

A Research
on
Assess the school curriculum regarding menstrual dignity

Prepared by



Global South Coalition
For Dignified Menstruation



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Abbreviations

| | |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| CDC | Curriculum Development Center |
| DM | Dignified Menstruation |
| HPE | Health and Physical Education |
| MD | Menstrual Discrimination |
| SGBV | Sexual Gender Based Violence |
| SRHR | Sexual and Reproductive Health Right |

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Executive summary

Menstruation is the shedding of the innermost lining of the uterus, which is formed every month in anticipation of fertilization. This is the lining that feeds the fetus when a woman is pregnant. The blood is both “clean” and “pure”. Menstrual Discrimination (MD) refers to all taboos, shame, stigma, restrictions, abuse, violence and deprivation from resources and services that are associated with menstruation throughout the life cycle of menstruators in all diversities. It reinforces societal power dynamics and patriarchy, lowering the value of women and girls. Various initiatives in Nepal since 2005 aim to eliminate menstrual discrimination and promote dignified menstruation (DM), a holistic approach to addressing these issues. The objective of this study is to assess the school curriculum from grade 1 to 10 regarding menstrual dignity. A qualitative approach was used, reviewing secondary data from textbooks provided by the Education Development Center for grades one to ten. Data were analyzed into three categories.

The absence of menstruation-related content in the early grades (1 to 3) is notable. While personal hygiene is covered. Introduction of menstruation starts in grade four, but the content is incomplete and lacks comprehensive scientific explanations. The definition of menstruation and related biological processes are often oversimplified or inaccurate. It also highlights on going discriminatory practices and taboos in grade six. In grades seven and eight contain more detailed information about menstruation, including menstrual cycle, menstrual management, menstrual taboos and their impacts. However, the content still falls short of providing a holistic understanding of menstruation and its management. There is no content to be found in grade nine and ten in present secondary school curriculum.

The current school curriculum inadequately addresses menstruation and menstrual dignity. Improvements are needed in the content, terminology, and approach to teaching about menstruation to ensure it is inclusive, accurate, and supportive of all students.

Introduction

Menstruation is the shedding of the innermost lining of the uterus, which is formed every month in anticipation of fertilization. This is the lining that feeds the fetus when a woman is pregnant. The blood is both “clean” and “pure” (1).

Menstrual Discrimination (MD) refers to all taboos, shame, stigma, restrictions, abuse, violence and deprivation from resources and services that are associated with menstruation throughout the life cycle of menstruators in all diversities (2). It is a form of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) (2). Menstrual discrimination reinforces the power dynamic and patriarchy structure within society. It lowers the value and importance of women/girls in which results in men being prioritized in the family, society, and other contexts. Menstrual discrimination is the unseen root cause that influences different forms of Gender-Based Violence.

In the year 2005, the Supreme Court made the initiative for the national menstrual movement with the verdict that Chhaupadi (a form of menstrual discrimination, visible with sets of invisible menstrual restrictions associated) was a violation of human rights. On the other hand, series of actions were taking place across Nepal till 2022, such as the Chhaupadi Elimination Guideline (2008), the National Dignified Menstruation Policy Draft (2017), Free Distribution of Menstrual pad in government schools (2019), Marked December 8 as Dignified Menstruation Day (2019), Conducted 1st International Conference on Dignified Menstruation in collaboration with Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen and National Human Rights Commission (2020), mainstreamed the dignified menstruation into Gender Equality Act (2021) and Inclusion of Dignified Menstruation in the Annual Plan by provinces and municipality such as Gandaki Province (2022). These efforts contributed to promoting dignified menstruation by eliminating Menstrual Discrimination (1) (3).

Dignified Menstruation (DM) is an innovative and holistic life cycle approach to addressing all forms of menstrual discrimination. A state, free from any forms of menstrual discrimination including stigma, taboos, abuse, violence, and restrictions associated with menstruation throughout the life cycle of menstruators within all identities (2) .

Since most girls experience their first menstruation during primary school age, it is crucial to incorporate menstruation topics into the school curriculum. Menstrual education through the standard Nepali school curriculum, starting from primary school itself, could prepare menstruators¹ for their menarche. Although school has its guidelines for menstrual health education, it varies from school to school and country to country which indicates that all students might not have the same experience learning about menstruation in school. The standard Nepali school curriculum needs to integrate menstrual education from primary school, which will effectively prepare menstruators for their menarche. However, the guidelines for menstrual health education in school vary between institutions and countries, therefore among students there will be uneven experiences about menstruation.

