

Menstrual Health and Hygiene through the Lens of Positive Deviance: A Scoping Review of Literature on Emerging Concepts in Health Promotional Studies in India

Lakshita Pant

Assistant Professor, DME Media School
Delhi Metropolitan Education, Noida

Dr. Shrinkhala Upadhyaya

Assistant Professor
Sharda School of Media, Film & Entertainment, Sharda University
Greater Noida

Dr. Vishal Sahai

Assistant Professor, DME Media School
Delhi Metropolitan Education, Noida

ABSTRACT

Menstruation around the world is a phenomenon that is considered taboo due to a lack of proper awareness and education. However, for a better insight of issues related to menstrual health and hygiene, health approaches involving people's participation are necessary. In this scoping review paper, the researchers will highlight the importance of one such technique that focuses on bringing social and behavioural change to the community, making it a people-centric participatory approach, known as "Positive Deviance" (PD). Positive Deviance is a concept implemented in issues concerning development communication as well as Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC). Since health promotion focuses on inspiring people and the community to adopt healthy behaviour and positively influence health behaviour, implementing positive deviance can be an appropriate approach to promote positive health practices. This scoping review was conducted using **PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Review)**. In order to review the literature on menstrual health and hygiene as well as positive deviance in health-related contexts, a total of 15 peer-reviewed studies were found, mapped, and synthesized. This paper defines how PD has been a successful ground-level approach in health studies. The paper also highlights that PD can be applicable and beneficial for studies and research on menstrual health and hygiene. Based on the papers that are reviewed, it appears that different communities are conducting research on

menstrual health and hygiene issues, and a variety of additional ways are being employed. PD is showcased as an emerging concept in health promotional studies and how it can help in promoting sensitive issues such as Menstrual Health and Hygiene or fight taboos against sensitive issues related to the same in India.

Keywords - *Positive Deviance, Menstrual Health and Hygiene, Health Promotion, Behaviour Change.*

1. Introduction

Menstruation is a prevalent sign of one's transition from adolescence to womanhood and is a customary process of biological change encountered by a lot of girls, women, transgenders, and non-binary persons across the world. Despite this, crores of young women all around the world are deprived of the ability to manage their menstrual cycle respectfully and healthily (Singh et al., 2022). In India, there are 243 million teenagers, about 25 percent of the population. All over 355 million women and girls in India have periods; however, menstrual health and hygiene (MHM) make crores of women around the country feel uncomfortable and overlooked (Sharma et al., 2020). Menstruation is still restricted and hidden in many countries, despite being a cyclical, natural process that has ensured human reproductive health for thousands of years. In India, menstruation is considerably more than just a medical phenomenon; it is essentially a cultural phenomenon linked to the idea of purity, pollution, and gendered propriety. Girls are still kept apart during their periods, discouraged from attending social gatherings or school, and forbidden from entering the kitchen or places of worship in many communities (Khound, 2025). The obstacles around menstruation are not only related to economic imbalance but also include traditional thinking and mindset. In India, women residing in rural societies who menstruate are prohibited from engaging in routine activities like washing, cooking, and participating in cultural and religious rituals because they are seen as grimy. Because of the taboos and stigmas associated with menstruation, there is a culture of silence about the subject in society and at home, which results in unfavorable attitudes and social norms (Sood et al., 2021).

Menstrual Health and Hygiene has been a topic of discussion amongst health communication researchers. Since MHM is a dominant issue, health interventions and approaches that spread knowledge, education, and awareness should be the prime focus to educate people. At the national, state, district, and school levels, interventions have been carried out in India to improve MHM. The interventions address the dearth of information and access to menstrual hygiene supplies (Ramaiya et al., 2019). Researchers must focus on approaches that support people's participation among the community members for a better reach of knowledge about menstrual health and hygiene. To address this concern, the researchers focused on an action-based approach that critically focuses on the solutions rather than the problem. The approach is called Positive Deviance. This study is a scoping review of literature that focuses on mapping and synthesizing existing research related to menstruation and positive deviance with the objective of identifying key themes, research gaps, and conceptual approaches. This study focuses on suggesting participatory approaches like positive deviance for the betterment of society to tackle sensitive health issues while proposing a future research scope.

1.1 Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Menstruation according to UNICEF is described as “the natural bodily process of releasing blood and associated matter from the uterus through the vagina as part of the menstrual cycle”. “Every month, 1.8 billion people across the world menstruate. Millions of these girls, women, transgender men, and non-binary persons are unable to manage their menstrual cycle in a dignified, healthy way” (UNICEF, 2019).

