

IMPLEMENTATION OF MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY IN INDIAN COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

Menstruation also commonly known as “Periods,” is a monthly cycle that a woman goes through. It starts at the age of 12-14 and ceases at the age of 45-50. Menstruation cycle lasts for 4-7 days and occurs every 28 days. Premenstrual Symptoms (PMS) vary from woman to woman. Physical PMS may include cramping, backache, abdominal bloating, constipation, muscle pain, etc. Behavioural PMS includes mood swings, appetite change, insomnia, etc. Postmenstrual Symptoms arise after the period ends. It includes both physical and mental or psychological symptoms that can cause hormonal imbalance. Menstrual leave is a highly debated and contested topic in India. The issue has gained prominence in recent years as a result of increased awareness and advocacy by women's rights groups. This research paper aims to explore the prevalence and effectiveness of menstrual leave policies in Indian companies. The study draws on data from a survey of 500 female employees in Indian companies and interviews with human resource managers and representatives from women's rights groups.

Keywords - Menstrual leave, Leave Policy, Gender Equality, India and Premenstrual Symptoms

INTRODUCTION

Menstrual Leave policy has always been a controversial topic and is still sparking debate in many countries around the world. Some countries express concerns that the implementation of Menstrual Leave policies could discourage the hiring of women and potentially hinder progress toward achieving workplace equality for women. Biological differences exist between men and women, which need to be respected and should not lead to discrimination. It is crucial to challenge the patriarchal norms and societal taboos surrounding menstruation in order to bring about meaningful change. We live in the 21st century, yet having an open discussion about menstrual leave in India is still controversial and challenging.

In 2017, John Guillebaud Professor of reproductive health at University College London, talked about periods pain in his article. He described period cramps as bad as a heart attack. The severity can lead to a condition where women are unable to move and can interrupt their daily lives, making it hard for them to participate in normal activities. A painful period can lead to a decrease in efficiency, and affect performance, work productivity, and promotions. Women also suffer from PCOD and PCOS, which are disorders impacting the ovary. These are vital reproductive organs responsible for producing progesterone and oestrogen hormones and play a crucial role in regulating the menstrual cycle. The indomitable spirit inherent in the majority of women compels

them to persevere resolutely, defying all odds and steadfastly pursuing their professional obligations by diligently venturing forth into the realm of work. The introduction of a Menstrual Leave policy can prove advantageous for women grappling with the challenges of Endometriosis and Dysmenorrhea during their menstrual cycle. The provision of such leave can serve as a catalyst in fostering loyalty and commitment among employees, ensuring their sustained dedication and active involvement in the workplace.

In recent years, there has been an escalating discourse regarding the implementation of menstrual leave policies in India, eliciting widespread attention and deliberation. The research found that menstrual leave policies are still not widely implemented in Indian companies, and where they do exist, they are often informal and inconsistently applied. However, some companies have displayed commendable initiative by embracing the introduction of such policies, duly recognizing the complexities and impediments that menstruation may present to women in the corporate setting. Despite this, most women surveyed believed that menstrual leave would benefit their health and well-being. Human resource managers expressed concerns about the impact of menstrual leave on productivity and the potential for abuse. This paper concludes that there is a need for a more formal and standardized approach to menstrual leave in Indian companies. It recommends that companies consult with women employees and women's rights groups to develop policies that are sensitive to the needs of female employees while also addressing concerns about productivity and abuse. Overall, this research contributes to the ongoing discussion about the role of menstrual leave in promoting gender equity and women's health in the workplace.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Prithivi Raj (2021) Stated in their article about Menstruation Benefits Bill, 2017, which aims to mandate all organizations to provide Menstrual Leave. The study explores the attitudes of men and women towards this type of leave in the workplace. He also explores International scenarios where some countries have implemented unpaid or paid menstrual leave policies. Furthermore, it delves into the situation in India, where certain private companies have initiated menstrual leave policies, but there is no nationwide legislation yet. The author emphasizes the need for a gender-sensitive labour policy to address the challenges women face during menstruation and create more inclusive workplaces.

Adrija Bhattacharya (2021) focused on the need for a policy of period leave for working women and the perception of employees towards this issue. The author conducted an empirical study in three Indian cities and found that both men and women agreed that menstruation can interfere with a woman's ability to work effectively. The majority of respondents supported the introduction of period leave for women. Interestingly, many respondents, especially women, were reluctant to personally avail of menstrual leave, possibly due to societal stigmas. However, respondents agreed that the policy should be applicable to all organizations, regardless of the nature of work. The study emphasizes the importance of implementing women-centric policies to improve working conditions for women in the workforce.

Jyothsna Latha Belliappa (2018) stated in her article that Menstrual leave is a complex and contentious issue, presenting valid arguments on both sides of the debate. The research paper includes important considerations namely the prevalence of menstrual challenges faced by employees, the availability of menstrual hygiene products and facilities, cultural attitudes towards menstruation, and the potential effects on productivity and gender discrimination. Though limited research suggests potential benefits like relieving menstrual pain and reducing

stigma, there are also concerns regarding possible increased discrimination against women. As such, any decision on menstrual leave should be thoughtfully weighed, acknowledging the intricacies involved in addressing this issue within each workplace's unique context.

INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO



Menstrual leave policies have been implemented to different extents in several countries worldwide, including Southeast Asian countries such as Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam, and Taiwan, as well as the African country of Zambia and the European country of Spain.

Japan

Japan has ensured the provision of period leave entitlement for over 70 years. Japan introduced menstrual leave as an industrial right in 1947 but

the implementation was preceded by approximately 20 years of debate and discussion. Article 68 of the Labour Standards Law states that "When a woman, for whom work during menstrual periods is especially difficult, has requested leave, the employer shall not employ that woman during that period." The Japanese Labour Standards introduced the "seiri kyuka" which means

(psychological leave), granting women the right to take leave for menstrual-related issues.

While Japanese labour laws do not mandate payment for menstrual leave, approximately 30 percent of Japanese companies surveyed by the labour ministry in 2020 reported offering full or partial pay to women during their menstrual leave. Over a span of at least ten years, female factory workers were granted the invaluable provision of period leave, affording them respite from rigorous toil and inadequate hygienic circumstances. This enlightened policy sought to acknowledge and address the manifold challenges posed by menstrual pain, conscientiously recognizing the

distinct hurdles faced by women amidst their professional pursuits.

Indonesia

Indonesia implemented the Menstrual Leave Policy in 2003. By Article 81 of Law No. 13/2003 on labour, women are accorded the right to avail themselves of a specified duration of two days per month as paid menstrual leave, without the necessity of providing advance notice.

Nevertheless, a 2003 International Labour Organization report cautioned that requiring employers to provide women with 24 days of menstrual leave in addition to their annual leave of 12 days could result in a "significant cost" for businesses, potentially leading to discrimination against women during the hiring process.

