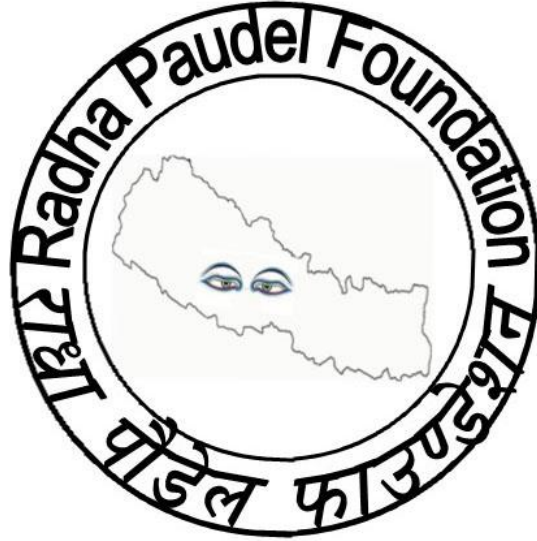


# Annual Report

## August 2017-July, 2018



Prepared by:  
**Durga Thapa, MDM**  
LGBTQI Activist, Freelancer

September 2018  
Kathmandu

**Dear Peace Maker/Lovers/Supporters/ Well Wishers around the World,**

**Namaste and Greetings!**

As I mentioned in Annual Report 2017, Radha Paudel Foundation completed second year in July 2018. Here, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to each of you who supported me and cause even during difficult situation of my professional career.

As I promised in earlier year, Radha Paudel Foundation is trying to do trainings, research and policy advocacy in various setting with it's volunteer efforts. This report is just captured of few activities erratically from facebook due to limited human resources. Because RPF hasn't specific fund for any projects, therefore, all activities are implemented on voluntary basis or without funding. RPF made huge impact in society but very hard for team and always worried for sustainability.

Despite all ups and downs, RPF so passionate and committed to continue our dream and fulfil the promise what we made.

Here, on behalf of RPF, would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all individual donors, foundations, networks and all for your generous support. I hope that you will continue the support for novel cause on what I believe and doing. Together we would make difference!

Thank you very much for your understanding.

Shall you have any queries, feel free to drop the message as follows.

Your's Sincerely,

Radha Paudel *Raudel*

Founder/Director

+977-9849596298

email: rpaudel456@gmail.com, rpaudelfoundation@gmail.com

## **Background:**

Radha Paudel Foundation (RPF) was founded with the *vision* of emancipation for girls and women from poverty, injustices, discrimination. It started working since 2016 in informal way and it got formal registration on 2017. The *mission* of the foundation are: i) educate for deconstruct the social evils and practices, ii) engage men for gender justice, peace and human right, iii) empower girls and women politically, economically, socially, environmentally, iv) enhanced networks, coalition and alliances for policy enforcement and advocacy at all levels and v) enrich capacity of team, partners and concerned stakeholders. The *objectives* are; i) to organize and mobilize the likeminded organizations and individuals for peace and justice, ii) to initiate dialogue on dignified menstruation, gender-based violence, human right, iii) to cultivate culture of hope and inspire during nature and human made crisis, iv) to accomplish evidence-based policy advocacy and to build role models through execution of programs. The key *strategies* of RPF are Miteri Gau-Let's Live Together, Social Business, Movement Building, accountability.

It has been voicing out for different discriminatory practices that has been practicing in our society. An embedded traditional value system, patriarchal social norms and stereotyping continue to hinder Nepalese women's progress in the way that legitimize discrimination and violence against women and girls in the household, community and public spaces. Among many such kind of norms and traditional values Chhaupadi is one of those. In various parts of Nepal, women are subjected to discriminatory practices like Chhaupadi, Boksi (witchcraft) etc. The constitution and prevailing laws have abolished some discriminatory cultural practices but the practice in the society still prevails and women are forced to comply with those practices.

Menstruation is the sign that woman's body is getting ready for pregnancy and childbirth. We should celebrate it but the situation is different in the context of Nepal. Many communities in Nepal considered Women in menstruation as inferior, impure or unholy human. They are not even allowed touching food, religious icons, cattle and men. In some area women are not even allowed to live with their family, they are sent to the menstrual shed and are even compelled to live along with animals, in animal shed. Despite of all the progress happening, menstruating girls are not allowed to touch other people and worship the god even in the urban area.

