

**INTERGENERATIONAL CHANGES IN MENSTRUAL TABOOS
AMONG SCHOOL GOING ADOLESCENT GIRLS OF
BOUDDHA, KATHMANDU**

A Thesis

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July, 2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled "**Intergenerational Changes in Menstrual Taboos among School Going Adolescent Girls of Bouddha, Kathmandu**" submitted to Central Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor. I have made due acknowledgments to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of preparing this thesis. The result of this thesis has not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other purposes. I assure that no part of the content of this thesis has been published in any form before.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that **Shanta Acharya** has completed this dissertation entitled **"Intergenerational Changes in Menstrual Taboos among School Going Adolescent Girls of Bouddha, Kathmandu"** under my guidance and supervision for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology. I, therefore, recommend and forward this dissertation for final approval and acceptance by the dissertation committee.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis submitted by **Shanta Acharya** entitled "**Intergenerational Changes in Menstrual Taboos among School Going Adolescent Girls of Bouddha, Kathmandu**" has been approved by this department in the prescribed format of the faculty of humanities and social sciences. This thesis is forwarded for acceptance.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION	ii
LETTER OF APPROVAL	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1-8
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem	5
1.3 Research Questions	8
1.4 Objectives of the Study	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9-35
2.1 Biological Interpretation of Menstruation	9
2.2 Socio-cultural Interpretation of Menstruation	11
2.3 The Relationship between Patriarchy, Gender, and Menstruation	14
2.4 Radical Feminism in Cultural Domestication of Women	21
2.5 Menstruation Practices in the Global Context	25
2.6 Empirical Studies in Nepali Context	30
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	36-41
3.1 Research Design	36
3.2 Rational of the Side Selection	37
3.3 Sources of Data	37
3.4 Universe and Sampling	38
3.5 Tools of Data Collection	38
3.6 Data Analysis	40
3.7 Limitations and Significance of the Study	40
CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDETNS AND THEIR PERCEPTION TOWARD MENSTRUATION	42-53
4.1 Caste/Ethnicity, Religion, and Occupation Background of the Sample Household	42
4.2 Perception Towards Menstrual Taboos	45
4.2.1 Perception towards Menstrual Blood	45

4.2.2 Religion and Perception Towards Menstruation	47
4.2.3 Perception Towards Menstrual Restriction	50
4.3 Conclusion	52
CHAPTER FIVE: ADOLESCENTS PRACTICE TOWARD	
MENSTRUATION	54-65
5.1 Practice Towards Menstrual Taboos	54
5.2 Menstrual Practices Inside the Household	55
5.3 Attendance at Religious Events	56
5.4 Purification of the Body	58
5.5 Prior Knowledge of Menstruation	60
5.6 A Culture of Hiding	61
5.7 The Role of School	62
5.8 Managing the Menstrual Hygiene	64
5.9 Conclusion	64
CHAPTER SIX: INTERGENERATIONAL CHANGE IN PRACTICE OF	
MENSTRUAL TABOOS	66-74
6.1 Menstrual Practices in Daily Activities	66
6.2 Religious Purification of the Body	68
6.3 Religious Enforcement of Postponing the Menstruation	70
6.4 Manage the Menstrual Blood	72
6.5 Conclusion	74
CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	75-80
7.1 Summary	75
7.2 Conclusion	78
REFERENCES	81-84
ANNEX I: INTERVIEW CHECKLIST	85-88
APPENDIX II: PHOTOGRAPHS	89

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how urban adolescent females perceive and implement menstruation taboos. Menstrual taboos are socio-religious customs that restrict daily activities for a specific period of time each month based on menstrual bodies. In addition, my study looks into the menstrual practices of girls' mothers in order to understand how menstruation has changed over time. In this study thesis, I had to respond to the question, "What kinds of menstruation taboos do both girls and their moms practice?" Furthermore, the effects of menstrual views on girls had been investigated. As a result, the purpose of this study is to find a solution to menstrual taboos that relate to a unique aspect of life, as well as adolescents' perceptions of those taboos based on their own menarche experiences.

Menstruation is a biological event that occurs every month in the lives of women. Menstruation, in general, is a basic, natural procedure that occurs after a particular age in a woman's life and is also a symbol of the beginning of reproduction. Menstruation, however, is not merely a biological process; it is exacerbated by a culture that is influenced by a variety of variables. Women are stigmatized, restricted, and portrayed as a cultural taboo on specific days.

Menstrual taboos are associated with a woman's menstruated body, which occurs every month of her life and often involves the exclusion of women from many aspects of society. Menstruating girls and women are viewed as impure and stigmatized as untouchable, based on religious values. Due to strongly established socio-cultural ideas that prolong menstrual rituals in Nepali society, women's activities are restricted to personal, familial, and cultural life. Menstrual body taboos vary by caste/ethnicity and religious beliefs.

It is linked to a variety of activities based on regular bleeding, which is directly related to daily activities. Menstruation taboos persist in Nepali society, but the traditions vary by caste and ethnicity. "Not touching a male member of the family, plant, tree, or fruit during menstruation, not consuming pickles or dairy products, eating alone during menstruation, not entering the kitchen or places of worship, not

visiting relatives, or not attending social or religious gatherings are some of the common socio-cultural beliefs in various castes in Nepal related to menstruation. Menstrual rituals include not entering temples, not attending religious or social gatherings, not touching plants or male family members, and cleansing the bed on the fourth day of menstruation are just some of the common menstrual practices or restrictions followed by menstruating women” (Mukhargee et al., 2020).

During menstruation women and girls are isolated in their homes every month for certain days. The extreme traditional practices of living in menstrual huts (*chhaupadi*) remain in Nepal pervasively in Darchula, Bajura, Doti, Dailekh, Kailali, Achham, Kanchanpur, Kalokot lies in the far and mid-western regions of Nepal. It is an extreme form of menstrual taboo practice, where they are required to distance themselves from the family and community that has deeply rooted in socio-cultural tradition. Along with *chhau* practice, all women and girls are isolated from their daily activities, and may not be extreme restrictions but women are considered impure, imposes multiple socio-cultural constraints based on periodic bleeding have still existed. Even though this practice has been less prevalent among urban girls but still restrictions on mobility, touching the close male members of the family, cooking food, worshipping the gods, and attending family gatherings are forbidden during menstrual periods are forced to practice. Those restrictions or taboos affect women's lives and make them limited to mobility to attending social gatherings which makes them excluded from their own homes as well public participation.

Complete isolation of females for one week or more in some parts of the community, as well as exposure to sunlight, are the first taboos in the first menstruation. They are also forbidden from seeing their brothers, fathers, and other male relatives, which is difficult for young females to do. "Menstrual taboos are almost common, and while many of them have to do with uncleanness, there is a slew of others. The objectives and meanings of menstrual customs are completely distinct, even contradictory" (Buckley and Gottib, 1988). For most girls, menstruation is a source of fear or embarrassment, and limitations on daily activities such as not being able to bathe, change clothes, comb hair, or visit holy locations during this time are rigidly enforced.

These limitations are harmful to all women. "Menstruating girls have feelings of embarrassment as a result of isolation in their own homes, as well as social and

religious rejection. This isolation from regular activities may result in a negative attitude toward women's bodies, abilities, creativity, and overall well-being. "At first, these social and religious constraints cause embarrassment among menstruation females, but they subsequently have a negative influence or have psychological ramifications" (Yadav, et al., 2017). The young girl's menarche experience is significant not only for understanding their perspective. However, knowing how menarche is seen as a chance to enforce gender norms on girls is also significant from a societal aspect. Later, it leads to girls' social marginalization from several fields of interest.

Adolescent women in Nepal, where the average age of menarche is 13.5 years, lack consistent access to sexual, reproductive, and menstrual health education. "Many Nepali women lack access to sanitary menstrual products and disposal choices, as well as a private space to change period cloths or pads and clean water to wash their hands, bodies, and (if used) reusable items." Women are left to manage their periods in ineffective, inconvenient, and unsanitary ways, such as using bark, leaves, and soiled rags" (WaterAid, 2009). The lack of cheap sanitary products and facilities is frequently exacerbated by cultural beliefs that regard menstruation as shameful or filthy. As a result, many women and adolescent girls are "restricted from full participation in social and cultural life," according to the report. As a result, many women and adolescent girls are "excluded from fully participating in social and cultural life, including religious activities" (Rothchild and Piya, 2020).

The educational institution serves as a significant vehicle for the socialization of the younger generation and the organization of standardized patterns of social conduct related to menstruation. It provides information on various aspects of human life, including menstruation. Menarche and menstrual hygiene are rarely discussed in our school curriculum for younger students. Our curriculum never discusses the various aspects of menstruation that assist young people to hide and offers them the opportunity to practice under social pressure. More efforts in our curriculum are needed to de-stigmatize menstrual habits and make them more dignified, so assisting in the gender equality of our society. Prior understanding of menstruation helps girls prepare for menstruation and manage monthly bleeding before they reach menarche, although it has been fruitful in raising issues in the curriculum it was just imagination for all the girls.

All women have their perceptions and way of practice towards menstruation. Practicing menstrual taboos in daily lives are make a perception of menstrual bodies. On the one hand, our cultural values imposed the practices of menstruation exclusion based on religious beliefs, as well as our curriculum also does not share proper knowledge makes a negative perception of the issues. At an early age, the practice and perception of menstruation under families values but later are made their own beliefs on it.

When I first started menarche, my family members, mostly female members, were regulating and imposing it on me. Then, through social media, books, and menstrual cramps, we have access to a wealth of information that allows us to form ideas that are distinct from those of our families. During my period, I never touch my father, brother, or uncle, but we traveled together and eat lunch at the same table, so nothing is different. It contributes to the dignity of menstruation. As a result, adolescents grow up with various habits and form opinions on the subject; but, as a result of social mobility and exposure to global culture, they may subsequently diverge.

I had my own unique menstrual experiences. I had the first period in the classroom when I was 14 years old. I was brought to the homes of my relatives to be hidden. I stayed for ten days. I was not allowed to enter the kitchen, touch the water pots, or touch the male members of the family; I was not allowed to comb my hair, drink cow milk, or touch the male members of the family; I was not allowed to worship the god; I did not attend social gatherings, and I slept on the floor using old bedsheets that were only made for menstruating women, and I took a bath every day before the sun rose. I used garments for blood management to control menstrual hygiene. This constrained conduct around me made me feel like I wasn't part of the group.

Because of my evolving thoughts about menstruation, I gradually departed from the prescribed trend. For example, I never touched my brother at home during those days, but we sat together in class, drinking cow milk at my friends' house, and I visited a temple near our school. Similarly, because of my changed attitude toward menstruation, I began sleeping in a regular bed, cooking regular meals, touching restricted people, using regular utensils, and attending social functions. I used to hide my menstruation while pretending to be normal, but I eventually started doing it openly. These events shifted my perspective on menstruation, and I gradually began to follow some of my family's regulations.

Compounding factors such as caste/ethnicity, geographical area, family kind, and educational position of family members affect menstruation habits, as well as beliefs. Taking those aspects into account, urbanization may have an impact on menstrual-related disorders. This area is more mobile than the village, and as a result of consuming global culture, which is always spreading in the countryside, it rapidly changes people's perceptions of issues. As a result, I was investigating concerns in an urban setting to uncover adolescent perspectives and behaviors. In addition, I'll look into how my respondents' mothers deal with menstruation.

In this research, I focused on adolescent girls from Kathmandu Metropolitan City's Boudha Ward No. 6 in urban settings. Because young minds have their method of perceiving the phenomenon after a particular age of practice, my experiences have pushed research in this sector. Girls have a different course of action to understand social values in the religious environment after leaving higher school generally after their adolescence. They are unsure of what they should or not do. They have their own beliefs, but they are influenced and eventually coerced by the family members closest to them.

Along with my menstruation habits, my mother adhered to the menstrual taboos that I saw in my teens, such as not touching the water tap, not drinking cow milk, and even slipping on the floor at the cow shed without a decent bed. I witnessed some impossible procedures, such as touching the male manhood, cooking the food, and brushing the hair. She has a separate lunch plate that she solely uses for menstrual practice. She follows a thorough purification practice after four days of menstruation.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

My mother followed the menstrual taboos that I had witnessed in my youth, such as not touching the water tap, not drinking cow milk, and even slipping on the floor at the cow shed without a comfortable bed. I watched various bizarre practices, including caressing the family's male members, cooking the food, and brushing the hair. She has a separate lunch plate that she uses just for menstruation hygiene. After four days of menstruation, she undergoes a strict cleansing regimen.

My mother's tight adherence to the menstrual taboos that I witnessed as a teenager also prompted me to do this research. She belongs to the Hindu high castes and lives in rural Nepal, where women are obliged to adhere to various restrictions, including

menstrual taboos. I perceived her as being ostracized on monthly days, and if she had bleeding during festivals and ceremonies, she had to leave the house for a few days because she made the buildings dirty, according to a practice that persists in our culture. I'd like to depict the current practices of menstruation taboos as they are experienced by my respondents' mothers.

These cultural taboos or prohibitions affect all women every month, from menarche through menopause. Nepalese women are covered by more than half of the world's population. Menstruation, on the other hand, is not included in Nepal's national statistics. These problems aren't just restricted to women's painful life experiences. As a result, the researcher is keen to conduct a study in this area to compare my experiences with adolescent girls and their mothers to those I have had with my mothers.

The practice of menstrual restriction has a variation according to caste/ethnicity, religious beliefs, “geographical location, class”(Gottib, 1988) occupational status are major. I had a different way to practice menstruation and my Janajati friends have not similarly practiced menstrual exclusion like me. Likewise, the so-called Dalit friends are sharing their different way of practicing menstruation. The variation of practicing menstruation is not only according to caste/ethnicity but religious beliefs prominently play a role in doing all of those things.

My bitter experiences with menstrual exclusion, in Nepal, most women and adolescent girls experience restricted mobility and participation in normal activities due to menstrual bleeding were forced to do based on cultural norms. Those cultural norms have a variation. “Women belonging to Janajati and other ethnic groups were less likely to follow the socio-cultural restrictions during menstruation. The Janajati caste, an indigenous group, were more likely to enter places of worship while menstruating, compared to the Brahmins.” (Mukherjee, et al., 2020) “Societal pressures to maintain menstrual restrictions become even more pot when menstruating women internalize these beliefs and begin to practice self-exclusion.” (Shrestha and Piya, 2020).

Memorizing my bitter experiences of cultural taboos along with my mother, I want to know about experiences on menstrual taboos from young girls and their observation of the mothers' practices, based on their experiences. For a certain period of every

month, based on cultural milieu, we are excluded from our home, and later community, in the name of cultural values, which leads to the decline in the status of women. I have also had bitter experiences while practicing menstruation which is imposed by religious values. My beliefs are a part of my life but culture forced me to put unnecessary values on my head.

Education is a changing vehicle for all sectors but in this part of life, education cannot massively transform values. However, I have also experienced school drop outs that I saw at my school live who are coming from so far to study. At our school menstruation is never taken as a natural process, taken as hiding and made shameful for all of us. Managing the bleeding is a major thing for all of the girls at that time. We all are using the rag of clothes. Yet, our teachers never help with these issues and the curriculum raises awareness and teaches the proper way of managing it.

This research is also equally important to all the researchers who are interested in this issue to know the present condition of practices followed by young girls. As in more, this research is equally important to policymakers for formulating the policy, and planning for dignifying menstruation will be a small effort from my side. Furthermore, the research findings are helpful for policymakers as well as community workers to formulate plans and policies and improve the level of knowledge and create awareness of menstruation.

Issues, there exists limited research on menstrual practices in Nepal, even though the urban area and young girls' feelings, and experiences were less focused. The menstrual studies were mostly focused on menstrual health and hygiene, and discussed "what they do on those days. Menstrual practices are more than what they do. It is also about the experiences and feelings of their perceptions. So, in this research, I will preliminary observe young girls' menstrual practices including intergenerational changes, according to young girls, including the practices of their mothers based on their experiences regarding menstruation.

This research is also an equally important issue at the same level as reservation, education, and property rights because the issue of practices hampers the overall well-being of women status in different sectors. But it is only lately dialoguing over menstrual practices that has started taking place. So, a need will be felt to conduct a qualitative study about menstrual practices on basis of cultural values prevailing in

society, to know the socio-cultural practices towards menstruation, perception towards menstruation, and the tradition of practices by their mothers, and manage the hygiene of young girls from Kathmandu valley are major themes for this research.

1.3 Research Questions

Against the backdrop of the statement of the research problem and research gap that I identified during the literature review, I plan to pose the following research questions for the present research:

1. What perception do urban and educated young girls have toward menstruation?
2. How do urban and educated school-going young girls practice menstruation?
3. What intergenerational changes can be observed between the two generations?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out the understanding of menstruation which is based on practices by school-going young girls living in the urban area. The specific objectives are:

1. To find out the perception of young, school-going girls from urban settings towards menstruation.
2. To understand the practices of menstruation according to their religious beliefs.
3. To understand their mothers' practice towards menstruation to find out the generational changes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Biological Interpretation of Menstruation

For all women, menstruation is a general natural biological process that occurs every month after a certain age. It is the shedding of the lining of the uterus (endometrium) accompanied by bleeding. It happens in approximately monthly cycles throughout a woman's reproductive life, except during pregnancy. Menstruation starts during puberty (at menarche) and stops permanently at menopause. The menstrual cycle begins with the first day of bleeding, which is counted as day 1. "The cycle ends just before the next menstrual period. Menstrual cycles normally range from about 25 to 36 days. Only 10 to 15% of women have cycles that are exactly 28 days. Also, in at least 20% of women, cycles are irregular. That is, they are longer or shorter than the normal range. Usually, the cycles vary the most and the intervals between periods are longest in the years immediately after menstruation starts (menarche) and before menopause" (Knudtson and McLaughlin, 2019).

