

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

AIDS is taking a major toll of human lives and spreading relentlessly. The latest UNAIDS/WHO report estimates that currently, 30.6 million are living with HIV/AIDS, of which 5.8 million have been newly infected during 1997, 590,000 of them children. Every day nearly 16,000 new people are getting infected with HIV. Almost 90% of all those infected with HIV live in the developing World and most of them do not even know that they are infected.

In the South- East Asia Region, there has been a steady increase in the number of people affected by HIV and AIDS. As of December 1997, more than 3.7 million people were estimated to be infected by HIV. So far more than 66, 900 AIDS cases have been reported in the region. By the Year 2000, it is estimated that 8-10 million men, women and children would be infected with HIV, representing 25% of the global cumulative infections.

Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This virus gradually breaks down the body's natural defense mechanism leaving it a prey to disease and unable to fight off other infections. Each infection leaves the person weakened and more susceptible to fresh infections, leading eventually to death. There is yet no known cure or preventive vaccine.

Myanmar is one of the developing countries in the Southeast Asia region. Economic development within the country in the recent years favored epidemiological transition. Myanmar is faced with HIV/AIDS disease. HIV epidemic started in Myanmar among injecting drugs users. Following this, HIV spread was found to be increasing among commercial sex workers and Sexually Transmitted Disease patients.

According to sentinel surveillance, gradual increase in HIV sero-prevalence rates have also been observed among new military recruits and pregnant women attending antenatal clinics. There are strong evidences that HIV is spreading towards general population through heterosexual mode of transmission.

In the essay section, I describe HIV/AIDS transition in the world that is occurring due to human behavior. HIV/AIDS is now appearing in all different social classes in Myanmar. It is also currently seen in high-risk behavior groups in all part of the country and begins to spread into the low risk population groups such as young people and new military recruits. This leads to the question, why does HIV infection occur in among young people? I mentioned that the determinants of HIV infection and AIDS include biological, social and economic factors. These factors make it difficult for young people to control change of life style and social norms. Therefore, how could we solve of HIV problem in young people? Peer education is an effective strategy in HIV prevention among young people.

In the proposal section, I present the rationale of the study, research methodology, peer education program including peer educators selection, training, retraining and evaluation. The proposed peer education program in school includes intervention activities, monitoring, supervision and evaluation. I also present the limitation of the study, budget allocation and timetable for school-based HIV/AIDS peer education program.

The data exercise section is aimed at getting first hand experience before I implement the proposal. This exercise includes collecting primary data through the use of questionnaire and analyzing with a statistical computer package.

In my bibliographic (literature) review, a series of readings are explored to get information about transmission of HIV infection, causes of HIV problems, because of

human behavior, environmental factors and personal factors. Health education is an important role of the HIV/AIDS control and prevention program. As the AIDS epidemic involves more and more regions of the world, there is an urgent need for preventive actions. Adolescents are an important target group for AIDS prevention, because during this age attitudes about sexual behavior are developed and decisions about lifestyle and identity are usually made. School-based HIV/AIDS education is an effective way of educating adolescents and young people.

In the presentation section, I outline the rationale of the study, conceptual framework, objective of the proposal, study design of the proposal, expected outcomes of the study. In addition, findings of the data exercise, process of data collection and conclusion are also described.

School-based HIV/AIDS peer education program is the first such study such in my country. I believe that this program is an appropriate strategy in HIV/AIDS prevention and control for the school adolescents, out of school adolescents and young generation of our country. Subsequently, this will lead to the improvement of HIV/AIDS prevention and control strategy in my country and the development in the healthy life of our people.