Identifying and Responding to Complex Challenges using the Dignified Menstruation

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Outline of the Presentation

Aristotle (323-285 BC), Hippocrates

1920, function of ovaries identified

1948 Human Right Declaration, WHO’s Health Definition

1979 CEDAW

1994 ICPD, 1995 Beijing Conference

40 societies including Europe; restrictions on food, sex, touch, shelter etc. 1988

2014 Human Right Council (Menstruation)

2015 SDGs

Home Sapience: 4 billions years

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Menstrual Discrimination is Centuries old Hindu Practice: Myth

Calling: Menstruation, Rajaswala, monthly..

Consideration: impure, sin from god

Restriction on Touch: plant of fruits, vegetables, kitchen, house, temple, priest, tap etc.

Restriction on Food: Sour foods, milk and milk products, meat products, vegetables etc.

Restriction on Mobility: restriction on going school, any cultural activities etc.
Menstruation within Religious Mythologies/practices

Islam:
Quran 2.222; impurity, asks for keep away, sexual activity or male

Christianity: Unclean, restrictions e.g. not allow to touch children, temple, any political and social gatherings

Buddhism:
not attaining the temples in Thailand during period and women would lose Qi

Chanakya Niti;
6,3,11:12: Imp pure, No sex till stop

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Menstrual Discrimination Prevails in only West Nepal: Myth

- Calling: Chhau, Chhui, Chhaupadi, going out......
- Consideration: impure, dirty blood.....

- **Restrictions on Touch:** Plant of vegetables/fruits, house, temple, tap, wash and dry the cloths separately ...
- **Restriction on Food:** Any sour food, milk products
- **Restrictions on Mobility:** Any cultural gatherings

Both Visible and invisible
Menstrual Discrimination in Kathmandu, capital City of Nepal

- **Calling**: menses, state of queen, Majhu (Newari)
- **Consideration**: impure, dirty and collected blood...
- **Restrictions on Touch**: Plant of vegetables, fruits, temple, tap, ....
- **Restriction on Food**: Any sour food, milk products ....
- **Restrictions on Mobility**: Any cultural gatherings ......

Both Visible and invisible
Menstrual Discrimination in East Nepal

▪ Calling state of living far, going out, untouchability, priest, ....

▪ Consideration: dirty, collected and impure blood

▪ **Restrictions on Touch:** Plant of fruits/vegetables, Kitchen, temple, priest, garden etc.

▪ **Restriction on Food:** Sour foods, milk products

▪ **Restrictions on Mobility:** No school for 5-7 days at first, not allow any cultural activities

Both Visible and invisible

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Stigma, disgusting, dirty, should be hidden, often dangerous, deadly....

Bleeding shame, shocked, disgusting, surprised, calling with nickname (guest coming, hatched egg), no bath, interruption of daily activities, menstrual suppression, UK (menstrual stigma, taboo, access do not significantly differ from globally)...

Restriction from cooking, bathing, washing, grooming, nature and agricultural activities, Isolation, communal water pump, toilet, to cross river, entering cultural sites, gathering, fasting Ramadan, restriction to praying, socializing.

Dirty, stigma, disgusting, panic, teasing, no sports, socializing, No white and, sour food, isolation, no religious activities ...

Stigma, very much women's business, subtle, male shop staff reported that they didn't sell any menstrual product or wrapped....

Stigma, no touch children, dog, brothers, trees, heavy lifting, sweep, bath, No lemon, grapefruit, any acid fruit, milk, sweets...

Impure, Dirty, Silence, Stigma, Taboo, Tax............................,
May or may not

Pretended that there is nothing to worry or to do
Summary: Practices around Menstruation

Menstrual Blood: Dirty, Contaminated, Impure

Diverse identity:
Red dot, Monthlies, Chhaupadi, Period, Chhui, Mense, guest, egg hatched,

Regardless of class, caste, education, religion, region, TABOO, STIGMA, RESTRICTIONS are practicing across globe with varying in severity, forms, visibility.
Menstrual Practices and its Impact
Menstrual blood considered as an impure, dirty, contaminated

Restriction on touch

Restriction on mobility/participation

Restriction on eat

Psychosocial trauma

Humiliation, no participation

Anxiety, depression

low self-esteem

Restriction on

Poverty

Poor maternal health

School dropped

Absent, fail in school

Separation, poor facilities

Impact on Girl’s Education

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Women's Health and Dignity

Physical Health
Death, murder, Abuse, Rape, Infections, illness

Mental Health
Suicide, depression, low, self-esteem, humiliation, seclusion

Social Health
Poverty, Unemployment, Early marriage, school dropped out, exclusion, vulnerability

