CHAPTER - 6

CASE STUDIES

The previous chapter depicts the way HIV/AIDS has deeply affected the marital relations of couples either infected or affected with this disease. It has highlighted the ruthless realities associated with the couples facing inconsistency in sustaining their nuptial relations ending in blaming and shattering of faith. It has resulted in splitting and divorcing of couples living with this disease and leaving them suspicious upon the character of their partner. The present chapter is aimed at exploring and analyzing the life of people living with HIV/AIDS and the societal response towards their illness in the form of Case Studies. These case studies also exhibit the process of social construction of this infirmity by individuals, their family, community and society that is largely influenced by social and cultural factors which are deeply interwoven with the social fabric of life (Pokarna, 1994).

Case study is a method of studying social phenomena through the thorough analysis of an individual case (Sharma, 1992). In a way it is a comprehensive study of a social unit – be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community (Young, 1966). The cases present the actual human experiences and attitudes which constitute the social reality. This method draws attention to the role of each independent factor in relation to others and provides a picture of past situations furnishing new meanings. It is a method which is termed as a technique, an approach to social reality and a mode of organizing data in terms of some chosen unit. It also examines the complex situation and combination of factors involved in a given situation.

Here, it refers to the intensive investigation of a particular unit, called CASE (Selltiz, 1976). It may include the study of an individual, a family, a community, a social institution, a cultural organization or a social institution. Case studies are conducted for developing a deeper understanding about intricate relationships existing in the process aspects of a specific unit(s) through qualitative inquiry (Das, 2008). Social scientists, in their study of human behaviour, strive to obtain a fundamentally real and enlightened record of personal experiences which would reveal in concrete detail a man’s inner strivings, tensions and motivations that drive him to action, the barriers that frustrates him or challenge him, the force that directs him to adopt a
certain pattern of behaviour and to live according to a certain scheme and philosophy of life (Young, 1966).

In the present chapter, a detailed investigation was carried out by taking 20 case studies based on the life of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). These case studies throw considerable light on the various issues related to their life and the different modes of transmission of the disease. The main objective of these case studies is to comprehend various issues, problems and circumstances these people face after disclosing their status. Moreover, the aim is to show the way people construct this illness after learning their HIV positive status within their family, community, society and at workplace. It also shows the deep impact of prevailing cultural norms which force PLWHA to construct this illness as a divine retribution and punishment from the cosmos. These case studies aim at depicting the unheard voices of those living with HIV/AIDS and the problems they have come across after they disclosed about their illness.

These cases are the selected histories exhibiting the socio-economic, discriminatory attitude towards the PLWHA from family, community, society, workplace and health staff and finally the marital relations of the couples infected or affected with this illness. Each case study set forth a unique reality of its own and also uncovers the suffering, immense agony and tremendous pain in the life of sero positives. Moreover, it shows the process of social construction that is fabricated by the society against people living with this infirmity. Respondents from various occupations, castes and religion have been incorporated to cover all the aspects of HIV/AIDS and the tribulations created by this health disorder. The names used for presenting the case studies of PLWHA are fictitious. These case studies were collected through extensive discussion with the respondents during the time of interviews. Though, it was not an easy task to talk about their personal background including their sexual histories. However, with the help of icebreaking and rapport building with the respondents, the task was near to accomplishment and it became swift to discuss about various issues. It may be mentioned that the names used in the cases are factitious.
Case No 1: He That Loveth Pleasure Shall Be A Poor Man (Proverbs XXI, 17)

Name: Ravinder Singh
Status: HIV Positive
Source: Red Light Areas of Mumbai

The eldest son of a Jat Sikh family, Ravinder Singh is 24 years old belongs to a very simple family comprising of an agriculturalist father and a housewife mother. The other siblings in the family are a younger brother and sister. Being eldest in the family he started his own glass trading in Amritsar and Mumbai. At times sailing in two boats leaves one floating in the water. He is maintaining two relationships. Ravinder was forcefully married by his parents when he was 21 years of age. His father’s childhood friend’s daughter Gurwinder Kaur became his better half. As Ravinder has started new glass business he had to travel very often with Kavita, a friend who later became his second spouse. With both the conjugal bonds he was blessed with two children from two of his wives. Even with two relationships Ravinder was becoming sex maniac. His sex appetite started increasing and his desires were not being fulfilled. To fulfill his sex gratification he became regular visitor to the red light areas of Mumbai. Ravinder’s inclination towards his wife Kavita in Mumbai was greater than his wife Gurwinder in Amritsar. He gave short visits to Amritsar because of his father’s fear and anger. He stayed in Amritsar for few months and returned to Mumbai for the rest of the year. This process continued for 5 years and he was not suspected of his dual relationship.

Soon hell broke over Ravinder. He was asked by his father to return to Amritsar immediately as his wife was not keeping well. He was in no position to refuse. On consulting a good doctor in a government hospital he came to know that his wife had all the symptoms of AIDS. He took her to Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC) and got her blood tested for HIV, which reported as positive. On the advice of doctor he and his two children were also tested which again showed HIV positive reports. He got worried about his second wife and the other two children. Gurwinder was refused any treatment in the government hospital as she was HIV positive. With payment of some extra amount she got admission in a private hospital.

Ravinder had to disclose all this to Kavita, who being a working and educated woman understood these problems as they were common in Mumbai. Ravinder had to uncover his sero status to Kavita who was shocked and fainted. Somehow Ravinder convinced Kavita to get
herself tested. Her life fell to pieces when the doomed news of the test came to be HIV positive. She was in great trauma and tried to commit suicide and kill her children. But God had other things in mind for her. She was unsuccessful. She knew all the routes of transmission of this dreadful disease. She asked for divorce from Ravinder as it was getting impossible to stay with him under same roof. She did not hesitate in insulting Ravinder who had committed the crime of communicating this illness to his wife and children. On being speechless he returned to Amritsar as he was afraid of losing his other wife and children. As they were uneducated he wanted to save them. He got Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART) from Government Hospital and poured the capsules in Revital bottle. He requested his wife Gurwinder to take these capsules along with the children to regain energy and good health.

In Mumbai, Kavita left her apartment along with her two children and became untraceable. Ravinder wholeheartedly tried to trace her but was in vain. His nuptial knot with Kavita ended here. Ravinder revealed in his own words, “When I see my young children, I feel ashamed of myself. I still love Kavita as she was my first love.”

**Case No 2 : For All Guilt Is Punished On Earth (Goethe)**

**Name** : Baljeet Singh  
**Status** : AIDS  
**Source** : Roadside Prostitutes

Manjit Singh, a 27 years old Majabhi boy living in a village near Amritsar is a victim of this dreadful disease. He belongs to a very poor and simple family. His father is a daily wager and mother is a housewife. He has an elder sister and two younger brothers. To meet the financial crisis of the family and help his siblings to continue their education he joined as truck driver in a transport company.

As a truck driver for last couple of years he had travelled almost all over the country and met different people belonging to different regions. The earnings were not enough to enable him to meet all the requirements at home. Through other truck drivers he came to know about truck drivers working abroad and making more money. He was guided by a man and helped to put forward an application in a well known Gulf country Muscat. After fulfilling all the requirements
and arranging for the required money for travelling, he was at last able to make for Muscat. He got all his medical tests done through a Government hospital which again were all agreeable to the situation. He was happy that the Great Almighty Babaji (God) was bestowing all his blessings on him. He even started making fantasies. He dreamed high, of how his brothers would now be well settled and his father would be little relaxed of his burdens.

