

Mensuration restrictions: A body politics

Lina Baniya

Researchers, Dignity Without Danger, Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University

Abstract

In this article, we set out how menstrual practices are controlled by socio-cultural structure. Control over women body by creating restricted rules and regulation which condone and institutionalize gender inequalities. Health science speaks menstruation as a biological process where culture -religion behave as a social function. Menstruation practice is formed as a political agenda, global body politics and gender biasness. visible-invisible chhau system are seen in menstruation practices which leads to women follow the similar restriction. Here, we examine how menstruation has been taken to as a serious socio-cultural issue with various restricted practices. Furthermore, this article is a contribution to show the women positionality in the patriarchal system. Fewer are do's and larger rules are don'ts in the menstruation time for women show that women have bundles of restriction which make them feel burden for their own body.

To control women mobility and to mobilize the hegemonic patriarchal power in the society mensuration practice looks the perfect tool. Story of past and security of future, both are vibrantly worked to follow the practices. Symbolically, it is the politics over the women body by the social -cultural and religious various organizations.

Keywords: Body politics, Restrictions, menstruation practice, invisible chhaught, power relation

introduction

Nepal has diverse stories for menstruation practices. Menstruation as a source of social stigma and taboos equally it is the mark of women reproductive age. different research has done to explore the mensuration practices in which number of research show mensuration practice is confined and defined by society religion and the cultural authorities. Discussion on the menstruation practice and Foucault's Genealogy of Power, Knowledge and the Subject, Power, the Body and Sexuality, Subjectivity, Identity and Resistance, Freedom, Power, and Politics are here we attend. Foucault traces the emergence of some of the practices, concepts, forms of knowledge, social institutions and techniques of government which have contributed to shape the society. He calls the method of historical analysis he employs 'genealogical'. Genealogy is a form of critical history in the sense that it attempts a diagnosis of 'the present time, and of what we are, in this very moment' in order 'to question what is postulated as self-evident ... to dissipate what is familiar and accepted' (Foucault 1988a: 265).

Menstruation practice is varying to every community and women. However, it has always been surrounded by taboos and myths that reject women from many aspects of socio-cultural life. In Nepal, the issue has been a taboo until date. Such taboos about menstruation and menstruation practices existing in many societies impact on girls' and women's emotional state, mentality, physically and lifestyle. Women body is controlled by religion /culture societies norms and values, there is the need to follow a strategic approach in fighting these issues devaluing women body and blood indicating low women position in the patriarchal society, equally controlling mobility and participation in public sphere. Around half of the population in the world bleeds regularly, monthly. Menstruation is a natural process in which a girl or a woman in her reproductive age bleeds. Menstruation blood is calculated by socio-cultural perception and practices either pure or impure or good or bad. Restricted practices not only making women separate from the household and religious participation also behaving with inhumanly and violently. controlling bodily function by social norms and values is terribly hitting the womankind and prioritizing patriarchal power relation.

Applied Methods During Research

This research led the Dignity Without Danger 'East 'Team, organized by TU in collaboration with SOAS, University, and Liverpool University UK ". East team, who visited the 4 provinces (8 districts) of Nepal, Researchers were from the different Nepali background which made the research interesting as well as viewing the society with various perspectives. Different areas (social, religious, cultural) have different practices which is caught by research. Present Nepali various caste (Brahmin, Chhetri, Janajati, Dalit) are captured by this research. It helped to understand different social background.

Doing interview with girls and women aged 18 above. This is the research from eastern part of Nepal held in 4 different provinces to discover the menstrual practices and restriction. In each province we conducted in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. In this research there were 150 interviews including male participants and 8 focus group discussion. participants were from various religious and cultural background. priest Lama teachers, farmers, housewives' businessperson, students all were participated. Especially observation and field diaries kept by the researchers helped to capture the context and detail of the research and taking photographs to help contextualize the research findings and researchers emotional and actual experiences of the location. One is the deeply embedded stigma and taboos associated with menstruation; another is treating mensurated women blood as an impurity in socio-

cultural forum. Engaging male in this research interview supported to find the role of patriarchy to sustain practices and holding the history.

Research Purpose

Analyze the power relation and politics over the women body with the mensuration blood

Discover the role of social structural for the women's menstruation practices.

Research Limitations:

All of our sample are collected from eastern part of Nepal. Language/caste and social identity are not exposed with the ethical consideration. Male and female participants are only captured, sexual minorities are not part in this research .

