

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi Disciplinary  
Peer Reviewed Edition :

[www.ijlra.com](http://www.ijlra.com)

## **DISCLAIMER**

No part of this publication may be reproduced or copied in any form by any means without prior written permission of Managing Editor of IJLRA. The views expressed in this publication are purely personal opinions of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Editorial Team of IJLRA.

Though every effort has been made to ensure that the information in Volume 2 Issue 7 is accurate and appropriately cited/referenced, neither the Editorial Board nor IJLRA shall be held liable or responsible in any manner whatsoever for any consequences for any action taken by anyone on the basis of information in the Journal.

Copyright © International Journal for Legal Research & Analysis

IJLRA

## **EDITORIAL TEAM**

### **EDITORS**



### **Megha Middha**

*Megha Middha, Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmangarh, Sikar*

*Megha Middha, is working as an Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmangarh, Sikar (Rajasthan). She has an experience in the teaching of almost 3 years. She has completed her graduation in BBA LL.B (H) from Amity University, Rajasthan (Gold Medalist) and did her post-graduation (LL.M in Business Laws) from NLSIU, Bengaluru. Currently, she is enrolled in a Ph.D. course in the Department of Law at Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur (Rajasthan). She wishes to excel in academics and research and contribute as much as she can to society. Through her interactions with the students, she tries to inculcate a sense of deep thinking power in her students and enlighten and guide them to the fact how they can bring a change to the society*

### **Dr. Samrat Datta**

*Dr. Samrat Datta Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Samrat Datta is currently associated with Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Datta has completed his graduation i.e., B.A.LL.B. from Law College Dehradun, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand. He is an alumnus of KIIT University, Bhubaneswar where he pursued his post-graduation (LL.M.) in Criminal Law and subsequently completed his Ph.D. in Police Law and Information Technology from the Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Udaipur in 2020. His area of interest and research is Criminal and Police Law. Dr. Datta has a teaching experience of 7 years in various law schools across North India and has held administrative positions like Academic Coordinator, Centre Superintendent for Examinations, Deputy Controller of Examinations, Member of the Proctorial Board*



## **Dr. Namita Jain**



*Head & Associate Professor*

*School of Law, JECRC University, Jaipur Ph.D. (Commercial Law) LL.M., UGC -NET Post Graduation Diploma in Taxation law and Practice, Bachelor of Commerce.*

*Teaching Experience: 12 years, AWARDS AND RECOGNITION of Dr. Namita Jain are - ICF Global Excellence Award 2020 in the category of educationalist by I Can Foundation, India. India Women Empowerment Award in the category of "Emerging Excellence in Academics by Prime Time & Utkrisht Bharat Foundation, New Delhi.(2020). Conferred in FL Book of Top 21 Record Holders in the category of education by Fashion Lifestyle Magazine, New Delhi. (2020). Certificate of Appreciation for organizing and managing the Professional Development Training Program on IPR in Collaboration with Trade Innovations Services, Jaipur on March 14th, 2019*

## **Mrs.S.Kalpana**

*Assistant professor of Law*

*Mrs.S.Kalpana, presently Assistant professor of Law, VelTech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi. Formerly Assistant professor of Law, Vels University in the year 2019 to 2020, Worked as Guest Faculty, Chennai Dr.Ambedkar Law College, Pudupakkam. Published one book. Published 8 Articles in various reputed Law Journals. Conducted 1 Moot court competition and participated in nearly 80 National and International seminars and webinars conducted on various subjects of Law. Did ML in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration. 10 paper presentations in various National and International seminars. Attended more than 10 FDP programs. Ph.D. in Law pursuing.*