"Menstrual bleeding lasts 3 to 7 days, averaging 5 days. Blood loss during a cycle usually ranges from 1/2 to 2 1/2 ounces. A sanitary pad or tampon, depending on the type, can hold up to an ounce of blood. Menstrual blood, unlike blood resulting from an injury, usually does not clot unless the bleeding is very heavy. The menstrual cycle is regulated by hormones. Luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone, which are produced by the pituitary gland, promote ovulation and stimulate the ovaries to produce estrogen and progesterone. Estrogen and progesterone stimulate the uterus and breasts to prepare for possible fertilization" (Knudtson and McLaughlin, 2019).

Women in Balance Institute, research on natural Hermon system regarding women's menstrual body and argues that menstruation also known as period or menses is a biological process that a woman's body goes through when she reaches the age of, between 8-14 years in average and must go through it every month except pregnancy till she reaches a certain age and experiences menopause, which happens in an average at the age of 51 years old, which is when the menstruation process stops occurring in a woman's body.

When a girl has her first period, it is a sign that now her body is preparing itself to bear children in the womb and the blood that flows out during menses is the lining of the uterus which the body sheds because of not getting pregnant that month. During the menstrual cycle of ordinary vaginal bleeding, one may experience many different things other than just bleeding out of their vaginas. During their period women and girls alike, may experience and must go through abdominal or pelvic cramping pain, lower back torment, bloating and sore breasts, food yearnings, mood swings, headache, weariness, nauseous, etc. This happens due to the hormonal misbalance that the women must go through during their periods. To understand hormonal imbalances, it is very important to first understand how the menstrual cycle takes place”(women in balance, 2018).

Menstruation happens because of the heightening and lowering of hormones between the pituitary gland in the brain and the ovaries. Every month, the female sex hormones prepare the body to support a pregnancy, and without fertilization, there is the period. A menstrual cycle is determined by the number of days from the first day of one period to the first day of the next. So, day one of the menstrual cycle is the first full bleeding day of the period. A typical cycle is approximately 24-35 days (an average of 28 days for most women). It is not abnormal for a woman's cycle to occasionally be shorter or longer.

On the very first day of menstruation, the hormones called estrogen and progesterone levels are at a low level. The low level of these hormones gives out a signal to the pituitary gland to produce Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH). Then, FSH begins the process of maturing a follicle, which is a fluid-filled sac in the ovary containing an egg. The follicle further goes on to produce more estrogen to prepare the uterus for pregnancy and all these procedures finally lead to ovulation at around 12 to 14 days. At ovulation, the increased level of estrogens sets off a rise in the level of Luteinizing Hormone (LH) from the pituitary gland, which in return causes the release of the eggs from the follicle. During this period, if one fails to fertilize the eggs, the estrogen and progesterone levels drop and one begins to menstruate, approximately on the 28th day of the menstrual cycle. "The menstrual cycle occurs in three phases: follicular, ovulatory, and luteal. The first half of the cycle is known as the follicular phase and the second half of the cycle is considered the luteal phase.

Midway through the cycle between days 12 and 16 ovulation occurs, known as the

ovulatory phase." When one comes to know about how a normal menstrual cycle works, it helps to understand the symptoms of Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), perimenopause, and menopause. The symptoms are often the result of too much or too little hormones. During perimenopause, hormone levels fluctuate because of fewer ovulations, so less progesterone is produced in the second half of the menstrual cycle.

Periods can be erratic, skipped, or have heavy bleeding /clots. Symptoms result from the change in the ratio of estrogen to progesterone, so the imbalance creates the symptoms and during the time of menopause, estrogen is no longer produced by the ovaries and is made in smaller amounts by the adrenal glands and fat tissue. Estrogen is still produced in the body, but in lower amounts than in younger cycling women. The most significant hormone change of menopause is the lack of progesterone, so a time of estrogen dominance and low progesterone" (Women in Balance, 2019).

Menstruation is a natural biological process that happens in 12 years to 51 years on average. This cycle is also influenced by geography, manner of food consumption, and hereditary, but every society has a different way to perceive it. Societal values based on religion determine the level of exclusion of women in those days and also differ according to the socio-religious values of that places.

2.2 Socio-cultural Interpretation of Menstruation

During menstruation, most women and girls are restricted mobility and participation in normal activities and forced to follow traditional norms and practices based on socio-cultural beliefs which differ according to religion. Family members and communities usually perpetuate those social norms and cultural practices. Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation (Buckley and Gottlieb, 1988b), a collection of essays that helped the modern anthropological study of menstruation practices and beliefs around the world. That collection introduced to know the diversity of menstrual experiences, especially in the Global South.

The essays argued that "despite shared biological roots, individuals and communities perceive and experience menstruation in enormously different ways, for reasons encompassing religious, political, demographic, and economic factors. A bleeding woman is considered polluted, contamination dangerous. these acts of challenging taboos take various forms and invoke diverse individuals across religion, ethnicity,

class, caste, gender identity, and other factors. The word taboo unconsciously evokes primitive peoples from long ago or far away. People who unthinkingly obey(ed) arbitrary rules that restrict their lives and thoughts (socially constructed). yet images of menstruation as symbolically polluting retain strong staying power in a world ostensibly.” So, menstruation is a socially constructed phenomenon.

Women and girls are menstruating every month but their experience of menstruation depends on social context. The voices and lived experiences of menstruators in different contexts are different. They all menstruate, but their unique socio-cultural, religious, and political contexts differentially shape and provide meaning to their experiences. Gottib (2020) argued that starting with questions, “Why do words describing a biological process experienced by half our species have this symbolic power? And she concluded that It is true that biblical and, later, qur’anic views of menstrual blood as dirty, pain-inducing, and/or polluting—and of menstruating women, as cursed—have traveled globally.”

Maharaj and Winkler (2020) also add social values to menstrual bodies and argued that “menstruation and the practices associated with it go to the core of our understanding of societal norms about gender roles. Active debates regarding the question of purity or impurity of menstruation can alone further dialogue on women’s entry into places of worship and change of societal attitudes regarding practices of menstruation.”

Cultural beliefs about menstruation such as food taboos and untouchability harm women and girls. After their first period, girls report feeling sexualized by others and start a taboo of their activities that happen contextual societal sphere. In most of society, menstrual practices are done based on religious beliefs. For Cohen (2020), compares menstrual practice and religious beliefs, and argues that “menstrual practices through an inquiry into what and how they contribute to better understanding the ways a religious community defines and (re)produces itself. Analysis of religious menstrual practices at the communal, structural level shows the role they play in determining, communicating, and maintaining identities, hierarchies, and culture itself. It has demonstrated that menstruation can be read as a site through which women’s sexuality—and by extension, the boundaries of the religious community and maintenance of social hierarchies—are controlled according to

particular ideologies, producing the idea that women are bearers of tradition and responsible for the wellbeing of the family, society, and religion itself.”

According to Hasson (2020), what happened to women's lives during menstruation? She argued “women increased their activity outside the home during menstruation amid prevailing norms insisting that bleeding be hidden, women became responsible for an increasing range of self-monitoring and body-management tasks. Stigma and secrecy meant that for many women menarche and menstruation were characterized by shame and embarrassment, even as the body project of managing menstruation could also provide a site of agency, pride, and resistance.”

The sociocultural beliefs about and perceptions of menstruation have been constructed by multiple factors having to do with cultural beliefs about women’s fertility and lack of purity. After their first period, girls report feeling sexualized by others and start a taboo of their activities that happen contextual societal sphere. “Religious, political, demographic, and economic factors” (Buckley and Gottlieb, 1988b), differently influence menstrual practices but the caste system is also playing a prominent role while practicing it. It is argued by Shrestha and Piya (2020), while research on Nepalis society “strong beliefs about menstruating women as impure was present across all castes and ethnic groups in the lives of the women in Nepali society, yet each caste and the ethnic group maintained its customs about recognizing and influencing MHM for women and girls. The normal activities during menstruation were forced to observe traditional norms and practices of isolation and segregation, despite physical discomfort and/or lack of resources. Family members and communities perpetuated these sociocultural beliefs and taboos.”

Different castes and ethnic groups have different ways to follow menstrual restrictions. In the Indian context Bhartiya (2013), argues that menstrual practices and beliefs are often constructed from gender, religion, and culture. She focused more on religion and concluded that all religions of the world have placed restrictions on menstruating women. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism have restrictions but “Sikhism is the only religion where the scriptures condemn sexism and don’t impose any restriction on menstruating women. The taboos exist across religions and cultures. Some of the most consistent practices followed include isolation, exclusion from religious activities, and restraint from sexual intercourse.

Women are still prohibited even by the ‘modern’ religions to enter the temples” (Bhartiya, 2013).

“Ritual purity and pollution are taboo and misconceptions that leave women vulnerable during menstruation, such as being prohibited from using water taps, or the practice of Chaupadi where women are excluded from community life and often stay separate from the home, kitchen and often sleep in remote sheds” (Rajabhat et al., 2015). The force is based on cultural beliefs, for most girls, menstruation is something to fear or be ashamed of and restrictions in daily activities such as not being allowed to take bath, change clothes, comb hair, and enter holy places during the period are also imposed. They were isolated and felt in their own home; social and religious restriction brings the feeling of awkwardness among menstruating girls. These restrictions may harm youth.

Negative perceptions may create a bad attitude toward women's body image, their ability, creativity, or the overall life of women. Taboos are particular social or religious customs, prohibiting or restricting a particular practice or forbidding association with a person or things. The stigma and taboos wreak serious psychological damage. during period menstrual practices are also important for personal hygiene management too. Menstrual practices mean necessities and requirements such as the use of sanitary pads or clean and soft absorbents, adequate washing of the genital area, proper disposal of used absorbents, and other special health care needs of women during the monthly menstrual cycle.” (Deshpande, et.al., 2018). The stigma around menstruation and menstrual hygiene is a violation of several human rights most importantly of the right to human dignity. (Georgre, 2013). Menstruation taboos are nearly universal and while many of these involve notions of uncleanness, numerous. Menstrual traditions “bespeak quite different, even opposite, purposes and meaning” (Buckley and Gottib, 1988).

2.3 The Relationship between Patriarchy, Gender, and Menstruation

Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies, and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes, and likely behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned. “They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures.

Systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age, and more, modify gender roles.” (UNESCO).

While societal norms and values enclose ideology based on natural sex, fundamentally its impacts are hit on menstrual practices too. When roles are given by family and society, that negatively impacts menstrual practices. In this sense, Hasson (2020) combined menstruation and gender roles and argued that “it functions as a literal and symbolic marker of sex and sexuality, fertility, age, and health. With challenging menstruation as a natural “bodily process” varying social construction of menstruation in different places and times. Taking seriously the material differences highlighted in the process of redefining menstruation—and gendered embodiment—as multiple, highlighting the variation and dynamism of biology in its interactions with technology. Complex arrangements of organs, tissues, and hormones—produced in the body or taken in from outside—generate embodied experiences of regular, irregular, or absent bleeding”(Hasson, 2020).

These occur in the context of gender binaries and cultural norms that demand management and concealment of bleeding. So, menstrual practices are not only influenced by a single factor but “embodied experience of menstruation, from menarche to menopause, is rarely cause for celebration or even contentment, and is instead typically a project to manage properly as an essential component of “doing (feminine) gender” (Roberts, 2020). In the Indian context, Gundi and Subramanyam (2020), studied how various social determinants influence girls’ gendered menstruation experience across social domains; and whether the lived gendered experience of menstruation harms girls’ health. Who found that “menstrual health, which is largely considered a ‘women’s topic, reflects unjust gender and socioeconomic differences in the accessibility of information for both boys and girls at a stage in their lives when they learn to conform to expectations.

These unjust differences are rooted in the gender inequalities perpetuated in patriarchal societies such as India governs girls’ menstruation by treating it as a shameful experience. we experience menstruation in the body, which is always already embedded in interactional and sociocultural discourses” (Gundi and Subramanyam, 2020).

According to Roberts (2020), the menstrual experience is embodied in a different but particular social context. She argues that “on the power of institutions to subjugate and discipline bodies to probe the many ways the menstrual cycle becomes a site of sexualization, self-objectification, and abjection, of shame and shaming, of medicalization, disability and dysfunction, and even a source of moral panic. Thus, the embodied experience of menstruation, from menarche to menopause, rarely causes celebration or even contentment and is instead typically a project to manage properly as an essential component of “doing (feminine) gender”(Roberts, 2020).

Patriarchal societal norms and values are significantly regulating menstrual practices. In a patriarchal society, women are guided by the “stand of males ideology” (Laws,1990). Then, what is patriarchy, literally mean? For Bhasin, (1993) The word patriarchy means the rule of the father or the “patriarch”, and originally it was used to describe a specific type of “male-dominated family”-the large household of the patriarch which included women, junior men, children, slaves, and domestic servants all under the rule of this dominant male. Now it is used more generally to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in several ways. The subordination that we experience at a daily level, regardless of the class we might belong to, takes various forms -discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence- within the family, at the place of work, and in society. The details may be different, but the theme is the same. The patriarchal system control women’s productive or labor power, reproduction, sexuality, mobility, Property, and other economic resources” (Bhasin, 1993).

While following Walby, (1990) introduces that “patriarchy as a system of social strictures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women...the use of the term social structure is important here since it implies rejection both of biological determinism and the notion that every woman a subordinate one. Patriarchy is composed of six strictures patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions.” So, patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women. In this context, Gerda Lerner (1989), in her book *The Creation of Patriarchy* said, “The use of the phrase subordination of women instead of the word

“oppression” has distinct advantages. Subordination does not have the connotation of evil intent on the part of the dominant; it allows for the possibility of collusion between him and the subordinate. It includes the possibility of voluntary acceptance of subordinate status in exchange for protection and privilege, a condition that characterizes so much of the historical experience of women. I will use the term “paternalistic dominance” for this relation. “Subordination” encompasses other relations in addition to “paternalistic dominance” and has the additional advantage over “oppression” of being neutral as to the causes of subordination” (Learner, 1989).

In this system, different kinds of practices (examples of menstruation) may be used to control and subjugate women, such practices even be considered legitimate, and women are always routinely experienced their biological differences as wishes of societal norms based on culture. Due to such culturally guided practices, at last physically or mentally suppress women’s lives. While following Nepali’s context patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions are more relevant to continuing menstrual practices. Because Smith (1992), argues that “the meaning is always constructed from an almost exclusively male standpoint, a standpoint within the institutional complex rule by society. The women’s experiences were complex, individualized, and various. People’s knowledge of how our everyday worlds are investigated and shaped by social relations, organizations, powers beyond the scope of direct experience”(Smith, 1992).

“Women’s experience beginning with what we shared as women, our sexed bodies, operations, whether of violence, rape, of lack of control over the choice to have children was grounded in male control, defined by our bodies relevance for and uses to men. While talking about women’s experiences, she is concerned with examining and explicating how “Abstractions” are put together, with concepts, knowledge, and facility, as socially organized practices.” Making these processes visible also makes visible how we participate in and incorporate them into our practices but later she concludes that the standpoint of women locates the knowing subject in the actual, before the differentiation between the subjective and objective-a conceptualization of objectifying institutions where women are always reflective ” (Smith, 1992).

While analyzing the patriarchal discourse about menstruation, it is often only acceptable when spoken in female spaces by labeling them as “women’s things”. Men either ignore menstruation or speak negatively about it. Boys and girls are separated

when learning about menstruation, creating confusion over what is known about menstruation or how boys learn about the female body. Censorship policies toward menstruation pressure women to “shrink to fit a culture that simply doesn’t allow us to be women. These behaviors reinforce norms of silence by also keeping any visual marker of menstruation hidden from public view. Patriarchal structures can be understood to constrain or disable women from performing menstruation beyond the expected gender norms of silence and secrecy. This process of concealment works to filter out our bodies and [...] create an image of women that is unrealistic and unattainable. Filtering language suggests that women’s bodies can be seen in public discourse, but only if they have parts of their bodies and experiences removed (Lese, 2016).

It is argued (Beauvoir, 1949), that because women are secondary and inferior to men, women and women’s bodily functions are considered negative, private, and shameful. Radical feminist Laws argues in her book, *Issue of Blood: The politics of Menstruation*, claims that women's feelings about their periods are shaped by men's attitudes and the imposition of their views on women, Looking at the social treatment of menstruation and how the practices of our own culture spell out messages about male superiority and compulsory heterosexuality to women, Laws argues that in a patriarchal society, “menstruation is seen by men as a marker of femaleness and used to convey a particular belief in women's inferior status. Menstruation may not be important, but it is highly symbolic of femaleness, and how men deal with it reveal aspects of how they view women in general.” She challenges the universal menstrual taboo theory of much anthropological research in this area. The taboo theory proposes that menstrual blood is inherently dirty and that men are naturally repulsed by a physical function they do not share with women.

In her book, she focused to reveal the existence of an immense variety of cultural practices relating to menstruation and argues that “it is not useful to reduce the complexity and variety of rituals, practices, and beliefs around menstruation across different cultures to generalized statements about taboos. She also focused on a menstrual etiquette that operates in contemporary secular culture “as a set of social practices which express and reinforce the distinctions between people of different social status”. The etiquette requirement women may not make men aware of the existence of menstruation either implicitly or explicitly, those who do not ridicule,

harassed, or avoided men” (Laws, 1990). How does social etiquette perceive the menstrual body? “It is consistent with the ideas about form and formlessness to treat initiates coming out of seclusion as if they were themselves charged with power, hot, dangerous, requiring insulation and a time for cooling down. Dirt, obscenity, and lawlessness are as relevant symbolically to the rites of seclusion as other ritual expressions of their condition. They are not to be blamed for misconduct any more than the fetus in the womb for its spite and greed” (Dougle, 1996).

Inside the patriarchal and caste notions of purity and pollution, all women are considered impure and untouchable during menstruation. “Menstrual taboos that deem women impure and polluting in their periods contribute to the belief system that women are inferior. This menstrual shaming of women’s bodies into impure and inferior objects has allowed the male to dominate and control women and their sexuality. Women are made to carry the burden of protecting the supremacy and purity of the male and his caste with deeply ingrained cultural practices such as menstrual segregation, ritual fasting by women to protect the men, and covering the head and face in a male presence” (Sukumar, 2020). During the menstrual period, women and girls are stigmatized by society. Relatively societal norms are the main route to stigmatized menstrual bodies comparing non-menstrual ones. “Many women believe that menstruation remains a social stigma with ramifications for the behavior of women and those with whom they interact. The stigma of menstruation remains more a fact than fiction. In the present study, menstruating women perceived themselves to be stigmatized relative to non-menstruating women” (Kowalski and Chapple, 2000).