Compromised safety, security, food, water, learning, education, self-esteem, dignity

Restrictions on Mobility and Participation
Not allowed to enter in house and send to shed, hut, any allocated place, field, forest
Not allowed to participate in family meeting, other meetings, cultural gatherings, school

Impacts on Health
Compatibility between Menstrual Impacts and Policies/Programs
WHO 72 years old
25 years ICPD
Comprehensive Package on SRHR (2019)

Infertility
Sexual and Gender Based Violence
Safe Abortion
HIV/STIs
Comprehensive Sexuality Education
Reproductive Cancers
Sexual Health and Well-being
Safe Motherhood Programme
Family Planning: 1930

Perfect example of huge Negligence, deep silence on menstruation

Nowhere But Menstruation is Everywhere

Where is my Menstruation?
**CEDAW Definition of Discrimination**
“…any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.” (Article 1)

**Article 5: Sex Roles and Stereotyping:**
The Convention recognises the influence of culture and tradition in restricting women's enjoyment of rights. States must modify or abolish discriminatory cultural practices and take appropriate measures to eliminate sex role stereotyping and prejudice stemming from the idea of the inferiority or superiority of one sex over the other.

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**42 years CEDAW**

- **Is Menstrual practice as like as early marriage or FGM?**
- **What is menstrual practice? Cause of effect for the early or child marriage?**

**Deep Silence**

**Huge Ignorance**

**Incompatibility**

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UN definition Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)

Any act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships.

Incompatibility
20 years
UNSCR 1325, 4 Pillars

P = Participation in decision making

P = Prevention All forms of Violence

P = Protection: sexual violence

P = Post Conflict Recovery

There is deprivation to get food, when she feels hungry

Incompatibility

She lives in clean house, have internet, toilet, Tele Vision, etc
Menstruation and Government of Nepal
Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act, 2066 (2009)
Any form of physical, mental, sexual and economic harm perpetrated by person to a person with whom he/she has a family relationship and this word also includes any acts of reprimand or emotional harm.
Can Clean shed or Communal Sheds or Pads Gurantee

• Can she live along with her family members/senior members?
• Can she mobile freely?
• Can she use any water source, toilet, temple, school, sanitary materials freely?
• Can she join any cultural/social activities of family and community?
• Can she touch the plants of fruits, and vegetables?

Dignity ?
Constitutional Rights ?
International Human Rights?

NO, these are important but not ends.
Dignified Menstruation and Government of Nepal

Ministry of Water Supply

Toilet, water, Waste

Ministry of Education

Class 4 onwards, Extra curricular activities Informal education

Ministry of Health

Pre menstrual, menstrual illness, Counselling, menopause, cancers

Ministry of Women Children, Women, Elder Citizen, LGBTQI

Ministry of Environment

Sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, trafficking, citizenship, children, elder, LGBTQI

Eco-friendly, waste management
GAPS: Globally DIGNITY during menstruation

- **Oscar** – Focus on Pad/Hygiene

- **Pad Man Movie** - Focus on Pad/hygiene

- **Meghan Duchess of Sussex** - Focus on Pad/hygiene

Created the space for menstruation BUT missing the dignity and promoting the idea of menstruation is dirty.
Urgency for #DignifiedMenstruation

Global Intervention and Concepts:

