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## “MENSTRUAL HYGIENIC CONDITION OF WOMEN IN INDIAN PRISON”

**THIS ARTICLE COVERS “DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS” AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF “MENSTRUAL HYGIENIC CONDITION OF WOMEN IN INDIAN PRISON”. THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE “SOCIAL ISSUES” SECTION OF THE UPSC- CSE EXAM.**

### **WHY IN THE NEWS?**

The dire situation faced by one of the most marginalised groups—women incarcerated in Indian prisons—continues to be disregarded. In a societal framework where prisoners are stripped of their fundamental rights, female inmates endure heightened injustices. Society upholds an unattainable notion of female purity, denying the reality that women are capable of transgressions. This prejudicial stance has resulted in a systematic failure to address and provide for the necessities of female prisoners, including menstrual hygiene.

### **STATUS OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE IN PRISONS:**

- As per data from the National Crime Records Bureau, there are **currently 23,772 women incarcerated in Indian prisons**, with 77% falling within the reproductive age bracket of 18-50 years, likely necessitating regular access to menstrual products.
- However, the provision of sanitary napkins has been inconsistent across various prison facilities nationwide, with notable discrepancies in quality.
- Despite the **Model Prison Manual's(2016)** recommendations, several states have yet to enforce vital provisions such as ensuring adequate water supply and restroom facilities for female detainees.
- The issue is compounded by overcrowding and unfavourable socio-economic circumstances, intensifying the struggle for incarcerated women to obtain essential items like water, sanitary napkins, detergent, and soap during menstruation.
- A study conducted in June 2023 by one of the authors at a prison in Maharashtra underscored the inadequacies in water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities for female inmates.
- This shortfall presents significant hurdles for women, particularly during menstruation when increased water consumption is crucial for maintaining personal hygiene.

- The intermittent water supply forces women to store water, occupying valuable space in the limited number of toilets available.
- With approximately 50 women having to share just two toilets for all their daily activities, including personal hygiene, changing napkins, and washing clothes and utensils, the situation is dire. Moreover, the unsanitary conditions deter women from using the facilities frequently, contributing to a higher incidence of urinary tract infections.
- Furthermore, the study revealed that prison authorities relied on donated sanitary napkins from non-governmental organisations, relinquishing control over the type, quality, and quantity of menstrual absorbents.
- This dependence often results in the provision of substandard products, exacerbating the already challenging circumstances faced by incarcerated women.

### **POLICY INTERVENTION:**

- India has been actively endeavouring to enhance access to menstrual hygiene products, particularly among young women, through initiatives like the Menstrual Hygiene Scheme, which involves the distribution of free or subsidised sanitary napkins.
- In a significant move in 2023, India took a crucial step forward by introducing the '**National Menstrual Hygiene Policy**,' recognising menstruation as a natural process deserving of more comprehensive attention.
- Central to this policy is the imperative of **ensuring equity in the dignified and safe management of menstrual hygiene**. The draft policy emphasises the importance of prioritising equity to ensure that all menstruating individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic status or geographical location, have equal opportunities to manage and access their menstruation in a hygienic and safe manner.
- It also highlights the need to address disparities and barriers hindering certain groups from accessing necessary menstrual hygiene products, resources, and information.
- Notably, the policy identifies prisoners as a target population facing challenges in accessing menstrual hygiene facilities, reflecting a positive stride forward.
- However, it lacks a concrete plan to improve prison menstrual hygiene management. It overlooks the Ministry of Home Affairs as a crucial stakeholder influencing menstrual hygiene practices within correctional facilities.

### **STEPS CAN BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE MENSTRUAL HYGIENE CONDITIONS IN INDIAN PRISONS:**

- **Ensure Adequate Water Supply and Hygiene Facilities:** Ensure that each inmate has access to clean water and basic facilities to maintain good hygiene practices by providing warm water and soap for better hygiene practices.
- **Provision of Quality Sanitary Pads:** Ensure that prison authorities provide quality and sufficient sanitary pads to women prisoners. Provide sanitary pads free of cost to prisoners, recognising the importance of dignity and hygiene during menstruation.
- **Safe Disposal of Used Pads:** Ensure that prison infrastructure is designed to facilitate the safe disposal of used sanitary pads. Provide regular prison visits by female doctors to ensure proper disposal and address any health concerns.
- **Awareness and Education:** Conduct awareness camps and capacity-building sessions with prison staff to educate them about menstrual hygiene and the importance of maintaining good

practices. Organise regular awareness camps for women prisoners to educate them about **menstrual health, hygiene, and disposal methods**.

