



# PLUS

## Case studies March 2009

### Kolhapur district

#### History

Rekha married Shankar in 1998. Both were living in Wadgaon with Shankar's parents –in-law. They were very happy. Shankar was working in Gahatage Patil Transport in Kolhapur. Rekha was 7 months pregnant at that time but her mother in law beat her for small reasons so they went to live separately from her in-laws. Rekha gave birth to a daughter, and Rekha's mother and father gave good support. Two years later Rekha became pregnant for the second time. This time she gave birth to a son. All were living happily but sometimes God shows difficult days for human beings. Shankar was facing some health problems like fever and a cough so many days he needed to take leave from his work. Slowly his financial situation deteriorated. He couldn't afford medicines and other expenses.

Then Rekha heard about the Network of Kolhapur People Living with HIV.

Shankar and Rekha came to Network in 2007. Because of his various health problems, the peer counsellor gave him counselling and referred them both to the Community Care Centre in Pachagani.

Rekha was worried about his health problems. She did not know then about self-health and testing. Two weeks later Shankar's health improved and he was discharged from hospital.

Both decided they would live separately from all relatives. Shankar was now working regularly. In a counselling session the peer counsellor advised them to get the children tested for HIV. Some days Shankar did not adhere to his ART, he was in default from ART medicine. Rekha came to know the truth about Shankar, that he had been diagnosed as HIV positive before the marriage but he did not tell anyone about the report. Rekha was in a state of shock when she found this out and wanted to leave Shankar. Shankar's family were blaming her.

She was worried about her son and daughter because both were small. She lost her meaning in life and didn't have the energy to fight her community and relatives. Rekha was disturbed so much and she fought with her husband about small things. From this situation Shankar gradually became an alcoholic so his health problems increased, including diarrhea, fever and liver problems. They were not yet ready to take treatment. At this time Rekha faced financial, psychological and social problems. The treatment outreach worker did a home visit to talk to Shankar about his treatment but he and Rekha did not have money for his treatment. Some time later Rekha called to the office of the Network of Kolhapur People with HIV and told us that Shankar had died.

For some months Rekha was in a panic about her own health. Also she wanted to do an HIV test of children but she did not dare to do it. Rekha had a good CD4 count so she did

not need ART medicine but she needed psychological support, so our peer counsellor gave her support.

In May 2008 she was invited to go for peer training so that she could do stitching work to economically support her father and other family members. She was now actively participating in every activity. NKP+ had a HIV/TB project so there was a vacancy for a positive person who was interested in it. Rekha was given a job at that time in the drop in centre. She is now working as an Out Reach Worker for Panhala Taluka.

### **Observations**

- Shankar did not have knowledge of HIV treatment.
- Rekha did not have good family support.
- Her financial condition is now poor.
- Rekha gave good support to her husband during his treatment.
- She has started ART medicines from Sangli civil hospital.
- She now accepts her HIV status.
- She is developing the confidence level to fight her relatives.
- She is now working regularly.

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## **Pune district**

### **1. Hospital discriminates against positive person**

Nimisha was admitted to the Sassoon Hospital, Pune, ward 18, for a leg operation. She was already registered in our network. She had the operation but the doctors and nurses were troubling her, then suddenly the doctor discharged her. When this happened she was still not cured, she needed treatment and medicines. They gave lots of problems to her, because of her positive status. But Nimisha still needed one to two weeks treatment to be fully cured. At the time one of her relations informed our network. As soon as we heard we went to the hospital and we met the doctors who were responsible for her treatment and who had discharged her. We asked them about her discharge, and asked them why are you giving her problems and troubling her? Because of her status which is HIV+?

The staff of our network, Manisha Kudale and Kunda Mujumale reminded them about their duties. That being a doctor their work is to give treatment to all types of patients fairly and without prejudice. What you are doing is against the law. You can be punished for giving problems and for discharging a patient before they have recovered. So we are advising you and all the staff that you do not repeat it with other patients.

As a result of this visit Nimisha was re-admitted into hospital and now she is receiving good treatment and recovering well.

### **2. School discriminates against a positive teacher**

Shah had been working in a private institution in the post of high school teacher since 1990. His working experience at the school was eighteen years. In these years he was never guilty of absenteeism or taking unnecessary leave. And his work quality was also very good and the equal of the other teachers in the institution. But at this time he got trouble from the institution where the institution suddenly made a decision to dismiss him

from his post. He went to office and asked them the reason for dismissing him. The reason they gave him was that he was "HIV positive". They said there was no way to get his job back.

One day he came to our organisation and told us his story of getting dismissed from his job. Our network President Sanjay Jadhav and General Secretary Lahu Pawar advised him that he should go back to the school and ask them to put the reason for his dismissal in writing. But they wouldn't give him a letter and they refused to allow him to come inside the institution.

Once again he came and informed us about this development, so our President and General Secretary went to institution. They spoke to the school about his dismissal from the job. They told them that it was becoming a legal issue. If you still want to dismiss him, you have to give a reason in a letter, then we can challenge it legally through the court.

They were not prepared to give the reason in writing, so in this way he got his job back and now he is regularly attending to the same job in the same institution in the same post.