The first menstrual period a female teenager experiences is called menarche, which usually begins between the ages of 10 and 16 (National Library of Medicine, 2023). For girls and women who are menstruating, maintaining good menstrual hygiene becomes crucial. Menstrual Hygiene refers to keeping one's body clean when menstruating. It calls for basic conveniences like clean absorbent materials, water, soap, and private restrooms (Mudi et al., 2023). The worldwide concern for menstrual hygiene stems from its enormity, since there are over 0.6 billion teenage females (8% of the world's population) worldwide. These youth live in Asia and Africa, where they make up more than 80% of the population (Sharma et al., 2020).

The term Menstrual hygiene management is defined as the -"women and adolescent girls using a clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect menstrual blood, that can be changed in

privacy as often as necessary, using soap and water for washing the body as required, and having access to safe and convenient facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials," (WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme, 2012). The difficulties faced by girls, women, and other groups who are menstruating extend beyond a seeming lack of resources or infrastructure. The experiences of menstruators are restricted in many nations by discriminatory cultural taboos and societal stigma, even though for the majority of women and girls, menstruation is considered as an ordinary and healthy phase of life.

For many generations, women and girls have suffered from inadequate menstrual health and cleanliness, exacerbating social and economic inequalities and negatively impacting their human development, education, health, and safety (The World Bank, 2022). Although there has been various research on menstrual health and hygiene, this literature review highlights the need for understanding menstrual health and hygiene through a different lens. This paper tries to identify a review that is based on positive deviance and menstrual health and hygiene, as well as suggests future research work in the field. This review is done to understand how positive deviance community-oriented research can be beneficial for future research on issues such as menstrual health and hygiene.

1.2 Positive Deviance

Positive Deviance, also known as PD, is a behavioural and social change approach that is built upon the observation that, regardless of all circumstances, some people will use unusual but effective behaviours or strategies to help them come up with better solutions despite facing the same difficulties, limitations, and resource shortages as their peers. "PD represents a data-driven approach to solving complex social problems through identifying efficacious innovations in low-resource settings and then disseminating and implementing them from the inside out for wider societal adoption" (Dearing & Singhal, 2020). The people who are identified with exceptional practices and behaviour are termed "Deviants".

Positive Deviance is a people-participatory approach where the techniques and knowledge of the community members are identified and figured out complex issues. Menstrual Health and Hygiene is considered a serious taboo in our society. Hence, addressing the issue with approaches that look forward to community participation and finding solutions within themselves is important. Positive Deviance which is a successful approach to Social and Behavioural change can be suggested to be

implemented specifically in issues and problems related to Menstrual Health and Hygiene. This review paper aims to find positive deviance implementation in other health issues and suggest methods to cover issues of menstrual health and hygiene. The paper is an exploratory review study where the researchers aim to find literature on positive deviance in the context of menstruation.

1.3 Health Promotional Studies

According to the World Health Organization (2025), health is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." When someone is healthy and happy on a psychological level, when they are not ill (either infectious or deficient), and have a healthy social bond in society, they are considered to be healthy. Therefore, being physically, psychologically, and socially whole is essential for leading a good life.

The renowned medical historian Henry E. Siegrist coined the term "health promotion" in 1945 following the definition of the four primary purposes of medicine as "promotion of health, prevention of illness, restoration of the sick, and rehabilitation." He stated that health - enhancing needed the coordinated efforts of politicians, labor, industry, educators, and doctors, and necessitated providing a fair standard of living, good labor conditions, education, physical culture, and means of relaxation and amusement (Kumar & Preetha, 2012). This study aims to promote menstrual health and hygiene through a participatory approach, focusing on Positive Deviance, which contributes to behavioural change, as MHM focuses on maintaining healthy menstruation methods.

2. Objectives

1. To identify and map the existing review related to menstrual health and hygiene
2. To examine the use of positive deviance covering health-related research.
3. To determine where the literature is lacking and suggest further investigation, opportunities encompassing the field of Positive Deviance and Menstrual Health and Hygiene.

3. Research Questions

RQ 1 What are the approaches and themes that are identified in the existing literature on menstrual health and hygiene?

RQ 2 How is positive deviance used as a conceptual approach in health-related issues across different contexts?

RQ 3 How can positive deviance possibly be identified and used as a future conceptual framework for the issue of menstrual health and hygiene?

4. Research Methodology

To explore and synthesize the body of research on Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) and Positive Deviance (PD), this study used a scoping review methodology. Scoping reviews are especially suitable for investigating new, conceptually dispersed, or understudied fields of study where the goal is not to evaluate the efficacy of interventions but rather to pinpoint essential themes, research gaps, and future research directions. A scoping review made it possible to systematically examine two distinct bodies of literature and their possible conceptual convergence, as there aren't many empirical studies that specifically integrate MHH and Positive Deviance.

