

## Review Article

# Menstrual Restrictions and Its Impact on Learning and Education: A Case from Jumla, Nepal

Radha Paudel

PhD Scholar, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

\*Corresponding author: Radha Paudel, PhD Scholar, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

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## Abstract

The study entitled 'menstrual restrictions and its impact on education' has done in the accessible village of Chandanath municipality in Jumla where employed qualitative approach, post positivist world view by using multiple methods; history talking/timeline, participatory observation and In-Depth Interview. Participants followed the restrictions during menstruation no matter whether the participants male or female, educated or uneducated or any characteristics. The restrictions grouped in three categories: touch, eat and mobility/participation. All kinds of restrictions have direct and indirect negative impacts on learning and education in many ways: embarrassing learning condition at school, home and huts, constraints of time, facilities at school, home and hut, fear of leaking, deprived from studying, poor performance and school dropped out. The menstrual restrictions and its impact on education has overlapped with the empowerment. Thus, it has significance value to improve the policy on education specially for girls. This study has done for the academic purpose and completed with limited resources.

## Introduction

Globally, having menstruation considered some forms of an impure, dirty, contaminated, bad and matter of silence, stigma, taboo. Thus, the girls miss the classes at school for few days during menstruation because they have to travel in school as well as they cannot focus on class [1]. Because the girls were teased or harassed by the boys, boys somehow know about that she is menstruating (Lawrick, n.d.). Increase in a year of secondary education helped not only increase the annual per capita income but also improve the maternal and children health by marrying later and eventually improve the decision making process [2]. Many researches revealed that the menstrual practices heavily impacted on acquiring quality education. Mugambi & Georgas, (n.d.) found that the adolescent girls discourage to go school, dropped from school and lose 3.5. Million learning days per month due to poor management in school for menstruation in Kenya. In rural Malawi, one third school girls remined absent at least one day during menstruation it is associated with school infrastructure specially toilet [3].

In Afghanistan, Bangaladesh, Bhutan, Sri-Lanka, girls are missing classes at least one to two days during menstruation [4].

In Nepal, parents denied to continue their study during menstruation by assuming that the school is holy places and menstruation is sin, found in focus group discussion (FGD) and eventually they do not only failing in class but also dropped out from school due to stigma and lack of menstrual friendly school environment [4]. Pandey further added that the girls couldn't pay adequate attention in preparation of exams due to their menstruation. In the same vein, among 5609 participants, 12.1 percentages reported school absenteeism due to menstrual stigma and 33.6% reduced their

regular work including education. Among the In-School and Out-School Adolescents girls, the menstrual restriction is recognized as an important barrier for development of self-efficacy and collective efficacy [5].

Nepali communities, regardless of class, caste, religion, region, the restrictions during menstruation is common. It has immediate and long-term negative impacts on the life of girls and women including education. During menstruation, girls deprived from going to schools though the number of days vary from place to place. Despite having lots of women's movement raised up in Nepal, such as equal citizenship rights, stop rape etc. but the most feminists, activists and organizations remained silent around the menstruation which resonates the women's oppression as well as menstruation as matter of taboo.

In this connection, this study took place to provide an evidence to all relevant actors specially for educators on how does menstrual restriction impacted on education by addressing following questions;

- i) what are restrictions practised during menstruation, and
- ii) to what extent, the education affects by restrictions during menstruation?

## Methodology

This study aligned with qualitative study, post positivist world's view where the feminist ethnography employed in order to explore the answers of restrictions during menstruation and its impact on education [6]. The cautions took place for consideration of reflexivity through explained the purposes, process and outcomes with gate keepers and participants throughout the field work. Because of the knowledge of having practice of restrictions during menstruation

and accessibility with transport, Kartikswami village of Chandanath Municipality, Jumla selected for this study [7]. The ethical procedures undertaken before, during and after the collection of the data: approval took from National Health Research Council, August 2017, took verbal and written consents and maintained safety and security of the data.

