

A Sociological Study on the Factors Contributing to the Rise of Period Poverty Among Sri Lankan Women

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1. Introduction

A healthy population is one of the most important determinants of the country's economic development. The concept of the World Health Organization that health is a basic human right was accepted by the first government that came to power after independence from the colonial state in 1449, and all the governments that came to power after that have borne that responsibility. In 1951, free health policies were introduced and all the governments that came to power so far have continuously implemented policies and programs aimed at welfare. However, the health sector in Sri Lanka faced a severe challenge due to the covid epidemic which started spreading from march in 2020, and therefore the government had to bear a huge additional cost for health services. Also, due to the foreign exchange liquidity crisis, the importation of essential medicines and other medical equipment and sanitary materials was limited. had to give. where some of the most impoverished and vulnerable groups are severely affected, the development goals are more Negatively influenced. It was possible to identify the female population as a more vulnerable group, and the increase in the price of sanitary products with the economic crisis strongly influenced their health and hygiene. Accordingly, more than in previous years, Sri Menstrual poverty in Sri Lanka clearly showed a rapid growth. The American Medical Women's Association defines period poverty as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene tools and education. This includes the following approaches:

- Sanitary products
- Laundry facilities
- Waste management
- Toilet facilities with water
- Mechanism for disposal of used materials
- Privacy means.

Many women are physically and mentally tired due to their responsible busy lives and are facing some crisis and because of this busyness, the tendency of many women to pay attention to their health and hygiene is at a very low level. Many problems related to sanitation have to be faced. It is called economic poverty and has developed into a social problem. There is. A review of recent research literature shows that there are still a group of women who do not use factory-made sanitary napkins and sanitary liquids during their menstrual period. As these studies make clear, the reasons for the development of menstrual poverty or economic poverty in Sri Lanka A few main points can be identified. It can be highlighted that women are not aware of the importance of maintaining their health and hygiene, do not give priority to their personal hygiene, do not have enough economic power to use standardized hygiene products and are used to using unsafe alternatives.

This situation already sends a red signal of a major health problem in the country and the majority of women do not use sanitary napkins during their monthly periods, which not only affects their health, but also delays their lives for several days every month in their daily activities affected Strongly. When the population of a country is weak in terms of health, it has a negative impact on the country's development process. A healthy woman, a professional, a housewife makes a huge contribution to social progress. Good parents give birth to good children, healthy parents give birth to healthy children and have the strength to commit to their

future. When a woman is weak in terms of health and hygiene, it affects the entire family system. It affects the income status of the head of the household. The survival of the child studying from It is the responsibility of the government to identify the factors that have adverse effects on hygiene and to remedy them immediately. Ovarian cancer, various complications related to the reproductive system, reproductive health problems etc. can be seen in women who are ignorant of health and hygiene with sexual and reproductive complications. This study addresses menstrual poverty or period poverty and thereby focuses on the social, cultural and economic factors that influence the development of period poverty among rural women in Sri Lanka.

Study problem

Identifying the factors that influence the development of menstrual poverty among women in Sri Lanka.

Objectives of the study

- To identify the social, economic and cultural factors contributing to the rise in period poverty among rural women in Sri Lanka.
- To identify the challenges and problems faced by Sri Lankan rural women in the face of period poverty and their social impact.
- To identify measures that can be taken to reduce period poverty.

2. Research methodology

This is research conducted using the qualitative study method and the respondents have been selected to cover all categories of women between the ages of 15-50, schoolgirls, teenagers, employed women and unemployed housewives, focusing on several rural areas of the Anuradhapura district of Sri Lanka. In order to obtain data from the participants, data was obtained through semi-structured interviews using a structured questionnaire. Using thematic analysis, the data obtained from the respondents through the interviews were filed according to the topic.

3. Findings and Discussion of the Study

For the study, using a sample of twenty-five women in the age range of 15-50 years, covering different educational, economic and social levels, information was collected using semi-structured interviews and a structured questionnaire, which covered the following points.

Several social, economic and cultural reasons could be identified which are the main reasons for the development of menstrual poverty especially among Sri Lankan women.

