

**Report of the
Launch of Legislators Forum on HIV/AIDS on the
observation of World AIDS day
3rd of December 2013
Central Hall of Suvarna Soudha in Belgaum**

Jointly organized by
**Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society (KSAPS),
Department of Health and Family welfare services,
National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)
and Red Cross**

Global experience has shown that leadership can make a difference. Political leadership is critical in breaking the silence around HIV/AIDS and for removing barriers of discrimination. Building political consensus on HIV for a unified political response is the need of the hour. Legislator's Forum on HIV & AIDS (LFA) can be instrumental in this regard and can ensure a well coordinated response on key issues. The LFA has a wide scope of advocating with political leadership at all levels on health and HIV issues. Furthermore, being a multi party forum it preserves commitment and focus even in the face of a change in power or political regime.

Legislator's Forum on HIV & AIDS (LFA) is a forum of Legislators, irrespective of party affiliation, who come together with commitment and resolve to act constructively to tackle HIV/AIDS and associated issues. The forum will not only initiate and facilitate framing of appropriate laws and policies to address HIV/AIDS but also address issues in the field by helping create awareness and sensitise masses on HIV & AIDS. The three tiers of elected representatives at District (Zilla Parishad), State (Legislative Assembly and Council) and National level (Parliament) provide distinct entry points for engaging political leaders in specific aspects of HIV prevention, care and mitigation efforts. Engaging elected leader in the AIDS response through Legislators Forum on AIDS (LFA) has proven to be successful in mobilizing effective political leadership and action on AIDS in the high prevalent states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur and Nagaland. As envisaged within the National AIDS Control Program (NACP-III) framework, it has played a supportive role for State Council on AIDS and State AIDS Control Societies in policy advocacy, mainstreaming and preparing groundswell for implementation of HIV programmes at community level.

As a follow up to the Southern Regional Consultation held in Bangalore on 28th and 29th October 2013 it was planned to formally launch the Karnataka's Legislators Forum on HIV & AIDS during the assembly Session in Belgaum on 3rd December 2013. The occasion was also the observation of World AIDS Day in Karnataka. Peoples' Representatives including legislators, elected representatives from the local self government came together to form the LFA that was **launched at Central Hall of Suvanna Soudha in Belgaum during the special session of assembly held in Suvanna Soudha on 3rd of December 2013.**

Program:

On the occasion of World AIDS day observation of 2013 KSAPS, Peoples Representatives and Elected Representatives of local self government and officials converged together on a common platform for the launch of Karnataka **Legislator's Forum on HIV/AIDS**.

KSAPS, Department of Health and Family welfare services, National Rural Health Mission and Red Cross jointly organized a **Convention on Comprehensive Health and HIV/AIDS for the people's representatives and observation of World AIDS Day** at Central Hall of Suvanra Soudha in Belgaum, during the special session of assembly, on 3rd of December 2013.

Health department shared comprehensive information on health related programs and schemes being implemented in Karnataka. Convention was the platform for the people's representatives to understand the complete programs and projects of health department being implemented in the state

Legislative Council Chairman Sri D.H. Shankarmurthy launched the forum at the Suvanra Soudha. Honorable Chief Minister Sri K. Siddaramiah, Convener of Parliamentarians' Forum and Union Minister Sri Oscar Fernandes, Minister for Health and Family Welfare Sri U.T Khadir, Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Sri H.K Patil were present in the programme.

Honorable Chief Minister Sri. Siddaramiah Addressing the gathering and said, "HIV/AIDS can't be eliminated completely but definitely can be controlled and also possible to take measures to control the disease. Comparing to the situation of last two decades, today there is a sharp decline in the spread of HIV/AIDS in Karnataka. "The stigma towards HIV/AIDS infected and affected should go from the society." He suggested legislators to build the self confidence among the HIV/AIDS infected people. HIV/AIDS infected people should imply themselves of avoiding infecting diseases to others and put self constrain to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. He also said that elected representatives to take up the task of spreading the messages on awareness on HIV/AIDS and contribute towards making Karnataka a HIV/AIDS Free State.

World AIDS Day- December 1st

The World AIDS Day is observed on 1 December every year. This is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, extend the solidarity for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have passed on. World AIDS Day is important as it reminds the public and Government that HIV is still rampant – there is still a vital need to raise and increase awareness, fight against taboos and stigma and discrimination and improve education The day is an opportunity for public and private partners to express solidarity, spread awareness about the status of the pandemic and encourage progress in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care in high prevalence countries and around the nation.

Getting to zero:

**Zero new HIV infections,
Zero discrimination,
Zero AIDS related deaths"**

**The theme for the World HIV/AIDS day
declared by
World Health Organization**

The Government facilities available to the affected people have to be publicized. We have to take the responsibility of prevention of the occurrence and spread of HIV/AIDS. The self confidence of infected and affected HIV/AIDS people has to be enhanced. Elected representatives have to take an active role in implementing programme.

Convener of Parliamentarian's Forum and Union Minister Oscar Fernandez speaking on the occasion said, "Elected representatives have a crucial role to play in the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The forum has been formed to create awareness from GP to ZP and this has to take the form of people's movement and has to develop the confidence among the people. In this process rural development organization has to involve. Karnataka should stand in the first place in the list of states that are putting efforts for the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Honorable Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Sri HK Patil said, "elected representatives have the important role in the campaign of prevention of HIV/AIDS. They should not be hesitant and should have respect for the service that are being given to them. The LFA has been constituted to create awareness on HIV/AIDS and committees will be formed at the village level in all the 5629 Panchayats and awareness programs will be organized in the Grama Sabhas. The construction of buildings will not indicate the development of the State, The society should be healthy and free from HIV/AIDS.

