

# Menstruation: A Special Journey

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Illustrated by: Kadam Badhate Chalo Youth

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**About this Booklet:**

This booklet has been developed by Rachel Barr, a student from University of Victoria, Canada, who interned with Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC) programme for six months in the year 2017. She worked with KBC youth leaders in Sonipat and Panipat in Haryana on issues related to sexuality and reproductive health. During her six-month long engagement, she found that young and adolescent girls who live in extremely conservative and resource-poor backgrounds, hardly have access to quality information on menstruation and menstrual hygiene. If they try to seek such information, they are faced with countless taboos and myths regarding menstruation. Also, practitioners, parents or teachers who wish to speak to young and adolescent girls about these topic, find it extremely difficult to find the right vocabulary to do so.

Therefore, Rachel developed this booklet which can be used by teachers, trainers of NGOs, frontline workers, volunteers or parents in order to facilitate an effective interaction on menstruation with school going (6th – 10th Standard) and out of school adolescent girls (around 13 years to 16 years). Rachel credits her fellow researchers cum co-creators, the young KBC leaders from Haryana for supporting her to develop this booklet.

**About Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC):**

KBC is a youth-led programme to end violence against women and girls (VAWG), which works in 21 locations in 12 states of India. It calls on young boys and girls to identify issues of VAWG in their communities and to collectively find solutions to them. In doing so, these young boys and girls turn into leaders, who influence their homes, communities, government, police, judiciary and other institutions to join them to bring about a change.



Hello, My name is Pooja, I have an elder sister and a younger brother. I attend school. After school I help my family with all the chores that need to be done around our home. My favorite games to play are carom and cricket.





One day after dinner my grandmother calls me over and tells me she needs to tell me something. She tells me that right now I am a girl but I am starting a special journey soon. This journey is how I will change from a girl to a woman.





She calls this journey puberty.  
“I went through this journey many years ago, it is something that happens to everyone in the world, girls and boys. It means that your body will go through changes so you can be physically mature.” She tells me.





Grandmother leans in, and in a soft voice whispers, “You are extra special my dear, because you are a girl and your journey will include menstruation”





**“Stand up tall my love”**

**Grandmother insists. “This is what you must do when people tell you menstruation is dirty, impure, or that it makes you weaker than men, you must stand tall”**





**“But Grandmother what does menstruation mean?”**

**I have heard the word at school before but I was too embarrassed to ask questions.**





“Women have a menstrual cycle that comes once a month. Blood comes from your vagina.

This is so grown up women will be able to have a baby, if she wants.”





“Blood, that sounds scary” I shriek,  
My grandmother kindly explains to  
me that

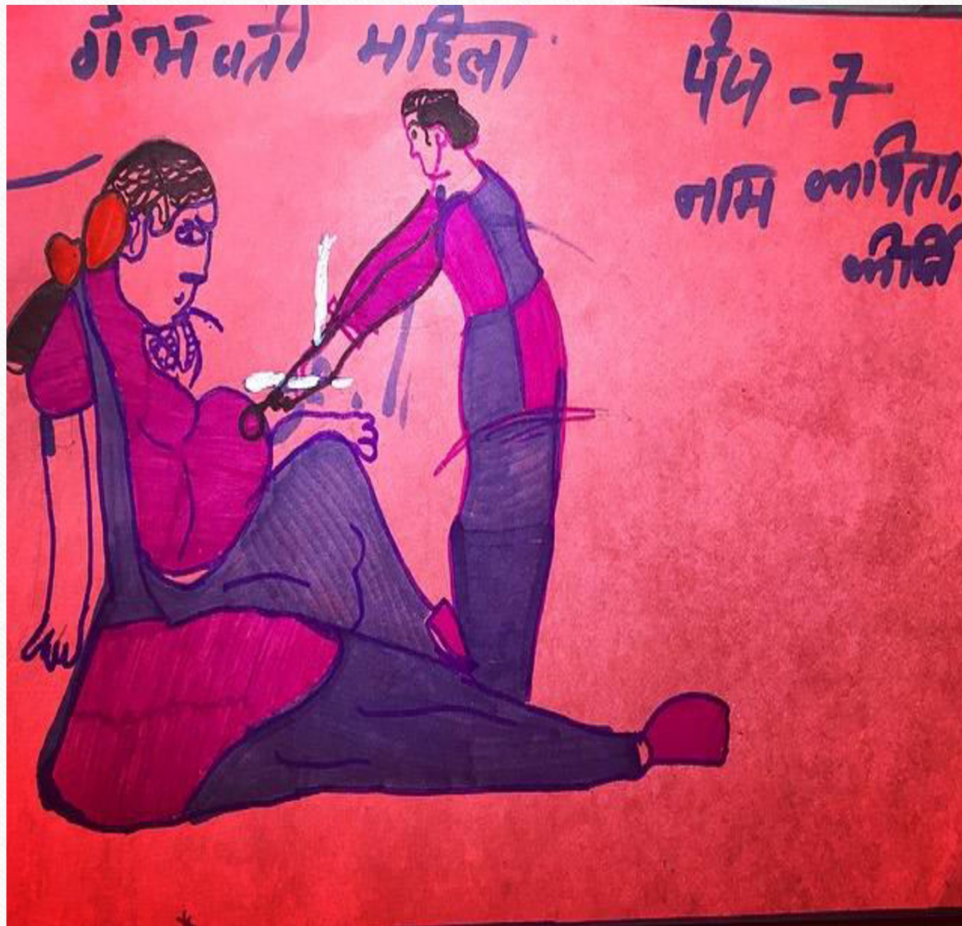
“Women have uteruses and that is  
what holds and keep a baby safe  
during pregnancy, there is a lining, it’s  
kind of like a pillow that is created  
every month in order to keep the  
baby safe and protected but if there is  
no pregnancy the lining is shed and  
that is what a period is.”





“Wow that kind of cool” I say.  
“ My dear, consider yourself very special, in the animal kingdom only humans, monkeys, apes, and bats get their period. Now off to bed you go, you have school tomorrow”





As I prepared for bed that night, I couldn't stop thinking about the exciting journey I had ahead. I couldn't wait. I was happy to be a girl.





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