Keenly and critically researching this field Bobel (2020), argues that menstruation is old humanity itself. It is transgressive to resist the norm of menstrual concealment. “With notable exceptions, across cultures and historical eras, society socializes this biological process—including a serious inquiry into its form, function, and meaning—into hiding. This is shortsighted and at the same time deeply revealing, as it shines a bright spotlight on the need for change.” After all, a dearth of attention to a fundamental reality and indeed a vital sign is not only a profound knowledge gap, it is an exposure of the power of misogyny and stigma to suppress knowledge production. She edited the Palgrave Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies numbering 72 chapters, written by a total of 134 contributors from 23 countries, thematically

divided into six chapters to provide an unmatched resource for scholars, activists, policy makers, and practitioners, both those new to and already familiar with the field. This book mostly focused on menstruation to make sense of political, social, medical, and/or biological processes, and the recursive work embedded in the menstrual cycles' myriad social constructions. She writes:

And that is why we are unequivocal. Attention to menstrual issues across the life span surfaces broader societal issues and tensions, including gender inequality, practices and discourses of embodiment, processes of racialization and commodification, and emergent technologies as read through various disciplines and underdisciplined (for example, history, psychology, communication studies, sociology, anthropology, art, nursing, gender studies, public health, law policy analysis—the list goes on). Put differently, menstruation-as-unit-of-analysis serves as a gateway—both conceptually and symbolically—to reveal, unpack, and complicate inequalities across biological, social, cultural, religious, political, and historical dimensions (Bobel, 2020).

By following Roberts (2020), “the cultural milieu of sexual objectification accomplishes colonization of the mind of many girls and women, who, consequently, become their own first surveyors—self-objectifying as a way of anticipating rewards and punishments likely to come from a culture that values their physical appearance above all else. She argues that This is a unique misogynist form of punishment, meted out against bodies and minds that have been colonized by objectification and self-objectification. We are far from there yet, but I yearn for a day when menstruation might no longer be the stigmatizing “mark” it is, both reflecting and contributing to women’s lower social, political, and often even moral status, and providing the grotesquely ideal platform for this way to dehumanize those of us who landed on the wrong side of the law and who live in bodies that menstruate” (Roberts, 2020).

“Disgust and shame both are dangerous social sentiments. We should be working to contain these, rather than “building our legal world on the vision of human beings that these emotions contain. Society would do well to cast disgust and shame into the garbage heap where it would like to cast so many of us” (Nussbaum, 2004). “Since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, menstruation has been defined as both a cultural and biological event in which cultural menstrual ideologies have become inseparable from biological interpretations. For nearly two centuries, the Western patriarchal discourse has used the process of menstruation to socially define women

and their standing within the social hierarchy. This solipsistic male worldview has historically pinned women's reproductive biology against them as religious, medical, and economic discourses have been exercised to socially subjugate and inscribe the menstrual body with symbolic cultural "text" In many ways woman's subordination is rooted in the menstrual body, as menstruation is socially perceived to be the essence of womanhood which upholds the binary and perpetuates her objectified and Othered status" (Kissling, 2006).

2.4 Radical Feminism in Cultural Domestication of Women

Menstrual taboos are the topic of this thesis. Different theories apply to this matter. However, feminist theory is the most pertinent, and I shall employ its macro theory, which describes women's sexuality, body politics, and cultural domestication of women.

Women's bodies and even natural differences between males and females are the productions of social organization menstrual taboos are, in my experiences that are related to sexuality. Foucault analyzes the "History of Sexuality" in his book related to sexuality. He discusses four types of knowledge that greatly contributed to the construct of sexuality, one of these is the "systemization of women's bodies". It means women's body is highly sexual and which is constructed by society and again regulated by society is constructed by men's power. It is related to the aspect of our consciousness and social being" (Focoult, 1978).

Radical feminists seek to abolish the patriarchy in which men dominate and oppress women. Radical feminist seeks to abolish the patriarchy as one front in a struggle to liberate everyone from an unjust society by challenging existing social norms and institution. "This struggle includes opposing the sexual objectification of women and raising public awareness about such issues as rape and violence against women. Challenging the concept of gender roles and challenging what radical feminists see as a radical see as racialized and gendered capitalism characterizes the united states and many other countries" (Shulamith Firestone, 1970).

"Radical feminism is a perspective within feminism that calls for a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts while recognizing that women's experiences are also affected by other social divisions

such as race, class, and sexual orientation. In other words, radical feminist believes that patriarchy is the main cause of women's domination" (Elien, 1984).

She states, while referencing Walby (1990), "patriarchy is a system of social norms and behaviors in which men dominate, exploit, and subjugate women... The phrase "social structure" is crucial in this context since it implies the rejection of both biological determinism and the idea that all women are subservient." "Male aggression, patriarchal relations in the state, patriarchal relations in sexuality, patriarchal relations in cultural institutions, and patriarchal mode of production are the six tenets of patriarchy" (Walby, 1990).

Therefore, patriarchy is a set of societal norms and structures through which men exploit, dominate, and subjugate women. Women are led by the "stance of male ideology" in a patriarchal culture" (Laws, 1990). In addition, all communities have different definitions and meanings, and re(production) regarding menstrual practices. Every religion has a symbolic power to control women's menstrual bodies. At last, based on religious symbolic power, the "menstrual body as a dirty, polluting-and of menstruating women as cursed-have globally traveled" (Gottib, 2020).

"While we observed variation in families' beliefs, taboos, and restrictive practices, many women in our study felt compelled to follow physical seclusion. These sociocultural practices instill "shame and fear in menstruating women and serve as a control mechanism for policing gender norms and women's sexuality" (Rothchild & Piya, 2018).

In contrast to religious beliefs, Cohen (2020) argues that "menstrual habits through an examination into what and how they contribute to better understanding the ways a religious community defines and (re)produces itself. To understand the role religious menstruation rituals have in the building, articulating, and maintaining hierarchies, identities, and culture as a whole, it is necessary to evaluate them at both the communal and structural levels. Menstruation is a site through which women's sexuality—and, by extension, the upholding of social hierarchies and the boundaries of religious communities—are controlled under particular ideologies, giving rise to the idea that women are the keepers of tradition and are responsible for the welfare of the family, society, and religion itself" (Cohen, 2020).

Menstruation and gender roles were merged by Hasson (2020), who claimed that "it works as a physical and symbolic marker of sex and sexuality, fertility, age, and health. Various societal constructions of menstruation at various times and locations challenge menstruation as a natural "bodily process" (Hasson, 2020). In a unique yet specific social environment, the menstrual experience is embodied, according to Roberts (2020) contends "on the power of institutions to subjugate and punish bodies to investigate the numerous ways the menstrual cycle becomes a site of sexualization, self-objectification, and abjection, of shame and shaming, of medicalization, disability and dysfunction, and even a source of moral panic." As a result, the physical experience of menstruation, from menarche through menopause, rarely results in joy or even happiness but is instead usually a negative one. It is instead typically a project to manage properly as an essential component of "doing (feminine) gender" (Roberts, 2020).

Since the meaning is always "formed from an almost entirely male position, a standpoint within the institutional complex dominated by society," according to Smith (1992), the meaning is always "ruled by the institutional complex. The women's experiences were nuanced, unique, and varied. People's understanding of how social interactions, organizations, and powers outside of their experience probe and change our daily lives. Women's experiences began with what we shared as women, our sexed bodies, and operations, whether of violence, rape, or lack of power over the decision to bear children, were rooted in male domination, defined by the usefulness of our bodies to men. While discussing the experiences of women, she is interested in examining and explaining how "Abstractions" are made together using concepts, knowledge, and facility as socially organized practices" (Smith, 1992).

This hiding process "attempts to filter out our bodies and [...] construct an unrealistic and unreachable image of women." Filtering language argues that women's bodies can be visible in public discourse, but only if specific portions of their bodies and experiences are eliminated" (Lese, 2016).

Women in patriarchal societies are led by the "ideology of the stand of males." Issue of Blood: The Politics of Menstruation, written by radical feminist Laws, asserts that men's attitudes toward women and the imposition of their beliefs on them have a profound impact on how women feel about their periods. When one considers how menstruation is socialized and how our culture's customs convey to women messages

about male dominance and compelled heterosexuality, one can see how menstruation is used as a social cue.”

Once more, Laws contends that in patriarchal societies, "menstruation is viewed by men as a sign of femaleness and used to indicate a specific belief in women's inferior status. Although menstruation may not be significant, it is a powerful symbol of femaleness, and how men respond to it indicate certain characteristics of how they regard women generally. She questions the widely accepted assumption in this field of anthropology that menstruation is always taboo. According to the taboo idea, males are intrinsically revolted by a bodily function that men do not share with women because menstrual blood is essentially filthy” (Laws, 1990).

Bobel (2020), who has diligently and critically studied this subject, claims that menstruation is as old as humanity itself. Resisting the custom of menstruation concealment is wrong. "With notable exceptions, society socializes this biological process—including a serious investigation into its form, function, and meaning—into hiding, across cultures and historical periods. This is both shortsighted and profoundly enlightening since it puts a strong spotlight on the need for change. To put it another way, "using menstruation as a unit of analysis acts as a portal to disclose, analyze, and deepen disparities across biological, social, cultural, religious, political, and historical aspects" (Bobel, 2020).

According to Roberts (2020), “the cultural milieu of sexual objectification successfully colonizes the minds of many girls and women, who subsequently become their own first surveyors—self-objectifying as a way of anticipating rewards and punishments likely to come from a culture that values their physical appearance above all else. She contends that this particular misogynist punishment is meted out to bodies and minds that have been colonized by objectification and self-objectification. Although we are still a long way from that, I long for the day when menstruation might no longer be the stigmatizing "mark" that it is, reflecting and contributing to women's lower social, political, and frequently even moral status, and providing the grotesquely ideal platform for this way to dehumanize those of us who experience it us who landed on the wrong side of the law and who live in bodies that menstruate” (Roberts, 2020).

“Menstruation has been viewed as a culturally and biologically determined event from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, with cultural menstrual ideas becoming inextricably linked to biological interpretations. The Western patriarchal discourse has been using the "process of menstruation to socially identify women and their place inside the social hierarchy for nearly two centuries. Religious, medical, and economic discourses have been used to socially subjugate and inscribe the menstrual body with symbolic cultural "text," and in many ways, the subordination of women is rooted in the menstrual body because menstruation is socially perceived as the essence of womanhood, which upholds the binary and perpetuates her objectified and Othered status” (Kissling, 2006).

The continuation of menstruation rituals is especially pertinent when considering patriarchal ties in sexuality and patriarchal interactions in cultural institutions in Nepal. Additionally, patriarchal norms also represent sexuality over women's bodies. This idea so has application to the attached menstruation research.

2.5 Menstruation Practices in the Global Context

perceptions and practices of menstruation differ according to age, gender, caste, ethnicity, geographic location, and social context. Societal culture plays a vital role in continuing menstrual practices. The voices and lived experiences of menstruators in different contexts are different. “They all menstruate, but their unique socio-cultural, religious, and political contexts differentially shape and provide meaning to their experiences. Taboos are particular social or religious customs, prohibiting or restricting a particular practice or forbidding association with a person or things” (Rose, 2015). A bleeding woman is considered polluted, contaminating, and dangerous. Bucky and Gottib argue that menstrual taboos are nearly universal, the object of taboo may be a source of good or evil, but in the case of menstrual blood, the ascriptions are universally evil. They study Yurok women (now northern California) “menstruating woman is highly polluting and will contaminate the family house and food supply if she meets either. Thus, in the old days, a special shelter for menstrual seclusion was built near the main house, and special food for a family's menstruating women was separately collected, stored, and prepared for consumption in this shelter. Separate food storage, as well as cooking and eating utensils, was furnished in the kitchen” (Bulcky &Gottib, 1988).

It is argued by Nancy and Rajput (2019) on the Indian context “culture plays a dominant role and leads to exclusion of girls during the periods days and curtailment of freedom as the girls can conceive after menarche.” They argue that the woman is idealized as an epitome of sacrifice and menarche is the first step towards womanhood which teaches ways to curtail herself. Women are treated as untouchables and disfavored with separate bedding, utensils, etc. which leads them to exclusion from their own family life. Many religions and cultures have traditions and practices that influence the activities, experiences, and interactions of menstruators. Maharaj and Winkler (2020) argue their article: Cultural and Religious Practices Related to Menstruation “has a deeply religious meaning that has a political dimension deemed important enough to spark large-scale protests. Our understanding of menstruation and the practices associated with it go to the core of our understanding of societal norms about gender roles” (Maharaj and Winkler, 2020).

The discursive meaning assigned to menstruating bodies and how they are experienced is dependent on the sociocultural and historical spaces which they occupy. “Globally there are similarities in the way menarche and menstruation are experienced, there are also cultural differences, including specific beliefs, practices, and restrictions placed on women during means. Religious practices associated with menarche and menstruation also differ across socio-cultural contexts but “migrant and refugee women are re-position themselves, variably adopting, resisting, negotiating, and tailoring practices associated with menstruation” (Hawkey, et al., 2020). Menstruation taboos are nearly universal and while many of these involve notions of uncleanness, numerous. Menstrual traditions bespeak quite different, even opposite, purposes and meaning” (Buckley and Gottib 1988). Menstruation is not simply a biological phenomenon people experience menstruation within the social context. “After their first period, girls report feeling sexualized by others and start a taboo of their activities that happen contextual societal sphere. The stigma and taboos wreak serious psychological damage. “Stigma around menstruation and menstrual hygiene is a violation of several human rights most importantly of the right to human dignity” (George, 2013).

During menstruation, physical psychological, and cognatic changes occur which is challenging for a girl. Throughout history, menstruation has been assigned roles that range from defining a “women’s status and social role to being seen cruse that women

had to endure (Anjum, et al., 2010). “Menstrual experiences were impacted by internally and externally enforced behavioral expectations including explicit cultural or religious expectations of menstruating women which cultural restrictions varied across and within countries according to religion, region, caste, and individuals family expectations directly impacted woman’s and girls’ social participation restrictions on women behavior, including not touching interacting or sitting with male, touching or cooking food, having contact with crops, livestock, farming” (Hennegan, et al., 2019). The study about menstrual taboos and stigma, in India by Garg and Anand (2015), found that cultural and social influences on menstruation have still prevailing many parts of India. Culturally in many parts of India, menstruation is still considered to be dirty and impure. (Garg and Anand 2015).

The origin of this myth dates to Vedic times, “from the Hindu faith, the woman is prohibited from participating in normal life like not entering the pooja, room not entering the kitchen, and restricted from offering prayers and touching holy books are still practiced. In addition, food taboos during menstruation such as sour food like curd, tamarind, and pickles are usually avoided during the menstruating time. The practice and effect of menstrual taboos in Bangladesh found that monthly periods are secret and shameful things. Menstruation is a sign of marriage, do not intake nutritious food, are not allowed to consult with the doctor, have a separate bed for sleeping, can’t touch clay pots, and do not visit religious places and social gatherings. In poor and richer countries; in all sorts of family backgrounds and cultural contexts, one truth is usually universal: women and girls are supposed to cope with menstruation silently and invisibly. They are not supposed to talk about it outside private conversations between women and girls. Nor are they meant to give any outward indication that they are menstruating” (Garg and Anand 2015).

This taboo and silence extend outwards from the family home, but also inwards, between members of the same family. Even “mothers and daughters may not talk openly or easily about menstruation. In many studies presented and mentioned throughout the day, the statistics of silence were striking” (Mondal, et al., 2017). In Ghana, to cite just one example, 68% of girls knew nothing about menstruation when they started their periods (celebrating womanhood, 2005). In Indian society, “mensuration is considered unclean the comparison between rural and urban adolescent girls in India was found that the poor and the various beliefs found to be

inappropriate. On the other hand, the vital role of mothers should be armed with correct and appropriate information on reproductive health. On the other side of mensuration, what factors influence menstrual behavior? A study in India shows that “menstrual behavior depends on the mother’s literacy and father’s occupation” (Vyas, et al., 2017).

The relationship between menstruation and religion, suggests that menstruation is a cultural phenomenon, but it is also a psychological one. Sociocultural beliefs also transmit important messages about female roles in society more broadly. Specifically, “after menarche, adolescent girls’ menstruation become increasingly subject to sanction and physical separation enforced by patriarchal attitudes regarding men’s and women’s roles” (Piya and Rothchild, 2000). “Religiously and culturally motivated practices, and what menstruation symbolizes and communicates within a particular system, “ultimately (re)produce religion and culture themselves. Hinduism and Judaism menstruation are a part of a larger purity system, which underlines menstrual restrictions, and these systems are concerned with the boundaries of identity and community” (Cohen, 2020).

The caste system also plays a vital role in menstrual practices. The caste system in the Hindu social structure places people by birth in a hierarchy based on ritual purity. “Menstrual behaviors and taboos are part and parcel of the caste and patriarchal design to maintain the hierarchy of caste structure by propagating and using the belief system of purity and pollution. The urban middle-class Dalit women, did not experience menstrual taboos or restrictions but the upper caste on the hierarchy is considered to be impure and polluting” (Sukumar, 2020). Attitudes and practice among adolescent girls in the Indian context found that the knowledge seems satisfactory; the practices were not optimal for proper hygiene. The “issues of privacy affect the hygienic practices and daily lives, particularly school attendance, and the local customs and cultural and/or religious traditions and taboos concerning menstruation have added challenges to young girls to manage their period properly” (Hakim, et al., 2017).

