



Chhaupadi Practices in Nepal: A Barrier to Sustainable Development Goals in the Context of Climate Change

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Background:

- ❖ Chhaupadi is an ancient menstrual seclusion practice in Nepal, poses a significant challenge to the country's progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ❖ Despite positive demographic indicators and advancements in education and life expectancy, Chhaupadi persists, particularly in the face of Nepal's vulnerability to climate change.
- ❖ This extreme form of menstrual restriction forces women and girls into unhealthy and perilous spaces, exacerbating existing challenges in the wake of shifting climate patterns.
- ❖ Likewise Nepal, with climate change, witness's women in Chhaupadi facing additional hardships such as grappling droughts and landslides.
- ❖ The practice hampers menstrual hygiene management, amplifying the vulnerability of women to climate-related disasters. As the climate crisis intensifies, the adverse impact on women subjected to Chhaupadi becomes intertwined with broader issues of climate justice.

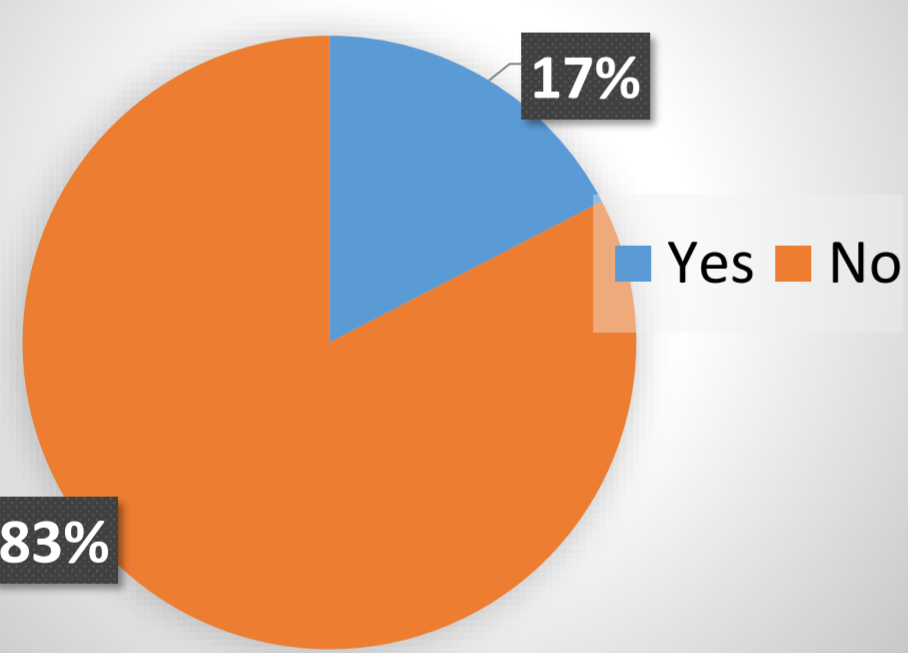
Objective of this study is to explore the status of chhaupadi and its association with climate change to achieve sustainable development goals

Methods:

- Data was based on Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (NMICS) 2019, a publicly available dataset from UNICEF MICS (<http://mics.unicef.org/surveys>).
- The study was limited to 1117 women in Sudur Pashchim Province of Nepal.
- Chi-square, Bivariate and Multivariable logistic regression were applied to show the association between variables.

Findings 3 Prevalence

Figure 3: Respondents who are staying in Chhaupadi



- Younger women (15-29 years) practiced Chhaupadi less frequently (17%) compared to older women (21%).
- Higher number of rural women and girls practiced chhaupadi (24%) than urban women (13%) and it was statistically significant.

Findings 4 Statistical Association

- Women from lowest wealth quintiles had 4 times more likely to practice chhaupadi compared to highest wealth quintiles and it was statistically significant.
- Similarly, women and girls who were early aged had less likely to practice chhaupadi than later age groups.
- Results from binary logistic regression showed that women who belonged to illiterate were 2.4 times more likely to practice chhaupadi than those who were from higher education level category ($p < 0.05$).
- Women and girls who were from rural areas had 2 times more likely to practice chhaupadi compared to urban women.



