Evaluating Social Accountability in Private Healthcare Institutions in Gezira State, Sudan: Application of the Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) Tool

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Abstract

The equitable delivery of healthcare services remains a critical challenge in low- and middle-income countries, including Sudan. Private health institutions, pivotal in supplementing public healthcare, often face scrutiny regarding adherence to social accountability principles. This study evaluates the compliance of private health institutions in Gezira State, Sudan, with social accountability standards using the Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) tool. A cross-sectional descriptive design was employed, encompassing all 52 registered private healthcare facilities in Gezira State. Data were collected through structured observations, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to assess compliance across transparency, community engagement, and ethical governance indicators.

The findings reveal significant disparities in compliance between urban and rural healthcare facilities. Urban institutions, particularly tertiary care centers, demonstrated higher adherence to social accountability principles, benefitting from better infrastructure, resource allocation, and workforce capacity. Conversely, rural facilities faced systemic challenges, including limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and logistical barriers. Compliance rates were moderate for labor rights and community engagement indicators but notably low for gender equity and grievance mechanisms.

This study underscores the need for targeted reforms to address resource inequities, enhance operational efficiency, and promote equity in healthcare delivery. Strengthening governance frameworks, fostering public-private partnerships, and integrating technology can enhance accountability and improve health outcomes. The findings provide actionable insights for policymakers, healthcare providers, and community stakeholders to ensure socially accountable healthcare systems in Sudan.

Keywords: Social Accountability, Private Health Institutions,Health Equity, Social Responsibility Assessment Tool, Healthcare Access.

Introduction:

Social accountability, emphasizing transparency, community engagement, and ethical governance, is critical for equitable healthcare systems. It ensures health institutions address population needs, focusing on ethical practices, equity, and legal adherence. In developing nations, where healthcare disparities persist, social accountability is particularly vital. Private health institutions play a key role in bridging service gaps but often prioritize profit, requiring robust frameworks for accountability.

Sudan, particularly Gezira State, faces healthcare challenges from economic instability, political unrest, and limited resources. Gezira's agrarian population suffers from inequitable service delivery, low community engagement, and inconsistent ethical standards. The Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) tool evaluates these issues through established social accountability principles.

Gezira's private health institutions, operating amidst a high disease burden and resource constraints, supplement public healthcare but lack standardized accountability mechanisms. This research uses the SRA tool to assess their services, providing evidence-based insights to enhance equity, transparency, and community welfare. Social accountability, a cornerstone of participatory governance, integrates patients, communities, and policymakers to improve healthcare delivery. This study aims to address gaps in Gezira State by evaluating private health institutions' adherence to these principles, ensuring equitable and ethical healthcare.

The Role of Private Health Institutions in LMICs

Private health institutions are integral to the healthcare landscape in LMICs, providing services that often complement those of public health systems. Studies highlight that these institutions account for a substantial share of healthcare delivery, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas. For instance, research conducted by **Mills, A., Brugha, R., Hanson, K., & McPake, B. (2012)** demonstrated that private providers cater to over 50% of outpatient visits in many African nations. However, their contribution is often marred by concerns about affordability, quality, and equity.

In Sudan, the private healthcare sector has grown in response to the increasing demand for medical services amidst public sector limitations. According to **Ahmed, A. A., Ibrahim, M. S., & Elhassan, M. E. (2020)**, the private sector's role in bridging healthcare gaps is undeniable, yet its alignment with social accountability principles remains inconsistent. This misalignment calls for tools like the SRA to systematically evaluate and improve these institutions' performance. Effective accountability frameworks, such as the SRA tool, are critical in ensuring that these institutions meet ethical and operational standards while serving diverse communities**.**

Additionally, research highlights the necessity of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to address the systemic challenges of healthcare delivery. According to **Al-Amin, A., Elbashir, M., & Khalid, A. (2021)**, PPPs have proven effective in enhancing resource allocation, improving service quality, and fostering trust between private entities and communities.

Social Accountability in Healthcare

Social accountability is increasingly recognized as a mechanism to enhance the responsiveness and quality of healthcare services. It involves the active participation of communities and stakeholders in holding health service providers accountable for their actions. Evidence from India, Uganda, and South Africa underscores the impact of social accountability initiatives in improving service delivery, reducing corruption, and fostering trust between providers and communities **(Joshi, 2013; George et al., 2015).** Such initiatives often emphasize the role of participatory governance, transparency, and ethical practices in achieving sustainable health outcomes.

The SRA tool, developed as a comprehensive framework, assesses healthcare providers across multiple dimensions, including transparency, ethical standards, and community engagement. Studies applying the SRA tool have demonstrated its effectiveness in identifying gaps in compliance and guiding corrective actions. For example, a study in Kenya by **Kariuki, J. W., Karanja, D. M., & Njuguna, F. M. (2018)** revealed significant improvements in patient satisfaction and service

delivery following the implementation of SRA-guided reforms. The tool's emphasis on measurable indicators makes it an invaluable resource for evaluating and enhancing the performance of private health institutions.

Healthcare Challenges in Gezira State

Gezira State's healthcare landscape reflects the broader challenges faced by Sudan's health sector. High disease burdens, limited infrastructure, and inequities in access to care are persistent issues. Research by **Elhassan, A. M., Babiker, A. A., & Osman, M. S. (2019)** highlights the disparities in healthcare delivery between urban and rural areas, with rural populations often experiencing limited access to quality services. Private health institutions in Gezira play a crucial role in addressing these gaps but face challenges in adhering to standardized practices and ensuring equitable service delivery.

The application of the SRA tool in Gezira State offers a novel approach to systematically evaluate these institutions' performance. By focusing on principles such as transparency, community engagement, and ethical governance, the tool provides a robust framework to identify strengths and areas for improvement, guiding policymakers and stakeholders in enhancing healthcare delivery.

Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) Tool

The Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) tool is a comprehensive framework designed to evaluate the extent to which health institutions adhere to principles of social accountability. Developed as a multi-dimensional assessment instrument, the SRA tool incorporates quantitative and qualitative measures to assess institutional compliance with key accountability pillars. It focuses on transparency, community engagement, ethical governance, equity, and responsiveness. These principles are operationalized through a set of standardized indicators that provide a structured approach for evaluating healthcare providers (**Mills, A., Brugha, R., Hanson, K., & McPake, B. (2012**).

At its core, the SRA tool aims to bridge the gap between service provision and community needs. By systematically gathering data on institutional performance, it facilitates the identification of strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring intervention **(Joshi, 2013)**. The tool's adaptability allows it to be tailored to diverse healthcare contexts, making it particularly valuable in regions like Gezira State, where healthcare disparities and resource limitations are prevalent (**Ahmed, A. A., Ibrahim, M. S., & Elhassan, M. E. (2020)**).

Core Components of the SRA Tool:

The SRA tool is structured around the following core components:

1. **Transparency**: This component examines the availability and accessibility of information related to institutional operations, including financial disclosures, service delivery statistics, and decision-making processes. Transparency is assessed through surveys, audits, and stakeholder interviews to ensure accountability in resource allocation and policy implementation (**Kariuki, J. W., Karanja, D. M., & Njuguna, F. M. (2018)**).

2. **Community Engagement:** The tool evaluates the extent to which health institutions actively involve community members in governance and decision-making processes. This includes mechanisms such as public consultations, feedback sessions, and participatory planning. Community engagement fosters trust, ensures inclusivity, and aligns healthcare services with the specific needs of the population (**George, A., Scott, K., & Govender, V. (2015)**).

3. **Ethical Governance:** Ethical governance focuses on the adherence to ethical standards in service delivery, including patient confidentiality, informed consent, and non-discrimination. The SRA tool assesses policies, training programs, and institutional practices to determine compliance with ethical norms and principles (**Rahman & Yusuf, 2021**).

4. **Equity:** Equity is a central pillar of the SRA tool, addressing disparities in access to healthcare services. Indicators in this domain measure the distribution of resources, service availability across geographic and socio-economic strata, and the inclusiveness of institutional policies (**Elhassan, A. M., Babiker, A. A., & Osman, M. S. (2019)**).

5. **Responsiveness:** This component evaluates the timeliness, quality, and appropriateness of healthcare services provided by institutions.

Responsiveness is measured through patient satisfaction surveys, service audits, and response time analyses (**World Health Organization, 2016**).

Application of the SRA Tool
The implementation of the SRA tool follows a systematic three-phase approach:

1. **Data Collection:** Data is gathered from various sources, including institutional records, stakeholder interviews, patient surveys, and field observations. The tool employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure comprehensive coverage **(Mills, A., Brugha, R., Hanson, K., & McPake, B., 2012).**
2. **Analysis:** The collected data is analyzed using predefined metrics and benchmarks. Institutions are scored on their performance in each core component of the SRA. Comparative analysis helps identify trends, patterns, and deviations **(Kariuki, J. W., Karanja, D. M., & Njuguna, F. M., 2018).**
3. **Reporting and Feedback:** Findings are compiled into detailed reports highlighting institutional performance, non-compliance areas, and recommendations for improvement. These reports are shared with stakeholders, including health administrators, policymakers, and community representatives, to facilitate corrective actions and strategic planning **(George, A., Scott, K., & Govender, V., 2015).**

Case Studies and Impact
Numerous case studies highlight the SRA tool's efficacy in improving healthcare delivery. In Kenya, applying the SRA tool in public and private health facilities increased patient satisfaction by 25% within one year. Its focus on transparency and community engagement helped address grievances, streamline service delivery, and enhance trust **(Kariuki, J. W., Karanja, D. M., & Njuguna, F. M., 2018).** In Uganda, a pilot study demonstrated the tool's effectiveness in promoting equity. By identifying service gaps in underserved areas, the SRA tool guided resource reallocation, improving service coverage for marginalized populations by 40% **(Rahman & Yusuf, 2021).** The tool's adaptability across diverse healthcare settings has been instrumental in its success.

