

## Awareness of Aids Control and Sexual Behavior of Youth in A Town of Assam State

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**ABSTRACT** Acquired Immune Deficiency is a menace. As it is an incurable epidemic and prevention is the only way to keep anyone safe from this monster disease. In this paper an attempt has been made to find out knowledge level and practices of AIDS control besides the sexual practices among the youth in the age group of 18-25, which is a vulnerable group, in the town of Silchar in Assam. The study has revealed that while about 75 percent of the respondents out of a total sample of 200 have heard of the word AIDS only, half of them have heard of the word HIV. Hardly 11 percent of the total respondents have at least 75 percent knowledge of AIDS. One third of the respondents, both male and female are active in hetero sexual behavior. Only 7 percent of them use condom or used to use regularly while 10 percent of them used rarely. It has also been observed that those who are deviant in the sexual behavior are less exposed to media; thus they are at higher risk.

### INTRODUCTION

“Health for all by the year 2000” The slogan was raised about half a decade ago with the conviction that all the deadly diseases would be conquered by the year 2000. Unfortunately, it was not known to mankind that their effort would go in vain because of a nuisance, invisible killer ‘Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome’ (AIDS). As a fatal infectious disease, it appeared in the mid-eighties and stands as a challenge to humanity. As evident by its name AIDS is not a single disease but is a failure of the body’s immune system that leaves the affected persons vulnerable to a variety of total diseases. The cause of AIDS, HIV1 and HIV2, is transmitted through bodily fluids and lasts in the body for life, even though the person carrying it may not show any signs of illness until 6 months to 7 or more years after initial infection. Studies by Balaji and Shivilal reveals the fact that most victims are drug users who share contaminated needles, homosexual and bisexual men, people who have received infected blood and infants who are infected in the womb or during birth from infected mother (Balaji and Shivilal, 1994).

In India, first AIDS case was identified in Mumbai in 1986 and HIV positive cases in Chennai later AIDS cases were detected in Mumbai, Chennai and Manipur. At present AIDS cases are found in almost all the states. Data available from National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) as on 31st March, 2002, reveal that there are 32,326 AIDS cases in India.

Among these 32,326 cases 23,931 are male and 8431 female (Internet, 25th April, 1999). It is very sad to note that among these AIDS victims 1317 cases are children within the age group of 0-14 years. North East India ranks top most among the AIDS prone areas in India. It is mainly due to the proximity to the notorious golden triangle from where the contrabands have been porting in through its porous border. Inject able form of drug use is a common practice among the addicts in this region (Suman 1999). Manipur ranks top among the HIV infected states of North East region, with the highest number of HIV/AIDS infected persons among the seven sisters. The numbers of HIV cases by 31st March 2002 in North East are: Manipur-1095, Nagaland - 235, Mizoram - 20, Assam - 149, Meghalaya - 198 and no case is reported in Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh till date. Churachandpur in Manipur witnessed the highest number of deaths related to HIV and AIDS within the state, (Internet 25th April, 2002). State-wise HIV prevalence levels in these states are Manipur 56.26 percent, Assam 1.49 percent, Nagaland 5.50 percent, Meghalaya 1.39 percent, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh 0 percent. Information available with District Person Responsible for AIDS Management (DISPRAM) Silchar, 5 cases of AIDS are found in Barak Valley as of today. Of these 5 cases 3 cases are detected, one in each district of Cachar, Karimganj, and Hailakandi and two are extremists under prison in Silchar Jail. Some more HIV cases are expected to come if all the blood samples are screened properly. But due to reasons of under screening

of blood samples, lack of equipment, lack of finances, and some socio-economic constraints proper survey has not been done. It is clear from above that AIDS is a menace in this region due to high propensity to consume intravenous drugs, resulting in the increase incidences of HIV/AIDS in the states of Manipur and Mizoram (DISPRAM, Silchar 1999).

In the absence of cure to AIDS, the effective solutions remain with prevention. The first step for prevention of the disease is that one should be aware of the disease. Without being aware of it one would not be able to take any preventive step. The level of awareness is absolutely necessary to design strategies for various means that the infections should be disseminated.

Though level of awareness of AIDS is so crucial, there have been very few studies across the country, particularly in the North Eastern region. According to Sivaraman (2002), the level of awareness of AIDS is as high as 70 percent in urban India and only around 30 percent in rural areas. As World Bank report shows that about 79 percent of the women in rural Bihar, 75 percent in rural Gujrat and 72 percent in rural Calcutta have no basic awareness of the epidemic (Kaushal, 2003). In a study conducted in Jamnagar city, Gujrat among school going 620 boys and 380 girls studying class XI and class XII in schools, it is found that the level of AIDS awareness in between 30 - 46 percent (Raizanda et al., 2004) only Bhelon and Jayaram (2003) report from their study covering 151 girls and 162 boys in the age group of 13 - 19 studying in high school, intermediate and graduate classes in a rural area of Maharashtra that only 46.9 percent of them have heard about AIDS. The second National Family Health survey found that only 18 percent non literate women have heard of HIV while 54 percent of women with a primary level education had heard of so (UNDP report 2004). In a survey of 50 men in the age group of 17 - 39 in Dhanbad coal fields it is found that only 60 percent have heard about AIDS (Singh, 2002). Thus, the above brief review of literature shows that the level of awareness differs between rural and urban population, men and women and also between educated and literate. Further, there is a wide gap between the "Hearing" of HIV and AIDS and actual knowledge about HIV and AIDS.

India is purely sand witched between the "golden triangle", and the "golden crescent" that produce 95 percent of the world's heroin. And,

Assam in general and Silchar town particularly remains in the buffer zone very close to Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland. Therefore it is felt that survey on the awareness of HIV and AIDS in Silchar would provide bench mark data, so as to make necessary measure to step up the awareness.

Standing on agrarian social structure Silchar, the capital town of Barak Valley, emerged in the 19th Century as an important urban centre surrounded by hillocks and situated against the scenic background of 'Borail Hill' and on the bank of meandering Borail hills. Its boundary consists of Borail hills on the north, Mizo Hills on the South, Manipur on the East and Bangladesh on the West. It has a population of 1, 15,183 according to 1991 census report (Census report of 2001 is not available with Silchar municipality). It is predominantly Bengalee speaking population who migrated from Bangladesh specially Srihatta district after partition. Apart from Bengalee Hindus and Muslims, a substantial number of Bishnupriya Manipuri and Hindi speaking people inhabit the town. Silchar is one of the few cities of Northeast where a small segment of people speak Punjabi, Oriya, Telugu and Tamil. They are conglomerated here to serve in different institutions like University, Regional Engineering College, Silchar Medical College, Central School and other different central government departments like Army, B.S.F., Air force, Railways and Customs etc. Silchar is the only corridor to enter Mizoram and is connected with Manipur by road and rail. Because of this geographical situation it welcomes many people from these two states every day.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey was conducted during 2000 among the youth of 18 to 25 years to gather relevant data on the sexual behaviour and awareness of AIDS. At first wards of the town were selected using random number table. Initially it was decided to collect 20 samples of 10 literates and 10 illiterates and in each category there would be 5 male and 5 female respondents. But when the data collection started very shortly problem arose. It was to find required number of illiterate youth especially in the central areas of the town. Therefore the short fall of the illiterate, sample was covered from slum areas of the town. The respondents were selected using 'Snowball Technique'. The data were collected using structured interview technique with the help of a

