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Female inject drug users, vulnerability to HIV infections and lack of service provisions-NEPAL

Ananta Parajuli

Tribhuvan University, Nepal


Issue: The intersection of unsafe injecting drug use and unsafe sexual practice is a significant factor in the increased risk for HIV infection among female who inject drugs (FDUs) in Nepal. Additionally, most HIV/AIDS prevention and care programmes are not reaching this vulnerable group because most programs are designed for men and despite its attempt to reach and work with FDU are not working. In fact, gender sensitive services addressing the specific needs of female injecting drugs user hardly exists in most Asian countries.

Project: Since June-November 2015, Rise Above (Community-based NGO of drug users) implemented 6 months long survey project supported by the Drug Control Program (DCP) under Ministry of Home Affairs, mainly on available service provisions & gaps for FDUs in 4 most affected districts of the country. This survey was carried with mixed methods of individual & institutional interviews, focal group discussions and interaction meetings with concerned stakeholders.

Result: The result revealed that there is very limited and or comparatively non existence of service provision for FDUs in all 4 districts, because there is no dialogue and communication between donor/s, female groups and service providers consequently creating more lack of services for FDUs. Nevertheless, the need for long-gapped programs for FDUs is acknowledged and understood by Government entities, donors & service providers, there is a need to kick-off the intervention with coordinated efforts from all concerned parties. Furthermore, more of the activities targeting social discrimination towards FDUs have to be done at larger scale.

Conclusion: Local government authorities and stakeholders are positive towards the need of services for FDUs and are ready to play their supportive part. There needs to be a frequent dialogue & communication between government body, donors and other stakeholders which should be initiated by FDU groups themselves.

e: pananta1986@gmail.com

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