Whenever we see a polio patient with deformity we should hang our heads in shame. This ought not to have happened.

Prevention is better than cure is not a cliche; it is the bedrock of public health activities. Immunization is one of the most cost effective means of preventing infectious diseases. The impact is evident in the global eradication of small pox. 50 years back could anyone have imagined that this scourge will be eliminated from the world? The success of small pox vaccination has removed the need for this vaccination for international travelers. This has been also largely achieved in the control of polio and just a little push is required to get rid of this disease worldwide.

Measles is also on the way out, especially in the developed world.

**What is immunization?**

In ancient time, Thucydides noted that people surviving the epidemics of plague in Athens were spared during the later outbreaks of the same disease. This shows when a person suffers from a certain disease the body reacts in some way to protect him from the same disease. i.e. immunity is produced. Hence the idea of immunization.

Can we artificially produce a mild disease in a person so that he gets a life long protection and immunity against the disease? A great landmark in the history of immunization is the observation of Edward Jenner that milkmaids who develop cow pox appeared to be immune to small pox. Hence he developed the idea of infecting people with cowpox, which is a mild disease, so that they are protected against the deadly small pox. The rest is history.

At present we use both dead organism and attenuated live organism for immunization. The most commonly done immunization in children in India are BCG, Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and measles. Immunization against typhoid is a common procedure the only disadvantage being is the immunity is short lived, and needs repetition.

Hepatitis B vaccination is important since Hepatitis B may produce chronic hepatitis, which is difficult to treat, and in some cases may lead to liver cancer. Here the cost factor is a problem. HIB vaccine against H. influenza, which may cause meningitis, is at present very costly. Vaccination against varicella (chicken pox) and Hepatitis A (which causes mild form of jaundice) is useful, but not fully accepted, as many people believe that we can afford to suffer these mild illnesses.

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**Editor’s Column**

It gives me great pleasure to present the second edition of Niramaya Newsletter.

There has been a lot of activity at Niramaya in the first three months of 2007. We have acquired a large Tata van for conducting community health checkup camps, especially in far-flung areas and in areas where there are no spaces available. The van is also a great advocacy tool for Niramaya’s activities in the community.

International Women’s Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm on 8th March 2007, at two places - one, a school in Shivaji Nagar with children as participants and another, a ‘Sports Fest’ at Dalvi Maidan in Sion, with women and adolescent girls from the community.

Our outreach work, both in shelter homes as well as for street children, is expanding and requests are still coming in not only for health camps but also for health education and counseling services.

Our commitment this year is to contribute towards making India ANEMIA FREE. We also seek to educate adolescents on sexuality issues and promote health-seeking behavior among them.

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Dr. Janaki Desai...
The use of combined vaccines has made things simpler. One common misconception is that a child having a cold should not be vaccinated. Minor illness is not a contraindication to immunization process.

Access to Immunization:

Four major barriers to infant and childhood immunization in India:
1. Low public awareness and lack of public demand for immunisation.
2. Inadequate access to immunization services
3. Missed opportunities to administer vaccines
4. Inadequate resources.

One important point to be noted is that non-maintenance of cold chain during transportation of polio vaccines has led to immunization failure. The government as well as the voluntary organizations have to make immunization available to all, to address these problems.

There is a tendency to think that disease prevention with vaccines as a strategy is only for children but adults also require immunization. Examples are Influenza vaccine, especially for the elderly, tetanus toxoid for pregnant women to avoid death due to neonatal tetanus and for all.

Herd immunity

It is not necessary to immunize every person in order to stop transmission of an infectious agent through a population. If a high percentage of a population is immunized, everyone benefits. This is called herd immunity.

As a direct consequence of success of immunization, vaccine preventable diseases have become less visible. This situation ought not to make the caregivers and the government complacent.

New types of vaccines

The second generation vaccines uses molecular genetics. One conceptual leap is the production of transgenic plants expressing protective vaccine antigens. The molecules causing the production of antibodies can be genetically engineered into potatoes or bananas. These when ingested orally, induce immune response. This will avoid problems of maintaining the cold chain and avoid injections.

Another big step forward is DNA vaccines. The gene containing the sequence for immunogenic protein is introduced into the person. This is taken up by the person’s cell and immunity is produced.