South Korea

Since its inception in the year 1953, Women have been granted the provision to take a day off each month specifically for menstrual purposes, recognizing and accommodating the inherent requirements tied to the menstrual cycle.

According to CNN, Korean women utilized an average of 19.7% of their menstrual leave days in 2017, a decrease from 23.6% in 2013. The provided data illustrates the prevailing taboo nature surrounding the topic of menstrual leave, leading to its avoidance and limited discussion within the workplace. Korean women have openly shared the challenges they face in exercising their legal entitlement to menstrual leave.

The legitimacy of taking leave for menstrual pain is still not recognized in male-dominated workplaces. Some women are hesitant to exercise their rights due to concerns about burdening their co-workers while they are away.

Vietnam

In 2020, Vietnam introduced the Menstrual Leave Policy and under this legislation, women are empowered to request a duration of three days for menstrual leave from their respective workplaces. One notable provision within the comprehensive

126-page decree under the Labor Code specifies that women who opt for menstrual leave will be granted a 30-minute paid break daily during their monthly cycle.

According to the new regulation, women have the option to take these breaks at least three times per month, and additional breaks or adjustments to the schedule can be agreed upon between the employee and her employer. Furthermore, the regulation specifies that if women choose not to take menstrual leave or utilize these breaks, the time will be considered as working time instead of overtime, resulting in additional compensation.

Taiwan

Taiwan is one of the countries with a menstrual leave policy that started in 2002. Women are entitled to three days of menstrual leave per year, which is separate from the statutory 30 days of regular sick leave and does not count towards it, according to the Gender Equality in Employment Act.

It also states that a female employee can request one day of leave per month during menstruation. Furthermore, the employer is prohibited from denying or considering the menstrual leave as an absence from work and no adverse measures will be taken against an employee in respect of the perfect attendance bonus and performance appraisal, according to Article 14 of the Act of Gender Equality in Employment.

The Ministry of Labour wishes to remind employers that, where they are found to be in breach of the abovementioned regulations, workers may, to protect their rights and interests, contact their local labour administrative authority, the labour bureau of their local county, or the social services department of their local municipality.

Zambia

In 2017, Zambia achieved the distinction of becoming the inaugural African country to

introduce menstrual leave for its female workforce. Irrespective of their matrimonial status or parental circumstances, women in Zambia are bestowed with a one-day respite, known as "Mother's Day," wherein they are entitled to take leave from work. Women can take a day off at any time in the month, without providing medical explanation to their employer. A prosecution may be brought against an employer who denies that right to a woman employee.

In Zambia, the use of the term "Mother's Day" as a euphemism reflects the prevailing taboo surrounding menstruation in the country. This terminology reinforces the notion that womanhood is solely connected to motherhood. Mother's Day does not enjoy universal acclaim, and there exists a significant contingent of women who are counted among its critics. In Zambia, there are allegations made by certain women that employers, particularly those in the private sector, impose undue pressure on female workers, discouraging them from availing themselves of their allocated "Mother's Day" leave.

Spain

On February 16, 2023, the Spanish parliament approved the establishment of sick leave specifically for women experiencing debilitating menstrual periods, making Spain the first European nation to pass a law that permits "menstrual leave," thereby allowing women to take time off work for menstrual-related reasons. The bill states that women can avail of the monthly pay leaves of three to five days, after showing a doctor's note. The legislation incorporates provisions regarding the distribution of complimentary menstrual hygiene products, which will be readily accessible at educational establishments, correctional facilities, and social centers.

Irene Montero, the Minister of Equality in the country, emphasized in parliament that without the existence of such rights, women cannot attain the status of full-fledged citizens. The government has taken the responsibility to fund the implementation

of the menstrual leave policy. The measure has garnered both proponents and detractors, with voices expressing both support and opposition to it.

The primary conservative opposition party, the Popular Party (PP), has cautioned that the law carries the potential risk of "stigmatizing" women and may result in "adverse ramifications within the labour market" for female individuals. After undergoing a thorough and comprehensive debate in the plenary session of the Congress of Deputies, the law was ultimately ratified. The final tally of votes recorded 185 in favor, 154 against, and 3 abstentions, signifying the successful adoption of the legislation.

Other Countries

Although menstrual leave is not prevalent as a standardized practice in the United States, there are select companies that have begun introducing such policies. Notably, a Los Angeles-based manufacturer of a popular astrology app and a globally recognized software company are among those leading the way in implementing this progressive measure. Chani, an enterprise driven by queer and feminist leadership, which has garnered significant popularity for its widely acclaimed astrology app, showcases an array of enticing advantages to allure potential employees.

In addition, the Los Angeles-based company extends a distinct and unconventional perk to its workforce: "unlimited menstrual leave" specifically designated for individuals with uteruses. This policy serves as an exemplar of the increasing momentum towards dismantling the stigma surrounding menstruation and acknowledging the physical discomforts it can entail. Sonya Passi, the CEO of the company, expressed, "The experience of having a uterus can be exceptionally agonizing, and yet, from a tender age, we are conditioned to persevere through this pain and continue working."

Nuvento, a worldwide software company with offices in Kansas and New Jersey, has recently unveiled a policy granting its employees the opportunity to avail themselves of one day of menstrual leave per month. Although the policy is in its nascent stages, it has been warmly received by workers thus far, as stated by Susan Margret Correia, the digital content manager, who noted that employees feel acknowledged and experience an increased sense of comfort.

In 2016, Italy deliberated on the concept of implementing menstrual leave, wherein lawmakers put forth a bill suggesting the provision of three fully remunerated days off to workers who provided medical certificates. Unfortunately, the proposal failed to gain momentum and ultimately met its demise in Parliament.

Where Does India Stand?

A menstrual leave policy refers to a policy that allows women to take time off from work or school during their menstrual cycle. These guidelines are intended to recognize the challenges menstruation can pose to women and to allow them to take the time off they need to maintain their health and well-being.

Under the menstrual leave scheme, women can take paid or unpaid time off from work or school during their menstrual cycle. The period of menstrual leave varies depending on the rate and can range from one to several days per month. The guidelines for menstrual leave aim to support women in effectively managing menstrual symptoms such as pain, cramps, and fatigue. Additionally, they seek to promote overall menstrual health and well-being among women. These guidelines also recognize the social and cultural stigma attached to menstruation and are intended to reduce to stigma related to menstruation.

In recent years, there has been a growing debate about menstrual leave policies in India. Recognizing the challenges that menstruation can pose to women in the workplace, some companies have taken the lead in implementing such policies.