Destiny had other things in store for him. On reaching Muscat, according to the rules of that country, he along with some other truck drivers was asked for a medical examination again. But this time the report has some other language. He was reported as sero positive along with some other workers. They were all handed over to the local police where they all were incarcerated for one day. Early the next morning all HIV positives were deported back to India. Back in his mind he was blaming the travel agent as he was not ready to believe all that. He believed that because of their negligence in preparing all his documents he had to face this day today. To confirm this truth he again went to the hospital in Amritsar to get all his doubts cleared. No, he got all negative reports. He was declared HIV positive. He was left in no state to go and face his family.

Going back on his thoughts, he could recall his going to different places while driving truck. He often had sex with roadside prostitutes. On most occasions as he was highly drunk he forgot to use condoms. He was not aware of the fact that HIV could be contracted through sex, since most of his village mate died of AIDS because they were Injecting Drug Users (IDUs). His parents would get a big shock and go into trauma whey they would face this reality. His dreams of serving his parents turned into a nightmare. Presently he is worried about people within his community who will make fun of him, if they come to know about his HIV positive status. He came to know that in his community this disease was commonly known as Truckan Wali Bimari. People blame truck drivers for spreading this illness. It is believed that truck drivers can contract this illness as compared to other vulnerable groups. Manjeet being uneducated was afraid and bothered about what people would be saying. People do not understand the circumstances the truck drivers suffer when they have to travel long distances and stay away from home. Now Manjeet is no more driving a truck but is a mere Taxi driver and counting his days.
Case No 3 : It Is Too Late To Call Back Yesterday

Name : Mandeep Singh
Status : HIV positive
Source : Extra Marital Affair

This is a tale of a 34 years old Jat male. Belonging to a rich agriculturist father, he is the only son. He was pampered by his parents since his childhood. He was never taught about the norms and values of a family. After completing his education till class 10 + 2 he commenced into alcoholism. Due to early adolescence and notorious company he soon fell into the habit of oral drugs. On reaching his youth, his habits had reached the peak. He got interested in a Hindu Brahmin girl when he was 26 years of age. His parents were not in favour of his getting married outside his religion. Mandeep, under no circumstances cared about his parental decision and his desire to get married to the girl of his choice got stronger.

Destiny had other things in store for him. His father underwent a major cardiac attack. In an emotional blackmail by his mother he was forced to get married to the girl of his father’s choice, Maninder in lieu of the girl of his own preference. He had to finally give his consent to save his father. He was not very happily married to Maninder. Their relationship was never so smooth. Nevertheless, they were soon blessed with a daughter and then a son. As Maninder was a village girl she was not very glamorous and fashionable. Belonging to a homely family she was not very attractive to him. Mandeep wanted some more out of his marriage instead of just regular relations. He wanted a woman of his own preference who could fulfil his sexual needs and stand upright in society. Fortunately, Mandeep met Balbir Kaur, an astonishing looking widow of 39 years. She was also looking for a young man to look after her and her daughter. Their relationship went beyond the platonic landmark which resettled in an apartment which Mandeep got for Balbir, his paramour. He started spending long times with Balbir which at times extended to months. He rarely went home to his wife and children. On being questioned by this wife he gave an explanation that he was extending his business and his visits to home would be very occasional.

Soon Mandeep discovered that Balbir was suffering from some health problem. The doctor revealed about her anemic state and advised some blood tests. On the other side Balbir was very cool and told Mandeep that she was aware of her disease. It was even more shocking
for Mandeep when he came to know that Balbir was an AIDS patient and her husband had also expired due to AIDS. She told Mandeep that she had undergone blood transfusion on many occasions. This news was too shocking for Mandeep and he was panic stricken. He was also advised by the doctor for HIV test as he was acting as her husband. On knowing about his also being HIV positive his anxiety level reached at its peak and he started shivering and sweating. He started to regret on his life’s blunder of prolonged relations with Balbir.

Now he was worried about his wife Mandeep and his two offsprings. All this incidence was forcing him from within to leave everything behind and abscond. Somewhere his conscious was not allowing him to do so because of his moral duties towards his family. He was even shocked to know that Balbir had hidden her illness and constructed everything against Mandeep. The betrayal from the lady he loved the most was too agonizing.

Mandeep got his wife and children tested for HIV. God had blessed the family by showing them to be HIV negative. This relaxed Mandeep a little. Later Mandeep acknowledged that, “Its utterly my fault because I was the one who felt unhappy with my companion and started exploring other women. I believe that this was the only way for me to understand the meaning of family and life. I am not bothered about my sero position and will carry on leading an ordinary life, but it has taught me a new lesson that nature gives us back what we give to nature.”

**Case No 4** : **The Broad Minded See The Truth In Different Religions; The Narrow Minded See Only The Difference (Chinese Proverb)**

- **Name**: Paramjit Kaur alias Anna
- **Status**: HIV positive
- **Source**: Needle Stick Injury

Anna a 27 years’ old belonging to a Scheduled Caste family is a baptized Christian. Her actual name is Paramjit Kaur. Her father is a government employee and mother is a school teacher in Amritsar. Paramjit completed her B.Sc nursing from a local college in Amritsar and later joined a private hospital as a staff nurse. She has a younger sister pursuing the same course and wants to settle abroad. Paramjit was very enthusiastic about her profession and took it very seriously. She also dreamed of settling abroad where nursing profession is in great demand. She had asked her
parents to look for a groom, but never in India. This idea also interested her parents as she could earn a good salary there. The working experience in India would add a star to her profile. After about a year or so her father got a good matrimonial match for Paramjit in London.

Parminder Singh, a Punjabi boy was a Lawyer and well settled in London. Both the families were well known to each other. Paramjit’s dreams started to come true. They got married and left for London to start a new life. The life was not a bed of roses for her. Finding a suitable job was not easy as she had thought. She preferred to stay at home until she got the required job.

Paramjit started making a good home and was trying to become a good housewife. She did all that she could to satisfy her husband. They were maintaining a good relation. After around for 2 months, she reported a terrible pain in her lower abdomen on which she was immediately taken to a nearby hospital by her husband. The doctors advised a few tests which included HIV. Next day when Parminder went to collect her reports from the pathological laboratory he was dumb founded. He lost all his words and was shocked to know that his hardly few months old wife was a carrier of HIV germ. On the advice of the doctor even he got his tests done, but fortunately he was HIV negative.

This was a turning point in Paramjit’s life. Her husband started abusing her of being a characterless girl. He had this notion that she had sexual relation with others before marriage. But Paramjit knew that this was not true. She had tied the nuptial knot with great sincerity and purity. She was unable to recall her route of transmission.

Parminder meanwhile informed her parents in India and asked her parents to keep her with them as they were all busy and could not look after her. Paramjit was shocked when she came to know that she had to leave London next morning all alone and stay in India without her husband. On facing her father at Indian airport she was full of tears. Her parents consoled her and assured her that they would look after her and get her treated for the same.

By a physician in a general hospital she was recommended to Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC) for HIV testing. There she revealed her story of how while working as a staff nurse in a private hospital she many times met with needle stick injuries to which she was suffering today. Her misery seemed to be growing when Parminder refused to accept her back and asked for divorce.
Paramjit went into deep depression for a few months. Paramjit later confessed that what all had happened was because of her own negligence towards the injuries she had suffered in the past. She also said, “No one want to get such an odious disease which can lead your life to hell.” She accepted divorce from Parminder because she did not want to ruin the life of a man with no fault of his.

Case No 5 : A Woman And Glass Are Ever In Danger

Name : Pooja Rani
Status : HIV positive
Source : Spouse

This is a sad story of Pooja Rani a 28 years old Ramgharia woman presently living in Pathankot. On finishing her schooling of 10+2 she was married off to Ashok Kumar a petty shopkeeper. They were living a happy married life and Pooja was carrying his child. But the destiny had other thing destined for them. Ashok met with a terrible accident which he could not survive. Then Pooja was pregnant for 6 months. This was a hasty marriage as Pooja’s father was not keeping well and her mother wanted her to get married as soon as possible.

