



**Pelvic Organ Prolapse (PoP) Program
in
Dhanusha District**



Project Background

In Nepal, 80% of the population lives in rural areas, where over 40% of the population is illiterate and poor. This widespread poverty and illiteracy has made the development of rural areas very challenging. It has also made the fight to eradicate many diseases extremely difficult.

Pelvic organ Prolapse (PoP) is a serious problem affecting mostly rural, illiterate and poor women in Nepal. United Nation's Population Fund (UNPF) estimates that Nepal may have as many as 600,000 PoP victims in Nepal. These victims never seek medical treatment as they fear losing social prestige, and many also think the treatment might be costly. This, however, is not the case as victims who have 1st degree problem only need a simple exercise to cure the problem; while a ring pessary, that is distributed for free, needs to be inserted for women with a 2nd degree problem. For women with 3rd degree problem, a free surgery is available in a hospital.

Because of these misconceptions and lack of awareness regarding how the problem arises and can be treated, there is clear need for a PoP awareness program in rural and deprived regions of Nepal, where the local communities are illiterate and poor.



Location of the Project

The program will be organized in the 10 village development committees (VDCs) of Dhanusha district. All the VDCs are located south of the highway and suffer from high level of poverty and illiteracy. There are also many women suffering from abuse and uterus prolapse in these areas. The total beneficiary, both directly and indirectly, will be around 54,645.

Need for the Project

A woman suffering from pelvic organ prolapse clearly isn't as productive as a healthy woman. In communities that are overwhelmingly dependent on farming and animal husbandry, it is vital for all family members, especially women, to be healthy as the work they do is very labor intensive. But it is in these communities that women have more uterus prolapse. There are many reasons for this. They are:

- Lack of awareness due to high level of illiteracy in the rural population. This leads to early childhood marriage and early pregnancy. This also leads to lack of intake of nutritious food during and after pregnancy.
- Poverty also leads many women to return to work without proper rest after child delivery. Many pregnant women in rural area also have deliveries at home, where their deliveries aren't attended by trained medical professionals. This can directly result in uterus prolapse.
- Social stigma attached to the problem leads many women to hide the problem even from their husbands. They do not even seek medical care because of it.
- Many women do not seek medical care as they think it is expensive. This clearly isn't the case.

Despite the pain and the discomforts, there are many documented cases of rural Nepali women not seeking medical care even after suffering from it for many years. Because of these reasons, there is an urgent need to educate the local population, train the local health workers, and find women who currently suffer from PoP problem.

Goals and Objectives

Goals

- Empower women living in rural communities

- Lay the foundation stone for overall development of Nepal with good healthcare

Objectives

- 1 Spread awareness of Pelvic organ Prolapse (PoP) to change the perception the general public hold of the problem, and also eradicate the social stigma and the cultural habits that promulgate the problem.
- 2 Organize screening camps to identify victims and find out the severity of their prolapse so they can be treated accordingly.
- 3 Familiarize local health workers, who have already been trained to diagnose the problem and provide necessary treatment, to treat PoP victims by involving them in screening camps.
- 4 Hold nutrition fairs to inform the general public, especially pregnant women, about the need for nutritional diet during and after the pregnancy. Also inform them the necessity of rest after the pregnancy and the damage a heavy work can do to their health during postpartum.

Program Design

To implement the programs and realize the objectives, the activities listed below will be undertaken.

Objective 1 – Spread awareness of Pelvic organ Prolapse (PoP) to change the perception the general public hold of the problem, and also eradicate the social stigma and the cultural habits that promulgate the problem.

Activities are:

- 1.1 Develop IEC materials (Information, Education and Communication materials like brochure, pamphlets) to inform the general public about PoP.
- 1.2 In weekly local markets, set up stalls to educate the local people on what nutritious foods are and how they can be enjoyed them.
- 1.3 Spread PoP awareness among the general public by organizing rallies, seminars and meetings.
- 1.4 Hold orientation programs with adolescents studying in the schools to inform them of gender relations, the danger of early childhood marriage, necessary steps that need to be taken during pregnancy and the rest that is required after it, and how pelvic organ prolapse can be prevented, and how women suffering from pelvic organ prolapse can seek treatment.
- 1.5 Have similar interaction programs with adolescents who are not attending schools.
- 1.6 Organize video shows at various locations to highlight various issues that lead to PoP and how it can be tackled.

