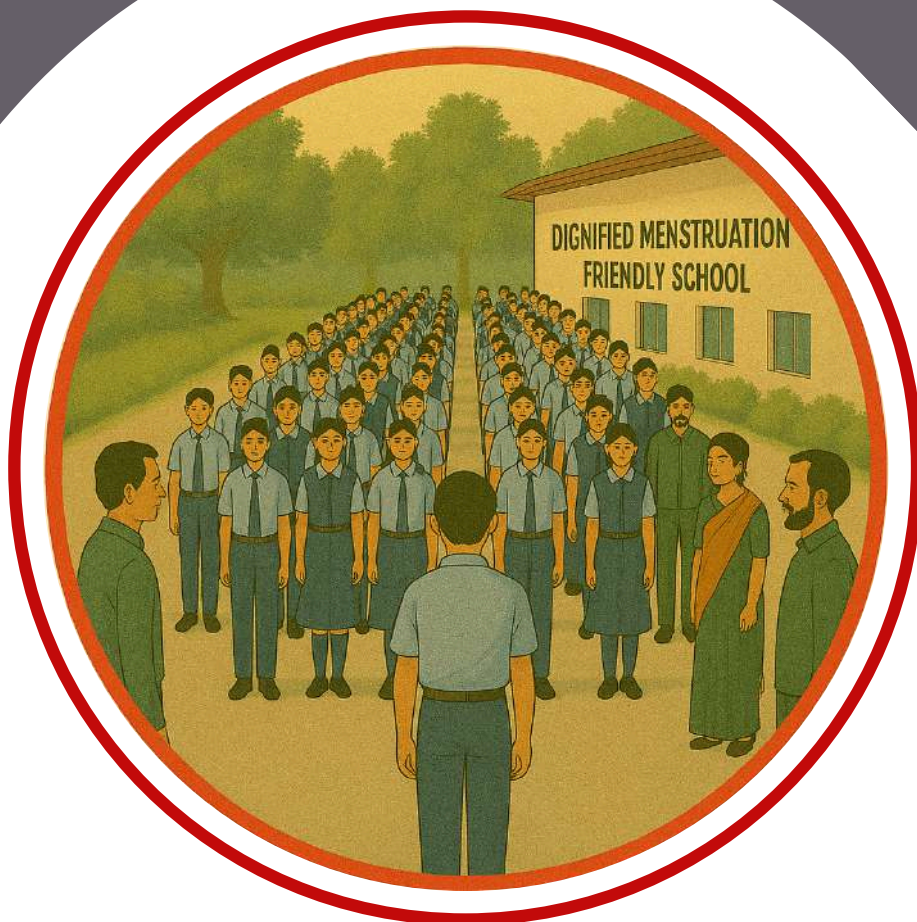


# DIGNIFIED MENSTRUATION IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM



**Radha Paudel Foundation 2081**



**Global South Coalition**  
For Dignified Menstruation



## INTRODUCTION

On being motivated with the commitment made after a one-day programme ‘An Interaction with Stakeholders on Dignified Menstruation including Building Eco-Madi’ the draft of the same was forwarded to other municipalities like Tatopani Rural Municipality, Jumla; Sunwal Municipality, West Nawalparasi and Lalbandi Municipality, Sarlahi.

This book ‘Dignified Menstruation in School Curriculum’ is prepared on the following basis:

1. Subject matter missing in the curriculum prepared by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Curriculum Development Center. (Table),
2. Within 6 to 9 years of age, children know about menstrual discrimination through family, media and friends. Those with uterus grow with the perception and feeling of insecurity, difference, inferiority and weakness that in future they will also menstruate and need to observe the practices which are being observed by others. Those born without a uterus grow with the perception and feeling of secured superiority and strength. Likewise, unequal power relation and patriarchy are formulated impacting on all the aspects of life so, on the basis of creating a culture of building an equitable and just society, we have to intervene in the formative point.
3. If we create an environment of discussion about dignified menstruation in the classrooms from Class 1, we may be able to minimize the violence at home, school, society and workplace,
4. Dignified menstruation friendly environment facilitates us to achieve gender equality and social justice,

Class	Age	Developmental Learning on Dignified Menstruation	Theme Included in the Curriculum Prepared by the Curriculum Development Center, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Things to Learn
1	6	Starting to learn about Menstrual Discrimination through family and media	Hamro Serofero: Personal Hygiene; Nail Trimming, Combing, Hand Washing	Menstrual Blood: Words denoting to pure and clean blood
2	7	Starting to learn something additional about Menstrual Discrimination through family and media	Hamro Serofero: Personal Hygiene; Nail Trimming, Combing, Hand Washing, Brushing Teeth, Exercise	Menstrual Blood: Teaching symbolically about pure and clean blood, and management



3	8	Understanding about menstrual discrimination with additional logic through family and media for eg. a flower dies if you water it.	Hamro Serofero: Personal Hygiene; Good Habits for example, Wearing Mask, Nail Trimming, Eating, Washing Clothes, Brushing Teeth	Song denoting to basic concept/ information about dignified menstruation
4	9	Understanding about menstrual discrimination with additional logic through family and media for eg. a flower dies if you water it. 1- 2 students menstruate	Menstrual management is included through the story of Ujeli in page 7 of Health, Physical Education and Creative Art subject out of 6 subjects	Simple information on menstruation and menstrual products to make mentally (emotionally) ready
5	10	About one third students menstruate	Simple information on menstrual management under healthy habit at menstruation only in pages from 9-11 in Health, Physical Education and Creative Art subject out of 6 subjects	Additional information on Menstruation and menstrual product
6	11	The number of those who menstruate will increase	Learning materials on sexual and reproductive health, menstrual discrimination, and information on how to make cloth pad at home including menstrual management only in pages from 63-67 in Health, Physical Education and Creative Art subject out of 6 compulsory subjects	Information about the relation between menstrual discrimination and climate justice