By considering the principles of Elana D. Buch & Karen M. Staller [4] this research employed following methods for data collection;

**Life history/Timeline:** The four menstrual participants identified through consultation meeting with gate keepers then snow ball, who represented the age between 28-40 years. All participants married, Hindus and mixed caste (two were from higher caste and the remaining belonged with Dalit and Chhetri respectively). Regards to education, none of them been to school.

**Participatory Observation (non- participant to participatory):** The total six participants identified for participatory observation for three days. They, all were married and four been to school. The checklist prepared for observation and enquired in between the observation. Specially, the observation had done around the menstrual women such as their place of living, their clothing, their physical gesture and sitting/sleeping, their interactions (family and social), their physical appearance, their personal behaviours/emotions/feelings, their key influencers, their food/liquid intake, their restrictions (private, public), their mobility, their used and management of sanitary materials, and their cleanliness observed [8]. The observation checklist prepared for the observation.

**Mass observation:** Researcher observed two mass activities; Teej celebration (Annual festival specific for women called red colour festival as well) and Temple observation where enquired with the women who were observed from distance.

**In-Depth Interview with Key Informants:** The total 17 participants: female 8, male 9, identified for In-Depth Interview, age ranged 14 to 80. Both female and male have experienced of restrictions during menstruation though they represented teacher, health workers, traditional healers, media workers and housewife. Except three females, all were married. Regards to education, except one participant, all were educated. In terms of caste, only two participants were belonged with Dalit. The interview guide prepared for administration of In-Depth Interview.

In order to triangulate the data, the varieties of methods used, probed the questions and followed up the visits to get deeper level of discussions. Further, the field diary, logbook, footage of videos, photos used. In this study, the data analysis is ongoing process started from data collection. The recorded data transcribed, coded, developed patterns and generated themes. The multiple attempts of peer review, consultation with supervisor had done for ensuring the accuracy, grounded of data, logical inferences, appropriate themes, justified decisions and methods, credibility and biasness.

## Results

Three types of restrictions during menstruation and its impact on education discussed in upcoming paragraphs.

### Restrictions on dring Menstruation:

*The place, person and things are restricted during menstruation due to consideration of menstrual blood as an impure. The place comprised of: foundation of house, house, kitchen, temple, toilet, person comprised of: male member, faith healers, seniors, priest, things comprised of: tap, river, intercourse, book, cattle, clothes, and plants of vegetables and fruits. Likewise, girls and women not allow eating rice, vegetables, fruits, milk products, prasad, meat products, beans, sour foods during menstruation. They also are prohibited in mobility, cannot work inside the house, same road or place as seniors walk/work, around the temple, meetings and cultural celebrations.*

### Impact on Learning and Education

#### Menstrual Taboo:

The elder participants had not had the opportunity to go school during their days. After marriage to date, they cannot join any formal and informal gatherings at home and community during menstruation by thinking of something would go wrong due to contamination with 'impure' blood.

Often, informal gatherings took place either at the roof or yard of the house. The house owner scared and made announcement for not joining the meeting to those who have menstruation because their god was so strict or something would go wrong at family.

Sometimes, the gatherings lead or participated by the men or faith or religious leaders or seniors who would sick if any menstruating women touch or contaminated them and place. Sometimes, few women do announce that they do not prefer to contaminate with menstrual girls and women in meetings/gathering. During the field work, a meeting was organized at the yard of house and the other menstruating women denied to join. Menstruating women said that this house owner could blame her if something would go wrong on her health and family in future therefore, they did not like to join in meetings.

Sometimes, menstruating women do not like to go there by thinking any possible sickness on their body and family due to contaminations with others.

The participants who went to school, they remained absent in school 3-5 days (will discuss later in details). The participants who are in school and college are also do have taboo on menstruation as well as have to follow the restrictions as other participants are practicing. Because of this restriction, the 'fear', 'inferior' complexity and participants started to remain far, tried to avoid the direct interaction with them.