## **Avinash Kumar**



*Avinash Kumar has completed his Ph.D. in International Investment Law from the Dept. of Law & Governance, Central University of South Bihar. His research work is on "International Investment Agreement and State's right to regulate Foreign Investment." He qualified UGC-NET and has been selected for the prestigious ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Formerly he has been elected as Students Union President of Law Centre-1, University of Delhi. Moreover, he completed his LL.M. from the University of Delhi (2014-16), dissertation on "Cross-border Merger & Acquisition"; LL.B. from the University of Delhi (2011-14), and B.A. (Hons.) from Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He has also obtained P.G. Diploma in IPR from the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. He has qualified UGC - NET examination and has been awarded ICSSR - Doctoral Fellowship. He has published six-plus articles and presented 9 plus papers in national and international seminars/conferences. He participated in several workshops on research methodology and teaching and*

*learning.*

## **ABOUT US**

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

ISSN

2582-6433 is an Online Journal is Monthly, Peer Review, Academic Journal, Published online, that seeks to provide an interactive platform for the publication of Short Articles, Long Articles, Book Review, Case Comments, Research Papers, Essay in the field of Law & Multidisciplinary issue. Our aim is to upgrade the level of interaction and discourse about contemporary issues of law. We are eager to become a highly cited academic publication, through quality contributions from students, academics, professionals from the industry, the bar and the bench. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS ISSN 2582-6433 welcomes contributions from all legal branches, as long as the work is original, unpublished and is in consonance with the submission guidelines.

# **“FOSTERING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE: A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR INDIA”**

AUTHORED BY: DR. SUSHMA SHARMA

Affiliation: National Law Institute University

Designation: Associate Professor

Email Id: [sushma.sharma@nliu.ac.in](mailto:sushma.sharma@nliu.ac.in)

CO-AUTHOR: MS. BHOOMIKA AHUJA

Affiliation: National Law Institute University

Designation: Ph.D. Research Scholar

Email Id: [bhoomikaahuja.phd@nliu.ac.in](mailto:bhoomikaahuja.phd@nliu.ac.in)

## **Abstract-**

The Menstrual Hygiene Policy in India is a pivotal initiative recognizing menstruation as a natural biological process impacting girls, women, families, and the environment. Historically overlooked, this policy emphasizes the need for comprehensive investment to address the diverse requirements of all menstruating individuals. Framed within India's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals, the policy aligns with Goal 3 (good health), Goal 4 (quality education), Goal 5 (gender equality), and Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation). Adopting a life cycle approach, it provides comprehensive support from menarche to menopause, with a focus on underserved populations, ensuring equitable access to menstrual hygiene resources. National Family Health Survey 5 data as per the policy reveals a positive trend, indicating a significant improvement in hygienic menstrual protection usage among women aged 15-24. However, variations persist between rural and urban areas, emphasizing the importance of education, with women receiving 12 or more years being twice as likely to use hygienic methods. While progress is evident, the study identifies regions with below-average access, stressing the need for targeted efforts to enhance menstrual hygiene practices in these areas. Highlighting menstrual health as integral to overall well-being, the policy aims to promote health, empowerment, and dignity. By ensuring access to safe products, improving sanitation, providing comprehensive education, and

challenging social taboos, the policy seeks to break barriers, eliminate stigma, and foster inclusivity. Ultimately, it aspires to create a society where menstrual hygiene is celebrated, prioritized, contributing to gender equality, education, and overall development. This research underscores the critical role of the Menstrual Hygiene Policy in shaping a positive transformation within Indian society.

***Keywords: Menstruation, Menstrual Policy, Health & Hygiene***

## **Introduction-**

The Draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy of 2023 marks a significant stride towards addressing long-standing challenges associated with menstruation in the context of India. This pioneering policy recognizes menstruation as a natural biological process affecting girls, women, families, and the environment, challenging the historical oversight that has resulted in adverse impacts on various fronts. As a comprehensive framework, the policy underscores the necessity for substantial investment to cater to the diverse requirements of all menstruating individuals, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and social equity.

The genesis of the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy of 2023 can be traced back to a landmark judgment by the Supreme Court in the case of Shailendra Mani Tripathi v. Union of India and Ors. (2023/SC). This crucial legal intervention, presided over by Hon'ble Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala, addressed a public interest litigation (PIL) petition advocating for the introduction of menstrual pain leave or period leave for female students and working women across India.