7	12	Almost all menstruate with some exceptions	Mentioned about sexual and reproductive health, menstrual discrimination (staying separately) only in pages from 67-69 in Health, Physical Education and Creative Art subject out of 6 compulsory subjects	Menopause and Dignified Menstruation Day
8	13	Almost all menstruate with some exceptions	Included definition of menstruation and management under sexual and reproductive health only in pages from 71-75 in Health, Physical Education and Creative Art subject out of 6 compulsory subjects	Roles of Menstruation law and child club
9	14	Almost all menstruate with some exceptions	N/A	Responsibility of Non-Menstruators for Dignified menstruation
10	15	Almost all menstruate with some exceptions	N/A	Responsibility of a state for Dignified Menstruation

Schools or municipalities can use the subject matters mentioned here as additional curriculum. Schools can include them from Class 1 to 10 as per their circumstances or can select and use on the basis of their needs.

The materials have been prepared on the basis of the information collected through discussions and interaction at several training sessions (digital and in-person) and research in Nepal and around the world about how menstrual discrimination helps to construct unequal power relations and strengthen patriarchy.

In Tulsipur of Dang District, the curriculum was prepared under the leadership of Radha Paudel herself in collaboration with Curriculum Development Centre and other stakeholders in 2017, September 15 and 16. Though the curriculum was implemented in some schools of Lumbini and Karnali, it was not being implemented at the national level fully because of various reasons.

This curriculum is only a simple guideline. All the related issues have not been included in this curriculum. This guides the subject teachers to accommodate inclusive methods and issues as available in the local contexts. As dignified menstruation is a novel concept and it's not practical to suggest all the issues so I request to explore additional materials and books, and conduct teaching and learning activities.

**Please take permission to use this book partially or fully.**

**01. CLASS 1**

Lesson 1: M .....	1
Lesson 2: K (P) .....	2

**02. CLASS 2**

Lesson 1: Menstruation .....	3
Lesson 2: Personal Hygiene .....	4

**03. CLASS 3**

Lesson 1: Blood from B .....	5
Lesson 2: I'm with You .....	6

**04. CLASS 4**

Lesson 1: Menstruation .....	7
Lesson 2: Management of Menstruation .....	8

**05. CLASS 5**

Lesson 1: Menstruation .....	9
Lesson 2: Menstruation Management Product .....	11

**06. CLASS 6**

Lesson 1: Menstrual Discrimination .....	12
Lesson 2: Climate Justice .....	14

**07. CLASS 7**

Lesson 1: Menopause .....	15
Lesson 2: Menstruation Day .....	17

**08. CLASS 8**

Lesson 1: Menstruation Law .....	19
Lesson 2: Role of Child Club .....	20

**09. CLASS 9**

Role of Non-Menstruators for Dignified Menstruation....	22
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**10. CLASS 10**

Role of State for the Promotion of Dignified Menstruation..	24
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**M: MENSTRUATION**

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**My mother is menstruating at home.**

Dignified Menstruation

**P: PANTIE OR UNDERWEAR**

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**We need to change pantie or underwear everyday.**

# MENSTRUATION

Menstruation from M, menstruation from M  
The world runs through this cute M.

From menstruation comes the blood clean, pure, fresh  
Not all fall sick seeing the blood trace.

Say no to menstrual discrimination  
Know the law that fines and imprisons.

Neither uterus nor religion is to be blamed  
Let's be united to celebrate menstruation day with acclaim.



## PERSONAL HYGIENE

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With great attention, listen dear little ones,  
Pee right in the toilet-pans,  
Flush well and clean the pans,  
Create no feeling of disgust when your friend comes.

Change every day and use panties clean,  
No shame, dry it when the sun light beam,  
Drying for three hours, aha, it's clean,  
Pure and hygienic wear for your healthy discipline.



Dignified Menstruation

## B FROM BLOOD

B.....B.....B....B from blood  
We, all born from blood  
Menstrual blood.

Grandfather, uncle, maternal uncle, brother all born from the blood  
Grandmother, sister all born from the blood  
B.....B....B...B from blood  
All born from blood  
Menstrual Blood.

Priest, wizard, nurse, leader all born from the blood  
Priestess, witch, all born from the blood  
B.....B....B...B from blood  
All born from blood  
Menstrual Blood.

Scientist, artist all born from the blood  
Teacher, sportsman all born from the blood  
B.....B....B...B from blood  
All born from blood  
Menstrual Blood.



Dignified Menstruation

# I'M TOGETHER WITH YOU

Together...together.....,  
 I'm menstruating, I'm together,  
 Together, together Together, together!

I'm menstruating, I'm together,  
 Together, together  
 Like my brother's growing mustache, I'm bleeding  
 O..Like my brother's mustache, I'm bleeding!

The blood runs our universe,  
 Our universe  
 Together, together  
 Together, together

Together...together.....,  
 I'm menstruating, I'm together,  
 Together, together  
 Together, together!

No barrier, I eat whatever I prefer,  
 No barrier, I eat whatever I prefer  
 Elated and overjoyed, I reach everywhere,  
 Together, together  
 Together, together  
 O...I'm menstruating, I'm together.

Grandpa, grandma's little baby,  
 I'm a little baby....baby.  
 Grandpa, grandma's little baby,  
 Leaves me never alone with fear of my worries

Together...together.....,  
 Together, together  
 O..I'm menstruating, I'm together,  
 I'm menstruation, I'm together  
 Together, together O...  
 Together, together O...  
 I'm together, I'm together, together..



## **MENSTRUATION**

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Persons with uterus menstruate.

Persons with uterus are girls, young women, transmen and queer.

