

Dignified Menstruation Campaign Nepal (DMC Nepal)



CEDAW & Menstrual Discrimination in Nepal

Nepal's Non-governmental Organization Report assessing the government's progress in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 90th Session, 3-7 February 2025

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Abbreviation

DMC Nepal	Dignified Menstruation Campaign Nepal
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HMIS	Health Management Information System
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
RJ	Reproductive Justice
RPF	Radha Paudel Foundation

Menstrual Discrimination is an umbrella term that includes silence, taboos, shame, stigma, restrictions, abuses, violence, and deprivation from services and resources associated with menstruation throughout the life cycle of menstruators¹.

1. Introduction:

1.1 Menstrual Discrimination

According to the 2021 Nepal census, 51% of the population consists of women, representing the majority of menstruators (individuals born with a uterus and ovaries). The term "menstruators" serves as a primary demographic category and promotes inclusivity, encompassing girls, women, transgender men, and other non-gender-conforming individuals who are menstruators. Menstruators are present across all sectors of society, working in both formal and informal settings, with varying levels of education, and representing diverse ethnicities, religions, and regions, including areas affected by disasters, pandemics, climate vulnerability, and other humanitarian contexts.

Despite their diverse backgrounds, over 95% of menstruators experience menstrual discrimination, which is referenced by more than 50 different euphemisms¹. While this discrimination is more visible in a few parts of western Nepal, it manifests in less apparent forms; invisible forms are present throughout the rest of the country. The menstrual discrimination is defined *is an umbrella term that includes silence, taboos, shame, stigma, restrictions, abuses, violence, and deprivation from services and resources associated with menstruation throughout the life cycle of menstruators².*

It's important to note that "Chhaupadi," often cited as the sole menstrual discrimination, actually means "menstruation" in the local Achhami language. These discriminatory practices extend beyond "Chhaupadi huts" and affect menstruators, menstrual blood, and the menstruation period itself, resulting in numerous restrictions, exclusions, and exploitation³. These practices impact fundamental rights, including dignity, equality, freedom, environmental access, education, health, employment, housing, clothing, and the ability to manage menstrual blood and products. Regardless of ethnicity, class, religion, or region, this discrimination stems from the widespread perception of menstrual blood as "impure" and "dirty" and menstruation as a "state of weakness," with fear being a common underlying factor⁴.

Both menstruators and non-menstruators typically learn about menstruation between the ages of six and nine through observation of their home, school, community, and media exposure in their environment. From this early age, menstruators often internalize feelings of inferiority and disadvantage, while non-menstruators develop a sense of superiority and privilege⁵. This dynamic is the foundation for establishing power relations and patriarchal structures. These

¹ Paudel R., 2020. Dignified Menstruation, A Practical Handbook.

² Paudel R., 2020. Dignified Menstruation, A Practical Handbook.

³ <https://www.dignifiedmenstruation.org/detail/97/a-baseline-study-of-menstrual-dignity-for-srhr-in-all-diversities>

⁴ Husken U., Paudel R., 2024. Gendered Agency in Transcultural Hinduism and Buddhism.

⁵ Paudel R., 2020. Dignified Menstruation, A Practical Handbook

unequal power dynamics and patriarchal systems create a self-perpetuating cycle that affects all aspects of menstruators' lives, resulting in systemic inequalities and reinforced patriarchy. Consequently, social and political norms evolve in ways that consistently devalue menstruators, treating them as disadvantaged and oppressed throughout their lives "from womb to tomb," even after death in some cultures. The impact of menstrual discrimination manifests in three primary ways: descriptive (perception of menstruation as impure, dirty, or a state of weakness), normative or prescriptive (dictating specific norms, roles, or behaviors), and structural (affecting power dynamics, privileges, and prestige).

Menstrual discrimination is a form of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) according to the SGBV's definition of UN (1993). It is also violation of human rights as enshrined in declaration of Human Rights (1948). For example, when menstruators are excluded from cultural programs, this practice constitutes multiple categories of SGBV, including physical and emotional violence, as well as deprivation of services. Furthermore, these discriminatory practices violate fundamental human rights, including dignity, freedom, equality, protection against untouchability and exploitation, access to a clean environment, education, health, and food. Such discrimination also represents a violation of constitutional rights⁶.

