



How Menstrual Hygiene Management Facilities are Supportive to Girl Students in the School Environment in Tanzania

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Abstract: *The study aimed at examining how menstrual hygiene facilities are supportive to girl students in the school environment in selected secondary school in Dodoma city. The study adopted exploratory research design. This study employed a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion as data collection tools. A total of 29 students from four different private and public schools in Dodoma city were involved. The study found that menstrual hygiene management facilities were not supportive to girl students in the school environment. Most girls faced different challenges when they were at school; this study found out that there was insufficient water, soap, pads, scarce toilets and no private rooms. Most of them waited until the end of the session; they would not leave the class until they were the last to leave and when they leave, would wrap sweaters around their waists. The findings revealed that the selected secondary schools in Dodoma City have no private changing rooms. Female students were use conventional restroom facilities as personal changing areas. The study recommends that the government, through the Ministry of Health, should make available sanitary pads and distribute them to all secondary school girls for free. Further, the government should set aside 1% of all education budget to be used in the production of sanitary pads. The government may exempt tax to all sanitary products produced within and outside the country to reduce the price of the product.*

Keywords: Menstrual, Hygiene, Management, Facilities, Girl student, Environment

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1. Introduction

Consideration to menstrual needs is critical for global health and gender fairness. Menstrual hygiene management is a significant issue affecting women's health around the world. Inadequate knowledge and awareness about menstruation and the silence surrounding it is a risk factor for all women (Amatya *et al.*, 2018). The mothers of girls were identified as the major source of information about menstruation. However, mothers believed that teachers should be imparting this knowledge. Studies indicate that progress has been made in recent years to

bring attention to the challenges faced by school-aged girls around managing menstruation in educational settings that lack adequate physical environments and social support in low- and middle-income countries (Magayane and Meremo, 2021; Al Omari, Razeq and Fooladi, 2016).

There is a growing global movement advocating for the implementation of legislation aimed at addressing menstrual requirements. The primary objective of Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day), initiated in 2014, is to promote the normalization of menstruation on a global scale by the year 2030. In the year 2019, the Tanzanian Ministry of Health made the decision to include menstrual

hygiene management as a distinct policy concern within the updated National Health Policy. According to Gabrielsson (2018), the nation's decision to promote menstrual hygiene as a public health concern was a significant milestone. However, many girl students in low-income countries struggle to find appropriate places and facilities in their schools that support the management of menstrual hygiene, and they miss class during menstruation (Ulalam, 2014). However, there is little evidence that school menstrual hygiene management facilities impact school attendance (Magayane & Meremo, 2021).

Guya, Mayo & Kimwaga (2014) suggest that a supportive environment for MHM at schools has to be provided and that there is an urgent need for girls' toilet designs and appropriate final disposal facilities for menstrual products.

Different initiatives have been done by the government and other stakeholders like the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), Tanzania Youth Alliance (TAYOA), Population Services International (PSI) and FEMINA to ensure menstrual hygiene management is better for young girls in Tanzania. These initiatives include; creating awareness among girl students on menstrual hygiene management, providing reproductive health education and distributing sanitary pads to adolescent girls. Despite all those initiatives, Tanzania scores low in knowledge, attitude and practice on menstrual hygiene management, with some differences between rural and urban areas (Okello, et al., 2022). It has also been found that there is a weak commitment to menstrual hygiene management at the local level, especially at the village, ward, district and regional levels. This is why there is a need to do more study in this area.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