- Menstrual Rights: Academic discussion
- Menstrual Health Management (UNICEF, WHO: 2012)
- Menstrual Hygiene Management, UNESCO 2014, UN
- Dignified Menstruation (Nepal Initiative; Policy on Dignified Menstruation, 2017)
1. In collaboration of Ministry of Water Supply, Health, Education and Women, Children and Social Welfare, the first national consultation held in Dang as 'Dang Declaration' Feb 6, 2017.
2. Then, in technical support of WSCC, ministry of water supply led to conduct another consultation meeting at Nagarkot in February 9-10, 2017
3. Ministry of Water supply formed a committee for policy drafting on dignified menstruation in 1 July 2017
4. Nepal criminalized the Chhaupadi by Legislature Parliament August 9, 2017 (effective from 2018 August)
5. September 15-16, 2017 school curriculum developed from grade 4-10 and piloted in two schools
6. The draft policy been used since October 2017, Reconstruction Authority ++++
7. The first Dignified Menstruation day marked by four respective ministers, speaker of the house and Civil Society. May 28, 2018
8. Due to turmoil of politics and new federal government, the dignified menstruation is remained a silent feature till July 2019 in government.
9. In July, 10-14, Ministry of Water Supply organized a five days training on dignified menstruation
10. The Ministry of health incorporated the dignified menstruation in its curriculum of school nurse program as well as sanitary pad distribution program, Ministry of Education
11. As an enforcement of the law against menstrual restrictions, Home Ministry, Nepal government arrested the brother in law of Ms. Parbati Buda, 21 years who was dead at menstrual hut in December 1, 2019.
In December 8, 2019, Hon. Minister Parbat Gurung, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen endorsed December 8 as Dignified Menstruation a day for 16 days activism and also announced for sheds free country.

In December 25, 2019, Home Ministry, Nepal Government officially started to dismantle of all physical menstrual huts that existed in west Nepal.

January 5, 2020 organized a consultation meeting with parliamentarian from 6, and 7 provinces

January 18, 2020 in Doti,
January 19 in Managalsen, Achham,
January 20, 2020 in in Dullu, and Narayan Municipality in Dailekh,

January 27, February 3 officially took a lead role for organizing the first ever International Workshop on dignified menstruation globally


May 26, 2020; Virtual ever first conference on Dignified menstruation amid COVID-19, Pandemic with the slogan of ‘Menstrual Talk, Dignity First’
Dignified Menstruation

Simple definition for daily business:
State of free from any forms of abuse, discrimination, violence associated with menstruation
Or
No difference between 25 days and 5 days in terms of discrimination
Dignified Menstruation: Three `P’

1. Principally:
Consideration of Menstruation through human right lens.
2. Practically:

By considering the nature of menstruation, complex and multifaceted, need to address through Holistic approach

i) **Womb to tomb**: before & during puberty, menarche, reproductive age, menopause

ii) Sectoral Integration: Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, Education, Health, Environment, Human Right and Empowerment, have to go simultaneously.
3. Psychologically: Reconstruct the Power Since childhood/home

Restrictions leads the various forms of Violence including Rape

Result Known, NO Voice  Result Known, NO Accountability

Unconsciously normalize/accept the violence e.g. sexual abuse

Unconsciously reinforce the perpetual statements and acts against girls e.g. pinching girls

Girls socialize with feelings of inferior, powerless, dehumanize than boys and obligate for silence

Boys socialize with feelings of superior, powerful, than girls and have so many privileges

Between 6-12 years, girls and boys, unconsciously, knew about menstruation/restriction at their family/school/community

Menstrual Restrictions Construct the Power
Mainstreaming of Dignified Menstruation

Menstrual Talk, Dignity First

Few Examples:
- Dignified Menstruation Hygiene Day/Program
- Dignified Menstrual Cup program
- Dignified Menstruation Health Program
- Dignified Menstruation Educational program
- Dignified Menstruation Art Competition
- Dignified Menstruation and SRHR, GBV, HR

Game Changer for robust the confidence of each menstruators
Ending SGBV, Improving SRHR, Promoting Human Rights
Pandemic Does not STOP Menstruation

Date of Birth of Menstruation: 4 billion Year
Date of birth of Pandemic: 2449 years
Date of Novel Corona Virus: 2019, COVID-19

- Story from China: Birth control pills, same dipper
- Story from India: Anaesthetic dr. and Journalist
- Stigma, restriction, No products on PPE sets, Relief Package
- Gender policy failed to address menstrual issues
1. Let's change the narratives on menstruation,
   From charity to human right,
   From hygiene to dignity,
   Impure to purity,
   Five days to throughout the life

2. Let's incorporate policy
   on the dignified menstruation along with gender policy so can get
   disaggregated data on including menstrual products, more importantly
   acknowledge the menstruation

3. The menstrual product needs to consider as essential supplies of PPEs, relief
   package in COVID19 and other emergencies.

4. Accept and act that menstrual practice is cause for GBV, deteriorate of SRHR,
   violence of human right, thus should be a priority across all sectors and levels

Way forward: Mainstreaming the Dignified Menstruation amid COVID-19

 Inspired from COVID-19
Thank you

Question Answer

Feedback

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https://www.dignifiedmenstruation.org/