Objective 2 - Organize screening camps to identify victims and find out the severity of their prolapse so they can be treated accordingly.

- 2.1 Through Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) inform local community of the locations of screening camps.
- 2.2 Discover the severity of the problem the women face and counsel them on the course of action they can undertake to cure the problem.
- 2.3 For women with 1st degree prolapse, inform about pelvic and kegal exercises they can do.
- 2.4 For women with 2nd degree prolapse, insert a ring pessary.
- 2.5 For women with 3rd degree (severest) cases, refer the women to a hospital for surgery.

Objective 3 - Familiarize local health workers, who have already been trained to diagnose the problem and provide necessary treatment, to treat PoP victims by involving them in screening camps.

- 3.1 On the VDC level, form PoP committees. Committee members will include ex-victims, health post in-charge, mid-wife, female health volunteers and members of local political parties. They will be trained and monthly meeting will be organized to check the progress of the program.

- 3.2 Through social motivators, work with committees already established at village levels – mothers group, saving group – to inform about PoP during their meetings.
- 3.3 Work with Health Post and Sub-Health Post in-charge and ANM (Auxiliary Nursing Mid-wife) to successfully organize the screening camps so they can learn to check PoP cases, and also become skillful in inserting ring pessaries, or referring women with severe PoP problems to a hospital for surgery.

Objective 4 - Hold nutrition fairs to inform the general public, especially pregnant women, about the need for nutritional diet during and after the pregnancy. Also inform them the necessity of rest after the pregnancy and the damage a heavy work can do to their health during postpartum.

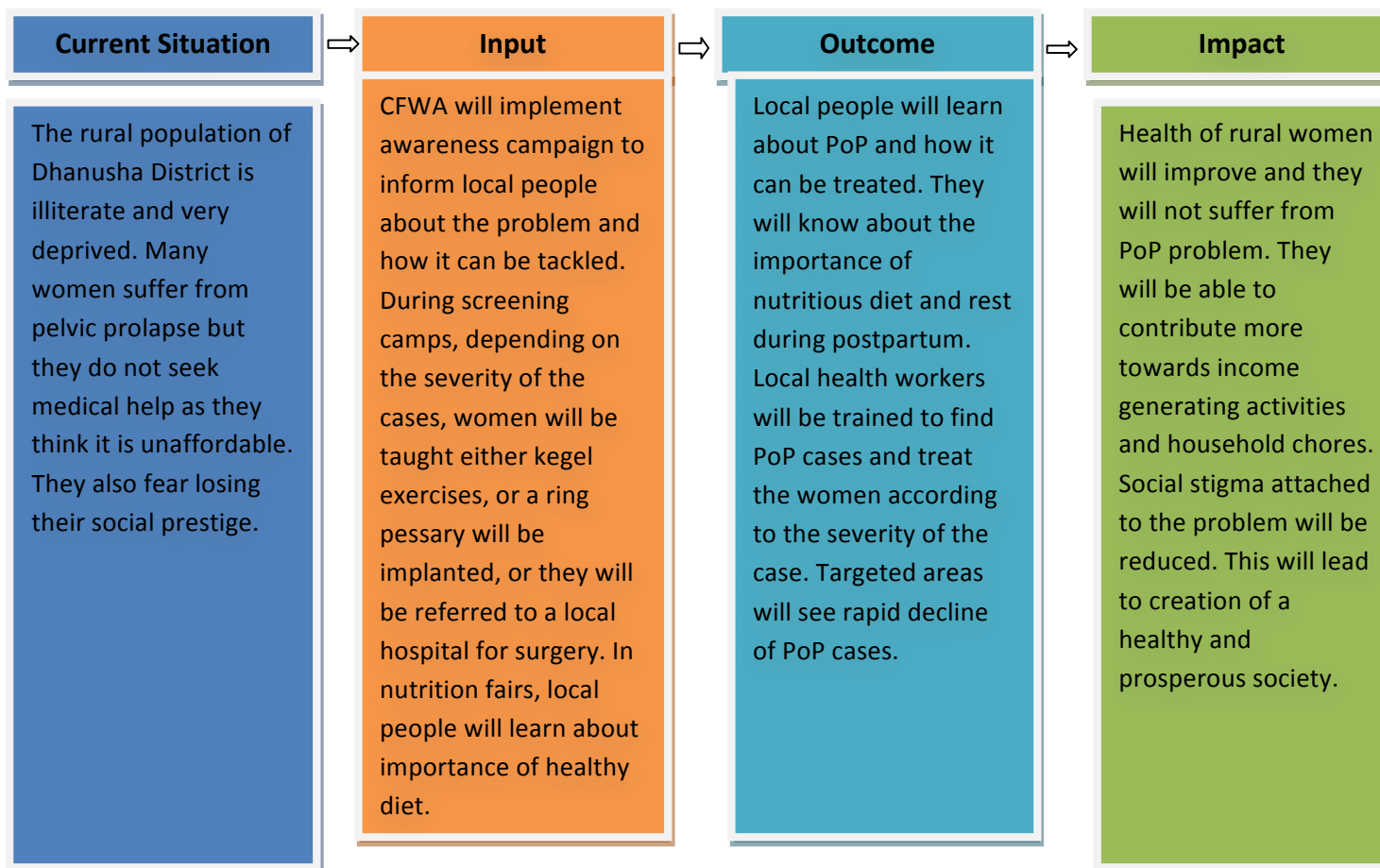
- 4.1 Through Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) inform local community of the locations of nutrition fairs.
- 4.2 Conduct general checkup of pregnant women during the fair.
- 4.3 Inform the public about the dangers of early childhood marriage.
- 4.4 Make them aware of the importance of rest and nutritious food during and after pregnancy.

