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ABSTRACT

AIDS has been reported as an ailment with no cure. At present, it continues to be so. Having been reported from all countries of the world, its conversion from an epidemic to a pandemic happened within a few years. The HIV was first detected in 1981 in a group of homosexual men in United States of America. In India, HIV was first reported in 1986. Since then, the virus never regressed but has continuously leaped forward to spread to all parts of the country.

The present study, with a special focus on children makes an attempt to probe into the dimensions of HIV and AIDS and its impact on children in the afflicted families. It aims to look into the position of children growing up in HIV positive families (where one or both parent/s is/are HIV positive), who are gullible and experience the difficulties while growing up. The study has specifically looked into the direct and indirect effects on children. The effects range from the psychological impact of losing one parent to less obvious impact of reduced access to quality education and health service due to the death of the main earning member. It has also tried to understand the impact of parental status on recreation and social interactions of the child and barriers encountered by the parents in the overall development of

the child. The situation of children in such families is definitely grim given that their development in such restrained circumstances is far from normal.

The study brings out that the impact of HIV on all family members is both immense and disquieting. When attention is paid to children growing up in HIV and AIDS afflicted families, the pandemic has curbed their opportunities and capacities to develop into adults in a somewhat patterned way. In fact, in several ways adulthood has come to them earlier than it would have otherwise. Within their households, they face several difficulties and challenges. The presence of an illness, such as HIV, places several limitations upon these families. The increasing financial expenditures against diminishing incomes and the insecurity about future take a heavy toll on them. The stressful environment at home compromises their nutritional, educational, health, emotional and social needs. Also, many of them see the death of one of their parents early in life and probably live with an anxiety and fear of losing the other parent too.

Thus the research recommends that in the process of assisting children affected by HIV and AIDS, the nature of efforts must essentially be multi-sectoral and above all require a strategic partnership of like minded people. Keeping in mind the findings of the study, the recommendations have been grouped into three main categories namely, Individual/ Family level, Organization level and Programme/ Policy level.