



# REPORT FOR DIGNIFIED MENSTRUAL MONTH 2019

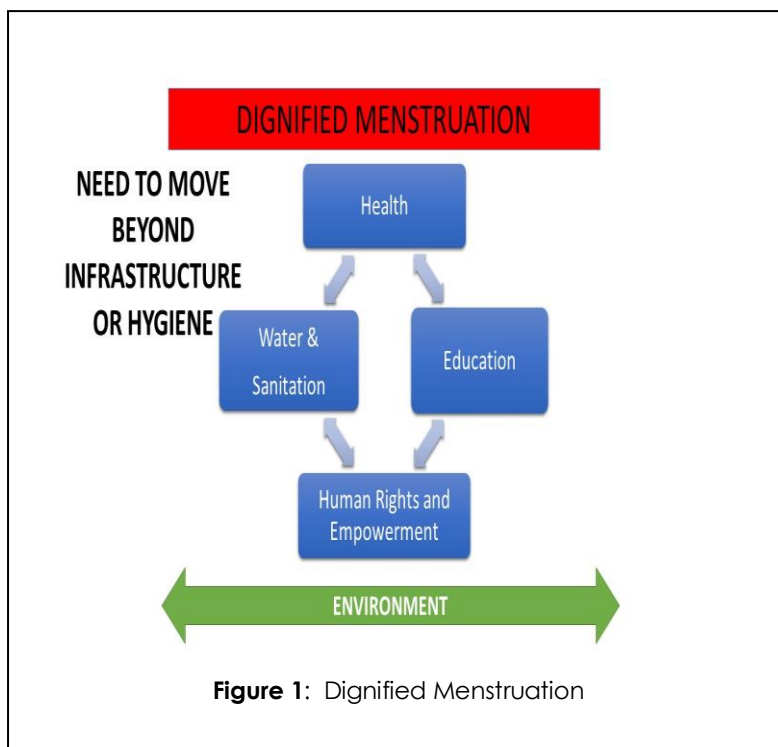
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## INTRODUCTION

Menstruation, a natural biological phenomenon is a crucial time for adolescent girls to learn about their body and health. The current state of attitude, behaviour and practices on menstruation restricts women in Nepal in more than physical ways. Menstrual blood is seen as being 'impure' or 'dirty' and a burden of shame that still hinders girls and women's ability to fully express their rights to health, education, work and gender equality.

For menstrual month 2019, as a way to raise awareness, campaign materials have focused the need for action to change negative social norms and practices, ensure dignity for each to catalyse progress on menstrual education and to ensure everyone has access to products. Menstruation hygiene day observed each year on May 28 since 2014, serves as a reminder that women and girls around the world face poor hygiene during menstruation. The Radha Paudel foundation has advocated the need to move beyond infrastructure and hygiene, stressing the need to focus on health, education, human rights, empowerment and environment (see figure 1). Radha Paudel is a pioneer in opening the dialogue on dignified menstruation as a researcher, trainer, author and advocate. She has been engaging on the topic of dignified menstruation for over three decades.

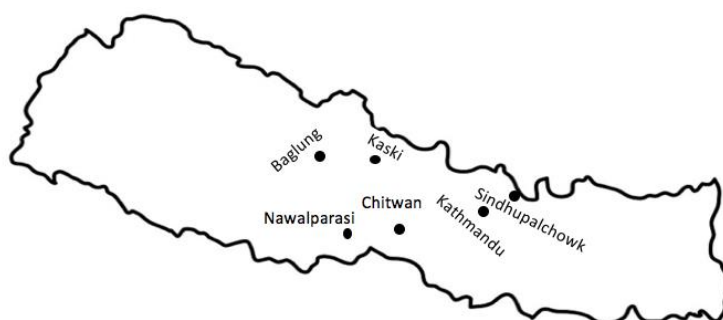


Dignified menstruation refers each girls and women deserved the dignity during menstruation. It is reclaiming the rights as constitution guarantees as well as the rights mentioned in international covenants. As mentioned in Figure 1, dignified menstruation is beyond the dismantle menstrual huts or beautification of huts or free distribution of sanitary pads.

