

Govt efforts at AIDS control inadequate: Minister Thapa

POOR REPORT
CONTINUES, BUT
 Minister for Health Kunal Thapa expressed dissatisfaction over the government's efforts towards control and prevention of HIV/AIDS and treatment of those infected with virus.
 "The HIV/AIDS problem is great and we have not been able to control it," Thapa while addressing a group of AIDS experts said.

AIDS now a social issue, stress experts

Experts at a seminar on HIV/AIDS in Kathmandu said that the disease has become a social issue. They stressed that the government should take more steps to control and prevent the spread of the virus. The experts also discussed the importance of community-based approaches and the role of the media in raising awareness.

एचआईवी सन्क्रमितहरूलाई कामको समस्या

सन्क्रमितहरूको कामको समस्या बढ्दै गइरहेको छ। यी सन्क्रमितहरूले आफ्नो काममा बाधा पर्ने गरेको बताएका छन्। यो समस्यालाई समाधान गर्न सरकारले कडा कदम चाल्नुपर्ने आवश्यकता देखिन्छ।

HIV-infected seek say on policies

People living with HIV/AIDS are demanding that the government should take a more proactive role in addressing their needs. They are calling for policies that provide social support, employment opportunities, and access to healthcare services. The experts also emphasized the need for a multi-sectoral approach to tackle the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination

JAMUNATA PAMAKAR/DHAKA
AIDS stigma and discrimination are major barriers to the control and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Stigma and discrimination lead to social isolation, reduced access to healthcare, and increased vulnerability to infection. The experts discussed the role of the media in challenging stereotypes and promoting acceptance. They also highlighted the importance of community support and peer education in reducing stigma.



MEDIA REVIEW

Analysis of Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Nepal



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MEDIA REVIEW



Analysis of Reporting on **HIV/AIDS in Nepal**

National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC)

POLICY Project/Nepal

Sancharika Samuha (SAS)



Media Review: **Analysis of Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Nepal**

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This review was conducted by Sancharika Samuha (SAS) (the Forum of Women in Media) on behalf of the NCASC with the support of the POLICY Project, Nepal. SAS was established in April 1996 and has around 100 members from all over the country working in print and electronic media. It has three regional offices in the western, eastern, and mid-western regions of the country. As its slogan “Communication for Equality” implies, mainstreaming gender in the media is the overriding concern of Sancharika Samuha. SAS has been conducting various activities on media advocacy on gender and equality particularly related to violence against women. SAS has also been conducting activities for raising awareness through the production and publication of IEC materials, conducting public outreach programmes, research, media monitoring, and monitoring the implementation of Beijing Platform For Action (BPFA) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). With these activities and programs, SAS has been able to play a catalytic role between the women’s movement and the media, working to contribute to a better understanding of these issues and to bridge the differences that currently exist.



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Foreword

His Majesty's Government of Nepal has shown a strong commitment to addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic. However, HIV/AIDS is not something that can be addressed by one sector alone. It needs a collaborative effort involving all sectors and line agencies.

As an individual's risk of HIV infection is influenced by attitudinal and behavioral factors—what people know, how they understand, and what they do—it is important that the messages communicated to them support positive behaviour change. Therefore, the communication sector or the media plays a vital role in addressing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Media can play a more crucial role in increasing the knowledge and understanding of the epidemic among the key stakeholders and people at large.

In recent years, we have many media messages on HIV/AIDS spread over all forms of communication channels in Nepal. Though the increase in coverage of HIV/AIDS issues is a positive trend, it is very important at the same time to review and analyze how these messages are perceived by consumers or target audiences. Is this making the general population more knowledgeable about the issue? Are the sensitivities and human rights of the affected and infected being addressed by these messages or reports? Is the mainstream media giving due importance to the epidemic? Do our journalists possess the required capability for covering this issue knowledgeably and sensitively? These are issues that we need to understand in order to meaningfully engage the media in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

In view of the above, I think this study is very relevant and timely. I would like to congratulate the Policy Project and Sancharika Samuha for partnering in this important initiative. The study analyzes trends in the media—particularly print, radio, and television—and also portrays the views and perceptions of various categories of target audiences. I am confident that this study will enable all organizations working on HIV/AIDS to understand the media better and help in developing effective media programs for addressing HIV/AIDS. Beyond that, I hope it inspires and awakens the development workers and media practitioners to collectively deal with this epidemic.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the excellent work of the review team.

Mukunda Sharma Poudyal

Secretary

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Date: September 21, 2004

Foreword

The media have tremendous reach and influence to disseminate HIV and AIDS information and in shaping community attitude towards those most affected. In recent years we have seen many media messages on HIV/AIDS in all forms of communication channels in Nepal which is a positive trend. The media has played a considerable role in bringing the disease out of the shadows and getting people talking about it in an open and informed way. Therefore, we must continue to engage the media as full and strong partners in the fight to halt HIV/AIDS through awareness and educative message in prevention of the diseases.

Media Review: Analysis of Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Nepal is a relevant and timely initiative of NASC Sancharika Samuha, USAID, and the POLICY Project to assess the trend of coverage on HIV/AIDS issues in the Nepali Media, particularly print, radio, and television. The media representation of PLWHA's and the complexities encompassed in HIV/AIDS reporting need greater attention, research and documentation. NCASC feels that this is an important step to ensure the consistency in the HIV and AIDS messages and the sensitivity and protection of the human rights of vulnerable groups in the media messages.

I would like to congratulate the consultant and the review team for the excellent work. This assessment should contribute to identification and application of innovative and creative strategies to foster a greater and meaningful partnership with the media to combat HIV and AIDS in the country.

Dr. R.P. Shrestha
Director



The Futures Group International
in collaboration with
Research Triangle Institute and
The Centre for Development and Population Activities

Foreword

Media Review: Analysis of Reporting on HIV and AIDS in Nepal is an collaborative attempt of Sancharika Samuha, NCASC, USAID, and the POLICY Project to assess the general trend of coverage on HIV/AIDS issues in the Nepali media particularly print, radio, and television. How the media reports on HIV/AIDS has a significant impact on shaping the prevailing environment of stigma and discrimination. The power of the media's response to HIV/AIDS should never be underestimated. It has the ability to shatter dreams and foster hope, to dispel myths and misconceptions, and create understanding and clarity.

In Nepal, HIV/AIDS remains a highly stigmatized disease associated with lifestyles and behaviors (most significantly sex work, multiple sex partners, men who have sex with men, and injecting drug use) that have their own specialized stigmatic attributes and that remain a controversial subject of progressive policy development. Reducing stigma and discrimination and promoting human rights are priorities for the POLICY Project. POLICY will partner with the media to strengthen its ability to exercise and advocate for human rights protections. We understand that there is considerable commitment in the media, and we need to build on that commitment and foster a greater partnership with the media to combat the epidemic.

The study revealed that the media has played a considerably important role in raising awareness about the disease. In the recent years, there has been an increase in the coverage of HIV/AIDS issues, which is a positive trend. At the same time, the findings imply there is a lack of sensitivity to the human rights of the infected and affected in media messages. Do our journalists possess the required capability for covering this issue knowledgeably and sensitively? These are issues that we need to understand in order to meaningfully engage the media in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Our appreciation is extended to the team of experts and consultants who worked on the assessment led by Ms. Bandana Rana, President of Sancharika Samuha and, Ms Susan Brandt and Ms Veronica Padberg for assisting us in editing the report. We hope that this assessment will serve as a major tool for greater and more meaningful involvement of the media in reporting on HIV and AIDS.

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Promoting Communication for Equality

Acknowledgements

Even as we move ahead in the new millennium, the HIV/AIDS epidemic poses a major threat to development and to the very existence of humankind. It brings about new challenges that are too diverse and complex for one sector alone to tackle. It raises socio-economic, legal, ethical and human rights issues that all need to be adequately addressed if the fight against the epidemic is to be successful. In this regard, partnership and involvement of all relevant sectors, including individuals directly affected by the epidemic, are essential to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

All over the world the media is considered a key partner in strengthening the response to HIV/AIDS and addressing the human development challenges posed by the epidemic. But in a fast changing world of mass media, it is imperative that we re-examine the values and goals, reformulate the media approach, and restructure the policy framework so as to assess the critical bearing that the mass media could possibly have in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is with these broad objectives that this study was undertaken. The review team hopes this study will bring new insight in the situation of HIV/AIDS in Nepal and how the media reports it. We sincerely hope that it will spur new efforts to improve the existing knowledge base by offering alternative solutions and innovative ideas for developing and targeting media programs on HIV/AIDS.

On behalf of the study team and Sancharika Samuha, I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the POLICY Project and NCASC for partnering with us in undertaking this study. We would particularly like to acknowledge the continuous support and valuable guidance of Mr. Bhojraj Pokharel, Country Director and Ms. Sumi Devkota, Senior Program Officer of the POLICY Project during the entire period of the study. Ms. Shreejana Ranjitkar and Ms. Ivana Lohar also deserve special thanks for their help.

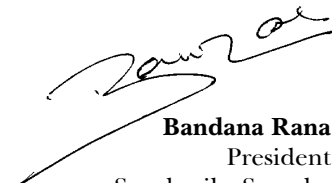
This study could not have taken place without the contribution of our media consultants. I would like to thank Dhrubha Hari Adhikari for his analysis of the print media, Rajendra Sharma for providing a detailed overview of radio programs on HIV/AIDS, and Prakash KC for his review and analysis of television programs. Rajendra and Prakash must also be commended for the information provided in spite of the constraints faced due to lack of documentation of programs. Our appreciation also goes to review associates Babita Basnet, Pradip Ghimire, Rekha Rajbahak, and Tara Wosti for compiling all media reports. Navin Singh and Suvetchya Rana deserve special acknowledgement for helping to bring the report to its final shape.

Without assessing the view and perceptions of the target audience, this review would not have been complete. Our sincere thanks to Binod Nepali for his contribution in conducting the various focus group discussions (FGDs). Most important, we would like to thank all the participants of the FGDs for their time and for sharing their views and opinions without any inhibitions. The study would have remained but a vision without their contributions.

Our sincere acknowledgement is also given to all those who attended the initial sharing of this report and gave their valuable inputs. I would particularly like to thank Mukunda Prasad Acharya, Secretary at the Ministry of Information and Communications and Jesse Brandt of USAID for jointly chairing the session and for their suggestions, which helped to complete this report.

Finally my deep appreciation to all my media colleagues and the Sancharika Samuha team for their continuous support and help.

Thank you.



Bandana Rana
President
Sancharika Samuha

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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BPFA	Beijing Platform For Action
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CEDA	Center for Economic Development and Administration
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FGD	Focus group discussion
FHI	Family Health International
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries
FSW	Female sex worker
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IDU	Injecting drug user
IEC	Information, education, and communication
MSM	Men having sex with men
MTV	Music Television
NCASC	National Centre for AIDS and STD Control
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NTV	Nepal Television
PLHA	Person living with HIV/AIDS
PSA	Public service announcement
SAS	Sancharika Samuha
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nation Children’s Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

The support of the media is considered to be essential in strengthening the response to HIV/AIDS and addressing the human development challenges posed by the epidemic. As an influential advocate of social change, the media needs to play a positive role in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and in reducing its impact. In fact, it is the media's responsibility to inform, educate, and lead. But the question is, has it been able to play this role effectively? This review analyzes the role of the media and the reporting trends on HIV/AIDS issues in Nepal in order to better understand how the media reports in order to foster effective partnership with it.

This report will help in assessing the general trend of coverage on HIV/AIDS issues. It is expected to help the government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working in the area of HIV/AIDS to devise more influential advocacy strategies. It is also expected to help in deciding on the choice of media for dissemination of information and messages on HIV/AIDS.

This review was conducted in September and October 2003. However, the defined period for the media review was from November 15 to December 14, 2002 and from May 1 to June 30, 2003. News reports on HIV/AIDS published in major newspapers of Kathmandu, Parsa (Birgunj), Sunsari, Nepalgunj, Surkhet, and Kailali within the defined periods were examined. These places were selected on the basis of the outreach and influence of various media in these markets. In addition, an attempt was made to analyze the programs on television and radio on the basis of information provided by concerned authorities and some available documented programs. Billboards put up in major thoroughfares of Kathmandu and eight focus group discussions (FGDs) with targeted clients were also the basis for the review. Considering the limitations because of the backdate of the review period and the unavailability of recorded broadcast media programs, this report cannot be taken as an exhaustive research. But it is an indicative study of key trends, themes, and issues that have emerged from media reports and clients' perceptions.

Key Findings

Print Media

The coverage of HIV/AIDS issues in the print media during the review period revealed a lack of investigative and analytical reporting. The general trend of reporting is to cover routine programs such as trainings, workshops, rallies, interactions, and campaigns. Very few investigative reports highlighting the plight of the affected and infected and the linkage of HIV/AIDS with other social sectors and development dimensions were found. More reports were published in the month of November/December compared to May and June. This can be attributed to the fact that World AIDS Day falls on December 1st and most activities related to HIV/AIDS issues take place around this day.

Seventy percent of news reports that appeared in the newspapers during the review period were mostly reports of events, trainings, campaigns, workshops, rallies, and a few reported cases of HIV/AIDS. There were no follow-up reports. Only 13.9 percent of the total news reports were found to be investigative, providing a deeper insight into the issue and presenting analytical perceptions. Nine percent of the reports were feature articles written by experts. The articles provided a lot of information. But, the observation was that the majority of them might not have attracted many readers as they contained too many technical details too difficult for a layperson to understand. Daily newspapers published a significant number of editorials during the World AIDS Day event.

In the majority of the news reports that appeared during the review period, the maximum number of perceptions, interviews, and opinions that were quoted were those of government officials and NGO/international NGO (INGO) representatives. The numbers of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs) quoted were far fewer, particularly in the outlying districts. This was attributed to two reasons: journalists find it very difficult to locate PLHAs who are willing to talk; and the journalists fail to gain the confidence of PLHAs when they do meet.

Exposure to print media such as newspapers or magazines appeared to be lower than that of broadcast media in all categories of people participating in the FGDs. *Kantipur* was found to be the most read newspaper amongst the targeted clients. However, what was interesting to note was that in almost all categories of FGD, a significant number read the weekly *Saptahik* of Kantipur Publications in great detail, without fail.

Both male and female PLHAs identified more negative terms used by both the print and broadcast media than any other group. This indicates that some messages considered appropriate or normal by the general population are likely to be offensive from the perspective of PLHAs. They expressed their disappointment over the use of the terms HIV and AIDS together in almost all media reports. They said that the use of the words together can create the misconception that a person with HIV will die right way.

Radio

The national broadcaster, Radio Nepal, and the three FM stations included in the review were found to give priority to sponsored programs and advertisements. None of the stations had a regular program schedule for health issues. Consequently, issues on HIV/AIDS were not adequately addressed. Whatever was broadcast was generally guided by the instincts of the broadcaster and not by a pre-determined policy on public issues. The same trend was found at the FM stations interviewed.

The review also revealed that HIV/AIDS issues do not usually feature in the news unless some high-ranking official is involved. None of the news bulletins during the review period featured their own investigative reports. The full potential of Radio Nepal in terms of coverage, program formats, and use of the existing excellent production studios has not been adequately harnessed for disseminating information and creating awareness of HIV/AIDS.