pre-tested schedule. The schedule consisted of various aspects covering different age groups, caste identity, marital status, education, occupation, family income and family type of respondents. Respondent's awareness and knowledge about AIDS were tested through different questions on AIDS. To find out their AIDS control and practice, different set of questions on the control of AIDS were asked. Similarly questions were asked about sexual and deviant behaviour of them. To know their sources of knowledge questions regarding the media habits of the respondents were asked.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**(1) Background of the Respondents:** Sex-wise distribution of the sample shows equal distribution of male (104) and female (96) respondents (52 percent and 48 percent respectively). Most of the male respondents are in

the age group of 24-25 years and female 18-20 years. Occupation wise, the male are bread-winners though a substantial number of female contribute to the family income. Out of 200 respondents 133 are unmarried, of them 81 are male (60.9 percent) and 52 are female (39.0 percent). From the age wise distribution, married respondents are within the age group of 24-25 years. However, a few are found married below 24 years (22.0 percent). Majority of the respondents hail from lower middle class but in the category of caste most of them belong to Kayastha followed by scheduled castes and other backward classes. About 61 percent of the respondents hail from nuclear families. Of them Kayasthas are highest in number (67.7 percent). Among the Brahmins more than 49 percent of the respondents are from nuclear families and most of them are from lower middle income groups. Existence of joint family is common in the families where income is above Rs. 15,000 per month (Table1).

**Table 1: Background of respondents**

| Category                       | Age     |          |         |          |         |          |       |          |
|--------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|-------|----------|
|                                | 18 - 20 |          | 21 - 22 |          | 23 - 25 |          | Total |          |
| Sex                            |         |          |         |          |         |          |       |          |
| Male                           | 34      | (45.3)   | 25      | (44.6)   | 45      | (65.2)   | 104   | (52.0)   |
| Female                         | 41      | (54.7)   | 31      | (55.4)   | 24      | (34.8)   | 96    | (48.0)   |
| Education                      |         |          |         |          |         |          |       |          |
| Illiterate                     | 41      | (54.7)   | 25      | (44.6)   | 34      | (49.3)   | 100   | (50.0)   |
| Primary                        | 8       | (10.7)   | 3       | (5.4)    | 3       | (4.3)    | 14    | (7.0)    |
| Secondary                      | 18      | (24.0)   | 11      | (19.6)   | 16      | (23.2)   | 45    | (22.5)   |
| Graduate and above             | 8       | (10.7)   | 17      | (30.4)   | 16      | (23.2)   | 41    | (20.5)   |
| Occupation                     |         |          |         |          |         |          |       |          |
| Student & unemployed           | 48      | (64.0)   | 36      | (64.3)   | 23      | (33.3)   | 107   | (53.5)   |
| Business & Self employed       | 16      | (21.3)   | 19      | (33.9)   | 35      | (50.7)   | 70    | (35.0)   |
| Govt. Service, Private Service | 11      | (14.7)   | 1       | (1.8)    | 11      | (15.9)   | 23    | (11.5)   |
| Monthly Income (in Rs.)        |         |          |         |          |         |          |       |          |
| <5000.00                       | 64      | (85.3)   | 40      | (71.4)   | 52      | (75.4)   | 156   | (78.0)   |
| 5,000 to 15,000                | 9       | (12.0)   | 12      | (21.4)   | 15      | (21.7)   | 36    | (18.0)   |
| 15,000>                        | 2       | (2.7)    | 4       | (7.1)    | 2       | (2.9)    | 8     | (18.0)   |
| Marital Status                 |         |          |         |          |         |          |       |          |
| Married                        | 16      | (21.3)   | 15      | (26.8)   | 36      | (52.2)   | 67    | (33.5)   |
| Unmarried                      | 59      | (78.7)   | 41      | (73.2)   | 33      | (47.8)   | 133   | (56.5)   |
| Caste                          |         |          |         |          |         |          |       |          |
| Brahmin                        | 5       | (6.7)    | 3       | (5.4)    | 7       | (10.1)   | 15    | (7.5)    |
| Kayastha                       | 36      | (48.0)   | 29      | (51.8)   | 28      | (40.6)   | 93    | (46.5)   |
| SC and OB Caste                | 32      | (42.7)   | 24      | (42.9)   | 31      | (44.9)   | 87    | (43.5)   |
| Muslims                        | 2       | (2.7)    | 3       | (4.3)    | 5       | (2.5)    |       |          |
| Social Background              |         |          |         |          |         |          |       |          |
| Low                            | 35      | (46.7)   | 7       | (12.5)   | 7       | (10.1)   | 49    | (24.5)   |
| Middle                         | 40      | (53.3)   | 46      | (82.1)   | 53      | (76.8)   | 139   | (69.5)   |
| High                           |         |          | 3       | (5.4)    | 9       | (13.0)   | 12    | (6.0)    |
| Total                          | 75      | (100.00) | 56      | (100.00) | 69      | (100.00) | 200   | (100.00) |

SC: Scheduled Caste

OBC: Other Backward Class

(Percentage in parenthesis)

**(2) Knowledge about AIDS:** To the question “Have you heard about AIDS”? the replies indicate that 75 percent of the respondents have heard of it. Almost all the male respondents have heard about it. Contrary to hearing of AIDS only a few people have heard of HIV. Respondents who heard of HIV constitute only 10.7 percent of the total respondents. Their sex wise distribution reveals the fact that approximately 30 percent of the respondents of both the sexes have heard of HIV. Scheduled caste and other backward class respondents are least informed than any other caste. All most all the literate respondents have heard about AIDS while 56 percent of the illiterates have heard of it also (Table 2). The above data indicate that general awareness 95 percent in Silchar is better as studies by Siveram reveals the fact that there is 70 percent of awareness in rural India. However, studies by Bhalwan and Jayaram reveals, awareness of Silchar town is far below as it starts (99 percent and above) compared to the rural youth of Maharashtra.

Only 16 respondents (8 percent) know the full form of AIDS. Those who know the full form of AIDS, majority of them are within the age group

**Table 2: Respondents who have heard about AIDS/HIV, by age, sex, marital status, education and caste**

| Category              | AIDS       | HIV       | N   |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|-----|
| <i>Age</i>            |            |           |     |
| 18-20                 | 50 (66.7)  | 23 (30.7) | 75  |
| 21-23                 | 45 (80.4)  | 21 (37.5) | 56  |
| 24-25                 | 54 (78.3)  | 24 (34.8) | 69  |
| Total                 | 149 (74.5) | 68 (34.0) | 200 |
| <i>Sex</i>            |            |           |     |
| Male                  | 89 (85.6)  | 38 (36.5) | 104 |
| Female                | 60 (62.5)  | 39 (31.5) | 96  |
| Total                 | 149 (62.5) | 68 (34.0) | 200 |
| <i>Marital Status</i> |            |           |     |
| Married               | 34 (50.7)  | 7 (10.7)  | 67  |
| Unmarried             | 115 (86.5) | 61 (45.9) | 133 |
| Total                 | 149 (74.5) | 68 (34.0) | 200 |
| <i>Education</i>      |            |           |     |
| Illiterate            | 56 (56.0)  | 7 (7.3)   | 100 |
| Primary               | 10 (71.4)  | 2 (14.3)  | 14  |
| Secondary             | 44 (97.8)  | 29 (64.4) | 45  |
| Graduation and above  | 39 (95.1)  | 30 (73.2) | 41  |
| Total                 | 149 (74.5) | 68 (34.0) | 200 |
| <i>Caste</i>          |            |           |     |
| Brahmin               | 8 (53.3)   | 10 (66.7) | 15  |
| Kayastha              | 42 (45.2)  | 81 (87.1) | 93  |
| SC and OBC            | 17 (19.5)  | 54 (62.1) | 87  |
| Muslim                | 1 (20.0)   | 4 (80.0)  | 5   |
| Total                 | 149 (74.5) | 68 (34.0) | 200 |

SC: Scheduled Caste

OBC: Other Backward Class

(Percentage in parenthesis)

of 18-20 years. Among the male 10.6 percent and among the female 5.2 percent only know the full form of AIDS. It is seen that married ones are least informed as only 1.5 percent respondents know the full form of AIDS only (Table 3). It is observed that electronic media, that is, Television is the most common source of information for both literate and illiterate, respondents (Table 4).