Menarche occurs at about 10-16 years of age.

12th year is the age of menarche in most cases.

Menstrual bleeding occurs for 5 days for most persons. It's normal even if the bleeding continues for 3 to 7 days.

Similarly, most persons have a gap of 28 days between one menstruations to another, but if the regular menstruation gap is 21 to 35 days, it is considered normal as well.

A regular diary note can be maintained to know whether our menstruation is normal or not. Menstruators will have many advantages if other family members know about menstruating members' conditions.

Persons (boy, young men or male) without uterus are also born because of the menstrual blood.

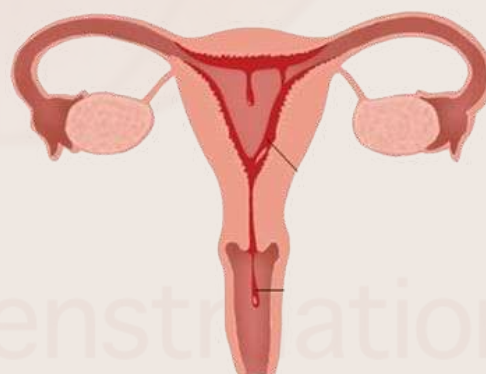
The world is running due to menstruation. Moving forward due to menstruation.

Menstrual blood is clean, pure, and fresh. Menstruation is not the condition of illness or weakness.

Some (persons) may need help during menstruation or menopause.

We need to help them in a dignified way by making inquiries if they need help.

Dominating, discriminating, following untouchability and discrimination on the ground of menstruation is a social offence.



**UTERUS**

## **MENSTRUATION MANAGEMENT**

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While in Class 4, some friends (girls) may menstruate. Blood comes out after tearing the new thin layer made in the inner part of the uterus. The blood comes out through vagina slowly.

When the blood comes out like this some feel stomach or back pain. Some don't feel anything at all. Some feel wetness or damp in their panties. Easy to know about it by checking the panties in the toilet. Sometimes blood may stain clothes or bench unknowingly.

This may shock, frighten or wonder some.

This blood is clean, pure, and fresh. This type of bleeding is natural.

We cannot change natural processes but can help to manage.

Girls, boys, and teachers whoever are near need to help to manage menstruation.

Should not tease, discriminate, or practice untouchability.

Need to teach about using degradable menstrual pads.

The pad must be changed at least within four hours. Vagina must be washed always one sided from front to backwards. This way the blood can be stopped from reaching to anus from the urinary organ.

The hands must be washed well using the soap after cleaning the blood.

If the pad is reusable and biodegradable, it must be cleaned and dried up for at least 3 hours dangling in the sun-lit place.

If you find it difficult to manage menstruation or pad, you need not feel ashamed to learn by asking others.

We need to understand that our body is stronger and the world is being organized because we menstruate naturally.



**UTERUS**

## MENSTRUATION

Boys' beards and mustaches don't sprout at once. After getting matured, some streaks of hair appear first on their faces and slowly within 1 or 2 years beards and mustaches grow, some have thin and some have thick beards and mustaches on genetic influence.



On maturing, the inner part of the uterus of a girl adds another layer. The layer is formed to grow a child for 9 months in the uterus. Marriage is not good before 20 years of age legally, emotionally, mentally and physically. So, for various reasons, it is impossible or not recommended to be pregnant, and the layer formed later, starts tearing. The blood that comes out after tearing the layer is menstrual blood.

The blood is pure, clean and fresh. This is not a situation of illness and weakness.

But, it is found that people don't talk about menstruation openly, and menstrual blood is taken as impure, unclean or unhygienic and menstruation is considered a weakness in society. It is a social offense to practice untouchability, and dominate due to menstruation and menstrual blood, or menstruator, and use of menstrual products. If the menstruator doesn't have any food allergy, the menstruator can have any favourite food. All the works that can be accomplished during non-menstruating time of around 25 days, can be accomplished during 5 days of menstruation.

Out of 100 around 85 menstruators know 24 hours earlier that they are going to menstruate. They feel the symptoms like lower stomach ache, back pain, wanting to eat something, tension of something unknown, loose bowel or constipation, headache etc. After a few hours of menstruation, these symptoms disappear. We can do any work like working in offices or teaching when these symptoms appear or at menstruation.

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Some 10 of the remaining 15 menstruators may feel the pre-symptoms harder. Primary treatment can make life easier in such situations. Except for allergies, we can make ourselves more comfortable within a few hours by eating our favourite food, sleeping, walking, listening to music, talking to friends, warming with hot water-bottle, tying light waist-bands, or diverting thinking to different issues. Better not have medicine as each medicine affects our body.

The rest 5 develop tough symptoms like hard stomach ache, back pain, tension, nausea, feeling of crying, boredom, and frustration. These symptoms may appear a week before menstruation and may last a week even after the menstruation. It may not be because of menstruation but because of some kind of illness. These persons should go to good health institutions for treatment. And we should not dominate and discriminate if such symptoms are seen.

Learners can identify the symptoms and can notify the teacher and parents to help to facilitate proper treatment on time.

Menstrual discrimination is a social offense. The discrimination violates fundamental rights of our constitution. This is punishable. As per Nepalese legal provision, there shall be 3 months of imprisonment or 3 thousand rupees fine or both penalty for those who violate the rights.

To stop the violence like this and create awareness, every year December 8 is celebrated as Menstruation Day. This marking started from Nepal.

Dignified Menstruation

## MENSTRUATION MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS

While in Class 5, most of the friends (girls) may menstruate.

If we discuss menstrual practices beforehand in the classroom, this will benefit not only those girl children who menstruate but the whole society.