As, of 2018, Government of Nepal have also called for dignified menstrual day for the first time in Nepal, showcasing their commitment to policy and practice change around menstruation. The fight is still

long, and in an effort to participate on a global platform that brings varied network of actors from different sectors, keeping in line with the 2019 theme #ItsTimeForaction, Radha Paudel foundation is further elaborating on the concept of dignified menstruation. Dialogue on dignified menstruation took place on local, national and global level. These have been conducted by all staff members on a voluntary basis. Below are some of the few activities that Radha Paudel Foundation undertook to celebrate menstrual month.

## Areas of direct intervention in Nepal



## Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation in Schools and Colleges

The Radha Paudel Foundation visited 11 schools in total- 10 schools and 1 college. The foundation had the opportunity to engage with 2,310 students on dignified menstruation. The program was coordinated by Sudha Gurung in Pokhara, Sitaram Thapa in Baglung, Indira Chapagain in Nawalpur, Sabitri Bhandari in Chitwan.

DATES	SCHOOLS	PLACE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
2nd of May	Shirin Deaf School	Pokhara	200
3rd of May	Kumudhini Home School	Pokhara	300
	Vision impaired Students	Pokhara	90
7th of May	Annapurna Mount High school	Pokhara	200
	Step by Step School	Pokhara	250
7th May	Girl's School	Pokhara	150
16th May	Presidency College of Management Science	Chitwan	60
22nd May	Shining Secondary School	Gaidakot	300
28th of May	Marigold English Boarding School	Chitwan	340
	Shree Kankali Secondary School	Chitwan	220
29th of May	SOS Hermann Gmeiner School	Chitwan	200
Total			2310





Dialogue on dignified menstruation with vision impaired school kids in Pokhara.

## Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation with CSO Leaders

The Radha Paudel Foundation also launched a community outreach program with CSO leaders in Baglung, Kaski, Sindhupalchowk, Kathmandu and Chitwan. The program was jointly organised by WHRD, Ama milan Kendra and Sarkarma Nepal. The program was attended by political representatives, law family, civil society, teachers, scholarship, women's rights guard, women's campaign, police, staff social campaign and local women.

Reached 600 CSO leaders within Chitwan, Baglung, Kaski, Sindhupalchowk and Kathmandu.

RPF founder Anupa Regmi, in collaboration with Jay Nepal also led a 3-day training session on health, hygiene and sanitation in Bodgaun (Sindhupalchowk). In total 43 females participated and a further 7 were selected to complete training for 3 days on gender equality and women's reproductive health in Kathmandu.



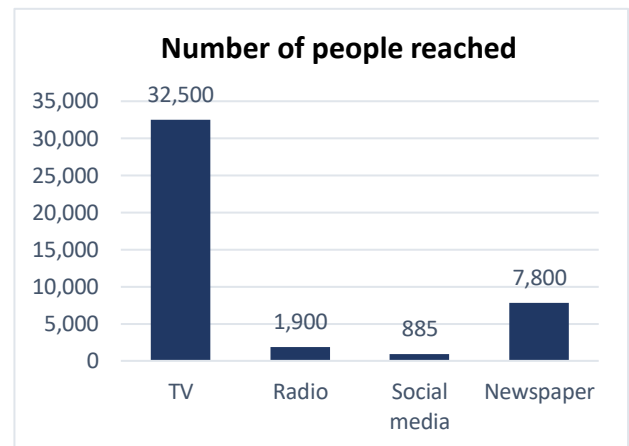
Director Radha Paudel creating dialogue on dignified menstruation with CSO leaders in Pokhara.



RPF founder Anupa Regmi training women on gender equality and women's reproductive health.

