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## Advocacy for anti-stigma and the creation of supportive environment to live dignified normal life for the people living with HIV/AIDS

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Nepal is one of the least developing countries in the world. Due to lack of education, Nepal's HIV prevalence has not changed much over the last five years. The estimated HIV prevalence age is among 15-49 years. Apart from overall low HIV prevalence among adult population, the country's epidemic scenario looks much different among key populations where, in certain groups, HIV prevalence is much higher, notably among people who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, transgender people, female sex workers and male labour migrants and their families. Besides HIV prevalence among key populations, their size remains a considerable challenge for achieving as well as maintaining optimal coverage. Stigma and discrimination: One of the most difficult challenges for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) is to face negative responses towards them by people in their social environment. As the above quotes show, attitudes towards PLWHA may be well informed and supportive or involve negative comments and actions. These responses may range from unconscious gestures, to rejection and mistreatment tinged with harassment and hostility. Negative attitudes and behaviors related to HIV/AIDS that are based on unfounded ideas and fears constitute stigma and discrimination. Stigma and discrimination often have a profound impact on the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. Stigma and discrimination are one of the key barriers to combating the AIDS epidemic. They result in individuals denying that they are HIV-positive, staying away from preventive behaviors and being inhibited in seeking medical treatment out of fear that their health status will be discovered. Sufferers attempting to receive medical treatment may also experience a lack of commitment and mistreatment by health professionals. In addition, stigma and discrimination may cause infected people to lose social and economic support from their families. Fear of being identified as positive and discriminated against discourage individuals from seeking voluntary testing of their HIV status, thus affecting prevention and surveillance efforts. In Nepal, stigma and discrimination stem from beliefs that HIV/AIDS is a fatal, contagious disease readily transmitted in casual or indirect contact with a person with HIV/AIDS. In addition, the social and intimate nature of its transmission and the emphasis on its spread through sex work and drug use have created stereotypes of PLWHAs and the mistaken image that only immoral people are infected. In order to address inaccurate and damaging attitudes towards PLWHA, it is important to identify the nature of the cultural beliefs and practices that underlie them.

### Biography

Binita Karanjit Joshi has completed her Master's degree from Tribhuban University Nepal. She is Women Development Coordinator of Eurasia Reiyukai Nepal Office, UN affiliated organization. She has been working on women development in remote areas of Nepal in the field of women health issue and women empowerment from past 25 years. She has a lot of community based experience from different organization like Nepal Red Cross Society, Vulnerable Community Development Program, and Eurasia Reiyukai Nepal Office. Nepal is one of the least developing countries in the world which is having male dominated society and situation of women is more backward than man. In this situation, to work on remote field areas is a challenge. To create awareness, she has frequently published on women health and empowerment issues in daily newspaper. She received Blue Lotus award for her contributions in the field of Women Development. She has also got an award from Eurasia Reiyukai Nepal Office.

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