Implementing Organization

The Pelvic organ Prolapse (PoP) program will be implemented by Community Family Welfare Association (CFWA). CFWA is a locally based non-governmental organization that was established in 1996. The organization works to create a healthy and knowledgeable society by building capacity of the local communities. It has 40 full-time staff and has experience of organizing PoP program for several years. Besides Dhanusha, CFWA has also worked in several other districts.

CFWA will appoint a full-time Program Coordinator to look after the program. The coordinator will be locally based and will have several years of experience organizing PoP and other locally based health programs. There will be 4 other full time staffs to organize the program.

Program Summary



Sustainability

The awareness generation part of the program will reduce or eradicate the social stigma attached to the women who suffer from uterus prolapse. Currently, many women do not seek treatment as they fear loss of social prestige. But by informing the local people of the necessity of seeking treatment and changing social attitudes, these women will be able to approach their local health posts to consult and seek treatment.

The awareness part will also inform the local community that the medical treatment required to cure women with uterus prolapse is either free or inexpensive. Because of this, more women will seek treatment early, and with even a simple exercise the problem can go away.

Our video shows, pamphlets, brochures and other awareness generating activities will inform about how PoP can be avoided and also highlight the disadvantages the whole community will face if a woman has uterus prolapse. This will directly reduce PoP cases.

This program will also train Female Community Health Workers, Auxiliary Nursing Mid-Wives, Health and Sub-Health Post in-charges, and women of the community to spread the knowledge of PoP. Through them, the message will be disseminated to every family.

The Health Post in-charge and the midwives will also become expert at checking the severity of PoP case. They will learn to teach the women to do kegel exercise. They will also learn to insert ring pessaries and to refer women with severe prolapse to a hospital.

After all this has been achieved, the 10 village development committees of Dhanusha will not only see a rapid decline of PoP victims but will also see a society that knows how to avoid uterus prolapse all together and treat PoP victims.

Budget

The program will target 10 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in Dhanusha District and will benefit up to 54,645 women. The program will run from January 2015 to December 2015.

The total cost of the program is US \$ 13,061.36

Evaluation and Monitoring

The project will be evaluated and monitored by Karuna-Shechen with the help of CFWA, our local partner. CFWA will carry out all the accounting in the field and send regular reports to Karuna-Shechen. The staff of Karuna-Shechen will also visit the project to monitor and evaluate the program. CFWA will submit quarterly reports and all the details of the activities and cost involved.