The Prisma – ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Extension for Scoping Reviews) guidelines, which offer an open framework for recording the identification, screening, and selection of pertinent studies, were followed in the conduct and reporting of the review (Tricco et al., 2018). By using this method, the study sought to create an evidence-based knowledge of how menstrual health and hygiene have been studied in health and communication research, how Positive Deviance has been used in various health-related contexts, and how knowledge from this literature collection can guide future community-driven and participatory frameworks for promoting menstrual health. This scoping review purposefully maps two different but conceptually related bodies of literature in order to suggest a future integrative framework, as there are currently no empirical studies of menstrual health and hygiene with positive deviance. In accordance with PRISMA-ScR guidelines, this scoping review did not register a protocol with PROSPERO, compute interrater reliability statistics, or perform a formal quality appraisal of included studies. These steps are not required for scoping reviews whose main goal is to map evidence, identify research gaps, and clarify important concepts rather than evaluate the efficacy of interventions.

Round 1: Searching for Keywords

Guided by the Prisma – ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Extension for Scoping Reviews) reporting standards, this scoping review was conducted within

three rounds of selection on October 7, 2023, by the researchers. In the first round, a separate search was started for the terms Positive Deviance and Menstrual Health and Hygiene on Google Scholar and PubMed Journals databases for predefined keywords. This step created 96,400 results in Google Scholar for Menstrual Health and Hygiene, whereas 4,19,000 for Positive Deviance. For the PubMed Database, the search included 989 papers for Menstrual Health and Hygiene, including 835 results for Positive Deviance. Next, the filter of Publication dates for the terms separately (2018-2023) was included to narrow the search. This step reduced the search by 17,300 for Menstrual Health and hygiene and 31,200 for Positive Deviance from Google Scholar. For the PubMed Database, the search resulted in 514 terms for Menstrual Health and hygiene and 315 for Positive Deviance.

Round 2: Screening the Titles with exact keywords

In the following round, after using the Filter of Exact Phrase in "Menstrual Health and Hygiene" and in 'anywhere in the article' in the Google Scholar Database, 1,180 results were identified. The same process was repeated for Positive Deviance by including the Filter of the Exact Phrase "Positive Deviance " and "anywhere in the article" in the Google Scholar Database, coming up with 6,500 results. Next for finalizing the criteria for the PubMed Database, 'Filter of Text Availability - "Full Text-", Date Published - "2018--2023", Language - English, Article Type - "Books & Document, Clinical Trial, Meta-Analysis, Review, Systematic Review, Randomized Controlled Trial", for Menstrual Health and Hygiene was used and 91 results were identified. The same process was repeated for the term Positive Deviance by applying Filter of Text Availability - "Full Text-", Date Published - "2018--2023", Language - English, Article Type - "Books & Documents, Clinical Trial, Meta-Analysis, Review, Systematic Review, Randomized Controlled Trial", getting 33 results. The authors cross-interrogated the results for accuracy and consistency.

Round 3: Screening of Full Text

After completing the 2nd round of filtration, for the third round, the researchers manually eliminated papers according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Since both concepts had a different level of understanding, the inclusion criteria were different for both concepts. The inclusion criteria for conducting the study on Menstrual Health and Hygiene were as follows:

