

A Research Report on **SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES OF** **CHHAUPADI PRACTICE**

**A Study on Social Thoughts and Belief of
Locals on Chhaupadi in Karnali, Nepal**

Submitted to:
Action Works Nepal, Kathmandu Nepal
BEE Group, Nepalgunj, Banke

Submitted By:
Research Team

May, 2017



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Social norms and values of Chhaupadi practice: A study on social thoughts and beliefs of locals on
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A final research report

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Research Team:

Bhola Prasad Dahal, PhD

Mr Suraj Acharya, MPhil

Ms Rupa Munakarmi, PhD Scholar

Mr Tej Sunar

Mr Bishnu Parajuli



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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.

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Abbreviations

AWON:	Action Works Nepal
BEE:	Bheri Environmental Excellence
BS	BikramSambat
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
DDC	District Development Committee
FCHV	Female Community Health Volunteer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GON	Government of Nepal
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
SMC	School Management Committee
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
ToR	Terms of Reference
VDC	Village Development Committee

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BholaPdDahal, PhD

Team Leader

Executive Summary

Women and girls in Nepal have generally some restrictions at home and religious place during menstruation both in urban and rural areas. However, 'Chhaupadi' is a deeply rooted socio-cultural practice during menstruation strictly followed in mid & far western regions of Nepal. In such practice, the menstruating women and girls are considered as 'impure' and they have to follow several restrictions and barriers inside and outside their homes. In many communities, the menstruating women and girls have to stay in isolated place like Chhau-hut, Cow-hut and separate room in the house. They are restricted to enter into home, consume nutritious foods, touch male family members, use similar toilets and water taps, participate in social functions, and other essential daily activities. All these barriers and restriction are directly affecting the life and wellbeing status of women and girls; and ultimately impact on overall livelihood.

While considering the 'Chhaupadi' as harmful practice, the GON promulgated a directive regarding to eliminate it in 2007. Similarly, development organizations, local institutions, CBOs, right actors are raising the voice against this mal practice; and working to address the issues related to such practice. Similar to this, AWON and BEE Group has been implementing an action in three districts of Karnali through financial support of EU. This research is a part of the project to assess the existing social thoughts and belief relating to Chhaupadi practice in the research districts. Further it is expected that the findings should be captured as strategies to enhancing leadership of women and finally contribute on eliminating the Chhaupadi practice in the project working districts.

The research applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches of data collection from 21 working VDCs of three districts: Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot. The random sampling method was used to get quantitative data from 655 respondents who represents several groups such as political leaders, school teachers, house hold head, youth leaders, traditional healers, priests, FCHV, and other general public. Similarly, qualitative information was captured through FGD, KII, groups meeting, consultation with district and local committee, and observation of the real context. After the field work, the data were transcribed, tabulated, and information was categorically analysed with their themes and sub-themes.

It was found that the socio-cultural beliefs, norms and values regarding to menstruation and *Chhaupadi* are deeply rooted and practiced in the research areas. Respondents' education level, age and occupation generally shape the perception, understanding and belief system on Chhaupadi among the research participants. Similarly, the female members have more deeply rooted belief, perception and social thoughts towards traditional aspect of menstruation and Chhaupadi as compared to male.

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. Here is the summary of major research findings:

- 58.6% of respondents perceived that girls/women become impure during their menstruation. Such believe is higher among the female respondents.
- 33.3% of respondents (46.7% female and 26.2% male) perceived the girls/women should stay in separate place outside home like Chhau-hut, Cow-shed and other separate place during menstruation.
- The understating and believes on 'staying at Chhau/cow-shed' is found significantly high with the age and education level of respondents. Mostly high age respondents perceivedon "staying at Chhau/cow-shed' whereas mostly highly educated persons perceived on 'not staying at Chhau/cow-shed'.
- The occupation and social identity of respondents is also shaping the understanding and beliefs of respondents upon menstruation and Chhaupadi practice. It was found that 72.4% traditional healers/priest perceived that girls/women should strictly stay at Chhau-hut/Cow-shed at menstruation.
- 29.9% of respondents perceived that women/girls should not eat as usual food and 56.6% believed that they should not eat milk or milk products during menstruation.
- 33% of respondent believes that menstruating girls/women should not touch the public water tap; 68.8% believes that they should not walk through the religious sites.
- 46.3% of respondents believed that if the Chhaupadi practice is violated (i.e. do not follow properly), then the God will angry and will have negative implication to the family.

Based on this study and its findings, the research team recommends the following for changing the social thoughts and beliefs of local people that will contribute on elimination of Chhaupadi in the research districts and in similar context:

- Perception, thoughts and belief among the women respondents are not convincing towards menstruation and Chhaupadi system. Education and empowering the girls and women is more important to change their perception and behaviours.
- Education might be a best strategy to eliminate the practice of Chhaupadi. However, in the short-term, some informal education programme targeting to women and family members can be targeted to aware and educate them on basic principles of women's rights, menstruation practices, and harmful consequences of Chhaupadi.
- It seems that the youth/adolescents are gradually changing their attitude and behaviours regarding the negative aspects of Chhaupadi. In this regards, the Youths/adolescents can be

mobilized as change-agent. In-laws group (Sasubuhari) could be formed and mobilized as role model for change and transformation.

- Pay special attention to the traditional healers, priests and religious leaders to educate them on the biological, social and psychological aspects of Chhaupadi. Similarly, those religious leaders who are adapted the changes can play as role-model in community to educate and counsel other religious leader as well as the community people on the negative aspects of Chhauapdi system.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Research

Perception and socio-cultural norms during the menstruation is varied in society in Nepal. Majority of society considers the menstruation as events of impurity, stigma and sin. The women and girls during menstruation are forbidden to touch food, enter into the home, and have to live separately in unsafe places like hut, Cow-shed. Traditionally, the practice of following the socio-cultural norms of menstruation is very severe in Hindu religion, mainly in far west and some parts of mid-west region including districts of Karnali zone in Nepal. This culture is known as '*Chhaupadi*' in these society. In such practice, the women and girls during the menstruation stay in isolated place; mainly in *Chhaugoth*¹ or cowshed. The practice of *Chhaupadi* is also followed by woman during child birth and for up to eleven days after the delivery². Even their babies are also sent to live in these sheds with their mothers.

Although the *Chhaupadi* practice is culturally accepted in those districts, it is noted that the life of women and girls are negatively affected by such practice. Similarly, the restrictions, as practices during the menstruation period, are making the women and girls far from getting basic requirements such as nutritious food, healthy environment, and basic sanitation facilities. It was found in some communities that the women and girls during their menstruation are not allowed to eat sufficient food, milk and milk products, fruits and other healthy foods. All these, socio-cultural aspects are affecting the life and livelihood of women and girls living in such localities.

Government of Nepal (GON) has considered the *Chhaupadi* practice as a form of violence against women, and regulated to eliminate through promulgating the Directive Regarding to *Chhaupadi* Elimination in 2007. Similarly, several development partners, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), Community Based Organization (CBOs) including women rights advocates are working to aware the people on issues regarding to *Chhaupadi* and menstruation practices; and advocating to eliminate such issues. Similar to such effort, Action Works Nepal (AWON) and BEE Group has been implementing "Elimination of *Chhaupadi* practice in Karnali, Nepal" in three districts, Jumla, Kalikot and Mugu of Karnali Zone. The overall objective of the project is to eliminate traditional, deeply rooted *Chhaupadi*

¹*Ghaugoth is a type of shed specially build for women and girl to stay at the time of their menstruation.*

²*Government of Nepal, Directive Regarding to Chhaupadi Elimination, 2007*

practice from the remote villages of Karnali to establish women's human rights, justice and dignity.

