

**THE PROCESS AND OUTCOME OF EMPOWERMENT OF
FEMALE COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS IN REGARDS
TO INCREASE IN THE CONTRACEPTIVE ACCEPTANCE
AMONG THE CURRENTLY MARRIED WOMEN OF
REPRODUCTIVE AGE GROUP IN RURAL NEPAL**

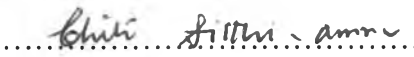


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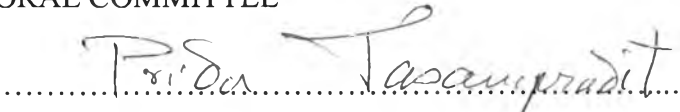
**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health
Health System Development Program
College of Public Health
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2004
ISBN: 974-9599-59-4
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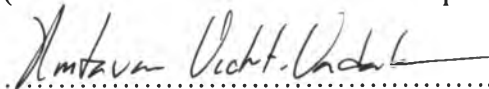
Dissertation Title : The Process and Outcome of Empowerment of Female
Community Health Volunteers in Regards to Increase in the
Contraceptive Acceptance Among the Currently Married
Women of Reproductive Age Group in Rural Nepal
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Program : Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health (Health Systems
Development) College of Public Health
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Accepted by The College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctoral Degree

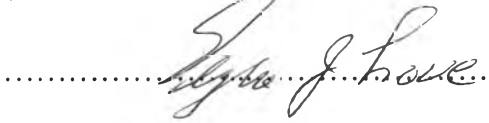
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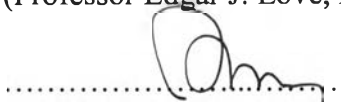
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PH: 981134 : MAJOR HEALTH SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
 KEY WORDS : CONTRACEPTIVE ACCEPTANCE / EMPOWERMENT / FEMALE
 COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEER

SARALA SHRESTHA: THE PROCESS AND OUTCOME OF EMPOWERMENT OF FEMALE COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS IN REGARDS TO INCREASE IN THE CONTRACEPTIVE ACCEPTANCE AMONG THE CURRENTLY MARRIED WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE GROUP IN RURAL NEPAL. DISSERTATION ADVISOR: ASSISTANT PROFESSOR NUNTAVARN VICHIT-VADAKAN, M.S., Dr.P.H., DISSERTATION CO-ADVISOR: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JINTANA YUNIBHAND, M.S.N., Ph.D., 196pp. ISBN 974-9599-59-4


Despite the presence of ample evidences of the beneficial effects of family planning on maternal and child health and on the population growth rate of a country, lesser than one-third of the women of reproductive age group in Nepal practice birth spacing and limit their child births through contraception. Although another one-third has the desire to space or limit births they are not using any method of contraception. Different reasons have been given for non-use of contraception, with one of the commonest reasons being the negative attitude towards contraceptives. Currently the contraceptive prevalence rate is increasing at the rate of 1% per year, which is 50% less than the desired increase to achieve the target set by the government by the year 2020. In this regard, interventions aimed at increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate would be highly desirable to the country.

Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim of enhancing contraceptive acceptance among the Currently Married Women of Reproductive Age Group (CMWRAs) through empowerment training of Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs). The objective of the study was to develop and test a model of empowerment of FCHVs in regards to increase in the contraceptive acceptance among the CMWRAs

The study used a before-during-and-after design to measure the process and outcome of empowerment of FCHVs. Seventeen FCHVs who were working in Kakani Village Development Committee in the hills of central Nepal attended the empowerment training that used participatory action research and reinforcement mechanisms. Following the training FCHVs were expected to empower the CMWRAs to increase their contraceptive acceptance. The impact of the intervention was assessed in a sample of 241 CMWRAs who were neither pregnant and nor using contraceptives at the time of selection, by interviewing them before and six months after the intervention.

