

## MHM & Its Various Facets in NFHS

Ms. Anjali Tripathy<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Tridibesh Tripathy<sup>2</sup>, Prof. Rakesh Dwivedi<sup>3</sup>, Prof. Byomakesh Tripathy<sup>4</sup>, Professor Shankar Das<sup>5</sup>, Professor D.R. Sahu<sup>6</sup>, Ms. Sanskriti Tripathy<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Director- Programmes, Knowledge Management & Research, Team of India Sanitation Coalition HQ at New Delhi. Former Deputy Director of Fair Med India, Gurgaon. Former Senior Program Manager, Language & Learning Foundation, Lucknow & Former Employee of International Agencies for Development such as Catholic Relief Services & Water Aid

<sup>2</sup>BHMS (Utkal University, Bhubaneswar), MD (BFUHS, Faridkot), MHA (TISS, Mumbai), Ph.D. in Health Systems Studies (TISS, Mumbai), Homoeopathic & Public Health Expert, Visiting Professor, Master of Public Health (Community Medicine) Program, Department of Social Work, Lucknow University, Lucknow, UP, India

<sup>3</sup>HOD, Department of Social Work, Co-ordinator, Master of Public Health (Community Medicine) program, Department of Social Work, Lucknow University, Lucknow

<sup>4</sup>Vice Chancellor, Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur, Odisha, Former Vice Chancellor i/c, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, District Anuppur, Madhya Pradesh & Former Vice Chancellor of Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

<sup>5</sup>School of Health Systems Studies, TISS, Mumbai. Former Pro VC, TISS, Mumbai, Former Officiating In-Charge of Gokhale Institute of Politics & Economics, Pune, Maharashtra & Former Director, IIMR, Delhi

<sup>6</sup>Department of Sociology, University of Lucknow, Former HOD, Department of Sociology, University of Lucknow, Lucknow and Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha

<sup>7</sup>Student of Final Semester, B.Tech in Biotechnology, Bennett University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh

\*Corresponding author: Ms. Anjali Tripathy | Received: 11.04.2026 | Accepted: 04.06.2026 | Published: 05.06.2026

**Abstract:** The short article deals with the issue of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in broad sense focusing on the process of its dissemination among the masses. It builds on the largest health survey in India, the National Family Health Survey. The other scheme that the article banks upon is the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janausadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) which catalyzed the users because of its access in the cost & geographic factors through the provision of sanitary pads. The third issue that it deals with is the encouragement to go back to the basics through the use of dry, clean, homemade cotton cloth as the main vehicle in the MHM process. Primarily, the target group for MHM is the 'Menarche' group that covers the mid teen age.

**Keywords:** MHM, NFHS, SWM, PMBJP, Menarche.

### INTRODUCTION

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) constitutes three words. The first is Menstrual that deals with the anatomy & physiology of the process of menstruation. The second is hygiene that tells us to ensure that the process should follow the basic sanitary hygiene practices [1]. It is to be noted that 'Hygiea' was the daughter of Aesculapius who lived around 1200 BC was the Greek medicinal anchor whose staff entwined by a serpent is the symbol of medicine. Obviously, she was the first to behold the hygiene aspect of menstruation [2, 3]. The third word is 'management' which deals with the manufacture, distribution, use, disposal and waste management of the used products during menstruation

that basically acts as soaker of the un-coagulated menstrual blood [1].

The issue of MHM got focus with the masses when the data collected through the largest health survey in India was disseminated to the masses. The survey was the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) done in 2015-2016. As the 108<sup>th</sup> indicator of the national fact sheet, the heading under which the MHM related indicator was clubbed was 'women's empowerment & gender based violence for the age group of 15-49 years'. The indicator mentioned was 'women age 15-24 years who use hygienic methods of protection during their menstrual period'. In the footnote as the 18<sup>th</sup> footnote, the fact sheet explains the hygienic methods. It mentions 'locally prepared napkins, sanitary napkins &

Quick Response Code



Journal homepage:

<https://www.easpublisher.com/>

**Copyright © 2026 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

**Citation:** Anjali Tripathy, Tridibesh Tripathy, Rakesh Dwivedi, Byomakesh Tripathy, Shankar Das, D.R. Sahu, Sanskriti Tripathy (2026). MHM & Its Various Facets in NFHS. *Cross Current Int J Med Biosci*, 8(3), 78-79.

tampons are considered as hygienic methods of protection' [4, 5].

