

Strategic Intervention For Prevention of HIV/AIDS Among / through Police In Uttar Pradesh

Raison d'être:

On forces, police and other uniformed services around the world face a serious problem of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections due to the nature and characteristics of their profession. Among the uniformed services, personnel STI/HIV/AIDS prevalence rates are two to five times higher than in the general population. There is urgent need for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support programme for police personnel. The police may also be used as an instrument for prevention of HIV/AIDS since they are in regular contact with vulnerable population – commercial sex workers, drug addicts, truck and taxi drivers, etc. Moreover, police also perform a regulatory services relating to intelligence, investigation, anti-corruption, maintaining law and order and keeping a check on crime. Police is the main instrument for combating organized crimes such as trafficking in women and children. There is a need for creating an enabling environment within the police to support the rights of vulnerable groups to access HIV/AIDS services. Moreover, international agencies have recognized the importance of uniformed services in its fight against HIV/AIDS.

India has one of the largest populations of people living with HIV/AIDS, second only to South Africa. An estimated 5.1 million individuals currently live with HIV infections across all the states. As per data available, there were 1.12 lakh AIDS cases in India in July 2005. HIV prevalence rate among the adult population is 0.8 per cent but the absolute number of people living with HIV is very high and growing rapidly. In areas that have been affected the most severely, the epidemic is challenging the development achievements. In India, HIV/AIDS epidemic is characterized by heterogeneity. The epidemic shifts from most vulnerable population (including sex workers, injecting drug users, men who have sex with men) to bridge populations (clients of sex workers, STI patients, partners of drug users) and then to

the general population. The epidemic continues to shift towards women and young people. Migration of workers and laborers has also caused serious concern since it is a major source of transmission of HIV. The trafficking in women and children has caused the major challenge for combating HIV/AIDS while sex workers are living in high health risk due to non-adoption of safe practices of sex behaviour. Trans-border migration – Nepali and Bangladeshi migrants is also reported to be high which exposes vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

It is reported that around 40 per cent clients of female sex workers come from uniformed services in Nepal. HIV/AIDS prevalence in the uniformed services has been reported to be significantly high in Angola (40-60 per cent), Congo (40-60 per cent), South Africa (17 per cent) and Tanzania (15-30 per cent). As per estimates, HIV/AIDS prevalence in Mumbai police was reported to be 10 per cent during 2003. Though, authentic statistics related to HIV/AIDS prevalence among the police personnel is not available. However, a large number of police personnel are facing problem of high risk due to their interaction with commercial sex workers.

Uttar Pradesh has the distinction of being the largest single police force not only in the country but of the entire world. Director General of U.P. Police commands a force of approximately 1.7 lakh personnel spread over 70 districts, 31 armed battalions and other specialized wings relating to intelligence, investigation, anti-corruption, technical, training, forensic sciences, etc. The police structure of the state comprises of Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), Government Railway Police (GRP), Traffic and Transport police, etc. Police in the state of Uttar Pradesh has its glorious tradition of keeping communal and social harmony, maintaining law and order and keeping a check on crimes. In the state of Uttar Pradesh, there were 1383 AIDS cases during 2005. Average HIV prevalence among women attending anti-natal clinics in India is 0.88 per cent. Much higher rates are found among people attending sexually transmitted disease clinics (5.66 per cent), female sex workers (8.44 per cent), injecting drug users (10.16 per cent) and men who have sex with men (8.74 per cent). The HIV prevalence rate has been reported significantly high in Nagaland (1.63 per cent), Manipur (1.25 per cent), Maharashtra (1.25 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (2.0 per cent) and Karnataka (1.25 per cent). Apart from maintaining law and order, the police have to deal with social issues. In carrying out

their duties, they interact frequently with vulnerable groups with increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS such as female sex workers, IDUs, MSM and prisoners.

It is already well defined that due to various factors, the uniformed personnel are more susceptible to falling prey to HIV/AIDS than a normal citizen. Due to its nature of policing the society, this important segment of people has an additional burden to lead by example. The project envisages the awareness drives and policy advocacy among the entire police force to adopt measures for prevention of the dreaded disease.

Also this entire force has a unique inter-face with some of the most HIV/AIDS susceptible and vulnerable social groups namely prostitutes, sex workers and the immoral trafficked. The illegal and immoral nexus, which rules this segment, is kind of impenetrable by social organizations, citizen societies and medical assistance etc. The nature of the group's activity is a taboo and also a deterrent to reach out for any kind of assistance. The project envisages the mobilization of the police personnel to not only assist in spreading the message of prevention of HIV/AIDS but also use their good offices by providing assistance to the voluntary organization in identifying these groups, reaching out to them, checking them for HIV/AIDS, help in various awareness drives, rehabilitation of HIV/AIDS victims from these groups and extend support in establishing self help groups to sustain the movement and replicate the same.

