



# Niramaya Newsletter

**Niramaya Health Foundation, Mumbai - 400 014.**

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## **Immunization ..... need for future India**



**Dr. K. S. Vardhachary**

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 cliché; 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.

### **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.

**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 contra indication 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 use 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)*

## NIRAMAYA LAUNCHES NEWSLETTER & INAUGURATES THE NEW VAN



*Launching of Niramaya Newsletter*



*New Mobile Van*



*Lighting of Ceremonial Lamps*



*Vande Mataram  
(Pratham Shelter Kids)*



*Traditional Dance*

### **New Van**

On 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **Newsletter**

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

*International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> March every year. The idea of an International Women's Day first arose at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> February 1909 in the United States and later changed to 8<sup>th</sup> 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, theatrical 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 Vardhacharya 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.*

## SPORTS FEST



*Women Spirit*



*Women Power*



*A Big Leap!*



*Come, Unite & Celebrate*



*Prize Distribution*

Niramaya gratefully acknowledges the local donors who helped to make this day a huge success.

## बदलते चित्र

एकविसाव्या शतकाच्या उंबरठ्यावर स्त्री-पुरुष समानता आपल्याला सर्रास पहावयास मिळते. जी स्त्री काही काळापूर्वी घराचा उंबरठा ओलांडत नव्हती ती आता गावाचा, राज्याचा एवढच नव्हे तर देशाच्या सीमा, नोकरी, शिक्षण इ. गोष्टींसाठी ओलांडून बाहेर पडली आहे. स्त्री आपल्या (तिला आखून दिलेल्या) चौकटीतून बाहेर पडली आहे. पुरुषाच्या खांद्याला खांदा लावून काम करत आहे. परंतू समाजाने मात्र अजून स्वतःची चौकट सोडली नाही. स्त्री च्या भूमिका कक्षा विस्तारल्या आहेत पण समाजाच्या मानसिक कक्षा विस्तारल्या नाही.

आजही समाजाचा स्त्री कडे बघण्याचा दृष्टीकोन तोच आहे. स्त्रीयांना घरात व घराबाहेर कामाच्या ठिकाणीही त्रास सहन करावा लागतो. स्त्री ज्या ठिकाणी काम करते तिकडेच पुरुष सहकारी, सत्ताधारी, अधिकारी तिच्याकडे फक्त एक स्त्री म्हणूनच बघतात. त्यामुळे स्त्रीयांना फक्त उंबरठ्याच्या आतच नाहीतर बाहेर देखील वेगवेगळ्या समस्यांना तोंड द्यावे लागत आहे.

जरी समान रोजगाराचा कायदा निघाला असला तरीही स्त्रियांना मात्र कमी रोजगारच मिळतो. उदा. कायद्याने ६० रु. रोजगार ठरवून दिला आहे तरीही स्त्रियांना ५० ते ५२ रुपयेच दिले जातात. फक्त रोजगारच नव्हे तर स्त्रियांसाठी अनेक कायदे बनविले गेले आहेत पण याबद्दलची जागरूकता फार कमी लोकांमध्ये आहे.

अशा या पुरुषप्रधान समाजात स्त्रीच स्त्रीची वैरी आहे अशी कोटी केली जाते. पण हे सत्य नाही. दोन पुरुष भांडतात तेंव्हा असं म्हटल जात नाही. वैरी स्त्री किंवा पुरुष नसतो. असते ती सत्ता, अधिकार व प्राप्त झालेले पद.

फक्त स्त्रीच नव्हे तर पुरुषांबरोबर सुध्दा काम करणं गरजेचे आहे. त्यांची मानसिकता बदलण्याची गरज आहे. फक्त शोषितांशी काम करून चित्र बदलणार नाही तर शोषण करणाऱ्यांची मानसिकता ही बदलणे ही काळाची गरज आहे.

पल्लवी शिंदे...

