

Kaushalya was never HIV positive

HIV-AIDS: Medical-terrorism unbound

-Destroy people and societies, while the Big-pharma & Medica ring the cash register-

Kaushalya never had HIV. She was never tested. But doctors and the media declared her and her daughter HIV positive. Even the district administration, calling on her, declared the 'family' HIV positive. This is a tale of insensitivity, almost criminal behaviour of people in positions of authority without any sense of responsibility, forget about humanism.

Kaushalya's husband Ranbir, 33 years old, died of TB. He was a bus driver in Delhi. Had contracted TB, which is not unusual in Delhi. Most certainly he discontinued the treatment, leading to relapse, which is also not infrequent, despite free treatment provided in government TB hospitals. Ranbir was admitted to Rohtak medical College (RMC) in serious condition on 24 April, 1997 with complaints of weight loss, TB, high fever. He was clinically diagnosed as an AIDS case.

Truck Driver+TB+weight loss=Confirmed AIDS case, QED

Truck driver? Yes, his occupation was entered as truck driver, when he was actually a bus driver. But that is another huge story.

Next day (25th April) he was discharged from the hospital and expired on 26th April. On 16th May 1997, the Medical Director of RMC 'declared' that Ranbir's widow and youngest child were also HIV positive.



Widowed Kaushalya with her daughter in 1997. Today the tall, healthy lady is happily married and has given birth to her third daughter.

The Art of Clinical Diagnosis, which is the real and permanent basis of our profession, remains untouched until our days. A good physician should be able to reach the correct diagnosis - or elaborate some diagnostic hypothesis - in 70 to 80% of cases, with a simple (good) clinical consultation, which consists of a complete medical history and accurate physical examination. Further investigation is indicated to *confirm* our diagnosis, not to make it. We are not expected to treat the exam: first comes the patient standing in front of us.

<http://www.medstudents.com.br/clindi/clindi.htm/>

'The Americanization of the Indian healthcare system has put fear of the devil in the minds of the patients. And the process has turned our doctors into devils. Each patient is now measured in terms of potential cash value to the hospital and to the pharmaceutical industry.' Author

Kaushalya traumatized

Without any confirmatory tests, doctors wrote on Kaushalya's OPD card that she was HIV positive and revealed the case details to the District Administration and the media. At the time Kaushalya was 'diagnosed' as HIV positive, she was pregnant. Doctors advised her medical termination of pregnancy (MTP), an advice she followed. Kaushalya's daughters were refused admission to a local Government school. Ranbir's brother lost his job as a driver because the 'family was HIV positive.' As words spread around Kaushalya's village Chochi,

people ostracized the family. Her father-in-law, Mr. Mange Ram, a brave soul, continued to support her, giving her strength that all will be right.

The village traumatized

The real drama of HIV-AIDS in the village started 8th May onward, following 13th day of mourning Ranbir's death. On 11th May the newspaper quoting medical sources reported that Ranbir had died of AIDS and that 80 persons in Chochi village might be AIDS cases.

“Before coming to the hospital he was treated by the village ‘doctor’ who used unsterilised needles. It was feared that the virus could have been passed on to others who came to the ‘doctor’ for treatment. The health department, as well as doctors of the Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Medical Centre, a private medical centre, advocated that all villagers undertake the ELISA test to find out who had been infected. The local administration was said to have put the villagers on a ‘watch list’.” (‘Analysis of Press coverage of HIV-AIDS in India, a study jointly commissioned by NACO and UNAIDS, June-September, 1997)

It is alleged that a reporter of Rashtriya Sahara, a Hindi newspaper, masquerading as medical doctor visited the village and spread the word that the local, unqualified, village doctor was using the same needle to give injections and that perhaps the whole village is HIV positive. The village was now in the national media. Scores of journalists swamped the village. One TV channel showed the District Commissioner with Ranbir's children holding medical cards that they were HIV positive.

Chochi gained notoriety overnight. People shunned Chochis. Marriages arranged with men and women of Chochi village were annulled. Neighbouring villages stopped social interaction. Even buses plying via the village refused to stop at Chochi. In turn, the villagers ostracized Kaushalya, her children, Mange Ram and every one in the household.

Role of the District Administration (DA) and the civil society

On 13th May, the DA convened a meeting of district medical officers and RMC. The RMC conducted a door-to-door campaign on AIDS awareness. Senior officials openly talked of Kaushalya and her children as AIDS case.

The many client Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) were conspicuous by their absence. Since money was not available for Chochi, nothing moved, except more notoriety.

However, one man, Purshottam Mulloli, went there, restored the respectability of Kaushalya and exposed the frauds on her family and relations. Initially he had to face the wrath of the traumatized villagers who thought he was yet another reporter out to further demonize them. Gradually he gained their confidence, after having spent months just talking to Mange Ram, having a cup of tea in the household, and sharing their pain. Then the villagers opened up and narrated the story of how they had been hounded by the media, the administration and the health officials.

Role of the mass media

During the month of May, the media coverage had acutely embarrassed Kaushalya and the villagers of Chochi. Purushottam invited the villagers to meet the press and in June they met the press in Delhi, barely 65 kilometres away. The press in fact heard the story of the

villagers and rectified its mistake by giving further coverage in June. The media in India even now, by and large, is free as compared to the western mainstream media. But the damage had been done.

