



Global South Coalition
For Dignified Menstruation

7th International Dignified Menstruation Day: Learning Conference on Dignified Menstruation

Kathmandu, Nepal | 8–10 December 2025

SUMMARY REPORT

The Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation (GSCDM) was officially launched in 2019 under the governance of Radha Paudel Foundation, Nepal. Dignified Menstruation is a decolonial framework evolved through the lived experiences of Radha Paudel and many others across the globe, particularly from the Global South. This framework challenges conventional understandings of power construction, patriarchy, and exclusion.



Grounded in these values, GSCDM designated the 14th day of the 16 Days of Activism, 8 December, as International Dignified Menstruation Day starting in 2019. This date firmly recognizes that menstrual discrimination is not only a violation of human rights, but also both a cause and consequence of sexual and gender-based violence in all its diversities.

8 December 2025 marked the 7th International Dignified Menstruation Day. On this auspicious occasion, GSCDM, together with the National Youth Council, Government of Nepal, and Men Engage Alliance (MEA), Global, organized a three-day International Learning Conference from 8–10 December 2025 in Kathmandu.

Key Features of International Learning Conference

1. Participants Profile:

The International Learning Conference convened over 140 national and international participants from more than 21 countries, representing civil society, academia, government institutions, grassroots movements, youth groups, feminist collectives, and global networks working on gender justice and human rights. Participants spanned a wide intergenerational age range, from children as young as 7 years to elders over 70 years, reflecting a strong life-cycle approach to dignified menstruation. The conference brought together diverse expertise, including gender justice, feminist activism, SRHR, public health, education, climate justice, humanitarian response, disability rights, LGBTQIA+ advocacy, research, arts, and policy-making, enabling interdisciplinary and practice-based dialogue.

2. Critically examine the concepts and terminologies, language around menstruation:

Participants from Achham, West Nepal, where the word “chhaupadi” is used to mean “menstruation” in the local Achhami language, challenged speakers and the global community for the misinterpretation and misuse of the term “chhaupadi.” They emphasized that such misinterpretation has misled the menstrual movement under the name of support or research. Participants were clear and vocal in centering local knowledge, narratives, and realities, asserting that the word chhaupadi should not be used outside scripts exclusively rooted in the Achhami language.

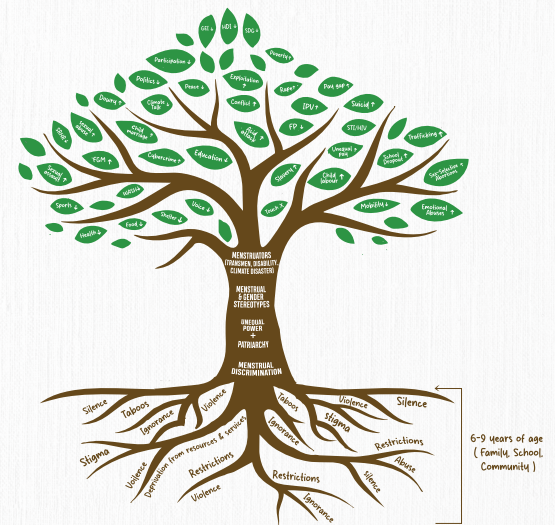
The conference also reiterated the definition of menstrual discrimination as an umbrella term encompassing silence, taboos, shyness, stigma, restrictions, violence, abuse, and deprivation of services and resources associated with menstruation throughout the entire life cycle of menstruators in all diverse settings.

Participants from over 21 countries shared experiences of menstrual discrimination in their respective contexts, expressed through different names, forms, and magnitudes. Consequently, the conference firmly rejected the UN categorization of menstrual discrimination as a “Traditional Harmful Practice,” noting that menstruators constitute over 50% of the population and that menstrual discrimination exists everywhere, rather than being confined to specific ethnic, religious, or regional groups.

3. Menstrual discrimination

As articulated by GSCDM, participants identified the age at which they first became aware of menstruation, commonly between 6–9 years, through guided meditation, and shared their emotions (fear, scare, confusion) via Mentimeter. This moment represents the departure point of power construction between menstruators and non-menstruators.