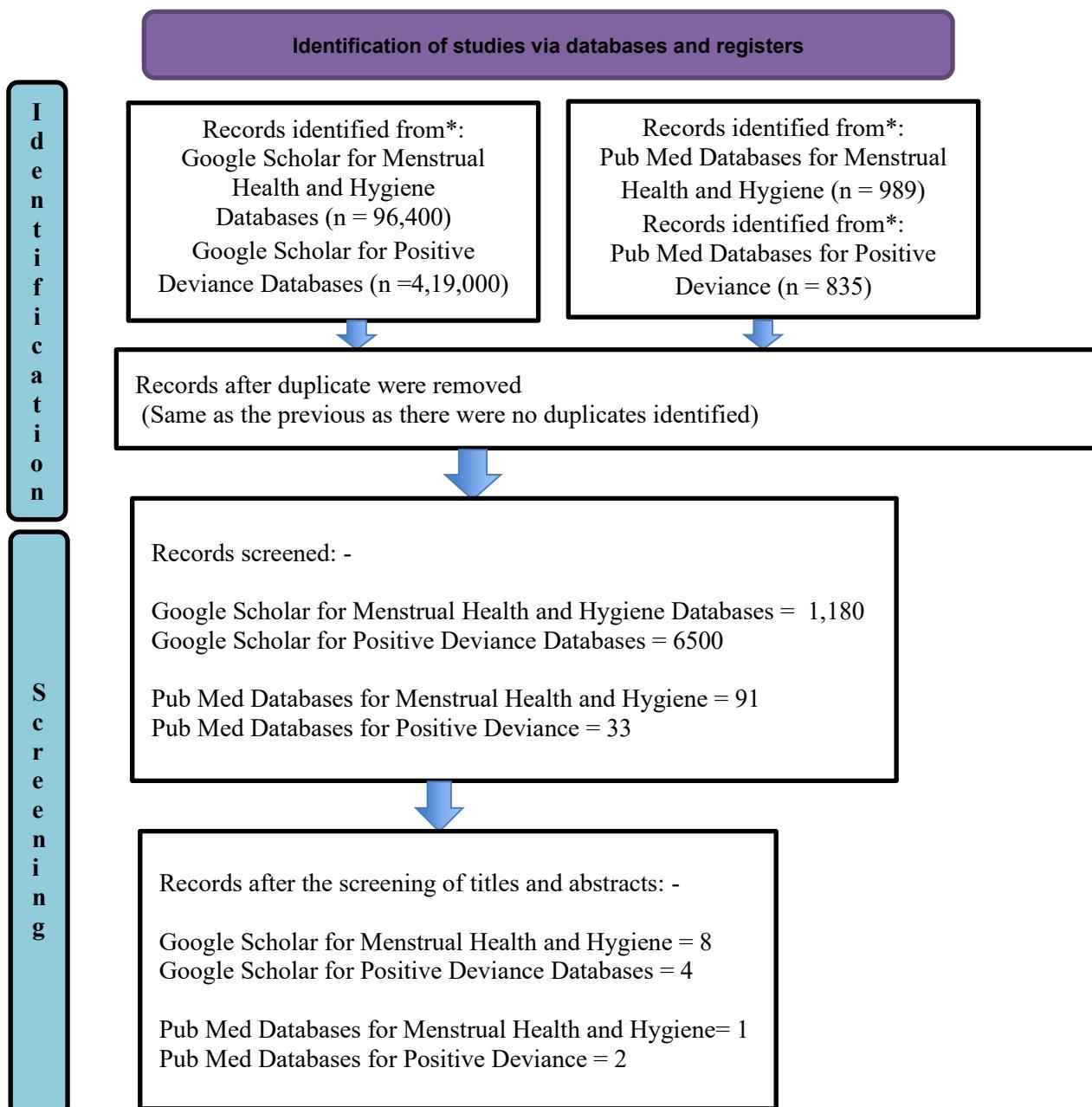
- 1) -Papers were selected for 5 years between 2018 and 2023.
- 2)- Papers focusing on menstrual health and hygiene and positive deviance.

3) For a better understanding of MHM methods previously used by another researcher review paper was selected, papers that talk about the use of MHM in interventions were selected, and papers that focused on the Indian female population were a major focus.

4) Then, other criteria were associated, if any conceptual paper that defines menstrual health was present.

The inclusion criteria for selecting Positive Deviance papers were: -

1) Mostly conceptual papers that talk about the use of Positive Deviance in other research studies.
 2) Papers that have implemented the positive deviance approach as interventions in other health-related issues. Toward the end, only 15 papers were selected to review. The PRISMA-ScR flow diagram is summarized as follows in Figure 1.



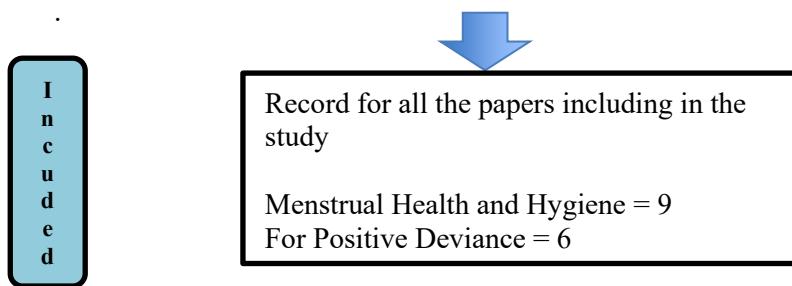


Figure 1: PRISMA- ScR flow diagram of literature criteria for selection of papers

5. Findings

5.1 Findings, Result and Analysis for Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Citation	Themes	Methodology	Summary
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. <i>Obstetrics and Gynecology International</i> , 2020, 1–8. doi:10.1155/2020/6238193	To improve the learning of menstrual cycle, practices, and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in schools. To decrease absence from school and boost academic performance, menstruation.	In 2020, a prospective research study was conducted in 10 Vijayapura schools, involving low- and middle-income girls in grades 8-12, who completed a questionnaire before hearing a presentation on MHM topics.	Schools should adopt a realistic approach towards MHM and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities MHM should be included in the school curriculum.
Sharma, N. S., & Mohan Nahak, F. (2021b). A systematic literature review of communication strategies and Menstrual Hygiene: From 2007 to 2020. <i>JOURNAL OF CONTENT COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION</i> , 14(8), 250–266. doi:10.31620/jccc.12.21/21	Focus on theoretical foundations and the sparse application of theories or models in research studies on menstrual hygiene.	The report highlights the absence of appropriate theoretical frameworks and the sparse use of theories or models in research studies on menstrual health and hygiene.	The research, which primarily focused on Western European and American nations, had limited prior knowledge of menstrual hygiene and health in specific geographical regions.

