Community Needs Assessment of South Asian families in Minnesota to provide need-based programming

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Abstract

Community organizations serving ethnic minorities need to seek community input to ensure programs are closely aligned to community needs. AshaUSA developed a mixed-method (SCAN) approach to identify needs of South Asian community in Minnesota. 194 surveys and 9 key informant interviews highlight a need for support with bicultural parenting, assimilation, family challenges, mental health, senior citizen issues, and civic engagement.

Background

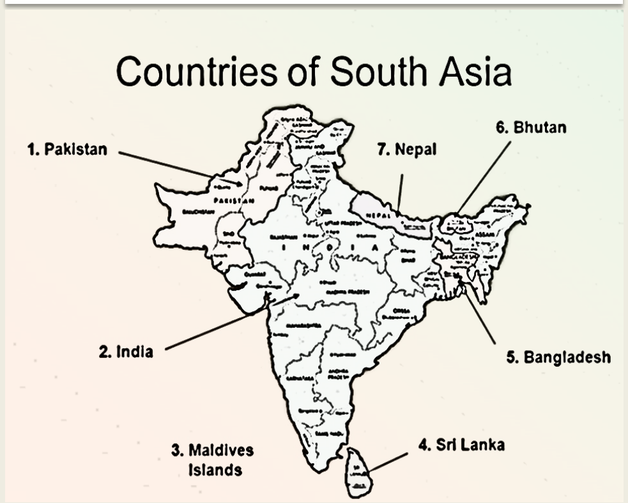
South Asian people trace their origins to India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Over 42,000 South Asians call Minnesota home (2010 census). Due to paucity of research, a needs assessment was identified as a crucial first step to understand the needs and challenges of this community. AshaUSA is a 501(c) non-profit organization that carries out research, education, and programming for South Asians in Minnesota. AshaUSA's goals for this community informed research were to:

1. Align AshaUSA programs with community needs to maximize efforts
2. Work with other nonprofits to meet the overall challenges of the community
3. Educate government organizations on service needs of South Asians and seek resources

Research Questions

The three main research questions were:

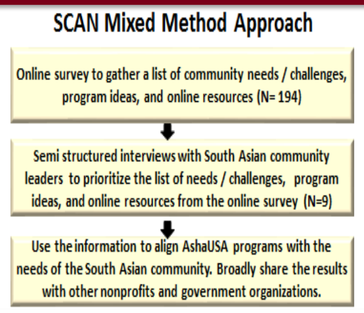
1. What are the needs and challenges faced by the South Asian community in Minnesota?
2. What are the resource needs of the South Asian community in Minnesota?
3. What programs, services, and resources should be provided to cater to the needs and challenges of the South Asian Community?



Demographics

Basic descriptive analysis of 194 participants of the survey

Method



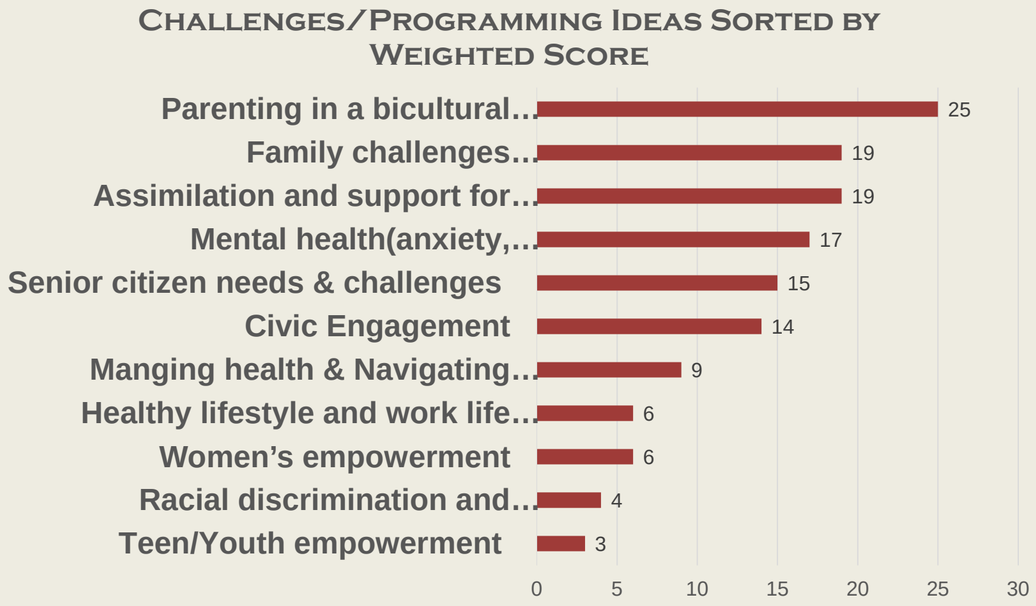
This mixed method research study includes collection of quantitative as well as qualitative responses. The ***South Asian Community Assessment of Needs (SCAN)*** was developed to collect information on the programming needs of South Asian community.

Survey Results

The open-ended survey responses highlight:

- **Concerns** about mental health issues, assimilation issues, and services for new immigrants
- **Need for programming**: new immigrant orientation, women's empowerment, senior citizen care, and bicultural parenting, career/future planning, interaction with police, children's disability issues, and civic engagement.
- **Online resources** to be listed on AshaUSA's website: list of resources regarding social, cultural and religious organizations, South Asian health care professionals, navigating K-12 school system, language classes for children, and legal help.

Qualitative Results



<u>The culturally relevant resources</u> that were suggested to be listed on our organization website by South Asian leaders:

1) **Senior citizen Needs**: opportunities for volunteering, socializing, and information on Alzheimer care, senior care, etc
2**) Health support services** for mental illness, alcoholism, drug-addiction, domestic violence, poison control and other kinds of emergencies
3**) Legal support services** for financial planning, immigration, bringing sale deeds from South Asian countries, DUI and other legal emergencies
4) **Civic engagement resources**: List of social advocacy groups, opportunities for civic engagement service projects, voter registration etc.
5) **Resources for visiting relatives**: health insurance, transportation services, free medical / dental clinics, and interpreter services.
6) **Lifestyle resources** on healthy eating advice, preventing diabetes, maintaining health chronic conditions, financial literacy, etc.

Implications & Next Steps

This study demonstrates a community focused approach of understanding the needs of the South Asian community in Minnesota. It highlights the importance of nonprofit organizations investing time in understanding the community's needs to best use available resources for the community

- The aim of this community research is to increase knowledge and understanding of their needs and priorities and integrate the knowledge gained with interventions, policy and programming.
- Other community organizations could use **SCAN and the mixed method approach** as a template to carry out needs assessment to set their service delivery priorities, influence their strategic planning, and strategize program outcomes, and improvements. AshaUSA would be happy to provide help or consult on using the SCAN approach.