Discussion with youths, parents, and NGO representatives indicated that radio is the most common media in rural areas; and that students in hostels have no choice but to read newspapers or to listen to radio. Radio and audio cassettes were also found to be most popular among men working in the transport sector. The discussions indicated that the majority of the people were attracted to dramatized stories, true cases, and interactive phone-in programs. Contrary to expectations, not only parents, but also young people, were found to tune in regularly to religious and spiritual programs.

Television

Nepal Television (NTV) seemed to be the most watched TV channel among the participants of the FGDs. Based on the review of programs aired by NTV and Channel Nepal during the study period, it was evident that there was little content on HIV/AIDS on a regular basis. As with Radio Nepal, issues on HIV/AIDS do not usually feature in the news bulletins of NTV unless it is a public event involving a high-ranking official or personality. There were only four news stories featured in the news bulletin during a three-month period.

Television was reported as the most widely used media by all categories of people participating in the FGDs. Although news was apparently a commonly watched program on television, preferences for other programs varied. The discussions indicated that people are attracted to dramas such as telefilms, true stories, and interactive programs. Telefilms were found to be most popular among FGD participants, who also suggested that more teleserials and films on the issue of HIV/AIDS should be made. The participants further added that presentations based on or close to reality tended to be influential.

Billboards

The various FGDs had differing opinions about the impact of the billboards. The PLHAs felt that it would be more effective if an actual person having HIV/AIDS were portrayed on the billboard instead of actors. However, a significant number of the FGD participants felt that since the actors are easily recognizable people tend to be attracted to the billboard. Some mentioned that the billboard sent negative messages to the people in the rural areas; they believed that the person on the billboard was infected with AIDS. The consensus among all the groups was that initially, the billboard catches the attention of the people. However, they suggested that the content of the billboard should be changed after some time and that its message should be complemented by alternative means of communication to provide full information on HIV/AIDS.

In general most media consumers agreed that the billboard media messages on HIV/AIDS have contributed significantly in raising awareness. The NGO representatives noted that the messages have facilitated their outreach workers in opening discussions with target populations. The outreach workers or peer communicators use the media messages as a reference for more detailed explanation.

Perception of Media Consumers

The FGDs indicated that the mass media has contributed to raising awareness on HIV/AIDS among the general population, as well as among vulnerable groups in the urban and rural areas. However, the majority of the FGD participants felt that the impact on individual behavior change was minimal.

The majority of the FGD participants felt that there are a significant number of media messages and public service announcements (PSAs) on HIV/AIDS that are successful in drawing public attention and are also easily understood. However, they also felt that many messages have incomplete information and are difficult to understand, and some are culturally inappropriate as well. Current media messages also fail to adequately address specific issues and concerns of some vulnerable groups such as men having sex with men (MSMs) and PLHAs. As revealed during the FGDs, some terms used with HIV/AIDS-related messages are perceived by the PLHAs as contributing to increased misconceptions and stigmatization in the family and society.

Although media is contributing significantly to raising awareness, there is an urgent need to reassess the media campaign on HIV/AIDS. Specifically, pre-testing of HIV/AIDS messages among concerned audiences and periodic updating of the messages were urgently felt by the FGD participants.

Conclusion

It is understood that the media covers a lot of issues other than HIV/AIDS. But what the media needs to understand is that HIV/AIDS is not only just one of many health issues. It is a development issue, tied to the socio-economic vulnerabilities of its victims. It also cuts across socio-economic classes as some injecting drug users (IDUs) are from middle and upper classes. This linkage is missing in the Nepali media. Coverage of issues such as HIV and development should be integrated into mainstream issues so that they are not relegated to the margins of journalism. There is considerable interest and receptiveness in the media in promoting HIV/AIDS issues and organizations working on HIV/AIDS need to build on that.

New initiatives require building the media's capacity to effectively report on HIV/AIDS. While the role of a journalist to influence public knowledge and opinion on the exigencies of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is well recognized, the need for strengthened commitment of media organizations at the policy level is an important consideration. The media can do a lot of harm by doing things wrong, but it can also make improvements. The need to understand the media and how it functions is the key to a better and more fulfilling relationship between the media and those working in this field.

Recommendations

To Organizations Working on HIV/AIDS

1. Build rapport with the media through regular interaction between experts and media practitioners at all levels.
2. Include journalists on field visits to help disseminate authoritative information.
3. Support training and skill building workshops for journalists for investigative and holistic reporting of HIV/AIDS.
4. To better engage the media's attention, broaden the issue at public events to look at the roots of the crisis.
5. Involve the media from the formulation stage of all media and communication plans and policies.
6. Encourage and support the production of short teleserials or telefilms, including dissemination plans, to get the message to a wider audience.
7. Monitor the media on a regular basis to assess improvements or problems.
8. Encourage and motivate interested and capable journalists by granting fellowships and by establishing yearly awards for committed and quality reporting.
9. Support the publication of a monthly feature service on HIV/AIDS issues for promoting investigative reports and for ensuring consistent coverage.
10. Involve journalists from influential weeklies having substantial readership, not just those from daily papers, in all media training and programs.

To Media Decision-makers and Practitioners

11. Encourage reporting on the impact and follow up of programs rather than just reporting on events.
12. Encourage reporters to conduct in-depth investigations and analytical reporting with sociological and developmental perspectives.
13. Radio and TV stations should schedule HIV/AIDS programs in their annual calendars to ensure an even distribution of programs all year.
14. Encourage accurate, insightful, and sustained coverage.
15. Encourage reporters and programmers to specialize in HIV/AIDS issues.
16. Ensure that the jingles, advertisements, and telespots are culturally and socially suitable to the intended audience.
17. Ensure that the headlines of news reports concur with their content.
18. Ensure news reports and programs respect the rights and sensitivities of the infected and affected people.

Accommodate perceptions from a cross-section of society to mitigate the discrimination and minimize stereotyped thinking in society.



Introduction

1

C H A P T E R

Worldwide, the support of the media is considered essential to strengthening the response to HIV/AIDS and addressing the human development challenges posed by the epidemic. Media can, indeed, play a critical role in all sectors of the epidemic, including prevention; care and support efforts; increasing knowledge and understanding of the epidemic among key stakeholders and people at large; and sensitizing the public to the issues of stigma and discrimination, access to treatment, and human rights.

As an influential advocate of social change, the media needs to play a positive role in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and reducing its impact on communities. It can influence attitudes and behaviors because of its unique access to a large number of people. It can be the bridge between the people and the government and strengthen advocacy for effective implementation of programs and national policies. It can draw urgent attention to the threat and to the necessity of taking steps to mitigate disaster. The media must deliver on three fronts: as a credible information provider by being pluralistic and legitimate;

as an investigative adversary, criticizing and questioning; and as an educator to the masses.

Between the dawn of Nepali democracy in 1950 and after the restoration of democracy in 1990, many events have shaped how the Nepali media cover and comment on events and ideas. However, after the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990, the Nepali media entered a new era. With a positive environment and potential for growth, the media industry has expanded considerably. Many publication companies have formed, and today there are more than a thousand mainstream newspapers and magazines. Eleven daily broadsheets (three in English) are published in Kathmandu alone.

By mid-2001, the government distributed 25 licenses for independent FM radio stations. Sixteen went on the air immediately. However, government-run Radio Nepal is probably still the most influential of the nation's media, catering to the illiterate majority of Nepali people and reaching villages well beyond the circulation of any newspaper.

The television sector has also grown significantly, with six channels presently broadcasting. The rapid spread of cable and satellite TV is sending tremors through Nepali society; Indian pop videos, Hollywood movies, and all the advertising broadcast with them is having a strong influence. However, an earlier television audience survey revealed that the majority of viewers are still tuned in to home productions.

Wider access to all media has accelerated the influence of media to the extent that it has become a major factor in shaping ideas, values, concepts, and behaviors. With this changed context and the ever-expanding media industry, the need for the media to help stem the spread of HIV/AIDS in Nepal has become even more of an obligation today. In fact, it is the media's responsibility to inform, educate, and lead by effecting changes. But has it been able to play this role effectively?

This review analyzes the role of the media and the trend of its reporting on HIV/AIDS issues in Nepal in order to understand the media better and foster a meaningful partnership with it.

1.1 Objectives of this Review

This review aims to understand the media trends that shape opinions about HIV/AIDS in Nepal in order to enhance responsible HIV/AIDS reporting. In particular, the report

- Collates and analyzes print and broadcast media reporting on HIV/AIDS;
- Analyzes the perceptions and media practices of targeted clients; and
- Assesses the thematic content on HIV/AIDS of selected broadcasting and print media, including billboards, over a defined period.

1.2 Limitations and Scope of the Report

This review is based on 315 published news reports and stories on HIV/AIDS issues in various newspapers of the country, the few programs on the national radio and television that were broadcast during the review period, billboards put up in major thoroughfares of Kathmandu, and eight focus group discussions (FGDs) with targeted clients. Only reports and programs from November 15 to December 14, 2002, and May 1 to June 30, 2003, were studied. Therefore, this review cannot be taken as exhaustive research but as indicative of key trends, themes, and issues that have emerged from the media reports and clients' perceptions. Moreover, as the broadcast media did not have good documentation of the programs broadcast last year, the review is based on the individual memories of the producers and information provided by relevant persons.

Most FGD participants were residents of Kathmandu while some were migrants from other parts of the country. The participants normally referred to the media available in Kathmandu valley, primarily the urban

areas. Therefore, the findings of the study may not necessarily be applicable in other settings, especially for rural areas. As the informants did not necessarily represent all sociodemographic entities within their subpopulations, the findings of the study cannot be generalized. However, the findings are expected to give good insight into the issues of HIV/AIDS media messages. Some groups had both male and female participants. Although they expressed no hesitation in participating in mixed-gender groups and no inhibitions were apparent during the discussions, the influence of, or presence of, persons of the opposite sex cannot be ruled out. However, the researchers ascertained that the impact, if any, was minimal.

HIV/AIDS has featured in the Nepali media in different forms for the last several years, but no structural review to assess

coverage has taken place. Since this is the first study in Nepal that has attempted to review and analyze the coverage and presentation of HIV/AIDS issues in the media, previous research analysis could not be compared for reliability and validity of the findings. However, an attempt has been made to validate it with the experiences and perceptions of several practicing journalists and media experts from around the country.

Considering the important role the media can play in molding public opinion, this study is expected to help the government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international NGOs working with HIV/AIDS to devise effective strategies for building partnerships with the media. It is also expected to help in deciding the choice of the medium for disseminating information and messages on HIV/AIDS.



Methodology

2

C H A P T E R

2.1 Selection of Target Media

Review of all media outlets of Nepal was not feasible in the short span of three months that was allotted for the program. Moreover, the backdate of the review period (November 15 to December 14, 2002, and May to June, 2003) would have required a lot of research as the documentation and archival system is very poor in all media organizations, particularly radio and television. In view of this, only some influential media that would provide a strong indication of the current trends and the way to move forward were selected for the review. The media reviewed are described below.

2.1.1 Print Media

Selected papers published from Kathmandu, Parsa (Birgunj), Sunsari, Nepalgunj, Surkhet, and Kailali were reviewed. These places were selected on the basis of the outreach and influence of media in these areas, their strategic locations, and prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

Birgunj was selected because it is close to the Indian border, with a high level of movement

across the border. It is also the commercial hub of the country, and as such, is considered a very vulnerable area for HIV/AIDS.

From Sunsari District in the Eastern Region, Dharan, Itahari, and Inaruwa were selected. Among these areas, Dharan is known for the high number of young drug users who are a risk factor for the spread of HIV/AIDS.

It is estimated that many towns of the midwestern and far western regions have a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. One reason for this is the large number of migrant workers who go to India or other foreign countries. In addition, the existing practice of *Badi*, *Jhuma*, and other forms of social and cultural violence against women are considered high-risk factors for the spread of HIV/AIDS. Therefore, from this region, selected newspapers published in Nepalgunj, Kailali and Surkhet were reviewed.

All the papers published in the country are categorized by the Ministry of Information and Communication into “A”, “B,” and “C” ratings on the basis of readership, quality, message, outreach, and content. From

Kathmandu, this study reviewed all newspapers of “A” category, under which all dailies and some major weeklies fall. However, as the “A” category weekly papers published only four relevant articles during the entire review period, they were not included in the study. Reports from only the daily newspapers have been included. As most papers from the districts do not fall under the “A” category, only a few newspapers from the identified districts were reviewed (See Annex I for the list of newspapers).

2.1.2 Radio

The state-owned Radio Nepal, the only station with nationwide coverage that penetrates the most remote regions, was selected for the review. However, Radio Nepal did not have any recorded documentation of programs aired last year and only began recording programs in mid-April 2003. Therefore, when possible, the review for the earlier period was based on available written information and consultation with program producers and directors.

Though there are many FM stations, their outreach is mostly limited to urban areas; thus, their target audience is very limited. Also, it was not feasible to review all FM stations due to the unavailability of documented information and lack of time. Therefore, on the basis of available written information and consultations with related officials and producers from three major FM stations of Kathmandu, an attempt was made to obtain information on the transmission of HIV/AIDS programs. Researchers consulted Kantipur FM (96.1 MHz), HITS FM (91.2 MHz), and K.A.T.H. (97.9 MHz).

2.1.3 Television

Private television channels are relatively new in Nepal. Therefore, the national station, Nepal Television, which reaches across the nation, was selected for the review. There was no documentation of the majority of programs aired during the review period. An attempt was made, however, to make an analysis based on a review of the few recorded programs available from the visual archives of Nepal Television and interviews and individual meetings with producers. In addition, an attempt was made to obtain information about the transmission of HIV/AIDS programs from the only private station that reaches across the nation, Channel Nepal.

2.1.4 Billboards

Billboards placed in major thoroughfares of Kathmandu were reviewed. Through FGDs, perceptions of the messages and suggestions for effective messages and placement of billboards were sought.

2.2 Processes and Study Tools

2.2.1 Development of Reviewing Guidelines

A monitoring guideline for print, radio, and television was developed (See Annex I.) The format helped analyze the different media in terms of themes covered, type of report, placement or timing, main source, people quoted, and number and frequency of reports.

2.2.2 Compilation of Necessary Material for the Review

Research assistants compiled all relevant reports and programs of the assigned media. Those covering the print media

prepared a file of all relevant media clippings and other necessary information. Those covering radio and television recorded the programs when possible and compiled the monitoring guidelines.

2.2.3 FGDs

Eight FGDs were held to assess and analyze the target groups' perceptions and comprehension of media messages. The participants of these eight separate FGDs were youth, parents and guardians, female sex workers (FSWs), clients of FSWs, men who have sex with men (MSM), female PLHAs, male PLHAs, and NGOs working on HIV/AIDS (See Table 8).

The focus of the discussions was the content of media messages (print, broadcast, and billboards), the timing,

understanding, consistency, and the overall impact. Suggestions for future media programs were also sought during these sessions. To guide the discussion, a guideline was developed. (See Annex II.)

2.2.4 Incorporation of Inputs Received from Sharing Preliminary Findings

The initial report of this review was shared among different stakeholders on December 2, 2003, at a special program to mark World AIDS Day. The session, entitled "HIV/AIDS and Media," was attended by approximately 175 people representing various media, government ministries, national and international organizations, U.N. organizations, external development partners, medical practitioners, PLHAs, and MSMs. The suggestions made during this session have been incorporated in this report.



Findings of the Print Media Review

3

CHAPTER

The print media has come a long way in its odyssey to carve a niche for itself, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The print media can have a substantial influence on the spread or prevention of HIV/AIDS. It plays a major role in educating people to combat disease, making government and nongovernmental agencies more accountable, and helping to remove discrimination and stereotypes.