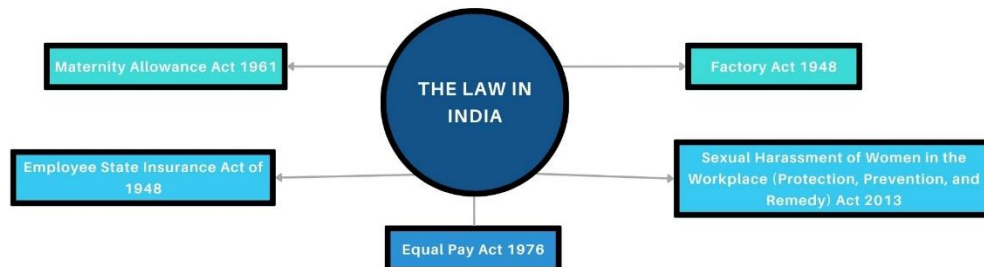
In 2020, Zomato announced 10 days of paid vacation per year, with companies like Swiggy and Byju following suit. Despite the importance of menstrual leave, its implementation is still limited in India, with only two states, Bihar and Kerala, having introduced regulations specifically addressing menstrual leave for women. A Bihar policy was introduced in 1992 to allow workers two days of paid menstrual leave each month. The state of Kerala recently announced that the State Ministry of Higher Education will provide menstrual and maternity leave to students at its colleges and schools in Kerala have introduced similar programs.

Attempts to bring a bill on menstrual leave to parliament have so far been unsuccessful. In 2017, the Menstrual Services Act was introduced, and in 2018, the Women's Sexual, Reproductive, and Menstrual Rights Act was introduced. Both bills aim to ensure that women have access to menstrual health products and the right to take menstrual leave. But did not pass.

Recently, a bill entitled "Women's Menstrual Leave Rights and Complimentary Access to Menstrual Health Products Bill 2022" was introduced. The bill seeks to grant women and trans women three days of paid leave during their menstrual cycle, while also extending these benefits to students.

The bill cites research suggesting that menstruation affects girls' education, with nearly 40 percent of girls missing school during their period and nearly 65 percent saying menstruation affects their school routine. It states that it gives Although India has made some progress on menstrual leave policies overall, more efforts are needed to ensure that women take menstrual leave and are not disadvantaged because of their natural bodily functions.

THE LAW IN INDIA



Menstrual leave is a policy that falls within the Indian labor law. Below are some of the labor laws related to the introduction of menstrual leave.

1. Maternity Allowance Act 1961:

This law provides for maternity leave for female workers, including sick leave resulting from pregnancy, childbirth, or miscarriage. The law also provides for the payment of maternity benefits while on leave. The law demonstrates the importance of granting leave for women's reproductive health and could serve as a model for the introduction of menstrual leave.

2. Factory Act 1948:

This law guarantees the health, safety, and welfare of factory workers. The law requires factories to provide clean and sanitary working conditions, including the provision of drinking water and toilets. Menstrual leave can be seen as a way to further promote the health and well-being of female factory workers.

3. Employee State Insurance Act of 1948:

This law regulates employee benefits, including maternity benefits. This law may be amended to

include provisions for menstrual leave and related benefits.

4. Sexual Harassment of Women in the Workplace (Protection, Prevention, and Remedy) Act 2013:

This law provides for the prevention and remedy of sexual harassment of women in the workplace. The law recognizes the need for safe and healthy working conditions for women, which may be further supported by the introduction of menstrual leave.

5. Equal Pay Act 1976:

This law provides for equal pay for male and female employees. The law recognizes the importance of promoting gender equality in the workplace, which could be further facilitated by the introduction of menstrual leave.

In addition to these laws, several international conventions and recommendations may be relevant for the introduction of menstrual leave in India. For example, the International Labor Organization Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) recognizes the need for related

benefits, including maternity leave and leave for sickness associated with pregnancy or childbirth. While India has not ratified the Convention, it still serves as a valuable framework for comprehending the significance of providing leave for women's reproductive health. The introduction of menstrual leave requires careful consideration of the legal and practical implications of such policies. Employers needed to be educated about the importance of menstrual health and the need for measures to support women's reproductive health. It is also necessary to establish a mechanism to verify the necessity of menstrual leave and prevent the system from being abused. To introduce menstrual leave in India, it is crucial to take into account the existing labor laws and international agreements. These legal frameworks offer valuable guidance in recognizing the significance of granting leave for women's reproductive health and advancing gender equality within the workplace. While there may be challenges in implementing such policies, they are worth considering given the potential benefits to women's health and well-being.

The Jurisprudence in India

Anushree V.R. vs Delhi Government NCT (2015):

In the case, the Delhi High Court ruled that menstrual cramps were considered a valid reason for taking leave and that employers should not discriminate against women taking leave on this basis. The ruling could be used as an argument for introducing menstrual leave as a form of legally recognized leave in India. National Human Rights Commission v. Arunachal Pradesh (2017):

In this case, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) advised the state government to grant menstrual leave to female civil servants. The recommendations put forth by the NHRC can be utilized to bolster the argument that menstrual leave is a fundamental human right and should be acknowledged and supported by the state.

Kerala Women's Commission vs Cochin Devaswam Commission (2018):

In this case, the Kerala State Women's Commission advised the Kochin Devaswam Commission to provide menstrual leave for the female staff working at the temple. This recommendation can be used as an argument for introducing menstrual leave in religious establishments and other workplaces where women's health and safety may be at risk. Bihar vs. Sanjay Kumar Singh (2016):

In this case, the Supreme Court of India ruled that men could take parental leave to care for their children and that this leave should be granted on par with maternity leave. This decision can be used as an argument for the introduction of menstrual leave as a form of leave that takes into account the special physical and mental demands of menstruation. These lawsuits demonstrate a growing awareness of the importance of menstrual health and the need for policies that support women's reproductive health.

Stats In India

What Does Data Says?

- According to World Bank data, the proportion of working women in India fell from 26% to 19% between 2010 and 2020.
- A 2017 survey of 32,748 Dutch women published in the British Medical Journal found that 14% of them missed work or school during their period. Researchers estimate that problems related to the menstrual cycle cost workers about 8.9 days of lost productivity per year.
- On February 24, the Supreme Court rejected PIL's acceptance of menstrual leave for workers and students across the country, citing it as a political issue.
- The Supreme Court of India ordered the applicant to contact the United Ministry of Women and Child Development to draft a policy on menstrual issues.

Arguments Against Menstrual Leave

It will lead to discrimination

Not everyone can take menstrual leave. Some believe that this is not necessary and will backfire and lead to discrimination against women by employers.

Recently, her tribunal, headed by India's Chief Justice D.Y., also warned that biological processes should not be "disincentives" for employers to offer jobs to women.

Prioritizing other issues that require attention is necessary before addressing the matter at hand.

India also has other issues that need to be addressed, such as the lack of sanitation facilities in schools and workplaces, especially in the informal sector.

Attempts being made in India?

- Bihar and Kerala are the only state governments that have introduced menstrual leave for women.
- The Bihar government, then led by Mr. Lal Prasad Yadav, introduced a menstrual leave policy in 1992, giving workers two days of paid menstrual leave each month.
- Recently, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarai Vijayan announced that the state's Department of Higher Education will provide menstrual and maternity leave to students at universities under the ministry's control.
- Kerala MP Hibi Eden recently announced that he would introduce a private parliamentary bill to give working women the right to paid menstrual leave, schoolgirls to have menstrual leave, and free access to menstrual health products.