Most significantly, menstrual discrimination serves as both a source of multiple forms of discrimination and an underlying cause of other types of SGBV, such as sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, including child marriage. Additionally, it creates barriers that prevent individuals from accessing and claiming their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)⁷.

1.2. Dignified Menstruation Campaign Nepal

In Nepal, the Dignified Menstruation Campaign Nepal (DMC Nepal), initiated by the Radha Paudel Foundation, works to eliminate menstrual discrimination and dismantle patriarchal power structures through the Dignified Menstruation framework⁸. The coalition unites over 44 organizations across all seven provinces, including civil society organizations and NGOs representing diverse marginalized communities—from LBT+ groups and menstruators with disabilities to child and youth clubs and rural women's rights organizations.

1.3. Dignified Menstruation

Dignified Menstruation is a transformative human rights and feminist framework that challenges menstrual discrimination—a systemic tool that perpetuates false narratives of menstruators' inferiority to maintain patriarchal control. By addressing discrimination throughout the life cycle and exposing how it manufactures unequal power dynamics between menstruators and non-menstruators, this holistic approach works to dismantle deeply rooted systems of oppression.

⁶ Training Manual on Dignified Menstruation, 2023. Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation

⁷ <https://www.dignifiedmenstruation.org/detail/97/a-baseline-study-of-menstrual-dignity-for-srhr-in-all-diversities>

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/DignifiedMenstruationNepal>

2. Article 1-5: General State Obligation

2.1. While "ending all forms of discrimination" is enshrined in the constitution's preamble. Article 24 (1) explicitly states that "no person shall be subjected to any form of untouchability or discrimination in any private and public places on grounds of his or her origin, caste, tribe, community, profession, occupation or physical condition," menstrual discrimination has yet to be formally recognized as a form of discrimination. Moreover, menstrual discrimination consistently violates multiple fundamental constitutional rights, including the Right to Dignity (Article 16 (1)), Right to Equality (Article 17 (1)), Right to Freedom (Article 18 (1, 2, 3)), Right against Exploitation (Article 29 (1, 2, 3)), Right to Clean Environment (Article 30 (1)), Right to Housing (Article 37(1)), Right to Food (Article 36 (1, 2)), Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Rights (Article 38 (3, 4)), and Right to Social Justice (Article 42). Unfortunately, both visible and invisible forms of menstrual discrimination and their wide-ranging impacts on menstruators' lives remain entirely unaddressed, throughout all policies and programming.

2.2. The term 'Chhaupadi,' which simply means 'menstruation' in the Achhami language, has been mischaracterized by academics, NGOs, donors, and media as a "harmful traditional practice" in GR 31⁶. This misclassification obscures the true nature and scope of menstrual discrimination, which fundamentally differs from other practices like son preference, dowry, child marriage, witchcraft accusations, or Female Genital Mutilation. Menstrual discrimination affects 51% of Nepal's population and, crucially, many of these other forms of violence and harmful practices can be understood as outcomes of deeply rooted menstrual discrimination rather than isolated phenomena. This false narrative of 'harmful traditional practice' fails to recognize how menstrual discrimination serves as a foundational mechanism for perpetuating systemic gender-based violence. Moreover, this mischaracterization imposes an additional layer of oppression on people living in Western Nepal and Nepal as a whole by stigmatizing their communities rather than addressing the underlying systemic issues of menstrual discrimination⁷.

2.3. Menstruation is universally regarded as 'impure', 'dirty', and a 'state of weakness' throughout Nepal, with restrictions on food, touch, mobility, and visibility remaining broadly similar across regions. During their menstrual periods, menstruators face dozens of restrictions and various forms of exclusion. While it is popularly recognized that some families in Western Nepal confine menstruators to separate huts, this practice varies significantly. In the mountainous regions of Western Nepal, menstruators are often confined to particular spaces within the same home. Similarly, in urban areas like Kathmandu, Chitwan, or East Nepal, where high land prices and space constraints make separate menstrual huts impractical, menstruators are restricted to individual rooms, segregated flats, or designated corners within the home⁶. Even in cases where people are not confined to separate rooms, they are prohibited from entering the kitchen and prayer room and are not allowed to eat together with the family. Thus, while the specific manifestations of menstrual restrictions may vary across regions and settings, the fundamental practice of exclusion and isolation persists throughout Nepal.

