

# Research Brief

## Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Regarding Menstrual Health Among School Students

*A survey conducted in schools in the Banke and Surkhet districts in Nepal*

### Background

NFCC with support from Simavi under the WASH SDG WAI Sub-Programme in Nepal conducted [a survey](#) to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practice surrounding menstrual health. The survey targeted adolescent girls and boys (grades 6 to 10) from 10 different schools in the Banke and Surkhet districts.

### Objectives

1. To assess the knowledge regarding menstruation and menstrual health among male and female students.
2. To assess menstrual hygiene practices among female students.
3. To assess the perception of male students towards menstruation and menstruating women and girls.
4. To assess the attitude of students towards menstruation and menstruating women and girls.

### Methods

A total of 10 schools, five in Banke and five in Surkhet, were selected for this assessment. A total of 952 students were selected using a randomized sampling technique.

Ethical approval and written consent was taken from the selected schools and respondents to conduct the survey.

### Key Findings

#### KNOWLEDGE:



82% RESPONDED THAT PAIN, DISCOMFORT AND SHAME WERE THE PREDOMINANT **REASONS FOR ABSENTEEISM** AMONG SCHOOL GIRLS DURING MENSTRUATION



FEMALE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY (**MOTHER, SISTER AND GRANDMOTHER**) ARE REPORTED TO BE THE FIRST SOURCE OF INFORMATION WHEN IT COMES TO KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MENSTRUATION



WHEN ASKED: DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE?  
69% OF THE STUDENTS RESPONDED **NO**

#### ATTITUDE



31% OF THE STUDENTS AGREE WOMEN MUST **NOT ENTER THE HOUSE** WHILE MENSTRUATING



46% OF THE STUDENTS AGREE WOMEN **MUST NOT ENTER** TEMPLES WHILE



23% OF THE RESPONDENTS THINK **ITS OKAY TO TEASE** GIRLS DURING MENSTRUATION



37% OF THE RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT WOMEN BECOME **IMPURE** DURING THEIR MENSTRUATION PERIOD.

*\*Field work and data collection was conducted in August 2020.*



29% OF STUDENTS AGREE THAT MENSTRUATING GIRLS **SHOULD BE KEPT IN A SEPARATE ROOM**



30% OF THE FEMALE STUDENTS ARE **UNCOMFORTABLE** EITHER READING OR TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION

**PRACTICE:** Practice-related questions were asked to both male and female students to identify the way in which they demonstrate their knowledge and attitude towards menstruation and menstrual health through their actions.



73% OF MALE STUDENTS AGREE THAT MEN AND BOYS ALSO NEED TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO MENSTRUATION.

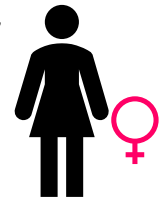
88% OF THEM AGREE THAT MEN NEED TO HELP THE WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THEIR FAMILY DURING THEIR MENSTRUATION.

80% OF BOYS AGREED THAT BOYS NEED TO HELP THEIR FEMALE SCHOOL FRIENDS DURING THEIR MENSTRUATION.

78% OF THE STUDENTS RESPONDED THAT THEIR SCHOOL PROVIDE DISPOSABLE PADS

BOTH DISPOSABLE PADS AND CLOTHS ARE COMMON PRODUCTS USED BY THE SURVEYED STUDENTS. HOWEVER, 74% OF THE STUDENTS RESPONDED THAT THEIR SCHOOLS LACK A SEPARATE PLACE TO WASH CLOTHS AT SCHOOL.

88% OF THE FEMALE STUDENTS RESPONDED THAT THEY LEARN ABOUT MENSTRUATION AT SCHOOL HOWEVER, 56% OF THE STUDENTS IN BANKE AND 73% OF THE STUDENTS IN SURKHET SAID THEY DO NOT KNOW ABOUT MENSTRUATION FRIENDLY TOILETS.



## Conclusion

Menstrual health and hygiene is an important subject that should be discussed and taught to adolescent boys and girls, as knowledge is an essential influencer of their attitude and behaviours towards menstruation. The survey revealed that the students felt they had inadequate knowledge about menstrual health and hygiene, despite it being a part of their school curriculum. Although students seemed to report an overall positive attitude towards menstruation, a reportedly positive attitude does not always result in positive actions. Menstruation is still a taboo amongst adolescent school-going girls and boys. On average, around 30% of the students supported the restrictions girls face while menstruating such as not being able to enter the kitchen, part-take in religious/cultural ceremonies, enter the temple, etc.

## Recommendations

Menstrual health and hygiene education needs to be prioritized for both boys and girls. Special focus should be aimed at debunking the social taboos attached to menstruation. Any programme will only be effective when all stakeholders are sensitized. As women in the family are the first source of information on menstruation, they are the catalysts for change. However, men and boys should also be encouraged to take a proactive role in educating their children on menstrual hygiene. The survey re-enforces the need for continued advocacy, capacity building, education and awareness in addressing issues related to menstrual hygiene and management practices.