The study is guided by Feminist perspectives theory. This study is built on the theoretical framework constructed by Simone De Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1953). According to this work, women are viewed as the inferior sex, and all issues about women including menstruation are viewed as less important at all levels of society. When it comes to menstruation, Simone de Beauvoir explores how society has often viewed it as a marker of a woman's difference from men and has used it to justify treating women as inferior or less capable. She argues that the menstrual cycle has been pathologized and used as a basis for claiming that women are emotionally unstable or unfit for certain roles, including political leadership or intellectual pursuits. De Beauvoir's feminist perspective challenges these notions and argues that women should not be defined solely by

their biology or reproductive capacity. She calls for the recognition of women as individuals with agency and the right to make choices about their lives. She advocates for the liberation of women from the constraints of societal expectations based on their sex. De Beauvoir's feminist perspective emphasizes the importance of women having access to resources, education, and healthcare. Ensuring that women have access to sanitary products, pain relief, and healthcare during menstruation is a practical way to support women's well-being and autonomy.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 The concept of Menstrual hygiene management

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) refers to the practice of a woman or an adolescent girl using clean menstrual management materials to absorb menstrual blood, which can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of a menstrual period, using soap and water for washing the body as required and having access to safe and convenient facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials (UNICEF, 2021). Therefore, MHM refers to access to menstrual hygiene products to absorb or collect the flow of blood during menstruation, such as privacy to change materials, clean water, and facilities to dispose of used material (Budhathoki *et al.*, 2018).

2.2.2 Facilities in the School Environment

As reported by Sommer et al. (2016) focused on the menstrual hygiene management needs of female students in schools. The study highlights the advancements made in recent times to raise awareness about the difficulties faced by school-aged girls in handling menstruation in educational institutions that lack appropriate physical facilities and social assistance in low- and middle-income nations. In relation to the five identified priorities, this investigation revealed that, there has been a significant improvement in the body of evidence concerning menstrual hygiene management in schools (priority 1). However, the study found that there is currently a lack of globally recognized guidelines for menstrual hygiene management in schools (priority 2). Furthermore, the study observed the emergence of several advocacy platforms that are grounded in evidence and aimed at supporting efforts in menstrual hygiene management (priority 3). It has been observed that there is an increasing recognition of the importance of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in schools by governments worldwide, which is considered a priority 4. Additionally, there is a gradual integration of MHM into education systems at the national level, which is seen as a priority 5. However, it is worth noting that there is a shortage of resources allocated to support these efforts.

Ulalam (2014) conducted a study to evaluate the level of knowledge, availability of facilities, and adherence to practices related to menstrual hygiene management among adolescent school girls in Bangladesh, and its association with school absenteeism. The objective of this study was to investigate the correlation between knowledge, availability of facilities, and adherence to menstrual hygiene management practices, and the occurrence of school absenteeism during menstruation among female students in Bangladesh. The research conducted a survey of 700 schools in Bangladesh, selecting 50 urban and 50 rural clusters. The selection process employed a probability proportional to size sampling technique. A total of 2,332 schoolgirls were interviewed, and environmental spot inspections were carried out at each school to assess the availability and quality of menstrual hygiene facilities. The findings observed that 41% (931 individuals) of these participants reported being absent from school during their menstrual periods, with an average duration of three school days each menstrual cycle. In conclusion, the factors contributing to school absenteeism were identified as deficiencies in physical infrastructure, the presence of menstruation symptoms, feelings of shame and embarrassment, as well as misconceptions around menstruation. Efforts aimed at enhancing girls' capacity to effectively manage menstrual hygiene within the school setting include the provision of accessible toilets equipped with facilities for changing menstrual materials, raising awareness about menstruation prior to menarche, educating girls on strategies for managing menstruation while at school. offering resources to alleviate discomfort. These initiatives hold promise in yielding immediate health and educational advantages for students by mitigating school absenteeism.

