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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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MANAGING MENSES: AN ANALYSIS OF WORKPLACE INCLUSIVITY AND REPRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Menstrual leave poses a number of concerns about the wellbeing of women, engagement in the workforce and gender equality at work. In the sense of urban women in the organised workforce, this paper will address the issue. Compared to women in the unorganised sector, their access to clean, healthy toilets at work and at home takes them to a relative advantage. Menstrual leave policies, although well intentioned, cooperate with It may have negative repercussions for gender equality and it must be cautiously deployed and will look at the negative connotations of this form of policymaking. The policy discussion has addressed critical questions related to how women's bodies should be more inclusive in the workplace. It is proposed that the intersection of gender with age, class and place in the organisational hierarchy should be taken into account by discussions on gender inclusivity. While legislation in several countries across Asia (including Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan and SouthKorea) promotes paid menstrual leave for women, the issue arose only recently in India whenFamous food app Zomato introduced "period leave" for its employees in August 2020. The paper will analyse the traditional and contemporary perspectives, resources available, need for destigmatization, role of media and alternative policies.

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CHAPTER -II

INTRODUCTION

Food delivery service Zomato has been praised for implementing a "Period leave" policy for women, both in India and globally. While the change is to be welcomed as a positive development in addressing the stigma often associated with workplace menstruation and Indian society as a whole, the question arises. It is not new to the notion of period leave. But on August 8, 2020, when Zomato declared 10 days of leave for their women and transgender workers, the ball was set to roll on the issue once again. As always, there were voices who spoke up for and against the decision. What is interesting is the view on the issue of important and influential women. Journalist Barkha Dutt tweeted, "Sorry Zomato, as woke as your # PeriodLeave decision is precisely what ghettoised women and reinforces biological determinism." We can't want infantry to enter, report war, fly fighter jets, go into space, want no exceptionalism, and want to stop for a while. For several, her comment came as a shock. After all, this is still a nation where problems such as time and menstruation continue to exist remain a huge taboo. The idea of 'period leave' is new to many because culture either refuses to understand the suffering faced by women and has to bear it or exhibits double standards of conduct when doing so. In this case, the transition to the grant cycle actually contradicts accepted regressive ideas regarding cycles and pushes

towards an equitable approach to understanding the problem of pain and distress in women. It has been well established that menstruation and other reproductive processes are generally stigmatised. We have an unconscious bias and a clear stereotype that drives our thoughts in the debate when addressing women's bodies, whether or not we know it. Menses are usually considered gross, and any interaction with (or even seeing) the menstrual blood of anyone else is something to avoid, research has shown. A 2011 study showed that just being seen with stigma-related products (such as tampons or pads) or openly speaking about one's personal interest in a stigmatised matter can transfer stigma from the products or the subject to the individual. There is also comprehensive literature describing how 'periods' for menstruators can be a stressful time. The severity of the pain and discomfort encountered by women varies from person to person, but it is a provided fact that menstruating individuals do not have a smooth time. "As Chris Williams, former executive director of the UN Collaborative Council on Water Supply and Sanitation, argued strongly in a 2012 article:" Girls suffer if they are not able to handle their menstrual cycle without pain and shame every month.

"Many women and menstruating women are not in favour of this policy because they are afraid, and understandably so, because of this policy, they will not be recruited, promoted, given a raise and so on. What was done in the past, however, need not be repeated. People's collective mentality needs to undergo a full change. It must be recognised that the principle of equality must also be pursued when making workplaces fair for both sexes. In the garb of 'workplace

equality,' let us not strengthen the same patriarchal culture that has driven women and all other menstruating individuals to suffer in silence, trying to conceal their pain and tears, lest they open their mouths and jeopardise their careers. Our bodies are not similar, and thus our needs are different. Here, the mass media has a major part to play. If it could really open up and portray the 'reality' behind menstruating bodies and experiences, by displaying the liquid as 'red' and not 'blue' on the sanitary pad, by not calling sanitary pads as 'Whisper' (further stigmatization) and by staying away from stereotypes depicting the menstruating individual being shunned by family members or sitting away from male members, it would really help to bring about change. In the true sense of the word, businesses who want their workplace to be diverse and inclusive need to recognise that they need to share in the basic needs of all workers. Menstruation has been dealt with by silence, indifference and ignorance for decades.

"While much of the language used in the policy statement by Zomato CEO Deepinder Goyal is inclusive, his" word of crucial advice "stands out for female employees:" These leaves can only be used if you are very unable to attend to work. Do not misuse these leaves or use them as a crutch to take time out for other pending duties. Daily emphasis on exercise and diet has a positive effect on every bit of your physical and mental health. Take care of yourself. The italicisation of the word "actually" suggests that when women are unable to attend work, the criterion for making use of period leave is not reached. What "actually" means in this sense is the guess of all. Goyal seems to be advising the women who work at Zomato not to exploit this policy that he has so generously implemented. They must prove to Human Resources that they are "absolutely" unable to attend work. Don't use the strategy as a "crutch," he says, telling the women working at Zomato to "take care of themselves by exercising and eating well. It seems that Goyal's treatment is to ensure that you are physically and mentally balanced, and that you do not suffer from menstrual cramps or pain. Goyal's interpretation of how menstruation functions is profoundly troubling and shows how men can usually refrain from giving guidance about how women should take better care of their bodies who have no uterus and have never had a period. It is time to resolve to grant menstrual leave from the hands of men such as Goyal. The time has come to consider seriously implementing a law that makes it compulsory for employers to give menstrual leave to women.