This research is a part of the project implementing by AWON and BEE Group in Karnali. The findings of the research are expected to replicate in project's planning and implementation as an evidence to increase awareness against the demerits of *Chhaupadi*, and advocacy to influence policies and their implementation to eliminate *Chhaupadi* practice.

1.2 Objective of the Research

The overarching objective of the research is to assess the psychosocial thoughts and belief of local people on menstruation and Chhaupadi practices in the three project districts of Karnali.

The specific objectives of research are as follows:

- To assess the perception and understanding of local peoples on menstruation and Chhaupadi system.
- To assess the process through with Chhaupadi system is justified in local contexts.
- To recommend the specific intervention strategy to eliminate the negative consequences affecting in the lives of women and girls by Chhaupadi

1.3 Scope of the Research

The research is commissioned based on the ToR developed for the entire research work. Additionally, the research work is entirely focused for exploring the following research questions based on the objective of the research work. The major research questions are:

- What are the basis understanding of local people on menstruation and Chhaupadi practices in Chhaupadi rooted communities of Karnali?
- What are the social, traditional and religious belief system relating to Chhaupadi?
- How the local people perceive the daily activities of female/girls at the time of their menstruating?
- What might be the working approaches and modalities to eliminate the negative consequences of menstruation and Chhaupadi practices in in the research local and in similar contexts of Nepal?

1.4 Limitation of Research Work

This research is conducted in three districts of Karnali, i.e. Kalikot, Jumla and Mugu; and covered only 655 local people (both male and female) as primary respondents, and collected relevant information from social actors, development practitioners, women rights actors and other like-minded people from district and local level in these three research districts. The information/data that are generated for this research is based on appropriate statistical process. Hence, the findings are possible to generalize in similarly social context of Nepal. However, the experiences and social factors that are captured through this research might not be similar to other social context. It is mainly because of the hard geographical context of the research site, and diverse socio-cultural practices during menstruation.

Similarly, the complexities and perpetuation of Chhaupadi practice and other forms of discrimination during the menstruating time might not be same in all parts of the country. However, even in these limitations, there are some possibility to generalize the socio-cultural practices of the research area as reference to articulate in other similar types of research and studies.

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Chhaupadi: A Cultural Practice in Nepal

Menstruation is one of the very important physiological processes in females that starts with the onset of puberty. It signifies the transition of a girl from childhood to womanhood. Nepali society has viewed this natural biological process as a religiously impure and culturally shameful occurrence, and hence, an issue to be dealt with indifference or overlooked silently. Such an unfavourable social attitude is a major cause of inhibition among menstruating girls and women leading to self-imposed and external restrictions in day-to-day activities, accessing services, mobility, and personal freedom. However, the degree and types of discrimination, restriction and behaving them at the time of menstruation are differ in societies. One such practice locally called '*Chhaupadi*' is in existence in Far-Western and Mid-Western regions in Nepal, in which it believes that menstruating women and girls are impure, and they are kept in a separate place for certain period with some restriction. Such tradition makes restriction to the menstruating women and girls for several individual and social task such as entering into home, touching male members, using public water-taps, participate in religious functions, eat nutritious food including milk, and others.

The word 'Chhaupadi' is the combination of two local words 'Chhau' and 'padi'. The term 'Chhau' refers to condition of being untouchable, and 'padi' means a woman³. Hence, the term 'Chhaupadi' refers to the condition of untouchability of menstruating women and girls. Similar to the term 'Chhaupadi', there are also other term used to refer menstruating women and girls in other society in Nepal. For example, the term 'Chhui' is also used in mid and far western regions; and 'mahinawarihunu', 'bahirasarnu' and 'para sarnu' are some useable term in other parts of Nepal to indicate menstruating women and girls.

The social and cultural customs of menstruation are followed in almost every society in Nepal. However, the practice of 'Chhaupadi' is more severe form with having more restrictions and rooted believes. The custom believes that menstruating women and girls as impure, and they are required to refrain from participating in normal daily activities. They are not allowed to touch their husbands or even other male members, cattle, fruit and crops plants. They should not walk into the premises of temples and participate in religious functions. They are not permitted to eat nutritious diet like milk, milk products, meat, fruits and green vegetables.

³Nilima&Tandon (2011). *Centuries old Nepal banishment ritual endangers girls and women.*

They are forced to stay in a separate hut, which is called 'Chhau-hut' in locally. In mid and far western region, the 'Chhau-hut' can easily see near to almost every houses with made of stones and muds without having windows and doors. Such huts are very narrow, dark, congested, and having cold floor where menstruating women and girls have to stay around 4 to 7 days in every month. On the last day, the women/girls take a bath, wash their clothes and return to home. Mainly, it is believed in the society that if the custom is breached by any means then it will create problem for women/girls, their family and even for the community like becoming sick, infertile and even the death.

2.2 Social, Cultural and Traditional Belief on Chhaupadi Practice

Chhaupadi system is traditional practice in which during menstruation women and girls are forbidden to touch anything and have to live in cowshed. It is a widespread practice prevalent in far west and some parts of mid-west region of Nepal. In these areas, family and society do not treat menstruation as natural phenomena. In Chhaupadi system girls and women are isolated from family and home during several days in their menstrual cycle. Menstrual women are not allowed to touch men, children, cattle, living plants, and fruit bearing trees⁴. It is believed that if the menstruating women and girls touch to all aforesaid things, the things become polluted and it made god angry⁵.

Traditionally, the family members even the society treat the menstruating girls and women as untouchable during 5-7 days in the normal period. They are denied to eat milk, milk products, and are forbidden to go in the public places and touch public tap, temple, home and food⁶. In some communities, the menstruating girls and women are forbidden to go into the kitchen garden, and touch tree plants. It is believed that the tree/plants does not give flowers and fruits if it is touched by those female. Moreover, if there is any disaster in the community, the blame goes to the girl who just had observed the Chhaupadi, and will be accused of not observing with full purity⁷.

In Chhaupadi rooted community, it is also believed that if anything is touched by a menstruating woman and girls, it will become impure and may cause harm to others. If they touch something accidentally, then the item should be cleaned immediately to make it reusable. If the women touch their husband or other family members, then those touched

⁴Amgain, B (2011). *Social dimension of Chhaupadi system: A study from Accham District, Far West Nepal*.

⁵Bennet, Lynn. 1983. *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters: Social and Symbolic Role of High Caste Women in Nepal*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁶Upreti Aruna, 2010 *Nepal Ka Babu harulai Patra (A Letter to All Fathers of Nepal)*: In Daily Newspaper Kantipur, 13 April 2010

⁷Tuladhar, S. K. (2012). *Chhaupadi: A socio-cultural practice during menstruation in Far Western Nepal*, UNICEF Nepal

must bathe in order to cleanse themselves of impurities⁸. Similarly, the locals believe that every girl/woman in their menstruating time should follow the social norms to make their family and community healthy and safe, if not god will punish not only to the disobeying girl/woman but also to the whole community⁹.

In many communities; the community elders, husbands, mother-in-law, traditional healers, priests and even the elderly women are influencing as propagator of Chhaupadi practice; and they consider it as a way of preserving the tradition which has been in existence for a long time with a focus on purity¹⁰. Such people perceive that they are performing their venerable duties to take care of their community from harmful cruse of God. Those who support this practice as a justifiable one, lack to answer whether this practice is good or not; but they believe only on God and justify it as a continuous practice. They only believe that letting women live inside the family house instead of Chhau-shed/Cow-shed, allowing them to enter the kitchen and welcoming them into temples will infuriate the God and that wrath can inflict serious consequences on the family and the entire community¹¹.

