

AIDS: the sure and silent killer

Synopsis: AIDS is now an epidemic and pandemic disease it has developed many new channels of transmission and so nobody feels safe and secure from the dreaded disease. The fact that now the world has turned into a global village has made problem all the more compel and terrible. The genesis of AIDS or HIV can be traced to a particular typed of monkeys (chimpanzees) found in western African and some tribes who killed them for their food. Gradually the virus became virulent and deadly and the endemic disease pandemic. AIDS was discovered for the first time in 1981 in Los Angeles, USA in some homosexuals, Later the same symptoms were found in drug-addicts and those who had infected blood-transfusion.

Nobody really now seems safe and secure from the sure and silent killer called Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS); met even the cjo;drem jpisoves from traditional homes and conservative families,. The fatal infecting is no more confined to high risk groups and Ares like truck-drivers, red light Ares, roadside dhobis, immigrants, homosexuals, drug-addicts etc. In recent years the fateful disease den epidemic has developed many new channels and chains of rapid and wide transmission among all the sections of the society. This rapid spread of AIDS has really stunned the people and put every society under a tremendous stress and strain.

Partition brought unparalleled misery, pain, suffering and killings. The price of freedom paid in terms of human misery, suffering, anguish, shame, bloodshed and massive migration of people was too much and too traumatic. Even today its memory sends shivers down the spine. It was the greatest human migration that history has ever experienced. India won freedom from the colonic rile without violence, without bloodshed under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi but then it ended in unprecedented massacre, violence and pools of blood of innocent men, women and children, Soon after the golden dawn of freedom, the skies of India were overcast with the darkest possible clouds of sloop despair and madness.

Indian history and civilization go back to over 5000 years and as such the time span of 50 years looks too short to be country and yet it is big enough for and individual Indian citizens with a life-expectancy of 63 years for man and 67 for women. The maternal mortality rate of 307 per thousands, infant mortality rate of 63 per thuds and that invested in our human capital all these decades since independence. We claim to have achieved food sufficiency but it is seemingly so because of 7-8 successive good monsoons it is also because the

majority of the people lack the purchasing power and, therefore, there are enough food-stocks.

We have not been able to make any appreciable progress in literacy. The female literacy is below 40 per cent and it is only 20 per cent in Rajasthan. Among the scheduled tribes it is 29 per cent while in the scheduled castes it is 37 per cent. The rate of dropout at elementary level is very high. The Government's claim to achieve full literacy by the turn of the century looks too optimistic. During the Eighth Plan the government failed to utilize the whopping Rs, 252 crores of the amount earmarked for the National literacy Mission (NLM).

AIDS is a very sure, silent and painful killer. The suffering, deprivation, trauma, isolation and untold misery of an AIDS' patient can be well imagined. He dies a slow, lingering and painful death rejected and scorned by the society, relatives, friends and even medical practitioners. But the gravity of the problem can certainly be eased by a mass movement in AIDS awareness. People should be educated how to avoid the dreaded disease and help the infected person. We need to be more sensitive and responsive to this global problem at various levels of a city, state, country and the world; it is a global and colossal problem and should be treated as such.

In the words of Dr. Peter Piot, the Executive Director of UNAIDS, "Asia can meet the AIDS challenge if it uses existing knowledge, existing tools, and practices for tackling the epidemic. This knowledge has been hard won, and it has already cost millions of lives. Not to take full advantage of it would be a tragedy of historic proportions for Asia's billions." Different world governments, world-bodies like UN etc., should rise to the challenge and make combined and determined efforts to prevent the countries from becoming national heeds of the dreaded epidemic called AIDS.