

Research Proposal

Animesh Gadre (II year)

Angira Shukla (III year)

Mrinal Tomar (III year)

Title: Impact Study on the overall performance of adolescent girls through intervention in the sensitization on menstrual health

Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that menstrual health sensitization and intervention increases the overall scholastic performance of adolescent schoolgirls.

Importance of the topic: India is home to more than 253 million adolescents¹, an approximated quarter of the total population, the cohort pushes India to a vantage point as opposed to the ageing West. However, such potential will only yield results if young people are healthy, educated and equipped with information skills and confidence that would enable them to contribute to their communities and the country's socio-economic growth. Adolescents face numerous issues especially when it comes to sexual and reproductive health where girls are disadvantaged due to unequal gender norms, lack of autonomy and gender- based power imbalances. This coupled with limited communication between parents and adolescents on sexual and reproductive health-related matters exacerbate the problems for girls to access and address sexual health in life, often hindering them from receiving education in some form or the other. Economic barriers, parental concerns about the safety of the girls, the need to undertake household chores, and poor quality of teaching and absence of adequate water and toilet facilities within the school, especially separate toilets for girls are some of the social and technical barriers to access higher education among girls. Recognising the relevance of Menstrual Health Management(MHM) to the health, wellbeing and educational achievements of girls, the Government of India has initiated some policies and programmes that are implemented at the state level² yet they remain inadequate and often reprioritized when addressed alongside institutional insufficiencies. Therefore, it necessitates the need for impact studies to substantiate policy-making for further successful implementation.

Research Methodology and Survey Design: This is a *primary data based survey*. The study would deploy the Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) methodology to evaluate the impact of our intervention. We consider three schools which represent public schools in Delhi/low-income

¹ Source: Census of India, 2011, UN World Population Prospects, 12th Revision

² Muralidharan A, Patil H, Patnaik S. Unpacking the policy landscape for menstrual hygiene management: implications for school Wash programmes in India.

public supported schools in Delhi NCR. In these schools, through simple random sampling, 50 girls (class 8-12) will be chosen to participate in our study from each school. Now, we define our control and intervention groups-

1. Control group- School 1- no experimental set up is introduced. Variables are observed as such, in their status-quo.
2. Intervention group 1- School 2- experimental set up includes installing sanitary pad boxes in the ladies' room.
3. Intervention group 2- School 3- experimental set up is the same as Intervention group 1. It also includes the involvement from an NGO that holds monthly camps in school with the objective of increasing menstrual health awareness and the benefits of using sanitary pads over cloth.

This RCT would be conducted for a period of 7 months (September 2019 through March 2020). Fortnightly questionnaires will be distributed to the participants in school to observe the variables. Their attendance will be recorded through the schools' attendance registers.

Variables to be measured:

1. Age
2. Use of adsorbent material (cloth/sanitary pads/other)
3. Taboos of menstruation
4. Knowledge of menstruation before menarche and source of information about the same
5. Knowledge of menstrual health (sub-variables included)
6. Disposal of menses
7. Bathing during menses
8. Conversations around menstruation- over time
9. Academic performance- over time
10. Attendance- over time
11. Causes of absenteeism- over time
12. Athletic fitness in school
13. Confidence & self esteem- over time

Apart from this, 50 boys will be chosen at random (class 8-12) in each of the schools and the following variables will be observed for them:

1. Knowledge about menstruation
2. Taboos of menstruation

Ethics in research: The participants of this study are minors and that requires a nod from their parents/guardians. Consent forms signed from them are given prior to the study. Permission from heads/principals of these schools will also be recorded. Personal information of participants will

not be revealed. Names and addresses of schools will also not be revealed. However, the nature of their administration (public/private) along with the locality will be made available.