

A Research Report on

CHHAUPADI AND EDUCATION

OF GIRLS

**A Study on effects of Chhaupadi Practices on Education of
Adolescents Girls in Karnali**

Submitted to:

**Action Works Nepal, Kathmandu Nepal
BEE Group, Nepalgunj, Banke**

Submitted By:

Research Team

May, 2017

A Research Report on

CHHAUPADI AND EDUCATION OF GIRLS

A Study on effects of Chhaupadi Practices on Education of
Adolescents Girls in Karnali

Submitted to:

Action Works Nepal, Kathmandu Nepal
BEE Group, Nepalgunj, Banke

Submitted by:
Research Team

May, 2017

Chhaupadi and Education of Girls: A study on effects of Chhaupadi Practices on Education of
Adolescent Girls in Karnali, Nepal

A Final Research Report

© Action Works Nepal & BEE Group, 2017

For citation

Dahal, B.P., Acharya, S., Munakarmi, R., Sunar, T. & Parajuli, B. (2017). *Chhaupadi and education of girls: A study on effects of Chhaupadi practices on education of adolescent girls in Karnali, Nepal*. Kathmandu: Action Works Nepal & BEE Group

Research Team:

Bhola Prasad Dahal, PhD
Mr Suraj Acharya, MPhil
Ms Rupa Munakarmi, PhD Scholar
Mr Tej Sunar
Mr Bishnu Parajuli



actionworks
n e p a l



Disclaimer

The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility the contractor and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
Executive Summary	vii
Chapter I	1
Introduction	1
AWON, BEE Group and Chhaupadi Project.....	2
Objective of the Research.....	2
Scope of the Research Work	3
Limitation of the Research Work.....	3
Chapter II	4
Literature Review	4
Chhaupadi: A Long-established Observable Fact.....	4
<i>Chhaupadi</i> and its effects on Education: An Empirical Review	5
Initiatives by Government of Nepal (GoN) Against <i>Chhaupadi</i>	7
Chapter III	8
Research Methodologies and Approaches	8
Sources of Information.....	8
Research Area.....	8
Desk Review and Consultation with AWON and BEE Group:	8
Designed training programme for enumerators and research assistants:.....	9
Data collection from the field level.....	9
Sampling Framework for Quantitative Data	10
Data Reduction and Data Analysis.....	11
Quality and Reliability of Data	11
Chapter IV	12
Findings and Discussion	12
Findings and Discussion of the Study.....	12
Attending School during Menstruation: A Thorny Period	12

Activities throughout Menstruation:	15
Staying Place during Menstruation: Effects in Study	17
<i>Chhaupadi</i> and its Consequences in Education	18
School Management: A Responsible to Eliminate <i>Chhaupadi</i> Tradition.....	20
School Actors for Campaign on <i>Chhaupadi</i> Elimination: Limited on Preaching.....	21
Chapter V	24
Conclusions and Recommendation	24
Conclusion of the Research	24
Recommendations.....	25
Reference	28

Abbreviations

AWON	Action Works Nepal
BS	Bikram Sambat
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
DDC/DCC	District Development Committee (now District Coordination Committee)
FCHV	Female Community Health Volunteer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GON	Government of Nepal
HT	Head Teacher
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
SMC	School Management Committee
SLC/SEE	School Leaving Certificate/Secondary Education Examination
ToR	Terms of Reference
VDC	Village Development Committee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We, researchers are thankful to all the respondents including women group, community people, school teachers, students, and child club members for their willingness to participate in the various data collection activities for their valuable information. We also extend our gratitude to all the district and VDC officials (representatives) for providing their valuable time and insights and also for sharing their experiences on *Chhaupadi* tradition. The researchers are especially grateful to all the district level project members for their continuous support in gathering research assistants and visiting place to meet and to get in-depth information with the participant.

This study was made possible with the acceptance of our proposal by the AWON and BEE group. We highly appreciate AWON and BEE group for engaging themselves in complex issues like *Chhaupadi* which is one of the root cause of women discrimination in mid-west part of Nepal. We would also like to thank the Department of Women and Children under the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare for their continued guidance and support during this assessment.

This assessment would not have been possible without the cooperative and active support of the AWON and BEE group in the three projected districts; Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot. We would like to extend our gratitude to the team of AWON and BEE group both at the central and district level for their persistent work to produce this comprehensive report. The research team is so thankful to all those selected research assistants who attended the trainings very attentively and worked hard in the field to get both the qualitative and quantitative data.

We would also like to thank the communities in the study sites especially for providing good place to stay and nice food to have in those hectic days. Lastly, we are especially grateful to the research team: Suraj Acharya, Rupa Munakarmi, Tej Sunar and Bishnu Parajuli, and local enumerators for their hard work and dedication to start and complete the report.

Bhola Pd Dahal, PhD

Team Leader

Executive Summary

Menstruation is a woman's monthly bleeding which usually takes/marks as the switching from a girlhood to the womanhood. It mostly starts between the age of 11–15 years of their lives and continues till the age of 50 years. When a female countenance this menstruation, they face various physical changes like body shapes, fluctuations in hormone levels, painful cramps during menstruation period, and muscle contractions etc. They also face social and cultural obligations in some hilly and mountainous districts of Mid and Far-west Regions of Nepal. It is traditionally believed and culturally practiced that women are impure during their menstruation periods and are not allowed to participate in normal daily activities. Hence, this natural process become curse for many adolescent girls and women.

Chhau means few restrictions on food, mobility, religious functions and shelter to women and adolescent girls during mensuration which is common in Nepalese society. Chhaupadi is a system and practice of putting women and adolescent girls outside the house in a Cow-shed or in a separate small and dark Chhau-gotha in Mid and Far West Regions. It was found that: i) nuclear family has less restriction than the joint family; ii) female members are stricter than the male members of the family; iii) grandparents are stricter than other members; iv) daughters have more flexibility than daughter-in-law; v) semi-urban and urban areas are flexible than rural areas; vi) mix communities are more open than homogenous community; vii) family with migrant members are less restrictive; and viii) family of religious leaders and priests are more restrictor.

In such condition, it demands engagement and collaboration of human rights and social development agencies with Academia for a proper research and studies on it. Working together may bring changes but deeply rooted socio-cultural norms and practices leave a big question mark on societal transformation. This does not only affect the regular activities of the female but also has effect in their education.

The purpose of the study was to assess the real status of *Chhaupadi* and its effects on life of women and adolescent girls. The research team believes that this type of study itself brings changes in communities, documents the existing *Chhaupadi* norms and practices and also guide to set future priorities and interventions. Therefore, keeping this in mind, the research covered the school/college (not) going adolescent girls from 11 to 25 years of age in Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot districts. This research work is a part of the project, "Elimination of *Chhaupadi* practice in Karnali, Nepal", implementing by Action Works Nepal (AWON) and Bheri Environmental Excellence (BEE) Group with the funding from European Commission.

The five-member study team applied both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies on this research. The data and information was collected from survey questionnaire, focused group discussions, key informant interviews and observations. The research was carried out in 7 VDCs each from Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot. There were 21 field enumerators and six research assistants in total who received 5 days training on research tools, methods and questionnaire. The research team itself visited all three districts and seven VDCs in total for supervision of the field study and also to interact and carry out FGDs for in-depth information. The project team in both organizations provided logistic support to research team and to coordinate with stakeholders for both the quantitative data and qualitative information.

In regard to Chhaupadi and its effect in Education, there were altogether 616 respondents selected randomly from three research districts (altogether 21VDCs) with different caste and ethnicity. Among respondents, there were 75.6% school/college going respondents, 20.3% were dropped/left out and 4.1% have never attended school. The findings revealed that 94% respondents attended school during menstruation period, but those who remained absent on those days take leave mostly on the first day of menstruation (8.3%) and the absent rate decreases as the days of menstruation increases from 6.9% in second day to 0.2% in eighth day.

