


A Newsletter From 

HIV/AIDS Bill

status update

National Coalition on the HIV/AIDS Bill was set up in May 2008 with an aim to advocate for the tabling and passing of the HIV/AIDS Bill at the earliest. The coalition consists of more than 50 PLHIV networks and Civil Society organization, from across the country. It is led by Indian Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS (INP+) and Lawyers Collective HIV/AIDS Unit. The advocacy by the coalition, consisted of street actions, media advocacy and meeting the members of parliament. Concerted advocacy over a period of time has led to the Law Ministry coming out with the revised draft of the Bill in January 2009. Hopefully, the Bill should be tabled in parliament in the upcoming session in June.

Highlights of the HIV/AIDS Bill, 2009:

Prohibition of Discrimination:

This Bill prohibits discrimination on HIV related grounds in both public and private sector. . Discrimination in various settings like education, healthcare and employment and in various forms, including denial of and removal from services, hate and discriminatory speech has been prohibited under the Bill.

Informed Consent:

The Bill requires specific, free and informed consent for HIV test, treatment and research. It also reduces the age of consent for testing and treatment to sixteen, thereby increasing access to health care services for children.

Disclosure of Information:

The Bill guarantees the confidentiality of HIV related information and also lays down specific conditions and guidelines for exceptions to this.

Right to Access Treatment:

The Bill furthers the Right to Health as recognized in our constitution and puts the responsibility on the state to provide free of cost comprehensive HIV related treatment including diagnostics, ARVs and nutritional supplements.



EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Now, INP+ Newsletter is wearing a new outlook with Denim at its borders. It displays youth and dynamism. The title **SEEDEE 4** indicates the advancement of people living with HIV by becoming healthier.

From April, 2009, the newsletter shall be a monthly feature. I welcome your comments and contributions.

KK Abraham
President, INP+

Strategies for Risk Reduction:

This chapter provides for strategies that minimize a person's exposure to HIV/AIDS which includes programmes such as Needle-Syringe Programme, Condom promotion, providing information etc. These are typically targeted interventions with communities which are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS such as sex workers, injecting drug users and Men having Sex with Men (MSM). More importantly, as these services are criminalized under the present Indian laws, the Bill provides legal immunity to both provider and receiver of these services

Implementation and Grievance Redressal:

The Bill proposes innovative and speedy legal redressal which includes a complaints officer in every institution with more than 20 people and a Health Ombudsman in every district to provide relief in case of the violation of the provisions of the act. ●

News



On Nov 26, 2008, INP+ organized a national consultation meeting on "Ensuring equity in ART access for marginalized groups". During the consultation, the following research reports and policy brief generated by INP+ were shared with key stakeholders - including National AIDS Control Organization (NACO).

Policy brief: Barriers to free antiretroviral treatment access for marginalized groups in India: policy and programmatic implications to ensure equity.

Barriers to free antiretroviral treatment access to men who have sex with men / trans women / female sex workers / injecting drug users in Chennai, India (download reports @ www.inpplus.net).

INP + held a Faith in Action Interfaith Consultation on Monday, the 15th December 2008, under the aegis of Sarvojana Project at the President Hotel, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004. Religious leaders from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and representatives from faith based service organizations like Brama kumaris, Isha were invited for consultation. INP+ presented them its services and significance of faith based organizations in prevention, care and support for PLHIV. Following this, there were speeches by representatives from each faith. In the afternoon session, there were interactive discussions on the approaches through which each faith could collaborate and expand their respective services in improving the quality of life of PLHIV.

Initiative to empower street kids /children affected by HIV/AIDS: A training centre is to be established at Maloya, Chandigarh following the advocacy efforts of **Ms.Pooja Thakur President CNP+** and her team, Chandigarh. The Department of Social Welfare will run the centre through the Chandigarh Child and Women Development corporation (CCWDC).

The initiative taken by the administration will help children in developing a sense of self-worth, confidence to face the world and generate livelihood for them and their family.

