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Exploring the knowledge on hygiene management practices among adolescent girls

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Abstract

The present study aims to assess the existing knowledge, attitude, and practices of girls regarding personal hygiene management practices. The study was conducted in Haryana, specifically in Hisar district, with a focus on two randomly selected girls' colleges: I.C. College of Home Sciences, CCSHAU, Hisar, and Government Girls College for Women, Hisar. A total of 100 respondents (50 from each college) were selected to evaluate their awareness and practices in the areas of personal hygiene. Data were collected using a knowledge inventory designed to measure the girls' understanding and knowledge towards personal hygiene management. The findings from this research are expected to inform the development of educational interventions aimed at improving hygiene practices among young women.

Keywords: Yucatec maya, traditional medicine, plant use, herbalist

Introduction

Hygiene management plays a critical role in the overall health and well-being of individuals, particularly in the prevention of infectious diseases and the promotion of a healthier living environment. For young women, proper hygiene practices are not only essential for personal health but also contribute to their academic, social, and professional well-being. Knowledge about hygiene management, therefore, serves as a foundation for adopting appropriate practices that safeguard against a range of preventable health issues.

The knowledge aspect of hygiene management refers to the understanding and awareness an individual possesses regarding proper hygiene practices and their significance. Knowledge in hygiene encompasses multiple dimensions, including personal hygiene, food hygiene, domestic hygiene, and environmental hygiene. Each of these areas is fundamental in fostering a clean and healthy lifestyle. Personal hygiene involves practices that individuals perform to maintain cleanliness and prevent the spread of germs, such as bathing, hand washing, dental care, menstrual hygiene, and proper grooming. Girls, particularly in their adolescence, may face challenges in maintaining personal hygiene due to lack of awareness or access to resources. A strong knowledge base regarding personal hygiene is essential for self-care, as it reduces the risk of infections, skin diseases, and other hygiene-related issues.

Despite the importance of these aspects of hygiene, a gap often exists between the theoretical knowledge of hygiene and the actual practices implemented in daily life. Several factors can contribute to this knowledge gap, including cultural beliefs, socio-economic status, education levels, and access to proper resources. Often, individuals may possess basic knowledge of hygiene but fail to apply it due to misconceptions or lack of motivation. The role of education in closing this knowledge gap is critical. By increasing awareness about the significance of hygiene and providing practical guidance on how to adopt these practices, it is possible to empower girls to make informed decisions that positively impact their health and the health of those around them.

Therefore, the study seeks to assess the existing knowledge of hygiene practices among college-going girls in Haryana. Understanding their current knowledge levels will help in identifying gaps and areas where educational interventions are needed. Moreover, it will highlight the effectiveness of existing educational programs or media packages in improving hygiene awareness and practices. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that young women are not only aware of the importance of hygiene management but also equipped with the necessary

skills and attitudes to implement these practices in their daily lives, fostering a healthier future generation. Therefore, present study was done with following objectives

1. To assess the level of knowledge among adolescent girls regarding personal hygiene management
2. To categorize the knowledge of respondents based on their awareness of the importance and practices related to personal hygiene management.

Methodology

Locale of the study

The present study was carried out in Haryana state.

Sampling procedure

(a) Selection of area

From Haryana state Hisar district was selected purposively. Two girl’s college viz. I.C. College of Home Sciences, CCSHAU, Hisar and Government Girls College for Women, Hisar were selected randomly.

(b) Selection of respondents

From the selected colleges a sample of 100 respondents (50 from each college) was taken randomly to assess existing knowledge, attitude and practices of girls on hygiene management practices.

Knowledge: According to Wikipedia (2017) [5] Knowledge is a familiarity, awareness, or understanding of someone or something, such as facts, information, descriptions, or skills, which is acquired through experience or education by perceiving, discovering, or learning. Change in knowledge refers to the difference between the knowledge regarding various dimensions of hygiene management practices possessed by the respondents before and after the exposure of media package. For obtaining the knowledge scores, knowledge inventory was prepared for all the four dimensions i.e. personal, food, domestic and environmental hygiene with their importance. Scores 0 and 1 was assigned for no and yes.

