

## Socio-Economic Impact of HIV and AIDS in Andhra Pradesh

This study was conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), with support from the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2004-2005.

### HIV prevalence – past trends and current status

Andhra Pradesh has been identified as one of the six high HIV-prevalence states of India. It accounts for an estimated 10 percent of the HIV cases in India. According to the UNAIDS estimates for the year 2004, of the 42 million people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) in the world, around five million are in India, and of these almost one tenth, i.e. around five hundred thousand are in Andhra Pradesh. Of the total number of 1,11,608 AIDS cases reported in the country till 2005, as many as 12,349 cases, accounting for nearly 11.06 percent are from Andhra Pradesh. So far, the state has recorded 739 AIDS related deaths.

A comparison with other HIV high-prevalence states also indicates that the prevalence rates in the sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and antenatal care (ANC) clinics are highest in Andhra Pradesh for the year 2005. While the national prevalence rate of HIV is less than one percent, Andhra Pradesh has recorded the highest prevalence rate of two percent among the antenatal clinic attendees, who represent the low-risk adult population.

The HIV prevalence among STD patients in Andhra Pradesh has been well above 15 percent for the past seven years. In the year 2005, the state recorded 22.8 percent among the high-risk population as represented by the STD clinic attendees.

Such trends indicate that in Andhra Pradesh, the HIV infection has been consistently above one percent among the women attending antenatal clinics, with the state also reporting a significant increase in the ANC prevalence rates during the last round of sentinel surveillance. These developments clearly signify that the HIV epidemic in the state is no longer confined to the high-risk groups like sex workers, truckers and men who have sex with men (MSMs), but has also penetrated into the general public.

### Study objective

The study focuses on the impact of HIV and AIDS on the household income and employment of the affected persons and their caregivers; level and pattern of household consumption, savings and borrowings; education of the children of affected families; and health status and household expenditure on medical care. The social impact is also analysed in terms of the stigma and discrimination faced by PLWHA and their families.

## Methodology and sample profile

The field survey for the study was conducted by NCAER, covering both the rural and urban areas of seven districts in Andhra Pradesh.

The sample included 400 HIV households (471 PLWHA were interviewed) and 1246 non-HIV households. Both categories of the sample households mostly belonged to low economic strata and whose heads had poor educational background. The agricultural and non-agricultural labour class accounted for 35 percent of the heads of HIV households.

## Key Findings

### Impact of HIV status on income and employment

- The high work force participation rate (WFPR) of the children and elderly of the HIV households' highlights the additional burden imposed on these groups to earn and contribute towards family income.
- Among the 60 years and above age group, the work force participation rate is 66.7 percent in the rural areas and 43.8 percent in the urban areas, while among the 0-14 years age group the rate for the rural and urban HIV households is 7.8 percent and 2.9 percent respectively.

### Impact of HIV and AIDS on household consumption and savings

- The medical expenses of the HIV households are four times higher than that of non-HIV households. The survey shows that almost half of the HIV households have either borrowed or liquidated their assets, since one of their family members has tested positive, to cope with the financial burden.
- In the case of women, while 50 percent of the cases went untreated since they were not considered serious, another 38 percent were untreated because of financial limitations.

### Impact of HIV and AIDS on health and health expenditure

- In comparison to the non-HIV households, the prevalence rates of illnesses are considerably higher for the HIV households, indicating a heavy burden of

diseases experienced by these households. It is evident that the burden of diseases increases as the stage of infection advances among the PLWHA.

- NGOs seem to play a very important part in the treatment of non-hospitalised illnesses in Andhra Pradesh. In nearly 46 percent of the illness episodes, the treatment was taken from NGOs, while government and private health facilities accounted for 23 percent and 28 percent respectively.
- A very high percentage of women, about 56 percent have sought treatment from NGOs.
- There is a gender difference in the average expenditure incurred per illness episode, irrespective of the source of treatment.

### Stigma, discrimination and coping mechanism

- Fearing stigma and discrimination, around 20 percent men and 14 percent women have not disclosed their status in the community. Similarly, as high as 60 percent have not disclosed their status in their workplace.
- The survey of non-HIV households establishes that all the sample respondents have heard about HIV and AIDS. Of these, 70 percent men and 67 percent women could tell about all the modes of transmission. However, all of them do not have adequate knowledge about other important details like the link between HIV and STIs.
- In addition, many of them have a negative attitude towards PLWHA and their families.