

**Tool Kit:**  
**Marking 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022,**  
**4<sup>th</sup> International Dignified Menstruation Day**



Dignified Menstruation

**Prepared by:**



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### Menstrual Discrimination:

Menstrual Discrimination refers to taboos, shyness, shame, stigma, restrictions, abuses, violence, deprivation from resources that are associated with menstruation throughout the life cycle of menstruators (girls, women transmen, queer) and all people born with a uterus and ovaries (Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation, 2019). Menstrual Discrimination has been practiced everywhere across the globe with different names, forms and magnitudes. It is a type of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and a violation of human rights. It is complex and multifaceted.



Figure 1 Examples of menstrual practices across the globe

### Dignified Menstruation (DM):

DM is a state of freedom from any forms of menstrual discrimination includes taboos, stigmas, shyness, shame, abuse, restrictions and violence associated with menstruation throughout the life cycle of menstruators. Menstrual discrimination is not evidenced on any single day or event. It is a concern throughout the 24/7 hours and 365 days of a menstruators’ lifetimes from childhood to death – and in some cultures, even applies after death. Menstrual discrimination is more significant and urgent in humanitarian settings including pandemics and disasters where menstruators need equal access to care, services and hygienic products at public and private institutions -- everywhere. Because Dignified Menstruation is a matter of human rights, founded on international human rights instruments and declarations of constitutional rights, including e.g. in Nepal, its name captures the innovative and comprehensive concept initiated in Nepal by the government of Nepal and the Radha Paudel Foundation (RPF).

### Dignified Menstruation Day:

The 8th of December is International Dignified Menstruation Day, recognizing that DM is a concern of human rights and call to end menstrual discrimination as a form of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The 8<sup>th</sup> of December has particular significance in two ways: ) it falls in the month of December, which is designated as Human Rights Month; and 2) it falls on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the United Nations’ 16 Days of Activism, an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day.

Since 2019, Dignified Menstruation was launched by RPF and Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation (GSCDM). On the same day, the Government of Nepal’s Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens endorsed 8<sup>th</sup> December as Dignified Menstruation Day (DM Day). Partners of GSCDM in about 50 countries are engaged in promoting this campaign globally our effort from the event on December 8, 2022 will be another milestone.



**Slogan for 4<sup>th</sup> International Dignified Menstruation Day:**

This year's slogan is 'Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation for Ending Child Marriage'.

**Reasons behind this theme:**

In the course of 93 years of interventions for ending child marriage in various ways and forms, the subject of menstrual discrimination is omitted, even though it is the main driver for child marriage globally. The issue is more pertinent in local/rural settings low and middle income countries like in South Asian Countries. Actors for ending child marriage consider only the following issues: the absence of or low education; poverty; harmful practices including female genital mutilation (FGM); traditions of family honor; trafficking and displacement; inequitable social and gender norms; and disasters including wars and pandemics such as COVID-19.



Figure 2 Menstrual Discrimination impacts throughout the life

GSCDM studies the policies on Child Marriage and their link to menstrual practices around the world, and particularly in Bangladesh, India and Niger where the rate of child marriage is significantly high (Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation, 2019). On 14 March 2022, GSCDM shared these findings at the sixty-sixth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW66) and asserted that menstrual discrimination constructs the power and perpetuates the patriarchy in global social, economic and political arenas. When parents pass to men outside their family the care of their daughters before or when they start menstruating out of fear of pregnancy or value of virginity, they treat their girls as worth less than boys, being incapable of making decisions affecting their own futures, and truncating their educational and development opportunities. Clearly, menstrual discrimination is playing role of cause and effect of many forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against girls, including child marriage. Systemically, the girls are led to believe by their families and society that they are lower, inferior, and powerless compared to boys. Symptomatically, girls are faced for a total of at least two months in a year (5 days a month, 60 days a year) due to exclusionary perceptions and practices reinforcing menstrual discrimination at home, school and community. Eventually, girls believe themselves that they are less worthy and are coerced or

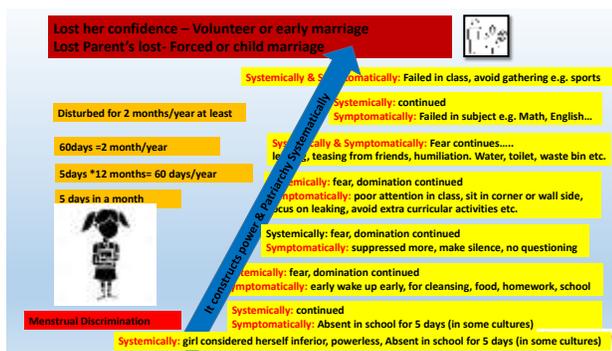


Figure 3 Menstrual Discrimination and its role for Child Marriage



trapped into voluntary, forced early or child marriage. In this connection, the Steering Committee and National Coordinators of GSCDM selected the slogan of Child Marriage in the monthly meeting in June 2022 as the theme of DM Day 2022.

