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Culture, Infrastructure, and Intersectionality in Menstrual Management in Urban Slums in Delhi

Emerging as an important concern focussing on women's hygiene situated within areas of WASH/Infrastructure, development work on menstruation predominant focuses on technical aspects of access and barriers. Meanwhile, explorations of cultures of menstruation often tend to pathologise cultural attitudes and practices by looking at them as essentialism and homogeneous body traditions and customs. Further, in South Asian contexts-which have been important in putting menstruation on the scholarly and development agenda-work on infrastructure has predominated in urban settings, where scholarship on menstrual taboos has tended to be rural. An important framework of my research focus is to look at menstruation and its practices outside of this framework amongst migrant women in an urban slum, moving between both rural and urban spaces. This research seeks to bring in a focus on menstrual practices in informal settlements of Delhi to understand the intersections of class, caste, religion, regional origins, and generation among women that inform their experiences of menstruation. It aims to highlight how infrastructure across, barriers, migration, and cultural transformation interact and shape menstrual health in dynamic ways. The aim is to generate a critical understanding of development strategies regarding menstruation when viewed from a perspective of both infrastructural access and cultural practices. Through an ethnographic study, the cornerstone of the research will be to look at menstruation as a complex gendered practice that is embedded in the everyday lives and life histories of women, incorporating a critical understanding of menstrual management and health.