

A STUDY ON THE NEED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY (BOTH IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR) IN INDIA

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Abstract

The role of working women has evolved over the years due to the demand of the society and the conditions that is prevailing in the economy, which has led to a scenario where women are found to handle tremendous pressure and become competent to build a strong career for themselves and to be independent. The female participation in the workforce is considered a vital factor for the growth of an economy. The decline in the participation of women in the workforce by 10% over the last decade has deterred the progress and development of Indian economy. Though there are various reasons for the decrease in female participation in the workforce, say lack of education and employment opportunities, difficulty in striking a work-life balance, etc. yet the implicit reason would be that, Menstruation has not been considered as a serious health issue prevalent among the contemporary women fraternity. The psychological and physiological discomfort that women experience during menstruation, emphasises on the necessity for one day of paid leave, each month for female employees. While men and women can take up the “Padman Challenge” to reduce the problem of menstruation taboos, why not bring in a policy for Menstrual Leave? Hence, the study throws spotlight on the need for the implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy for women employed in both private and public sector in India from the purview of common public.

Keywords: Menstruation, Menstruation Leave Policy, Women employees, Menstrual Leave

Introduction

India is a country that has encountered series of reforms with regard to women empowerment, from reservations in buses and trains to reservation of quotas for women in all sectors. Why is Menstruation still being viewed as disgust and with raised brows! This view of society looking at Menstruation as a Taboo should be changed for which implementation of Menstrual Leave policy is a necessity. Menstrual Leave is an optional leave of one day paid leave for each month that is to be allowed to female employees. It is saddening to know that despite passing of “Menstrual Benefit Bill, 2017” by Ninong Ering, Lok Sabha MP from Arunachal Pradesh, which proposes that two days of paid leave has to be granted for female employees working in both private and public sectors in India, it lacks initiative with regard to the implementation of the same. Menstrual Leave is not a sickness that women experience, it is a biological function that is unique for women. Menstruation though part of life, is still considered as embarrassment from the view point of common public. Implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy is a move towards improving efficiency of women in workplace. When such policy is implemented in countries like Japan, Indonesia, etc. why not in India! In the similar lines fall the title of the study “**The Need for Implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy in India.**”

Objectives of the study

The Study emphasises on the need for implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy (both in Private and Public) in India. It aims to understand the view on menstruation and the impact on the productivity of female employees due to the implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy in India.

Review of Literature

Menstrual Leave – the Next Work-Life Benefit by Deepti Arora and Akanksha Nigam is a study which precisely spots the work – life benefits that women get to relish due to Menstrual Leave. It intends to be an evidence for Menstrual Leave to be a step ahead to focus on advancing women's rights and to bring out positive changes in the society, by leaving behind all the obstacles and stereotype thinking.

A Study on the "Menstruation Leave Problem" in Japan authored by Tadashi Hattori – is a study conducted in Japan which sheds light upon the movements and struggle that Japan has undergone for the inclusion of Menstrual Leave Policy in **Chapter VI-II, Article 68 of Labor Standard Law.**

Measures for Women for Whom Work During Menstrual Periods

Would Be Especially Difficult

Article 68. When a woman for whom work during menstrual periods would be especially difficult has requested leave, the employer shall not employ such woman on days of the menstrual period.