**Table 3: Respondents knowing the full form of AIDS by age, sex and marital status**

| Category              | Know      | Don't know | Total       |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| <i>Age</i>            |           |            |             |
| 18-20                 | 5 (31.2)  | 70 (38.0)  | 75 (37.5)   |
| 21-23                 | 6 (37.5)  | 50 (27.2)  | 56 (28.0)   |
| 24-25                 | 5 (31.3)  | 64 (34.8)  | 69 (34.5)   |
| <i>Sex</i>            |           |            |             |
| Male                  | 11 (10.6) | 93 (89.4)  | 104 (52.0)  |
| Female                | 5 (5.2)   | 91 (94.8)  | 96 (48.0)   |
| <i>Marital Status</i> |           |            |             |
| Married               | 1 (1.5)   | 66 (98.5)  | 67 (100.0)  |
| Unmarried             | 15 (1.2)  | 118 (88.8) | 133 (100.0) |
| Total                 | 16 (8.0)  | 184 (92.0) | 200 (100.0) |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

**Table 4: Sources of Information on Aids**

| Source              | Illiterate | Literate  | Total      |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Friend              | 10 (10.0)  | 27 (27.0) | 37 (18.5)  |
| Wall poster         | 1 (1.0)    | 10 (10.0) | 11 (5.5)   |
| Newspaper           | 12 (12.0)  | 31 (31.0) | 32 (16.0)  |
| Television          | 55 (55.0)  | 83 (83.0) | 138 (69.0) |
| Radio               | 15 (15.0)  | 5 (5.0)   | 20 (10.0)  |
| Cinema              | 1 (1.0)    | 2 (2.0)   | 3 (1.5)    |
| Magazine            | 1 (1.0)    | 13 (13.0) | 14 (7.0)   |
| N.G.O. Worker       | 7 (7.0)    | 0 (0.0)   | 7 (3.5)    |
| Friend, wall poster |            |           | 19 (9.5)   |
| Total               | 100        | 100       | 200        |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

Respondents' knowledge is measured with the help of a three point scale of 18 items. Some of the items include right and wrong statements about AIDS as the following (a) a person having HIV contracts AIDS, (b) there is no vaccine for prevention of AIDS, (c) AIDS infection is caused by virus, (d) AIDS is not hereditary, (e) any one can get contracted with AIDS infection, if donates blood, (f) AIDS can be transmitted through mosquito, (g) one cannot get AIDS by touching or sharing hands with AIDS patient, (h) AIDS can be transmitted by sneezing and coughing of infected person, (i) women are vulnerable, (j) medical personnel are at greater risk of getting AIDS, (k) alcoholics are not vulnerable, (l) breast milk of an AIDS patient is infectious, (m) Some

items such as the following test the knowledge of AIDS infections etc. main sources of transmission of AIDS infection, (n) methods used for detecting AIDS, (o) symptoms of AIDS, (p) vulnerable group for AIDS infection and, (q) intravenous drug users are more vulnerable.

Among those who have heard about AIDS the most commonly known aspect of AIDS is that 'one cannot get AIDS by touching or sharing hands with AIDS patient' (37 percent). Next commonly known aspect is that 'AIDS is not hereditary' and thus it is acquired or contracted. Almost equal proportions of the respondents (32 percent) are aware that any one can get contracted of AIDS through blood transfusion and breast milk. Less than one third of the respondents know the most important fact about AIDS that chances of getting AIDS are less if one has only one sexual partner. Since most of the respondents have not heard about HIV (66 percent), it is not surprising to note that less than 30 percent of the respondents are aware of the fact that a person having HIV contracts AIDS. Not even one fourth of the respondents (23.5 percent) are aware that there is no vaccine for prevention of AIDS and AIDS is incurable. Since majority of the respondents are not well educated, it is quite reasonable to accept the fact that only 16.5 percent respondents know that AIDS infection is caused by virus. Similarly only 19 percent think that alcoholics are vulnerable and AIDS can be transmitted through mosquito (23.5 percent). About 29 percent of the respondents think that medical personnel are at greater risk of getting AIDS (Table 5). Studies by Bhalwan and Jayram's reveals, the teen agers of rural Maharashtra have better knowledge (46.9 percent) about the cause of AIDS compared to the youth of Silchar (16.5 percent).

While each correct answer "3" points are awarded, "2" points are awarded for incorrect answer and "0" is awarded for not reply. Thus, the maximum points one would be able to score are "54" and minimum would be "0". Those scoring 75 percent or above are considered as "knowledgeable"; those who have scored between 25 percent and 75 percent are considered as "Less knowledgeable" and those who have scored less than 25 percent are considered as "Not knowledgeable". Among the "Knowledgeable", male and female respondents constitute the proportion of 12 percent and 8.3 percent of the total respondents. Unmarried ranks topmost among the "knowledgeable" respondents. Little

**Table 5: Knowledge about AIDS**

| S. No. | Awareness                                                                | Percentage |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1.     | A Person having HIV Contract AIDS                                        | 29.5       |
| 2.     | There is no vaccine for prevention of HIV/AIDS                           | 23.5       |
| 3.     | AIDS infection is caused virus                                           | 16.5       |
| 4.     | AIDS is not hereditary                                                   | 33.0       |
| 5.     | One can get contracted with AIDS infection if donates blood              | 32.0       |
| 6.     | AIDS can't be transmitted through mosquito                               | 23.5       |
| 7.     | One can't get AIDS by touching or shaking hands with AIDS patient        | 37.0       |
| 8.     | AIDS can't be transmitted by sneezing and coughing of an infected person | 27.0       |
| 9.     | Chances of getting AIDS are less if one have only one sexual partner     | 31.5       |
| 10.    | Women are vulnerable                                                     | 11.5       |
| 11.    | Medical personal are at greater risk of getting AIDS                     | 20.0       |
| 12.    | Alcoholics aren't vulnerable                                             | 19.0       |
| 13.    | Breast milk of an AIDS patient is infectious                             | 32.0       |
| 14.    | Main source of transmission of AIDS                                      | 9.5        |
| 15.    | Method used for detection of AIDS                                        | 26.0       |
| 16.    | Symptoms of AIDS                                                         | 1.0        |
| 17.    | Vulnerable groups of AIDS                                                | 5.5        |
| 18.    | More vulnerability of intravenous drug users                             | 28.0       |