The plea highlighted the societal neglect of menstrual periods and underscored the initiatives taken by some organizations and state governments, citing examples such as Iyipanan, Zomato, Byju's, and others, which already provided paid period leaves. The Supreme Court, while disposing of the plea, acknowledged the policy dimension inherent in the case and permitted the petitioners to make a representation before the Union Ministry of Women & Child Development. CJI DY Chandrachud emphasized the importance of approaching the ministry for further considerations, recognizing the delicate balance required in implementing such leave policies to avoid unintended consequences, as suggested by a caveator law student during the proceedings. This case served as a catalyst for recognizing the need for a comprehensive National Menstrual

Hygiene Policy, reflecting evolving societal attitudes and addressing the unique challenges faced by menstruating individuals.

Aligned with India's dedication to achieving Sustainable Development Goals, the policy is designed to contribute significantly to various goals like, good health, quality education, gender equality, and clean water and sanitation. By adopting a life cycle approach, the policy aims to provide robust support throughout the entire menstrual journey, recognizing and addressing the unique needs of individuals from menarche to menopause.

The policy signifies the transformative role in reshaping societal norms surrounding menstrual hygiene. As the nation endeavors to create a positive environment that embraces menstruation as a natural and normal part of life, the Draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy of 2023 emerges as a pivotal document, poised to play a central role in fostering health, empowerment, and dignity for all individuals who menstruate.

The Draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy of 2023 envisions a society where all women, girls, and individuals who menstruate can experience menstruation safely, healthily, and free from stigma. The overarching goal is to ensure that every girl, woman, and person who menstruates across India has access to safe and dignified menstrual hygiene resources, improving their quality of life and enabling them to realize their full potential in health, education, and other aspects of life.

The policy outlines six key objectives to achieve this vision. These include the following-

- Ensuring access to safe and quality menstrual products and sanitation facilities,
- Creating an enabling environment to address myths and stigma surrounding menstruation,
- Establishing coordination mechanisms among different stakeholders,
- Fostering a 'menstrual-friendly environment' in various settings,
- Promoting innovative practices, and
- Strengthening environmentally sustainable menstrual waste disposal.

The comprehensive scope of the policy is reflected in its inclusive targets, covering all menstruating individuals in diverse settings such as rural, urban, tribal areas, educational institutions, workplaces, healthcare settings, and public places. It specifically addresses the needs of marginalized populations, including people with special needs, trans populations, orphans,

destitute populations, tribal populations, prisoners, and those with differential needs during emergency situations.

The policy is underpinned by key principles, emphasizing access and affordability, equity, inclusivity, education and awareness, safe and hygienic facilities, waste management, and environmental sustainability, as well as collaboration and partnerships. These principles collectively form the framework for addressing menstrual hygiene challenges effectively and fostering a supportive environment for all menstruating individuals in India.

### **Policy Strategy-**

The National Menstrual Hygiene Policy of 2023 outlines a robust strategy aimed at addressing various facets of menstrual hygiene management in India. The multifaceted approach encompasses key components that emphasize accessibility, affordability, quality standards, infrastructure development, and education, collaboration with non-governmental sectors, research, innovation, and policy integration.

The policy underscores the importance of ensuring access to affordable and safe menstrual hygiene products. Initiatives like the Menstrual Hygiene Scheme are introduced to provide free or subsidized products in schools, reducing absenteeism and promoting continued education. Targeted outreach programs address challenges in rural and remote areas, emphasizing equitable access. Supply chains and distribution networks are developed to ensure consistent availability, including innovative schemes like the Suvidha Sarathi Scheme.

Quality standards and regulatory frameworks are highlighted, emphasizing the need for comprehensive standards for menstrual hygiene products. Clear and accurate product labeling, along with a robust regulatory framework, ensures safety, efficacy, and transparency in the market. Environmental sustainability is prioritized, with standards for the development and manufacturing of biodegradable products.