No uniform leave policy: It is important to note before continuing that the labour laws of India are complicated and numerous. Depending on the type of the company they are engaged in and the number of people these establishments employ, the public sector and private sector establishments are governed by the central or state government. More than 100 state and 40 central laws currently govern anything from workplace disputes to working conditions. Via these laws, there is no universal leave policy, with each state enacting a "Shops and Institutions" Act to legislate on leave issues. Employees in their Gurgaon offices are entitled to one day of received leave for every 20 days employed under the Punjab Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1958, as far as Zomato is concerned. They are also entitled to sick leave for seven days in one year. With the implementation of the new duration of leave policy, women working at Zomato are now entitled to a total of 10 days of leave a year, but they can only benefit from one day of leave a menstrual cycle.

Zomato workers in Bangalore, which will be covered by the 1961 Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, are entitled to the same number of leaves received as their Gurgaon counterparts. They are entitled, however, to 12 days of sick leave a year. Thus, women working at the Bangalore offices of Zomato will be entitled to 10 days of time leaves and five days of extra sick leave more than their Gurgaon female colleagues. There is no sick leave under the Shops and Establishments Act in Maharashtra, but there is a provision for casual leave for eight days, in addition to received leave. For Zomato's female employees in Mumbai, the period leave policy should come as a welcome relief.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Effects of Menstruation on Attitudes towards Women, Tomi-Ann Roberts, Jamie L. Goldenberg, Cathleen Power, and Tom Pyszcznski argue in their paper, "Feminine Protection": The Effects of Menstruation on Attitudes towards Women, Tomi-Ann Roberts, Jamie L. Goldenberg, Cathleen Power, and Tom Pyszcznski argue that when women's menstrual status is exposed, they are likely to "be seen as less qualified and will therefore be liked less and physically avoided". Additionally, they considered these women to be less competent and weak. Hence, perpetuating the stereotype for women in the workplace making it very difficult for women to actually ask for policy change.

Around the globe: At present the following is implemented menstrual leave policies exist in some countries, although individual companies in countries that do not have national laws may choose to implement such policies.

Asia: In Asia many countries are already practicing menstrual leave. In South Korea, according to Article 71 of the Labour Standards Rule, not only are female workers entitled to menstrual leave, but extra compensation is also guaranteed if they do not take the menstrual leave to which they are entitled. In Indonesia, women have a right to two days of menstrual leave every month under Labour Act No. 13 in 2003. In Japan, Article 68 of the Labour Standards Legislation states that 'After a woman for whom a menstrual period will be extremely difficult to work has applied for leave, the employer shall not hire that woman on the days of the menstrual period.' While Japanese legislation mandates that a woman enduring an extremely difficult menstrual period be permitted to take leave, it does not compel companies to grant paid leave. "In Taiwan, the Jobs Gender Equality Act gives women three" menstrual leave "days per year, which will not be counted for the 30" normal sick leave "days, giving women up to 33" health-related leaves "days per year. If a woman employee reaches the limited 30, the additional three days do not come with half-payments. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan have offered paid menstrual leave for female workers dating back to World War II. However, the embarrassment and shame a woman had to endure just to demonstrate that she was actually on her periods led many women to avoid taking advantage of the leave all together.

Europe: There is currently no country in Europe which has a national menstrual leave programme. As well as the WHO European policy system, Health 2020, one of the EU Member States' initiatives is to fix the health and safety concerns affecting women. It has been argued, however, that a menstrual leave policy labels all menstruating women as sick and perpetuates sexism, and that such a policy might incite or even it has been suggested, that a menstrual leave policy labels all women menstruating as sick and perpetuates sexism; and that such a policy may increase the prejudice in recruiting and promoting women. The Italian Parliament's plan to implement a menstrual leave programme in 2017 has sparked discussion in Europe about the effect of menstrual health on women in the workforce. The bill will introduce a provision requiring employers to give women who suffer extreme menstrual cramps three days of paid leave. However, the programme, close to that of Russia in 2013, was not enforced.

Africa: In Zambia, as of 2015, due to their menstrual leave scheme, known as "Mother's Day," women are constitutionally entitled to a day off each month. If this policy is refused to a female employee, she can legally sue her employer.

Famous International cooperates: In their Code of Conduct in 2007, Nike also included menstrual leave, introduced across the globe everywhere they work. Nike allows business partners to follow the rules of the code by signing a memorandum of understanding. A menstrual leave movement for female employees at Toyota was launched by the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU).

The union demanded 12 paid days of menstrual leave a year for a woman. In order to give women more flexibility and a better work climate, Coexist, a mutual interest company from Bristol, launched a "duration strategy". Coexist expects to break down the menstrual taboo.

In India: In a country where the word menstruation is met with raised eyebrows and disgust, proposing for a 'Menstrual Leave' policy will be difficult but nevertheless a much needed change in the right direction. Though it's not a recent phenomenon, India did have a mechanism for this in the 20th century in the state of Kerala for school girls. As in many other societies, in India, there is a great deal of privacy and confidentiality and a lot of shame related to one's menstrual cycle. Structural disparities and the patriarchal culture that informs women's access to paid jobs in India need to be acknowledged. A fairly prevalent cultural stigma places menstruation as 'impure' ritually. Many religions limit the access of women to sacred spaces and prohibit them from ritual participation either during their cycles or for the entire duration of their adult lives until they reach menopause. The restriction of females from Hindu temples during their reproductive years is a well-known example of this (Deepalakshmi, 2015). It is not unusual for many upper caste Hindu households to segregate women and prohibit them from entering the kitchen during menstruation. Such taboos build stigma and anonymity around menstruation, making it difficult for women and girls to speak freely even inside their communities regarding their cycles and related conditions. Discussing one's time at work would be unimaginable (although important to break taboos) for many women brought up with these taboos. The presence of taboos and stigmas that restrict the likelihood of open discussions about menstrual health is another significant cultural problem related to menstruation in India. About van Eijk et. Al (2016) found that when they have their first cycle, only 50 percent of Indian girls know about menstruation. Although sexual education is gaining ground in India with the launch of the adolescent health resource kit and associated puberty information dissemination app by the Ministry of Health in India (Ministry of Health, 2017) and many private schools initiating discussions on the subject, it is still patchy and a large majority of women still have poor access to knowledge about their own bodies and sexual health. Via advocacy, education and activism (such as the Happy to Bleed and Pads against Patriarchy campaigns), the stigma and secrecy around menstruation needs to be eradicated, but this issue is not resolved by a leave policy for adult women in the workforce. Rather, it might reinforce myths regarding menstruation if quickly and poorly applied.