## Dignified Menstruation in Media

Radha Paudel (founder of RPF) also spoke on various media outlets such as tv interviews, radio interviews, and newspaper. The Radha Paudel Foundation staff members have also actively advocated for dignified menstruation through social media platforms such as facebook, twitter and instagram to celebrate menstrual hygiene month. A total of 43,045 people were reached.

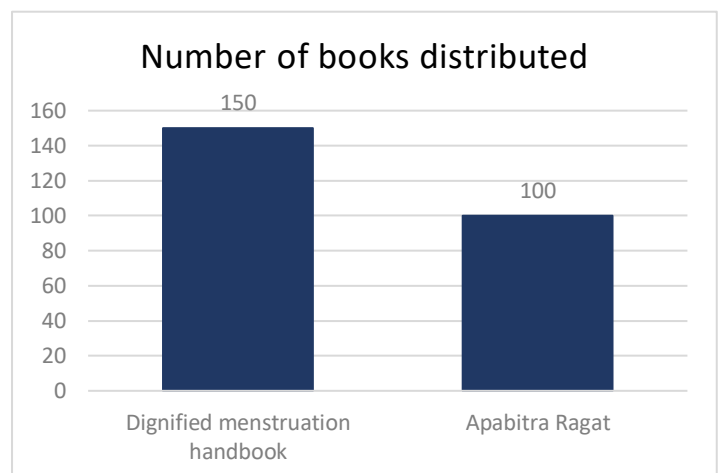


## Distribution of Publication

Launch and distribution of 'Apabitra Ragat' (impure blood) written by Radha Paudel and distribution of dignified menstruation handbook.



Students reading book on dignified menstruation at MITERI bio-degradable pad factory.



## Miteri Bio-Degradable Sanitary Pad

The Radha Paudel Foundation in collaboration with Active Women Forum for Justice launched Miteri eco sanitary pads on May 21, 2019. The venture was a collaboration with Akar innovation for the first time in Nepal. Significant support was provided by the local government.

Two different types of eco sanitary pads are currently being produced:

1. Disposable eco sanitary pads
  - Uses 100 percent bio-degradable products (Tested by Health Care Foundation Nepal).
2. Reusable eco sanitary pads
  - Produced in the same factory- RPF also provides training in production and selling.



Representatives of local government and Radha Paudel (Founder of RPF) displaying MITERI bio-degradable pad on launch day.

## Essay Writing Competition

RPF held a national essay competition focused on dignified menstruation which was won by Namrata Shrestha from Kaski, Pema Chhoden Tamang from Humla and Achal Tiwari from Bhaktapur.



Winners of national essay competition on dignified menstruation

## Cycle rally for dignified menstruation

The Radha Paudel Foundation also co-organised a cycle rally along with X pose Nepal to celebrate dignified menstruation day 2019. RPF also handed over the bio- degradable sanitary pad and book Apabitra ragat written by Radha Paudel. Radha Paudel foundation has been a mentor for Xpose Nepal on dignified menstruation since 2016.



Founder Radha Paudel handing over MITERI bio-degradable sanitary pad and book 'Apabitra Ragat' to Hon. Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare at the cycle rally.



## Panel Discussion on Dignified Menstruation

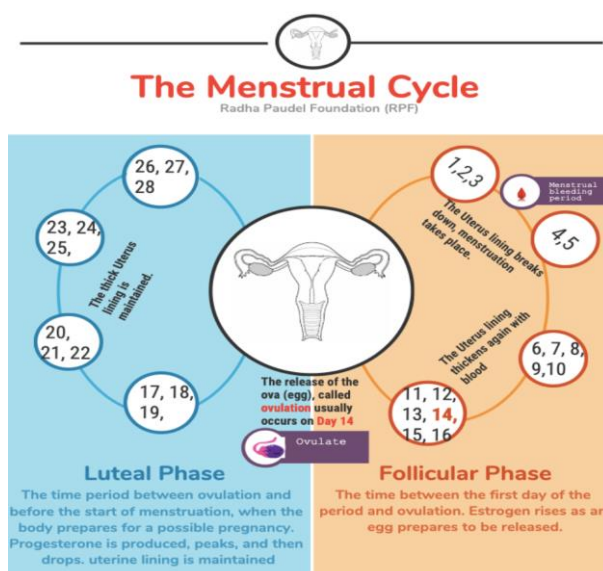
Ministry of Water Supply and MHM PA jointly organised the panel discussion at hotel Pagoda on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019 where RPF is a founding member and co- organiser.