The State Legislative Assembly Speaker Sri Kagodu Timmappa stated, "If the GPs to Parliament members initiate the process it will be easier to prevent the infection of HIV/AIDS. Elected Representatives should have will power then only the process will be result oriented.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Sri U.T Khader stated the objectives of the HIV/AIDS Legislative Forum and he explained the various schemes from the health department that are meant for the control of HIV/AIDS. Information camps will be organized on HIV/AIDS across the states. The problems of the HIV/AIDS infected people will be dealt with at Grama Panchayat, Taluk and district level. Government will open pharmacies in forth coming days to provide appropriate treatment to PLHIV. Government is also thinking of providing free higher education for the infected and children of infected people. Apart from health department, other departments also should take proactive measures to tackle HIV & AIDS problem of the state. Our



state should become a role model for the other states in the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Former minister Sri MV Rajashekar said, "The state has been giving all the facilities to the PLHIV and appreciated the work of the people's representatives and the NGOs working in the HIV sector."

Principal Secretary of Health and Family Welfare Sri Madan Gopal, explained the contents of the Health

Department's hand book. "Health does not mean that approaching hospital when they are sick, health means protecting ourselves from the diseases. When the focus is on the aspects of Nutrition, Cleanliness, Safe drinking water, food protection, then only it is possible to build a healthy society. He also answered the questions from Peoples representatives.

Sri T. B Jayachandra, Education Minister, Sri Kimmane Ratnakar, Transport Minister. Sri. Ramalinga Reddy, Minister of Urban Development Sri. Vinay Kumar Sorake, Minister for Municipal Administration, Sri Khamarul Islam, Excise Minister and Minister in charge of Belgavi, Sri R. Jarakiholi, Minister for Higher Education, Sri R. V. Deshapande, Smt. Tara Anuradha, Smt. Motamma, Sri Veeranna Mattikatti, Smt Vimala Gowda, Shr. Vishweshvara Hegde Kageri, Sri Aravind Limbavali and State, District, Talluk and Gram Panchayat level representatives participated in the session.

The program was begun with the folk songs. Sri. V.B Patil welcomed the participants. Project Director, Sir Manoj Kumar Tripathi gave the Vote of Thanks and Joint Director IEC Dr. Leela Sampige anchored the program.

Annexure-II

Legislators Forum on AIDS, Karnataka

The Karnataka legislative Forum on HIV/AIDS ensures the political leadership and commitment to make Karnataka AIDS Free State. Members of Legislature and council have to come together without the political party's identities and differences to zero down HIV/AIDS in Karnataka. The Forum establishes the strong leadership to eliminate HIV/AIDS absolutely at various levels in Karnataka.

Forum is committed to prevent HIV/AIDS, take measures for the care of infected people and removal of stigma and discrimination also the formation of proper legislations and policies. The Forum enables elected representatives to implement the programs more effectively. It is expected that members will reach out to gram panchayat and gram sabha members. Also members will put in their best efforts to create awareness in their respective constituencies.

With this chain of network with the people representatives the Zilla panchayat, taluk panchayat members also play an important role in creating awareness. Legislator's forum resolved to take up awareness programmes at the grassroots across the State. The Forum establishes a strong leadership to control HIV/AIDS at various levels in Karnataka and promote awareness regarding the same.

The Forum enables the elected representatives to implement programs effectively. It is expected that members will reach out to Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabha members. Also members will put in their best efforts to create awareness in their respective constituencies.

The forum enables them to understand their importance, roles and responsibilities in getting into zero HIV/AIDS and making Karnataka as a state free from HIV/AIDS.

The Purpose and Goals of the Forum

Objectives of the Legislators Forum

- Enhancing the knowledge and awareness on HIV/AIDS of Elected representatives at all levels
- Enhancing the abilities and motivating to dedicate themselves in the struggle against the HIV/AIDS of all the elected representatives from State, District, Taluk and Village level
- Through these elected representatives educate and enhance the knowledge on HIV/AIDS of the youths, women children and others who are at the risk of infection and possibilities of getting infected
- Strengthen the movement against HIV/AIDS through the political leadership in the state
- Taking the decision of inclusion of struggle against the HIV/AIDS in the political agenda
- Persuade and Motivate Political Policy makers and decision makers to give importance to the struggle against the HIV/AIDS
- Enhancing the abilities of the elected members to include measures to control HIV/AIDS effectively in constructing fair law and political policies
- Monitor the partnership of all the allied departments that are related to HIV/AIDS
- Forming appropriate forums at Village, taluk and district level and also facilitate them to take the membership of Legislators Forum.

- The goal of the Legislative Forum on HIV / AIDS is to bring about effective leadership strategies and upgrade the activities.
- All Elected Representatives will be part of bringing about awareness and increasing knowledge and understanding of the problems at the State, District, Block and Village level.
- Elected Representatives can help in reducing the incidence of HIV / AIDS among at-risk young people, women, children.
- HIV / AIDS will be on the political agenda and implementation of programmes will be prioritized.
- HIV / AIDS control measures will be adopted and a balance in the law will be effected to increase the ability of the Elected Members.
- All departments will be involved in the action.
- HIV / AIDS-related services will be universally available to all in order to establish effective partnerships.
- HIV / AIDS issues will be brought to the forefront through constant consultations with the public and the private meetings of organizations.
- District, Block, and Village levels will establish the appropriate forums with the State legislature to address issues.