Furthermore, in the context of Nepal, Menstruation has been identified as an obstacle to discontinuing education for girls. In many Nepalese schools, menstruation is briefly covered in

¹ Menstruators are those who born with uterus and ovaries.

the educational curriculum as part of the Health, Physical, and Creative Arts course. In Nepal, Health and Physical Education (HPE) has been a compulsory subject in the school curriculum up to grade eight since 1971 A.D by the Ministry of Education. In 1999, an integrated subject emerged by combining the content of Health, Population and Environmental Education and it was made compulsory for grade 9 and 10 by 2017 (3). HPE book of grade 9 and 10 includes content about menstruation as biological process, common menstrual problems and menstrual hygiene management including homemade pad making and using of menstrual pads, myths, social and religious beliefs related to menstruation and national efforts for promoting menstruation in Nepal. In basic education curriculum 2078 B.S, Health, Physical and Creative Arts book was made compulsory from grade 4 to 8 where students learn about contents related with menstruation (5).

The subject of menstruation has become a subject of self-study, which prevents children from understanding their body and the natural process of menstruation. The exclusionary practices, stigma and prohibition related with menstrual practices, inherited from in traditional beliefs and cultural heritage practice have negative impact on school attendance and participation of menstruators in different activities. Due to lack of informed plan, policies, and programs menstruators are not only deprived of dignity but are also a victim of social stigma, and taboos on their health and education. School-going students encounter various of problems such as shame, fear, confusion and health issues due to insufficient knowledge and education about menstruation, which result in dropout and absenteeism in school.

Objectives

- To assess the school curriculum from grade 1 to 10 regarding menstrual dignity.
- To provide a way forward.

Rational

Menstrual Discrimination is everywhere in the globe. The study done in Jumla, Kathmandu and Sarlahi by Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation /Radha Paudel Foundation reveals that both the developed cities and rural areas follow menstrual restrictions which are primarily related to mobility, eating, touching and others (6). These all kinds of restrictions have direct and indirect negative impacts on learning and education of menstruators in many ways. In terms of education being hindered, by calculating the menstrual days ($5 \times 12 = 60$ days), which directly hampers the studies of menstruators. Consequently, this often can lead to early marriage, school dropout and other problems (7).

School is the place where children learn new things. Children learn something about menstruation at the age of 6-9 years which is basic school going age (8) so, it's very important to include menstruation in school curriculum from basic level. School should be a safe environment, where open discussion to impart knowledge and awareness about menstrual health. However we observed that teachers lack adequacy and hesitate to address this particular topic directly, instead directing students to research on their own (3). This reluctance is partly due to a lack of training in menstrual health education and management, compounded by cultural and

social stigmas. Instruction on menstrual health is frequently provided separately to menstruators during guidance sessions or promotional workshops by menstrual product brands, which are not inclusive of non-menstruators. Consequently, non-menstruators often remain uninformed about menstruation. Excluding non-menstruators from these discussions perpetuates the belief that menstruation is “gross” and irrelevant to them, while also teaching menstruators that they need to be discreet and hide their menstruation.

Thus, educating both menstruators and non-menstruators about menstruation and menstrual health can empower menstruators to manage their menstruation more confidently at school. Moreover, breaking down stigmas becomes more feasible when non-menstruators understand and support their menstruating peers instead of mocking or ostracizing them.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach by reviewing secondary data i.e reviewed different governmental books from grades one to ten, which is provided by the Education Development Center. We classified the information into three categories: I) Content related to menstruation II) Content related to relationships and III) Content related to agency. The timeframe for this research was one month, where we reviewed different books from grade one to ten related to menstruation content. Discussion part is also divided into five sub parts i.e. menstruation, relationship, agency, terminology and management.

Key Findings

1. Grade One

There is no content that is directly related to menstruation but there are some content related with personal hygiene and cleanliness. The contents related with personal hygiene and cleanliness are included in our body and our habits chapters in the **Hamro Serophero** course book. Students will know about good habits like cutting nails, combing hair, washing hands after using the toilet, bathing and cleaning the surroundings.