The policy also focuses on the availability of clean and dignified menstrual hygiene facilities. This involves promoting the development of infrastructure in various settings, including homes, educational institutions, workplaces, and public spaces. Proper waste disposal systems and handwashing facilities are essential components, with a keen emphasis on environmentally

friendly waste management practices.

Promotion of education and awareness on menstrual hygiene is a critical aspect. Awareness campaigns targeting menstruators and sensitizing communities, parents, teachers, and stakeholders contribute to eliminating stigma and fostering a supportive environment. Integration of menstrual hygiene education into school curricula is advocated, along with studies on effective strategies.

Collaboration with non-government and private sectors encourages partnerships to promote innovative, sustainable, and affordable menstrual hygiene products. Corporate Social Responsibility is leveraged to fill access and affordability gaps. Private sector engagement extends to awareness generation, ensuring access to products, and addressing infrastructure needs.

Research and innovation in menstrual hygiene management are promoted, encouraging research institutes and academia to contribute to evidence-based policymaking. Development of innovative and sustainable menstrual hygiene products, along with policy integration, is emphasized. Integration into existing health, education, sanitation, gender, and environment programs ensures a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach.

Overall, the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy of 2023 strategically addresses the diverse needs of menstruating individuals, promoting a holistic and inclusive approach to menstrual hygiene management in India.

### **Current Initiatives-**

The National Menstrual Hygiene Policy of 2023 builds upon existing programs that have been instrumental in addressing menstrual hygiene management in India. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare initiated the Menstrual Hygiene Scheme in 2011, focusing on the distribution of low-cost sanitary napkins in communities through Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs). The Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin, launched in 2014 by the Ministry of Jal Shakti (formerly MDWS), incorporated menstrual hygiene management initiatives. The Ministry of Education (MoE) collaborated by introducing the National Guidelines for Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in 2015, providing a blueprint for states to intensify efforts in this domain.

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin phase 1, budgetary allocations were made for awareness generation on MHM, gender-responsive WASH facilities, and safe disposal solutions in schools and rural communities. The Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) under the Ministry of Health focused on adolescent health, including sexual reproductive health, with support for the procurement and distribution of sanitary napkins across states and union territories.

The School Health and Wellness Programme, a joint initiative by the MoHFW and MoE, includes MHM awareness through interactive classroom sessions conducted by trained teachers. Jan Aushadi Suvidha Kendras introduced subsidized oxo-biodegradable pads, marking a significant milestone. Swachh Survekshan Grameen incorporated MHM indicators in 2021-2022, emphasizing awareness and menstrual waste management policies. Additionally, initiatives like Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan have promoted sanitary napkin vending machines and incinerators in schools, highlighting the growing importance of menstrual hygiene management in educational institutions. The policy recognizes and builds upon these ongoing programs to strengthen menstrual hygiene practices across the country.

### **Roles & Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

The successful execution of the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy in 2023 is contingent upon the coordinated efforts of diverse stakeholders, including government ministries, institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private sectors. To ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach to menstrual hygiene management, these stakeholders must collaborate under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). Each stakeholder group bears unique roles and responsibilities, creating a synergistic ecosystem that addresses various aspects of menstrual health and hygiene across different settings.

- **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW):** As the Nodal Ministry, MoHFW assumes a central role in coordinating, supervising, and supporting the policy's implementation. Its responsibilities span drafting and developing the policy, formulating comprehensive action plans, setting standards and guidelines, disseminating the policy across all levels, ensuring infrastructural support, allocating adequate resources, and overseeing collaboration among relevant departments.