12 COMPANIES IN INDIA THAT OFFER PERIOD LEAVE TO THEIR FEMALE EMPLOYEES

1. Swiggy

Online food delivery company Swiggy has launched a unique initiative for its female food delivery partners. Swiggy has announced that it will give its female delivery partners two days off each month. "The unacknowledged impact of experiencing discomfort while going out during menstruation is a significant factor that contributes to women not perceiving childbirth as a fulfilling career option." To support all menstrual challenges, we offer the following services for all women's regular births: Partners have introduced two days of paid no-questions leave per month. Mihir Shah, Swiggy's vice president of operations, said in a blog post, "This industry-first initiative allows our female des to voluntarily take time off during their menstrual cycle and receive a minimum income guarantee during that period. I can do it," he said.

2. Culture machine

In July 2017, Mumbai-based digital media startup Culture Machine made headlines when it announced the good news that it would allow female employees to take time off on the first day of their period. The company drew inspiration for this policy from Blush, one of her video channels focused on women's issues and empowerment.

3. Maturumbi

In 2017, Mumbai-based startup Culture Machine, led by Malayalam-language media outlet Maturbumi, allowed its female employees to stay home on the first day of their menstrual cycle. Mathurbumi's management said Culture Machine's decision was the impetus for drafting such a policy. "This was eye-opening because sewer workers are stressful jobs and unusual working hours. They often work long hours. Don't think of it as pity, it's more about understanding

women," the company's co-CEO MV Shrejams Kumar told The Times of India.

4. Magzter

In July 2017, another company followed Culture Machine's FOP vacation policy. Chennai-based digital magazine platform Magzter said its employees are required to take one day of paid leave each month, either on the first day of their period or two days for him. Magzter, co-founder and CEO of Girish Ramdas said: "The situation is challenging for women working in India because they often cannot talk freely with their male colleagues about menstruation and the pain, they experience each month. It's even tougher," he said. "We want to avoid old-world taboos that disparage women and their physiological needs, and we want to make this a mainstream issue that women should not be sensitive to. It's the same thing as taking a cold or a cough and resting." "That's normal," Ramdas said.

5. Wet and dry

Wet & Dry Personal Care, a feminine hygiene product manufacturer based in New Delhi, has implemented a policy allowing their female employees to take two days off during their menstrual cycle. "Based on medical recommendations, we give our employees two days off a month for her, so that they can be pain-free and comfortable in the office," he said at W&D. CEO Pankaj Garg said. According to the company, women can take paid leave and work from home.

6. Industry arc

Hyderabad-based market research and strategy consulting start-up industry Ark has introduced a menstruation scheme that allows female employees to cash out for one or two days during their period. However, politics also has its pitfalls. The employee must make up the leave later and do the next job later. "We are committed to providing equal growth opportunities regardless of gender,

which is why we conducted an in-depth analysis of the challenges women encounter and the influence these challenges have on their daily work."

It took us some time to recognize, understand and implement this policy, but we are proud of their efforts and would like to say that we will always support them. I hope that our small company can drive changes in workplace rules at home and abroad," said Chaitanya Kumar, CEO and co-founder of the company.

7. Zomato

Gurugram-based Zomato was founded in 2008 and is one of India's most prominent companies with over 5,000 employees. Last year, it allowed female employees to take 10 days of paid leave per year. This helps female workers maintain job continuity. Deepinder Goyal, founder, and CEO of Zomato, announced this in an email to employees. "There should be no shame or stigma attached to requesting time off," he said, adding that "people should feel free to let them know they are on vacation for the day in internal groups and emails."

8. Ivipanan

To combat stigma around menstruation, Surat-based digital marketing firm Ivipanan has announced that it will follow in Zomato's footsteps in 2020 by giving female workers 12 days of vacation per year. "To create a healthier and happier work environment, we are announcing monthly paid menstrual leave for all female team members starting today (Sunday), effective immediately," said Bautik, founder of Ivipanan. She wrote in an email to his employees. "We are always thinking about how to make our team more comfortable, how to make our work environment more people-friendly, how to make our work environment healthier and more friendly," he added.

9. Gozoop Online Pvt Ltd

Another company in the same league is one of the first companies to introduce this policy in India. Gozoop is a digital marketing organization that allows all female employees to take paid leave on the first day of their period. The initiative was initially introduced by Culture Machine, a Mumbai-based digital entertainment company, and later adopted by Gozoop.

10. Horses Stable News

Bangalore-based start-up Horses Stable News has hired 60% women and 40% men to break the menstrual taboo and has given female employees two days of paid leave, during this period. It offers a reward of 250 rupees to reduce stress and calls it time-saving. No, no'. "It is undeniable that women suffer from severe pain and cramps during their menstrual cycle, which is a major source of stress for female workers. The introduction of menstrual leave should not be called a gift. Horses Productions "Our goal is to create equal opportunities for growth for men and women. We hope to use this to encourage other organizations to take advantage of this initiative." This policy is a step towards gender integration." Through this initiative, we hope to break down the taboo on menstruation," she added.

11. Fly My Biz

In the last week of December 2018, Kolkata-based digital media company Fly My Biz announced that the New Year's gift that almost every working woman in the country wants is paid time off. Flymybiz founder and CEO Samyo Datta said: "All the female employees in my company are getting extra leave every month. It means there is." "We have about a dozen female employees, and they are all happy to welcome this change. Male employees welcomed the company's efforts as well," said Datta.

12. Byju's

Byju's, India's leading education app, allows female employees to take up to 12-period leave (PEL) per year. 1 PEL is credited each month. According to Byju's blog, employees can take one day off each month or two half days off.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research methodology employed to investigate the topic of the Implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy in Indian Companies. The research design, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, limitations, and measures taken to ensure validity and reliability are discussed.

Research Design

The research design chosen for this study was a descriptive research design. It effectively combined subjective perspectives with rigorous statistical analysis. This approach allowed for a holistic exploration of the topic, promoting a deeper understanding by incorporating both qualitative insights and quantitative data analysis.

Data Collection

Secondary Data: To establish a solid theoretical foundation, a systematic literature review was conducted. A range of peer-reviewed research papers related to the topic were reviewed. These papers were carefully selected based on their relevance, methodology, and findings. The reviewed papers provided valuable insights into the research area.

Data from other sources: In addition to research papers and the survey, data was collected from various sources to provide a comprehensive analysis. Websites, news articles, and legal documents were reviewed to gather information on the current state of the field, recent developments, and relevant regulations. The data from these

sources were critically analyzed and synthesized to support the findings of the research.

Primary Data: To gather primary data, a survey was conducted among the target population. A total of 68 responses were collected, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. The survey questionnaire was designed based on the research objectives and included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Measures were taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, and the survey was distributed through various channels to enhance the representation of the target population.

