



Mumbai has only 1.1 square metres of open space for the people living in the city.

**Y**outh Power is an annual social leadership programme organised by The Global Times. It witnesses ten teams from Amity schools work on varied social causes in several stages. One of them is 'Panel Discussion' where experts from different walks of life discuss several aspects of the chosen social cause. Here's presenting **Part 6** of this exclusive eight-part series, based on the panel discussions organised by YP teams, and a host of opinions as experts debate on 'Period Positivity', the cause chosen by YP team of AIS Noida.



# Tied by blood

## Menstruation, A Process So Natural Still Ties Down Women In Stereotypes

### Congenial workplace

The past decade alone has witnessed more changes than the whole of the century gone by. Things are changing at a fast pace and this includes the work spaces as well. Today, offices are no longer just a bastion of men alone. Women have become a major part of the workforce in the recent years. However, policies related to workplace have not been as dynamic to keep up with this changing scenario. This holds even more relevance with regard to menstrual health. There are only a handful of organisations that offer maternity leave. Not many companies offer facilities with regard to menstrual health. It is the lack of these facilities and our inability to recognise menstrual health as a pivotal issue that still keeps women from working out of homes. This definitely needs to change. India is a huge country. Women living in rural areas and those living in urban cities have



Divya Patpatia  
\*Delhi based lawyer

different lifestyles. Without proper statistics, guidelines and procedures, you cannot expect to tap into the female population in the country and help women. What our society needs to understand is that not every woman is same and each one of them might go

through their periods in a different manner. Thus, there is a need to shape policies that look at menstrual health rather holistically. \*The panelist is a specialist in cases pertaining to gender equality, human rights and criminal justice.

### Adults, grow up!

In my initial days of practice as a gynaecologist, I noticed that for young girls who had problems with their menstrual cycle, their mothers came to discuss the problems. They said that girls shouldn't see a gynaecologist. For them, it was a taboo. Though the situation has changed a lot in recent times, there are still a lot of taboos surrounding menstruation. It is still



Dr Surbhi Singh  
Gynaecologist, obstetrician & founder prez, \*Sachhi Saheli

subject. The onus of the problem rests with the adults, who make menstruation seem scary and negative right from the time a girl hits puberty. The result is that today it has become hard to

rare to find girls and boys talk openly about the

destigmatise something as normal and essential as breathing, simply because of the string of negative outlook it has become engrained with. However, if we aren't ashamed of breathing, then we shouldn't be embarrassed to bleed or to talk about it, to say the least. It is time for us, adults, to actually behave like grown-ups and encourage conversation about the subject. It's high time that such topics no longer remain a taboo.

\* Sachhi Saheli is an NGO that works towards creating awareness about menstrual health and hygiene. It enables women to act collectively at all levels of our society.

### Coming out from the veil

Pramathesh Purkayastha  
Executive director (retd), NTPC and member of Advisory Board of \*PRISM



When I first went to buy sanitary napkins for my daughter, the pharmacist wrapped it in a black bag before handing it to me. When I asked him, he said that people prefer not to have it seen by others, leaving me baffled. Sanitary napkins are a basic necessity and help in maintaining hygiene. Despite this, we continue to conceal it in opaque bags. I fail to understand why something so important is being stigmatised by our society? We need to start advocating it and sensitise everyone about the significance of sanitary pads in-

stead of hiding them. Awareness programmes need to be organised on the safe and proper usage of sanitary napkins. So many women across the country contract infections and diseases that can simply be avoided by use of one simple thing, ie, sanitary napkins. And yet, we continue to make it a taboo. It is about time that sanitary napkins are looked upon as a tool to promote wellness instead of an object of shame.

\*PRISM is an organisation creating collaborative models for sustainable development built on science, evidence & value.

### No stigmas attached

vulnerable. They remind her of the numerous restrictions she has to live with simply because she belongs to a certain gender. Every time you say such things, it takes away a part of her self-confidence. Thus, it is no surprise that many girls feel like an outcast simply because of the restrictions that are imposed on them during their periods. What makes matters worse is that we are constantly feeding those thoughts instead of telling her that it's alright and it's just another natural process that her body is undergoing. How about we start telling young girls that periods is just another phase of the month and that they are free to do whatever they want to do? This is the only way to restore normalcy around periods in the minds of young girls.

Dr Manpreet Sodhi  
Clinical psychologist



Menstruation and taboos go hand in hand in our country. Things like "You shouldn't go to the temple" or "You shouldn't enter the kitchen" are said so casually to any girl during periods. While these may look like small things and do not appear to have any significant outcome at the surface, the truth is that these statements can have repercussions much larger than they appear to be. Such statements constantly remind a girl of being