2. Grade Two

In grade two similarly there are no separate book for Health. The content related to menstruation is not available in the textbook for grade two as well. **Hamro Serophero** "covered some contents related to personal hygiene in the personal cleanliness chapter which will teach about washing hands, washing face, cutting nails, bathing, combing hair, brushing teeth and doing exercise like yoga.

3. Grade Three

In grade three menstruation contents are not included in any course book but **Hamro Serophero** highlights personal cleanliness and hygiene in good behavior chapter where

they are informed about good and healthy behaviors such as using mask, cutting nails, bathing, having nutritious foods, washing clothes, combing hair and brushing teeth.

4. Grade Four

Among six subjects in grade four, only the **Health, Physical, and Creative Arts** textbook contains information about menstruation in the **Personal Hygiene** chapter on page number 7.

4.1 Content related to menstruation

Menstruation is defined as the regular discharge of blood up to four to five days through the genitalia of a girl and the average menarche age is 10 years old.

4.2 Content related to relationship

At grade four **Health, Physical, and Creative Art** textbook provide an example of a girl named Ujeli who is 12 years old and experiences her first menstruation. She confides it to her mother, who educates her on using a sanitary pad, the importance of changing them timely and proper way to dispose it. However, the textbook does not provide any details regarding how to use pad and its disposal process nor introduced or encouraged menstruators to use biodegradable products.

4.3 Content related to the agency

By this content, students will learn that menstruation is a natural process and they should not be afraid of it. They can seek help from their parents, teachers, and friends during menstruation.

5. Grade Five

Among six subjects in grade five, only the **Health, Physical, and Creative Arts** textbook contains information about menstruation in the **Personal Hygiene** chapter on page number 9-11.

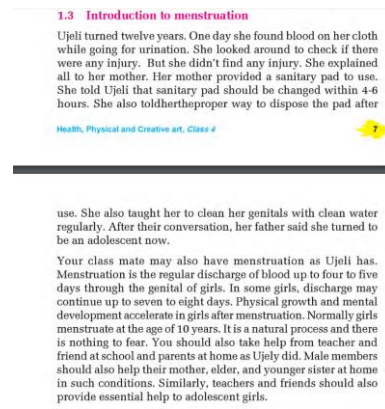


Figure 1: Grade 4 “Health, physical and creative arts” book

5.1 Content related to menstruation

Menstruation is defined as a natural process in which blood comes out from our vagina and we need to take care of our personal cleanliness.

5.2 Content related to relationship

Also, it focuses on the roles of family and friends during menstruation. Family should take care of menstruating people by providing nutritious food, and hot water bags, helping in household activities like cooking, cleaning, carrying heavy loads, etc.

5.3 Content related to the agency

It also highlights that menstruation is not a matter of shame or discomfort.

6. Grade Six

Among six compulsory textbooks for grade 6, only the **Health, Physical, and Creative Arts** textbook contains information about menstruation in the **Sexual and Reproductive health** chapter from page number 63-67.

6.1 Content related to menstruation

Menstruation is a natural process that occurs monthly in adolescent girls and it starts at the age of 11/12 years, it occurs due to the absence of fertilization, the blood vessels in the urine wall weaken and rupture, causing bleeding. It is a sign of the uterus of an adolescent being mature. Additionally, it explains the factors to be considered during menstruation like having nutritious food, a balanced diet, light exercise, and consumption of hot water.

It also describes menstrual hygiene and healthier behavior in which menstruators should clean their genitalia with clean water and use clean cloths or pads which should be replaced after it is soaked in blood. If cotton cloth is used during menstruation, it should be washed and dried in sunlight which kills bacteria, and menstruating girls should bathe daily and clean their

१.४ महिलावारी हुँदा अपनाउनु पर्ने स्वस्थकर व्यवहारहरू (Hygienic behaviors during menstruation)

