

Menstrual Hygiene Management Awareness Program to Adolescents girls

By Healing Hands Nepal (निको पार्ने हातहरु नेपाल)

Shree Ganesh Higher Secondary School
Simpani, Marshyangdi Gaupalika
Lamjung District, Nepal.
31-May-2019 (14-Jestha-2076)



We are very happy to share our report of the "Menstrual Management Hygiene Awareness Program" at Shree Ganesh Secondary School in Simpani, Lamjung.

Well, our program was for the World Menstruation Day, the May 28th, but due to unexpected and sad nationwide no vehicular movement on the day before, we couldn't travel to Lamjung, so rescheduled the whole program for Friday, the 31st of May.



As a part of "Women & Girls' Health & Hygiene", HHN with Roni Shakya, our SRHR Trainer, conducted a one-day MHM program to 87 girl pupils from class 5 to 10. The response at first was slow, girls shied away and covered their faces as Roni said "*mahniwari* or *yoni* or just pad or menses" but as they started getting used to the talk, everybody

opened up and actively participated in various games.

What was more amazing was to see, Class 5 students, who had not even reached their puberty were more eager to learn about menstruation and what they need to do when they get one.



The girls not only made queries about MHM or personal health but also on how to empower themselves and get over the social and emotional norms or how to mentally deal with the various phases and physical changes occurring at adolescent age.

Kalpana from Class 6 said, "My mom always said, bleeding from the vagina is a "disease" that girls get after 11 years of age and I should not bathe during the first four days of it, but now after this session I realize how wrong it is not to bathe for 4 days. I was always ashamed of foul smell during menstruating and I preferred missing classes in those days. Now that I know I can bathe every day, I will not miss my school because of my menses anymore."

There is a tradition of *gufa basne* (hideout) when girls get their first period that means no sight of the sun and no sight of boys of the family while confined to one dark room for 11 days. But in Lamjung, the girls are driven away from their house on every menses for 3 consecutive months. People there believe that menstruating girls must not even look at their house-roof for 3 months on the days. My jaw dropped when Teacher Pabitra Thapa said that. It was not like I had not hideout when I got my first menses but that was 20 years ago. My nieces in Kathmandu don't do that anymore. I strongly oppose my relatives to send them to *gufa-basne* ritual and I have succeeded too. But this 3 months negative-rites that girls go through in Lamjung is terrible, I feel sorry about it but somewhere I know it is still better than Chaupadi tradition in Western Nepal.

Healing Hands Nepal

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I remember Pabitra's hopeful eyes when she said, "Ma'am it will take time, but I can see that this *gufa-basne* tradition will become a history in Lamjung too."

Pabitra is a young and enthusiastic teacher at the school (*seen on photo below*).

Well, one step at a time. Now that the girls know menstruation is not a disease, they are not hesitant to talk about it with their female teachers anymore and they actively participate in this kind of session. The Nepal government in their recent Budget announcement for the fiscal year BS. 2075/76 has set aside funds for free sanitary pads to girls. This is very good news, right? Hopefully, we will soon see the day when girls are not banished from their house in the name of Menstruation and the term *Gufa-basne* becomes appalling thing to do.

The event ended with the refill of sanitary pads at school's infirmaries for 6 months and reading materials on menstrual hygiene and FAQ of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for the school's library.



We were showered with love from girls and teachers.
What could we have asked more for!

However, this could not have been possible without your support and encouragement. I send love and hearty congratulations to all those who supported us on GoFundMe and PayPal.

This is your achievement more.