Apart from this, the men in uniform can also be a great assistance in prevention of HIV/AIDS in some of the most vulnerable group, the truckers, illegal squatters, migrant population etc. The modalities will be discussed in action plan

Objectives of programme:

The project intervention will have the following main objectives:

To sensitize the entire police force to the issue of HIV AIDS and inculcating a social spirit with high level of leadership and commitment for the cause among them.

Creating awareness and preventing HIV infection among U.P. Police and their families;

Training to trainers (from the force) on communication skills, public relation and social work.

Interface with vulnerable groups, stakeholders and community using the good offices of the police services for sensitization, prevention, identification and treatment for HIV.

Providing treatment, care, rehabilitation and support services through institutes wholly dedicated to HIV AIDS patients and run / organized by the department.

Setting up surveillance system;

Developing an effective monitoring and evaluation system;

Building effective institutional mechanism in the form of AIDS Society for the department for prevention and cure and care of the HIV AIDS, and its affected.

Work Plan:

Establishing and sustaining high-level leadership and commitment:

State wide base line survey and need assessment

Awareness drive among police personnel

Preparation of training modules

Training of beat officers

Identification and training of trainers

Establishing district-wise offices and training camps

Interaction with stakeholders and community-based organization

Providing HIV/AIDS education including HIV prevention and impact mitigation

Educating police forces regarding human rights of people living with an individual affected by HIV/AIDS

Disseminating information to police forces about effective HIV/AIDS policies and programmes

Establishing forums and conduct regular meetings between police, public health officers, stakeholders and community-based organizations

Interfacing with stakeholders, community-based organizations and government departments

Preventing HIV infection among U.P. Police and their families:

- Integrating HIV/AIDS education into training programmes of U.P. Police
- Identifying and imparting training to peer educators
- Adoption of STI/HIV/AIDS/IEC materials
- Promoting consistent and correct condom use
- Establishing depots for condom distribution
- Establishing depots for disposable syringes
- Forming and strengthening committees and associations
- Conducting sensitization programmes for officials, stakeholders, service providers and community-based organizations
- Promoting blood safety measures

Providing treatment, care and support services:

- Developing VCT facilities in different parts of the state
- Developing trained counselors in the police force at district and sub-district level
- Developing a civil police alliance and referral system
- Establishing centers for STI care in vulnerable areas
- Providing STI care services through mobile operation
- Identification of STI cases and their care at health centers
- Promoting programmes on home-based care for STI patients and people living with HIV/AIDS
- Developing policy for vulnerable children and dependent of people living with HIV/AIDS
- Providing regular services for check-up and identification of HIV/AIDS cases for their proper rehabilitation

Interfacing with vulnerable groups, stakeholders, police forces and community:

- Involving representatives of vulnerable groups as resource persons / peer educators
- Organizing field visits and interaction with vulnerable groups
- Developing monitoring mechanism to monitor the behaviour of U.P. Police and vulnerable population
- Establishing a network of stakeholders, police forces, community-based organizations and service providers
- Social marketing of condoms

Surveillance System:

Coordinating and networking with NACO, UPSACS, UNAIDS, Population Council and other agencies involved in prevention and combating HIV/AIDS

Developing and conduct a behavioral survey for U.P. Police and vulnerable population

Developing and conduct zero prevalence survey for U.P. Police

Developing mechanism for protecting confidentiality

Monitoring & Evaluation:

Developing criterion and parameters for monitoring and performance evaluation

Documentation of project activities

Conducting feed back surveys

Adopting supportive monitoring through MEAL – Monitoring, Evaluation, Appraisal and Learning Programme

Institutional Mechanism:

Developing programme of activities to strengthen community-based organizations and stakeholders

Implementing capacity building activities

Creating enabling environment

Strengthening local committees and groups

Developing policy for HIV/AIDS affected persons and their dependents

Strategic Approach:

The entire project is oriented towards touching some of the most vulnerable sections of the society, and any intervention, which could affect the largest number of most susceptible in the shortest possible time, is welcome at this juncture when the HIV/AIDS is acquiring a critical mass. In this project the department is the patient and the doctor both. It is an acknowledgement that some of the most HIV/AIDS vulnerable sections of society have an uneasy but nevertheless a relationship with the law enforcer. And this project is a bridge between the two. Apart from showing a humane face to the public, this initiative would also, with the help of the police, open the gates to those sections of the social spectrum where social workers are not welcome.

With the establishment of a nodal NGO to look into the implementation, coordinating, networking and monitoring of the program, the department may be provided the fund for implementation of the project. The modalities are already well established. We will be elaborating the same in the detailed project.