Both menstruators and non-menstruators reflected that non-menstruators are often perceived as superior, privileged, and powerful due to not having a uterus, ovaries, or menstruation. Participants, therefore, challenged conventional notions of power and patriarchy and collectively called for dismantling all forms of menstrual discrimination in all diverse settings. Dialogue on Dignified Menstruation was emphasized from home, school, community, and workplace to parliament, as a pathway toward equality and the dismantling of patriarchy.



4. Pledge the inclusivity by calling menstruators and non-menstruators:

Conventionally, exclusion manifests in multiple ways:

- i) menstruators are excluded due to the systemic impact of menstrual discrimination, being considered inferior, vulnerable, and powerless;
- ii) menstruators are required to follow restrictive menstrual practices, often resulting in exclusion for at least five days;
- iii) people born with a uterus and ovaries, such as lesbian, transmen, and queer women, are excluded when the menstrual movement is framed only around “girls and women.”

Throughout the conference, the consistent use of the terms menstruators and non-menstruators was maintained, including during participant registration. Space was also created for non-menstruators to share their affirmative roles in advocating for dignified menstruation.

5. Shared new approaches for aligning with DM values:

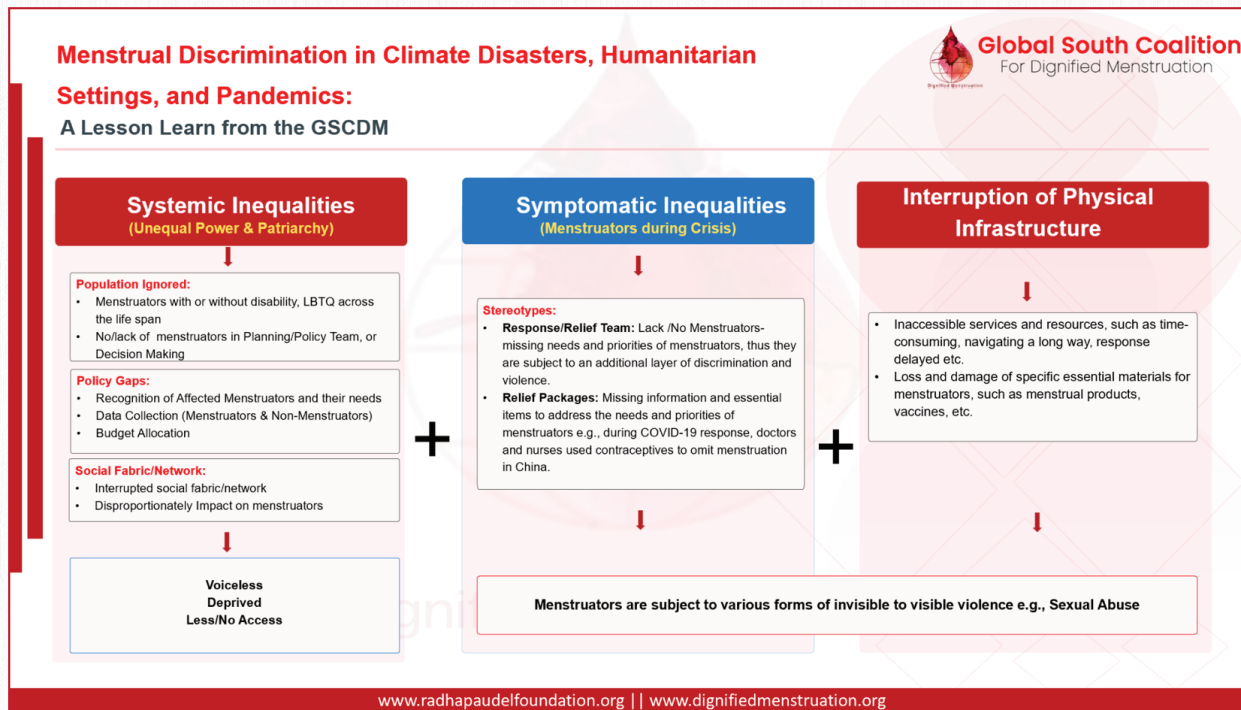
The conference highlighted that dignity cannot be achieved through product distribution alone, but requires systemic change that addresses affordability, accessibility, safe and inclusive WASH infrastructure, sustainable waste management, environmental impact, and informed choice. Drawing from diverse contexts, the conference reinforced the 3P model (Product, Planet, Pocket) and 4S framework (Safety, Security, Savings, Stigma) as shared approaches for aligning menstrual management with Dignified Menstruation values, positioning menstrual management as a collective, rights-based responsibility shaped by policy, systems, and social norms rather than individual burden. (pictures of all of them)

