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Report on the new cultural change among the Jarawa women attached to Tirur

As we all know some cultural changes have been adopted by the Jarawas. Now it has been observed that another important cultural change has been taken among the Jarawa women attached to Tirur. During, the Menstrual period Jarawa women use the leaf as a Sanitary napkin, which is one of their traditional practices. Now, it has been observed that the Jarawa women have started to use Carry bags as a Sanitary napkin. When we came to know we had lots of questions like "How long they have been practicing this? Whether they are using the leafs or not, as earlier? If not, why? From where they learnt and how they are using it? Whether it is practiced among the young girls group or the elders too?" etc., hope you also have the similar kind of questions when you read. To get answer for these questions self along with Smti. Sriti Sarkar, interacted with the Jarawa Women at Hot Spot, Tirur with the help of Janjati Sevak namely Shri. Sukh Bahadur and Shri. Sarfudeen. When we started to ask, at first they are not willing to open up the truth, then few minutes later they have started to answer our questions.

It was clearly said by the Jarawa women that they are using the carry bags as a Sanitary napkin because they feel more comfortable to perform their day to day activities during their periods. Usually when they have menstrual period, they stay at chadda on first and second day or when their menstrual flow is heavy and rest of the days i.e., once menstrual flow becomes less they use leaf as a sanitary napkin and perform their day to day activities.

When they go hospital, they have provided with the cotton napkin (cotton rolled with cotton binders) by seeing that they have learnt to make carry bag as a napkin. It was clearly stated by them that not only the girls group but the married women also started this new practice. It is used by both the elder and young women but the young girls group are very active. These Carry bags they get it from the road side and from the illegal barter (poachers exchange the things in the carry bags)

When we asked whether they dispose it or using the same by washing? They stated, in case of less flows on it they will wash and use the same or else they will dispose it in the forest. When we asked whether only the Tirur group of women are using or the other groups..? It was said by them that in Jirkatang two or three Jarawa women are having this practices and the Kadamtala group is unknown.

Finally, one Jarawa woman has demonstrated how they make the carry bag as a sanitary napkin and it was documented.

They are using the carry bags by without any proper wash and there is no proper way of disposal, which all leads to the infections. Also it may give way for new diseases among the Jarawa women. Since, there is a possibility of health infection and it needs immediate attention I, request you to take this issue as an urgent and discuss with the Administration especially with the Health Department to come up with the suggestion "what would be the alternative ways to stop this practice..?"

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