There were altogether 233 participants (37.8%) who do not attend school during menstruation (including school left, never attended and absent during menstruation). Nearly 20% do not attend school because of health problem during menstruation and 19% responded that they felt uneasy to go, where 16% remained absent cause of shyness on those days. And still 15% have to stay in separate place strictly in those days so they remain at home, and in the same way other 5% were not allowed by parents to attend school. The reason behind leaving the school on the first day of menstruation is because of not having proper facilities at school. Not only this, the restriction of touching and crossing the temples has also stopped them to be regular in school on those days. Not only the *Chhau-Goth* affects the study, the myth of not touching books during that period also hinders them.

Similarly, Chhaupadi tradition is being one of the reasons of increasing drop-out rates(20% in researched VDCs) in education. Furthermore, the data shows that lack of education is not only a cause of continuing that tradition. The participants admitted that the stay in *Chhau-Goth* should be eliminated but touching gods and cooking at that time most not be eliminated along with *Chhau-Goth* system. As the participants seemed afraid of it as they still believe it can bring violence in the community. But still pointing only on the education system or

showing the cause of lack of education on practicing this *Chhaupadi* tradition seems to be a myth as most of the people are aware but to change the mind-set of the local people on their strong beliefs on deep-rooted traditions is a challenge.

Educated people who are in Kathmandu valley or in other cities also do follow Chhaupadi system while going back home. The politicians and government officials are also strictly following this. Adolescent girls critically raised this double standards and practices of authorities which makes continuity of such practices. This can only be solved with the continuous effort of multi-sector involvement which requires a lot of patience. Most participants accept that this culture should be avoided, but still are following as they have fear to their elders and myths created on the culture.

Similarly, most of the respondents mentioned that school teachers also are continue this practices both in schools and at home. It is because of respect and habit from childhood to continue the culture, mostly the male Nepali teachers who are considered as *Bahun*s stay far from females though they do not speak on that. And when adolescent girls miss the classes by staying absent in menstruation period, 79% feel difficult to consult teachers, even 4% aloud that teachers are not cooperative and there is not such practice developed (17.4%) to ask them for extra support for those missing days. This shows the gap and mistrust between teachers and students. Until we can not make school child friendly girls can not talk openly with teachers.

Furthermore, the school Actors for Campaign on *Chhaupadi* elimination are limited on preaching and lacking on practicing as teachers themselves follow this practice in school. However, most of the community leaders, traditional healers and school teachers are aware and agreed to eliminate the system of staying in cow-shed; but still considered menstruation time as impure and are not allowed to touch temples and kitchen. Hence, elimination of *Chhaupadi* is limited to elimination of *Chhau-Goth* but not of other untouchability. It was also found that female counter parts were more rigid to continue the tradition than male counterparts.

The *Chhaupadi* system is being taken as a culture from several years, so one cannot think to eliminate it with few interventions in small span of time. From the immense study in the project area, the research team recommends that there should be a course on school curriculum regarding menstruation and reproductive health as a natural and biological aspect, not as the impure or untouchability by god. School education should focus more on menstrual hygiene to eliminate this practice. It is also recommended to have better school

facilities like separate toilets, sanitary pad and clean water. Girls suggested to give awards to those who do not practice *Chhaupadi* tradition, do awareness programs and promote role model who brings positive change on *Chhaupadi* elimination. Similarly, it is vital to educate and keep the important social actors as priest, *Jhakris* as the chairperson or secretary of the *Chhaupadi* elimination program.

Finally, the research findings suggest the following for eliminating the *Chhaupadi* practice and contribute to increase access and quality of education for girls:

- Make provisions of basic facilities in each school for girls (Separate toilet, sanitary pad, sick room, first aid box, focal teacher, girls group)
- Activate and functionalize child clubs, scouts, Red Cross on social campaigns and life skill education
- Sensitize, Train and Mobilize – HT, SMC and PTA
- More interactions between adolescent girls, mother groups and health workers
- Develop school as “common platform” for social change and transformation
- Extra class/mentoring to girls and weak students who missed their regular class
- Child/Girl friendly school and class room environment "practice child friendly school"
- Make local health post routinely do health check-up and sexual and reproductive health education in schools
- Incorporate *Chau* into school curriculum, textbook and teacher guide

Chapter I

Introduction

Menstruation is considered as a natural process which the adolescent girls and females have to face after the certain age (13 or above). This natural process is not considered as a natural occurrence but females are forbidden to touch anything as it is considered impure after their touch in such period. This type of discrimination is even worst in some part of Nepal, mostly in mid and far-west of Nepal such as Achham, Bajura, Bajhang, Doti, Baitadi, Dadheldhura, Darchula, Kalikot, Jumla, Humla, Mugu, Dailekh Jajarkot, and Surkhet Districts.

Chhau means few restrictions on food, mobility, religious functions and shelter to women and adolescent girls during mensuration which is common in Nepalese society. Chhaupadi is a system and practice of putting women and adolescent girls outside the house in a Cow-shed or in a separate small and dark Chhau-gotha in Mid and Far West Regions. It is termed as *Chhaupadi* in those area and it is taken as a traditional practice in which menstruated women and girls are forbidden to touch anything and have to live outside the house in a cowshed for some days (minimum 3 to 5 days depends on place and their culture). Menstrual females are not allowed to touch men, food, cattle, living plants, and fruit bearing trees. If they touch all aforesaid things it is believed that the things become polluted and die as it makes god angry (Bennet 1983). In those days of menstruation, female especially needs social support, nutritious food, and warm home but they are forced to live in either cowshed or *Chhaupadi* Shed and eat less dietary food avoiding all milk products. The shed where they are forced to live in the name of culture do not consists of doors, and are narrow, tight and very congested (Kafle 2011).

Hence, this particular study is about the *Chhaupadi* tradition in Nepal focusing mainly in mid and far western part of Nepal. Adolescence is a highly dynamic period characterized by rapid growth and development. The adolescent girls around 10-13/15 years face menstruation as a natural process. In that period, they have limited knowledge about it and its hygiene. Especially, in the rural part, this natural process of bleeding once in a month is taken as a sin. And it is termed with different terminology according to the place like chhau, chhui, para

sarni, means etc. This study was carried out among the school going adolescents and other adolescent girls up to the age of 13-25 years in Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot districts. Hence, this research work is a part of the project, "Elimination of *Chhaupadi* practice in Karnali, Nepal", implemented by Action Works Nepal (AWON) and Bheri Environmental Excellence (BEE) Group with financial support of European Commission.

AWON, BEE Group and Chhaupadi Project

Action Works Nepal (AWON), a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of the poor through education and social and economic development programs in Nepal has been working in Karnali since 2001 and was affiliated with Social Welfare Council in 2010. Action Works Nepal aspires to empower the poor, vulnerable, and excluded women, children, and men of Nepal so that they may live their lives with social equality, justice, and dignity. The objective of AWON is to improve the livelihood of communities through innovative humanitarian, educational, and vocational result driven programs around political, economical, social, cultural and environmental empowerment, moving forward to peace, growth, and sustainable development.

The co applicant, BEE Group, also has expertise on women's economic empowerment, focusing on modern methods of farming and microfinance and also have expertise on the issue of *Chhaupadi*. The AWON and BEE Group prioritize adolescent girls as its key target group to make their life more meaningful and productive.

This research work is a part of the project, "Elimination of *Chhaupadi* practice in Karnali, Nepal", implemented by Action Works Nepal (AWON) and Bheri Environmental Excellence (BEE) Group with financial support of European Commission.