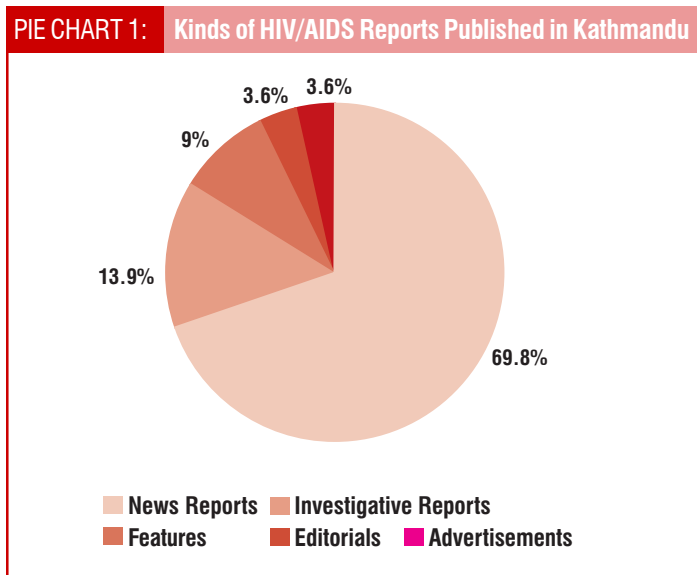
The print media has been effective in spreading the message that the threat of HIV/AIDS is assuming bigger proportions daily. In general, the published reports and stories have exposed the inadequacies of health facilities at hospitals and health centers and pointed out the need for monitoring HIV/AIDS-related programs. It has uncovered the government's deficiencies, including a sometimes indifferent approach and misplaced priorities. Similarly, the newspapers, both in the capital and outside have pointed out pervasive illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, drug use, a porous border, trafficking in girls and women, unsafe sex, and prostitution as causes for the spiraling incidence of HIV/AIDS. The print media has also

highlighted the activities of NGOs working in the HIV/AIDS sector, such as recovery and rehabilitation of trafficked women who are HIV positive. Despite these positive developments, the reports and news stories during the review period reveal that consistent, in-depth, investigative reporting on HIV/AIDS issues is still acutely lacking in the print media.

3.1 Trends in the Coverage of HIV/AIDS Issues

3.1.1 News and Features

The general trend in both the Kathmandu and *mofussil* (districts) is to cover routine programs such as rallies, gatherings, seminars and workshops, interactions on HIV/AIDS prevention, and campaigns against girl trafficking. Program and policy launches are reported with much fanfare. Most of the time, the media attaches more importance to the chief guest and the speakers, usually public figures or high-level government officials, than to the long-term objectives of the program and its impact. Other processes of programs and policies and the status of implementation are barely reported, if at all. There is also a



lack of sociological perspective and new ways of presenting facts while reporting about HIV/AIDS.

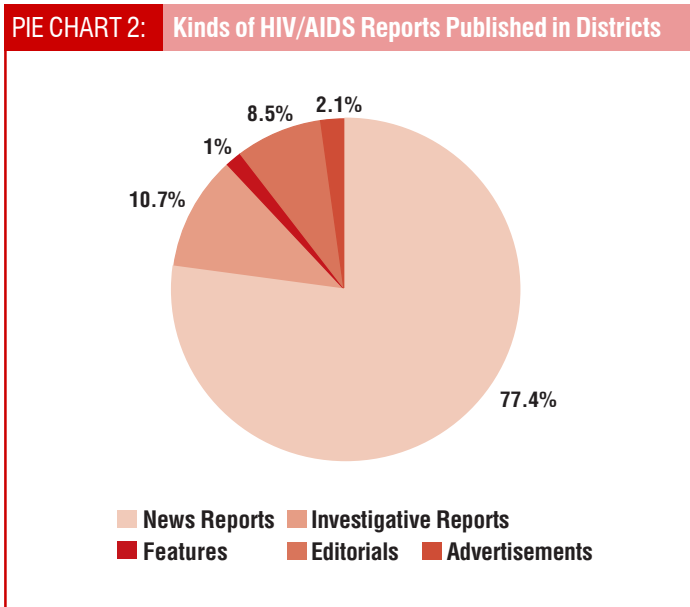
Pie Chart 1 reflects the kinds of HIV/AIDS reports that are published in Kathmandu. Around 70 percent of news reports that appeared in the newspapers during the review period were mostly reports of events, training, campaigns, workshops, rallies and a few reported cases of HIV/AIDS.

Lack of follow-up reporting on HIV/AIDS issues was clearly seen from the review. Only 13.9 percent of the total news reports were investigative, providing deeper insight into the issue and presenting analytical perceptions. Newspapers in the capital reported on the government’s apathy, the challenges to treatment, and the lack of manuals to regularize treatment. Various reports pointed out the global challenges posed by AIDS, the symbiotic relationship

of various diseases with AIDS, the vulnerability of street children to the disease, and the need for partnerships in the fight against AIDS. Nine percent were feature articles, written mainly by experts on HIV/AIDS. Though the articles provided much technical information, most articles may not have lured many readers for that very reason. A layperson would have found it difficult to understand them.

The lack of follow-up and investigative reporting could be attributed to the fact that most media organizations in Nepal are poorly equipped in terms of human, technical, and financial resources. Most newspapers do not have reporters who specialize. They are expected to report on any issue. The journalists may not have the means to prepare an investigative story, which takes longer and requires more effort and knowledge than covering regular events. The weakness may also lie with authorities working on the issue. They fail to engage journalists in other facets of the program or to package information in an effective, interesting way.

The news reports in the *mofussil* more or less reflected the same picture with the focus more on simple news reports of events rather than investigative articles (see Pie Chart 2). The few feature articles that were published in the district newspapers focused on girl trafficking, numbers who have succumbed to the disease, society’s response to infected people, girl’s education, and moral education. The reports accused the government of not forming District AIDS Coordination Committees.



3.1.2 Editorials

Some editorials were published during the World AIDS Day Program. To some extent, these editorials may have helped to emphasize the importance of the issue and draw the attention of policymakers to it. The media stressed that anti-AIDS programs should not be confined to mere formalities.

3.1.3 Headlines

HIV/AIDS is a sensitive issue, and a publication has to be fully aware of the implications of a report before it is published. Sensational headlines such as *Parbatko Dhairing Gaon Khatarnak Stithima* (“Dhairing Village of Parbat in Dangerous Situation”), *Nepal AIDS Mahamari Chettrama Parinat* (“Nepal Evolves as an AIDS Epidemic Zone”), and *Singo Gaon HIV/AIDS Ko Chapetama* (“The Whole Village in the Grip of HIV/AIDS”) may give rise to fear and terror unnecessarily. Many headlines are also unsubstantiated, with no facts or

statistics in the report to support the headline. For example, a story with the headline “Stopping to Distribute Injections Leads to Increase in AIDS” contains no facts documenting the headline, nor any authority having made such a statement. The focus seems to be on creating a sensational headline to attract readers.

3.1.4 Advertisements

Advertisements on HIV/AIDS, both in the capital and *mofussil*, were glaringly lacking. There was only one advertisement in May 2003, whereas there were 65 stories covered by the print media in the same month. There were only three advertisements in the capital and one in Birgunj in November/December 2002. Surprisingly, there was only one letter to the editor in *Kantipur* during the entire review period. Editorials in *The Rising Nepal*, *Space Time*, *The Himalayan Times* and *Himalaya Times* highlighted the dangerous situation of the disease, problems in treatment, and the relevance of World AIDS Day.

3.1.5 Amount of Coverage

The coverage of HIV/AIDS issues during the review period revealed that more reports were published in November and December compared with May and June. This can be attributed to the fact that most activities related to HIV/AIDS take place around World AIDS Day, December 1. Such occasions are highly relevant and have proved instrumental in relaying messages. A number of newspapers responded to the events and HIV/AIDS messages by publishing editorials, lending strength and credence to the HIV/AIDS campaign.

Out of 219 news reports that appeared in the 11 daily newspapers reviewed in Kathmandu, 105 articles were published between November 15 and December 14, 2002, compared with 68 in May 2003, and 46 in June 2003.

3.1.6 Story Placement

Depending on the newsworthiness and the importance of the issue, news reports are slotted into different pages in the newspapers. News or stories that are accorded the highest priority are published on the front page. The last page is also considered an important slot, as there are many readers who only look at the front and the last pages. Thus, reports considered of less importance generally occupy the middle pages.

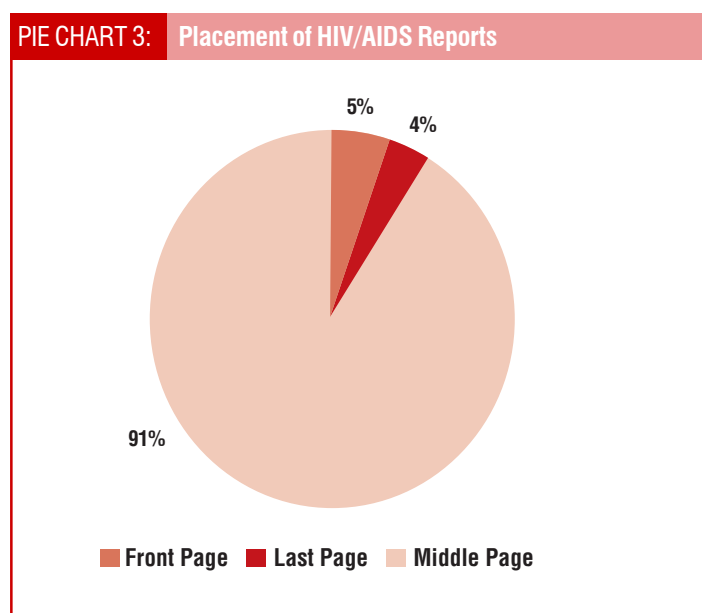
The majority of the news reports on HIV/AIDS printed during the review period failed to occupy priority space. Only those related to public figures and important

events were on the front pages. The majority of the stories were located in the middle pages. Out of 219 news reports that appeared in the 11 daily newspapers of Kathmandu, 200 news reports appeared in the middle pages, ten in the first page, and nine in the last page.

Comparing Pie Chart 3 with the tables in Annex V, it is clear that the majority of news reports appeared on the front page between November 15 and December 14. Since high-level government officials, including ministers, are involved in programs marking World AIDS Day on December 1, coverage is deemed important enough to be placed on the first or last pages, validating the belief that the media attaches more importance to public figures and public events.

3.2 Analysis of the Print Media in the Districts (Sunsari, Parsa, Banke, Surkhet, and Kailali)

The analysis of print media in the districts has been based on the findings shown in Pie Chart 4. Sunsari District in the Eastern Region receives many publications from the capital in addition to its locally published newspapers. The district is important with regard to HIV/AIDS since most of the youth in this area are employed abroad in Malaysia and Hong Kong or join either the Indian or British army. *Blast Times Daily*, published in Dharan, is categorized as an “A” grade newspaper and is the most widely read. Other newspapers from Sunsari are *Dharan Weekly*, *Bijaypur Weekly*, *Purba Times Weekly*, *Daily Morning Post*, and *Tapaiko Akhabar*. Through the initiation of local NGOs, with the support of PLHAs,



awareness-raising programs on HIV/AIDS and a rehabilitation program have been implemented in the district. According to Kamal Limbu, the president of Rehabilitation Center, an NGO, the programs have been more effective because of the participation of local journalists. The movement against HIV/AIDS in Sunsari District has only recently been initiated, and there is a possibility of achieving greater success by increasing the reach of the media in the area.

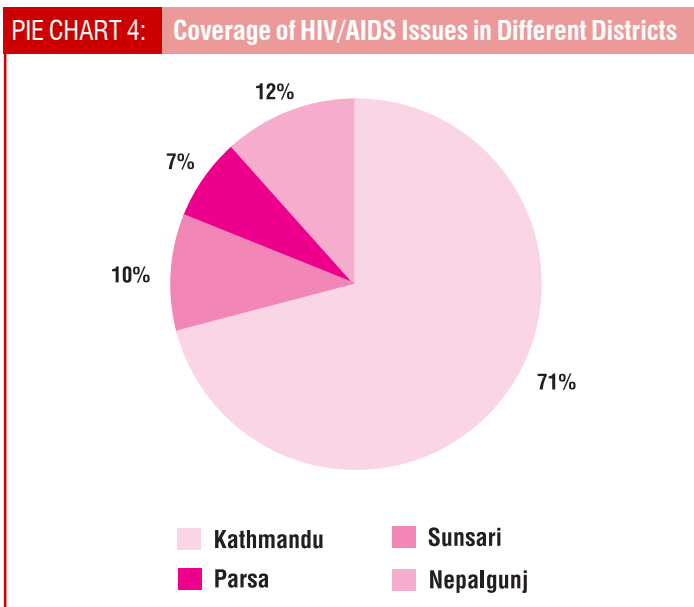
Birganj, in Parsa District, is located in the southern part of the Central Region of Nepal, bordering India. It is the main port for people and goods traveling to and from India. Many Nepali girls are trafficked through this area to brothels in India and are sent back when they become infected with HIV/AIDS. There are two popular newspapers published in Birganj, *Pratik* and *Ankus*. According to active journalists of the area, there are many other

newspapers; however, most of them have limited readership. Most of the news reported is related to girl trafficking, with only limited coverage of HIV/AIDS. Chief of the Central Regional Media Center, Ramesh Dahal, feels that the local newspapers do not publish sufficient information on HIV/AIDS.

Nepalgunj, Banke District, in the Midwest Region, also borders India. According to journalists of the area, the coverage of HIV/AIDS is very low due to the lack of mechanisms to test for HIV/AIDS, the lack of a focal point for HIV/AIDS data and information collection, and the inactive state of organizations working to control HIV/AIDS in the area. The newspapers from Nepalgunj cover the hilly and mountainous areas of the Central Western Region.

Although Surkhet District has a very high prevalence of HIV/AIDS according to tests of sick people at the hospital, no news has come out in the media due to lack of any regular newspaper publication. At present, the only newspaper in the area, *Susheli*, is not published on a regular basis. According to local journalists, the reasons for the paucity are a lack of resources and fear of the administration, security forces, and the Maoists. Kailali District faces a similar situation and challenge. Even the national media has not given priority to the issue of HIV/AIDS in these areas.

All areas of the *terai*, Surkhet and Dailek in the hilly region, and Kalikot in the mountainous region are AIDS-affected districts. However, the reality of the situation



in these areas—the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and the inactivity of organizations—has not been reported. Local concern about the epidemic, even under these circumstances, is evident in the publication of a special weekly paper devoted solely to HIV/AIDS, “AIDS Weekly.”

3.3 Sources of News on HIV/AIDS Issues

3.3.1 Main Source of News on HIV/AIDS Issues

The table below shows clearly that the main source of news and information for journalists on HIV/AIDS-related issues are representatives from NGOs and government and U.N. officials. Compared to Kathmandu, district government representatives seem to be rarely consulted for HIV/AIDS news reports. This might

Main source	Kathmandu	Outside Kathmandu
Government	57	9
NGO/INGO	75	67
PLHAs	7	1
U.N.	24	—
High-risk Group	6	—
Medical Practitioner	5	—

(Note: Sources do not add up to the total as only the disclosed news reports have been reflected in Table 1.)

