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## IMPACT OF MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICIES: DO THEY HELP WOMEN OR PERPETUATE BIAS?

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### ABSTRACT

Menstrual leave is increasingly recognized as a crucial workplace policy issue intersecting health, gender equality, and inclusivity. This study examines employees' perceptions across genders towards the implementation of menstrual leave in professional spaces. A structured questionnaire was administered, and responses were collected through Google Forms to ensure participant comfort, confidentiality, and accessibility. A total of 302 respondents participated, with targeted questions for women to capture lived experiences and menstrual health challenges. The findings indicate that most respondents view menstrual leave as a legitimate health need rather than a privilege, expressing strong support for paid leave or flexible work-from-home options. At the same time, concerns regarding gender stereotypes, workplace bias, and policy misuse were noted. The study also reveals gaps in policy awareness and the absence of formal menstrual leave provisions in most workplaces. These insights emphasize the urgent need for legally recognized, gender-sensitive, and inclusive workplace policies that normalize menstruation, enhance employee well-being, and reduce stigma. This research contributes to advancing menstrual equity and shaping inclusive labour practices in India.

### KEYWORDS:

Menstrual Leave, Workplace Policy, Gender Equality, Employee Well-being, Inclusivity, Paid Leave.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a natural biological process experienced by women and other menstruators across the world. However, its impact on daily life, particularly in professional environments, remains significantly under-acknowledged. In India, where cultural taboos and stigma around menstruation persist, the subject is often excluded from formal workplace policy discussions. While countries like Japan, Indonesia, and Spain have implemented menstrual leave policies, India has yet to

establish uniform legislation, except for isolated state and corporate initiatives.

Menstrual pain and related symptoms such as cramps, fatigue, and discomfort can affect productivity, concentration, and overall well-being. Despite this, menstruation is often treated as a private issue rather than a legitimate workplace health concern. Implementing menstrual leave can help foster inclusivity, reduce stigma, and promote gender equality.



This research seeks to analyse employees' awareness, attitudes, and opinions regarding menstrual leave, including perspectives on its necessity, ideal structure, and potential impact on workplace dynamics. By focusing on both men's and women's views, this study aims to present a comprehensive understanding of how menstrual leave can be integrated effectively into India's evolving labour landscape.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

**Prithivi Raj, Antra Pandit (2021)<sup>612</sup>:** "Implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy in India: An Empirical Study".

The study examines the necessity of menstrual leave policies in India, supported by data from 343 women in the organized sector. It highlights how menstrual pain affects women's physical and mental productivity. The authors review global menstrual leave policies in countries like Japan, Indonesia, and Taiwan. The 2017 Menstruation Benefits Bill is analysed as a progressive legislative step. Private companies like Zomato and Culture Machine are cited for implementing menstrual leave. The study also considers alternate options like wellness leave. It concludes that gender-sensitive policies are essential for inclusive workspaces.

**Bansal, Aastha (2025)<sup>613</sup>:** "An Analysis of the Pros and Cons of the Menstrual Leave Policy" (SPRF)".

The paper explores the evolving discourse around menstrual leave in India and abroad, assessing both its social and economic implications. Bansal highlights how menstrual leave can improve employee well-being, reduce stigma, and enhance workplace inclusivity. However, she also warns of potential drawbacks such as benevolent sexism, hiring biases, and privacy concerns. The study stresses the importance of inclusive policy design that extends benefits to all menstruators, including gender minorities. It concludes that while menstrual leave fosters empathy and

health equity, it must be implemented carefully to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes.

**Bhargabi Kundu (2023)<sup>614</sup>** - "The Need and Legal Perspective of the Menstrual Leave in India"

The research paper explores the urgent requirement for a menstrual leave policy in India. It highlights the physical and psychological discomfort faced by women during menstruation and the lack of legislative attention towards this biological necessity. The paper discusses how countries like Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, and Spain have implemented menstrual leave policies. In India, Bihar is the only state to provide two days of special leave, and companies like Zomato have also adopted such policies. Despite efforts to introduce menstrual health bills in Parliament, national legislation is still absent. The paper references Articles 14, 15(3), 21, and 42 of the Constitution to justify the policy's legal viability. It emphasizes that menstrual leave would not only support women's health but also enhance productivity and workplace inclusivity. The author concludes by advocating for a uniform national law to ensure dignity and equality for all menstruators.

**Gurnimratjeet Kaur and Ishan Tyagi (2025)<sup>615</sup>**- "Impact of paid leave policies for women in workplace with special reference to menstrual leaves"

The study highlights gaps in menstrual leave policies in India despite growing global recognition. It references the Menstrual Benefit Bill, 2017 and Women's Sexual, Reproductive and Menstrual Rights Bill, 2018, noting their non-implementation. International examples from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Italy, Indonesia, and Zambia showcase varied approaches to menstrual leave. Mary Lou Ballweg's the Endometriosis Sourcebook emphasizes the medical need for menstrual leave due to conditions like dysmenorrhea and endometriosis. Nadya Okamoto's Period Power supports menstrual equity and normalizing

<sup>612</sup> Nat. Volatiles & Essent. Oils 8, no. 5, 2317–2322 (2021).