- **Reproductive Health Support:** Ensure that prison authorities provide reproductive health support to women prisoners, including access to medical care and counselling.
- **Setting Up of Menstrual Product Enterprises:** Consider setting up menstrual product enterprises within prisons to provide a livelihood option for prisoners and promote menstrual hygiene.
- **Prison Infrastructure Upgrades:** Upgrade prison infrastructure to ensure privacy and dignity for menstruating prisoners, including separate facilities for women and adequate dustbins for sanitary napkin disposal.
- **Training for Prison Staff:** Provide training to prison staff on **gender-specific needs and menstrual hygiene management** to ensure that they are equipped to support women prisoners effectively.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of these measures to ensure that menstrual hygiene conditions continue to improve and that women prisoners receive the necessary support and care.

### **GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES:**

- **Model Prison Manual 2016:** This manual recommends that “sterilised sanitary pads should be issued to women prisoners as per their requirements.” However, the manual does not provide detailed guidelines on the provision of sanitary pads, water supply, and disposal facilities.
- **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana:** This scheme ensures that menstruating women have affordable sanitary napkins, but it does not specifically address menstrual hygiene management in prisons.
- **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI):** CHRI has conducted studies and awareness campaigns to highlight the need for proper prison menstrual hygiene management. They have also collaborated with organisations like Boondh to develop recommendations for menstrual health management in Indian prisons.
- **Prison Statistics India (PSI):** The PSI reports provide data on the number of women prisoners and their demographics. These statistics highlight the need for targeted initiatives and policies to meet the needs of women prisoners.
- **Policy Recommendations:** CHRI has developed policy recommendations for menstrual health management in Indian prisons, emphasising access to clean water, basic facilities, quality sanitary pads, proper disposal mechanisms, and regular medical visits. These recommendations aim to improve menstrual hygiene management and the overall health of women prisoners.

### **PRELIMS BASED QUESTION**

**Q. Consider the following two statements related to Menstrual hygiene:**

1. Every year, 28th May is celebrated as the Menstrual Hygiene Day.
2. In India, Three days of paid menstrual leave for women is mandatory.

**Which of the above statement/s is/are correct?**

1. 1 only
2. 2 only

3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer: A**

### **MAINS BASED QUESTION**

**Q. In India, the focus on Menstrual hygiene is limited to gender, ignoring the particular section, especially Dalit, rural and prisoner women. Comment.**

[Vishal Yadav](#)

## **AI ANCHORS**

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "AI ANCHORS". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

### **WHY IN THE NEWS?**

Recently, DD Kisan introduced two AI-powered anchors to refresh the channel's presentation. This makes Doordarshan Kisan the pioneering government-operated television channel in India that incorporated artificial intelligence in this manner. The DD Kisan channel was launched on 26 May 2015 and is celebrating its ninth year of foundation.



### **KEY FEATURES OF THE AI ANCHORS:**

1. These AI-powered presenters are engineered to mimic human anchors, possessing the ability to broadcast news continuously, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without needing any breaks.
2. The two anchors can speak 50 Indian and foreign languages.
3. These AI presenters will deliver all essential updates on national and global agricultural research, trends in agricultural markets, weather forecasts, and details of government programs.

4. Farmers throughout India will benefit from AI anchors that provide updates on agriculture, market trends, weather, and government schemes in fifty languages, serving a broad audience.
5. It improves farmers' services by providing them with precise and timely information in a creative and captivating manner.

### **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF AI ANCHORS:**

AI anchors, digital figures created through artificial intelligence to mimic human news presenters, are becoming increasingly significant in the media sector. They offer a revolutionary approach to disseminating news and information. AI anchors are highly beneficial for broadcasting due to their efficiency, cost savings, and multilingual capabilities. **Here are some key advantages:**



