

## Climate Justice: Centered the 'Menstruators'

Now, who doesn't know about the climate change? It is a long term shifts in temperature and weather patterns that occurs naturally or through human made activities that is manifested as floods, storms, heat waves, fires, droughts, hunger or malnutrition in our daily lives. And there were remarkable agreements on issues and actions at global level. However, while assessing the issues and solutions, are the vulnerable communities considered or not? Scholars, activists, donors are claimed and have showed that they have coalition for climate justice where the sexual and reproductive health or gender equality or peace appealed to address. Others who are working directly around climate justice may claim that they are addressing the gender issues, working for last mile population, or marginalized communities for adapting climate impacts. Who are the marginalized within the marginalized? How do the global community reach out to them? Are they really reaching out to them? How long do they preach the marginalized communities and what is the impact of it? Is the notion of inclusion adequately addressed across the activities of climate justice?

This article is provoking these above mentioned questions. It is too late to ask this question and how important is it to ask too. Almost all gender responsive policies including climate justice highlighted the disproportionate impact to the girls, youth, women, racial minorities, marginalized communities etc. Are such concerns or such attempts enough for address the disproportionate impact of climate change? Are their categorization enough to understand the diversity within the population and the struggles they faced at every moments?

This article say 'No'.

Not only the climate action movement, but also everywhere, at almost every movements, the first and foremost categorization is missing since beginning that is 'menstruator' and 'non-menstruator'. Once menstruator is stated, it applies to all human who are born with uterus and ovaries. Without further delay, it brings fast forward to person with disability, racial minorities, sexual and gender minorities, indigenous communities and so on the basis of uterus. It not only fastens the entire inclusion process at all sectors and levels but also prescribes the new parameters for it. It means that it addresses multiple discriminations and gaps already. More importantly, it also applies in all nature and human made casualties. The data collection sheet of any casualty serves so many info under single word i.e. 'menstruator'. For instance, 'who' are the victims of flood? 'Once, there is menstruator, many priorities and needs unveil without further delay. The flow of questions shifts from sympathy to important human being. During COVID -19 pandemic, if the patient were menstruator, we need to consider so many things automatically like age, phases (menstruation, pregnancy, contraception, peri-menopause, menopause etc.), any complications or diseases related with menstruation, any impact of hormone or any medication which is often forgotten to ask. The entire assessment of that patient differentiates due to the uterus. In other hand, that menstruator could be at frontline or at quarantine or ICU or anywhere. Be it wherever, that menstruator would deserve the treatment as 'human being' or as like any non-menstruator. The WHO and others took so long time to understand and recognize that 70 % female workforce were frontline workers during COVID-19 Pandemic. Therefore, the pandemic preparedness to response protocols missed the needs and priorities of them including the vaccine equity. The gender responsive policies or statements or appeals did not considered menstruators as means of inclusion. None of the gender responsive policies or GESI (gender and social inclusion) considered the needs and priorities of menstruators. Likewise, the ILO C 190 did not acknowledge the abuse and violence due to

menstruation or menopause at workplace. The sexual and reproductive actors attempted to include the menstruation but still missed the multifaceted nature of menstrual discrimination (taboo, shyness, stigma, restrictions, abuses, violence, deprivation from resources and services throughout the life cycle of menstruators). The comprehensive sexual education, or free distribution of menstrual products or menstrual hygiene or health are yet to acknowledge the complexity of menstrual practice and its role at every moment and throughout the life cycle systemically. The idea of use of contraceptive as climate adaptive strategy is more than just an irony and an outcome of undermined presence of human rights of menstruators. Even for safe abortion or any element of the sexual and reproductive health, dismantle of menstrual discrimination is not only the entry point of it but also enlightens the menstruators to build their agency, choices and making decisions. In such case, menstruators feel heard, recognized and dignified.

Of course, the non-menstruators do not have uterus and ovaries but they are born through and process of these. It is an open secret but is becoming a hick up while expressing it out at both private and public sphere. It is because of its connection with the power. Directly and indirectly, non-menstruators are considered 'pure', 'powerful' and 'privileged' because they never ever menstruate and historically or traditionally and deliberately in some extent, made taboo topic by hiding the fact that they are born from the menstrual blood. Simultaneously, menstruators are considered 'impure' 'dirty', 'contaminated' 'powerless' and 'disadvantaged' therefore; menstrual discrimination is in practice with different name, forms and severity all around the globe. Here, supporters of climate action, again, missed to acknowledge menstrual discrimination and its impact. Indeed, menstrual discrimination are impacted in two ways; systemic and symptomatic. Systemically, it constructs and socializes the 'power' and 'patriarchy'. As a result at any sphere women are considered as 'worthless' (e.g. sex –selective abortion) or 'weak' (e.g. gender pay gap). That notion applies in spiral way throughout the life cycles therefore menstruators are subjected in various forms of sexual and gender based violence at home, school, workplace, and everywhere, though there are endeavors for prevention and response. Here, the global community missed to analyze the gender equality or development or peace from the perspectives of the menstruators. Menstruators have already experienced and have been treated as low therefore; they often missed to count and respond accordingly. Therefore, menstruators are left behind yesterday and today. It will continue if the actors do not put the menstruators at the center of their work. If the menstruators would be put at center of the program or movement, even the symptomatic impact of menstrual discrimination (menstruation, menopause) would be addressed largely. If not, because of systemic impact of menstrual discrimination, the symptomatic needs of menstruators e.g. compromised the health seeking behaviors of the menstruators because there is shortage of water sources or experienced verbal or physical violence or high workload and so on.

More importantly, for tangible climate action, menstruators should be at center for cutting emissions as leaders, researchers etc., for adapting climate impacts as planner, as development or human right actors etc., for financing required adjustments as decision makers. The climate action is for the planet and as more than half of this planet's population is occupied by menstruators, there is no way to not put menstruator at center. Its high time and global call to acknowledge the existence of this planet with having menstruators and respect to this planet for equal, just and peaceful manner.

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