Objective of the Research

Within the overall objective to assess the real status of *Chhaupadi* and its effects on life of women and adolescent girls, this specific study aims to assess the effects of *Chhaupadi* on education of women and adolescent girls in Karnali region.

Scope of the Research Work

The research work is the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches that assess and explore the existing practices of Chhaupadi and its effects on education of women and adolescent girls. The research was carried out in 21 VDCs of the three selected districts: Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot of Nepal. The survey was carried out with 636 randomly selected adolescent girls (both school going and drop out), women group, child clubs, teachers, health workers, district officials, parents etc. For this, the logistic support of AWON and/or BEE group was instrumental to select local enumerators and in providing training and logistic support on research work.

The purpose of this study is to see the effects of *Chhaupadi* in adolescent girl's education in Karnali region. The findings of this study can be considered representatives of *Chhaupadi* practice at the national level. However, it cannot be generalized, due to the limited sample size and geographical locations.

Limitation of the Research Work

This study is about the Chhaupadi and its effect on education of women and girls in Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot districts. The rigidity of *Chhaupadi* practice might be more or less even in other villages in the districts according to their level of education, awareness they have got, caste, provision of health facilities, social and cultural factors etc.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Chhaupadi: A Long-established Observable Fact

Menstruation is a woman's monthly bleeding which usually is taken/marked as the switching on of a girl to the womanhood. Generally, it takes place around the adolescent age i.e. from the age of 11–15 years of their lives, but in few cases, it can start from early age too. When a female countenance this menstruation, they face various physical changes like fluctuations in hormone levels, painful cramps, and muscle contractions etc. This is a natural process for a female, however, it is being understood and practiced as a curse for women due to some socio-cultural and religious norms and beliefs.

Mostly in the remote parts like in mid-western and far-western (Jumla, Humla, Mugu etc), it is termed as 'Chhau', Chhui, *Chhaupadi* or Mahinawari and during such period, they are taken as impure or untouchable by male and also by senior females too. In this period, people in the name of tradition (Hindu tradition) banishes women from their house during their menstrual period. Actually, the word '*Chhaupadi*' is derived from a local Raute dialect of Achham district mostly used in the in the far west. The term *Chhaupadi* consists of two words, 'Chau' and 'padi', where Chhau means menstruation and padi means a woman (Kandel, Bhandari and Lamichanne, n.d., and Kadariya & Aro, 2015). The study conducted by AWON reveals that 100% households practice *Chhaupadi*, even though some of them were reluctant to disclose it (AWON, 2012)

There is a myth based on socio-cultural norms and traditional belief that women are impure during their menstruation periods and are not allowed to participate in normal daily life and inside house activities. Such as, they cannot sleep in their common or self-rooms, cannot enter the premise of home, cannot touch god/goddess, cannot eat certain food items like milk, ghee etc. Hence, they are made to stay far from elders and stay in a small shed/hut which is used to keep cow i.e. cowshed. In other words, women in this area are treated as second-class members of the society with lesser autonomy, power, and freedom compared to men. Menstruation which is a natural process and every woman face it, is being taken as a

curse to women. This is more rampant and highly followed as a social norm in mid-western part of Nepal. Family and society do not treat menstruation as a natural phenomenon (Amgain, 2011).

The female who is facing menstruation for the first time has to live in the sheds for up to 11 days and for other times, it lasts up to 3-5 days. After completing the cycle, they have to bathe and clean everything that they have been using and keep them in the sun to dry before taking them inside the house and only after that, they can enter their home. Practices and taboos surrounding menstruation vary according to the region, the community, the village, and are not confined to Nepal (Rebaud, 2011).

Thus, *Chhau* means few restrictions on food, mobility, religious functions and shelter to women and adolescent girls during menstruation which is common in Nepalese society. *Chhaupadi* is a system and practice of putting women and adolescent girls outside the house in a cow-shed or in a separate small and dark *Chhau-gotha* in Mid and Far West Regions.

***Chhaupadi* and its effects on Education: An Empirical Review**

Chhaupadi is being practiced mostly in mid and far west region of Nepal as a continuation of traditional and cultural norms, social taboos and superstition. During these periods, women are considered "impure" or "unclean" and are prohibited from taking part in many normal aspects of their lives. It is believed that any breach in such practice will bring bad omens upon their family, community or society. Females are even not allowed to touch or cross the temple and male counterparts and they are compelled to remain in the shed provided. These practices are obviously, a violation of human rights and also a form of gender discrimination against women, which brings negative effects on education (Kandel, Bhandari, Lamichhane, NA). Similarly, the study conducted by AWON (2012) in Jumla and Kalikot districts amongst school girls from grade 6-12 reports that 77% of the girls are kept in cowsheds at the time of menstruation; 48% are not allowed to attend social gatherings, 28% never attend school during menstruation. This showed that they missed out around 4-11 days a month in the school, there has been some consequences on the homework to be done and other negative reinforcement from teachers and school management. The national data showed that 44.2% of adolescent girls currently aged 15-19 dropped out from secondary

school and 21.3% have never been in school, and one of many reasons is being absent in regular school days(Koiral et.al, 2010)..

Women are object of discrimination during their menstruation in Nepal as it is considered as impurity and sin. In some parts of Nepal, women are kept in chhau goth i.e. cowshed during that period. The practice of *Chhaupadi* is also followed by woman during child birth and for up to eleven days after the delivery (Directive Regarding *Chhaupad* Elimination, 2007). Though they arise many voices against the *Chhaupadi*, menstruation is still considered as an impurity and taboo by 58 % population belonging different culture in Nepal (CBS, 2011). Such practice promotes physical, and psychological violence and it happens as an obstacle to build capacity and confidence of women and girls in social, political and economic activities. The *Chhaupadi* practice causes restriction in attending classes. This mostly effect to continue their school education.

Furthermore, school is believed as a temple of Goddess *Saraswati* and as menstruating girls are termed as impure and untouchable, school along with the community thinks menstruating girls should not enter the school (symboling a temple). This hampers a menstruating girl going to school during those days. Male teachers also become aware of such students and students feel uneasy even if they are sent by family members to attend school.

Human Rights Policies, Regulation (related to women and girls discrimination)

Chhaupadi in the Context of International Rights and Norms is taken as the challenges on the fundamental human rights which promotes discrimination and increases vulnerability. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaims the entitlement of everyone to enjoy equal dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind, including sex, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth or other status. Nepal is also a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Its preamble states that discrimination against women is an obstacle to the equal participation of women in political, social, economic and cultural life. CEDAW also calls upon states to work toward eliminating prejudices and customary practices based on the idea of inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women.

Chhaupadi is a violation of women's and girls' rights as provisioned by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. The Millennium Development Goal's (MDG) Goal 3 aims to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. Similarly, MDG Goal 5 aims to improve maternal health care and reduce maternal mortality rate by three quarters between 1990 and 2015. The *Chhaupadi* practice can be one of the barriers to achieving these goals to be achieved by Nepal under MDG 5.

While talking about the constitution of Nepal, Nepal Supreme Court banned *Chhaupadi* practice as a form of gender based discrimination in 2005. Nepal Government also declared *Chhaupadi* as a harmful traditional practice and formulated a national guideline in 2007 to end the practice. However, the guideline is not implemented at the national, district and local levels. The proposed project continues to work at the community and district levels to close this gap.

