

MEDIA COVERAGE ON MENSTRUATION 2022

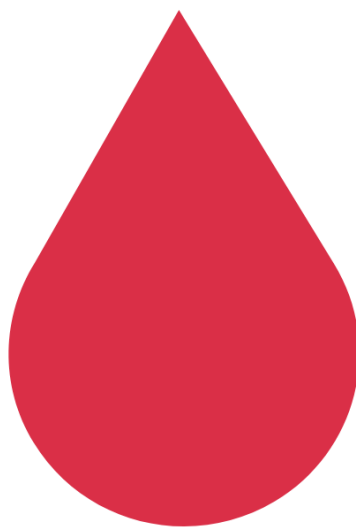


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Introduction

Over the last decade, menstrual health and hygiene has been getting a lot of importance. Donor agencies, international development organizations, NGOs are finally acknowledging the fact that menstrual health is a separate component and its agenda needs to look beyond the SRHR factor. Even in Nepal, menstrual health is gaining momentum and is gaining the required importance that it needs. Although cultural and traditional aspects are evolving over the years, taboos around menstruation and Chhaupadi system are still rampant across many parts of Nepal. In Nepal, reports have suggested that 89% of women and girls face one or another form of restriction or exclusion during menstruation. This also links with causing hindrance in the regular mobility of women and girls in Nepal. In this regard, Nepali media has a bigger role to play in dismantling structural discrimination that women and girls face while menstruating.

Nepali media has been covering issues of menstruation for a long time now. Media plays an important role in disseminating relevant and truthful information. It also acts as a catalyst in generating evidence, advocating for inclusive policy and in acting as a knowledge producing tool. Media plays a catalytic role in activism and advocacy, in addition to providing transparent news to the readers. Therefore, it is very important for the media to give space to articles, editorials and op-eds in order to highlight menstruation related topics like menstrual health and hygiene, menstrual stigma and most importantly dignified menstruation.

As many communities in Nepal still practice restrictions towards menstruating individuals, Nepali media has a strong role to play in advocating for Dignified Menstruation in the coming days.

Rationale

This is MHMPA's Second Edition of "Media Coverage on Menstruation" Report. In order to advocate for media to prioritize menstruation, MHMPA plans to bring forward such reports every year. The main aim of this report is to highlight the media's prioritization towards a sensitive topic like menstruation and the space it has given in its coverage.

The key rationale of developing this report are as follows:

- 1) Identify gaps in media coverage and make adaptive strategies for the media sector
- 2) Create evidence for policy advocacy

This year, the news portals have been selected according to three categories: English Newspapers, Nepali Newspapers and Online News Portals (Both English and Nepali).

For English newspapers, The Kathmandu Post, The Himalayan Times, The Rising Nepal and myRepublica have been chosen.

For Nepali newspapers, Kantipur, Nagarik, Gorkhapatra and Naya Patrika have been chosen.

For Online portals, OnlineKhabar, Setopati and Nepal Live Today have been chosen.

Objectives

The main objectives of developing this report are as follows:

- To provide a comprehensive outlook on media's overall coverage on menstruation for the year 2022
- To understand what kind of coverage (articles, editorials, op-eds) have been published and what kinds of details have been provided
- To understand what the Nepali media is missing while making coverage on menstruation
- To identify gaps in the media and to help media develop strategies

Methodology

The report is based on the analysis of news pieces covered by both print media and online news portals. A total of eleven newspapers have been selected and analyzed. The following are the newspapers that have been analyzed:

For English newspapers, The Kathmandu Post, The Himalayan Times, The Rising Nepal and myRepublica have been chosen.

For Nepali newspapers, Kantipur, Nagarik, Gorkhapatra and Naya Patrika have been chosen.

For Online portals, OnlineKhabar, Setopati and Nepal Live Today have been chosen.

The main idea behind choosing newspapers and online portals in both Nepali and English language is to check the coverage each news article makes and the types of readers who read them.

The newspapers have been thoroughly analyzed and key findings have been presented. In addition, several different themes have also been identified. The analysis has been done in order to check different themes and to see if the media has missed out on any important theme that needs to be covered.