Two years later Pooja was again forcefully married to Raju a 26 years old widower who was a truck driver. His wife died few years back because of Tuberculosis. Raju had to drive down his truck to different places and stay away from home for many days and at times weeks. Raju was an alcoholic. He had to spend his nights at roadside dhabas where he had his food and drinks. To pass the lonely nights and quench his sexual desires he used to spend the nights with roadside prostitutes. Slowly he started developing dysentery and weight loss. He visited local quacks and was temporarily relaxed. But he was getting critical day by day. He came back home and along with his wife went to a nearby government hospital where he was diagnosed with Tuberculosis and AIDS. On the advice of doctor even Pooja was asked to undergo such tests. Unfortunately she was also diagnosed HIV positive followed by her two children. Pooja little knew about HIV/AIDS but was sure that it was a dreadful disease and incurable. Pooja informed all this to her mother in law about how Raju, Pooja and her two children were suffering from HIV/AIDS.
Her mother-in-law's attitude towards Pooja changed tremendously. She blamed Pooja and made her responsible for bringing this dreadful disease in the house. She was even blamed for killing her previous husband and being unfaithful to her two husbands. Her cries and pleading were of no use. She had no proof that she was innocent. Raju and his mother started ill-treating Pooja and asked her to leave the house immediately. She was accused of being a *Gandi Aurat* (bad woman) who spread ill in the families. She was blamed to be promiscuous.

Pooja had no other alternative but to leave for her parents' house. In Pooja’s word she said, “I know it was not me who gave HIV/AIDS to Raju, rather he gave this illness to the whole family. It was he who stayed away from home and spent nights with other women. But despite all this I am being blamed, I am only a housewife staying in the four walls of my house. I was not responsible for my previous husband’s death. Now my parents have to take the burden of both my children and me. I have become a sorry figure for my parents.”

*Case No 6 : The Tale Runs As It Pleases the Teller*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ganesh</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Blood Transfusion</td>
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Your deeds of the last birth come back to you in present birth. This is a basic myth that most of the Indians live with even in today’s advanced life. This is the belief that Ganesh is still living with. Ganesh Kumar is a 36 years old Hindu Julaha (*Kabirpanthi*). After completing his matriculation he got an opportunity to work as a constable in Punjab Police. He is married to Seema, a 29 years old housewife. He is blessed with two children studying in class 6th and 5th respectively. They live in a nuclear family.

Entering into an arranged marriage by their parents Seema and Ganesh were living a happy married life. Ganesh was working as a constable since last 12 years and recently he was promoted as a head constable. In medical examinations conducted biannually of the staff Ganesh was diagnosed as HIV positive. Later on his wife and children were also declared as the sufferer of the same illness. Ganesh was grief-sticken as his whole family was now HIV positive. Soon his reports were handed over to the Station House Officer (SHO). Few constables were called upon for the inquiry of Ganesh’s character. While the SHO was interrogating about his
moral conduct, other constables and rest of the staff members came to know about his sero status. It became very embarrassing for Ganesh and he was caught in a chaotic situation. All his colleagues and neighbours started talking and whispering about this disease. Their main issue was how he contracted this disease. According to the general masses HIV/AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease. This is contracted by going to roadside prostitutes and red light areas. It is a well known fact that HIV/AIDS have different routes of transmission but people construct the route of transmission according to their notion of understanding. Ganesh’s presence was always marked by jocular comments. Sex and HIV/AIDS became everyday gossip in the office. Even his officers started pulling his leg by labeling him promiscuous. His colleagues started complaining of their not being safe in such working environment.

He was now being treated as a stranger. He was not invited for any lunch in the canteen and even his presence was ignored. Ganesh started entering into a state of depression. He wanted to run away from all these things and end up his life. He even thought of resigning from his post. Being a responsible man in his life, the thought of his wife and two children came before him. He could not leave them at this stage of time when they needed him the most. By doing any such thing, he would be forced to take away three more lives. His colleagues even went to higher authorities to demand for a separated workplace for Ganesh. But Ganesh was lucky as the concerned officer was not interested.

Ganesh, on running his thoughts back realized that his wife during her first pregnancy had undergone blood transfusion. The blood donor was an unknown person. He started taking everything on himself that because of his negligence and ignorance today his entire family was suffering from such a dreadful disease known to the mankind. He was now concerned about the future of his children. Ganesh started repenting on his previous life. He must have done some sins then for which he was being forced to pay in this birth. Not only him but because of his bad deeds then, his children were being forced to repay for him. The torture that he was going through now was getting too much for him. But he decided to face the world and its tortures for the future of his children and helped them to lead a normal life. He would stand as a wall between his children and the uneducated masses. He also decided to educate his children so that they could spread a word about HIV/AIDS and tell people that by touching and working in the same office HIV/AIDS never spreads.
In this case, a 24 years old majabhi woman Parminder Kaur contracted HIV from her husband. Entering into the pious wedlock with Kamalpreet Singh of similar caste had other things in store for Parminder Kaur. They had an arranged marriage initiated by their parents. Kamalpreet after studying till 5th standard at present is a rickshaw puller, working on daily wages. Whereas, Parminder studied up to 10+2 level and became a housewife. She bore him two sons within two years of marriage aged 1 and 2 years respectively. The entire family is HIV positive since Kamalpreet contracted HIV from his friends while sharing needles with them.

Few months after her marriage, Parminder, from the homely circumstances understood that her husband did not give any monetary aid to the family. On being queried the reason given by Kamalpreet was that he got tired after pulling the rickshaw the whole day, so he required alcohol to relax himself. He even told her that if she was so bothered then she should earn for herself and contribute towards the family finances. Taking this to be the fate of God she kept silent reluctantly. After the birth of her two sons, she expected some change in her husband’s attitude since he was a father now. He might realize his duties were the thoughts that haunted Parminder. But her hopes were losing fast as he had started indulging more into alcohol habits and offered no money to his wife.

Being educated a little she could not see her children starving away, so she started to search for a job. Fortunately, she got a job in a veterinary shop as a helper with `2000 per month. She had to deal with the clients and help the doctor during the surgery. Due to high fever, weight loss and diarrhoea, Kamalpreet was admitted to a government hospital few months later. There during his blood tests he was declared HIV positive. This shocking news moved Parminder badly. The concerned doctor advised her and her children to go in for the same test. For her miseries had no end as she along with her children were diagnosed as HIV positive. She was in distress and cried over her sero status. Later Kamalpreet revealed his habit of Injecting
Drugs. Parminder knew the result of AIDS. She had all the concerns about her children who even after coming to this world had a very short life to live. Her sufferings had no end as the doctor advised her family to get CD4 testing. This was a little expensive test.

Parminder had some hope from her employer so she went there for some monetary help. The veterinary doctor told her that AIDS is a fatal illness and he could be of no help to her. Instead he just paid her pending salary and asked her not to come for the job again. The veterinary doctor did not listen to her pleas and instead shouted at her and asked her to leave the clinic immediately. She got her family tested for CD4 from her last salary. Lastly she said that, “Women are always punished by the society and its members just because they are women and have no social status. From birth till marriage and from marriage till death, life of a woman is surrounded by miseries.”

Case No 8 : Deceivers Have Full Mouth And Empty Hands

Name : Amarjeet Kaur
Status : HIV positive
Source : Marriage

A graduate and working as a school teacher Amarjeet a Jat women was 21 years at the time of her marriage. About a year and a half back, she was married to Sukhwant Singh but unfortunately she was deceived by her Bhua (parental aunt). After marriage the truth came to her that Sukhwant Singh was a truck driver instead of a businessman. At present she is staying with her parents. Her father is a farmer and mother is a housewife. She has two younger sisters who are unmarried and are pursuing their studies.

