maintenance of *Sauca* (personal hygiene). Evidence-based health education that integrates these principles with modern menstrual hygiene management can promote physical well-being and psychosocial health among adolescent girls. This review critically examines the role of health education in shaping menstrual hygiene awareness and practices among adolescent girls by integrating contemporary public health evidence with Ayurvedic concepts. Findings from school- and community-based educational interventions indicate that culturally sensitive, age-appropriate, and Ayurveda-inclusive health education can significantly improve menstrual hygiene practices, reduce stigma, and empower adolescent girls.

**INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a crucial transitional phase characterized by rapid physical, psychological, and social changes. Menarche represents a major physiological milestone; however, it is frequently associated with fear, anxiety, and misconceptions due to inadequate prior knowledge. [1] Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) includes awareness of menstruation, use of hygienic absorbent materials, maintenance of personal cleanliness, and safe disposal practices. [2] Poor menstrual hygiene has been linked to reproductive tract infections, school absenteeism, reduced self-esteem, and social exclusion.[3,4,5]

Health education is a cornerstone of preventive and promotive healthcare, enabling adolescents to

understand bodily changes, adopt healthy behaviours, and make informed decisions.[6] Addressing menstrual hygiene through structured educational interventions helps dispel myths, reduce stigma, and promote positive attitudes toward menstruation.[1,2,4]

**AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

This review aims to analyse the role of health education in improving menstrual hygiene awareness and practices among adolescent girls, with special emphasis on the integration of Ayurvedic principles relevant to adolescent and menstrual health.

**METHODOLOGY**

Relevant literature is referred in *Samhitas*, *Sangraha Granthas* and contemporary literature. Literature related to the title is explored from all reliable Ayurvedic journals and Modern journals from internet. Conclusion has been drawn from comparison and rationale.

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## DISCUSSION

### Menstrual Hygiene: Contemporary and Ayurvedic Perspectives

Menstrual hygiene refers to the use of clean absorbent materials, timely changing of absorbents, maintenance of genital hygiene, and safe disposal of used materials. Adequate menstrual hygiene is essential for preventing infections, maintaining reproductive health, and ensuring dignity and comfort during menstruation.<sup>[7]</sup>

In Ayurveda, menstruation is described as *Rajasrava*, a physiological and cyclical process governed predominantly by *Apana Vayu*.<sup>[8]</sup> Classical texts emphasize that normal, timely, and painless menstruation is a marker of good reproductive and systemic health. Suśruta states that proper elimination of *Raja* is essential for maintaining women's health, while its vitiation may result in *Yonivyapada* (gynecological disorders).<sup>[9]</sup> *Caraka* highlights the importance of *Sauca* (cleanliness), appropriate diet, and regulated lifestyle during menstruation to maintain *Doshic* equilibrium.<sup>[10]</sup> Thus, Ayurvedic concepts reinforce the biological normalcy of menstruation and the importance of hygienic practices.

### Knowledge-Practice Gap in Menstrual Hygiene

Despite increasing awareness, a substantial gap persists between knowledge and actual menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent girls.<sup>[4]</sup> Studies report that socio-economic constraints, lack of sanitation facilities, limited access to menstrual products, and inadequate family or school support impede the translation of knowledge into practice.<sup>[3,5]</sup> Health education acts as a bridge by reinforcing correct information, building practical skills, and fostering supportive attitudes within families, schools, and communities.<sup>[6,7]</sup>

### Role of Health Education in Menstrual Hygiene

#### Improving Awareness and Knowledge

Early education before menarche helps girls approach menstruation with confidence rather than fear.<sup>[4]</sup> Several educational interventions have demonstrated significant improvements in knowledge related to absorbent use, frequency of changing, and genital hygiene.<sup>[3,5]</sup> Ayurvedic health education complements this understanding by explaining menstruation as a natural process regulated by *Apana Vayu*, thereby reducing fear and stigma.<sup>[8]</sup>

#### Correcting Myths and Cultural Misconceptions

Cultural myths often portray menstruation as impure, leading to unnecessary restrictions and negative self-perception.<sup>[4]</sup> Health education encourages open discussion and normalizes menstruation as a natural biological phenomenon.<sup>[1]</sup> Ayurveda supports this view by recognizing *Rajasrava* as a physiological function and discouraging excessive

restrictions that may disturb physical and mental balance.<sup>[8,9]</sup>

### Promoting Healthy Practices through *Ahara* and *Vihara*

Behavioural change is a key outcome of effective health education.<sup>[6]</sup> Interactive and participatory educational approaches positively influence hygienic practices.<sup>[3,5]</sup> Ayurvedic guidance on *Ahara* (light, warm, and easily digestible food), *Vihara* (adequate rest, avoidance of excessive exertion), and *Sauca* during menstruation supports comfort, prevents aggravation of *Vata*, and promotes overall well-being.<sup>[8,9]</sup>

### Enhancing School Attendance and Psychosocial Well-being

Menstrual discomfort, lack of confidence, and inadequate facilities contribute significantly to school absenteeism.<sup>[1,4]</sup> Health education, combined with supportive school environments, empowers girls to manage menstruation effectively, thereby reducing anxiety and improving academic participation and psychosocial well-being.<sup>[7,11]</sup>

### Approaches to Menstrual Hygiene Education

#### School-Based Education

Schools provide an effective and sustainable platform for menstrual hygiene education. Integration of MHM into school curricula, teacher training, and adolescent-friendly teaching methods has been shown to improve knowledge, attitudes, and practices.<sup>[12]</sup>

#### Community and Family-Based Education

Mothers and female caregivers play a pivotal role in shaping menstrual beliefs and practices. Community-based educational programs involving families, health workers, and local leaders reinforce positive behaviours and enhance cultural acceptance.<sup>[13]</sup>

### Role of Health Professionals and Media

Healthcare providers serve as trusted sources of menstrual health information, while mass media and digital platforms facilitate wider dissemination of evidence-based messages, particularly among urban adolescents.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Public Health and AYUSH Perspectives

Improving menstrual hygiene through health education has significant public health implications, including reduction of reproductive tract infections, improved mental health, enhanced gender equity, and better educational outcomes. Integration of menstrual hygiene education into national adolescent health programs and AYUSH initiatives supports preventive, promotive, and holistic healthcare approaches.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Challenges and Future Directions

Persistent challenges include inadequate sanitation infrastructure, economic barriers, and

sociocultural resistance. Future strategies should adopt multisectoral approaches combining health education, access to affordable menstrual products, sanitation facilities, and culturally acceptable Ayurvedic lifestyle guidance.

## CONCLUSION

Health education plays a pivotal role in shaping menstrual hygiene awareness and practices among adolescent girls. By providing accurate scientific knowledge, dispelling myths, and promoting healthy behaviors, education empowers girls to manage menstruation with dignity and confidence. The integration of Ayurvedic principles- such as understanding *Rajasrava*, maintaining *Doshic* balance, and adopting appropriate *Ahara*, *Vihara*, and *Śauca*- adds a holistic and culturally resonant dimension to menstrual health education. Strengthening integrative menstrual hygiene education through schools, communities, and AYUSH health systems can significantly improve adolescent health outcomes and support sustainable women's health practices.

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