Initiatives by Government of Nepal (GoN) Against *Chhaupadi*

Chhaupadi practice, being a trauma for the women is still being practiced in most area of Nepal. But after the years, the Supreme Court of Nepal outlawed the *Chhaupadi* system and issued a directive to the GoN to formulate laws eliminating the practice in May 2005. However, it's still practiced throughout the Mid and Far-Western Regions. Similarly, in 2008, the Ministry of Women, Child and Social Welfare promulgated guideline to eradicate *Chhaupadi* nationally (*Chhaupadi Pratha Unmulan Nirdesika*, 2064). But still the practice is being continued and the guideline remains incomplete. The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 also announce to end the discrimination, including based on gender, and ensures rights to equality and social justice, and protection against caste discrimination. But these all laws and policies are only remained in the paper but not in practice. It would be fair enough to say that those women who are practicing *Chhaupadi* might not have heard about these laws. It is still being practiced because it has been promoted and preserved by the society for generations. In particular, article 29(2) of Human Rights mentions "No one shall be exploited in the name of any custom, tradition and usage or in any other manner whatsoever".

Chapter III

Research Methodologies and Approaches

The study team followed the following methodologies to carry out the proposed assignment after having understanding the scope, objectives and role of consultancy service in the particular assigned work.

Sources of Information

This research relied on both primary and secondary sources of information. The secondary sources obviously were the previously published different reports on *Chhaupadi*, newspapers, websites and relevant books. And the primary sources were the respondents who were/are experiencing the *Chhaupadi* practice in their everyday life of the three districts mentioned above.

Research Area

The survey focused on three districts mention by AWON. They are: Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot with 7 VDCs from each districts.

Desk Review and Consultation with AWON and BEE Group:

First of all, the literature like books, articles, news related to *Chhaupadi* practice as well aspolicy related documents were reviewed. The review was done in order to design the research framework, andtools/technique for data collection as expected to meet the research objectives.

After developing the tools and techniques based on the desk review, the research team then organized 3 consultation meetings with concerned officials of AWON and BEE Group (especially the concerned project team). These meetings assisted for finalizing the tools and techniques developed by the research team; and finalize the field activities based on the proposed field plan of research team. The team heartily accepted the suggestion from the project team and after that there was a discussion with the research team, then finally it was finalized.

Designed training programme for enumerators and research assistants:

The research team designed the training programme targeting to enumerators and research assistants on the survey methods and tools and qualitative information collection checklist. The enumerators and research assistants were selected by AWON and BEE Group from each research location. The training was of five days in which all 30 participants (enumerators) were called in the Jumla and were trained together. The training enhanced knowledge and practical skill to the enumerators in data collection process through using both quantitative and qualitative tools. The research team also piloted and refined the survey questionnaire and other tools including checklist on the spot with joint reflection and feedback session.

Data collection from the field level

The Quantitative data were collected by mobilizing the trained 21 field enumerators and 7 research assistants using field questionnaire from the selected participants by using sampling framework. Similarly, for the Qualitative, the information was collected using different participatory tools as per required with the context of stakeholders and social setting. As, the field enumerators and research assistants were guided by the research team to collect qualitative information from the research participants from each research site through interview, observation and focus group discussion.

A standard interview checklist was developed for the key informant interview and the guideline was developed for the **FGD**. For each FGD in each VDC with homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, the research team had generated few themes to probe the discussion as a icebreaker. Similarly, as the enumerators and research assistants were there to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, they also did observation of the local contexts, gestures and postures of the participants and also the feelings and expressions of them. And while doing **observation**, they were focusing on capturing the information of socio-culture practices, daily activities of women and adolescent girls, and the impact of *Chhaupadi* in education of women and adolescents girls.

Furthermore, the enumerators were collected few specific cases to present that they find in their research time. The research team themselves also came up with the qualitative information through the above mentioned tools from the VDC and district level dialogues and FGDs in all three districts namely Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot. The research team interacted

with district and local stakeholders like health office, education office, teachers, child clubs, women and children office, police office and other concerned government offices in district and local level and collected their opinions, perceptions and experiences about the *Chhaupadi* practice and its effect on women and adolescents girls' education.

Sampling Framework for Quantitative Data

The household survey with using specific questionnaires was commissioned based on the specific sampling numbers. The sample number was calculated with using statistical sampling calculation method with confidence level of 99% and a margin of error (degree of accuracy) of 5.0% from the total population. The total population of girls 8,619 (aged 13-24 years) of all 21 VDCs was considered as total research population for the research work¹.

From these two groups of population, specific sample number were derived with applying the following formula.

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = \frac{\chi^2 * N * (1-P)}{ME^2(N-1) + (\chi^2 * P * (1-P))}$$

Where

n = required sample size

χ^2 = Chi square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom

N = Population size

ME = Desired Marginal error (expressed as a proportion)

Based on this, 616 samples were calculated for this research. Further, the calculated sample (i.e. 616 sample) was divided into all 21 VDCs (7 from each district) based on the ratio of population as follows:

Table 1: No of sample in research district			
SN	District	Total Population (13-24 years) Girls	No of Sample
01	Jumla	2,982	213
02	Kalikot	3,267	233
03	Mugu	2,370	169
Total		8,619	616

¹Census Report, CBS 2011

Data Reduction and Data Analysis

On completion of field visit/work and data collection, the research team developed standard data compilation templates and processes for presenting and analyzing field data. Qualitative data were transcribed and categorized based on different themes. Specific cases, scenario and observations were recorded separately. Duplicating, unusable, and unrelated information were omitted. Most common findings and unique nature of information were refined and presented systematically.

As far as quantitative data is concerned, the data were entered in SPSS software in the computer, and were analyzed to explore the meaning underlying in data. Common findings, observations and information were combined together. Similarly, specific and contrast findings were recorded separately. By this the district reports were prepared. Following this, a consolidated study report of all three districts was prepared and submitted to AWON.

Quality and Reliability of Data

In terms of quantitative part, field enumerators were guided in every point of data collection process to ensure the quality of data. The research team and enumerators along with research assistants made several rounds of formal and informal meetings to share their field findings among themselves and few available participants. While in the field, the research team member communicated with each other to discuss the findings of the day which includes similarities and differences on what they found in the field, which helped to validate the field findings and motivated them to explore in depth in several occasions.

After completion of the report writing process, the first draft was shared with AWON and BEE group for their inputs and feedback. The revised draft was shared in a group of Karnali people living in Kathmandu to get more insights on issues and findings. This was very helpful for making meaning and interpretation.

The final report was made public through an interactive session in Kathmandu with policy makers, development practitioners, journalist, government officials, representatives of I/NGOs who are working on women rights and international development partners. This report sharing workshop also gave few inputs and feedback which were incorporated by research team before printing this report.

Chapter IV

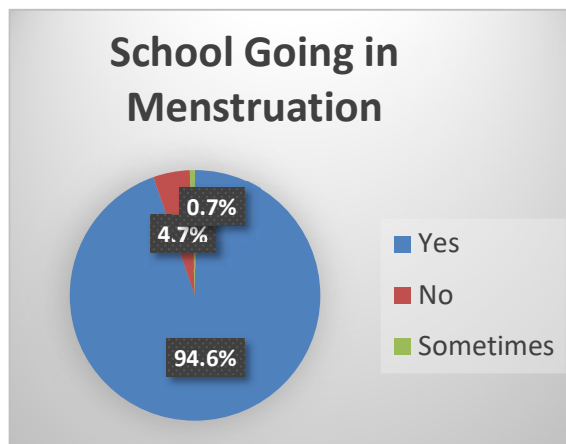
Findings and Discussion

This research is based on survey and qualitative information about the perceptions, experiences and understanding of 616 respondents with different caste and ethnicity on menstruation and Chhaupadi system in 21 VDCs of Kalikot, Jumla and Mugu. These respondents are mainly occupied in agriculture, business and self-employed work. Out of 616 total participants, 75.6% (466) were school/college going, 20.3% (125) were left/pushed out and 4.1% (25) were never gone to school. The 78% of the 150 school not going participants have left school within the last 3 years. The brief findings of both the quantitative survey and qualitative study is below:

Attending School during Menstruation: A Thorny Period

As females are supposed to be impure during the menstruation period, they are prohibitive to touch/cross any temples and males. School itself is termed as a temple and inside the school also there is small temple of Saraswati "Education Goddess", and beside that there might come across different local temples on the way to school. Because of this, they have to stay on leave on those days or use alternative way to walk to school where there are no temples and religious places. When the research team were on the field, the group of females showed the alternative way to school. They even expressed that they have to walk the uncommon way where male do not walk usually. Most of the participants said that the alternative way is riskier from them to go to school.

