



RVWRMP with Women and Children



(BASED ON THE OPINIONS OF RM VICE CHAIRPERSONS DURING THE DIGNIFIED MENSTRUATION MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP – 10 & 11 FEB 2020)



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The Rural Village Water Resources Management Project, Phase III (2016-2022), jointly funded by Government of Nepal, European Union and Government of Finland together with local governments, provides support to rural communities for clean drinking water, and behaviour change in sanitation, hygiene and nutrition. The project also supports livelihood promotion for income generation, cooperatives and renewable energy. The Project covers 66 remote rural municipalities of Nepal. Capacity building of local governments is a key component of the Project.

The Overall Objective to which RVWRMP III contributes is improved health and reduced multidimensional poverty within the project working area. The Purpose of the Project is to achieve universal access to basic WASH services, and improved livelihoods with establishment of functional planning and implementation frameworks for all water users and livelihoods promotion in the project area. It is estimated that 351,000 people will have basic water supply services with improved system; 54 000 people will benefit from irrigation systems; and 21,000 people will be connected to household electricity from micro-hydropower. Over 170,000 will have changed their cooking stoves to an improved smokeless and energy saving models. 275,000 people will benefit from home gardens, providing their families with better nutrition. Some 60 000 inhabitants will use training in income generation to improve their opportunities in agribusiness and small business ventures. The Project's working modality and approach are embedded in the local governments' working modality and the Project is implemented by the Local Governments.

RVWRMP advocates for the human right of women to stay in a safe and hygienic place during menstruation. Similarly, the project implements different training and awareness raising activities on women's access to water taps and toilets during their menstrual period. The Project, jointly with Rural Municipalities, is implementing campaigns on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), nutrition and sanitation behaviour changes. Similarly the Project has constructed Child, Gender and Disabled persons (CGD) friendly WASH structures at household, community and school level.

The Project has focused its efforts on assisting women to maintain personal hygiene during menstruation, together with encouraging families to improve the cleanliness of their household and surroundings (in the Total Sanitation Campaign), in order to contribute to the gradual eradication of risky practices that women are forced to follow. Menstruation-related taboos are deeply rooted in the society, and we realise that eradication of these taboos overnight is not possible. Therefore, the Project has been involved with securing the human rights of women and children, and ensuring their access to water taps and toilets during menstruation. With this purpose in mind, the mobilisation of student/child clubs, adolescent girls' networks and mothers' groups has started to achieve positive results. The project has linked MHM with total sanitation and nutrition. It includes CGD-friendly WASH structures construction, school toilets with facilities for sanitary pad changing and proper disposal, availability of sanitary pads in the schools (locally made reusable pads, or commercial) and home garden management. Schools have made action plans for the 'three star model', which includes MHM. At community level, a menstrual hygiene management related indicator is included as a part of total sanitation indicator. The project has trained women to stitch reusable sanitary pads locally, and improved their knowledge regarding anatomy and natural biological processes. We need everyone to understand that menstruation is a vital part of life – and feel comfortable discussing it (just as attitudes regarding discussion of open defaecation changed).

In order to maintain uniformity on MHM related activities in all working RMs and prepare a joint action plan to support all the RMs, a workshop was organized on 10-11 February 2020 with the chairpersonship of the Mayor of Dipayal Silgadhi Municipality. The Deputy Speaker of Sudurpaschim Provincial Assembly was chief guest of the inauguration ceremony. The workshop also prepared the Dhangadhi declaration of Dignified Menstruation management. This document has been prepared based on the opinions expressed by the participants of the workshop. The Dhangadhi declaration on DMM is also included in this document. Video clips were also taken of the vice chairpersons discussing the topic, and these are available from the Project.



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I am very happy to know that RVWRMP has initiated creative campaigning for dignified menstruation management, which has been following up harmful practices in our society. I would like to thank RVWRMP for this creative action. Menstruation management taboos are not only a problem of Sudurpaschim province – they are observed around the world in some form. In our economic and social setting, these practices have been followed since ancient times, and now they are connected with religion and customs, which is in fact malpractice. In order to overcome the problem, women themselves have to pay attention. After restructuring of the state, we have been given various rights. The vice chairpersons of Rural Municipality should lead the movement to eradicate harmful traditions utilizing such rights.



Honourable Nirjala Badal Joshi, Deputy Speaker, Sudurpaschim Provincial Assembly



Federal, Provincial and Local Governments are passengers in the same boat. Women do not have enough opportunities, even when they are capable to take leadership roles. Nepal has a history of successful leadership of various movements and social campaigns. Women must take the leadership role themselves, and eliminate the misconduct and superstitions prevalent in society. Men's leadership should support women in the campaign to change society led by women and to follow the promulgated laws. Political parties should also give special priority to women.

