

## Adaptation and Validation of Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire on Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a period of change between childhood and adulthood, marked by significant physical, biological, and psychological changes. Specifically in girls, one of the most notable changes is the onset of menstruation. The present endeavor aims to adapt and validate the Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire by Chandra et al. (1989), an adapted form of original Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire by Brooks and Gunn (1980), for adolescent girls in India. Since attitudes evolve, adaptation of a 30-year-old questionnaire was necessary and plausible to ensure its ecological relevance. The questionnaire was translated from English to Hindi and vice versa with the help of language experts. Further, reviewed by experts from various fields, like psychologists, physicians, and gynecologists. Later, the test was administered on a sample of 412 adolescent girls from all strata. Based on the obtained data psychometric properties of the measure were established properly.

**Keywords:** *Teenage, PMS, feminine hygiene, menstrual health*

Menstruation is an inherent biological phenomenon and a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, which can lead to anxiety for early adolescence (White, L. R., 2009). The uterus sheds its lining during menstruation, which causes vaginal bleeding. Usually, it happens in a monthly cycle, lasting around 3–7 days, and is a key part of the reproductive system in females. Common symptoms include cramps, bloating, mood swings, and fatigue; experiences vary from individual to individual.

Menstruation is a normal part of life. However, stigma, misconceptions, and misinformation are attached to it across cultures. It has been acknowledged by Kapoor and Khari (2016) that there is a dearth of knowledge, awareness, unhygienic practices, and a negative attitude among adolescent girls towards menstruation. Attitudes toward menstruation refer to thinking, feelings, and reactions towards the period, which widely vary across cultures, societies, and individuals. Numerous markers influence menstrual behavior, like economic status and living environment, with locale being the most significant contributor (Thakre et al., 2011).

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In a historical lens, menstruation has been surrounded by stigma, misconceptions, and forbidden taboos, which consequently lead to shame, secrecy, and restrictions for menstruating females. These taboos exclude the female from different socio-cultural lives (Garg & Anand, 2015).

Chandra and Chaturvedi (1992) echoed that cultural parameter significantly affect menstrual attitudes, premenstrual symptoms, and experiences. Menstruating females are excluded from religious and certain social activities (Yaliwal et al., 2020). On the other hand, a few tribal cultures openly acknowledged and even celebrate menstruation as a symbol of fertility and womanhood.

Modern perspectives are shifting toward more open conversations about menstrual health, breaking stigmas, and conceiving the period positively. However, most of the information provided to young girls about menstruation focuses on how they should behave during their periods, and often instills certain superstitions. Increased awareness, education, and activism have helped normalize menstruation as a natural bodily function rather than something shameful or "unclean."

However, challenges remain regarding period poverty, i.e., lack of access to menstrual products, education, and sanitation facilities. A positive attitude toward menstruation begets gender equality, improves menstrual health management, and helps to create a viable society, where menstruation is not considered a burden but a normal phenomenon.

In the Indian societal context, menstruation has traditionally been surrounded by taboos and misconceptions, resulting in restrictions on women's activities during their period. However, recent initiatives aim to challenge these negative perceptions and promote a more positive and informed understanding of menstruation. Studies have also explored menstrual attitudes across the globe. Research comparing Indian and American women found that Indian women consider menstruation a normal occurrence and were more inclined to minimize its impact on day-to-day activities (Hoerster et al., 2003). Here, it can be inferred that menstruation is a complex interplay between cultural norms and individual perceptions, serving as a fertile ground for context-specific educational interventions.

The Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire (MAQ) has been developed by Brooks-Gunn (1980) on the US population to assess beliefs about menstruation, covering mundane aspects such as viewing it as debilitating, bothersome, or natural. Therefore, there is a great need to validate the measure according to the population where it has to be administered to ensure the accurate reflection of currently prevailing attitudes. India is a land of immense cultural diversity, shaped by its long history, geography, and the coexistence of multiple ethnicities, religions, languages, and traditions. Within a small geographical area, there are a lot of differences that exist based on language, beliefs, cultural norms, etc. Keeping in view the aforesaid background, the present study was planned and carried out. Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire, adapted by Chandra et al. (1989), which is the Indian version of the original Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire developed by Brooks and Gunn (1980), was used for the present purpose.

### ***Rationale of the study***

Attitudes are not static entities. They are subject to change with time and social context. To study the phenomenon of attitude and perceptual change in attitude, it should be measured properly and effectively by a culture-suitable measure. Therefore, it is vital to adapt the pre-

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existing *Attitude Towards Menstruation* questionnaire, which was adapted by Chandra et al. (1989) on adult females in southern India, which is a shortened version of the Brooks and Gunn (1980) questionnaire based on adolescents and the adult population. As more than three decades have passed since its initial adaptation, updating the questionnaire to align with contemporary contexts has become imperative. So, a cross-cultural adaptation of the questionnaire is necessary. Hence, it is pivotal to translate the measure into Hindi and to establish its psychometric properties.

### **METHOD**

#### ***Sample***

The study was carried out on adolescent females. A convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample from the school of Bhiwani and Dadri district of South Haryana, India. For this study, data were collected from those adolescent females who had crossed a maximum of one year after their first menarche. The age range of the sample was around 12 to 14 years, having both rural and urban backgrounds from all socio-economic statuses. Girls who are taking any medical treatment regarding their health are excluded from the sample.

