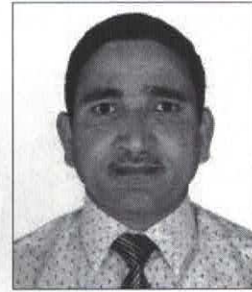


Fighting the discriminating chaupadi practice with music



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Gender based discrimination is one of the major problems of women in Nepal. Among many issues related to gender, menstruation-based discrimination is one of the major issues. It can be observed all over Nepal excluding some of the ethnic communities. In far western provinces of Nepal, this discrimination is named by so called “Chhaupadi”. Chhaupadi is being practiced in its hardest form in Karnali province and province number seven. There are harmful practices of Chhaupadi in many areas of these two provinces. This means that in many areas, women are made to sleep outside their home in a separate shed (Chhau hut) or with cattle during menstrual bleeding. These sheds, generally known as goths, are usually some 20–25 meters away from their own residential homes and are sized around 1×2 m. Such sheds often lack doors and windows, are very narrow, dark and congested, and have cold dirty floors where women sit and sleep. Chhaupadi also excludes women from the society. Hygienic conditions in the sheds are deplorable, women do not bath during periods and due to poverty and lack of knowledge, usually they do not have clean sanitary pads or cloths in use. Similarly, many women are not allowed to participate in social life, like attend meetings or go to school during the periods.

Chhaupadi tradition also denies women the right to touch water taps and use toilets in the fear of polluting the water source. Menstruating women are also not allowed to touch men and women and eat curd, milk, fruits and some other nutritious foods for the sake of ritually polluting and bringing bad luck to the man, cow or plant.

Similarly, another important impact is related to the consequences of open defecation. Despite of most of the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project (RVWRMP) working districts being declared open defecation free (ODF), menstruating women are not allowed to use toilet and compelled to go outside for defecation very far from the house. Open defecation has resulted in water contamination and high chances of water borne disease, sexual harassment or rape and fear of snake bites and wild animals.

There are many cases of death while staying in the Chhau hut in RVWRMP working areas. RVWRMP has taken effective actions to fight this harmful practice. In this line, triggering jingles, songs, radio programmes and campaigns against the harmful Chhaupadi practice and its impacts are the means of intervention.

In this line, the project has produced a song named “*Chhaupadi Ka Bedana*” in Deuda rhythm which will be played in radios in the project districts for wider coverage. The song reflects the realities of the menstruating women and adolescent girls. By showing the pain the hard discrimination causes, the song aims to make the target audiences to realize the harmfulness of the practice.

Song name: Suffering of Menstruating Women: Unofficial translation



Conversation (before the song)

(Daughter in law coming back from the forest with a full load of fodder)

- Daughter in law:** Oh! Mother in law Mother in law
- Mother in law:** You came back just now? Why were you so late?
- Daughter in law:** Mother in law ... I'm on my period..... My stomach is hurting So came slowly...I'm so hungry.
- Mother in law:** Take this roti (chapatti) I've cooked curd curry with rice ... But, I can't give you.
- Daughter in law:** Please give me curry and rice Nutritious food should be consumed during the period, because the body gets weak What's the problem?
- Mother in law:** I don't want to spoil my cow/buffalo by providing you the milk, curd and ghee. Go to collect firewood, take this mat and sleep in Chhau-hut there, you can't touch anybody.... Take water
- Daughter in law:** It's really difficult to eat this roti with salt (Moves towards jungle weeping meets one neighbor man)
- Neighbor:** Sister!! Sister!!! Why are you weeping? Where are you going with sickle and rope? Are you OK?
- Daughter in law:** Brother!! What to say ... it's my fate... I'm on my period. I am not allowed to eat proper food and stay at home or proper place. Going to jungle now. I have to sleep alone on this mat in that Chhau. Brother! I am helpless. Ma

incidences happened in chhau-hut, .. several have died there. But this society never changes. I'm frustrated being a woman.

Neighbor:

I know everything... please don't cry ... nothing can be changed by weeping...But put your courage to raise voice against this malpractice I am also with you and will support you.

Song starts

Man:

What a malpractice! Many of the daughters have to eat food with salt only and have to sleep on mat during the period.

Woman:

Mother! You gave me the birth to stay in Chhau-hut and to die being a victim of tiger, bear and snake.

===Music===

Man:

Several women burn in the fire, suffocate and get raped in the Chhau hut. How women resist such a pain?

Woman:

No security in the Chhau hut, even less than there is for cattle. Why the cruel society do not react when hearing such happenings.

===Music===

Man:

Oh god! What a tradition established that hurts us. Our blind society has become a women killer following such tradition.

Women:

How my fate could be changed ? How long should I get this trouble in the name of religion?

===Music===

Chorus:

Both:

Come together all mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters. Let's eradicate this malpractice and destroy the Chhau-huts.

Man:

In Far Western villages, Untimely demises are made in the name of menstruating women.

Woman:

In Far Western villages,Untimely demises are going on in the name of menstruating women.

Both:

In Far Western villages, if not, untimely demises will be going on in the name of menstruating women.