

## **Menstruation and Attitudes: An Understanding of Psychosocial Attributes among Adolescents**

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### **Abstract**

Menstrual attitude refers to the plethora of responses in the Behavioral, and emotional forms held towards the entire menstrual experiences by the adolescent girls and women during their menstruation. Especially the adolescent stage is where girls are encountered in various transformations with their physiological and psychological functioning's which is also the scope for the attitude formation towards their life. The attitude towards the menstruation has an inevitable influence in the different aspects of life with respect to the psychosocial attributes, which is bolstered by the lot of studies. The current study aims to explore the relationship between the menstrual attitudes and some of the significant psychosocial factors like quality of life, depression, anxiety, and stress. And to identify the critical influential extent of the menstrual attitudes. The study involves 620 adolescent girls ranging between the age 15 and 18. Samples are refined from 4 different private schools in the city of Coimbatore in TamilNadu. The findings state that the attitude held towards menstruation have an influence on the psycho-social attributes like depression, anxiety, stress, and the quality of life. The correlational values shows that the variable menstrual attitude is positively correlated with the quality of life. The psychological distresses like depression, anxiety and stress are negatively correlated with the attitude towards menstruation.

**Key words:** Menstrual attitudes, Emotional state, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Quality of life

### **Introduction**

In India larger proportion of population contribution is youth and in which adolescent girls ageing between 10 and 19 constitute about 111 million. Adolescent girls are often considered as the account of the displaced persons in the increasing proportions. Adolescent girls have relatively critical period while compared to the male peer groups and the adults. Girls in the adolescent stage especially after or during the puberty stage do not have much exposure to the live-saving skills and rather experience victimization, human trafficking, and harmful practices(Kissling, 2002). Adolescent girls are under the pressure of assuming roles and

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responsibilities, breaking bonds with the peer groups despite the gender, reducing or completely denying social networking. Strengthening and utilizing the psychosocial attributes of the adolescent girls plays the important and critical role for the economic growth of the country. Thus, it is very essential to ensure the adolescent girls meet the basic needs during this transitional period which be the source of physiological changes like menstrual cycle onset and the psychological attributes like formation and awareness of “self” and the relevant constructs like quality of life, body image, depression, anxiety, and stress (Romans et al., 2012). The social constructs around the gender roles are increasingly negatively influencing the mental health and the social functioning the adolescent girls. This is further bolstered in the studies conducted in India including TamilNadu, Uttaranchal, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

Menstruation, an inevitable physiological process that naturally occurs in the adolescent stage of women become the hub of enormous psychosocial attributes. Even though the menstrual cycle is oriented as the physiological and biological changes occurring in the sequential order of every month in the women’s life till the menopause, the psychological and emotional changes that are combining with those changes are not substantially discussed. The frequency and the intensity of the menstruation signs differ based on the distinct menstruation stages, physiological or biological nature of the menstruating individuals, geography, culture etc. Despite the influential factors mentioned above the adolescent girls are exposed to a lot of new psychosocial constructs in this period. According to the World Health Organisation, the reports reflects that the prevalence of menstruation signs along with the moods related changes in Asian countries. Prevalence of psychological disorders like depression, anxiety, depression, quality of life and psychological issues based on the self like body image, performance and social esteem are higher in the Asian countries (Eliot, 2014). There are a lot of controversial researches bolstered in this aspect of adolescence menstrual attitude with the period between (10 and 19 years). There are also a larger number of adolescent girls in today’s world which comprise of (21.8% of total population, and major changes occur in their respective body image, socialization and networking behaviour, and psychological capital at puberty (Nanda et al., 2013). With all the mentioned facts it can be concluded that the attitude held towards menstruation especially in the adolescent stage can bring significant differences in the emotional states like depression that impact the quality of life of an individual. The stress and anxiety levels are also capable of being influenced by the menstrual attitudes which affects the quality of life in respect to the various religious and cultural origins in distinct demographics.

Menstruation is a bodily process, but has a load of impact of women’s entire psychosocial functioning. During menstruation the hormones and their associated functions, be in check which bring the physiological changes like ovulation and psychological distresses or mood related changes like mood swings, even a deadlier state of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) in few individuals (Fehintola et al., 2017). Menstruation is a very salient issue as because it has a more profound effect on the quality and amount of education than do other aspects of puberty. It includes the learning elements as well as other components affected by the academic environment. Infrastructure and transportation facilities also include access to menstrual hygiene materials, toilets and latrines, and safe and secured places for changing menstrual material, safer sanitation and water, and optimum hygiene practices like washing hands with soap. When the school environment fails to meet up the criteria then the infrastructure is considered unhealthy and inadequate as well as gender discriminatory (Fehintola et al., 2017).