#### ***Instrument***

The Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire (Chandra et al., 1989) is a multidimensional questionnaire. The MAQ has a five-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with 22 statements, divided into four dimensions: Menstruation as a debilitating event, Menstruation as a natural event, Menstruation as a bothersome event, and Deniability of effects. The measure has adequate psychometric properties.

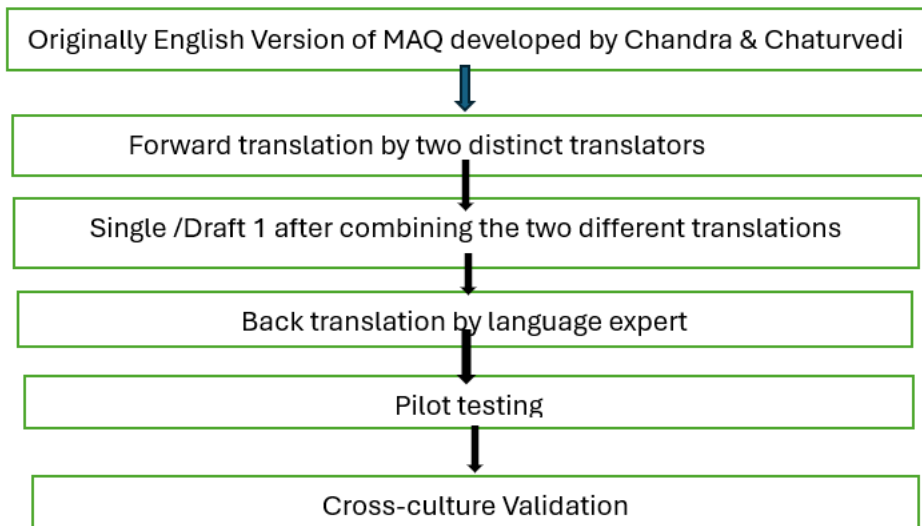
#### ***Procedure:***

This study was conducted in the following manner, i.e., cross-cultural adaptation and validation of an adapted questionnaire.

It involves the following phases: (1) forward and backward translation, (2) pilot testing (3) validation of an adapted questionnaire.

Two separate forward translations of the Attitude towards Menstruation questionnaire into Hindi were carried out from the original English version by two separate health professionals, who were native to India and fluent in both written and spoken Hindi and English. These two translations were then harmonized into a single draft through collaboration between the original translators. After that translation of the Hindi questionnaire was done by a language expert, and a back translation was also reviewed by another language expert. Based on these, a final draft in Hindi was prepared for the purpose. (2) Moreover, for pilot testing purposes Hindi translated questionnaire was given to ten adolescents for their understanding of each statement in the measure. Additionally, other females and Angadwani workers, working with females, were also contacted for their views and reviews.

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### RESULT

To ensure the validity of the adapted tool reliability and validity questionnaire are checked. Items were checked by experts from different fields: psychologists, physicians, Anganwadi workers, as well as feedback from adolescents was taken for establishing the face validity and content validity of the questionnaire. For reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha (.576) is calculated, which is allying with a previous study by Chandani and Nagaich (2024). Irrespective of this inter-dimension correlation is to be checked, which is also found to be significant at the .01 level.

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.576	.571	22

#### Table showing inter-dimensional Correlation.

	Debilitating	Natural	Bothersome	Denial
Debilitating	1			
Natural	.302**	1		
Bothersome	.263**	.143**	1	
Denial	.380**	.077	.259**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### CONCLUSION

The process of adaptation was driven by the recognition that menstrual attitudes are deeply influenced by cultural norms, literacy levels, and regional practices. One already existing measure of attitude towards menstruation is around thirty years old. The tool is also adapted by Initial face and content validity assessments, with input from local experts, clinicians, and women, resulting in modifications to language, grammar, and content. This step was critical to ensure that the language of the questionnaire was both acceptable and understandable for local girls. Psychometric analyses demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity. The internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, is very close to acceptable thresholds, indicating that the items consistently capture the construct of menstrual attitudes. Furthermore, the adapted MAQ was found to be sensitive to cultural variations in menstrual practices. For instance, responses indicated that females in this region hold distinct views

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about the impact of menstruation on daily activities and social interactions. Such findings underscore the importance of culturally adapting instruments rather than directly using measures developed in other sociocultural contexts. Our results are consistent with earlier cross-cultural research, which has documented significant differences in menstrual attitudes across populations. In sum, the adapted tool helps in accurately capturing the attitude towards menstruation among adolescents, fostering a better understanding of their experiences and perceptions.

### **Limitations and future directions:**

The adaptation of the measure is not free from limitations. As this study was carried out on adolescents who were still developing their critical thinking, impulse control, and emotional regulation, which can make communication and decision-making difficult. The sample was drawn from a specific geographical area, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to all regions within the country. Additionally, while rigorous qualitative methods were employed during the translation and adaptation process, future research should incorporate larger, more diverse samples to further validate the instrument and examine its predictive validity concerning reproductive health outcomes. Further, a qualitative investigation should be carried out involving participants with different religious backgrounds.

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Yaliwal, R. G., Biradar, A. M., Kori, S. S., Mudanur, S. R., Pujeri, S. U., & Shannawaz, M. (2020). Menstrual Morbidities, Menstrual Hygiene, Cultural Practices during Menstruation, and WASH Practices at Schools in Adolescent Girls of North Karnataka, India: A Cross-Sectional Prospective Study. *Obstetrics and gynecology international*, 2020(1), 6238193.

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### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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