
CHAPTER : V

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In the present investigation an attempt was made to see the effects of sex typing, General Stress level, and religion on the menstrual distress among college girls.

Issues and Objectives

As an exploratory study the present investigation focussed on the following issues and queries.

1. Whether there is a change from bipolar to orthogonal sex typing in our culture and whether this leads to a different nature and pattern of menstrual distress among the different sex typed groups.
2. What is the general stress level of college girls and whether it affects the menstrual stress.
3. In what way, the differences in the religious backgrounds affect the nature and pattern of menstrual distress.

4. Whether there exists any phase differences in the experience of menstrual symptoms and their severity with regard to sex types, stress level and religion.
5. Which cluster of symptoms is most prevalent in college girls as determined by their sex type, stress level and religion.
6. Thus, the present study is guided by the need to bring out the differences, if any, in the experience of menstrual symptoms, menstrual phases Cluster of symptoms and severity of symptoms as determined by various sex types, stress levels and religions.
7. What further conceptual and empirical work could be, planned and carried out in order to improve the understanding of pattern and dynamics of menstrual distress with regard to sex typing, stress level and religion, among college girls.

The Hypotheses

From the queries stated above the following Null Hypotheses were formulated.

- A) The Androgynous, Masculine, Feminine and Undifferentiated sex type groups do not differ with regard to the nature of menstrual distress.
- B) The high and low stress level groups do not differ with regard to the nature of menstrual distress.
- C) The Christians, Hindus and Muslims do not differ with regard to the nature of menstrual distress.
- D) The four sex typed groups with two stress levels do not differ with regard to menstrual distress.
- E) The four sex typed groups with various religious backgrounds do not differ in the nature of menstrual distress.
- F) The two stress level groups with different religious backgrounds do not differ in the nature of menstrual distress.

- G) The four sex typed groups with high and low stress levels from different religious background do not differ in the nature of menstrual distress.

Variables

The major independent variables taken in this study were :

- i) Sex typing at four levels
- ii) General stress level at two levels and
- iii) Three religious sects

Menstrual distress was taken as a dependent variable.

Sample :

A total sample of 2200 unmarried college girls was taken from the various faculties of M.S.University, Baroda, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad. The age range was from 19-20 years. In the actual study, 206 cases were eliminated out of the total sample. Thus, the final sample consisted of 1994 subjects, drawn from Hindu, Muslim and Christian sects.

Tools :

The tools used in the present study were :

1. Moos Menstrual Distress Questionnaire (MMDQ).
2. Bem's Sex Role - Inventory as adapted by M. Gon (1983).
3. Sarason's Life Experience - Survey as adapted by the researcher (1986 SLES).

The MMDQ is a self rating questionnaire consisting of two forms.

1. Form 'C' which allows a woman to describe her menstrual cycle symptoms in three phases of her most recent menstrual cycle.
2. Form 'T' which allows a woman to describe her menstrual cycle she is experiencing on the day she answers the questionnaire.

In the present study FORM 'C' of MMDQ was used as a tool to measure menstrual, distress. It consists of 48 symptoms grouped in 8 clusters to be rated on a 5 point rating scale for three phases of menstrual cycle.

The Sex Role Inventory used in this study was developed by M. Gon and is an adaptation of Bem's Sex role Inventory (BSRI). It is based on the assumption of dualistic nature of characteristics culturally regarded as Masculine and Feminine and includes provisions for

- a) Separate masculinity and femininity scores
- b) Items selected on the basis of sex typed desirability in Indian context.
- c) Items with positive context.

This tool has 40 traits, 20 Masculine and 20 Feminine traits to be rated on a 7 point rating scale.

The Life Events stress Scale was adapted by the researcher in 1986 from Sarason's Life Experience Survey. The adapted version used to measure general stress level consists of 45 life events to be rated on a 4 point rating scale which allows the respondents to indicate stressful events which had a negative impact on them during the past 1 year.

The sample drawn from Hindu, Muslim and Christian sects was grouped under four sex type

groups and further subdivided under two stress level groups by using Median Split of sex type scores and stress scores, respectively.

Data Collection

The data was collected in three phases whereby in the first phase Deans and Heads of various faculties were approached to seek permission to collect data from female students of Second Year, Third Year and Post Graduation classes.