### गर्भाचे गाऱ्हाणे – संदेश गर्भाचा

आजी आजी ये इकडे  
माझे गाऱ्हाणे ऐक गडे ।  
गर्भाशय माझे ठिकाण,  
गर्भाची तुम्ही ठेवा शान ।  
नको आईला हिरवी साडी.  
व्या भरभरून जेवणाची थाळी ।  
पोटभर पाणी पिऊ दे,  
तिला समाधान मिळू दे ।  
त्या अन्नाचे मी करीन गर्भत स्नेहन,  
त्यासाठी आईला विश्रांती मिळू दे ।  
अंगारे-धुपाऱ्याला लावा टाळा  
आरोग्य शिक्षणाचे नियम पाळा ।  
नॉर्मल मी जन्मास येईन,  
सुदृढ म्हणून अटकार होईल ।

सौ. सुरेखा ह. म्हात्रे...

### भरारी

जग जिंकायला निघाली होती  
पण पंखात नव्हंत बळ,  
मार्ग कठिण होता,  
जिद्द होती भरपूर  
नजर होती ध्येयावरती.  
जशी गरुडाची अशती आपल्या शिकरीवरती.  
मारलीच झडप निश्चयाने  
पण हाती आली निराशा  
कारण धोका दिला मला माझ्याच  
नशिबानं.....  
नशीब फिरल  
जग चुकलं  
मग माझचं मला कळलं.

रीना हरीलाल जैसवार...

### Success Story

#### A teenager gets deaddicted.....

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.

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## आजच्या समाजात स्त्रीचे स्थान

स्त्री व पुरुष हे समाजाचे दोन आधारस्तंभ आहेत, दोन पाय आहेत. एक पाय जर आपण कमकुवत ठेवला, तर समाज आपली प्रगती करू शकेल काय? या स्वार्थी समाजात जितके महत्त्व या पुरुषांना दिले जाते; तितके प्राधान्य या स्त्रियांना देणारे फारच कमी आहेत. संसारमय शृंखलांनी जखडून ठेवणाऱ्या स्त्रियांना हे पारतंत्र्याचे बंधन झुगारण्याचा अधिकार नाही का?

सहिष्णुता व औदार्य यांसाठी प्रसिद्ध असलेल्या या भारत देशात हुंडाबळी, बालविवाह, सती अशा दुर्दैवी घटना वारंवार का बऱ्या घडव्यात? सध्या तर अत्याचार, जबरदस्ती यांसारख्या घटनांनी स्त्रियांचे मन आणखीच दुबळे बनत चालले आहे. या घटनांना स्त्रियाच का म्हणून बळी पडव्यात. मुलगी झाली, तो दिवस त्यांच्या आईवडिलांचा दुर्दैवी क्षण! ही प्रथा आपण सामान्य माणसानेच जन्माला घातली. त्यांच्या मते मुली या परकीय धन असतात; तर मुलगा म्हणजे त्यांच्या वंशाचा दिवा! त्यांच्या वृद्धापकालीन जीवनाचा आधार! मुलींचा भार सांभाळू न शकणारे आईवडील त्यांचा विवाह बालपणीच करतात.

बालवयातच त्या स्त्रीला गर्भधारणा पत्करावी लागते. त्यामुळे या माय-लेकरांचे आरोग्य धोकादायक बनते. पूर्वी तर पती मेल्यावर त्या स्त्रीला जगण्याचा अधिकार हा समाजच देत नसे. तिला पतीबरोबर त्या जळत्या अग्नीत मातीशी एकरूप व्हावे लागे. तिला दुसरा विवाह करण्याचा अधिकार नसे. काळाच्या ओघात या अनिष्ट प्रथा नष्ट होत गेल्या; पण एक प्रथा आजही थैमान घालत आहे आणि ती म्हणजे 'हुंडाबळी'! मुलीचा जन्म झाल्याबरोबर तिच्या आईवडिलांच्या काळजाचा ठोका चुकतो. कित्येक गरीब घरांतून तर या हुंड्याच्या अनिष्ट रुढीपायी कित्येक मुली या आजन्म अविवाहीत राहतात.