It is research on menstrual practices in low- and middle-income countries (for example Nigeria, Mexico, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Turkey, and Kenya) Patel and Molili, conclude that “coming to terms with menarche and navigating the shame and practical challenges associated with its management may cause girls great anxiety

and sadness. For example, being unprepared for menarche, being excluded and shamed during monthly periods, being hindered in self-care and uncared for when unwell, undermines a girl's sense of overseeing her life, her sense of self-worth, and her sense that the individuals and institutions around her are responsive to her needs" (Molili and Patel, 2017). In a similar qualitative systematic review and meta-synthesis done by Hennegan (2019), the topic of women's and girls' experience of menstruation in low and middle-income countries (ex. Nepal, Senegal, Ghana, Srilanka, India, Nigeria, Gambia, Malaysia), they argue that gender norms and sociocultural context influence for continuing menstrual practices. Menstrual practices are more than hygiene management. Menstrual experience is characterized not only by the hygiene practices undertaken to manage menstrual bleeding but "by women's and girls' perceptions of these practices, their confidence to manage menses and engage in other activities while menstruating, and their experience of shame and containment" also mostly important while managing menstruation" (Hennegan, et al., 2019).

Comparing the menstrual practices based on religious and non-religious beliefs regarding menstruation have different perceptions and experiences with a female. culture and religious contexts of orthodox Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu women, compared to their non-religious counterparts in the united states found that those women whose religion dictates specific prohibitions', prescriptions, and rituals around menstruation had more negative attitudes towards menstruation than non-religious women. The religious and non-religious women's attitudes toward menstruation, refute a simple conclusion that Western secular women, having no set codified rules regarding their periods, "are more liberated and positive than women who practice religiously prescribed rituals around menstruation." Although women who practice prescriptive religions acknowledged many negatives regarding their periods compared to nonreligious women, they also identified some positives that secular women did not. They concluded research, that "Jewish, Muslim and Hindu women's experiences of menstruation are paradoxical, in that they find empowerment and community despite the oppressive rituals in which they engage. Menstrual rituals are both restricting yet renewing, women's bodies within religious traditions are both polluting but powerful, and menstruating religious women themselves experience the

constraints of isolation from men, yet find community with one another” (Dunnavant and Roberts, 2012).

Ingra and Kumar (2009), research on tribal adolescent girls in India found that Practices during menstruation, the community depicted a strong web of social and cultural practices during menstruation. That through several generations these practices were believed and followed. There were many social and religious restrictions on girls during menstruation. “Girls received these instructions for dos and don’ts from mothers, elder sisters, and friends. Restrictions particularly related to prohibitions in going to religious places, offering prayers, and keeping fast (Roza’s) were most important. in many low-and middle-income countries, not knowing about menarche or understanding the process of menstruation leads to shame around menstruation, which in turn can lead girls to miss school, self-medicate, and refrain from social interaction, effectively quarantining themselves” (Ingra and Kumar, 2009).

Except for religious beliefs, geographical location also plays a prominent role in practicing menstruation. When women were taken out from their culture, experiences were different for adaptation to the new situation. Their religious scenario, the experience of migrants and refugees, constructions of menarche, and menstruation were strongly tied to notions of ‘womanhood,’ interlinked with reproduction and emergent sexuality. Nearly all women who took part in the study discursively positioned menarche and menstruation as shameful and abject, requiring associated regulatory practices of silencing and concealment. Silencing menarche and menstruation acts as a reinforcer of the discursive positioning of a woman’s bleeding as a source of stigma. But “when they are migrated or live as a refugee, they have a different experience than migrant and refugee women are not simply positioned within existing cultural discourses associated with menarche and menstruation but can re-position themselves, variably adopting, resisting, negotiating, and tailoring discourses and practices associated with menstruation. At the same time, menstruation and menstrual practices can become vehicles for change and innovation within religious context” (Perz, et al., 2020). The level of knowledge, readiness, and myths about menstruation among young Saudi girls, Alharbi, Alkharan, eds. (2018), found that they lack proper knowledge of information relevant to menstruation. Lack

of knowledge may “aid in preventing any future physical problems, increasing self-confidence, and improving quality of life” (Alharbi, 2018).

2.6 Empirical Studies in Nepali Context

Nepal is a culturally diverse country. Cultural norms and values play a vital role in practicing menstruation and different ethnic community has different norms and values regarding menstrual practice. Norms refer to behaviors and attitudes which are considered normal, while values are those things that people consider important to them. Social norms are the unwritten rules of behavior that are considered acceptable in a group or society. Norms function to provide order and predictability in society but values are beliefs related to norms. Nepal is a multiethnic, multilingual, and multicultural country with a population of about 30 million. “In the Hindu majority country of Nepal, religion and caste/ethnicity play big roles in sculpting socio-cultural norms. The people from Hindu (81.3% of the total population), followed by Buddhist (9%), Islam (4.4%), and other religions” (5.2%) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Most women and adolescent girls experience restricted mobility and participation in normal activities during menstruation and were forced to observe traditional norms and practices of isolation and segregation, despite physical discomfort and/or lack of resources. Family members and communities perpetuated these sociocultural beliefs and taboos.

Hindu practices are based on the belief that when women menstruate, impure blood leaves the body, and the body becomes impure. The woman’s “impurity forbids her from practicing religious and other sacred activities. Societal pressures to maintain menstrual restrictions become even more potent when menstruating women internalize these beliefs and begin to practice self-exclusion” (Shrestha and Piya, 2020). “Women belonging to Janajati and other ethnic groups were less likely to follow the socio-cultural restrictions during menstruation. Janajati caste, an indigenous group, were more likely to enter places of worship while menstruating, compared to the Brahmins” (Mukherjee, et al., 2020). “The strong beliefs about menstruating women as impure were present across all castes and ethnic groups” (Rothchild and Piya 2020). But mostly “Hindus consider women impure, untouchable, and underside during menstruation” (Ueda, 2012).

Among non-Hindus, “jangjati groups, and low castes and Dalits, the restrictions and seclusion regarding menstruation are typically not practiced, moderately or rapidly changing. The knowledge and attitudes of family members determine and shape adolescent girls' future actions and beliefs about menstruation and also the restrictive attitudes and misinformation about menstruation carried over into other areas of women's lives: education, family relations, and self-perception about their role and potential in society” (Rothchild and Piya 2020). Following Amatya and Ghimire (2018), about menstrual exile “prevalent throughout Nepal, the social taboo against menses is harshest, particularly in far-western Nepal, where menstruating women and girls are banished to a makeshift hut or livestock shed. Menstrual exile in this region is called “Chhaupadi” The temporary shelter where menstruating women and girls traditionally reside, called the Chhau shed, has been criticized for being unhygienic, exposed, unsafe, and lacking necessities.”

The girls expressed sentiments that suggested they would rather not practice Chhaupadi, but “Nepal's patriarchal society sets distinct socialization patterns for girls: the voicing of needs, concerns, and opinions is discouraged, and they are not given opportunities to make decisions. Further, strong familial and community bonds mean that rebellion is extremely rare and unlikely, so the girls follow the mandates imposed by their parents. They concluded that during menstruation “forbidden from touching other people and objects, Women and girls are required to live away from the community, typically in a livestock, shed, during menstruation” (Amartya, et al., 2018).

Those practices during the period “imposes physical and mental hardships and challenges fundamental human rights. cultural beliefs about menstruation such as food taboos and untouchability harm the dignity, health, education of adolescent girls” (Yadav, et al., 2017). During menstruation, “physical psychological, and cognitive changes occur which is challenging for the girl. Throughout history, menstruation has been assigned roles that range from defining a “women's status and social role to being seen as a curse that women had to endure” (Anjum, et al., 2010). For menstruating women and girls, menstrual hygiene maintenance is also important. It is very recently found that in the Dang district, a third of adolescent girls have inadequate knowledge of menstruation and one-fourth of poor menstrual hygiene practices but “knowledge on menstruation is positively correlated with the menstrual hygiene practices also, found

that mothers are the main source of information regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene. Menstruation was looked at as a restriction on women's religious and social traditions or as a taboo" (Neupane, et al., 2020).

In the case of Nepal, the notion of purity and pollution inside different caste systems also plays a leading role while menstrual practicing it. The strong beliefs about menstruating women as impure were present across all castes and ethnic groups but castes and ethnic groups maintained their own customs. Women and adolescent girls "experience restricted mobility and participation in normal activities during menstruation and were forced to observe traditional norms and practices of isolation and segregation; family members and communities perpetuated these socio-cultural beliefs and taboos. During menstruation women were forbidden from touching plants, manual grain grinding machines, water resources, or where food was stored" (Piya and Shrestha, 2020).

This research to relate menstrual rituals, taboos, and seclusion in the Nepalese context found that Women reported that during menstruation they were forbidden from touching plants, and manual grain grinding machines (dhiki/jaato), water sources, or places where food was stored. Touching anything while menstruating, "left it polluted—too dirty for anyone else to use. A menstruating woman should be careful to not let even a drop of water fall from her mouth while drinking, as that drop could then pollute the ground. Women interviewees talked about how at the end of their menstruation, they were instructed to bathe, as well as wash the items (utensils, clothes, bed sheets, towels, et cetera) that they used separately from everyone else during the fourth day of their period. While we observed variation in families' beliefs, taboos, and restrictive practices, many women in our study felt compelled to follow physical seclusion. These sociocultural practices instill shame and fear in menstruating women and serve as a control mechanism for policing gender norms and women's sexuality" (Rothchild & Piya, 2018).

In many Nepalese societies, menstrual practices are still surrounded by sociocultural restrictions and taboos resulting in adverse health outcomes for adolescent girls. Factors like "age, religion, socio-economic status, and mothers' literacy were found, "to have made a significant impact on the use of sanitary pads and the practice of perineal hygiene. Educational status of mother and father, family size, and living status was found to be independently associated factors of menstrual practice"

(Bhusal, 2020). The cross-sectional study among urban adolescents girls and women with related perception and practices regarding menstruation, Mukherjee, and Lama eds. (2020), concludes that “social discriminations, deep-rooted cultural and religious superstitions, and gender inequalities that continue to affect women during menstruation.”

But restrictions, though varied, are “practiced across the groups of different religion and culture – including Hindu, Muslims, Christians, and Jews – and in most cases are related to the “impurity” of the females during menstruation” (Ten, 2007). The young girls’ perceptions were heavily influenced by “socio-cultural beliefs and symbolisms. Mothers have been identified as an important source of information on menstruation for adolescent girls, as also shown by some other studies to a varying degree (Dasgupta, et al., 2005). Following Water Aid Nepal's (2009), study about determining the prevailing knowledge and experiences of menstrual hygiene and management, focusing on the implications in the daily lives and routines, among adolescent school girls in the rural and urban setting of Nepal, conclude that “among the adolescent schoolgirls both in urban and rural areas, menstrual knowledge and perceptions are poor and practices often not optimal for proper hygiene, efforts need to be made to address lack of privacy, which is an important determinant for proper practice of menstrual hygiene and also school attendance. “Disabled women may differently experience menstrual practices” (Water Aid Nepal, (2009).

They were already stigmatized by society. They have faced a layer of discrimination when they are menstruating. Inside Kathmandu valley, among disabled women, Pokherel Mahat, eds. (2020), does a cross-sectional study among 151 participants and concludes that “the majority of them have improper menstrual health and hygiene practices such as bathing only on the fourth day of menstruation, cleaning genitalia with soap and. water, and using the wrong cleaning technique. Since mothers and friends were the best sources of information about menstrual health and hygiene to disabled women, government and concerned organizations should provide health education through educating mothers as well as peer groups” (Pokherel, et al., 2020).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a systematic and scientific procedure, a way to solve the research questions as well as attends to the objective of the study. This study seeks to understand the perception of menstruation and practices of young school-going girls in urban settlements. The data will be presented descriptively by combining menstrual understanding and practice with different dimensions of life. The study focuses on menstrual understanding and practices that are affected by factors such as family, education, religious beliefs, and caste/ethnicity. To complete the research objectives researchers had to use a semi-structured interview majorly. Later, I used focused group interviews to know an understanding and practice regarding menstruation which helps to know an overall understanding of the subject.

The young girls cover the age ranges between 10 to 24 and the average menarche age is 13.5 in Nepal (WHO). In this qualitative research among young girls, I had taken adolescents in the age group between 14 to 24 to know about their practices on menstrual taboos and their perception of religious values. With strict taboos inside their own house and a lack of facilities on menstrual health management, young girls cannot take menstruation as a biological process which makes them confused. In this study, I had taken young and educated girls as respondents and did a qualitative inquiry to explore their practices and perception of the issues. perception is trust without proof of acceptance of the issues but practices are actual operations or experiments that happen in course of life and are related to daily activities. On the issues of menstrual practices in the Nepali context, it is all about doing activities done by menstruated women which may be different across caste, ethnicity, religion, geographical location, etc. By process, I had planned these steps to find my research objectives.

3.1 Research Design

In this research, a qualitative method had been used to explore the practices and beliefs on menstruation among urban adolescent girls. I also used the quantitative method to explore the caste/ethnicity, religious beliefs, and occupational status of the respondents' parents. The qualitative method is a naturalistic mode of inquiry that

helps explore the inner experiences of respondents on an issue. “Qualitative methods extolled the humanistic virtues of their subjective, interpretative approach to the study of human groups of life” (Denzin and Lincon, 2005). Experiences, beliefs, and practices are personally related to a person according to their social upbringing. Inside particular social settlements, individuals have a different ways of practicing it. To explore the incident related to menstruation, the researcher will use a semi-structured interview. After a semi-structured interview, the researcher will use focused groups interview to know the overall understanding related to menstrual beliefs and practices.

In the qualitative and descriptive research method, the researcher collects non-numerical data according to research objectives and seeks to interpret meaning from these data which helps to know the experiences of people from different societies. In this research, the researcher will employ the qualitative method to know the perception towards menstruation first, then interpret it by relating it to a different dimension of life. Perceptions are personal issues, but practices are different based on social context. “Interpretative method is sensitive to context, that gets inside the ways others see the world, that is more concerned with achieving an empathic understanding and testing human behavior” (Neuman, 2006). So, the researcher used the quantitative research design for this research.

3.2 Rationale of the Site Selection

This study is based on urban adolescent girls from the Boudha ward no.6 cluster of settlements inside Kathmandu municipality which lies in the Eastern parts of the main city. The study sites are located in the heart of the National Capital Territory of Kathmandu. A part of Kathmandu municipality, this area is a diverse population in terms of castes, ethnicity, religion, occupational opportunity, diverse class, family structure, etc.

I am more familiar with this site cause of living here for twelve years. I know the diverse understanding and practices towards menstruation among young girls from this area. The major objectives of my research questions are the perception, and practice of menstruation among urban school-going girls, This area is suitable by location for me. To fulfill the objective of my research question, this site is easier to

get data. At last, diverse respondents help the researcher to generalize overall understanding among young girls.

3.3 Sources of Data

Both primary (field research-based) and secondary (literature and earlier research-based) sources of data will be pursued. Primary data will be gathered through interviews with selected respondents from the chosen study area. Books, journal articles, and research reports will be taken as secondary sources of information.

3.4 Universe and Sampling

Urban adolescent girls who are continuing their study in grade 10, at the public school of Boudha Ward No. 6 had been the universe for this research. For this research, particularly in three government schools girls who are studying in class ten are the universe. The universe is the total chosen experimental units. For representation and to fulfill the objectives of this research 33 girls are chosen to explore the overall view on the issue. The two major goals that sampling can achieve are to “establish the representativeness of study issue and reduce bias, and to be able to make inferences from finding based on sample to the larger population from which that sample was drawn” (Baker, 1998).

The researcher used to simple probability random method for choosing the sampling from the total experimental unit. In the process of choosing the sampling. I was taken from a total of 135 girls as universe who are continuing their studies in grade 10 from government school lies on Boudha Ward No. 6. I listed them randomly according to their school roll no. After that, I took the first girl who is listed in no.1, which was my first sample for this research. Then, I left 2 numbers and take the third one which is randomly listed as my universe. Similarly, I take a total of 33 girls as a sample who are my respondent for this research, representing different caste/ethnic and religious identities.

3.5 Tools of Data Collection

This research interview had been a major tool for data collection. I applied semi-structured interviews to explore menstrual perceptions and practices among young girls. I developed an interview checklist of closed-ended questions to keep the conversation on track. However, the open-ended questions are mandatory to know the perception of menstruation, and the tradition of practices was mainly used in this

research. The interview is a purposeful conversation between the researcher and respondents where questions are asked on the demand of research objectives. In this research, the interview is important to know the real expression of respondents on the researchable issue.

“Interviews are a widely used tool to access people’s experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of reality. Based on the degree of structuring, interviews can be divided into three categories: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews” (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The semi-structured interview has a predetermined set of questions including open and close-ended which are filled in by the researcher. It is an informal conversation between the researcher and respondent where the researcher quickly makes a questionnaire on-field if needed. It is also referred to as “open-ended interviews, which allow more fluid interaction between the researcher and respondent. In this format, respondents are not forced to choose from a pre-designed range of answers; instead, they can elaborate on their statements and connect them with other matters of relevance” (Marvasti, 2004).

In this method, the researcher encourages respondents to elaborate answers based on the research objectives. An interview guide, usually including both closed-ended and open-ended questions, is prepared “but in the course of the interview, the interviewer has a certain amount of room to adjust the sequence of the questions to be asked and to add questions based on the context of the participant’s responses. The interviewer follows the interviewees’ narration and generates questions spontaneously based on his or her reflections on that narration” (Zhang and Wildermuth, 2007). The researcher’s control over the conversation is intended to be minimal, but the researcher will try to encourage the interviewees to relate experiences and perspectives that are relevant to the problems of interest to the researcher (Burgess, 1982). To use this tool in my research, I will gather information about experiences, perceptions, and practices along with practicing trends in the household.

Another tool for gathering data in this research was a focus group discussion. The focused group interview is a group interview where respondents are chosen by common traits. In other words, the researcher already took the sample from the universe based on the research goal, and taking an interview in groups is known as a focused group interview. In this research focused groups are educated girls from Kathmandu valley.

In focus groups, “the researcher asks questions from several respondents at the same time to stimulate discussion and thereby understand the meanings and norms which underline those group answers” (Marvasti, 2004). It is a collective conversation, which helps explore the problem as well as opine on what is not possible through individual interviews. A Focus Group is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meetings present characteristics defined concerning the proposal, size, composition, and interview procedures. The focus or object of analysis is the interaction inside the group. The participants influence each other through their answers to the ideas and contributions during the discussion” (Krueger, 1994).