- **Departments of Health - State/UT:** State and UT health departments play a pivotal role in the implementation of menstrual hygiene initiatives. Responsibilities include convening joint coordination committee meetings, providing training on MHM guidelines, advocating for dedicated budgets, ensuring affordable and accessible menstrual hygiene care, and facilitating the provision of WASH/MHM facilities across various public spaces.
- **Ministry of Education:** Recognizing the barriers menstruation poses to education, the Ministry of Education integrates menstrual health and hygiene education into school curricula. It ensures access to hygiene facilities, trains teachers and staff, reduces stigma, provides menstrual hygiene products in educational institutions, and coordinates with MoHFW for additional support.
- **Ministry of Women and Child Development:** Collaborating with MoHFW, this ministry focuses on implementing policies and programs for women and girls. It ensures gender equality, trains field-level functionaries, provides menstrual hygiene products at the community level, and actively participates in joint review committee meetings.
- **Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation):** Recognizing the importance of water access, sanitation, and waste disposal, this ministry ensures clean and safe water for MHM, improves sanitation infrastructure, and coordinates with other ministries to ensure water supply for menstruation management.
- **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change:** With a focus on environmental sustainability, this ministry promotes eco-friendly menstrual products, encourages research and development, raises awareness about environmental impacts, and supports waste management and recycling initiatives.
- **Ministry of Chemical & Fertilizers (Deptt of Pharmaceuticals):** This ministry ensures the availability, affordability, and quality of menstrual health products, supports research and development, and collaborates with other ministries for awareness campaigns.
- **Ministry of Rural Development/Urban Development:** This ministry promotes the construction of sanitation facilities, directs local bodies to support MHM information and services, facilitates access to affordable menstrual absorbents through Self Help Groups, and conducts awareness programs in rural communities.
- **Pollution Control Board/Bodies:** These bodies develop guidelines, provide guidance on procurement, regulate permits for incinerators, and partner with various entities for waste management.

- **NGOs, CBOs, and FBOs:** Non-Governmental Organizations, Community-Based Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations, and the private sector contribute by raising awareness, advocating for policy change, mobilizing resources, conducting research, providing training, and working collaboratively with the government.
- **Development Partners:** Development partners support MoHFW in policy formulation, provide technical assistance, conduct research, and bring international experiences and best practices to ensure the robustness of the policy.
- **Private Companies/Private Practitioners/Professional Bodies/Social Entrepreneurs:** Private entities play active roles in awareness campaigns, allocate CSR funds for MHM initiatives, support training and capacity-building, invest in research and innovation, and develop sustainable menstrual hygiene products.
- **Research Institutes and Academic Institutions:** These institutions conduct research, provide expert guidance, share findings, and support training programs, contributing valuable insights to improve government programs.

In conclusion, the successful implementation of the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy relies on the collaboration and commitment of these diverse stakeholders, each contributing uniquely to create a comprehensive and effective approach to menstrual hygiene management in India.

### **Institutional Framework of Policy**

The institutional mechanism framework of the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy in 2023 is designed to ensure effective policy implementation, from the national level down to the district level. This framework is organized into key components, including the formation of committees at different levels, the manufacturing and supply chain of menstrual hygiene products, and a comprehensive disposal mechanism for menstrual waste.

- **Formation of the National Menstrual Hygiene Committee:** The framework proposes the establishment of committees at the National, State, and District levels to oversee policy implementation. The National Committee will finalize policies, guidelines, and steer the monitoring and review of policy implementation across the country. State Committees will tailor national policies to local contexts, coordinate implementation efforts, and monitor progress within their respective States/UTs. District Committees will be responsible for the district-level implementation of the policy, including awareness campaigns, distribution of menstrual hygiene products, and infrastructure development.

Importantly, adolescents and others who menstruate will be actively involved in these committees, ensuring diverse perspectives and effective implementation, especially for those with special needs or marginalized populations.