Manju Malasi, Mayor, Dipayal Silgadhi Municipality, Doti

Women have been trained and are able to lead development activities after implementation of the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project in Turmakhand Rural Municipality. Due to the working approach of the Project, such as compulsory participation of women in scheme implementation and leadership, women have realized that they have rights, and a role in a decision making. Women are excited to take the leadership and they have gained a lot of knowledge and skills in this regard from the Project. There have been a lot of changes in the awareness of women after the implementation of the Project

Amrita Budha, Vice Chairperson, Turmakhand RM, Achham



As the coordinator of the monitoring committee, I have observed the quality of the materials and work used in the projects while monitoring many of the schemes being undertaken. The project and the villagers have collaborated on many tasks. Sustainability has been seen in the schemes supported by the Project. There has been a lot of good work in our Rural Municipality. A private connection system installing meters has been implemented in the Naumule market area, which has made it easier for women to manage their menstrual hygiene.

Amrita Singh, Vice Chairperson, Naumule RM, Dailekh

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The Project has insisted on at least 75% households and 50% women's compulsory attendance and representation in various mass meetings, public auditing and formation of user committees. Women's leadership skills have been developed, leading to increased confidence and dignity. I have been greatly impressed by the public auditing system applied, and the way the project even shares the allocated budget and actual cost of trainings. The staff working through the project are hardworking and honest, which has created quality and sustainability in the scheme.

Urmila Bohara, Vice Chairperson, Apihimal RM, Darchula



With the support of the Project, women have become self-reliant, being able to make their own decisions. Women have been able to demand schemes for themselves. Due to the provision of the Project, there is proper participation of women. There has been support for women's income sources, and women have benefited directly from the implementation of improved stoves, agriculture and sanitation. The campaign for menstrual hygiene management allows women to abandon malpractices of menstruation management, use regular toilets and stay clean and healthy during menstruation.

Kalawati Bhand, Vice Chairperson, Ajaymeru RM, Dadeldhura

Due to the clear priorities of the schemes set out in the Water Use Master Plan, there is no dispute in the selection of the schemes and the poor and the disadvantaged people are served. The Step-by-Step approach and monitoring system have disregarded political discrimination and possibility of bias in the selection of user committee members, which has also maintained social harmony. Due to training and public auditing, ownership has been developed as all the users know the income and expenditure of the scheme. If all such schemes would be established in a similar manner, they could be implemented transparently.

Kushma Chand, Vice Chairperson, Shivanath RM, Baitadi



Women traditionally must bring water to the house. If the water is far away, it hurts women and the health of women also deteriorates. Rural Village Water Resources Management Project has supported us to provide water supply services to many villages in Naugad Rural Municipality suffering from water shortages. Schemes are completed in ward no 1 and 2 and ongoing in 4 and 5. The schemes constructed with the support of the Project are of very good standard and quality. Sanitation and livelihood programs have directly benefitted women. Even the health of women and children has been positively impacted.

Gauri Devi Thagunna, Vice Chairperson, Naugad RM, Darchula



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The Rural Municipality has learned a lot from the procurement process applied in the Project. The participatory and transparent procurement process through sealed quotations has been extremely effective. The step-by-step approach adopted by the Project ensures the participation of all. Through this approach all the women in the scheme area get information about the progress and the income and expenditure of the schemes. The Rural Municipality has replicated the procurement process and public auditing system in all the schemes.

Chandra Regmi, Vice Chairperson Bhagawatimai RM, Dailekh



We have started the implementation of the livelihood activities as planned in the Water Use Master Plan and Livelihood Implementation Plan, based on the feasibility of the particular activity. Women have benefited directly from livelihoods activities such as: vegetable farming, livestock farming, agro processing, sewing, poultry farming, etc. Women who were scared to speak in front of others are now leading the income generating activities. Every household that works in vegetable farming is earning at least NPR 3,000 in a season.

Jala Kumari Bista, Vice Chairperson, Alital RM, Dadeldhura

We have formed child clubs in all schools of Talkot to implement the DMM program effectively. Similarly, a RM level network is also formed. A Mothers' group and adolescence girls' network is also mobilized for awareness campaigns. Women are feeling very comfortable in their homes after construction of private tap, chang and dish washing platform. Waste water is being used for home gardens and the nutritional status of women and children is improved. Staff working for RVWRMP in the field are honest and well disciplined.