Most of the women and girls in the rural Chhuapadi accepted community still lives separately at the time of their menstruation; and they are bounded to follow the social and cultural norms. However, the trend of following the restricted social norms during this period are avoiding in some areas, mainly in urban areas. It was found that some women residing near the district headquarters have started to drink milk and eat milk products; girls are attending schools during their menstruation; and women/girls are engaging in social and cultural activities even at the time of their menstruation¹². However, even some educated women still hesitate to visit temples, or prepare food with assuming that such practice may anger the God and bring misfortune in the family.

2.3 Policy, Provision and efforts against Chhaupadi Practice

Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Nepal is widespread cutting across classes, races, ages and religions; and women and girls are facing violence both in private and public places. Similarly, discriminatory laws, social customs, prejudices that undermine equal status and opportunities

⁸Kandel, N., A. Rajbhandari and J. Lamichanne. "Chhue, Chhaupadi and ChueekulaPratha" – 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.

⁹Tuladhar, S. K. (2012). *Chhaupadi: A socio-cultural practice during menstruation in Far Western Nepal*, UNICEF Nepal

¹⁰Kadariya, S. &Aro, A. R (2015). *Chhaupadi practice in Nepal-analysis of ethical aspects*.

¹¹Kadariya, S. &Aro, A. R (2015). *Chhaupadi practice in Nepal-analysis of ethical aspects*.

¹²UNRHCO (2011). *Field Bulletin in Chaupadi*

for women in public and private life are the major contributing factors for the GBV in Nepal through encouraging the consequences of child marriage, dowry, women trafficking, polygamy, witchcraft, religious divorce, Chhaupadi and other faithful social-culture practices affecting the life of women and girls. The traditional gender norms and masculinity beliefs in society that encourage to tolerate men's habits and problems associated with infidelity are found to be major triggers of GBV.

Nepal has committed to response of gender equality and addressing the issues of GBV through signing the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, which supports the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action; and has accordingly adopted national action plans¹³. Additionally, over the past two decades, the nation has carried out substantial legal reforms to eliminate discrimination against women in the country's constitutional and legal frameworks. The constitution 2015 has prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender, recognised reproductive health and rights as fundamental rights, and banned all forms of violence against women. Additionally, the promulgation of Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act 2009, Amendment of some Nepali Acts to maintain Gender Equality and End Gender-Based Violence in 2014 are some key policy provision to address the issue of gender inequality and addressing on GBV.

Mainly, the new constitution of Nepal 2015 guarantees the right of women to protection against physical, mental, sexual, and psychological or any other forms of violence as fundamental right, with penalty for perpetrators and entitlement of compensation for victims. It has prohibited concretely any act of sexual or psychological violence against women, and oppression against women based on religious, social, cultural, or traditional practices, with offenders liable not only for punishment, but also compensation for victim. Despite all these efforts, violence against women and girls remains widespread in Nepal in different forms. Among those form, Chhaupadi is being practice in Mid-and Far-western regions as a form of gender based violence, where women and girls are not allowed to enter inside the house, touch water sources, eat nutritious food including milk and milk-products, and forced to stay in a hut outside identified as 'Chhaupadi-hut' or Cow-shed.

When the practice of Chhaupadi became a social debate, many human right defenders, social actors urged to eliminate this practice. Similarly to this, the Supreme Court of Nepal in May 2005 outlawed the Chhaupadi system and issues a directive to the GON to formulate laws for

¹³UNCT Gender Theme Group (2016). *Position paper on ending violence against women and girls in Nepal*

eliminating the practice¹⁴. Additionally, in 2008, the Ministry of Women, Child and Social Welfare promulgated guidelines to eradicate Chhaupadi nationally through promulgation of 'ChhaupadiPrathaUnmulan Nirdesika-2064 BS'. The guideline has mainly focused for ensuring commitment from different committee to address the issue of Chhaupadi and contribute to eliminate it.

¹⁴UNRHCO (2011). *Field Bulletin in Chaupadi*

Chapter III: Research Methodology and Approaches

With understanding the objectives and scope of the entire research work; different methodologies and approaches are applied by the research team to maintain credibility and validity both in research design and commissioning in the real field. The designing of the research work was mainly followed the TOR as suggested by AWON and BEE Group, and theories of social research. Similarly, several literatures related to research issues as well as project documents were reviewed for designing the research. Then, the research work in real field was commissioned with managerial supports from both implementing organization. The major approaches and methodologies that were applied in the entire research process are briefly highlighted as follow:

3.1 Desk Review:

Relevant documents related to Chhaupadi practice, socio-cultural practices of Karnali region as well as policy related documents (both primary and secondary) are reviewed. The review of such documents was targeted for designing the research framework as well as the tools/technique for data collection as expected to meet the research objectives. As an output of desk review, the research team finalized the modality of conducting the research work with specific tools and techniques.

3.2 Consultation with AWON and BEE Group:

After developing the tools and techniques based on the desk review, the research team organized consultation meetings with concerned officials of AWON and BEE Group. The consultation meeting was planned to finalize tools and techniques developed by the research team; and prepared detailed plan for field activities based on the proposed field plan of research team.

Meeting with AWON team was also conducted for second time after preparing the research tools and detail field plan. The second time, the meeting was mainly focused to agree on selecting of field enumerators, supervisors and final field plan for data collection. Hence, the meeting decided to select local enumerators from each districts to collect Household level data based on the developed questionnaires.

3.3 Training to enumerators and research assistants:

The research team designed a specific training programme to enumerators and research assistants to provide them basis knowledge and skill of research. Mainly, the enumerators and research assistants were taught on selecting the appropriate sample, technique of data collection with using questionnaires, and other approaches such as FGD, individual interview, observation and other qualitative tools. In total, there were 21 enumerators and 3 research assistants selected by AWON and BEE Groups to mobilize in three research districts. The training programme was organized for 3 days in headquarter of Jumla district on 23-27 Feb, 2017.

The training was not only planned to aware the enumerators and research assistants on research techniques, but it was also captured as an opportunity to test the developed research tool. The developed questionnaires were discussed in the training; and as an exercise, it was tasted through collecting data/information from nearby location of training venue. That provision gave an option to finalize the research tools and questionnaires through collective approach in training.

3.4 Data collection Processes:

On the basis of the designed tools and techniques; the field activities were assisted to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from different respondents and representative of different institutions. For this purpose, the Quantitative data were collected by mobilizing the field enumerators and research assistants with using field questionnaire from the selected participants by using sampling framework. The questionnaires was developed to collect required information from the targeted respondents.

Similarly, the Qualitative data/information were collected with using different participatory tools as per required with the context of stakeholders and social setting. The field enumerators and research assistants were assisted by the research team to collect and/or generate the qualitative data/information from the research participants as well as from the research site. However, the research team members also engaged for conducted FGD, interview and discussion among some specific participants in each district headquarter. For

that process, the enumerators and research assistants were given role to observe the process as learning for them to organize similar types of events in the local level.

