

KOSHISH

Working towards better sexual and reproductive health and rights of PLHIV in Andhra Pradesh

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From the desk of the President of VMM

Vasavya Mahila Mandali is committed to communities to improve the standard of their lives through various initiatives like implementation, networking and advocacy. We respect the partnerships with various stakeholders and provide a platform for them to grow with confidence. KOSHISH Project - 'Sexual Reproductive Health Rights for PLHIV community' focuses on advocacy at various levels to improve the health of people living with HIV and to live in dignity. This project is in five districts of Andhra Pradesh - East Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Anantapur and Ranga Reddy with district level HIV Positive network and one Key population CBO. The baseline survey is being presented along with other events of the programme in this issue.



It is a pleasure to present the second issue of 'Koshish', a news letter.

Chennupati Vidya



European Commission



Summary of Baseline study

The KOSHISH project, with the support of the European Commission, is being implemented by India HIV/AIDS Alliance, through state-level partners and state-level PLHIV networks across four states; Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The project supports capacity building and advocacy by civil society organizations with the aim of improving sexual and reproductive health and rights of PLHIV.

The India HIV/AIDS Alliance carried out a study among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) in India to understand issues related to their sexual and reproductive health and services available at the community level. The study tried to understand the barriers in realizing the sexual and reproductive health rights among the PLHIV. Sigma Research and consulting agency carried out a study among PLHIV between 15-49 years of age. The study was carried out with 200 respondents (85 men, 100 women and 15 Trans gender persons) in 5 districts of Andhra Pradesh.

The profile of the respondents interviewed in the baseline survey indicated that, about 59% of the respondents were between 25 and 34 years of age and more than two fifth (42%) of the respondents had below high school education. Analysis also revealed that average monthly household income of respondents in Rs 4962 and the respondents himself/herself was the main income contributor in the household as reported by 68% of the respondents. Out of a total coverage, 18% of the respondents reported consumption of alcohol.

About 84% of the respondents were aware of more than seven SRH services and 93% of the respondents were aware of Ante Natal Care, Natal Care and Post Natal Care. Utilization of 4-6 SRH services was reported by nearly two fifth (38%) of the respondents.

Study showed that nearly all (97%) currently married respondents had sexual partners and more than three fifth (61%) of the unmarried respondents had non-regular sexual partners. About 95% of the female respondents were HIV positive while only 78% of the male respondents reported the same.

About 98% of the respondents were aware of one or more methods of contraception and 89% of the respondents reported currently using some contraception. Female sterilization was the most preferred contraceptive method among the respondents as more than half of the respondents reported currently going for female sterilization. About 96% of the respondents reported condom use during the last sexual encounter.

Nearly 4% of the women had an unmet contraceptive need for limiting. Nearly one fifth of the respondents (18%) reported that sterilization was suggested to them by someone; health provider, spouse, family members, friends, relatives, etc because of their HIV status. Two fifth of the respondents reported that someone (health provider, spouse, family members, friends, relatives, etc.) encouraged them to adopt sterilization because of their HIV status.

About 91% of the respondents were aware of sexually transmitted infections and about two fifth (39%) of the respondents reported experiencing some STI symptoms in the last 3 months among those reported STI symptoms. Among all interviewed respondents, more than four fifth (83%) of the respondents had comprehensive knowledge of HIV AIDS.

Events of Koshish Project in A.P

Trainings at state level



From 6th to 10th February 2012, Vasavya Mahila Mandali conducted five days state level training to all Civil Society Organisations at Vijayawada. Five field workers from Key Population organisations, Five field workers from District Level Positive Networks and 7 representatives from Civil Society Organisations and two from VMM participated. Ms.Kumkum, PO, Alliance and Mr.Amith, Technical Officer, Alliance Regional Technical Support Hub (South Asia) participated as observers. The focus was to capacitate District Advocacy officers in sexual reproductive health and the rights of the PLHIV community related to SRH. The points were vulnerability of community people, risk factors in sex, differences between sex and sexuality, SRH needs and health seeking practices of KP and PLHIV, body mapping of male and female, the sexual reproductive system and the physiology, components of SRHR, accessing of SRH services and addressing the barriers for PLHIV, sexual reproductive health rights of the community and process of Advocacy.

Community consultation meetings

In the month of May, 2012 VMM Koshish project partner NGOs conducted Five Community Consultation Meetings in Five districts. 122 members participated in these meetings among them 56 members from Key population and 61 members from District level networks. Koshish project Technical Support officers' Mr. D.Janardhan Rao and Mr.G.Jagdish Kumar facilitated the meetings. In this quarter District level Network organizations had taken lead to conduct the meetings. New issues identified and it was prioritized in 3rd coalition meeting.

Coalition Meetings

Second Coalition meeting of KOSHISH project was organized by TNP+ in Guntur. Ms. Kumkum, programme officer, India HIV/AIDS Alliance, representatives of partner NGOs, SLP, SLN staff and three technical support providers (TSPs) attended the meeting in March on 15th and 16th 2012 focused on prioritization of issues of five implementing Districts and resolved to follow base line study report for state level issues as most of the issues identified were district or local level issues. In this meet Coalition Governance was approved by the members.



Third Coalition meeting of KOSHISH project was organized by VMM in Vijayawada on 21st June 2012. VMM, TNP+ staff, representatives of partner NGOs and Seven Civil Society Organizations attended. Ms. Sonal Mehta, Director: Policy & Programmes, India HIV/AIDS Alliance, facilitated the meeting. Mrs. G.Rashmi, Secretary VMM and Dr B.Keerthi, Technical Support Manager, VMM also participated.

Issues prioritized were, in East Godavari district, women living with HIV are being suggested by counselors to undergo abortion and counselors' attitude is objectionable towards Sex workers. In Ananthapur District counselors' attitude towards MSMs and their exposure during the time of testing and used as demonstration is objectionable. **Issue for State level Advocacy** is 'Pap smear testing to Women Living with HIV/AIDS (WLHIV) at the time of their CD4 testing for early detection of cervical cancer'.

Participation

In SGRC meet

TNP+ (Telugu Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS) is the only CSO member in the State Level Grievance Redressal Committee (SGRC) of Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Andhra Pradesh. They participated in the meeting on 7th April, 2012 and submitted a concept note on SRHR-KOSHISH project and briefed the members on need and initiation of the project by Mr.G. Jagdish Kumar, TSO along with the General Secretary of TNP+.

The 4th SGRC meeting was initiated by Mr. C.Pardhasaradhi, IAS, Project Director, APSACS explained the Directivities of the Supreme Court and the purpose for which the State Level Grievance Redressal Committee constituted for the comprehensive care for PLHIVs.

State level consultation

Mr. G. Jagdish Kumar, Technical Support Officer disseminated information on KOSHISH project in a State Level Consultation, organized by Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust (HLFPPT) for the State Level Consultation on Family Planning on 29th May, 2012. Along with us the other partners including Family Planning Association of India, Center for Health and Social Justice and Advocating Reproductive Choices also participated.

Family Planning Association of India (FPAI)



Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) organized a series of workshops at Delhi in the months of May and June, 2012. Mr.G. Jagadish Kumar and Mr.D. Janardhana Rao from VMM attended workshops and build their capacities in four aspects: SRH-HIV Integration, Gender Equality and Mainstreaming, Youth Friendly SRH-HIV Integration and Project proposal development.