Control over women body and mind

Bodies are sites in which social constructions of differences are mapped onto human beings. Subjecting the body to systemic regimes such as government regulation is a method of ensuring that bodies will behave in socially and politically accepted manners. The body is placed with the different age, sex and categorization. Furthermore, these dichotomies exemplify that public/private borders are unstable. For example, governments either choose to recognize the rights for minorities or justify discrimination and marginalization for minorities. The denial of constitutional rights of women seeking abortions, racial/ethnic minorities, gay men, lesbians, and transgendered people, or people with disabilities have demonstrated the unequal application of free speech, due process, privacy rights, and the Equal Protection clause. Citizenship entitlements are not available for bodies that transgress cultural, social, sexual, and/or political boundaries. Body and blood are main agendas in the society to play. women menstrual blood is always in debate from historical period however modern society not able to escae with this till date.

"We cannot move around during menstruation, specially near the plants, our elders say we get impure during menstruation, and we should not make our souring duty. I don't move for 3 days _ young" (women aged 25). The human body is itself a politically inscribed entity, its physiology and morphology shaped by histories. The idea of men and women as opposites is supported by polarized categories such as mind-body, culture/nature, spirit-matter that have been inflected with gender ideologies. In the mind/body dualism the body and mind are regarded as quite separate, the body is merely the crude container of the mind. Mind and reason are superior to the emotions and senses and divorced from one another. Man is mind and represents culture: the rational, unified, thinking subject; woman is body and represents nature: irrational, emotional and driven by instinct and physical need. Woman's association with body/nature is strengthened by biological essentialist and determinist paradigms which define woman according to her reproductive physiology. She is thus feeble and passive, literally a receptacle for the desires of the male and incubator for his offspring; a creature driven by emotion and instinct; a slave to her reproductive organs. Man may be able to transcend his biological materiality, but woman is entrenched in her physicality - "a thing sunk deeply in its own immanence" (de Beauvoir 1988:189)

“We ourselves follow the restrictions, because we are known with our religious and cultural pattern which are following from the historical period. now we cannot stop following, its normal to us women. I afraid, if I don't follow the restrictions my family suffer with various problems, my control myself moving around, if I make mistake god punish us, we should understand this” (women aged 30 and 38). Woman as other is inferior but also unknowable, enigmatic, and worrying. She represents that which must be investigated and dissected until her secrets are relinquished. Consequently, the female body has been subjected to the scrutinizing gaze of the human sciences far more than the male. Every hint of abnormality has been thoroughly and enthusiastically ferreted out and classified by numerous ‘experts’ eager to provide indisputable proof of its inherent pathology. Its uncontrolled sexuality must be contained, and inherent weakness of character exposed, particularly as it is primarily a reproductive body.

“Women themselves follow the restriction, when they come to my shop they don't money to my hand they put it on the table because they don't touch male during that time ,their understanding is that ,they can't stop following” (male age 54). Foucault's commentary of how subjectivity is produced calls to mind Simone de Beauvoir's now famous phrase that “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (de Beauvoir 1988: 295). Foucault's apparent gender neutrality is problematic precisely because we live in a society that is far from gender neutral and in fact constantly seeks to reiterate the polarization of the sexes through these ‘techniques of gender’. His analysis sidesteps how a woman has been discursively identified with the body and downplays the objectification that feminists argue these results to argue for the subjectify Ing power of discourse.

Thoughts and practices reveal society and its nature, menstruation restricted practices are the very visible exam of socio-political power which is implementing over women to control their mobility and freedom that women are controlled by socio- cultural and gender identity. Men, on the other hand, not involve in such issues because of body privileged. Bleeding body had various. Going through with all activities .it is found that menstruation is taken as an impurity however it is female bodily process. Social norms and traditions are shaping male and female. Stigma and taboos are demoralizing women to stand up in the society as a human. Religious text and religion another strong supporting factors to promote restriction during mensuration. Knowledge and practices are easily adopted by the women without raising any question. Cultural norms and rules and ruling society .it seems clearly that there is not any other priority for society beyond cultural norms and rules.

Misogynist ideology

I am 38 now, when I menstruate, I don't go outside specially when male member of the village going outside, because if I go out I they see us they say it's very bad luck to us, women's menstruation is tagged with bad luck so, if feel very bad of this thinking of the society, (women aged 38). intellectuals have argued that the body is both socially shaped and colonized the politically shaped and analyzed. thought over women body is very misogynist as result all activities are countered even the biological process too. Locating the body within a Western intellectual history perhaps starts with Marx but was popularized by Foucault's Marx contended that the body was marked with a person's economic class which in turn affected his experiences. Foucault (1977) later argued that the body is a central point for analyzing the shape of power. Indeed, issues ranging from population size to gender formation and those that society has deemed deviant are inherently political. These issues, among others, define and shape the body. The “cultivation of the body is essential” to determine how one will behave in society (Johnson 1989, 6).