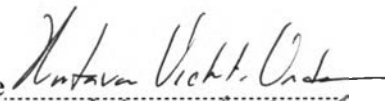
The findings revealed that the participatory approach used in the model helped FCHVs to learn from one another's experiences and develop group cohesion. Their ability to identify and intervene the stakeholders increased. They considered peer reinforcement as an easily accessible and feasible source of support to them. Their awareness, competence and confidence in providing FP services at the community level increased considerably through the empowerment training. Comparison of the FP activities performed by FCHVs before and after the intervention revealed a considerable change in their service activities following the intervention.

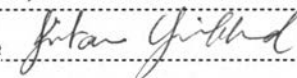
The use of modern contraceptives among the CMWRA six months following the intervention increased from none before the intervention, to 53.9%. There was a significant increase in CMWRAs' satisfaction with the services provided by the FCHVs. The study concluded that empowerment training of FCHVs using participatory action research and peer reinforcement was effective in increasing contraceptive acceptance among CMWRAs in a rural area of Nepal.

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Field of study Health Systems Development

Academic year 2004

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks and sincere gratitude to my advisor Dr. Nuntavarn Vichit-Vadakan, Associate Dean, College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University for her esteemed support, encouragement and guidance in the study. I would like to express my deep sense of appreciation to my co-advisor Associate Prof. Jintana Yunibhand, Dean, Faculty of Nursing, Chulalongkorn University for her willingness to advise me in spite of her busy schedule and for her invaluable guidance and support to me in the completion of my dissertation. I would like to express my profound gratitude to my local advisor, Dr. Indira Singh, Professor in Nursing, Nursing Campus Maharajgunj, Institute of Medicine, for her continuous inspiration, support and guidance in the study.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Chitr Sitthi-Amorn, Dean College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University for his invaluable guidance and encouragement to me in the finalization of the dissertation proposal. My sincere appreciation goes to Dr. Prida Tasanapradit, Associate Professor for his invaluable remarks in the dissertation report. I express my sincere gratitude to Dr Sathirakorn Pongpanich, ajarn Wacharin Tanynount, ajarn Tanawat Likitkererat, ajarn Rattana Somrongthong and ajarn Channawong Burapat for their valuable guidance and support to me during my study period. I am grateful to Dr Stephen King, Former Assist. Dean, College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University for introducing me to various components of self-directed learning skills and providing me with the opportunities to gain these skills

I am deeply obliged to ajarn Suriya Veeravongs, Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University for giving me invaluable suggestions and direction during the initial phase of the proposal development. I would like to express my special thanks and sincere gratitude to Prof. Caryl Abrahams, Center for Community Development, Delta State University, U.S.A. for going through my draft proposal and making invaluable feedback and suggestions during the proposal writing. My deep sense of appreciation goes to Dr. Edgar J. Love, Emeritus Professor, Department of Community

Health Sciences and Obstetrics & Gynecology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary, Canada for his continuous and invaluable guidance, feedback and support to me in the completion of the dissertation.

My sincere thanks are extended to Ms Sunanta Wongchalee and Ms King Keawbunroung, Information Center, College of Public Health for their invaluable contribution in literature search. My earnest thanks goes to Ms Kuntida Augphun, Ms Duangtip Chuphan, Mr. Jaran Lumlert, Mr. Tanaphong Vongnagmmonkkhon and Ms. Kaesorn Sitdhiraksa for the timely administrative assistance extended to me.

Last but not the least, I am grateful to Tribhuvan University, Institute of Medicine, for providing me financial support to pursue my study through the assistance of World Health Organization. I am indebted to the Female Community Health Volunteers and women from the Kakani village development committees who participated in the study and provided me the valuable information. I am also thankful to the research Assistants Ms. Sangita Manandhar and Ms. Gita Shrestha for their valuable assistance in data collection and intervention. I am also thankful to the authorities and staff of Kakani Primary Health Center for their kind assistance and support during the study period

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