

Media Exposure and HIV/AIDS Awareness among the College Students in Churachandpur District of Manipur

G. P. Pandey
Meenakumari Angom

The Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV), which causes Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), is the leading infections cause to adult in the world. Given the scale of the epidemic, HIV/AIDS is now considered not only a health problem, but also a developmental and security thread. Even if a cure is found tomorrow, the toll of death and suffering by 2010 will be far exceed any other recorded human catastrophe, and other previous epidemic, natural disaster, war, or incident of genocide violence (Javed M. Iqbal, 2008).

Throughout the world the number of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) continues to grow with an estimation of 33.4 million people were living with HIV/AIDS by 2008 (UNAIDS 2008). All the countries of the world have been touched by the epidemic. India is also one of the worsely HIV/AIDS effected country.

In India approximately 2.5 (2- 3.1 million) people were living with HIV/AIDS (NACO, 2008). 65 percent of the country's HIV/AIDS cases were contributed by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Manipur. NACO classified these states as country's HIV/AIDS high prevalence states. Among these states Manipur has recorded the highest adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate with 1.13 percent, which is against the national adult HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 0.36 percent. Manipur, a small land-locked state located in the periphery of north-eastern region of the country contributes hardly 0.2 percent (22.9 lakhs) of country's population is contributing nearly 8 percent of the country's total HIV/AIDS cases (MACS, 2007 & Manipur statistical report, 2007). The first case of HIV positive in the state was reported in February 1990 from the blood sample collected in October 1984 among a cluster of six injecting drug users (IDU) (MACS, 2006). Though HIV was appeared like a mere smoke signal among the IDU's, it is now no longer confined to them but it has been spreading like a wild fire from urban to rural areas, from valley to hill areas, from male to females and from vulnerable population to the general population. By May 2008, there were 29,602 people living with HIV/AIDS in the state.

NACO classified all the districts in the country into three categories A, B and C based on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS cases. All the nine districts of Manipur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur,

G. P. Pandey is Professor of Mass Communication at Deptt. Of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar

Meena Kumari Angom is Research Scholar at Deptt. of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar

Chandel, Ukhrul, Senapati, Thoubal, Tamanglong and Churachandpur, comes under A category (NACO, 2006). According to MACS report majority (44.24 percent) of the state's HIV/AIDS cases were found under the age of 30 years. At global scenario also among the new HIV infection each year more than 50 percent occur in 15 and 24 age group, of which only a fraction know they are infected (UNAIDS, 2004). Considering this fact the importance of focusing on young people has been recognised at global level by the 2001 UN General Assembly Special session on HIV/AIDS, which endorsed a number of goals for young people including "By 2005, ensure that at least 90 percent and by 2010 at least 95 percent of young men and women have access to the information, education, including peer education and youth specific education and service necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability of HIV infection; in full partnership with youth, parents, families, educators and health care provider" (WHO, 2000).

With an effort to achieve the said objectives various media being used throughout the world in disseminating HIV/AIDS related messages to promote responsible behaviour and to educate about the prevention and protection from HIV/AIDS with special emphasis given on youth.

Over the last two decades evaluation of HIV/AIDS awareness level and the role of media in prevention and control of HIV/AIDS have attracted the attention of the various social scientists. A study on AIDS related knowledge and attitude among college students in Aurangabad shows that majority of the students obtained the knowledge about AIDS from radio and newspaper (Hiramani, 1992). In India, Africa and Latin America, popular soap operas that includes plot about family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention have reportedly increased clinic visits and change health behaviour (Johns Hopkins centre for Communication programme, 1995; Ketende Bessinger, Gupta, Knight & Lettenmaier, 2000; Rogers et al, 1999; Singhal & Roger, 1999; Vaughan & Rogers, 2002).

A cross section research in Ghana shows that mass media effect on AIDS related knowledge and behaviour were larger than those of interpersonally bases communicative channels (Benefo and Takyi's, 2003).