Data Analysis

The collected data underwent a rigorous analysis process to derive meaningful insights. Quantitative data from the survey was analyzed using statistical software, to generate descriptive statistics, correlations, and inferential analyses. Qualitative data, including responses from open-ended questions and data collected from other sources, were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns.

Limitations

It is crucial to recognize and consider the limitations of this research. One limitation is the sample size of the survey, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the

reliance on secondary data from research papers and other sources introduces potential biases and limitations inherent in those sources. The study specifically focused on gathering information and insights from a select group of individuals: working women residing in India. By setting this specific criterion for the research pool, the study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences, challenges, and perspectives unique to this particular demographic. However, it is important to acknowledge that restricting the sample to Indian working women introduces limitations in terms of generalizability to broader populations or contexts. These limitations should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results and drawing conclusions.

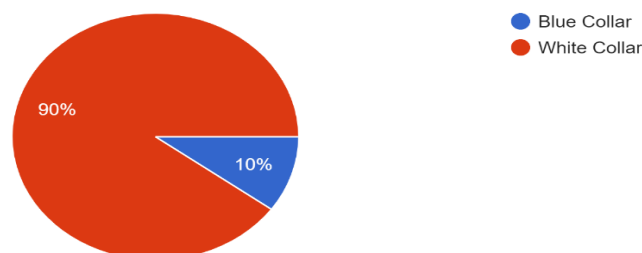
Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, several measures were taken. The survey questionnaire underwent a pilot testing phase to ensure the clarity and relevance of the questions. Multiple researchers were involved in the data analysis process to enhance inter-rater reliability. Triangulation of data from different sources was also employed to establish convergent validity and strengthen the overall research findings.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

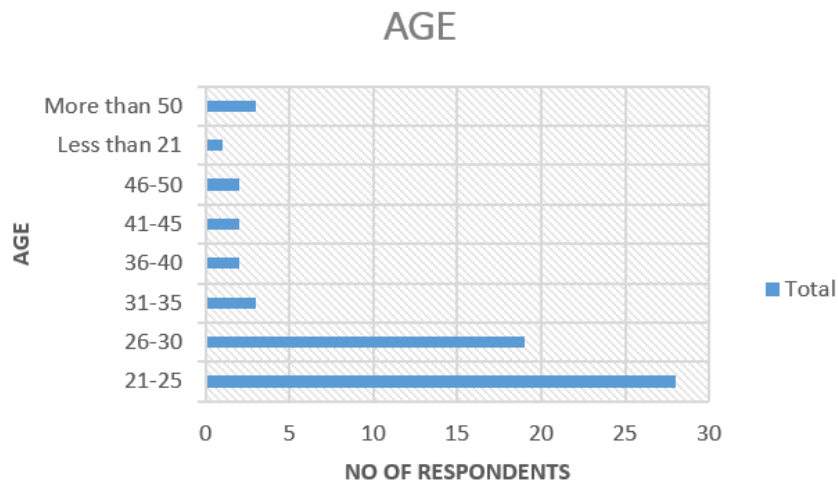
Chart 1: Occupational Distribution of Women: Blue-Collar vs. White-Collar Positions

Occupation
60 responses



The chart indicates that the majority of women, specifically 90%, held blue-collar positions, while only a small proportion of 10% were employed in white-collar roles.

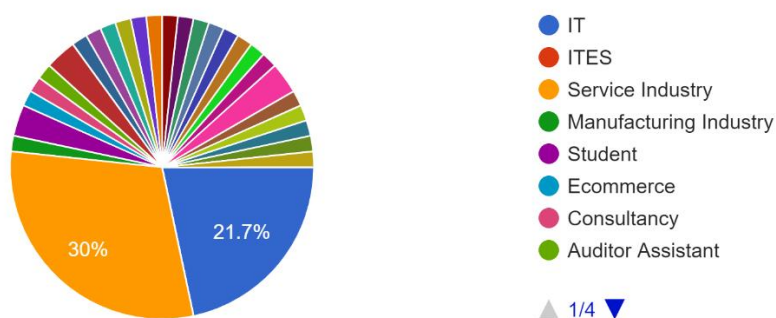
Chart 2: Age Distribution of Survey Participants



The chart illustrates that the largest proportion, comprising 46.7%, falls within the age group of 21-25. Additionally, 31.7% belong to the 26-30 age group, while the remaining percentages are evenly distributed among the other age groups.

Chart 3: Industry Distribution of Women Survey Participants

Industry you work
60 responses

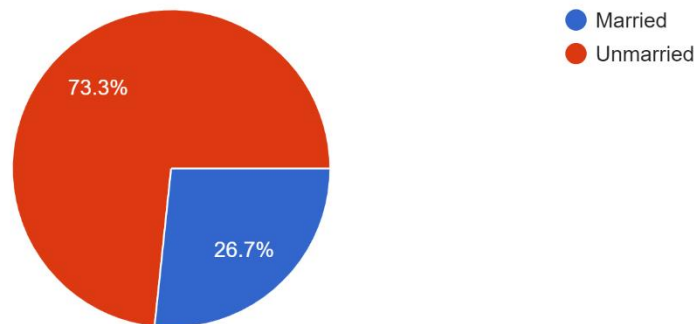


As per the survey women are from a wide range of industries but 30% of them are from service industries and 21.7% of them are from the IT sector and 2-3% of them are in different industries.

Chart 4: Marital Status Distribution of Women Participants

Marital Status

60 responses

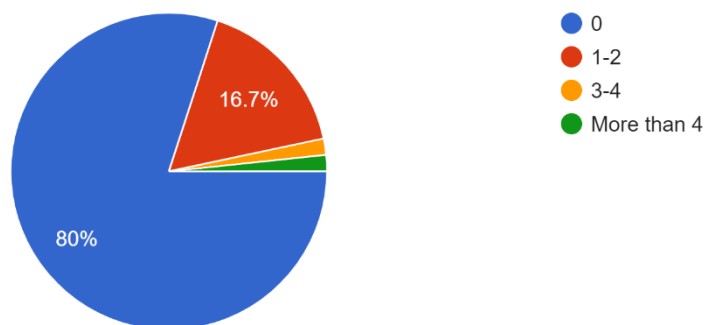


The chart indicates that a significant majority of women participants, comprising 73.3%, were married. Conversely, the remaining 26.7% of women were unmarried.