Menstrual Products are Dignified If you follow			3Ps Model
Indicators	Yes	No	Figure
1.P= Person (Menstruators in All Diversities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right to choose on menstrual products Informed about the pros and cons of all types of Menstrual Products Free from all forms of Menstrual Discrimination 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.P= Planet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic and chemical free No Burden to Air, Soil, Water, and Entire Planet 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.P= Pocket <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable/cheap with qualities and standard Accessibility locally produced 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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Four 'S' for Dignified Menstruation-Friendly WASH Facilities			
Four 'S'	Descriptions	Yes	No
S- Safety (Infection Prevention)	Accessible to all diverse people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Facility of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Facility of waste management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Available of soap	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Place for washing and drying the clothes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S- Security (Agency Building)	Spacious toilet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Well locked door/window	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Well light	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Well ventilated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Appropriate for privacy and confidentiality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S-Save (Menstrual Products)	Save planet (eco-friendly menstrual products)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Save people (right to choice for using menstrual products, no any harm due to chemical to body, soil and water collected)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Save Pocket (cheap, locally available with quality and standard menstrual products)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S-Stigma (Free Menstrual Discrimination)	Free from any forms of menstrual discrimination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Supporting environment in school in case of leaking or sick or about due to menstruation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Systemic impact of menstrual discrimination in all aspects and sectors:

The conference sessions addressed menstrual discrimination across multiple thematic areas, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), STI/HIV prevention and care, education, gender-based violence, climate change and environmental justice, humanitarian and crisis settings, pandemics and public health emergencies, disability inclusion, LGBTQIA+ rights, menopause, and life-course perspectives, highlighting the cross-cutting and systemic nature of dignified menstruation across sectors.



7. Worked in four thematic working groups:

The conference convened four thematic working groups: Dignified Menstruation and Men & Masculinities; Dignified Menstruation, SRHR and Health; Dignified Menstruation, Climate and Pandemics; and Dignified Menstruation, GBV, Cyberspace and Human Rights, to translate the conceptual framework of Dignified Menstruation into concrete strategic directions. The working groups emphasized multi-sectoral, rights-based, and life-cycle approaches that center lived experiences, engage non-menstruators as allies, strengthen legal and institutional accountability, and integrate Dignified Menstruation into policies, programs, and global advocacy as a coordinated approach to addressing menstrual discrimination at the global level.

8. Governments are on board for supporting dignified menstruation:

The Rt. Honorable Prime Minister shared a message highlighting the urgency and importance of dignified menstruation during the inauguration. Senior government representatives, including the Secretary and Assistant Secretary from the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, the government spokesperson, the Honorable Minister from Information and Communication, and the Vice Chair of the National Youth Council, emphasized the urgency of dignified menstruation and the enforcement of the Resolution Motion on Dignified Menstruation, unanimously endorsed by the National Assembly on 21 March 2025. Parliamentarians were also present.

Importantly, the Honorable Minister from the Ministry of Women, Sri Lanka, joined the conference in solidarity. On behalf of the French Government, H.E. Virginie Corteval, Ambassador of France to Nepal, also addressed the inauguration, highlighting the relevance of dignified menstruation in the current global context.