सामान्यतया १० वर्षको उमेर पुगेपछि किशोरीहरूमा महिलावारी प्रक्रिया सुरु हुन्छ। महिलावारीको समयमा चारपाँच दिनसम्म लगातार योनीबाट रगत बग्छ। यो नियमित र प्राकृतिक प्रक्रिया हो। महिलावारी भाएका बेलासा योनीको नियमित सरसफाइ गर्नुपर्छ। यो समयमा प्यान्ट आरमको पनि आबरवकना पर्छ। यस्तो बेलासा सफा स्यानिटरी प्याड वा सफा सुतीको कपडाले बनाएको प्याड प्रयोग गर्नुपर्छ। यस्ता सुनिश्चित व्यवहारले महिलावारी हुँदा स्वास्थ्यमा आउन सक्ने समस्यालाई कम गर्छ। सुरु सुरुमा महिलावारी नियमित नहुन सक्छ। यस्तो भयो भन्दा आतित हुँदैन। आकस्मिक परेका बेला स्वास्थ्यकर्मी वा चिकित्सकको सल्लाह लिनुपर्छ।

महिलावारी हुँदा अपनाउनुपर्ने स्वस्थकर व्यवहार

- व्यक्तिगत सरसफाइमा ध्यान दिनुपर्छ।
- नरम र सफा सुती कपडा वा प्याडको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्छ।
- सुतीको कपडाको प्याड प्रयोग गरेपछि सावुन पानीले सफा गरी घाममा सुकाएर मात्र पुनः प्रयोग गर्नुपर्छ।
- प्रयोग गरेका प्याड चारदेखि छ घण्टाको अन्तरमा फेर्नुपर्छ।
- नियमित रूपमा पोसिलो खानेकुरा खानुपर्छ।
- सधैँ समयमा योनी बग्दैन सफा पानीले धुनुपर्छ।

स्वास्थ्य, शारीरिक तथा कलात्मक कला, कक्षा ५

Figure 3: Grade 5 "Health, Physical and Creative Arts" textbook

7.4 Factors to be considered during menstruation

Activity 5.5

Go to the nearest health facility and after consulting with a health worker, prepare a report summarizing the things to consider during menstruation. Present it to the class.

Let's read and understand:

Rasila's stomach hurts today. A small amount of blood has also flowed from the reproductive organ. This is because of the onset of menstruation. During this period, light exercise should be done and a balanced diet should be eaten. During menstruation, a friend should be helped if needed. During this, warm water should be consumed to reduce lower abdominal pain, and hot water bag can be used to soak the lower abdomen. Enough rest should be taken. In case of severe abdominal pain, the nearest health post should be visited or a health worker should be consulted.

In such cases, special attention should be paid to sanitation. After using the toilet every time, genitals should be washed with warm water (if available) or with clean water. A clean cotton cloth or pad should be placed on the genitals. After it is soaked in blood, it should be replaced. If the cotton cloth is to be reused, it should be used only after washing it with Dettol or soap-water and drying it in the sun. During this, one should bathe daily and clean the bedsheets, quilts and pillowcases.

Figure 4: Grade 6 "Health, Physical and Creative Arts" textbook

How to prepare a pad at home

Materials required:

- Scale, 2. Thick paper that can be folded, 3. Pen/ Marker, 4. Scissors, 5. Needle thread, 6. Clean cotton cloth (new/clean old)

How to make

- Prepare the necessary materials.

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Health, Physical and Creative arts 6

- Wash the cloth with soap and water and dry it in the sun.
- Cut the paper in 25 cm in length and 16 cm in width.
- Fold the cut paper so that it evens in length and again fold from the middle to make it even from the width.
- Place the closed part on the table to the right and the open part of the width to the outside.

Figure 5: Grade 6 "Health, Physical and Creative Arts" textbook

surroundings. It also includes the steps to make a homemade pad.

Similarly, it has mentioned popular menstrual practices, where it indicates misconception, impractical and orthodox belief of the society and emphasized on a need for a change.

6.2 Content related to relationship

During menstruation, an adolescent girl needs support and care from their family, teachers, and friends. They might be scared, panicked, and anxious during their first menstruation.

6.3 Content related to the agency

In grade 6, it also taught students about making homemade pads. While the textbook sheds some light on menstrual discrimination practices, the textbook itself stirs a contradiction by saying to bath daily, clean all bed sheet, quilt and pillowcases. On a superficial level, it might seem to be a basic hygiene practice, however, such text and the repetitive use of words such as hygiene and indirectly refers to menstruation as dirty and impure.

7. Grade Seven

There are six compulsory subjects in grade seven and the **Health, Physical, and Creative Arts** is one of them which contains content about menstruation in the **Sexual and Reproductive Health** chapter from page number 66-69.