- **Cost-Effectiveness:** AI anchors enable continuous operation, reducing labour costs and production expenses due to no need for breaks, wardrobe, or studio sets. Despite high initial costs, they lower long-term operational costs by removing the need for human anchor salaries and benefits, offering a cost-effective solution for news outlets.
- **Multilingual Capabilities:** AI anchors enable news outlets to reach a global audience by fluently communicating in various languages without human translators. This broadens news dissemination and enhances worldwide understanding, overcoming language barriers and benefiting international news platforms targeting diverse demographics.
- **Error-Free Message Delivery:** AI anchors are designed to provide messages with precision and uniformity, eradicating the chance of human mistakes, such as mispronunciations or false information.
- **Real-Time Reporting and Reduce Biasness:** AI presenters can swiftly process extensive datasets and produce instant updates on unfolding news stories, which is especially beneficial in providing information during emergencies. AI news anchors can be designed to present stories without bias, mitigating the risk of partiality in human journalism. This ability to offer unbiased reporting can improve the reliability and integrity of news outlets.
- **Increased Accessibility:** AI news presenters can broadcast information in multiple formats, including video and audio, thus reaching a broader spectrum of viewers and listeners. Their ability to be scaled up means they can simultaneously cover more news stories and events. This feature enables news outlets to broaden their reporting scope without increasing their human workforce.
- **Innovation and Technological Advancement:** AI anchors are a notable breakthrough in the media sector, highlighting artificial intelligence's innovative potential. This development fosters additional exploration and progress in AI technologies and their implementation across different domains.
- **Interactive Capabilities:** Upcoming technological progress could enable AI news presenters to engage directly with the audience in real-time, responding to inquiries and participating in dialogues. This level of interaction could significantly improve the viewing experience, making news consumption more lively and interactive.

While AI anchors offer several advantages, notable disadvantages and challenges are associated with their use in the media industry. **Some disadvantages of AI Anchors are:**

- **Lack of Human Touch:** AI presenters are missing the emotional intelligence and empathy that human presenters contribute to delivering news. Their inability to convey emotions, grasp the nuances of sensitive news, or personally engage with viewers results in an impersonal and disconnected news experience.
- **Job Displacement:** The introduction of AI anchors could result in the loss of jobs for human news presenters and other related personnel. This situation raises worries regarding how employment in the media sector might be affected and the wider economic effects of automating jobs.
- **Ethical and Trust Issues:** Ethical issues around transparency and authenticity raise concerns. Audiences may be sceptical about the reliability of AI-generated news, fearing potential manipulation or false information. To preserve trust, it is vital to be transparent about the employment of AI in distributing news.
- **Technical Issues:** Despite the progress in artificial intelligence, today's AI systems have shortcomings. AI news presenters might find it challenging to grasp intricate linguistic subtleties, slang, or cultural idioms, which could result in incorrect pronunciations or misinterpretations. Such issues could undermine the trustworthiness and dependability of news delivery.
- **Programming and Bias:** The effectiveness of AI systems hinges on the quality of the data and algorithms they are built upon. Biases in the training data or inherent in the algorithms can lead to AI news anchors reinforcing these biases in their news presentations. This could compromise the objective of delivering unbiased news.

#### **ABOUT DD KISAN:**

- DD Kisan, a channel dedicated to agriculture, was established by the Government of India and falls under the purview of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. This channel, which is the principal channel of Doordarshan, started broadcasting on May 26, 2015.
- It provides farmers with timely updates on innovative agricultural practices, water-saving methods, and organic cultivation, among other critical information.
- This initiative seeks to cater to the informational needs of India's agricultural and rural sectors, making strides to reach even the most isolated parts of the nation to enlighten and educate the rural population.
- It is committed to fostering a well-rounded framework for sustainable development and inclusive growth within these communities.
- The channel offers a variety of programs catering to the rural and farming community, including:
  - **Mausam Khabar:** A daily LIVE weather bulletin providing climatic trends and crop-wise advisories.
  - **Mandi Khabar:** Trends of commodities across Mandi of India, along with advisories for small and medium farmers.
  - **Chatt Par Bagwani:** A guide for terrace gardening.
  - **Krishi Darshan:** A long-running program on Doordarshan, launched on January 26, 1967.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

AI anchors are transforming the media industry by mimicking human news presenters using artificial intelligence. These entities offer numerous benefits, including cost reduction, round-the-

clock news coverage, content personalisation, easy scalability, and unbiased reporting, significantly altering how news is delivered. However, their adoption also presents challenges, such as ethical issues, technological limitations, potential job losses, and the risk of bias. Media companies must carefully weigh these pros and cons to successfully integrate AI technology into their operations.

**MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION:**

**Q. Discuss ethical considerations regarding the transparency and disclosure of AI anchors' use in place of human news anchors. How can we ensure that using AI anchors does not significantly lose jobs in the journalism and broadcasting industries?**

[Amit Pradhan](#)



**Yojna IAS**  
योजना है तो सफलता है