In a recent investigation conducted by Adam et al. (2022), the focus extended beyond the mere availability of sufficient water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities. Instead, the study delved into the examination of menstrual hygiene behaviors among adolescent females in high school. The study utilized a univariate analysis approach to examine the menstrual hygiene behaviors among female students in Ghana. This investigation utilizes the Menstrual Behaviors Questionnaire as a tool for data collection. A study was conducted on a sample of 167 female students, randomly recruited from five high schools in Ghana. The average age of the participants was 14.5 years. The Findings indicated that, in spite of limited availability of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities, a significant proportion of female individuals engage in sanitary menstruation practices. Nevertheless, a considerable portion of the female participants exhibited insufficient, substandard, unhygienic, and unhealthy practices in relation to various aspects of menstrual hygiene. These included the utilization of menstrual materials (47.5%), cleansing of the genital area (70.3%)

and hands (70.9%), disposal of menstrual waste (27.7%), sterilization of menstrual materials (31.4%), and management of menstrual cramps (64.5%). Addressing this disparity necessitates a comprehensive awareness campaign within the community and the sufficient availability of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. In conclusion, the claimed obstacle of poor access to WASH facilities on the observance of good menstrual hygiene among girl students may not be as significant as portrayed in conventional literature. Consequently, it is recommended that additional research be conducted to investigate the factors that influence this phenomenon. Such studies would ideally yield a unique origin that might significantly impact the prevailing skewed viewpoints around the intersection of religion, culture, and menstrual hygiene discourse.

3. Methodology

This study employed exploratory research design to have a better understanding of the existing problem but did not provide conclusive results as suggested by Kothari (2011), and it adopted a qualitative research approach. It also adopted triangulation techniques to guide data collection efforts.

3.1 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study employed a purposeful sampling technique to choose sample units (girl students, head teachers and DEO) from the overall population. A total of 29 individuals were purposefully chosen. The secondary schools were purposefully selected in Dodoma city such as school Z, school H, school R and school J.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The study used interviews and Focus Group Discussion with a total number of six girl students from each secondary school. The study's key informants were the District Education Officer (DEO) and head teachers. The data was obtained through the application of direct observation and in-depth interviews. The data gathered was analysed qualitatively applying content analysis techniques.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

To attend and encourage the wellbeing of the respondents, the researcher applied for the ethical clearance at St John's University of Tanzania Ethical Review Committee. The research was certified as ethically compliant and ethical clearance certificate was issued to the researcher to get data collection work.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings and analysis of the study. A single research question was utilized as a guiding framework for the obtained findings.

The following research objective was stated to examine how menstrual hygiene management facilities support girl students in the school environment.

Using this as a leading objective, three other sub-objectives were mentioned to measure respondents' views.

4.1 Toilet, suitable water and soap

The objective of this sub-section was to analyze the extent to which menstrual hygiene management facilities contribute to the well-being and educational experience of female students within school settings. Limited access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities has been recognized as a prominent obstacle impeding the educational attainment of female students. Based on the findings of the Tanzania National School WASH Report (2018), it is evident that a mere 25% of schools in Tanzania have successfully adhered to the prescribed government guideline for the ratio of learners to toilets, which stipulates that there should be 20 girls and 25 boys per toilet (UNESCO, 2023).

Kumbeni, Otupiri, and Ziba (2020) have estimated that a significant number of women and girls residing in underdeveloped nations face challenges on a daily basis in obtaining clean water and soap for menstrual hygiene purposes. This difficulty is most pronounced during their monthly cycles. The researchers discovered certain factors, such as socioeconomic disadvantage and inadequate access to water and sanitation facilities, commonly observed in rural educational settings, that have a detrimental impact on the attendance of female students during menstruation. In this regard, it was observed that the toilet facilities at H and Z secondary schools were inadequate compared to R and J secondary schools. This discrepancy arose from a lack of proportionality between the number of students and the available bathroom facilities. As an illustration, one of the educational institutions included in this research had a student body consisting of 152 female individuals sharing a total of two restroom facilities. Furthermore, the absence of a door in the toilet caused discomfort among female students during their menstrual cycles.