Basically, several qualitative approaches were applied to collect data/information from the research site. For that purpose, some specific checklist was also developed as a reference to facilitate the data collection process in qualitative approaches. The basic approaches that were applied for qualitative data collection process were:

- **Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** In each VDC, two FGD was carried out to collect views, ideas and experiences of targeted participants. The first FGD was mainly targeted to female of reproductive age to collect their perception and practice on menstruation and its consequences. Similarly, another FGD was carried out in a mixed group of male and female. The objective of the mixed group was to collect views from male members regarding to menstruation practice. For all these process, a specific checklist was developed to conduct FGD with including some thematic questions to be discussed. Hence, in total, 42 FGDs were conducted in all 21 research VDCs in three districts.
- **Key Informant Interview (KII):** for collecting qualitative information, the data collection process was also focused to collect information from key stakeholders, representative of key institutions, social leaders, traditional healer and others as key informant. For making the KII process more effective, a list of possible informant was prepared through consulting with AWON and BEE Groups team members. Similarly, thematic areas of interview for KII were already prepared before going to field. In total, around 56 representatives of local institutions, youth leaders, social leaders, and others key informant were interviewed in this process.
- **Meeting with Stakeholders:** As data collection process, the research team met with district and local stakeholders (health office, education office, women and children office, police office and other concerned government offices in district and local level) and collected their view through discussion and interaction about the Chhaupadi practice and its effect on women and adolescent girls. Similarly, some consultation meeting was organized with specific institutions, committee such as district child club network, District women and child development office, and others in district head

quarter level to assess their view and experiences on Chhaupadi practice in the research location.

- **Observation:** Observations at the field level were carried out to assess the practice of Chhaupadi. The observation was mainly focused for capturing the information of socio-culture practices, daily activities of women and adolescent girls, and the impact of Chhaupadi in life of women and adolescents girls. Similarly, the Chhaupati-hut, Cow-shed and the living places of menstruating women and girls were also observed to capture the status of those places.

3.5 Selection of Research Site and Participants

The research work was a part of a project named "Elimination of *Chhaupadi* practice in Karnali, Nepal" as implementing by AWON and BEE Group in 21 VDCs of Jumla, Kalikot and Mugu district. Hence, the research location (districts and VDCs) are purposefully selected in the same working VDCs of Project.

Regarding for selecting the research participants, the research team followed some basic principle based on the objective and scope of the research. As the research theme is purely related to assess the understanding and perception (i.e. psychological thoughts and beliefs) of local people on Chhaupadi practice; it was assumed that the appropriate participant for the entire research work would be the local people (both female and male). Hence, the local people were selected as primary respondents for the research. However, the selection of those respondents were also categorically targeted to capture the representation from every categories of people, such as local leaders, elderly people, teachers, religious/faith leaders, traditional healers, local health volunteers, women household head, male youths, etc.

Besides these primary participant, other relevant participants were also selected for collecting their views through other aspects such as FGD, KII and interview. Some basis criteria was defined while selecting such types of participants while collecting data/information from the field level. Mainly, the persons who are directly involving to work for women, and girls; and experienced social and cultural issues related to women and girls are considered as appropriate participants. Hence, the relevant government representative, NGO workers, political leaders, women activists and child clubs members are selected as participants in

district level. Similarly, in the community level; the school teachers, FCHVs, health workers, traditional healers, religions/faith leaders, youths, elderly women and other female and male members of local institutions were selected as appropriate participants for research. Required information/data from these participants were collected/generated from applying appropriate qualitative tools/techniques such as FGC, interview, consultation, and meetings.

3.6 Sampling Framework

The data collected through using questionnaires was mainly focused for selected key respondents; and those respondents were selected based on the specific sampling numbers calculated through statistical methods. As the research theme was related to menstruation and Chhaupadi practice, the total population of the research was considered only for the whole population above age of 10 years of old in the 21 selected VDCs of the three districts. As a results, the total research population was found 48363 based on the national census report of Nepal¹⁵. Based on that total population, the sample number was calculated with using statistical sampling calculation method with assuming the confidence level of 99% and margin of error (degree of accuracy) of 5.0% with applying the below 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)

Hence, the total number of sample was derived as 655 from the total population. Further, the calculated sample (i.e. 655 sample) are divided into all 21 VDCs based on the ration of population. The below table gives the brief picture about number of sample collected from each research VDCs.

¹⁵The population number is calculated based on the National Census Report 2011

Table 1: Research Sample

Name of VDCs (Jumla)	Total Population	No of Sample	Name of VDCs (Kalikot)	Total Population	No of Sample	Name of VDC (Mugu)	Total Population	No of Sample
Lamra	2089	30	Chilkhaya	3153	42	Gamtha	1812	25
Kudari	3449	46	Phoimahadev	2405	30	Khamale	1242	17
Sannigaun	3295	45	Ranchuli	1693	23	Pina	2673	35
Raralihi	1811	25	Chhapre	2477	34	Rowa	3042	41
Ghodemahadev	1659	23	Jubitha	1665	24	Rara	992	14
Malikathata	2336	32	Pakha	2962	40	Seri	1545	21
Mahabaipatharkhola	2061	27	Dahaphat	3475	46	Srikot	2527	35
Total Sample		228			239			188

Note: the total research population is only considered for the above 10 years age population in the selected VDCs

While collecting data with applying the total calculated sample, it was also considered to capture the representation from diversified ethnicity and social background of respondents. Hence, the total calculated sample number of each VDCs was also divided to specific targeted groups to collect data.

3.7 Data Analysis and Reporting:

After completion of field activities, the research team concentrated for analysing the data. Both the quantitative and qualitative data were analysed with using specific data analysis technique. First, the quantitative data were analysed with using SPSS; and generated useful tables and cross-tabulation. Similarly, the qualitative data were analysed with coding the information in specific theme and area. In addition; some narratives were prepared with using the qualitative information to articulate the findings of quantitative data.

Regarding to the research report; first, a draft report was prepared and shared for the feedback and suggestion from concerned officials of AWON and BEE Group. Based on the first draft report, a joint meeting between research team and AWON team organized to discussion on the essence of report. The feedback on the report and the joint meeting suggested the research team to prepare the final research report.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Number of respondent in Research Districts and VDCs:

The total number of respondents captured through quantitative data collection process in three research districts are 655(Kalikot239, Jumla228, and Mugu188).The ration of number of respondents are higher in Kalikot as compare to Jumla and Mugu. It is because of proportion of total population staying in the proposed research VDCs. The ration of male and female is around 3:1 respectively. Out of total respondents, 65.3% are male and 34.7% are female.

Table 2: District * Sex of respondent Cross-tabulation

		Male	Female	Total
Kalikot	Count	158	81	239
	% within District	66.1%	33.9%	100.0%
Jumla	Count	148	80	228
	% within District	64.9%	35.1%	100.0%
Mugu	Count	122	66	188
	% within District	64.9%	35.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	428	227	655
	% within District	65.3%	34.7%	100.0%

Casts, Ethnicity and Religion:

Out of those total 655respondents, majority of respondents are represented from Cheetri casts (46.9%) and followed by Thakuri (23.5%) and Dalit (16.9%). There are also significant representation from Brahmin casts (12.1%), and few representation from Janjati (0.6%).

Table 3: Cast & ethnicity * District Cross-tabulation

		Kalikot	Jumla	Mugu	Total
Dalit	Count	50	32	29	111
	% within District	20.9%	14.0%	15.4%	16.9%
Janjati	Count	0	4	0	4
	% within District	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.6%
Brahman	Count	35	32	12	79
	% within District	14.6%	14.0%	6.4%	12.1%
Cheetri	Count	51	136	120	307
	% within District	21.3%	59.6%	63.8%	46.9%

Educational Status:

The education status of respondents vary in different level. Out of total respondents, majority are represented from three major level of education status, i.e. illiterate (27.6%), +2 and above level (24.3%) and Literate (16.8%).