- **Manufacturing and Supply Chain:** This component emphasizes the importance of maintaining quality and safety standards throughout the manufacturing and supply chain processes.
  1. **Manufacturing:** Strict quality control measures are to be implemented to produce safe and reliable menstrual hygiene products. This involves adherence to relevant national standards and regulations, ensuring the affordability and accessibility of quality raw materials, optimizing manufacturing processes for cost-effective production, and supporting research and development initiatives for innovative products.
  2. **Procurement:** Transparent procurement processes, robust supplier evaluation mechanisms, compliance with quality standards, and training of stakeholders in the supply chain are crucial. The procurement processes should employ appropriate quality assurance mechanisms and comply with existing quality standards.
  3. **Distribution:** The establishment of an efficient distribution network, inventory management, last-mile delivery strategies, collaborations with NGOs, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are key components to ensure timely and effective distribution of menstrual hygiene products.
  4. **Quality Standard Setting and Safety:** Developing and enforcing scientifically reviewed comprehensive quality and safety standards for various menstrual hygiene products, engaging relevant stakeholders in the development process, establishing a regulatory framework, and conducting regular product testing and inspections are outlined in this section.
  
- **Disposal Mechanism:** The management and disposal of menstrual waste are addressed in this section, recognizing the challenges it poses to health and the environment.
  1. **Guidelines for Menstrual Waste Management:** The framework calls for the development of comprehensive guidelines covering awareness, education, segregation, disposal, and the promotion of sustainable solutions. These guidelines

should be integrated with existing frameworks for solid waste management to ensure effective implementation.

2. **Investment and Innovation:** Increased investment and innovation are essential for developing effective and sustainable standardized menstrual waste management systems.
3. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaboration between public and private entities is encouraged to provide sustainable menstrual waste management solutions.
4. **Research and Awareness:** Promoting comprehensive research on waste volumes, types, effective handling techniques, compliance with pollution control norms, and raising awareness through targeted campaigns are emphasized in this section.

The institutional mechanism framework outlined in the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy reflects a comprehensive and integrated approach to address menstrual hygiene management, from policy formation to product manufacturing, distribution, and waste disposal. The involvement of stakeholders at all levels ensures inclusivity and effective implementation across diverse contexts and populations.

### **Strategy For Vulnerable Groups And Humanitarian Crisis**

The draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy 2023 recognizes the unique challenges faced by vulnerable groups and those affected by humanitarian crises, emphasizing a tailored strategy to address their specific needs. For individuals in vulnerable situations, such as refugees, internally displaced persons, or those living in conflict zones, accessing menstrual hygiene products and facilities becomes particularly challenging.

The policy's strategy emphasizes key elements for menstrual hygiene management in vulnerable populations and humanitarian crises. It centers on ensuring accessibility through targeted distribution programs, establishing efficient supply chains, and collaborating with humanitarian aid organizations to reach remote and conflict-affected areas. Additionally, the strategy involves implementing educational initiatives to empower vulnerable individuals with proper menstrual hygiene practices, dispelling myths, and fostering positive attitudes towards menstruation. It highlights infrastructure development, focusing on creating essential facilities for sanitation and waste disposal in crisis-affected regions to uphold dignity and health. The policy also underscores collaboration with humanitarian agencies to coordinate efforts, share resources, and address the unique menstrual hygiene needs of individuals in crisis situations, promoting a comprehensive

and inclusive approach.

By specifically addressing the requirements of vulnerable groups and those affected by humanitarian crises, the policy aims to ensure inclusivity and equitable access to menstrual hygiene resources, acknowledging the importance of preserving the dignity and well-being of all menstruators in challenging circumstances.

### **Monitoring Framework**

The monitoring framework of the draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy 2023 incorporates essential elements for accountability and continuous improvement. Regular monitoring and evaluation are emphasized to ensure the achievement of vision, goals, objectives, and targets outlined in the policy.

The National Committee will develop specific indicators covering access to accurate information, quality menstrual products, infrastructure, facilities for hygiene management, and environmentally friendly waste disposal. Universal indicators encompass various aspects of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), including open discussions on menstruation, safe management in public spaces, effective disposal practices, allocation of sufficient funds, and the development of a nationwide system to regulate menstrual products.