- Report from Tribune News Service, August 13, 2008

The Consultative meet on Positive Living Centers (PLC) was held between 25th & 26th September, 2008 at Chennai. The purpose of the meet was to gain a better understanding of the evolution of PLC and its significance as of date. The meet was well attended by all the PLCs Core staff, INP+ ACT Team and state coordinators and senior officers of the program from PFI. The primary objectives were to understand the role and functions of PLC and to evolve a strategy for PLC

Indian Network for People living with HIV/AIDS (INP+), with the support of Family Health International (FHI) and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), held a workshop on GIPA Manual testing and design from 19 to 24 January, 2009, in Chennai with the delegates attending from the six high prevalent states. The purpose of the workshop was to orient the delegates on the GIPA manual and gather their feedback on the effectiveness of the training.

INP+ is happy to inform its new state level network at Chhattisgarh.

Mr. M. Mukesh is its president.

The following is the contact details.

CGNP+ [Chhattisgarh Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS]

SBI Colony, Makan No. 130, Near Dafodilis School,
Sundarnagar, Raipur

E-mail: cgnpplus@gmail.com

Key contact: Mukesh - 09827464384 / Prashant - 09424154591

INP+/TNNP+/CFAR with support from FHI SAMARTH and Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations (APCASO) had conducted two three-day Media Advocacy Training Workshops in October /November 2008 for representatives from PLHIV networks and marginalized communities in Tamil Nadu. The objectives of the workshop were to train the participants as media spokesperson and to strengthen media relationships and outreach capacities among the participants.



Community Workshop on HIV/ TB Treatment

On 15th and 16th of December, a workshop was organized by MSF Access Campaign in coordination and partnership with **INP+ on 'HIV/TB Treatment'** in New Delhi. There were representatives from state level networks of Bengal, Maharashtra, Manipur, Delhi, Mizoram, Jharkand, Hariyana, Bihar and Karnataka. There were also NGO representatives from Treatment Action Group and Lawyers Collective.

International Human Rights Day

'Discrimination and Human Rights Violations faced by People living with HIV and other marginalized communities in Tamil Nadu'. A public hearing was organized on the **International Human Rights Day - Dec 10, 2008** in Chennai. The aim of the event was to bring the grievances of PLHIV and the marginalized to the attention of the government.



Ms. Lorraine from HIV/AIDS Unit, Lawyers Collective presented on the status of the HIV/AIDS Bill and the corrections made by the Law Ministry. Mr. Anthony Francis, State GIPA Coordinator, presented to the audience on the initiatives taken up by TNSACS against stigma and discrimination in Tamil nadu.

The panel of eminent writers, legal and health professionals as well as activists listened to the issues faced by the marginalized communities PLHIV, MSM / FSW / TG / IDU. The distinguished members were: Mr. Gnani, Writer, Mr. Charu Nivedita, Writer, Mr. Arunachalam, Tamilnadu state legal services authority, Dr. Jaya Sreedhar, Internews, Ms. Shantha Kumari, Women Lawyers Association, Ms. Naga Saila, PUCL-Chennai Unit, Dr. Manorama, Child Welfare Committee, Ms. Goh SoonSiew, APCASO.

The submissions by different marginalized communities included the issues on employment and education for transgender, the need for all services of care and rehabilitation to be under one roof for IDUs, excessive police torture and violence against MSM, denial and negligence of treatment for other infections/diseases for PLHIV and denial of funeral and burial rites.

Ms. Goh of APCASO felt that Public Hearing was a good platform for people affected to express their concerns and get help and support.

confidence that it would be possible for her to live for herself and her daughter. Her change of mind and her decision to live and live for her children has been the most satisfying information for the counselor.

INP+ 12th Annual General Body Meeting

INP + held its 12 th AGM in Chandigarh on 11th September, 2008 as a four day events engaging every member of AGM in active participation. As part of the program, INP+ had organized **advocacy and capacity building event** to the benefits of the people living with HIV in the northern region. There was a **region wise situation assessment** exercise among the 144 members from 22 states on the first day. A workshop was organized on **regional governance** on the second day to the governing members of state networks who were grouped into six regional groups based on geographical continuity. A session on **TB-HIV programs** was the focus on the forenoon of the third day, the 13th September, 2008 with Mr. Case Gordon of World Care Council as the facilitator. A parallel workshop on **Positive Prevention** for the consecutive two days also took place wherein SLN presidents and board members of INP+ took part. As a culmination of the AGM meet, INP + organized a **rally** on the theme "All Rights, Women's Rights" on 13th September 2008 to highlight the issues of people living with HIV/AIDS in Northern region.



