

Gender Inequality & Stigma

Many women, girls, transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive people don't have access to clean water or safe bathrooms to manage their periods. In places where access to water is limited, menstrual supplies are often very expensive. Gender roles also expect menstruators to collect clean water for their families, adding to domestic responsibilities.

Without clean water or menstrual supplies, many people must stay home to manage their periods. This leads to social exclusion and school and work opportunities for those experiencing menstruation.

Menstruators may also experience stigma, as menstruation is viewed as "dirty." This stigma is exacerbated when menstruators experience water insecurity.

THE INTERCONNECTIONS OF WATER + MENSTRUAL JUSTICE IN CANADA

Water Justice refers to the fair and equitable distribution, access, and management of water resources for all people, especially marginalized communities. It involves ensuring that everyone has the right to clean, safe water, and sanitation and that the management of water doesn't exploit, harm, or exclude vulnerable populations. It also includes addressing the historical and systemic inequalities that impact access to water.

Menstrual Justice is the right to access affordable, safe, and hygienic menstrual supplies and facilities, as well as the removal of stigma and discrimination around menstruation. It also involves addressing the social, economic, and environmental barriers that affect people's ability to manage their menstrual health with dignity, and working towards equity in healthcare, education, and public policy related to menstruation.

Environmental Racism

Environmental racism occurs when racialized communities are unfairly exposed to problems such as a lack of clean water. It is caused by systemic inequalities and biased policies that ignore marginalized communities.

Canada's federal government claims it has no legal duty to provide clean drinking water to First Nations reserves. This neglect of water infrastructure is a form of environmental racism and adds to the colonial violence that many Indigenous menstruators face.

Colonial Violence

In Canada, menstrual and water injustices are forms of colonial violence.

Many Indigenous communities face water insecurity and high costs for menstrual supplies.

These issues stem from colonial policies that displaced Indigenous peoples to places with poor water access and expensive transportation of goods, negatively impacting menstruators.

Colonial violence has also impacted many traditional Indigenous teachings that connect menstruation to water.

Climate Change

Climate change makes it harder to access clean water and increases challenges for menstrual health. Droughts, floods, and extreme weather limit access to water and sanitation needed to manage periods.

Marginalized communities are hit hardest by climate change, worsening the gender and social inequalities menstruators face.



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