People Quoted	Kathmandu	Outside Kathmandu
Government	67	3
NGOs/U.N.	78	5
PLHAs	18	1
Social Activists	15	17
Medical Practitioners	11	1
High-risk Group	10	-

Note: Table 2 reflects the review of people quoted in the news. The review reflects the people/institutions that journalists approach for comments and observations. Hence, it does not total the number of newspapers reviewed, as not all newspapers disclose the source.

indicate a low level of government HIV/AIDS activity outside Kathmandu, or it might indicate a failing on the part of journalists to conduct adequate research. Rarely do journalists seek information from PLHAs and people from high-risk groups.

3.3.2 People Quoted in the News

In the majority of reports appearing during the review period, NGO and U.N. representatives and government officials were quoted or interviewed more than any other source. A large number of government officials were quoted in the Kathmandu-based newspapers, but this was not the case in the district newspapers. This could be a reflection of a low level of government activity, or a low visibility of activity in the districts. Very few PLHAs were quoted, particularly in the districts. This was attributed to two reasons: journalists find it very difficult to locate PLHAs who are willing to talk, and the journalists fail to gain the confidence of PLHAs when they do meet.

3.3.3 Voices of PLHAs in the News

A cursory glance at the development of news reporting on HIV/AIDS reveals that the issue was given a human face only after 1996. Voices are being raised on the need to include PLHAs in all decisionmaking processes. According to Rajiv Kafle, Coordinator of Nava Kiran Plus and a PLHA himself, “There is no Everest expedition without a Sherpa, and any plan or decisionmaking regarding HIV/AIDS cannot proceed without the inclusion of PLHAs.”

Newspaper headlines such as “Society is opening up itself about AIDS” and “Youth in Dhankuta speak up their mind without

hesitation” reveal that there has been some behavioral change. However, the PLHAs feel extremely aggrieved by the social outlook of the society towards them. They feel that they are being deprived of dignity, freedom, and security. They stress the need for participation, which ensures partnership, active mutual support, shared vision, goals, and responsibility. Although some behavioral changes are beginning to be noticed in terms of looking at the PLHAs, there is still more to be done to remove the stigma and discrimination attached to HIV/AIDS. Newspaper headlines such as “Let’s treat AIDS patients in a human way” and “On the verge of life and death after getting infected with HIV” attract the attention of readers but often communicate misinformation and do not relate to the content of the story. Journalists are very keen to write on the issue but lack proper information.

According to PLHAs, some of the advertisements give the misleading suggestion that a PLHA will die right away.

Also, the difference between HIV and AIDS is not presented clearly, so the general population does not understand that there is a difference.

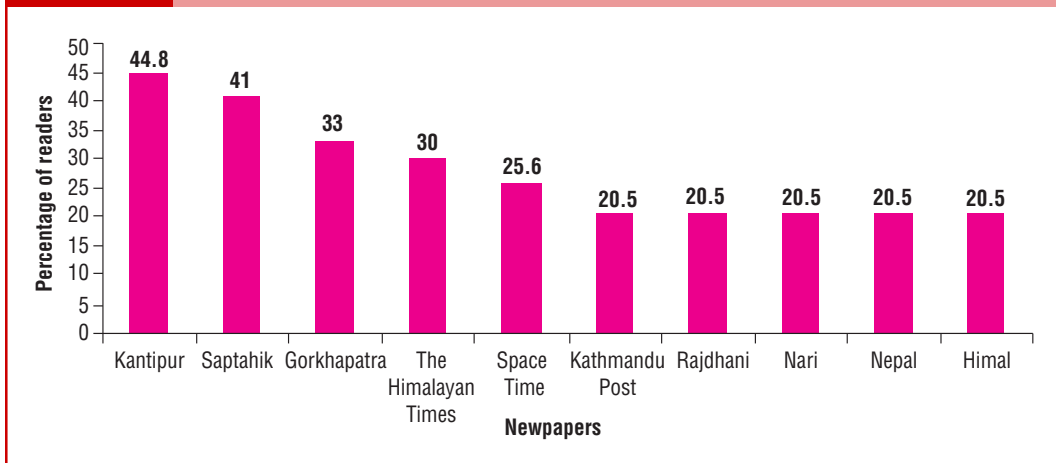
The perspectives of PLHAs have begun to be included in a number of news reports. However, they are limited to only those few who have disclosed their status and have been in the media for quite some time. The perceptions of the female PLHAs were completely lacking.

3.4 Perceptions

3.4.1 Clients Perception of Print Media

FGDs were conducted to solicit perceptions and attitudes toward mass media messages on HIV/AIDS. The FGDs revealed that the habit of reading newspapers or magazines is limited to a small segment of literate people irrespective of their sociodemographic attributes. The discussions indicated that most people read newspapers or magazines at their offices or workplaces while some people either buy or borrow from their

BAR CHART 1: Newspapers Read by FGD Participants



neighbors. Bar Chart 1 shows the various newspapers read by FGD participants.

Exposure to print media such as newspaper or magazines appeared to be lower than that of broadcast media in all categories of people. The review indicated that media preferences depend upon the literacy level. For example, most of the FSWs reportedly did not read any newspapers. However, this is not surprising, as a large proportion of them cannot read or write. Those who do read the newspaper usually look for horoscopes and classified ads. The meta MSM (the "female" partner) prefer stories related to fashion, beauty tips, and the like.

The majority of the FGD participants had similar preferences for newspapers, with Kantipur being the most read. However, in almost all FGDs, a significant number, without fail, read the weekly Saptahik of Kantipur Publications in great detail. Regular HIV/AIDS-related messages and stories in the Saptahik might be an effective print medium to reach targeted clients.

Both male and female PLHAs identified more negative terms used by the print media than any other groups. Some messages considered appropriate or normal by the general population are offensive from the perspective of PLHAs. Terms identified as negative or stigmatizing include pranghatak (fatal), pidit (victim), and maaya (love). The PLHAs explained that pranghatak scares people and pidit

and maaya underestimate the capabilities of and possibilities for HIV-infected people.

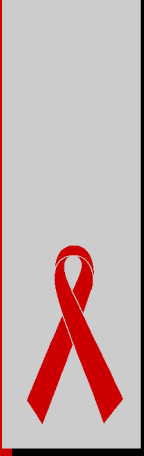
PLHAs expressed their disappointment over the use of the terms HIV and AIDS together. They noted that HIV and AIDS have different meanings and should be used separately. Use of the words together can create the misconception that a person with HIV can die right way. This was verified by the opinions that emerged during the FGD with male clients of FSWs.

"HIV lai AIDS bhanne ho bhane Baccha lai Budha bhane bhaihalyo ni." ("Putting HIV and AIDS at the same level is like calling a young boy an old man.") [Female PLHA]

"There is no clarity on the difference between HIV and AIDS [in HIV messages]. Most of the people assume that it is the same thing and that people will die." [Male client of FSWs]

3.4.2 Gaps Perceived

- Lack of investigative reporting and in-depth analysis
- Lack of adequate knowledge among reporters, particularly in the districts
- Lack of sociological perspective among reporters
- Lack of reports on how gender roles impact the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Inadequate inclusion of perceptions of those infected and affected, and of high-risk groups, particularly from the female perspective
- Lack of sustained coverage
- Lack of prioritized space



Findings of the Radio Review

4

CHAPTER

Radio reaches even the most remote regions using the cheapest technology available for public information and communication. State-owned Radio Nepal has been joined in the last decade by a number of privately owned FM stations.

The Radio Nepal broadcast is estimated to reach approximately 90 percent of the population through its nine stations located in the capital and in other regions. It has also set up five fill-in stations along Nepal's southern border in an attempt to reach areas that were not previously covered. It is currently on air 16 hours a day on workdays, from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., and 18 hours on holidays. Radio Nepal is the only station that penetrates the remote regions through its short wave, medium wave, and six FM transmitters.

Although Radio Nepal was established as a public service broadcaster, it has not fulfilled this role well, primarily because of its dual nature in terms of function and programming. On one hand, it has been mandated by the Communications Policy to safeguard national interests through its public service function, and on the other, it

has been compelled to generate its own resources through advertisement and sponsorship.

Over 25 private FM radio stations are operating in the capital and other towns. Private commercial FM stations are not obliged to produce or present public service programs.

4.1 Trend in the Coverage of HIV/AIDS Issues

Most Radio Nepal programs have been running for years. Since sponsored programs and advertisements are a priority, there is little room for additional programs or even minor inclusions. While it is desirable that a national broadcaster incorporate matters of national importance, including health issues, in the regular program schedule, this has not been the practice at Radio Nepal. Hence, HIV/AIDS topics have not been adequately addressed. The little coverage the issue has received has been on an ad hoc basis, often prompted by requests for inclusion in the form of interviews or when reporting on World AIDS Day.

4.1.1 Coverage in the News

The news programs on both Radio Nepal and the FM stations have a large audience. Radio Nepal broadcasts news almost every hour. Apart from the regular Nepali and English bulletins, the news is broadcast in twenty regional languages from the Central Transmission Centre in Kathmandu and from the regional stations. The inclusion of HIV/AIDS stories in news programs in regional languages could have a great impact on the ethnic communities.

The review revealed that HIV/AIDS issues do not usually feature in the news unless the minister or some high-ranking official is involved. News on HIV/AIDS was broadcast only on six occasions during the study period. The trend both on Radio Nepal and on the FM stations was to include issues of HIV/AIDS in the news mainly during the period marking World AIDS Day in December when public figures are involved. None of the news programs included their own investigative reports. Information on news coverage in regional news bulletins was not available.

The full potential of Radio Nepal in terms of coverage, program formats, including dramas, and use of the existing excellent production studios has not been adequately

harnessed to disseminate information and create awareness of HIV/AIDS.

4.1.2 Radio Programs that Included HIV/AIDS Issues

The national broadcaster and the three FM stations included in the review gave priority to sponsored programs and advertisements. Consequently, none of the stations had a regular program schedule for health issues. The little coverage HIV/AIDS received was on an ad hoc basis, often prompted by requests for inclusion in the form of interviews or when marking World AIDS Day, Condom Day, or International Drugs Day. Whatever was broadcast was generally guided by the instincts of the broadcaster and not by a predetermined policy on public issues.

There are several programs in regional languages such as Newar, Tamang, and Sherpa. Discussions with the producers revealed that there was some content on HIV/AIDS in the last few days of November and the first few days of December 2002, although details of the content, duration, and format could not be ascertained. As with the print media, the information reveals that radio programs included materials on HIV/AIDS only during November/December, around World AIDS Day.

The study also learned that producers and reporters at Radio Nepal are not focused on specific areas of expertise. A producer making a program on HIV/AIDS would have to be well informed and knowledgeable on the issue before creating a program to inform and educate others. Reports also would be more meaningful to

TABLE 3 Radio Programs that Included HIV/AIDS Issues

Program Title	Type of Program	Date
Yuva Sansar	Weekly Youth Program	19/11/02
Sur Sangam	Regular Musical Program	21/11/02
Majheri	Regular Musical Program	25/11/02
Bal Karyakram	Children's Program	12/12/02
Namaste Nepal	Daily morning radio show	-

the listener if the reporter attempted specialization.

According to a survey of the programs aired by Radio Nepal during the study period, issues concerning HIV/AIDS were broadcast in five different programs. There may have been more, but no other information was available due to the nonexistence of an archiving system in November-December 2002, and the difficulty of retrieving previously broadcast materials even after such a system was introduced.

All programs in Table 3 presented some information and tips on HIV/AIDS, except *Sur Sangam*, which carried the story of a listener who was HIV positive. It is evident that, apart from isolated instances around the period marking World AIDS Day, there was little HIV/AIDS content on Radio Nepal. This may not be the full picture, however, as most of these details were elicited from the memories of individual producers, not from documented sources.

4.1.3 Highlights of Aired Programs

Yuva Sansar. This program is a regular weekly radio program targeting youth. It mostly provides information, education, and entertainment that are relevant to youth. On November 19, 2002, a newspaper article with HIV/AIDS information was read. However, it must be noted that material read directly from a newspaper article is usually not ideal for broadcast. Even if there were vital or useful information, it might have not have reached the audience due to the inappropriate presentation.

Sur Sangam. This regular music show of Radio Nepal featured the story of a listener who was HIV positive. However, such stories would be more meaningful if told by the person him/herself instead of by the radio presenter, lending variety and credibility to the program.

Majheri. Another regular music program of Radio Nepal, *Majheri* broadcast a poem on HIV/AIDS, a listener's contribution highlighting ways to protect against HIV/AIDS.

Children's Program. The program for children broadcast by Radio Nepal carried some tips on HIV/AIDS, focusing on PLHAs on one of its programs.

Namaste Nepal. This daily morning show of Radio Nepal carried some information on HIV/AIDS on World AIDS Day.

It is evident that apart from isolated instances, there was little content on HIV/AIDS in national broadcast media. All the programs listed above are Radio Nepal's own programs, showing that the national broadcaster is performing its public service function to some extent. However, due to the lack of archiving and documentation, it is difficult to determine the full picture.

4.1.4 Coverage in Advertisements and Jingles

During the study period, several public service announcements (PSAs) and commercial advertisements on HIV/AIDS were broadcast. A survey of the PSAs revealed that popular actors, sports persons, and television anchors were selected to give

messages on HIV/AIDS. The number of advertisements aired was substantial compared to program coverage. The 30-second PSAs under the category "Unity Against AIDS" were voiced by eight different personalities. These were supplemented by a series of advertisements promoting the use of condoms. Together they were broadcast a total of 547 times.

The five different advertisements in music, drama, and dialogue were found to be quite effective. Although there was some controversy on the Jhilke dai jingle, the matter was resolved after altering a few words. Trivialization of a serious matter might be counterproductive sometimes. All this needs to be taken into account through audience surveys and needs assessment. In terms of technical quality, all the advertisements were of high standard. Table 4 shows a list of all the radio advertisements aired during the study period.

Radio spots 1-8 were sponsored by AIDS Biruddha Ekata Nepal. Family Health International (FHI) sponsored spots 9-13. The FHI productions were also produced in different local languages and broadcast from Radio Nepal's Regional Transmissions Center.

4.1.5 HIV/AIDS Issues on Some FM Radio Stations in Kathmandu

It was difficult to collect broadcast information relating to HIV/AIDS from FM stations during the assigned period, as documenting broadcast information is not practiced at most FM stations. Most programs were broadcast live.

The commercial FM stations are primarily music stations catering to the entertainment needs of the urban elite. They are not obligated to broadcast programs of public interest. The public service or community service function is not mandatory. Whatever is aired is done so at the discretion of the

TABLE 4 Radio Advertisements/Spots

Spot Number	Title of Ad	Duration	November 15-December 14, 2002	May 2003	June 2003	Number of Times Broadcast
1	AIDS Bare Ramesh Uprety	30 sec	21	17	16	54
2	AIDS Bare Sharan Chhetri	30 sec	31	13	14	58
3	AIDS Bare Jharana	30 sec	20	6	8	34
4	AIDS Bare Nalina	30 sec	18	7	7	32
5	AIDS Bare Dhana Bahadur	30 sec	20	0	0	20
6	AIDS Bare Kala Subba	30 sec	20	7	7	34
7	AIDS Bare Kala Subba	30 sec	22	10	8	40
8	AIDS Bare Upendra Man	30 sec	22	0	0	22
9	FHI Jingle	1 min	154	0	0	154
10	FHI Female	1 min	39	0	0	39
11	FHI Karmachari	1 min	19	0	0	19
12	FHI Kirana Pasal	1 min	24	0	0	24
13	FHI Truck Driver	1 min	17	0	0	17
Total		9 min	427	60	60	547

broadcaster and not by a predetermined policy on public issues. However, it was observed that at least some materials on HIV/AIDS were broadcast during the study period. The majority of all programs, features, news, and advertisements were broadcast with assistance from sponsors.