But many more vaccines are required. A pressing need is for an HIV vaccine. Vaccines for protozoa like amoebiasis and helminths that affect a large percentage of the world population have been difficult to develop and remain only a hope for the future. Another problem in the production of vaccines is the lack of interest in the drug industry due to the high cost and poor sales. This may need a big public initiative to keep vaccine production going.

It is up to us to support the vaccination programmes and make India free of communicable diseases.

(Awck: Some data taken from Harrison’s Text Book of Medicine.)

Dr. K. S. Vardhachary... (Chairperson, Niramaya Health Foundation)

An AIDS Vaccine Could Have an Enormous Effect

Scientists are working hard to develop a vaccine to prevent HIV. It is likely that the first generation of successful HIV vaccines will offer some form of protection, but they will not be entirely protective (as no vaccine is one hundred percent effective). Future generations of a preventive HIV vaccine will become increasingly more effective over time as scientific knowledge improves.

Even partially effective vaccines could make a difference by:
- protecting some vaccinated individuals against HIV infection;
- reducing the probability that a vaccinated individual who later becomes infected will transmit the infection to others; or
- slowing the rate of progression to AIDS for those who later become infected with HIV.

IAVI estimates that - even assuming that other programs for treatment and prevention have been scaled up - an HIV vaccine could substantially alter the course of the AIDS pandemic and reduce the number of people newly infected, even if vaccine efficacy and population coverage levels are relatively low.

A vaccine that could reduce the number of new infections by 20% to 80% would produce enormous health and economic benefits and could help to dramatically curtail the pandemic.

Contributed by Sameer Salvi...
(Source: www.iavi.org)
On 6th February 2007 Niramaya held a function for the inauguration of our new Tata 410 van. The program began with the lighting of ceremonial lamps by chief guest Mr. Narendra Popat, an NRI, Mrs. Jyoti Popat, Dr. Vardhachary and Dr. Janaki Desai. Mr. Popat in his memorable speech spoke on the theme that Service to man is service to God and every human being must strive to make the world a better place for his fellow beings. He expressed his satisfaction with the work done by the earlier van and hoped that the bigger van would be used to provide health care to larger population.

On the same day Niramaya launched its quarterly magazine called “Niramaya Newsletter”. The first issue was released by Dr. K.S. Vardhachary. A cultural programme was held on this occasion where children from Pratham shelter and our health workers participated. Five representatives of schools that participated in Niramaya’s SPARSH programme were felicitated. They in turn spoke of the crying need for such programs.

Niramaya thanks Mr. Narendra Popat and PUSA for their donation towards purchase of the Van.
International Women’s Day (IWD) is celebrated on 8th March every year. The idea of an International Women’s Day first arose at the beginning of the 20th Century, which in the industrialized world was a period of expansion and turbulence, booming population growth and radical ideologies. The first IWD was observed on 28th February 1909 in the United States and later changed to 8th March.

Every year, on this day, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate their achievements. While there are many large-scale initiatives, women in various parts of the world celebrate the day via a rich and diverse fabric of local activity ranging from political rallies, business conferences, government activities, NGO activities and networking events such as local women’s craft markets, theatric performances, etc.

On the occasion of “International Women’s Day” Niramaya organized a Sport Fest at Dalvi Garden, Sion, Mumbai for adolescent girls and women in a community. 108 women and girls relieved their childhood by actively participating in various outdoor games like running, skipping, threading the needle, quiz, memory game were held. Dr. Shamla Dupte addressed the participants on the importance of women’s day and the need for women empowerment and fight against gender discrimination. Our chief guest Mrs. Jamna Vardhachary awarded the winners prizes.

A special Adolescent Fest was organized in Dnyansampada High School at Shivaji Nagar, Govandi. 36 girls from Class IX actively participated in competitions like essay writing on two topics (Women & Health, Role of Women in today Society), Mehendi designs and long jump. 60 boys participated in a drawing competition on the topic of role of women in society (past & present). Teachers of the school played musical chairs enthusiastically and energetically and felt like “Students again!” The first and second winners were given prizes. We are proud to carry the first prize-winning essay in this newsletter. The celebration concluded with talks on the importance of women’s day by Dr. Janaki Desai and the Principal of the school.
Niramaya gratefully acknowledges the local donors who helped to make this day a huge success.
Success Story

Seventeen-year-old Santosh Vargate looks older than his age. He has difficulty in opening the mouth also has a swelling in the buccal cavity and is waiting for the doctor’s opinion. Looking back Santosh recalls how he started consuming Gutkha. He was then fourteen. His friend had given him a packet of Gutkha, which was available at Re.1/-.