**The following can be done:**

Dialogue. Dialogue. Dialogue.

Anything can be done for initiating a dialogue (talk, discussion, breaking the silence) by anyone who is committed to practicing and promoting dignified menstruation or human rights or ending child marriage or preventing SGBV or improving SRHR or working for gender equality or SDGs. However, this depends on the will to act and availability of resources, including a support team of experts.

**If you an independent individual**

These are the few examples of what you can do: GSCDM and DM have social sites including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Blog, and LinkedIn. Simply visit the website and social sites of the and copy or share or re-share whatever message you like.

Always remember to add the following #tags: #DignifiedMenstruation, #DignifiedMenstruation2022, #DignifiedMenstruationForEndingChildMarriage This allow us to track where and what you have been doing around DM Day 2022.

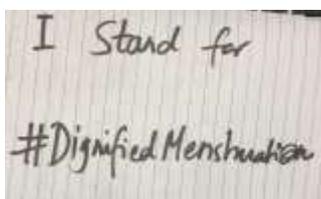


Figure 4 Simple way to stand for Dignified Menstruation

You can pick up a piece of paper and write any message that best fits this year’s theme and upload it via social media with or without your photo. Please do not omit the #tags (see the example) and say “I stand for #DignifiedMenstruation.”

If you are artist or painter, you can create images and messages accordingly



Figure 5 Art Work made by Late Kamla Bhasin, Sangat



**If you are representating an organization or network,**

There are many ways to mark the DM Day 2022:

- You can produce posters, videos, banners, pamphlets, stickers or anything your wish by putting the logo of your organization with that of DM and sharing it across your social media sites. But you need to include the symbol of Dignified Menstruation, Logo of RPF and GSCDM as mandatory and #tags as mentioned above. This poster was developed in collaboration of DMC Nepal (Dignified Menstruation Campaign Nepal) and Rotary Club of Bhaktapur. Here the symbols are missing for #DignifiedMenstruation and #DignifiedMenstruationforedningChildMarriage.
- You also can organize a webinar, talk show, radio program, interactive program, or rally or competition for poems, jingles, art or essays -- or anything by following the instructions as mentioned above.



**Use of other Opportunities**

We all deserve to celebrate DM throughout the year, 24/7, but strategic efforts in other days can be further improvised to make it everyone’s business to assure equitable society . Often we also question whether celebrating one day a year is impactful for the important intended outcomes. Yes, it is true that neither celebrating every day nor celebrating one day a year are always effective. Therefore, to draw the attention towards menstrual discrimination and ending its abuses, we need to utilize other days and opportunities to raise the subject. This could be local, national, regional or international days including cultural days. We need to align with theme and adjust the message as we wish or is convenient. For instance, In Nepal since 2021, Gift for Girls along with the Dignified Menstruation Campaign Nepal (DMC Nepal) asked for Mehendi for a ceremonial blessing for promoting DM during the holy month of Shrawan (Pariyar & Paudel, 2021). The 11<sup>th</sup> October International Girls Day is the perfect occasion to talk about DM because girls have to know about DM early, recognize it and be able to say ‘No’ to any bad or hurtful acts including child marriage. Likewise, during the 16 days of Activism, every day can be marked for the promotion of DM day because menstrual discrimination is all about sexual and gender-based violence and violation of human rights. On December 1, International HIV Day, DM can be raised to break the silence around HIV and other forms of sexual discrimination (<https://www.aidshealth.org/>, n.d.) Therefore, adapted to the organizational framework of all events advancing human rights, you can mark DM at the front and center as a cross-cutting concern.



### The Key messages:

While marking DM Day 2022, you can incorporate other messages into any program in order to deepen understanding of DM and amplify the voice to oppose DM:

- Each menstruator deserves dignity throughout her life cycle.
- Dignified Menstruation is everyone’s business and responsibility because it is a human right.
- Menstrual Discrimination is a form of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Menstrual Discrimination is a violation of human rights.
- Menstrual discrimination is complex and multifaceted.
- Menstrual discrimination plays a key role for constructing and shaping the power and patriarchy.
- Menstrual Discrimination is umbrella term for the taboo, shyness, shame, stigma, restrictions, abuses, violence, and deprivations imposed on menstruators throughout their lifetimes.
- Name, form and severity of menstrual discrimination vary from place to place, culture to culture.
- Menstrual discrimination is a key barrier to gender equality and justice.
- Dignified Menstruation is an innovative and holistic approach to tackle the multifaceted and complex problem of menstrual discrimination.
- Dignified Menstruation is cross-cutting theme to ensure gender equality and social Inclusion for menstruators.
- Dignified menstruation is an opening for a discussion of sexual and reproductive health.
- Dignified Menopause is human right, not a privilege.
- Let us promote ‘Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation for Ending Child Marriage’
- Menstrual Discrimination and its role for Child Marriage in Global South countries is an issue for urgent action.

### Contact details

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