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NEPAL: LOCAL CUSTOM DISCRIMINATES AGAINST WOMEN

VIDEO

JANAKI AND BABY LEAVE HUT /
WALK IN VILLAGE

VILLAGE AT DAWN

JANAKI ON CAMERA

WASHING BABY

AUDIO

NARRATION

It's a brisk morning and 18-year-old Janaki Luhar and her child emerge from a small, unheated shed. (7")

She is forced to stay here during her menstrual cycle. Like most women in remote, western Nepal, after giving birth and during menstruation, they are considered bad luck for the family. The local custom – *chaupadi* – prohibits them from entering the home at night. (16")

JANAKI: (Nepali)

F

"I'd like to stay in the house with my family, but I have no choice but to go to the shed. It's cold in winter and very hot in the summer. Many women are inside." (9.5")

NARRATION

Every night, some ten women – including teenagers – gather in this shed. It's neither comfortable nor safe. Some women contract

NGO GROUP

pneumonia or suffer fatal snake bites.

Even members of a women's rights group admit they still go into the chaupadi shed each month. (12")

NGO MEMBER ON CAMERA

NGO MEMBER: (Nepali) **F**

"I'm afraid people will shun me. I would have no friends and no support if I did not follow the rules of our society." (7")

DEBO COOKING / HUSBAND

NARRATION

But there is one woman who defies the custom. Debo Bogati runs a shop in Janaki's village. She refused to go to the shed. (8.5")

DEBO ON CAMERA

DEBO: (Nepali) **F**

"Everyone thinks that when things go wrong it is the woman's fault. If a family member gets sick or a buffalo dies, they blame her. I don't believe that. I always stay in the house, and I've never had a problem." (13")

WOMEN SIT

NARRATION

Debo suffered a backlash from the community – customers stopped doing business with her. And so far, no other woman has followed her actions. But Shrigna, who is 16, and her friends have taken notice. (13.5")

SHRIGNA ON CAMERA

SHRIGNA: (Nepali) **F**

"I admire her. I don't like to stay in the shed, but I have to go. Anything can happen there; the door is not strong." (8")

NARRATION

Punam, who is only 11, hasn't started going to the shed yet. (4.5")

PUNAM ON CAMERA

PUNAM: (Nepali)

F

"I will have to go too. My parents would like me to stay home but there is too much pressure from our neighbours." (6")

WOMEN/JANAKI WALKING

NARRATION

The local custom of *chaupadi* discriminates against women and girls in Nepal. Despite social progress, women still respect this traditional belief. But Janaki hopes it will become a distant memory by the time her daughter comes of age. (16")

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by William Ryan for the United Nations.