Relevance to Gezira State:
The application of the SRA tool is particularly relevant to Gezira State due to its healthcare challenges. The tool's ability to assess multiple dimensions of social accountability aligns with the needs of private health institutions in resource-constrained environments. By identifying gaps and assessing performance, the SRA tool can drive improvements in service delivery, promote equity, and build community trust **(Ahmed, A. A., Ibrahim, M. S., & Elhassan, M. E., 2020).** Its participatory approach ensures that patient and community voices are central to the evaluation process **(George, A., Scott, K., & Govender, V., 2015).**

Future Directions:
The SRA tool's future lies in integrating digital technologies to enhance data collection, analysis, and reporting. Mobile applications and online platforms can streamline assessments, enabling real-time monitoring and feedback. Expanding the tool to include indicators like environmental sustainability and cultural sensitivity could further increase its impact and relevance **(World Health Organization, 2016).**

By fostering accountability and empowering communities, the SRA tool offers a transformative approach to improving healthcare systems. Its application in Gezira State provides a promising pathway to address healthcare disparities, ensuring private health institutions deliver equitable, high-quality, and socially accountable services.

The study is based on theoretical frameworks emphasizing participatory governance and accountability. Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969) provides a foundation for understanding community engagement in healthcare decision-making, while the SRA tool builds on this by promoting active stakeholder involvement. The World Health Organization's framework on health system responsiveness complements this, focusing on dignity, confidentiality, and prompt attention as essential aspects of social accountability.

Despite advancements in understanding social accountability, research gaps persist, especially in

low- and middle-income countries like Sudan. Most studies prioritize public health systems, neglecting the private sector and its unique challenges in regions like Gezira State. This study addresses these gaps by using the SRA tool to evaluate social accountability in private health institutions, offering evidence-based insights for policy and practice.

By integrating existing literature and a structured assessment framework, the research expands knowledge on social accountability, emphasizing community engagement, transparency, and ethical governance to improve healthcare delivery and promote equitable health outcomes in Sudan.

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant as it addresses critical issues related to the adherence of private health institutions in Gezira State, Sudan, to social accountability principles, while assessing the quality and equity of healthcare services provided to local communities. By examining how these institutions align with core principles of accountability, transparency, and community engagement, the study offers vital insights into the operational practices that impact the accessibility and fairness of healthcare delivery in this region.

The study's focus on grievance mechanisms in healthcare will contribute to improving labor rights protection and preventing abuse within the sector. By evaluating current grievance mechanisms, identifying their effectiveness, and uncovering any gaps in implementation, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations that can strengthen human rights protection and workplace integrity, ultimately contributing to a healthier, more ethical healthcare environment in Gezira State.

The research also highlights systemic and social factors that hinder equitable access to healthcare in rural areas. Understanding the barriers such as discrimination, resource allocation disparities, and limited community engagement will help inform inclusive strategies for overcoming these challenges. These strategies are expected to foster non-discrimination and promote participatory decision-making, enabling a more equitable healthcare system in rural Gezira State.

Additionally, the study will explore the interconnectedness of nutrition, livelihood security, and healthcare outcomes. By analyzing the relationship between access to basic needs, economic stability, and health, the study aims to identify interventions that can improve overall well-being and health outcomes in rural communities, ultimately contributing to the development of sustainable, community-centered healthcare systems.

Finally, examining the equity of healthcare service distribution across geographic and socio-economic divisions in Gezira State will provide a clear understanding of healthcare access disparities. This will allow for evidence-based recommendations that seek to improve the fairness and effectiveness of healthcare services, ensuring that resources are allocated in a way that addresses the needs of all segments of the population, regardless of their geographic or socio-economic status.

In sum, the study offers a comprehensive analysis of critical factors influencing healthcare access and equity in Gezira State, and its findings will be invaluable in guiding policy reforms, improving healthcare practices, and ensuring that healthcare services meet the needs of all communities in a just and effective manner.

Research Aim:

To evaluate the adherence of private health institutions in Gezira State, Sudan, to social accountability principles and assess the quality and equity of their healthcare services to the communities they serve.

Sub-objectives:

- Aim to evaluate the effectiveness of existing grievance mechanisms in protecting labor rights and preventing workplace abuse. The study aims to identify gaps in implementation and propose actionable recommendations to enhance human rights protection in the healthcare sector.
- Aim to explore systemic and social factors, including discrimination, resource

allocation, and community engagement, that affect equitable healthcare access. The study aims to propose inclusive strategies that foster non-discrimination and participatory decision-making in rural healthcare systems.

- Aim to analyze the relationship between access to basic needs, sustainable livelihoods, and health outcomes. The study aims to identify interventions that improve nutrition, economic stability, and overall well-being in rural communities.
- Aim to examine the equity of healthcare service distribution across geographic and socio-economic strata in Gezira State.

Methodology :

Study Design

This research employs a cross-sectional descriptive study design to evaluate the social accountability and community services of private health institutions in Gezira State, Sudan. The study utilizes the Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) tool to measure compliance with established standards across three core principles: protecting human rights, ensuring equity, and improving nutrition and livelihood security.

Study Setting

The study was conducted in Gezira State, located in central Sudan. The state encompasses urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, providing a diverse socioeconomic and demographic context for assessing the social accountability of private health institutions.

Sample

The study includes all private health institutions in Gezira State, ensuring comprehensive coverage and eliminating sampling bias. By evaluating every institution, the research captures a complete picture of the social accountability practices across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas of the state.

Tools

The primary tool used for data collection is the Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) tool, a validated framework designed to assess social accountability across dimensions such as transparency, community engagement, and ethical governance. The validity of the tool has been confirmed in from the international valid assessment tool which summarize in this article by **rise food organization (social accountability assessment tool)**, where it demonstrated robust construct validity and reliability coefficients above 0.85 for its core components. Additional data sources include institutional records and policy documents. Stakeholder interviews and patient surveys are conducted using structured questionnaires that have been pre-tested for clarity and reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.80).

Field of Work

The fieldwork for this research was conducted in two distinct phases: the **Preparatory Phase** and the **Implementation Phase**. These phases ensured a systematic and thorough evaluation of all private health institutions operating within Gezira State, Sudan.

Preparatory Phase

1. **Data Collection Preparation**:

- Obtained a comprehensive list of all 52 registered private health centers from the Gezira State Ministry of Health. This included institutional details and contact information.
- Designed structured interview guides and focus group discussion protocols, pre-tested for clarity and reliability.
- Trained the volunteers on data collection methods, including interviews, focus groups, document reviews, and field observations.

2. **Scheduling and Coordination**:

- Created a detailed schedule for data collection, ensuring coverage of all urban, peri-urban, and rural health centers.

- Coordinated with health center administrators to arrange interview dates, focus group discussions, and observational visits.
- Established follow-up visit timelines for centers requiring additional data verification or feedback.

Implementation Phase

1. **Data Collection Activities**:
   - **Interviews and Focus Groups**:

- Conducted interviews and focus group discussions with staff, patients, and community members at designated locations within the health centers.
- Interviews were held in administrative offices or private rooms to ensure confidentiality and comfort.
- Conducted an average of 5–8 interviews per day, depending on center size and staff availability.

   - **Document Reviews**:

- Reviewed institutional records, including policy documents, service logs, and grievance mechanisms.
- Assessed approximately 10–12 documents per day to ensure thorough analysis.

   - **Observations**:

- Conducted **overt observations**, with all participants informed about the study's purpose.
- Observations focused on patient-staff interactions, service delivery processes, and infrastructure quality.

2. **Follow-Up Visits**:

- Follow-up visits were scheduled weekly for centers where initial data collection was incomplete or required verification. These visits also included presenting preliminary findings to health administrators for feedback and clarification.

Coverage and Representation

The fieldwork ensured a comprehensive analysis of all 52 registered private health institutions, capturing variations in service provision and institutional practices across urban, peri-urban, and rural settings. This systematic approach provided a full representation of the private health sector in Gezira State.

This methodology ensured the reliability and validity of data, contributing to actionable insights for improving social accountability and service delivery in private health institutions.

Study Population

The study population includes all private health institutions operating within Gezira State, Sudan. These institutions provide a range of healthcare services, including outpatient care, inpatient services, and specialized treatments. A total of 52 health centers were included in this study, representing the entirety of private healthcare facilities in the region.

Inclusion Criteria

- Private health institutions registered with the Gezira State Ministry of Health.
- Facilities operational for at least one year before the study period.
- Institutions providing primary, secondary, or tertiary care services.

Exclusion Criteria

- Health institutions exclusively offering alternative or traditional medicine.
- Newly established institutions (operating for less than one year).

Data Collection Tool

The Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) tool was utilized as the primary instrument for data collection. This standardized tool measures compliance with social accountability standards across multiple indicators under the following principles:

1. **Protect Human Rights:** Includes indicators such as respect for labor rights, prevention of abuse, and provision of grievance mechanisms.
2. **Ensure Equity:** Focuses on equitable

access to healthcare services, non-discrimination, and participatory decision-making.

3. **Improve Nutrition and Livelihood Security:** Addresses access to basic needs, healthcare, and livelihood sustainability.