The themes have been analyzed through thematic analysis- initially, preliminary codes were identified after which patterns/themes were generated in accordance with articles and their priorities on different topics of menstruation. The following themes were found to be prevalent in the articles that were analyzed:

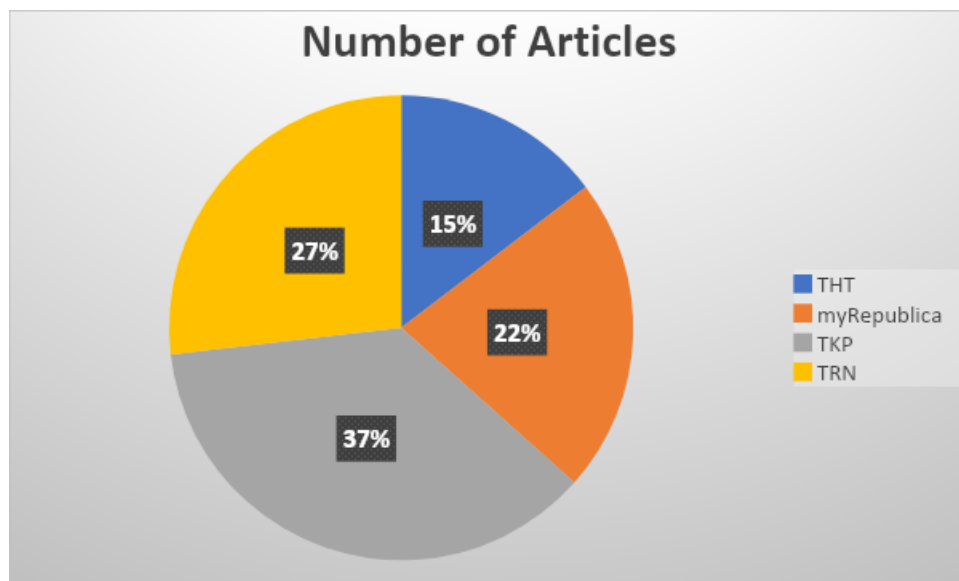
- Chhaupadi: Stigma, Untouchability, Social Norms/ Societal Pressure
- Awareness: Doctor's Perspectives, Celebration, Real-life experience, Education, Dignity
- Menstrual Products: Menstrual Cups, Vending Machines
- School: Attendance, women friendly toilets

The different themes mentioned above have been thoroughly described along with other key findings.

