



PLUS

Case studies September 2009

Case Study Sinhudurg

When a husband dies there is no one to care for his wife. The civil society will not accept her, this society wants to put restrictions on her without sympathy or empathy. If the wife died society would not restrict him. This shows that our society is a male dominated society. If the male goes wrong no one asks him about his faults, but if a woman is doing the same this society says that she is not suited for society.

Why cannot women get justice? She is also born in this society, but she is a woman so she gets different treatment. I want to share a woman's story, Rani, who fought against injustice with the help of a press reporter who published her story in Tarun Bharat News paper. Then donors came forward and she was able to stand on her own feet.

When Rani's family members came to know of her and her husband's status they refused to meet with them. They would not speak with them. Because of this discrimination she lost her husband. Days and years went by but no relatives communicated with them. She was living with her two sons. She always tried to tell her relatives that her two sons are not HIV Positive, but no one believed her words. The family was isolated from the society.

One day Rani's house caught fire after an electrical short circuit. When she saw that her house was on fire she cried for help, but no one came to help her. She woke the children up and got them out of the house. She collected a few belongings then she also had to run from the house. There was heavy rain which caused further damage to the house. Rani and her children had to make a home on the street. They took shelter under a tamarind tree. When the rain stopped she went to the damaged house and managed to salvage some food for them to eat.

From then on they had to sleep and eat under this tree. One day a press reporter came to that place and asked her about this incident. Rani was crying and telling the reporter the story of how she came to live under a tree. When the reporter heard this story he promised her that he would help her build herself a new home and provide an income source for herself. He also promised her that he would publish her story in the newspaper.

He kept his promise and published the story in his newspaper. When the story was published many people came forward to help her. With the help of these donors they built a new house for her. One donor took responsibility for her monthly grocery and Roshan, someone else provided for her children's education. Some helped her to establishing a poultry farm for her earning source.

Rani was so happy for this kindness by society she is very thankful to all that helped her. At her house opening ceremony all funding persons came together to eat a breakfast which she made herself. Rani cannot speak any words of gratitude but her eyes are speaking all her emotion.

This is a memorable incident in the life of our district network also. At last the woman and her children get a justice.

Case Study Akola

Salekha is a 23 years old positive woman. Her story is a story of courage and strong willpower. Salekha was a tiny girl, her mother was dead. Her father married a second time. Some years later her father died. After that her step mother hated her and started doing bad practices with her. The family was poor, and not well educated. Salekha was very clever in school, and she liked to go to school but her step mother didn't want to send her. Her step brother and sister became very cruel with her. Her step sister became an 'aunty', doing sex work, and became a sex agent. When Salekha was an adolescent, her sister brought her into sex work. Salekha is looking smart so she attracted a lot of clients. Her business grew.

Salekha she stayed in school up to 10th class. She had some knowledge of HIV. After some years of sex business, she became ill. She went to the civil hospital. She had an HIV test and found she was HIV positive. After her sister heard about her HIV status, she hated Salekha. Her sister opened her status in front of customers. She knew it would have an effect on her business. She lost her customers so her sister banished her from home. She had to live alone and she had a problem of how to survive.

She moved to Akola and started sex work, in order to earn a living. One day she was going to the civil hospital there when she heard about the Network of Akola People with HIV (NAP+). She came to the network office and met with our counsellor. The counsellor listened to her story and counselled her. But Salekha did not reveal her sex work. That time NAP+ was organising some Peer treatment education training. Our counsellor suggested that Salekha join the training. She agreed. She took an active part in the training. She learnt many things about HIV. She liked this training very much and she told us in the district about her business. The network officer and other staff asked her to leave the business. She agreed and stopped her sex work. We helped her find a room to live.

After she stopped the sex work, she tried to live innocently, but her former customers didn't want to let her. But NAP+ helped her on every step. After some time we helped her start a business selling saris and clothes. Now she has fully closed her previous business and only sells clothes. Now her financial condition is good. She takes care of her health. We are proud that we helped her to a better life.

Case study Beed

Geeta 29, lived in the Beed District about 20 km from Beed. Her husband of three years and Geeta worked on their own farm. Her husband became very ill with frequent short illnesses and he was diagnosed with HIV. When they both came to the Network of Beed People with HIV (NBP+) office we suggested that she should also take a HIV test but her husband did not want her to. He also told her not to tell anyone else in the family the reason for his status.