The survey showed that 94.6% of the total school going students attend school on that period, where only 0.7% attend sometime and 4.7% remain absent in school. Among three districts also, in Kalikot (234), except 2 participants, 229 attended regularly during menstruation and 3 attended sometime. The high range of participants attended school in Kalikot in comparison to Jumla and Mugu



as out of 200, 182 attended schools in Jumla and out of 157,148 attended schools in Mugu. Hence, there is significantly high number of participants attending school.

As mentioned above, most of the study participants attended school, but the one who remain absent on those days take leave mostly on the first day of menstruation (8.3%) and the absent rate decreases as the days of menstruation increases from 6.9% in second day to 0.2% in eighth day. The reason behind leaving the school on the first day of menstruation is because of not having facility of sanitary pads, water and separate toilets.

One of the participants, Ms. Santoshi Mahat said, "Last month when I had menstruation, I told one of my friends and returned home without informing the teachers because I had not carried any pads and my friend's house was also not nearby so I had no option but ran from there." Teachers are not concerned on such issues though they are aware on that and neither the School Management Committee and Parents teacher Association. For this, few students (6%) in survey also complained on not having separate toilets for girls. There is clear policy that a school must have at least 2 toilets even if it is primary but the case is different in these project schools, though the school runs up to secondary level. The lack of such facilities for women become curse especially for those days.

Although, a big data shows the status of school going girls at the time of their menstruation, there are some significant number of girls who do not attend school, and those who attend do not fully stay in school. Out of total who do not go to school, 20% do not attend school because of health problem during menstruation and 19% responded that they felt uneasy to go where 16% remained absent cause of shyness on those days. And still 15% have to stay in separate place strictly in those days so they remain at home, and in the same way 5% were not allowed by parents to attend school and this is because of the school which is termed as temple and other temples on the way to school. The participants are practicing the tradition as they also have witnessed that the females who failed to follow the rules of *Chhaupadi* shaking their body at the time of ritual at any temple with the music. This is called Deuta lagne "God comins to their body to punish for wrong doing".

The *Dhami/Jhakri* along with the priest said that this type of uncommon behaviour is seen when females do not follow the rules of *Chhaupadi* and touch where they are prohibited. As the females witnessed such activities by themselves, they seemed to be believing that somewhere they are true and females on their menstruation period should stay in cowshed and far from temples/elders/home. These beliefs showed that it will be difficult to change the perception even for the young generation too though they strongly said they are against it. According to the students, they believed that females are still following *Chhaupadi* tradition as it is set by gods which cannot be avoided.

Table 3: Reasons of not going School/College While menstruation

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
<i>Need to stay strictly in separate place.</i>	34	14.6
<i>School is Far</i>	37	15.9
<i>Feeling shy to go School</i>	43	18.5
<i>Feeling Sick (Health Problem) at that period.</i>	47	20.2
<i>Parents do not allow me for going to school.</i>	12	5.2
<i>School/Teachers do not allow for coming to school</i>	5	2.1
<i>Other friends do not come at that time. So I don't.</i>	10	4.3
<i>Bulling by friends at that time.</i>	24	10.3
<i>School does not have separate toilet for Girls</i>	15	6.4
<i>Other reasons</i>	6	2.6
Total	233	100

When the students do not attend 4-8 days in a month due to menstruation, then it hampers their study and performance as a result they slowly drop out from school which was seen around 20% in the researched districts. One of the reasons of weak performance of girls in school is also because of this tradition as they remain absent and the place they stay during their menstruation time also lacks light to study. One of the respondents said, "We have to work 3-4 hours in normal days but during *chhui*, we need to work more than 6 hours." This also brings difficulty on improving their study and to continue their school life further which then leads them to drop out the school ((Koirala, et.al, 2010).

One of the school going participants admits that she did not attend classes during menstruated time as her others friends also remain at home. When they have the menstruation at the same time that they get time to play at home too so they miss the school. The survey also showed that nearly 6.5% do not go to school as their friends also do the same. This system of remaining absent for couple of days in a month distract them from study to other activities. So, it is also a challenge to lessen absenteeism in those days.

Activities throughout

Menstruation:

It was believed that women during their menstruation are not allowed to conduct inside household chores but they rather are made to do other stuff like going to the forest to bring grass for the cattle, carryfirewood from there, work in the field etc. So when the adolescent girls were asked regarding the activities they do, most

of the school going i.e. 529 participants (224 in Kalikot, 162 in Jumla and 143 in Mugu) said that they regularly attend school during that time where 62 participants (10, 38 and 14 in Kalikot, Jumla and Mugu respectively) responded that they remain at home. Among the regular school going also only 432 (13.3)participants feel comfortable in attending school and rest feel uneasy but still they attend the school. This is because, students still are not made feeling comfortable by the teachers (especially male) and also by the community. They seemed to be affected by the cultural root that they were living in and those who attend school comfortably have supportive family background.

The family also are coming out of such norms against Chhaupadi because during the interaction with the women group it was found that the family who is nuclear and have no

Pain for Self and Children: Stand against Tradition

- Sabitri Adhikari (40 years, Jumla)

I used to sleep in cowshed as the tradition suggest. Once I was sleeping in the cowshed with my two sons of 2 and 6 years. I felt uneasy and creepy in my neck and threw away without seeing anything. Then I lit the torch and saw a snake creeping on the ground. I hold my one son at back and one in front and run inside the home neglecting the tradition. It was not easy to take this decision as it is against the local culture. But for me, the life of self and my sons was more important than any tradition and culture. i was threaten that god will get angry and curse me but I was ready to face it rather than dying inside cowshed. In fact, nothing has happened to me till now.

This showed that when you are ready from your heart for change, then it is possible, otherwise any force compulsion cannot make people to follow or reject it.

command of grand-parents are slowly avoiding the tradition and they do not want their daughters to suffer what they had suffer during that time. This is because of the awareness programs that were conducted in those VDCs. There is also a case that was found during the field visit which is illustrated in the box aside.

Furthermore, on the query of the activities they get involved in their menstruation period, most of all the school going adolescent replied that they do their homework (95.1%) and also read books (95.1%). They also meet with friends and talk with female teachers. The survey also showed that 90.5% participants talk with male teachers too. Here, the concept of not touching or talking with elder males as the norms of Chhaupadi seems to be broken.

It is obvious that in the place where one gets knowledge on different area, should free these type of misconception. But the participants also said that the case was not same few years before. Mostly the Nepali teacher (who basically belongs to Brahamin) do not say to stay far to the females but he always maintains his distance with the female students and female teachers. But there was contrast finding in the interview and FGD with women group, the SLC pass out student from Kalikot, Ms Shanti Sharma said, "I do not follow any restriction when I am in Kathmandu or Nepalgunj but when I move to my birthplace in vacations or in any occasion, I do follow that Chhaupaditradition. We are compelled to do that as grandparents and mother are strict enough and show me the fear of god."She further said that she has tried to convince the family members by illustrating examples and experience of nit following such tradition while she was in the city but she could not make them understand and have to follow it anyhow. This showed that though one is educated and aware about the negative consequences of Chhaupadi tradition, one most follow it to show the respect to elders.