over half of the scheduled castes and other backward classes are "Not knowledgeable". Kayasthas are at the top of the 'Knowledgeable' respondents even though 18.3 percent of the Kayasthas are "not knowledgeable". All the Muslim respondents are "Less knowledgeable". So far as education is concerned, secondary school educated persons constitute 22.2 percent and graduates and above constitute only 7 percent. No illiterate respondent is "knowledgeable", while among the primary educated respondents 4 of them have knowledge about AIDS and its prevention. Respondents who belong to family of higher income (Rs. 15,000 per month) 25 percent of them are "knowledgeable" and 90 percent of the middle income group are "Less knowledgeable" while a large number of the respondents whose family income is 15,000 are "Less knowledgeable". A large number of students and unemployed youth are 'less knowledgeable' (52.3 percent) while a few of them (11 percent) are "knowledgeable". Among the service category respondents, "Not knowledgeable" and "Less knowledgeable" are in the proportion of 39.1 percent and of 52.2 percent respectively. No respondent belongs to high social background are "Not knowledgeable" though a

large number of them can be classed as “Less knowledgeable” respondents. Among the ‘not knowledgeable’ respondents 72 percent hail from lower social background and on the other hand among the “Less knowledgeable” majority of the respondents (33.3 percent of them) belong to higher social background (Table 6). Study by Raizade reveals that the awareness level Silchar’s youth (12 percent men and 8 percent women) is far below than that of the youth 30 percent to 46 percent in Jamnagar city of Gujrat.

**(3) Sexual Behavior:** As AIDS is related with sexual behavior, it is pertinent to know the sexual behaviour of the respondents. In order to understand the sexual behaviour data were collected on the homosexual and hetero sexual relations. One third (57 out of 200) of the respondent found to be sexually active at the time of survey and also long before the time of survey. Distribution by marital status indicates prevalence of deviance is more among the unmarried than that of married respondents. Out of 133 unmarried respondents 26 are found to have had heterosexual relations. The data reveal that 22 unmarried male

out of 81 (27.2 percent) and 4 unmarried female out of 52 (9.6 percent) had heterosexual relations with married and unmarried partners and even sex workers (Table 7). No case of homosexual relation has figured out in the survey. While 17 unmarried (13 male and 4female) are presently active in heterosexual relation, one is presently active but 14 of them had heterosexual relation long before the time of survey. A report by Arizona State University reveals that the sexual behaviour, when compared to the students of the Arizona State University, USA, it is believed that the unmarried youth of Silchar town are not sexually so active. It is reported that 77.4 percent student of Arizona State University are sexually active and 5 out of 964 had been infected with HIV. A percentage of 4.3 male and 2.9 female had a same sex partner during the previous year of the survey.

Table 7 indicates that out of 22 unmarried male respondents, 17 had heterosexual relation with unmarried female; one with married women and 4 with sex workers. In every age of the respondents, they are seems to have been relation with sex-workers. Among the female unmarried respondents

**Table 6: Respondent's knowledge and background**

| Category                          | Knowledge        |                    |              | Total       |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
|                                   | Not Knownedgable | Less Knowledgeable | Knownedgable |             |
| <i>Age</i>                        |                  |                    |              |             |
| 18-20                             | 38 (50.7)        | 30 (40.0)          | 7 (9.3)      | 75 (100.0)  |
| 21-23                             | 19 (33.7)        | 31 (55.4)          | 16 (10.3)    | 56 (100.0)  |
| 24 -25                            | 20 (29.0)        | 41 (52.4)          | 8 (11.6)     | 69 (100.0)  |
| <i>Sex</i>                        |                  |                    |              |             |
| Male                              | 39 (37.5)        | 52 (52.0)          | 13 (12.5)    | 104 (100.0) |
| Female                            | 38 (39.6)        | 50 (60.0)          | 8 (8.3)      | 96 (100.0)  |
| <i>Marital Status</i>             |                  |                    |              |             |
| Married                           | 36 (53.7)        | 26 (38.8)          | 5 (7.5)      | 27 (100.0)  |
| Unmarried                         | 41 (30.8)        | 76 (57.1)          | 16 (12.1)    | 133 (100.0) |
| <i>Caste</i>                      |                  |                    |              |             |
| Brahmin                           | 5 (33.3)         | 9 (60.0)           | 1 (6.7)      | 15 (100.0)  |
| Kayastha                          | 27               | 49 (52.7)          | 17 (18.3)    | 93 (100.0)  |
| SC and OBC                        | 15 (31.8)        | 39 (44.9)          | 3 (3.5)      | 87 (100.0)  |
| Muslims                           |                  | 5 (100.0)          |              | 5 (100.0)   |
| <i>Education</i>                  |                  |                    |              |             |
| Illiterate                        | 72 (72.0)        | 28 (28.0)          |              | 100 (100.0) |
| Primary                           | 2 (14.3)         | 8 (57.1)           | 4 (28.6)     | 14 (100.0)  |
| Secondary                         |                  | 35 (7.8)           | 10 (22.2)    | 45 (100.0)  |
| Graduate and above                | 3 (7.4)          | 31 (75.7)          | 7 (17.1)     | 41 (100.0)  |
| <i>Monthly Income</i>             |                  |                    |              |             |
| <5,000                            | 77 (49.4)        | 64 (41.0)          | 15 (9.7)     | 156 (100.0) |
| 5,000 to 15,000                   |                  | 32 (88.9)          | 4 (11.1)     | 36 (100.0)  |
| 15,000>                           |                  | 6 (75.0)           | 2 (25.0)     | 8 (100.0)   |
| <i>Occupation</i>                 |                  |                    |              |             |
| Student and Unemployed            | 39 (36.4)        | 56 (52.3)          | 12 (11.2)    | 107 (100.0) |
| Business and Self employed        | 29 (41.4)        | 34 (48.6)          | 7 (10.0)     | 70 (100.0)  |
| Govt. Service and Private Service | 9 (39.1)         | 12 (52.2)          | 2 (8.7)      | 23 (100.0)  |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

**Table 7: Unmarried respondents who had sexual relationships by age**

| Age    | Had Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 |            |
|--------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
|        | Unmarried                | Married   | Sex Worker | No Relationship | Total      |
| Male   |                          |           |            |                 |            |
| 18-20  | 8 (47.1)                 | 1 (100.0) | 1 (25.0)   | 21 (35.6)       | 31 (38.8)  |
| 21-23  | 4 (23.5)                 |           | 3 (75.0)   | 16 (27.2)       | 23 (28.4)  |
| 24-25  | 5 (29.4)                 |           |            | 22 (37.3)       | 27 (33.4)  |
| Total  | 17 (100.0)               | 1 (100.0) | 4 (100.0)  | 59 (100.0)      | 81 (100.0) |
| Female |                          |           |            |                 |            |
| 18-20  | 1 (33.3)                 |           |            | 27 (56.8)       | 28 (53.9)  |
| 21-23  | 2 (66.7)                 | 1 (13.3)  |            | 15 (34.6)       | 18 (34.7)  |
| 24-25  |                          |           |            | 6 (11.5)        | 6 (11.4)   |
| Total  | 3 (100.0)                | 1 (100.0) |            | 48 (100.0)      | 52 (100.0) |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

3 out of 4 had sexual relation with 3 unmarried male. Only one had sex with a married man.

