

ABSTRACT

The abstract encapsulates a comprehensive study conducted to delve into the legal aspects surrounding HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) and its repercussions on individuals residing in North Gujarat. The research aims to provide valuable insights into the discrimination, awareness levels, and risk perception associated with HIV/AIDS victims through extensive discussions with healthcare professionals and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in the region.

The study originates from the researcher's involvement in Legal Awareness Studies concerning the legal rights of HIV/AIDS victims in North Gujarat. This involvement led to an exploration of critical issues such as discrimination, awareness levels, risk behavior, and risk perception, through interactions with counselors from Integrated Counseling and Testing Centers (ICTCs), Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) Centers, doctors, nurses, and staff from NGOs. These discussions prompted the researcher to ponder over crucial questions regarding societal attitudes towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS, and the role of knowledge in shaping these attitudes.

Understanding that societal perceptions are influenced by knowledge, the study focuses on measuring the awareness levels of HIV/AIDS within the public domain, which is crucial for framing future interventions and programmatic responses to combat the epidemic effectively. National surveys, such as the National Family Health Survey-3 (NFHS-3) (2005–06), have highlighted significant gaps in knowledge about HIV/AIDS among the general public, with only 17% of women and 33% of men being fully informed about the disease. These surveys have also revealed widespread misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS, further emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to dispel myths and enhance understanding.

The scope of the study extends to providing descriptive data on discrimination against HIV/AIDS victims and understanding perceptions of human rights, which play a pivotal role in influencing behavioral change, a key objective of any intervention program. The study aims to shed light on societal attitudes towards HIV/AIDS victims and the variables that shape these attitudes.

Qualitative data will be collected through interviews conducted in four districts of Gujarat, namely Aravalli, Sabarkantha, Mehsana, and Banaskantha. These interviews will focus on various aspects, including the role of family and society in treatment, challenges faced by patients, and awareness levels among individuals and their families. By engaging with healthcare professionals, counselors, patients, and their families, the study aims to explore the support systems crucial for the recovery and treatment of patients.

The primary participants in the study include physicians, counselors, patients, and relatives of patients, whose perspectives and experiences will provide valuable insights into the legal rights and challenges faced by HIV/AIDS victims in North Gujarat. By documenting these experiences and perceptions, the study aims to contribute to the discourse on HIV/AIDS, raise awareness, and inform policy interventions aimed at addressing the legal and societal issues surrounding the disease.

In summary, the study holds significant implications for understanding and addressing the legal, social, and healthcare challenges associated with HIV/AIDS in North Gujarat. Through its comprehensive approach, the study seeks to advocate for the rights of HIV/AIDS victims and pave the way for more inclusive and effective interventions in the region.

The research will be organized into the following chapters:

The chapter Introduction and Research Planning will delve into the current research, the identified research problem, the rationale behind the study, its scope and objectives, the chosen research methodology, and the sampling techniques employed.

The chapter Review of Literature will provide a comprehensive review of existing literature relevant to the research topic, drawing from international, national, and state-level studies.

The chapter Human Rights and HIV/AIDS will explore the awareness levels of HIV/AIDS among the general population and examine discriminatory behaviors towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS. It will also discuss the intersection of human rights and HIV/AIDS issues.

The chapter Public Awareness Programs in Gujarat and the Role of NGOs will focus on the history and guidelines of organizations such as NACO (National AIDS Control Organization)

and GSACS (Gujarat State AIDS Control Society). It will also highlight the significant contributions of NGOs in HIV/AIDS prevention, control, and awareness efforts within the district.

Chapter Interaction Between Patients and Society and Perceptions of Discrimination will analyze the consequences of stigma and discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) in various aspects of their lives. It will also address the challenges encountered by PLHIV and examine the knowledge and interventions of healthcare professionals and social workers.

Research Methodology chapter will outline the methodology employed in conducting the study, including the research design, statement of the problem, hypothesis formulation, and data collection techniques using structured questionnaires. It will also discuss the tools and techniques used for data analysis and interpretation.

This crucial chapter of Data Analysis and Interpretation will present the analysis of data collected from respondents, including coding, tabulation, and statistical analysis. It will demonstrate the implementation of the research methodology and provide insights into the findings.

In this pivotal chapter of Summary and Conclusions, the essence of the entire thesis will be distilled. It will offer thoughtful interpretations of the analyzed data, guiding readers through the process of drawing meaningful conclusions and implications. This chapter plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between raw data and informed decision-making, ensuring the overall validity and relevance of the study.