However, a friend and relative of Geeta's helped her get tested, she decided to make up her own mind. When she told her husband that she, too, had HIV, he became very angry and frustrated and thought about suicide. They both came for a second time to NBP+ so we motivated them both to have confidence and see that life is positive.

While Geeta was hospitalised with a short illness he told people about her status. He told both their families and her workplace that she had infected him with HIV and tried to kill him. Both families understood about being positive and gave a big support to Geeta and her husband. Her brother-in-law was very a good person with a positive view of HIV. When she was discharged from hospital Geeta left her husband. She went home with a new dream. She wanted to live life!

Understanding the urgency of the situation both families and relatives found Geeta a place of safety away from her home district. However, the new home they offered her had no furniture. But Geeta told them she wanted to live her own life away from her husband and farm. She was unable to take any of her belongings from home for fear of assault. So our counselling and financial support helped her to furnish her home so that she was able to move in.

Geeta now lives life free of her husband and sees life is positive. Both regularly come to office and when we see Geeta's face we think "Geeta is a one of the happiest women In India". She has begun to make friends and to come to terms with her diagnosis. Although she still lives in fear of her husband, she can begin to rebuild her life.

Lessons:

- 1) Stigma and discrimination will have gone from HIV When all families think like Geeta's family
- 2) Her brother advised her to go back home but Geeta refused. She is an example of a courageous women
- 3) Now she is trusting herself and doesn't think of suicide

Jitendra Surywanshi
District Social Worker, Beed

Case study Parbhani

Parbhani District Network has been working for 5 years and enrollment was 1608 in August 2009. Among these enrollments there are many successful stories which contain lessons for others. One story is given below about a lady whose name is Surekha.

Surekha, 28 years old, was married to 1997 with Ram who was a driver of a Tempo and also owner of a ration shop. After four years Surekha had given birth to two girls. All are living in a big family of Ram's with two brothers and his sister in law. Once Ram was taken ill and his family members thought this was normal. Day by day this health decreased and from a private lab he detected that he had HIV. At that time there were no ICTC and ART centres in the district and Surekha didn't know anything about the external world. She was totally a housewife. Up to a limit Ram's family made efforts to save him and then they gave up all hopes. So Surekha was left alone with him. She was trying to pay for treatment by selling her jewelry. She visited many doctors taking her husband and two small children but they didn't get good treatment and Ram passed away.

After this death Surekha was neglecting her life. Her brother in law stole her ration store and Tempo. As she was in shock she never contested this. She decided to do any job to stand on own feet and be able to give good nourishment and education to her children as she and Ram had always dreamed. She went back to her mother-in-law and tried to search for jobs while taking her children with her. Because of her low education and having no experience she failed in every field.

Someone suggested that she test her HIV status. She went to the government hospital where she tested positive for HIV. Her confidence was shaken but at that time an ICTC had recently opened at the district hospital where she could get proper counselling. She was getting a positive approach for her life. At this time a People Living with HIV group, the district network (DLN), was starting and to strengthen this they approached her to join. By spending time with them she got more information and her views became positive to her life.



After she enrolled at the DLN a network election was held in 2004 and she became secretary. But as a newly formed group they were all unsure of their responsibilities. By attending workshops and trainings under NMP+ she got more confidence. After one year with the network she got a project and she became a peer counsellor. By this profession she was earning a good salary and she was able to nourish her daughters. On her own earnings she purchased an L.P.G, television, TV dish, bicycle and all needs which were demanded by her two daughters. Now they are studying in 3rd and 5th standard in the top school of the district. They also tested for HIV but they got a good report which was negative.

She formed links with other NGOs who are working in the district. She made good contacts with the Tahsil office, the Collector's office and their working staff who helped her for Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana to other her clients. In various schools and collages she gave guidance about HIV information and did some Positive Speaker talks . At district level and state level she attended many workshops of NMP+, INP+, PFI etc., and impressed everyone. After three years experience as a peer counselor she was appointed to the post of care coordinator at the ART centre in Parbhani. There she has given good service to others.

For her future plans she wants to give a good education to her daughters. For future expenses Surekha deposits money at the bank each month in the credit of both daughters. Regarding marriage of both she will prefer a court marriage with a groom of any caste. Surekha said that she will make both daughters independent, so they can live on their own feet. She will never give any dowry.

While living at the house of mother-in-law occasional crises take place but she withdraws bravely and enjoys every moment of life.

Sanju G Kale, District Social Worker, Parbhani