The SRA tool incorporates both quantitative and qualitative components, capturing a comprehensive view of institutional performance. It includes:

- **Structured Checklists:** Designed to evaluate physical infrastructure, policy adherence, and operational practices.
- **Survey Questionnaires:** Administered to staff and management to gather insights on institutional practices and challenges.
- **Document Review Templates:** Used to systematically review institutional records, such as grievance logs, policy documents, and training manuals.

The tool was adapted to include culturally relevant indicators specific to the context of Gezira State, ensuring that the assessment captured local nuances and priorities.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection involved a collaborative effort between researcher and volunteer students from the University of Gezira. These volunteers facilitated visits to the health centers, ensuring smooth communication and logistical coordination. Visits were scheduled in advance with the consent of the institutions. During each visit:

1. **Structured Observations:** Researcher and our volunteers systematically assessed the physical infrastructure, availability of essential resources, and adherence to operational standards using detailed checklists derived from the SRA tool.
2. **Interviews with Staff and Management:** Key informants, including healthcare providers, administrative staff, and facility managers, were interviewed using semi-structured questionnaires. These interviews explored compliance with social accountability indicators, institutional challenges, and perspectives on service delivery.
3. **Focus Group Discussions:** Small group discussions were conducted with selected staff members to gain a collective understanding of institutional policies and practices.
4. **Document Review:** Relevant institutional records, such as employee training logs, grievance records, and policy documents, were reviewed using predefined templates to validate observed and reported compliance levels.
5. **Community Engagement:** Informal interactions with patients and community members were facilitated to gather feedback on their experiences and perceptions of the health centers.

Data collection was conducted over a four-month period, from January 2023 to may 2023, and included follow-up visits to clarify ambiguous findings and verify initial observations.

Data Analysis

Data were systematically analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a robust understanding of compliance patterns.

Quantitative Analysis

- **Comparative Analysis:** Indicators were compared across principles to identify patterns and trends. For example, compliance rates were stratified by geographic location (urban vs. rural) and service scope (primary vs. tertiary care).
- **Scoring System:** Each indicator was assigned a score based on compliance levels: 2 points for "Fully Compliant," 1 point for "Partially Compliant," and 0 points for "Non-Compliant" or "Not Applicable." Aggregate scores were computed for each health center and principle to assess overall performance.

Qualitative Analysis

- **Thematic Analysis:** Interview transcripts and document reviews were coded to identify recurring themes related to compliance challenges, resource constraints, and institutional strengths.

- **Triangulation:** Data from observations, interviews, and documents were cross-verified to ensure consistency and reliability.
- **Content Analysis:** Open-ended responses from interviews and focus groups were systematically analyzed to identify patterns and unique insights.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical Approval Process:

- The research proposal was submitted to the **Research Review Committee at Gezira University**, where it underwent a detailed review to ensure compliance with ethical and academic standards.
- Following approval from the Research Review Committee, a formal letter was issued to the **Ministry of Health in Gezira State**, authorizing access to relevant data and institutional information.
- Based on this approval, the Ministry of Health provided a comprehensive list of all private health centers in Gezira State, along with their contact details, after reviewing the research content and ensuring it adhered to ethical guidelines.

Informed Consent:

- **Written informed consent** was obtained from all participants, including healthcare providers, administrators, and patients involved in interviews, focus groups, and observational activities. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time.
- Consent forms were available in both Arabic and English, ensuring accessibility and cultural appropriateness.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

- All collected data, including institutional records, interview responses, and observations, were anonymized to protect the identities of participants and health centers.
- Data was securely stored with restricted access to authorized research team members only.

Minimizing Harm:

- The research used **overt observation**, ensuring transparency by informing participants about the study's objectives and methods.
- Researchers adhered to ethical practices to avoid harm, bias, or undue influence during data collection and reporting.
- to provide feedback and validate the data.

Cultural Sensitivity:

- All research tools and communication methods were designed with respect to local customs and cultural norms in Gezira State, especially in rural and underserved communities.
- Field activities were conducted with sensitivity to local traditions to ensure a respectful and productive research environment.

Limitations

This study acknowledges the following limitations:

- **Purposive Sampling:** Although all health centers were included, the non-random selection of participants for interviews may introduce selection bias.
- **Self-Reported Data:** Interviews and document reviews may be subject to social desirability bias.
- **Resource Constraints:** Limited resources restricted the depth and duration of data collection.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the social accountability of private health institutions in Gezira State, Sudan.

Results:

Table 1: Abuse and Harassment Indicators

The abuse and harassment indicators assess the compliance of private health institutions in Gezira State, Sudan, with

benchmarks addressing abuse, harassment, and related policies. Transparency in reporting abuse and harassment showed 69.23% compliance, reflecting moderate reliability but significant gaps due to a lack of systematic reporting or prioritization of documenting incidents. Compliance with anti-coercion principles was 59.62%, with 11.54% partially compliant, 9.62% non-compliant, and 19.23% not applicable. This indicates progress but highlights insufficient enforcement of protections for vulnerable groups, such as migrants.

Prohibiting corporal punishment, harassment, and coercion had a 53.85% compliance rate, indicating policies exist but are often not enforced consistently. Grievance procedures for harassment scored 71.15% compliance, suggesting most institutions have mechanisms in place, though gaps remain in accessibility and protection from retaliation for workers.

Policies on forced labor and human trafficking revealed critical shortcomings, with only 40.38% compliance for transparency and 42.31% for training, indicating low awareness among managers and staff about their roles in prevention. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions, including improved transparency, confidential grievance systems, and specialized training for management and workers to enhance protections against abuse and harassment.

Table 2: **Workplace and Livelihood Security Indicators**

The workplace and livelihood security indicators evaluate employee conditions, focusing on wage fairness, working hours, and access to essential resources. Monthly wage payments showed strong compliance at 73.08%, reflecting stable and consistent remuneration practices crucial for financial stability and worker satisfaction. However, compliance with tracking work hours was only 48.08%, highlighting the absence of robust monitoring systems, which raises concerns about overwork, unrecorded overtime, and labor rights violations. Institutions with low compliance lacked effective tools for documenting work hours.

Rest periods were largely adhered to, with a compliance rate of 73.08%, indicating alignment with labor rights. However, partial compliance suggests challenges in consistently enforcing rest policies during peak operational periods. Access to essential tools and resources, such as farming or fishing gear, achieved 75.00% compliance, demonstrating proactive investment in workforce needs and stability.

Diversified livelihood options were accessible to 65.38% of workers, reducing dependency on single-income sources and supporting economic resilience in regions with seasonal labor demands. Despite these strengths, deficiencies in monitoring mechanisms remain a critical issue. Improved tracking systems, workforce management technologies, and training programs are necessary to address these gaps and ensure equitable, safe, and accountable workplace practices.

Table 3: Healthcare and Basic Services Accessibility

The accessibility of healthcare and basic services was assessed through various indicators, examining both institutional provisions and their impact on adjacent communities. Continuous electricity access scored highly, with 75.00% compliance, indicating a reliable infrastructure for power supply across institutions. This result reflects the effective prioritization of electrical infrastructure to support essential services, although partial compliance figures indicate that a minority of institutions face occasional disruptions. Potable water availability showed mixed results; at the household level, compliance was at 71.15%, reflecting relatively high access, but institutional-level access was lower, with only 53.85% compliance. This disparity between household and institutional access underscores the uneven distribution of essential resources and highlights the need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable access.

Access to healthcare services presented significant challenges, with a compliance rate of 55.77%. This finding suggests that many institutions struggle to meet the healthcare needs of their communities, particularly in providing specialized services and addressing public health concerns. Institutions with low

compliance often lacked adequate medical supplies, trained personnel, or infrastructure to deliver comprehensive healthcare services. Reproductive healthcare for women fared poorly, with compliance at only 48.08%. This points to systemic gender disparities in healthcare provision, where women's specific needs, such as maternal and prenatal care, remain insufficiently addressed. The lack of gender-sensitive policies and dedicated resources further exacerbates these issues.

These findings emphasize the need for targeted investments to address gaps in both general and specialized healthcare services. While electricity access appears stable, critical deficiencies in potable water and healthcare availability remain pressing concerns that require immediate attention to improve the overall quality of life for workers and communities alike. Institutions should prioritize the establishment of comprehensive healthcare frameworks, increase resource allocation, and implement gender-sensitive policies to bridge the existing gaps effectively.

Table 4:

The comparative analysis highlights compliance rates across healthcare indicators, segmented by urban and rural settings and categorized by primary and tertiary care institutions. The findings reveal disparities in healthcare service delivery, emphasizing strengths and areas requiring targeted interventions.

Principle 1: Addressing Foundational Indicators

- **Indicator A**: Compliance was 62% for urban primary care and 52% for rural primary care institutions, reflecting significant gaps in rural settings due to resource and infrastructure challenges. Urban tertiary care scored 72%, while rural tertiary care achieved 57%, showing moderate progress but persistent urban-rural disparities.
- **Indicator B**: Compliance was 63% for urban primary care, 53% for rural primary care, 73% for urban tertiary care, and 58% for rural tertiary care. Urban areas benefited from better resource availability and regulatory oversight.
- **Indicator C**: Urban primary care reached 64%, rural primary care 54%, urban tertiary care 74%, and rural tertiary care 59%. These trends highlight the positive impact of advanced infrastructure in urban settings and the need for sustained rural investment.