World Health Organization (2017) has well defined the term “quality of life” as an individual’s or self-perspective about their life’s position with the contexts of cultural and value systems where they are living, and in relation with their respective goals, belief system,

standards, and concerns also with their expectations (International Encyclopaedia of public health, second edition 2017). QOL is a must variable that to be explored in girls who have just started menstruating and are middle of their pubertal transitions because QOL must be assessed in terms of physical health as well as that psychological well-being. Resilience be the very psychological ability to bounce back from the setbacks and the drawbacks and leading a normal life (O'Dea & Abraham, 1999). To put it into a nutshell it is all about heading to the normal life period after hitting with any psychological or social or physical distress. The researcher argues that girls especially during the adolescent period who are menstruating exhibits good amount of resilience as they undergo different bodily and psychological changes in the name of puberty development.

### **Attitudes Towards Menstruation Based on Distinct Origins:**

Although the western culture and their contemporary views do not confine menstruating girls and women to abandoned huts like some distinct cultural practices or sending them to a secluded place (Dunnivant & Roberts, 2013). Periods and menstrual products are not at all advertised as a hygienic emergency which is ought to be managed quiet effectively (Erchull et al. 2002; Roberts et al. 2002). However, few predominant religion and cultural practices, even when practiced in the United States, signifies prohibitions and prescriptions in menstruating girls that do involve seclusion (Guterman et al. 2008). This study includes the population of adolescent girls for their menstrual attitudes where the religious origins be the Hinduism, Muslim, and Christianity as the most rituals and practices oriented to seclusion are similar in all these religions. Till to date, only few researchers have investigated the multiple ways with all the codified subtle rituals effect modern women's menstrual practices in respect to their attitudes, especially in the India, plethora of traditions restrict menstruating girls from engaging in sexual relationship with the partner, from active participation with their spirituality and religion, and needs some sought of a ritual bath once bleeding has stopped in each month during their menstrual cycle. The adolescent girls who menstruating and their subjective attitudes and experience are essential than the society and family members attitudes towards menstruation because at the end of the day menstruation is the subjective experience of an individual who are menstruating.

### **Need And Significance**

Menstruation is the inevitable and significant physiological functioning during the puberty stage of the adolescent girls. The psychosocial functioning that comes along the adolescence stage are the significant transformation phase of adolescent girls' lives. Most the researches on adolescent girls have been bolstered with respect to the hygiene and the environmental experiences with their menstruation. This study exclusively focuses on psychosocial attributes associated with the adolescence stage. The emotional states that are negative and have high impacts on their well-being is also taken into account to arrive the clarified role of menstrual attitudes in the overall quality of life during the menstrual days of the adolescent girls.

### **Aim And Objectives of The Study**

The current study aims to study the role of attitude towards menstruation in adolescent girls in respect with their psycho-social attributes, quality of life, depression, anxiety, and stress.

The objectives comprise as follows

- understanding the effect of menstrual attitudes in the quality-of-life adolescent girls who attained puberty and experiencing menstruation.
- To understand the effect and relationship of menstrual attitudes with the psychological distresses as follows depression, anxiety, and stress.
- To understand the effect and relationship of appearance esteem with menstrual attitudes.

## **Methods And Participants:**

The current study is the cross-sectional survey in which the data was collected from 621 girls between the age of 15 and 18, who are studying three higher secondary in 3 distinct private schools in Coimbatore city (District of Tamil Nadu state, INDIA). Out of 660 questionnaires which are subjected for administration, 631 were retrieved and 621 are used for the data analysis in the study. The remaining 11 questionnaires which are incompletely filled were discarded from the study.

### ***Inclusion Criteria:***

- Girls between the age of 10 to 18 years of age
- Girls who were attained their menarche
- Girls who experience normal menstrual cycle.
- Girls from both government and private schools.

### ***Exclusion Criteria:***

- Girls who are below the age of 10
- Girls who have not reached their menarche
- Girls who have experienced precocious puberty
- Girls with irregular menstrual cycle

### ***Variables and Corresponding Tools:***

**Menstrual Attitude:** The Adolescent Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire (Amaq) (Janice.M. Morse, Kieren. Joan Bottorff 1993). This Is A Five-Point Likert Scale With Six Subscales For Both Pre And Post Menarchial Versions That Are 1. Positive Feelings, 2. Negative Feelings, 3. Living With Menstruation, 4. Openness Towards Menarche, 5. Acceptance Of Menarche And 6. Menstrual Symptoms. The Reliability Score For The Post-Menarchical Scale Is Found To Be .90 Which Reflects The High Level Of Reliability And Could Be Used For The Samples Of The Present Study.