To manage menstrual blood, there are 10 different types of products in the market. They are as follows:

1. **Menstruation Disc:** Kept on bleeding vagina as covered on some things
2. **Menstruation Pantie:** Just to be worn as other panties
3. **Menstrual Cup:** Placed on the mouth of uterus, blood is collected, to be emptied and cleaned and reused after drying up
4. **Menstrual Tampon:** Kept in vagina after menstruation and the string is outside
5. **Menstrual Pad:** There are 2 types of pads (Degradable: This degrades within 2-4 months easily. Made from the bark of pine or banana trees. Made in Nepal as well. This was first made in Nepal by Radha Poudel Foundation and Active Forum for Women in Chitwan in 2018. Non-Degradable: There is a mixture of plastic and chemical materials in such pads. To degrade such products, it takes from 200 to 1000 years.)
6. **Menstrual Loin-Cloth:** Long cloth piece is worn as loin-cloth from the front to back waist. This is the most traditional practice.
7. **New Cloth Piece:** Can be used by holding under regular panties. This can be prepared using new cloth the size of a handkerchief.
8. **Old Cloth Piece:** Used but not tattered soft cotton cloth piece like from sari or quilt cover

The products mentioned above are not hundred percent safe. So, we need to give attention to qualitative local products that do not have any negative impact on ourselves, water, land, jungle, and air.

The practices like buying products from the shop where there are only male, taking the product to home by hiding, using it by hiding, washing and drying panties and cloth pieces secretly, storing it secretly, telling lies or disputing while managing the products are all discriminatory practices. These are undignified practices. We should not let these practices be repeated.

We have to discard our thinking that our prestige is higher with the use of pads only. We have to be aware and manage menstrual products like food products by keeping records of the number of people born with uterus, who are the ones to menstruate, what are the products basically used, and how much budget is required to buy the products.



Menstruation Management Products

## MENSTRUAL DISCRIMINATION

It may be difficult for some people and communities to accept something heard, seen and done from a long time ago as discriminatory. This is common because, until some time ago, only those who studied science and health used to learn about menstruation.

The situation was that menstruators used to feel nervous even to discuss with health workers and used to consult with them after the situation worsened. Such a situation is also visible even with the people who are educated and live in the cities. Fear is the main reason. Lack of open minded discussion culture on menstruation is the main reason for such a fear. When there is silencing practices at home, school, community and state level, this gives promotion to ignorance. Mixing silence and ignorance creates fear in a society and some in the society give various reasons to practice and force menstrual discrimination.



Snake and Ladder for Menstrual Discrimination

Ultimately, the society practices menstrual discrimination by creating a situation of self and others silencing. Still, in our society, such practices are made to follow on a regular basis in the name of sacrament, culture, religion, prestige etc.

The above situation remains because of the lack of wider discussion about menstruation as a natural phenomenon. In previous classes we discussed that menstrual blood is pure, clean and fresh, and this is not a condition of illness or weakness but the same blood helps the universe move forward, and everyone, female, male or transgender or from anywhere is born because of menstrual blood. If we discuss such natural truths at home, school, community, and office, we can eradicate various forms of discrimination at once. Only discussions and talks by Class 6 students at home also is helpful to eradicate menstrual discrimination. Discussing openly with friends, parents, grandparents, sisters, or brothers is the interaction.

Some of your friends may avoid discussing menstruation by saying 'It's not at my home, I don't have a shed as seen on the television, I follow different religions, and I'm of different caste.' Or may dominate those who talk about it. Even If, some of our households do have such discrimination, we should start talks. Each friend should help talk about it.

It's important to let them know or understand that there is discrimination at my home or not. If there is a situation that whatever works are done in 24 hours of 25 non-menstrual days are also done easily without restrictions in the 5 days during menstruation, such a situation is nondiscriminatory. The person or family can be considered as dignified menstruation friendly. If there is a lack of a single friendly behaviour, that is discrimination.

Most people don't agree that unseen discriminations are discriminations. For example, some don't enter the kitchen, don't have sour food, don't talk openly with father-daughter or mother-son, or with other members, dry the wet clothes used during menstruation secretly, and sleep separately. These all are discriminations. Discriminations may not always be visible. There are certain invisible discriminations in developed countries like Australia, America, and United Kingdom as we face in Kathmandu or eastern or central Nepal. Geography, language, social and economic situation make difference in the type or form or name of menstrual discrimination. Therefore, it's not necessary that discrimination everywhere is the same or should be the same kind.

Whatever is the case, if there is an effect on the physical, mental situation or disturbs access to resources or means, or creates a situation of feeling low for menstruator, this is taken as discrimination.

Some people say that they have been following the practices willingly, and even they like it and feel comfortable. Such thinking is because of a lack of proper understanding about menstruation. For example, if people with such thinking don't get access to the kitchen for food, they don't enjoy free and respectful lives. Or they may have head or stomach aches because they don't get food on time. They may take wrong medicine which is not good for their health. We should not stop asking questions to get proper causes.

Whatever the forms of practices are, menstrual discrimination is a social offence. This is a violation of human rights. This is gender based violence. We have to discuss and talk wherever (home, school, community, office, and club) we can and eliminate it. Menstrual blood has helped the world move forward, we have to understand the value of it, and end the discriminatory practices. We have to do it together. We have to have shared awareness and education.

Dignified Menstruation

## CLIMATE JUSTICE

Are you feeling that climate crisis, climate change, and climate justice are big and tough words and you're small and will talk about them after you grow up?

Climate change has been creating a climate crisis, and we need to work together for climate justice from wherever and whatever is possible because our lifestyle has been impacted by climate change. If we delay to address this, there are visible indications of risks in future.

Products used for managing menstruation and disposing of the products are also one of the causes of climate change.

We discussed the management of menstrual blood. If we use non-biodegradable products like plastics, it takes from 200 to 1000 years to decompose after burying in the soil.

