



When Aid Agencies Leave

CARE, KINSHIP AND FEMALE HEALTH IN POST-DISASTER NEPAL

Research Project October 2015—April 2016: Kathrin Fischer



Women in post-disaster settings are in a particularly vulnerable position which is reflected in both caretaking and health seeking behaviour: they may not go to the doctor, many skip check-ups and do not comply with rest-periods.

Based on a six month field study following the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, I aim to give insight in the complexity of underlying reasons, thereby pointing to an interrelation of humanitarian aid effectiveness and kinship.

Methods included participant observation and 50 in-depth interviews. I cooperated with NGOs, accompanied medical teams and lived with local families. The findings shall provide the basis for my Master thesis.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

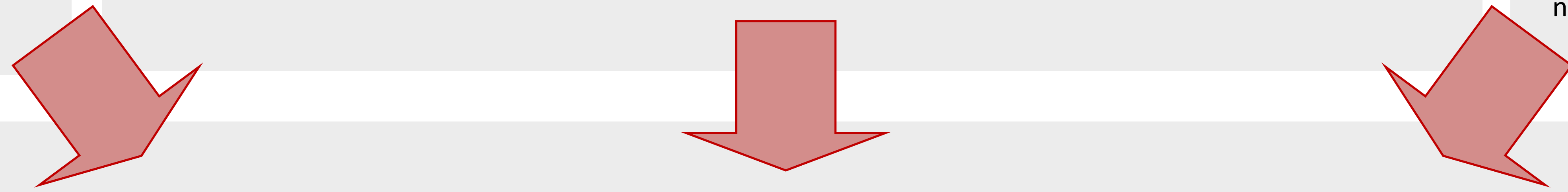
Poverty, harvest, rituals, distance to health facilities, migration of family members

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Different patterns of residence, marriage patterns as well as related obligations and relationships have a considerable impact on the possibilities in finding a caretaker and replacement for lost working power. Crucial factors include: distance to family members, hierarchy, gender and age specific fields of activity.

VALUATION

Perception of health and body, medical education, knowledge on medical system, fears, shyness



SITUATIONAL DECISION-MAKING IN HEALTH-SEEKING

Decisions in health-seeking are made according to perceived options and urgency. Questions such as *WHO MAY CARE?*, according to social norms, *WHO IS AVAILABLE?*, depending on workload, and *IS THERE TIME TO GO TO THE DOCTOR?* are decisive.



Persistent trade-off between health and harvest. Goganpani, 2015.



A son carries his mother to a Health Camp. Jharlang, Nepal 2015.

While NGO rhetoric refers to gender theories and explain female vulnerability through societal power structures and patriarchal oppression, a closer look at decision-making processes reveals a multi-layered picture.

Health seeking is not a consequence of weighing women's value against other pressing concerns, but shaped by a combination of everyday conditions. An identification of these influencing factors may serve as starting points in further project design.