2.4. Menstrual discrimination is practiced by over 99% of families in Nepal, regardless of class, religion, region, or ethnicity⁹. While the specific names, forms, and severity of these discriminatory practices may vary from person to person and family to family, the fundamental

⁹ doi: [10.1186/s12978-022-01456-0](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-022-01456-0)

discrimination remains consistent throughout society. Across Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim communities and among diverse ethnic groups, including indigenous peoples, common restrictions prevent menstruators from participating in religious activities, handling plant seeds, touching vegetables or fruits, or making physical contact with non-menstruating family members. Perhaps most pervasively, a culture of silence surrounds menstruators, reinforcing their systemic exclusion.

2.5. The Domestic Violence Crime and Punishment Act (2009) fails to recognize menstrual discrimination as a form of domestic violence, despite its clear manifestations as sexual, psychological, and physical violence and the deprivation of essential services and resources. The practice of restricting menstruators from kitchen spaces and confining them to separated corners or rooms not only inflicts severe psychological trauma but also leaves them vulnerable to physical or sexual violence if these restrictions are not followed. This grave impact on menstruators' well-being and safety is systematically overlooked when menstrual discrimination is mischaracterized merely as a "harmful traditional practice" rather than being recognized as a form of structural violence.

2.6. In 2017, a policy on Dignified Menstruation was drafted to address menstrual discrimination, but it remains in draft form. The Civil and Penal Code 2017 (168; 3, 4, 5) includes provisions for punishing menstrual discrimination. However, these provisions are poorly defined in scope, unclear on reporting mechanisms and legal enforcement, and inadvertently create an additional layer of discrimination against Western Nepal. While the Gender Equality Act 2021 and the 16th Five-Year Plan mention a term 'dignified menstruation,' they fail to define the term, its scope, or establish specific indicators for measuring progress.

2.7. The distribution of free menstrual pads, the construction of toilets, or discussions about reproductive anatomy alone cannot dismantle the systemic inequalities and patriarchy that are constructed and perpetuated through complex and multifaceted menstrual discrimination. Even if a menstruator has access to world-class menstrual products and adequate facilities, dignified menstruation remains unattainable when they face restrictions on mingling with family members, accessing water, or obtaining food when hungry or thirsty. These and many other restrictions simultaneously violate multiple fundamental human rights, demonstrating how current policy approaches fail to address the deeper structural nature of menstrual discrimination.

2.8. Nepal initiated the distribution of free menstrual pads in 2019, yet this policy fails to address the fundamental rights of menstruators. While providing free pads, the policy does not explicitly challenge discriminatory practices such as requiring separate bedding, plates, utensils, or living spaces, nor does it address menstruators' rights to mobility and social inclusion. As a result, menstruators continue to endure discriminatory practices and face life-threatening risks. The deaths reported by donors, media, and NGOs as "snake bite fatalities" misrepresent the root cause: these deaths result from the government's failure to protect citizens' right to health by not providing snake bite prevention education, emergency transportation services, adequate medical care, and equipped medical facilities.

2.9. The Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act (2015) fails to acknowledge any form of discrimination related to menstruation or menopause in its provisions¹⁰. Informal sector, menstruators asked for unpaid leave or not allow to do regular activities during menstruation.¹¹ Likewise, menstruators subject to ranges of violence from mental torture to quit the job due to having moderate to severe menopausal symptoms¹².

2.10. The Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act (2018), implemented to uphold constitutional rights (38.3, 4), fails to recognize menstrual discrimination as a barrier to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The current SRHR framework's narrow focus on reproductive anatomy education overlooks the systemic discrimination that menstruators face. Simply discussing reproductive organs does not address the deep-rooted menstrual discrimination that fundamentally restricts menstruators' access to their SRHR, as achieving SRHR is impossible without first addressing the complex layers of menstrual discrimination that underlie these barriers¹³. For instance, Ministry of Health and Population hosted two days orientation program on adolescent health where they discussed intimate friendship, safe/unsafe sex etc. where they were practicing menstrual practice at home without saying 'no'. Menstrual discrimination is an underlying barriers for SRHR¹⁴.