**Quality Of Life:** Youth Quality Of Life Scale- Short Form (Yqol-Sf) (Patrick Dl, Edwards Tc). This Shorter Form Of Comprises 15 Perceptual Statements Denoting The Life's Quality From Various Health, Socioeconomic, Health And Disability Backgrounds, This Measure Found To Be Highly Reliable With The Internal Consistency And The Test Retest Reliability Is Found To Be .78 .

**Depression, Anxiety, Stress:** Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale-21(Dass-21) Is A Scale Developed By Lovibond Contains Three Different Subscales Which Assess The Level Of Psychological Distresses As Follows Depression, Anxiety, And Stress. Each Sub – Scale Contains 7 Statements That Are All Equally Containing The Content Related To The Psychological Distresses. The Sub-Scale Depression Assesses The Relevant Components To Depression Such As Hopelessness, Feelings Of Missed Out (Fomo). The Sub-Scale For

Anxiety Measures The State Anxiety, Skeletal Muscle Effects. The Final Sub-Scale Which Is For Stress Contains The Items Related To Difficulty In Relaxing, Irritability And Impatience. The Reliability Of The Tool Was Found To Be .88 Which Is Suitable For The Current Study.

**Appearance Esteem:** State Self-Esteem Scale Developed And Validated (Heartherton, T.F. & Polivy,1991). The Scale Comprises Of 20 Items With Three Dimensions, (Performance Esteem, Social Esteem, And Appearance Esteem). The Scale Is The Five-Point Likert Scale (1= Not At All, 2= A Little Bit, 3 = Somewhat, 4=Very Much, 5=Extremely). Among The Subscales, The Last Subscale, Appearance Esteem Has Been Considered For This Study. The Internal Reliability Of The State Self-Esteem Is Found To Be .841

## Results

This following table shows the inferential statistical results of the sample taken for the study

**Table 1:** *Pearson Correlation statistics for the study variables*

VARIABLES	Menstrual Attitude	Quality of life	Appearance esteem	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Menstrual attitude	-					
Quality of life	.753**	-	.750**			
Appearance esteem	.778**	.750**	-			
Depression	-.734**	-.880**	-.801**	-	.	
Anxiety	-.721**	-.894**	-.735**	.898**	-	
Stress	-.659**	-.890**	-.726**	.893**		-

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01level (2-tailed)*

The above table (Table 1) shows the Pearson correlation for the study variables. The findings of the analysis are discussed here. The analysis revealed that the quality of life and appearance esteem had a significant positive correlation with menstrual attitude,  $r = .753$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The attitude towards menstruation had a significant negative correlation with depression,  $r = -.7314$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Also, the attitude towards menstruation had a significant negative correlation with DASS-21 domain Anxiety  $r = -.721$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The stress levels had a significant negative correlation with the menstrual attitude or attitude towards menstruation  $r = -.659$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; Additionally, Depression had a significant negative correlation with quality of life,  $r = -.880$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Anxiety had a significant negative relationship with quality of life,  $r = -.894$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

This following table shows the regression analysis for the samples of the study

**Table 2:** *Linear Regression Model Summary For Quality Of Life*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the estimate	F	Sig.
1	.753 <sup>a</sup>	.567	.567	1.551	810.640	.000 <sup>b</sup>

- a. Predictors: (constant) Menstrual Attitude
- b. Dependent variable: Quality of life

**Table3: Linear Regression Coefficients Statistics**

	Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
		B	Std.Error	Beta	t	Sig
1	Constant	2.252	.154		14.660	.000
	Quality of life	.024	.001	.753	28.472	.000

The model summary of the linear regression (Table 3) indicated that the variables entered in the model were a significant predictor of menstrual attitude,  $F = 810.640.964$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The proportion of the variance were estimated to be 57% which was explained by the predictors of the model. In this predictive model, the menstrual attitude was the significant predictor of the dependent variable entered in the model. It was interpreted that the menstrual attitude increased by one unit, the facial affect recognition indices were increased by .024 units.

**Table 4: Multiple Regression Model Summary For Menstrual Attitude**

R	R.Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the estimate	F	Sig
.573 <sup>a</sup>	.328	.325	7.03162	100.174	.000 <sup>b</sup>

- a. Predictors: (constant) stress, depression, anxiety  
 b. Dependent variable: Menstrual attitude

**Table 5: Multiple Regression Coefficient Statistics**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std.Error	Beta			
(constant)	58.716	.664			88.452	.000
Depression	-.153	.100	-.128		-1.530	.126
Anxiety	-.730	.148	-.427		-4.937	.000
Stress	-.031	.081	-.030		-.354	.724