7.1 Content related to menstruation

Menstruation content includes the impact of menstrual taboos. Menstrual taboos like separating menstruating girls and making them live in a hut far from their own house will cause various negative impacts on the health of menstruators like physical and mental pain.

7.2 Content related to relationship

Mothers play an important role in mitigating menstrual taboos because in the narration, when the teacher asks Nani about why she's staying in the hut, she replies that her mother has ordered her to stay there as she is in her menstrual cycle. The teacher visits Nani's house, where she talks with Nani's mother and learns about discriminatory menstrual practices.

5.2 Impact of taboos regarding menstruation

A teacher teaches in a school in a remote district. On Saturday, he went for a walk in the village. He saw an adolescent girl sitting at the door of a small house with her head bowed. He started a conversation with her. Let's read the dialogue between them:

Teacher : Nani, why are you living alone in this little house?

Nani : Sir, my mother told me not to stay at home because of menstruation, so she sent me here to live.

Teacher : Why can't you stay at home, Nani?

Nani : I don't know, sir. It is customary for everyone in our household to come and live in such a house after menstruation.

(Teacher went to Nani's house and met her mother and asked some things.)

Teacher : Namaskar, are you the mother of the girl living in

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Health, Physical and Creative art, Class 7

Figure 6: Grade 7 "health, Physical and Creative Arts" textbook

Afterwards, the teacher gathers a women's group to help shift their perspective using a scientific and logical approach.

8. Grade Eight

Among six compulsory subjects in grade eight, only the **Health, Physical, and Creative Arts** book contains content about menstruation on **Sexual and reproductive health** in page number 71-75.

8.1 Content related to menstruation

Menstruation is the natural bleeding from a woman's vagina once a month. It is a regular biological process caused by hormones. The age at which menstruation begins for the first time, the monthly cycle length, and the age at which menstruation ceases can vary from woman to woman. Most girls get their first period between the ages of 12 and 14. But some teenage girls can have menstruation sooner or later than this age.

There is also content related to menstrual hygiene management where students were taught about the duration of changing pads, how to manage used menstrual pads, and personal cleanliness like washing the genitalia after each urination. It also covers making reusable homemade pads which help to minimize the cost of pads.

5.5. Menstrual Hygiene Management

A. Read the case below and discuss.

Even before I got my period, my mother taught me a lot about menstruation. She also said that there was no need to be afraid during menstruation. We use sanitary pads available in the market during our period. She also taught me how to use such pads. I learned so much from the internet and TV. My mother taught me about changing the pad after it gets wet and throwing the used pad in a suitable place.

One day I had my period in school. There was no place to keep pads in the toilet. I flushed the pad down the toilet. After a few days, the toilet got blocked. After knowing this I was very scared. I thought the toilet was blocked because of the pad I had thrown away. Come on! I was worried about what I would do if someone found out about it. After that, while cleaning the toilet, many pads came out. Like me, other friends had been throwing pads in the toilet in the same way. From that day on, we never flushed a pad down the toilet. At present, our school has a provision of bins to dispose the used pads.

Questions for discussion

1. How should you manage the pads you use if you had period at school?

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Health, Physical and Creative arts, grade 8

Figure 7: Grade 8 Health, Physical and Creative Arts textbook

8.2 Content related to relationship

Most of the girls learn about menstruation from their mothers.

8.3 Content related to the agency

Knowing about menstruation before menarche helps them to manage menstrual blood without being scared and afraid.

9. Grade Nine and Ten

In the course book for grades 9 and 10, there is no content associated with menstruation. There is no subject named Health, Physical, and Creative Arts in grades 9 and 10, nor is it included in subjects like science or social studies.

Discussion

Schools are responsible for providing their students with proper knowledge about the importance of menstrual health, making knowledge about menstruation inclusive to all genders. The school curriculum in Nepal addresses menstruation in the **Health, Physical, and Creative Arts** textbook. The discussion part is divided into five sub-headings:

1. Menstruation

1.1 Grade One

In grade one there are four subjects (Nepali, English, Math and Hamro Serophero). None of these subjects covers the content about menstruation. The age between 6-9 years is the average age where both menstruators and non-menstruators learned about discriminatory menstrual practices like menstrual blood is impure and dirt, menstruators need to follow various social restriction (8) . After knowing about menstruation, they will have knowledge about power construction too. Menstruators feel powerless and inferior while non-menstruators feel powerful and superior which will create unequal power dynamic between them. It is very crucial to give appropriate and scientific information to children at a small age for building equal power relationship between menstruators and non-menstruators and deconstruct patriarchy.