<sup>613</sup> Aastha Bansal, "An Analysis of the Pros and Cons of the Menstrual Leave Policy," 2025

<sup>614</sup> Indian Journal of Integrated Research in Law, Volume III, Issue V, 2023.

<sup>615</sup> IJRAR, Volume 12, Issue 1, March 2025



menstruation discussions. Private firms like Zomato and Culture Machine in India have adopted menstrual leave policies. State-level initiatives in Maharashtra and Kerala show partial progress. The literature underlines the need for inclusive policies promoting health, productivity, and gender equality.

The paper “Menstrual Leave at Workplace: Employees’ Point of View” (2021)<sup>616</sup> by **Adrija Bhattacharya, Stotram Kumar, and Amarendra Pattnaik**, explores the need for menstrual leave policies in India. It notes that despite several women-centric measures, menstrual leave remains largely ignored in the policy framework. The authors highlight the constitutional basis under Articles 14, 15(3), 21, and 42 supporting such initiatives. Using an empirical study of 200 respondents from three cities, the research finds strong support for paid menstrual leave across all sectors. It also reflects on how menstruation impacts productivity, comfort, and workplace participation. The study identifies key barriers such as social stigma, personal hesitation, and lack of legislation. It emphasizes that menstrual leave is essential for ensuring equality and dignity for working women. The authors conclude by calling for national-level policies or institutional frameworks to implement menstrual leave effectively.

The paper “Analysing the Scope of Menstrual Leave Policy in India” (2024)<sup>617</sup> by **Arshi Alam**, examines the historical, social, and legal need for menstrual leave in India. It highlights how patriarchal structures have long ignored women’s biological needs in workplace policies. The author draws from multiple medical studies showing how menstrual pain, dysmenorrhea, and related symptoms reduce productivity and increase absenteeism. The paper argues that expecting women to use regular casual leave for menstrual pain is inequitable. It also analyses the stigma, legislative gaps, and

reluctance of governments and employers to frame inclusive policies. Through the case study of Coexist, it shows that menstrual leave can enhance productivity and inclusion. The research emphasizes that menstrual leave is a human right, not a privilege. It concludes by urging the government to frame a national menstrual leave policy and implement awareness measures to address stigma and workplace discrimination.

**Ananthika G.P. and Yogashree A.M. (2023)**<sup>618</sup> in their paper “From Stigma to Support: Understanding the Evolution of Menstrual Leave Policies” explain how menstruation-related taboos in India and globally have influenced workplace policies. They highlight that dysmenorrhea and related menstrual pain significantly affect women’s physical and mental health, leading to absenteeism and reduced productivity. The authors emphasize the need for menstrual leave to ensure health, hygiene, and workplace equality. They review international implementations of menstrual leave, such as in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and Spain, and discuss early initiatives by Indian companies like Zomato and Byjus. The paper explores how menstrual leave policies can challenge patriarchal norms while improving gender inclusion. It also outlines barriers such as societal stigma, lack of legal mandate, and fears of workplace discrimination. The study underscores the importance of awareness programs and supportive policies to normalize menstruation at workplaces. Finally, the authors call for the Indian government to legislate menstrual leave, ensuring it becomes a recognized right rather than an optional benefit.

**Mantasha Afaque (2023–2024)**<sup>619</sup>, in her paper “Menstrual Health Management: Period Leaves Policy” explores the critical need for menstrual leave in workplaces and educational institutions. The paper highlights how menstrual pain, cramps, anxiety, and other health issues

<sup>616</sup> Parikalpana - KIIT Journal of Management, Volume 17, Issue 1, 2021, DOI: 10.23862/kiit-parikalpana/2021/v17/i1/209016

<sup>617</sup> International Journal of Advanced Legal Research, Volume 5, Issue 1, August 2024, ISSN: 2582-7340

<sup>618</sup> JETIR, December 2023, Volume 10, Issue 12, ISSN 2349-5162

<sup>619</sup> Integral Law Review, Vol. 2 (2023-2024), 33.



significantly affect women's productivity and well-being. It examines global menstrual leave policies, citing countries like Japan, Spain, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Taiwan, and corporate initiatives by companies like Zomato and Byjus. The study discusses India's existing framework, including state initiatives in Bihar and Kerala and the proposed Menstruation Benefit Bill, 2017. Afaque emphasizes the connection between menstrual leave and constitutional rights, particularly the right to life and dignity under Article 21. The paper critiques the societal stigma around menstruation, patriarchal barriers, and the lack of legislative implementation in India. It also addresses concerns about potential gender bias while underlining that menstrual leave is meant to support, not disadvantage, women. Finally, the paper advocates for flexible options like work-from-home during menstruation to ensure gender-inclusive workplaces and safeguard women's health.

**Devdas, S. (2024)**<sup>620</sup>, "A Critical Analysis on the Menstrual Leave Debate: A Welcome Move for Women's Empowerment or a Hurdle to Women's Employment?".