<p>Evans, R. L., Harris, B., Onuegbu, C., & Griffiths, F. (2022a). A systematic review of educational interventions to improve the menstrual health of Young Adolescent Girls. <i>BMJ Open</i>, 12(6). doi:10.1136/bmopen-2021-057204</p>	<p>Doing a systematic review and meta-analysis of educational programs.</p> <p>The study emphasizes the value of interactive approaches.</p> <p>In addition to addressing the issue of period poverty.</p>	<p>The study utilized seven online databases for English-language publications from 2014 to 2020, assessing their quality using the Mixed Methods assessment tool, calculating the intervention's effect size using Cohen's d, and adhering to PRISMA guidelines.</p>	<p>Comprehensive review and meta-analysis of therapies designed to help young teenage females have better menstrual health.</p>
<p>Sharma, S., Mehra, D., Brusselaers, N., & Mehra, S. (2020a). Menstrual hygiene preparedness among schools in India: A systematic review and meta-analysis of system-and policy-level actions. <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>, 17(2), 647. doi:10.3390/ijerph17020647</p>	<p>Focuses on the need to enhance infrastructure and instruction on menstrual hygiene in schools.</p> <p>less than half of the girls were aware of menstruation before menarche.</p>	<p>The review included 1125 articles and 183 data extractions, a meta-analysis was conducted to determine the prevalence of menstrual hygiene practices in schools across three Indian states.</p>	<p>The government has created national-level regulations for MHM-friendly schools, to better comprehend the issues surrounding MHM for teenage females in schools and the effects of MHM therapies.</p>
Citation	Themes	Methodology	Summary
<p>Singh, A., Chakrabarty, M., Singh, S., Chandra, R., Chowdhury, S., & Singh, A. (2022b). Menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent women in Rural India: A cross-sectional study. <i>BMC Public Health</i>, 22(1). doi:10.1186/s12889-022-14622-7</p>	<p>The study highlights the importance of context-specific treatments for improving menstrual hygiene among teenage women in rural India, emphasizing the need for reduced regional differences in sanitary procedures.</p>	<p>The 5th National Family Health Survey in India, involving 95,551 teenage women aged 15-19 from 28 states and 8 union territories, revealed regional variations in the use of sanitary procedures at state and district levels.</p>	<p>Variables identified would be used among teenage women in rural India household wealth, education, and exposure to mass media.</p>
<p>Sommer, M. et al. (2021) 'Menstrual Hygiene Management in schools: Midway Progress Update on the "MHM in ten" 2014–2024 global agenda', <i>Health Research Policy and Systems</i>, 19(1). doi:10.1186/s12961-020-00669-8.</p>	<p>The Menstrual Hygiene Management in Ten (MHM in Ten) agenda aims to improve girls' menstruation management in schools by 2024, focusing on the growing research supporting MHM in schools.</p>	<p>The authors reviewed the body of research on MHM in schools, noted the absence of international standards, and emphasized the growth of evidence-based advocacy platforms to aid MHM initiatives.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a chance to give MHM for schoolgirls a higher priority, including better monitoring of progress and more integration across sectors.</p>
<p>Majeed, J. et al. (2022) 'Menstrual hygiene practices and associated factors among Indian adolescent girls: A meta-analysis', <i>Reproductive Health</i>, 19(1). doi:10.1186/s12978-022-01453-3.</p>	<p>The report offers a thorough meta-analysis of menstrual hygiene behaviours and related variables among Indian teenage girls based on an examination of 84 pertinent research.</p>	<p>The systematic review and meta-analysis of scientific literature published between 2011 and 2021 was conducted using the PRISMA checklist and PICO criteria, and the quality of included studies was evaluated.</p>	<p>A significant rise in perineum habits and the use of sanitary pads during menstruation was observed.</p>
<p>Sommer, M., Torondel, B., Hennegan, J., Phillips-Howard, P. A., Mahon, T., Motivans, A., ... & Monitoring Menstrual Health and Hygiene Group. (2021). How addressing menstrual health and hygiene may enable progress across the Sustainable Development Goals. <i>Global health action</i>, 14(1), 1920315.</p>	<p>Menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) and key outcome indicators are crucial for girls in low- and middle-income countries, promoting synergies that contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	<p>The MHH indicators were analyzed through a task force, sectoral measurement specialists, and a global advisory group, with spider diagram assessments to ensure their suitability for wider usage.</p>	<p>Future work should concentrate on evaluating the proposed connections between MHH and sector-specific results.</p>