#### Shyness and Embarrassment against Menstruation:

All female participants experienced shyness/embarrassment while they started to know the state of 'purity' and 'impurity' due to menstruation. Without having menstruation, they started to experience the feeling of shyness and embarrassment if someone or specially boy and men member talked about menstruation. Usually, these kinds of discussion started if someone absent at their surroundings or work. They learned such culture of shyness and embarrassment from

seniors, mothers, sisters at home and community. However, they felt more shyness and embarrassment right after the first menstruation. Despite knowing little bit about menstruation, they had feeling of extreme form of shyness, embarrassment and losing something in the family and community. It is very deep and vague feeling that hard to explain. Suddenly, they do not like appear in front of the any men members such as grandfather, father, elder brother etc. at home and other at neighbourhood. They also do not like to mix up with their contemporary boys or class mates.

In other hand, the men members at home and community keep asking about their age, education and linked the discussion with maturity or marriage. The boys from their class, often from senior class also started to tease while meeting. They often make jokes if they see something wet on the back of butt or bench. They also asked haphazardly if they feel bulky bags too.

Gradually, they become familiar and started to cope with all sorts of teasing, comments and difficulties though some sorts of shyness and embracement is existing within themselves. Therefore, they are trying to hide such discomfort on their body as well as on face. In this scenario, they are more focus on menstruation instead of their overall learning and study.

*'I have observed leaking. We shared with close friends only. Even we do not like to share all girlfriends. Four of us know about her leaking. Therefore, we four stay in class room in between the classes or break. We are trying to engage in gossip or something related with study as we pretending that we are there because of reason. At the end of the day, we let go all friends first. If others asked to go together, we just try to persuade them that we have work. When all go out, we simply use the shawl or sweater to wrap on her lumber to hide the blood. Meantime, few friends bring the water in noodle's cover to wash the bench.'*

*IDI\_Adolescent Girl\_17*

Because of shyness and embarrassment, menstruating girls and women do limit themselves to participate in other activities such as playing with siblings even with girls. They feel discomfort in playing or going anywhere so just living in single place where no one come without let them know.

### **Parent Discourage Menstruating Girls Read Books at Home**

During the first menstruation, parents asked not to touch any reading materials absolutely due to fear from god of wisdom. It is a form of deprivation and violation of human right (right to education) from education or learning which is violation of human right for education.

A young girl, she disobeyed the norms imposed by her mother and from neighborhood and continued her education during her first menstruation. She persuaded her siblings and friends to bring the essential reading materials and continue her study.

### **Children are deprived from Study at Home**

Because of menstrual restrictions followed by menstruating mothers and sisters at home, the young children's study is compromised in many ways. No matter whether the children are male or female,

they have to cook the food as instructed by their mothers.

*'(short smile...) sister, during menstruation, we, menstruating women could not enter in to house. The seniors or men members usually do not like to cook food. Thus, we need to ask for our children. If they are grown up well, they cook whatever they know. If not, we keep instruct them to cook from outside of the house during regular menstruation. Nowadays, the young children do not like to cook, they get angry, they cry and keep denying to cook because of not able to enough time to do homework or reading. My daughter simply cooked the rice to me as well. She always created dispute if I asked to cook handmade bread instead of rice. Rice supposed not to eat during menstruation as our culture.'*

*Lifehistory/Timeline\_Housework\_Bramin\_1*

Besides of cooking, they also need to engage for supplying the essential materials to their mothers, sisters, and aunts. Sometimes, they have to serve the foods, sometimes bring the soap, cloths, or any others materials as they asked. Sometimes, they also have to go here and there as asked by menstrual mothers, sisters and aunts where their concentration for study is not enough. Sometime, they have to go at field to serve food, water and sometimes have to go up to their mothers and sisters to consult with them on what to cook, how do cook or what should do or what should not.

*'I was shocked when I knew that my sister could not fetch the water even after entering in to house. She had no more blood in her body but she still considers impure and dirty. I got so irritated when she kept asking like for water, cloth, food etc. because I was distracted so much from my own task.'*

*IDI\_Healthworker\_Female\_11*

In few families, because of menstruation, women and young women who could do significant work inside and outside of the house, other family members such as grandparents, men members projected their anger and frustration with young children. Sometimes, they scared and unbalance to concentrate regards to their work and study. Young children experienced so challenging and feeling so long for five days due to constant pressure from their family members.