FM stations are clustered around Kathmandu where other means of information are also available. In terms of education, exposure, and the economy, Kathmandu is much better off than the remote areas. While there is a need to highlight HIV/AIDS issues for listeners in Kathmandu, choosing the right station and weighing the options could be a difficult decision to make. In the absence of audience surveys, it is impossible to make a choice based on listener ratings of the stations. One must also take into account the coverage area of each station and the overlapping of radio signals. Almost all the stations can be heard throughout the valley. This calls for a narrowing down of the target audience and program focus in the most suitable format. This process has not yet begun.

KANTIPUR FM, 96.1 MHz. By its own initiative, Kantipur FM broadcast some programs on HIV/AIDS issues during the review period. The following were broadcast from Kantipur FM with its own resources:

- **December 1, 2002, World AIDS Day**
World AIDS Day: Interview with Dr. Bhubaneshwori Dutta, Director General, Department of Health Service, Ministry of Health
Duration: One hour
Time: 8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.

- **Condom Day**

Hour-long program was broadcast. (No other information available)

- **June 26, 2003, Drug Abuse Day**

Program title: Lagu Padarthale Garda Samajma AIDS Jasto Bhayanak Rog Nimtyaunchha (Drug Abuse Invites Deadly Disease, AIDS)

Interview with a professional working with PLHAs

Duration: One hour

Time: 8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m.

HITS FM, 91.2 MHz. During the assigned period, HITS FM transmitted no HIV/AIDS material using its own resources. A source at the station said that during one period, advertisements and spots on HIV/AIDS sponsored by an external organization were aired about 10 times a day. (It is believed that this was sometime around June/July.) Broadcasts of such material would depend on the availability and willingness of the sponsors, according to this source.

K.A.T.H., 97.9 MHz. During the assigned period, K.A.T.H. FM broadcast issues relating to HIV/AIDS in news, programs, and advertisements. Occasionally, there were special programs on HIV/AIDS issues sponsored by the Ministry of Health. There were some interviews and talk shows with experts. There might have been other information about HIV/AIDS presented, but most of the programs were live, and no records were available.

Private commercial FM stations are not obliged to produce or present programs pertaining to HIV/AIDS. Moreover, these stations have limited or no production

facilities, meaning only programs that do not need editing or mixing can be accommodated. Although some private production houses have emerged to cater to the needs of program producers, commercial stations do not feel the need to avail of such facilities.

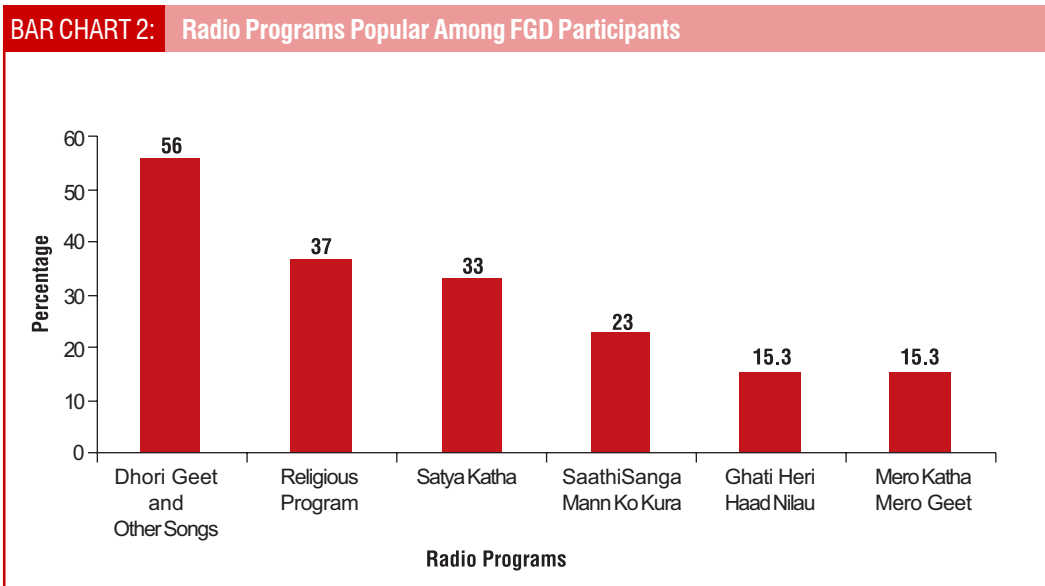
4.2 Perceptions

4.2.1 Clients' Perception of Radio Programs

Discussions with youth, parents, and NGO representatives indicated that radio is the most common media in rural areas, and students in hostels have no choice but to listen to radio or read newspapers. However, the FGDs indicated that there are limited numbers of listeners of radio if there is a choice between radio and TV. When people tune in to the radio, they want to listen to news, songs, comedy, interviews, and religious programs. Contrary to expectations, not only parents but young

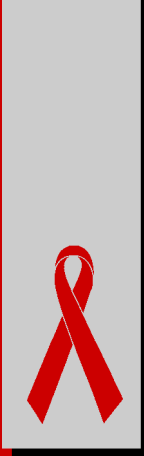
people also listen to religious and spiritual programs on radio. Men working in the transport sector mentioned that radio is played throughout the day at their workshops. Since people working as drivers, conductors, or helpers spend most of the time in vehicles, they either tune to the radio or play audio cassettes. The discussions indicated that the majority of people are attracted to radio dramas, true stories, interactive, and phone-in programs. Bar Chart 2 shows the radio programs most popular among FGD participants.

Altogether there were five different advertisements in music, drama, and dialogue, which were found to be quite effective by the FGD participants, although there was some concerns on the Jhilke dai jingle. In terms of technical quality, the advertisements rated quite high, but sometimes the messages were drowned out by the music.



4.2.2 Gaps perceived

- Lack of specific policy for covering HIV/AIDS issues and lack of regular programming on HIV/AIDS or health issues. HIV/AIDS issues are covered on ad hoc basis mostly depending on sponsors, resulting in an inconsistency of reports and programs
- Lack of adequate knowledge on HIV/AIDS issues among producers and reporters on Radio Nepal; absence of producers and reporters specializing in the topic
- Lack of audience surveys, which creates difficulties in determining listener ratings needed to make choices
- Need to harness the full potential of Radio Nepal in terms of coverage, program formatting, and use of production studios.



Findings of the Television Review

5

CHAPTER

A recent survey on "The Television Viewing Pattern of Kathmandu Dwellers and Their Unmet Needs," for Kantipur Publications by the students of School of Management, Kathmandu University, revealed that Nepal Television (NTV) still captures the majority of viewers even after the start-up of several private channels.

Out of the 29 programs included in the survey, including those of Channel Nepal, the number one program, NTV Nepali news at 8 p.m., had a weighted value of 287, followed by Santosh Pant's miniseries, "Hijo Aja Ko Kura," a look at current social issues, with a weighted value of 204. These were followed in popularity by telefilms, musical programs, and current affairs programs.

According to a source from Nepal TV, another recent survey conducted for Nepal TV by the Center for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) in 23 districts of the country shows viewers' preferences more or less validate the Kathmandu University survey. Results of the CEDA survey are illustrated in Table 5.

5.1 Coverage Trend in Nepali TV Programs

NTV and Channel Nepal gave priority to sponsored programs, mostly advertisements related to HIV/AIDS. Neither station had a regular program schedule for HIV/AIDS issues. Although NTV did have a weekly program on reproductive health, the issue of HIV/AIDS featured only once in this program during the three-month review period. Neither station adequately addressed the issue of HIV/AIDS. In general, they broadcast national and international events related to HIV/AIDS or features related to World AIDS Day. Most broadcasts were sponsored programs.

Judging from the materials on HIV/AIDS on Nepal TV and Channel Nepal during

TABLE 5 CEDA Survey for NTV

Program	Percentage of the Viewers
News	93%
Hijo Aajaka Kura	78%
Purus (Telefilm)	64%
Bishwa Ghatana Telefilm	54%
Disha Nirdesh	50%
Geetanjali (Musical)	46.8%
Aangan (Participatory song and dance program)	44.4%
	36%

the review period, it must be pointed out that while the topic was given space, it certainly was not sufficient. On NTV from November 15 to December 14, 2002, and May 1 to June 30, 2003, there were two talk shows, two telefilms, one concert program, two news stories in four news bulletins, the Jhilke jingle, and telespots. The same telespots were transmitted by Channel Nepal from November to December 2002.

5.1.1 Coverage in the News

News programs play an important role in providing information and new knowledge to viewers. As noted by several surveys and the FGDs conducted for this review, news is the most popular program among the Nepali viewers. However, as with Radio Nepal, the study revealed that issues on HIV/AIDS do not usually feature in the news bulletin of NTV unless the minister or a high-ranking official is involved. Most of the reporting is about public programs held in the capital.

HIV/AIDS topics featured in only four bulletins during the entire three-month review period, reflecting the fact that the issue is given low priority. Two of these reports revolved around World AIDS Day events in November and December. NTV's news bulletin of November 22, 2002, carried a story about an AIDS program organized by an NGO, and on December 1, 2002, a story of the Prime Minister addressing a rally organized to mark World AIDS Day was carried. On June 10, 2003, NTV covered the launch of a U.N. report on rising HIV/AIDS cases in South Asia, "Live and Let Live," to mark International Drugs Day. On May 14 and 15, 2003, a news report

was broadcast covering a seminar on bringing effective HIV/AIDS-awareness programs to the general public.

All of these news stories were related to public events attended by important personalities. The lack of investigative stories on HIV/AIDS on television is strongly evident, not only in the news bulletins, but also in other current affairs programs.

5.1.2 HIV/AIDS Programs on NTV

According to the review of programs on NTV during the study period, issues concerning HIV/AIDS were aired on only six programs, shown in Table 6.

Table 6 illustrates that apart from isolated instances, NTV airs little content on HIV/AIDS. However, as most of the details were derived from the memory of individual producers, this may not give the full picture.

Sneha. A one-episode, half-hour drama sponsored by the United Mission to Nepal was transmitted on November 15, 2002, at 6:55 p.m. The transmission time was good for rural viewers but not very appropriate for urban viewers. The story was based on an HIV-positive man and his contribution to increasing HIV/AIDS awareness.

Achanak. The eight-episode drama was NTV's own production portraying the condition and life of a person with HIV/AIDS. The drama, with 25-minute episodes, was first transmitted at 9:00 p.m. on a Saturday in December 2002 (a more specific date was not available). The true story, dramatized to make it more

TABLE 6 TV Programs that Included HIV/AIDS Issues

Program	Type of Program	Date
Sneha	Telefilm	November 15, 2002
Staying Alive Concern	Musical concert	December 2002
Achanak	Teleserial	December 2002
Sankalpa	Talk program	May 7, 2003
Sanjeevani	Weekly talk program on reproductive health	May 8, 2003
Catmandu	Teleserials teaching life skills to youths	Every Saturday from May 10, 2003

engrossing, gave a very positive presentation.

Live Program (Musical). "Staying Alive" was a recorded tape of a live musical program performed elsewhere with messages on HIV/AIDS. The English language musical program was transmitted at 4:30 p.m. on December 1, 2002.

Sankalpa. A 35-minute talk program involving professionals in the fields of health and social work provided information on the HIV/AIDS situation in Nepal. Representatives of the National Centre for AIDS and STD Control (NCASC), NGOs, and a female PLHA took part in discussions. The program was broadcast on May 7, 2003, at 1:15 p.m.

Sanjeevani. "Sanjeevani" is NTV's 30-minute weekly talk program on reproductive health aired on Saturdays at 1:15 p.m. The program on May 8, 2003, focused on safe sex and sex education and included the participation of medical practitioners, educators, and NGO representatives.

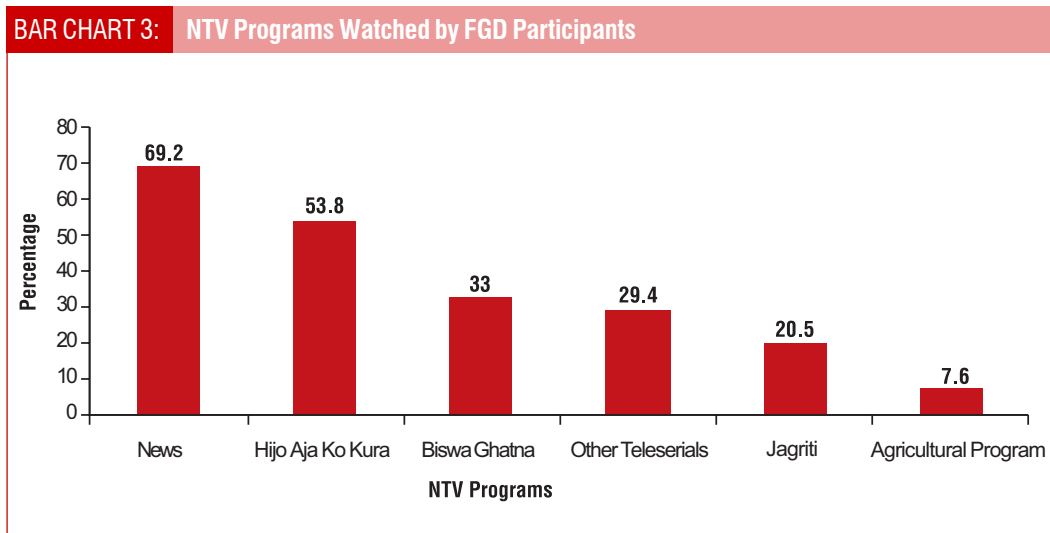
Catmandu. Sponsored by UNICEF, "Catmandu" is a weekly serial of 25 minutes

aired every Saturday at 6:55 p.m. beginning May 10, 2003. With the long-term objective of addressing HIV/AIDS, the program targets youth and focuses on teaching life skills strategies. Although the content may not focus directly on HIV/AIDS issues, it can contribute to educating youth about ways to avoid risky behaviors and situations that make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

The eight-episode teleserial "Achanak" and the one-episode "Sneha" were repeated several times outside of the review period. Both programs had large numbers of viewers in the rural areas, the majority of whom have access only to NTV. However, the same cannot be said of the viewers in the urban areas, most of whom are linked by cable and thus have access to multiple channels. Both were well-made programs catering to the general public.

The inclusion of HIV/AIDS issues in talk programs is a good beginning. However, these programs do not have many viewers. The timing was inappropriate for many, and the presentation was monotonous with too many "talking heads" and no supplementing visuals. Considering the viewing pattern of the people, it can be said with confidence that the talk programs would not have attracted as many viewers as the telefilms.

The live concert (on recorded tape) was an excellent choice for urban and suburban viewers. Programs such as these should be broadcast more often as today's youth are of the MTV generation and are easily influenced by this culture. The UNICEF-sponsored "Catmandu" program was also popular among youth.



5.1.3 Coverage in Advertisements and Jingles

During the study period, several "Unity Against AIDS" advertisements and PSAs, similar to those on Radio Nepal, were broadcast on NTV.