The study identified a lack of adequate bathroom facilities as a key factor contributing to the lack of supportiveness of menstrual hygiene facilities during the observation period. Additionally, the research revealed that all restroom facilities consisted of pit latrines. The results indicate that a lack of adequate toilet facilities was seen in two of the

four schools under study, namely H and Z secondary schools. It was found that all the available toilet facilities in these schools were in the form of pit latrines. At least two secondary schools, namely R and J, possessed bathroom facilities. During Focus Group Discussion with the students, one of the girls from Z secondary school reported that:

“menstrual hygiene management facilities are not supportive because of scarcity of toilets. We have more than a hundred girl students but we have only two toilets. Our school has a scarcity of toilets with clean water and soap. We get water only twice per week and there is only one water tank for all students 152 girl students from form one to form four. Most girls always return home when they are in menstruation period” (Interview on 14/07/2023 Z secondary school).

Another interviewee reported that:

“menstrual hygiene management facilities are not supportive because the girl's toilet is near the boy's toilet, it is separated by a wall and there is no secret at all. We feel ashamed if a girl stains her skirt with blood when she is menstruating” (Interview on 14/07/2023 Z secondary school).

During the interview with the students, one of the girls from H Secondary School reported that:

“menstrual hygiene management facilities are not supportive because there is inadequate water and hand washing facilities in the toilets. There are times when the toilets become so dirty in a such a way you cannot be able to use them to clean ourselves when we are menstruating” (Interview on 24/07/2023 H Secondary School).

The study conducted by WaterAid in 2018 brought attention to the correlation between insufficient management of menstrual hygiene and decreased attendance rates among female students. The presence of inadequate and insufficiently maintained facilities has been found to be correlated with higher rates of absenteeism and student attrition. Female individuals who experienced limited availability of appropriate sanitation facilities were found to have a higher probability of being absent from

school during their menstrual cycles. In the context of Tanzania, it has been observed that female students might benefit from additional knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene management (MHM), and it is recommended that this material be incorporated into the school curriculum. Furthermore, according to TAWASANET (2015), schools face significant issues related to the scarcity of soap and hand washing facilities, inadequate privacy in bathroom facilities, and the absence of freely available sanitary pads to address emergency needs. Additionally, Guya, Mayo, and Kimwaga (2014) propose the provision of a conducive atmosphere for menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in educational institutions. They emphasize the pressing requirement for girls to have access to user-friendly toilet facilities and proper disposal methods for menstrual products.

According to available data, it has been shown that the absence of sufficient bathroom facilities, clean water, and soap has a direct correlation with increased rates of absenteeism among female students during their menstrual cycles. This can be attributed to the discomfort experienced by these students in the school environment. The presence of soap, sufficient toilet facilities, and access to water in educational institutions has been identified as factors that positively influence the likelihood of experiencing improved menstrual hygiene management (MHM). According to student reports, the adequacy of menstrual hygiene management facilities was found to be lacking due to insufficient school restrooms and a lack of soap. As a coping mechanism, students residing in close proximity to their educational institution retreat to their residences in order to seek solitude and engage in personal hygiene practices. Hence, the results underscore the significance of implementing comprehensive strategies for managing menstrual hygiene. These strategies should encompass provisions for adequate toilet facilities, clean water, and soap. Such provisions are crucial for maintaining proper hygiene during menstrual product changes and personal cleansing. Additionally, these strategies contribute to the overall well-being and educational opportunities for girls.

4.2 Private room and waste disposal facilities

The objective of this subsection was to analyze the ways in which menstrual hygiene management facilities contribute to the well-being and educational experience of female students within school settings. The objective of the study in this particular sub-section was to investigate the accessibility of private rooms and waste disposal facilities for the purpose of implementing menstrual hygiene management (MHM), with a specific focus on girls. The provision of private rooms and waste disposal facilities plays a crucial role in the effective management of menstruation within the school setting. The provision of