Among the unmarried male respondents who had sexual relations, majority of them, that is, 12 out of 22 fall in the category of "Less knowledgeable" of AIDS (54.5 percent). Seven respondents, that is, 31.8 percent of them are "Not knowledgeable". One of them is "knowledgeable" as well. None of the female respondents who are involved in hetero sexual relationship is "knowledgeable"; any of them are "Not knowledgeable". They all are "Less knowledgeable", of AIDS (Table 8).

Out of 17 unmarried respondents who are presently active in hetero sexual relation 13 are male and 4 are female. Of these 13 male 8 are within the age group of 18-20 years, 3 are in the age group of 21-23 years and 2 are in the age group of 24-25 years. Those who are within the age group of 18-20 years 7 of them have sex with unmarried female while one of them is engaged with married women also, and one is with sex workers. Out of 3 who are in the age group of 21-23, 2 are engaged with unmarried women and one with married woman. The 2 unmarried respondents in the age group of 24-25 are having relationship with

unmarried women. Out of 13 male 8 of them is illiterate including the lone person who visits sex workers. There is only one person who is a graduate and has sex with his unmarried partner, 4 of them are either student or unemployed category and two are in service sectors. Of the 13 male respondents 7 of them are either self employed or businessmen and 4 of them are students and 2 are in service sector. Among them no single case of 'Brahmin' is found. Six of them hail from either scheduled caste or other backward classes and six of them belong to Kayastha families, only one is a Muslim respondent. Seven of them are 'not knowledgeable and 4 have "less knowledge", while 2 are knowledgeable respondents also. Out of 52 unmarried women, 4 are in active sexual relationship as stated above. All of them are within the age group of 21-23 years. Three are having relationship with unmarried men and one with married men. No single case of illiterate is found among married female who are in active sexual relations at present. But 2 of them are graduates, one is primary school educated and another one has studied up to secondary level. All of them are either students or

**Table 8: Unmarried Respondents Who Had Sexual Relationships by knowledge**

| Age                | Had Sexual Relation with |         |         |            |                 | Total   |    |         |    |         |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------|------------|-----------------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|
|                    | Unmarried                |         | Married | Sex Worker | No Relationship |         |    |         |    |         |
| Male               |                          |         |         |            |                 |         |    |         |    |         |
| Not Knowledgeable  | 7                        | (41.2)  |         |            | 22              | (50.0)  | 29 | (35.9)  |    |         |
| Less Knowledgeable | 9                        | (52.9)  | 1       | (100.0)    | 2               | (50.0)  | 28 | (47.5)  | 40 | (49.4)  |
| Knowledgeable      | 1                        | (5.9)   |         |            |                 |         | 11 | (18.6)  | 12 | (14.6)  |
| Total              | 17                       | (100.0) | 1       | (100.0)    | 2               | (100.0) | 61 | (100.0) | 81 | (100.0) |
| Female             |                          |         |         |            |                 |         |    |         |    |         |
| Not knowledgeable  |                          |         |         |            |                 |         | 12 | (25.0)  | 12 | (23.1)  |
| Less Knowledgeable | 3                        | (100.0) | 1       | (100.0)    |                 |         | 32 | (66.7)  | 36 | (69.2)  |
| Knowledgeable      |                          |         |         |            |                 |         | 4  | (8.3)   | 4  | (7.7)   |
| Total              | 3                        | (100.0) | 1       | (100.0)    |                 |         | 48 | (100.0) | 52 | (100.0) |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

unemployed. Three of them are from Kayastha caste, and one is from scheduled caste. Two of them have “Less knowledge” while one is “knowledgeable” also. And only one has “No knowledge” about AIDS (Table 9,10,11,12 and 13).

Among the married respondents, 14 out of 57 (25 percent) had heterosexual relations before marriage and 9 of them are found to be male and 5 female. In case of male 8 had relations with unmarried women and one with a sex worker.

**Table 9: Unmarried respondents who are having sexual relationships by age**

| Age           | Having Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 | Total      |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
|               | Unmarried                   | Married   | Sex Worker | No Relationship |            |
| <i>Male</i>   |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| 18-20         | 7 (63.7)                    |           | 1 (100.0)  | 23 (33.8)       | 31 (38.3)  |
| 20-23         | 2 (18.2)                    | 1 (100.0) |            | 20 (29.4)       | 23 (28.4)  |
| 24-25         | 2 (18.2)                    |           |            | 25 (36.8)       | 27 (33.3)  |
| Total         | 11 (100.0)                  | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 68 (100.0)      | 81 (100.0) |
| <i>Female</i> |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| 18-20         | 1 (33.3)                    | 1 (50.0)  |            | 26 (54.2)       | 28 (53.8)  |
| 20-23         | 2 (66.7)                    |           |            | 16 (31.9)       | 18 (34.6)  |
| 24-25         |                             |           |            | 6 (12.5)        | 6 (34.6)   |
| Total         | 3 (100.0)                   | 1 (100.0) |            | 48 (100.0)      | 52 (100.0) |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

**Table 10: Unmarried respondents who are having sexual relationships by occupation**

| Age                          | Having Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 | Total      |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
|                              | Unmarried                   | Married   | Sex Worker | No Relationship |            |
| <i>Male</i>                  |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Studies and unemployment     | 4 (36.4)                    |           |            | 19 (27.9)       | 23 (28.4)  |
| Business and Self employment | 6 (54.5)                    | 1 (100.0) |            | 42 (61.8)       | 49 (60.5)  |
| Service                      | 1 (9.1)                     |           | 1 (100.0)  | 7 (10.3)        | 9 (11.1)   |
| Total                        | 11 (100.0)                  | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 68 (100.0)      | 81 (100.0) |
| <i>Female</i>                |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Studies and unemployment     | 3 (100.0)                   | 1 (100.0) |            | 41 (85.4)       | 45 (86.5)  |
| Business and Self            |                             |           |            | 2 (4.2)         | 2 (3.8)    |
| Service                      |                             |           |            | 5 (10.4)        | 5 (9.6)    |
| Total                        | 3 (100.0)                   | 1 (100.0) |            | 48 (100.0)      | 52 (100.0) |

(Percentage in Parenthesis)

**Table 11: Unmarried respondents who are having sexual relationship by Caste**

| Age           | Having Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 | Total      |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
|               | Unmarried                   | Married   | Sex worker | No Relationship |            |
| <i>Male</i>   |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Brahmmin      |                             |           |            | 5 (7.4)         | 5 (6.2)    |
| Kayastha      | 5 (45.5)                    |           | 1 (100.0)  | 34 (50.0)       | 40 (49.4)  |
| SCandOBC      | 5 (45.5)                    | 1 (100.0) |            | 26 (38.2)       | 32 (39.5)  |
| Muslim        | 1 (9.1)                     |           |            | 3 (4.4)         | 4 (4.9)    |
| Total         | 11 (100.0)                  | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 68 (100.0)      | 81 (100.0) |
| <i>Female</i> |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Brahmmin      |                             |           |            | 5 (10.4)        | 5 (9.6)    |
| Kayastha      | 3 (100.0)                   |           |            | 27 (56.3)       | 30 (57.7)  |
| SC/OBC        |                             | 1 (100.0) |            | 16 (100.0)      | 17 (100.0) |
| Muslim        |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Total         | 3 (100.0)                   | 1 (100.0) |            | 48 (100.0)      | 52 (100.0) |

