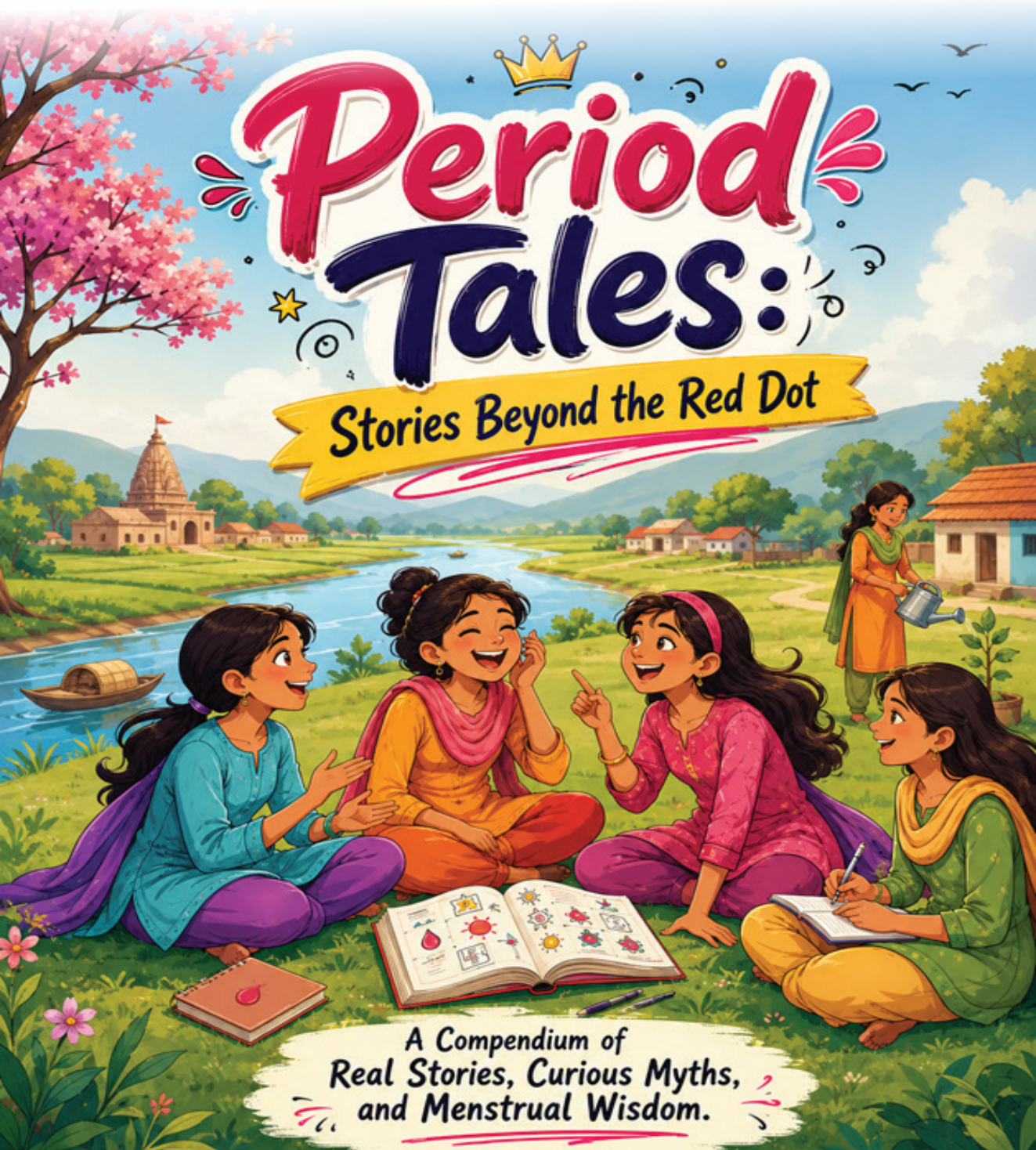


Period Tales:

Stories Beyond the Red Dot



A Compendium of
Real Stories, Curious Myths,
and Menstrual Wisdom.

More Than Just a Monthly Cycle...

