



SAATHII

Solidarity and Action Against The
HIV Infection in India

WWW.SAATHII.ORG/SAATHIIUSA
tel: 312-423-7899 email: saathiiusa@yahoo.com



HIV/AIDS a Serious Threat to India

At a home for vulnerable women and children in the city of Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, 23-year-old Nagmani clutches her five-year-old daughter in her lap. Neither smiles. The doctors say both of them are traumatized. In January Nagmani's husband died of AIDS. "After my husband died my parents in-law threw me out of their house," she says. "My brother's wife didn't want me in my family's house either. I had no place to go, that's why my daughter and I came here." Test results show Nagmani too is HIV-positive, but that's too much for her to cope with. She refuses to accept she is infected. [BBC News, September 21, 2005]

Today, an estimated **5.1 million Indians are infected** with HIV/AIDS, making India second in the world to South Africa in number of HIV cases. India accounts for 10% of the global HIV burden and 65% of the burden in South and South East Asia.

The first AIDS case in India was detected in 1986, and since then **HIV has been reported in all States and Union Territories**. Those most affected include Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Manipur and Nagaland and are closely followed by Gujarat, Goa, Pondicherry and West Bengal.

The epidemic, which began among high-risk groups and urban populations, is now **spreading rapidly amongst the general population and into the rural areas**. It is primarily affecting the most productive age group of society, those 15-44 years of age.

The epidemic is also shifting towards women and young people and making children especially vulnerable. Close to half of those infected are below 29 years and one in every three cases is a woman, many of whom are monogamous housewives.

More than 50,000 children are infected with the virus and already 1.2 million children are orphaned due to AIDS.

India's distinct social and cultural environment furthers spread of the virus. Sexual activity accounts for 85% of spread, but India is silent about sex. Denial and cultural myths on sex and sexuality especially amongst sexual minorities make the problem invisible. And those infected are shamed and ostracized by society, but the legal environment is not sensitive enough to protect the human rights of vulnerable and affected populations.


The virus affects all dimensions of a person's life – physical, psychological, social and spiritual. Antiretroviral drugs and care and support however can counter some of the negative impact and allow those infected to lead healthy quality lives. But these medications and services are unavailable for the vast majority of those infected in India.

Tuberculosis is now the leading infectious killer in India and HIV/AIDS contributes to increased TB cases. However, if those currently infected do not receive immediate antiretroviral treatment, **HIV/AIDS will supersede tuberculosis in two years as the number one killer in India**.

India's epidemic is at a critical stage, offering a unique window of opportunity to control the spread of the virus. But just a small percentage increase in HIV/AIDS cases **can have detrimental consequences in a nation of over one billion people**.

HIV/AIDS in India deserves priority.

Contributing to the response against HIV/AIDS in India therefore means contributing to the health and development of a nation.



SAATHII Addresses the Threat of HIV/AIDS

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES – SAATHII strengthens and expands HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services throughout India through the following objectives:

- **Technical and Financial Assistance** to build capacity of and provide resources for frontline organizations;
- **Information Dissemination** to bridge knowledge gaps;
- **Networking** to promote collaboration and dialogue; and
- **Advocacy** for increased attention to those affected.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE – SAATHII was founded in February 2000 and is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization in the U.S.A. and registered trust in India. SAATHII's offices are located in Chicago, IL in the U.S.A. and in Chennai, Calcutta, and Hyderabad in India. SAATHII employs more than 20 staff and consultants in India. In the U.S.A., SAATHII adopts a volunteer staffing model with roughly 15 dedicated volunteers across the country.

CORE COMPETENCIES – SAATHII is recognized in India, U.S.A. and globally for the following core competencies:

- Innovative, unbiased and comprehensive solutions
- Strong grassroots knowledge and solid roots in India
- Relationships with major frontline organizations in India.
- Technical expertise on HIV/AIDS in India
- Commitment to addressing major gaps and unmet needs
- Bringing multiple sectors together on a neutral platform

SAATHII believes in supporting strong performance as a foundation for lasting change, thereby stretching every dollar raised for the greatest impact.

IMPACT FROM INDIA – SAATHII has served more than 1,500 organizations and has **impacted thousands of infected and vulnerable Indians**. Some major achievements include:

- **Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT):** Coordinates second-largest PMTCT program in India which is implemented by a consortium of partners that reached close to 140,000 pregnant women across four states. (Funded by the Elizabeth Glazer Pediatric AIDS Foundation)
- **Family Care Continuum:** Provides technical assistance to government in expanding care, support and treatment for 4000 family members of infected and affected children in Tamil Nadu. (Funded by Child Investment Fund Foundation)
- **HIV/AIDS Service Directory:** Developed India's first print and electronic database of HIV/AIDS services. (Funded by John M. Lloyd Foundation, UNAIDS and Global Strategies)
- **Information Communications Technology:** Developed one of the most visited India-specific Online Resource Centers on HIV/AIDS and India-specific electronic forums. (Funded by UNDP Development Information Program)
- **Regional Support Center:** Developed a support center for voluntary agencies working with People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and sexual minorities in eastern India. (Funded by the Elton John AIDS Foundation)

IMPACT FROM THE USA – SAATHII in the USA bridges resources to support HIV/AIDS services at the frontlines of the HIV/AIDS fight in India. Since fall 2004, SAATHII USA has:

- **Mobilized over \$100,000** for HIV/AIDS in India;
- Introduced the AIDS Orphan Community Care Program to **benefit hundreds of orphaned children** in India;
- Strengthened Indian non-governmental organizations through **placement of ten skilled volunteers**; and
- Reached hundreds of people across the USA through various **awareness-raising activities and events**.

U.S.A Led Programs to Bridge Major Gaps

SAATHII in the USA provides support to programs undertaken by SAATHII in India and **carries out the following focus areas** for years 2005-2006:

➤ **Improving the Health and Development of Children Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS**

Objective: Strengthening care, support and treatment of children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS by ensuring access to essential services, including medical, nutritional, psychosocial, and educational services and strengthening family capacities for home-based care and support.

➤ **Mobilizing USA Against HIV/AIDS in India**

Objective: Raising awareness, promoting dialogue and mobilizing action in USA against HIV/AIDS in India.

➤ **Developing Young Americans into Social Conscience, Public Health Leaders of Tomorrow**

Objective: Building capacity of non-governmental organizations by encouraging people from the USA to travel to India to participate in volunteer assignments that benefit frontline organizations. The program serves to inspire service and civic responsibility, educate on India and its development, and build leadership and public health skills.

➤ **Promoting Good Health, One HIV+ Leader at a Time**

Objective: Contributing to the good health of HIV positive leaders of non-governmental organizations by providing them a continuous supply of second-line, antiretroviral medications, which are unaffordable in India and are beneficial to those persons experiencing treatment failure.

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Our Supporters Leading the Way

SAATHII USA is grateful for the generous contributions made by several individual donors, universities and the following organizations: John M. Lloyd Foundation, Johnson and Johnson, and Global Strategies for HIV Prevention.

Support Us in Fighting HIV/AIDS in India

SAATHII USA is looking for additional supporters to help lead the way. As a supporter, you have the potential to benefit those infected or vulnerable for HIV/AIDS in India and to establish a precedent in our community in taking on the fight against the epidemic.

If you or someone you know may be interested in supporting our cause, please email saathiiusa@yahoo.com or call 312.423.7899.

You can donate online at www.saathii.org/saathiiusa/donation.html or send a check payable to SAATHII: P.O. Box 14635, Chicago, IL 60614.

For more information, please visit www.saathii.org/saathiiusa.

JOIN HANDS WITH US, MAKE A DIFFERENCE



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