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Essay Question

1. Between 5.5 and 6 million people in South Asia are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS. What are the social, economic and spatial factors most likely to put people in the region at risk of HIV infection? What are some strategies that governments and NGOs in the region can employ to educate people, to improve and accelerate their responses to HIV/AIDS, and in general, to lessen the region’s vulnerability to the epidemic?

The social, economic, and spatial factors that most likely to put people in South Asia at risk of HIV infection are that most of people who get infected with HIV/AIDS live in rural area for a starter. The people who live in rural areas of South Asia are more susceptible to the infection by many means such as having sexual intercourse without using condoms, using drugs with needle, mistaken belief about ADIS infection resulting from lack of proper sex education, and social norms that tolerate and overlooking male sexual promiscuity. First of all, people living in rural areas are obviously poor. Poor people are unable to receive proper education and that means they do not have access to receiving proper sex education as well. I heard stories where some men do not want to use condoms because they think it is not manly thing to do or using condoms lessen the pleasure. People who think like that should understand that using condoms is not only for their protection but to protect the partner they are having sexual relation with. Sex education can greatly reduce the AIDS infection by providing valuable information such as using condom during sexual intercourse or using used needles for drugs can increase the chance of transmitting the HIV virus.

There can be various economic factors that contribute to AIDS infection in South Asia. My main concern about life right now would be getting a decent paying job during the current economic crisis and AIDS infection would be last thing in my mind to worry about. Just like me, when people are living in poverty, their primary concern would be how they would live through a day and not about contracting some deadly virus. Even if they get AIDS infection, they would just view it as a consequence of inevitable situations from their poverty stricken lives. Also poverty would force some women to conduct prostitution and either they will get HIV virus from infected clients or transmit the virus after getting infected. Some people came to the rural areas looking for jobs or working far away from their homes. This type of situation will easily advocate those that are away from their wives and partners into getting engaged to prostitution or risky sexual behaviours. I felt really bad when I saw the clip about AIDS in India when the woman in interview did not blame her husband for giving her AIDS which most likely resulted from low social economic status of women in South Asia. It is sad to see when sometimes it is invisible thing such as social norms or factors can hurt the people that do not deserve them.

The spatial factor of AIDS infection is South Asia is the high population density of the rural areas. Since so many people live in small areas closely together, AIDS infection can spread out faster than it does in major cities. Also these rural areas are short of hospitals or medical institutions where infection can be treated. The government would also pay small attention to rural areas. The government does not collect much taxes from rural areas so in return, they would neither invest time nor funds to do something about AIDS infection in rural areas. The government should help out its citizen equally regardless of their social or economic status and it is unfortunate that the government act like a corporation.

The governments and NGOs in the region can employ several strategies to fight off AIDS infection. First, the governments and NGOs need to have some type of specific communication line which makes it easier for people who have AIDS infection to report their problems. Without some type of authority or institution where people can visit for their problems, it would difficult for the organizations to check and effectively control the epidemic. Also it would help to provide more than simple sex education. Maybe the government can provide some educational classes or lectures where if people participate, then they can receive small amount of food or monetary value. The poor people have tendency to mistrust or fear of anything which government or organizations advocate. It is important to bridge the gap between the people and the government so that government can effectively control the epidemic and help out the people in need.