Every once in a while... every month, to be precise... girls across India suddenly take on a new avatar. They become so “powerful” that they can’t touch food, babies, or plants, lest they get “polluted”! They can’t play sports, go to school, sleep on a bed, visit temples, sit near family members and are suddenly considered ‘untouchable’!

Going to the shop to buy sanitary napkins? Shhhhhhh... don’t tell anyone! Pack it tightly in a black cover - the blackest cover possible. Oh, the shame if anyone were to see it!!

Don’t be surprised because this is the norm in many parts of India even today. Menstruation continues to be associated with impurity and shame, affecting girls’ confidence, participation, and opportunities. Poor menstrual hygiene management and lack of awareness before menarche often lead to school absenteeism, stress, embarrassment, and reduced social participation among girls, especially in rural and underserved communities. Menstrual stigma limits open conversations and access to accurate information, seeking on reproductive health issues for girls.




According to NFHS-5, while 78% of adolescent girls now use hygienic menstrual products, deep-rooted taboos still persist across homes, schools, workplaces, and communities. Menstrual health is therefore not just a hygiene issue, but one linked to dignity, education, gender equality, and well-being. **Addressing stigma requires open family and community discussions, along with active involvement of boys and men to create supportive and inclusive environments.**

These real-life experiences compiled into a compendium of short stories with girls from different locations demonstrate girls' resilience and the ways in which they cope with the stigma, taboos and restrictions with humour, pain, courage and fortitude. This is an open invitation to all girls and women from all across India to contribute to this living compendium to break the stigma and normalize menstrual health. Through these short, humours take on menstrual experiences, let us together sensitize other girls, boys, men and women to break the stigma, taboo and restrictions, and to celebrate menstruation as a natural and healthy phenomenon. If you have more such stories and would like them to be converted into a graphic story and added to this collection,

[write to us at: khptblr@khpt.org](mailto:khptblr@khpt.org)

Renuka's Monthly Bedsheet Horror Story




RENUKA
from Mattaldrini,
Koppal

RENUKA'S MONTHLY BEDSHEET HORROR STORY!

Break the Silence. End the Shame.

A story of fear, courage & change.



**LET'S CHANGE
THE STORY!**

1 THE REAL FEAR!

My biggest fear during periods was not stains - it was staining the bed.

2 MOM'S WARNING!

Be careful while sleeping. If you stain the bed, everyone in the house will know.

BIG FAMILY SHAME!

3 THE BIG SECRET!

Your father or brothers should never see the stained bedsheet.

SAA...

I started feeling embarrassed about it...

4 SLEEP CAREFULLY!

Sleep carefully... don't move too much.

As if I was doing gymnastics in sleep!

5 MISSION: NIGHT PREPARATION!

- Old dark towel
- Pad
- Extra cloth
- Cycling shorts
- Full safety arrangement!

6 THE LAYER MASTER!

Old dark towel on the bed...

Pad + Extra cloth + Cycling shorts = Safety level 100%

7 SLEEP LIKE A STATUE!

No turning left, no turning right.

If I moved even a little, the bed would be ruined.

8 EVERY MOVE = PANIC MODE!

If I sneezed...
Acho!

Or suddenly woke up at night...!

My first thought was never "Am I okay?"
It was "Ayyo... did I stain the bed?"

9 DETECTIVE RENUKA!

Morning check like a detective!

If there was even a small stain, I would quickly wash it...

10 TOP SECRET OPERATION!

...before anyone in my family saw it.

M?
What's she doing?

11 LOOKING BACK...

Now when I think about it, I laugh.

My parents made me feel like a bedsheet stain was a **NATIONAL ISSUE!**

12 THE REAL TRUTH!

During periods, I was not sleeping - I was doing **NIGHT DUTY** for my bed!

MISSION: KEEP MY BEDSHEET CLEAN!



LET'S CHANGE THE STORY!

Periods are natural. Shame is not.
Let every girl sleep peacefully, not fearfully.

#PeriodPositivity #NoShame #ItsNatural #MyStory



The Great Indian Period Rulebook

**Three Friends.
One Old Belief.
Many Rules.
Many Restrictions.
But... Are They
Really True?**

Meet our three friends from Koppal...

