

CHAPTER I

Community Financing of Drug Supply: A Strategy for Increasing Health Post Utilization through the Mobilization of Health Post Management Committees in Rural Nepal

1. Introduction

The government of Nepal, like other many least developing countries, has been committed to fulfill the growing demand for extension of health services under the condition of limited resources. As a result, health care infrastructures have been developed to meet the increasing demand of the population. Health post and sub health post have been established in each village development committees (VDC) as a means for providing basic health care package (BHCP) to those in rural settings. These health posts have been financed by the government in order to provide basic curative, preventive and promotive health services to all people without any direct costs from the consumers for achieving better equity and access.

However, it is not known how these public health facilities may impact on health of rural population, the overall utilization of these public health posts is very limited. Evidences revealed from different studies have shown that these public health

facilities have been utilized by one third of the population in rural Nepal (Sepheri and Pettigrew, 1996; Chalker, 1995). The overall utilization of clinical services at these health post have an estimated of 0.2 per population per year (DoHS, 1996), which is quite low as compared to burden of diseases estimated.

The reason for under utilization of these public health facilities are believed to be due to shortage of essential drugs, and failure of health system in addressing the perceived needs of rural population (Chalkier, 1995; Stone, 1986). Examining the issue and reasons, there seemed to be the greatest need for balancing curative and preventive health care strategies in order to satisfy the health care demand of these rural people in Nepal.

Design and implementation of appropriate community financing mechanisms are necessary to deliver effective health services through the mobilization of health post management committees in order to increase the effectiveness of these health facilities. Appropriate training activities and better participation in planning and implementation of health care activities can help to improve health services.

How the implementation of Community drug program (CDP) through the health post committees, impact pattern of health service utilization among rural population in Nepal, is clearly the most significant question. Although shortage of essential drugs have been considered the most important factor for under-utilization of public health facilities, the proposed intervention has approached to further

examination of these factors by comparing pattern of utilization between community financed drug supply and government financed.

Subsequent chapters of this portfolio thesis will include an essay, the proposal, data exercise, annotated bibliography. Presentation activities and appendices will be also given following these chapters.

Chapter II, the essay describes about health care utilization, needs, demand and determinants of health service utilization. The purpose of this essay is to explore concepts and ideas using established research works from various sources of knowledge. Print and Electronic media were used for collecting information regarding health service utilization, financing mechanisms, community participation and so forth.

The essay describes the problem that is, why public health facilities are under utilized by rural population? What factors influence the utilization of health services and what alternatives are available for improving the utilization of these public health facilities? The essay also describes different approaches to health care financing and health care utilization.

The essay concluded that the community drug program will resolve the present inadequacy of essential drugs at public health posts providing financial autonomy essential to ensure, that additional resources will be available to the health post and used for replenish the drugs.

Chapter III, the proposal, provides an overview of the rationale and methodology of this proposed study. This chapter also gives an overview of the problem. The purpose of this study is to increase health post utilization through the community drug program and mobilization of health post management committee in health facility management. The objectives of this study are specific to developing program protocol, curriculum for training, and training and implementation of the proposed program. The proposed study proposal described how different activities will be carried out and how the program will be supervised. Monitoring and evaluation of different activities are also described. The proposal also provides an overview of inputs process and outcomes of the study program.

Data exercise, chapter IV, covers the pilot test of methods and tools, proposed for the impact evaluation of the study. Although the study is still in preparatory phase, relevant data were collected in Nepal by using proposed data collection methods and tools. Data exercise was completed with following objectives.

- 1) To test the data collection tools and techniques proposed for the study
- 2) To develop and refine the data collection methods and tools.
- 3) To develop confidence and skills on data collection techniques.
- 4) To identify the community's perceptions regarding drug supply and health service utilization.

Focus group discussions, interviews and review of health post service statistics are the main methods for collecting necessary data. The entire data exercise is conducted in Takum village Development committee west of Myagdi District, Nepal.

Chapter V, presentation contains information used in final examination and provides outline of this portfolio thesis. An annotated bibliography of selected literatures, which consulted in preparing this thesis works, are given in chapter VI. Other information such as, appendices are given following this chapter.

The proposed intervention study gives a clear understanding of community drug program, implemented by trained health post management committees and health workers in Myagdi District of Nepal. This study will provide important information on health care utilization, community financing, and drug supply. The findings of this study will provide some basis in reallocating resources effectively at public health posts. It is hoped that the results of this study will be useful for district, local and central level health planners in order to improve the effectiveness of PHC activities in Nepal. Therefore, plan has made to present the results of this study to Logistic Management Division of Department of Health services, District Development Committee (DDC) Myagdi and local Community.