Those who do not follow the restrictions, they have more confidence to deal every day and learn anything. In many cases, even outsiders do not notice whether the girl or women have menstruation or not.

*'.....(big smile) .....you know didi (sister), this is big hotel in Jumla. In our hotel, we do not follow the any kinds of restrictions except Puja. Our customers are minister, billionaire, dalit, Hindu, Muslim etc. I am and serving food during menstruation too'. I never feel scared in front of them. I am feeling that I have confidence to do anything.'*

*Informal Meeting\_Feamle\_Lama*

### **Limited Time for Study due to the Restrictions on Water, Toilet, Bath, and Washing clothes**

Almost all participants, who were in school, did not go to the school during first menstruation therefore there was no worry about the homework. They were not allowed to touch any kinds of reading

materials too.

Only one young participant went to school during her first menstruation. However, her learning and study also compromised at home because she has to ask her essential materials for reading either from mother or siblings due to unable to enter in to house. She shared that she had to please her siblings either giving some gifts or money to get the materials as her need and interest. They kept denying and arguing so many things including letting her mother about her asking to get such restricted materials.

In regular menstruation, the learning and study is compromised in two ways. First, they have to engage in heavy works outside of the house which is planned for the time of bleeding so they have limited time to focus on their personal learning and study. Secondly, they are busy to manage the water, bath, toileting because of not allow to touch and use the water source, toilet, place for washing and drying the cloths.

During the course of field, participants are approaching towards the stream first. The stream was disturbed with rain (flooded), they changed their plan and went to the irrigational canal. For defecation, they have to wake up early in the morning to get bath, wash the clothes including cloth pad and prepare for the day. These all activities are not only distracted from concentration for reading but also waste the time that allocated for study. Participants shared that they often were late in school due to preparing for management of blood at menstrual hut during menstrual days.

*.....silence.....I am mad with rain? I went to stream early in the morning to finish my fourth day's purification. Because I was planning to go school from today. I wanted to go to my friend's house to enquire about the progress of study as well as homework. But I could not take bath there due to flooded. I was so confused what to do? Two aunts were already gone to the irrigational canal.*

*Participant's Observation\_Bramin\_1*

Additionally, sometimes, they also need to wait and becoming late while walking for school if there were any faith healers, seniors or any men member walking through same road.

Those participants who never been to school, or adult female participants, they also missed the opportunity to interact and learn from common place for fetching water and other activities.

### **Fear of Leaking Blood**

Elder women participants smiled with me when I asked the questions of participation in formal and informal interactions during menstruation. They even could not imagine to participate though they missed a lot of opportunities of meeting friends, relatives and other activities such as singing, dancing, eating etc.

Female participants who are working in formal jobs, they are used to and managed the pad including extra though they keep thinking about leaking while they are working. They are more conscious and more worried if they are working along with men and strangers. In addition to, they keep going to the toilet to check their leaking as well as asking with their female friends whether they have signs of leaking

or not. During the menstrual days specially first three days, they lose the confidence to concentrate to their work due to menstruation and stigma around menstruation.

*'....sister, indeed, I do not like to go school while I have period. When taking*

*class, often, I think about the leaking. I managed to go backside of the class and look at the back side of mine. The story of leaking noticing by students swimming over my mind and keep reminding myself to check. Sometimes, when I was responsible for extracurricular activities, I must sit in chair for a while. Then I had feeling of suffocation due to fear of leaking.*

*IDI\_Teacher\_Female\_11*

Among all female participants, young girls are in more stressed during menstruation. Menstruation considered as bothersome assignment from the god, shared by the school/college going participants. During menstruation, they keep awake up at night, due to intense thinking about leaking. Sometimes, they dreamed of leaking and sometimes they just feel cold or wet so they just distracted from the idea of leaking.