For my thesis, I conducted a separate focus group discussion at three schools that were chosen at random for the study. I correlated the information acquired from the interview responses with additional information gleaned from the focus group discussions, a potent research technique.

3.6 Data Analysis

Interview transcriptions were analyzed manually. I had to identify emerging themes and cluster them into theme segments. Then the information had been clustered based on the theme segments and analyzed based on variables such as perception of menstrual bleeding, religious beliefs on menstrual bleeding, experiences with menarche, the tradition of practices on daily activities, hygiene management, and practices of their mothers, the role of school, and other demographic backgrounds are major. In those themes, I analyze the menstrual taboos that are in Kathmandu in urban areas of Kathmandu.

3.7 Limitations and Significance of the Study

This research had been conducted within a limited time and budget and conducted to fulfill the academic course of Master in Sociology. In Addison, this research had to be conducted to interview limited respondents, so findings may not generalize the overall youth’s beliefs on menstruation. Cultural norms and traditional values are different prevailing in the specific community which is affected by practices of menstruation. Religion and community-based typical cultural values shape menstrual understanding and practice. Nepal has diversified castes, religions, and ethnicity; Nepali society also has divested norms and values which may affect menstrual attitudes and practices. Different cultures have different values regarding menstruation, so the

findings may not generalize the overall girl's perception and practices on menstruation.

The most important theme of my research is inter-generational changes in menstrual practices. I made research questions based on practices of menstruation from the mothers of my respondents that was answering their daughters of them. I was not going to the mothers. So, findings may not generalize the overall practices done by mothers.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THEIR PERCEPTION TOWARD MENSTRUATION

4.1 Caste/Ethnicity, Religion, and Occupation Background of the Sample Household

The respondents of my research have various backgrounds. Caste/ ethnic identity, religious beliefs, and occupational background of the household have variation that makes the menstrual taboos different from that found in the ground research, I have done in Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

Table 1: Caste/Ethnic Background of the Respondents

Caste	Total	Percentage
Janajati	20	60.60
Brahmin/Chhetri	7	21.21
Dalit	6	18.19
Total	33	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In the table 1, a total of 33 adolescent girls who are my respondent, belongs to different caste and ethnic groups. Most of the respondents are in the janajati category. In this category, the young girls from Tamang and Magar communities are 10, following Rai and Sherpa all together 6 in the numbering. Similarly, the rest of the respondents are from Limbu, Majhi, Newar, and Dumi are 2, 1, and 1 in number. The next representative category is Brahmin and Chhetri are the 5 and 2 in number respectively and are so-called high castes in our society. 6 girls from the so-called Dalit community have participated in the research and are randomly selected for this research.

The fieldwork for this research was done at Boudha Ward No.6. This area has covered a dense population from the Janajati and this randomly drawn sample has more than 60 percent from this community. Nearly all of the respondents migrated from different places to this area. The respondent from high castes Brahmin also lived in this area are little few to comparing to Janajati groups. Likewise, the Chhetri is also

among the very few a respondent to this research. However, the so-called Dalit are nearly similar to Brahmin/Chhetri. The age of 14 to 18 takes as a respondent are school-going girls and all of them are read in grade 10 at government school.

Table 2: Religious Background of the Respondent

Religion	Total	Percentages
Hindu	19	57.57
Buddhist	11	33.33
Christain	1	3.03
Kirat	2	6.06
Total	33	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The respondents who belong to different religious beliefs have representation in this sample. A higher percentage of the respondents are Hindus, who covered more than half of the total sample. In addition, 11 girls a respondent from the Buddhist religion are from the Janajati community. Similarly, 2 girls who believe in the Kirat religion are from the Rai and Limbu communities. The only girls from Dalit castes are believed in Christianity are found in my fieldwork.

More than half of the respondent's beliefs in Hinduism are 19 in numbering. All of the Brahmin Chhetri girls beliefs in Hinduism. The Janajati girls from Tamang, Magar, Newar, and Majhi also beliefs in Hinduism and are equal to Brahmin Chhetri is 7 in number. The girls from the so-called community also believe in Hinduism is 5 in number. The 10 Buddhist girls are from the Janajati community and 1 is from the Dalit community. Similarly, 2 Kirat girls from the Rai and Limbu communities. At last 1 girl who believes in Christianity was from the Dalit caste.

Table 3: The Occupation of Respondent's Father

Types of Works	Total number	Percentage
Labor	16	48.48
Small scale business	9	27.27
Farmer	6	18.19
Foreign employee	2	6.06
Total	33	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In order to identify their father's background, the respondents' father is involved in different occupations to accomplish their livelihood. Among the total 33 respondents, most of the respondent's fathers are engaged in laborious work, are engaged in mason, carpenter, painter, and weaving a carpet for their livelihood daily wage are nearly half in size of the total respondent. In the given data, their fathers have a small-scale business. They have vending businesses such as they have grocery, and small tea hotels, and some are engaged in vegetable vending. Furthermore, following the small-scale business, some are doing farming in Kathmandu and some are doing the. Very few of the parents are living in other countries in Malaysia and Qatar.

Table 4: The Occupation of Respondent's Mother

Types of Works	Total number	Percentage
Housewife	10	30.30
Small scale business	10	30.30
Labour	8	24.25
Farmer	3	9.09
Foreign employee	2	6.06
Total	33	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Based on my field research, a total of 33 respondents' mothers are also engaged in different jobs. Many of the mothers are does small-scale businesses like a tea shop, clothes shop on the street, and selling vegetables as vending. In the same way, the same percentage, are housewives. They are just busy with household work. Following that, the respondents' mothers are doing laborious work. They do some laborious work to fulfill their basic needs weaving a carpet, doing Manson work, and doing household chores for others. Among them, a few went to foreign countries in Malaysia and Qatar. Finally, a lower percentage of the mothers are farmers who are farming in Kathmandu taking an as small portion of the land in rent and some are doing farming in villages.

The main portion of the respondents are born in rural areas and shifted to studying in school and lived for study purposes for a few years. All the girls went to school and read in grade 10. They are aged between fourteen and eighteen. Entirely all are living

in rent are coming from different districts of Nepal, now living in Kathmandu with their parents.

4.2 Perception Towards Menstrual Taboos

This study aims to understand the perception of girls on menstrual taboos in various themes attempts have been towards menstrual blood, restrictions, and rituals of purification. By using these themes to explore the perception of menstrual taboos, I will be connecting the themes with religious beliefs, caste/ethnicity, and the livelihood of parents are major. In addition, I will make some subthemes that help to explore the issues.

Perception is a personal manifestation of how one views the world which is colored by many socio-cultural elements. Markus and Kitayama (1991) concluded that peoples in different cultures have strikingly different perceptions of self and others. They added more and explain that our perception is shaped by family, environment, and life events, that affect our lives each day. The perception regarding menstruation is also shaped by our religion, caste, and place we belong. In this database, the perception of menstruation differs according to the respondents' social environment.

Respondents have a different perception of menstruation that is not shaped by religious beliefs. This data indicates that the religious beliefs, the main section is Hindus followed by Buddhists, Christians, and Kirat have a similar perception of bleeding when respondents are religiously neutral. However, when issues are compounded with religion, their perception of the blood is changed.

4.2.1 Perception towards Menstrual Blood

The central focus of this study is how women perceive menstrual blood. Menstrual blood is considered natural by the majority of the respondents. This blood has a symbolic value that is linked to everyday activities. These exercises vary depending on whether you're bleeding or if you're on a monthly schedule. According to my interviewees, their attitudes toward blood are very similar regardless of religious views, caste ethnicity, or parents' work. Blood is taken by all women as a natural process that occurs in their daily lives, and it is also crucial for reproduction that they shared these methods:

"I believe menstruation is a natural process and also a symbol of age that ladies are ready to give birth," said Anugya Majhi, a 16-year-old Janajati. Menstruation, she

believes, is a completely natural process that all women go through. She went on to say that this blood is a sign of a woman's life being reproduced. She believes that following the bleeding, women are capable of giving birth.

The brahmin group, like the previous responses, has a similar perception of menstrual bleeding. Ansika Kharel, a brahmin 16-year-old girl, expressed her feelings about menstrual blood in the following way: "Menstruation occurs for delivery because it is a symbol of adulthood."

A similar perception of menstrual bleeding has been articulated by the next respondent who belongs to the Chhetri community and disclosed her opinion this way "menstruation is a natural process and happens from birth to a new generation" (Salina Katwa). She also demonstrated that it is a natural process and happens for continuing the next generation.

Menstrual bleeding is perceived in the same way regardless of respondents' caste/ethnicity. Menstrual bleeding is viewed similarly by the next respondents from the Janajati group. "Menstruation is a normal process that all women go through, and it is also a sign of giving birth to a new generation," says the author (Sunita Magar Janajati).

The notion of menstrual bleeding was echoed by significant responders from the Dalit group and those who practiced Hinduism. This is how she investigates her viewpoint. "As a woman, menstruation occurs to give birth to a new generation" (Anita Jagmer, Dalit). It indicates that she agrees with previous replies and believes that menstruation is a natural and significant aspect of all women's life that occurs throughout childbirth.

Menstruation is a natural procedure, and monthly bleeding is equally natural, according to the information supplied. When they are in a neutral state, my respondents associate blood with adulthood and consider it a metaphor for reproduction. They explore in one voice a common experience in women's lives and also vital to delivery, in their perspective, or without relating to religion. Menstruation is viewed in the same way regardless of ethnicity or caste.

A key cause for having the same perspective on menstrual bleeding is due to education, social media influences, and living in a city. When religiously neutral, the perceptions of these school-aged girls are unaffected by their religious beliefs and

caste/ethnicity. When I queried them about their religious beliefs, though, they seemed to be divided.

4.2.2 Religion and Perception Towards Menstruation

The impression of menstrual blood from the other side, which is linked to religious ideas, has a purity to it. Many of the interviewees in this study are Hindus from the Janajati, Dalit, Brahmin, and Chettri communities, respectively. Shrestha and Piya (2020) discovered that strong "beliefs about menstruation women as impure were evident in the lives of women across all castes and ethnic groupings, however, each caste and ethnic group retained their rituals." Menstrual restrictions and isolation are often not practiced, somewhat practiced, or fast-changing among non-Hindus, Janajati communities, low castes, and Dalits."

Their beliefs influence their perception of menstruation, but when I asked, "What is menstruation?" It's similar to how you'd look at the issue from a biological standpoint. "Menstruation is a natural biological process that symbolizes the beginning of femininity for all females" (Knudtson and McLaughlin, 2019). Almost every response shares the same viewpoint on the problem. At the same time, despite their ties to blood and religion, they have a different perspective on blood, which they shared with the Hindu community in the following ways:

My respondent Sabina Gautam reported that menstrual bleeding is not pure. She reported that "It is impure blood so that we can't touch the religious places. (*pooja garna, saman chhuna hunna, hameta mandir vitra pasdainam*)" (Sabina Gautam, Hindu). She belongs to the Hindu religion. Saraswoti Mandal from the so-called Dalit community also similarly sounded on menstruation and bleeding and shared that "We never enter the temple on menstrual bleeding (*Malaita mandir xoyako than nai xaina kasaile pani*)" (Saraswoti Mandal, Hindu). These two respondents have a similar perception of menstruation and bleeding from religious aspects that is impure. This sense of impurity forbids them from doing religious events.

My next respondent who is from a high caste and followed the Hindu religion shared that "I never touch the religious things and never entering thereon menstrual time(*yo ta sambhav nai xaina*)"(Ansika Kharel, Hindu). Continuing the same perception from religious beliefs on menstrual bleeding, the young girls reported that "It is impossible to touch the gods and takes the prasad on menstrual time (*sochnai pardaina*)"

(Shrijana Magar, Hindu).

The perception towards blood is different than another bleeding. Till a certain time of bleeding, they are restricted from religious events reported a girl from the Hindu community shared this way: “In our religion, worshipping the gods, touching a sacred thread wear people, going to the temple, touching a holy plant (*Tulsi*, *Peepal*, *Kush*) are not allowed” (Ansika Kharel, Hindu).

The above narrative represents a perception on their menstrual blood has a sense of purity. The girls are never doing religious activities during their menstrual time. My respondents are sharing that it is impossible to participate in religious events even fetter to touching the religious things that are never allowed to them. One of my respondents shared that the religious restriction on detailing in this way:

At my home, the pooja planning for the next day, I am near to menstruation was tense for my parents and happens to me. They purify the home for pooja and my mother told me to not enter the house I stay at my neighbor's home for 3 days because I am not sure that told by my grandmother. That day I felt like I was overkill because I am not participating in the events that happen. All of the members and relatives are enjoying the events but I am separated which I never forget in my life. (Bipana Pun Magar, 2022).

This information is mostly related to menstrual blood and serves as a symbol of girls' exclusion from religious engagement. Their religious beliefs influence their vision of blood, and they have a close friend who acts as an agent for them. Almost all of the Hindu females in the research felt guilty because of their menstrual blood. As evidenced by the data, the images of the menstrual body are symbolically tainted.

The literature also concluded that menstrual bleeding is religiously impure. “Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, took the menstrual body as an impure (Bhartiya, 2013),” and also inside Nepali society, “menstruating women, as impure were present across all castes and ethnic groups” (Shrestha and Piya, 2020). This data explores that religious beliefs are making different perceptions of blood and body. The literature concluded that all religions have a sense of impurity towards menstrual blood but have a variation and Hindus take it more impurely compared to other religions. This research also concluded that menstrual bleeding is taking impure according to Hinduism.

The Buddhist responders in this study felt impure as well. During this time, they are also kept away from any religious activity. They are, nevertheless, more adaptable than Hindus in this regard. "In my religious views, there is no chance to cheat God," Sharmila Bajracharya said. "If we do that, gods will curse us and our jobs will not be perfect" (bhagawan choyo vane pap lagxa) (Sharmila Bajracharya, Buddhist). Sonam has a similar attitude toward menstrual bleeding. She's a Buddhist, as well. "I never go into the pooja area or visit the gumba, but I do take the prasad, which I do not present to God" (Sonam Doka Sherpa, Buddhist).

My Buddhist responders have a strong sense of purity and do not participate in religious activities. They took the prasad and went outside to see the gumba. Buddhists are more fluid in this regard than Hindus who indirectly attended religious rituals during the period.

Respondents from the Kirat and Christian communities had differing perspectives on menstrual blood in this study. They reveal that their menstrual cycles have never prevented them from attending religious activities. "In our religious views, Kirat scripture, menstruation is regarded as a natural phenomenon," they explained. There are no areas that are off-limits because of menstruation, according to our beliefs" (Evenjeelina Dumi, Kirat).

My respondents also agreed with earlier responders from the Kirat group, who discussed their religious ideas concerning menstrual bleeding: "Take a menstruated woman as normal." During this time, my elders also worship the god. Mami hajuraama, kaki koi ne barnu hunna, chalan nai xina, maile ta sathibata thapako barxan vanne)" (Asmita Limbu, Kirat).

"According to my religion, menstruation is a regular occurrence, and we all go to church for praying to have bleeding," Bipana said. (Hameta minse vayane church janxam, aru ne aaunuhunxa, pasterle barna pardaina vannuhunxa) He would occasionally remark that women did not participate regularly for various reasons. Some women are told they are menstruating, and Paster appears unfazed, encouraging the women to pray often" (Bipana Sewa, Christian).

One of my Kirat respondents attended religious events and was unaware of the restrictions on religious sites throughout the period. She worships the gods as usual in her household, and she doesn't need to discuss menstruation for religious reasons. It

implies that menstrual bleeding has a typical significance. Inside the Kirat society, the menstrual body is likewise pure.

In comparison to Kirati, the next respondent, a Christian, had a similar impression of menstrual bleeding. She routinely attends her Saturday prayer. Her family members have never been barred from attending church because of a period. Paster was also encouraged to publicly attend the prayer for women at the Church. It denotes that menstrual flow does not cause discomfort.

4.2.3 Perception Towards Menstrual Restriction

The majority of the respondents have dealt with menstruation taboos, which have kept them from participating in daily activities. Exclusion and control were the most significant and painful experiences they had in this database. Religious participation is a key source of exclusion and control, especially among family and close friends. The majority of people have had control experiences, however, Hindus have more than Buddhists.

The perception of menstrual limitation or taboo practices is an important sub-theme in this research. Religious beliefs impact people's perceptions of issues once again. The Hindu group makes up the majority of the respondents, and their views on menstrual restrictions are varied. Some are content with the restrictions, while others are irritated. Only for religious engagement do respondents accept the menstrual restriction. They mentioned that they have a dread of worshiping, touching, or receiving prasad that is tied to religious beliefs:

Menstrual taboos, in my opinion, are ridiculous customs that should be abolished. Natural bleeding does not cause us to pause or delay our everyday work. However, I prefer not to worship the gods on certain days since our gods punish us when we touch and adore them. (bhagawan le shrap dinxan) Bhagawan le shrap dinxan Bhagawan le shrap dinxan Bh (Soni Kumari Shah, Hindu). "Menstruation is a normal process, and no one should be hampered by it." Because it is our religious culture (hamro chalan)" it is necessary not to touch or worship religious beliefs. (Hindu Hindu Manika Pandit). "It is a natural process and nobody needs to be restricted due to menstruation. In the case of religious beliefs, it is important to not touch and worship them because it is our religious culture(*gharma aestai vannu hunxa*)" (Sunita Magar, Hindu).

These voices suggest that religious beliefs impact people's perceptions of menstrual limitations. This study also indicated that these respondents hold a Hindu philosophy that includes a "heightened sense of purity" (Piya and Shrestha, 2020). Other actions, including cooking meals, sharing a meal, and sleeping in the same bed, are viewed differently by the participants. Their perspective of restrictions in other areas of their lives is irrelevant, yet they have accepted religious restrictions.