2.11. Although children learn about and begin to internalize menstrual discrimination between the ages of six and nine years, none of the child rights policies—including the child-friendly municipality strategy, child marriage policies, or school education frameworks—recognize menstrual discrimination as an urgent matter requiring transformation.

2.12. Almost every sector has Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) policies are in place and recently few sectorial offices and schools placed the vending machine at wash rooms for menstrual pads secretly. It is unfortunate that none of the GESI policies acknowledge or address discrimination related to menstruation and menopause¹⁵. Likewise, without recognize the scope of menstrual discrimination and dismantle of it, the vending machine of menstrual pads are less effective.

2.13. While disability-related strategies address SRHR as a cascading effects of implementation of UNCRPD, it fail to acknowledge the menstrual discrimination faced by menstruators with disabilities, including within educational frameworks. Menstruators with disability experiences ranges of menstrual discrimination, direct and indirect violence due to menstrual discrimination such as imposed medication for suppress menstruation, or surgery (hysterectomy). In other hand,

¹⁰ Paudel, R. (2023). *Menstrual discrimination and its impact on decent work*

¹¹ Paudel, R. (2023). *Menstrual discrimination and its impact on decent work*.

¹² Kemp, H. (2022). Surgical Menopause.

¹³ <https://www.dignifiedmenstruation.org/detail/97/a-baseline-study-of-menstrual-dignity-for-srhr-in-all-diversities>

¹⁴ <https://www.dignifiedmenstruation.org/detail/97/a-baseline-study-of-menstrual-dignity-for-srhr-in-all-diversities>

¹⁵ Regmi, A., Acharya, D., Paudel, R., Koirala, S., & Wenzel, T. Research Open. *Archives of Women Health and Care*, 4(4).

there is huge lack of access of educational materials like sign language, tactile, brail etc. on menstruation and menopause¹⁶. There is no priority for the research too.

RECOMMENDATION:

- i) Language and Representation: Eliminate the use of the term 'Chhaupadi' in discussions of menstrual discrimination, as it inaccurately reduces complex systemic issues to a regional practice and perpetuates stigma against communities in western Nepal. This oversimplification fails to address broader systemic menstrual discrimination.
- ii) Systemic Recognition: Define and acknowledge menstrual discrimination as a distinct structural issue that contributes to systemic inequalities and reinforces patriarchal systems. This discrimination should be examined and addressed independently rather than being subsumed under other forms of gender-based discrimination, such as child marriage, dowry practices, or accusations of witchcraft.
- iii) Independent Framework: Recognize menstrual discrimination as a systemic and structural form of violence against menstruators that extends far beyond specific practices like chhaupadi huts. The current framing of menstrual discrimination as primarily a “harmful traditional practice” not only provides an inadequate definition but actively obscures its true nature as a deep-rooted structural issue. Menstrual discrimination is deeply embedded in social, institutional, and economic structures that perpetuate exclusion and inequality. It functions as an independent source of oppression while simultaneously creating conditions for multiple intersecting forms of discrimination. This discrimination serves as a catalyst that enables and perpetuates other forms of violence against menstruators across all spheres of life - from education and employment to healthcare and civic participation. As such, it demands its dedicated framework for analysis and intervention, separate from but connected to other forms of gender-based discrimination. Understanding menstrual discrimination as a pervasive structural issue rather than merely a harmful traditional practice is crucial for developing comprehensive strategies that address its systemic nature and its varied manifestations across different contexts and institutions.
- iv) Legal Integration: Explicitly recognize menstrual discrimination as a fundamental barrier to SRHR and incorporate dignified menstruation principles into the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Rights Act (2018). This integration will strengthen the legal framework protecting menstruators' SRHR and entire health, including nutrition. Due to the vicious impact of menstrual discrimination, menstruators are deprived of access to nutritious food (deprived from entering into kitchen, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products, meat and meat products etc.).
- v) Cross-Sectoral Implementation: Establish 'dignified menstruation' as a cross-cutting theme throughout all sector-specific Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) policies and programs. This comprehensive approach ensures consistent attention to menstrual dignity across all feminist, human rights and development policy initiatives.