private changing rooms specifically designated for female students can contribute to enhancing their comfort levels in attending school and engaging in academic activities. This arrangement affords females the option to discreetly address their personal needs, such as changing and managing their hygiene during menstruation (Amatya et al., 2018). Waste disposal facilities play a crucial role in promoting the well-being of individuals during menstruation by ensuring comfort, minimizing the risk of infection, and mitigating unpleasant odors. In order to effectively engage in Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), it is crucial to have changing facilities that are equipped with separate areas for girls' and boys' bathrooms, ensuring sufficient space for the proper management of menstrual materials during the menstrual cycle (Al Omari, Razeq, and Fooladi 2016). According to House, Mahon, and Cavill (2012), it is imperative for educational institutions to ensure the provision of sufficient sanitary products to facilitate proper hygiene practices, including washing, changing, and appropriate disposal of menstrual waste. According to a recent investigation undertaken by Atlaw et al. (2022) on behalf of the Netherlands Development Organization, it was shown that the school setting in four districts located in southern Ethiopia does not provide a suitable atmosphere for the effective management of menstrual hygiene. This is primarily due to the absence of private facilities for the purpose of changing menstrual pads, a deficiency observed in almost 90% of the schools examined.

Conversely, the results indicate that the chosen secondary school in Dodoma City lacks a dedicated private changing facility. Female students were use conventional restroom facilities as personal changing areas. This section examines the findings from J Secondary School, which indicate the lack of menstrual hygiene management facilities within the school premises. During Focus Group Discussion with the students, one of the girls from J secondary school reported that:

“there is no private changing room; we always use the toilet as an alternative to a changing room. Private room helps all girls to feel confident and self-esteem during menstruation period” (Interview on 12/05/2023 J secondary).

During the interview, one girl from Z secondary school reported that:

“our school has no private rooms for changing used pads...there are no dustbins... I always put a used pad in the bag and mix them with my exercise books until I return home. Private room is good for us because

it will help us to go and change freely even during emergency days”
(Interview on 14/07/2023 Z secondary school).

Additionally, the research findings indicate that due to the absence of a designated private space for changing menstrual products within the school premises, female students are compelled to resort to using two separate pieces of menstrual products during their menstruation period. The situation is causing significant discomfort for the individuals involved. A female student from Z Secondary School's environmental sanitation, hygiene, and water supply program expressed the following statement:

“menstrual hygiene management facilities are not supportive because there are no private rooms and scarce waste disposal facilities like bins, I use two or three pieces of pads at once so that I do not bother until when I come home” (Interview on 14/07/2023 Z secondary school).

During the interview with the Headmaster from H Secondary School reported that:

“menstrual hygiene management facilities are not supportive because there are no private rooms... Students use the toilet as a private changing room... I encourage the government to build even a single room for each school in Dodoma City as they do to build the laboratory; I think it will be better for girls to be comfortable when they are in menstruation period” (Interview on 24/07/2023 H Secondary School).

The results bear resemblance to the research conducted by UNICEF (2018), which indicates that the availability of private rooms or designated spaces within educational institutions can offer menstruating individuals a secure and pleasant setting to attend to their menstrual requirements, including the changing of sanitary products and alleviating any associated discomfort. Effective waste management systems, encompassing the provision of sanitary waste containers within toilet facilities, play a pivotal role in facilitating the clean disposal of utilized menstruation products. It is imperative to ensure the regular emptying and effective management of these bins in order to mitigate the occurrence of unpleasant odors and the spread of illnesses. Moreover, this observation is substantiated by Pillitteru's (2012) study conducted in Malawi, which highlights the persistent issue of inadequate disposal of discarded menstrual materials within numerous public

educational institutions. As a consequence, the majority of female students within educational institutions opt to discard their sanitary pads or other menstrual products in solid waste receptacles or rubbish bins, occasionally resorting to disposing of them in close proximity to their school premises.