The framework aims to maximize accountability among stakeholders and promote a safe, dignified, and environmentally conscious approach to MHM. Additionally, the policy includes a provision for periodic reviews, allowing for necessary modifications and enhancements to address gaps in implementation and adapt to emerging needs and priorities, particularly for adolescent girls, women, and other menstruators. The National Menstrual Hygiene Committee will guide and specify the procedures for these policy reviews at the national and state levels.

### **Communication Framework**

The communication framework of the draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy 2023 emphasizes the need to demystify menstruation, dispel taboos, and provide sustainable access to knowledge and information. It urges national and state governments, along with stakeholders, to implement a comprehensive menstrual hygiene communication strategy. This strategy aims to provide girls, women, and all menstruators, as well as their families, with information on the biological

significance of menstruation, ensuring access to menstrual products, safe toilets, and private spaces. It also addresses socio-cultural and mobility-related restrictions. Key considerations include addressing specific needs, using inclusive language, promoting behavior change, leveraging diverse communication channels, and engaging stakeholders at various levels for open discussions and awareness about menstrual hygiene.

The key target groups identified are young and adolescent girls, trans and non-binary menstruators, mothers, peers, and other influential women in the family. Secondary target groups include boys, men, teachers, frontline health workers, self-help-group members, and community members. Tertiary target groups involve key political leaders, socio-political influencers, informal networks, religious groups, neighborhood groups, trade unions, and mass media, recognizing their crucial role in creating an enabling environment for discussions and fund allocation for menstruation.

### **Key Action**

The key actions outlined in the communication framework of the draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy 2023 emphasize the development and implementation of a comprehensive communication strategy. This strategy aims to demystify menstruation, dispel myths, and ensure sustainable access to knowledge. Guidelines will be developed to cover the usage and disposal of menstrual products and personal hygiene practices. Clear, culturally sensitive messaging will address the specific needs of target groups, avoiding stigmatization. The strategy advocates for accurate and reliable information through various channels, including print and digital media, incorporating public figures and influencers.

Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) activities will utilize behavior change models to foster positive attitudes and behaviors, creating open spaces for dialogue. Evidence-based information will dispel myths, involving local influencers and healthcare professionals. Collaboration with relevant departments will integrate menstrual hygiene communication into policies and educational curricula. Community engagement through workshops and awareness campaigns will encourage comprehensive knowledge among all community members.

A robust monitoring and evaluation system will assess the effectiveness and impact of communication activities, collecting data on knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to

menstrual hygiene. Regular evaluations will inform adjustments to the communication strategy, ensuring its continuous improvement. Overall, these actions form a holistic approach to communication, aiming to break taboos, promote awareness, and establish an enabling environment for discussions on menstrual hygiene.

### **Critical Analysis**

The draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy 2023 represents a significant stride towards fostering comprehensive menstrual health management in India, embodying several commendable merits. Firstly, it prioritizes accessibility by emphasizing targeted distribution programs, efficient supply chains, and collaborations with humanitarian aid organizations, ensuring that menstrual hygiene products are readily available, particularly in remote and conflict-affected areas.

Secondly, the policy underscores education and awareness, seeking to inform and empower vulnerable groups through age-appropriate curriculum integration, teacher training, and awareness campaigns. By addressing taboos and myths surrounding menstruation, the policy aims to foster positive attitudes and contribute to breaking the silence on this crucial aspect of reproductive health.

Infrastructure development is another notable merit, focusing on creating essential facilities like sanitation infrastructure and waste disposal systems. This ensures that even in challenging circumstances, individuals have access to dignified and hygienic menstrual management.

Moreover, the draft policy promotes collaboration with humanitarian agencies, recognizing the unique challenges faced during crises. Establishing partnerships with such organizations enhances coordination, resource sharing, and the tailored addressing of menstrual hygiene needs in emergency situations.

Where on one hand the draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy 2023 offers a comprehensive roadmap for menstrual hygiene management, yet, on the other hand, it grapples with potential challenges that warrant careful consideration. A significant concern is the risk of insufficient implementation, primarily driven by resource constraints. For the policy to yield meaningful results, it is imperative to allocate substantial funds and ensure their effective utilization at both

the national and state levels. The success of the outlined initiatives hinges on securing the necessary financial backing.