In Iran, HIV/AIDS knowledge among college students shown that mass media have succeeded in raising AIDS awareness, but have produced little effect in changing student attitude towards those with HIV/AIDS (Dadkha, B., Mohammadi, M.A. & Mazafari, N., 2008).

The above review shows that mass media play an important role in generating HIV/AIDS awareness and in promoting responsible behavior to protect oneself from the epidemic in develop societies as well as in case of developing society like India.

However in respect of Manipur context no specific study has been carried out in this regard. The present study access the HIV/AIDS awareness level and exposure to HIV/AIDS related messages appears in different media among the college going youth's in Churachandpur district of Manipur. It is particularly appropriate to choose the Churachandpur district for the present study as the district is one of the woersely HIV/AIDS effected district in the state. In terms of HIV/AIDS prevalence the district stands third position with 16.70 percent, which is against the state average of 12.16 percent. Again in terms of population it contributes 9.93 percent of the state's total population. While in terms of HIV/AIDS cases it contributes 8.77 percent of the state's total HIV/AIDS cases (MACS, 2008 & Manipur Statiscal Report, 2007). In May 2008 out of 12440 bloods sample screened about 2078 were found HIV positive and majority (44.24 %) of them belongs to under age of 30 years.

The specific objectives of the study are: 1) To understand the social background of the college going youth in the district; 2) To find out the media habits of the college going youth in the district; 3) To assess the knowledge status about HIV/AIDS among college going youth in the district; 4) To assess the exposure of HIV/AIDS awareness messages disseminated through different media on the college going youth in the district.

Methodology

Keeping in view of the objectives of the study, the present study adopted survey method. The study was conducted with 130 college students. They were selected randomly from those students who admitted in academic session 2007-2008 in Churachandpur Government College and Rayburn College Churachandpur. Primary data were collected by administering a highly structured schedule. The schedule consists of three sections. The first section related to general information about the social background of the respondents. The second section related to media habits of the respondents and their exposure to HIV/AIDS related messages appears in different media. And the third section deals with assessing of HIV/AIDS awareness level of the respondents.

Media used in HIV/AIDS awareness Campaign in the state

In Manipur as a part of IEC programme of National AIDS Control Programme, the Manipur State AIDS Control Society (MACS) has been using various media in HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. In the past five years (2002 - 2007), 1110 Sumang Leela (a traditional folk theatre of Manipur) based on HIV/AIDS were exhibited throughout the state in seven different dialects, 1519 different news items on the issue were published in different local dailies, 2207 different programmes based on the epidemic were broadcast on AIR, Imphal, 434 different programme based on HIV/AIDS were telecast on Doordarshan Kendra Imphal & local cable channel, and 400 Wall Writing, 253 Hoardings, 3000 Banners which have HIV/AIDS messages displayed at roadsides and public places. 2500 Puppet shows and 120 Street Play were shown throughout the state. 38, 88100 Poster + Folders + Leaflets were distributed. And one feature film was also produced (MACS Annual report, 2004 – 2005, 2005 – 2006 and 2006 - 2007).

Social Background of the Respondents

Majority (67.70%) of respondents belongs to under the age of 20 years group. Most (92.31 %) of them belongs to ST and professed Christianity and it is obvious as the study area is dominated by tribal communities. The respondents belong to 13 different communities and the Paite (46.68 %) represent the largest community. Cent percent of them knew three to four languages and English and Manipuri are common to all. Majority (fathers' with 98.47 % and mothers' with 95.39 %) of the respondents' parents are literate and common educational qualification is up to Higher Secondary (fathers' 45.40 % and mothers' 44.63 %). Most (56.94 %) of the respondents' fathers are agriculturalist and mothers are housewives (96.16 %). On an average most of them (78.47 %) have medium size and nuclear families (83.84 %). Most (43.08%) of the respondents' household consumption pattern belongs to average. Their major source of drinking water is well (52.33 %). They mainly depend on bus (29.24 %) and sumo (30.76 %) service for travelling. For medical treatment majority (90.79) of them used to go to the District Hospital.