Kur and Kur (2018) conducted a study in Indonesia which revealed that restroom facilities in the region suffer from a lack of appropriate disposal receptacles for old sanitary pads. Furthermore, there is a notable absence of hand washing facilities specifically designed to cater to the menstrual hygiene needs of adolescent girls. In line with the findings of Atlaw et al. (2022), their research indicated that female students were compelled to transport used absorbents to their residences due to the absence of waste management infrastructure and dedicated restroom facilities for girls in schools. The significance of gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, which encompass appropriate waste disposal methods for menstrual hygiene products, was underscored in the research conducted by UNICEF (2021). According to UNICEF (2021), the provision of secure and confidential environments for girls to address their menstrual needs is crucial in upholding their dignity and mitigating the likelihood of school abandonment.

This suggests that female students encounter challenges while menstruating inside a school setting. According to the interview, a student admitted to temporarily storing used pads in her backpack alongside exercise books due to the absence of disposal bins for such items in the school restrooms. In an additional focus group discussion (FGD), a student elucidated her personal encounter with the practice of utilizing multiple sheets of paper simultaneously to minimize disruptions till she returns home. This phenomenon results in a decrease in self-assurance and induces feelings of worry when she is situated within the educational environment.

4.3 Menstrual products (sanitary pads, clothes, napkins and others

The objective of this sub-section was to analyze the ways in which facilities for managing menstrual hygiene contribute to the well-being and educational experience of female students within school settings. The objective of this study was to investigate the extent to which menstrual hygiene management facilities contribute to the support of female students in the application of menstrual hygiene management. By implementing the provision of sanitary pads in schools, educational institutions can effectively guarantee equitable access to indispensable menstrual products for all female students, thereby mitigating the risk of absenteeism resulting from menstruation-related challenges. In addition, educational institutions have the

capacity to establish secure and nurturing settings for female students during the menstrual cycle. The frequency at which menstruation materials are replaced is contingent upon the availability of absorbent resources. The survey revealed that a significant proportion of female students experienced a shortage of access to menstrual pads, both within the school environment and within their households. Craft and Fisher (2012) conducted a study in Uganda, which found that the frequency of changing sanitary materials in schools was typically at least thrice a day. This was attributed to inadequate hygiene conditions, as well as a dearth of privacy and proper facilities for the disposal of spent materials.

The project receives assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the year 2023. Girls in several regions over the globe encounter many obstacles pertaining to menstruation, encompassing limited availability of sanitary items and inadequate access to hygienic facilities. Bolarinwa's (2017) study examines the significance of ensuring access to sanitary pads that are both of superior quality and reasonably priced. Sanitary pads facilitate successful and comfortable menstrual management for individuals. In educational institutions, it is imperative that essential resources and services, such as vending machines, school clinics, or designated staff, are readily available and easily accessible.

The research findings indicate that female students experience apprehension around menstruation during their time at school. Individuals experience apprehension due to the potential presence of blood stains on their attire, the prospect of being subjected to altered perceptions, or the risk of encountering social censure from their peers. When a girl is in class and experiences the onset of her menstrual period, she may feel a sense of fear and a subsequent decline in her ability to concentrate. During the focus group session including students, a female participant from Z Secondary School conveyed the following information:

“menstrual hygiene management facilities are not supportive in a school environment because we have no money to buy it... I use a piece of cloth during my menstrual period... I always thought about my period and lost my attention to the teacher because of fear” (Interview on 14/07/2023 Z secondary school).

Another girl reported that:

“menstrual hygiene management facilities are not supportive because there is a time we did not have sanitary pad which is more helpful

than other... I feel much more comfortable when I use sanitary pad...I am usually given only two packages of sanitary pads per year, one package for the first term and another for the second term which is not enough for me” (Interview on 14/07/2023 Z secondary school).