1.2 Grade Two

Similarly, in this grade also, **Hamro Serophero** book has mentioned about personal cleanliness and hygiene but it has neither connected nor included anything regarding menstruation at all. In addition to menstruation, they need to know to take care of genitals before and after the urination and defecation. It is important to continue such practices once the girls have menstruation in future to come.

1.3 Grade Three

Moving on to the textbook of grade three, the none of the textbook include the content related to menstruation. While it might seem unnecessary to include menstruation for children at such an early age, nonetheless, it is vital that these young minds are inform about menstruation so that when the time comes girls can openly discuss their menstrual cycle with their family, friends, and teachers without any hesitation. in To destigmatize the taboos and stigma related to menstruation, from early primary level students must be taught about menstruation.

1.4 Grade Four

Finally, students are introduced to menstruation in fourth grade. They are taught about menstruation and its definition in **Health, Physical, and Creative Arts** textbook. According to the textbook menstruation is defined as a natural process in which regular discharge of blood up to four to five days through the genitalia of a girl and the average

menarche age is 10 years old. The definition provided by textbook is incomplete, so CDC should use the definition provided by Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation (GSCDM) “*menstruation is the shedding of the innermost lining of the uterus, which is formed every month in anticipation of fertilization. This is the lining that feeds the fetus when a woman is pregnant.*” (1). It does not address the fact that menstrual blood is clean and pure and has been a sole reason behind the continued balance and functioning of this entire world. Stating so will not only help to impart the wisdom that everyone is equal irrespective of their gender but will also, incorporate the agenda that bleeding every month is not a girl’s choice and rather a nature’s way of operating which is essential for the sustenance of Earth. Similarly, it only mentions about genitals should be clean but has not elaborated on how to clean it. Like: should you clean it by water only? Or use soap and water? It explained that menstrual blood flow up to four to five days or continue up to seven to eight days but the discharge of blood depends on the body type of menstruators. The discharge of blood may vary due to hormonal and genetic factors as well.

1.5. Grade Five

In **Health, Physical and Creative Arts** textbook menstruation starts at the age of 10 years but it's not true it might start earlier or late according to physiology of the body. The statement only mentioned that menstruation is a regular and natural process; however, it lacked sufficient information about the specifics of menstruation.

1.6. Grade Six

According to **Health, physical and Creative Arts** textbook, menstruation is defined as the natural process occur in healthy adolescent girls in which ovaries produce ovum in every 14/15 days of menstruation. In the absence of fertilization, the blood vessels in urine wall weaken and rupture causing bleeding and that blood is known as menstrual blood. This definition provided by textbook is incomplete and it provides misleading information to children. It did not address menstrual blood as pure and clean blood and the existence of human beings is also from menstrual blood. Book have described about menstrual hygiene but does not include how to clean genital.

1.7. Grade Seven

In **Health, Physical and Creative Arts book**; menstruation is defined as the blood flow from female reproductive organ. It does not provide clear and scientific definition nor does it include menstrual blood as pure and clean blood. In this book it mainly focuses on menstrual taboos and its impact. But it does not describe how the menstrual taboos effect on dignity of menstruator. It does not relate menstrual taboos with child marriage, deprive from Sexual and Reproductive Health Right (SRHR) services.

1.8. Grade Eight

Health, Physical and Creative Arts textbook chapter **Sexual and Reproductive Health** described menstruation cycle briefly. Menstrual cycle is divided into three stages: pre-ovulatory phase, ovulatory phase and menstrual blood phase. In page number 72 under the section 'Menstrual Bleeding Phase' of the same book, the cycle has been described as *Menstrual bleeding phase is a stage where the egg is not fertilized during ovulation, the amount of progesterone and estrogen starts to decrease. As a result, the amount of oxygen in the wall of the uterus is low and the blood vessels of the uterus begin to burst. Therefore, bleeding occurs when the inner lining of the uterus ruptures and bleeds which last for six days.* Here, it depicts the scientific process of our physiology, however, it only focuses on how it occurs and has not said a word on why it occurs. This definition also does not give a clear picture of menstruation nor it had defined menstrual blood.