Now, think about your and the next generation's future! Each menstruator, on average, uses about 150 kilograms of menstrual pads in a menstrual life. This may increase the temperature of land as well. Burning it produces carbon which is more harmful to our climate and environment. Some may intend to throw it in a source of water secretly. If we throw like this in water, it pollutes water and the creatures living in the water will be harmed. Sometimes, people throw in the drainage and the plastics block the drainage system. Some even throw it into the toilet and face trouble with toilet blockage.

Before using any menstrual product, we have to think about our environment, environment for our future generations, and how to minimize the effects of climatic change, rather just trying to find easy products only. We cannot do climate justice only by celebrating world environment day, doing projects by pasting green leaves on notebooks or by wearing green clothes.

We have to know how many family members menstruate, what kind of products they use, and how they manage, store and dispose of the products. In the same way, it's important to know and discuss with friends and family about legal provisions for chemical and plastic-free menstrual products, and what kind of products are prescribed as quality ones. Ample new research is being done on menstrual products so we have to learn about those innovations and need to make them familiar and favourable to the environment and climate.

You might have heard that our municipality has declared many areas as plastic-free and ecofriendly. This is good. In the same way, there may be many programs related to environmental and climate justice. During the programs, it's the responsibility of the students to find out how many people in the locality or municipality menstruate, how many are nearing menopause and what are the support provisions for them.



## MENOPAUSE

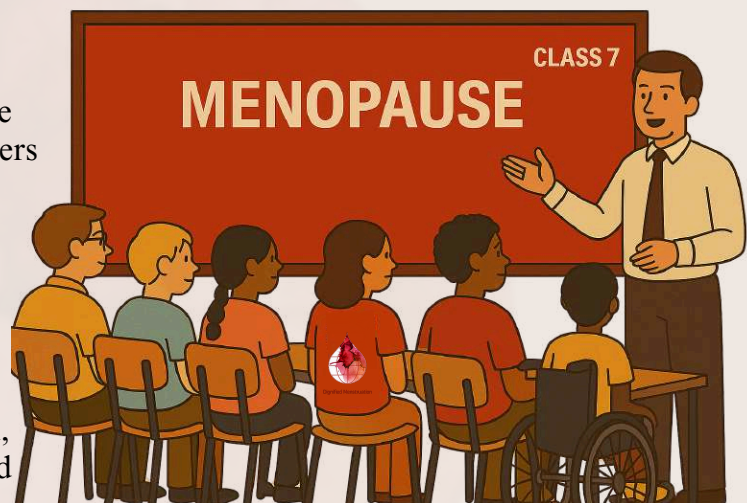
Every menstruator's menstruation stops. After a year of menstruation stoppage, it's taken as menopause. In everyday language, it's even called the menstruation dried up. Even while the menstruation is regular, from the age of 40, menstruators may feel or see the symptoms of menopause. As in menstruation, many factors make differences in menopause as well. For some, the menopause occurs at around 45 and for some at around 50 years of age. The most average age is between 47 to 50 years but if a person has had the womb taken out by surgery, the person may face menopause earlier. This menopause is called surgical menopause. Natural one is natural menopause. If menopause occurs because of the side-effects of other treatments for some illness, it's called chemical menopause. Whatever is the menopause, there are simple, medium and hard symptoms.

In natural menopause, symptoms appear beforehand or while the menstruation continues, the menstruator feels the known or unknown symptoms. We should not start thinking right away the same will befall on us as is to our mothers and sisters, but need to be careful.

Menstruators may show physical, emotional, and social symptoms when menopause is to begin. Physical symptoms are mostly irritation, insomnia, joint pain, feeling of palpitation, dryness and itching of skin, eyes, or sexual organs, difficulty to hold urine, and headache.

Emotional symptoms may be feeling of loneliness, feeling of low willpower or confidence, loss of interest on happy moment or laughter, feel crying, feeling of disappointment, inclination not to survive or suicidal thoughts in extreme cases. Because of these physical and emotional symptoms, there may arise some sort of fluctuations in familial and social relations, and it is difficult to carry on even the work done for years. The situation may differ from person to person. Some may not even feel it or may not appear in some. Some may feel it is very tough.

But our society keeps concern about menstruation be it secretly, and doesn't concern about menopause at all. There is a kind of silencing, ignorance, shame, and stigma about menopause, and even discrimination, and chances of breaking familial and social relations because of our apathy to menopause. In some situations, health workers also treat menopause as mental illness, and it is the result of ignoring social perspectives and practices in the curriculum of nursing, medical sciences, and public health.



Students can help by realizing the difficulty faced by grandmother, mother, aunty, and sister about their symptoms of menopause and help them, and the female teachers in the school can create awareness in the school, community and society.



## Dignified Menstruation

## MENSTRUATION DAY

Menstruation is a special celebration. Celebration gifted by nature. Celebration to run the world. No matter how you praise it, it is not enough.

Anyway, every society has a practice of silencing, prohibition, discrimination, violence connected to menstruation. In some places, there's a restriction on food. In some, there's restriction on touching things. In some, seeing. In some, there's restrictions on movement or on products. And in some, there's complete restrictions on food, touching, seeing, movement, using products.

It's visible in some places. Invisible in some. We need to discuss and observe, we can make a long list in some places. In some, the list is short.

Some menstruators live in a separate room and they practice eating, moving, touching and seeing. Some menstruators live in a corner of the regular room but all the activities are carried out in a restrictive way. Even if they use a big television, fast internet, attached toilet and bathroom, they strictly follow a menstrual prohibition for movement, touching, and seeing, this is menstrual discrimination.