Media Habits

Majority of respondents (82.24 %) have subscribed newspaper and The Sangai Express (English local daily) is the most popular newspaper among the respondents. 68.48 % of them read newspaper regularly and the most preferred news items are Employment News (46.15 %), Current Affairs (46.15 %), sports (31.53 %) and Editorial (26.15 %).

Magazine reading habits among the respondents appears to be very high as 80.70 % used to read magazines. Generally they spent 1 – 2 hours on reading magazines. The most popular magazines among the respondents are Tongluang (dialect magazine) with 26.92 % followed by competition success review with 13.07 % and India Today with 10.76 %.

More than three-fifth (65.38 %) of respondents owned radio but only 28.46 % used to listened radio regularly and most (19.23 %) of them used to spend less than one hour on listening radio in

a day. The most popular programmes among the respondents are news (20.76 %) and film songs (20 %). The most preferred radio station is AIR, Imphal with 19.23 %.

More than three-fourth (78.46 %) of respondents owned TV and most of them (57.70 %) used to watch TV daily/regularly. Normally they used to spend 1 – 2 hours on watching TV in a day. The most preferred timing for watching TV is evening. The most popular programme among them are music (60.76 %), feature films (43.07 %) and news (40.76 %). The popularity of DD Channels appears to be low as only 37.69 % used to watch the channels.

Cinema going habits among the respondents appears to be very high as cent percent of respondents have the habits of film watching. Most of them (76.94 %) used to watch films at their homes and they preferred romantic films (56.17 %). Regarding languages of the film, English film (86.92 %) emerged as the most preferred one followed by Hindi (20.76 %), Manipuri (6.92 %) and Korean films (5.38 %).

Internet using habits among the respondents appears to be considerably low as only 23.08 % used to surf internet and most of them (17.69 %) used it very rarely or occasionally.

In terms of traditional media majority (65.39 %) of respondents' families have associated with one or other form of indigenous form of folk/ traditional media. But the popularity of Street Play, Puppet Show, and Sumang Leela (a traditional form of theatre) which are being used extensively by various organizations for various social causes are significantly low as most of the respondents have hardly given attention on these media. And the popularity of Outdoor Media which displayed at Fair, Roadsides and Public Places are considerably low as only 26.16 % have given attention on Outdoor media.

HIV/AIDS Awareness

The term of HIV and AIDS is well verse among the respondents as almost cent % (96.16 %) of respondents' are familiar with the term. But from the table 1 it is observed that only a little more than two-fifth (42.30 %) have clear concept about AIDS. 59.25 % have perceived clear concept about HIV. Regarding the difference between HIV and AIDS, three-fourth (75.38 %) of respondents' have realized that there is difference between the two, however, only 44.61 % could identify the actual difference between the HIV and AIDS. Majority of them (53.85 %) realized that HIV contacts AIDS. Awareness about preventive vaccine from HIV/AIDS is considerably low as only 21.54 % realized that there is no preventive vaccine from HIV/AIDS. 43.08 % realized that HIV/AIDS is not a hereditary.

Table 1- Respondents Knowledge Status about HIV and AIDS

S. N.	Knowledge Status about HIV and AIDS	Number	Percentage
01	Concept about AIDS	55	42.30
02	Concept about HIV	77	59.25
03	Difference between HIV and AIDS	58	44.61
04	A person having HIV contact AIDS	70	53.85
05	There is no vaccine for prevention of AIDS	28	21.54
06	AIDS is hereditary	56	43.08
07	Anyone can get HIV/AIDS through casual contact with PLWH	67	51.55
08	Anyone can get HIV/AIDs by blood transfusion with PLWH*	119	91.55

09	HIV/AIDS can be transmitted by sneezing and coughing of PLWH*	67	51.55
10	Having only one sex partner reduces the chances of getting HIV/AIDS	94	72.30
11	Types of precaution to be taken up while taking injection	71	54.61
12	Blood should be check for HIV+ before transfusion	119	91.55
13	Main sources of transmission of HIV/AIDS	106	81.59
14	Method use for detecting AIDS	100	76.95
15	Symptom of AIDS	13	10
16	Preventive measures from AIDS	18	13.84
*PLWH: People Living With HIV/AIDS			