Chart 5: Number of Children Reported by Women Survey Participants

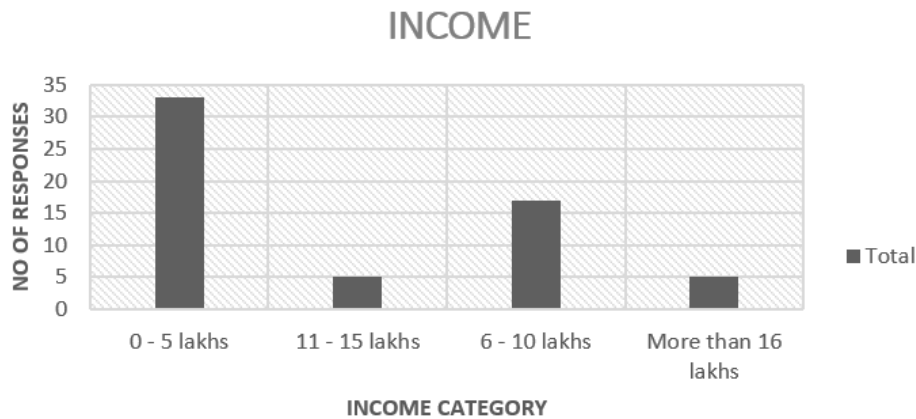
Number of Kids

60 responses



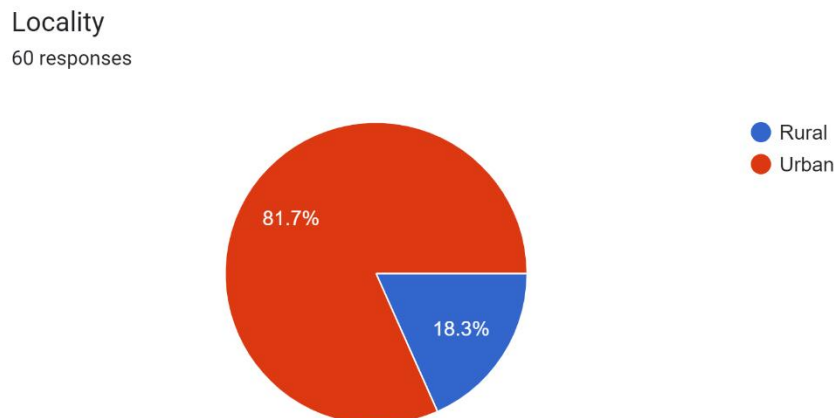
According to the chart based on the survey, the majority of women, accounting for 80%, reported having no children. Additionally, 16.2% of women indicated having 1-2 kids, while the remaining percentage was evenly distributed between 3-4 kids and 4 or more children.

Chart 6: Income Distribution of Survey Participants (in Lakhs)



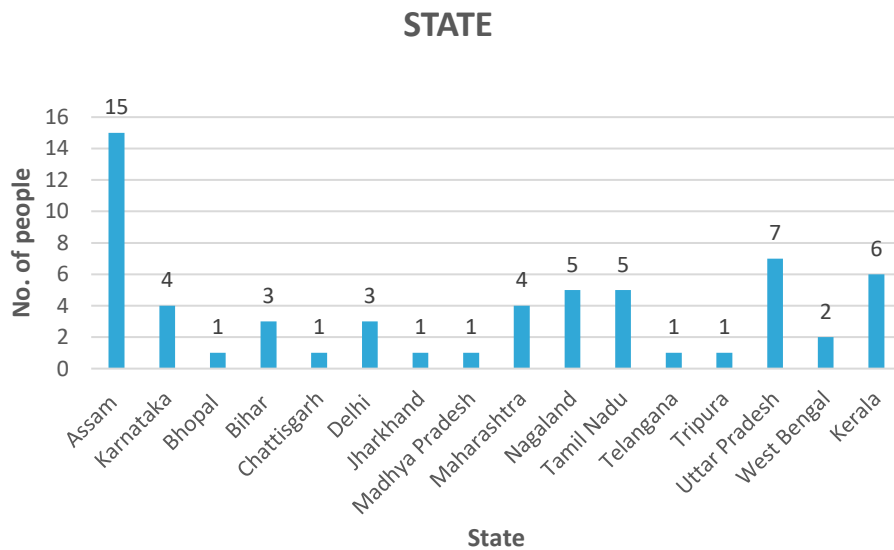
Based on the survey findings, the data indicates that 55% of participants reported an income ranging from 0-5 lakhs. Furthermore, 28.3% of respondents fell within the income bracket of 6-10 lakhs, while 8.3% reported earning between 11-15 lakhs. The remaining 8.3% of participants had an income of 16 lakhs or higher.

Chart 7: Residential Distribution of Survey Participants: Urban vs. Rural



The survey findings reveal that an overwhelming majority of participants, constituting 81.7%, dwell in urban localities. Conversely, a minority of 18.3% of respondents stated their residence in rural regions.

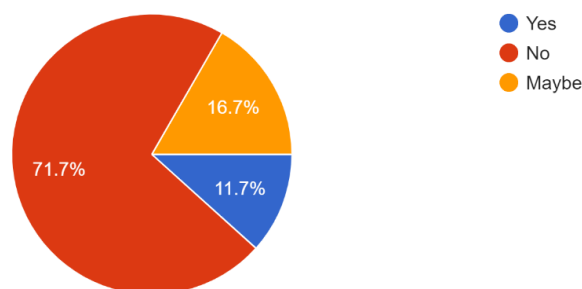
Chart 8: Workforce Participation of Women in Different States of India



The graph provides a visual representation of the workforce participation of women across different states in India and showcases the varying numbers of employed women in each state.

Chart 9: Leave Practices During Menstrual Cycle Among Working Women

Do you take leave from your organization during your Menstrual Cycle?
60 responses

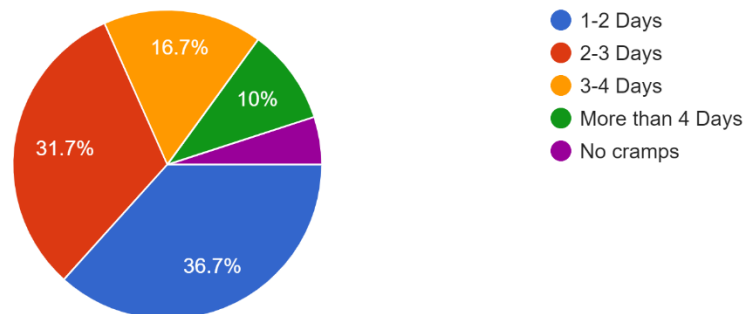


Based on the survey results, a significant majority of working women, specifically 71.7%, reported taking leave during their menstrual cycle. Additionally, 16.7% of participants responded with "maybe" indicating some uncertainty regarding taking leave during this time. The remaining 11.7% of women stated that they do not take leave during their menstrual cycle.

Chart 10: Duration of Menstrual Cramps Among Survey Participants

What is the duration of your menstrual cramp?