In the second phase the female students were met in their classes and the 8 page booklet consisting of all the three tests in English as well as Gujarati was given to them.

In the third phase after collecting the filled in booklets, incomplete and wrongly filled test booklets were eliminated from the collected data.

Analysis

In order to study the main and interaction effects of sex typing, general stress level and religion on menstrual distress, the data was treated

to 4 x 2 x 3 ANOVA for each cluster of symptoms and each phase of menstrual cycle. Thus there being 8 clusters and 3 phases, 24 ANOVAS were computed with each cluster and each phase scores. The 4 x 2 x 3 Factorial Design took into consideration 4 levels of sex typing, 2 levels of stress and 3 religious sects.

Further, the data was also treated to test of least significant differences.

A summary of the major findings is as follows

1. The intensity of the menstrual distress symptoms reported is mild to moderate.
2. The pattern of the menstrual distress experienced by college girls is a cross culturally consistent pattern where maximum distress is reported during the menstrual phase and negligible distress is experienced during the intermenstrum phase by college girls.
3. Maximum distress is reported for symptom cluster PAIN, BEHAVIOUR CHANGE, IMPAIRED CONCENTRATION & WATER RETENTION during the menstrual phase while maximum distress is

reported for symptom cluster WATER RETENTION & NEGATIVE AFFECT in premenstrual phase. Distress reported in the intermenstrual phase is negligible and distress reported for AUTONOMIC REACTION, AROUSAL & CONTROL too is negligible.

4. Feminine Sex typed group of girls experience maximum distress in the Menstrual Phase.
5. Masculine sex typed group of girls experience maximum distress in the pre-menstrual phase and in the Intermenstrum phase too.
6. Androgynous sex typed group of girls experience minimum distress in all phases for almost all clusters.
7. Girls with high stress level experience maximum menstrual distress for all symptom clusters in all phases.
8. There is no significant difference between the three religious groups' experience of the Menstrual Distress but the trend of results show that Christian girls experience greater

menstrual distress & Hindu girls experience least menstrual distress for all symptom clusters in all phases.

- 9) Feminine sex typed girls with high stress level experience maximum menstrual distress in the menstrual phase.
10. Masculine sex typed girls with high stress level experience maximum menstrual distress in the Premenstrual phase & Intermenstrum phase.
11. Androgynous sex typed girls with low stress level experience minimum menstrual distress in all phases.
12. Christian girls with high stress level experience maximum menstrual distress for almost all clusters in all phases.
13. Hindu & Muslim girls with low stress level experience low menstrual distress for almost all clusters in all phases.

14. Christian girls with feminine sex type experience maximum menstrual distress for almost all clusters in menstrual phase. While Christian girls with masculine sex type experience maximum menstrual distress in the premenstrual phase.
15. Hindu & Muslim girls with Androgynous sex type experience minimum menstrual distress for almost all clusters in all phases.

A critical and comparative interpretation of the findings was done in terms of different theories of Physiology and Psychology and research studies relating to the variables under consideration viz. sex typing, life events stress, religion and menstrual distress.

In the process of interpretation care was taken that the specific effects of the prevailing socio cultural and ecological milieu are not underestimated or lost in the statistical analysis of the psychological data.

During the course of this research some of the limitations which surfaced are lack of a control group in the sample selected, lack of comparative data in terms of religious sub sects, age groups

various socio-economic classes, need of supplementing ANOVA analysis, with some other analysis.

The researcher suggests that these above mentioned limitations of the present research, could be overcome in future research by using a control group of non menstruating women or males in the sample studying male cycles as a concomittant variable, including women from rural classes, from various religious sub sects and various age groups in the research sample, adopting a comparative developmental approach towards the research problem.

The researcher suggests that menstrual distress should also be studied as an independent variable in relation to other dependent variables such as depression, competency, anxiety, efficiency, role playing etc. Studies on menstrual distress with variables such as food habits of women and its nutritional balance, personality typology of women, use of oral contraceptives as a therapeutic measure self disclosure in women and attitudes of men and women towards menstruation are suggested by the researcher as future directions for research.

It is felt that a Biopsychosocial perspective towards the menstrual distress research would help to understand the diversity of factors involved in menstrual distress and would open up new modalities of health care attitude and delivery system.