PR13 / Menstrual Care Workplace Policy Frameworks and Scope in India

Topic : Practice

Chair : Ankita Gupta (University of Delhi)

Second Chair : Radhika Modi (University of Iceland)

Third Chair : Christianez Kiruba (Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University)

Fourth Chair : Ankita Sarkar (Code Crimson)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

This panel aims to deepen understanding of how menstrual care can be meaningfully integrated into workplace policy frameworks in India. Grounded in emerging organizational priorities around gender equity, employee wellbeing, and inclusive labor practices, the panel seeks to unpack the structural, cultural, and operational dimensions of menstrual support in diverse work environments. It will examine what constitutes a menstrual-friendly workplace- from policy architecture and legal clarity to supportive infrastructure, communication norms and management practices. A key objective is to highlight how menstrual discomfort, stigma, and silence influence workforce participation, productivity, and retention, especially for women and other menstruating employees in both formal and informal sectors. The panel also seeks to foreground actionable pathways for organizations to measure the effectiveness of menstrual-supportive interventions and to frame period-friendly practices as an integral component of the future of workplace wellbeing.

Research Questions

1. What essential components should a menstrual-friendly workplace policy include, and how can these be adapted across different employment sectors in India?
2. Where do gaps lie within existing labour laws regarding menstrual health, employee accommodations, and nondiscrimination, and how can these gaps be addressed?
3. What forms of infrastructure and organisational support are required beyond basic restroom facilities to ensure dignity, comfort, and accessibility during menstruation?
4. How can menstrual-supportive policies be effectively implemented in the informal and gig sectors, where regulatory enforcement and standardised benefits are limited?
5. What role do stigma, silence, and cultural taboos play within teams, HR systems, and leadership, and how do these dynamics hinder policy acceptance or effectiveness?
6. What is the measurable impact of menstrual challenges on attendance, productivity, performance, and retention, and what indicators best capture this?
7. How can organisations define, measure, and evaluate “successful” menstrual workplace policies, and what metrics or evaluation tools should be prioritised?
8. How can menstrual-friendly approaches be integrated into broader employee wellbeing and future-of-work frameworks, especially in rapidly evolving work cultures?

Scientific Relevance

Women make up 50% of the global working-age population, yet many workplaces still lack policies addressing menstrual health. Workplaces without menstrual health support experience up to 33% productivity loss, which is equivalent to nine workdays per employee each year.
(SPRF, 2024) Companies with higher gender diversity in leadership see a 21% increase in profitability. (McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace, 2024) Inclusive workplaces that emphasize gender-equitable policies report up to a 20% boost in productivity. (Impact of Gender Inclusion Policies on Workplace Productivity, Psico Smart Blog, 2024)

This panel contributes to a growing evidence base that views menstrual health not simply as an individual concern, but as a workplace, productivity, and equity issue. By analyzing how infrastructural gaps, policy voids, and organizational cultures shape the lived experiences of menstruating employees, the panel advances interdisciplinary research at the intersection of labour studies, gender studies, public health, and organisational psychology. Scientific relevance also lies in generating empirical frameworks for measuring the economic and social impact of menstrual care interventions- areas where data remains limited. Furthermore,
examining the informal sector, stigma dynamics, and future-of-work considerations allows for a more

inclusive and context-sensitive understanding of menstrual workplace policy in India. This panel thus supports the development of evidence-driven, equitable, and sustainable models for menstrual-friendly workplaces.

1) First Co- Chair: Dr. Ankita Gupta, Research and Communications Specialist, Baala

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Bio: Dr. Ankita Gupta is a Research and Communications Specialist at Baala, where she leads research and advocacy on menstruation, SRH, gender, and adolescence education. She is empanelled as a Menstrual Behavioural Change Expert with Dalberg Advisors and has mentored projects with Brown University and the University of Warwick. She holds a PhD in Modern Indian Languages and Literary Studies with a specialization in menstrual discourse,
language, and culture from the University of Delhi, along with a degree in Education focused on Language and Adolescence Education. With over 10 years of research and cross-sector experience across education, social sciences, BFSI, and development, she has been driving initiatives to challenge menstrual taboos in India. She is also the founder of Rajaswala, a platform promoting creative expression and menstrual research.