As like at night, they are worried about leaking in classroom. They keep thinking about leaking. Menstrual days determined the place in classroom. They prefer to sit in back and wall side so they can hide from letting their friends about menstruation in case of leaking. They also asked to close friends to monitoring their leaking as well. They keep changing their sitting positions. They also denied to participate in extracurricular activities including sports during menstrual days due to fear of leaking. I also do the same during my school and college days. I did not care about lecture of teacher; I just concentrate on my butt and blood. At school, my cloth pad fell off in to the toilet then I terribly nervous about my leaking.

The young participants also do not like to join any social cultural gatherings due to fear of leaking during menstruation as well as consideration of 'impurity' for menstrual blood.

### **Lack of Girls friendly Sanitation Facilities**

All female participants, limit to drink water in order to avoid the using the toilet during menstruation. They all had experienced of holding for a long to urinate and changing the cloths and pad in past during the menstruation due to not having appropriate sanitation facilities at home, school and community.

During the earlier days, when the professional worker female participants were in school, there was no toilet in school at all for girls. There was only a toilet which was occupied by boys. Girls usually had to go the bush and forest always. During menstruation, they have to go further bush and forest because of stigma as well as have to follow the stream to clean it. Thus, they discourage to go to the school during menstruation. Most of the participants either remained absent for few days or left the class after the school break or later due to no toilet for girls, no soap, no water, no facility of the emergency menstruation and leaking of the blood.

Among young participants, they have separate toilet in school but

no soap, water supply, no dust bin. They discourage to stay for a whole day in class due to lack of facilities while they like to change the cloth/market pad.

### **Lack of Facilities for Managing Health Problems**

During menstruation, all female participants experienced varieties of health problems especially abdominal and back pain. Most of them, because of stigma, neither they like to share nor get any support. But they missed or left the activities whatever they are doing such as class or other interaction. The young participants asked their friends to manage stripes for binding as well as asking for massage where both were missing the class or any activities they involved. The class or activity is not matter to anyone in the family therefore, they allow to leave the class or any activity including the cultural activities once they noticed that they have pain and blood.

### **Not Possible to Read and Write in Small Hut/Cowshed during Menstruation**

During the first menstruation (menarche), all participants were in menstrual hut/cowshed not allowing to touch any reading materials.

Participants who went to school, they had not brought the books by themselves due to concept of contamination. There books were carrying by their friends except in class. There learning and overall study so much distracted, they shared.

In regular menstruation, most of the participants continue to stay in same or similar menstrual hut/cowshed or separate room. These locations are not suitable for study at all because of not enough space (floor) to spread the books and her body, no light. Usually in menstrual hut/cowshed, I saw the small candle or *Jharo* (inner piece of pine firewood). They had not had enough reading materials in hut. They also struggled with bad smell from cowshed, attacking by insects. Sometimes, they also lose concentration because of not having food and water when they are hungry while living in shed.

During field work, a young participant was found in the cowshed where there was very little space to sleep for two adult menstruating women and her. Two adult women were smoking and talking about their families till mid night. Therefore, the young participant also just follows their gossip and sidelined the study. She shared that she had to continue her education but there was no enabling environment at all.

In other menstrual hut, menstruating women brought two young children who are already joined school. There learning and study also compromised because of the practice of restriction.

Likewise, another young participant was lying on floor. She also remained absent in class and I did not see any materials related any reading. She simply rounded by few pieces of rags clothes, utensils, broken gallon for water, pine firewood with traditional (use three stone for making oven) oven for firing during night for making warm and wipe away the mosquitoes.

More importantly, the emotional and physical environment for learning is further deteriorating due to living in separation where no adequate lights for reading at night and even during day. There is no smooth, enough and clean space to spread the reading materials.

Additionally, they keep distracting from focusing on study or work because of receiving strange noises from insects, dogs and scared by thinking anything wrong like stranger man or wild animal or anything bad.

### **Poor Performance and School Dropouts**

Because of consideration of menstrual blood is impure, dirty, contaminated and matter of shyness, low status, stigma, taboo, educated participants except one remained absent during first menstruation.