Accordingly, due to the lack of attention in the society towards the opus process of a woman, some women have to hide all the physical and mental sufferings that occur to them during this period from their family and their close ones. She often does not receive nourishment and support from Sri Lankan families or workplaces. It has become common for women to pay less attention to hygiene. Furthermore, in some rural societies, it is socialized that women should not bathe within the first two or three days of their menstruation, avoid eating meat, and avoid oily food. Accordingly, not getting the necessary nutrition for the body during menstruation is an adverse situation. Also, many women do not refer to products like tampons and period cups that can be used instead of sanitary napkins without a full understanding of them and how to use them. Many young women reject this because of the unwarranted fear that it will damage their hymen as they are to be worn. Due to different socialization and often, women do not use these products because of their partner's reluctance. But if you buy a product like this, it can be used for a period of time rather than spending a lot of money on sanitary napkins. Educating women about these and dispelling the myths that exist in them. The health department should

also do this. Due to these social and cultural reasons, period poverty among Sri Lankan women is gradually increasing. There is no clear way to get rid of them except to grow.

A woman's level of education has a strong influence on the formation of their ideologies about their health and hygiene. The following findings revealed by the study will make the above conclusions clear. Physical discomfort in the women used for the study is definitely seen during this period and it is clear that the monthly menstrual period adds some setback to women's daily work. Also, many of the respondents used for the study often take leave from the workplace due to any physical discomfort that occurs to them. It has become common for many schoolgirls to skip school due to the unwarranted fear of getting caught and getting stains on their white clothes. There is. But it should be understood that this is something that will have a strong impact on the country's economy, development and children's education. Findings on the prevalence of "menstrual poverty" in Sri Lanka, which refers to insufficient financial resources, cultural stigma and limited menstrual hygiene resources affecting menstrual period management, show that the majority of women reported menstrual problems and only a small number of them sought medical care. Furthermore, a minority of respondents had used "old clothes" as a sanitary product during their lifetime, highlighting the lack of access to proper menstrual hygiene products. With insufficient sanitary facilities, low education, low income, living in remote MOH areas, we can conclude that the menstrual poverty is increasing day by day because Sri Lankan women still do not have proper knowledge about health and hygiene.

Among the respondents who participated in the study, it was revealed that the number of sanitary napkins used by a woman during her menstrual period is at least three to four. Also, among the respondents who participated in the study, there were a group of people who used the same brand of sanitary napkin for a long time as well as those who used them. It has been found that the increase in the price of the brand has led to the use of other sanitary napkins and some women are switching to cloth pads instead. In addition, in many workplaces, schools, water facilities and facilities for regular waste disposal are at a very low level... Accordingly, due to the lack of these facilities in some rural schools in the Anuradhapura district selected for the study, it is necessary for schoolgirls to maintain menstrual hygiene and regular It has also become an obstacle to maintain cleanliness.

Safe modern hygiene methods that can be used instead of sanitary napkins are popular among women in other countries of the world today. Things like period cups and tampons make it easier for women to have their period, and it is an advantage for their wallet. Generally, a woman spends at least thirty years of her life. Lives with the menstrual process. During that period, if you buy sanitary napkins that can be bought in the market, in one sense at least two packets of sanitary napkins (i.e. sanitary napkins) If it is concluded that at least 20) are used, she will use 240 sanitary napkins per year and 7200 sanitary napkins for thirty years. Accordingly, the number of sanitary napkins used by women in a whole country is tons. An amount should be spent. Despite the whole world facing an economic crisis, sensitively paying attention to the menstrual process of women, which is a very natural phenomenon, is necessary for their health. Actions should be taken. Especially sanitary materials and sanitary napkins are rapidly rising prices, so that they can be produced at an affordable price or direct women to the use of other alternative hygiene methods, while maintaining their health and hygiene for themselves and their families. Good attitudes should be instilled in the women about the good for the development of the entire country.

4. Conclusion

Considering the current economic difficulties faced by Sri Lanka as a country, emphasizing the need to find solutions for the financial development of feminine hygiene products, the study of period poverty deserves more relevance. We recommend that comprehensive reproductive health education for adolescent girls and women, as well as efforts to reduce the financial

burden of menstrual hygiene products and awareness among women of safe modern alternative sanitary methods to improve menstrual management for women in Sri Lanka.

5. Keywords

Health problems, Menstrual poverty, Period poverty, Reproductive health, Sanitary products

6. References

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