9. Valuing lived experiences, indigenous wisdom, community perspectives:

Throughout the conference, participants shared lived experiences in Nepali, English, French, and sign language, grounding discussions in diverse realities across contexts. Indigenous knowledge and community-led practices on menstrual management, including sustainable use, waste management, and local entrepreneurship, were highlighted as critical alternatives to extractive and one-size-fits-all approaches. By centering stories from the Global South, marginalized communities, and survivors, the conference reinforced lived experience as legitimate knowledge and a foundation for shaping dignified, context-responsive, and transformative menstrual justice solutions.

10. Research reports and other reading materials launched:

The conference launched key books and research reports centering marginalized voices from the Global South, including publications on trans men, menstruators with disabilities, LGBTQ+ communities, children, and impact studies. Notable launches included "Kaatu", a child-friendly poetry book on menstruation, an inclusive guide for lesbian, bisexual, and queer womxn, and research on menstrual discrimination among trans men and persons with disabilities, reinforcing evidence-based, rights-driven advocacy for dignified menstruation.



11. Emphasized on Co-creation and community leadership for shifting power and agency:

The entire preparation and implementation of the conference was led by young people from the GSCDM team, MEA, National Youth Council, and participants, reinforcing the shift of power and agency.

12. Dignified menstruation is a life cycle approach:

The conference highlighted:

- i) guided meditation to explore early-life socialization around menstrual discrimination and the reinforcement of patriarchy;
- ii) participation ranging from 7-year-old menstruators and non-menstruators to participants over 70 years old;
- iii) discussions spanning the full life cycle, from womb to tomb, including sex-selective abortion, pre-menarche, menarche, reproductive age, menopause, cervical cancer, and rituals before and after death.



13. Locally practiced, multi-methods adopted:

To engage diverse audiences, the conference adopted multiple methods, including guided meditation, live song and dance performances, theatre art, exhibitions, presentations, and thematic panel discussions.



Ensuring Accessibility

- By language: sign language, French, English, Nepali
- By location: disability-friendly venue

Conference concluded with 12-point declarations:

The conference concluded with the endorsement of a 12-point Declaration and Call for Action, developed by a diverse drafting committee. Endorsed by all participants, the declaration reaffirmed collective accountability and a shared commitment to dignity, equity, and inalienable rights for all menstruators in their full diversity. It serves as a unifying political and advocacy instrument to guide future action.

1. “Menstrual discrimination, historically ignored, misunderstood, and minimized, must be recognized as a root driver of unequal power relations, patriarchy, and exclusion. It should be addressed as a distinct form of discrimination, rather than subsumed under ‘harmful traditional practices,’ as it exists globally in multiple forms and intensities.
2. Menstrual Discrimination needs to be dealt with as a cause and outcome of sexual and gender-based violence, including child marriage.
3. Adapt Dignified Menstruation as a decolonial framework that centers lived realities, shifting power and agency with a lifecycle approach.
4. To accelerate inclusion and intersectionality, reform the categorization of the human population as menstruators and non-menstruators.
5. Dignified Menstruation is an integral part of child rights. Harmful masculinities must be transformed in the primary education curriculum, as well as in media and the arts.
6. Dignified Menstruation to be considered as a powerful entry point in all conversations, in SRHR, including STIs, HIV, and CSEs.
7. Integrate the Dignified Menstruation framework into policies and programming related to disability rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, and elderly rights.
8. Centering the Dignified Menstruation framework in all phases of climate disasters, pandemics, and humanitarian settings.
9. Apply the menstrual dignity lens, “menstrual talk, dignity first,” across the conversation of WASH initiatives, menstrual products, including tax.
10. Include strategic actions to address discrimination related to menstruation and menopause in formal and informal workplaces, including sports.
11. The 14th day of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, to be marked as “International Dignified Menstruation Day”, endorsing Dignified Menstruation as a human right.
12. Centering Dignified Menstruation into at least nine SDGs (Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 3 (Health), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), Goal 8 (Decent Work), Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption), Goal 16 (Peace and Justice), Goal 8 (Decent Work)) to strengthen interventions targeting SDG 2030.

ORGANIZER



Global South Coalition
For Dignified Menstruation



Radha Pooja Foundation
राधा पीठेन फाउण्डेशन



MenEngage Alliance
menengagealliance.org



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Dignified Menstruation

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