Therefore, in order to change the social perception and create safe space for women and girls and live dignified life, the team initiated the campaign named "dignified menstruation" for the first time in the country. Radha Paudel's dedication to humanity has been continuously uplifting mental, physical, and emotional health of the community. She has been voicing out against women human rights violation including Chhaupadi. Now, she is not alone in the campaign she has a big team under the banner of Radha Paudel foundation. The team believes *Chhaupadi is practicing across globe where Nepalese community resided whereas civil code defined or confined with west or far west and mid-west Nepal. Government is trying to address the issue by cleaning sheds but cleaning shed is not enough. It doesn't ensure dignity, right to food, health, freedom, housing,*

*healthy environment, touch ability and non-discrimination, women, education, employment as provisioned in constitution. In this connection, to aware more and more people on the issue and eliminate the harmful practices that discriminate women from Nepali society many activities has been carried out by the foundation.*

## **Main Activities:**

### **1. Peace, Human Right, Empowerment**

During this reporting period, the team including Radha Paudel has conducted different sessions and activities to achieve the goal of the campaign and the organization.

RPF excited to know the news that Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, supported the women's group in India who are working for menstrual rights. In this connection, RPF appreciated and requested to continue such work through dispatching letter.

RPF worked with *CEDAW Shadow Periodic Report Preparation* network and contributed significantly specially for Article 5 and 15, Traditional Harmful Practices and Gender Stereotyped Roles and Rural Women respectively. For Article 5, RPF worked as Coordinator for facilitation and finalization of regional (Karnali) and national level consultation meetings. More importantly, RPF initiated the petition with addressing Chair of CEDAW Committee for considering the menstrual restrictions as urgent issue- <https://www.change.org/p/dalia-leinarte-menstrual-restriction-shouldn-t-discuss-under-traditional-harmful-practice-in-cedaw>. The number of signatures has reached 939 till the date of completion of this report.

Ms. Radha facilitated the workshop entitled 'Dignified Menstruation for Peace, Human right and Development at the Era of 2030' in *Asia Pacific feminist forum* (sisters, resisters, per sisters) which was held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Under this heading, RPF engaged in *Anti-Rape* Solidarity rallies, protests, interaction program and social media to create pressure for securing justice for all survivors of rape including Nirmala Pant, 13 years old girl.

As an *Executive Member ESCR* network, RPF has been involved in various types of advocacy activities e.g. petition to Women and Child Ministry against/ Home Minister for rights of girls and women.

RPF strongly believes that Rape has strong relation with Menstrual Restriction because the notion of 'Powerful' and 'Powerless' construct in between the age of 5-8 years old among girls and boys. As a result, the boys started to use their feelings of Powerful and started to perpetuate the rights of girls. Meanwhile, the girls feel inferior and living with humiliation where they do not question or challenge to anyone and anything. Therefore, each girl and women deserved dignity during period. In relation with dignified menstruation, there are many activities are going on during this reporting period as well.

As assessment report identified (visit website), RPF addressed the issue of death of 19 years old girl, Tulashi Shahi, lost her life in shed due to snake bite in shed. Tulashi's story is only an evocative story of such sad incident. There are many such stories of women who have suffered due to menstrual restrictions. The organization has continued its work and has been using mobile technology to robust the enforcement through series of trainings, media mobilization. Policy makers and the main coalition working for gender equality have also failed to address the issue of menstrual hygiene. This is one of the key underlying causes for all. Dignified menstruation is core heart of all activities. Despite of laws in favor of women women's are not getting opportunity to enjoy their rights fully.

The month of August 2017 had become the historical month for the team working on dignified menstruation. On 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2017 Legislature Parliament passed the Criminal Code 2074 on Wednesday. The Parliament brought the new code in order to update the criminal law which was earlier based on the amendment of Civil Code-2011. The code came into effect from Bhadra 1. This would have been possible due to the continuous advocacy and lobby of the group. With the introduction of new Criminal Code, the traditional social practice of Chhaupadi would be

criminalized. Those forcing woman to take refuge in shed during the period would now be punished with three month's jail term along with fine.



*Radha was speaker in Porto, Portugal, March 2018*

The team has visited remote areas of Nepal and Radha and her father were interview by three different FMs at Dailekh bazar on the issue, where she shared her experience and the better truth about the harmful tradition that people are practicing not only that the team but also addresses *Teej* program at Brindrasainee Chamunda and appealed to join hands together to stop

Chhaupadi. During the series of dialogue the team featured the most unique documentary about dignified menstruation. As partner organization, RPF facilitated the filming process in Dailekh and Kathmandu, entitled+Chhaupadi Full Movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXJrfQPHEETA>. In the same line, RPF conducted assessment study in March 2018 in Bajura and organized trainings for boys, girls, women's groups, teachers, health workers.

As an active member of MHMPA (Menstrual Health Management Partner Allaince), RPF involved, shared and contributed in monthly meetings and activities.

Similarly, international media, Radio SBS Sydney covered news about Chhaupadi. Miss Paudel and her team participated in many interviews/dialogues/interaction program/ discussions on the topic in different local, national and international media that includes Kantipur TV HD:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXVFdqzKML4>, Print media during the conference at University do Parto in Portugal: <https://www.msn.com/pt-br/video/musica/radha-paudel-em-portugal-para-falar-de-discrimina%C3%A7%C3%A3o-das-mulheres-nepalesas/vp-BBKDazn>



*Engaging Boys on Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation*

Radio Bajura covered the news on its regular program called community health and development about harmful practices, where the representation linked the perspective with human right, empowerment and sustainable development goals.