Her tale goes as follows. Amarjeet always had a desire to become a school teacher. She had certain aims and ambitions. She got a job as a primary teacher in a local school with a nominal salary. But as she was a beginner she agreed. She wanted to enhance her studies to get a better job. Her bhua was a big barrier as she wanted her to get married. Her bhua used to criticize her for not making better future for her sisters. She often got good marriage proposals but Amarjeet refused them all as she was adamant to get more education. Few days later she got another proposal of a businessman. Sukhwant Singh, who belonged to her bhua’s husbands family. Amarjeet’s parents were impressed by this proposal. They arranged for a meeting with
the groom’s parents. As they had blind faith over Amarjeet’s bhua so they did not inquire and confirm anything about the groom and his family. Finally the marriage commenced. Her bhua assured everything would go well as she was there to look after her as she was going to enter her family.

Everything was going good after marriage. They were very happy which was short lived. A few months later Sukhwant did not turn up from work for a few days. He refused to answer any of her queries and retired to bed saying that he was tired and wanted to rest. Amarjeet spent a restless night that day. She had a shocking morning ahead of her. On again asking her husband, she got an answer to which she had no words to describe. He was a truck driver by profession and not any businessman. She took it too lightly thinking that as he was tired and was trying to tease her. After spending a restless day, she went to her neighbour’s house to confirm his business. On hearing the same thing from the neighbours and from her mother in law, she was in tears.

She informed her parents about this news of Sukhwant being a truck driver and had no business of his own. She also informed them of her being pregnant. On inquiring about all this from the bhua, she simply denied the fact that she knew anything about it. Both the families had heated arguments and instead her in laws blamed her parents and bhua for cheating them by not giving them dowry and money promised by her bhua. It was getting difficult for her to stay in this relation anymore but continued for the sake of her unborn child.

Being educated and thinking about the welfare of her unborn child, she went to a gynaecologist where she was prescribed some blood tests. Her agony had not come to an end because here she was declared as HIV positive. At this position she could not even go for an abortion. Her HIV situation was a marriage gift to her by her husband with no fault of her. She passed all this information to her father who could not bear the pain of his daughter. He could understand what their daughter was going through. On discussing this problem with Sukhwant and his family members, Amarjeet was blamed to be promiscuous and characterless. She was charged with having sexual relations with other men while her husband was away. This was all done to defend their side as her mother knew all about her son being HIV positive. On hearing all this Amarjeet left for her parent’s house till her delivery. No hospital was ready to admit her for her delivery as she was HIV positive. On paying a heavy sum of money to local doctor,
running a small clinic, she gave birth to a baby girl. Expecting her husband and in laws to join her and bless the new born was all hopeless. No one turned up.

At present Amarjeet is living with her parents and has no contact with her in laws and husband. She said, “My aunt had spoiled my life. My innocent daughter will definitely ask me about her father when she grows up and that time she will be reluctant to tell her that he was an HIV positive truck driver and her mother is also HIV positive.”

Case No 9 : I Never Found The Companion That Was So Companionable As Solitude (Thoreau)

Name : Gopal
Status : AIDS
Source : Blood Transfusion

Thalassemia is an inherited disorder of haemoglobin due to which the patient has to undergo blood transfusion multiple times. A typical Brahmin family in Maharashtra gave birth to Gopal who is now 21 years of age. His father is an army officer and mother is a housewife. He is the only child of his parents. While Gopal was in his childhood, he suffered low haemoglobin and later on was diagnosed as Thalassemic. His growth was retarded and he seems to be like a child of 7 – 8 years. Blood transfusion is very common for him and has to be admitted to the hospital very often. Gopal told us that during his childhood his growth was dissimilar to that of his friends and classmates. All his friends used to make fun of him. None of his parents at that time knew anything about this disorder. He was admitted in various hospitals in different cities due to his father’s transferrable job. He usually felt lonely as only his mother accompanied him as his father was busy with his work and showed less concern for him. Even his coming out of the house was reducing and he had to spend most of his time in solitude. People used to stare at him and often asked his age from his mother. He felt that by staying indoor and to himself he could save his mother to face the humiliation from the whole community.

He used to see his mother spend restless and lonely nights crying alone. While his father was posted in Assam, Gopal was diagnosed with HIV due to which he was put on to Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART). Now his father was posted in Amritsar, so Gopal had to leave the
place from where he had to again undergo HIV test followed by CD4 test to resume his ART. At present his CD4 cells are below 200 which show that he is a sufferer of AIDS. His mother was told by the doctors that Gopal had a very unpredictable life and he could expire anytime because of AIDS. Now his mother is in trauma as being the only child she does not want to lose him. Gopal even feels that his father felt that he was a disgrace to his name. The entire community knew about his disease and often asked his father about his illness. His father never accompanied them anywhere and asked his mother to take Gopal back to Maharashtra. He reduced his interaction with Gopal and remained busy in his work. Inspite of all this, his mother is whole heartedly committed and concerned about her child.

Many people knew about his status. Once, while walking outside his home, few girls passed by and commented that *dekhne mein to bahut chota sa hein par kam to bahut bade bade karta hein* [He is too small and young but the job done by him is too big]. This disheartened Gopal and he decided to stay inside and spend his time by reading books and watching TV. He had to drop his studies because of his sero status. His school mates and teachers often segregated him while he was in school. No one was ready to sit and share the food with him.

Lastly Gopal said, “Parents always have a desire for a male child so that he can take care of them when they get old, but in my case, my father feels that I am a disgrace to them. My mother always cries for me and fears my death. On the other hand my father is never concerned about me because I am lowering his dignity. I have no friends and I do not go to the garden to play with anyone. Their parents do not allow them to play with me thinking that they may contact AIDS. AIDS cannot be transmitted due to social contact. People fear this illness and as a result construct various illusions pertaining to this illness. I feel I am untouchable and polluted. I fight with God and often ask him that why he gave me this horrible life full of troubles.”
Case No 10 : Appearances Are Deceptive

Name : Kawaljit Kaur
Status : HIV positive
Source : Rape

A labourer father and a housewife mother, who are scheduled caste family, have a 28 years old daughter Kawaljit Kaur. Her education being only till matric she was married to Palwinder Singh alias Pamma, a skilled labourer, at the age of 21. Pamma was killed in a group clash within his community leaving behind 3 daughters and a son. Kawaljit was declared HIV positive few years back and presently she is on ART.

He life was never smooth since she got married to an alcoholic husband, who was obsessed with the habit of liquor consumption. All his income was spend on alcohol and other drugs. The household expenses were looked after by his father who had retired as a class four. After the death of her husband, Kawaljit was completely at the mercy of her father in law as she had no other source of income to feed her children and look after their livelihood. She decided to look for a job, but most of the time the employers wanted more of sexual favours in return of money to which she preferred to remain unemployed.

Kawaljit often visited a local church to pay her obeisance and was optimistic with the blessings of Jesus. The father of the church always provided spiritual discourses to her, so she also shared her problems with him. She narrated her life history and told him that she had no money to feed her children. She even told him that she had no one to look after her and her children, not even her biological parents. The father assured her financial assistance. The father asked her not to reveal this to anyone. Getting some positive signs and promising to keep it a secret she went away. As said the father started paying her on weekly basis.

One day she was in need of some more money following which she went to the father. She was surprised to see the father as he was badly drunk. He agreed to give some money but in return he asked for sexual relations. Kawaljit stood naïve and instead of absconding away got involved in some arguments with him. Following to denial made by Kawaljit, she was beaten and thereafter raped twice by the father who was known to be a holy man. It was a major setback to her as she had never expected such a brutal response from a person who held such a dignified position in society. A day later he warned her to keep silent about the whole episode otherwise
he would abduct her children and she would never see them again. He still kept on paying her weekly and Kawaljit out of trauma could not disclose this to anyone and visited him regularly to get molested.