- **Personal hygiene and its importance:** Twenty-nine statements for personal hygiene and eleven statements for its importance were made. Following scores were assigned

Categories	Score
Personal hygiene	
Low (1-10)	1
Medium (11-20)	2
High (21-29)	3
Importance of personal hygiene	
Low (up to 3)	1
Medium (4-7)	2
High (more than 8)	3

Review of Literature

Lal and Kavitha (2013) [3] illustrated that there is no relation between knowledge and personal hygiene practices in the public, even at the higher levels of education. In addition, it is vital to increase public awareness of personal hygiene practices, especially, among adolescent people in schools. Furthermore, it is crucial to increase the focus on the effects of media, which increases the level of knowledge at the community level, and encourage the personal hygiene behaviors in daily life routines among the Warangal district

population.

Tan *et al.* (2013) [4] showed that the respondents had basic knowledge on personal hygiene practices, mainly on hand washing (30.7%) and glove use (18.7%). The food handlers (11%) also demonstrated their knowledge on other good personal hygiene practices that were related to the use of hair restrain/cap/apron, keeping tidy hair/ clean nails/ clean hand, no bare hand contact with food, not wearing ring/jewelry, no smoking, tidy/clean attire and typhoid injection.

Bashtawy (2015) [1] found that the prevalence of cleanliness and neatness among school children was 76.7 percent. Furthermore, these improved with age. Poor oral hygiene (47.6%) and not washing hands after eating (47.1%) followed by unkempt hair (44%) were the main types of poor personal hygiene. Health promotion programmes and health education lectures should be implemented for children and their families. School nurses, school staff and parents also have an important role in teaching the children how to practice good personal hygiene.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-personal profile of the respondents

N=100

Sr. No.	Variables	Frequency	Percentages
1	Age (in years)		
	Up to 20	67	67.0
	20-23	21	21.0
	Above 23	12	12.0
2	Caste		
	General	50	50.0
	Scheduled Caste	24	24.0
	Backward Classes	26	26.0
3	Education (graduation)		
	Graduation 1 st year	32	32.0
	Graduation 2 nd year	25	25.0
	Graduation 3 rd year	18	18.0
	Graduation 4 th year	18	18.0
	Post Graduate	8	8.0
4	Family Education Status		
	Low (3-8)	12	12.0
	Medium (9-14)	57	57.0
	High (15-20)	31	31.0
5	Family size		
	Up to 4 members	25	25.0
	5-6 members	40	40.0
	More than 6 members	35	35.0
6	Family type		
	Nuclear	62	62.0
	Joint	38	38.0
7	Social participation		
	Nil participation	66	66.0
	Member of a social group	34	34.0

The socio-personal profile of the respondents reveals key demographic and background characteristics that provide context for understanding their knowledge of hygiene management practices. The age distribution indicates that the majority of the respondents (67%) were up to 20 years old, followed by 21 percent in the age group of 20-23 years, and 12 percent above 23 years. This suggests that most participants were in the early phase of their higher education.

In terms of caste composition, exactly half (50%) of the respondents belonged to the General category, while 26 percent were from Backward Classes and 24 percent from Scheduled Castes, indicating a fair representation from various social backgrounds. Regarding educational status, the largest group of respondents was from Graduation 1st year (32%), followed by 25 percent from 2nd year, and an equal distribution (18% each) from 3rd and 4th year. Only 8 percent of the participants were pursuing postgraduate studies, reflecting a predominantly undergraduate sample.

Family education status was categorized into three levels: low, medium, and high. The majority of respondents (57%) came from families with a medium level of educational background, followed by 31 percent from highly educated families and 12 percent from families with low education levels. This indicates a moderate to strong educational influence in most respondents' households.

As for family size, 40 percent of the respondents belonged to families with 5-6 members, 35 percent came from larger families with more than 6 members, and 25 percent from smaller families with up to 4 members. This variation reflects a mix of nuclear and extended family structures. Supporting this, 62 percent of the respondents lived in nuclear families, while the remaining 38% lived in joint family systems.

Lastly, in terms of social participation, a significant proportion (66%) reported no involvement in social groups or activities, whereas 34 percent were members of a social group. This data highlights limited community engagement among the majority of the girls, which may influence their exposure to health and hygiene awareness programs.