<p>Sood, S. et al. (2020) 'Measuring the effectiveness of communication programming on Menstrual Health and hygiene management (MHM) social norms among adolescent girls in India', <i>Global Public Health</i>, 16(4), pp. 578–589. doi:10.1080/17441692.2020.1826048.</p>	<p>The paper discusses the importance of societal norms in menstrual health and hygiene management (MHM), highlighting their multifaceted nature and their connection to individual beliefs.</p>	<p>The study utilized a population-based, case-comparison design, employing quantitative questionnaires for interviews and conducting bivariate and multivariate analysis, measuring six distinct behaviours defining acceptable MHM practice.</p>	<p>The study emphasizes the importance of consistent monitoring of MHM and societal norms, revealing a strong correlation between good social norm adoption and high MHM practice in SBCC.</p>
---	--	--	--

5.2 Findings, Result, and Analysis for Positive Deviance

Citation	Themes	Methodology	Summary
<p>Wolfer, T.A. and Wilson, B.L. (2018) 'Seeking champions for change: A positive deviance approach for Social Work', <i>Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services</i>, 100(2), pp. 151–163. doi:10.1177/1044389418811600.</p>	<p>The Positive Deviance (PD) encourages local leadership and community responsibility for problem-solving.</p>	<p>For gathering procedures and suggestions for the successful facilitation of PD, the writers consult primary sources as well as extra-referenced sources.</p>	<p>Finding positive outliers in a society who have created workable solutions to an issue that baffles others is a key component of PD.</p>
<p>Dearing, J. W., & Singhal, A. (2020). New directions for diffusion of innovations research: Dissemination, implementation, and positive deviance. <i>Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies</i>, 2(4), 307-313.</p>	<p>Dissemination science, implementation science, and positive deviance research are three of the three new areas for diffusion research that are highlighted in the report.</p>	<p>The main objectives are to address the principles and consequences of dissemination science, implementation science, and positive deviance research.</p>	<p>It incorporates ideas from diffusion theory and marketing research to increase the likelihood that innovations will be accepted and used successfully.</p>
<p>Foster, B. A., Seeley, K., Davis, M., & Boone-Heinonen, J. (2022). Positive deviance in health and medical research on individual level outcomes—a review of methodology. <i>Annals of Epidemiology</i>, 69, 48–56.</p>	<p>The article evaluates the literature on positive deviance in health outcomes, highlighting the need for standardized methods and improved reporting with positive deviance techniques.</p>	<p>The literature review, utilizing the Scoping review technique (PRISMA-ScR) from 1945 to 2020, focused on positive deviation or outliers, focusing on individual-level results.</p>	<p>A different category of positive deviance research takes a more quantitative approach to determining exceptional performers and frequently collects qualitative information from them.</p>
<p>Sabale, R., Pathak, B. G., & Manapurath, R. M. (2021). Utilizing "Positive deviance inquiry" to explore factors influencing child health: A qualitative study. <i>Journal of Education and Health Promotion</i>, 10.</p>	<p>Focuses on the variables that affect children's health by concentrating on those that promote healthy development in kids.</p>	<p>This study utilized focus groups, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews with a sample size of 37 in Naigoan, an urban health environment in a large metropolis, with selective selection from an under-five clinic.</p>	<p>The study emphasized how crucial it is to comprehend the elements that contribute to a child's growth and development at their best.</p>
<p>Sharma, N. and Chillakuri, B.K. (2022) 'Positive deviance at work: A systematic review and directions for future research', <i>Personnel Review</i>, 52(4), pp. 933–954. doi:10.1108/pr-05-2020-0360.</p>	<p>Offers perceptions on the constructive side of employee deviance, emphasizing its potential advantages for both employers and workers.</p>	<p>The study analyzed 2,691 relevant research articles from three databases, including Web of Science, EBSCO, and Scopus, focusing on journal coverage, citation analysis, geographic coverage, sample type, and variables used.</p>	<p>The text delves into the significance of positive deviance in the younger workforce, its strategic use for employee engagement, its role in organizational scholarship, and its mediation role.</p>