Sahana from Hirearalahalli, Koppal	Savitha from Vajrabandi, Koppal	Mallika Basavaraj Hosmani from Gunnal, Koppal
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Remember! You are on your periods. Follow all the rules! These are from our elders, and must be followed!

❌ Don't touch the pickle.

If you touch it, the whole pickle will get spoiled!

Pickles are 'hot'. You will spoil it!

❌ Don't touch the baby.

The baby is so pure. You'll make her sick!

Baby is delicate. You'll harm her!

❌ Don't touch water pots or kitchen vessels.

Water will become impure. Don't go near!

Everything will become impure!

❌ Don't go near the stove or cooked food.

Food is sacred. Don't spoil it!

Food is sacred. Don't spoil it!

❌ Don't touch papad, clothes, or wet grains.

They'll all get spoiled and useless!

Papad won't dry. Clothes will stain. Grains will rot!

❌ Don't sit on the sofa or on others' bed.

You'll make it dirty! Go sit there!

More rules... more pain.

Sit separately. Don't talk to anyone much. Don't laugh too loudly.

Be quiet. Be calm. Don't be happy!

THE RESULT OF ALL THESE RULES?

- ❌ Fear grows in the heart.
- ❌ Shame becomes a shadow.
- ❌ Girls start believing they are 'impure' and 'dangerous'.
- ❌ Confidence fades away. Childhood is stolen.

BUT HERE'S THE TRUTH!

- ✔️ Periods are natural.
- ✔️ Girls are not impure.
- ✔️ Nothing gets spoiled by you.
- ✔️ Love, respect & understanding should be the real rules!

Let's break the old rules and build a new world of respect, care & truth!

PERIODS ARE NORMAL. NOT A CURSE.

Suvarna, White Pants, and Her "Perfectly Timed" Periods




Me, My Periods, and the “Dangerous” Betel Leaves



Me, the Flower Garden, and My 4-Kilometre Toilet Marathon

AMBROTHA FROM KALLUR, KOPPAL

ME, THE FLOWER GARDEN, AND MY 4-KILOMETRE TOILET MARATHON



"I used to work in a flower garden, and apparently during periods I was considered more dangerous than pesticides," laughs Ambrotha.

1 THE STRANGE RULE!

One day, while working, I needed to use the toilet. Very normal problem, right? But in that garden, there was one strange rule—women on periods should not go near certain areas because elders believed it would affect the flowers and plants.



Don't go near those areas during periods. It will affect the flowers and plants.

2 FLOWERS WILL DIE? REALLY?

As if flowers would see me and suddenly say,



Oh no! Oh no! she's on her period, let's die immediately!" she jokes.

Oh no! She's on her period!

3 NO TOILET ANYWHERE!

The bigger problem? There was no toilet nearby.



No washroom. No private place. Not even bushes nearby.

Just flowers everywhere and people watching.

4 ONLY ONE OPTION...

I had to walk nearly 4 kilometres back home just to use the toilet.



No choice... I have to walk all the way back home.

4 KM

5 THE LONG WALK...

While walking, I felt frustrated and amused at the same time.



These flowers get so much care, water, and protection.

But women working here don't even get one toilet.

6 NOBODY CARES ABOUT ME!

Everyone was worried about protecting flowers from me,

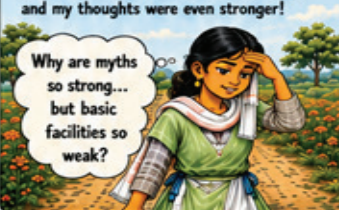


But no one was worried about my bladder.

DO NOT ENTER DURING PERIODS — IT WILL AFFECT THE PLANTS

7 4 KILOMETRES OF THOUGHTS!

The road was long, the sun was strong, and my thoughts were even stronger!



Why are myths so strong... but basic facilities so weak?


8 FINALLY... HOME!

By the time I reached home, I was exhausted.



9 THE REALISATION!

That day I realised I was not the problem. My periods were not the problem.