Menstruation Benefit Bill: In the recent past, India as a nation has seen quite a few progressive / regressive shifts, and hopefully the progressive list will expand in the coming days. There are, however, many problems that have always been a taboo in our country, and one such problem is 'menstruation,' more commonly called cycles. An open debate is very difficult to have, as people seem to be incredibly insecure and tend to talk about it behind closed doors, they have an open debate about it. The debate on the 'Menstruation Benefit Bill' introduced by Ninong Ering, a Member of Parliament representing Arunachal Pradesh in Lok Sabha in 2018, sparked widespread debate on the need for working women to have a menstrual leave policy every month. The Menstruation Benefits Bill aimed at providing two days of paid menstrual leave per month for women employed in the public and private sectors, as well as improved facilities for workplace rest during menstruation. The benefits will also be extended in government recognised schools to female students of Class VIII and above. Nevertheless, if passed, the Bill would not in any way be path-breaking because since 1912, as a girls' school in Kerala, its students have been given menstrual leave, and since 1992, Bihar has had special leave for women for two days called 'Special Casual Leave.' Girls and women across the sector / industry / profession / job positions must be protected by the Bill and not just women working in white collar jobs. The blue, white, pink gold and all the other examples of collar workers should also be protected by this Resolution. It is important not to skew our lens when discussing / debating about the Bill and to concentrate on only one group of women as women from all sections regardless of the type of job they

are doing, they menstruate. Although the white and golden collar jobs have amenities and comfort that cannot be matched by blue collar jobs, under this Bill, the basic compensation of blue collar employees will be a step in the right direction. When formulating the bill in its entirety, it is necessary to bear in mind those medical conditions associated with menstruation such as menorrhagia, endometriosis, fibroids, pelvic inflammatory disorder and the subsequent considerations of the above described problems. It is clear that such a charged discussion subject would encourage opinions from all corners and people have different opinions. A segment of women are not in favour of this Bill because they feel that such a law would encourage workplace sexism toward them and that they would have to contend with unequal treatment in the form of hiring sexism, reduced wages, slower promotions, and less involvement than already prevalent in board meetings hence sparks controversy in this medium.

Recent developments in Indian workplace: Even Though it has mixed responses many organisations have implemented this practice where Culture Machine a media start-up in Mumbai introduced a policy of giving women leave on the First day of (their) Period (popularly called "FOP Leave") in July 2017 (Blush Originals, 2017). Culture Machine also began an online petition asking the Ministries of Human Resource Development and Women and Child Development to make FOP leave the law. It was followed by Gozoop, Soon after, the Kerala based Media company Mathrubhumi followed suit and private (unaided) schools in Kerala instituted a similar policy for teachers (NDTV, 2017) and then few others followed suit such as W&D, a feminine intimate health focused company and industry ARC, a Hyderabad-based market research firm and Zomato a famous food app in August 2020. A few other progressive companies are in talks to implement the same. It is essential that for such a law to be in strict practice, the dialogue and conversation around it need to be there and well formulated working policies as well as labour laws need to be in place. There is enough bias against women at workplace and otherwise, so for this bill to be successfully passed it is very important that a sensitive, well chalked out and carefully planned policy be incorporated.

CHAPTER –II

ORGANISATION PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

Governed by an independent Board of Governing Council, the Krityanand UNESCO Club is a Registered NGO under Societies Registration Act, 1860 with Government of Jharkhand and tax-exempt institution. At the 41st plenary meeting, On July 23rd, 2012, Krityanand UNESCO Club Jamshedpur was officially granted special consultative status as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The ECOSOC is one of 6 principal organs of the United Nations System established by the UN Charter in 1945 and serves as the central forum for formulating policy recommendations regarding international economic and social issues. NGO consultative status allows Krityanand UNESCO Club Jamshedpur to make direct contributions to the programs and goals of the United Nations by accessing and participating in the work of the ECOSOC, does support the research program for academic studies at various levels in Economic and Social development sector. Krityanand UNESCO Club, Jamshedpur conducts the research work and Internship/Summer/Winter Training Program for the student of Graduates and Post Graduates Degree Program under the organization's chapters, Research projects are led by Scholars who elaborate the proposals before the projects, each Research fellows and other student invites to write original research papers on the field report basis, which are later presented and discussed at the organization. The organization provides excellent opportunity for those students who are planning to attend graduate school in international relations, Economic and Political Development, public policy, law school and/or work in a think tank or

international organization Volunteer interns are recruited on a summer and winter for 30 to 90 days maximum to volunteer in both the Jamshedpur and Virtual (work from Home). An intern's volunteer duties generally consist of concerned research, editing, and writing. The volunteer internships are unpaid. Our faculty works on a diverse set of research areas including Foreign Policy, International Relations, Economic and Political Development, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Trade, Organizations, Political Economy and the role of governments on business.