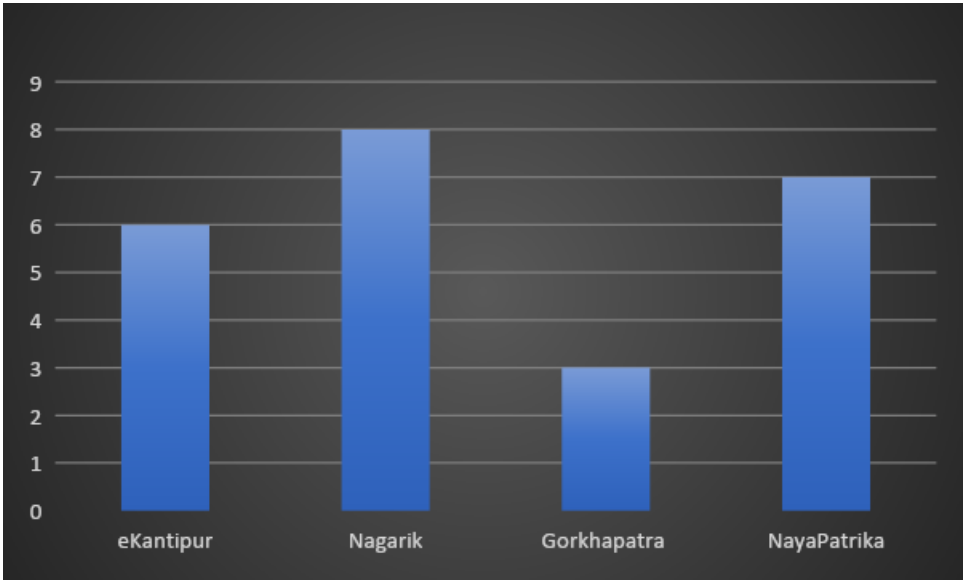
Analysis

Overview of the News Coverage in 2022

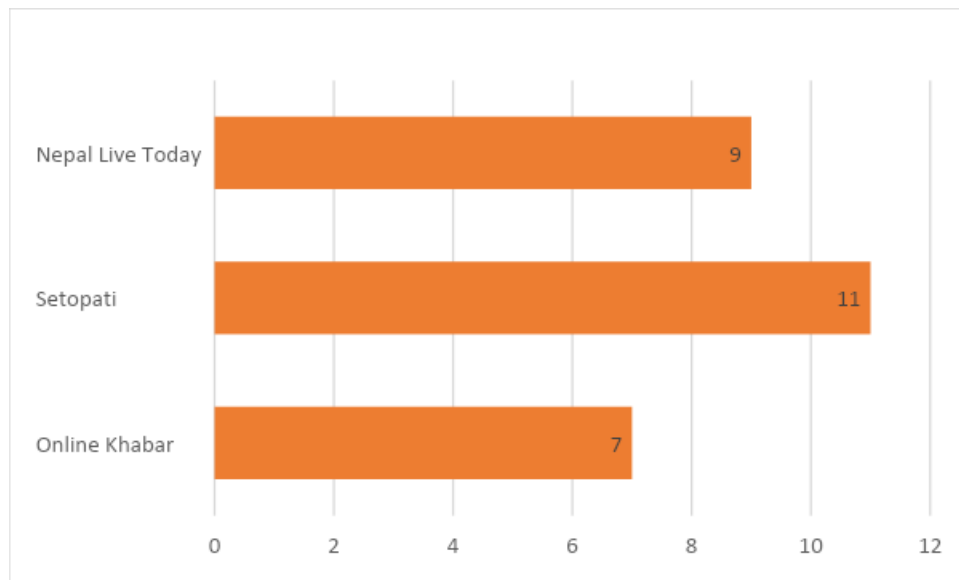
English Newspapers	Number of Articles
THT	6
myRepublica	9
TKP	15
TRN	11



Nepali Newspapers	Number of Articles
eKantipur	6
Nagarik	8
Gorkhapatra	3
NayaPatrika	7



Online News Portals	Number of News Articles
Online Khabar	7
Setopati	11
Nepal Live Today	9



Thematic Areas

A thematic analysis was conducted from all the articles from the above-mentioned newspapers and online news portals. After a thorough analysis, four major themes have been identified. They are as follows:

- Chhaupadi: Stigma, Untouchability, Social Norms/ Societal Pressure
- Awareness: Doctor's Perspectives, Celebration, Real-life experience, Education, Dignity
- Menstrual Products: Menstrual Cups, Vending Machines
- School Systems

A brief description of all the themes have been given below:

Chhaupadi

Many news pieces have covered Chhaupadi. Although Chhaupadi has been criminalized, some areas in Nepal still continue to hold this tradition because of which every year, there is at least one news coverage of young girls and women dying in Chhaupadi.

The news pieces that have covered Chhaupadi have presented a very similar kind of pattern. Stigma, shame, certain social norms, societal pressure and untouchability are factors that play a role in Chhaupadi.

Awareness

Over the years, menstrual awareness has been an integral part of different programs and projects run by different organizations and individuals. Although there is news coverage of Chhaupadi, there is also news coverage on awareness of menstruation through the lens of dignity, celebrations, real life experience, doctor's perspectives. The news coverage is mostly in forms of op-eds and articles which gives a certain level of awareness. The articles have certain viewpoints from doctors and experts in relation to menstrual health which helps readers in gaining knowledge around the topic of menstruation. Few articles have also showcased the positive side of menstruation where families have celebrated the daughter's first menstruation with open arms, gifts and cakes. Many op-eds have also reflected on authors' stand on menstrual discrimination and stigma and their individual efforts to overcome them.

Menstrual Products

A number of articles have also focused on menstrual products to help menstruators know about the choices that they have while menstruating. Many articles have focused on menstrual cups and have provided insights of how it can be a long-term sustainable solution for menstruation. Similarly, news pieces on reusable sanitary pads have also made their way to newspapers.

This year, the majority of the newspapers and online portals which have been analyzed had a photo feature on the protest against red tax on menstrual products. The news gained a lot of popularity and many have also argued that menstrual products should not be labeled as luxury since menstruation is a natural process and not a luxurious one.

