



Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV): A Bridge Between the Mountains and Valleys of Nepal?

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Overview



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Introduction

What is the Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) Program?

- Developed in the 1980s
- Communities elect female health volunteers to receive health care training and resources.
- Volunteers provide educational services alongside resource delivery to promote maternal health.



Introduction

Context and Motivation

- Nepal: Ethnic, cultural, and topographic diversity.

Threat of economic and social inequality

- Mountainous rural areas: significantly lower economic opportunities and political representation (Murshed and Gates 121).
- Frustration and tension contributed to civil war from 1996–2006.
- Today, inter-regional disparities remain

A beacon of hope?

- The FCHV program has significantly reduced maternal and child mortality in rural mountainous areas (Panday et al. 1).



Key Question

Can Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV)
promote social equality and harmony in Nepal as
proxied by access to health services?



Findings

How does the FCHV program address disparity in Nepal?

Health

- Program provides mountainous areas with key healthcare resources and training
- Culturally sensitive care (Panday et. al 6)
- Improved maternal and mental health (Horton, Silwal, and Simkhada 6).



Findings

How does the FCHV program address disparity in Nepal?

Social cohesion

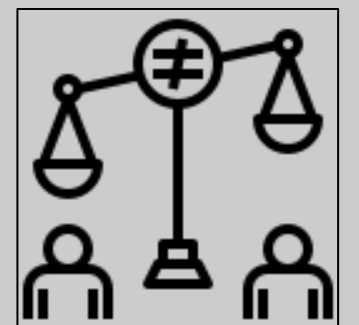
- Female empowerment
 - Volunteers and patients (Khatri et. al 2; Shahi et al. 117)
- Positive relations between volunteers and their communities (Glenton et al. 1922)



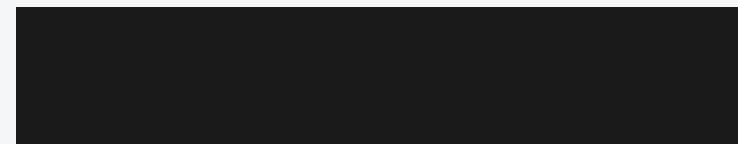
Findings

Challenges for the program?

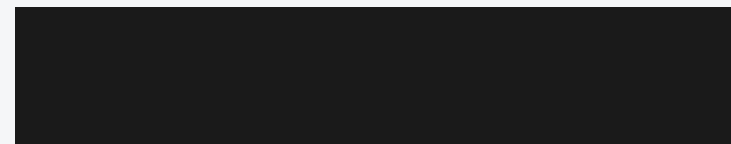
- Limited volunteer empowerment (Panday et al. 2).
- Program highlights regional inequality (Panday et al. 6).
- Program invites anti-government sentiments (Glenton et. al 1921-1922).
- Program curbs further government action (Khatri et al. 1; Panday et al. 4-5).
 - Volunteer strain



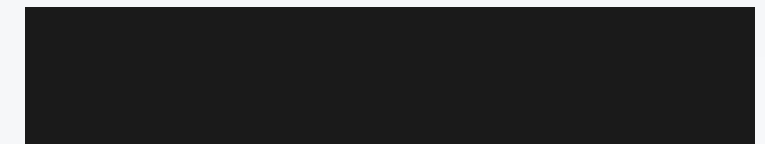
Key Tensions and Lessons



Public Goods and Services:
A Key and Challenge



Female volunteerism: A source of empowerment and
burden



Volunteerism: A source of
unity and bitterness



Policy Implications

Volunteer engagement in policymaking

Benefits at the community level

- Uncover volunteer challenges
- Ease volunteer strain
- Improve quality of care

Broader benefits

- Address social determinants of health
- Enhance state image





Thank you!

Works Cited (in MLA8)

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