Table 5: Education Status * District Cross-tabulation

		Kalikot	Jumla	Mugu	Total
Illiterate	Count	58	56	67	181
	% within District	24.3%	24.6%	35.6%	27.6%
Literate	Count	41	39	30	110
	% within District	17.2%	17.1%	16.0%	16.8%
Primary Level	Count	12	27	13	52
	% within District	5.0%	11.8%	6.9%	7.9%
Lower Secondary	Count	19	15	9	43
	% within District	7.9%	6.6%	4.8%	6.6%
Secondary	Count	17	17	13	47
	% within District	7.1%	7.5%	6.9%	7.2%
SLC	Count	23	24	16	63
	% within District	9.6%	10.5%	8.5%	9.6%
+2 and above	Count	69	50	40	159
	% within District	28.9%	21.9%	21.3%	24.3%
Total	Count	239	228	188	655
	% within District	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Similarly, there are some respondents who have education level of SLC (9.6%), secondary level (7.2%), lower secondary (6.6%), and primary level (7.9%). District wise, the proportion of level of education of respondents are found similar. However, the majority of respondents in Mugu (35.6%) and Jumla (24.6%) are represented from illiterate group; whereas in Kalikot majority is represented by +2 and above level (28.9%).

Occupational Status:

Regarding to the occupation of respondents and their family, majority of them states agriculture (66.0%) as a major occupation in their family. Similarly, it follows by Service (10.5%), business (2.7%), and self-employment (3.1%). The diversified trend of occupation, as found by the research, is also because of purposive sampling of the research participants. While selecting the primary research participants, it was expected to capture the representation from diverse economic group of people. It was mainly because of exploring the perception and understanding on Chhaupadi practice based on the occupation of

respondents. Additionally, while collecting data in the research areas, it was also considered to capture the voice of traditional healer/priest. Hence, a significant proportion (4.4%) of their engagement is also found in the research.

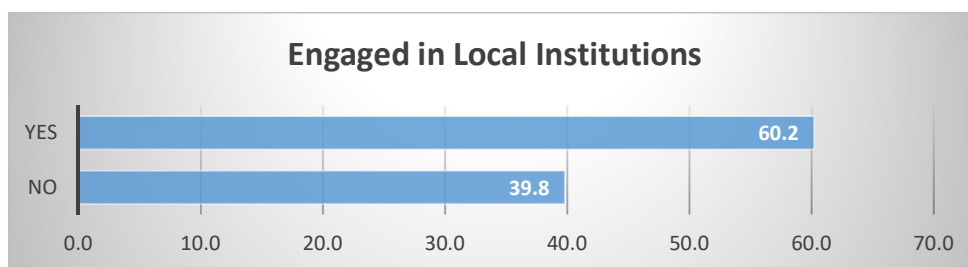
District-wise, the proportion of agriculture as major occupation is comparatively higher in Jumla (71.1%), than Jumla (69.5%) and Mugu (55.3%).

Table 6: Main Occupation * District Cross-tabulation

		Kalikot	Jumla	Mugu	Total
Agriculture/Livestock	Count	166	162	104	432
	% within District	69.5%	71.1%	55.3%	66.0%
Service	Count	23	35	11	69
	% within District	9.6%	15.4%	5.9%	10.5%
Business	Count	4	7	7	18
	% within District	1.7%	3.1%	3.7%	2.7%
Self-employment	Count	4	5	11	20
	% within District	1.7%	2.2%	5.9%	3.1%
Labour Work	Count	5	2	1	8
	% within District	2.1%	0.9%	0.5%	1.2%
Social Service/Leader	Count	10	10	13	33
	% within District	4.2%	4.4%	6.9%	5.0%
Traditional Healer/Priest	Count	10	4	15	29
	% within District	4.2%	1.8%	8.0%	4.4%
School Teacher	Count	14	3	16	33
	% within District	5.9%	1.3%	8.5%	5.0%
Other	Count	3	0	10	13
	% within District	1.3%	0.0%	5.3%	2.0%
Total	Count	239	228	188	655
	% within District	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Participation and Engagement in Local Social Institutions

The engagement of respondent in local institutions such as social group, user groups, CBOs, and different forms of local committee is found healthier in the research location. It was found that 60.2% of respondents are engaged in at least one institution as general member. Similarly, out of total respondents who are engaged in local institutions, 67.0% are represented as executive member in those institutions.



The status of representing in local institutions by the respondents is found diverse regarding to nature and types of institutions. It was found that majority of respondents are engaged in saving & credit group (44.5%) and women group (20.1%). There are also some representation of respondents in users committee (19.1%), local government committee in VDC and local bodies (14.3%), in school (14.1%) and health pose management committee (7.0%).

Table 7: Status of Respondents' Engagement in Local Institutions

<i>Types of Groups</i>	Responses	
	N	Percent of Cases
Saving & Credit Group/Cooperative	177	44.5
Women Group	80	20.1
Farmer Group	58	14.6
Users Committee	76	19.1
Local Governance Committee	57	14.3
SMC/PTA	56	14.1
Health Post Management Committee	28	7.0
Other groups/committee	62	15.6

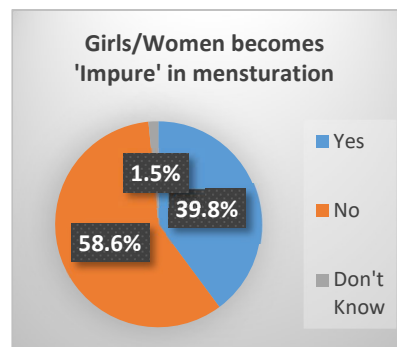
Note: Multiple Response

In summary, the socio-demographic features of respondents are varied in all three research district. Mainly, the research work has tried to capture the proportional representation from every categories of respondents regarding to casts and ethnicity, marital status, level of age, educational level, and occupation. Similarly, the social aspect such as engagement of respondents' on social institutions such as local groups, institutions, committee are also considered.

4.2 Perception and Understanding on Menstruation

Menstruation: matter of purity or Impurity

The respondents' perception and understanding on menstruation was found diverse in the research area. Out of total respondents, 58.6% perceive that girls/women at their menstruation become impure. However, 39.8% consider that they don't become impure at such period.



The perception of considering 'impure' to girls/women at their menstruating is significantly higher in female respondents. The research data shows that out of total female respondents, over half of them (53.3%) perceive that they are 'impure', where only 32.7% male respondents consider the same fact.

*Table 8: Girls/women become impure in menstruation * Sex of respondent Cross tabulation*

	Sex of respondent			Total
	Male	Female		
Yes	Count	140	121	261
	% within Sex of respondent	32.7%	53.3%	39.8%
No	Count	284	100	384
	% within Sex of respondent	66.4%	44.1%	58.6%
Don't Know	Count	4	6	10
	% within Sex of respondent	0.9%	2.6%	1.5%
Total	Count	428	227	655
	% within Sex of respondent	100.0%	100.00%	100.00%

Staying at Chhu-hut/Cow-Shed

The research tries to explore the perception of local people on whether the menstruating women/girls should stay separately in Chhu-hut/Cow-shed or not. Hence, it was asked to the research participants, "do you think that menstruating women/girls should only stay at Chhu-hut/Cow-shed or separate place?" Then, the response came from over one-third of respondents (33.3%) as 'Yes'.