RPF is a core team member of draft policy called 'Policy on Dignified Menstruation 2075'. The continuous dedication towards the issues made the team to had live discussion on zero draft of policy among ministries; education, women, health; federal and CSO representatives on October 11,

2017 at Singhadurbar. The campaign got support from political leaders to declare Chhaupadi free community. Team raise voices against the violation faced by women due to menstrual restrictions. The team talked about the women deprived using toilet in Melauli Baitadi during menstruation, talked about the death of 22 years women in shed. The team also did its field study which was interesting to know for them as well. Women in Sharadpur, Bharatpur are proudly practicing menstrual more than 20 forms restriction and saying west Nepal is suffering from harmful traditions e.g. Chhaupadi. This shows how people are practicing *chau* in different way.



As a result of the advocacy done by the team on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> Hon. Minister Tham Maya Thapa, Ministry of women, children and senior citizen expressed that discrimination on the name of menstrual restriction or Chaupadi is punishable.

While sharing her own story Radha said nothing is impossible if you have passion and commitment to broke the family's code of conduct on Menstruation. Further she said at the age of 14 she run away from home to escape from cowshed during her first menstruation at

IOE Pulchowk campus. Similarly, she took part in discussion program held at Nagarkot on dignified menstruation, gender equality and Sustainable development goal 2030.

She had done presentation in panel at Rasission Blu Royal hotel. She focused the issue of global concern and shared her experience and stories about the violence and incident due to same.

The team has also engaged men to fights against *chhau*. Utilizing the same resources this group has conducted many sessions of dialogue and interaction with media, student, teachers, politicians, faith leaders and women leaders at Achham, Bajura, Chitwan, Kavre, Sindupalanchok, Nuwakot, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur etc. It also involved young candidate to speak about dignified menstruation and sanitation with the locals in Chuangsar, Kerung on the special occasion of inauguration of co-operation for women by roots for life.



OBR Feb 14, 2018

In addition, Radha and team never stopped on their path so on the month of April Radha delivered lecture and speech on women's life including peace, human right, empowerment and SDG including menstruation ar universitat Salzburg Austria and speaks ar Asiastisches, Institute Salburg. On the same month a film entitled Home Bird screened in Bramberg, Austria on women's issues of Nepal in her presence. For further advocacy and find more allies for the campaign the team appealed for petition for solidarity.

Radha Paudel Foundation worked as coach and mentor for X-pose Nepal and participated in Cycle rally program to celebrate "World Menstrual Hygiene Day" on May 26<sup>th</sup> 2018. Among 300 cyclist who participated in the cycle rally 80 were female. Representative from Radha Paudel Foundation gifted the hand book on dignified menstruation is everyone's business to Chief Guest Hon. Bina Magar, Ministry of Water and Sanitation. The slogan for this year was "No More Limits".

## 2. Education

RPF also led the process of assessing the school curriculum from grade 1-10 for alignment with dignified menstriation. effort of the team showed its result as media covered news about dignified menstruation in school curriculum which is jointly organized Swiss Redcross and Regional office, Ministry of EDucation in Dang.

The foundation conducted series of Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation at Dailekh with different coalition groups that includes interaction program with faith healers, discussion with mother's group, political leaders, students from grade 7, 8, 9 and 10. During the time the team had visited role models home, interface program with CSOs and spoke about dignified menstruation and *RishiPanchami*. In addition, Radha gave a brief and inspiring presentation on women's rights and dignified menstruation with international students at Dhokaima Café, Lalitpur on September 13.

On the month of January the team had drafted a mini hand book entitled “Dignified Menstruation” is everyone’s business, deconstructing over four dozen of myths and misconceptions. On the month of February, the team along with 170 students jointly launched the mini handbook at Boston International College at Chitwan followed by interaction program.



*Solidarity for Justice for all Rape Victims*

students were kept for exhibition at City Hall. Approximately 400 persons visited the exhibition including general public, nursing student from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University and Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training.

For the first time in the history of Nepal, Government of Nepal celebrated “National Dignified Menstruation Day”. Ms. Radha Paudel was the key note speaker at the program. She discussed about the existing situation, law and punishment regarding the menstrual restriction and areas to be improved to obtain the dignified menstruation status. Similarly, the foundation conducted Speech competition on dignified menstruation among 20 students of class 8, 9 and 10 at Durga Secondary School Lamra, Jumla in collaboration with Action Works Nepal and district education office. Further, Usha Paudel and her team (School Teacher) conducted the several programs like cycle rally, storytelling, and drama with the technical advice of Radha Paudel among the students without any logistic and financial support.