Chhaupadi Hut and map of Nepal with highlighted sample province

Findings 1

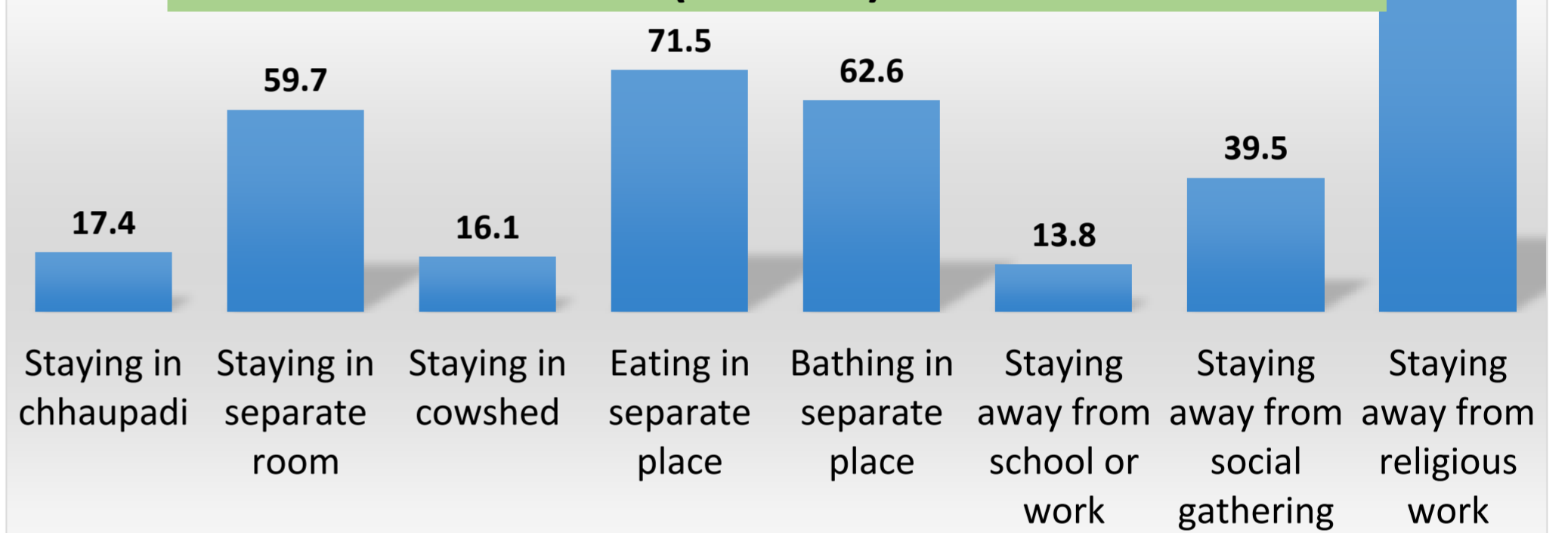
Figure 1: Background Characteristics of the Respondents (N=1117)

Age	Education	Residence	Wealth Status
• More than half of the women (55%) were aged 15-29 years	• More than a third women (34%) were illiterate	• 40% women were from rural areas	• Three fifth women (60%) were from lowest wealth quintiles

Findings 2

Overwhelmingly, majority of the respondents (94%) faced restriction to perform religious activities and followed by restriction to eat in common place (72%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Conditions faced during Menstruation [%] (N=1170)



Linkage

- Due to the lack of knowledge and lack of access, most of the menstruating women and girls with reusable cloths and climatic changes affect local water supply make the MHM more difficult and increase the use of negative cultural practices
- Similarly, women practicing chhaupadi are facing more vulnerable situation in extreme weather changes such as storms, landslides and extreme hot and cold weathers, due to the restrictions of sufficient sleeping and staying materials which can lead different health problems.
- Environment changes impacts the availability of firewood and which hinders the their overall well being and hygiene as well and not only this it also affects the overall eco-system and chhaupadi women forced to stay in more hazardous situation.

Conclusion

- ❖ Chhaupadi and other menstrual restrictions remain deeply entrenched in Nepal, impeding women's rights, education, and societal participation.
- ❖ Access to clean water and safe period products during disasters is crucial, yet Chhaupadi obstructs these essential provisions.
- ❖ The multi-sectoral approach should explicitly incorporate climate resilience strategies, recognizing the complex connection between menstrual restrictions, gender equity, and climate justice.
- ❖ Addressing Chhaupadi is not only a matter of human rights but a vital step toward building climate-resilient communities in Nepal.

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