Telespots. Ten 30-second PSAs involving popular actors, sports personalities, models, PLHAs, and television anchors giving messages on HIV/AIDS were transmitted 60 times between November 15 and December 14, 2002. The ten telespots of the HIV/AIDS Personality Campaign drew much attention as they were aired

frequently between popular programs over a long period. Each PSA was placed at different times in programs such as Nepali news, current affairs, "Hijo Aja Ko Kura," "Clap," and "Young Asia."

Channel Nepal transmitted the same telespots 60 times from November 5 to December 31, 2002. They were placed at two spots each between the regular entertainment and information program at 7:00 p.m. and the news program, "Haal Khabar" at 7:30 p.m.

The same telespots were also transmitted in May and June 2003 on NTV. They were broadcast eight times between May 1 and 9, during the religious program "Bishnu Puran," the musical program "Hit Mix," and teleserials. They were transmitted two times during the Saturday afternoon Hindi feature film shows, one each on May 3 and 10, 2003. In the month of May, one PSA was placed between each of three episodes of "Hijo Aja Ko Kura." Similarly, there were

TABLE 7 Advertisements Telecast from NTV

Title	Duration	No. of Times Aired			Total
		Nov. 15–Dec. 14, 2002	May 2003	June 2003	
HIV/AIDS awareness campaign with celebrities	20-35 sec	60	50	36	146
Jhilke Lahai	30 sec	82	-	-	82

nine spots in "Disha Niradesh," a weekly current affairs talk program, and 28 spots on the 8:00 p.m. Nepali news for the entire month of May. In June, the campaign had 25 spots on the Nepali news and 11 spots in "Disha Niradesh." The total number of PSA spots for May and June 2003 was 86.

The "HIV/AIDS Personality Campaign" telespots were the most prominent transmission on HIV/AIDS on NTV. The placements among all the major programs on NTV and Channel Nepal ensured that all age groups of every class and discipline were reached.

FHI Jingle. The 30-second jingle Jhilke Lahai (same as Jhilke dai) was well made with catchy local music, setting, and costume. With the objective of informing and educating the target viewers-PLHAs, youth, sex workers, and the general public-the jingle was broadcast 82 times between November 15 and December 14, 2002. It

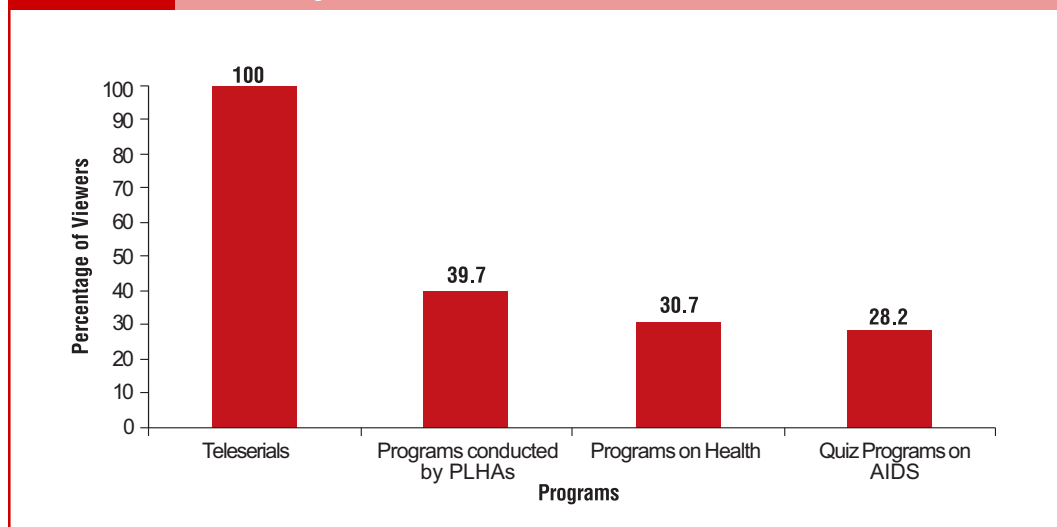
was placed between programs such as "Disha Niradesh," "Artha ko Artha," "Jagaran," "Achel," "Chintan Manan," "Hijo Aja Ko Kura," "Clap," "Kathmandu," "The Collection," "Bhaka," "Sangeet Sandhya," and "A-One Hits." The jingle was not transmitted in May and June.

5.2 Perceptions

5.2.1 Clients' Perception of TV Programs

While radio has the widest reach, television was reported to be the most popular medium by all FGDs. Although news was apparently a commonly watched program on TV, preferences for other programs varied according to the category of the viewer. Youth preferred to watch musical programs, movies, sports, teleserials, and entertainment. Literate people, especially adult men, preferred to watch news analysis or political discussions. Women, especially school graduates, chose teleserials and folk music such as dohori. The discussions

BAR CHART 4: Viewers' Program Preferences



indicated that people are attracted to dramatized stories, telefilms, true stories, and interactive programs such as talk shows. The participants further added that presentations based on, or close to, reality tend to be influential. The FGDs revealed that the "Raat" and "Aasha" telefilms and Rajiv Kafle's talk program left an impact on the participants. Bar Chart 4 shows the kinds of programs that the FGDs said they would like to see on television.

Some of the media messages were perceived to be embarrassing from a cultural perspective. A commonly cited example was the advertisement "Jhilke dai chha chhain condom..." ("Brother, do you have a condom..."). As explained by the participants, use of the term dai (brother) is inappropriate in the Nepali cultural context where sexual relations between brother and sister are prohibited.

"Jhilke dai ad was good because of its lok geet tune (folk music), but it became stereotyped, and the message it gave was not clear. Moreover, it portrays a negative

relationship between a brother and a sister." [MSM]

"Jhilke dai ad is vulgar. We feel uncomfortable watching it in front of our children." [Parents]

5.2.2 Gaps Perceived

The following gaps in TV programs have been noted:

- No specific policy in regard to TV stations producing their own HIV/AIDS programs
- Heavy dependence on sponsored programs
- Lack of reporters and producers who specialize in the issue
- No investigative reporting or production of news reports apart from public events related to the issue
- PLHAs or issues concerning them very rarely featured in talk and informative programs
- Inconsistency of programs and advertisements related to HIV/AIDS
- No variations in the production of telespots and advertisements.



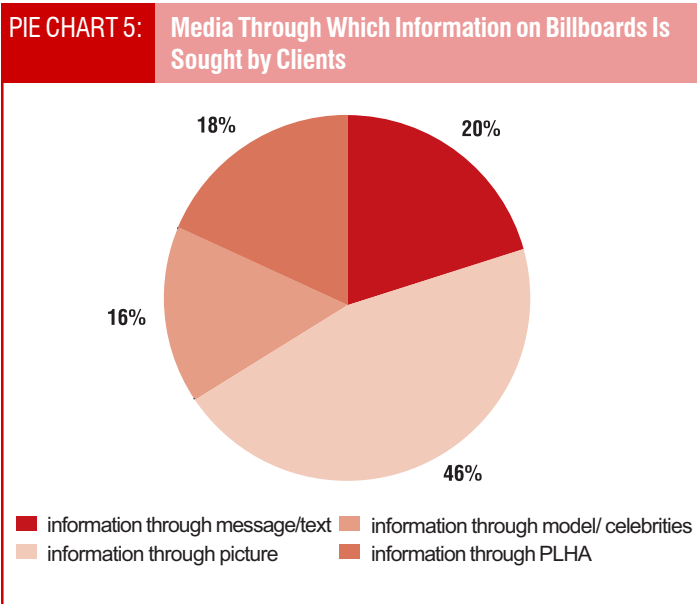
Findings of the Billboard Review

6

CHAPTER

At present there are limited numbers of billboards inside the valley. Two billboards under the "Unity Against AIDS" campaign have been installed at two busy crossings of the valley. One board with a picture of singer Nalina Chitrakar and the message HIV/AIDS sarna bata aafu pani bachau arulai pani baachau ("Let's save ourselves and others from the transmission of HIV/AIDS") is installed at the Maitighar crossing inside the compound of the

Ministry of Health. Similarly, another board with a picture of actor Ramesh Upreti and the message HIV/AIDS bata bachau, jivan badau- sui haina ("Save yourself from HIV/AIDS, share life-not syringe") is installed at the Lagankhel crossing inside the compound of the Patan Mental Hospital. Both boards have the campaign motto HIV/AIDS bare aajai dekhi kura garaun ("Let's talk about HIV/AIDS right from today") and the logo of "Unity Against AIDS, Nepal." A dozen similar boards were installed in the last year, but most of them have now been taken outside the valley and installed in business centers and along the highway.



6.1 Type of Message and Location of Billboard

The participants of the FGDs suggested that the length of messages depended on the nature of the location. The billboard should display a short message if it is located at places where people pass through quickly, such as roadsides. The billboards should display messages in detail if they are located at places where people have time to read, such as at hospitals and parks.

"In billboards, the message should be more explicit and cover all issues and all types of people. The best location to place billboards would be school, college, halls, and public areas including public vehicles." [MSM]

"Illustrations on the billboard should be very effective so that even uneducated people can understand it. Billboards would be most effective if placed at bus stations." [FSW]

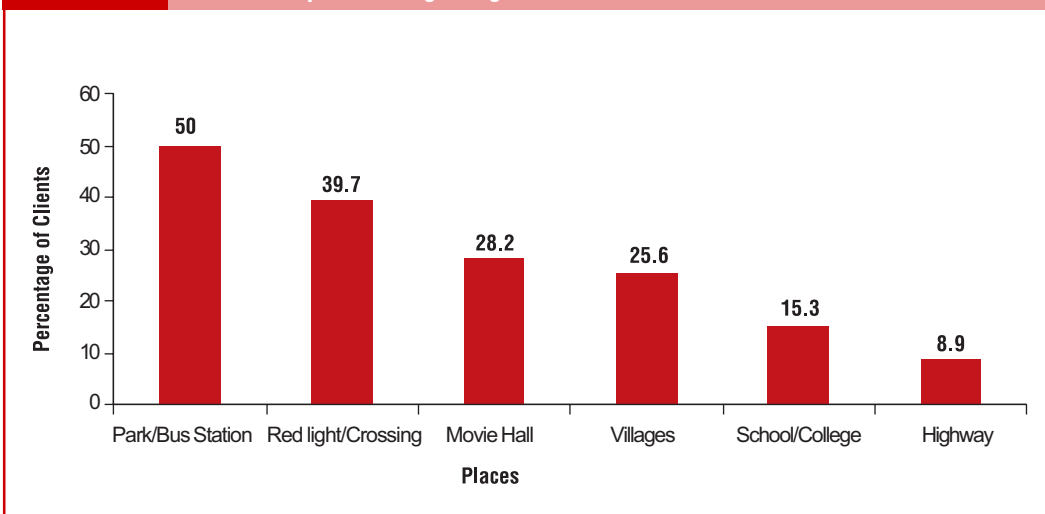
"Billboards should not be installed in turnings. Five or six boards should be installed in places where people stop for tea or lunch. They can be placed at bus stops and checkpoints. Pictures of models on hoarding boards attract attention but no one reads the messages. They may distract drivers. One example is the billboard at Thapathali where models are playing snooker [where the body of the female model is exposed]." [Male clients of FSWs]

Participants suggested that a billboard not be placed at the same location for a long period with the same message. Considering the cost implications of frequently updating billboards, the participants suggested shifting the boards to other locations from time to time.

"The billboard should stand on the same place for only six months. It would be better if the boards could be exchanged from one place to another." [Youth]

Two small billboards are installed in the main entrance of the Balaju Industrial Estate and the Patan Industrial Estate with the message "Who is at risk of HIV/AIDS? You, them, or me? We are all at risk. Therefore, let us become careful and cautious about our habits and behavior." For more information, the contact address and telephone numbers of Community Based

BAR CHART 5: Clients' Perspectives Regarding Billboard Placement



Rehabilitation (CBR) Bhaktapur and Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) have been included in the billboard. The main target group of this particular billboard is the workers of the industrial estate and passersby. The location of the billboard is appropriate, keeping in mind the target group. But, as mentioned earlier, the message needs to be replaced by others after some time. Bar Chart 5 shows the FGD participants' preferences for billboard placement.

6.2 Clients' Perception of Billboards

The various FGDs had different opinions about the impact of billboards. The PLHAs felt that it would be more effective if an actual person having HIV/AIDS were portrayed instead of actors. Others believed that the actors attract attention since they are well known. Some mentioned that the billboard sent the wrong message to people in the rural areas since they believed that the person on the billboard had AIDS. The consensus among all the groups, however, was that the billboard does initially catch the initial attention of the people, but that it should be changed after some time. They were also of the view that as billboards cannot contain detailed messages, they should be complemented by other methods. They complained that the billboards did not have any contact address for more information.

6.2.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations for more effective use of the billboards were suggested:

- The picture and the messages on the billboards should be changed after some time (preferably every six months) because they become monotonous.
- In designing the messages, appropriate pre-testing should be done with the target groups, including PLHAs.
- Billboards should be more pictorial and speak for themselves rather than containing too much text.
- Billboards with long messages should be placed in places such as bus parks, places where people rest, so that there is time to read and comprehend the messages.
- Billboards that shine at night should not be located at turnings or at places where there is heavy traffic, as this distracts drivers.

6.2.2 Gaps Perceived

- The picture and the messages in the billboards are retained for too long, rendering them monotonous.
- Billboards with long messages are placed at inappropriate places where it is difficult for the target population to read all the content.
- Billboards that shine at night, located at places where there is heavy traffic, distract drivers.



Analysis of Focus Groups' Media Perspectives

7

CHAPTER

The review conducted FGDs to solicit information on people's perceptions and attitudes toward mass media messages on HIV/AIDS. Table 8 shows the characteristics of the participants of the eight focus groups.

7.1 Findings

7.1.1 Exposure to Mass Media

Access to media varied according to the category of the study group. As sources of information and entertainment, broadcast media, especially television, were reported as the most popular media by all categories. However, people working in the transport

sector and students residing in hostels had limited opportunity to watch TV. Students in hostels had access only to newspapers and radio. Discussion with youth, parents, and NGO representatives indicated that radio was the most common medium in rural areas. Use of internet and email as a source of information appeared to be rising among young urban people. Youth and parents also identified the telephone as a source of information.

NGO representatives indicated that interpersonal communication, such as interaction with outreach workers, was a useful and effective way of communicating

TABLE 8 Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

Category	No. of participants	Sex	Age	Education	Remarks
Youths	10	Male=3 Female=7	18-22	Literate (School Leaving Certificate and above)	Some employed, some students
Parents and guardians	12	Male=5 Female=7	30-71	Literate and illiterate	Majority literate
Sex workers	8	Female	25-41	Literate and illiterate	Majority literate
Clients of FSWs	12	Male	21-42	Literate and illiterate	Majority married
MSM	12	Male	21-42	Literate	Majority identified themselves as meta
Female PLHAs	8	Female	16-40	Literate and illiterate	Only one illiterate
Male PLHAs	7	Male	27-35	Literate	
NGOs working on HIV/AIDS	9	Male=3 Female=6	-	Literate	

and educating marginalized groups such as street children, FSWs, and clients of FSWs. These groups also highlighted the importance of this approach. Meetings, discussions, and training were listed as important sources of information as well.

The habit of reading newspapers or magazines is limited to a small segment of literate people irrespective of their sociodemographic attributes. Most people read newspapers or magazines at their workplaces; some either buy or borrow from their neighbors.

It is worth noting that although all the groups were familiar with billboards, in most instances these were indicated as a source of information only after probing.