The paper examines the menstrual leave debate in India, highlighting the conflict between women's health needs and employment opportunities. It notes that 7–15% of women experience severe menstruation-related pain, disrupting work. The study compares global menstrual leave policies in Spain, Japan, Zambia, South Korea, and Indonesia, noting both successes and limitations. It discusses benefits such as improved well-being, productivity, and reduction of menstrual stigma. Simultaneously, concerns like reinforcing gender stereotypes, biased hiring, and misuse of leave are explored. Indian legal frameworks, including PILs and proposed bills, are analysed for policy feasibility. The study emphasizes the broader link between menstrual leave and gender equity in

workplaces, advocating for inclusive and culturally sensitive implementation.

**Rehmat Swani (2020)**<sup>621</sup>, "Labor Resilience: Paid Menstrual Leave and Women's Economic Empowerment in India,".

The paper highlights how menstruation remains a taboo in India, affecting female workforce participation and leading to workplace discrimination. It emphasizes paid menstrual leave as a policy to improve gender inclusivity and economic empowerment. Swani examines international best practices, including Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Zambia, for implementing menstrual leave. The paper critiques India's current maternity-focused policies, noting insufficient support and low budget allocation for gender equality initiatives. It underscores that menstrual leave could reduce absenteeism, improve productivity, and counter socio-cultural barriers. The study also discusses opposition concerns, like potential discrimination against women in hiring, but counters them with evidence of health-related work disruption. Finally, Swani proposes a policy framework to implement paid menstrual leave in India, aiming to increase workforce participation and reduce gender inequity in employment.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

**3.1** To explore employees' opinions, both men and women, regarding the necessity and implementation of menstrual leave in workplaces.

**3.2** To examine the experiences of women in utilizing menstrual leave, including its impact on productivity, well-being, and workplace support.

**3.3** To assess perspectives on policy design, including paid leave, flexibility (e.g., work-from-home), legal mandate, and potential effects on hiring or promotion practices.

<sup>620</sup> Vishwakarma University Law Journal, Vol. IV, Issue I

<sup>621</sup> International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research, Vol 5, Issue 5, May 2020, DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2020.v05i05.016



#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is exploratory research. Descriptive and Quantitative research methods has been used in this study. Details are as follows:

##### Research Approach:

The research approach implemented in this study is interpretivism. This approach is appropriate because the study explores subjective experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of individuals regarding menstrual leave. Respondents' views are influenced by social norms, workplace culture, gender roles, and personal experiences, which are abstract and non-tangible factors. While the study gathers quantitative data, understanding the meaning and implications behind the responses—such as the impact on well-being, productivity, and workplace equality—requires interpretation of human experiences rather than relying solely on numerical analysis. The use of women-specific questions alongside general questions further emphasizes the need to interpret diverse perspectives of key stakeholders in the workplace.

##### Research Design:

This research makes use of a quantitative research strategy. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and analysing it to identify patterns, trends, and generalizations regarding awareness, perceptions, and attitudes toward menstrual leave policies.

##### Research Methods:

For the purposes of this research, the authors have used questionnaires as the primary data collection tool. Questionnaires were chosen because they are a reliable and efficient method to gather responses from many participants. Certain questions were specifically directed at women to capture their personal experiences, while general questions addressed all respondents to study overall awareness and opinions.

##### Sampling Strategy:

For the purposes of this study, the authors examined two distinct groups of participants. The first group was broader and general in nature, including both men and women, to gather overall awareness and perspectives on menstrual leave policies. The second group consisted of women respondents alone, with certain questions specifically directed at them to understand experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding menstrual leave. A sample size of 302 was used for the study, and convenience sampling was employed to select respondents. The survey data have been organized into three tables: Table 1 – Personal Information, Table 2 – Solely for Women Respondents, and Table 3 – Views and Perspectives on Menstrual Leave Policy, allowing for detailed analysis of demographics, gender-specific experiences, and overall attitudes toward menstrual leave.

**Ethical Considerations:** All the participants were informed in advance about the purposes of this project and gave their consent to participate. Their identity as well as other personal details has been kept in strict confidentiality, thus meeting the requirements of the code of ethics.

##### Instrument of Data Collection:

The researchers designed the data collection instrument keeping in mind the social sensitivity and stigma associated with the topic of menstrual leave. Since open discussion on menstruation can be uncomfortable for many participants, a structured questionnaire with predefined options was used to ensure ease of response and accurate analysis. The responses were collected through Google Forms, which allowed participants to respond comfortably and confidentially. Certain questions were specifically directed at women respondents, as they are the primary stakeholders affected by menstrual leave, allowing for a deeper understanding of personal experiences and perceptions. The questionnaire also considered factors such as age and sector of employment,



to study variations in awareness, attitudes, and acceptance across different demographic groups. Additionally, questions were framed to capture participants' general awareness, comfort in discussing menstruation, and perceptions of workplace inclusivity. The instrument further allowed for analysis of opinions regarding the implementation, benefits, and potential challenges of menstrual leave, including considerations such as paid leave, flexibility, and policy impact on workplace dynamics. Overall, the questionnaire was structured to balance sensitivity, clarity, and comprehensiveness, enabling the researchers to derive meaningful insights while respecting participants' comfort and privacy.

**Data Analysis:**

The results were analysed using MS Excel due to the small sample of participants. The major results and findings of this research are discussed in the following chapter.

**5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

The researchers analysed responses to understand employee opinions and acceptance of menstrual leave policies. The sample of 302 respondents, collected via convenience sampling, was divided into two segments: a broad group including both men and women, and a specific group consisting solely of women. Analysis was conducted first on general perspectives and then on responses from women, with the findings presented below.

**TABLE 1**  
**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

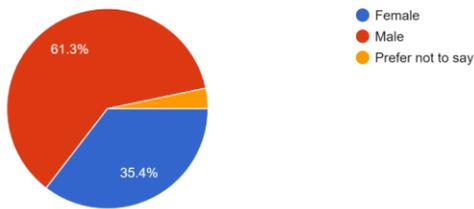
S.NO	QUESTIONS	OPTIONS	NOR	%
1.1	Gender	Male	185	61.3
		Female	107	35.4
		Prefer not to say	10	3.3
		Total	302	100.00
1.2	Age	Below 18	127	42.1
		20-30	151	50
		30-40	16	5.3
		40-50	02	0.7
		50-60	04	1.3
		above 60	02	0.7
		Total	302	100.00
1.3	Sector of Employment	Government	49	16.2
		Private	42	13.9
		Informal/Unorganized sector	08	2.6
		Self-employed	37	12.3
		Student	153	50.7



		Others	13	4.3
		Total	302	100.00

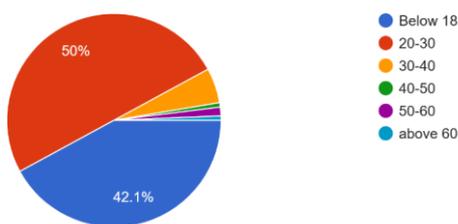
### PIE CHART – 1.1

Gender  
302 responses



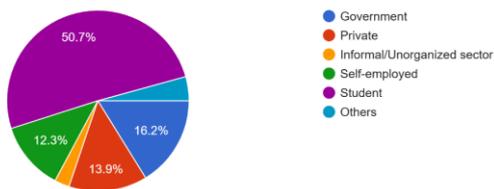
### PIE CHART – 1.2

Age Group  
302 responses



### PIE CHART – 1.3

Sector of Employment  
302 responses



**Source:** Primary Data

**Interpretation:** 5.1 General Demographics (Table 1: Personal Information)

The survey comprised 302 respondents, with 61.3% male, 35.4% female, and 3.3% preferring not to disclose gender. Most respondents were young, with 42.1% below 18 years and 50% between 20–30 years, while a small fraction was above 30. Regarding employment, 50.7% were students, 16.2% in government, 13.9% in private sector, 12.3% self-employed, 2.6% from informal sectors, and 4.3% in other categories. This suggests the findings primarily reflect younger individuals’ perspectives, who may hold more progressive attitudes toward workplace equality and menstrual health.



**TABLE 2**  
**SOLELY FOR WOMEN RESPONDENTS**

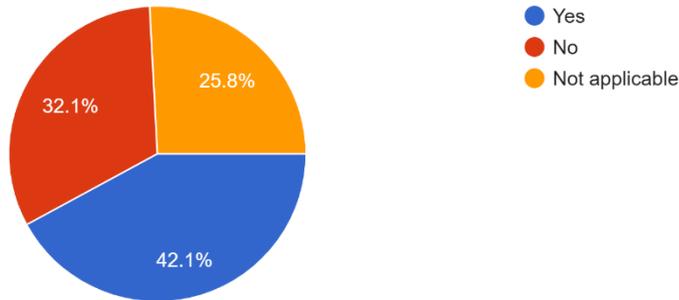
S.No	Questions	Options	NOR	%
2.1	Have you ever taken menstrual leave from your organization?	Yes	127	42.1
		No	97	32.1
		Not applicable	78	25.8
		Total	302	100.00
2.2	If yes, how did your manager or coworkers react to you taking menstrual leave?	Very supportive	134	44.4
		Neutral/No reaction	70	23.2
		Disapproving	29	9.6
		Not applicable	69	22.8
		Total	302	100.00
2.3	If you've taken menstrual leave, how did it affect your productivity and well-being?	I felt relaxed and stress-free, and after returning I could work enthusiastically.	104	34.4
		It resulted in workload piling up, which made me feel pressured later.	63	20.9
		I feel that instead of leave, I would prefer the option to work from home during these days.	55	18.2
		I haven't taken it	80	26.5
		Total	302	100.00
		2.4	On difficult period days, what do you usually do at work?	Push myself to go to work despite discomfort
Take sick leave	90			29.8
Manage with short breaks or medication and continue working	56			18.5
Not applicable	49			16.2
Total	302			100.00



### PIE CHART – 2.1

(For women respondents only) Have you ever taken menstrual leave from your organization?

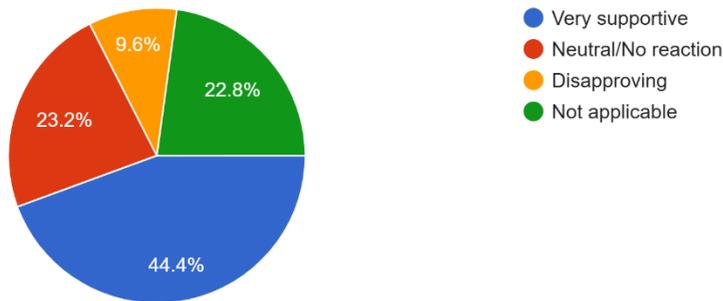
302 responses



### PIE CHART – 2.2

If yes, how did your manager or coworkers react to you taking menstrual leave?

302 responses



### PIE CHART – 2.3

[For women] If you've taken menstrual leave, how did it affect your productivity and well-being?

302 responses

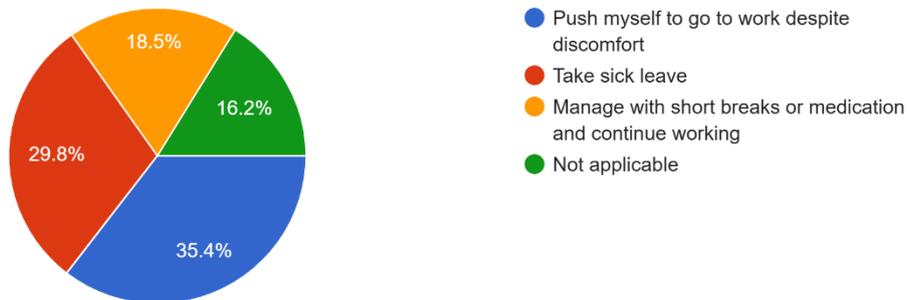




### PIE CHART – 2.4

On difficult period days, what do you usually do at work?

302 responses



**Source:** Primary Data

**Interpretation:** 5.2 Women-Specific Responses (Table 2: Women Respondents)

Among female respondents, 42.1% had experienced menstrual leave, 32.1% had not, and 25.8% found the question not applicable. Supportive attitudes from managers and colleagues were reported by 44.4%, while 23.2% observed neutral responses and 9.6% faced disapproval, indicating that stigma persists in some workplaces. Menstrual leave positively impacted productivity and well-being for 34.4% of respondents, though 20.9% felt pressure due to accumulated work, and 18.2% preferred flexible work-from-home options. On difficult days, 35.4% pushed through discomfort, 29.8% took sick leave, and 18.5% managed with short breaks or medication, demonstrating the challenges women face without adequate support.

**TABLE 3**

**VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES ON MENSURAL LEAVE POLICY**

S.No	Questions	Options	NOR	%
3.1	Are you aware of menstrual leave policies implemented in any organization or state?	Yes	204	67.5
		No	98	32.5
		Total	302	100.00
3.2	Does your organization currently offer menstrual leave?	Yes	108	35.8
		No	114	37.7
		Maybe	80	26.5
		Total	302	100.00
3.3	Do you feel comfortable discussing menstruation-related issues in your workplace?	Yes	130	43
		Sometimes	124	41.1
		No	47	15.6
		Total	302	100.00
3.4	Do you think menstrual	Strongly agree	159	52.6



	leave is necessary in the workplace?	Strongly disagree	61	20.2
		Depends	82	27.2
		Total	302	100.00
3.5	Do you think menstrual leave reinforces gender stereotypes about women being "weaker"?	Yes	131	43.4
		No	108	35.8
		Maybe	63	20.9
		Total	302	100.00
3.6	Should menstrual leave be:	Paid	178	58.9
		Unpaid	124	41.1
		Total	302	100.00
3.7	Should menstrual leave be legally mandated by the government?	Yes, for all workplaces	203	67.2
		Only in specific sectors	99	32.8
		Total	302	100.00
3.8	To what extent do you agree that offering a work-from-home option during periods would improve productivity and comfort?	1	20	6.6
		2	19	6.3
		3	39	12.9
		4	38	12.6
		5	186	61.6
		Total	302	100.00
3.9	Do you think menstrual leave may discourage employers from hiring/promoting women?	Yes – it could worsen hiring bias	99	32.8
		No – if implemented well, it won't	83	27.5
		Not sure	90	29.8
		Employers already have such biases	30	9.9
		Total	302	100.00
3.10	"Special treatment" vs. "Health necessity" – How do you see menstrual leave?	It's a biological need, not special treatment	114	37.7
		It's a mix of both	106	35.1
		It can be misused	39	12.9
		I'm undecided	43	14.2
		Total	302	100.00

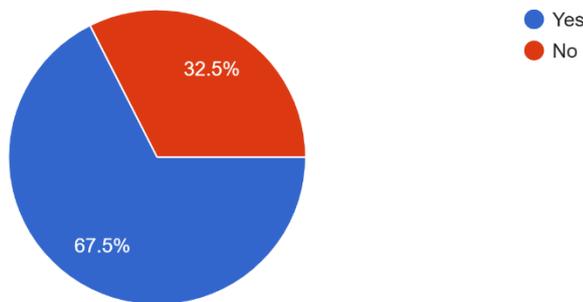


3.11	How many days of menstrual leave should be ideal?	1 day per month	62	20.5
		2 days per month	82	27.2
		Up to 3, flexible	76	25.2
		No fixed number – as needed	42	13.9
		No leave should be given	40	13.2
		Total	302	100.00

**PIE CHART – 3.1**

Are you aware of menstrual leave policies implemented in any organization or state?

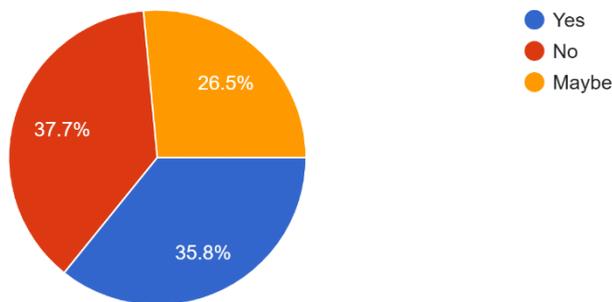
302 responses



**PIE CHART – 3.2**

Does your organization currently offer menstrual leave?

302 responses

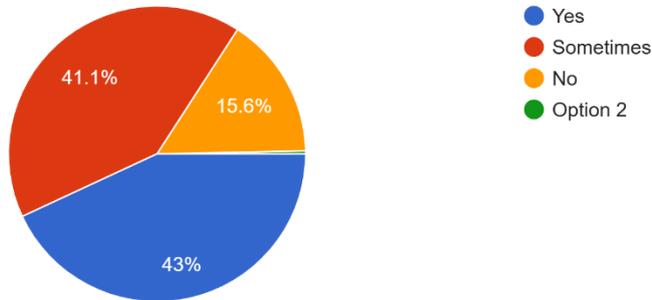




### PIE CHART – 3.3

Do you feel comfortable discussing menstruation-related issues in your workplace?

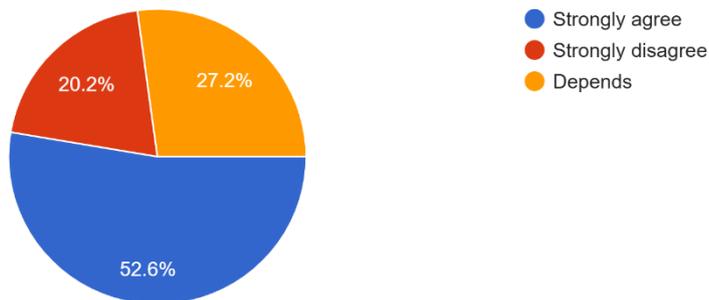
302 responses



### PIE CHART – 3.4

Do you think menstrual leave is necessary in the workplace?

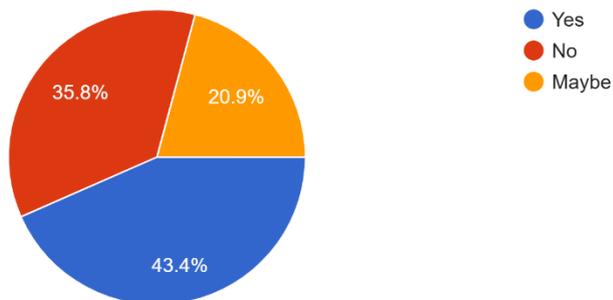
302 responses



### PIE CHART – 3.5

Do you think menstrual leave reinforces gender stereotypes about women being "weaker"?

302 responses

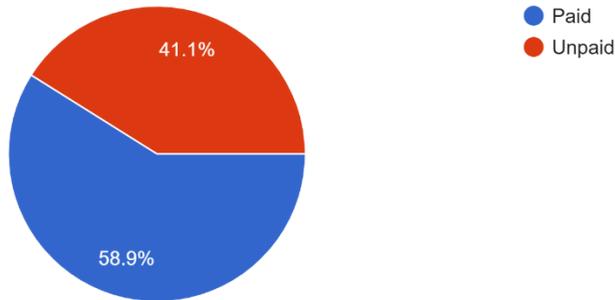




**PIE CHART – 3.6**

Should menstrual leave be:

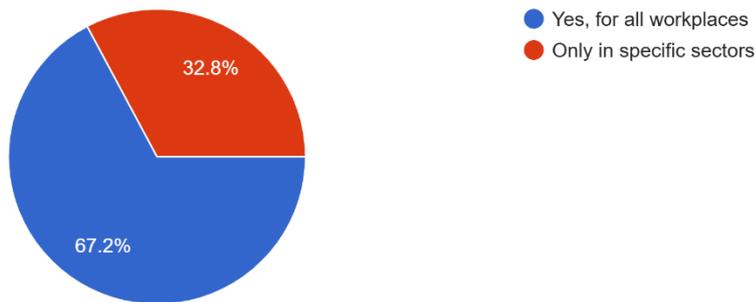
302 responses



**PIE CHART – 3.7**

Should menstrual leave be legally mandated by the government?

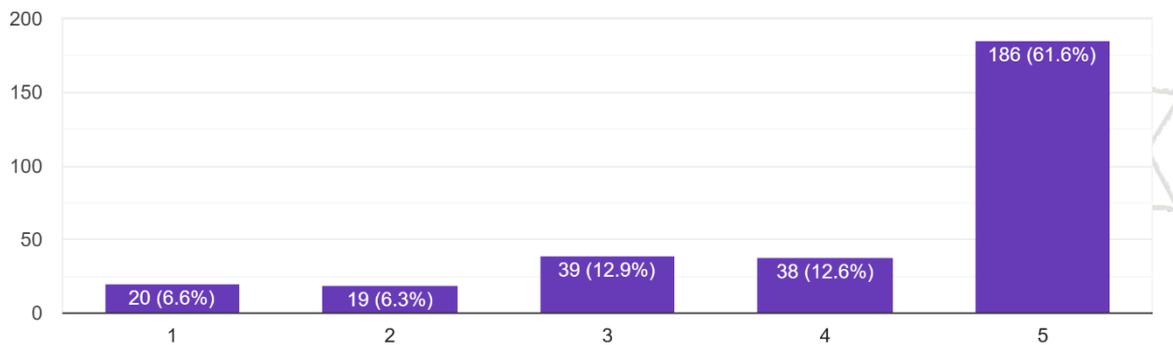
302 responses



**PIE CHART – 3.8**

To what extent do you agree that offering a work-from-home option during periods would improve productivity and comfort?

302 responses

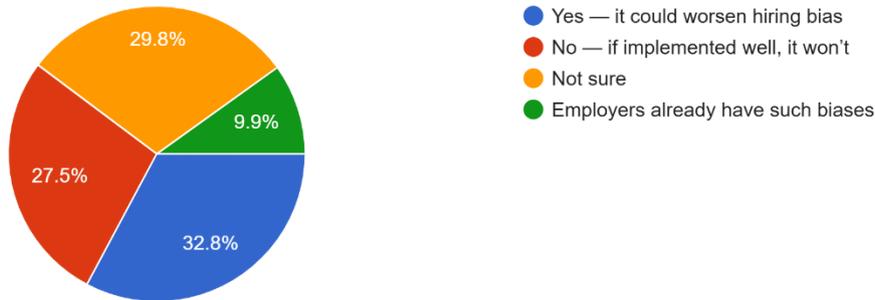




**PIE CHART – 3.9**

Do you think menstrual leave may discourage employers from hiring/promoting women?

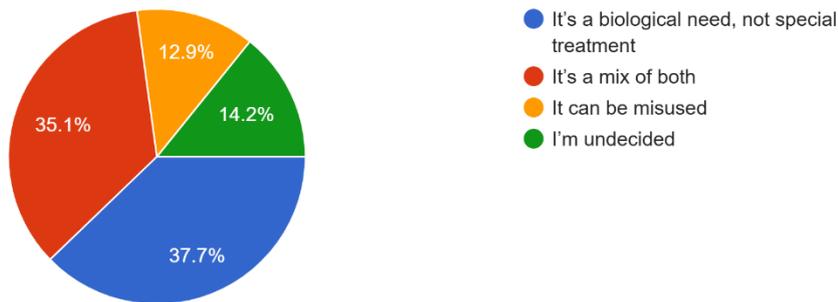
302 responses



**PIE CHART – 3.10**

“Special treatment” vs. “Health necessity” – How do you see menstrual leave?

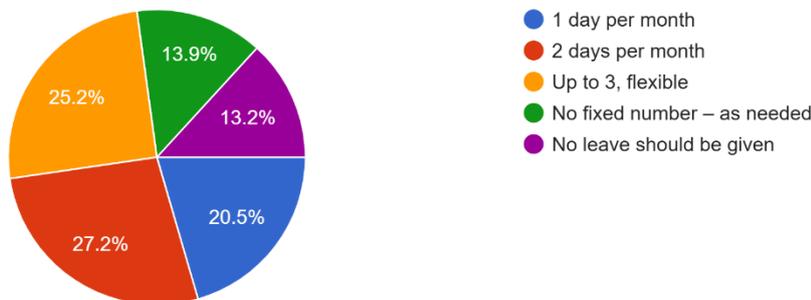
302 responses



**PIE CHART – 3.11**

How many days of menstrual leave should be ideal?