Some Hindu females are bypassing the restrictions that come with religious engagement due to their notion of menstruation restrictions. They all agreed that restrictions and exclusion on the menstrual body's basis bother them. The family and close friends must make it normal because of the dignity that Hinduism bestows on all castes. "In my opinion on issues, the worship of the gods, all things are normal on periods," says the data (Anugya Majhi, Hindu). "I dislike menstrual restrictions in any area, but my family members are compelled to do so" (Ansika Kharel, Hindu).

This evidence suggests that menstruation restrictions in all industries should be repealed. The girls do not consent to be kept out of their regular activities and regulated. They are treating menstrual bleeding as natural and wish to participate in religious activities as well. Menstrual limitations, they believe, are superfluous and merely exist to induce compliance. "In the case of menstruation taboos, we need to eradicate them in our communities, such as not cooking meals, touching male family members, not sleeping in the normal bed, visiting the temple, and attending social gatherings" (Salina Katwal, Hindu).

Menstrual taboos were perceived similarly by Buddhist respondents. They're speaking in unison and agreeing that monthly bleeding puts them in a bind. They have, however, accepted the religious restrictions placed on them. They express the fact that religion requires them to sin, as well as bad luck, in the following ways: It is important to restrict for a few days because it is a cultural practice, and if we do religious works during that time, gods curse us and bad incidents (*gharma naramro hunxa*) occur at our home, so it needs to be restricted from the pooja, not other places. (Buddhist Renuka, Rai).

"It is necessary to restrict for a few days since it is a cultural tradition, and if we conduct religious activities at that time, gods curse us and unpleasant happenings occur at our home, thus it is necessary to restrict from the pooja, not the other places"

(Manisha Henjan, Buddhist). The Buddhist respondents are oblivious to the impact menstruation exclusion has on any aspect of their lives. Religious practices, on the other hand, are tolerated. Respondents from Christian and Kirat communities also disregard the menstruation restriction for any sector, and they share in the following ways:

"In the case of menstrual limitations, which are prevalent in our society, that is nonsense, and I believe it also hurts mental health." Cooking dishes, touching male members, cleansing the body, and deferring visits are all unscientific behaviors imposed by other religions that are unduly compelled to practices that I despise and that my friends share" (Evanjellina Dumi, Kirat). "In my own opinion on menstrual restriction, there are no regions to the constraints related to natural bleedings," says one of my respondents, Bipana Sewa. It is a natural part of every woman's life" (Bipana Sewa, Christian).

These respondents' nonsensical habits are influenced by their perceptions of menstrual constraints. Their religious beliefs also recognized menstruation bleeding as natural and accepted it as a regular part of women's life. These findings suggest that respondents tolerate the prohibition of religious gatherings to identify with their own culture. Years of custom have pushed them to accept the menstruation limitation at religious gatherings.

4.3 Conclusion

The majority of the respondent was taking those beliefs on the menstrual restriction as nonsensical but when it is connected with their religious belief, they link it with cultural values and somehow accept the exclusion that re-explores the data. On the one hand, they were taking the issue that took them controlling, separated, and gendering. Another side of the reality was that they were accepting the menstrual restriction due to religious beliefs and the tradition they are following.

In the case of accepting the menstrual restriction, the agents are imposed on them for doing such things and also, at the same time agents are doing. To sum up, the restrictions on the menstrual body and respondents' perceptions are to be expected to be contradictory, in the sense that they are not following taboos inside and outside the house except for religious participation.

To analyze the data, this research question, perception towards menstruation, entire respondents perceive menstruation as a natural process when they are religiously neutral. The researcher went into depth and want to explore the possibility of religious participation, all of them have boundaries of religion. “The menstrual blood has a deeply religious meaning”(Maharaj and Winlker,2020), “objectifying the woman’s body”(Bobel ed. al,2020), and “considered to be dirty and impure”(Garg and Aananda,2015) “embedded with larger purity system”(Chohen,2020) are some representative meanings of menstrual bleeding that directly and indirectly founded.

My perception of menstrual taboos is similar to that of researching girls when I am in my adolescent age. I am also imposed by cultural values like these adolescents. Menstrual blood is impure and menstrual exclusions are general issues for me when I am in the age of early menstruating which is a different finding that I found from this research. The research girls are not accepting menstrual taboos. However, Their perception of the issues of menstrual taboos, sometimes they are somehow accepting the restriction because of cultural values that belong to following Hinduism. For accepting the taboos, little be agents are also accountable mostly because their mother is similar to my menstrual experiences.

My attitude about menstruation taboos is comparable to what I had when I was a teenager when I was researching girls. Like these kids, I am subjected to cultural values. Menstrual blood is dirty, and menstrual exclusions are common problems for me when I'm in the early stages of menstruation, which is a new conclusion from this study. Menstrual taboos are not tolerated by the girls who are conducting research. However, because of the cultural norms associated with Hinduism, their understanding of the issue of menstruation taboos might occasionally lead to acceptance of the limitation. Little agents are also to blame for adopting the taboos since their menstruation experiences are comparable to mine.

CHAPTER FIVE

ADOLESCENTS PRACTICE TOWARD MENSTRUATION

5.1 Practice Towards Menstrual Taboos

Menstrual taboos are associated with thoughts that the menstrual body has done something repeatedly based on socio-cultural customs. In this instance, it has been habitual to follow the tradition, which is occasionally enforced by the agents. The researchers discovered that this menstruation taboo varies by caste/ethnicity, social class, the place where menstrual women travel, and, most importantly, religious views. Those taboos in the froth of Chhaupadi are well-known throughout Nepal, although each region has its style of practicing them.

Menstrual taboos exist throughout Nepal (Mukharjee, 2020), isolating women from their families (Shrestha and Piya, 2020). This taboo is associated with a sense of uncleanliness (Bulcky and Bottib, 1988), exclusion from socio-cultural life (Rotchild and Piya, 2020), and a negative impression of the menstrual body (Yaduv and Joshi, 2017), and taboo practices vary according to religious, political, and economic reasons (Bulcky and Gottib, 1988b). These taboos are also shaped by gender (Bhatariya, 2013), with women's experiences being complicated, unique, and diverse (Smith, 1992). On the other hand, taboo prevents girls from having an accurate base of menstrual information and preparing for menarche (Kissling, 1996).

Caste/ethnicity, religion, and social class may all have an impact on how she and those around her practice these taboos; yet when compared to other characteristics, most of the girls who took part in this study were quite close to their religious views in terms of menstrual taboos practice. They have been breaking religious taboos, but not according to others, as I discovered throughout my study. Nearly all castes follow the same norms and are not prevented from engaging in normal activities, but some Brahmin respondents adhere to the menstrual restriction that I discovered.

My research explores the practice of menstruation taboos. I'll look at practices inside and outside the home, as well as experiences with menarche, in this theme. I'll also look at religious beliefs and caste/ethnicity as subthemes.

5.2 Menstrual Practices Inside the Household

According to the findings, females from various castes, including Janajati, Dalit, Brahmin, and Chhetri, do not practice menstrual taboos in their homes. However, only a small percentage of brahmin respondents say they are barred from engaging in common activities. In contrast to religious beliefs and restrictions on the household, respondents' religious values have a sense of purification of their bodies, and the majority of them go through this process, have their way of doing things, and are completely restricted from participating in the religious activities explored in this study. Nonetheless, they prepare daily meals, eat with family, and sleep in their normal beds.

In this study, young and school-aged girls practice menstrual taboos by continuing their daily routines on period days. "I cook the daily meals that we are generally done by others time," my respondent Sabina Gautam, who is from the brahmin culture, said of her menstruation customs. There are no concerns that affect the male members of the family, and we have our meals together at the same table as the rest of the family. "I slept in my regular beds and touched everything in our homes (*hamrota barne chalan nai xaina*)."

As shown in the preceding paragraph, she is not prevented from performing her regular duties owing to menstruation. My next respondent, Renuka Rai, who is from the Janajati tribe and is 17 years old, expressed her embarrassment by revealing her menstrual customs in this manner. Renuka Rai, who is from the Janajati community and is 17 years old, believes in Buddhism. "My mother and I normally cook the dishes we eat during our periods in our kitchen." We share the same table for our dinner and there are no rules about touching the male members of the family. During my monthly period, I slept in my normal bed, but I didn't work on our kitchen garden or veggies, even though I touched the drinking water (*period vayako vanne chalan nai xaina*)."

Anisha Khati has also had similar experiences with menstruation rituals. She's a Dalit. She also goes about her daily routine as she did when she wasn't on her period. In this way, she disclosed her menstruation habits. "When I'm on my period, I make our daily dinners for the whole family." At our house, we eat our meals at the same table, sleep in the same beds, and touch each other. At our house (*hamro gharmata*

bardainan), touching the male members of the family, sleeping in the same beds, and eating at the same table are all natural.

These three menstrual customs show that there are no restrictions on the menstrual body or the ability of menstruating women to engage in their daily activities. All girls are benefiting from menstruation in these situations since they are not prevented from participating in their regular activities. The girls are not subjected to discrimination and have complete discretion over their activities.

Few Hindus from high castes have, however, reported having their periods restricted. Brahmin community young ladies their age have a difficult time dealing with the problems. She said the following about her restriction:

The food is never made by me. When my family members wore the sacred thread, such as my grandfather, father, and brother, I would never touch them. I never eat dinner at the same table as my family while I'm on my period. My mother used to give them to me individually, and I would take them outside the kitchen, wash whatever utensils I touched, dry them in the sun, and use them for three days. I changed my bedroom, which had been designed with menstruating women in mind, while I slept. (Ansika Kharel, Brahmin).

According to the aforementioned accounts, she experienced limitations in her movement, difficulty performing daily tasks, changes in her eating habits, and control over touching male family members, to name a few. It implies that menstrual bleeding is a sign of authority and a subject of exclusion. Additionally, it continues the patriarchal traditions.

5.3 Attendance at Religious Events

The most crucial subtheme in this study is religious practices. Girl respondents have included Kirati, Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian girls. According to research, Hindu and Buddhist girls claim that they have never attended religious gatherings at their homes or with their families, not even in open temples. Doing religious activities and handling objects are completely under their power. All castes are subject to religious exclusion, including Brahman/Chhetri, Janajati, and even so-called Dalits who adhere to Hinduism and Buddhism.

The Dalit girls practiced Hinduism. Anisha Khati described her spiritual practices in the following way: "I never enter the pooja room from my menstruation experiences

throughout my life. I've never gone to a temple for pooja, visited no locations connected to the gods, and never touched anything religious. This information suggests that attending religious events is forbidden.

Sharmila Bajracharya, who practices Buddhism, has engaged in similar actions. Her religion forbids menstruating women from participating in religious activities. Menstruating women are not permitted to perform the daily pooja or consume the prasad in their homes. She explained her religious beliefs in the following way: "we can't worship God, enter the pooja room or even regions, make the prasad for the god are restricted, and I don't have experiences going to the gumba during the menstrual time."

The young ladies have no prior experience participating in the Hindu and Buddhist religious practices that they hold dear. Neha Tamang, the Janajati responder, practices Hinduism and never goes to religious gatherings. She always exercises control and keeps her distance from the religious practice at the time. She recounted her controlling experience in the same manner as earlier replies. I never go inside my home's temple to offer sacrifices to the gods. I never go inside the temple during times when entry is severely restricted.

Both Hindu and Buddhist girls participate in comparable religious activities. Regardless of a person's caste or ethnic identification, these practices are the same. They share similar sensations but don't go to religious gatherings or interact with religious objects. They are prohibited from participating in such practices that are based on menstruation.

The young girls in this study follow different religious traditions than those of the Christian and Kirat populations. In this study, there are very few numbers, but they are all significant. One of the girls is Christian and is from the Dalit community, while the others are Janajati. Participation in religion is not prohibited for them.

The young woman who practices Christianity described her religious beliefs in the following way: "In my religion, menstruation is considered a normal phenomenon, and we all go to church to pray for bleeding. Menstruation does not prohibit reading the Bible or attending church. According to this information, menstruating women are participating in their regular religious practices. Their religious convictions did not

prevent them from engaging in these religious activities. She is free to practice her religion as she pleases and is not kept out of the things that happen to her.

The Janajati community's girls who follow the Kirat religion engage in similar religiously-motivated behaviors. Their participation in religious activities is likewise free. In their description of their religious practices, these girls stated: "At our religious beliefs, Kirat scripture, take menstruation as a normal phenomenon. There are no sites that are forbidden because of menstruation, according to our beliefs. Everybody is carrying out the religious duties they usually perform at other times. (*Holy book padna hunxa, hamromata pooja garna, prasad khana, aama, kaki haru sabaile bareako thanai xaina Malaita, barxan vanne satthibata tha pauda ahamma lagyo Malaita* (Evanjellina Dumi) The information above suggests that the girls who follow the Kirat and Christianity religions are not under the influence of their respective religions.

Participation in religious events, which I summarize in the two points, is a sub-theme of my research. Any girl can do religious duties, regardless of caste or ethnic identity. However, a significant obstacle to preventing such religious acts is the religion's membership. The two Dalit girls each follow their method of participating in religion. A Christian girl is free to participate in religious activities, whereas members of the same ethnic group who practice Hinduism have restrictions on doing so, including touching religious objects. Buddhism is a different religion that controls involvement. The Kirat, on the other hand, is the antithesis of Buddhism and Hinduism.

5.4 Purification of the Body

Additionally, important subthemes for this research are the customs surrounding menstruation and body cleanliness. Different purifying methods are used by the respondents. The purification rituals practiced by the responders who practice Hinduism vary depending on which days of their menstrual cycle they follow. Some people go through that process in 4 days, while others wait 7 days. A different method is used by Buddhist respondents than by Hindu respondents. When it comes to purifying rituals, Buddhists are quite lenient. There are no longer any purification procedures, according to the replies from Christian and Kirat. These young women have the same freedom to act as they like about practice-related matters.

The respondent, a Hindu of a high caste, has a method of purification. After particular days, some of them only bathe. However, some people also wash the garments they wear during their period while taking a bath, sprinkle gold water over their bodies and rooms, and put ghee or oil on their bodies and hair. The teenage girl, Soni Kumari Shah, described her method of cleansing in the following way: "After four days, bathing is required, and I will also clean the place where I slept by washing all garments and utensils. "*Garnai parxa hamromata, natra pooja garna mandir jana hunna,*" I say, "sprinkling the gold water on my body and across the room."

According to the data provided above, ladies who are menstruating should cleanse themselves. It operates uniquely. If you want to participate for religious reasons, you should do this. The Janajati respondents, who profess Hinduism, have several ways that they purify themselves. Shrijana Magar, a little girl, explained her method of purification in the following words: "After 4 days of menstruation, it is important to take a bath for purifying me. I also wash the garments that I used on those days. Since you participate in religion, it is vital to do these things.

Girls from Buddhist communities are also engaged in the purifying ritual. Bathing and cleaning the clothing from those days are two of their purifying rituals. The Janajati community is made up of these Buddhist females. Young Ichchha Bomjan, who attends school, described her purification rituals, which differ slightly from those of Hindus from high castes. After five days of menstruation, I take a bath. The clothing I wore on those days gets washed. It is required since we cannot do religious duties without bathing. (*Nanuhaya Samma Pooja Room: Ma Pani Chadauna Hunna*).

The girls who are Christian and Kirat, however, continue to exhibit the same menstrual customs on the purification issues. They are not engaging in any purifying activities. They are bathing to preserve their menstrual hygiene. They decide what happens, and there are no standards for purifying techniques. According to the young woman Asmita Limbu, who describes her customs, "I don't know any purification that happens on menstrual days." I merely bathe to preserve my hygiene. Christian Bipana, who engages in the same behaviors, revealed them.

a ritual or process they adhere to purify both themselves and the items they used. These customs have religious roots. In a way, the argument is based on religion because females' shared ethnic identities are irrelevant, but their religious convictions

repress them. Girls from the Dalit community who practice Hinduism and menstrual rituals on concerns of body cleanliness find that Christians manage their purification rituals very differently than Hindus and Buddhists. Additionally, the answers from Kirat and Christian follow a similar routine on regular days.

5.5 Prior Knowledge of Menstruation

For my research, a crucial sub-theme is the experiences with menarche. Teenage females don't know much about the problems, but they are unprepared for them. They weep after their first bleeding because they are scared, perplexed, astonished, and confused. Their menstruation is the same regardless of caste or religion, but it is vital to control it based on who is nearby on that particular day.

Information regarding menstruation can be found through mothers, sisters, social media, friends, and aunts. This information is superficial. It only concerns blood, and cultural issues regarding restrictions on bodies and bleeding were included. The problem with culture is that it makes things different for them to do certain things.

Their knowledge of menstruation is the same regardless of their religious affiliation. I discovered that the problems are largely private and that the agents matter more than one's caste or ethnicity. "I have limited knowledge of menstruation, heard by my mum," the girl said when asked about it. She occasionally told me that when we are bleeding, we experience body aches, blood, and laziness, but my pals also talked about a mood swings.

Moreover, half of the research participants reported having their initial knowledge of the problems from their mothers and sisters. Since these girls' activities are very different from what they would normally do, they are asking their mothers about their problems. Some of them don't cook meals every day, and they never participate in religious activities. After being questioned about the problems, Sabitri Tamang—who experienced her first period at the age of 12—was given the following response: "I heard from my mother that was related to bleeding, pain in the body, and being unable to worship the gods on those days. She shared this with me when I was interested in the various activities she was engaging in. I was pretty afraid about my menarches.

Social media is a source of information for some females regarding their periods. Anugya Majhi, a 14-year-old girl, described her first source of menstruation

knowledge as follows: "I was astonished and sobbed. My mother and my friends taught me about my period, but later I learned about it from magazines, movies, and television shows. After seeing the actress Barsha Raut's interview, I discovered it on YouTube thanks to singer Indira Joshi.

The same viewpoint was expressed by earlier responders, who stated that these girls also learn about their periods through their sisters and peers. This information only relates to physical pain and bleeding. This understanding of the problems was a cultural barrier. Soni Shah, one of my respondents, explained what she knew about the subject in the following way: "I know little knowledge about menstruation before I have, such as bleeding from the private parts, stomach pain, can't look at our male members who are close ones, does not goes the temples are necessary to follow." According to her peers, she belonged to a high caste and practiced Hinduism. When I first started bleeding, I felt embarrassed and shocked.