In addition, there are restrictions for eating, touching and mobility/participation that also deprived from learning and education directly and indirectly. For example, not eating and drinking adequate food and water accelerate the depression, dizziness during menstruation whereas restrictions for touching and mobility further wreck the enabling environment for learning.

All educated participants recalled their childhood where they remained absent during regular menstruation from two to four hours to one to three days in school. It depends the nature of menstruation. Participants who were in school, they could not go school for at least seven days which showed immediate impact on education so started to get lower marks. Few participants are missing classes during regular menstruation. Few participants who continue the class but failed to pay attention in class due to thinking about the leaking of blood in class and assuming the situation of embarrassing in front of friends, teachers and others. In addition, they further scared from potential shyness because of not having infrastructure (separate toilet, water, soap, waste management, and washing, drying) for leaking, unexpected menstruation. Therefore, few of them, did not like to go school and few of them left the school at the middle of the day.

Later, they started to failing in subjects. In year or two, they failed to school and did not like to go school due to dismissal of their dream for life as well as interested to do voluntary marriage. In other hand, the parents also broke their hearts due to failing their daughters and started to think to arrange marriage. Thus, the restriction for not touching books and reading materials pushed girls for forced or voluntary child marriage at the immediate level but huge loss in future due to losing the economic opportunities.

Few participants did not go school for three to five days every month because they had not had confidence to go school. Personally, they felt with low energy to go school because of dirty, lazy and also have deep fear with friends specially with boys. They might tease and harassed if the menstrual blood leaked out.

*“Remained absent in school for three to five days in months due to work and menstruation. I do not like to go school by many reasons: feeling lazy, dirty, fear with girls and boys for teasing, no concentration for study. I failed in subject in math, science that I cannot cover from self-study as well as from friends”.* IDI\_Adolescent Girl\_Dalit\_17

Almost all female participants whether they go to school or not, they lost their confidence and scared from teasing from seniors, boys, friends at home, school and community. Because of suddenly absence in school or work, others knew about their menstruation

that hinders to participate in school or work as like before. Most of girls found themselves strange by themselves and limited from many opportunities, they added.

*‘‘I did not go school for five days during my first menstruation. The male teachers also understand without telling directly because this is our culture. I felt so humiliation since then’’.*

*IDI\_Healthworker\_Female\_5*

Male participants who worked as teacher in school, also noticed about the same situation since childhood. Teenagers girls kept saying that they were sick or they had urgent work at home, their parents were sick etc. then remained absent in school in regular interval.

*‘‘None of the girls tell that she has menstruation in school. Teachers also do not talk or discuss about it. I do not know about leaking yet. I do not know notice complaint at office not know at classroom. One female teacher is also Dhami. She doesn't tell her menstruation but keep staying far from us while eating snacks. Girl students are remaining absent in school because of sick and work at home but not say that because of menstruation. I felt sad and sorrow that girls do not have any interest to study when they enter in to puberty in my 11 years' experience of teaching. They attracted with opposite sex and do the marriage. Just recently, a five graded, 12 years girl got marriage. Girls can't tell their health problems directly. Usually, girls made binding with shawl at their back. They replied that they use due to abdominal or back pain with shy mixing smile then we guess that they have menstruation. Menstruation is not issue of discussion in school. When I was in school, we teased girls if they remained absent in school for 5 days and girls came school without holding the books. They don't touch books by themselves’’.*

Then, in regular menstruation few remained absent for three days as well as drop of the class after having menstruation or scared of leaking or menstrual pain.

*‘I just feel lazy and discomfort to go the school during my menstruation. I tried couple of times before but found so exhaustive and suffocative and did not understand almost anything. Thus, nowadays, I remained absent for three days at least. I am worried about my study though for me managing menstruation is important than study. More importantly, too many things have to ask from inside the house with family members which needed for study, that made me more bored and frustrated.’*

*Participant's Observation\_Dalit\_6*

As belief towards menstrual blood, girls and women are excluded from at all. It has direct and indirect impact for quality education for school/college going girls and impacted for the learning to others. First, all participants remained absent in school during menarche.