Educated people living in the cities are also involved in discrimination. Even if it is done just for a single activity or single day out of 5 days of menstruation, that is discrimination. Many people think that such discriminations are prevalent in the Hindu communities only but this is completely wrong. In all the so-called large religions, the discrimination practice is done, the difference is only in name, form and gravity. If there is no discrimination in some persons or family, this is the just society envisioned by our constitution.

If the activities done on a regular basis are carried out differently, discriminating against the menstruator is discrimination. Whatever, be it eraser or instrument box, if somebody steals, he or she is a thief. One cannot defend or cover up discriminating behaviour by saying that he or she does not have a separate room.

Some people believe that only Chaupadi, the word used for menstruation in the western Nepal, is only called discrimination. That is wrong. Chaupadi is the Achhami word for menstruation. They use mostly thatched-shed for living during menstruation because of their social and economic conditions. Whichever is the form of discrimination, it is a kind of sexual violence. Violation of human rights. Therefore, to eliminate such discriminations and violations, we have 3 kinds of celebrations related to menstruation.

1. Menopause Day
2. Menstrual Health Day
3. Dignified Menstruation Day



Menstruation Day Celebration

### **Menopause Day**

October 18 is celebrated as menopause day to address menopause, a human right by eliminating all kinds of discrimination related to it. The celebration started from June, 2009 AD.

### **Menstrual Health Day**

This started in 2014 AD from Germany. It is also known as menstrual hygiene or cleanliness day. When we say menstrual hygiene, the message starts spreading that menstrual blood is unclean, so the day is celebrated as menstrual health day to flow a positive message. Menstrual health denotes the identification of health issues because of menstruation and its treatment.

### **Dignified Menstruation Day**

This is popular as the day to eliminate all kinds of discrimination related to menstruation. With the acceptance that menstrual discrimination is a sexual violence and violation of human rights, December 8, is being celebrated as dignified menstruation day. This started from Nepal in 2019 AD by Radha Paudel, a resident of Chitwan, Nepal took active initiation to introduce the day as the dignified menstruation day. She has been working against menstrual discrimination since her childhood. The day is now observed throughout the world.

Dignified menstruation is the concept and movement that emphasizes to eliminate all kinds of discrimination connected to food, touching, movement, seeing, washing, or some structural ones related to even menstrual products and to prohibitions and restrictions to the menstruators. Discrimination denotes all sorts of silencing, restrictions, shame, stigma, misbehaviour, prohibitions, violence, and restriction to access to the resources and means whether it's before, during or after menstruation or menopause. Not to talk or to be silent is also discrimination. This is all over the world in various names, forms and seriousness but it's not discussed openly. Like Jhorley, Jojolappa, Sebaro, Ramram, Pranam, Good Morning have different connotations in various languages and places, menstruation has a dozen derogatory names to address in Nepal and around 5000 in the world. If addressed with other names than menstruation in English and Mahinawari in Nepali, this is discrimination. If a menstruator is allowed to work without any restrictions or has a convenient working environment during menstruation, it's dignified menstruation. In other words, this is a right to live as a human. This is human right. And this is a constitutional right.

Dignified Menstruation

## MENSTRUATION LAW

You have learnt that menstrual discrimination is complicated. The members of the same family may have various practices, understanding and thinking about menstruation. Some may behave differently about menstrual blood or some about menstruator or may be some about menstruator's activities like touching and eating. The nature of menstrual discrimination is multifaceted as there is a lack of discussion about the natural process, benefits and other issues related to menstruation. This cannot be analysed and addressed as we walk in a linear path.

There is no palace in the world where menstruators are not present or don't reach. Well, the number varies in times or places. The discrimination like domination, untouchability practice or seen or unseen violence against menstruators is a social offence.

National Criminal Code 2074 Clause 168, sub-clause 3 and 4, has clearly stated that we should not practice such discriminatory acts. If done, there shall be a penalty of 3 months of imprisonment or fine of rupees 3000 or both. If the same is done by a person holding public position, the person shall face double the penalty faced by a common person.

The law is directly in accordance with the provision of fundamental rights in the constitution of Nepal. Even a single practice of menstrual discrimination violates 2 or 3 fundamental rights. For instance, if a menstruator is not allowed to sit together and eat with other family members at home, this violates the right to dignified life, right to freedom, right to equality, right to food, right to involvement, right to water, and right to health. In our society, in the name of religion and tradition or honour, there are more than a dozen discriminatory activities like this. If we relate and analyze in relation to the fundamental rights, we can find the rights are violated dozens of times. Therefore, to make menstruation dignified, we have to discuss and talk seriously and profoundly.

What we need to understand is all the persons with uterus who or in whatever circumstances menstruate, bear a child or breast feed if they have not used any medicine or haven't had any surgery. They have additional rights. The rights are not because of others' sympathy or mercy or kindness but because of human rights and constitutional rights they deserve. To ensure such rights, we have to discuss and talk in each and every home and society.



Source: National Assembly

## ROLE OF CHILD CLUB

On your journey till Class 8, you might have been a member of a child club or participated in some programs related to a club. Did you know that dignified menstruation is also a child right?



Role of Child Club

Not to face any humiliation or disregard because of the birth with a uterus, access to and right to get nutritious food through mother are also a child's right to life. In the same way under right to protection, everyone should get a menstruation friendly structure, right information on menstruation and menopause. Under developmental child rights, there are menstruation, dignified menstruation, menstruation law, bio-menstrual products, menstruation friendly physical infrastructure. The rights which the children essentially need, should not be violated because of menstruation. For example, preparing food and having it together, going to school, and participating in the cultural programmes at home and neighborhood.

The children from rich families in the city are restricted to school for 3 to 9 days and the discriminatory practice is that they are not allowed to go to certain specific places, eat certain food, and meet and talk to some specific persons. The practices violate child rights though these are continued in the name of respecting grandmother or not to dishearten her or in the name of religion or culture.