Nearly all of the respondents had religious knowledge of the topics that are associated with taboos, such as the limitations on certain daily activities. The majority of respondents discuss matters that are not significant to them in terms of controlling the bleeding and coping with the circumstances they encounter over time while also sharing their knowledge about menstruation as it relates to their religions. For the first hemorrhage that exhibits these shards of evidence collected on the field, this justification holds that their belongingness does not differ according to caste and religion.

When the girls got their first period, I discovered that they were not well-informed about menstruation, which caused them to feel terrified, astonished, surprised, sobbing, and ashamed when they first saw blood. Despite their little understanding of the problems, they are prepared to manage the blood that needs to be done. As a result, respondents have only a limited amount of theoretical understanding of the problems they learn about from various sources, but they rarely possess the practical expertise required at the right moment to handle them. They lack fundamental information and the proper technique for using the pad during the first bleeding.

5.6 A Culture of Hiding

Menarche concealment is a significant subtheme in this research that is practice-based. High-caste Brahmin, Chhetri, and some Dalit girls who responded to the

survey all adhered to the custom of hiding during the first menstrual period. They all practice Hinduism. Some Dalit girls and all of the Janajati girls, who practice Kirat, Buddhism, Christianity, and some other religions, do not adhere to this custom.

Ansika Kharel, a member of the Brahmin group who experienced her first period at age 12, described her parents' menstrual concealment behavior in the following way: "In my first period, my parents are hiding from me for 14 days. They hid for a week in my relative's house throughout the second period, which was an hour away from my house. I slept on the floor because no male members touched me while I was wearing the sacred thread, we hadn't shared a meal, and they provided me with a new sleeping bag.

According to this story, there is still a tradition in our culture of menstruating women being hidden. In Kathmandu's cities, she does indeed adhere to it. In our culture, women are controlled and kept apart so they can menstruate without restriction. Anisha Khati, a Dalit respondent, also said that she had comparable situations, which is where she is being concealed. She described the custom associated with menarche as follows: "During my first period, my parents hide for four days near the neighbor's chamber. They kept me hidden from my father, uncle, and brother throughout those times.

The Janajati community members who responded to my survey do not conceal their first period. Yet within this society, the females from the Newar community, who make up a very small percentage of respondents, had stories of concealing that took place before having periods. "*Gufa Rakhne*" is the name of this traditional custom. According to my response Sharmila Bajhacharya, "I was hidden for 14 days and left otherwise even I will not watch the sun when I was at an age of 9," she described her experience. After doing this, she is no longer constrained in any way outside of religious obligations.

5.7 The Role of School

By educating girls about menstruation before they experience it and the correct manner to use a pad, schools play a crucial role in regulating menstruation. According to the study's participants, using pads to control bleeding soon became something they learned from others. While they read about the challenges in social studies and health classes, where the teacher likewise felt too ashamed to teach, they never hear

their class teacher discuss the problems in class. There was little conversation in such seminars, and no one questioned the problems. Following the class, the boys will tease the girls in a peaceful moment of silence. They will also chuckle in class.

As I thought about the research subject, I spoke with the girl in-depth about the problems, and the young people who attended Janakalyan Ma. Vi. shared her classroom in this way. "We are all aware of the class discussion on menstruation, which our teacher already covered in earlier lessons. To demonstrate how to use it when bleeding, she brought a piece of a pad to class. We were in sixth school, and while some of my friends were already menstruating, I will be interested in the subject because I do not. We were instructed to maintain silence while the teacher made figures on the whiteboard to teach. Boys tease us to relate the concerns after lessons are over, then we never discuss them again formally in classes."

Due to the problems that mainly affect women, menstrual troubles in our patriarchal society always catch people off guard. It is a problem with humiliation, insignificance, and issues that only women have that I have experienced on my own throughout the years. The reading materials utilized in schools today are crucial for menstruating girls, but they never get normalized. This is still happening over time. When the girl from the Janajati community is with her father, they both share their menarche.

Kalpana Kumari, a student at Mahendra Bouddha School, spoke about her embarrassing experiences. Her social studies teacher in school was a man, and he expressed humiliation over the problems she discussed with me in the following way: "Our social teacher remarked in class on the topics that you learn yourself, this is an easy one and may you all have little knowledge of it and boys are laughing at class."

The next person I'll address is a student at Janajagriti Ma. Vi admitted that her experience learning the topics in class was a little different from the prior response. The girl who teaches her class normalizes the problems as much as she can. "Our teacher entered the room and informed us that this is a unique class for us. Please be silent while she begins to demonstrate how to wear the pads both practically and theoretically while also instructing us.

These findings show that we cannot normalize the problems by teaching and learning activities alone. Additionally, educators won't change the norm. Their obligations

concerning matters of instructional strategies are likewise unimportant. Additionally, they are according to our culture's custom, which occurs during menstruation. It showed that neither the teachers nor the study materials we use treat the problems as biological processes.

5.8 Managing the Menstrual Hygiene

The management of menstrual hygiene is the most significant subtheme of my research. A significant problem in maintaining cleanliness is controlling menstrual bleeding. The participants in this study who responded to the survey have always used pads to control bleeding. By giving kids free pads, the school administration plays a crucial part. Three government schools in Boudha Ward No. 6 are where I attended, and I was impressed with the work they were doing. The government of Nepal provided these pads.

The fact that their institution furnished the pads with a disposal mechanism made all of the respondents sound the same. To control the bleeding, they are utilizing and appreciating the pads that are most beneficial to them. The responses all used the same expression, which they communicated with me in the following way: "For controlling the menstrual blood, I always used the pad and also changed on time, and I always cleaned the private parts after using the restroom. The free disposal pads that our school provides are also something I've been appreciating.

This sound was the girl from Mahendra Bouddha School. "I loved menstrual-specific facilities at schools including pads, disposal mechanisms along with pleasant washrooms," a student from Janaklayan School said. All of the girls from this school give off the same sentiments.

5.9 Conclusion

To sum up, unpack the research question practices of menstruation, the young and school-going girls are not restricted to doing daily activities except for religious events. The girls who follow Hinduism and Buddhism are fully restricted from doing religious works even touchings the kinds of stuff that are for Gods. However, the girls belong to Christianity and Kirat is free to do those religious activities. the purification of the body of menstruated girls still exists in Hinduism and Buddhism.

In the case of hiding the menstruated girls, some Hindu girls from Brahmin, Chhetri, and Dalit are does it for a week. The prior knowledge of menstruation is insufficient

and was related to bleeding and the cultural issues on the menstrual body. The agents are most important sources of menstrual knowledge the mother, sister, social media, and the curriculum of the school. The girls are enjoying the facilities of pads with disposable mechanisms provided by the school.

The practices of menstruation were quite different to comparing to my previous experiences of menstruation from those who are respondents to my research. At the age of my respondents, I was fully restricted to do daily activities. I never prepare the daily meals, touch the female members of my family and relatives, or enter the temple at home and other palaces. I slept on the floor which was made for menstruating women. However, the girls who are of adolescent age are not controlling the doing usual activities but some rare girls who belong to high caste and follow Hinduism are similarly practicing the menstrual taboos which are similar to my experiences.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERGENERATIONAL CHANGE IN THE PRACTICE OF MENSTRUAL TABOOS

Menstrual taboos are practiced by respondents' mothers, which is the final and most significant issue in my study. The study's questions were designed for the mother, but I'll examine them to see what the girls would say in response. It is based on the girls' moms' sharing of their menstrual hygiene routines. I will examine how women's everyday activities, participation in religion, and menstrual hygiene management relate to caste/ethnicity, religious views, and professions in this theme.

6.1 Menstrual Practices in Daily Activities

Women from Brahmin and Chhetri communities who follow Hinduism have traditionally limited their regular activities while menstruating. Around the situation in Nepal, women's customs regarding menstruation restrictions on everyday activities, and urban mothers are also separated from their regular lives. The woman, who is a member of the Brahmin community and a Hindu, observes the menstrual fast in the following manner: "My mother never cooked for four days and slept apart from her regular bed. She doesn't go to social and religious gatherings held at our home or those of our relatives, but she has recently begun to occasionally attend social events held at the party palace.

My responder Ansika Kharel, a member of a high caste and a practicing Hindu, agreed with the aforementioned reality. Food prepared by her mother during her period is never served. She goes about her tasks differently than she would on other days. It demonstrated that menstruation bodies are unclean and under strict control. It is supported by societal tradition, which prevents women from living freely and continuing to have limited mobility. Women view this normal process as polluting, and the "practices connected with it go to the core of our understanding of cultural norms regarding gender roles" (Maharaj and Winkler, 2020).

Hindu Janajati respondents to my survey adhere to distinct religious practices than Brahmin and Chhetri respondents. Although women are only allowed to participate in religious activities during their periods, they carry on with their regular work. They prepare meals, share meals, and rest in their regular beds. They observe religion, even

at home, but they avoid going to religious gatherings. Sunita Magar, one of my respondents, told me this about her mother: "My mother also cooks the food while she is on her period. My grandfather, my father, and my brother are all still with her. She is also still with my family as a whole. My father and she share their customary bed. The religious gatherings take place at home and among family members, however, she has not attended.

The vibes from data for menstrual restriction are changing. The women belonging to Janajati do their work as usual in daily activities. The mother of my respondents also prepares the daily meal, take it with family members, and then sleeps in her usual bed. It indicates that the women from Janajati who follows Hinduism are not restricted to daily activities. Yet, she never attends the religious events that happen around her. It means the menstrual bodies are impure and women are controlled by religious beliefs found from the data by Janajati and follow Hinduism.

The responder, who is also from Janajati and practices Buddhism, follows a similar religion to respondents who are Hindu. The Janajati Buddhists carry out their daily tasks as usual but never engage in religious ones. Similar customs of their mothers were discussed by Sonam Doka Sherpa and Asmita Rai in the following way: "My mother also never practices the menstrual taboos inside the household except for the religious rituals that happen to us. In addition, she makes all of our daily meals, sleep in her normal bed, and attends family-related social activities. She also doesn't take part in the pooja or eat the prasada at religious gatherings, choosing instead to eat a meal that has been prepared for the crowd instead.

The respondents from the Dalit community, who practice Hinduism, had similar sentiments. The way my answer Saraswoti Mandal described her mother's menstrual habits was as follows: "My mother also prepares daily meals and we eat them together with all family members at the same dining table. She slept in her customary bed but didn't go into the pooja room or participate in any of the gods' works

Mentioning data from Dalit respondents who practice Hinduism may change that proof in favor of the menstrual restriction. During this time, her mother leads a normal life. She is nevertheless excluded from religious pursuits on such days. This information suggests that menstruating women are behaving properly. When it comes to "not touching a male family member, plant, tree, or fruit during menstruation, not

consuming pickles or dairy products, eating alone during menstruation, not entering the kitchen or places of worship, not visiting relatives, or not attending social or religious gatherings" (Mukharjee and Lama, 2020). The issues on the restriction on daily activities are changing. The religious ones do, however, still exist.

Kirat and Christian women do not have complete influence over other aspects of life, such as religious observance. They never have any restrictions on any aspect of their lives and are free to carry out their daily activities as usual. Christian responder Bipana Sewa stated the following regarding her mother's menstrual habits: "She is not abiding by the menstrual limitations inside the house. She also goes to social-religious events that are held in our religion. On the days of her period, she attended church.

Evangelina, a Janajati who practices the Kirati religion, said that her mother's menstrual habits are comparable to those of the Christian respondent. Her mother is never barred from participating in any activities that take place at her home. She also performs Kirati-related religious work. This is how her liberal actions are described: "My mother, aunt, and grandmother have never engaged in menstrual taboos. Additionally, they carry on with their daily routines just as they did before. They share in the daily meal preparation, eat together, sleep in the same bed, worship the gods, and participate in social and religious events held by our own and our relatives who share the same religion.

Menstrual taboos can be practiced in a variety of ways at home, although there are differences based on religious views, according to what respondents said. Hindu women have complete authority over every aspect of their lives. Women from Janajati who practice Buddhism and Hinduism are permitted to carry out regular tasks, but they never carry out religious ones. According to the aforementioned data, Christian and Kirat women perform typical tasks, including religious ones.

6.2 Religious Purification of the Body

According to what I learned from my fieldwork, ladies should be sure to cleanse their bodies after a particular number of days, most often four. For them, the most crucial aspect of the cleansing of the body is participating in religious activities. Varied religious perspectives on this matter take different approaches, however, some religious perspectives choose to disregard it. Although Hindus practice the religion in

a variety of ways, all Hindus and Buddhists practice the Janajati, which includes bathing and washing one's garments. The responses from the Dalit community also adhered to the same custom as the Janajati community, while Christian and Kirat people don't observe any purifying laws.

Both my Brahmin and Chhetri respondents mentioned traditions they had learned from their mothers, including those they had enumerated. The 15-year-old daughter of Soni Kumari Shah said, "purifies herself by bathing, cleansing all used clothing, and also does sprinkle the gold water with her body and room," to describe her mother's purification rituals. It suggests that females must undergo purification. While going about her daily routine, she must maintain a certain level of cleanliness because of her employment. In ways that are typically seen among elite castes, religious beliefs have a symbolic impact on behavior. Women are oppressed by Hindus, who also force them to take part in ritual purification.

Little distinguishes Janajati purifying rituals from those of Brahmin and Chhetri. Soni Lama and Shrijana Magar, two of my respondents, described their purification rituals: "My mother takes a bath after four days to purify herself and washes the clothes that she wore on those days." This information suggests that the Janajati group, which adheres to both Buddhism and Hinduism, still engages in purifying rituals.

The Dalit community undergoes the same purifying procedures as the Brahmin and Chhetri communities. They have the custom to take a bath after particular days, sprinkling gold water on their bodies and their surroundings, and washing any leftover clothing from those days. Anita Gagmer, one of my respondents, described how her mother purifies herself by taking a bath and washing the clothing she wears while menstruating. Additionally, she showers the body and room with gold water.

Christians and Kirat adherents are exempt from the restriction based on menstrual cycles, demonstrating the distinction between them and other castes and religions. My respondent Bipana Sewa, a Christian from the so-called Dalit community, never cleanses her body, especially that of her mother. According to her mother, who also doesn't follow any rules for the purification of her body, "she doesn't do anything for purification, she takes a bath when necessary."

Similar experiences were related by my respondent with a Christian from the Janajati community who adheres to the Kirati culture. The Kirat culture is followed by Asmita

Limbu and Evangellina Dumi, who shared their lack of participation in purification rituals in the following way: "My mother, sister, and aunt never do any things for purification of the bodies, it is new information for me that I never listen to the course of my life."

The aforementioned data demonstrate that different religious beliefs lead to distinct behaviors for body cleaning based on menstruating women. The Brahmin, Chhetri, and Dalit share a practice that is not only physical but also involves touching clean objects. However, as evidenced by the facts, neither Christians nor Kirat adheres to any purifying rules.

6.3 Religious Enforcement of Postponing the Menstruation

The biggest subtheme in my research is the postponement of menstruation. individuals who identified as Hindus postponed their menstrual cycles as a result of their participation in various religious and social activities. There are many occasions when Brahmin and Chhetri women are delayed for religious reasons, but there are also occasions when they are delayed for social events like weddings and bratabandhas. Women in Janajati who practice Hinduism and who also delay menstruation do not practice Buddhism.

Brahmin and Chhetri's experiences are analogous to those of the Dalit women in this subject. The same Christian community, however, sees it in two different ways. For no reason whatsoever, these ladies never delay their period. The Kirat community adopted the same mentality, which forbade delaying menstruation at all costs.

According to the person who responded to my question, her mother frequently delays her period so she can attend social and religious gatherings at their house and those of their family members. The Brahmin community member who responded to my survey and was 16 years old, Sabina Gautam, described how her mother postponed her period around religious and social events like Tihar and Teej. On the occasion of marriage that being close like maternal uncles homes and pooja at home like satyanarayan pooja, she does many times."

The mentioned data indicates that women are forced to postpone menstruation for social and religious participation. The symbolic power of Hinduism is controlling women's bodies for religious and social purposes. At the same time, social participation is also related to religion which controls the menstruated body. The

same experiences that she observed many times, who belongs to Janajati and beliefs in Hinduism, Neha Tamang shared in this way: “my mother postponed menstruation many times for participating the religious events like Bratabandha, Marriage happens at closest to us like uncle, maternal uncle, and sometimes for putting the tika for a maternal uncle at Tihar.”

From the prior respondent, I received the same vibes. Hinduism holds that women should take medications multiple times to delay their menstrual cycle. Women's health is hampered by the religious importance placed on the body. To achieve the same goals, Dalit women are delaying their periods as well. Radhika Bhulan, one of my respondents, self-identifies as a Dalit woman. For the same reasons that the Brahmin, Chhetri, and Janajati respondents who practice Hinduism mentioned, she frequently witnessed her mother delaying her period.

However, the Dalit girl, who has different experiences and Christian beliefs, recounted her mother's background with the matter of never delaying the menstrual cycle. Bipana Sewa, one of my respondents, stated as follows: "My mother never delayed the menstrual cycle for any reason. Menstruating women were never divided by our religious beliefs, thus I was unaware of the delay in menstruation.

The menstrual cycle was never delayed by Kirat women for whatever reason. During these periods, they are allowed to participate in social activities and do religious duties. Asmita Limbu, one of my respondents, described how her mother dealt with the problems in the following way: "To my knowledge, my mother never postpones menstruation for any reason. We have to bleed while attending religious and social ceremonies, which is against our religion.”

According to the findings above, religious practices have an impact on women's health and menstrual cycles. I am routinely made aware of the numerous difficulties women encounter as a result of using medications to postpone their periods. Blood clots that form over time are one of the unfavorable consequences brought on by the use of the medicine. Another side effect of postponing menstruation is weakness, which is also treated with medication. According to the theme I chose for my research, placing religion on women's bodies harms their health.