School Systems

Oftentimes, young girls also miss out on school in comparison to their male counterparts. Although, studies have shown that young girls miss school during menstruation because of lack of proper WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) facilities, this is NOT only the sole reason. Social, cultural and traditional barriers play an equally important role. For example, women and girls often live under fear of having stains from menstrual blood in schools and workplaces because of which they withdraw themselves from any activities in the classrooms and workplace. Similarly, lack of conversation around menstruation and the silence that is observed has also helped in maintaining menstrual stigma across all generations.

What is the Nepali Media Missing?

In monitoring the news coverage on menstruation by Nepali media, there were a few areas related to menstruation where coverage was missing. The following has been analyzed after looking at all the articles from 5 print media and 2 online portals. In order to provide an outlook of the missing areas in Nepali media's coverage on menstruation, the following points have been summarized.

Gaps in policies and plans related to menstruation

There are several policies and plans that are in place. However, analysis and gaps are never analyzed. Analysis of gaps in policies, plans and programs will not only create a buzz among policymakers, it will help the general people understand that policy gaps exist and that there needs to be a certain level of intervention to acknowledge it.

National initiatives by individuals and organizations on menstruation

There are many individuals and organizations who are working at their maximum capacity to create knowledge, awareness and to advocate for menstrual health and hygiene. There are several coverages of celebrities and their view towards menstruation. However, it would help if the common man and their efforts are also acknowledged.

Menstruation in Emergencies

Every year, there is news about flooding and displacement from across the country. However, during such emergencies, there is no news and coverage on how women and girls are dealing with menstruation during such difficult times. Emergencies can happen anytime, therefore the media should put its effort in covering issues of difficulties faced by women and girls during emergencies.

Menstrual issues with individuals from LGBTQIA community and persons with disabilities

Menstruation is a natural process and it does not stop for anyone. Proper mechanisms for menstruators from the LGBTQIA community and persons with disabilities also need to be focused. There is hardly any coverage from the media on this topic. The media needs to be inclusive in its coverage and try to include everyone.

Policy advocacy to authorities from all three levels of the government

Media has the ability to advocate for several issues through their write-ups and networking. In this regard, the Nepali media can work in advocating for policies and plans relevant to menstruation

Coverage on Menopause

Along with the themes that have been identified above, the media should also try and reflect upon issues like menopause. Several women go through several different symptoms while going through menopause. Coverage on such sensitive issues will help women understand more about the changes in their bodies and will make them feel less isolated considering the fact that there are many women going through a similar phase.

Coverage on PMS/PMDD (Premenstrual Syndrome and Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder)

There are sensitive areas like Premenstrual syndrome and Premenstrual dysphoric disorder which need to be highlighted and the media needs to provide space for the same. It has been estimated that 80% of the menstruators have one or another form of PMS or PMDD. Therefore, this is also an important area that needs to be covered.

Involvement of Men in Menstruation

There are many male activists who have been working in the field of menstruation for a long time. Their effort in normalizing dialogues and stories on menstruation shows that involvement of men is also an integral point to destigmatize menstruation. Stories and continuous efforts of such men and their coverage will help more men being involved.

Conclusion

Looking at the level of media coverage on menstruation from renowned newspapers and online portals, it won't be wrong to say that the topic is yet to get recognition in the mainstream. With so much silence still pertaining around menstruation, the media can play a very important role by giving space and recognizing how important it is in the Nepali context.

As one of the core thematic areas of MHM PA Nepal's building block, it has become important to advocate for media's support and coverage on a sensitive topic like menstruation. This report, as a part of our advocacy effort, tries to bring forward an analysis of Nepali media's effort in bringing forward news pieces on menstruation and the space it has given to op-eds, blogs and other columns for the same. This research was done in order to raise awareness among Nepali media to highlight the importance of menstruation and to destigmatize and stop silence at a broader level. This report can also be used as an advocacy tool to help media in reaching policy makers through their constant coverage.

The findings that have been achieved from this report would be disseminated to different media houses for their individual reflections and hoping that they bring forward necessary changes by incorporating recommendations that are provided.

With Nepali media's presence in the public sphere and its capability to influence the general public, more coverage on menstruation related areas and topics would mean better outreach and proper dissemination.