Moreover, when the school going girls were asked about their participation in ECA, there were less (61.4%) engagement of students comparing to other activities. Nearly 40% avoid participating in ECA, this statistic showed that females are backward on ECA asthey are not supported naturally. When a school going participant was asked about the reason, she said, "It is difficult to run or walk freely on such time and even if we do we need to get changed but there is no such facilities provided in school. I definitely would love to take part but feel

very bad and shy to face that." And, this showed that our education system has also not yet made compulsion for female friendly environment in school.

Staying Place during Menstruation: Effects in Study

Table 4: School going girls' place to Stay at Menstruation

<i>Stay while menstruation</i>	Response	%
<i>Chhau-Goath</i>	174	22.3
<i>Cow-Shed</i>	238	30.5
<i>Another Room in Home</i>	191	24.5
<i>Corner/Open place of Home</i>	47	6.0
<i>Outside of Home</i>	70	9.0
<i>Same Room as usual</i>	30	3.8
<i>Neighbours</i>	31	4.0
Total	781	100

Few villages have already declared elimination of *Chhaupadi* in some of the VDCs of Jumla district like LamraVDC's Ward No. 6 & 7 and Kudari VDC's Ward No. 8. However, the survey showed that they have to remain in cowshed (31%) or *Chhaugoth* (22%) and only 24% stay in any other room of their home, 6% stay in corner of home and 4% stay at neighbours where only 4% remain in their casual room (table: 4). It was heard that after some awareness program, people started living in their own home but one of the *Jhakris* mentioned, "the people became aware to some extent and that is not the cause of shifting from cow shed to home-room, the actual thing is in previous, houses were made attaching with each other's and one room touch another. And in such case, elders including kitchen and temple is being touched so they were kept outside the home. But when the people started making new home (modern) than they make separate room for that purpose." The research team has also observed such place in their visit. The rooms were downstairs where no male go there. It was

a place made especially for that purpose only. It is palpable that this change is better than staying in *chhau-goth* or away in unsafe place. But for those students who need to spend in *chhau-goth* or cowshed (nearly 53%), they do not get clean place and there is no light also.

The school going girls directly affected by the place they stay during menstruation as it determines either they are in favourable place to study or not. When the research team asked about the light facilities, then as still some participants remain in Chhau-goth or cowshed with no windows, 40% participants only have light facilities and among three districts also, the participants of Kalikot responded that they have light facilities whereas 65% responded that they feared to study during night time.

Chhaupadi and its Consequences in Education

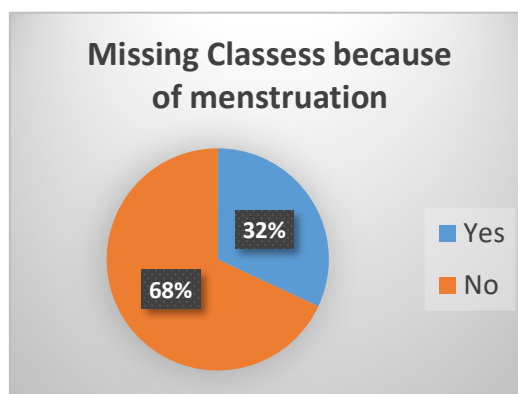
There is no certain of the menstruation to occur among the adolescent, it might be during their exam too. But still 95% (T-4) of the participants have not missed exam because of menstruation. Neither there is high number in drop out case due to menstruation as 82%

Staying in Chhau Goth: Weaken in Study

Some adolescent girls in Jumla still stay in chhau goth during their menstruation period despite their education and exposure. When Sita was asked about the reason, she said, "I have to stay in goth as there is temple inside home (Thhan) and if we touch it during menstruation then it is considered as sin and god gets angry. When god gets angry, then we have to face many negative consequences like death of domestic animal, members of home felt sick, priest would get problem etc." She further said, "Now we are allowed to go to school but have to be aware about 'thhan' on the way and scare touching male teachers. If we touch them, then we become 'paapi' and would go to hell after death. So during that time I try to skip school and there is difficulty in reading and doing homework as well, as there is no light in the shed where we stay." This evidence showed that women remain weak in studies than males and their interest of going school also decreases as they feel discrimination on those days. This tradition has not been changed in such a way that it has rooted in depth in their mind and culture of the society.

denied that the drop out is due to menstruation. This responses figure out well that there is very less connection between drop-out and menstruation. But still 60% participants believed that female became less competitive than males because of menstruation. During that period, few do not attend school, few have to look after other heavy works with less notorious food and have some sort of health problem too. This indirectly took around a weektime of a student from their study which directly effect on their study. So, 55% believed that school results is not satisfactory because of the menstruation. Only the respondents of Mugu (73.5%) do not fully accepted that it hampers their result.

The 68% of the total school going participants attended classes during menstruation and 32% miss classes. While comparing to the districts, the participants of Mugu missed class more than other two districts. And when they were asked about the strategy to cover the missed class, 51.7% get help from friends, 17.6% from teachers, 17.9% from self-study and only 6.4%



through tuition and remaining that is 6.4% do not consult anyone for their missing classes. 61% of the participants do not feel comfortable to get support from teachers. The gaps between the student teacher can clearly be seen.

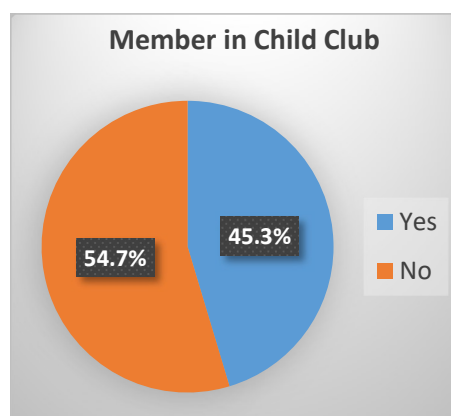
The education policy and different educational stakeholders including educationist talks about having child friendly schooling but the scenario speak against that. Still in most of the schools, students feel afraid to go in front of teachers and ask the queries and in this study area also 79% feel difficult to consult teachers. Even 4% aloud that teachers are not cooperative and there is not such practice developed (17.4%) to ask them for extra support for those missing days. The girls' education, being the key to the empowerment of Nepalese women, suffers from their absence of three-five days a month, including during exams (Rebaud,2011). Knowing this fact also, it is rare to have extra classes/support in any of the school. One of the participants from Mugu districts said that there is no comfort zone for the students to go and talk with teachers. According to her, neither the students nor the teachers care on such issues. Here arise the question mark on maintaining quality education. It is widespread that *Chhaupadi* tradition is highly practiced in these areas and teachers know that students miss classes on those days but till the time, nothing is being initiated and practiced by school or by other organizations.

The other school activities rather than regular classes is Extra Curricular Activities (ECA). The survey report showed that there is no such high difference among the participants in terms of participating in ECA. 40% responded that they face difficulties in participating and 50% do not face difficulties while 10% sometimes take part. Comparing to other districts, participants of Jumla found difficult to take part in ECA (46%). The school of these three districts do not

organize many ECA programs but let the students play running, skipping, volleyball etc. For this, the students of Jumla in the FGD said that they hesitate to play games during those days and ECA mainly are physical one so they stay far from such type of games. There still is a need to develop female friendly ECA activities where all can participate. This initiation will not only develop students' skill in extra activities but also is one of the best tools to make the student regular in school.

