

Formative Research on Menstrual Hygiene Management in Nepal

December 2015 - July 2016



Ensuring girls right through improved menstrual hygiene management

Project Objectives:

- To investigate and understand the scope of challenges faced by girls during menstruation (mainly at school but also in the community or household)
- To understand the determinants of those challenges and identify potential solutions and recommendations.

Team Members:

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Project Summary

Adolescent girls face significant challenges to managing their menstruation hygienically, with comfort and confidence, especially in low-income countries. Cultural constraints, lack of access to accurate and pragmatic information, and inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in homes and in schools can restrict girls' ability to participate fully in society. WaterAid is working with the Government of Nepal to strengthen WASH facilities in schools of Udaypur and Sindhuli districts, and to help equip them to facilitate confident menstrual hygiene management (MHM). This study sought to inform the development of these interventions through mixed-methods research with girls, boys, teachers and mothers.

We found that although some girls and families were challenging restrictions, the perceptions of menstruation as a dirty, polluting process with the potential to harm girls, their families and others, as well as crops, and livestock still prevailed in the study districts. Menstruation was perceived as a time of vulnerability, when women and girls should rest, be around their home, and take care of their body. In addition, fear of suffering ill health, heavy bleeding or infertility if others see their menstrual blood is a constant source of concern for women and girls. The lack of appropriate, comfortable and affordable materials for MHM, of adequate waste disposal, and of adequate toilet facilities at school made leakage and others seeing their menstrual blood a source

of stress for girls. Girls avoided changing their sanitary materials at school because toilet facilities were dirty and lacked privacy. Girls preferred to suffer the discomfort of using thick cloth, restricting their movement, and using friends' toilets rather than use the school toilet.

Conclusions and recommendations

We detail seven areas of focus for interventions in this report. We conclude that interventions should focus on cultural concepts of pollution and vulnerability **and** practical, sustainable strategies to improve waste management, maintain clean and child-friendly toilets, and increase access to comfortable, secure menstrual materials to enable more confident MHM.



Menstrual hygiene management in Udaypur and Sindhuli districts of Nepal
Research report



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