Out of total respondents, it was found that the perception and beliefs of staying in Chhu-hut/Cow-shed or in separate place is significantly higher in female respondents as compare

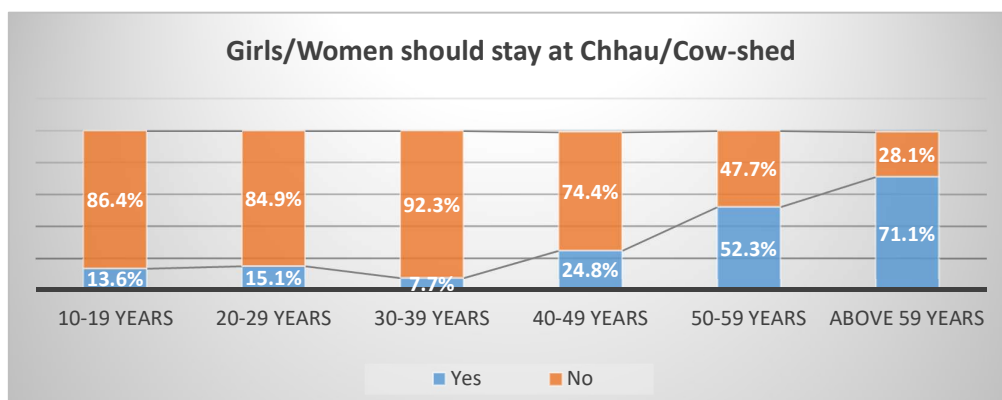
to male. The research data indicates that out of total female respondent, 46.7% believes that girls/women should only stay in Chhau/Cow-shed in their menstruation. However, the similar believe are only for 26.2% male respondents.

Table 9: Girls/Women should stay in Chhau/Cow-Shed in Menstruation

		Sex of respondent		
		Male	Female	Total
Yes	Count	112	106	218
	% within Sex of respondent	26.2%	46.7%	33.3%
No	Count	315	120	435
	% within Sex of respondent	73.6%	52.9%	66.4%
Don't Know	Count	1	1	2
	% within Sex of respondent	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%
Total	Count	428	227	655
	% within Sex of respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The understating and believes on 'staying at Chhau/cow-shed' is also found significantly link with the age factor of respondents. When the response of this data is analysed with the age-level of respondent, then it was found that respondents with having higher the ages strongly believes that women/girls should only stay in Chhu/Cow-shed. And only 13.6% respondents of age

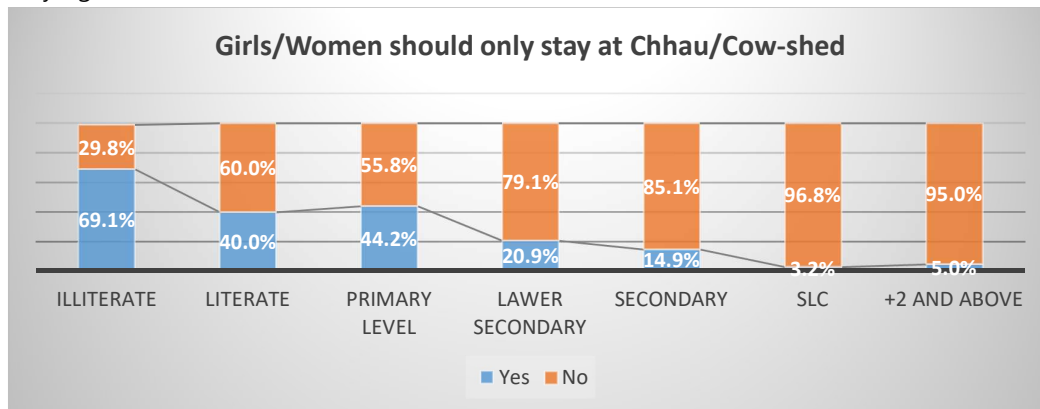
group
10-19
years



perceived about staying only in Chhau/Cow-Shed, however such perception was higher in the higher level of ages.

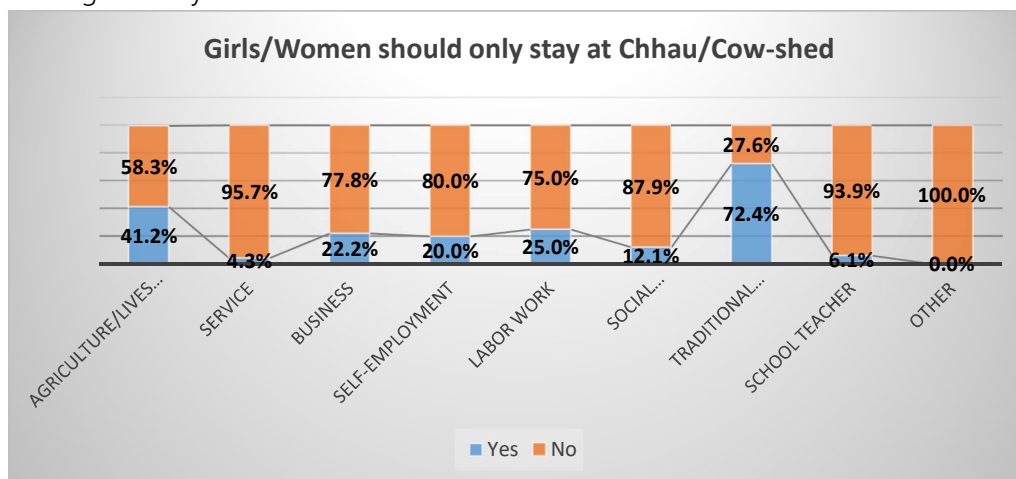
The perception, understating and believes of 'staying only in Chhau/Cow-shed' at the time of menstruating is also shaped among the respondents based on their educational level and occupation. It was found that higher the level of education of respondents shape belief of not staying at Chhau/Cow-shed; whereas the illiterate as well as the literate and below educational level of respondents perceive to stay at Chhau/Cow-shed. In this aspect, the

educational level of respondents is also one important factor to establish the perception of staying at outside at the time of menstruation.



Such assumption become true when we analysis and reviews the research data. The research data indicates that 69.1% respondent who are illiterate perceive to stay at Chhau/Cow-shed; whereas only 5% response who are in +2 and above believe the fact.

Similar to the occupation of respondents, the perception of staying at Chhau/Cow-shed is also significantly varied.



The statistical analysis of the following data indicates that significant proportion of respondents who are engaged in agriculture/livestock as primary occupation highly believe of staying at Chhau-/Cow-shed (41.2%). But, other respondents who are engaged in other occupations have significantly lower perception rate of staying at Chhau/cow-shed as compare to those who are in agriculture/livestock; such as service (4.3%), business (22.2%), self-employment (20.0%), labour work (25.0%), social leader (12.1%), and school teacher (0.1%). Among all the respondents based on their occupation, it was found that those people who highly perceive for staying at Chhau/Cow-shed are the traditional healer/priest (religious

leader) in the community. For the research data, it was found that 72.4% respondents who represent as traditional healer/priest perceive strongly for staying at Chhau/Cow-shed.

Perception on Food Habits/Culture while Menstruating:

The perception of food habits is found significantly varied in the research areas. It was found that 29.9% of respondents perceived that women/girls should not eat as usual food in their menstruation. Similarly, large proportion of them (56.6%) believe that they should not eat milk or milk products at that period.

Table 10: Perception on Food habits while Menstruating

Girls/Women should not eat as usual food in menstruation?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	196	29.9
No	456	69.6
Don't Know	3	0.5
Total	655	100.0
Girls/Women should not eat milk or milk products in menstruation?		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	371	56.6
No	282	43.1
Don't know	2	0.3
Total	655	100.0

Consuming food, milk and milk-product directly connects to nutrition and health. However, the major proportion of female respondents (68%) consider that they should not eat milk/milk-product at the time of their menstruation. Regarding to male respondents, such perception is little bit lower, i.e. out of total male respondents, only 51% believe that girls/women should not eat milk/milk-products at their menstruation.