Initially he felt hesitant, but as days passed in to years the amount of Gutkha consumption increased to 20 packets daily. One day Santosh happened to attend an audiovisual presentation on addiction conducted in the community by Niramaya’s team and saw that how consuming tobacco can lead to oral cancer. He got frightened and queried the doctor during the session on his ailment and it can be due to his Gutkha consumption and whether he has to undergo investigation. From that day on Santosh has pledged to stop consuming Gutkha and still does so as reported on follow up by our health workers.
आजच्या समाजात स्त्रीचे स्थान

स्त्री व पुरुष हे समाजाचे दोन आधारस्त्र आहेत, दोन पाय आहेत. एक पाय जर आपण भरद्वाज तेव्हा, तर समाज आपातील करा शकेल काय? या स्वार्थी समाजात जितके महत्त्व व पुरुषांना दिले जाते, तिचे प्राधान्य व तिच्या नेतृत्वाचा फारक करती आहेत. संसारात संशोधनातील जाहीरदार त्यऱ्या स्थितीमध्ये परामर्श देण्याचा विषय आंतरराष्ट्रीय आधारकार्यांक नाही का?

सहिष्णूता व आदर्श यासारी प्रविष्टी असलेल्या या भारत देशात हंडकबंधी, सार्वजनिक, सती अशा प्रदूषित घटना वाढावर कैसा पहाडायत? सर्वा तत्कालीन जबकीच सार्वजनिक घटनांची स्थितीच्या गंभीरतेनुसरून आणणीच अनद्वितीय दुसऱ्या करावे जाते. या घटनांना स्थिती कचऱ्या बदलत असते. मूलभूत ज्ञानी, तो निवट त्यऱ्या आईविडियोंचा हंडकबंधी क्षण! ही प्रथा आणा सामान्यतः मानसिक जयांग्र घातली. त्यऱ्या मूळतील परिक्रमा ध्यानात असता, तर मुगला मूळ: त्यऱ्या त्यऱ्यांचा दिवा! त्यऱ्या शुद्धभाषकलीन जीवनाचा आर्थार व मूळती वाढ शांती उपलब्ध न शकणारे आईविडियोत त्यऱ्या विवाद बालगणीच करता.

बालवयात त्यऱ्या स्त्रीता गर्भाधारण पटकारील वागते. त्यऱ्यावर किंवा माया-लेकरचे आर्थ्य धोका दाखणावे बनते. पूर्ण तर परत मेहनतच त्यऱ्या स्त्रीता जन्ममंत्रांचा अभिव्यूह करू नवीन देत नसे. तिला पातळीवर त्यऱ्या जन्माव्या अनुसार त्यऱ्या वालिका हातात दिलेले लागते. तिला दुसऱ्या विवाद करण्याचा अभिव्यूह नसे. कालक्रमनाच्या ध्येयानुसार अनुवाद प्रथा नसते हेच जितना; पण एक प्रथा आजी धर्माचा धार्मिक आहे आणि परत मूळजे ‘हंडकबंधी’! मूळिचा जन्म बालवयातवर त्यऱ्या आईविडियोंचा काम प्राप्त करतो. किंवेके गर्वाचा धरती तर या हंडकबंधी अनुस चेकीपायी किंवेके मूळजे आणणीच अविवादात रहावते.

सर्वा तर सर्वत्र ‘बलकार वा अमानूष वार्तामुळे स्वतंत्रतेचा मनावर पहावी विशिष्टतीची कोणती जबाबदार आहे? पुरुषपुरुषाचे मूळजे अवलोकने ह्या त्यऱ्याचे मनावर पुरुषांच्या दादूसून भाले असे. तिला नेहमीच कोणताच न कोणताच आधार च्याचा अर्थावर वाचाले. त्यऱ्या तिच्या तिचं तत्त्वातीच आणि तत्त्वावर वाचाले पुरुषाचा. ती ‘प्रतिशती बाहील’ मूळजे तिला ‘देवता’ या शर्यांनी संसूचित, तर सोळ्याचारी मूळजे तिला चार मित्रदेशा त्यऱ्यांना कोणतें जाते. तुम्हाला संसारात विवाद जगतील जळणवाने नाही या, त्यऱ्याकडून पुरुषांचे स्वार्थ होतो.