60 responses

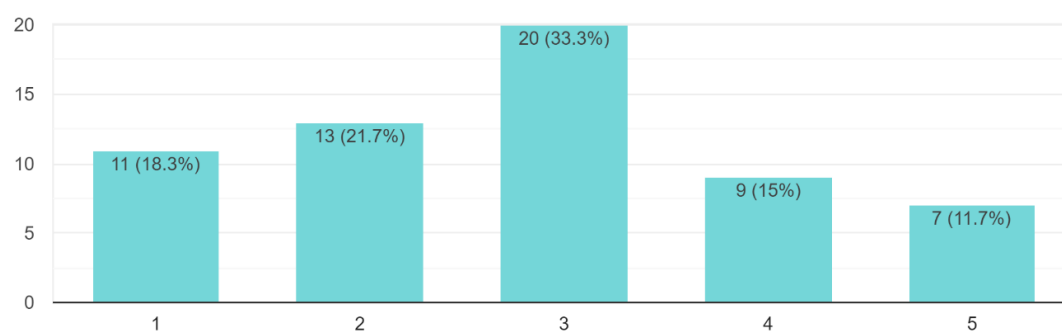


The survey reveals that among the participants, 36.7% experience menstrual cramps lasting 1-2 days, while 31.7% have cramps for 2-3 days. Additionally, 16.7% reported having cramps for 3-4 days, while 10% reported experiencing cramps lasting more than 4 days. Interestingly, 5% of respondents reported not having any menstrual cramps.

Chart 11: Work Effectiveness Rating During Menstrual Cycle (Scale 1-5)

How will you rate your work effectiveness during your menstrual cycle on a scale of 5? (1 being low work effectiveness and 5 being the normal day work effectiveness)

60 responses

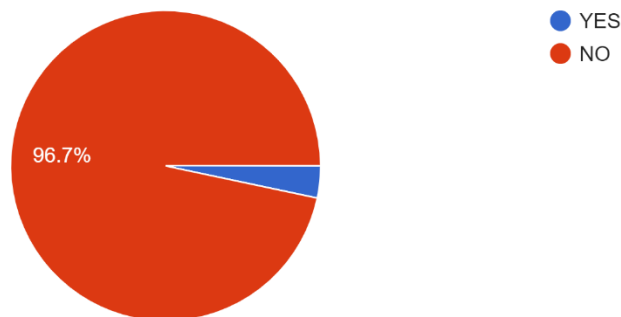


When rating their work effectiveness during their menstrual cycle on a scale of 1 to 5, the survey found that 33.3% of respondents rated it as 3, indicating a moderate level of effectiveness. Furthermore, 21.7% rated it as 2, 18.3% rated it as 1, 15% rated it as 4, and 11.7% rated it as 5, showcasing varying perceptions of work effectiveness during this period.

Chart 12: Presence of Menstrual Leave Policy in Survey Participants' Companies

Is there any existing Menstrual Cycle Policy in your organization?

60 responses

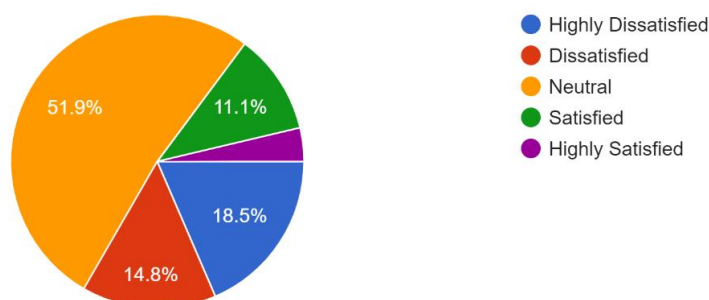


According to the survey results, a significant majority of participants, accounting for 96.7%, stated that their company does not have a menstrual leave policy. Conversely, a small minority of 3.3% reported that their company does have such a policy in place.

Chart 13: Satisfaction Level with Menstrual Leave Policy in Participants' Organizations

If "YES", How satisfied are you with it?

27 responses

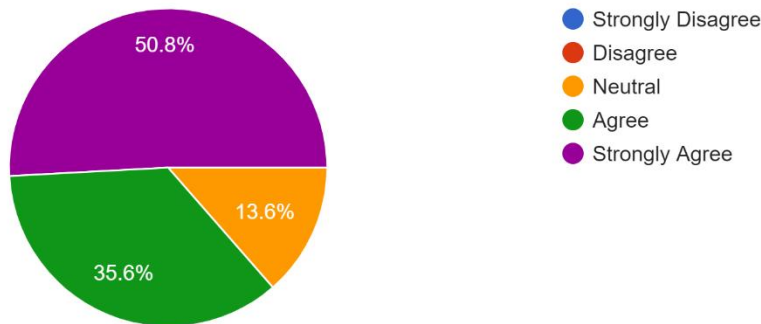


The pie chart represents that 51.9% of women are neutral means not satisfied or dissatisfied and 33.3% of them are dissatisfied with such a policy in their organization.

Chart 14:

Do you want your Organization to implement a menstrual cycle policy?

59 responses

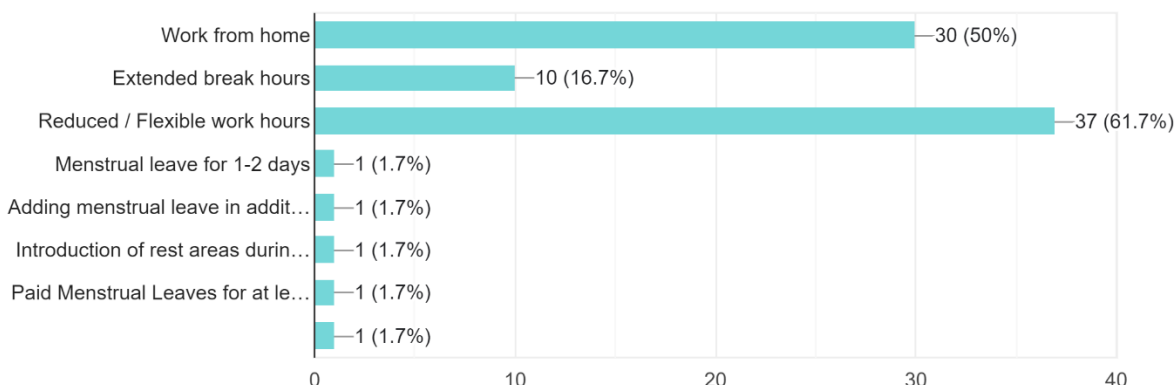


In the survey conducted, it was found that 50.8% of women strongly supported the implementation of a menstrual leave policy, while 35.6% agreed with the idea. Additionally, 13.6% of women remained neutral or had no strong opinion on the matter. Therefore, the survey indicates that a substantial majority of women (86.4%) either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal of introducing a menstrual leave policy.

Chart 15: Attitudes Toward the Introduction of a Menstrual Leave Policy and Preferred Accommodations During Menstrual Cycle.

Which one of the following menstrual cycle policy would you like your organization to implement?

60 responses



Additionally, 13.6% of women remained neutral or had no strong opinion on the matter. Therefore, the survey indicates that a substantial majority of women (86.4%) either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal of

introducing a menstrual leave policy. The responses show that 67% of the women are comfortable with reduced/flexible work hours or work-from-home options during their menstrual cycle.