Few days later she felt some burning sensations in her private parts for which she went to Venereal Disease Research Laboratory (VDRL) in Guru Nanak Dev Hospital, Amritsar. She was declared as suffering from Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs). She was asked for HIV screening since her symptoms were almost similar. The world turned over her when she came to know that she was HIV positive. All this was new to her but she had heard about AIDS as one woman had expired in the village. Since the women who expired were pregnant Kawaljit had a notion that it can only be transmitted from mother to her child. Later she came to know about the other routes of transmission. She was ashamed of herself. Already, her life was not easy and on top of all this illness added to her agonies. Presently she is worried about her children as she may die anytime and there is no guardian for her children. She is afraid that her community people would throw her out of the village when they would come to know about her sero status.

Now she understands this illness very well and she knows about her route of transmission. In her own words she revealed, “He, the Father has done this to many woman of our village who are in need of money. Most of the males in my village are drunkards and do not contribute anything to their family. So women have to earn for themselves in order to feed their children.”

**Case No 11 : Sorrows Come Unsent For**

**Name** : Reeta  
**Status** : HIV positive  
**Source** : Dental Treatment

At times it is perceived that doctors are a version of butchers who slaughter their innocent patients instead of assisting them. Reeta a 41 years old Khatri woman lost all her hope on the doctors when she contracted HIV due to the negligence of dental surgeon who later denied taking the burden on himself. Reeta is happily married to Raman a 43 years old businessman. Together they are proud parents of two children a son and a daughter. They live in an extended
family and Reeta maintains good relations with her in laws. Unfortunately, Reeta is suffering from AIDS but her family members are safe from it.

Reeta is a graduate and at present is a housewife. Reeta always believed in “Health is Wealth” policy. She was always concerned about her health rather than anything else. She had never faced any major illness except some minor seasonal infections like cold, cough or minor fever. But an inflated balloon can be busted by a very thin pin. A few days later while taking her meal she felt a little pain in her teeth. She decided to see a good dental surgeon. She went to the dentist the very next morning where she was told that it is a minor pain and a minimum of three sittings would cure it. She got relief after three sittings after which she followed the entire do’s and don’ts and other instructions given by the doctor.

A few months later Reeta felt body weakness all of a sudden for which she consulted a private practitioner. He gave her some medications and told her that due to climatic and hormonal changes these symptoms do happen. With a certain course of medicines she would be back to her normal life. After the passage of few weeks she again suffered the same problem. This time she told the doctor about her dental surgery in the past. Listening to her past medical history, he prescribed her few blood tests. This time she was accompanied by her husband to the government hospital. Here she was found to be HIV positive. It was something unbelievable for Reeta. She was shocked and her eyes were filled with tears. She started sweating heavily and felt dizzy. It was difficult for her to anticipate that she was HIV positive. It struck her that during her dental treatment she was given some injections in the gums. He had used open syringe which had already been used on some other patients.

On inquiring from the doctor, he simply refused to accept this blame. He said that he always used fresh syringes with every patient. He even blamed her that to save her soul and to prove herself to be innocent she was putting the blame on him. She must have procured this disease through some sexual relations. He also blamed her to be having extra marital relations, which she was hiding from her husband. Raman was an understanding husband. He told her that he trusted her that she was loyal to him.

Now Reeta is only worried about what the people would say about her character. They would call her a characterless woman, when they will come to know about her sero status. She said, “People make fun of those who are HIV positive. They attach various meanings to the disease and isolate people with HIV/AIDS. When my children would come to know about my
position they would get a bad impression. They would be ashamed of me. Throughout my life I have been in best of my health. I never made any compromise with my health and was always in good shape. But now I have contracted an illness which may be fatal and cause death anytime.”

Case No 12: *I Regard Sex As The Central Problem Of Life (Havelock Ellis)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sundru</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
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Sundru is a 19 years old scheduled caste boy. He is an abandoned child and spent his life on the streets. He is an illiterate and works as a scavenger and rag picker. He resides in slum with his friends. Few months back Sundru was diagnosed with Tuberculosis followed by AIDS. Presently he is on Directly Observed Treatment Service (DOTS) and Anti Retroviral Treatment (ART).

Sundru is least concerned about his family and parents as he remembers nothing about his past. He was deserted on the streets by his parents when he was a new born. Since then he lives on the streets and earns by begging and rag picking. According to him what he remembers is that when he was around six years old his peers used to practice homosexuality. Without understanding what he was doing he too got involved in the act with his friends. It was something new and very exciting to perform these acts. This practice of homosexuality continued till Sundru and his friends became adults. He also stated that few of his friends had bisexual relations within their community and locality as they could dare to negotiate with them. Few of his friends were also drug enslaves and they regularly used pharmaceutical drugs like capsules and injecting drugs. Sundru was very frightened of injections so he never dared to inject any needles. During this period few of his friends expired due to unidentified reasons and a few ran away in search of jobs to far off places. Sundru was left with two of his associates with whom he was living.

Later Sundru suffered some skin infection and mild fever which was followed by frequent weight loss. His friends took him to a nearby TB hospital for treatment. As they used to collect garbage from the nearby grounds of the TB hospital they knew a sweeper who was
working in the hospital. Sundru was diagnosed as a carrier of TB. All his treatment was done free of costs. His blood was sent for HIV examination and was declared positive. He got this shocking news from a staff nurse. This surprised Sundru. He kept silent for a long time as the words were something new to him. He had never heard about this earlier. The nurse told him about the different routes of transmission and tried to provoke him to tell his route of transmission of this dreadful disease.

Sundru was very nervous at that time because of the fact that he was homosexual. He was ashamed to disclose all this to the nurse. Instead he mentioned that owing to garbage collection he often suffered needle prick injuries. The nurse even informed him that due to this chronic disease his life span is now shortened. He can expect his death anytime. Sundru was in tears and lost all hopes of life. The nurse also told him to leave the hospital at the earliest as they did not keep any HIV positive patients within the ward as it can threaten the lives of other patients. He was sent to the concerned department of ART to which his body has started to respond.

Sundru said, “I contracted AIDS because of my innocence about the route of transmission. Before this I had no idea that such illness ever prevailed in this world. We all friends were naïve during adolescence and mere fantasized by looking at girls and women within the community. I have no one to look after me and feel that I would meet my end soon as explained by the nurse.”

**Case No 13 : Frequent Remarriages Give Room For Scandal**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Monika</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>HIV positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Second marriage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At times all the miseries come together. Something like this happened for a 10+2 educated Monika. A Hindu Brahmin girl now of 32 years of age came across all types of hardships at this young age. At the age of 20 years Mona got married and was a widow at the age of 24 years. Her husband died due to cardiac arrest. After about two years, she was remarried to Kashyap, a 36 years old scheduled caste boy. He was a widower and his wife died due to unknown reasons. Monika has a son from her first marriage who lives with her parents. Kashyap had two daughters.
from his first marriage who live with him. Unfortunately both his daughters are HIV positive and suffering their fathers illness.

The main source of income for Kashyap was property dealing. Monika, being a widow at a young age and financially not very well off her parents found a match for her from matrimonial section in the newspapers. Finally Monika and Kashyap were tied in wedlock. Life was not so smooth for Monika as it was difficult to survive with Kashyap who was an alcoholic and full of lust. Somehow Monika managed to survive with her second match under same roof. After few months, Monika was pregnant from her second marriage and she went to a gynecologist in government hospital for her medical examinations. Here she was prescribed some blood tests which she got examined from laboratory in government hospital. She was accompanied by her elder sister who is a school teacher. Here she was declared as HIV positive. On hearing this scary news Monika and her sister were dazed. It became difficult for her to understand how she contracted this terrible disease. She told the doctor about her second marriage and her husband’s occupation being a property dealer. The doctor doubted on her husband, as in many cases the husbands hide their HIV positive status from their wives. The doctor asked her to get her husband tested for HIV.

