The Feasibility and Acceptability of Female Community Health Volunteers Facilitating GBV Survivor Care and Support In Nepal

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Background

- Only 22% of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence sought help.
- The Government of Nepal has committed to addressing gender-based violence (GBV) multisectorally, including through the health system.
- Jhpiego, with UNFPA, has been supporting government initiatives on a health sector response to GBV, including in the district where this study was carried out, since 2015.

26%  
Women experiencing domestic violence in Nepal
Jhpiego’s work on health response to GBV

Developed National Clinical Protocol on GBV, training package & GBV toolkit for FCHVs

- Health service providers trained: 877
- FCHVs oriented on GBV toolkit: 384
- Survivors reached with facility based services: 4,185

FCHVs participating in role play during orientation on GBV toolkit
Study Aim

• To pilot a GBV intervention that orients FCHVs

› To identify GBV survivors and refer them for facility-based services as an extension of the existing health response to GBV interventions in Mangalsen, Nepal

FCHVs are the women selected from and by health mothers’ groups—who are active in different social and health activities within their locality.

An FCHV with her child after receiving GBV orientation
Research Questions

1. Do service providers and communities view FCHVs’ involvement in the health sector response to GBV as feasible and acceptable?

2. What do FCHVs know about GBV services, their role in supporting GBV survivors, and linking survivors to services?

3. What do FCHVs identify as barriers and facilitators to working with GBV survivors in the community?

4. Does an orientation about GBV services increase FCHVs’ knowledge of GBV and GBV services and change their attitudes about GBV?

5. Is there an increase in the number of GBV survivors reaching health facilities in Mangalsen, and if so, how does FCHV referral contribute to that increase?

6. What has been the most significant change in Mangalsen Municipality for FCHVs and survivors—from the FCHV perspective—since the introduction of the project?
Study Site and Key Population

Study site
• Mangalsen Municipality, Achham
• Population: 32,331
• Health facilities: 8

Study population
• FCHVs: 116

Key stakeholders
• Health mother’s group
• Health service providers
• Police
• Safe house in-charge/counselor

Study period
• June 2018–October 2019

Map of Achham district showing study site
Methodology

Baseline
• FGDs: FCHVs (2), mothers (1)
• Key informant interviews (5)

Intervention
• GBV orientation for FCHVs
• Knowledge/attitudinal assessments
• Review of service statistics
• Most Significant Change (MSC) story collection

Endline
• FGDs: FCHVs (2), mothers (1)
• Key informant interviews (5)

FCHVs attending orientation on the GBV toolkit
Most Significant Change (MSC) Process

FCHVs identify GBV survivors in the community and refer them to affiliated facilities for care.

1. MSC stories at each level
   - 264
   - 96
   - 32
   - 6

Select ~2 stories per month ➔ 6 per quarter

Selects 2 stories per quarter out of 6=up to 16 stories per quarter received from 8 HFAs

Selects 3 stories per quarter out of 16

FCHVs share MSC stories during monthly group meetings at affiliated facilities.

1st quarter 2nd quarter

Facility staff and FCHVs discuss MSC stories and choose a certain number of stories per facility every 4 months.

Municipality Level Review
2 times during study

Project Level Review
1 time: End of Project
Findings—Knowledge and Attitudinal Changes

Average scores (percentage) of FCHVs at eight health facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Facility</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Final-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bannatoli HP</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jupu HP</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalagau HP</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>96%</td>
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<td>Janalibandali HP</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oligau HP</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>98%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mangalsen DH</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basti HP</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuntibandali HP</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average scores of Pre-test and final assessments
On average, FCHVs scored more than 95% in all HFs on final assessments

Attitudinal assessment before and after GBV orientation

- **GBV is a private matter**
  - Pre-test: 51%
  - Final Assessment: 7%

- **Husband is justified beating wife under some conditions**
  - Pre-test: 44%
  - Final Assessment: 4%
Identification and referral of GBV survivors by FCHVs (2018/19)

1,253
Identification

221
Referral

22
HF visits

1,213
# of sessions on GBV delivered to mother’s groups

251
Total GBV survivors visiting HF in Mangalsen Municipality

3 fold

50% “self referred/ HW identified”
Stakeholders’ Perspectives

• All service providers and most stakeholders acknowledged the role of FCHVs in identifying and referring GBV survivors for services.
• Mothers’ groups identified FCHVs as providers that women trust and look to for help.
• FCHVs’ older age and illiteracy were identified as potential barriers to performing their role effectively.

“The more new things they (FCHVs) learn, we’d get to learn about it too.”—Mother/FGD2
FCHVs’ Perspectives

• FCHVs see a role for themselves in helping GBV survivors, with empathy toward survivors as a motivating factor.

• GBV orientation has sensitized and empowered FCHVs to advocate for change in the community.

“Before we had no training. We didn’t understand much either. We didn’t know what Gender Based Violence is. How would we have known that Chaupadi (menstrual isolation) is a form of GBV too!” – FCHV/FGD3
MSC Stories

• MSC stories reinforce FCHVs’ role as powerful change agents

• Domains of change include behavior (41%), attitude (33%), and knowledge (26%)

“after receiving GBV orientation, we discussed on this issue continuously and numerous times in mothers’ group meeting...many women have lost their lives while living there...we discussed we need to unite and declare this area as chhaugoth free...we decided that every woman will develop their habit of staying in their own house during menstruation...at present, the number of women living inside their house during menstruation is increasing in the village.”

–MSC story/Jupu Health Post

A typical menstrual hut (chhaugoth) in far-west region
Barriers and Gaps in Accessing Services

• Not reaching health facility
  › Fear of consequences
  › FCHVs referring to other institutions
  › Resolving issues in community

• Not disclosing at health facility
  › Confidentiality and privacy concerns

• Safety concerns of FCHVs
  › Some verbal threats documented
  › No severe adverse events reported

Role play by health service providers on privacy during GBV orientation for FCHVs
Discussion and conclusion

• Despite barriers and challenges, FCHVs were motivated and interested to work with GBV survivors

• Stakeholders and mothers’ groups perceive FCHVs as change agents in society

• With proper support and transformative training on GBV, FCHVs have potential to raise awareness and facilitate services and support for GBV survivors

FCHVs after orientation on GBV toolkit
“Before I didn’t even know the term ‘laingik hinsa’ (GBV). Though we knew different forms of violence, we could not categorize it and pinpoint these are also violence. But now I not only know about it but can also help women in the communities.”

— FCHV/FGD1
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