Sociocultural diversity poses another formidable challenge. Regions across the country exhibit varied attitudes towards menstruation, influenced by cultural nuances and traditions. A one-size-fits-all policy may fall short in addressing the nuanced needs and perceptions related to menstrual hygiene, demanding a more context-specific and adaptable approach.

Resistance from conservative groups and individuals rooted in traditional beliefs and taboos surrounding menstruation is another potential obstacle. Overcoming such resistance demands tailored communication strategies and robust community engagement efforts. Additionally, the complexity of monitoring and evaluating the policy's impact underscores the need for a sophisticated system capable of collecting accurate data on knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to menstrual hygiene.

To tackle these demerits, an adaptive approach is crucial, incorporating flexibility in implementation to accommodate regional variations and diverse social contexts. Continuous engagement with stakeholders, strategic resource allocation, and cultural sensitivity are paramount to navigating these challenges and ensuring the policy's effectiveness in diverse settings.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy 2023 emerges as a pivotal and comprehensive framework, reflecting India's commitment to advancing menstrual health management with a nuanced understanding of the challenges and needs across diverse demographics. The policy is commendable for its multi-faceted approach, emphasizing accessibility, education, infrastructure development, and collaboration with humanitarian agencies. By prioritizing vulnerable groups, the policy recognizes the importance of inclusive and sensitive strategies, seeking to address socio-cultural taboos, dispel myths, and provide accessible and sustainable menstrual hygiene solutions. The emphasis on education, awareness, and infrastructure is poised to bring about a positive transformation in societal attitudes towards menstruation. However, the policy is not without challenges, particularly regarding resource constraints, regional socio-cultural variations, and potential resistance from conservative groups.

To ensure successful implementation, there is a crucial need for dynamic strategies, continuous stakeholder engagement, and robust monitoring mechanisms. The draft policy is a significant step towards breaking the silence surrounding menstruation, fostering a culture of openness, and promoting dignified and hygienic menstrual practices. Its success hinges on the adaptability of strategies, cultural sensitivity, and the active involvement of all stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the holistic well-being and empowerment of individuals who menstruate in India.

## References

- A Communication framework Menstrual Management, 2015, UNICEF
- Biomedical Waste Management Rules, 2016
- Draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy 2023
- Draft Odisha menstrual health and hygiene Policy,2022. PHFI-IIPHB in collaboration with UNICEF and Govt. of Odisha
- Draft Sanitary Dignity Policy Framework, 2017. Department: Women, Republic of South Africa
- Guidelines for Management of Sanitary Waste, As per Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, Central Pollution Control Board, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
- International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. 2017. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), 2015-16: India. Mumbai: IIPS
- International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. 2021. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21
- Landscape of Menstrual products in India, 2021. UNFPA and Water Aid
- Lotter, Stefanie & Parker, Sara & Standing, Kay & Khanal, Neeti & Subedi, Madhusudan. (2022). Menstrual Policy and Practice in Nepal: Insights from Dignity Without Danger Menstruation Research Network Menstruation: Policy, Rights and the Law Presentation Outline.
- Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management for Persons with Disability; Insights and Good Practices from India, 2022. UNFPA and WaterAid
- Menstrual Hygiene Management in Emergencies, UNFPA
- Menstrual Hygiene Management National Guidelines, 2015. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation Government of India
- Menstrual Hygiene Management Policy 2019-30. Ministry of Health, Government of Kenya
- National Education Policy, 2020. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

- National Health Policy, 2017. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- National Menstrual Hygiene Management Strategy 2021. Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh
- Operational Framework for Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram. January, 2014. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India
- Operational Guidelines on School Health Programme under Ayushman Bharat. April, 2018. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource & Development, Government of India
- Product Manual for Sanitary Napkins according TO IS 5405:2019 , Bureau of Indian Standards, September,2020.
- Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016