Most (51.55 %) of respondents understood that sneezing or coughing and any form of casual contact with PLWHA doesn't spread HIV virus. And maximum (91.55 %) of them aware that blood transfusion with PLWHA spread HIV virus. 72.30 % understood that having only one sexual partner reduces from the risk of getting HIV/AIDS. 54.61 % aware well about the right precaution to be taken up while taking injection. 91.55 % would like to check blood for HIV positive before transfusion. 81.59 % aware well about all main sources of transmission of HIV/AIDS. 76.95 % knew the method used in detecting HIV positive.

Awareness level about the symptom of AIDS is significantly low as only 10 % acquired adequate knowledge about the symptoms of AIDS. Regarding awareness about preventive measures only a few (13.84 %) of respondents is acquainted with all short of preventive measures from HIV/AIDS.

It is clearly observed from the table 2 that among the mass media newspaper has emerge as the most powerful medium as 50.76 % have given it as their main source of HIV/AIDS related information followed by TV (44.62 %) and radio (40.76 %). 43.07 % depend on NGO. Seminars (33.07 %) also served as good source of HIV/AIDS related information among the respondents'. 27.64 % have depended on magazines. But only few depend on drama (20 %), friends (14.61 %), street play (11.53 %), leaflet (1.53 %), and banners (6.15 %) as their main source of HIV/AIDS related information.

Table 2- Main Sources of HIV/AIDS Related Information

Sl. No.	Media	Percentage
01	Radio	40.76
02	Newspaper	50.76
03	Television	44.62
04	Wall Poster	34.61
05	NGO	43.07
06	Magazine	27.64
07	Drama	20.00
08	Seminars	33.07
09	Friends	14.61
10	Street play	11.53

11	Leaflet	01.53
12	Banners	06.15

HIV/AIDS Awareness and Media

The study made an attempt to collect qualitative opinion from the respondents on the coverage of HIV/AIDS and the health related information in media, and from their responses it has found that 30.76 % of respondents stated that media provides adequate information on the issue, 19.23 % have the opinion that no due coverage is given on the matter, 16.92 % expressed that media give more emphasis on commercial aspect and 33.07 % have not given any specific opinion on the matter.

Table 3 -Respondents Media Habits and their Exposure to HIV/AIDS Related Messages Appears in Different Media

S.N.	Types of Media	Media assess profile the Respondents	Respondent's Exposure to HIV/AIDS Related Messages Appears in Media
01	Newspaper	96.16	50.76
02	Magazine	87.70	23.08
03	Radio	28.46	19.23
04	Television	95.39	44.62
05	Film	93.00	05.38
06	Internet	23.08	03.87
07	Outdoor media*	26.16	26.16
08	Traditional Media:		
	a) Street Play	24.62	01.53
	b) Sumang Leela**	06.15	02.30
	c) Meetings	56.92	23.08
	d) Speech	53.84	25.38
* Outdoor Media: Wall Writing/Hoarding/Banner. **Sumang Leela: A popular form of traditional form of folk theatre of Manipur.			

From the table 3 it is observed that out of 96.16 % used to read newspaper 50.76 % used to read the news item related with HIV/AIDS appears in newspaper and could recall the messages. Out of 87.70 % respondents having the habit of magazine reading only 23.08 % used to read HIV/AIDS related items on Magazines and could recall the messages.

As for electronic media, out of 28.46 % used to listen radio regularly 19.23 % have given due attention to HIV/AIDS related programme broadcast on Radio. Out of 95.39 % used to watch TV regularly 44.62 % used to watch the programmes based on HIV/AIDS and could recall the messages.

Almost cent percent (93.08 %) of respondents have the habit of watching films but only a few (5.38 %) have interest on the films which have HIV/AIDS theme.

Regarding outdoor media cent percent (26.16 %) of respondents' used to give attention on wall writings/ hoardings/banners and given equal importance to these media which displayed HIV/AIDS related messages.

