

Prayer Notes

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks." – Thessalonians 5:16

August 2023

Death of young girl in "period hut" - Young people are speaking out.

16 year old Bhita Chand was sleeping alone in a 'period hut' when she was bitten by a snake. Isolated from her family and community during menstruation in an ancient practise known as chhaupadi, there was no one to help.

She died alone.

Bhita isn't the first young woman to die during menstrual isolation. Chhaupadi, which has its roots in religious traditions, excludes women and girls from all contact with their families and community while they menstruate. They are considered 'untouchable' and are permitted no contact with food, religious icons, animals or other people. During their isolation, the women are confined to small 'period huts' on the fringes of their village, which have no heating, electricity or lighting.

After decades of campaigning, the practise is now illegal, but there's little appetite for enforcement by police.

"We try and tell our parents that this isn't the right way," says Bibhu, one of the young women who takes part in leadership mentoring with our partner Welfare Association for Children, Tikapur (WACT).



A traditional "period hut" for women and girls

"But it's very hard because they say that this is something our communities have practised for a long time."

Bibhu and other young leaders want to end the practise once and for all. With the support and encouragement of the team at WACT, they raise awareness of the rights of children and young people through street dramas and discussion at their high school; they have engaged parents in education sessions in their homes.

"When this happens to us, we can't do our school lessons," Bibhu explains. "There's no electricity to do lessons at night. We have to wait for other people to bring us food and water. We can be in isolation for a week if our menstruation is long."

Both the young men and women of Bibhu's group are united in their desire to see the practise ended.

"No one should be treated this way," says 16 year old Sunam. "We are determined to put an end to chhaupadi and we are thankful to our team leaders for giving us support to speak up."

Please pray for our partner, Welfare Association for Children, Tikapur (WACT)

WACT work with young people from castes where chhaupadi is still practised. They create groups and learning clubs where young people can talk about the issues that matter to them, and they mentor and nurture young leaders to take action.

Bibhu and Sunam are leaders of these groups, along with many other young people who desperately want to help create change. Please pray for the leaders of the groups as well as for the young people who take part.

Remember you can pray and get more detailed updates about our partners online with Ben on the 1st Monday of each month from 7.30am AEST. Email the office for the link.

Please pray with us

INF Nepal

INF are excited to announce a new climate change resilience project in Kalikot (BREAD). In an area where flooding, drought, fire and landslides are increasingly threatening livelihoods, the initiative will equip local people to anticipate and prepare for disaster as well as give them tools to adapt to the changing climate, including better irrigation, water collection and drought resistant crops. Please pray for the roll out of the project.

Give thanks also for a successful emergency medical camp in disaster-affected regions of Panchthar district, specifically in Yangwarak and Thallelung Rural Municipality areas. 243 individuals received medical attention and emergency support.

Ongoing rains have triggered landslides in various project locations, making it extremely challenging to deliver the construction materials to project sites. Please pray for the safety and security of INF field teams and community members and for the timely progress on the project.

Please also pray for families affected by recent landslides in Himali and Gaumul Rural Municipalities of Bajura. Over 50 households have been devastated by landslides; INF are helping provide strength, comfort, and material support to the group.

Pray for community livestock farmers in Rolpa who are facing a distressing outbreak of lumpy pox among cattle, leading to substantial losses of domestic animals, including cow and buffalo. Please pray for the affected SHG members and for the intervention of veterinary experts and authorities to bring the disease swiftly under control.

MILAP

MILAP gives thanks for time spent in the local community (Janaki) to assess the impact of their projects. It was a rich time to listen from beneficiaries about how Milap is working with them and impacting their individual lives.

They are also grateful for the impact of their work among fire and flood victims this month. Emergency packs were provided and gratefully received.

Please pray for the work in some project areas which have been affected by heavy rainfall, flooding and the evacuation of families. MILAP work with Self Help Groups in this area, but many have been disrupted and are struggling to recover from the impact of the weather events.

WACT (Welfare Association for Children, Tikapur)

Give thanks for the securing of three year donor funding for projects which enables WACT to plan sustainably for their future and provide ongoing employment for workers and service to the community.

Pray for flooding in WACT's project areas – more than 300 families are living in tents on the highway due to the inundation of their homes. WACT is providing an emergency response including food and clothing for those impacted. Seasonal flooding can disrupt for months the work of Self Help Groups and their efforts to breed livestock or plant crops for harvest.

Please also pray for two staff members who are visiting the Women's Leadership Program in Australia this month. Pray they will travel safely and learn deeply from this opportunity.

SSS - Sarwangin Sewa Samaj

SSS have asked us to pray for a number of people with whom they're working this month:

25 year old Rajan Buddha is from Jajarkot. While looking after his goats in the jungle, he fell from cliffs and was badly injured. He is hospitalised in Bheri and SSS staff have been provided support and counseling.

Rhythm Sharma is 4 years old and suffering from epilepsy. His parents are estranged and so he is staying at his maternal uncle's house. Please pray that he is able to access appropriate medical treatment in time and for his family life, so that he might receive the love and care he needs to thrive.

Caryn and Peter Kneale

Caryn and Peter have returned from a short holiday and give thanks for the time they enjoyed together in Japan.

Please pray for Peter's health as he starts the new school year. Pray also for a presentation on nutrition Caryn is about to present to the Green Pastures Hospital Staff from the Palliative Care and Chronic Disease Department.

Ming Poone

Ming is about to return to Hong Kog to undergo some medical check ups and spend time connecting with her supporter churches. Please pray for safety in travel and productive time among her supporters.