Role of NACO and UNAIDS

NACO and UNAIDS commissioned a joint study to ‘probe the role’ of mainstream media. The study, conducted by Shree Venkatram of Unnati Features, cited above, very cleverly implies that the June reporting of press conference of the villagers with the press in Delhi was a sort of misreporting. Purushottam’s comments were:

‘Presenting the Chochi events in jumbled sequence, the study distorts the impact of the events by mentioning as positive aspects of media coverage, events that happened in May. Totally ignoring the **negative aspects** of media coverage in May in which the village was declared ‘AIDS affected’ by the authorities, villagers identified by name and photographs by media reports, which led to their social ostracism;’ and ‘The study totally ignores the **positive aspects** of the media coverage in the month of June, which drew the attention of the society at large and the concerned authorities to the unfair treatment meted out to the villagers, and helped bring the villagers out of their isolation, by giving them an opportunity to air their grievances at a press conference...’

In fact, Purushottam says that the study ‘identifies the media coverage of the press conference in Delhi as the cause of the ostracism faced by the villagers, holding him responsible and he wrote to the head of the UNAIDS that ‘reports after the press conference reveal a media much more sensitive to the plight of the villagers, the unnecessary stigmatization, ostracism and loss of human rights they were subjected to.’ (Letter to Gordon Alexander, Head of UNAIDS in India, 20th November, 1998)

The two daughters of Kaushalya were married off. They lead a perfectly healthy life, never mind the photo session of the head of district administration called DC (whether it stands for the District of Cruelty, I don’t know).

What is going on?

Although it is ten years since the events of Chochi, not much has changed in terms of attitude of the medical establishment towards HIV. Doctors shun HIV cases as if they were the walking plague. Some questionable methods of testing are employed that have been discredited already. One TV reporter, when asked as to how he could determine that Kaushalya tested positive responded that ‘reports suggest she has 70% chances of being HIV positive!’

NACO continues to parrot the scourge of HIV-AIDS. Each year since 1998, NACO has brought out estimates of HIV positive cases and ‘the 2006 estimates suggest national adult HIV prevalence in India is approximately 0.36 percent, amounting to between 2 and 3.1 million people. If an average figure is taken, this comes to 2.5 million people living with HIV and AIDS; almost 50 percent of the previous estimate of 5.2 million.’

(http://www.nacoonline.org/Quick_Links/HIV_Data/)

Almost 50% of the previous estimate?

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, conducts National Family Health Surveys (NFHS). In 2005, the third round of NFHS, a five-yearly event, was conducted. The Ministry normally designates International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) as the nodal agency to supervise research agencies with training, data collection and analysis. This time, the research agencies were asked to submit raw data to be analyzed by a designated agency. Who was the designated agency? Macro International (<http://www.measuredhs.com/hivdata/>). Who was funding NFHS-III? The bid document says, among others, USAID. Why USAID? Search me. A Rs. 700 million study is pittance for a Ministry that gets billions of rupees to ensure the health of citizens of India. And yet, Rs. 700 million, about US\$18 million was required of the USAID by way of aid? How were the agencies selected to this strategic survey? When I asked a series of searching questions, filed under **Right to Information Act**, IIPS refused to divulge any data of concern to me, saying that NFHS was NOT FUNDED BY PUBLIC MONEY. NFHS not funded by public money? Which private party was involved in funding? No answer. Insiders in the Ministry say that USAID had pre-determined who will conduct the study and they selected two agencies of which we know one had no experience in biological testing and another that had been blacklisted by the Ministry itself.

I have written on many fora that findings of NFHS-III should be scrapped, particularly that on HIV-AIDS. It is a fraud on the Indian people.

How many Chochies will be destroyed in the process? How many Kaushalyas will be forced to terminate their pregnancy? How many more will be forced to take anti-retroviral drugs that would actually induce a calamitous destruction of the immune system? How many villages will be ostracized? How much of our society and the fine social fabric of inter-dependence will be consigned to the flame of a fraud such as HIV-AIDS?

The way forward

We need change agents like Purushottam and Anju. Anju joined Purushottam in 1998. Together they chased the monster of HIV-AIDS from Chochi. As human beings, fully aware of the fraud of HIV-AIDS, the fraudulent causal connection between HIV and AIDS, we have a responsibility. And that responsibility includes:

- Educating the media
- Meeting up with the condemned, touching them, talking to them, eating with them, or just having a cup of tea; it makes a huge difference to their lives; when they are reassured that HIV does not mean a death sentence, it will change you as a human being, it will transport them from being 'condemned' to a 'normal' human being, and their blessing will be our redemption;
- Telling doctors to read and know the facts, to educate themselves to ensure that they don't send the 'message of death' to people wronged at all stages of the HIV-AIDS fraud; and
- Organizing quiet meetings with stakeholders, with no fireworks, because fireworks will attract a backlash from cash-rich sociopaths, the 'custodians of chaos,' as the late Kurt Vonnegut said, who have lost their conscience.

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