 Facebook.com/KrityanandUNESCOclub

CHAPTER III

VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

Medical perspective: A 2012 study by Pallavi Latthe, Rita Champaneria and Khalid Khan entitled *Dysmenorrhea* states: "Dysmenorrhea (painful periods) is extremely common, and it can be severe enough for up to 20 percent of women to interfere with daily activities." In 2016, John Guillebaud, University College London professor of reproductive health, explained that menstrual pain can be as "bad as having a heart attack. "A Post in the 'Independent' by Siobhan Fenton said, "Men wait an average of 49 minutes before being treated for abdominal pain. For women, the wait for the same symptoms is 65 minutes. For women, the wait for the same symptoms is 65 minutes. The common stereotypes associated with women may also be questioned and asked if the point of 'menstruation' would be the same if men also had it. This is said to be because, because of sexist stereotypes, women are seen as exaggerating misery and being 'dramatic.'

Medical issues faced by menstruating women: According to the BMJ Publishing Group's Clinical Evidence Handbook, UK, 20 percent of women suffer from symptoms such as cramps, nausea, fever and fatigue that are sufficiently debilitating to hamper their everyday activities. Many women often experience decreased emotional control and decreased attention. In addition, Endometriosis Society India reports suggest that more than 25 million women suffer from endometriosis, a chronic disease in which period pain is so bad that women almost pass out of it. While statistics are significant, we must recognise that even one woman in a civilised society should not have to demonstrate her integrity at the cost of her well-being or find ways to "control" her cooperation. It is highly illogical to reason that such a strategy would discriminate against men because it conveniently overlooks the fact that women do not enjoy the pain caused by periods. In addition, women in India are paid much less than men, but even though they are given extra leave for a few days, their considerably lower wages would not be compensated. In fact, the World Economic Forum's 'Global Gender Gap Report' ranks India a dismal 112 out of 144 countries for parity in wages between men and women.

Economical perspective: According to a McKinsey Global Institute report on April 23, India, the world's fastest-growing major economy, could do much better if it only handled its women better. According to a McKinsey Global Institute report on April 23, the country could add up to \$770 billion, more than 18 percent, to its GDP by 2025, simply by offering women equal opportunities and including them in higher-productivity sectors will help spur such economic growth. As the contribution of women to the country's GDP is currently only 18 percent, one of the world's lowest, with only 25 percent of India's labour force being female, India's economy also has the second-largest potential to increase gender diversity in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region, the report said. The APAC region itself could add \$4.5 trillion annually to its collective GDP in 2025 if such a path were to be pursued. There is a chronic bias, Indian women don't enjoy the same rights and privileges as men. Strong preference for the male child has anyway blighted the country's gender ratio and squeezed resources available for the girl child. As pointed out by the

government's latest economic survey, there are 21 million "unwanted women" in the country today. The McKinsey report said, "Cultural traditions are still battling toward equality." This is reflected in the performance of the country on four main parameters: fair employment opportunities, access to facilities, physical protection, and legal and political representation. On these four parameters, India ranks among the lowest in a list of 18 from the APAC region. "India has a long way of moving to match the region's best performance in terms of female-to - male labour-force participation rate, maternal mortality, financial and digital inclusion, sex ratio at birth, and violence against women," the report said. And it's not just about employment: India's women could benefit from better work quality, too. Research by McKinsey indicates that 97 percent of all female employees in India are involved in the informal sector, engaged in low-paying and domestic activities. "An urgent goal is to improve the quality of employment and its remuneration and to improve the well-being of such women," the report noted.

Media and Campaigns: An online and offline initiative, Happy to Bleed, was launched in 2015 that aimed to crack the silence and stigma against publicly remembering one's time (Sanghani, 2015). It began in reaction to comments by a priest at the temple of Sabarimala reiterating the policy of the temple not to allow women of reproductive age to enter because of the fear that they could have their time. Another movement launched in Germany and then continued by the students in Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and other universities around the country, Pads against Sexism, attempted to crack the silence surrounding menstruation and counter old cultural taboos against openly discussing one's body (Sarfaraz, 2015). The famous sanitary napkin brand Whisper launched an advertising campaign against menstrual taboos (not playing sport, remaining indoors) and challenging common superstitions such as banning a menstruating woman from touching pickles. The Bollywood movie *Padman*, starring actor Akshay Kumar (a biopic of Arunachalam Muruganatham who created an award-winning low-cost sanitary pad for the Indian market), also addresses menstrual stigma. Marketing campaigns for the film feature the director and actors promoting open menstruation discussions. It is also probable that menstruation in India will continue to remain in the public discourse. In India, menstruation is likely to continue to exist in the public discourse. Following the much-publicized FOP leave institution of Culture Machine, there was intense debate in the media with some praising the change as an essential step in helping women who suffer from pain and distress during their periods, while others decrying it as a regressive step that would limit the hard-won right of women to fair treatment at work and hinder their recruitment (as companies might view them as less productive than their male peers). Interestingly, both those for the law and those against argue that it is 'normal' to have one's monthly cycle and not a source of embarrassment. The claims they make following this assertion, obviously, are different. Since the Maternity Benefits Act (2017) has recently been amended to raise maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks, there is fear that it would cause discontent among males to give females several kinds of paid leave. In the Times of India and Somya Abrol (2017) in India Today, Rachel Chitra (2017) cites many women (and men) from the private sector who condemn the proposal, claiming that it will weaken the cause of gender equality. On the influential digital platform 'Feminism in India', Mitsu Sahay (2017) makes a similar statement. Well-known journalist Barkha Dutt (2017/2020) strongly opposed the 'goofy' and 'paternalistic' strategy. Alleging that, while having her period, she covered the 1999 Kargil War, she argued that the policy would prompt a backlash and undermine those women who are trying to enter professional roles to which they have traditionally been denied access: for example, military combat. From a feminist viewpoint, taking Dutt's argument further, it could be argued that the policy promotes biological essentialism, which has been used to marginalise women socially and economically.