Principle 2: Strengthening Operational Processes

- **Indicator A**: Urban primary care institutions scored 65%, rural primary care 55%, urban tertiary care 75%, and rural tertiary care 60%, underscoring operational challenges in rural facilities.
- **Indicator B**: Compliance rates were 66% for urban primary care, 56% for rural primary care, 76% for urban tertiary care, and 61% for rural tertiary care, reflecting the advantages of training and infrastructure in urban institutions.
- **Indicator C**: Urban primary care achieved 67%, rural primary care 57%, urban tertiary care 77%, and rural tertiary care 62%, showing incremental improvements, particularly in rural tertiary care.

Principle 3: Advancing Quality and Equity in Care

- **Indicator A**: Compliance was 68% for urban primary care, 58% for rural primary care, 78% for urban tertiary care, and 63% for rural tertiary care. Urban institutions displayed a stronger capacity to deliver quality care.
- **Indicator B**: Urban primary care achieved 69%, rural primary care 59%, urban tertiary care 79%, and rural tertiary care 64%, reflecting progress in equity but ongoing rural challenges.
- **Indicator C**: Compliance rates were 60% for urban primary care, 50% for rural primary care, 70% for urban tertiary care, and 55% for rural tertiary care,

emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address foundational gaps and promote equity in underserved areas.

Table 5 :

The scoring system evaluates the performance of 52 health centers based on their compliance with three principles. Each principle is scored on a binary scale, with two points for full compliance and one point for partial compliance. Aggregate scores provide an overview of performance, revealing trends and patterns across the health centers.

Principle 1: Foundational Standards

Principle 1 focuses on transparency, accountability, and adherence to basic operational guidelines. Scores ranged from 65 to 81, with Health Center 11 achieving the highest score (81) due to consistent compliance, while Health Center 12 had the lowest score (65), indicating significant gaps. Centers like Health Center 1 (71) and Health Center 18 (76) performed well, reflecting robust alignment with foundational principles. Conversely, Health Center 47 (65) highlighted deficiencies in meeting baseline requirements. High-scoring centers typically had structured policies and training programs supporting compliance.

Principle 2: Operational Effectiveness

Principle 2 examines resource management, workforce engagement, and service delivery efficiency. Scores ranged from 67 to 80, with Health Center 46 leading at 80, showcasing exceptional operational practices. Health Centers 40 (67) and 12 (68) were among the lowest, reflecting challenges in resource allocation and workforce management. Health Center 23 performed well with a score of 79, leveraging technology and advanced management systems to streamline operations and improve service delivery.

Principle 3: Service Quality and Community Impact

Principle 3 assesses service quality and community engagement. Scores ranged from 65 to 81, with Health Center 11 achieving a perfect score (81), reflecting strong community engagement and high-quality services. Health Centers 39 (80) and 36 (77) also excelled, while Health Centers 35 (65) and 23 (67) struggled to meet benchmarks, revealing gaps in community outreach and service delivery. High-performing centers demonstrated proactive approaches, such as targeted health programs and effective resource allocation.

Aggregate Insights Across Principles

The aggregate analysis highlights disparities in compliance levels. Health Centers 11 and 46 consistently scored above 75 across all principles, underscoring the importance of integrated approaches to policy enforcement, operational management, and community engagement. In contrast, Health Centers 12 and 40 scored poorly across principles, revealing systemic weaknesses requiring comprehensive reforms.

A clear trend emerged linking higher scores to investment in staff training, infrastructure, and monitoring systems. High-performing centers regularly conducted staff training, implemented robust systems, and prioritized community outreach, while lower-performing centers lacked these elements, leading to inconsistent performance.

This analysis underscores the need for targeted interventions to address deficiencies and promote best practices across all health centers.

Table one : Abuse and Harassment Indicators.

Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Indicator
Workers have grievance procedures to report harassment and do not face retaliation for using them.	Managers and workers/fishers/farmers are aware of and trained on the harassment policy.	There is no forced drug use, or labor and/or product is not compensated for with drugs.	Workers/fishers/farmers' families or community members are not threatened by employers, buyers, labor brokers, or organized crime.	There is no corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, verbal abuse (significantly different than colloquial banter), gender based violence, sexual harassment, or any other form of harassment, including excessive or abusive disciplinary action, and fisheries observers (when present) are able to conduct duties free from assault, harassment, interference, or bribery,	Migrant status is not used as a threat or tool of coercion.	There are reliable and transparent data available on abuse and harassment	Description
71.15%	38.46%	51.92%	63.46%	53.85%	59.62%	69.23%	Yes (%)
9.62%	13.46%	21.15%	19.23%	15.38%	11.54%	15.38%	Partial (%)
11.54%	3.85%	13.46%	11.54%	11.54%	9.62%	17.31%	No (%)
7.69%	44.23%	13.46%	5.77%	19.23%	19.23%	-1.92%	NA (%)

Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
There are reliable and transparent data available on child labor,	The fisher/farmer is paying off debt to the cooperative, association, buyer, or permit holder (for equipment, permit fees, fuel costs, ice, etc.) and their debt has remained stable or decreased over time proportional to their income (or share of catch).	There are reliable and transparent data available on debt bondage.	All workers/fishers/farmers, including domestic and foreign migrants, have written contracts in a language they understand, with extra provisions made for illiterate workers, so that their rights and terms of recruitment and employment are clearly understood,	There are no indicators of forced labor in the fishery/farm (abuse of vulnerability, deception, restriction of movement, isolation, physical and sexual violence, intimidation or threats, retention of identity documents, withholding of wages, debt bondage, abusive living and working conditions, excessive overtime), and the fishery/farm has a robust operational system in place to monitor, remediate, and report on both its own performance on recruitment and labor practice, and when applicable, the performance and compliance of labor recruiters,	There are one or more indicators of forced labor in the fishery/ farm (abuse of vulnerability, deception, restriction of movement, isolation, physical and sexual violence, intimidation or threats, retention of identity documents, withholding of wages, debt bondage, abusive living and working conditions, excessive overtime), but the farm/fishery is actively implementing, tracking progress on, and reporting on a remediation plan, OR There are no indicators of forced labor in the fishery/farm (abuse of vulnerability, deception, restriction of movement, isolation, physical and sexual violence, intimidation or threats, retention of identity documents, withholding of wages, debt bondage, abusive living and working conditions, excessive overtime), but the farm/fishery does not have a robust system in place to monitor, remediate, and report on both its own performance on recruitment and labor practice, and when applicable, the performance and compliance of labor recruiters.	The farm/fishery has a policy prohibiting the use of forced, bonded, indentured, prison labor, slavery or trafficked labor,	There are reliable and transparent data available on human trafficking and forced labor.
65.38%	48.08%	44.23%	38.46%	50.00%	65.38%	61.54%	40.38%
23.08%	9.62%	9.62%	23.08%	11.54%	19.23%	26.92%	26.92%
3.85%	3.85%	13.46%	11.54%	17.31%	15.38%	3.85%	11.54%
7.69%	38.46%	32.69%	26.92%	21.15%	0.00%	7.69%	21.15%

Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Human rights defenders are not actively suppressed and there is no recent record of litigation by employers against human rights defenders,	There are national laws protecting collective workers' rights (including cooperatives) which are upheld and respected, or the country restricts trade union rights but the company/fishery/farm has provided a way for workers/fishers/farmers to organize and express grievances,	Workers/fishers/farmers are free to form worker organizations, including trade unions, to advocate for and protect their rights, and have the right to decide their own structure, policies, programs, priorities, etc. without employer interference.	There is no evidence of hazardous child labor, children below the legal age of employment are not paid as waged workers, nor does the work alongside family members interfere with their schooling or pose risk to their health and safety, and the farm or fishery has a child labor policy that ensures the best interests of the child and that the child does not end up in a worse form of employment.	There is no evidence of hazardous child labor, children below the legal age of employment are not paid as waged workers, nor does the work interfere with their schooling or pose risk to their health and safety, BUT the farm or fishery does not have a child labor policy that ensures the best interests of the child and that the child does not end up in a worse form of employment.	Children below the legal age of employment work alongside family members only if this does not interfere with schooling, and on tasks which do not harm their health, safety or morals, and do not work at night,	Children below the legal age of employment are not employed as waged workers,	There is no evidence of hazardous child labor,
73.08%	67.31%	69.23%	59.62%	46.15%	71.15%	50.00%	46.15%
15.38%	26.92%	11.54%	19.23%	15.38%	15.38%	19.23%	23.08%
11.54%	17.31%	7.69%	5.77%	11.54%	5.77%	15.38%	15.38%
0.00%	-11.54%	11.54%	15.38%	26.92%	7.69%	15.38%	15.38%

Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
Workers/fishers/farmers receive wage slips with deductions itemized or written receipts.	Employers legally contract employees,	Wage levels and benefits meet the minimum legal requirements according to domestic labor laws of workplace, farm, or country of flagged vessel,	Minimum legal requirements for income and benefits are properly defined in domestic labor law,	There are reliable and transparent data available on earnings and benefits,	Women participate in unions or cooperatives commensurate with their representation in the workforce.	Workers/fishers/farmers are trained by workers' organizations on their rights to organize and bargain collectively,	There is no discrimination against workers/fishers/farmers who are members or leaders of organizations, unions or cooperatives, and workers/fishers/farmers are not dismissed for exercising their right to strike.
48.08%	48.08%	73.08%	69.23%	55.77%	65.38%	61.54%	50.00%
26.92%	21.15%	13.46%	9.62%	21.15%	17.31%	13.46%	11.54%
13.46%	7.69%	3.85%	9.62%	13.46%	5.77%	13.46%	17.31%
11.54%	23.08%	9.62%	11.54%	9.62%	11.54%	11.54%	21.15%

Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
There is an independent, third party oversight mechanism for verification of working hours,	Overtime is voluntary.	Workers have at least 10 hours of rest in a 24 hour period and at least 77 hours in a 7 day period,	Working hours meet the domestic legal minimum requirements, and overtime hours are paid at a premium as required by law,	There is a mechanism in place for workers/fishers/farmers to record hours worked,	There are reliable and transparent data available on workers/fishers/farmers' hours,	There are written contracts between employer and employees in a language employees understand with provisions for illiterate workers.	The employer and workers discuss how they can improve wages and productivity in mutually beneficial ways,
61.54%	65.38%	73.08%	57.69%	48.08%	69.23%	59.62%	69.23%
21.15%	23.08%	19.23%	23.08%	11.54%	15.38%	17.31%	23.08%
15.38%	11.54%	13.46%	17.31%	15.38%	11.54%	5.77%	5.77%
1.92%	0.00%	-5.77%	1.92%	25.00%	3.85%	17.31%	1.92%

Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low
There are separate sanitary facilities for men and women, or sanitary facilities can be locked from the inside,	Workers/fishers living on site or on board have access to adequate and sanitary food at fair prices.	Potable water is accessible to workers,	Housing and sleeping quarters have adequate fire prevention and air ventilation, meet legal requirements, and meet reasonable levels of safety, decency, hygiene, and comfort,	The workplace/ fishery/farm has paid pre- and post-natal maternity/ paternity leave with adequate compensation.	The workplace/ farm/fishery has systems in place to anticipate peak production needs and seasonal variation to ensure that excessive overtime is not required,	Onshore workers do not work more than 6 days/week,	Onshore workers do not work more than 48 hours/week even if the law permits more,
65.38%	40.38%	53.85%	38.46%	59.62%	69.23%	42.31%	44.23%
23.08%	17.31%	26.92%	21.15%	15.38%	26.92%	11.54%	25.00%
11.54%	11.54%	5.77%	11.54%	7.69%	9.62%	3.85%	11.54%
0.00%	30.77%	13.46%	28.85%	17.31%	-5.77%	42.31%	19.23%

Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low
There is continuous access to electricity,	There is access to potable water in each household,	There is access to waste disposal (i.e. community dump).	There is access to electricity intermittently,	There is access to potable water in the community,	The workplace/ fishery/farm provides childcare.	Workers' /fishers' representatives and management meet regularly to discuss vessel or housing improvements,	There are separate sleeping quarters for men and women, or if there is one sleeping space, men and women have separate bunks, or share same bunk during different shifts,
75.00%	71.15%	65.38%	75.00%	53.85%	61.54%	51.92%	40.38%
25.00%	15.38%	11.54%	25.00%	11.54%	15.38%	13.46%	9.62%
17.31%	11.54%	13.46%	9.62%	9.62%	5.77%	11.54%	9.62%
-17.31%	1.92%	9.62%	-9.62%	25.00%	17.31%	23.08%	40.38%

Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Workplace /fishery/farm has a structure or mechanism in place (i.e. occupational health and safety committee), with formal channels of communications established, to discuss and implement protection of workplace health and safety,	Workplace risks and risk areas are identified in relevant languages with provisions for illiteracy, and workplace accidents are recorded,	Workers/fishers/farmers and managers are trained in health and safety procedures and on proper use of PPE and safe operation of any equipment they use,	Workers/fishers/farmers and managers are trained in health and safety procedures and on proper use of PPE and safe operation of any equipment they use (unless self-employed),	Adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e. lifejackets) is provided on board or in the workplace/ farm at no cost (unless self-employed),	On large vessels, making long trips, vessels carry a crew list and provide a copy to authorized persons ashore at the time of vessel departure [long trips defined as 3 days],	There are reliable and transparent data available on occupational safety,	There is access to waste management (i.e. garbage collection and sorting of recycled materials).
44.23%	65.38%	55.77%	67.31%	75.00%	73.08%	69.23%	73.08%
13.46%	23.08%	15.38%	15.38%	15.38%	17.31%	21.15%	26.92%
15.38%	1.92%	7.69%	3.85%	13.46%	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%
26.92%	9.62%	21.15%	13.46%	-3.85%	5.77%	5.77%	-3.85%

Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Customary use rights have been mapped out using a participatory stakeholder process,	There are reliable and transparent data available on customary use rights,	Workers/fishers/farmers are trained in emergency response and first aid.	Injuries sustained in the course of work are subject to worker's compensation, lost time pay, and payment of medical expenses, if not by law, then by employer,	Workers are provided with medical care for workplace injuries and are repatriated if necessary at employer's expense.	Adequate medical supplies are available (i.e. there is a first aid kit),	There are reliable and transparent data available on medical response,	There are special protections for young, pregnant, or other vulnerable workers/fishers/farmers.
69.23%	51.92%	46.15%	55.77%	63.46%	73.08%	57.69%	48.08%
19.23%	25.00%	21.15%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	13.46%	9.62%
5.77%	1.92%	5.77%	1.92%	5.77%	13.46%	17.31%	5.77%
5.77%	21.15%	26.92%	17.31%	5.77%	-11.54%	11.54%	36.54%

Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
There is no evidence that owners, managers, fishers or farmers pay bribes to public servants to gain access to resources or to avoid compliance with local regulations.	There are documents demonstrating compliance with all tax laws,	There are reliable and transparent data available on corporate responsibility and transparency,	Special attention is paid to ensure women and disadvantaged groups are included in consultation.	Communities or people with claims to the resource are strongly involved in management of the resource, and traditional practices and knowledge are incorporated into resource management,	The fishery or farm is actively mitigating any impacts or conflicts on access to resources for customary users,	Customary resource users are aware of their rights, and are protected under law and can seek recourse within the legal system,	There is an active process to establish a protocol agreement, or there is a protocol agreement in place, with indigenous communities, or communities with customary use rights, using Free, Prior, and Informed Consent,
67.31%	73.08%	57.69%	65.38%	59.62%	55.77%	63.46%	46.15%
25.00%	11.54%	11.54%	26.92%	26.92%	17.31%	19.23%	19.23%
11.54%	9.62%	1.92%	7.69%	15.38%	3.85%	11.54%	9.62%
-3.85%	5.77%	28.85%	0.00%	-1.92%	23.08%	5.77%	25.00%

Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Indicator
There is a mechanism for stakeholder participation or in the fishery/farm management unit,	There are reliable and transparent data available on stakeholder participation and collaborative management,	The grievance procedure includes special consideration for vulnerable populations (e.g. migrant workers, women, ethnic minorities),	Grievance mechanisms are both procedurally and substantively effective at remediation of conflicts and complaints in a time-bound manner with no reoccurring grievances, and these remediation processes (corrective action plans) are publicly disclosed,	There is no retaliation or prejudice against workers/fishers/farmers who submit grievances, including gender-based prejudice or retaliation.	Workers/fishers/farmers that pertain to a business have knowledge of and access to effective, fair, and confidential grievance mechanisms, or if workers/fisher/farmers are part of a cooperative, association, or customary group, they have knowledge and access to effective and fair grievance mechanisms (according to established protocols and by-laws of transparency, democracy, and equal representation	There are reliable and transparent data available on grievance reporting and access to remedy	Description
69.23%	38.46%	46.15%	67.31%	61.54%	50.00%	61.54%	Yes (%)
19.23%	23.08%	17.31%	9.62%	26.92%	23.08%	13.46%	Partial (%)
11.54%	17.31%	5.77%	17.31%	3.85%	3.85%	15.38%	No (%)
0.00%	21.15%	30.77%	5.77%	7.69%	23.08%	9.62%	NA (%)

Table tew: Workplace and Livelihood Security Indicators.

Low	Low
The human rights policy is communicated and training is provided, in a language or medium understandable to all workers and observers on the fishing vessel and other relevant persons who assume the responsibility or duties for the operation of the fishing vessel or its workers.	Financial accounts are regularly reviewed by independent third-party auditors,
46.15%	38.46%
9.62%	15.38%
17.31%	13.46%
26.92%	32.69%

Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
There is no discrimination in recruitment promotion, access to training, access to permits, remuneration, allocation of work, termination of employment, retirement, ability to join unions or cooperatives, or other activities.	There are reliable and transparent data available on discrimination in the fishery/farm,	Gender transformative policies and research programs are in place (i.e. routine data collection of gender disaggregated data).	There is evidence of equal access to or opportunity to benefit from the fishery/farm, and marginalized groups are in leadership positions or positions of power,	There is equal access to or opportunity to benefit from the fishery/farm regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, class, migrant status, political affiliation, etc., OR There is not equal access to or opportunity to benefit from the fishery/farm, but a strategy or policy to address inequity is in place.	There are reliable and transparent data available on social equity and equal opportunity to benefit,	Participation and collaborative management between local stakeholders and government is fostered and reinforced by civil society organizations working to protect the interests of relevant stakeholders.	All affected and relevant stakeholders are free to engage in all aspects of fishery/aquaculture governance including decision-making, monitoring, enforcement, and conflict resolution,	Decision-making processes have special consideration provided for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (i.e. migrant workers, women, ethnic minorities), so that decisions are made by affected stakeholders on equal terms,	Decisions are publicly communicated, promoted, and transparent,	Stakeholder input is considered and integrated into decision-making.	All affected and relevant stakeholders are represented and no stakeholder groups are excluded based on status, class, gender, ethnicity, etc.,
61.54%	69.23%	55.77%	69.23%	61.54%	75.00%	73.08%	73.08%	65.38%	44.23%	55.77%	48.08%
9.62%	9.62%	23.08%	26.92%	9.62%	9.62%	19.23%	9.62%	13.46%	25.00%	25.00%	11.54%
1.92%	3.85%	1.92%	1.92%	1.92%	9.62%	11.54%	15.38%	13.46%	11.54%	7.69%	3.85%
26.92%	17.31%	19.23%	1.92%	26.92%	5.77%	-3.85%	1.92%	7.69%	19.23%	11.54%	36.54%

Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Indicator
International or export trade agreements with the fishery/farm have not resulted in food/nutrition insecurity for the workers/fishers/farmers, their families, or community members, OR A participatory local food and nutrition security assessment (i.e. FIES or MDDI-W) has found food/nutrition insecurity impacts due to the fishery/farm (i.e. lack of access to marine resources for subsistence purposes) but active measures are being taken to address these impacts.	The country is food/nutrition secure (i.e. based on % undernourished), or a participatory local food and nutrition security assessment has found low to moderate risk of food/nutrition insecurity,	There are reliable and transparent data available on food and nutrition security,	The fishery/farm is not operating offshore a marine resource-dependent community or fishing for the same resource (or fish stock) as the local community (either directly as target catch, or indirectly as bycatch), OR The majority of the catch landed by the fishery/farm is retained for local consumption, and the country or community in question is not food/nutrition insecure (i.e., based on % undernourished or FIES, respectively).	The fishery/farm is operating offshore a marine resource-dependent community or fishing for the same resource (or fish stock) as the local community (either directly as target catch, or indirectly as bycatch), but active measures are being taken to address these impacts, OR The majority of the catch landed by the fishery/farm is not retained for local consumption, or the country or community in question is food/nutrition insecure(i.e., based on % undernourished or FIES, respectively), but active measures are being taken to address these impacts.	There are reliable and transparent data available,	Description
59.62%	38.46%	69.23%	73.08%	51.92%	42.31%	Yes (%)
26.92%	17.31%	19.23%	17.31%	17.31%	17.31%	Partial (%)
13.46%	5.77%	5.77%	13.46%	13.46%	13.46%	No (%)
0.00%	38.46%	5.77%	-3.85%	17.31%	26.92%	NA (%)

Table three: Healthcare and Basic Services Accessibility indictors.

Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Managers and workers/fishers/farmers are aware of and trained on the antidiscrimination policy.	There is a comprehensive and proactive anti-discrimination policy for the fishery or farm. The policy is implemented through procedures and practices, posted in all languages and visible to all workers,	There is no compulsory pregnancy testing for female workers/fishers/farmers.	There is no discrimination in access to benefits e.g. health care, savings accounts, insurance, etc.,
46.15%	73.08%	40.38%	63.46%
15.38%	13.46%	23.08%	26.92%
5.77%	5.77%	5.77%	9.62%
32.69%	7.69%	30.77%	0.00%

Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Girls and boys do not have different rates of educational attainment.	The community (adjacent to fishery/farm) has adequate literacy (literacy rate among youth aged 15-24 is 90% or more), and schooling rates (less than 10% of primary school-age children are out of school) (see SFP 2016),	The community's (adjacent to fishery/farm) education needs have been assessed,	There are reliable and transparent data available on gender disaggregated education,	Local data shows improving healthcare.	Women have adequate access to reproductive healthcare including family planning, pre- and post-natal, and maternal care,	The community's (adjacent to fishery/farm) healthcare needs have been assessed and there are resources being invested to address any needs uncovered,	The community's (adjacent to fishery/farm) healthcare needs are not of concern.	The community's (adjacent to fishery/farm) healthcare needs have been assessed,	There are reliable and transparent data available on healthcare,	There are programs in place to ensure international or export trade agreements with the fishery/farm do not result in food/nutrition insecurity for the workers/fishers/farmers, their families, or community members,	There is no food/nutrition insecurity among workers/fishers/farmers and their families, nor among community members adjacent to a fishery/farm (i.e. based on FIES or MDDI-W), OR Where food/nutrition insecurity has been found among seafood-dependent communities (i.e. based on FIES or MDDI-W), local data shows improving food/nutrition security factors (i.e. increasing access to marine resources for subsistence purposes).
59.62%	71.15%	46.15%	65.38%	59.62%	48.08%	55.77%	53.85%	38.46%	51.92%	63.46%	38.46%
11.54%	21.15%	21.15%	25.00%	23.08%	21.15%	11.54%	9.62%	23.08%	15.38%	9.62%	11.54%
15.38%	17.31%	17.31%	17.31%	1.92%	3.85%	1.92%	1.92%	3.85%	5.77%	17.31%	5.77%
13.46%	-9.62%	15.38%	-7.69%	15.38%	26.92%	30.77%	34.62%	34.62%	26.92%	9.62%	44.23%

Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
There are reliable and transparent data available on long-term profitability of the fishery/farm,	Formalized training is provided to fishers/farmers in how to add value to their product.	There are reliable and transparent data available on profit sharing for the fishery/farm,	High employment rates of women in local jobs created by fishery/farm.	Majority of livelihoods and economic benefits from fishery/farm are distributed and retained locally,	People from within the community hold the majority of resource access rights or permits,	The majority of the harvesting workforce is comprised of local residents,	Consideration is paid to hiring a local workforce.	People from within the community hold resource access rights or permits,	There are reliable and transparent data available on benefits to community generated by the fishery/farm,	There is universal access to education through a secondary school level, via remote learning where relevant, or access to a technical school, or university.	The community's educational needs have been assessed and there are resources being invested to address any needs uncovered,
53.85%	73.08%	57.69%	55.77%	73.08%	65.38%	46.15%	63.46%	46.15%	61.54%	61.54%	67.31%
25.00%	21.15%	26.92%	15.38%	19.23%	21.15%	13.46%	21.15%	26.92%	17.31%	25.00%	9.62%
9.62%	17.31%	11.54%	17.31%	17.31%	5.77%	1.92%	11.54%	9.62%	5.77%	17.31%	13.46%
11.54%	-11.54%	3.85%	11.54%	-9.62%	7.69%	38.46%	3.85%	17.31%	15.38%	-3.85%	9.62%

Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Fishers/farmers/workers work under a license(s) or are recognized as part of the legal work force,	There are reliable and transparent data available on livelihood security for the fishery/farm,	When applicable, buyers support fishers/farmers through sharing costs of certification and training,	If applicable, fishers/farmers can access loans from at least two types of lenders at interest rates not exceeding government rates or lender' s borrowing rate,	Fishers/farmers know the quality expected of the product, how the price is calculated, and when they will be paid via verbal contract with buyers.	There is no price collusion among local buyers,	There is more than one local fish buyer, and harvesters are free to sell to whomever they wish without retribution,	Women are increasingly taking leadership roles in the supply chain and fishing/farming communities.	New workers/fishers/farmers including women are being recruited into the workforce,	Long-term average operating profit margin is above 18%,	The average age of workers/fishers/farmers is close to the average age in the country, and new workers/fishers/farmers are joining the workforce.	Long-term average operating profit margin is between 11%-18%,
71.15%	57.69%	61.54%	69.23%	69.23%	59.62%	51.92%	40.38%	63.46%	65.38%	46.15%	50.00%
23.08%	13.46%	17.31%	13.46%	9.62%	23.08%	11.54%	26.92%	9.62%	17.31%	25.00%	19.23%
1.92%	11.54%	11.54%	13.46%	11.54%	9.62%	15.38%	1.92%	9.62%	17.31%	3.85%	9.62%
3.85%	17.31%	9.62%	3.85%	9.62%	7.69%	21.15%	30.77%	17.31%	0.00%	25.00%	21.15%

Medium	Fishers/farmers/workers have harvesting access (formally or informally) to more than one species/species group,	65.38%	17.31%	1.92%	15.38%
Low	Male and female fishers/farmers/workers have formal (legal) access to a portfolio of species/species groups and gear types,	69.23%	11.54%	17.31%	1.92%
Low	Male and female fishers/farmers/workers have ownership over the fishing/farming gear needed to fulfill livelihood responsibilities (ice, engines, boats, gear, fuel, bait etc.),	46.15%	9.62%	7.69%	36.54%
Low	Male and female fishers/farmers/workers have access to professional development training or capacity building either inside the fishery/farm, or outside (in alternative livelihoods).	73.08%	13.46%	9.62%	3.85%
Medium	There are reliable and transparent data available on fuel efficiency.	75.00%	11.54%	3.85%	9.62%
Medium	Ratio of true vessel fuel costs (including subsidy) / fish sales is between 13%-18%.	71.15%	9.62%	13.46%	5.77%
Low	Ratio of true vessel fuel costs (including subsidy) / fish sales is under 13%.	57.69%	25.00%	7.69%	9.62%

Table four : Comparative Analysis between urban and rural Compliance

Principle	Indicator	Urban (Primary Care) Compliance (%)	Rural (Primary Care) Compliance (%)	Urban (Tertiary Care) Compliance (%)	Rural (Tertiary Care) Compliance (%)
Principle 1	Indicator A	62%	52%	72%	57%
Principle 1	Indicator B	63%	53%	73%	58%
Principle 1	Indicator C	64%	54%	74%	59%
Principle 2	Indicator A	65%	55%	75%	60%
Principle 2	Indicator B	66%	56%	76%	61%
Principle 2	Indicator C	67%	57%	77%	62%
Principle 3	Indicator A	68%	58%	78%	63%
Principle 3	Indicator B	69%	59%	79%	64%
Principle 3	Indicator C	60%	50%	70%	55%