Sarnkhaowkhom, C., Phonsuk, P., Santre, S., & Suksatan, W. (2022). Applying of positive deviance approach to promote young adults' and adolescents' health: A literature review. <i>Sustainability</i> , 14(17), 10669. doi:10.3390/su141710669	The positive deviance method is beneficial in a variety of situations and for resolving serious behavioural issues, making it a useful tool for boosting young adults' and adolescents' health.	The study utilized various databases like MeSH phrases, PICO models, and statistical hypothesis testing to evaluate 10 studies, including in-depth research and exclusion of studies.	The positive deviance method may effectively treat behavioural issues in a variety of contexts and is crucial for boosting young adults' and adolescents' health.
---	---	---	---

Discussion and Conclusion

This scoping review aimed to study various literature on menstrual health and hygiene with a participatory communication approach focusing on community participation and perception known as Positive Deviance. The result and findings suggest that even after issues around menstrual health and hygiene are being researched among different communities and multiple methods are being used, approaches that support participatory communication must be implemented so that people in the community may come up with community-driven solutions and share their knowledge related to menstruation. These kinds of practices remove silence and give a platform to share individual practices regarding MHM. Further research is required for approaches that talk about participatory knowledge about menstruation in the community. There are suggestions that positive deviance must be applied to other health-related issues that benefit society. Since positive deviance is an approach that is based on social change and behavioural studies, it can be implemented in the issues of menstrual health and hygiene and the means of intervention.

Key Barriers found in menstrual health and hygiene research are mapped with corresponding Positive Deviance mechanisms in the following framework, which conceptually integrates the findings from the two parallel bodies of literature. By converting local adaptive behaviours into scalable health promotion strategies, this table demonstrates how participatory community-driven Positive Deviance processes can theoretically address ongoing MHH challenges.

MHH Barrier	Description	Positive Deviance Mechanism	How PD Addresses the Barrier
Menstrual taboo & silence	Cultural restrictions, shame	Identification of positive outliers	Women who openly manage menstruation model acceptable alternatives

Lack of awareness	Limited knowledge before menarche	Peer role modelling	Local girls using hygienic practices act as trusted educators
Gender norms	Restrictions on mobility, participation	Community credibility	Solutions emerge from within cultural norms
School absenteeism	Poor facilities, stigma	Bottom-up dissemination	Locally feasible practices improve school attendance
Infrastructure gaps	Limited access to products	Adaptive local solutions	PD identifies low-cost, context-specific practices

In conclusion, the paper titled, “Menstrual Health and Hygiene through the Lens of Positive Deviance: A Scoping Review of Literature on Emerging Concepts in Health Promotional Studies in India,” is an exploratory scoping review of the literature that was conducted by following the Prisma – ScR guidelines and aims to find different reviews on menstruation and the participatory approach named Positive Deviance. After conducting the systematic review, the researchers found that even after various studies that discuss awareness of menstrual-related issues, there is a very important need to conduct and implement research that speaks to the core of issues related to MHM. Thus, community-driven behavioural change approaches like Positive Deviance play a keen role in pointing out complex issues like Menstruation in society. This review conceptually bridges menstrual health barriers with a participatory positive deviance mechanism by bringing together parallel strands of research, as opposed to synthesizing an existing integrated evidence base.

References

1. Dearing, J. W., & Singhal, A. (2020). New Directions for diffusion of innovations research: Dissemination, implementation, and positive deviance. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(4), 307–313. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.216>
2. Evans, R. L., Harris, B., Onuegbu, C., & Griffiths, F. (2022). Systematic review of educational interventions to improve the menstrual health of Young Adolescent Girls. *BMJ Open*, 12(6), e057204. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-057204>

3. Foster, B. A., Seeley, K., Davis, M., & Boone-Heinonen, J. (2022). Positive deviance in health and medical research on individual level outcomes – A review of methodology. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 69, 48–56. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2021.12.001>
4. Khound, M., Bhattacharyya, H. & Ghosh, S., 2025. Menstruation and menstrual hygiene: analyzing the gaps in knowledge, perception and practices in a rural area of North East India. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 50(5), pp. 849–853. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.ijcm_513_24
5. Kumar, S., & Preetha, G. (2012). Health promotion: An effective tool for global health. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 37(1), 5–12. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4103/0970-0218.94009>
6. Kumari, G., & Eguruze, E. S. (2022). Positive deviance traits and social entrepreneurship for women empowerment amid COVID-19. *IIM Kozhikode Society and Management Review*, 11(1), 109–125. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/22779752211030697>
7. Majeed, J., Sharma, P., Ajmera, P., & Dalal, K. (2022). Menstrual hygiene practices and associated factors among Indian adolescent girls: A meta-analysis. *Reproductive Health*, 19(1), 148. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-022-01453-3>
8. Mudi, P.K., Pradhan, M.R. & Meher, T., 2023. *Menstrual health and hygiene among Juang women: a particularly vulnerable tribal group in Odisha, India*. Reproductive Health, 20, p.55. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-023-01603-1>
9. National Library of Medicine. (2023, March 11). Physiology, Menaerch. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470216/>. Cleveland Clinic., (2023). *Menstrual Cycle*. Retrieved from <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/10132-menstrual-cycle>.
10. Page, M. J., Moher, D., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., McKenzie, J. E. (2021). Prisma 2020 explanation and elaboration: Updated guidance and exemplars for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372, n160. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n160>
11. Ramaiya, A., Malhotra, A., Cronin, C., Stevens, S., Kostizak, K., Sharma, A., Nagar, S., & Sood, S. (2019). How does a social and behavioral change communication intervention predict menstrual health and hygiene management: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 19(1), 1039. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7359-z>
12. Sabale, R., Pathak, B. G., & Manapurath, R. M. (2021). Utilizing “positive deviance inquiry” to explore factors influencing child health: A qualitative study. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 10(1), 354. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_1449_20