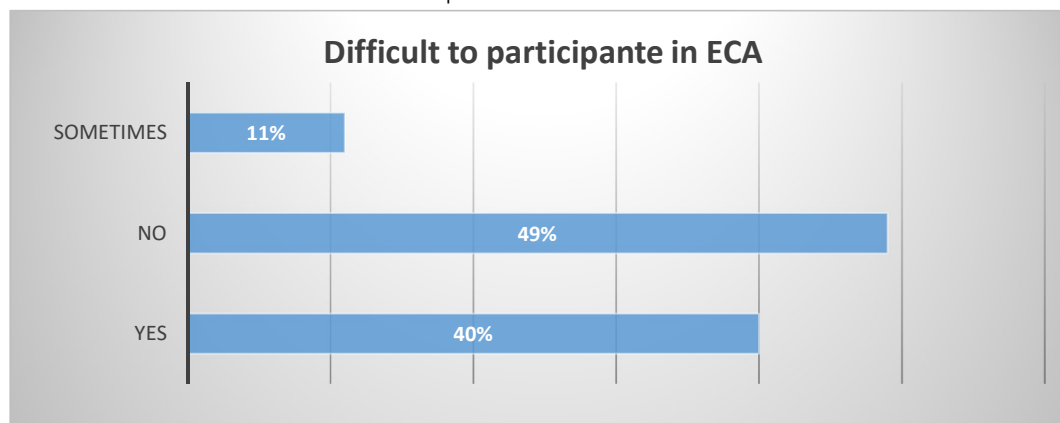
School Management: A Responsible to Eliminate *Chhaupadi* Tradition

School management is responsible in spreading knowledge and initiating activities against wrong practices. *Chhaupadi*, being the wrong practice of the projected districts, the education sector including all the teachers and SMC/PTA members are responsible to initiate programs/activities to abolish the existing wrong tradition. But the scenario of the school is different. When the students were asked what they do when they face menstruation during school time 44% said that they skip school, 26% take leave and go home, 13% ask for sanitary pad from school.



And they first prefer to tell their friends (66%) and then to female teachers (22%) than with others. This data showed the demoralizing management of schools. Students seek the facility of clean water and sanitary pads but only 29% participants replied that there is such facility in their school while 71% denied it in their respective school.

For
the



school going girls, one of the challenges in those days is to change and throw the pad. For this, the survey showed that 80% participants use bathroom, 11% use nearby forest, 4% use

separate room and only 1% use friends' home. This clearly portrayed that most of the schools do not have any separate place for changing and in terms of disposing those pads, 80% of the school has no facility of disposing pads. In some places, it is also heard that due to lack of such place, there is problem in drainage as the students throw it in toilet or nearby. The scenario become more painful when there is not even facility of separate toilets for girls, 20% of the participants still are using combine toilets till the research time.

Though the menstruation is the natural process, women and girls suffer from both physical and mental problems comparing to others days. They get different types of physical pains like stomach pain, headache, abnormal bleeding, fever etc.; and in such condition they seek basic medicines which is lacking in 43% of respondents school. 36% of the participants face health problem while rest feel it as normal. For this, one of the participants said "I hardly become sick in those days. And I have seen my friends in the town area who do not get up for 2-3 days during menstruation. I think it is because we are from village and we mostly do hard works and have habit of walking comparing to girls in the city. So, I think we have less such problems." The regular exercise and balance diet help females to be healthy on those days.

School Actors for Campaign on *Chhaupadi* Elimination: Limited on Preaching

There has been several efforts made by different government and non-government organization to eliminate the *Chhaupadi* tradition and one of those is through the child clubs. So, in order to see the activities of child club, the research team asked if the participants are involved in child clubs. It was found that 45.3% of the participants are involved in child club.

Among them, only 44% accepted that there arose discussion about *Chhaupadi* and only 38% said that the child club conduct activities related to *Chhaupadi* elimination (T-6). The main activity that is being conducted is the discussion among child club members and school children, they also organized street dramas and awareness programs.

Table 5: Activity of Child club against Chhaupadi

	Responses	Percent
<i>Discussion among child club members</i>	133	27.5
<i>Discussion among school children</i>	63	13.0
<i>Discussion among family members</i>	20	4.1
<i>Conduct awareness programme</i>	97	20.0
<i>Conduct Street Drama</i>	110	22.7
<i>Conduct Culture Program</i>	45	9.3
<i>Conduct Debate Program</i>	16	3.3
<i>Total</i>	484	100.0

Note: Multiple Response

When the research team had a focus group discussion with the child club members, they also said that they are doing several activities as mentioned above in their respective schools but when they were asked about the tradition at their own home, the female members said that they are afraid to avoid the tradition and not only that they themselves do not feel like to touch the god or enter the kitchen but they accept that they are not staying anymore in the cow-shed. This showed there is a high cultural root developed among them which cannot be cured in short span of time. The belief of culture and the day to day movements they are seeing in their life has impact on them. The threatening factor is that though the students are involved in such awareness programs, they still are not being able to Say No to *Chhau Goth*.

The male participants of the child clubs still do not eat food that are touched by their menstruated sisters. Similarly, the women group aloud that the social actors like social mobilizers, government officials, *Jhakris* who preach about eliminating *Chhaupadi* tradition themselves are following the tradition at home. For this, one of the *Jhakri* from *Chhaupadi* free VDC said, "In our home also we have not send our women to cowshed these days but we are not letting them to cook and enter the temple." This also can be taken as a big achievement because *Jhakris* are the one who follow this tradition very strictly and the villagers also hear what they say and practice. So in other words we can say that making them main actors for eliminating *Chhaupadi* tradition is a good initiation. Though they accepted to avoid cowshed for this point, they can be the change agent in eliminating this tradition. It is better to conclude that the change is possible but it certainly would take time.

School Management team on the other hand were found silent and passive in managing proper school management for female students. One of the female teacher said, "We all know that menstruation is a natural process and it does not affect anybody/thing by touching. But despite of these all facts, we are culturally bounded which make us to follow the tradition and there is some kind of fear of god among us as well." But when the teachers and SMC members were asked about the facilities of separate toilets and sanitary pads, they showed the cause of less budget. In some schools, there are facilities of sanitary pads but only till they get the support from any organization. They still have not thought to raise small fund among themselves and make local pads of it.

During the discussion and FGD, few female students said that they feel uncomfortable to attend school as there is temple inside school compound, and also there is no facilities of pad distribution. On the other hand, few students attend regular classes without any hesitation. But they also leave school in middle if they had menstruation while in the school time. Students feel uncomfortable as they cannot get sanitary pads and at the time of excessive bleeding, teachers and male friends start talking on them. Next issue is of unavailability and less openness of female teachers with female students.

One of the students also said that teachers directed them not to touch the *pipal* tree as it is symbol of god. There is not more touch/untouched problem between teachers and female students but there is one Nepali teacher from Brahmin caste who always stay alert with females and hardly touch either female students or teachers and if in case he touched them, at the same time, he puts *sunpani* (gold-water) to become pure. Such misconception and behave from a well-educated and one of the so called change agent of the community, makes this type of wrong practice '*kuriti*' continue and force the females to follow it.

Thus, the research team found that: i) nuclear family has less restriction than the joint family; ii) female members are stricter than the male members of the family; iii) grandparents are stricter than other members; iv) daughters have more flexibility than daughter-in-law; v) semi-urban and urban areas are flexible than rural areas; vi) mix communities are more open than homogenous community; vii) family with migrant members are less restrictive; and viii) family of religious leaders and priests are more restrictor.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendation

Conclusion of the Research

Chhaupadi is being adapted as a culture following certain practices unknowingly whether it is correct or false. This study was conducted with the objectives of exploring the effects of *Chhaupadi* in women and girl's education. Women in these districts are double victimized because of *Chhaupadi* tradition both at home and in the society in the name of socio-cultural practice as menstruating women are taken as impure and polluted.

