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**AN INSIGHT TO MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AND PRACTICES AMONG  
ADOLESCENT GIRLS AGE ABOVE 15 YEARS IN TANGALLE EDUCATIONAL  
DIVISION**

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**ABSTRACT**

Menstruation is an important occasions for girls in Asian region and there are major challenges. Adolescent reproductive health is greatly influenced by various myths, beliefs and attitude toward menstruation. The objective was to describe menstrual hygiene and practices among 384 adolescent girls over 15 years in a selected school in Tangalle Educational division. A descriptive cross-sectional study was done using pre tested structured interviewer administered questionnaire among post-menarchal school girls. Data was analyzed by using SPSS. Mean age of menarche was  $12.5 \pm 1.265$  SD. Most (53.6%) of students were had idea about menstruation before menarche. Majority (82%) of students shared first menstrual experience with their mother. Most (80%) stated they were confused and frightened at menarche. Majority (67%) of students mentioned cleansing of womb and release of bad blood were the reason for menstruation. Most correctly mentioned (63.5%) the two hormones are contributing to menstruation. Most stated (66.4%) that oil and fat containing food and dealing with men (53%) should be avoided during Menstruation. More than half (56.6%) restricted food and religious activities. Majority (96.1%) mentioned perineal area should be washed during every napkin change and most had (77%) changed sanitary napkins more than three times per day and (90.4%) wash hands after each napkin change. More than 37% of students disposed sanitary items by burning while 22.1% put in to latrine. Due to some cultural and religious restrictions, and also lack of appropriate and sufficient information regarding menstrual hygiene, adolescent girls are practicing incorrect and unhealthy behaviors during menstrual period.

**Keywords:** menstruation, menstrual hygiene, practices, adolescent girls