According to religious tradition, menstruation is delayed. For participation in religious activities that are most important to them, Hindu women frequently

postpone bleeding. For social occasions like Tihar, Weddings, and Bratabandha, they are also delaying menstruation. According to Dalit respondents who practice Hinduism, the same experiences were shared. The women from Dalit and Janajati, who followed the Kirat faith and were Christians, on the other hand, did not delay their menstrual cycles for any reason.

6.4 Manage the Menstrual Blood

All menstruation women must consider the issue of controlling their menstrual blood. In addition to being crucial for maintaining hygiene, it also has a significant impact on the price of the items those women buy. Even though the issue of tax-free pads is frequently in the news, our government is not concerned about it. These days, all women must pay to use pads. In this regard, controlling menstrual bleeding for hygiene or as a component of women's healthcare is crucial, and I address this issue in my research.

Many of the women who use pads and clothes to control their bleeding, according to the replies, have also constructed a rag out of an old piece of clothing. A relatively small percentage of people use solely pads, and some of them also use fabric rags. The supporting resources for the topic are connected to the economic class that my respondents, whom I discovered through research, belong to. The pads are used for every period of bleeding by the women who run small businesses and have worked abroad. Both pads and clothing are being worn by hardworking women. The clothing is worn by women who work as farmers and those who are housewives.

My reply Sunita Shrestha mentioned that her mother used pads to manage her mother's blood and that her mother also owns a restaurant: "My mother always used the pad." Ichchha Bamjan and her mother, who moved to another nation in search of work, both had similar procedures for managing their blood: "we both always utilized the pads." Respondents whose mothers are self-employed and make the money share similar practices.

These comments regarding menstrual practices are influenced by the respondents' socioeconomic status. The ability to buy pads on time is correlated with the person's profession, which makes it simple for them to do so. Both pads and garments are used by the respondents who are engaged in an arduous job (Masson, the carpet-knitter, and Masson).

My mother mostly utilizes the garments, but occasionally she utilized the pads that are mostly supplied by the organization," said my respondent Anisha Khati about how her mother uses materials when crocheting a carpet for daily pay. The pads are so expensive and not reusable so I contacted my mother and she used the clothes, but occasionally she used the pads that were donated by someone, according to Rojina, who related her same experience about her mother working as a mason. According to these statistics, ladies should consider the pad's price when purchasing them. Pads don't matter as much as the ladies who are putting in hard work and taking care of their fundamental necessities. Whenever she gets dressed, she uses the pads. She is using the pads when getting them from any source is free.

The responders whose mothers work in agriculture only use clothing to control their menstrual flow. Soni Lama, one of my respondents, described how her mother, who works in farming, follows this practice: "She is only using the garments because it is reusable and also durable." Menstrual bleeding is not made simple by the urban environment, amenities, and easy access to pads; rather, as evidenced by the data, it is influenced by people's ability to make purchases. The fact that women's health is hampered by their usage of pads is strongly related to the economic class to which they belong.

The main finding of my study was that generational shifts between mother and daughter were related to menstrual patterns that affect everyday activities. Many mothers find that during their periods they can easily complete daily tasks like cooking meals, caressing the family's male members, and having dinner. Only a small percentage of them are high-caste brahmins who practice Hinduism and are therefore prohibited from performing daily tasks.

For all of them who practice Hinduism and Buddhism, the body's purification after a set number of days has the highest significance. Hindus have a distinctive style of practice, which includes cleaning the garments, bathing the body, and misting the body and room with gold water. Buddhists are bathing and wash their period-related clothing. The responses from Christian and Kirat communities, however, never adhere to any guidelines for purifying rituals.

The respondent's decision to delay her period to attend nearby social and religious events was motivated by her religious convictions. The menstrual cycle is frequently

delayed by Hindu women for social and religious occasions including puja, weddings, and bratabandha. Buddhists also followed similar religiously-based customs. The menstrual cycle, however, is never delayed for any reason by Christian or Kirat women.

The ability of the respondents to make purchases depends on how they plan to control bleeding. The pads are frequently used by women who have businesses and have traveled to foreign countries to work. Women who run small companies like vegetable vendors and tea hotels employ both clothing and pads. The only clothing has, however, been worn by the women who work for menial pay, farm, and remain at home.

6.5 Conclusion

How menstruation is practiced in daily life is evolving. In this regard, some respondents who are high-caste Hindus are working in limited areas, but many respondents—many of whom are from other castes and religions—typically do their daily activities. All of them are Hindus and Buddhists, yet none of them participate in organized religion. The responders who practice Christianity and Kirati faith are not only allowed to participate in religious activities daily.

For religious occasions, women who practice Hinduism delay their menstrual cycles. These ladies are mostly from high caste and the Janajati community. The majority of women use both pads and garments to manage their blood. Few people, mostly those who run small enterprises and work abroad, use the pads to manage their menstrual blood. The respondents' economic status is related to these issues rather than caste/ethnicity or religious convictions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary

This study focuses on how metropolitan adolescent females who attend school perceive and use menstruation taboos. The 33 schoolgirls who have signed up to participate in the study as respondents are from various castes and ethnicities, as well as various religious and socioeconomic backgrounds. To answer the research topic, I employed a qualitative approach, and participants were selected randomly.

According to the information provided, menstruation is a natural process, and monthly bleeding is also natural. My respondents view blood as a metaphor for reproduction and identify it with adulthood when they are in a neutral condition. In their viewpoint or without reference to religion, they discuss in unison a common experience in women's life that is also essential to delivery. No matter a person's caste or ethnicity, menstruation is treated equally.

When they are linked to their religious beliefs and cultural standards, which reexamines the data, the majority of respondents see these menstrual limits views as significant. Another piece of the truth was that while they were addressing the concerns of control over them, they also agreed to the menstrual restriction because of their religious beliefs and the traditions they uphold. Religious restrictions are permitted. The girls from the Hindu and Buddhist communities see the prohibition as a matter of custom. Adolescent Christian and Kirati females, however, do not view the restriction as a custom.

All the girls, from various socio-religious and economic backgrounds, are free to go about their everyday lives, except for participating in religion both inside and outside the home. However, very few girls from the Hindu high castes are severely constrained from carrying out all of the everyday tasks. In the case of religious participation inside and outside the household, Buddhist and Hindu girls are strictly prohibited from participating in religious activities, including handling objects intended for the gods. Christians and Kirat are both allowed to freely practice their religions.

Based on their socio-cultural standards, menstruating females' bodies are still purified under Hindu and Buddhist traditions. After four or five days, the girls from Brahmin, Chhetri, Janajati, and Dalit cleanse their bodies by primarily washing the clothing they wore during those days and having a bath. There are very few people from this group that sprinkle the gold water on their bodies and touch objects on their period days. The girls who practice Christianity and Kirati faith, despite sharing the same caste and ethnicity, are not compelled to undergo body cleaning.

High caste All of the females who answered the survey were Brahmin, Chhetri, and some Dalits who followed the tradition of concealing during the first menstrual period. They all follow Hinduism. Some Dalit females and all Janajati girls, who follow Kirat, Buddhism, and Christianity, do not follow this tradition. The Dalit females do it for three days, which is a minimum day that only exists in Hinduism, while the girls from high caste Hindus are hidden for nine days or more.

The most prominent information sources regarding menstruation are mothers, sisters, social media, and the school curriculum. Nearly the majority of the respondents claimed to have religious knowledge of the subjects related to taboos, like the restrictions on particular daily activities. In terms of regulating the bleeding and dealing with the situations they face over time, the majority of respondents talk about things they are not well informed of any sources of information. They also share their knowledge about menstruation as it relates to their religious values.

I learned that the girls had little knowledge about menstruation when they got their first period, which made them feel afraid, amazed, surprised, tearful, and ashamed when they first saw blood. They are prepared to manage the blood that needs to be done despite their limited grasp of the issues. As a result, respondents rarely have the practical knowledge needed at the correct time to tackle the problems they learn about from diverse sources, despite having a limited academic understanding of them. They don't have the necessary background knowledge or know-how to use the pad properly during the initial bleeding.

A lack of practical information about menstruation is seen in the school's participation in these issues. Because they are unable to formally normalize the topics in class and because menstruation-related teaching materials are not included in the curriculum, teachers play an insufficient role in the learning process. These data

demonstrate that teaching and learning activities alone are insufficient to normalize the issues. The norm won't be altered by educators either. Likewise, it doesn't matter what they have to do in terms of issues relating to instructional methodologies. It demonstrated that neither the instructors nor the study guides we employ consider the issues as biological processes. The universe of my research is the three government schools from Bouddha-6, which are a helping hand for the issues of managing blood during menstruation. The girls are sufficiently using the pads with a disposal mechanism that they are shared with the researcher.

My study's key conclusion was that generational differences between mother and daughter were associated with menstruation patterns that have an impact on daily activities. Many mothers discover that they can easily do daily duties like preparing meals, touching the male members of the family, and eating dinner during their periods. Few of them are high-caste Brahmins who practice Hinduism and are thus forbidden from going about their daily lives.

A similar method of body purification is used by their mothers which is shared by the daughters. The body's purification after a predetermined number of days holds the greatest significance for all of them who follow Hinduism and Buddhism. Hindus have a unique kind of practice that includes washing one's clothes, bathing one's body, and spraying one's body and surroundings with gold water. Buddhists are taking showers and wash their attire. However, no rules for purification rites are ever followed in the responses from the Christian and Kirat communities.

Hindu women delay their menstrual cycles to align with social and religious occasions. The majority of these ladies are Brahmin and Chhetri, delaying their menstruation to participate in the social and religious festivities taking place all around them. However, some Janajati women who practice Hinduism sporadically put off their period. The majority of women wear both garments and pads to control their menstrual bleeding. Few people, mostly those who operate small enterprises and travel abroad, use pads to regulate their menstrual bleeding. Contrary to caste/ethnicity or religious convictions, these issues are related to the respondent's economic condition.

7.2 Conclusion

Existing taboos around menstruation, adolescents' attitudes on this bodily function, behaviors related to it, and generational changes in menstrual customs all seem to be changing. The older generation, who is the mother of these young, also goes about her daily business as usual on days when she is menstruating, thus there is a natural impression of menstrual bleeding. The restriction on religious activity still applies to Buddhism and Hinduism, though. However, Christians and Kirat are free to practice their religion as well as their daily tasks.

The menstrual cycle, which occurs in all women's lives on a natural basis, is becoming taken for granted by adolescent girls. They associate maturity with menstruation when they are in a neutral state, treating it as a natural occurrence and using blood as a metaphor for reproduction. They talk about a common experience in women's lives that is also crucial to delivery in unison, either from their point of view or without making any mention of religion. Menstruation is viewed equally by all people, regardless of caste or ethnicity.

The girls acknowledge that there is a connection between menstruation and religious beliefs and that their interpretation of the restriction on menstrual days was normal. The majority of girls who follow Buddhism and Hinduism are obedient to religious seclusion for periods. The menstrual restriction was accepted because it was under their religious beliefs and traditions. The ban is seen as a matter of tradition by girls who practice the Hindu and Buddhist religions. However, Christian and Kirati female youths do not consider the restriction to be a religious custom. The impression of limitations on everyday activities is shifting; teenage girls now view menstruation as a biological occurrence and wish to lead regular lives throughout the non-menstrual period, which was a general sentiment among all respondents.

The daily activities of adolescent girls from various socioeconomic and religious backgrounds are unrestricted, except for practicing their religion both within and outside of the home. Only a few Hindu upper-caste ladies are strictly prohibited from carrying out any home tasks. Girls who practice Buddhism and Hinduism are prohibited from participating in religious activities, including handling objects intended for the gods, both within and outside the home. Both Christians and Kirat are permitted to practice their religion freely. The girls have all had unpleasant

menarche experiences because they are startled, perplexed, and compelled to fear or even cry when they experience their first bleeding.

However, some of them are acting properly when they are close to their mothers or other females. The vast majority of participants claimed to be knowledgeable about religion in matters involving taboos, such as the restrictions on particular daily activities. When it comes to managing the situations they come across throughout time and controlling the bleeding, the majority of respondents talk about subjects about which they are not well informed by any information sources. The engagement of the school in these issues reveals a lack of practical understanding of menstruation. Because they are unable to formally normalize the concerns in class and because the curriculum does not include menstruation-related teaching tools, teachers do not play a suitable role in menstruation education.

Hindu and Buddhist religions continue to follow their socio-cultural standards regarding the purifying and cleanliness of the body after a specific number of days, as well as the tradition of menstruating girls concealing for a few days during their first and second periods. The Brahmin, Chhetri, Janajati, and Dalit girls wash their clothes from those days and take a bath to purify their bodies after four or five days. Few members of this group touch items and sprinkle the gold water on their bodies on their period days. Despite belonging to the same caste and ethnic group as the females who practice Christianity and the Kirati faith, body cleanliness is not practiced.

An important conclusion from my research was that both the mother and the daughter share the same views on menstrual taboos. The most important area of research for my thesis was the impact of generational changes on the menstrual practices that I discovered to be similar to those of their daughter. Except for religion, which affects all caste-ethnic identities equally, all the mothers go about their daily business as usual. When women are on their periods, the mothers do their everyday activities including cooking meals, cuddling the male family members, and eating dinner. Only a small number of them are high-caste Brahmins who practice Hinduism and are thus forbidden from leading normal lives, just like their daughter.

Their mothers and daughters both practice a similar system of body cleansing. The most important thing for all of them who practice Hinduism and Buddhism is the body's purification after a set number of days. Hindus have a special tradition that

involves washing one's garments, taking a bath, and dousing oneself in gold water before performing other rituals. Buddhists are washing their clothes and take showers. However, the responses from the Christian and Kirat groups never follow any requirements for purification methods is also comparable to their daughter.

The moms and daughters have distinct experiences when it comes to menstrual rituals that delay and control monthly bleeding. Daughters are not delaying their periods, whereas mothers are. The school gave pads to all the girls, but mothers only use them under their socioeconomic status. Hindu women postpone their monthly periods to coincide with important social and religious events. These mostly Brahmin women and Chhetri, postpone their periods so they can take part in the social and religious celebrations going on all around them. However, some Janajati women who engage in irregular Hinduism postpone their menstrual cycle. The majority of women wear both garments and pads to control their menstrual bleeding. Few people, mostly those who operate small enterprises and travel abroad, use pads to regulate their menstrual bleeding. Contrary to caste/ethnicity or religious convictions, these issues are related to the respondent's economic condition.

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ANNEX I

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

A) Close-ended Questions

Name:

Age:

Address:

1) Caste/Ethnicity Brahmin:

Chhetri:

Janajati

Dalit:

Others:

2) Religion:

Hinduism:

Buddhism:

Christian:

Muslim:

Others:

3) Types of family structure:

Extended:

nuclear

4) housing status:

Renter:

Owner:

5) The number of family members:

Male:

Female:

6) Education

Father:

Mother:

Others:

7) Occupation

Father:

Mother:

B) Overall Perception/Experiences towards Menstruation

(open-ended questions:)

1. What is the first age of your menstruation?
2. When and where did you feel first menstruation?
3. What is your immediate feeling about first bleeding?
4. Did you know any idea about menstruation before your first experiences?
5. In your opinion, why/how does menstruation happen?
6. From where do you first hear about menstruation?
 - a. social media
 - b. course books
 - c. peer groups
 - d. family member
 - e. other sources
7. During your first menstruation, does your family member hide you? if yes, how many days?
8. According to your religion, what do you know about menstrual restrictions?
9. Do you share your menstrual experiences with your friends? If yes what are the major issues?
 - a. Menstrual Hygiene
 - b. Menstrual Restrictions
 - c. Physical Pain
 - d. Psychological Change
 - e. Behave of Your Close One's

C) Menstrual Practices Inside the Household

1. Generally, who cooks foods in your family?
 - a. Participant
 - b. Participant's mother
 - c. Participant's father
 - d. Others
2. Have you ever cooked foods during menstruation?
3. Do you touch the male member of your family?
4. During the period, do you take your meal with your family member? If not, who is not eating with you?
5. Do you sleep in the usual bed during periods?

6. Have you ever touched the drinking water / pots during periods?
7. Do you enter the temple during menstruation?
8. Do you touch the plants/vegetables during periods?
10. After certain days, do you purify your bed and yourself? If yes, what do you do?

D.) Menstrual Practice on Outside Household/ Public Places

1. Due to menstruation, do you have any experiences not visiting your relatives? If yes,
 - a. Marriage ceremony
 - b. Bratabandha
 - c. Pooja
 - d. Others
2. Do you visit the temples when you get menstruation?
3. Due to menstruation, do you have any experiences of not coming to school?
4. The cause of menstruation, do you have any experiences that you not attending social gatherings?
5. Do you mention your menstruation openly in public places?

E) Managing the menstrual hygiene

1. How do you manage your menstrual blood?
 - a. By using clothes
 - b. By using sanitary pads
 - c. others
2. Do you do bath everyday cause of menstruation?
3. Do you clean your genitalia every time after using the bathroom?
4. Do you change your clothes/pads on time?
5. Do you have enjoyed any facilities targeted to menstruation (toilets, available pads, disposal mechanism) in your school?
6. Have you ever postponed your periods for doing social/ religious performances? If yes, when and why did you stop?

F) Intergenerational Change

1. What do you know about your family members (grandmother/mother/sister) regarding menstrual practices?
 - a. cooking the food
 - b. touch the male member
 - c. sleep on usual bed
 - d. attend religious activities
 - e. attend the social gathering
2. What do you know about your family members about menstrual hygiene management?
 - a. Blood management
 - b. Taking the bathing
 - c. Purifies themselves
3. do they ever postpone their menstruations?

G) Percetpion towards menstruations

(Overall perception on menstruation)

1. In your opinion, is it good to not cook food, touch the male member of the family, sleep in another bed, purify the body, not attend a religious gathering that is important while practicing menstruation?
2. What do you think about not participating in social gatherings during menstruation?
3. In your opinion, menstruation targeted facilities are (school) are important? If yes how?
4. In your opinion, is it important to lesson/abolish menstrual restrictions?

(overall beliefs on menstrual restrictions)

Thank you!