



Discriminatory Menstrual Perceptions and Practices in Sri Lanka

1. Related with the Right to Dignity, Freedom, Equality, Participation, Health, Food, Water, Education

A. Restriction in mobility during menstruation:

1. could not go to school
2. could not go to the home in few culture, make a tent or separate house for menstruation
3. should stay in goat shed or separate home
4. could not go to the religious places such as temple, shrine premises, prayer room
5. could not do the physical activities
6. could not join events
7. could not enter from the main entrance of the house
8. could not go for outing during menstruation
9. could not play with boys
10. not allowed to cook in the kitchen
11. could not plug curry leaves
12. not allowed to fetch water from the well
13. do not participate in school activities
14. black prince will kidnap if go out during menstruation
15. not attending funeral, religious activities
16. confine mobility of women
17. men not allow to see girls during menstruation



B. Restriction to eat during menstruation:

18. could not eat meat
19. could not eat egg
20. could not have turmeric
21. could not eat oil
22. could not eat brinjal,
23. could not eat cucumber
24. could not eat pineapple
25. could not eat papaya
26. could not eat sour foods
27. could not eat oily food
28. could not eat fish
29. could not eat spicy food
30. could not drink normal water
31. could not drink tomato





C. Restriction to touch during menstruation

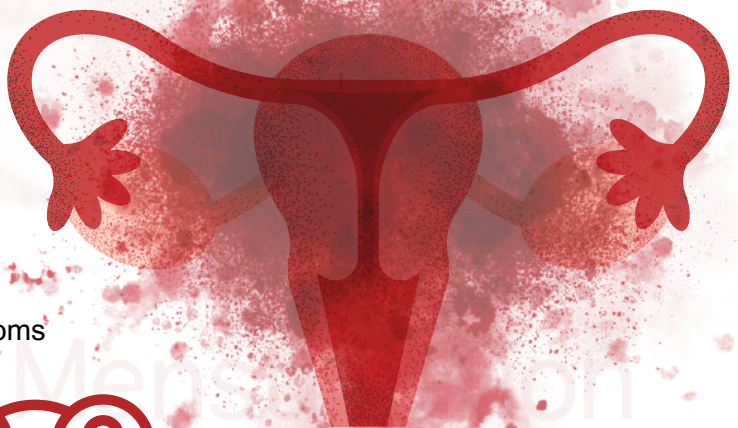
32. Boo tree
33. not allowed to fetch water from the well,
34. not allow to touch baby or infants and pregnant woman
35. not allow to touch Tulsi (Basil) plant
36. not allow to touch plant of lemon,
37. not allow to touch bettle,
38. not allow to touch vegetables
39. no touch to Neem leaves
40. no use of bindi
41. kum-kum (is a powder used for social and religious markings)
42. not allow wear bright e.g. white clothes
43. not sleeping with the partner,
44. not use same towel & bedsheet with partner,
45. no touch with male children
46. not allowing to watering flower
47. not allow to touch new clothes
48. not allow to go Buddhist sacred place
49. not allow to sit in many places as wish
50. separate the menstrual clothes while stored (separate section)
51. no sexual contact during menstruation



2. Related with Menstrual Health Issues

A. Related with Menstruation

52. dizziness
53. irritation
54. leg pain
55. painful –lower abdomen/back
56. dysmenorrhea
57. mood swings
58. heavy bleeding
59. Irregular bleeding
60. vomiting
61. bad pains/Pre Menstrual Symptoms
62. vomiting
63. migraine
65. constipation
66. diarrhea
67. muscular pain
68. breast tenderness
69. bloating





- 70. tension
- 71. depression
- 72. nausea for 3 days
- 73. white discharge

B. Related with Menopause

- 74. mood swings
- 75. brain fog
- 76. osteoporosis
- 77. bleeding
- 78. insomnia
- 79. palpitation
- 80. dry skin/vagina
- 81. painful sexual intercourse
- 82. hot flash
- 83. sweating
- 84. no mental support



3. Related with Menstrual Products (Poverty).

- 85. expensive pad
- 86. period tax
- 87. no pad at school
- 88. same pad for more than 6 hours
- 89. students are unable to buy pads due to poverty
- 90. no product available in public areas; cinemas, bank, hospital,



4. Related with Facilities; toilet, water, restroom

- 91. poor infrastructure
- 92. no rest areas or not given a rest time at work
- 93. washroom are not clean
- 94. lack of facilities e.g. water, toilet and
- 95. lack of proper washroom facilities
- 96. not disposable system of garbage
- 97. door does not have lock
- 98. no sick room facilities
- 99. no counseling activities
- 100. no clean washroom





5. Other (Overlap with above-mentioned categories and stand alone)

101. state of afraid, weak, scared, nervous, impure, dirty
102. private
103. hassle
104. need to inform through married women
105. early get up in the morning 40-60 minutes)
106. can't share with father
107. no loud on menstruation
108. shame to buy pad,
109. verbally abusing,
110. school teacher do not speak about the menstruation,
111. mother did not speak about the menstruation,
112. unlucky to family,
113. not shower
114. menstrual cramps/pain normalized
115. don't talk about menstruation with men
116. don't dry the undies publicly
117. don't share with husband
118. dispose menstrual products privately
119. it's not men thing
120. any mood swings, blame or ask ` are you on period'
121. pads are always wrapped in newspaper at grocery shops
122. ot educating on menstruation
123. can't fasting during Ramadan if there is menstruation
124. silence and ignorance towards Menopause
125. lack of Knowledge on management in school
126. shy and fear to talk about menstruation in school
127. haven't empathy among teachers
128. no helping system in school
129. some teacher does not talk about menstruation
130. skipping subject in school
131. immoral talks & humiliation
132. students feel guilty of being girls child
133. girls children ashamed during menstruation and bullied by boy children in school
134. number of absenteeism increases after menstruation
135. don't pronounce it loud
136. pad cover in newspaper
137. consider women impure
138. consider menstruation as a joke/slang
139. women as "Fate" and secondary to men.
140. women should respect men due to they never menstruate
141. stereotyping women into gender roles





142. punishment as menstruation
143. not drying underwear under the sunshine in open areas
144. no proper disposal at office
145. difficult in getting menstrual products
146. government hospitals
147. people don't talk about it seriously at work
148. no support during period days from coworker
149. people are bullied and teased
150. no discussion at workplace
151. no paid leave
152. government not implementing the policies on menstruation
153. men not allow to see girls during menstruation
154. menstruation has not been taken into consideration when making to the company budget
155. use contraceptive pill by menstruating women in garment factory

Question:



Does the concept of menstrual health, menstrual management, and period poverty address all forms of the above-mentioned discriminatory menstrual perception and practices?

Answer:



NO !!

Need to analyze and address this through the lens of menstrual dignity or Dignified Menstruation a Human Rights approach.

Sources:



1. Workshop in Colombo and Puttalam, organized by Viluthu, World Bank Sri Lanka, Shanthi Maargam, July 2023.
2. Workshop with 13 NGO representatives, organized by Family Planning Association Sri Lanka and French Embassy Sri Lanka, October 2023

Dignified Menstruation