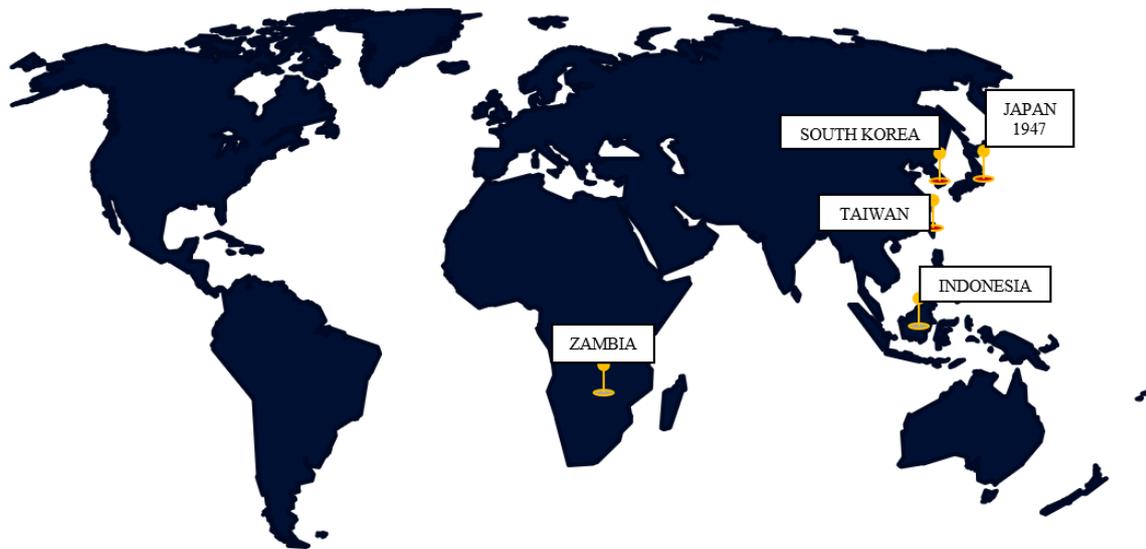
Research Methodology

The Study was conducted with a sample size of **364**, constituting Students, Employee, Worker, Self-Employed, Professionals, Domestic Worker, Unemployed and Retired. It is based on primary and secondary data analysis. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire and administered to the respondents through Google forms with **Purposive Sampling** technique. Interview Method was also used in collecting primary data. Secondary Data was collected through various e-journals, articles and websites.

Limitations of the study

Wider geographical regions could help in more definite conclusions. The main focus of the study was only on the implementation of Menstrual Leave policy and the hindrances were not given much of importance.

Conceptual Framework



From the above map, it is clearly evident that Asia is leading the way when it comes to Menstrual Leave.

Japan, being the initiator of Menstrual Leave Policy in **1947**, allows women to take off during painful periods due to overexertion and the leave is called **Seirikyuuuka** – meaning “**Physiological leave**”. Taiwan has also incorporated a similar type of leave, where women are able to take **three days off a year excluding the 30 days sick leave**. Indonesia, benefits women by providing two days a month of Menstrual Leave and in South Korea, Menstrual leave can be availed by workers and students. For women in Zambia, one day off per month is granted as Menstrual Leave.

The indicator for the growth of Indian Economy would be increase in the participation of women in the workforce, for which, Menstrual Leave Policy has to be implemented at the earliest. Hence, the research strives to shed light on the need for Menstrual Leave Policy in India from the lens of the common public.

Analysis and Findings

The demographic proportions of the respondents are summarized below as tabular representations:

Table – 1.1 – Age of Respondents

Age of Respondents	Number	Percentage
Up to 20 years	37	10.16%
21 years - 40 years	277	76.10%
41 years - 60 years	43	11.81%
Above 60 years	7	1.92%

Total	364	100.00%
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Table – 1.2 – Gender of Respondents

Gender of Respondents	Number	Percentage
Male	97	26.65%
Female	267	73.35%
Total	364	100.00%

Table – 1.3 – Status of Respondents

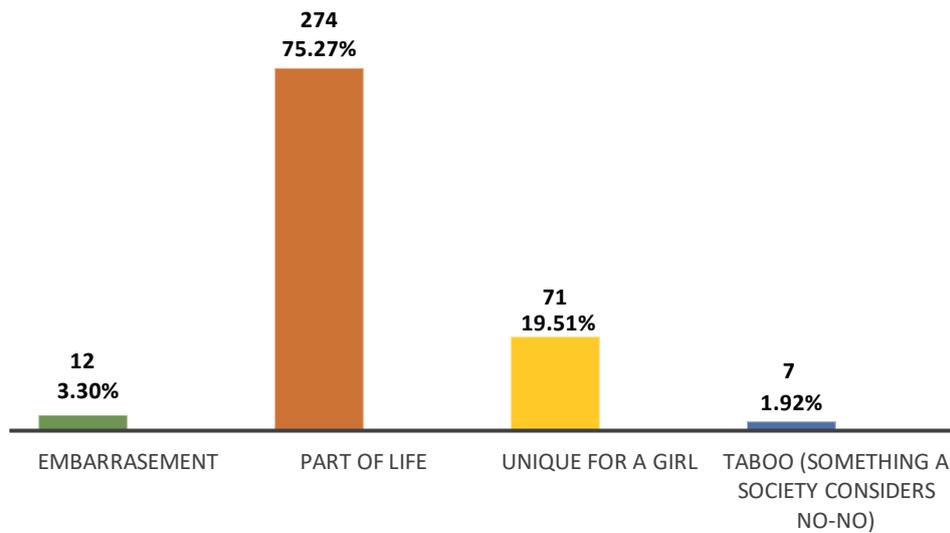
Status of Respondents	Number	Percentage
Student	140	38.46%
Worker	7	1.92%
Employee	131	35.99%
Self-Employed	17	4.67%
Professional (Doctor, Teacher, Lawyer)	45	12.36%
Domestic Worker (Maid Servant)	4	1.10%
Unemployed	13	3.57%
Retired	7	1.92%
Total	364	100.00%