SC: Scheduled Caste

OBC: Other Backward Class

(Percentage in parenthesis)

**Table 12: Unmarried respondents who are having sexual relationships by education**

|            | Having Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 |            |
|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Age        | Unmarried                   | Married   | Sex worker | No Relationship | Total      |
| Male       |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Illiterate | 6 (64.5)                    | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 29 (50.0)       | 37 (45.7)  |
| Primary    | 2 (18.2)                    |           |            | 1 (1.5)         | 3 (3.7)    |
| Secondary  | 2 (18.2)                    |           |            | 21 (36.2)       | 23 (39.6)  |
| Graduation | 1 (9.1)                     |           |            | 7 (12.0)        | 8 (22.2)   |
| Total      | 11 (100.0)                  | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 58 (100.0)      | 81 (100.0) |
| Female     |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Illiterate |                             |           |            | 15 (31.2)       | 15 (28.8)  |
| Primary    | 1 (33.3)                    |           |            | 2 (4.2)         | 3 (5.8)    |
| Secondary  |                             | 1 (100.0) |            | 14 (29.8)       | 15 (28.8)  |
| Graduation | 2 (66.7)                    |           |            | 17 (35.2)       | 19 (36.5)  |
| Total      | 3 (100.0)                   | 1 (100.0) |            | 48 (100.0)      | 52 (100.0) |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

**Table 13: Unmarried respondents who are having sexual relation by knowledge**

|                    | Having Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 |            |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Age                | Unmarried                   | Married   | Sex worker | No Relationship | Total      |
| Male               |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Not knowledgeable  | 5 (45.5)                    | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 22 (32.4)       | 29 (35.8)  |
| Less knowledgeable | 4 (36.4)                    |           |            | 36 (52.9)       | 40 (49.4)  |
| Knowledgeable      | 2 (18.2)                    |           |            | 10 (14.7)       | 12 (14.8)  |
| Total              | 11 (100.0)                  | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 68 (100.0)      | 81 (100.0) |
| Female             |                             |           |            |                 |            |
| Not knowledgeable  |                             | 1 (100.0) |            | 11 (22.1)       | 12 (23.1)  |
| Less knowledgeable | 2 (66.7)                    |           |            | 34 (70.8)       | 36 (69.2)  |
| Knowledgeable      | 1 (33.3)                    |           |            | 3 (6.3)         | 4 (7.7)    |
| Total              | 3 (100.0)                   | 1 (100.0) |            | 48 (100.0)      | 52 (100.0) |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

Among women 4 had relations with unmarried men and one with married man.

Table 14 shows that majority of the married respondents who had pre-marital sexual experience (11 out of 14) are in the age group of 24-25 years. Only 3 of them are in the age group of 18-20 years. Further, 12 out of 14 (83.7 percent) had relations with unmarried persons, one with married person and another with sex worker. Seven of them hail from scheduled caste and other backward classes, 6 of them are from Kayastha families and only one is Brahmin (Table 15). Male are mainly illiterates (6 out of 9) while 2 have studied up to primary level and one is a graduate (Table 16). None of the male respondents

are unemployed or is a student. While 4 out of 5 female are either unemployed or students and only one is self employed (see Table 17). Most male are "Less knowledgeable" (6 out of 9) about AIDS. In case of women none of them is "knowledgeable" about AIDS of them, 3 do not have any knowledge and one has some knowledge (Table 18). Thus, it appears that illiterate and employed male tend to deviate, but in case of women it is employed and literates who deviate in the sexual behaviour. Either male or female, the deviants in general are unaware of AIDS.

No single case of married respondent is found having active hetero sexual relationship. One of the most effective means of preventive measures

**Table 14: Married respondents who had sexual relations by age**

| Age   | Had Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 | Total      |
|-------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
|       | Unmarried                | Married   | Sex worker | No Relationship |            |
| 18-20 | 3 (25.0)                 |           |            | 13 (24.5)       | 16 (23.9)  |
| 21-23 |                          |           |            | 15 (28.3)       | 15 (22.4)  |
| 24-25 | 9 (75.0)                 | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 25 (47.2)       | 36 (53.7)  |
| Total | 12 (100.0)               | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 53 (100.0)      | 67 (100.0) |

(Percentage in parenthesis)

**Table 15: Married respondents who had sexual relationship by cast**

|          | Had Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 |            |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Age      | Unmarried                | Married   | Sex worker | No Relationship | Total      |
| Male     |                          |           |            |                 |            |
| Brahmmin |                          |           | 1 (7.1)    | 1 (4.3)         |            |
| Kayastha | 2 (25.0)                 |           | 1 (100.0)  | 8 (57.1)        | 11 (47.6)  |
| SC/OBC   | 6 (75.0)                 |           |            | 4 (28.6)        | 10 (43.5)  |
| Muslim   |                          |           |            | 1 (7.1)         | 1 (4.3)    |
| Total    | 8 (100.0)                |           | 1 (100.0)  | 14 (100.0)      | 23 (100.0) |
| Female   |                          |           |            |                 |            |
| Brahmmin | 1 (25.0)                 |           |            | 3 (7.7)         | 4 (9.1)    |
| Kayastha | 1 (25.0)                 |           |            | 11 (28.2)       | 12 (27.3)  |
| SCandOBC | 2 (50.0)                 | 1 (100.0) |            | 25 (64.1)       | 28 (63.6)  |
| Muslim   |                          |           |            |                 |            |
| Total    | 4 (100.0)                | 1 (100.0) |            | 39 (100.0)      | 44 (100.0) |

**Table 16: Married respondents who had sexual relationships by education**

|            | Had Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 |            |  |
|------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|--|
| Age        | Unmarried                | Married   | Sex worker | No Relationship | Total      |  |
| Male       |                          |           |            |                 |            |  |
| Illiterate | 6 (64.5)                 | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 29 (42.6)       | 37 (45.7)  |  |
| Primary    | 2 (18.2)                 |           |            | 1 (1.5)         | 3 (3.7)    |  |
| Secondary  | 2 (18.2)                 |           |            | 21 (30.9)       | 23 (28.4)  |  |
| Graduation | 1 (9.1)                  |           |            | 17 (25.0)       | 18 (22.2)  |  |
| Total      | 11 (100.0)               | 1 (100.0) | 1 (100.0)  | 68 (100.0)      | 81 (100.0) |  |
| Female     |                          |           |            |                 |            |  |
| Illiterate |                          |           |            | 15 (29.8)       | 15 (28.8)  |  |
| Primary    | 1 (33.3)                 |           |            | 2 (4.3)         | 3 (5.8)    |  |
| Secondary  |                          | 1 (100.0) |            | 14 (29.8)       | 15 (28.8)  |  |
| Graduation | 2 (66.7)                 |           |            | 17 (36.2)       | 19 (36.5)  |  |
| Total      | 3 (100.0)                | 1 (100.0) |            | 48 (100.0)      | 52 (100.0) |  |

**Table 17: Married respondents who had sexual relation by occupation**

|                        | Had Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 |            |  |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|--|
| Age                    | Unmarried                | Married   | Sex worker | No Relationship | Total      |  |
| Male                   |                          |           |            |                 |            |  |
| Student and unemployed |                          |           |            | 2 (7.1)         | 1 (4.3)    |  |
| Businessmen and        |                          |           |            |                 |            |  |
| Self Employed          | 5 (62.5)                 |           | 1 (100.0)  | 12 (85.7)       | 18 (78.3)  |  |
| Service                | 3 (37.5)                 |           |            |                 | 4 (17.4)   |  |
| Total                  | 8 (100.0)                |           | 1 (100.0)  | 14 (100.0)      | 23 (100.0) |  |
| Female                 |                          |           |            |                 |            |  |
| Student and unemployed | 3 (75.0)                 | 1 (100.0) |            | 34 (87.2)       | 38 (86.4)  |  |
| Businessmen and        |                          |           |            |                 |            |  |
| Self Employed          | 1 (25.0)                 |           |            |                 | 1 (2.3)    |  |
| Service                |                          |           |            | 5 (12.96)       | 5 (11.4)   |  |
| Total                  | 4 (100.0)                | 1 (100.0) |            | 39 (100.0)      | 44 (100.0) |  |

of AIDS is the use of condom. Therefore, an attempt has been made to find out the extent of the use of condoms by the respondents who had or having active sexual relationship with other than spouses in case of married respondents.