In the same manner the foundation has conducted different activities to change the social believes and deeply rooted social norms. Screening of Documentary “Chhaupadi-Banished for Bleeding” in partnership with Safer hands was held at UN House Kathmandu. The interaction program with school teacher on Dignified Menstruation held. Participants discussed about the situation of dignified menstruation in our home, community and nation and the change they can make in the society.

Radha Paudel recited her poem and conducted poem competition at Chitwan among 60 participants among people from various backgrounds like teacher, politician, social worker, business person etc. She launched her new poem book ‘Steps of Peace’ with the main aim of fighting against the menstrual restriction and ensures the human rights of every individual.

In addition, the two schools are continuously supported in Jumla (Kudari) and Kalikot (Phiomahadev).

### **3. Health**



RPF also provided input to RH bill at Ministry of Health and Population and provided feedback specially on maternal and child health and its relation with menstrual practice in rural Nepali context.

From 20-22<sup>nd</sup> of March she has attended parallel session on 18<sup>th</sup> General meeting of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) at Brussels, Belgium.

Radha and team have facilitated the training on dignified menstruation for health workers in Nuwakot. This group has been raising different challenges of women living in rural areas. Moreover, the team has been coordinating with different embassy, individual donor and volunteers to achieve the goal of the campaign. In the same connection of advocacy Radha meet with stakeholders and government officers and shared the importance of menstrual hygiene products.

The training on dignified menstruation was held in Melamchi with 18 school teachers. During the session, participants discussed about the current scenario, personal responsibility, menstruation products, its advantage and disadvantages. Participants also discussed about the impact they can create in the society. Melamchi Municipality is planning to declare the dignified menstruation friendly school. Similarly, Video documentary on criminalization of chhaupadi and menstrual restriction developed and shared for the first time. A documentary on Chhaupadi had selected for screening on Dec 8-9, 2017 London at Global health council.

#### **4. Livelihood**

Lip service is not enough therefore the foundation has trained local women to produce bio degradable, affordable pad for all women and girls in Mugu. This gives an employment opportunity to women, girls and men.

Another bio degradable sanitary pad project is initiated for Chitwan in partnership with Aakar Innovations India. During this period, team was prepared for it by organizing the workshop on strategy development that is facilitated by Pau, a Spanish Business Expert.

During this reporting period, the machine was ordered and plan for partnership with local women in Chitwan. The details will fall in next years reports.

#### **5. Disaster Response**

Nepal has difficult but beautiful topography although it is in high risk to different natural disasters. As the foundation is more focused to rural areas, during the early year it had worked actively in disaster response.

**6. Leadership Building:** Aside from various motivational, inspirational activities, three interns worked with RPF for 3 months in Jumla, Kathmandu and Jumla for unveil the social evils as RPF envisioned.

### **Challenges and risks:**

- 1. Work in geographically difficult areas:** The program has focused in rural areas, which was a biggest challenge while working. To reach out local and rural community and conduct sessions was challenging.
- 2. Funding:** The program is all carried out in voluntary basis and no specific funding yet except little fund from individual, foundation thus it limited resource was a challenging job for the campaigner and leaders. The team had to work with the people who had been following the norms since long which was hard and challenging.

### **Lessons learn:**

It is very necessary to utilize the network and the resources that we have in local level. We can change the world if we join our hands together. Involving stakeholders, target population and general people is very necessary to make them understand the issue deeper. Further, it is necessary to make people to understand the importance. Media is the best way to spread our message to people and have to create space for our issues. It is necessary to work on the cause not on the means.

### **Outcomes:**

Awareness raising program, advocacy and lobbying program has been successfully conducted among young students, political leaders, teachers, media persons, faith leaders and women leaders in different part of Nepal and abroad. Publication and document related to dignified menstruation has already been published. The team has taken the availability, affordability and quality menstrual products as priority agenda therefore, the team has trained local women to make bio degradable and cost efficient sanitary pad for all women. Local, National and international media has given the space for the news related to dignified menstruation and other women's issues. In policy level as well discussion had taken place to include the issues of menstrual hygiene in curriculum and had published flyer in order to aware people about menstrual restrictions and legal provision.

### **Conclusion:**

In the journey of women, menstrual rights and rural transformation, Radha and her team went long ahead. The team has raised the issues globally, now dignified menstruation is global concern. The continuous effort and the hard team work have given the height to the campaign. They have been focusing on rural women and their access to health care services, education and affordable menstrual products. It has become the business of everyone because it is human rights concern. The society and concerns has been rising towards chau system. This is the great sign towards the social transformation. The movement against Chhaupadi is progressing and is gaining the global attention. The way of engaging Radha's father and other men for the campaign is really appreciative, effective and has added value.