The onus is also now upon some newspapers from print media to realize that they have been lacking in covering ideas and issues related to menstruation and it is also their responsibility to create a platform where menstrual health and hygiene can be discussed.

It is also important to bring forward news pieces related to policies, programs and interventions related to menstruation from the federal, provincial and local level. This will help in bringing a clear picture of what is happening in all levels of the government and its gaps and to address them.

Recommendations

The following are a few recommendations to the Nepali media fraternity from MHMPA Nepal

- 1) The Nepali media needs to hold conferences related to menstruation at least once a year in order to provide a platform to talk about challenges and opportunities faced by different stakeholders working in the field of menstruation
- 2) There is a need for more editorials on menstruation and its related topics. There is lack of enthusiasm from editors in media houses to learn more about menstruation and lack of interest in addressing such a sensitive topic. With so many women and girls menstruating every day in Nepal, it is important to highlight the topic
- 3) Print media – the newspapers mentioned above must try and work with organizations working in the field of menstruation to bring forward more narratives and stories of women, girls and other menstruators in order to help bring attention and help in spreading similar experiences forward. Setopati has done a commendable job in bringing stories of famous women to help break taboo and stigma.
- 4) The media should try and focus on disseminating its people to different parts of the country to follow-up several news related to menstruation. Time and again, there is much news about Chhaupadi, but there is hardly any follow-up. By following up on news about such critical issues, it would help in creating awareness to the general public.
- 5) Nepali media houses should try and capacitate its employees by providing courses, training and workshops related to menstruation for better coverage.

Annex 1: Link of News Articles According to Newspapers

Daily (English)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
T H T		https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/nepals-period-p-overt-y-time-to-bring-about-change	https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/nepals-period-p-overt-y-time-to-bring-about-change	https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/nepals-period-p-overt-y-time-to-bring-about-change	https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/nepals-period-p-overt-y-time-to-bring-about-change	https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/nepals-period-p-overt-y-time-to-bring-about-change						
R e p u b	https://myrepublicanagarib	https://myrepublicanagarib			https://myrepublicanagarib	https://myrepublicanagarib	https://myrepublicanagarib		https://myrepublicanagarib			https://myrepublicanagarib

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T K P				http://kathmandu.ost.com/art-culture/2022/04/28/the-irony-of-the-honour-patriarchy-thrusts-upon-women http://kathmandu.ost.com/sudurpaschim-provinc		https://kathmandu.ost.com/sudurpaschim-province/2022/06/26/chhapadipractice-puts-women-with-disabilities-at-higher-risk https://kathmandu.ost.com/editorial/2022/06/26/dismantling-chhapadipractice	https://kathmandu.ost.com/national/2022/07/27/employing-dhamijhankritopractice-digitalized-menstruation https://kathmandu.ost.com/intervIEWS/2022/08/25/how-anepalenvironmental-s	https://kathmandu.ost.com/national/2022/08/11/how-some-restaurant-are-working-to-normalise-menstruation https://kathmandu.ost.com/intervIEWS/2022/08/25/how-anepalenvironmental-s		https://kathmandu.ost.com/editorial/2022/07/11/what-a-mole-1665505013 https://kathmandu.ost.com/national/2022/07/10/in-reemotion-we-stamped-ignores-tore-down-chhau-sheds-the-y	https://kathmandu.ost.com/fiction-park/2022/07/11/27/adeath-in-the-he-hut https://kathmandu.ost.com/monday/2022/11/09/sanitary-padded-vending-machine-shelp-to-keep-girls-in-school	https://kathmandu.ost.com/karnaliprovience/2022/12/20/karnalitude-ants-affected-by-lack-of-disabled-friendliness-infracture

				e/2022/04/26/mangal-sen-women-see-no-point-in-voting		mindset		cientist-founded-award-winning-period-panels?verify=false https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2022/08/20/investing-in-period-positive-schools https://kathmandupost.com/national/2022/08/20/menstrual-cups-are-gai		have-sprung-up-again		
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								ning-currency-albeit-slowly				
T R N	<a href="https://risingnepaldaily.com/main-news/women-preferri-
ng-eco-friendly-mens-trual-cups-over-sanitary-pads">https://risingnepaldaily.com/main-news/women-preferri- ng-eco-friendly-mens-trual-cups-over-sanitary-pads				https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/10860		https://www.risingnepaldaily.com/news/14312			https://www.risingnepaldaily.com/news/16703	https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/19251	https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/20196
					https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/11804		https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/14562					
					https://www.risingnepaldaily.com/news/11784							
					https://risingnepaldaily.com/news/11419							