प्रत्येक सीतेही श्रीमाणन्दांनी बांधा वृत्तचा बनवत भोगाला. ती देखील एका मूळजे होती. तिला तिच्या पश्चिमवाणीची तांत्रिक परिस्थिती घातावर: पण तर निर्वाचन समाजसाठी श्रीमाणन्दांची निर्वाचनी एका स्त्रीची साधक सोडली. अन्य तर प्रत्येक तीनांला धार्मिकताची एकूण वाहणे लागले.

‘न स्त्री स्वातंत्र्य अहृत!’

हे वचन शतकपुष्करण्यांचा त्यऱ्या स्त्रीता मनावर दाशस्वत्वाचा आहे. सामान्य आईविडियो पुढे जागतिक स्त्री निर्वाचनाचे मानवीय स्वातंत्र्य, सर्वांना जाणले आहे. त्यऱ्या जाणले आहे क्या? त्यऱ्या जाणले आहे कण संभवत तर त्यऱ्या जाणले आहे कण संभवत तर त्यऱ्या जाणले आहे कण संभवत तर त्यऱ्या जाणले आहे कण संभवत.

त्यऱ्या जाणले आहे कण कण कण कण \n
माघुरी लतन बागुल...ño

(निवार्दी ज्ञानसंपर्क विद्यालय, गोवळी)
VOLUNTEER SPEAKS

ON CHILD LABOUR

Child labour has far reaching repercussions on the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children. Being the most vulnerable section of the population, working children are exposed to many forms of exploitation. 70% of working children come from poor families and work for more than 7 hours in a day. They are forced to work for long hours, worsening the problem of malnutrition, which leads to deterioration in their physical & mental health which ultimately shortens his life span.

Occupational hazards faced by working children are mainly the following:

1. Intrinsic hazardous occupation are those jobs which by their very nature can harm the health and well-being of the child and may even cause death. For e.g. work in mines, in chemical factories, on construction sites, making fireworks, matches, glass, balloons, locks, etc. where the likelihood of accidents is relatively high. Other occupations like rag picking involve working in rubbish dumps where the danger of contracting tetanus is very high.

2. Environmental - The workplaces are overcrowded and ill-ventilated, lack basic health care and sanitation facilities and preventive measures against industrial accidents.

3. A third type of hazard arises not from the nature of the occupation but the fact that children are vulnerable and are unable to fight for their rights. Occupations like domestic work, working in dhabas, hawking, shoe-shining, etc. For example, children working in homes and dhabas work for long hours and are often severely punished for small mistakes. Children left on the streets fend for themselves are exploited, abused and misused by anti-social elements for a variety of illegal activities.

Working children are unable to participate in leisure or recreational activities and therefore lose the psycho-social benefits of play. Ill-equipped yet forced to play adults roles from tender age, they soon pick up habits like smoking, drinking and using drugs. They are also hurled into undesirable and antisocial activities like gambling and stealing. Most working children do not have time to go to school, they remain illiterate with little chance of upward mobility or of freeing themselves from the oppressive and exploitative environment.

Prachi...

Recent News
Ban on Sexual Education
As we go to press the Maharashtra State Government has on April 3rd, imposed a ban on sex education books prescribed by the Central Board of secondary education.

Niramaya Health foundation feels strongly against this ban. We believe every child must be sensitized towards his/her sexuality. For the past two years, we have been conducting SPARSH programme for classes IX & Xth at the behest of schools which have felt the need for sex education for their students. Our programme has been extremely well received by teachers and students alike and we continue to receive request for more sessions of the programme.

Catch this space in our next issue...

Help us

Your support by way of donations could greatly help us improve the services rendered. All donations made to Niramaya are entitled to 50% tax exemption under section 80G of the Income Tax Act. Niramaya invites you to join hands with us by contributing in any of the following ways:

» General monetary contributions - any amount is welcome.
» Infrastructure - office space, vehicle, computers, printers, etc.
» Medicines & medical instruments/supplies.

Cheques should be made out to “Niramaya Health Foundation” and mailed to our office.

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