302 responses



**Source:** Primary Data

**Interpretation:** 5.3 Views on Menstrual Leave Policy (Table 3: Perspectives on Policy)



The survey revealed moderate awareness: 67.5% were aware of menstrual leave policies, but only 35.8% reported their organization offered it, while 37.7% said no and 26.5% were unsure. About workplace openness, 43% felt comfortable discussing menstruation, 41.1% sometimes, and 15.6% not at all. A majority (52.6%) strongly agreed menstrual leave is necessary, though 43.4% acknowledged it could reinforce gender stereotypes. Most respondents supported implementation measures, with 58.9% favouring paid leave and 67.2% supporting legal mandates across all workplaces. Flexibility, such as work-from-home options, was strongly favoured (61.6%), though concerns about hiring or promotion bias remained mixed. Regarding framing, 37.7% viewed it as a biological necessity, and 35.1% as a mix of necessity and special treatment. Preferences for leave duration were varied, with 27.2% favouring 2 days, 25.2% up to 3 days, 20.5% 1 day, and smaller groups preferring flexible or no leave.

Overall, the findings highlight strong support for menstrual leave as a workplace health measure, while also revealing challenges such as stigma, uneven policy availability, and potential employer bias. Younger respondents and students show high awareness and positive attitudes, whereas implementation concerns persist among both men and women across sectors. Women's responses indicate that while menstrual leave enhances comfort and productivity, practical issues like workload management and cultural perceptions influence its utilization.

## 6. RESEARCH GAP & RESEARCH PROBLEM

Existing literature highlights menstrual leave policies and their global and national implementations, but there is limited empirical research on the perceptions and opinions of employees regarding such policies. Most studies focus on legal provisions, corporate practices, or medical rationale, while the views of men and women as key stakeholders are often missing.

Women today work across sectors and perform at par with male colleagues, yet menstrual health issues such as pain, fatigue, and stress continue to affect productivity and workplace comfort. Despite this, formal menstrual leave policies remain rare, and societal stigma persists, creating a gap in understanding how employees perceive, experience, and support menstrual leave.

This study addresses this gap by surveying 302 respondents using convenience sampling, with certain questions directed specifically to women to capture personal experiences, while general questions were aimed at all participants to understand broader attitudes.

The research problem is: although menstrual leave can support women's health, enhance productivity, and promote gender equality, lack of awareness, policy clarity, and stakeholder perspectives hinders effective implementation.

### **The research questions for this study are:**

- What are the opinions of employees, both men and women, towards menstrual leave?
- Should menstrual leave be paid or flexible, and what is the ideal duration?
- Should menstrual leave policies be left to employers or mandated by the government?
- How do employees perceive menstrual leave in terms of health necessity versus reinforcing gender stereotypes?
- Would the implementation of menstrual leave affect recruitment, promotion, or workplace dynamics?

## 7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This is exploratory research aimed at understanding the perception of both men and women towards menstrual leave and the possibility of implementing such a policy in workplaces.



**The major limitations of the study are as follows:**

- a. The sample size was limited to 302 respondents, which restricts the generalizability of the findings.
- b. Convenience sampling was used, which may have resulted in selection bias.
- c. Most respondents were students and young individuals, leading to an age and occupation skew.
- d. There was a gender imbalance, with a higher number of male respondents compared to female respondents.
- e. Data was collected only through online platforms, excluding individuals without internet access.
- f. All respondents were Indian nationals, and international perspectives were not considered.
- g. Due to the stigma associated with menstruation, some respondents may have provided socially desirable answers.
- h. There was a lack of sufficient secondary data on menstrual leave in India, which limited comparative analysis.
- i. The data analysis was conducted using MS Excel, restricting the use of advanced statistical tools.

**8. SUGGESTIONS**

- a. Policymakers should consider enacting a national menstrual leave law to ensure uniformity and protection of employees' health rights.
- b. Employers may introduce flexible leave options such as work-from-home or wellness leave to balance productivity and employee well-being.
- c. Awareness and sensitization programs should be conducted to reduce workplace stigma around menstruation and foster a more inclusive environment.

- d. Organizations should train managers and HR personnel to handle menstrual leave requests sensitively and confidentially.
- e. Gender-neutral policies must be designed to include all menstruators, including gender minorities, ensuring equity and inclusivity.
- f. Strong anti-discrimination safeguards should be implemented to prevent menstrual leave from becoming a basis for hiring or promotion bias.
- g. Data collection and research on menstrual leave should be expanded with larger and more diverse samples to improve policy formulation.

**9. CONCLUSION**

This research reveals that menstrual leave is widely perceived by employees as a legitimate workplace necessity rather than a privilege. Most respondents—especially younger individuals and women—support the introduction of menstrual leave or flexible alternatives, recognizing its potential to improve well-being, productivity, and inclusivity. However, concerns about reinforcing gender stereotypes and possible hiring biases highlight the need for thoughtful and balanced policy design.

The absence of a national menstrual leave framework in India reflects a broader social reluctance to address menstruation as a public and workplace issue. Implementing menstrual leave, backed by legal mandates and supported by awareness programs, can help dismantle stigma and promote gender equity in the workplace.

A structured, inclusive, and well-communicated menstrual leave policy would not only enhance employee health and morale but also align organizational practices with principles of dignity, equality, and workplace justice.

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