The research indicates that the experience of poverty hinders girls' ability to adequately manage their menstrual cycles. For example, girls frequently express a preference for commercially accessible pads as their chosen means of controlling their menstrual cycle. However, financial constraints impede their ability to acquire these products. Conversely, the academic performance of several pupils may be influenced by factors such as low literacy levels and the socio-economic background of their families. The research findings indicate that government secondary schools lack a dedicated budget allocation for addressing menstrual hygiene management (MHM) concerns. There exist additional budgetary allocations, such as the health budget, which currently falls short in providing adequate funding for the procurement of sanitary pads to cater to the needs of all students. What are the functions and responsibilities of the educational institution? In the event of an emergency, a limited quantity of sanitary pads is procured, which becomes insufficient due to the higher student population. During an interview, a female student from Z Secondary School expressed the following statement:

“menstrual hygiene management facilities are not supportive in the school environment because if the school does not provide sanitary pad...it costs money... my family cannot buy every month... I just find an old piece of cloth and wear...that is uncomfortable for me” (Interview on 14/07/2023 Z Secondary School).

During the interview with the Headmaster from Z Secondary School, it was reported that:

“sanitary pads are not enough for all students...there is a month they get and there is a month they miss... sometimes they ask for sanitary pads and we find they are not available... they always decide to go back home and definitely they will classes” (Interview on 14/07/2023 Z Secondary School).

During Focus Group Discussion with the students, one of the girls from H secondary school reported that:

“not supportive at school environment...I am not sure if I can get female towels...sometimes we are given a towel when we stain school uniform... I stay at home until my menstrual period ends” (Interview on 24/07/2023 H secondary school).

The research findings indicate that adolescent females encounter challenges during menstruation due to inability to change pads consistently as required. They either change once or not change at all. This section examines the findings from Z Secondary School, indicating the lack of menstrual hygiene management facilities within the school premises.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on this study's findings, it was established that menstrual hygiene management facilities were not supportive to adolescent girls in school environments. There was no private changing room for all secondary, Scarcity of toilets, inadequate supply of water, and an absence of washing soap. Inadequate facilities around the school environment contribute to poor menstrual hygiene management in adolescent girls which leads to poor attendance because they are not comfortable during their menstrual period. The presence of MHM facilities contributes to improved school attendance, better health, enhanced psychological well-being, and empowerment. Therefore, schools and policymakers prioritize and invest in MHM facilities to ensure that all girls have an equal chance to succeed in their educational journey and beyond.

5.2 Recommendation

1. Recommendation for the policymakers

The report proposes that policymakers should implement a directive mandating all local councils to allocate 5% of their annual revenue towards the provision of sanitary pads for secondary schools. It is imperative for the Ministry of Education to incorporate menstrual hygiene management as a dedicated subject within the curriculum.

2. Recommendation for government

The study suggests that it would be beneficial for the government, specifically the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), to manufacture and provide sanitary

pads to all female students in secondary schools without charge. I additionally advocate for the allocation of 1% of the total education budget by the government towards the manufacturing of sanitary pads, as well as their gratuitous provision to students. In order to mitigate the cost of sanitary products, the government has the potential to grant exemptions for both domestically and internationally manufactured items. It is advisable to devote funding to educational institutions in order to facilitate research on menstrual hygiene management and the provision of related facilities.

3. Recommendation for NGOs

The study suggests that it would be beneficial for well-established non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as NAMTHAMINI and NASIMAMA NA BINTI, to provide material and financial support to the government by facilitating the free distribution of sanitary pads. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should consider the inclusion of girls' restrooms equipped with water and doors, the establishment of private changing rooms and handwashing facilities, and the implementation of educational initiatives such as health clubs and seminars to provide girls with comprehensive knowledge on menstrual hygiene management (MHM).

4. Recommendation for schools

The report proposes that educational institutions should prioritize the establishment of a dependable water supply, provision of appropriate receptacles for the disposal of spent menstruation products, availability of soap, maintenance of hygienic restroom facilities, and provision of private spaces. Additionally, it is crucial to implement robust oversight and conduct routine inspections of restroom facilities on a daily basis.

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