In the 5<sup>th</sup> round of NFHS, the heading of NFHS 4<sup>th</sup> round was divided in to two headings. The 5<sup>th</sup> round

had the heading 'women empowerment' under which the MHM indicator was clubbed. In the 5<sup>th</sup> round, the MHM indicator was the 124<sup>th</sup> indicator. The following table gives the performance of the MHM indicator for the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> round of NFHS [4, 5].

**Table 1: Performance of MHM indicators in percentage [4-6] (INDIA)**

| Survey | Urban | Rural | Total |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| NFHS4  | 77.5  | 48.2  | 57.6  |
| NFHS5  | 89.4  | 72.3  | 77.6  |
| NFHS6  | 90.7  | 75.0  | 79.2  |

The fact sheet of NFHS5 had 131 indicators out of which the MHM indicator was the 124<sup>th</sup> indicator. In NFHS 4, the achievement of the MHM indicator was 57.6% in total out of which the performance of the urban area was 29.3% percentage better than the rural area. Similarly, in the 5<sup>th</sup> round, the achievement was 17.1% better in urban area than the rural area. Overall, from 4<sup>th</sup> round to 5<sup>th</sup> round, there was 19.7% percentage improvement in the MHM indicator in the nation over a period of 5 years [4, 5].

In NFHS 6<sup>th</sup> round, the achievement is 1.6% better in 5 years period. The difference between rural and urban is less than in 5<sup>th</sup> round. In this round, the hygienic methods are described as reusable sanitary pads, disposable sanitary pads, tampons & menstrual cups. It is the 18<sup>th</sup> footnote & the 94<sup>th</sup> indicator among 101 indicators in total [6].

It is to be noted that the MHM indicator is a subset of the reproductive age group as the MHM indicator is for the age group of 15-24 years in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> round of NFHS [4-6].

### Reflection

While the urban area received better access to sanitary pads because of the high availability, the rural area users also increased by 24.1%. This is because of the widespread coverage of the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Parijojana (PMBJP) since November 2016. It actually started in 2005 as the Jan Ausadhi Scheme in 2008 & it was renamed as Pradhan Mantri Jan Ausadhi Yojana (PMJAY) in September 2015. The cost effectiveness of 'Suvidha' sanitary pads helped increase the number of users [7].

These are the quantitative aspects of the issue of MHM. Along this approach, the qualitative aspect also needs focus. The quality of the napkin material is crucial so as to not give rise to local skin issues as a result of the poor quality of the material. Management of the waste product is also crucial as these should be incinerated & not thrown out in the open. It is another issue that the used product has soaking properties & hence it can soak the ground water if thrown out in the open.

### CONCLUSION

Currently, the use of menstrual cups, thick panties that have the soaking material are in focus as these are reusable. The 6<sup>th</sup> round mentions the menstrual cups and reusable sanitary pads as hygienic methods of MHM. Through the focus of reuse of MHM products, the issue of Solid Waste Management (SWM) can be dealt with. However, the approach of hygiene in MHM has come as a full circle.

The use of clean & dry cotton cloth as sanitary pads is again catching up as these are not only friendly to the pocket but also to the environment. The new generation should be aware about the use of home-made clean & dry cotton cloth so that the local bodies at both the urban & rural areas are not burdened with the garbage issue related to used MHM products.

**Acknowledgement:** The lead author acknowledges the contribution of all the co-authors.

**Declaration:** The lead author declares that the contents in the article are suggestive in nature.

**Conflict of Interest:** There is no conflict of interest related to the article.

**Funding:** No funding was received towards the article.

### REFERENCES

1. GoI, MHM National guidelines, 2015. <https://mdws.gov.in/sites/default/files/menstrual%20hygiene%20management%20-%20%20guidelines.pdf>
2. Park K, Text Book of Preventive & Social Medicine, 27<sup>th</sup> edition, Feb 2023, Bhanot Publishers, Jabalpur & Pune, ISBN: 978-93-82219-19-4.
3. Singh M & Saini S, Conceptual Review of Preventive & Social Medicine, second edition, 2019-2020, CBS publishers & distributors Pvt Ltd, ISBN-978-93-88725-84-2.
4. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) & ICF.2017, National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), India, 2015-16: Mumbai: IIPS.
5. GOI, MOHFW, International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) & ICF. 2021 NFHS 5<sup>th</sup> round 2019-2021: India: Volume 1. Mumbai: IIPS.
6. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) 2026. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6), 2023-24: India and States/UT Fact Sheets: Mumbai: IIPS.
7. GOI, PMBJP, Janausadhi, <https://janausadhi.gov.in>