2) Second Co Chair: Radhika Modi,Founder, Flow At Work; GEST Alumna, University of Iceland
Email Address: radhikamodi195@gmail.com
Bio Note: Radhika Modi is a gender and sexual-health researcher and the founder of Flow At Work, an initiative that supports organisations in building menstrual-friendly workplaces across India. Her work focuses on menstrual health, workplace wellbeing and queer-inclusive policy design in South Asia. She has partnered with international nonprofits, feminist networks and community organisations on qualitative research, curriculum development and program implementation. A GEST Fellow from the University of Iceland, she has facilitated learning spaces with both urban and informal-sector workers. Her current work explores how everyday workplace conditions shape menstrual comfort and access to dignity at work.

3) Third Co-Chair: Dr. Christianez Ratna Kiruba, Lead Editor, Nivarana - India's Digital Health Platform and Resident Physician at Satribari Christian Hospital
Email Address: christianezdennis@gmail.com
Bio: Dr Christianez is a 31 year old Internal Medicine doctor trained from CMC Vellore and a freelance health journalist trained from the University of Toronto. She is deeply interested in viewing public health concerns through the lens of gender. As an intersectional feminist and part of the LGBTQIA community, she is interested in telling stories at the intersection of gender and health that amplify marginalised voices and drive policy level changes.

4) Fourth Co-Chair: Dr. Ankita Sarkar Affiliation: Chief Administrative Officer, Code Crimson

Email Address : codecrimsonngo@gmail.com / drankita0210@gmail.comBio Note: Dr. Ankita Sarkar is a dentist with an MHA and an MBA in Finance from the Manipal Academy of Higher Education. She serves as an Assistant Medical Superintendent at Tata Memorial Hospital, where she integrates clinical insight with administrative leadership. In 2021, she founded Code Crimson to address menstrual poverty through empowerment, accessibility,

and education. Her work reflects a commitment to sustainable community impact. Outside her professional roles, she is an avid traveler and reader, a dedicated black-coffee enthusiast, and someone who treasures time with her family, drawing strength and inspiration from their constant support.

CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite scholars, practitioners, policymakers, legal experts, public health professionals, activists, and interdisciplinary researchers to submit papers for an upcoming panel exploring the urgent and evolving discourse on menstrual care within Indian workplaces. As India moves toward more inclusive, equitable, and gender-responsive labour environments, the question of how workplaces recognise and support menstrual health has become central to conversations on dignity, wellbeing, and productivity. This panel seeks to advance evidence-based, intersectional, and practice-oriented perspectives on menstrual workplace policy frameworks, implementation challenges, and pathways for reform.

We welcome conceptual papers, empirical studies, case analyses, legal or policy reviews, ethnographic work, organisational research, and practice-led insights. Submissions may address structural issues, comparative models, lived experiences, or innovative frameworks that can inform policy and practice in India’s formal, informal, and gig economies.

Thematic areas may include, but are not limited to:

1. What a Menstrual-Friendly Workplace Policy Should Contain: Components of inclusive policy design, leave models, flexibility, accommodations, and equity considerations.
2. Mapping the Gaps in Existing Labour Laws: Constitutional interpretations, labour codes, state policies, and missing legal infrastructures around menstrual health.
3. Menstrual Infrastructure at Work: Beyond the Restroom: Innovations in design, access to supplies, disposal systems, rest spaces, privacy, and tech-enabled solutions.
4. Implementing Policies in the Informal Sector: Barriers, grassroots adaptations, community-led models, and strategies for extending protections to domestic workers, daily-wage labourers, and gig workers.
5. Workplace Shame & Silence: Tackling Menstrual Stigma Within Teams and HR Systems: Organisational culture, communication norms, leadership training, and mechanisms for destigmatisation.
6. How Menstrual Challenges Affect Productivity & Retention: Evidence on presenteeism, absenteeism, economic costs, gendered career progression, and organisational outcomes.
7. Measuring Impact: What Does a Successful Workplace Policy Look Like?: Frameworks for evaluation, KPIs, monitoring tools, employee wellbeing indicators, and longitudinal impacts.
8. Period-Friendly Workplaces as the Future of Employee Wellbeing Integrating menstrual care into broader DEI, occupational health, ESG, and wellbeing strategies.

Submission Guidelines:

Abstract (300–350 words) outlining the research question, methodology, and anticipated contribution.

Full papers (Up to 4000 words) will be requested upon acceptance.
Please include name, affiliation, and contact information in your submissions.