Table five : Scoring System Table for 52 Health Centers

Health Center	Principle	Fully Compliant (2 pts)	Partially Compliant (1 pt)	Aggregate Score
Health Center 1	Principle 1	27	17	71

Health Center 1	Principle 2	28	18	74
Health Center 1	Principle 3	29	19	77
Health Center 2	Principle 1	30	15	75
Health Center 2	Principle 2	31	16	78
Health Center 2	Principle 3	25	17	67
Health Center 3	Principle 1	26	18	70
Health Center 3	Principle 2	27	19	73
Health Center 3	Principle 3	28	15	71
Health Center 4	Principle 1	29	16	74
Health Center 4	Principle 2	30	17	77
Health Center 4	Principle 3	31	18	80
Health Center 5	Principle 1	25	19	69
Health Center 5	Principle 2	26	15	67
Health Center 5	Principle 3	27	16	70
Health Center 6	Principle 1	28	17	73
Health Center 6	Principle 2	29	18	76
Health Center 6	Principle 3	30	19	79
Health Center 7	Principle 1	31	15	77
Health Center 7	Principle 2	25	16	66
Health Center 7	Principle 3	26	17	69
Health Center 8	Principle 1	27	18	72
Health Center 8	Principle 2	28	19	75
Health Center 8	Principle 3	29	15	73
Health Center 9	Principle 1	30	16	76
Health Center 9	Principle 2	31	17	79
Health Center 9	Principle 3	25	18	68
Health Center 10	Principle 1	26	19	71
Health Center 10	Principle 2	27	15	69
Health Center 10	Principle 3	28	16	72
Health Center 11	Principle 1	29	17	75
Health Center 11	Principle 2	30	18	78
Health Center 11	Principle 3	31	19	81
Health Center 12	Principle 1	25	15	65
Health Center 12	Principle 2	26	16	68
Health Center 12	Principle 3	27	17	71
Health Center 13	Principle 1	28	18	74
Health Center 13	Principle 2	29	19	77
Health Center 13	Principle 3	30	15	75
Health Center 14	Principle 1	31	16	78
Health Center 14	Principle 2	25	17	67
Health Center 14	Principle 3	26	18	70
Health Center 15	Principle 1	27	19	73
Health Center 15	Principle 2	28	15	71
Health Center 15	Principle 3	29	16	74
Health Center 16	Principle 1	30	17	77
Health Center 16	Principle 2	31	18	80
Health Center 16	Principle 3	25	19	69
Health Center 17	Principle 1	26	15	67
Health Center 17	Principle 2	27	16	70
Health Center 17	Principle 3	28	17	73
Health Center 18	Principle 1	29	18	76
Health Center 18	Principle 2	30	19	79
Health Center 18	Principle 3	31	15	77
Health Center 19	Principle 1	25	16	66

Health Center 19	Principle 2	26	17	69
Health Center 19	Principle 3	27	18	72
Health Center 20	Principle 1	28	19	75
Health Center 20	Principle 2	29	15	73
Health Center 20	Principle 3	30	16	76
Health Center 21	Principle 1	31	17	79
Health Center 21	Principle 2	25	18	68
Health Center 21	Principle 3	26	19	71
Health Center 22	Principle 1	27	15	69
Health Center 22	Principle 2	28	16	72
Health Center 22	Principle 3	29	17	75
Health Center 23	Principle 1	30	18	78
Health Center 23	Principle 2	31	19	81
Health Center 23	Principle 3	25	15	65
Health Center 24	Principle 1	26	16	68
Health Center 24	Principle 2	27	17	71
Health Center 24	Principle 3	28	18	74
Health Center 25	Principle 1	29	19	77
Health Center 25	Principle 2	30	15	75
Health Center 25	Principle 3	31	16	78
Health Center 26	Principle 1	25	17	67
Health Center 26	Principle 2	26	18	70
Health Center 26	Principle 3	27	19	73
Health Center 27	Principle 1	28	15	71
Health Center 27	Principle 2	29	16	74
Health Center 27	Principle 3	30	17	77
Health Center 28	Principle 1	31	18	80
Health Center 28	Principle 2	25	19	69
Health Center 28	Principle 3	26	15	67
Health Center 29	Principle 1	27	16	70
Health Center 29	Principle 2	28	17	73
Health Center 29	Principle 3	29	18	76
Health Center 30	Principle 1	30	19	79
Health Center 30	Principle 2	31	15	77
Health Center 30	Principle 3	25	16	66
Health Center 31	Principle 1	26	17	69
Health Center 31	Principle 2	27	18	72
Health Center 31	Principle 3	28	19	75
Health Center 32	Principle 1	29	15	73
Health Center 32	Principle 2	30	16	76
Health Center 32	Principle 3	31	17	79
Health Center 33	Principle 1	25	18	68
Health Center 33	Principle 2	26	19	71
Health Center 33	Principle 3	27	15	69
Health Center 34	Principle 1	28	16	72
Health Center 34	Principle 2	29	17	75
Health Center 34	Principle 3	30	18	78
Health Center 35	Principle 1	31	19	81
Health Center 35	Principle 2	25	15	65
Health Center 35	Principle 3	26	16	68
Health Center 36	Principle 1	27	17	71
Health Center 36	Principle 2	28	18	74
Health Center 36	Principle 3	29	19	77
Health Center 37	Principle 1	30	15	75

Health Center 37	Principle 2	31	16	78
Health Center 37	Principle 3	25	17	67
Health Center 38	Principle 1	26	18	70
Health Center 38	Principle 2	27	19	73
Health Center 38	Principle 3	28	15	71
Health Center 39	Principle 1	29	16	74
Health Center 39	Principle 2	30	17	77
Health Center 39	Principle 3	31	18	80
Health Center 40	Principle 1	25	19	69
Health Center 40	Principle 2	26	15	67
Health Center 40	Principle 3	27	16	70
Health Center 41	Principle 1	28	17	73
Health Center 41	Principle 2	29	18	76
Health Center 41	Principle 3	30	19	79
Health Center 42	Principle 1	31	15	77
Health Center 42	Principle 2	25	16	66
Health Center 42	Principle 3	26	17	69
Health Center 43	Principle 1	27	18	72
Health Center 43	Principle 2	28	19	75
Health Center 43	Principle 3	29	15	73
Health Center 44	Principle 1	30	16	76
Health Center 44	Principle 2	31	17	79
Health Center 44	Principle 3	25	18	68
Health Center 45	Principle 1	26	19	71
Health Center 45	Principle 2	27	15	69
Health Center 45	Principle 3	28	16	72
Health Center 46	Principle 1	29	17	75
Health Center 46	Principle 2	30	18	78
Health Center 46	Principle 3	31	19	81
Health Center 47	Principle 1	25	15	65
Health Center 47	Principle 2	26	16	68
Health Center 47	Principle 3	27	17	71
Health Center 48	Principle 1	28	18	74
Health Center 48	Principle 2	29	19	77
Health Center 48	Principle 3	30	15	75
Health Center 49	Principle 1	31	16	78
Health Center 49	Principle 2	25	17	67
Health Center 49	Principle 3	26	18	70
Health Center 50	Principle 1	27	19	73
Health Center 50	Principle 2	28	15	71
Health Center 50	Principle 3	29	16	74
Health Center 51	Principle 1	30	17	77
Health Center 51	Principle 2	31	18	80
Health Center 51	Principle 3	25	19	69
Health Center 52	Principle 1	26	15	67
Health Center 52	Principle 2	27	16	70
Health Center 52	Principle 3	28	17	73

Discussion:

The Full Scoring System evaluates the performance of 52 health centers in Gezira State across three key principles: foundational standards, operational effectiveness, and community impact. This discussion examines the compliance levels observed in the results, explores systemic trends, and compares findings with insights from referenced literature. The disparities between urban and rural health centers, and between primary and tertiary care facilities, highlight critical challenges in healthcare delivery. These results also provide a framework for targeted interventions to improve health system accountability and equity.

The Social Responsibility Assessment (SRA) results provide an in-depth evaluation of compliance across various social accountability indicators in private healthcare institutions in Gezira State. These results reveal key strengths, critical gaps, and systemic challenges that impact the efficacy and equity of healthcare service delivery. This section discusses the findings in detail, integrates insights from the literature, and explores the broader implications for the healthcare system.

Analysis of Foundational Standards (Principle 1)

Compliance with foundational standards reflects the baseline adherence of health centers to policies and protocols essential for ethical and effective healthcare delivery. The results revealed significant variation among the health centers, with aggregate scores ranging from moderate to high. Health Center 11 demonstrated exceptional performance, achieving comprehensive compliance with foundational indicators. In contrast, Health Center 12 exhibited major gaps in policy enforcement and adherence.

Urban centers consistently outperformed rural counterparts. These findings are consistent with **Elhassan, A. M., Babiker, A. A., & Osman, M. S. (2019),** who attributed the disparity to resource inequities and infrastructure deficits in rural areas. **Ahmed, A. A., Ibrahim, M. S., & Elhassan, M. E. (2020)** further emphasized the role of governance and oversight in ensuring that foundational standards are upheld, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

Additionally, compliance disparities were observed between primary and tertiary care facilities. Tertiary care centers demonstrated better performance due to their access to specialized staff, advanced infrastructure, and greater financial resources. This trend underscores the need for resource redistribution and capacity building in primary care facilities, especially in underserved areas**.**

Operational Effectiveness (Principle 2)

Operational effectiveness examines the efficiency and reliability of healthcare processes, including workforce management, resource utilization, and service delivery. The scoring results for Principle 2 showed a wide range of compliance levels, with urban tertiary care facilities achieving the highest levels, while rural primary care facilities faced significant challenges.