Among the different form of traditional media used by concern agency on HIV/AIDS awareness campaign only a few have expose to these media and they hardly given attention on these media which have HIV/AIDS related messages meeting with 23.08, and speech with 25.58 % , Sumang Leela with 2.30 % and Street Play with 1.53 %.

Conclusion

The present study evaluate the knowledge level of HIV/AIDS awareness, media habit and exposure to HIV/AIDS related messages appears in different media among college going youth in Churachandpur district of Manipur.

The HIV/AIDS awareness profile revealed that the term of HIV and AIDS seems to be universal among the respondents. However, majority (57.70 %) didn't have the clear concept about the AIDS. Significant number (79.46 %) thought that a vaccine could prevent HIV/AIDS and Very few (10 %) aware about the symptom of AIDS.

It has become a mandatory for one and all to have the knowledge about the sources of transmission and preventive measures of HIV/AIDS for insuring to protect oneself from the epidemic. In the present study very few (13.84 %) aware about the preventive measures from the epidemic. Lack of awareness about the preventive measure is one of the risk factors for contracting the disease among the youth, above this only 10 % aware about the symptom. So, it is clear that despite the present study sample being college students, their knowledge of HIV/AIDS information found to be surprisingly poor on certain important aspect related with the epidemic. This finding is not unique to the present study. Other studies with British and Iranish have found similarly disturbing gap in knowledge among the well educated young people (Boyle et al., 1989 and Dadkha et al. B., 2008).

Generally people felt shy to discuss openly about HIV/AIDS as it being associated with sex, disease and unwanted behaviour that are forbidden or taboo. But a free and frank discussion about the epidemic with parents and teachers is very much required to aware about the epidemic and prevent oneself from the epidemic. The present study found that majority (65.58 %) used to discuss with different persons but only few (father 3.07 % and mother 1.53 %) used to discuss with their parents and none of them used to discuss about the epidemic with their teachers. This suggests the importance of involving parents, teachers and students in AIDS education programme. The stimulation of interested in parent and teacher concerning HIV/AIDS may help them to educate themselves and their children/students (Maswanya et al., 2003).

Due to lack of awareness, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are being stigmatized in the society. It is necessary to eliminate the social stigma meted out to the PLWHA to uproot the epidemic. The present study reveals a very encouraging data in this respect as significant (60 %) of respondents have positive attitude towards PLWHA as they have given that PLWHA should socially be accepted without any discrimination.

The media access profile shows that majority of respondents subscribed newspaper, owned TV and Radio. Film medium is very popular as almost cent percent used to watch films. This implies that there is a lot of scope for this media to use it potential with the target audience.

The popularity of new media and outdoor media appears to be very much lagging behind in comparison with print and electronic media.

Significant number of respondents' families associated with one or other form of folk/traditional media. So this medium should be exploited. Many of folk media formats are flexible, thus facilitating the incorporation of development-oriented message in their themes. This makes them useful and credible channel for promoting planned change. Additionally, they are relatively inexpensive and, in almost all culture, command rich and inexhaustible verity both in form and theme. The timeless

traditional media, therefore, present inexhaustible alternative for experimentation in development communication (Ranganath, 1980).

Exposure to HIV/AIDS related messages appears in different media shows that Sumang Leela and Street play which are extensively used by Manipur AIDS Control Society (MACS) and Song and Drama Division seems to be losing ground as a channel of communication in disseminating HIV/AIDS related messages among the college going youth as very few have given attestation on these media.

As for mass media the overall percentage of those who didn't expose are outnumbered as compared with those who exposed to HIV/AIDS related messages appears on newspaper, radio and TV. This shows that to endorse mass media effectively in HIV/AIDS prevention programme there is need for well pre-planned to hit the target audience at the maximum. Effective use of mass media requires careful planning, audience research, message development, pre-testing dissemination strategy, evaluation, coordination with existing services and linking mass media with interpersonal communication (Brown, W.J., Singhal, A., Rogers, E. M., 1989). *Until and unless there is no medication for HIV/AIDS, prevention is the only panacea.*

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