The children, in such cases, don't get enough nutritious food. Cannot concentrate on their studies at least 5 days every month. They are forced to grow with a low feeling of why they are born with a uterus. These all situations are the violations of child rights. As discussed in the previous class, these are human right violations. And domestic violence. In sum, violations of human rights.

Child clubs can conduct various activities to make menstruation dignified on the basis of place and situation. To break the silence around menstruation, the simple idea is to discuss with and talk to the members your family like your grandmother, mother, sister about what was their understanding before menstruation, how they experienced and what they did during menarche, how and what they are feeling and doing now.

Besides, we can organize the activities such as competitions like song, poem, essay, fine art, skit, and awareness rally or wall-painting. Children can take the help of and mobilize the adults to organize various programs using the budgets of local governments on child rights, human rights, and empowerment.

Nowadays, under the influence of some NGOs (Non-Governmental Organization), some child clubs or local governments organize dignified menstruation programs as separate ones. This is because of misunderstanding. We discussed in the previous lessons, whatever the program is until menstruation is dignified, it's difficult to get the intended outcome. For example, the social transformation is only possible after realization that end of child marriage and dowry system or sexual abuse is possible when each person born with a uterus has a confidence with power of making decision about one's own body and those without uterus realize that the person is born because of menstrual blood and stand firmly against violence and discrimination. The programs and movements become more effective if the programmes are well planned and marked in the yearly academic calendar of the school.



Dignified Menstruation

## Role of Non-Menstruators for Dignified Menstruation

Non-Menstruators is one who is born without a uterus. Those with uterus and having male identity or Trans men are not included here because they are under the category of persons born with uterus and we have already discussed them.

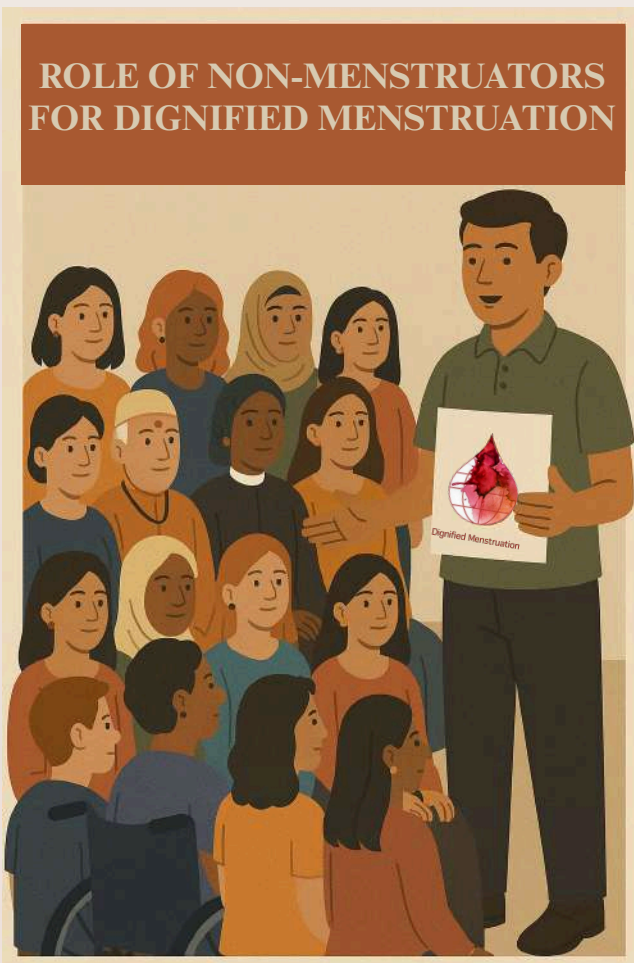
You may have curiosity that Non-Menstruators don't menstruate so why should they know about and work on Menstruation. Every Non-Menstruator has a responsibility and role to make menstruation dignified as everyone is born from menstrual blood.

Many people may feel that Non-Menstruators are violent or brutal because news media mostly provide information about the involvement of Non-Menstruators violence on those persons born with uterus. Here, we need to understand that Non-Menstruators are not violent by birth and all Non-Menstruators are not violent.

The society is to blame because the society has not created awareness on the fact and not taught them that Non-Menstruators are also born because of menstrual blood, they need to respect those who menstruate, and they should stand and speak against the violence on menstruators. So, especially schools can have wider dialogues and increase the number of exemplary children and Non-Menstruators.

First and foremost both born with uterus and without uterus are human beings. And we need to understand that when they are born, they must get the opportunity to live as human and the right to live as human is equal to everyone.

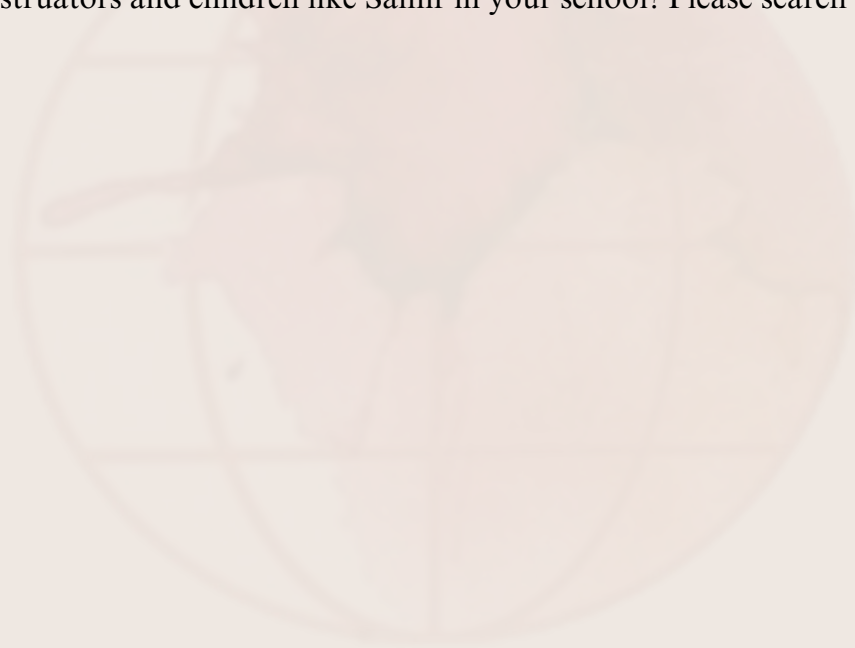
And, traditionally, mostly Non-Menstruators are involved in decision making, for example, father at home, Non-Menstruator head teacher in school and Non-Menstruator prime minister in the country. By mobilizing those Non-Menstruators who are in the decision making positions, it's important to work to minimize or eliminate violence against menstruators, and take legal actions against the perpetrators.