Monika told her husband everything on which he remained quite. Next day he went to the hospital and met the concern doctor. He alleged that he is innocent and his wife is a bad character woman as she has relations with other men is their locality. He also framed up a story that her first husband too died due to AIDS which he contracted through her. On examination he was declared as HIV positive. He told his mother at home that Monika and her parents had cheated on them. He blamed that they knew about her sero status. Now Monika was ill-treated by her mother in law. Kashyap and his mother used to beat her like animals and abused her badly. His mother said that she was forcefully married to her innocent son. Without any dowry or money they had got a characterless daughter-in-law. Nobody in the family had a soft corner for Monika. None gave an ear to her howling and burses. She was treated like a maid servant. Instead of being pregnant, she was given meagre food and asked to work from early morning to late night. Kashyap also informed his own sisters who again threaten Monika that they would kill her if anything went wrong with their brother.

One day Monika was alone at home, when a neighbouring woman, who was continuously noticing the hardships of Monika came to her. She revealed that everyone in the family knew
that Kashyap was suffering from AIDS and his first wife also died because of same illness. Moreover both his daughters are also HIV positive. She told that earlier at young age Kashyap was a wrestler. At that time he maintained illicit relations and was also charged with rape of young girls. He always escaped because of political approach. This was shocking news for Monika. She came to know that she was at the mercy of criminals who were habitual of abusing and beating women.

Still God had other miseries in store for her. She informed her parents who came and took her home for her delivery but no hospital was ready to accept her because of being HIV positive. At last a doctor with a small clinic accepted her case on some extra payment, where he said that he would dispose off all the utensils after conducting her delivery. In a caesarean case Monika gave birth to a baby boy. No one from her in-laws came to see her and to bless the baby. Even Kashyap was not bothered. Monika had expected that after the birth of the baby their might be a change of heart in Kashyap. But she was wrong as there was no change in their behaviour or attitude towards Monika. She was advised by the doctor not to feed the baby. Kashyap even denied any monetary help to Monika. Now she is completely dependent on her parents financially.

Monika said, “I am struggling to survive under this roof but due to the poor financial conditions of my family members, I have no other alternative. I could have committed suicide but due to my son, I stepped back as he will not be able to survive in that house full of demons. My husband is not less than a beast. He has no feelings for his newly born child. I consider him a merciless creature.”

Case No 14 : If You Trust Before You Try, You May Repent Before You Die

Name : Lakhwinder Singh
Status : AIDS
Source : Contaminated syringe

Lakhwinder Singh a train driver is 54 years Ramgharia. He has studied upto matric and is presently living in Jammu. His wife Palwinder Kaur is a housewife. The couple is blessed with
three sons who are married and at present living separately with their own families. Both Lakhwinder and Palwinder are suffering from AIDS and presently they are on ART.

Lakhwinder Singh is a happy person, so he has achieved good status in his life. He always had maintained a good rapport and social relations with his co-workers. He gave good education to all his kids as a result now they are well settled and earn a good salary. So Lakhwinder decided to spend the rest of their life with their grand children after his retirement. In his daily job work life he stays out of house for six days in a week and spends only one day at home with his wife. Being a sincere man he was always loyal to his wife. One day while on work he felt uneasy and weak bodily. He went to a local hospital where he was diagnosed as HIV positive. He was shocked as most people on coming to know about their HIV positive status connect it with sexual relations only. They little know about the other routes of this illness. The doctor explained him everything and he tried to recall his past.

He remembered that once on his duty, he was not keeping well so he went to a local doctor. It was during winters when he met with this infection. The doctor gave him an injection saying that it would cure him to the earliest. He recovered very soon. He did not talk about this incidence with his family members thinking that they would worry unnecessarily.

A few months later he again faced the same problem along with some skin rashes. This time he went to civil hospital in Jammu along with his wife. He had to be admitted in the hospital for a day to get all the tests done. Here Lakhwinder was declared HIV positive, but the doctor did not inform him about anything. Instead he was told that his wife also had to undergo some medical examinations. They both were very surprised to know that what had her wife to do with the examinations. Unfortunately, Palwinder was also diagnosed as HIV positive. The couple was panic stricken on knowing their sero status. In tears Lakhwinder told the doctor about his route of transmission, how he was treated by a local doctor with an open syringe while he was on duty. Palwinder was depressed after hearing about the disease. She is not so concerned about her health as much as her husband’s. Being an ideal wife she always prayed for the longevity of her husband, but now both their lives were at par. They could see their end nearby. On the other hand Lakhwinder is a brave man. He thinks high heartedly. He consoled his wife by saying that if death is destined that way then they would die together as they are suffering the same disease. Lakhwinder and Palwinder have accepted their fate.
They decided to reveal everything to their children and spend the remaining life with them and enjoy the company of their grandchildren. Lakhwinder had an idea that their children will understand them and try to give them a good remaining life. Lakhwinder said that on knowing about their illness, their elder son refused to take them in with him saying that his children were too small. They may contact this virus. Moreover he said that they had good reputation in the society and the community would also disgrace them. He was feeling ashamed of his parents. Even his eldest daughter in law used all types of bad words for them. Similarly the other two sons and their wives refused to understand their problems and did not accept them in their families.

Lakhwinder said, “They have no concern about the health of their parents rather they are worried about their social status. Parents spend their entire life in the upbringing of their children, but once they are married, they show no sympathy towards their parents.”

**Case No 15 : A Sound Marriage Is Not Based On Complete Frankness; It Is Based On A Sensible Reticence**

*Name* : Harpreet Kaur  
*Status* : HIV positive  
*Source* : Spouse

Post graduate and presently working as a lecturer Harpreet Kaur is 39 years old Jat female. She is married to Avtar Singh, a graduate who was working as a Junior Engineer in electricity department. The duo has two children studying in class 8th and 10+1 respectively. Both Harpreet and Avtar are HIV positive.

The tale as told by Harpreet is very painful. After completing her MA in History she got appointment in a college as a lecturer. On the other hand Avtar Singh being a drug addict he had been expelled from the electricity department. He was irregular to his job. In her details Harpreet mentioned that her husband is sexually promiscuous and had illicit relations with many women and prostitutes. She knew all about her husband’s bad habits but she had no guts to question him as he usually abused her mentally and physically. He was also rude and abusive towards his children. He had no shame in raising hands on those innocent souls.
Once he locked his wife in room without any food and water for two days. He bought different women at home in her presence. The children also observed everything but remained silent for the fear of unknown punishment. He is totally dependent on Harpreet’s salary which she draws from her college. He takes half of her salary and spends on women and drugs. She could not question him fearing the consequences.

Few months back Harpreet went into depression and faced some psychiatric problems. She consulted a psychiatrist and revealed her past history. She told her husband’s drugs and womanizing habits. Besides prescribing some psychiatry medications the doctor also asked her to get some blood tests in which she was diagnosed as HIV positive. The tears had no end in Harpreet’s eyes. Being highly educated she could make out the route of transmission. She told her husband about her sero status and asked him to get his HIV test. This angered Avtar and said that he knows that he is not suffering from any disease and would not go for tests. This confirmed Harpreet’s doubts about Avtar being HIV positive. Once in bad state Avtar came to Harpreet and blamed her for giving him the AIDS. He also said that she had relations with other males when she went for her teaching. He explained her that he always used contraceptives as he was well aware of all these things; instead she is the one who went in for unsafe sex. The result being, both of them are HIV positive today. He was so conscious that he was not ready to take the blame on himself. He wanted to prove himself right and his wife wrong. He told her that he was not the culprit. Knowing very well about his sero status he always defended himself.

