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Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation

Petition to the United Nations Secretary- General to adopt the 8th December a Dignified Menstruation Day

Date: 18, October 2023

To the Honorable Antonio Gutierrez, Secretary- General of the United Nations
'Dignified Menstruation is Human Rights'

1. More than half of the population of this planet is the people who born with uterus and ovaries and they experience menstruation and menopause as a developmental milestone since the time of homo sapience or for last 3 million years.
2. Menstruators experience varieties of practices due to menstruation since the Aristotelian days. The ranges of menstrual practices such as taboos, shyness, stigma, abuses, restrictions, denial from services and resources etc. which are discriminatory. Such menstrual discrimination are not only confined for five days of bleeding but also started before the menstruation and goes along with menopause and till death or even after death in some cultures. It has significantly effect in realm of social, cultural, political, economic, technological, environmental and everywhere.

Such menstrual discrimination has been practicing till now across the globe in various names, forms and magnitude. It is very complex and multifaceted. Most importantly, it plays vital role for construction and shape the power and reinforce the patriarchy at home. Because the children between 6-9 years learned the discriminatory menstrual practices and started to practice. As a result, the shadow pandemic of domestic violence is not an exception where the menstruators are converted as victim and non-menstruators are mostly perpetrators no matter whether it is sex selective abortion or intimate partner violence or gender pay gap and so on.

Likewise, menstrual discrimination is not only form of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) but also cause and effect of menstrual discrimination including child marriage. It is also a key barrier for achieving SRHR and gender equality.

3. Since 1948, UN keeps advocating on human rights but there is no movement as menstrual discrimination as violation of human rights or each menstruators deserved the menstrual dignity throughout the life cycle.
UN spends a lot of energy for promotion and implementation of CEDAW since 1979 but there is no space for menstrual discrimination which is experiencing by more than half of the population of this planet. Likewise, the SRHR or reproductive justice or CSE (Comprehensive Sexual Education) got a huge space globally which is confined with anatomy and physiology of the menstruation and untouched the dynamics of menstrual discrimination.
Menstrual discrimination is a key barrier for achieving SDGs which is missed again. At least nine SDGs are directly connected with menstrual discrimination. Neither the SDG goal 8, decent work nor the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policies address the discrimination associated with menstruation and menopause this is just an example.
4. Recently, the menstrual management movements emerged which is focused on free distribution of menstrual products, reducing tax for menstrual products or construction of toilets are creating space for menstruation but do not address the all forms of menstrual discrimination. We lost two adolescent girls in Kenya and Nepal in 2019 and 2023 respectively where the governments were distributing the menstrual pad free. Psychologically, it promotes the menstrual discrimination by confirming the menstrual blood as an impure, dirty or something disgusting to hide.

Menstrual Talk
Dignity First

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5. In this connection, dignified menstruation is an innovative, holistic and feminist approach to address all forms of menstrual discrimination including climate crisis. More importantly, it is not only survivor driven approach to address menstrual discrimination but also instrumental for accelerating the gender equality, empowerment and sustained peace.
6. Four Ministries (Water Supply, Women Children, Health and Education) of Nepal Government, promulgated the National Dignified Menstruation Policy, and Menstrual Law in 2017. In 2019, Ministry of Women Children and Senior Citizen adopted the 8th December as dignified Menstruation day along with [Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation](#) (GSCDM). This year, the 5th year of Dignified Menstruation will be marking by over 60 countries globally.
7. GSCDM has been strived to reach out the Secretary- General in many ways such as online petition, appeal through various forms like CSW, Women Deliver, conferences etc. since 2019.
8. Beginning of 2023, the good will ambassador of GSCDM, started to climb the 14 peaks which are more than 8000 meters high for persuading UN Secretary General to adopt the 8th December as Dignified Menstruation day because it is matter for human rights.

Given this scenario, on behalf of 77 organizations from all around the globe, Secretariat office of GSCDM, handover this appeal to honorable UN Secretary-General for prompt action.

On behalf of GSCDM/RPF

1. Radha Paudel
2. Sangita Rokaya
3. Gobinda Khadka
4. Sapna Poudel
5. Lal Sharan Chalaune

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