

Menstrual Practice among Adolescent Girls in Pokhara

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The purpose of this report is shown an evidence that the restrictions during menstruation is practicing in Pokhara as well where many people thought that it is practicing in only among rural, poor, uneducated and underprivileged areas.

Radha Paudel Foundation (RPF) has organized dozens of programs on 'Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation' at Pokhara with schools, media and CSO leaders from May 2-7, 2019 during the auspicious occasion of #MHDay2019. There were varieties of methods were used to explore the reality around menstrual practice due to deep silence. During course of dialogue, Radha Paudel who was the lead facilitator, asked to write of answer at their notebook by telling two questions at Girls School, Pokhara for brain storming. Two questions were

1. When did you know or see the menstruation at your life at your family or community?
2. How did you know that they were in menstruation? What were the features to know as menstruating girls/women?



Figure 1 Girls School, Pokhara



Figure 2 Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation, Pokhara

The total students were around 150 from grade 8,9 and 10. Out of them, only 54 girls submitted their papers voluntarily. They did not know about submission while writing answers. The purpose of asking questions was only assessing the situation quickly and bring the issue of up for discussion. Few were written in narratives, few were written in points, few answered both questions and few not. They were represented all caste, class and religion from the community. It was very voluntary exercise. Their answered were as follows. No matter whether they were submitted or not, it gave the idea of Pokhara has been following the restrictions during menstruation as like other parts of Nepal but mostly invisible. Participants from other programs in Pokhara also expressed their deep silence, huge fear and wide ranges of restrictions during menstruation.

Mode of knowing menstruation: They learned the menstruation and restrictions during menstruation mostly from mother, sister, friends Aunts, school and NGOs. Therefore, the engagement with parent is also very important.

Age of knowing of menstruation: As like other studies done by Radha Paudel Foundation (2018), the girls learned menstruation between the age of 7-13 years where the most common age is 10 years.

They learned the menstruation and its practices before having their menstruation. Menstruation is means of power construction for boys and girls where girls socialize as powerless, inferior and no right to question or cope whatever the situation she would face. Therefore, the dialogue on dignified menstruation should start before having menstruation.

Practices during menstruation: From their mothers, sisters and others, they learned practices for first menstruation and regular one. All together 24 types of practices they were following and believing to follow related with touch, eat, mobility. It has huge implication for learning, self-esteem and self confidence among girls. The details of impact was discussed several times and shared in website and blog of Radha Paudel Foundation, therefore do not like to repeat here.

Mode of knowing menstruation	• Sister at home	17
	• Mother	24
	• self-experience	2
	• Friends	7
	• Aunt	4
	• School	3
	• NGO	1
Age of knowing of menstruation	• 7 years	2
	• 9 years	1
	• 10 years	13
	• 11 years	5
	• 12 years	5
	• 13 years	4
Practices during menstruation	• Hiding of my sister, and myself 3 for three days during first menstruation	
	• Not allowing to go to kitchen	20
	• Not allow to enter the main entrance of the house	4
	• Not allow to go home	6
	• Not allow to touch water at home	2
	• Not allow to touch copy, pen	2
	• Not allowing to do Puja	25
	• Not allowing to touch its materials	25
	• Not allow to touch father and brothers	17
	• Not allow to see father/ brother at first menstruation	17
	• Not allow to see roof of house	1
	• Not allow to touch flowers	12
	• Not allow to touch mother	
	• Not allow to go to school	8
	• Dry the clothes in separate places	10
	• Stay far from the home	1
	• Not allow to eat fruits that offer to god	1
	• Not allow to see sun and moon	1
	• Sleep in floor of separate room	14
	• Sleep in floor of without touch anything	8

	• Sleep in shed and separate house	2
	• Do not tell anyone about menstruation	1
	• Eat separate in plates	2
	• Bath in 3 days	17
Pad User	• Cloth	9
	• Market pad	14

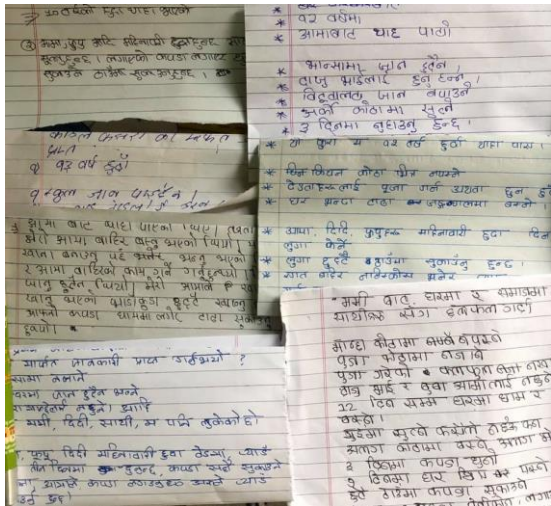


Figure 2 Random Sample of Responses of Girls

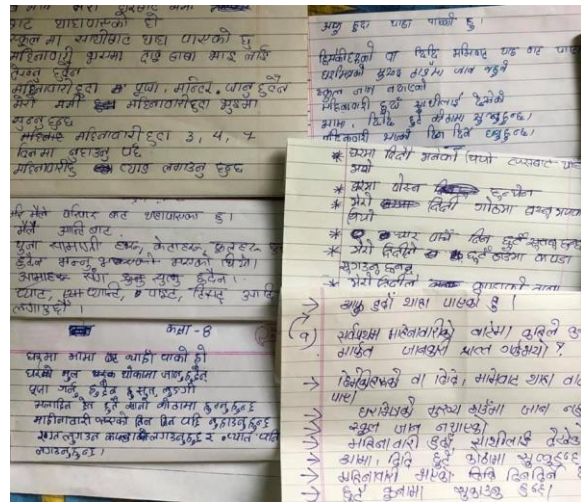


Figure 1 Random Sample of responses of Girls

Conclusion and Recommendation: As Nepali Namaste has different name as per different ethnic groups or places like good morning/afternoon in English, Salam Alekhum in Muslim, Dhorle in Magar, Fyafulla in Tamang, Jwajalapa in Newari, restrictions during menstruation are practicing everywhere but people, state and all do not realize its nature, gravity and manifestations indeed.

There are many forms of recommendations as per actors but more foremost recommendation or call for action are:

1. Break the silence around menstruation.
2. Burst the myths and misperceptions around menstrual practice.
3. Let girls and women to live with dignity during menstruation by holding accountability by all actors because the menstruation is everyone's business because it is human right issue.

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NOTE: This report prepared for the purpose of evidence only. So not prepared as journal article or anything. This is volunteer work at all.