Table 1: Regression Analysis

H₁₀: There is no association between the duration of cramps and the effectiveness of work.

H_{1a}: There is an association between the duration of cramps and the effectiveness of work.

H₁ Result: We accept H₀. The result shows the negative relation between the variables.

H₂₀: There is no association between the duration of cramps and they want their company to implement a menstrual leave policy.

H_{2a}: There is an association between the duration of cramps and they want their company to implement a menstrual leave policy.

H₂ Result: We accept H_a. The result shows that there is an association between the variables.

Regression Table

Regression Statistics								
Multiple R	0.55797	Greater than 0.5						
R Square	0.66548	Greater than 0.5						
Adjusted R Square	0.0338							
Standard Error	1.15634							
Observations	60							
ANOVA								
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F			
Regression	2	5.433647077	2.71682	2.03183	0.14048219			
Residual	57	76.21635292	1.33713					
Total	59	81.65						
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	-0.00138	1.110088495	-0.00124	0.99901	-2.22429573	2.22153	-2.2243	2.22153201
How will you rate you	0.18441	0.125113592	1.47397	0.04599	-0.06612203	0.43495	-0.06612	0.43494927
Do you want your Org	0.37443	0.218864179	1.7108	0.09256	-0.06383505	0.8127	-0.06384	0.81270087

Results: The table shows that there is a weak negative correlation between the duration of menstrual cramps and the effectiveness of work during menstruation. This means that women who experience longer menstrual cramps tend to rate their work effectiveness lower. The correlation coefficient is -0.27, which indicates a weak negative correlation. There is also a weak positive correlation between the duration of menstrual cramps and whether the woman wants their company to implement a menstrual leave policy. This means that women who experience longer menstrual cramps are more likely to want their company to offer menstrual leave. The correlation coefficient is 0.22, which indicates a weak positive correlation.

FINDINGS

- The majority of women participants were blue-collar workers (90%) in the age group of 21-25 (46.7%).
- Most women were married (73.3%) and had no children (80%).
- Most women lived in urban areas (81.7%).
- The majority of women worked in the service industry (30%) or the IT sector (21.7%).
- Most women (71.7%) took leave during their menstrual cycle.
- About 36.7% of women experienced menstrual cramps lasting 1-2 days.
- When rating their work effectiveness during their menstrual cycle, 33.3% of respondents rated it as 3.
- A significant majority of participants (96.7%) stated that their company did not have a menstrual leave policy.
- 50.8% of women strongly supported the implementation of a menstrual leave policy, while 35.6% agreed with the idea.
- 67% of the women are comfortable with reduced/flexible work hours or work from home options during their menstrual cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A menstrual leave policy should be implemented by businesses. Policies governing menstrual leave can assist women in controlling their monthly symptoms and preventing missed work. Additionally, they can improve the working conditions for women and lessen the shame associated with menstruation.

Policies governing menstrual leave ought to be nimble. Not many women go through their menstrual cycle with the same degree of pain or discomfort. Women might take the time they require, whether it be a day, a few hours, or even just a break throughout the workday, with the help of a flexible policy. An organization might permit women to work from home, take a shorter lunch break, or take a day off during their period.

Menstrual leave policies ought to be kept private. Women shouldn't have to tell their boss or coworkers about their period in order to take time off. Employers should not request proof of menstruation, and the policy should be kept private. By doing this, you'll be able to safeguard women's privacy and stop discrimination against them.

Businesses should promote menstruation health by offering information and assistance. This could entail offering menstruation supplies in the workplace, delivering education on menstrual health, and fostering a welcoming workplace culture where women feel at ease discussing their periods. Women can better understand their menstrual cycle and manage their symptoms with education and assistance. It can also aid in eradicating the stigma associated with menstruation and fostering an inclusive workplace.

CONCLUSION

The topic of menstrual leave is a complex and nuanced issue, as it involves considerations of women's health, workplace dynamics, gender equality, and societal perceptions. Some proponents argue that menstrual leave is necessary to safeguard women's physical and emotional well-being during their menstruation. Menstrual cycles can be accompanied by painful symptoms like cramps, headaches, and fatigue, which can significantly impact a woman's ability to perform her job efficiently and comfortably. Providing menstrual leave could alleviate some of the distress and discomfort experienced by women during this time, leading to improved overall health and productivity.

On the other hand, opponents of menstrual leave argue that it may reinforce gender stereotypes about women's physical and emotional vulnerability. There are concerns that granting specific leave for menstruation could lead to the perception that women are less reliable or productive than men, perpetuating discriminatory attitudes in the workplace. Such concerns can negatively affect hiring decisions, promotions, and overall career opportunities for women.

The recent survey of Indian women reflects the diversity of experiences regarding menstruation and workplace policies. While the majority of women did not take time off for their periods, a significant number reported experiencing menstrual pain regularly. This suggests that while many women can manage their symptoms without taking leave, some face severe discomfort that might impact their work performance. The desire for regulations like flexible working hours and work-from-home options highlights the need for adaptable workplace policies that cater to women's unique health needs.

Implementing menstrual leave as a policy requires careful thought and consideration to avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes and ensuring it is equitable for all employees. Employers may face

challenges in determining whether a woman's absence is due to menstrual-related issues or other reasons, which could lead to resentment and conflicts among non-menstruating colleagues. Therefore, any implementation of menstrual leave policies should be accompanied by clear guidelines and protocols to prevent abuse and ensure fairness.

Despite these challenges, introducing menstrual leave in India holds compelling reasons. Prioritizing menstrual health as an essential aspect of women's overall well-being is essential. Allowing women to take time off during their menstrual cycles can lead to better management of symptoms and overall improved health. Moreover, it can help break the stigma surrounding menstruation, promoting a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment.

Introducing menstrual leave exemplifies a commitment to gender equality. It acknowledges that women have unique health needs that should be accommodated in the workplace. Addressing these needs, sends a positive message about valuing and supporting female employees, potentially leading to increased job satisfaction and retention rates among women.

Moreover, implementing menstrual leave policies might encourage employers to create better working conditions for women. This includes access to clean and hygienic restroom facilities and the availability of necessary menstrual hygiene products, which are crucial for maintaining good health during menstruation.

However, to ensure the successful implementation of menstrual leave, it is essential to address potential challenges and concerns. Employers must adopt a sensitive and understanding approach, recognizing that menstruation is a natural and essential part of women's lives. Companies should foster an environment that encourages open communication and support, allowing women to manage their health effectively without fear of judgment or discrimination.

To conclude, menstrual leave is a policy worth considering for its potential benefits to women's health and workplace productivity. While the debate is ongoing, providing flexible working arrangements and remote work options, if feasible, could be effective alternatives to address women's health needs during menstruation. Striking the right balance between supporting women's well-being and avoiding gender stereotypes requires careful thought, cooperation, and understanding from all stakeholders involved.

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