Linda Zerilli has noted that Foucault's scholarship has guided feminist theorists to understand how the "body has been historically disciplined" as well as the basis for many essentialist claims (1991, 2). As we have shown, women's own voices have for a long time been ignored .

Together with the discourses of ideology that are used to frame their lives. These women who were yearning for the menstrual management practices of village life and the corresponding period of rest force us to recognize that "women's participation in gender-traditional religions" may not signify passivity (Talukdar 2014, 141). Thus, by paying attention to forms of knowledge transmission and meaning making of the kind expressed by these women we can better understand women's lived experiences of menstrual 'Management. 'These meanings are shaped by socio-environmental settings, joint family's vs nuclear, private vs public access water and how notions of public and private are reconfigured and remade in informal settlements.

In our religious text women roles and duties are given clearly so we can't make it down, we can't complete men. they are higher than us. we should follow we should not counter (women aged 60). According to Anne Balsamo "gender is one of the primary effects of the broad construction of the human body" (Balsamo op. cit., p.22). It is a pervasive and powerful method of social control that both produces and restricts one's mode of being. Therefore, by neglecting to address gender in his studies Foucault can only have produced a partial account of the discourses surrounding the body and the discipline that shapes it. Woman's historical association with the body has resulted in her being judged by and valued for her appearance more than man, often above all else, and has also engendered the fear and dread of otherness. Even in this supposedly equal, liberated, and progressive society femaleness is still disturbing enough to require supervision and containment by forms of discipline that men are not subjected to 6 the story of women's emancipation and increasing self-determination is clouded by the continuing presence of restrictive ideals of womanhood that Myra Macdonald claims 'Defensively reinvent' themselves against the cultural and social changes in women's lives (MacDonald 1995, p.220). However, just as Foucault did in his later work, I would like to stress that resistance is possible. I'm not suggesting that all women clamber to conform to the ideals of femininity. There have always been, and always will be, those who gleefully subvert or ignore the 'rules' or who enjoy the pleasures of fashion and beauty without feeling them to be an obligation or a necessity. As Wilson says, we can "acknowledge that dress is a powerful weapon of control and dominance, while widening our view to encompass an understanding of its simultaneously subversive qualities".

Society, through negative messages about women's cycles and negative responses to any mention of the menses socially constructs menstruation as negative. Lack of knowledge about the body and the menstrual cycle may put girls and young women in a position where they experience negative feelings such as shame about their reproductive body functions and lower self-esteem (White 2013, 67). Johnston-Robledo and Chrisler (2013, 2-6) demonstrated that menstruation is a source of social stigma for women, and documented many ways that menstruation is viewed negatively in our culture. Roberts and her colleagues (Roberts et al. 2002) demonstrated empirically that even reminders of menstrual blood (for example, seeing a wrapped, unused tampon) can lead to avoidance and social distancing, which suggests that menstrual blood may serve as a blemish on women's character. Negativity about menstruation subjects' women to ridicule, dismissal, and trivialization (Fahs 2016, 4), in this patriarchal and misogynist society menstruation a recognized as a negative aspect of women life, weak point of women body and lacking and facing several opportunities During the research that not addressing menstruation openly

affect men too. Taboos not only affect women but mystery surrounding it also prevents men from having conversations about an issue, which affect their mothers, sisters, wives, and female friends. Men and women should be empowered enough to talk freely about menstruation to understand the deeper level of why societies treat most issues affecting women as taboos. Understanding true intentions of why taboos and myths exist can help men and women analyze why society exists the way it does. This will lead menstruation not to be a woman's curse, but an empowering and indeed a magical experiences and consequences. Menstruation processes are predicted as an impurity and treated as a weak bodily process, biological function which is controlling by socially, culturally, religiously, and patriarchally. It is proven.

Misogyny also often operates through sexual harassment, compulsion, and psychological techniques aimed at controlling women, and by legally or socially excluding women from full human. In some cases, misogyny rewards women for accepting an inferior status. Using dominating language or insults making threatening or aggressive comments based on a person's gender or sex harassing or threatening someone for defying gender norms. behavior or clothing engaging in physical or sexual assault. Mensuration restriction and control mobility and harassing blood, menstruation stigma and taboos are the societies real misogynist face.