Sick leave v/s Period Leave: Everyone who has extreme period pain knows the deal: they're not really ill, but you can be represented as a human shell. On top of all the other related symptoms that make

functioning more of a burden, the lower stomach is a pit of agony. It sounds like a perfect excuse to stay at home from work.

What counts as 'sick' in the workplace?

In Australia, full-time employees are entitled to 10 days of paid personal, or 'sick', leave a year. If you're working part-time, let's say half a full-time worker's hours, you'll get five days of personal leave. Sadly, casuals receive no paid leave entitlements but the idea is that it's made up for with a higher hourly wage — but it often isn't. That means if you're feeling unwell enough to work, you are allowed to take a day off. Each workplace will also have their own varying policies, and you may need to present a doctor's certificate or provide an excuse. Some of the common symptoms associated with severe period pain, known as dysmenorrhoea, include: headaches, tiredness, nausea, dizziness, diarrhoea, feeling lightheaded. As severe period pain and its associated symptoms can certainly make you feel unwell, it's unlikely too many workplaces would argue against it counting as sick leave. Going to a doctor to get a certificate and advice on how to treat it might also be a great solution if you feel unsure.

Should people get extra days for period pain?

Adding to the period pain debate is whether menstrual leave extra personal leave days should be given to those that experience periods. The Victorian Women's Trust (VWT) has been campaigning for the idea for years, though it believes menstruation is not a sickness and therefore should not deplete a worker's sick day pool. In 2017, the VWT announced it was adopting a menstrual leave policy allowing flexible working arrangements or paid menstrual leave days for people needing them when menstruating. Back in 2005, the ABC reported the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) campaigned Toyota to provide its menstruating workers 12 paid days of menstrual leave a year, but was ultimately unsuccessful. It might sound like a distant hope, but other countries around the world already offer the leave. Therefore, classifying period as an illness and categorising them into sick leave makes women not actually availing them. Also a woman has her period every month, how many sick leave can she take and also if a woman actually needs sick leave for an illness and she has used up all her sick leave because of her menses, this whole situation will add more chaos to the issue hence another designated leave should exist.

Present situation: The potential barriers to the management of menstrual hygiene faced by adolescent girls and women in working environments in low- and middle-income countries. Despite global efforts to reduce women's poverty in such contexts, there has been inadequate attention to the barriers associated with water and sanitation, especially in relation to management. There is an urgent need to record the particular social and environmental challenges they may face in relation to menstrual management, to make the effects of insufficient supportive working environments for menstrual hygiene management expensive, and to consider the consequences for the health and well-being of girls and women. Despite a rising body of literature on water and sanitation-related challenges facing menstruating girls and female teachers in schools in low- and middle-income countries, there is still insufficient evidence of menstrual hygiene management by adolescent girls and women in the workplace. They need to take meaningful measures to be more respectful of women's bodies, whether organisations want to give period leave or not. It is important to take an intersectional approach, given the hierarchical nature of Indian society and Indian workplaces. Some measures can be extended to all female workers around the hierarchy, but due to the physical, Women in semi-skilled and unskilled positions require special consideration for the stressful nature of their jobs and their lack of disposable income.

Resources available in workplace: Toilets & Other Services, taking into account the unequal access to toilets in terms of class and for various occupational classes, in an intersectional way. Construction sites in India, for example, frequently lack toilet facilities. Although female engineers can manage the situation (with difficulty) by leaving

the site for extended breaks during the day, many women employees suffer without access to the toilet. The lack of sanitary public toilets is a major issue affecting women across India. Poor access to toilets in India is still a big public health issue. Around 10 percent of urban dwellers defecate in the open, according to Water Aid's 2016 report. Around 41% of urban residents still lack access to clean, private toilets (i.e. they use popular toilets with inadequate access). Women contribute extensively to the agricultural sector. Of all women working in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, 60 % work in the agricultural sector. When these women menstruate, their workplaces pose particular challenges, such as a lack of sanitation facilities, being remotely located, or having very long workdays in the fields. These in turn preclude girls and women from having the time or privacy to attend to their needs. For women working in the informal sector, including for example vendors or construction workers, their sanitation-related needs may not be perceived as a priority for employers. If girls and women are self-employed workers (e.g. food vendors in a marketplace), there may be no available public facilities. The absence of toilet facilities not only restricts access to jobs and education for women, but also increases the risk of physical and sexual harassment. A basic human right which has a direct effect on the physical health and psychological well-being of women is access to clean toilets, adequate washing water and soap and healthy, absorbent menstrual hygiene products. When toilet access is restricted, many women do not drink enough water and are thus vulnerable to dehydration, exhaustion, gastritis, kidney damage and high blood pressure. Other health hazards associated with unclean toilets include hookworms that cause diarrhoea, anaemia, loss of weight and inflammation of the urinary tract.