7.1.2 Media Preferences

Given the availability and opportunity to access specific media, individual preferences determined which were chosen. If all forms of media were available, most people preferred TV, and only a few chose radio or newspaper. While news was apparently a commonly watched program on TV, preferences for other programs varied according to the characteristics of the viewers. Educated people, especially men, liked to watch news analysis or political discussions. Women, especially school graduates, chose teleserials and folk music such as dohori. Youths selected TV because it provides visual entertainment and a familiarity with a number of subjects in a short period. They preferred to watch musical programs, movies, sports, teleserials, and entertainment.

The discussions indicated that, given a choice of broadcast media, there are fewer radio listeners. But, when people do tune in to radio, they want to listen to news, songs, comedy, interviews, and religious programs. Contrary to expectations, not only parents but also young people listen to religious and spiritual programs on radio. Participants explained that they listen to the radio while working or studying.

Men working in the transport sector mentioned that radio is played throughout the day at their workshops. Since people working as drivers, conductors, or helpers spend most of the time in vehicles, they either tune to the radio or play audio cassettes. While traveling, they have limited opportunities to watch TV, for example, at rest stops.

Exposure to print media appeared to be lower than that of broadcast media in all categories of people. The review indicated that media preferences depended upon the literacy level of the consumers. Those who were more educated chose newspapers or magazines in order to read current issues in greater detail. Most of the FSWs reportedly did not read any newspapers. This is not surprising, however, as a large proportion are illiterate. Those who did read usually looked for horoscopes and classified ads. The meta MSM preferred fashion and beauty tips.

7.1.3 Media Timing

In general, all categories of people watched TV in the evening, between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. Many employed or working people watched TV after 9 p.m. However, those who

are relatively free watched TV from early evening, 6-7 p.m. or even during the daytime. Most people start watching TV with the 8 p.m. news on NTV.

"Some watch TV in the evening from 6 or 7 p.m. Working youth watch after 9 p.m. But the nature of program and the choice of time to watch TV differ between girls and boys. Boys are free to watch TV all the time, but girls sometimes need to cook, so they watch TV after 9 p.m. and on holidays."
[Youth]

The timing for tuning in to the radio depended on individual preference. People interested in religious or spiritual topics tuned in early in the morning. Many who listen to music change frequencies often during the day searching for the music of their choice.

No preference regarding the timing of reading newspapers was mentioned by any category of participants. However, the discussions indicated that people tended to read newspapers in the morning.

The participants mentioned that many billboards are installed at crossings and roadsides in Kathmandu and along the highway. They added that people only take a look at the billboards when they stop at the crossings or when they are stuck in a traffic jam.

"Billboards are scanned only when there is a traffic jam." [Youth]

"No one stops to read messages on the billboards." [Clients of FSWs].

7.1.4 Sources of Information on HIV/AIDS

The participants mentioned that many people in their communities have heard of HIV/AIDS through more than one media. The most common sources of information on HIV/AIDS for various categories of people in the urban areas of Kathmandu valley seems to be radio and TV as opposed to interpersonal communication or targeted educational interventions, such as peers or NGO training. Newspaper columns on sexuality (for example, "Yaun Jigyasa" of Spathik) were indicated as popular sources of detailed information on HIV/AIDS.

Nonetheless, targeted educational interventions were thought to be more important than mass media in providing detailed and practical information on HIV/AIDS. The participants emphasized that they had learned about HIV/AIDS in greater detail only after they had had contact with outreach workers and peer communicators, had participated in discussions and training sessions, and had obtained pamphlets and posters describing HIV/AIDS.

7.1.5 Perception of Media Messages on HIV/AIDS

Although all FGDs identified many media messages on HIV/AIDS to be informative, educational, and presentable, they often began their remarks by pointing out limitations, controversies, and misconceptions inherent within these messages.

Effective Media Strategies. People are attracted to dramatized stories such as telefilms, radio drama, true stories, and

interactive programs such as talk shows and phone-in programs. The participants stated that presentations based on reality tend to be influential. Programs that left an impact on the participants included the "Raat" and "Aasha" telefilms and Rajiv Kafle's talk program. Some of the terms used in the messages drew attention.

"Condom bata suraksha yon swasthya ko rakshya." ("This message catches our attention. Especially the terms suraksha [protection] and rakshya [safety].") [Clients of FSWs]

Inappropriate Media Ads. Some media messages were embarrassing from a cultural perspective. A commonly cited example was the advertisement "Jhilke dai chha chain condom..." ("Brother, do you have a condom..."). As explained by the participants, use of dai (brother) is inappropriate in a culture where sexual relations between brother and sister are prohibited.

Some of the FSWs felt that it is not shameful to show messages on condom use on TV, as this is important information. They argued that one should not feel ashamed when the educational value is high. But, a few participants said that it would be embarrassing to watch the ad with family members.

Negative or Stigmatizing Terms. Both male and female PLHAs identified more negative terms than any other group. Some messages considered appropriate or normal by the general population are likely to be offensive from the perspective of PLHAs.

They explained that the term pranghatak (deadly) scares people, and the terms pidit (victim) and maaya (love) underestimates the potential and capabilities of HIV-infected people.

"HIV/AIDS being referred to as pranghatak rog (fatal disease) is a negative and discriminatory message. This message implies that people with HIV and AIDS will die right away. This kind of message brings negative feelings among the infected and unwillingness among parents to spend money for their treatment." [Male PLHA]

"AIDS lageko lai maya garau is another example of a negative message. Instead of maya (love) they could have used the word 'support.' Consultation with PLHAs is not done before publishing such messages. They should be involved in developing messages." [Male PLHA]

"Instead of saying maya garau, the message should have said bhed bhav nagarau (let us not discriminate)." [Female PLHA]

Clients of FSWs, especially those working as drivers, identified the messages comparing spare parts with condoms as a negative portrayal of drivers and transport workers.

"The advertisement suggesting that you keep a spare condom as equivalent to keeping a spare tire is uncomfortable. It defames drivers." [Clients of FSWs]

Incomplete, Confusing, and Misleading Messages. The FGDs indicated that perceptions on the wholeness and clarity of a particular message are not the same for all

and largely depend on individual characteristics or concerns. Although there were differences of opinion regarding the importance of using celebrities in disseminating messages on HIV/AIDS, the messages themselves were often perceived to be confusing. For example, some participants considered the messages under "Unity Against AIDS" as appropriate while others thought them to be incomplete and confusing. According to some, these messages have given the impression, especially to the illiterate, that the celebrity in the ad was infected with HIV/AIDS.

"The hoarding board of AIDS Biruddha Ekta is very popular. But this message has created a misconception as many people thought that the person on the board had AIDS. Some uneducated people also thought that it was a movie advertisement as it featured different actors and actresses." [Youth]

Contrary to other groups, MSM indicated the incompleteness of most of the current messages, saying that only heterosexual relations are addressed and not the concerns of MSM. An MSM participant explained that many of their friends, having seen these messages, think that HIV is only transmitted through heterosexual relations.

"It [ajai dekhi kura garau ('Let's start talking from today')] carries an incomplete message. Similarly, the No. One Condom ad is also misleading as it conveys the idea that touching can transmit AIDS and that AIDS is transmitted only through bisexual relations, not through homosexual relations." [MSM]

Youth considered animated ads of condoms as being effective, whereas the FSWs thought that the message on condom use was incomplete because viewers are only told to use condoms but not how to use them.

"TV and other media do not show how to use condoms. Media only stresses on the use of condom but does not illustrate how it should be used." [FSW]

7.1.6 Parent-Adolescent Communication

Although it is difficult to generalize findings about parent-adolescent communication on HIV/AIDS, discussions with the two groups indicated that communication between parents and adolescents on these topics rarely take place. Parents think that their children are more educated and have become aware of HIV/AIDS through media messages and school. Fathers only warn their sons when they are going to other countries. Some mothers talk about HIV/AIDS with their daughters but not with their sons. However, as the daughters feel uncomfortable interacting with their mothers, they only listen.

The young people also confirmed that they normally avoid talking about AIDS with their parents. Sons avoid watching HIV topics when they are sitting with their parents. A few in the youth group said that they do not talk about AIDS since it is not a matter of concern to them.

"We do not talk about it [AIDS] in the family. But we talk about it sometimes with our friends and siblings. We talk about drugs with parents but only indirectly about AIDS." [Youth]

7.1.7 Effectiveness of Billboards

Participants felt that some billboards initially attracted attention and left a positive impact. However, they also felt that some of the messages were incomplete, difficult to understand and also culturally inappropriate. They said the messages also failed to adequately address specific issues and concerns of vulnerable groups such as MSM and PLHAs. Some terms used with HIV/AIDS messages were perceived by the PLHAs as contributing to increased misconceptions and stigma in the family and in society. They felt that pre-testing HIV/AIDS billboard messages were necessary.

The majority felt that roadside billboards should display only short messages that can be easily read and understood. Only those placed where people spend a lot of time, like parks and hospitals, should contain detailed messages. People associated with the transport business suggested that the billboards should not be placed at turnings, as it is distracting to the drivers and may cause accidents. Food and rest stops were considered ideal. The participants also felt that keeping a billboard for a long time in the same place tended to be monotonous, saying that the same messages and billboards should not be retained for more than six months.

The most common sources of information on HIV/AIDS for different categories of FGDs seemed to be radio, TV, and billboards. Nonetheless, targeted educational interventions were perceived to be more important in providing detailed and practical information on HIV/AIDS.

7.1.8 Utility and Influence of Media Messages

The participants generally agreed that the media messages on HIV/AIDS have contributed to raising awareness of the disease. NGO representatives, especially, spoke at length of the utility and influence of media messages on HIV/AIDS. The discussions indicated that the utility and influence of media messages on HIV/AIDS varied according to the characteristics of the people. Although many messages are difficult for illiterate people to comprehend, they can nevertheless be good reference points to begin discussion with target groups during outreach educational activities. NGO representatives said the messages have aided outreach workers in talking with target groups. They added that the outreach workers or peer communicators use the media messages as a reference for talking in greater detail about the infection than is normally possible through the media.

"Media messages should not be seen in isolation. The messages are okay for initiating communication; outreach workers should give additional information. One should not depend on media for everything. Media just initiates. Then the outreach workers start talking in detail."
[NGO representatives]

An FSW said she used to laugh at the message "condom lagaun, AIDS bhagaun." But, when she heard about AIDS in greater detail from an NGO educating FSWs, she began to understand its meaning. Parents felt that the messages were effective for their children.

"Messages [on HIV] are effective for children since they can learn from them and be aware about HIV before it is too late. Teleserial is most effective for youths between the ages of 13 to 20 who are vulnerable to being trafficked." [Parent]

Although the impact of media on raising awareness was commonly acknowledged during all the FGDs, its impact on behavior change was perceived to be limited. This was clearly reflected during the discussions with FSWs and the clients of FSWs. Clients of FSWs mentioned that some of their friends were aware of HIV/AIDS but avoided using condoms. The FSWs also reported that some of their friends did not insist on using condoms if clients paid a good amount of money.

"People who have clear knowledge of AIDS also do not use condom. They think it reduces pleasure." [Clients of FSWs]

7.2 Suggestions

7.2.1 FGD Suggestions

The participants made suggestions to improve the existing messages and for developing new messages. They can be summarized as follows:

- Develop messages based on reality or real life situations.
- Air dramatized stories more frequently.
- Insert HIV/AIDS-related themes into established popular programs.
- Organize interactive programs involving experts and persons from target groups, such as PLHAs.
- Sensitize media workers and journalists to HIV/AIDS and at-risk groups.

Recommendations and suggestions that emerged during the discussions with specific groups were as follows:

Youth

- Collect questions from the audience and give answers through FM radio stations.
- Invite PLHAs to speak about HIV/AIDS.
- Integrate HIV messages in popular media programs (e.g., mero geet mero sandesh, jindagi ka pana).
- Produce popular teleserial and shows touching upon AIDS issues.

Parents

- Insert ads between teleserials and dohari geet.
- Avoid AIDS advertisements with religious programs.

FSWs

- Develop more visual messages, which are more effective than soon-forgotten radio messages.
- Use simple language.
- Develop radio dramas.
- Place billboards at bus stations and make them more illustrative.

Clients of FSWs

- Show dramas, telefilms, and serials on TV.
- Organize film shows on HIV in cinema halls.

Female PLHAs

- Feature spousal communication on HIV/AIDS.
- Regularly update information on HIV/AIDS.
- Advocate reduction in the cost of medicine.

- Promote HIV/AIDS-related dohari geet.
- Create radio dramas.
- Televisе case studies based on real stories about HIV/AIDS.
- Mobilize PLHAs.

MSM

- Develop messages that address the concerns of the vulnerable MSM community.
- Talk about non-vaginal sex.
- Publish regular columns on HIV/AIDS in magazines.
- Display ads before film showings at cinema halls.
- Develop messages with music.
- Sensitize journalists.

7.2.2 Suggestions on Broadcasting Times for HIV/AIDS Messages

- Air HIV/AIDS messages or programs on TV between 8 and 10 p.m.
- Air TV programs at different times, daytime and evening.
- Broadcast radio messages throughout the day.
- Update messages frequently.

7.2.3 Suggestions about Billboards

- Display short messages where people pass by quickly.
- Display detailed messages where people have time to read (e.g., parks).
- Update messages frequently.
- Replace the messages and move the billboards frequently.
- Place in locations that are not distracting to drivers.



Conclusion and Recommendations

8

CHAPTER

The Nepali media seems to be playing hide-and-seek with the issue of HIV/AIDS. There are times when, for more than a month, the media is flooded with reports on HIV/AIDS; then there is a longer period when the media is silent. The dominant reason for HIV/AIDS coverage seems to be based on sponsorships and on public campaigns organized to mark international events, rather than the media organizations' own drive to address the epidemic.

Though the coverage on HIV/AIDS issues has increased considerably over the years, the number of column space given to the issue in major newspapers might not be proportional to the space given to the magnitude of the problem. Reports from foreign media and from those with firsthand information of how HIV/AIDS has wreaked havoc across the globe should be enough to awaken the collective conscience of the Nepali media. Yet, even as more communities fall victim to the epidemic, and even as NGOs wage a feeble battle against mammoth indifference, the media continues its game of hide-and-seek.

It is true that the media must cover many issues other than HIV/AIDS, but what the media needs to understand is that HIV/AIDS is not just one of many health issues. It is not an epidemiological problem alone but a social problem as well. It is a development issue because it is tied to the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of the people. This is what is missing in the Nepali media. The debate about the HIV-development link should advocate passionately for a wider understanding of the issues and for generating more adequate responses. Coverage of HIV and development should be integrated into mainstream issues, not confined to the margins of journalism. Sensitizing the community is not enough. Generating serious responses is imperative. There is considerable commitment in the media, and this should be built upon.

Another major lapse is that only a very limited number of reports have addressed gender and societal vulnerabilities. Reports on the social and economic status of women, aimed at developing educational opportunities and services for them, sharing knowledge with them, and influencing decisionmaking on reproductive health

policy are needed. Another challenge is to improve the understanding of how gender influences men's knowledge, attitudes, and sexual behavior to design prevention programs that more effectively address gender-related factors that influence personal and societal vulnerabilities to HIV.

Tackling the stigma and discrimination that PLHAs face on a daily basis is an important role for the media. There is a need to bring HIV-positive people into an advocacy role. The sensitivity that surrounds HIV/AIDS needs to be promoted in the media tastefully so that it does not offend. In a country with a low level of literacy, the solution could be a greater focus on infotainment, such as dramas, to better reach the less literate population.