Out of 40 respondents of both married and unmarried who had hetero-sexual relations only 7 male (17.5 percent) used condom either regularly or rarely. Of these 2 are married and 5 are unmarried

used to use condoms. Among these 5 unmarried men only 2 who used to use condoms regularly, while the rest used condoms rarely. Only one female respondent reported that her partner used condom regularly or rarely (Table 19). Out of 17 respondents who are presently active in heterosexual relation only one of them is using condoms regularly. Out of 5 respondents who used to use condoms only one is “knowledge-

**Table 18: Married respondents who had sexual relations by knowledge**

|                    | Had Sexual Relation with |           |            |                 |            |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Knowledge          | Unmarried                | Married   | Sex worker | No Relationship | Total      |
| Male               |                          |           |            |                 |            |
| Not knowledgeable  | 1 (12.5)                 |           |            | 9 (64.3)        | 10 (43.5)  |
| Less knowledgeable | 6 (75.0)                 |           | 1 (100.0)  | 5 (35.7)        | 12 (52.2)  |
| Knowledgeable      | 1 (12.5)                 |           |            |                 | 1 (4.3)    |
| Total              | 8 (100.0)                |           | 1 (100.0)  | 14 (100.0)      | 23 (100.0) |
| Female             |                          |           |            |                 |            |
| Not knowledgeable  | 3 (75.0)                 |           |            | 23 (59.0)       | 26 (59.1)  |
| Less knowledgeable | 1 (25.0)                 | 1 (100.0) |            | 12 (30.8)       | 14 (31.8)  |
| Knowledgeable      |                          |           |            | 4 (10.3)        | 4 (5.1)    |
| Total              | 4 (100.0)                | 1 (100.0) |            | 39 (100.0)      | 44 (100.0) |

**Table 19: Respondents who had hetero sexual relationships and use of condoms by sex and marital status**

| Category              | Use of Condom |          |           |             |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
|                       | Regular       | Rare     | Never     | Total       |
| <i>Sex</i>            |               |          |           |             |
| Male                  | 3 (9.7)       | 3 (9.7)  | 25 (80.6) | 31 (100.00) |
| Female                |               | 1 (11.1) | 8 (88.9)  | 9 (100.00)  |
| Total                 | 3 (9.8)       | 4 (10.0) | 33 (80.2) | 40 (100.0)  |
| <i>Marital status</i> |               |          |           |             |
| Married               | 1 (7.1)       | 1 (7.1)  | 12 (85.7) | 14 (100.00) |
| Unmarried             | 2 (7.7)       | 3 (11.5) | 21 (80.0) | 26 (100.00) |
| Total                 | 3 (7.5)       | 4 (10.0) | 33 (82.5) | 40 (100.00) |

able” and 4 have “Less knowledge” and one does not have any knowledge about AIDS/HIV (Table 20). Thus a large majority of the respondents, who are sexually deviant, are not practicing safe sex.

**(4) Media Habit:** As regards to AIDS prevention is concerned media has been considered as potent source to disseminate information. Therefore, knowledge of AIDS can be related with media habit of the respondents. To study the media habits of the youth of Silchar Town, data were collected on media habits like listening to radio, watching television programmes and street dramas. Respondents are categorised as those who are “less exposed”, “medium exposed” and “high exposed” on the basis of a 3 point scale. Those who subscribe and read newspapers and

magazines regularly are awarded 3 points, similarly those who watch television video, cinema, street drama and listen radio rarely are awarded 2 points each and those who never watched any of them are awarded nothing. On the basis of three point scale three categories are made on the scoring of < 9 “less exposed”, 9 - 15 “medium exposed”, and 15 > “high exposed”.

Television is the most popular (68 percent) medium followed by cinema (50 percent) and video (12 percent). Street plays are least popular media. It is very clear from the data that about one half of literate respondents are exposed to local Bengali News Papers (Table 21). Most of the respondents are “Medium exposed” to media irrespective of their ages, occupations and background.

Only 9.5 percent of them are “High exposed”. About 32 percent of them are “Less exposed” in all the age groups (Table 22). Within the age group of 18-20, a few (2.7 percent) are “High exposed” to media but as the age increases the exposure seems to increase as 17.9 percent of them are “Medium exposed”. In the “Medium exposure” 65.3 percent of the respondents are from 18-20 age group followed by 21-23 and 24-25 years age groups. The “Less exposure” is high in the age group of 18-20 or 21-23 (Table 22). Proportion of “High exposure” is almost same in both the sexes, though percentage of female respondents is

**Table 20: Unmarried respondents who had/having hetero sexual relationship and use of condom by knowledge about aids**

| Use of Condom | Knowledge         |                    |               | Total      |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|
|               | Not Knowledgeable | Less Knowledgeable | Knowledgeable |            |
| Frequently    |                   | 1 (6.2)            | 1 (100.0)     | 2 (7.7)    |
| Rarely        | 1 (11.1)          | 3 (18.8)           |               | 4 (15.4)   |
| Never         | 8 (89.9)          | 12 (75.0)          |               | 20 (76.9)  |
| Total         | 9 (100.0)         | 16 (100.0)         | 1 (100.0)     | 26 (100.0) |

**Table 21: Respondents exposure to media**

| <i>Media</i> | <i>Regular</i> | <i>Rare</i> | <i>Never</i> |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Television   | 68.0           | 30.0        | 2.0          |
| Cinema       | 50.0           | 43.5        | 6.5          |
| Video        | 12.0           | 62.0        | 26.0         |
| Streetplay   | 10.0           | 13.0        | 86.0         |

higher than the percentage of male respondents (see Table 22). It is interesting to note that unmarried respondents are better exposed to media than married youth. While 25 percent of the respondents of the high income are “High exposed” to media, only 16.7 and 7.1 percent of the respondents from middle and low income families respectively are “High exposed” to media. Further 40.4 percent of the low income respondents are “Less exposed” to media (Table

22). Majority of the illiterate respondents are “Less exposed” to media and only one percent is “High exposed”. There is no single case of “Low exposed” among those who studied up to graduation and only 2.2 percent of secondary level educated respondents are “Low exposed” (Table 22). It is significant to note that students and unemployed youth are “High exposed” than those who are engaged in any occupation. Only “Highly exposed” respondents are “knowledge-able” about AIDS.