The feeling of enthusiasm was distracted because of confusion on idea of whether touching reading materials or not. The seniors and faith healers are not allowed to touch the reading materials as considering the goddess of wisdom (*god of Saraswati*) for books.

### **Limiting Themselves from Every day's learning**

Like across the country, due to patriarchal mindset and culture, men possess the superiority in family and community. Because of

access and decision-making authority, they have more knowledge and skills at home, school and everywhere. Inaccessible with men also fuels to deprive from the information and knowledge. The participants who were going school/college and work, they limited themselves for avoiding touching and interacting with men. The male participants especially elder also limit to have interaction with menstrual girls and women due to concept of impurity. Few female participants did not like to go school/college or work due to scare of touching with their family men members who were working there too.

### **Discussion**

Because of deprivation from the formal and informal interactions, gatherings, learning and classes at family, school and community, menstruating girls are unable to build analytical skills, missing the opportunities, decrease the sense of control, confidence and eventually failed in learning. In line with this, the empowerment theory defined as process of learning through participation in different activities including schools and other activities [9].

Menstrual understanding and practices impacted in learning and education directly and indirectly. Directly, girls and women are deprived from interaction and discussion takes place at kitchen or dining table. The deprivation not only confined in kitchen but also apply all activities take place at home. They also equally deprived from the interaction and participation in all kinds of socio-cultural gatherings, celebrations and meetings take place outside of the family or community. These formal and informal interactions provide the exposure as well as build confidence of girls and women. In opposition to, girls and women feel anger, stress, frustrated, isolated, lower, inferior, powerlessness within themselves and it is a form of violation of human right.

These above-mentioned feelings, experiences and beliefs is stronger as they grown up and started to limit themselves at home, school and community. In school, they started to miss classes to days, from one to three days then failing in classes. Eventually, they failed in class. They further demoralize to continue their education and attracted with field work and marriage. Indirectly, once, they do not have proper education, their employment also will affect in future and the entire vicious circle of poverty and illness start. Those girls and women who are not in school, they do not like to discuss or appear in front of the men and seniors and they would confine within house, field and forest.

First and foremost, menstruation associated practices constructed the power at an individual level of boy and girl and at institutional. Both girls and boys started to learn the menstruation since young childhood. Without knowing any logic, girls see themselves as like mother who have to work hard, dominated by the men members, powerless due to the state of impurity of menstrual blood. It has similarity with the believe of Rappaport (1987) where the empowerment as process of gaining mastery by people, organizations and Communities, happening at multiple levels [10]. Since childhood menstruating girls and women kept actively engage with their community and an understanding the socio-political dimension around them instead of having observations or self-perceptions regards to menstruation. In

this vein, [10] emphasized that that psychological empowerment is more than self-perceptions.

The socialization process of power construction is dominating where girls and women limit themselves from the opportunities of learning. In alignment with this, the close tie was revealed between restrictions during menstruation and gender based violence including rape [11]. The state of powerlessness is constructed and learned by menstruating girls and women through the observation, past experience, ongoing practices, behaviour and thinking patterns before, and during the menstruation. Feminist believed that the powerlessness or oppression or deprivation is the outcome of both socio-economic and psychological factors [12]. Further, this study emphasised for understanding the material reality of oppression. In contrary this, powerlessness considered as more than lacking power including inability to cope with emotions, skills, knowledge, lack of self-esteem including lack of external supports [13].

In this vein, the Garg et al., [14] Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler, [15] agreed that the segregation due to impurity and restriction regarding touch, the girls considered themselves inferior, negative feelings towards their body. As Rembeck et al., [16] believed the girls and boys

self-esteemed and self-agency built since childhood where the family played a vital role for that and influenced by and from menstrual practice. In this vein, Johnston-Robledo & Chrisler, [15] argued that the lower status of women was determined by menstrual stigma and taboo in the family and community.