While analysing the level of perception among the respondents based on their casts and ethnicity, it was found that there is not significant different in the perception and believe about consuming milk/milk-products at the menstruating. Over 50% respondents of all casts/ethnic groups perceive the fact that girls/women should not eat milk/milk-products at the time of their menstruation.

In the research areas, the perception behind not eating milk and milk-products are socially and culturally different. Mainly, a significant proportion of respondent perceive that milk should worship to God (64.2%), so menstruating women/girls should not consume it. Similarly, around half

Table 11: Reason of not eating Milk and Milk-products

Types of Reason	Responses	Percent of cases
<i>Cows become ill</i>	250	46.6%
<i>Milk should worship to God</i>	345	64.2%
<i>No such practice</i>	233	43.4%
<i>No permission from family</i>	67	12.5%
<i>Cows don't give milk if drink</i>	137	25.5%
<i>Others Reason</i>	102	19.0%

Note: Multiple Responses

proportion of respondents believe that if menstruating women/girls consume milk/milk-product, then the cows become ill (46.6%). Additionally, there are also other believe and perception about the reasons of not facilitating to consume milk/milk-product by girls/women at the time of their menstruation. Some respondents believe that such practice is not exit in community (43.4%), other perceive that cows don't give milk if they consume milk/milk-product at the time of menstruation (25.5%); and others believe that family member do not permit to consume milk/milk-product (12.5%).

Perception and Believe on Girls/women's Movement at menstruation:

It was found that large proportion of respondents do not think or believe the positive aspect of girls/women's movement at the time of menstruation. Out of total respondents, 40.8% believe that menstruating women/girls should not touch to male family members. Further they perceive that if they touch the male, God becomes angry and there will be bad luck in the family.

Similarly, one third of respondents (33.0%) believe that they should not touch the public water tap at the time of their menstruation. Additionally, a large proportion of respondents (68.8%) believe that women/girls should not walk past of the religious sites such as temple; around one third (32.7%) of respondents perceive that if the menstruating women/girls touch the vegetable/fruit plant, the plant becomes destruct and does not give fruit; around half of the respondent (47.8%) think that women/girls should not participant cultural and religious functions; and a few of them (16.0%) consider that they should not walk long distance.

Table 12: Perception and Believes on girls/women's movement at menstruation

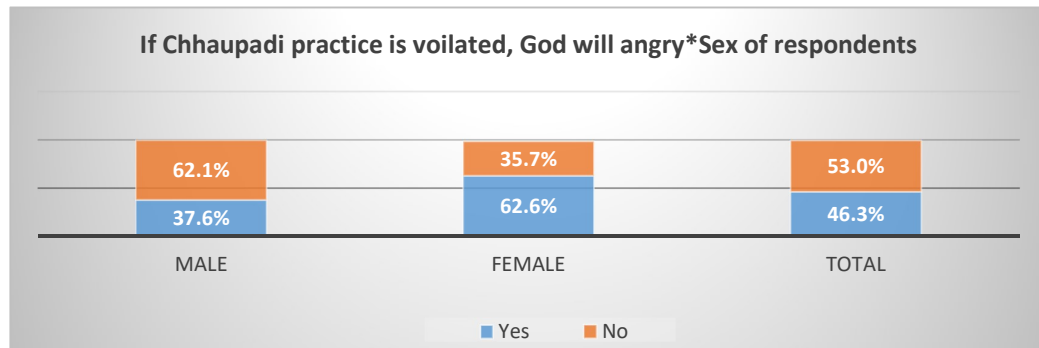
Types of Believe/Perception	Response	No		%		No		%		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
If Girls/Women touch male member, God becomes angry:	Yes	147	34.4	120	52.9	267	40.8			
	No	277	64.7	102	44.9	379	57.9			
	Don't Know	4	0.9	5	2.2	9	1.4			
	Total	428	100.0	227	100.0	655	100.0			
Girls/Women should not touch Public water tap	Yes	117	27.3%	99	43.6	216	33.0			
	No	311	72.7%	128	56.4	439	67.0			
	Total	428	100.0	227	100.0	655	100.0			
Girl/women should not cross/walk past religious sites (ex. Temple)	Yes	225	52.6	160	70.5	385	58.8			
	No	200	46.7	66	29.1	266	40.6			
	Don't Know	3	0.7	1	0.4	4	0.6			
	Total	428	100.0	227	100.0	655	100.0			
If girl/women touch vegetable/fruit plant, the crops will destruct	Yes	104	24.3	110	48.5	214	32.7			
	No	321	75.0	113	49.8	434	66.3			
	Don't Know	3	0.7	4	1.8	7	1.1			
	Total	428	100.0	227	100.0	655	100.0			
Girl/women should not participate in Cultural, religious function	Yes	180	42.1	133	58.6	313	47.8			
	No	242	56.5	88	38.8	330	50.4			
	Don't Know	6	1.4	6	2.6	12	1.8			
	Total	428	100.0	227	100.0	655	100.0			
Girls/Women should not travel long distance	Yes	45	10.5	60	26.4	105	16.0			
	No	351	82.0	149	65.6	500	76.3			
	only nearby	32	7.5	18	7.9	50	7.6			
	Total	428	100.0	227	100.0	655	100.0			

All these perception and believe as conceptualized by the respondents about the movement of women/girls are directly and/or indirectly shaped by shaped by socio-cultural believe system. However, it was found that out of total respondents who stated their view on girls/women's movements at the time of their menstruating, responses of female are more convinced by existing socio-cultural aspects. Because, the response of female are more relevant to social/traditional aspect of believe system. In summary, it was found that female are more traditional as compare to male in the research location to follow the socio-cultural believes relating to menstruation and Chhaupadi.

Superstitious believes on Menstruation and Chhaupadi:

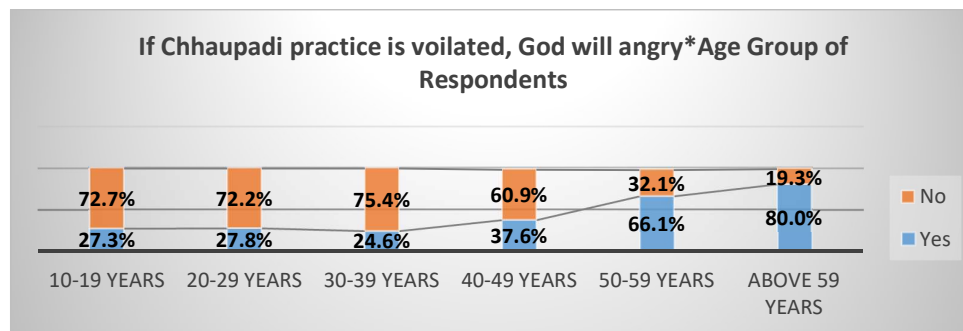
The social thoughts and believes is directly linked with superstitious believe system which is connected with unknown God and Goddess. Around half of the respondents (46.3%) believe that if the Chhaupadi practice is violated (i.e. do not follow by girls/women), then the God will angry and there will be negative consequences in family and even the community.

Regarding to sex of respondents, this believe system is more rooted among the women.