¹⁶ Paudel, R. (2020). Dignified menstruation, a practical handbook.

vi) Legislative Reform: Amend the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act (2015) to explicitly recognize menstrual discrimination as a form of gender-based violence and human rights violation. This alignment will strengthen consistency with constitutional rights and support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) commitment to Leave No One Behind specific to SDG 8, decent work.

vii) Institutional Prioritization: Elevate menstrual discrimination to a priority concern within the National Women Commission and National Human Rights Commission mandates, ensuring systematic monitoring and response mechanisms.

viii) Resource Allocation: Establish dedicated budget allocations for urgent research initiatives, policy development, and program implementation addressing menstrual discrimination, recognizing the immediate need for evidence-based interventions and systemic change.

ix) The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, as the primary institution responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of children, women, trans men, non-gender-binary and other Queer individuals, and menstruators with disabilities, should integrate dignified menstruation across all its functions as follows:

1. Policy Implementation: Expedite the finalization and implementation of the National Dignified Menstruation Policy 2017, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all affected populations.
2. Guideline Modernization: Fast-track the adoption of the 2020 Dignified Menstruation guideline to replace the outdated 2008 *Chhaupadi Prevention Guideline*, reflecting the current understanding of menstrual dignity.
3. Inclusive Integration: Systematically incorporate dignified menstruation principles and menstrual discrimination prevention into all policies and programs affecting:
 - Children's rights initiatives
 - Disability rights and accessibility programs
 - LGBTIQ+ support services, specifically addressing the needs of queer, trans men, and other non-gender-binary communities
4. Legal Clarity: Revise the Civil and Penal Code 2018 to establish clear, unambiguous penalties for menstrual discrimination, ensuring effective enforcement and accountability.
5. Amplify the advocacy on Dignified Menstruation: As a focal ministry, ensure the specific activities and budget on dignified menstruation in across all ministries. Likewise, dignified menstruation consider as priority issue and incorporate in all policies and programs such as shelter, child marriage etc.

3. Article 10: Education

3.1. The right to education, enshrined in Article 31 of the Constitution, is fundamentally undermined by early exposure to menstrual discrimination. Children begin internalizing

messages about menstruation discrimination as early as age six (grade one), well before many experience menarche around grades four to five¹⁷. Current school textbooks fail to present menstrual blood in accurate, non-stigmatizing terms - they do not acknowledge it as pure, clean, or as a natural process that neither indicates weakness nor disease. Attempting to teach SRHR in grade six without first addressing and dismantling menstrual discrimination is ineffective, as discriminatory attitudes and beliefs have already taken root. This resembles trying to pour water into sand - the crucial messages about SRHR cannot be properly absorbed when the foundation is compromised by years of unchallenged menstrual discrimination.

3.2. While government initiated free menstrual pad distribution to school-going menstruators through schools since 2019, this intervention alone fails to ensure their dignity due to persistent menstrual discrimination that affects them continuously during their menstrual periods. Menstruators face multiple daily challenges during their approximately five days of menstrual bleeding:

- Must wake up earlier than usual
- Need to find alternative ways to access and manage water (created another layer of violence in many ways)
- Face delays in receiving meals
- Must use different seating arrangements in classrooms
- Resort to wearing double layers of underwear or trousers to prevent leaking
- Forced to limit water intake
- Deal with constant anxiety about leakage

These restrictions and anxieties shift their focus from education to managing their bodies and preventing embarrassment. The cumulative impact is significant: menstruators lose approximately two months of regular activities annually (five days per month), leading to increased school absenteeism, academic struggles, and, ultimately school dropout. This chain of events often culminates in early or child marriage, either forced or as a perceived solution to their situation. Yet notably, the Child Marriage Strategy (2014) fails to recognize menstrual discrimination as a key driver of child marriage¹⁸.