1.9. Grade Nine and Ten

According to secondary education curriculum 2079 B.S **Health, Physical and Creative Arts** book is not considered as compulsory subject and there are no content related with menstruation in science textbook as well. It is very important to have knowledge about Dignified Menstruation and menopause in this age because in their family and at school some family members and teachers might have pre menopause symptoms.

2. Relationship

A child learns something about menstruation at the age of 6 from their mother, sister or other family members. During their menarche they confide in their mother (6). Mother taught then what to do and what she practices should be followed\ during her menstruation. The current school curriculum of Nepal has provided some space **in Health, Physical and Creative Arts** to discussed about the menstruation, but it is sufficient and teacher hesitate and uncomfortable to teach and discuss about reproductive health and menstrual health chapter. This might be due to influence of social and cultural practices in Nepalese society.

3. Agency

The textbook has emphasized on encouraging menstruators to talk and share about menstruation with their parents, teachers and friends. On the contrary, the constant use of words such as hygiene, sanitation, period and personal cleanliness implies that menstrual blood is dirty and impure which leads to low self esteem and hesitation in menstruators.

4. Terminology

Menstruators (a person who is born with uterus and ovaries) and non-menstruators (a person who is born without uterus and ovaries) should be used rather than the terms girls and boys. The reason not to use the term girls is because children will think that only girls

menstruate, they will not know about queers and transmen. So, to make it more clear for them, the right terminology needs to be used. In every grade hygiene word is used which directly points out that menstrual blood is impure and dirty, which we need to clean it and maintain personal hygiene. In this instance we should use menstrual management terms instead of hygiene. Sanitary pads also define menstruation as dirty and impure. We need to replace it with menstrual pads. “Period” word is used instead of menstruation in grade 8 textbook which will create confusion with students. Therefore, to be clearer, menstruation terminology should be used instead of a euphemism of menstruation.

5. Management

From grade four there is some content related with management but the course book did not make clear how to manage menstrual blood. In all grades, the curriculum emphasizes managing menstrual blood only by using sanitary pads or homemade pads. It is important to note that there are more than 9 alternative menstrual products available for use.

Course book should consider all nine menstrual products (1) and teach them about the pros and cons of them and make them choose what they want. The 3P approach(Person, Pocket and Planet) (4) should be taught at the secondary level.

Conclusion

In the nutshell, it has provided only limited coverage to menstruation. It is solely addressed in the health, physical and creative arts textbook from grade four to eight. Grades one, two, three, nine and ten lack any content. Likewise, the provided definition of menstruation are incomplete and misleading. In various occasion it uses stigmatizing language such as hygiene and cleanliness which reinforces negative perception of menstruation. The curriculum focuses solely on sanitary pads and homemade cloth pads, neglecting alternative menstrual products. Moreover, hesitation of teachers in addressing menstruation due to socio-cultural factors hinder effective education. Overall, the current curriculum falls short in promoting menstrual dignity. A comprehensive and inclusive approach is necessary to empower students and eliminate menstrual stigma.

Recommendation

- Young girls are taught by their mother figures regarding the do’s and don’ts of menstrual practices from their early childhood of 6 or 7 years of age. Hence, the Education Development Center should include content about menstruation from an early grade i.e. grade one. Doing so will familiarize children with this natural phenomenon and prove to be instrumental in superseding the imbalance of power dynamics and orthodox belief. Pictorial representations, poems, narrations regarding anything related to menstruation can be implemented to disseminate the message in child friendly approach.
- The Education Development Center should consider revising the definition of menstruation because in the textbooks it has been interpreted as natural process in which blood comes from the female reproductive organ (vagina). However, the real definition of

Menstruation is the shedding of the innermost lining of the uterus, which is formed every month in anticipation of fertilization. This is the lining that feeds the fetus when a woman is pregnant. The blood is both “clean” and “pure”

- The Education Development Center should include Dignified Menstruation and Menopause in the school curriculum at secondary level grades.
- Schools should train the health teachers in menstruation health. So that they can disseminate awareness regarding menstrual practices and dignified menstruation efficiently and effectively.

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