

A Journey towards Chhaupadi free Society

I am Sabina Sahi, from Kudari Jumla, where I live with my family. Recently I turned 26 years old. I remember when I was 14, I began to menstruate. My parents made me stay in a cowshed. I was not allowed to go to school and eat food like meat, milk, rice and green vegetables. I asked my parents for permission to go to school, but they did not allow me. They told me that on the way to school there is temple. Because you are "impure" during menstruation, therefore, you would be committing sin by going past the temple.

Every month, during my period, I shared a cowshed with my domestic pets. After few years, my sister joined me to share the cowshed. One day I felt very weak and suffered from severe abdominal pain. I became unconscious. After that I do not remember what happen to me. Later I came to know that my little sister called my mother, and she took me to the health post. After two hours I became regained my consciousness. The doctors reported that I had infection in my uterus, thus gave me medication. From that day on wards, I started taking care of basic sanitation.

When I, from the group discussions, became aware of the importance of menstruation, and how my age girls and other women suffer from the ill practice of *Chhaupadi*, I began to stay inside my own house during menstruation. I committed myself not only to help other women in the group, but also make the entire group *Chhaupadi* free. I wanted to end the 12 year of ill practice that I suffered in my own life. That evening I discussed it with my family members about the group discussion and our mission to end *Chhaupadi* from our group and community.

I was happy to see that my family did not show any interest neither disdain towards me. Despite the fear of god, , I was committed to abolish the practice. I began to stay inside my own bedroom during menstruation. I realized that god did not punish, and neither my fellow group members were punished. From May 2014, I have been staying in my own bedroom during menstruation. I succeeded to break from this age old ill practice.