Harpreet has only one message for all women. She says, “I know that I contracted AIDS through my husband and his bad habits. It is my husband who had sexual relations outside the marriage. I am really ashamed of myself that I got married to such a person who has no respect for his wife and love for his children. I am a senior lecturer and if my students and college faculty members will interface the reality about my sero status, what impact it would leave on them. I am really struggling to survive under these circumstances. A woman has to live like a bonded labourer in this male dominated society. She is treated like a slave and used sexually and economically even by her husband. I strongly feel that a woman is just a sexual object for man and nothing else.”
Case No 16 : Man’s Character Is His Fate (Heraclitus)

Name : Sukhwinder Kaur
Status : HIV positive
Source : Illegitimate relationship

A matric passed Ramgharia women Sukhwinder Kaur is 24 years old. Regularly encompassing quarrels with her husband they got separated about a year back. She has two children and now she is living in separation from her in-laws and parental family. Presently she is residing with her paramour who is married and owns good property under his name.

Getting married to a Ramgharia boy at a young age of 20 was making difficult for Sukhwinder to adjust. She was not able to understand her role as a wife and daughter-in-law to take up all the responsibilities of her family. She always had a desire to lead a luxurious life. Her daily high expenditures built up new cases for regular quarrels in the family. She always desired for very expensive items. As her husband was unable to bear all those expenses, Sukhwinder decided to get separated.

During her days in the court, she came across a Jat male Kulwant Singh, a government incumbent (Patwari). He had good wealth under his credit. Kulwant was a married man with two children. He always wanted a courtesan who would give him intimate pleasure that he did not get from his wife. He bartered with Sukhwinder that if she would give him some sexual favours, he would be a guardian to her children. He bestowed expensive gifts on her and bought a small house for her. Gradually Sukhwinder became a keep for him and fulfilled all his desires. Few months later Kulwant asked her to bear a child for him in lieu of all this property as he has only two daughters.

Sukhwinder was in great dilemma since she was not sure that it would be a boy. Moreover it would not be a legitimate child. But all the wealth and luxuries attracted her and she agreed at last. Soon Sukhwinder found out that Kulwant was taking some medications. On verification of the medicine from a local chemist she was shocked to learn that he was suffering from AIDS. She had earlier heard about it and knew that it was a non curable disease. He had never shared this secret of his with Sukhwinder. By now she was already four months pregnant. She got her blood test done and came to know that she was also HIV positive. The thought of her other two children came to her and she regretted on her decision to commence relations with a
stranger because of wealth. She called her sister who was also living separately from her husband with her paramour. She informed her about her status of being HIV positive. On hearing from Sukhwinder, panic was also created in her life.

Sukhwinder was now worried about her two children as they were too young to survive alone in this world. In Sukhwinder’s words, she said, “I trusted Kulwant since he was a rich man and promised me to provide good financial support to my children. But he never disclosed to me about his HIV status. He created a fake reality of being normal and trapped me into relations by offering money. It was entirely my fault to trust an unknown person who seemed to be a pious person.”

Case No 17: A Dead Sinner Revised and Edited (The Devil’s Dictionary)

Name: Baljinder Singh
Status: HIV positive
Source: Extra Marital Affair

Baljinder Singh is a 48 years Jat male. He has studied up to matric and after that started working as an effective worker in a local Gurudwara. He was married and blessed with four sons and two daughters. Two of his sons are presently living in London and other two are established in Punjab. Presently he is living with his wife in a rural community and has earned excellence amongst the Gurudwara clique since he is Granthi (Chief Priest). He is a wealthy person and owns a huge farming land under his credit. He was promoted every time as he commenced as an efficacious worker and earned a good reputation.

Baljinder Singh is an optimistic person and believes in Waheguru (God). As he was suffering from some opportunistic infections and underwent some blood tests, he was declared HIV positive. According to him all human beings have an appetite for sex, a fact that cannot be denied. He said that his wife was too old; therefore, he always eyed other women. Baljinder was a good preacher and had a group of followers. He was addressed Gyani Ji (a learned man) by his followers.

A village Ramgharia woman Navneet had also joined his group of followers. She was abandoned by her in-laws after she became widow. After the tragic death of her husband who was a truck driver she came to live with her mother in the same village and often visited the
Gurudwara to pay her obeisance. Baljinder was constantly getting attracted towards Navneet but the fear of losing his prestigious status amongst his followers he was reluctant to converse with her.

With passage of time Navneet came very close to him and visited him quite often. She praised his personality and his closeness with God. Few days later Navneet put a desire to clean his room after the completion of Satsang (Discourse). During that time Baljinder went close to her and declared his love for her. He even told her that he wanted to have sexual relations with her. Navneet was panic stricken on hearing all this. She shouted at him and even threw tantrums. She told him that he should be ashamed of himself as she was of his daughter’s age. She even reminded him of his status in the Gurudwara and told that if his followers learnt about all this reality they would lose the faith that they had in him. She ran away and didn’t turn up for the next couple of days.

She turned up a few days later as she was badly in need of some money. She was ready to commence relations with him to get some financial assistance. The relationship between the duos continued for next six months after which Navneet discontinued her visits to the Gurudwara. This worried Baljinder. He came to know from other followers that she was suffering from AIDS and would not survive for long. Baljinder was shocked by this news. He started shivering and was in no position to talk properly.

On the other hand, Navneet left this material world following her ill health. Soon after her cremation, Baljinder went to her house to meet her grieve stricken mother. There he was informed that her husband had also expired because of AIDS which was very common amongst the truck drivers. In their village it was commonly known as Truckan Wali Bimari. He even came to know that Navneet knew the fact that she was the carrier of HIV. Hearing all this got goose bumps on Baljinder. He wanted to get himself diagnosed for HIV. The very next day he went to government hospital where he was declared as sero positive and later on with AIDS. He started repelling on his decision on having sexual relations with Navneet without knowing her past.

He mentioned that this was the penalty of his deeds from Waheguru since he perceived himself not less than a sinner and had opted for an immoral path. He did not reveal this to anyone in his family since he was afraid of any kind of problem within the family. Now he is worried about his reputation amongst the villagers. His followers would lose their faith and respect if
they would interface the reality of his being HIV positive. Lastly he said that, “I know that people who have AIDS have shorter life span but I am not afraid of death because all humans are mortal. However, dying due to AIDS will be a shameful death for me.”

Case No 18 : A Low Hedge Is Easily Leaped Over

Name : Radha
Status : AIDS
Source : Gang Rape

Radha a 21 years old deaf and dumb (speaking and listening impairment) scheduled caste girl is presently rehabilitating in a local charitable organization in Amritsar. She was found in Phagwara and then was handed over to women organization in Jalandhar. Later on, she was entrusted to a charitable organization in Amritsar as she was found HIV positive.

Radha is deaf and dumb by birth. Her background is not clear as she is unable to evoke about her past life. Nevertheless, she has revealed her background to the concerned individuals in charitable organization. Radha was retrieved from Phagwara by local police, where she had been a victim of a gang rape. The assailants were identified as a group of drug addicts who were involved in minor robberies and chain snatching business. Few of them were caught and relinquished to the police custody. According to the present source on sight, it was revealed that a few people took her in car and molested her. Later she was thrown to the nearby place. From a local rehabilitation centre, where she stayed for two months, she was transferred to women shelter home in Jalandhar due to non availability of professional aide who could handle her case. Before getting admission there she was screened for various blood tests.

