

Menstrual Taboos in Australia, SL and PNG

Taboo, stigma, and restrictions during menstruation are still big concern for many girls in Australia¹. The use of 'Sanitary Products' and 'Feminine Hygiene Products' is itself a taboo and stigma for the menstruation. There were strange myths like not allow to touch wine, flowers, dogs. The concept of monthly disability till the early 20th century. They also not allow to run, dance, bicycle ride, sewin and novel reading. Albeit, the modern menstrual products introduced from mid-19th the century and the disposal pads available in market from late 1920s specially use by wealthier women that introduced through army and Red Cross Service. Even the sex education focused on hygiene and taught the idea of menstrual blood should hide cautiously².

The menstruators from indigenous, poor, rural communities are more suffering from the menstrual discrimination in Australia. The constraints of menstrual products further suppress the discussion on menstruation. Menstruation is socialized as taboo, secrecy and shame as well as incomplete, inaccurate and unknown. As a result, 25 % girls are too afraid even to buy the menstrual products due to extreme same regards to menstruation³. In this same vein, the menstruation has considered more taboo than sex, STD's and mental health where 3 out of 4 girls believed on menstrual stigma. Likewise, 8 out of 10 women are hiding the menstruation and avoid swimming, light coloured clothing, hiding menstrual products in their sleeves and bras. Additionally, 70 % girls fail in a subject in class than their friends due to menstrual shame and about a quarter woman (18-24 years) experienced embarrassed to purchase the menstrual products⁴. The first class on Period Talk, is started for eight to 13 years at first in 2019 March⁵.

As like Australia, the Solomon Island and PNG (Papua New Guinea) also have been practicing some forms of taboo, stigma and restrictions during menstruation. They considered menstrual blood as dirty, contaminated thus they do wash, drying, waste disposal in secrete manner. At the name of secrecy, they sometimes they are doing things inappropriate way or unhygienic. Because of extreme shame towards menstruation, girls and women experience deep level of fear of leaking, staining thus they often remain absent at their respective works⁶.

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/09/taboo-australia-menstruation/>

² <https://theconversation.com/the-ongoing-taboo-of-menstruation-in-australia-53984>

³ <https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-019-0846-7>

⁴ <https://www.marieclaire.com.au/period-stigma-new-research-2019>

⁵ <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/breaking-the-period-talk-taboo-20181122-p50h1k.html>

⁶ <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/30785/30785.pdf?download=true>