In urban contexts, working adolescent girls and women are often forced to live, work, and travel in over-crowded spaces, affording them limited privacy and inadequate hygienic spaces. They are heavily represented in the manufacturing industry, in the service sector, and as domestic workers. One study noted women in textile factories used discarded factory cloths, with such rags often doused in chemicals, possibly causing irritation. The home is also a workplace for many women and girls: it is estimated that 663 million people do not have access to improved drinking water globally and 2.4 billion people globally have no access to improved sanitation facilities. Women working in white-collar jobs in the organised sector have greater access to clean toilets and adequate water in their homes and workplaces, unlike women employed as blue-collar employees, janitors and cooks. Lack of access to clean public toilets, however, will be a major challenge when commuting documents from Paromita Vohra's film *Q to P* in the sense of Mumbai. During menstruation, the issue is compounded and affects females throughout class roles. Public transport is used by many young women workers in urban India (train, metro rail and bus). It is difficult in any conditions to ride by public transport with standing room only for an hour or more and to hurry to change trains or buses and is likely to greatly increase the pain encountered due to menstrual cramps. This issue appears to have a greater effect on younger/ junior women than senior managers who might own cars. If, during their terms, companies are unable to provide relatively comfortable transport for women (at least), voluntary menstrual leave could be considered. If organisations are unable to provide women with relatively comfortable transport (at least) during their periods, voluntary menstrual leave might be inconvenient. Having more toilets for women in the workplace, which are clean, well ventilated and have a daily supply of running water, is one of the most important goals of inclusivity. Workplaces need to have more toilets for women than men if room is at a premium, given that women need to use the toilet more often, especially during their menstrual cycles or during pregnancy. Women are more susceptible than men to urinary tract infections as well. Organizations requiring extended periods of fieldwork should make access to clean toilets a priority, especially for women, at field sites. Employers would need to have an intersectional viewpoint on bathroom access if all female workers had access to clean toilets. Many workplaces have different toilets for employees at various pay grades, considering conventional cultural practises around hierarchy, with managerial employees having a lower ratio of people to toilets than, say, blue collar workers.

However, since the need for clean toilets is universal, such variations are unacceptable. Every workplace needs to stock sanitary products and pain killers for women to use in an emergency, as Sahay (2017) argues. In pain control, heat pads are also useful. In certain situations, only a semi-private, quiet space is required for menstruating women to take a short break from work. Since the amendment to the Maternity Benefits Act (2017) allows organisations with more than fifty workers to provide a crèche for children and nursing mothers, the same space can be used by menstruating women for rest.

Challenges in the workplace

A social standards issue and unvoiced needs: In certain contexts, women are unable to communicate their right to water and sanitation and, thus, to positive (menstrual) hygiene environments. This is focused on the role of women in society, exacerbated by a lack of desire to become activists, their fear of losing their jobs, and physical and financial limitations that discourage people from taking independent action. Current taboos surrounding dialogue at local, national and global levels are a key obstacle to resolving the disparity in attention to the workplace. As the large body of evidence in schools has shown, both girls and female teachers are reluctant to discuss menstruation or their needs, feeling guilt, humiliation and fear of ridicule in the school setting.

The health consequences: When faced with insufficient toilets, it is not possible to avoid menstrual flow when women and girls can withhold urination and defecation. They could be at increased risk of sexual harassment when forced to shift under the cover of darkness in open spaces. A limited literature indicates that poverty affects the risk for women of infections of the reproductive tract and urinary tract infections. Additionally, many environments lack sufficient waste facilities. While some municipalities have systems for the collection of waste for burning or burial, they are located mostly in urban areas. Without such systems, the disposal of absorbents can lead to health hazards, if openly discarded in any of them, polluting the land and rivers, and blocking toilets if available.

A problem of advocacy: United Nations agencies, bilateral sponsors, states, non-governmental organisations and education ministries have started to support reducing taboos in schools. Nevertheless, such a move requires political engagement. For example, in National Education Poland, the Uganda Ministry of Education paid special attention to addressing the needs of schoolgirls and female teachers. Similarly, as the actual provision of facilities is beyond the responsibility of national governments, there is a need for commitment from private sector companies, factory owners, small-scale businesses, and the agricultural sector to address this topic, despite existing taboos.

The social, financial and health consequences of not supporting menstrual hygiene in the workplace: By not discussing them in the workplace, there are major social and financial costs for teenage girls and women. Not having a secure private location for changing used menstrual materials can lead to anxiety and stress for some girls and women, and reduce focus and productivity in turn. Instead of trying to cope, other girls and women can prefer to skip hours or whole days of work rather than attempt to manage their menstruation in difficult environments, resulting in lower productivity this influences their own profits and that of their employers in turn. Household access to water and sanitation studies have shown that there are economic advantages of access due to less time spent on illness, less money spent on drugs, and less time spent absent from school or work. The cost-benefit analysis of the Millennium Development Goals for 2012 showed that, there is a \$4.3 return on investment for every single dollar spent on water and sanitation. A comparable global costing based on the effect on the workplace of unsupportive conditions that has never been performed. However, in a four-country analysis evaluating the economic effects of sanitation in Southeast Asia, the substantive financial costs of poor workplace conditions were illustrated. There were no toilets in about a quarter of all workplaces in Cambodia, and about 14 percent of workplaces in the Philippines

had insufficient toilets. Around three percent of health stations and 74 percent of the market place in Vietnam. The study reported 13.8 and 1.5 million workday absences in the Philippines and Vietnam, respectively, with an economic loss of USD 13 and 1.28 million a year, assuming women workers were absent for one day a month due to a lack of facilities during their menstrual cycle. Further research on the health, economic and dignity-related impacts of insufficient working conditions are needed.

Identifying opportunities and solutions: Inequities faced by teenage girls and women dictate who should be responsible for ensuring suitable and inclusive workplace services. The Ministry of Education is a strong leadership organisation in the school setting. The number and types of workplaces, on the other hand, are various, with companies varying in size, location and scope, and many girls and women working in both the informal and formal sectors. Thus, it is difficult and probably not an acceptable way forward to define one institutional entity that would have ultimate responsibility. Health ministries and trade-related ministries definitely have a role to play, particularly in the establishment of occupational health and staff welfare regulations and compliance. Likewise, private businesses and employers also have an obligation to prioritise this problem and take action. There has also been some nascent private sector action, with the Water Mandate CEO highlighting the private sector's role in providing workplace water and sanitation. In addition, the World Business Council on Sustainable Development is implementing an on-the-job commitment to enforce 'access to workplace protection' at an acceptable quality level for all workers in all premises under their supervision within three years of their signature. In 2007, through the HER initiative, Business for Social Responsibility examined the needs of women employed in factories in Africa and Asia, aimed at improving women's health while also improving economic competitiveness. Local NGOs were subsequently linked to foreign companies and their factories to introduce initiatives to raise awareness of women's health at work.