					https://www.risingnepaldaily.com/news/11790							
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Daily (Nepali)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
K a n t i p u r	https://ekantipur.com/news/2022/01/02/164108690811049054.html	https://ekantipur.com/pradesh-7/2022/02/20/164533995433477283.html			https://ekantipur.com/pradesh-5/2022/05/31/165398147076278465.html https://ekantipur.com/health/2022/05/19/165296232419059008.html https://ekantipur.com/world/2022/05/06/16518016	https://ekantipur.com/opinion/2022/06/06/165448087249444347.html						

				7291748286.html							
N a g a r i k			https://nagariknews.com/social-affairs/758841-1646462346.html?click_from=category https://nagariknews.com/social-affairs/758841-1646462346.html?click_from=category	https://nagariknews.com/social-affairs/837311-1653721756.html https://nagariknews.com/social-affairs/834761-1653477100.html?click_from=category	https://nagariknews.com/education/860881-1655793319.html?click_from=category	https://nagariknews.com/arts/8461-1658303673.html	https://nagariknews.com/arts/898381-1659334447.html				
G o r k h				https://gorkhapatraonline.com/news							

a p a t r a				ws/14245 https://gorkhapatraonline.com/videos/1653714425 https://gorkhapatraonline.com/news/14228							
N a y a P a t r i k a		https://www.nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/81065/2022-02-22 https://www.nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/80725/2022-02-22		https://www.nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/87423/2022-05-25				https://www.nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/95037/2022-09-04		https://www.nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/103346/2022-12-25 https://www.nayapatrikadaily.com/news-details/102936/	

		022-02-16										2022-12-19 https://www.nayapatrickadaily.com/news-details/1022022-12-08
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Online

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul y	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	D e c
O n l i n e K h a b a r	https://www.onlinenekhabar.com/2022/01/1067306	https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2022/02/1076481		https://www.onlinenekhabar.com/2022/04/1110333				https://www.onlinenekhabar.com/2022/08/1179954	https://www.onlinenekhabar.com/2022/09/1189693	https://www.onlinenekhabar.com/2022/10/1208595	https://www.onlinenekhabar.com/2022/11/1211562	
S e t o p a	https://www.setopati.com/politic	https://www.setopati.com/social	https://www.setopati.com/literat		https://www.setopati.com/litera	https://www.setopati.com/blog/	https://www.setopati.com/blog/			https://www.setopati.com/blog/		

t i	s/260686	/262556 https://www.setopati.com/blog/256966	ure/265002 https://www.setopati.com/social/263858		ture/272811 https://www.setopati.com/social/272328	275473 https://www.setopati.com/social/274709	ati.com/ ket a-k eti- kur a/277166			285296		
N e p a l L i v e T o d a y	https://www.nepallivetoday.com/2022/01/12/hygiene-facilities-need-to-be-accessible-to-all-in-houses-holds-health-care-facilities-schools-and-public-institutions-trainees-countryside-ector-water	https://www.nepallivetoday.com/2022/02/25/combinational-of-arenas-and-legal-intervention-from-the state-is crucial to eliminate social-malpractices-kaajal-pradhan-hub-director-stress-development/	https://www.nepallivetoday.com/2022/03/08/breakthrough-hebias-it-is-now-time-to-break-barriers-and-gender-stereotypes/		https://www.nepallivetoday.com/2022/05/27/menstrual-hygiene-daughter-2022-wea-recommended-dignified-menstruation-in-schools/	https://www.nepallivetoday.com/2022/06/19/low-quality-sanitary-napkins-have health-impacts-on women/	https://www.nepallivetoday.com/2022/08/12/project-with-the-monsoon-and-menstrual-hygiene-lancet/			https://www.nepallivetoday.com/2022/10/14/dangers-of-blindly-following-traditions-without-questioning/		

-aid-nepal/ https://www.nepallivelihood.com/2022/01/06/why-it-is-important-to-ensure-menstrual-health-in-workplaces/				uring-menstruation/								
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