Economic profile of the respondents

Annual income of the family

It is evident from the Table 2 that majority of the respondents (70%) has family income above Rs. 4 lacs, which was followed by the range of Rs. 2 lacs to Rs. 4 lacs (16%), and below Rs. 2 lacs (14%) respectively.

Family occupation

It is apparent from the Table 2 that more than half of respondents' family members (57 %) were in service, followed by business (29 %), and less than one fifth of them (19 %) were engaged in farming as their family occupation.

Table 2: Economic profiles of the respondents

N =100		
Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Annual income (in rupees)		
Below Rs. 2 lacs)	14	14.0
Rs. 2 lacs to Rs 4 lacs)	16	16.0
Above Rs. 4 lacs)	70	70.0
Family occupation		
Farming	19	19.0
Service	57	57.0
Business	29	29.0

The economic profile of the respondents reveals significant insights into their family income and occupational background. A large majority of the respondents (70%) belonged to families with an annual income of above ₹4 lakhs, indicating a relatively higher economic status for most participants. In contrast, 16 percent of the respondents reported a family income between ₹2 to ₹4 lakhs, while only

14 percent belonged to families earning below ₹2 lakhs annually. This distribution suggests that a substantial proportion of the respondents came from financially stable households. In terms of family occupation, the data shows that service was the predominant source of income for 57 percent of the families, reflecting a strong presence of salaried employment in the sample. Business was the second most common occupation, accounting for 29 percent of the respondents' families, followed by farming, which was the primary occupation for 19 percent of the families. This occupational spread indicates a diversified economic base, with a mix of traditional and modern livelihood sources among the respondents' households.

Table 3: Material possession by the respondents

(N = 100)			
Sr. No.	Variables	Frequency	Percentages
1	Domestic items		
	Cooler	99	(99.0)
	Gas stove	100	(100.0)
	Refrigerator	100	(100.0)
	Sewing machine	88	(88.0)
	Electric iron	92	(92.0)
	Geyser/gas geyser/ electric rod	99	(99.0)
	Washing machine	98	(98.0)
	Pressure cooker	100	(100.0)
	Mixer, juicer, grinder	91	(91.0)
	Electric milk churner	26	(26.0)
	Air Conditioner	72	(72.0)
	Heater	53	(53.0)
	Induction chulha	38	(38.0)
2	Transportation items		
	Scooty/Bike	100	(100.0)
	Cycle	59	(59.0)
	Car/Jeep	79	(79.0)
	Tractor	21	(21.0)
3	Communication items		
	Television	97	(97.0)
	Telephone/mobile	100	(100.0)
	Computer	37	(37.0)
	Laptop	76	(76.0)
	Internet	87	(87.0)

The data on household possessions reflects the socio-economic status and modern amenities available to the respondents. A wide range of domestic, transportation, and communication items were reported, indicating that most respondents belonged to well-equipped households with access to modern facilities. Among domestic items, essential appliances such as gas stoves, refrigerators, and pressure cookers were present in 100 percent of the households, highlighting the widespread use of basic kitchen utilities. Similarly, geysers or electric rods (99%), coolers (99%), and washing machines (98%) were commonly available, suggesting a high level of comfort and convenience in daily household chores. Other frequently found items included electric irons (92%), mixer/juicer/grinders (91%), and sewing machines (88%). However, ownership of some items was relatively lower, such as electric milk churners (26%), induction cooktops (38%), and heaters (53%). Air conditioners were present in 72 percent of the households, reflecting a good standard of living for a substantial portion of the respondents. In terms of transportation, all respondents reported access to a two-wheeler (Scooty/Bike), demonstrating complete mobility within the group. A

significant number also had access to cars or jeeps (79%), while cycles were owned by 59 percent of respondents, indicating both modern and traditional means of transportation. Tractors were present in 21 percent of the households, which may reflect rural or semi-rural backgrounds and engagement in farming. Under the category of communication items, mobile phones or telephones were owned by all respondents (100%), showing full connectivity and access to communication. Television sets were present in 97 percent of households, laptops in 76 percent, and internet facilities in 87 percent, signifying strong access to both entertainment and information technology. However, only 37 percent reported having desktop computers, indicating a preference for more portable digital devices like laptops and mobile phones.