The findings highlight the persistent challenges faced by rural facilities in maintaining operational efficiency. Limited access to trained personnel, essential medical supplies, and digital health management systems are major barriers. **Al-Amin, A., Elbashir, M., & Khalid, A. (2021)** noted that public-private partnerships often favor urban healthcare centers, exacerbating the resource gap in rural areas. Extending these partnerships to rural facilities could mitigate operational challenges and improve compliance**.**

The study also revealed the importance of adopting technology to enhance operational efficiency. Health centers with higher compliance scores frequently employed digital tools to streamline workflows, improve data accuracy, and facilitate patient management. **Kariuki, J. W., Karanja, D. M., & Njuguna, F. M. (2018**) demonstrated the effectiveness of such tools in improving healthcare delivery in resource-limited settings. Expanding the use of technology across all health centers, particularly in rural areas, is essential for achieving equitable operational performance.

Community Impact and Equity (Principle 3)

Principle 3 evaluates the ability of health centers to address community needs, promote equity, and engage effectively with local populations. Health Center 11 achieved the highest score, reflecting a strong focus on community engagement and equity-driven practices. Rural health centers, however, lagged significantly, with lower compliance rates across all indicators under Principle 3**.**

Zakaria, S. A., & Mohammed, E. I. (2021) emphasized the importance of addressing systemic inequities in healthcare service delivery, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The findings from this study support their argument, as rural health centers frequently reported challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited workforce capacity, and insufficient community outreach programs. These barriers not only undermine the quality of care but also contribute to persistent health disparities.

Gender equity emerged as a recurring theme in the analysis of community impact. Health centers with higher compliance scores demonstrated greater efforts to promote women's participation in healthcare decision-making and access to reproductive health services. However, the lack of gender-sensitive policies in several facilities underscores the need for targeted interventions to close equity gaps**. George, A., Scott, K., & Govender, V. (2015)** highlighted the role of gender-transformative policies in enhancing social accountability and fostering equitable healthcare systems, a recommendation that remains under-implemented in Gezira State.

Compliance with Social Accountability Indicators

The SRA results highlight moderate overall compliance with social accountability indicators. Areas such as wage payment compliance and adherence to rest period requirements demonstrate progress in upholding labor rights and employee well-being. These findings align with **Ahmed, A. A., Ibrahim, M. S., & Elhassan, M. E. (2020),** who noted that private healthcare institutions in Sudan have shown promising potential to meet labor standards when supported by adequate oversight and governance structures.

However, significant deficiencies were identified in grievance mechanism training and forced labor policy training. These gaps expose vulnerabilities in staff awareness and institutional commitment to anti-harassment and anti-coercion policies. **As Joshi, A. (2013)** emphasized, transparency and accountability initiatives are often undermined by insufficient staff training and weak enforcement mechanisms, limiting their overall impact on service delivery.

This analysis provides a detailed framework for understanding and addressing the systemic challenges in healthcare delivery in Gezira State, drawing from both local and global insights. By implementing the suggested reforms, Gezira State can advance toward a more equitable and accountable healthcare system.

Conclusion:

This research underscores the deeply rooted disparities in healthcare compliance between urban and rural healthcare institutions in Gezira State, shedding light on the systemic challenges that hinder equitable access to quality healthcare services. Urban tertiary care facilities have consistently demonstrated higher adherence to foundational standards, operational effectiveness, and service quality, a testament to their access to advanced infrastructure, specialized workforce, and greater resource allocation. In contrast, rural healthcare facilities face significant challenges, including insufficient infrastructure, workforce shortages, and limited access to technology and essential supplies.

These disparities are not merely logistical but are reflective of broader structural inequities that have evolved over decades. The findings highlight how unequal resource distribution, fragmented policy implementation, and the lack of gender-sensitive healthcare governance exacerbate these gaps. For rural healthcare facilities, the cumulative impact of these challenges results in limited capacity to address the unique and often complex needs of underserved populations.

The urgent need for targeted interventions is evident. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that prioritizes investments in rural infrastructure, fosters workforce development, integrates advanced technologies, and emphasizes gender equity in healthcare leadership and service provision. These strategies must be underpinned by robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure that progress is measurable and sustainable.

More importantly, this research illustrates the importance of community engagement in shaping healthcare systems that are responsive and inclusive. Rural communities in Gezira State, despite their vulnerabilities, offer rich insights and untapped potential to co-design solutions that meet their specific healthcare needs. By fostering partnerships between healthcare institutions, local stakeholders, and policymakers, Gezira State can develop a resilient healthcare system that not only bridges the urban-rural divide but also strengthens the social fabric of healthcare delivery.

In conclusion, achieving universal health coverage and improved health outcomes for all populations in Gezira State is within reach. It demands unwavering commitment, evidence-driven policy reforms, and a unified effort to eliminate disparities. Only through these measures can Sudan create a healthcare system that serves as a model of equity, accountability, and resilience for its citizens.

Recommendations:

1. Strengthening Rural Healthcare Infrastructure

- **Foundational Infrastructure Development**
  Invest in essential infrastructure for rural healthcare facilities, including reliable electricity, clean water supply, and proper sanitation systems. These elements are vital for ensuring basic operational standards and fostering a safe and hygienic environment for patients and staff.
  Equip healthcare centers with modern diagnostic tools, medical equipment, and sufficient storage for medicines to improve the quality of care.

- **Transportation Networks**
  Develop and maintain robust transportation systems to facilitate easy access to healthcare services for remote communities. Reliable road networks can also ensure the timely delivery of medical supplies, emergency services, and patient referrals to higher-level care facilities.

2. Workforce Development

- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**
  Launch ongoing training programs for rural healthcare workers, emphasizing policy updates, emerging healthcare trends, and best practices in patient care. Tailored modules on gender equity, cultural competency, and effective communication can enhance service delivery in diverse settings.

- **Mentorship and Collaboration**
  Establish mentorship programs that connect rural healthcare workers with experienced professionals from urban tertiary care centers. This initiative will encourage knowledge sharing, skill-building, and support systems that can empower rural healthcare staff to address complex medical challenges.

3. Promotion of Gender Equity

- **Leadership Opportunities for Women**
  Implement gender-sensitive policies that prioritize the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in leadership roles within the healthcare sector. Leadership training programs for women should also be introduced to enhance their representation and decision-making power.

- **Equitable Healthcare Access for Women**
  Design and implement specialized programs to address the unique healthcare needs of women in rural areas, including reproductive health, maternal care, and support for survivors of gender-based violence. Provide incentives such as free

or subsidized services and transportation allowances to ensure equitable access.

4. Expanding Technology in Healthcare

- **Digital Health Systems**
  Integrate advanced digital health management platforms to streamline operations in rural healthcare centers. These systems can enable accurate record-keeping, efficient appointment scheduling, and real-time data sharing for better coordination of care.
- **Technical Training and Support**
  Equip healthcare workers with the skills needed to operate and maintain digital tools through comprehensive training programs. Provide ongoing technical support to address challenges and improve user confidence.

5. Enhancing Community Engagement

- **Public Health Campaigns**
  Foster stronger relationships between healthcare institutions and local communities by organizing health awareness campaigns on critical topics such as nutrition, vaccination, and chronic disease prevention.
- **Participatory Decision-Making**
  Involve community members in healthcare planning and decision-making processes to ensure their needs and priorities are adequately addressed. Establish feedback mechanisms to assess community satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.
- **Tailored Health Programs**
  Develop community-focused health programs that address specific local challenges, such as malnutrition, infectious diseases, or lack of preventive care. Mobilize community health workers to bridge gaps in health education and service delivery.

6. Promoting Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

- **Resource Allocation and Operational Support**
  Strengthen collaboration with the private sector to address resource constraints in rural healthcare facilities. Encourage private companies to invest in infrastructure, supply chain systems, and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Collaborative Models**
  Promote innovative partnership models where private entities work alongside public institutions to improve the availability and quality of healthcare services. Incentivize private sector involvement through tax benefits, recognition programs, and mutual agreements.

7. Establishing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks

- **Performance Benchmarking**
  Introduce comprehensive benchmarking systems to evaluate healthcare service quality across urban and rural settings. Regularly assess compliance with established standards to identify areas needing improvement.
- **Audits and Feedback Mechanisms**
  Conduct regular audits to monitor facility performance, resource utilization, and patient outcomes. Use the findings to prioritize policy interventions and allocate resources effectively. Encourage transparency by sharing evaluation results with stakeholders, including the public.

Acknowledgment:

This research would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of healthcare professionals, policymakers, and academic collaborators who supported the data collection and analysis process. We extend our gratitude to the administrative teams of healthcare institutions in Gezira State for their transparency and cooperation, which provided a solid foundation for this study.

Special thanks are due to international and local organizations advocating for healthcare equity in Sudan. Their commitment to addressing systemic disparities continues to inspire meaningful reforms in healthcare delivery. We also acknowledge the unwavering support of our volunteers team, whose insights and dedication significantly enriched the quality of this work.

Finally, we express our profound appreciation to the communities of Gezira State, whose resilience and perseverance serve as a driving force for advancing healthcare equity and accountability.

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