3.3. Despite the introduction of school health nurses in 2018, educational materials across all levels - from school textbooks to university curricula - fail to address discrimination related to menstruation and menopause adequately. This gap extends even to specialized medical, nursing, and public health programs, where the focus tends to be limited to clinical or commercial aspects. The current approach neglects the social, cultural, and discriminatory dimensions of menstruation and menopause, instead favoring purely medical perspectives or business-oriented views. This systemic oversight in educational content perpetuates a narrow understanding of menstrual and menopausal complexity, failing to equip healthcare professionals and students with comprehensive knowledge about discrimination and its impacts.

¹⁷ doi: [10.1186/s12905-023-02494-x](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-023-02494-x)

¹⁸ Paudel, R., Shah, N. J., & Ahmed, T. Isn't Menstrual Discrimination a Driver for Child Marriage?.

3.4. While diversity in sports continues to expand, equal participation of menstruators in sports and physical education remains significantly constrained. Menstruators face unique barriers that limit their full engagement in athletic activities despite the growing inclusivity in sports. The intersection of menstrual discrimination with physical education and competitive sports creates obstacles that prevent menstruators from fully participating in these essential developmental and professional opportunities. This disparity persists even as other aspects of sports diversity show improvement, highlighting the need to address menstruation-related barriers in athletic contexts specifically.

RECOMMENDATION:

i. Educational Reform: Comprehensively revise textbooks and educational programs across all levels to eliminate discriminatory content regarding menstruation and menopause. This revision should extend from primary schools (to cultivate the principles and values of dignified menstruation where students of primary schools would work as agent for dismantling menstrual discrimination at school and home) to universities, particularly emphasizing medical, nursing, and public health curricula. Integrate dignified menstruation as a foundational approach for effective SRHR education, supported by dedicated scholarships and research grants.

ii. Adult Education Integration: Incorporate dignified menstruation concepts into continuing education programs, including adult and functional literacy initiatives. This integration should serve dual purposes: empowering menstruators to embrace their experiences with pride while educating non-menstruators about their responsibilities in creating supportive environments.

iii. Child Marriage Prevention: Explicitly recognize and address menstrual discrimination as a previously overlooked driver of child and forced marriage. Integrate this understanding into existing prevention strategies and policies.

iv. Program Redesign: Center menstrual dignity in designing and implementing all menstruation-related initiatives, including pad distribution and sanitation facility programs. This approach ensures that practical interventions contribute to broader dignity and rights-based objectives.

v. Sports Inclusion: Develop and implement specialized educational programs on dignified menstruation within sports and physical education curricula, ensuring equal participation opportunities and addressing the specific needs of menstruating athletes.

4. Article 11: Employment

4.1. The right to employment is a fundamental constitutional right guaranteed under Article 33. However, a severe wage gap persists, with menstruators not receiving equal treatment for work of equal value¹⁹. This inequality extends to workplace evaluations and safety measures, highlighting disparities in how the quality of work is assessed and protected.

¹⁹ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/484811556130253064/pdf/Nepal-Gender-Brief.pdf>

4.2. Despite the existence of the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act in workplace (2015), workplaces still lack 'decent working conditions' for menstruators, who face discrimination related to both menstruation and menopause²⁰.

Recommendation:

- i. Integrate dignified menstruation as a cross-cutting theme throughout all employment-related policies and plans to ensure equal participation of menstruators in the workforce.
- ii. Amend the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act (2015) to comprehensively address the needs and priorities of menstruators during menarche, menstruation, menopause and across their life cycle.

5. Article 12: Health

5.1. The fundamental constitutional right to health is guaranteed under Article 35 (1, 2). However, health services and the Health Management Information System (HMIS) fail to address menstrual discrimination, creating a significant gap in healthcare coverage.

5.2. While the right to clean drinking water is enshrined in Article 35 (4) of the constitution, menstruators are deprived of access to clean water for both drinking and management purposes.

5.3. Despite existing nutritional policies and programs, malnutrition rates remain unchanged due to systemic inequalities and the ripple effects of menstrual discrimination²¹.