Invisible chhau system

We don't have chhau system in this part, but we don't think we are out of this mentality we do not have chhaught outside home but inside home we all are following all the restriction which referred by this religious and social norms and values,(women aged 43).Either chhaught or not women always have restrictions ,it is fact that everywhere similar and visible rules are not there but practices and treatment show that women have low position in the patriarchal system and power relation .Most existing studies on menstrual practices in Nepal have focused on the practice of Chhaupadi. However, even in regions and communities in Nepal where this extreme tradition is not practiced, menstrual taboos still affect women's daily activities.

I heard women from west go to the chhaught and stay there for some days which make their life terrible, I even can't imagine how they suffer; however, our life is not easy we have face similar kind of social behavior, inside home we stay as a refugee. We don't have any access of our home associates. I even heard that research and program all focused on that are however we are always in subordination, and we can't speak because we don't have thought visibly. (Age 35 government officer) While rituals are often imposed on menstruating Nepali women, their perceptions are important to assess to implement programs targeting changes in behavioral expectations. Limited studies have focused on eastern girls' and women's perspectives on existing menstrual practices and restrictions in Nepal, the objective of this study was therefore to assess the socio-cultural perceptions of menstrual restrictions among women. In the invisibly seen mensuration practices of eastern part of Nepal.

Brahminical patriarchy of eastern part of Nepal are focusing on restricted menstruation practices to continue the tradition which make them to be they're in power, "Patriarchy that is enforced in a caste-based society is called Brahmanical patriarchy. The interconnections of caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy lead to the reinforcement of patriarchy within the caste system," said Mira Mishra, a professor of Gender Studies at Tribhuvan University. The concepts of purity and pollution, fear of gods, and

protecting the masculinity of men have been attached to menstruation, so the whole patriarchal caste-based society collectively works in regulating it. Analysis of Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014 and 2019 – studies that monitor the situation of women and children in Nepal – indicates that despite women's education levels, they religiously practice moderate forms of menstrual exclusion rituals: seclusion from religious spaces, their own beds, kitchen, shared bathroom. During their menstrual period, women are generally considered impure in Nepal; in the rural areas of the western part of the country, they are even banished to stay in sheds (called chhaupadi) during this time, which increases their vulnerability to a variety of health consequences.

Conclusion /finding /recommendation

This study tosses light on existing social gender discriminations, body politics and deep-rooted cultural and religious superstitions with the mensuration blood. and gender inequalities in the urban areas of Kathmandu valley in Nepal. Targeted education and awareness are needed to make changes and balance between cultural and social practices during menstruation. After considering all the factors discussed above, we understand that there are so many sociocultural factors that women must go through in their menstruation journey. Taboos and stigmas of menstruation materialize as social and cultural restrictions imposed onto women. These socio-cultural restrictions consequently prevent women from achieving effective menstrual hygiene management, access to private facilities, and solutions for suitable disposal and gaining social status.

This review found that the menstruation practices and continuation are affected by social and cultural beliefs, norms, and practices. Negative perception for mensuration blood, women as a weak personality again society demands purity and women body doesn't have purity because of mensuration blood, such ideas and treatment making women inferior as a result they themselves separating during menstruation following their own subjectivity. Additionally, the social and legal factors are more crucial to maintain their practices however these are not settled appropriately. Some studies recommended that the sociocultural barriers of women putting themselves in a very vulnerable position.

The stigma, taboos and contrary perception of menstruation has negative consequences for women's physical and mental health, sexuality, well-being, and social and national status. The menstruation taboo, like body shaming, is deeply ingrained. Sanchez (2015) argued that we will not eliminate hateful behavior toward women until we reject the notion that menstruation is shameful. The elimination of menstrual shame may take longer however social and legal religious effort could lead vibrantly. women experience shame when they fail to meet extensive, layered, complex and competing demands and expectations. Brown (2004) describes shame as an intensely painful experience of believing we are flawed and thus unworthy of acceptance and belonging. She observed that shame is experienced as a profound sense of inadequacy, and often results in women avoiding social contact, leaving women feeling trapped, isolated, and powerless. In other words, when feeling shame, women often hide from others to avoid further shame. When we avoid talking about shame, shame unravels our connection to others. Therefore, sharing our story is a strategy to establish connection equitable treatment to women body. Biology should not be treated as a social and political weapon.

Note

It is important to note that not only cisgendered women (and girls) menstruate, but also some transmen, gender nonbinary and intersex individuals do as well. And of course, not all women menstruate. And not all the issues addressed.

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