The real problem was people believing strange myths and forgetting basic facilities.

10 NOT THE DANGER!

I worked hard, cared for the flowers, plucked them, carried them...



But I was never a danger to the flowers. Never.

11 THE UNFAIR TRUTH!

Protecting flowers was important, but protecting women wasn't?



Protecting flowers was important, but protecting women wasn't?

12 MY PERIODS, MY STRENGTH!

Ambrotha now jokes, "During periods, I was not a flower worker—"



—I WAS TRAINING FOR A 4-KILOMETRE WALKING COMPETITION!"

4 KM

LESSON LEARNED!

My periods are normal. My body is normal. I deserve respect, facilities, and freedom—not myths and restrictions!



Sneezing in the Classroom: "Emergency Mode Activated!"

SNEEZING IN THE CLASSROOM: EMERGENCY MODE ACTIVATED!

The classroom is going on as usual...

Today we'll learn about our village!

...teacher explaining.

...students listening.

...no one knows what's coming!

And then—
ACHOO! 😞
Just one sneeze. Normal? Yes. But for a girl on her periods?

Meet Srusti from Karmudi, Koppal!
Smart, kind, curious... and just trying to be normal like everyone else.

In 0.2 seconds, her brain goes into emergency mode:
OH NO.
Did anything happen?
Did I feel something?
Did the world see something?

She suddenly sits like a statue. Not moving even an inch. Even breathing feels like a risky activity.

Meanwhile, in reality... nothing happened.
Everything is normal.

BREAKING NEWS:
POSSIBLE LEAKAGE SITUATION IN CLASS 8!

She slowly performs "Operation Check Without Checking":

- adjusts her bag like a pro spy
- sits extra straight like a queen on a throne
- looks around casually like nothing is happening (but everything is happening in her head 😞)

Friend next to her whispers:
Are you okay?
And she instantly replies:
Yes yes... just... dust allergy! 😊😊
(even though there is no dust, only tension)

Teacher calls her name:
Srusti, Why are you so stiff?

She smiles like:
I am... very attentive, ma'am!

Meanwhile internally:
Please don't stand up, please don't stand up...

After class, she walks out like she just survived a war.

And thinks:
It was just a sneeze... but my mind wrote a full suspense thriller!

SNEEZES ARE NORMAL. PERIODS ARE NATURAL.
UNDERSTANDING IS POWER. SHAME IS NOT.

TISSUES

The Grand Puja Heist

The Grand Puja Heist 😊

Srusti Reddy
from Sanganal, Koppal 📍

It was Lakshmi Puja at home. The house was full of flowers, rangoli, and the smell of hot prasad and ghee.



Amma was busy arranging the puja plate, and Aji was supervising everything like a strict manager.



Just then, fifteen-year-old Srusti Reddy got her period.



Immediately, the usual rules started:

Go sit in the room.
Don't come near the puja.
Don't touch anything.



Srusti Reddy looked at the kitchen.

Prasad are coming out one by one.
So today even prasad don't want to meet me...



After some time, she quietly came out just to look at the puja.



Aji spotted her.

Didn't I tell you to rest?



Srusti Reddy quickly replied:

I am not doing anything... just spiritual observation.



Aji gave a look and went back to work.



Srusti Reddy stood there watching the puja, trying to look very innocent and "non-existent."



And of course... nothing happened.

Puja went on peacefully. All gods were happy. No alarm. No problem.



The puja finished peacefully, aarti was done, and prasad was distributed.



Srusti Reddy also got her share of prasad.



She smiled and said:

So basically, I was on restriction... but the prasad still knew my address!



Rules may be many... but love (and prasad) always finds a way! 😊



Story of Abhishek, Agalkera, Koppal

Abhishek from Agalkera Village

1 This is Abhishek... a normal village boy.
I know everything! 😊
Agalkera Village

2 When sister got her periods... Abhishek becomes "Commentator" 🤖
What drama is this? ❓
Why are you sleeping so much?
4-5 days only rest, no work at all ah?