The above tables reveal that the majority respondents belong to the age group of 20 years to 40 years with female respondents forming a larger part, with Students and employees being more than half the respondents.

FINDINGS OF THE CORE SURVEY

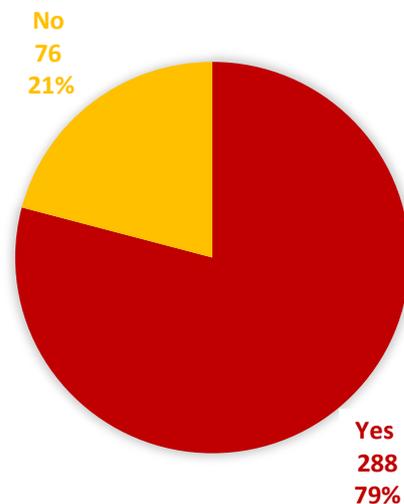
The findings of the core survey are explained in the form of graphs for easier interpretation and comprehension.

GRAPH 1.1 – VIEW ON MENSTRUATION



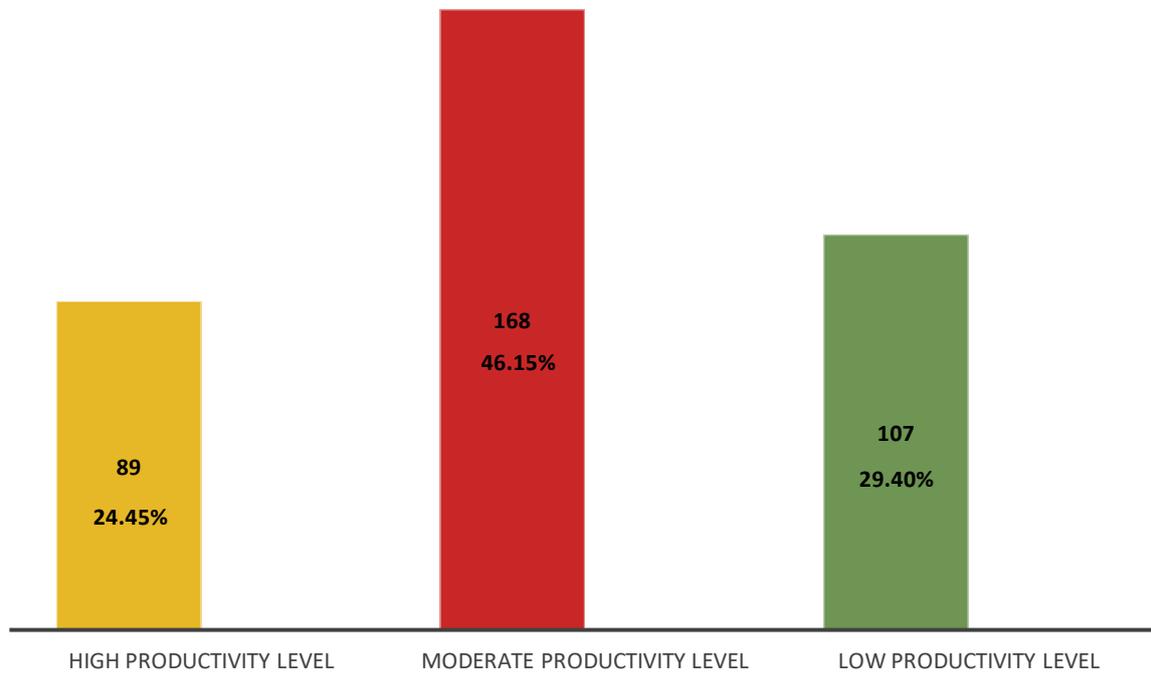
Graph-1.1 highlights that **Menstruation** is viewed as **part of life** by majority of the respondents. Out of 364 respondents, 274 respondents view menstruation as part of life, 71 respondents look at it as unique for a girl, 12 respondents consider it to be an embarrassment and 7 regard it to be a taboo with 75.27%, 19.51%, 3.30% and 1.92% respectively.

