



# PLUS

## Case studies December 2008

**This month there are two case studies. The first is from**

### **Beed**

**Our thanks to Jitendra Surywanshi for sending this in.**

Ms. Sunita (26 yrs) is a very beautiful young woman. She was married in the year 2002 and had a very happy married life with her husband who was the owner cum driver of a taxi car. He was the owner of a shop. Soon she was pregnant and she gave birth to her first baby girl child. Everything went well in their life until 2004. Then her husband started developing a fever, lost weight etc. and he was taken to Beed government hospital where his HIV positive status was diagnosed.

Once they knew of his HIV positive status, they ran from Beed to seek for help but all their efforts were in vain, no one helped or guided them. They tried various treatments available including through private medicine but all were of no use. His condition deteriorated further and finally he went to Bail-Air Hospital, Panchgani, in 2005 where he succumbed to his disease.

After her husband's death she felt hopeless and was contemplating suicide. She was also diagnosed as HIV+. Finally she approached Network of Beed People with HIV (NBP+) where she was calmed and motivated through counselling and support services. She realized that she was not the only one who is infected and there are so many other people living with their HIV positive status. The immediate reaction came to her mind was "if I die who will take care of my daughter?" She then joined NBP+ and continued her life in her own village

Meanwhile, she had to sell off her husband's shop and borrow money from others to clear the debts incurred for the treatment of her husband.

Despite these heavy troubles she has been a ray of hope for the HIV Positive people who come into contact with her, many of whom still live in isolation with stigma and discrimination. She has now 1.5 acres land in which she plans to build a small house of her own. In her life she is busy in creating awareness among the people with HIV/AIDS. Through helping many other people, she has forgotten that she is HIV Positive. With a smiling face she says "an HIV positive person can live a very happy and normal life like anyone else, and the community/society has a vital role to play in this regard". Let Sunita be an inspiration and a candle in the lives of those who live in fear and darkness because of their HIV positive status.

When she first came to our network she was very insecure and had lots of doubts about the future. With counselling we were able to change her attitude and she now looks at life positively. She knows she is not the only living person with HIV. She is educated and we are encouraging her to continue her education. She has an aim for her child and hopes to get her a good education so that she is qualified for a better life.

## Lessons

- 1) If she is to survive she has to fight positively for life.
- 2) Working for other people with HIV has a positive impact on her life.
- 3) We were able to change her attitude to life through counselling.
- 4) She needs to have social contact and other things to make her life full.
- 5) The high costs of treatment for HIV where free treatment is not made available can lead to economic ruin.

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**Our second case study is from**

### **Parbhani**

**Our thanks to Babita R Charan and Sanju G Kale for this one.**

Rupa is a 31 year old female client who enrolled in February 2006 at Parbhani district network. They lived in a village in Parbhani district. Her husband had AIDS but lack of knowledge about HIV meant his family members were unable to arrange the proper treatment and he died.

After her husband's death Rupa's mother-in-law and other family members started mistreating Rupa, blaming her for the death of her husband, telling her you must live apart from us. They drove her away, so one day she went from their home and went to her father who is living at Parbhani district proper, he is a widower and lives alone. He is a labourer and an alcoholic.

Slowly Rupa is becoming ill. Her neighbour took her to the Government hospital and there she found out that she too has HIV. When her father knows this he will not let her come inside the house. Even though she is living her father beat her each day and told her she should commit suicide. He will not eat food cooked by her and does not speak to her or give her any love.

The she fell badly ill and was admitted to the government hospital at Parbhani. From there she enrolled with Parbhani network. Once we knew about her we gave her deep counselling and tried to build positive living in her.

Day by day she was becoming weaker and finally required anti-retroviral therapy (ART). But before this the CD4 test is essential and at that time there was no facility for CD4 testing and ART except at the Mumbai ART centre.

Rupa is in trouble because her father does not support her and she does not have any money. We went to her father and tried to make him understand about HIV, that just

because we live together HIV will not spread, if we treat her she can get stronger and able to work to earn money, but for now she needs your company and support. To change his view about his daughter we did two or three visits. Then he agreed to pay for the CD4 count. But local hospitals charged 3000 to 5000 rs for a CD4 count and her father can not afford this amount. So we sent her blood sample to a Mumbai laboratory at a cost of only 600 rs. Her CD4 report came which was only 24. We advised her to take ART and we referred her to J.J hospital, Mumbai. She went with other clients whose appointment was on the same date. After a few days on 31 August 2006 she started on ART.

We kept regularly in touch with her and side by side we guided her father also about her care. Slowly she improved her health and recovered soon. After this we helped her to join the Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojna which gives financial support to widows. Now she is getting 750 rs per month and also she is earning money by washing utensils in other's houses. She earns enough to be able to nourish her father also and now they are living together happily.

We gave her livelihood and nutrition training also which helped improve her living standard. Sometimes she takes other people with HIV with her to the ART centre in Mumbai and she make guides them even though she is illiterate. She can do all necessary work and build nice communications with them and the hospital staff. She attends every support group meeting and other programmes and is now living a very happy life with her father.

Both are very thankful of Parbhani district network.

**Babita R Charan, District Network Officer, and Sanju G Kale, Social worker**