Respondents who had or having heterosexual relations are mostly “Less exposed” to media. A large number, as many as 35 percent of them are not exposed to media at all (Table 23). Out of the 40 respondents who had heterosexual relations, 4 of them used to use condom are not “Highly

**Table 22: Respondents expose to media by background**

| <i>Category</i>           | <i>Exposed to media</i> |              |             |              |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|                           | <i>Low</i>              | <i>Media</i> | <i>High</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| <i>Age</i>                |                         |              |             |              |
| 18-20                     | 24 (32.0)               | 18 (32.1)    | 21 (30.4)   | 63 (31.5)    |
| 21-23                     | 49 (65.3)               | 28 (50.0)    | 41 (59.4)   | 118 (59.0)   |
| 24-25                     | 2 (2.7)                 | 10 (17.9)    | 7 (10.1)    | 19 (9.5)     |
| Total                     | 75 (100.0)              | 56 (100.0)   | 69 (100.0)  | 200 (100.0)  |
| <i>Sex</i>                |                         |              |             |              |
| Male                      | 29 (27.9)               | 62 (62.5)    | 10 (9.6)    | 104 (100.0)  |
| Female                    | 34 (35.4)               | 53 (55.2)    | 9 (9.4)     | 96 (100.0)   |
| Total                     | 63 (31.5)               | 118 (59.0)   | 9 (9.5)     | 206 (100.0)  |
| Married                   | 33 (49.3)               | 33 (49.3)    | 1 (1.5)     | 67 (100.0)   |
| Unmarried                 | 33 (22.6)               | 85 (63.9)    | 18 (13.5)   | 133 (100.0)  |
| Total                     | 63 (31.5)               | 118 (59.0)   | 9 (9.5)     | 200 (100.0)  |
| <i>Education</i>          |                         |              |             |              |
| Illiterate                | 60 (60.0)               | 39 (39.0)    | 1 (1.0)     | 100 (100.0)  |
| Primary                   | 2 (16.9)                | 11 (78.6)    | 1 (7.1)     | 14 (100.0)   |
| Secondary                 | 1 (2.2)                 | 35 (77.8)    | 9 (20.0)    | 45 (100.0)   |
| Graduate and above        | —                       | 33 (80.5)    | 8 (19.9)    | 41 (100.0)   |
| Total                     | 63 (31.5)               | 118 (59.0)   | 19 (9.5)    | 200 (100.0)  |
| <i>Income</i>             |                         |              |             |              |
| <5000                     | 63 (40.4)               | 82 (52.6)    | 11 (7.1)    | 156 (100.0)  |
| 5,000-15,000              |                         | 30 (83.3)    | 6 (16.7)    | 36 (100.0)   |
| 15,000>                   |                         | 6 (75.6)     | 2 (25.0)    | 5 (100.0)    |
| Total                     | 63 (31.5)               | 118 (59.0)   | 9 (9.3)     | 200 (100.0)  |
| <i>Occupation</i>         |                         |              |             |              |
| Student and unemployed    | 32 (29.2)               | 60 (56.1)    | 15 (19.0)   | 107 (100.0)  |
| Busi. and Self employed   | 26 (37.1)               | 41 (58.6)    | 3 (4.3)     | 70 (100.0)   |
| Govt. and Private service | 5 (21.7)                | 17 (73.9)    | 1 (4.9)     | 93 (100.0)   |
| Total                     | 63 (31.5)               | 118 (59.0)   | 9 (9.3)     | 200 (100.0)  |
| <i>Background</i>         |                         |              |             |              |
| Low                       | 20 (29.2)               | 28 (57.1)    | 1 (2.0)     | 49 (100.0)   |
| Middle                    | 43 (30.9)               | 80 (57.6)    | 116 (11.5)  | 139 (100.0)  |
| High                      |                         | 10 (83.3)    | 2 (16.7)    | 12 (100.0)   |
| Total                     | 63 (31.5)               | 118 (59.0)   | 9 (9.5)     | 200 (100.0)  |
| <i>Knowledge</i>          |                         |              |             |              |
| Not knowledgeable         | 47 (57.1)               | 32 (41.6)    | 1 (1.3)     | 77 (100.0)   |
| Less knowledgeable        | 17 (16.7)               | 70 (68.6)    | 15 (14.7)   | 102 (100.0)  |
| Knowledgeable             | 2 (9.5)                 | 16 (76.2)    | 3 (14.3)    | 21 (100.0)   |
| Total                     | 63 (31.5)               | 118 (59.0)   | 9 (9.5)     | 200 (100.0)  |

**Table 23: Respondents with hetero sexual relation by media expose**

| <i>Media Exposed</i> | <i>Had Relations</i> | <i>Having Relations</i> |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Not exposed          | 14 (33.0)            | 7 (38.9)                |
| Less exposed         | 26 (64.0)            | 11 (61.1)               |
| Exposed              |                      |                         |
| Total                | 40 (100.0)           | 57 (100.0)              |

exposed” and while 7 respondents who regularly used condom who are “Low exposed” to media (Table 24).

### CONCLUSION

Though 75 percent of the total respondents have heard about AIDS, it is not more than sounds. Only 8 percent of the total respondents know the full form of AIDS. Male are better informed than their female counterparts. It is seen that the unmarried respondents have better knowledge about AIDS than that of married respondents. Those who are students and unemployed within the age group of 18-20 years are better informed than any other occupational category. It may be due to the fact that they are free from any responsibility and thus able to spend time to media exposure. It is found that educational achievement and knowledge about AIDS are related as those who had primary schooling obtained a little bit of correct knowledge. Further it may be pointed out on the basis of this study that education determines their behaviour also as among those who had or having hetero sexual relation, most of them are illiterates and do not have any knowledge of AIDS. Moreover they continue such type of relationships without taking any precaution. On the other hand the tendency to be deviant is less among the literates and even those who are deviant take precaution. It is seen that awareness depends on information. Media is the potential source of information. Data reveal the fact that media habits of the inhabitants of Silchar town are not sufficient enough to bring complete awareness of AIDS.

The awareness level is not sufficient among the youth of Silchar town while a chunk of them are involved in AIDS related activities. An interpersonal communication package needs to be developed as media habits are not sufficient enough to bring complete awareness of AIDS.

The awareness level is not sufficient among the youth of Silchar town while a chunk of them are involved in AIDS related activities. An interpersonal communication package need to be developed as media habits are not sufficient enough to bring awareness of HIV/AIDS. Both government and non-government organisations should come forward to augment the situation and overcome the problems of economic bottleneck and illiteracy. Lastly the problem of language in electronic media should be mentioned. The Doordarshan and other channels of Television telecast AIDS programme either in Hindi or in English. So the Bengalee viewers are not getting the complete message as they can neither understand Hindi nor English. Therefore it is suggested that AIDS awareness related message should be in local language.

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**Table 24: Media exposure and use of condom by those who had hetero sexual relations**

| <i>Media Exposure</i> | <i>Use of Condom</i> |             |              |              |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
|                       | <i>Regular</i>       | <i>Rare</i> | <i>Never</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Low exposed           | 1 (7.1)              |             | 13 (92.9)    | 14 (100.0)   |
| Medium exposed        | 2 (7.7)              | 4 (15.4)    | 20 (76.9)    | 26 (100.0)   |
| Exposed               |                      |             |              |              |
| Total                 | 3 (7.5)              | 4 (10.0)    | 33 (82.5)    | 40 (100.0)   |

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