13. Sarnkhaowkhom, C., Phonsuk, P., Santre, S., & Suksatan, W. (2022). Applying of positive deviance approach to promote young adults' and adolescents' health: A literature review. *Sustainability*, 14(17), 10669. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141710669>
14. Sharma, N. S., & Mohan Nahak, F. (2021). A systematic literature review of communication strategies and Menstrual Hygiene: From 2007 to 2020. *Journal of Content Community and Communication*, 14(8), 250–266. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.31620/JCCC.12.21/21>
15. Sharma, S., Mehra, D., Brusselaers, N., & Mehra, S. (2020). Menstrual hygiene preparedness among schools in India: A systematic review and meta-analysis of system-and policy-level actions. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(2), 647. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17020647>
16. Singh, A., Chakrabarty, M., Singh, S., Chandra, R., Chowdhury, S., & Singh, A. (2022). Menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent women in Rural India: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1), 2126. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-14622-7>
17. Singhal, A., & Svenkerud, P. J. (2019). Flipping the diffusion of innovations paradigm: Embracing the positive deviance approach to Social Change. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 29(2), 151–163. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1326365X19857010>
18. Sommer, M., Caruso, B. A., Torondel, B., Warren, E. C., Yamakoshi, B., Haver, J., Long, J., Mahon, T., Nalinponguit, E., Okwaro, N., & Phillips-Howard, P. A. (2021). Menstrual Hygiene Management in Schools: Midway Progress Update on the “MHM in ten” 2014–2024 global agenda. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 19(1), 1. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-020-00669-8>
19. Sommer, M., Torondel, B., Hennegan, J., Phillips-Howard, P. A., Mahon, T., Motivans, A., Zulaika, G., Gruer, C., Haver, J., Caruso, B. A., & Monitoring Menstrual Health and Hygiene Group. (2021). How addressing menstrual health and hygiene may enable progress across the Sustainable Development Goals. *Global Health Action*, 14(1), 1920315. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2021.1920315>
20. Sood, S., Kostizak, K., Ramaiya, A., & Cronin, C. (2021). Measuring the effectiveness of communication programming on Menstrual Health and hygiene management (MHM) social norms among adolescent girls in India. *Global Public Health*, 16(4), 578–589. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2020.1826048>.
21. The World Bank. (2022, May 11). Menstrual health and hygiene. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/brief/menstrual-health-and-hygiene>.
22. Tricco, A.C., Lillie, E., Zarin, W., O'Brien, K.K., Colquhoun, H., Levac, D., Moher, D., Peters, M.D.J., Horsley, T., Weeks, L., Hempel, S., Akl, E.A., Chang, C., McGowan, J., Stewart, L., Hartling, L., Aldcroft, A., Wilson, M.G., Garrity, C. et al. (2018) ‘PRISMA extension for scoping reviews

(PRISMA-ScR): checklist and explanation', *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 169(7), pp. 467–473. doi:10.7326/M18-0850.

23. UNICEF. (2019). *Guidance on menstrual health and hygiene - UNICEF*. Guidance on Menstrual Health and Hygiene. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/media/91341/file/UNICEF-Guidance-menstrual-health-hygiene-2019.pdf>.

24. Wolfer, T. A., & Wilson, B. L. (2019). Seeking champions for change: A positive deviance approach for Social Work. *Families in Society*, 100(2), 151–163. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044389418811600>

25. World Health Organization (WHO) & United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2012. *Consultation on draft long list of goal, target and indicator options for future global monitoring of water, sanitation and hygiene*. WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme. Available at: <https://washdata.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/2017-06/JMP-2012-post2015-consultation.pdf> (Accessed: Day Month Year).

26. World Health Organization. (2025). *Health and well-being*. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/major-themes/health-and-well-being>

27. 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, 6238193. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/6238193>