Menstruating girls and women lose their sense of and motivation to control, skills for decision making and problem solving and critical awareness on socio-political environment as impact of psychological disempowerment. In this vein [10] described as constructs; interpersonal, interactional and behavioural component under the nomological framework of psychological empowerment. Additionally, limiting or exclusion due to menstruation also affects women legal rights and freedom of women in public sphere.

The impact of education and health are overlapping here (Figures 1 and 2). Girls and women have low self-esteem, feeling of inferior, humiliation, hopelessness, powerlessness because of compromising the needs and rights related with food, water, shelter, environment, education, health and eventually dignity. Dignity is such a right which includes all rights and offers right to all aspects of life of girl, women

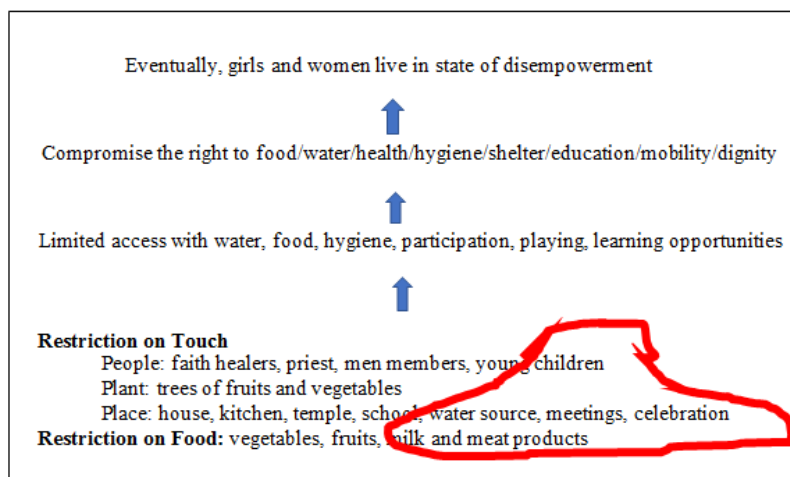


Figure 1 Menstrual restriction and its impact on Education

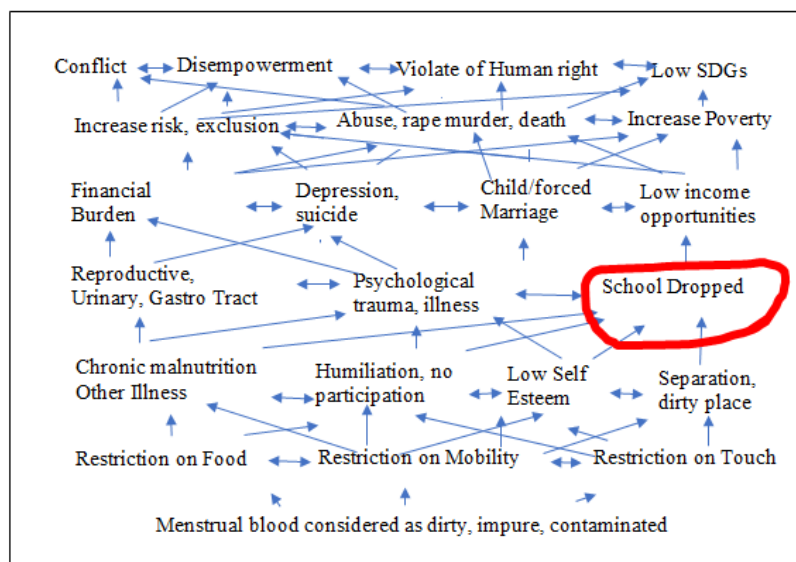


Figure 2 Menstrual Restriction and its impact on education

and any individual. Poor education, poor health is the status of poor human right and status of disempowerment.

## Conclusion

Restrictions during menstruation, is one of the factors for poor learning and education among girls and women. In order to expediate their learning and education, the dialogue on menstruation for unpacking the varieties restrictions, rumours around menstruation. In addition, the public spaces specially schools and college to play crucial role for educating on dignity during menstruation in curriculum and menstrual girl friendly facilities including awareness raising activities.

## Limitation

This study has done for the purpose of academic fulfilment with limited resources.

## Fund

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