Her being declared HIV positive created panic among the management of the women shelter home. They got worried about the other inmates who would stay with her. She was denied any assistance from staff members. Few days later, she was sent to a local charitable organization in Amritsar with all the provisions for disabled individuals. Furthermore, she was counselled by a group of intellects who were well trained in disability and rehabilitation. She was sent to Amritsar along with her file which gave a complete picture of her past history regarding her molestation episode in Phagwara, her medical reports showing her to be HIV positive and her stays in different shelter homes. Radha disclosed her story of molestation and rape in
conversation with the counsellor revealed. While disclosing about her family she mentioned about her brother and father but she was no more in touch with them. Her mother passed away when she was an infant. Now she had no contact with her family members as their whereabouts were not known to her.

Radha said that she was glad to live in this charitable hospital forever. Radha still get nightmares and is often haunted by her past memories. However, Radha does not know about the illness she is suffering from as she is illiterate. Sometimes she gets vexed by her bodily weakness. At present Radha is dependent on Anti Retroviral Treatment which is proving to be nectar for her because with the facilitation of ART, she is competent to battle this infirmity unaided. She is provided care and support from the charitable organization in Amritsar where she is taken care with proper food, shelter and medications.

(The whole story has been narrated by a professional counsellor who is working in the Charitable Organization for the last 7 years. As Rajni is deaf and mute, thus, can only understand the language of symbols and gestures).

Case No 19 : Who Comes Uncalled, Sits Unserved

Name : Sunil Kumar  
Status : HIV positive  
Source : Government Hospital

Helping and doing some social service has always been fruitful in one’s life. This type of situation arose for Sunil Kumar. But all good work is not always gifted with God’s blessings. It becomes a big drawback and in return affects our own life.

This is the life story of a 31 year old Hindu Brahmin boy Sunil Kumar. A post graduate and working in a call centre in Delhi, he is now settled in Amritsar. He was diagnosed as HIV positive. He lost his father a few years back. He and his old mother along with a younger brother were living very happily. But nature had other things in store for him. He had to shift to Amritsar to his other younger brother’s family after he was bitten by this dreadful disease. His sister who resides in Amritsar supports him financially and is looking for a suitable job for him.

Sunil Kumar had to quit his job in the call centre because of his colleagues. They came to know about his being HIV positive from an outer source. They used to humiliate him whenever
and wherever possible. Always liking the company of Sunil, his friends now started to avoid his presence and often neglect him.

The route of transmission was narrated by Sunil as follows. About seven months back, his younger brother who was living with him in Delhi met with a major road accident on his way to his college. He encountered many injuries and was admitted to the Government hospital in Delhi. In the general ward where one of the beds was occupied by his brother had many patients suffering from different ailments. On the neighbouring bed a patient got admitted who was badly wounded on the leg in an accident. Being in great pain he was shouting and howling. An intern doctor was sent to dress his leg. The doctor was not accompanied by any staff nurse or helper. The doctor asked Sunil to assist him by holding the leg. As Sunil had taken some leave from his work and was always by his brother’s bedside agreed to assist the doctor. He had got an opportunity to go in for some social service. He started doing work as the doctor advised him. As protective measure the doctor was wearing the surgical gloves but Sunil was holding the wounded leg with naked hands. After working for half an hour the wound was finally cleaned and dressed. The doctor asked Sunil to wash his hands as there was still blood on his hands.

On the request of his brother Sunil joined his job back as he was afraid of being sacked. Due to the odd timings of his job he visited his brother after a month in the hospital where he came to know that the patient for whom he had assisted the doctor had expired due to being an AIDS victim. Hearing this Sunil was in state of shock. He got frightened and wanted to get himself diagnosed for the same. In the same building of the hospital he went to the pathology laboratory. He gave his blood for examination as was asked to collect the report after few hours. All hell broke when he came to know that now he was also the carrier of HIV germ. On approaching the same intern doctor about why he was not advised to wear the gloves otherwise he could have refused to call him. Due to small negligence his life was ruined. Facing the world and his people around him had spread around that he had visited the red light areas of Delhi. His consciousness was provoking him continuously. Leaving everything behind he decided to leave for Amritsar with his mother and younger brother. Now his mother wants him to marry. He is speechless and ignores his mother on this topic every time. Keeping in mind his mother’s old age and all the hardships faced by her in life he is unable to inform her about the trauma that he is undergoing in his life.
Case No 20: Spare The Rod And Spoil The Child

Name: Raman
Status: HIV positive
Source: Injecting Drugs

This is the story of 27 years old Hindu Khatri boy Raman. He is a graduate and at present looking after the business of his father. His father is a well reputed man and is mostly on tours. Her mother is a housewife. Raman being the only child is very attached to his mother. His father often goes to US and Canada for business establishment. At times Raman also has to accompany him abroad. Few days back Raman was declared as HIV positive.

Since childhood Raman is a pampered child therefore he has never faced and experienced any difficulty in life. He never had to face any problem regarding money. He had friends who belonged to high class and rich families. Raman’s father never questioned him on how much money he was spending and where he was going. Raman never had to give any explanations about his whereabouts. His high society friends were mostly into drug business (peddlers) and all of them were drug addicts (IDUs).

Few years back, he was also trapped into the bad habit of taking injecting drugs with his friends. He even used oral drugs when injecting drugs were not available. His dose increased with the passage of time. He was also in relation with a girl and had promised to marry her one day. This fact was open to their families and they often visited each other as they lived nearby. With the passage of time few of his friends passed away and few scattered because of the fear of police raids. Raman had a childhood friend called Raghav who was forced by Raman into the habit of injecting drugs. One day Raman was not keeping well, so he went to his family doctor. He was immediately identified by the doctor as a drug addict. He was recommended by the doctor to go for HIV test. This frightened Raman as he knew about HIV/AIDS. He ran out of his clinic and took some medications from a chemist to relieve his tensions. He could not sleep the whole night as he was haunted by the thought of getting AIDS.

The next morning he again went to his family doctor who referred him to a private laboratory. He was declared HIV positive. He was shocked and shattered. He started shaking and was mute for a minute. He had no one to share his problem so he opened his heart in front of the laboratory technician. He informed Raghav about his sero status. Even Raghav was in for the
blood test and was declared as HIV positive. They were in deep waters as both of them were not in a position to inform their parents. Raghav was even engaged and now he was bothered about his fiancé. They were already engaged in sexual relations. Even Raman had spent nights with his paramour. They both lied to them and asked for their blood samples as they wanted to know their blood group. Both the girls had full faith on their boyfriends so they agreed to give their samples in a nearby laboratory. Both the girls were found to be HIV positive. Raman and Raghav started to live in guilt as they had ruined the lives of both girls. Raman was sure that if he would have had used his own syringe, instead of sharing it with others he could have been safe from this disease.

Lastly Raman stated, “I strongly believe that those guys were HIV positive because that was the first time I had used injecting drugs. I feel that this is retribution of God who has punished me by giving this fatal illness. The name of HIV/AIDS haunts people and now I am a carrier by myself.”

The presented cases throw considerable light on the life of PLWHA and depict the way people construct the reality of their own by incorporating their past experience and knowledge. The findings also highlight the different ways of HIV/AIDS transmission (Case No 4, 6, 9, 11, 14, 19) as against the prejudiced notion of society towards the single mode of transmission which also results in blaming PLWHA for their illness. But despite of that their innocence is condemned and attribution of being sexual promiscuous is deliberately assigned to them. It clearly depicts the way our social structure is deeply involved in traditional customs and cultural practices which forbid the maturation of their conceptual understanding. Few cases (Case No 1, 5, 7, 8, 13, 15) also depict the way people craft the reality of their own. The reality formation in most of the cases starts from their own family and the deceptive appearances do not give any space to peep into the subjectivity involved within the spectrum of intimate relationships. Majority of them show that women are the innocent and silent victims of this illness even though they have no active role to play in contracting this illness. For instance, case no 10 and 18 clearly show that women were victimized by their husbands and in-laws. They were left deserted from their family of procreation and were bound to live in exile from them as they were held culprit for proliferation of this illness to their husbands.

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