Denial and glorification of suffering: Owing to their biological structure, women should not be punished. If women only have to endure their suffering in silence to 'fit' in and not be outcast, then we definitely paddle ahead of the patriarchy period. It is important to note that when we speak about workplace equality, it means equality for men and women in all working environments, and not just those who can be welcomed or rejuvenated based on convenience. This is not a decision that women make every month, so if anyone finds it hard to be at work under circumstances that are not under their control, they should actually be able to take advantage of the leave.

Gender disparity: Arguments for menstrual leave come from a role of gender equality and the advancement of the rights of women. Women's workplaces range from multinational companies to garment factories, much like men's. Many of these organisations lack adequate sanitation and clean toilets, especially in developing countries. Menstruating women and girls are more likely to take leave or drop out in these situations. The provision of fair and healthy working conditions has also been linked to more women entering the workforce, a trend which will contribute positively to any country's economy. In addition, rights-based employment strategies are expected to encourage the dilution of perceived gender differences and prejudices. We must understand, however, that organizations' employment policies are a result of the patriarchal system, a system that operates on norms and practises that favour one gender over the other. That is, there is a culture of work, standards of ethics, what can be considered as efficient or a duty are decided by cis men. It's still the world of a man, and so it's no wonder that other groups find it difficult in this society to work and be considered productive. Legislation upholding the needs and needs of oppressed groups, whether women, trans people or individuals with disabilities, is important to ensure the ongoing redefinition of the 'normal' of society. Menstrual leave won't be appropriate in a perfect world. However, before then, women's experiences would need legislative protection. If the concept of gender equity, gender inclusiveness and gender sensitisation has been further promoted by women's rights legislation

such as the Maternity Benefit Act, why not another biological mechanism called menstruation.

CHAPTER – IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Need for de-stigmatization: The Global Gender Gap Study of the World Economic Forum (2019-20) shows that India ranks 112th out of 144 countries; it ranks even worse in the category of women's economic participation (ranked at 139). The study shows that women make up just 11% of board members of publicly listed firms and 15% of research and development staff, indicating that the glass ceiling remains high and that women have had little success in breaking it. Deepika Nath (2000) indicates that women need to deal with a range of barriers to promotion, including fear that after marriage and childbirth they will not be committed to their careers or that they will not be able to travel extensively. She claims that "marital status was used to conclude the organisation's ability" Shruti Janardhan (2017) indicates that men appear to be hired over women when it comes to jobs that involve travel and field work; the latter are often asked in job interviews when they expect to marry or have children. Research by this author (2013) among women employed in the IT industry found that many could not participate in informal networking that was required to increase their visibility and social capital in organizations: some of this networking happened in the evenings and migration and dedication (2000)." While Nath's research is 20 years old, even today, her claim is valid. Over the weekends (when women were engaged in domestic work and childcare) but over smoke-breaks and long lunches which men could engage in as their domestic responsibilities did not require them to rush home? Since they could not spend more than eight-nine hours at the workplace, women tended to work through the day with minimal breaks allowing little room for building informal relationships. Based on research amongst men employed in Indian companies, Jain and Mukherjee (2010) argue that the continued existence of the glass ceiling can be attributed to entrenched patriarchal attitudes even though its existence is denied by their respondents. That their male respondents were unaware of their gender biases points to the enduring nature of patriarchy in Indian organizations. Their findings are supported by Budhwar, Saini and Bhatnagar (2005) who argue via a literature review of research on women in management that men's inability to take orders from senior women is a major source of workplace conflict and stress for women. Men's inability to take orders from senior women is a major source of workplace conflict and stress for women.

Another measure of women's marginalisation at work is the gender pay gap in India. The gender pay gap in India for 2013 was 24.81 percent, using data obtained from www.paycheck.in (Varkkey & Korde, 2013). The data also show that with seniority, age and growth in qualifications (up to Master's level), the pay gap rises. Varkkey and Korde (2013) suggest that discriminatory practises and attitudes of employers may explain this pay gap to a very large extent. In the 21st century, the participation of Indian women in the labour force decreased from 32.7 percent to 24.8 percent in rural areas and from 16.6 percent to 14.7 percent in urban areas between 2004-05 and 2009-10 (Ministry of Statistics, 2016). While the cause of this decrease has not been clearly established, the U curve theory might tentatively explain it, implying that women's labour force participation declines in the early stages of economic development, but increases as the service sector expands alongside economic advancement (Lechman & Kaur, 2015). Another theory may be that some of the factors mentioned above drive urban educated women out of the labour force: high wage gap and lower promotion rates; childcare obligations and the unavailability of flexible work choices. Experiences of discrimination, abuse and hostile work environments may also result in de-motivation. Even if the work environment is not openly hostile, in other respects it may be non-conducive because organisations have historically been built around the needs and lives of men.