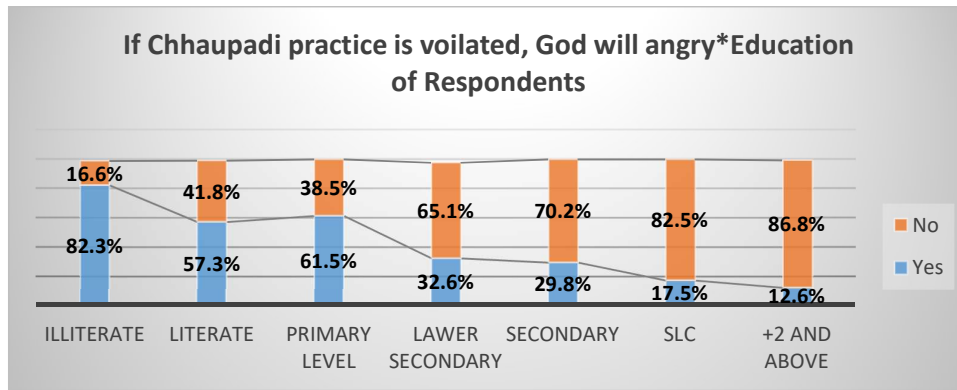


Because, out of total female respondents, 62.6% believe this statement; whereas only 37.6% male respondents believe on it.

The perception and believe on superstitious thoughts, i.e. God will angry is also shaped among the research participants based on their level of education and age factors. It was found that there were significant correlation between superstitious believe to God and level of education and age.



It was found that the respondent with higher age more believe upon the God and perceive that if the social customs of and menstruation and Chhaupadi are violated, then the God will angry and will happen negative consequences to family and society. However, similar thoughts and believe is comparatively lower in the below age group of respondents. For example, 80% of respondent age of above 59 years believe that God will angry, whereas only 27.3% respondent age of 10-19 years believe the same statement.



Additionally, respondents' level of education is also significantly correlated with their superstitious beliefs upon God regarding to following the social practices of menstruation and Chhaupadi. It was found that higher the education level, lower believe upon God; and lower the education level, higher believe upon God. For example, only 12.6% of respondents who have +2 and above education believe that God will angry if the Chhaupadi practice is violated, whereas the same statement of believe is higher in those respondents who are illiterate (82.3%).

Chapter V: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

The socio-cultural beliefs, norms and values regarding to menstruation and *Chhaupadi* are deeply rooted in the research areas. Respondents' education level, age factors and occupation are significantly shaped the perception, understanding and belief system on Chhaupadi among the research participants. Similarly, the female has rooted belief, perception and social thoughts towards traditional aspect of menstruation and Chhaupadi as compare to male. Although the women/girls are negatively affecting by the consequences of Chhaupadi, they are more convinced to perceive the traditional and affecting social thoughts and beliefs of Chhaupadi.

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. Here is the summary of major research findings:

- 58.6% of respondents perceived that girls/women become impure during their menstruation. Such believe is higher among the female respondents (53.3%).
- 33.3% of respondents (46.7% female and 26.2% male) perceived the girls/women should stay in separate place outside home like Chhau-hut, Cow-shed and other separate place during menstruation.
- The understating and believes on 'staying at Chhau/cow-shed' is found significantly high with the age and education level of respondents. Mostly high age respondents perceivedon "staying at Chhau/cow-shed' whereas mostly highly educated persons perceived on 'not staying at Chhau/cow-shed'.
- The occupation and social identity of respondents is also shaping the understanding and beliefs of respondents upon menstruation and Chhaupadi practice. It was found that 72.4% traditional healers/priest perceived that girls/women should strictly stay at Chhau-hut/Cow-shed at menstruation.
- 29.9% of respondents perceived that women/girls should not eat as usual food and 56.6% believed that they should not eat milk or milk products during menstruation.

- 64.2% of respondent perceived that milk is used to worship Gods and Goddesses, so menstruating women/girls should not consume it. Similarly, 46.6% believe that cows become ill if they consume milk and milk product.
- 33% of respondent believes that menstruating girls/women should not touch the public water tap; 68.8% believes that they should not walk through the religious sites.
- 32.7% of respondents perceive that if they touch the vegetable/fruit plant, the plant becomes destruct and does not give fruit; 47.8% think that women/girls should not participant cultural and religious functions; and a few of them (16.0%) consider that they should not walk long distance.
- 46.3% of respondents believed that if the Chhaupadi practice is violated (i.e. do not follow by girls/women), then the God will angry and there will be negative consequences in family and even the community.

5.2 Recommendation

While interacting among the respondents and analysing the research data, it becomes clear that social and traditional thoughts and believes of Chhaupadi system is significantly rooted in the communities. The people with below educational level are more convinced to traditional and cultural practices of Chhaupadi which are affecting the lives of women and girls. Mainly, the beliefs and thoughts related to negative aspects of Chhaupadi are superstitiously captured in the thinking of women. From the research data, it seems that female is supporting to follow the practices of Chhaupadi in the community. However, a large proportion of female are also convinced that the Chhaupadi practice is affective the lives of women and girls. Hence, their engagement is also essential to abolition of such practice from the society. But, it becomes clear after observing the trends of Chhaupadi practice that abolition of thispractice 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. However, some strategic actions and approaches are required to contribute for eliminating the practice from the society. Some of the recommended approaches, strategies and actions are as follow:

Recommendation for Local Government

- The local government can work together with social institutions, I/NGOs, CBOs, and other development actors to educate, aware and motive the local people on the negative consequences of Chhaupadi. The negative behaviours and practices that are adapting in

the community is not very easy to make changes, but through the initiation of local government, such practice might be reduced gradually.

- The local government can make some special provision in the case of practice of Chhaupadi. The conditional provision on local government's service in the case of Chhaupadi practice may support the reduction of such practice from community.
- Promoting the participation of women in local government, local planning & development process support to fulfil the rights of women, and gradually the overall status of women will be improved.
- The local government can promote the idea of recognizing and rewarding the "Role Model Women" as social movements to empower and educate other female who are deprived in rural community. The role model women can be mobilized to spread the message of Chhaupadi practice and its effects on life of women among the local women.

Recommendation for Development Organization working on Chhaupadi Elimination

- Perception, thoughts and belief among the women are not convincing towards menstruation and Chhaupadi system. Although most of the women/girls are negatively affected by the rooted Chhaupadi practice in the society, their belief is shaped by socio-cultural values and norms. They are more convinced towards even the negative consequences of Chhaupadi. In such context, first the interventions of Chhaupadi elimination should reach to women/girls. They are needed to educate, aware and counsel on their basic rights, menstruation and other changes of development policies and provision.
- It was found that the social thoughts, beliefs and perception are mainly shaped by the education among the respondents. Hence, education might be the best strategy to eliminate the practice of Chhaupadi. However, in the short-term, some informal education programme targeting to women and family members can be targeted to aware and educate them on basic principles of women's rights, menstruation practices, and harmful consequences of Chhaupadi.
- It seems that the youth/adolescents have changing attitude regarding to negative aspects of Chhaupadi. In many cases, it was found that their perception, thoughts, and belief are not convincing towards the negative consequences and practice of Chhaupadi. In this regards, theYouths/adolescents can play a role of change-agent in the community. The participation of youths/adolescents in awareness campaigns, advocacy, and educating the family and community people may eliminate the negative practice of Chhaupadi.
- It was found that thoughts and beliefs of some traditional healer (religious leader) are changed because of their education, and exposure. However, there are still a significant

proportion of religious leaders who are traditionally convinced for Chhaupadi practice. In such aspect, those religious leaders who are adopted the changes can play as role-model in community to education and counsel other religious leader as well as the community people on the negative aspects of Chhaupadi system.

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Contact Address



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

Phone: +977 1 4227730

Email: actionworksnepal.awon10@gmail.com

www.actionworksnepal.org

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