LIVING IS THE WAY FOR POSTPONING SUICIDE

Ms. Selvi, along with her child presently lives in her brother's residence after a bitter experience with her husband. She was sad that her husband caused her acquired HIV. This had already led her to suicidal thoughts and also to make an unsuccessful attempt on her life. During the counseling session, it was clear that she had not come out of her depression. She needed persuasion and calmness to rid herself of the thought of suicide. The mental health tool came in handy to achieve this. Firstly, she agreed not to go through with her decision to commit suicide and further follow up counseling made her want a little to live longer. She then decided to take appropriate medicines. In the meantime, she had put on weight and over the coming months she began to feel better in herself. In one of her follow up counseling sessions, she revealed that there was a complete change in her and she said that she wanted to live. The counselor shared her own life experience and instilled in her the

Advocating for changes to the legal system to protect PLHIV in India and China

Mr. Murali from INP+ reports from Mexico City, August 8-

Advocates, including people living with HIV (PLHIV), from the Asia Pacific region, are working with the Asian Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organization (APCASO) to improve the quality of their lives and those of other marginalized communities.

APCASO shared HIV/AIDS Bill, India, as adopted by National AIDS Control Organization and submitted to the Law Ministry under the banner of Legalizing the Epidemic in Asia and the Pacific with activists during the 17th International AIDS Conference in Mexico.

The panel of activists included: Jia Ping, an HIV and Human Rights Lawyer with Global Fund Watch; Malu Marine, Executive Director of ACHIEVE, an NGO working in support of PLHIV in the Philippines; Daisy David, Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV or AIDS (GIPA) Advisor of the largest PLHIV network in Asia; and UN Health Rapporteur and Anand Grover, Lawyers Collectives, and also a member of ICASO's board. They presented the work done by the activist organizations on anti-discrimination and HIV legislation and improvements to the justice systems in India and China.



Jia Ping spoke about the Chinese experience by describing the existing Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS Policies & Regulations in China. He explained that there is a gap between the regulations and policies and their implementations. This gap is caused by the fact

that while the current regulations and policies call for the protection of the rights of PLHIV, they place the burden of implementation on the community, rather than on the law enforcement agencies. Global Fund Watch Initiative has been working with the activist community to seek appropriate interventions to change the status quo in the judicial system.

During and after the discussion, conference delegates signed a solidarity banner, which activists, led by members of the INP+ later paraded around the Global Village collecting more signatures of support. Indian and other APCASO activists then displayed the banner at the entrance to the satellite session, "India's Response to HIV/AIDS: Lessons Learned," advocating for the bill's passing. The Minister of Health of India, Dr Anbumani Ramadoss, who was the main speaker, committed his support for the bill.



INDIAN NETWORK
FOR PEOPLE LIVING
WITH HIV/AIDS

New No 41, Old No. 42/3, Second main road,
Kalamagal Nagar, Ekkaduthangal, Chennai 600 097, INDIA
Phone

+ 91 44 42641580, 2225 4671, 2225 4672, 2225 4673, 2225 4674
Fax: + 91 44 2225 4670

Email

Inp@inplus.net; inplus@vsnl.com; inplus@eth.net
Website: www.inplus.net

Obituary

- We regret to announce that founder member of TNNP+ **Mr. Anabalagan** passed away on 25 12 08.
- **Mr. Ramesh Venkatraman** passed away on Saturday, the 31 January, 2009. INP+ regrets and feels isolated on the demise of Shri. Ramesh Venkatraman, one of our mentors and guides. Through his effective skills in public speaking, he guided INP+ in making great strides in advocacy measures particularly on treatment related issues. In this hour of sorrow, we all, at INP+ share the grievance of his family and friends.