Overall, the high prevalence of these domestic, transport, and communication assets suggests that the majority of the respondents come from economically stable and modern households, which may positively influence their access to information and awareness about hygiene management practices.

Existing knowledge of the respondents about hygiene management practices and its importance

Bloom *et al.* (1956) [2] defined knowledge as those behaviour and test situation, which emphasize the remembering either by recognition or recall of ideas, material and phenomenon. It was measured with the help of knowledge test developed in consultation with trainers, subject matter specialist and concerned literature. Change in knowledge was calculated on the basis of change in frequency and percentages obtained at pre and post-exposure.

Data in Table 6 highlights the existing knowledge of the respondents about personal hygiene management practices and its importance. Overall existing knowledge of the respondents was assessed as the respondents were asked various questions regarding personal hygiene and its importance. Further results showed that the existing knowledge of respondents, which reveals that 68 percent of the respondents had low knowledge level followed by medium knowledge level (27%) and high knowledge level (5%) respectively.

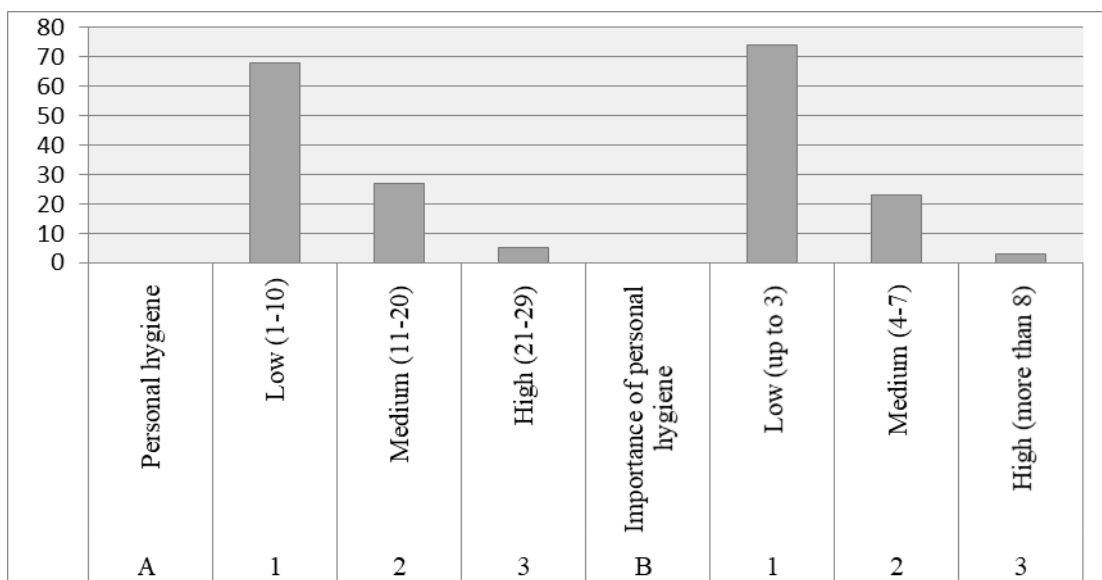
Regarding importance of personal hygiene, nearly three fourth of the respondents (74%) had low knowledge level which was followed by medium knowledge level (23%) and high knowledge level (3%) respectively.

Table 6: Existing knowledge level of the respondents about personal hygiene management practices and its importance

N = 100

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentages
A	Personal hygiene		
1	Low (1-10)	68	68.0
2	Medium (11-20)	27	27.0
3	High (21-29)	5	5.0
B	Importance of personal hygiene		
1	Low (up to 3)	74	74.0
2	Medium (4-7)	23	23.0
3	High (more than 8)	3	3.0

In summary, nearly seventy percent of the respondents were having low to medium knowledge level regarding personal hygiene and nearly three fourth of them were having low knowledge about importance of personal hygiene.



Conclusion

The study concludes that although college-going girls in Haryana possess a fair level of knowledge regarding hygiene practices, there remains significant scope for improvement. The integration of standardized print media as an educational intervention has the potential to enhance awareness and encourage the adoption of healthier hygiene behaviors. Continued efforts in this direction can contribute meaningfully to the health and well-being of young women and, by extension, to public health at large.

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