

OJUS MEDICAL INSTITUTE

SITE VISIT REPORT

Jana Rakshita met Ojus Medical Institute's team, at JJ Hospital, Mumbai on 21st January 2009. Dr. Asavari, the project head and one of the co-ordinators - Shafeeq talked to us about the subject project for which you got in touch with us.

The project that Ojus talked to us briefly about focuses on awareness and education about HIV among pregnant mothers and their families from economically backward areas - like slums and chawls etc. Their area of work (Ward D holds a population of about 4lakh people.

Ojus has a training program for co-ordinators and out reach workers. Once trained, they're assigned duty in a certain area. Co-ordinators keep track of the workings of the out reach workers, who visit the homes of families who have pregnant mothers or newly weds.

The information about the pregnant mothers and newly weds is provided to them by the respective "Aanganwadi" worker assigned to that area (Aangan wadi workers basically work for the govt. and collect data and information on families and households for various purposes especially focusing on health). Each Aangan wadi centre covers a population of about 700-800 people and each ward has many aanganwadis). Each Aangan wadi worker visits 5 families daily. They collect information about each family and submit this information to the government at the end of every month.

Ojus's outreach workers, co-ordinate with these Aangan wadi workers and receive information regarding families that have pregnant women or newly wed couples who would be planning a family. They also get detailed information about the medical conditions, age, cultural and economic backgrounds, etc.

The outreach workers visit 2 or 3 such families every day- sometimes repeating households , talk to them about the complications of delivering babies privately or at home and convince them to organize check ups and the delivery of the baby in a Govt. hospital.

For this very purpose, they have collaborated with JJ Hospital where a staff member advises and counsels pregnant mothers to undergo tests for HIV. Pregnant mothers identified as positive, along with their families are informed about it and are educated about the disease - how to deal with it, nutrition, care for themselves, and how to prevent transmission of the disease, esp. to the child.

One is aware that the virus is transmitted to the child during labour and delivery as well as during breast feeding. However, during child birth - with certain medications, there is a possibility of reducing the

chances of transmission of the HIV AIDS virus from mother to child, by administering certain medications DURING delivery.

Therefore their effort centers on making sure that all pregnant mothers with the Aids Virus are given this medication during delivery by the Govt. run hospital where these mothers are registered by Ojus.

They are provided the know how on alternate nutrition available to the child after delivery. Also, the out reach worker follows up and monitors their regular check ups until 18 months after delivery. At the end of 18 months, HIV test is performed on the child to check for HIV virus and if the child is found to be infected with the virus then the mother and child are directed to other NGOs who work in the area of provision of health care and shelter to such children and mothers.

From what we saw, this is the project plan and they are in need of funds to provide nutrition and other facilities for the mothers and their families when they come to the hospital for check up. Dr. Asavari mentioned to us that they have several other projects which however, she did not discuss or give any other information about.