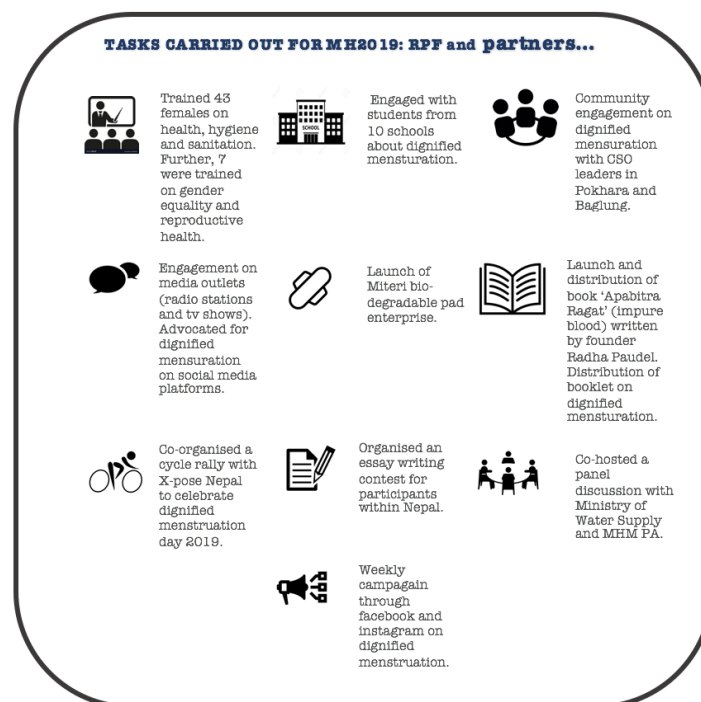
RPF members attending panel discussion at Hotel Pagoda.

## Weekly Campaign on Dignified Menstruation in Social Media

RPF member Milli Adhikari (US) also launched a weekly campaign on dignified menstruation through social media platforms such as facebook and instagram. Some of the campaign materials included information on menstrual cycle, menstrual products, discussion on discrimination against menstruation, impact of menstrual restriction on attitudes and behaviours and vice versa. The campaign reached a total of 5,052 people.



Campaign material: Information of menstrual cycle.



## RESULTS

### Local level

- Improved attitude, and knowledge on dignified menstruation.
- Deconstructed rumours and myths surrounding menstruation- participants contacted RPF stating they were already abolishing menstrual restriction.
- Increased demand of biodegradable and reusable cloth pad.
- Increased the number of boys and men on accountability for dignified menstruation.
- Increased the interest of the local and national government on accountability for dignified menstruation.

### National level

- Engagement with national media on dignified menstruation.
- Engagement in functions advocating dignified menstruation.
- Distribution of book on dignified menstruation and Apabitra ragat.

### Global level

- Engagement with members from all around the world through media platforms.

## CHALLENGES

- Dignified menstruation is not a priority at all for government, and other stakeholders. Everyone's focus is targeted on product, hygiene and sanitation, which are means but not the end.
- RPF has been conducting each activity without any funding- difficult to produce reports as work is being carried out.
- Although, the organisation is working on rural areas - due to limited resources, it is very difficult to reach out to remote areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to guarantee dignity of girls and women during menstruation, dignified menstruation should be at the centre of all activities conducted by stakeholders.
- RPF would advocate more changes and reach out to marginalised communities- if it receives appropriate financial support.
- Menstrual restriction is a century based tradition and demands long term engagement.