Dhanlaxmi Khatri, Vice Chairperson, Talkot RM, Bajhang



Ujyalo is a small farmers' cooperative, supported by RVWRMP, with more than 1000 shareholders. Savings of the cooperative are 35.2 million NPR. Many women have taken loans from the cooperative and purchased goats, buffalos and also invested in vegetable farming. It has opened the door to independent income for women. The cooperative has started a dairy, which has increased the income of women in the RM. User Committees have deposited their Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funds in the cooperative, and the cooperative has made available an emergency repair fund from its net profits.

Padam Kumari Bist, Vice Chairperson, Bhairabi RM, Dailekh



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I have monitored all the schemes constructed by the Project. Schemes constructed by the Project have good standard quality. While doing final monitoring of the scheme, we check the pipeline depth, quality of structure and materials, and book keeping of the UCs. If any of the work is found to be incomplete or not constructed according to the design estimate, we provide a deadline to the UC. Only after completion of the remaining work, will we recommend final payment to the UC. We found all the income and expenditure of the schemes are transparent, the community has taken ownership, and the schemes are sustainable.

Padam Bahadur Bohara, Vice Chairperson, Bhageshwor RM, Dadelhdhura



Before starting RVWRMP I, cash transactions were made only in Indian currency in our area. Many of the villagers saw Nepalese currency only after the Project began. The Project supported us to realize that we are Nepali citizens. Due to different training and awareness activities, the awareness of women and disadvantaged groups is enhanced. Saving habits have been established after formation of a cooperative, and women are gradually becoming self-reliant through small businesses taking loans from the cooperative. Nutritional status is improved due to home garden management and consumption of green vegetables. Income levels have been scaled up.

Bina Bhatta, Vice Chairperson, Pancheshwor RM, Baitadi

As a monitoring committee coordinator, I have monitored all schemes together with technical staff. We thoroughly check the volume and quality of work as per the design and estimate. We also check whether laborers have been paid or not, and the income & expenditure statement of the UCs. All the issues are discussed in the mass meeting and payment recommendation is made as decided by the mass meeting. If any work is incomplete or of low quality, we ask UCs to complete it before final payment. Health status of women and children is improved after they have become used to consuming green vegetables, and they also started earning some money by selling it.

Bishna Devi Singh, Vice Chairperson, Sayal RM, Doti



Women's living standards have changed after having sanitation facilities. We are planning to declare ward no 1 as a totally sanitized ward. Positive thinking on sanitation and nutrition has been generated in women. After project support, all the HHs have constructed solid waste and waste water collection pits. The waste water is used in home garden, by which green vegetables are produced, and people are being used to eating green vegetables. Women are destroying their chhau-hut themselves, and we are rewarding those households with NPR 5,000 from the RM. Child clubs are mobilized for monitoring of chhau hut use. Students are mobilized for awareness campaigns at household level.

Bhagawati Devi Bam, Vice Chairperson, Bogtan Fudsil RM, Doti



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The environment of the villages has been changed after RVWRMP's support. Private taps, CGD friendly school toilets, management of sanitary pads and installation of vending machines, has helped women and girls to keep themselves clean during menstruation. Waste disposal pits and bins have made the environment clean, and no plastics are visible. Household surroundings are clean and people are very happy, maintaining home garden management. We are now planning to separate the cow shed from home, and ensure manure management.

Radhika Kumari Ratala, Vice Chairperson, Chhabis Pathebhera RM, Bajhang



Menstruation was taken as sin and was considered a hateful thing. DMM has given the message to all to live with dignity. There is a lot of positive change but still much more to do. We were able to remove chhau-huts in 1,300 households in ward no 5. Women are leading the campaign and their confidence has increased. We are training the mothers' group on sewing and using sanitary pads. It is good that women are taking this change positively. We have separately allocated budget for dignified menstruation management activities from the RM for training, the awareness-raising campaign, and sanitary pad vending machine installation.

Sarswati Rawal, Vice Chairperson, Ramaroshan RM, Achham

Before we were elected, none of the women used to know about the budget allocated by local government for women and children, and there was no transparency. Through RVWRMP's 'Women as Decision Makers' workshop we planned different activities and they are now being implemented in a transparent way. The Project's insistence on mandatory participation of women has raised women's awareness and they are actively participating in income generation and cooperative development activities. Most importantly, they know their rights and have started to raise their voices, demanding different development activities focusing on women.