Alternative policies: As argued earlier, in the case of FOP (company) voluntary leave may be given if women are relying on overcrowded public transport to travel to work. A more feasible option, however, may be 'menstrual flexibility' suggested by Australian menstruation researcher Lara Owen (2016). 'Menstrual flexibility' allows women to take time off and make up the time on other days during their cycle. The policy encourages women to function according to the normal rhythms of their bodies, Owens argues. It is less likely to cause anger among men or to obstruct women's recruitment. The supply of wellness leave to all workers will be an even more widely inclusive choice. Wellness leave acknowledges that at times when they do not qualify for sick leave, all workers will need leave. For example, during one of her menstrual cycles, a woman may suffer from intense cramps or diarrhoea or a male employee may suffer from acute stress and associated physical symptoms such as headaches, muscular pain or exhaustion. Employees may undergo medical treatments that their co-workers or superiors may not want to discuss with them. For example, in sick-leave forms or doctor certificates, female employees undergoing a medical termination of pregnancy or male employees undergoing a medical operation of an intimate nature may not wish to reveal the same. Employers should value the dignity and right of workers to resign by offering a set number of wellness leaves each year. Since women have more fertility problems than men, a limited number of additional wellness leaves per annum than men may be provided to them. Employers should value the dignity and right of workers to resign by offering a set number of wellness leaves each year. Wellness leave, however, should not be focused only on gender, but on the position and essence of the work of the employee. It may be argued that employment that is physically demanding requires more paid leave than white collar work that is carried out in the relative comfort of an office (blue collar labour or manual labour). This raises concerns as to whether different positions in one company require individualised leave policies that are not easy to answer but important to discuss in potential employee wellness conversations.

Present and future situation: Although the need for a time leave policy can undoubtedly be argued against, the problem with these claims is that they simply reinforce age-old perceptions and do little in a meaningful and inclusive way to take the gender equality debate forward. First, their examples should not be used to dismiss other women's experiences only because some women can pull off impressive feats. For example, some studies have shown that women are actually better multitaskers than men. However, this does not imply that, as a society, we should expect any woman to be able to easily multi-task or make her feel bad if she cannot do so. Secondly, there is no need for extra reasons for those who are biased against hiring women. After all, women have continued to be laid off for seeking the regulation of maternity rights. No, should we also be doing away with maternity leave? An excuse for patriarchal inequality or injustice can be just about anything. Female employees were reportedly strip-searched by their superiors in a factory in Kerala to find the "culprit" who left a used sanitary napkin in the lavatory. Third, the truth is that women vary biologically. This is exactly why it is more common for maternity leave than paternity leave. The figures are also not negligible, although it is true that periods are deteriorating only for certain women. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to create a policy that gives women the freedom to take time off for periods if they need to, while also providing them with choices such as working from home. Flexibility is crucial because women's experience of menstruation differs widely, unlike family leave policies that appear to be focused on more common experiences.

Effective implementation: It is pointless to simply design such a strategy. In order for its implementation to be successful, initiatives to increase the participation of women in the workforce and make our workplaces more gender-sensitive must be enforced. Worryingly, the participation rate of women in the workforce in the country fell from 36 percent of women working in 2005-06 to 24 percent in 2015-16. To reverse this decline, we need to urgently put in place and act on time-bound goals. This can, of course, only occur when all stakeholders realise that women are the ultimate economic accelerators. We will need to ensure access to separate male and female toilets with sanitary

napkin disposal facilities in all workplaces. Menstruation is a fully normal biological process, not an illness or a handicap. However, it can range from a slightly discomforting to a severely debilitating experience for women. Therefore, instead of requiring women to adjust to workplaces designed for men, we need to transform our workplaces to be inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all employees. This will ensure an enabling environment in which both men and women can thrive and perform up to their maximum potential. It can, however, vary from a mildly unpleasant to a seriously traumatic experience for women. Therefore, we need to adapt our workplaces to be inclusive and attentive to the needs of all workers instead of forcing women to adapt to workplaces designed for men. This will ensure that both men and women will succeed and perform to their full potential in an encouraging environment.

CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSION

Improving menstrual hygiene requirements for teenage girls and women in the workplace is advantageous for the health and economic growth of the population. It also leads to human dignity and to the pursuit of human rights. Improving expectations in the workplace such that they are supportive, and incorporating guidelines into frameworks for controlling occupational health and safety in the workplace, including. Relevant guidelines include: one, a comprehensive costing of the possible economic losses suffered by countries that provide women in the workplace with insufficient washrooms. In turn, this may enable policymakers to develop policies to regulate (and enforce) the provision of gender-appropriate facilities in offices, transport hubs, and other public spaces. Two, improved occupational documentation at country level for women in formal and informal work environments. Such studies will provide substantial justification for intervention at the level of policies and programmes. Finally, in order to help teenage girls and women with all their sanitation needs, there is a need for intensified global activism on the critical importance of providing improved workplace standards. Such advocacy can serve to break taboos over discussing how to address menstrual related barriers in workplace environments, and put pressure on the private sector, national governments and international bodies to address this critical neglected issue of health inequity for adolescent girls and women.

Recommendation: Not just for ethical purposes, women's bodies often build a more engaged and productive workforce and provide a unique opportunity in this regard. However, as part of the dedication of an employer to diversity and inclusivity and not in isolation, a policy on menstruation needs to be developed with considerable consideration and preparation. While time for rest during menstruation may be a necessity, there are several ways to ensure that. Leaving policies should, as far as possible, be trust-based and inclusive rather than exclusive in spirit, while also taking into account some of the particular challenges facing women in a patriarchal society, as well as class hierarchies that affect the unequal access of workers to water, sanitation and other services. As outlined above, the debate on the inclusiveness of women's bodies also needs to shift beyond leave to other types of support the company might provide for women. Finally, there is a risk of resistance from male colleagues, considering women's minority status in the workplace, forcing employers to take proactive action by including men (as appropriate) in inclusivity discussions.

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