Media managers will not give regular coverage to HIV issues unless there is reader interest. Poorly displayed articles on HIV tucked away in the inside pages of a newspaper will not generate the level of interest needed. The media must find innovative and interesting ways to disseminate information that is both entertaining and informative from the readers', viewers', and listeners' points of view. Most development organizations have not been successful in producing creative, effective programs that get the desired messages across. It would be worthwhile to explore how media professionals and organizations can better work together.

New initiatives require building the media's capacity to more effectively report on HIV/AIDS. While the role of a journalist in influencing public knowledge and

opinion on the exigencies of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is well recognized, the need for strong commitment of media organizations at the policy/editorial level is an important consideration. In media advocacy, informed decisions made at the level of management, editor, or even senior writers tend to lead to more meaningful, long-lasting, and consistent content.

The media can do much harm by poor reporting; however, it is capable of making much more of an impact through positive and sensitive reporting. Merely sensitizing the media is not the answer. Training for those working in the field of HIV/AIDS—medical professionals, government officials, and others—to help them reach out effectively to the media and get their messages across is vital. The need to understand the media and how it functions is one key to a better relationship between the media and those working on HIV/AIDS.

Recommendations

To Organizations Working on HIV/AIDS

1. Build good rapport with the media through regular interaction between experts and media practitioners at all levels.
2. Include journalists during field visits to help disseminate authoritative information.
3. Support training and skills-building workshops for journalists on investigative and holistic reporting of HIV/AIDS.
4. Structure workshops so that they are not limited to HIV/AIDS. To better engage the media's attention, broaden the

issue to look at the roots of the crisis including gender and social implications.

5. Involve the media from the formulation stage of all media and communication plans and policies.
6. Encourage and support the production of short teleserials or telefilms, including dissemination plans, to get the message across to a wider audience.
7. Monitor the media on a regular basis for improvements and problems.
8. Encourage and motivate interested and capable journalists by granting fellowships and establishing yearly awards for quality and committed reporting.
9. Support the publication of a monthly feature service on HIV/AIDS issues to promote investigative reports and to ensure consistent coverage throughout the year.
10. Involve journalists from influential weeklies having substantial readership, not just those from daily papers, in all media training and programs.

To Media Decisionmakers and Practitioners

11. There is a plethora of reporting on seminars, conferences, or workshops wherein the major coverage focuses only on what the chief guests say. Reporters should also be encouraged to investigate the views of participants

in these programs and the programs' impact on the intended beneficiaries.

12. Investigative reports are rare. A lack of sociological perspective is also clearly evident in the print media. Reporters should be encouraged to conduct in-depth investigations and analytical reporting.
13. Radio and TV stations should schedule HIV/AIDS programs in their annual calendars to ensure an even distribution of programs.
14. Encourage accurate, insightful, and sustained coverage rather than reporting only during special days and events.
15. Encourage specialization in HIV/AIDS for reporters and programmers.
16. Ensure that the jingles, advertisements, and teleshots are culturally and socially suitable for the intended audience.
17. Many news headlines are sensational without any connection to the content of the story. News editors should ensure that the headline concurs with the content, avoiding sensational headlines that generate alarm.
18. Ensure that news reports and programs respect the rights and sensitivities of the infected and affected.
19. Accommodate perceptions from a cross-section of society to mitigate discrimination and stereotyped thinking pervasive in the society.

ANNEX i

Monitoring Guidelines

Monitoring of HIV/AIDS (Television)

Name of the Program: _____ Topic of the Program: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Language: _____

Story Topics	Target Audience	Objective	Program Length	Program Hour
	PLHAs	To inform		
	Youth	To educate		
	Sex Workers	To motivate		
	Clients of Sex Workers	To change behavior		
	Mass Media Practitioners	For advocacy		
	Medical Practitioners	For policymaking		
	Policymakers			
	Government Officials			
	General Public			
	Others:			
Type of Program	Main Source	Other People Quoted	VISUALS	Manner of Presentation
Documentary	Government	Government	Government Official	Positive
News	Local NGO	NGO	NGO	Negative
Talk Show	International NGO	International Organizations (e.g., U.N. bodies)	PLHAs	
Drama/Musical Program	Police	PLHAs	Others:	
Spot Announcement	PLHAs	Social Activist		
Advertisements	Medical Practitioner	Others:		
News Feature Magazine	International Organizations (e.g., U.N. bodies)			
	Others			

Comments: _____

Monitoring of HIV/AIDS (Radio)

Name of the Program: _____ Topic of the Program: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Language: _____

Story Topics	Target Audience	Objective	Program Length	Program Hour
	PLHAs	To inform		
	Youth	To educate		
	Sex Workers	To motivate		
	Clients of Sex Workers	To change behavior		
	Mass Media Practitioners	For advocacy		
	Medical Practitioners	For policymaking		
	Policymakers			
	Government Officials			
	General Public			
	Others:			
Type of Program	Main Source	Other People Quoted		Manner of Presentation
Documentary	Government	Government		Positive
News	Local NGO	NGO		Negative
Talk Show	International NGO	International Organizations (e.g., U.N. bodies)		
Drama/Musical Program	Police	PLHAs		
Spot Announcement	PLHAs	Social Activist		
Advertisements	Medical Practitioner	Others:		
News Feature Magazine	International Organizations (e.g., U.N. bodies)			
	Others			

Comments: _____

Monitoring of HIV/AIDS (Newspapers/Magazine)

Newspaper: _____ Magazine: _____ Date: _____

Headline: _____ Language: _____ Page No: _____

Story Topics	Target Audience	Objective	Story Length	Story Placement
	PLHAs	To inform		Top of page
	Youths	To educate		Page bottom
	Sex Workers	To motivate		Whole page
	Clients of Sex Workers	To change behavior		Main paper
	Mass Media Practitioners	For advocacy		Supplement
	Medical Practitioners	For policymaking		Middle of page
	Policymakers			
	Government Officials			
	General Public			
	Others:			
Type of Story	Main Source	Other People Quoted	Photos	Manner of Presentation
Feature	Government	Government	Government Official	Positive
News	Local NGO	NGO	NGO	Negative
Editorial Letter to Editor	International NGO	International Organizations (e.g., U.N. bodies)	PLHAs	
Regular Column	Police	PLHAs	Others:	
Advertisements	PLHAs	Social Activist		
Anchor News	Medical Practitioner	Others:		
	International Organizations (e.g., U.N. bodies)			
	Others			

Comments: _____

ANNEX ii

Guidelines for Focus Group Discussions

Knowledge, Attitude, and Perception of Mass Media Messages on HIV/AIDS

Introduction

[For Moderator: Please introduce yourself and your colleague (note taker) and briefly describe the purpose of the study, nature of the discussion, time required to complete a session, and your roles in the discussion. Request the participants to introduce themselves. Ensure that only those participants who meet the criteria participate in the discussion. Also ensure that everyone is at ease and that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Ensure that the information will be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of the research. Take permission to audio record the discussion.]

Discussion Points

[The discussion need not be confined to the questions presented below. The questions can be rephrased to fit the category of respondents]

1. Exposure to and choice of mass media

- 1.1. What are the types of mass media people of your age (category) know about?
[Probe and list down names of print media, TV channels, radio (including FM), and hoarding boards. Please note down what media do they usually seek out.]
- 1.2. What mass media do you like most? Why?
[Probe the types of programs, contents preferred, along with their reasons.]
- 1.3. What mass media do you like the least? Why?
[Probe the types of programs, content, along with their reasons.]
- 1.4. How often do people of your age (category) watch TV? What are the hours and times you usually watch TV? What are the programs you watch?
- 1.5. How often do you listen to radio/FM? What are the hours and times people of your age (category) usually listen to radio/FM? What are the radio programs you listen to?

2. Awareness of HIV/AIDS-related messages

- 2.1. In your opinion, how do people of your age (category) obtain information about HIV/AIDS? What are the sources of information on HIV/AIDS?
[Probe and note down what mass media messages are mentioned.]
- 2.2. What are the messages on HIV/AIDS you know about?
[Probe and list down by category of media: print, TV, radio/FM, hoarding boards.]

3. Perception of the content of HIV/AIDS media messages

- 3.1. [Based on the messages mentioned above, ask:] Whom do you think the message [specify] is targeting? [Probe: for whom are they aired/printed/displayed. Ask about specific messages one by one.]
- 3.2. In your opinion, what do these messages tell you?
[Note: Be as specific as required.]
- 3.3. Are there any messages on HIV/AIDS that are difficult for other people of your age (category) to understand? What makes those messages difficult?
- 3.4. What messages on HIV/AIDS engage the attention of people of your age (category)?
- 3.5. What messages on HIV/AIDS make a positive impression? What messages on HIV/AIDS do people like you feel comfortable watching/reading/hearing?
- 3.6. What messages on HIV/AIDS make a negative impression? What messages on HIV/AIDS do people like you feel uncomfortable watching/reading/hearing? Are there any specific circumstances in which you feel uncomfortable watching/reading/hearing those messages?
- 3.7. In your opinion, do the messages on HIV/AIDS influence people? Please give an example, if any. [Probe by presenting a case such as AIDS baare aajai dekhi kura garaun.]

4. Choices and suggestions

- 4.1. How do people of your age (category) wish to get information about HIV/AIDS? How should messages on HIV/AIDS be given?
[Probe for different types of media.]
- 4.2. What would be the preferred time for people of your age (category) to watch messages on HIV/AIDS? [Note: Encourage the participants to rank the timing.]
- 4.3. What would be the most preferred time for people like you to listen to messages on HIV/AIDS? [Note: Encourage the participants to rank the timing.]

[Thank the participants for their participation. End the session.]

ANNEX iii**Newspapers Reviewed****Kathmandu**

1. Annapurna Post
2. Gorkhapatra
3. Himalaya Times
4. Kantipur
5. Kathmandu Post (English)
6. Nepal Samacharpatra
7. Rajdhani
8. Space Time
9. Space Time Today (English)
10. The Himalayan Times (English)
11. The Rising Nepal (English)

Sunsari

1. Action Times Weekly
2. Akhbar Weekly
3. Bigyapan Daily
4. Blast Times Daily
5. Dharan Weekly
6. Saptakoshi Weekly
7. Tapaiko Akhbar Weekly
8. Today Nepal
9. Vijaypur Weekly

Parsa (Birgunj)

1. Ankush Daily
2. Darpan Weekly
3. Faisala Weekly
4. Milansar Weekly
5. Parsa Express Weekly
6. Prateek Daily

7. Rautahat Awaz
8. Sachetna Weekly
9. Sarthak Weekly
10. Satya Samacharpatra Weekly
11. Simana Weekly

Nepalgunj

1. AIDS Weekly
2. Janamat Bi-weekly
3. Karnali Sandesh Weekly
4. Kiran Weekly
5. Madhya Paschim Daily
6. Nepali Express Daily
7. Samay Adhikar Weekly
8. Today Nepal Weekly
9. Today Samachar
10. Weekly Kohalpur

Surkhet

1. Suseli Weekly

Kailali

1. Seti Samachar
2. Sudoor Sandesh
3. Hamro Seti (Weekly)
4. Yugnayak
5. Yugyan (Weekly)
6. Nava Paricharcha Weeklyimplications.

ANNEX iv

Coverage of HIV/AIDS Issues in Daily Newspapers

Published in Kathmandu

Published in Kathmandu			
Name of Paper	Nov. 15-Dec. 14, 2002	May 2003	June 2003
Annapurna Post	3	10	4
Gorkhapatra	10	2	5
Himalaya Times	8	6	4
Kantipur	3	3	1
Kathmandu Post (English)	13	10	6
Nepal Samacharpatra	6	6	3
Rajdhani	13	6	8
Space Time	17	10	6
Space Time Daily (English)	12	-----	-----
The Himalayan Times (English)	12	10	-----
The Rising Nepal (English)	8	5	9
Total Number	105	68	46

Note: Space Time Daily discontinued its publication from April 2003; therefore, it is not reflected in the months of May and June.

Coverage of HIV/AIDS issues in the District Newspapers

Sunsari			
Name of Paper	Nov. 15-Dec. 14, 2002	May 2003	June 2003
Action Times Weekly	2	-----	-----
Akhabar Weekly	1	-----	-----
Bigyapan Daily	-----	5	2
Blast Times Daily	7	5	-----
Dharan Weekly	1	-----	-----
Saptakoshi Weekly	1	-----	-----
Tapaiko Akhabar Weekly	1	-----	-----
Today Nepal	-----	1	-----
Vijaypur Weekly	1	1	3
Total Number	14	12	5

Parsa (Birgunj)			
Name of Paper	Nov. 15-Dec. 14, 2002	May 2003	June 2003
Ankush Daily	5	3	1
Darpan Weekly	-----	-----	-----
Faisala Weekly	-----	-----	-----
Milansar Weekly	1	-----	-----
Parsa Express Weekly	-----	-----	1
Prateek Weekly	4	3	-----
Rautahat Awaz	1	-----	-----
Sachetana Weekly	1	-----	-----
Sarthak Weekly	1	-----	-----
Satya Samacharpatra Weekly	1	-----	-----
Simana Weekly	-----	1	-----
Total Number	14	7	2

Nepalgunj			
Name of Paper	Nov. 15-Dec. 14, 2002	May 2003	June 2003
AIDS Weekly	13	-----	-----
Janamat Bi-weekly	-----	-----	1
Karnali Sandesh Weekly	-----	-----	1
Kiran Weekly	-----	-----	1
Madhya Paschim Daily	-----	5	3
Nepali Express Daily	-----	1	5
Samay Adhikar Weekly	1	1	-----
Today Nepal Weekly	-----	1	1
Today Samachar	-----	1	-----
Weekly Kohalpur	1	-----	-----
Total Number	15	9	12

Surkhet			
Name of Paper	Nov. 15-Dec. 14, 2002	May 2003	June 2003
Local newspapers	4	-----	-----
Total Number	4	-----	-----

Kailali			
Name of Paper	Nov. 15-Dec. 14, 2002	May 2003	June 2003
Local newspapers	1	-----	-----
Total Number	1	-----	-----

ANNEX V

Story Placement

Kathmandu	Front page	Last Page	Middle page
Nov. 15–Dec. 14, 2002	7	3	95
May 2003	2	4	62
June 2003	1	2	43
Total	10	9	200

Sunsari	Front page	Last Page	Middle page
Nov. 15–Dec. 14, 2002	9	—	5
May 2003	8	1	3
June 2003	3	—	2
Total	20	1	10

Parsa	Front page	Last Page	Middle page
Nov. 15–Dec. 14, 2002	3	—	11
May 2003	1	—	6
June 2003	1	—	1
Total	5	—	18

Nepalgunj	Front page	Last Page	Middle page
Nov. 15–Dec. 14, 2002	3		12
May 2003	3		4
June 2003	5	1	5
Total	11	1	21

"Media Review: Analysis of Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Nepal" is the first work of its type in Nepal. The review assesses the general trend of coverage on HIV/AIDS issues in the Nepali media, particularly print, radio and television. The review covers the period from November 15 to December 14, 2002 and May to June 2003. The review reveals the media has played a considerably important role in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS. There has been an increase in the coverage of HIV/AIDS issues; however, the findings also reveal the need for an increased level of sensitivity toward the human rights of infected and affected people in media messages. New initiatives are required to build the media's capacity to effectively report on HIV/AIDS. We hope this review will prove a useful tool in developing appropriate interventions to improve media coverage towards reducing HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination and protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups.