

Menarcheal Age Among Some Rural Muslim Women of 24 Paraganas

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ABSTRACT The present study intends to find out the role of food habits and income groups of menarcheal age of some rural Muslim women of Haria village of the district 24 Paraganas (N). West Bengal. The present data show the direct relationship between income group and food habits on menarcheal age.

The present study attempts to find out the menarcheal age of some Muslim women as data on this community are scanty. An attempt has been made to find out the economic condition and dietary habits which may influence the menarche.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The data on remembered menarcheal age of 300 women of ages between 12 and 30 years for the present study have been collected from Haria village of Habra Block, 24 Paraganas (N) on the printed proforma by questioning the subjects. A few of the subjects could tell the date of menarche exactly and while others could tell the month and the year only. This age given by subjects has been cross check-

ed by interviewing other older female members in the family and close relatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The highest frequency (31.67%) of women experienced menarche between the ages 12 to 13 years. Majority of the women in the present study had their menarche between the ages 12 to 14 years (Table 1).

The mean menarcheal ages among vegetarian and non-vegetarian groups are 12.60 ± 0.20 years and 12.65 ± 0.09 years, respectively, the difference between these two means is insignificant.

The differences in menarcheal ages between low (upto Rs. 500 per month), middle (Rs. 501 - 1000) and higher (Rs. 1001 +) income

Table 1: Age at menarche among Muslim women

S.No.	Particulars	Sample size	Age of menarche (in years)									Total
			9+	10+	11+	12+	13+	14+	15+	16+	17+	
1.	Distribution of Menarcheal age	300	2	3	45	95	78	63	11	1	2	300
2.	Food Habits											
	a) Vegetarian	40	—	—	7	16	8	5	3	1	—	40
	b) Non-vegetarian	260	2	3	38	79	70	58	8	—	2	260
3.	Income Groups (per month)											
	a) Low (upto Rs. 500)	212	—	1	31	65	64	40	9	1	1	212
	b) Middle (Rs. 501-1000)	70	2	2	12	22	12	17	2	—	1	70
	c) High (Rs. 1001+)	18	—	—	2	8	2	6	—	—	—	18

groups when compared, is found that women belonging to middle income group attain their sexual maturity a little earlier than the women belonging to lower and higher income group (Table 1).

There is an indication that the rural Karnataka women in higher income and vegetarian groups attain puberty earlier than those in lower income and non-vegetarian groups (Reddy, 1984).

From the foregoing analysis it has been observed that there is no significant difference in the age at onset of menstruation either in different economic categories or in dietary habits amongst the Muslim women studied, for clear understanding further studies on different religious and ethnic groups inhabiting 24 paraganas are required.

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