3 Zero knowledge. Full drama idea!
Periods = Excuse + Rest Combo Plan 😊
☂️

4 One day... Mom entered like a strict teacher!
It is not drama, it is pain!
• Stomach pain 🍷
• Weakness 🧑
• Tiredness 🔋
• Mood swings ☁️
Not easy like you think!

5 Abhishek's brain finally started working! 💡
Oh God... I was teasing for no reason!
From that day... I changed!

6 Earlier: Commentator 🤖
Now: Support Staff 🧑
Before: What drama is this?
After: Okay okay, you rest... don't act like you are in competition 😊

7 Support mode ON ✅
Water please!
I'll do cleaning!
Kitchen Upgraded!

8 Going to buy pads like it's normal grocery! 😊
Anna, one pad packet please.
Sure da!
NORMAL NATURAL NECESSARY

9 Now... Sister trusts me more ❤️
I have pain.
I'm here. No worries 😊
Earlier: Funny Ignorant Boy 🤖
Now: Slightly Mature Support System 🧑

Samarth's "Amma is Superwoman" Moment at Home



Bhuvan's Story: Change Starts Within Families

Awareness
Empathy
Equality
Respect

OUR STORY OF CHANGE

From Taboo to **Totally Normal!**

One family's journey to open conversations about periods

Creating
Change
Through
Conversations

THEN: SECRECY, SHAME & SO MANY 'DON'TS'

Earlier, when my sister got her periods, the whole house turned into a **SECRET OPERATION!**

Pads = Top Secret!

Buying pads was an undercover mission! Double cover, triple cover... No one must see!

Mission: Invisible!

Parties? Bathroom locked!

Total NINJA style!

Sneak mode: ON!

Even bathrooms had secrets!

Throwing the used pad also – Mission Ninja!

Shhh...

No one should ever know!

Once I went near the bathroom... She panicked and hid it inside her dupatta!

It felt like such a BIG secret to me.

Back then, I thought... "Why is Akka hiding all this so secretly? Why is there still embarrassment and fear in some families?"

Questions that stayed with me...

NOW: OPEN, CONFIDENT & FULL OF LAUGHTER!

Now... everything has changed!

"Hey... I got my periods today."

Open. Honest. Normal.

Sometimes, I'm the one who goes to the shop and buys pads for her!

No big deal!

No awkwardness. Just support.

Now I just laugh and tease her!

Akka... earlier you hid it like a CID officer... now you make loudspeaker announcements!

From CID officer to Loudspeaker Queen!

Hehe... Back then we were much more scared, kanoo!

We laugh, we learn, we grow together.

A CURIOUS MIND. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

Now in hostel life... I see some girls still hesitant to talk about periods...

Why do people still see it as something "not normal"? Why is there still shame and fear in our relatives' homes and some places?

Beta, change doesn't happen in a day. But when we start talking openly at home, society slowly starts changing too.

What we believe in:

- ✓ Periods are normal.
- ✓ Bodies are not dirty.
- ✓ Shame is taught, not natural.
- ✓ Conversations bring confidence.
- ✓ Boys & men being involved is important.

MY WORK. MY WHY.

For the past 8 years, I (Bhuvan's mother) have been talking to children about gender & periods whenever the moment came.

I create calendars, stationery & fun learning tools to make these conversations easier, beautiful & everyday!

Let's keep the conversation going... at home, in schools, in communities, everywhere!

Open minds
Stronger hearts
Better world

PERIODS ARE NORMAL. TALKING ABOUT THEM MAKES US STRONGER!

OPEN MINDS

RESPECT

NO SHAME

ONLY SUPPORT

TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

Share your stories. Break the silence. Build a better tomorrow. Together, we can change the narrative.

If you have similar stories or experiences—whether you are a girl, boy, parent, teacher, community worker or anyone working in the field—We would love to hear from you! Your stories can help create more inclusive, relatable & impactful materials.

The background is a colorful illustration of a rural landscape. On the left, a large tree with pink blossoms stands next to a river. In the middle ground, a river flows through a green field, with a small boat on the water. In the background, there is a temple with a dome and a flag, and several small houses with red roofs. The sky is blue with a yellow crown, a star, and some decorative swirls. The overall scene is bright and cheerful.

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