The model summary of the multiple regression (Table 5) indicated that the variables entered in the model were a significant predictor of menstrual attitude,  $F = 100.174$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The proportion of the variance were estimated to be 32% which was explained by the predictors of the model. In this predictive model, emotional states depression, anxiety and the stress levels were the significant predictor of the dependent variable entered in the model. It was interpreted that the depression scores increased by one unit, the menstrual attitude indices were decreased by .153 units. And when the anxiety and stress levels in mind increased by one unit, the menstrual attitude were decreased by .730 and .031 units respectively. The final predictive model was: Menstrual attitude =  $58.716 + (-.153 * \text{Depression}) + (-.730 * \text{Anxiety}) + (-.031 * \text{Stress})$

## Discussion

According to the various theoretical perspectives of the personality development, adolescent stage or the teen age is the lifespan is exactly where an individual experiences the changes and the transformation that contribute to the adulthood stage from childhood. An adolescent's mind and body are the classics are the development of the personality. In a family, adolescent girls have an enormous role in the maintaining the subjective well-being of the

entire family members and help in pertaining the good family dynamics also adolescent girls form the firm foundation for the society and the economy of the country. Recently the research studies focussing on the menstrual attitudes, further their experiences and their influences are bolstered the significance of menstrual attitudes and experiences on the role of mental health and other psychosocial attributes of the adolescent girls. Meanwhile, although the menstrual attitudes by healthy menstruating girls and their level depression, anxiety, stress, overall quality of life and body image and appearance esteem, they are not yet discussed.

The present study investigated the effects and the impacts of the attitude especially in respect to the menstrual experiences with the menstrual products, environments, and transportation to the negative emotional states like depression, anxiety and stress along with the psycho-social aspects, quality of life. The correlation and the regression performed with the collected raw data showed that the higher percentage of the adolescent students exhibited their attitude towards menstruation despite its positivity and negativity, had significant effects in the psychological disorder's depression, anxiety, stress, their appearance esteem, and the overall quality of life. The obtained results showed the significant relationship between the attitude towards menstruation and the psychological disorders, depression, anxiety, and stress. Healthier or positive attitudes means the better functioning of mind and body. Further the menstrual cycle which is purely physiological holds the effects and impacts in the psychological and emotional well-being of an individual. The negative attitudes usually come along with the negative experiences of life in the psychological and the emotional wellness. The menstrual cycle has some of the elements that are inevitable and significant such as menstrual products availability and the safer and secured environment for the menstrual products usage and disposal.

The relationship between the quality of life and the attitude towards menstruation was also significant. The findings that reflects the relationship between the moods or psychological distresses like depression, anxiety, stress and quality of life is connected and correlates with the menstrual attitudes are supported by the previous studies with the menstrual attitudes and dimensions and the menstrual experience oriented variables and the mood and state and other negative emotions(Drosdzol et al., 2010)(Rembeck et al., 2006), further the previously done researches are inclined towards the moods rather than the emotional states or the feelings associated with their attitudes towards menstruation, wherein the current study throws insights on the negative emotions and feelings associated with healthy menstruating girls.

The moods and the emotional states attached with the menstrual attitudes are positively correlated in the adolescent girls which is bolstered in the previous studies (Lee et al., 2015)(Kaczmarek & Trambacz-Oleszak, 2016)(Mohamadirizi & Kordi, 2013)The current finding that the appearance esteem being connected with the menstrual attitudes is supported by the previous studies which revealed the links between body image and related variable to the menstrual attitudes(Lawal et al., 2020)(Unless et al., 2015)(Drosdzol-Cop et al., 2017)

The study reflects the age of puberty which accompanies the physiological functioning of menstruation and the psychological and emotional experiences like the negative mood effects experience of overall well-being in respect to the quality of life. The sense of self development through the emotional self occurs specifically in this puberty stage. The study also throws light on the role of the menstrual attitude in the self-development based on the self-esteem inclined towards the body image and appearances. Attitude held towards menstruation despite of the positivity and negativity have impacts in the self-oriented concepts like self-esteem and body image. Positive the attitude better the self-esteem and the body image and negative the menstrual attitude poor body image and low self-esteem, is observed in the

adolescent girls. On the whole, to sum -up the findings menstrual attitudes possess to the potential to influence the psycho-social attributes of the adolescent girls. Especially the healthy menstrual cycle has the influences in the quality of life, negative mood states like depression anxiety and stress and the self-esteem inclined towards the body image.

## Conclusion

Attitude formation is one of the predominant functions that arises along with the physical body maturation in adolescent stage. Generally, the healthy attitudes towards life assists an individual to pick-up the healthiest life-style and the most positive and vibrant psychological states including the significant low level of negative emotional states or psychological distresses like depression, anxiety and stress and improvement and progression in the quality of life. The study concludes that menstrual attitudes play an inevitable role in the adolescent girls and mood and effects. The attitude towards menstruation has the significant of the predicting the range of quality of life. This study throws insight on the importance of inculcating healthy attitudes towards their puberty and the menstrual cycle gradually improvises the overall well-being in life.

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