5.4. The right to women, Article 38 (2, 3, 4) guarantees the overall health and safe motherhood and reproductive rights. However, the menstrual discrimination is missing (explained in above).

RECOMMENDATION:

- i. Integrate dignified menstruation into all health information systems and services, particularly SRHR including adolescent health services and the Health Management Information System (HMIS).
- ii. Incorporate dignified menstruation principles into programs for clean water access and nutrition to ensure comprehensive support for menstruators.

²⁰ Paudel, R. (2023). *Menstrual discrimination and its impact on decent work*.

²¹ https://ekantipur.com/news/2024/12/28/1-billion-spent-in-5-years-due-to-malnutrition-in-karnali-49-15.html?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1tw3fWGeWEfeodS54BuTczuCzOPPzjULTh2_-N85gSoohPhkcW-4zuCHY_aem_BKqeudB3ma7_7uKC6hNAuA

- iii. Amend the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Rights Act (2018) to explicitly include dignified menstruation as a fundamental component of sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR).

6. Article 13: Economic and Social Life

While the constitution explicitly prohibits discrimination in all aspects of life, menstruators continue to face barriers that prevent their full participation in recreational activities, sports, and professional and cultural life.

RECOMMENDATION:

Integrate the concept of 'dignified menstruation' into all policies, legislation, activities, and public discourse to eliminate menstrual discrimination across all aspects of menstruators' lives.

7. Article 14: Rural Women

- 7.1. The municipalities are working as primarily as local government since 2015. The women's representation in local government is also commendable where 41% (14,465 elected) are women²². However, they failed to articulate the menstrual discrimination as a form of SGBV and violation of human and constitutional rights. For instance, a state minister denied to inaugurate the program due to menstruation in Madhesh province where the invisible forms of menstrual discrimination is rampant. Likewise, the most of elected women representatives either miss to prioritize resources for menstrual discrimination or allocate very little like \$200-\$500 /year or allocate such budget for observing ritual which claimed the menstrual blood, and menstruators as impure or merged the issue with other GBV such as sexual abuse, child marriage. In any angle, the dismantling the menstrual discrimination is not a priority of local government. At the name of supporting voters, almost all political leaders ignore or bypass menstrual discrimination.
- 7.2. While the constitution prioritizes eliminating all forms of discrimination, rural women bear a disproportionate burden of discriminatory practices and lack access to essential training and exposure needed to combat menstrual discrimination. They face multiple deprivations that are often more severe than those of their urban counterparts, including limited access to information, education, adequate food, clean water, and healthcare. Their isolation is further compounded by poor transportation infrastructure, which makes accessing medical facilities and educational opportunities even more challenging. Additionally, deeply entrenched traditional beliefs in rural areas often lead to stricter enforcement of menstrual discrimination, while barriers to participation in community and recreational activities further reinforce their social exclusion.

RECOMMENDATION:

²² <https://localgov.unwomen.org/country/NPL>

- i. Develop and implement the municipality level 'dignified menstruation' policy would be the best way for addressing not only the menstrual discrimination but also preventing other forms of GBV and human right violations.
- ii. Integrate the concept of 'dignified menstruation' into all policies, activities, and public discourse, with particular emphasis on rural women, to eliminate menstrual discrimination across all aspects of menstruators' lives.
- iii. The interventions also focus on improving transportation infrastructure to enhance access to medical facilities, establishing community-based education programs to counter deeply rooted traditional beliefs, creating local training centers for dignified menstruation education, ensuring regular supply of sustainable menstrual products through local health posts, and developing support networks that enable rural women to participate more fully in community activities.

8. GR 37 (2018): Disaster Risk Reduction in Changing Climate

While the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (2017)²³ has been implemented, it fails to address menstrual discrimination and related needs during disaster²⁴.

RECOMMENDATION:

Integrate the concept of 'dignified menstruation' throughout all phases of the disaster management cycle, including prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

²³ <https://www.dpnet.org.np/public/resource-detail/1633>

²⁴ https://bipad.gov.np/uploads/publication_pdf/DRRM_Act_and_Regulation_english.pdf