Samir Pariyar from Western Nawalparasi is an exemplary Non-Menstruator who has been working to make Menstruation Dignified. He started working for Dignified Menstruation in home, neighbourhood, and school while he was working in a child club. Despite various challenges while working for Dignified Menstruation, he has established himself as a gentleman through discussion, talks, and regular studies for better strategies

He was saddened when he knew that his mother was practicing discrimination by not going to the kitchen, not worshipping and following untouchability. Then through self-study and sharpening his leadership, established himself as a best gentleman for Dignified Menstruation. He led and guided his family to make his home a Dignified Menstruation friendly home. He convinced his family. He and his family celebrated when his sister had menarche. He is trying his best to make every festival a Dignified Menstruation festival and through social media, appeals to everyone for making Dignified Menstruation friendly societies. To acknowledge and encourage him for his commendable contribution on Dignified Menstruation, the Government of Nepal awarded him with a cash prize of 1 lakh rupees and a certificate along with the Youth Prize in 2080 B.S.

We need more children like Samir to change conservative and patriarchal thinking. Who are the Non-Menstruators and children like Samir in your school? Please search and learn from them.



Dignified Menstruation

## **Role of State for the Promotion of Dignified Menstruation**

A State has a main role for the promotion of dignified menstruation and local governments have more important roles because dignified menstruation is a constitutional right. The government of Nepal has introduced National Policy 2074 for the same. We have some laws as well. Be it in Gender Act 2076 or 16th 5 Year Plan, there is a provision of promoting dignified menstruation. Moreover, local governments are assigned to play the main roles for the promotion of dignified menstruation through schools.

In addition, according to Menstrual Product (Distribution and Management) Procedure 2076, local governments have very important roles to play to promote dignified menstruation in schools.

Please prepare a report on what is already done and what can be done by discussing with the head of your municipality. Or you can do a small research in your municipality.

### **Basic Guiding Programs, Norms and Laws for Dignified Menstruation**

1. 14 fundamental rights are directly related to DM
2. National Menstruation Policy 2074 BS
3. Criminal Code 2074, Clause 168, Sub-clause 3, 4 and 5: 3 months imprisonment or rupees 3000 fine or both against menstrual discrimination
4. Free menstrual pad distribution in the community schools from 2076
5. From 2076 BS, December 8 is being marked as Dignified Menstruation Day
6. In 2076 BS, Declaration of elimination of Chaupadi system for Dignified Menstruation
7. In 2077 BS, 3 Day International Workshop: Organized by Ministry of Women and Human Rights Commission
8. In 2076, Dignified Menstruation is included in Gender Equality Act: Concept of Dignified Menstruation Friendly Schools
9. 16th 5 Year Plan included dignified menstruation

Dignified Menstruation

## Checklist list for dignified menstruation friendly school/educational institutions

S.N	Indicators	✓	✗
1	Is menstruation spoken about openly in your school?		
2	Can the students discuss menstruation at any time?		
3	Can the staff discuss menstruation at any time?		
4	Does your school allow you to ask anyone at any time for help if a girl has a menstruation-related problem?		
5	Does your school have a banner declaring, “You are most welcome to our dignified menstruation-friendly school” at the entrance or main gate?		
6	Has your school written statements regarding dignified menstruation such as “menstrual blood is clean and pure” or “menstrual blood is the main reason for our existence on this planet” or “we are all born for menstrual blood” in some important areas?		
7	Does your school have the posters of the advantages and disadvantages of menstrual products in an office, classroom, or other place?		
8	Does your school consider menstrual discrimination is a violation of human rights?		
9	Is there a code of conduct for voicing against menstrual discrimination at your school?		
10	Does your school have a regular program or any special activity to promote dignified menstruation?		
11	Has your school allocated a budget to promote dignified menstruation?		
12	Does your school have a separate toilet each for girls and women?		
13	Do toilets for girls and women have properly functioning locking doors and windows to make them safe?		

S.N	Indicators	✓	✗
14	Do your toilets have a proper supply of water or a water bucket?		
15	Does your school have a proper menstrual waste management system for the menstruators ?		
16	Does your school manage locally produced, environment friendly products for menstruators to choose?		
17	Does the school discuss Dignified Menstruation with parents on a regular basis?		
18	Does the school have a special program to facilitate students who face some menstrual discriminations?		
19	Does the school have a counselling program for students and/or families who are uncomfortable about discussing dignified menstruation?		
20	Does your school include menopause also in its activities related to dignified menstruation?		
21	Has your school curriculum incorporated menstruation and menopause?		
22	Does your school have a flexible working policy for menstruating and menopausal staff?		
23	Does the school have a provision for managing moderate and/or severe menstrual symptoms?		

# Dignified Menstruation

# DIGNIFIED MENSTRUATION IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM



Dignified Menstruation

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