The situation is even more debasing when it comes to the adolescent school going girls. It is taken and respected as a tradition by the adolescent girls with the strong belief that god would curse them and their family if not followed. So, during those days, they are allowed to attend the school but are not allowed to walk the same way which male uses and cannot cross any temples too so in such time also they have to walk long way. Because of such difficulties and feeling of discrimination, women leave their classes and further drop out from the school. *Chhaupadi* tradition is being one of the reasons of increasing drop-out rates in education but the data shows that lack of education certainly is not a cause of continuing that tradition.

The school is not girl friendly, especially men have to increase their knowledge and awareness of menstrual hygiene, and different forms of discrimination during the menstruation, including *Chhaupadi* and its consequences as male teachers yet stay far from females.

Young People, especially the members of child clubs are more aware and empowered to advocate against *Chhaupadi* with community leaders but still there seems to have practice of *Chhaupadi* at their home. This shows the huge difference between preaching and practicing. They got involved in some trainings and get fund to organize programs to eliminate *Chhaupadi* but the mind-set of their own is not seemed to be changed. Then how it is possible to bring in practice in other place. This is same in the case of social mobilizers.

Moreover, the study showed that young women and girl have improved knowledge on *Chhaupadi* and other forms of discrimination during the menstruation and its effect on education. They are convincing their parents but it becomes difficult to convince grandparents. So, to show respect also they are following the tradition. And in doing so, it now has rooted in their mind and are following with their interest. They are ready to stay in separate room but seek the facilities of clean room with light. But still pointing only on the education system or showing the cause of lack of education on practicing this *Chhaupadi* tradition seems to be a myth as most of the people are aware but to change the mind-set of the local people on their strong beliefs on deep-rooted traditions is a challenge which can be solved with the continuous effort of multi-sector involvement which requires a lot of patience District government official have increased their knowledge regarding the discrimination that *Chhaupadi* tradition creates among women and girls but they also are afraid to eliminate it fully because it has been practiced since many decades and the change might bring violence in the district. similarly, most of the community leaders, traditional healers and school teachers are aware and agreed to eliminate the system of staying in cowshed but still are considered impure.

Recommendations

Regarding the recommendations to eliminate this practice, all the respondents agreed that the abolition of *Chhaupadi* is a long and complex process because it involves religious beliefs and therefore it has to be tackle gradually but not making peoples against their culture and tradition. Adolescents should be recognized as a priority target group. As it is well known that education is the key factor to bring change in the mind-set of people so there should be a course on school curriculum regarding menstruation reproductive health with more focus on menstrual hygiene. Awareness among female is most as they are key to make the tradition follow or to change for betterment and with that the male also should be aware.

Regarding the school education, there should be separate toilets for females and there should be facilities of sanitary pad and clean water too. The room they are staying should have proper facility of light so that they can do their homework and read well. It is recommended to give away award to those who do not practice *Chhaupadi* tradition and do awareness programs.

Similarly, it is recommended to keep the important social actors as priest, *Jhakris* as the chairperson or secretary of the *Chhaupadi* elimination program. This will support lot as when the change agents of the community are made responsible to bring change, then the things become easier and at the end the impossible things become possible.

Additionally, there are some key points of recommendation for eliminating the Chhaupadi practice from the society and contributing to access and quality of education of girls.

Recommendation for Community People, Parents and adolescent girls

- Community people and parents should be aware on the educational rights of children, and they need to encourage their girls-children to go regularly in schools even at the time of menstruation. For this purpose, awareness and motivational efforts are needed for the parents and community people.
- Parents should be aware to maintain and manage the hygiene facilities for the menstruating girls. Similarly, the study-space in home is very critical for the menstruating girls. The study finds that a huge proportions of menstruating girls are not staying in affordable place at the time of menstruating period, where they cannot continue their study in home. In such aspects, it should be the responsibility of family members as well as the parents to ensure the safe and healthy place for menstruating girls where they can continue their study.
- Adolescent girls as well as the school going children are the key motivators in family to convince their parents about their study. In this aspect, those group of school age children are needed to aware about the provision of educational rights, and orient their family for continuing their education even in the menstruating time.

Recommendation for School Management

- Make provisions of basic facilities in school for girls (Separate toilet, sanitary pad, sick room, first aid box, focal teacher, girls group)
- Activate and functionalize child clubs, scouts, Red Cross on social campaigns and life skill education. Such mechanism in schools will advocate the rights of children and aware the parents and local people about menstruating and education.

- School management is required to sensitize, train and mobilize the school committee (HT, SMC and PTA) to aware and motivate the parents and local people about the menstruation and educational rights of girls.
- Develop school as “common platform” for social change and transformation. Regular interaction, parental education programme are required to facilitate by school to aware the parents.
- Extra class/mentoring to girls and weak students.
- Ensuring to provide Child/Girl friendly school and class room environment
- Routine health check-up and sexual and reproductive health education in schools

Recommendation for National and District Education System

- Incorporate Chhau (menstruation) and its policy provision in local school curriculum, textbook and teacher guide book.
- Incorporate the training session of menstruation, hygiene and role of school in teacher training curriculum.
- Assess the school data to capture the status of 'missing school of girls at the time of menstruation' and regulate some specific interventions in such schools.

Recommendation for Organization working on Chhaupadi Elimination Practice

- Educate the local people, parents, adolescent girls, and school age children on right to education as included in Chhaupadi policy and guideline as outlined by government of Nepal.
- Work jointly with School Management Committee to ensure basic school facilities as required for girls (such as gender friendly toilet, menstruation hygiene management, girls friendly school environment)
- Train and orient school committee (schools teachers, SMC, PTA, parents) on policy and provision of Chhaupadi guideline as amended by Government of Nepal.
- Facilitate the mother groups in community to aware them on girls' rights of education, menstruation and hygiene, and provision of policy and guideline.
- Work jointly with local institutions, CBOs, women groups to initiate for declaration of "Chhaupadi Free Community".

Reference

- Amgain, B. 2011. Social Dimension of *Chhaupadi* Systema Study from Achham District, Far West Nepal, Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF)SNV Nepal.
- Bicchieri, C. and H. Mercier. No Date. "Norms and Beliefs: How Change Occurs" in *The Dynamic View of Norms*. Cmbridge University Press.
- Bicchieri, Christina. 2006. "The Rules We Live By" in *The Grammar of Society: The nature and Dynamics of Social Norms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kadariya, S., & Aro, A. R. (2015). *Chhaupadi* practice in Nepal – analysis of ethical aspects. *Medicolegal and Bioethics* , 1-6.
- Kafle, Rima.2011. Seclusion during Menstruation in Nepal despite Supreme Court Rulling. Republica Daily, Friday, pp.8
- Rebaud, J. T. (2011, October). Monthly stigma: The practice of '*Chhaupadi*' in Nepal. *Ethics in action* , pp. 25-28.
- Kandel, N., Bhandari, A. R. and Lamichhne, J. n.d. "Chhue, *Chhaupadi* and Chueekula Pratha" – Menstrual Sheds: Examples of Discriminatory Practices against Women in the Mid- and Far-Western Regions of Nepal: Considering Women as "Impure" or "Unclean" During Menstruation and Post-Partum Periods, Nepal: <http://googlescholar.com>.
- Koirala B N, Bajrachary I.K, Khadka A., Singh N.K, Biswokarma C, Chhetri B. 2010. Late Comers in School: The Status of Dalit Girls in Education". A Draft Report Submitted to Feminist Dalit Organization, Nepal.

Contact Address



Kabil Marga, House No. 37, Thapathali, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: +977 1 4227730

Email: actionworksnepal.awon10@gmail.com

www.actionworksnepal.org

ISBN 978-9937-9227-3-9



9 789937 922739 >