GRAPH 1.2 – EXTENT OF AWARENESS OF MENSTRUAL BENEFIT BILL



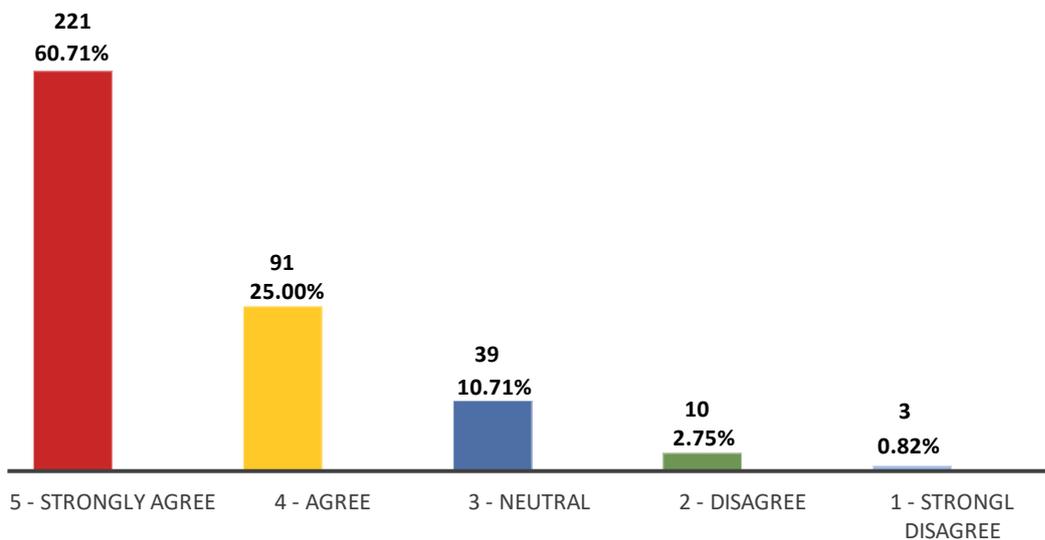
Graph-1.2 shows that 288 respondents out of 364 are **aware of Menstrual Benefit Bill, 2017** and 76 respondents are unaware of the same, with 79% and 21% respectively.

GRAPH 1.3 - PRODUCTIVITY OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES WHILE EXPERIENCING DYSMENORRHEA



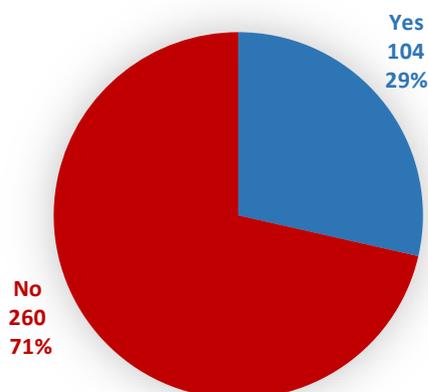
The survey reveals that the **extent of productivity of female employees while experiencing Dysmenorrhea** amongst 364 respondents is 24.4%, 46.15% and 29.40% with 89, 168 and 107 for high, moderate and low productivity level respectively. Hence, the extent of productivity of female employees is at the moderate scale collectively. **Graph-1.3** illustrates the following findings.

GRAPH 1.4 - DEGREE OF ACCEPTANCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY



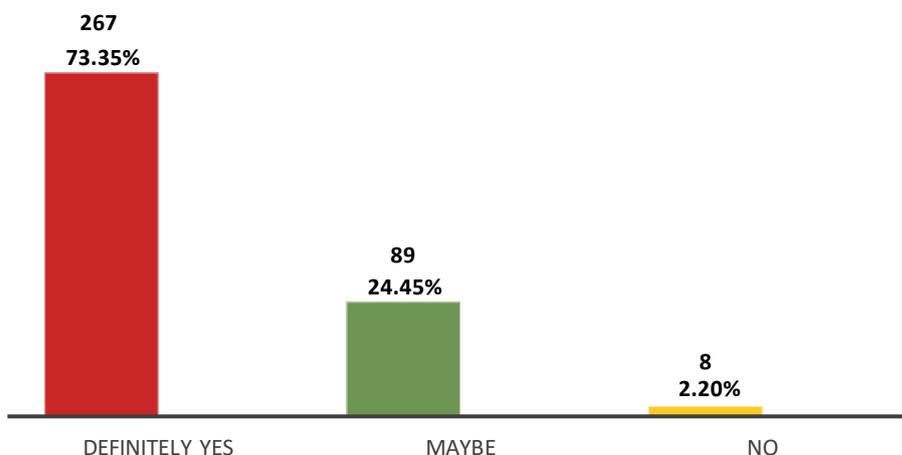
Graph-1.4 above focuses on the **degree of acceptance amongst the respondents for the implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy in the scale of 5** with maximum of 60.71% with 221 respondents in strongly agreeing stature and 25% with 91 respondents in agreeing position respectively.

GRAPH 1.5 - EXTENT OF AWARENESS OF MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY PREVALENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES



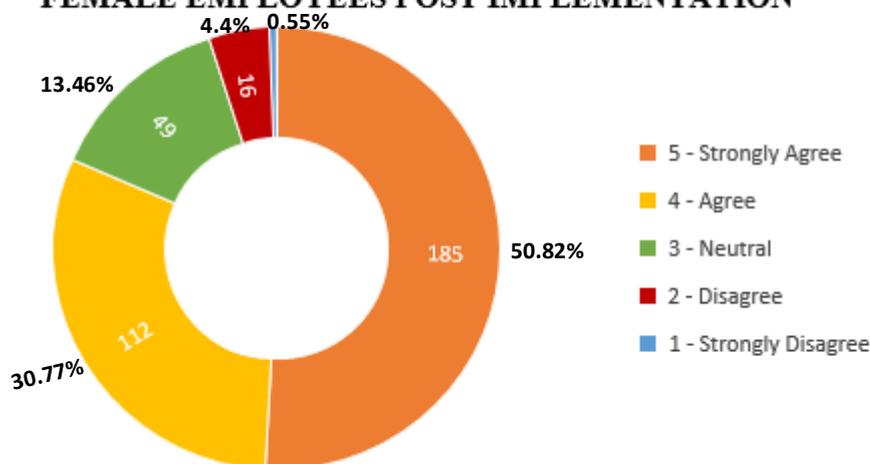
Graph-1.5 elucidates the response with regard to the **extent of awareness of Menstrual Leave Policy Prevalent in other countries**, where out of 364 respondents, only 104 respondents constituting 29% are aware of prevalent of Menstrual Leave Policy in other countries and the majority of 260 respondents constituting 71% are unaware of the same.

GRAPH 1.6 - MENSTRUAL BENEFIT BILL TO BECOME A LAW SOONER IN INDIA



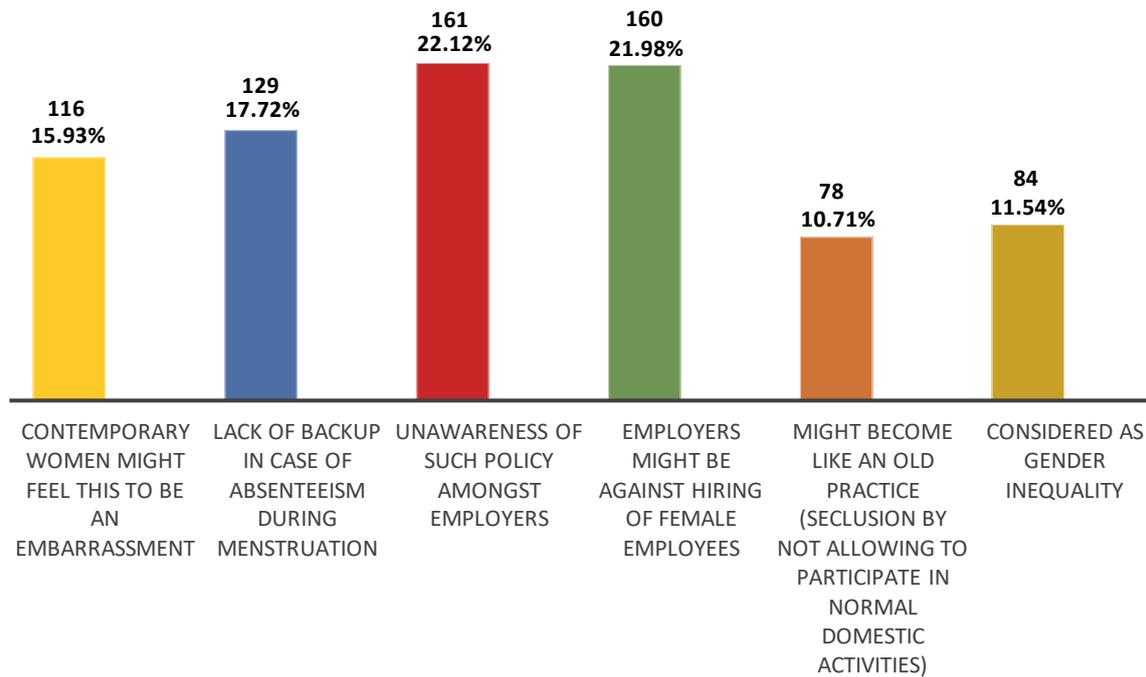
The research tries to know if **Menstrual Benefit Bill can become a law sooner in India**. The respondents were questioned on the same and the results are highlighted in **Graph-1.6**. Out of 364 respondents 267 respondents agree, 89 possibly agree and 8 disagree to the same

GRAPH 1.7 - POSITIVE IMPACT ON PRODUCTIVITY OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES POST IMPLEMENTATION



It is observed that with regard to the **positive impact on the productivity of female employees post implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy**, it is felt that 50.82% with 185 respondents strongly agree to the same and 30.77% with 112 respondents are in support

GRAPH 1.8 - HINDRANCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY



Graph-1.8 depicts the various **hindrances in implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy in India** with maximum responses to unawareness of such policy amongst employers and that employers might be against hiring female employees.

Observations

The study reveals that menstruation is viewed as part of life by majority of the respondents.

The awareness of Menstrual Benefit Bill, 2017 is found in larger proportion of the respondents.

It was found that the productivity of female employees while experiencing Dysmenorrhea (painful periods) was around low to moderate majorly. Hence, people feel that implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy will bring in positive impact on the productivity of female employees post implementation.

The findings of the study show that the awareness about prevalent of Menstrual Leave Policy in other countries is low. Yet, the perspective of respondents with regard to Menstrual Benefit Bill 2017, becoming a law sooner in India is positive and favorable.

The research reveals that the acceptance level of implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy according to the views of different sections of respondents is high, still the major drawback for the same is considered to be unawareness of such policy amongst the employers and that employers might be against hiring female employees.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is evident from the study that Menstrual Leave Policy is absent in India compared to other countries say Japan, Taiwan, Zambia, South Korea and Indonesia, also that implementation of Menstrual Leave Policy will make the work environment more conducive to women.

Though the severity of pain experienced by women differs, there are women whose life becomes unmanageable during such days. Not all women can have the facility of extended help from their families and can afford to hire helpers for their day to day chores. Menstrual Leave Policy is strongly suggested keeping in mind the entire women population, for them to strike a perfect-work life balance for themselves.

Men and women are considered biologically different. Hence, it is necessary for the male community to not look at this policy as gender inequality and accept it as a move towards improving the efficiency of women in the workplace. It is high time that India wakes up to this and brings in an evolution by implementing Menstrual Leave Policy which will have a positive impact amongst the female employees.

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