Sita Thapa, Vice Chairperson, Gaumul RM, Bajura



DHANGADHI DECLARATION ON DIGNIFIED MENSTRUATION MANAGAEMENT

(Vice-Chairs' DMM Workshop, 11th February 2020)

Clause 38 of Constitution of Nepal, 2015 has ensured equal lineage rights, the right to safe motherhood and reproductive health, and the right to not suffer physical, mental, sexual, psychological or other form of violence or exploitation on the grounds of religion, social, cultural tradition, practice or on any other grounds. The Criminal Code (Act), 2019, prohibits any kind of discrimination and mistreatment, such as forcing women to be confined in a chhau-hut, and punishment is also provisioned for doing so. Similarly, the Local Government Operation Act, 2019 chapter 3, clause 11, has given the right to local government to eradicate harmful social beliefs, such as chhaupadi. Following the provisions of national legislation, and enhancing the social development process, in order to support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Deputy Chairpersons of RVWMP working core RMs jointly issued a declaration, and committed its implementation under their own leadership. They made a common slogan of "Dignified Menstruation Management with Proper Hygiene, Safety and Self-respect" during the conference conducted on 10 – 11th February 2020, in Dhangadhi (with the chairpersonship of Dipayal Silgadhi Municipality Mayor, and Sudurpaschim Provincial Assembly Deputy Speaker as chief guest).

1. We commit to declare our RM totally sanitized and chhau-hut free within two years, formulating a strategic plan and setting targets through a DMM conference at RM level, fully pursuing the existing act, policy, directives and manuals of federal, provincial and local levels, in line to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. We shall coordinate and lobby in a planned way with federal, provincial and local governments, in order to have the necessary financial resources to implement a DMM campaign under our own leadership, realizing that Dignified Menstrual Management is everybody's concern.
3. Considering female and adolescent girls as the key victims of chhaupadi practices, we shall organize campaigns mobilizing child clubs, adolescent girls' network and mothers' group, with the participation of schools and leadership of women's groups in an integrated manner.
4. In order to achieve result-oriented and sustainable changes, and to establish a totally sanitized community, we shall develop and implement DMM indicators (as sub indicators of total sanitation) for model household, model community, model school and model ward/RM.
5. Considering the Total Sanitation and DMM campaigns as part of social accountability, self-respect and critical factors for sustainable development, we shall develop and 'Annual Plan for Total Sanitation and DMM' in each RM, and lobby to incorporate it in the policy of the RM for FY 2077/078 with the required financial resources.
6. We shall develop an information bank of development stakeholders and establish stakeholders' desks in our RMs. We shall develop a common approach among all stakeholders while implementing DMM and total sanitation campaigns and programs.
7. To share knowledge, experiences and learning of WASH and DMM sector, we shall establish resource centres in our RMs, and coordinate with media through interaction, workshops, information management and publications.



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8. To implement the DMM campaign effectively, we shall analyse and estimate required human resources, capacity and formulate a strategy to implement it.

The Declaration is signed by following Vice-Chairpersons of Following RMs

Ms. Sarswati Rawal, Ramaroshan, Achham	Ms. Amrita Budha Turmakhand, Achham	Ms. Parwati Rana Dilasaini, Baitadi	Ms. Ms. Bina Bhatta Pancheshwor, Baitadi
Ms. Kushma Chand Shivanath, Baitadi	Ms. Dhanalaxmi Khatri Talkot, Bajhang	Ms. Radhika Kumari Tatala Chhabis Pathibhera, Bajhang	Ms. Gangu Devi Khadayat Thalara, Bajhang
Ms. Sita Thapa Gaumul, Bajura	Ms. Mima Budha Swamikartik Khapar, Bajura	Ms. Kalawati Bhand Ajayameru, Dadeldhura	Mr. Padam Bdr Bohara Bhageshwor, Dadeldhura
Ms. Jala Kumari Bist Aalital, Dadeldhura	Ms. Chandra Regmi Bhagawatimai, Dailekh	Ms. Padam Kumari Bist Bhairabi, Dailekh	Ms. Amrita Singh Naumule, Dailekh
Ms. Urmila Bohara Apihimal, Darchula	Ms. Bagamati Thagunna Marma, Darchula	Ms. Gauri Devi Thagunna Naugad, Darchula	Ms. Bishna Devi Singh Sayal, Doti
Ms. Bhagawati Devi Bam Bogatan Fudsil, Doti	Ms. Indra Bohara Badikedar, Doti	Ms. Dipa Saud Chure, Kailali	Ms. Puja Budhamagar Mohanyal, Kailali

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