सध्या तर सर्वत्र 'बलात्कार' या अमानुष वार्षेमुळे स्त्रियांच्या मनावर घडणाऱ्या विसंगतीशी कोण

जबाबदार आहे? पूर्वीपासूनच स्त्री म्हणजे अबला हे त्यांच्या मनात पुरुषांनीच ठासून भरले आहे. तिला नेहमीच कोणाचा ना कोणाचा आधार घ्यावा लागतो. बालपणी पित्याचा, तरुणवयात पतीचा आणि वार्धक्यात पुत्राचा. ती 'प्रतिष्ठेची बाहुली' म्हणून तिला 'देवता' या शब्दांनी संबोधून, तर सोन्याचांदीने मढवून तिला चार भिंतीत-घरात कोंडले जाते. तुला संसाराशित्ताय बाहेरच्या जगातील ज्ञान समजणार नाही, या विचारांनी पुरुषच तिला जगात पुढे जाऊ देत नाही. यामध्ये पुरुषाचाच स्वार्थ होता.

प्रत्यक्ष सीतेने देखील श्रीरामांसह चौदा वर्षांचा वनवास भोगला. ती देखील एक स्त्रीच होती. तिला तिच्या पावित्र्यासाठी कठोर परीक्षा द्यावी लागली. पण या निर्दयी समाजासाठी श्रीरामांनी पत्नीची एका स्त्रीची साथ सोडली. अन् त्या पवित्र सीतेला धरणीमातेशी एकरूप व्हावे लागले.

'न स्त्री स्वातंत्र्यम् अर्हति ।'

हे वचन शतकानुशतके त्या स्त्रीच्या मनात ठासवण्यात आले. सगळ्या क्षेत्रात पुढे जाणारी स्त्री घरी कोणकोणते ताणतणाव सहन करते याचा कोणी विचारही करू शकतो का? या स्त्रीला पुरुष जुगारात आपली मालमत्ता म्हणून वापरतो. प्रत्यक्ष पांडवांनी आपली पत्नी द्रौपदी हिला कौरवांसह झालेल्या जुगारात आपली मालमत्ता म्हणून वापरले. या स्त्रीची पेचात धरून तिची अब्रू घेतली जाते. तिची बाजारात खरेदीविक्री केली जाते. तिच्या चारित्र्यावर संशय घेऊन तिचा जाहिर लिलाव केला जातो.

पण.... प्रत्येक पुरुष हे का विसरतो, की ही तीच स्त्री आहे, जिने त्याला जन्म दिला. स्त्रियांना तर पूर्वीपासूनच प्रत्येक क्षेत्रात कमी लेखले जाते. कधी-कधी तर या सर्व मानसिक तसेच शारीरिक त्रासाला कंटाळून त्यांच्या तोंडून सहज निघते,

'नको हा स्त्रीचा जन्म.'

''स्त्री जन्म म्हणुनि न व्हावें उदास ।''

स्त्रीची ही दुःखमय कथा ऐकून ऐकणाऱ्याच्या डोळ्यांत पाणी येते. सर्व स्त्रियांच्या संघर्षासाठी संघटना आयोजित केल्या पाहिजेत.

अशी आहे ही....

''स्त्री जन्मा ही तुझी कहाणी ।

हृदयी अमृत नयनीं पाणी ।।''

माधुरी रतन बागुल...

(विद्यार्थी ज्ञानसंपदा विद्यालय, गोवंडी)

### शेंगदाण्याची उसळ

साहित्य : १०० ग्रॅम कच्चे शेंगदाणे, चवीपुरती थोडीशी वेलची, ५० ग्रॅम गूळ, अर्धी वाटी ओले खोबरे, ५ किंवा ६ चेरी, रंग-बेरंगी सुके किसलेले खोबरे.

कृती : प्रथम कच्चे शेंगदाणे शिजवून घेणे. ते थोडे थंड झाल्यावर त्यामध्ये गूळ, ओले खोबरे किसून टाकावे व त्यावर थोडीशी वेलची बारीक करून टाकावी. सर्व मिश्रण एकत्र करून थंड झाल्यावर एका ताटात काढणे व त्यावर रंग-बेरंगी सुके किसलेले खोबरे व चेरी लावावे.

सौ. वीणा चोरट...

### 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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.

#### Editorial Board

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