



ASHA POSITIVE PEOPLE ASSOCIATION



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



We are delighted to share the annual report of APPA+ for 2023-24, the 19th year of our existence. As a community-based organization, it has been a personal journey for our team, filled with immense pride, joy and learnings. India has come a long way in its HIV services response since the detection of first HIV case in 1986. The collectivization of the PLHIV community through the formation of district level networks, state level networks and the national network, supported by the Govt., NGOs and the international agencies, has played a significant role in amplifying the voices of the PLHIV community throughout the country.

The recent legislation 'The HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 is an important constitutional commitment, protecting our human rights and dignity legally. The initiation of the Vihaan Care and Support Centre (CSC) Programme in 2013, supported by the Global Fund, and executed by the PLHIV networks, is a comprehensive program improving the survival rate and retention in ART for the community. Since 2013, APPA+ has been successfully implementing the Vihaan project in Khammam and Bhadrachalam districts of Telangana. For a couple of years, from 2019 to 2021, we have also implemented the Vihaan CSC project in the Adilabad district.

In the last 2 decades, we have received immense support from the State AIDS Control Society (SACS), initially of Andhra Pradesh and later of Telangana to create an enabling environment for the community members. With support of SACS and with effective collaboration with the District AIDS Prevention and Control Unit (DAPCU), district authorities, other NGOs, we have been able to ensure that the community receives health services in a stigma free environment. By building partnerships with the civil society and Govt. stakeholders, we have also been able to cater to the non-health needs of the community and their families – legal aid, social entitlements and welfare schemes, education and nutrition support, skill building and livelihood.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our donors, stakeholders, partners, volunteers and media for their support; our accomplishments would not have been possible without their support.

Founder's Message



Mr. A. Shankar Rao,
Founder and President

Organizational Overview:

APPA+ began its journey in the year 2005 to amplify the voices of the People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) in Khammam district of Telangana. Driven by our own experiences of having faced stigma and discrimination on account of our HIV status, we came together and registered a community-based organization under the Andhra Pradesh Societies Registration Act 35 of 2001 to provide a sense of belonging and togetherness for the community.

Awareness about and access to Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) treatment and other support services are crucial for PLHIV. Additionally, we also need to learn to manage side effects and opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis (TB). The challenges faced by the community, particularly for the poor and the marginalized, are further exacerbated by the HIV related stigma from the family and the society and the structural and economic barriers in accessing healthcare services.

During our early years, our first priority was advocating for better health services at the district level through sensitization of the district authorities and the health care staff. By means of mobilizing the community, we collectively worked towards demanding our right to receive ART services in a responsive, non-discriminatory setting. We work in collaboration with the government, the civil society and the community to create an enabling environment for the PLHIV community.

From 2010-2015, with support from the State AIDS Control Society, our team also worked on prevention of HIV from a parent to a child by facilitating promotion of institutional deliveries; the project benefitted 2900+ Women Living with HIV/AIDS (WLHIV).

In addition to health, we also focus on the socio-economic development by facilitating access to social entitlements, social welfare schemes and legal aid support. Gradually, we also extended our services to the PLHIV community in the Bhadradri Kothagudem district and Adilabad district.



Counselling session at APPA+ office

Vision:

A society wherein People Living with HIV/AIDS, marginalized populations and other underserved communities have access to equitable health services and are empowered socio-economically with rights and dignity.



Mission:

APPA+ collaborates to break down barriers faced by People Living with HIV/AIDS, marginalized groups, and underserved communities, promoting inclusiveness through innovative health and socio-economic programs, ensuring everyone has the chance to thrive

Approach:

By means of **Advocacy, Networking and Service delivery**, APPA+ works to:

- 1 Promote social acceptance of PLHIV and their families by diminishing stigma and discrimination
- 2 Protect and promote the rights of PLHIV by facilitating and ensuring their involvement at all levels of decision making
- 3 Facilitate early linkages of PLHIV for treatment, care and support services
- 4 Provide PLHIV with more economic, social and cultural networking opportunities
- 5 Provide access to information and awareness, thereby reducing incidences of HIV infection

As a community-based organization governed by PLHIV members, we work towards ensuring that our community receive services in a responsive and stigma free environment.

Affiliation:

Network of Telangana People Living with HIV/AIDS (NTP), Telangana

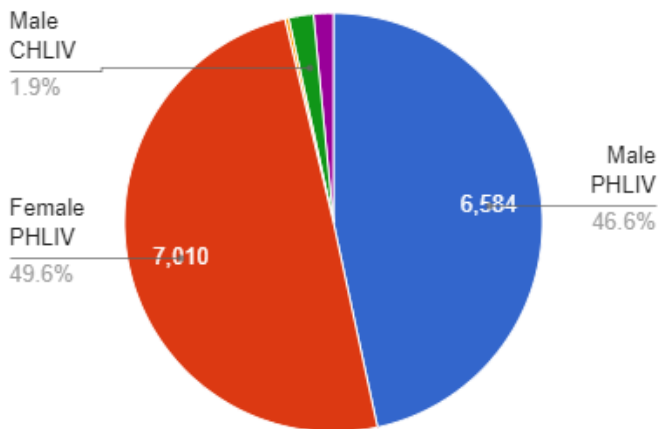
Indian Network of People Living With HIV/AIDS (INP+), Chennai

Beneficiaries:

We serve all individuals infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in Khammam and Bhadradri Kothagudem districts, including the high-risk groups most affected by HIV and AIDS - LGBTQI community, injecting drug users, sex workers, migrants.

14122 People Living with HIV/AIDS including 486 CLHIV (Children Living with HIV/AIDS) are registered with APPA+.

Beneficiaries



Male PHLIV	6584
Female PHLIV	7010
Transgender PHLIV	42
Male CHLIV	270
Female CHLIV	216

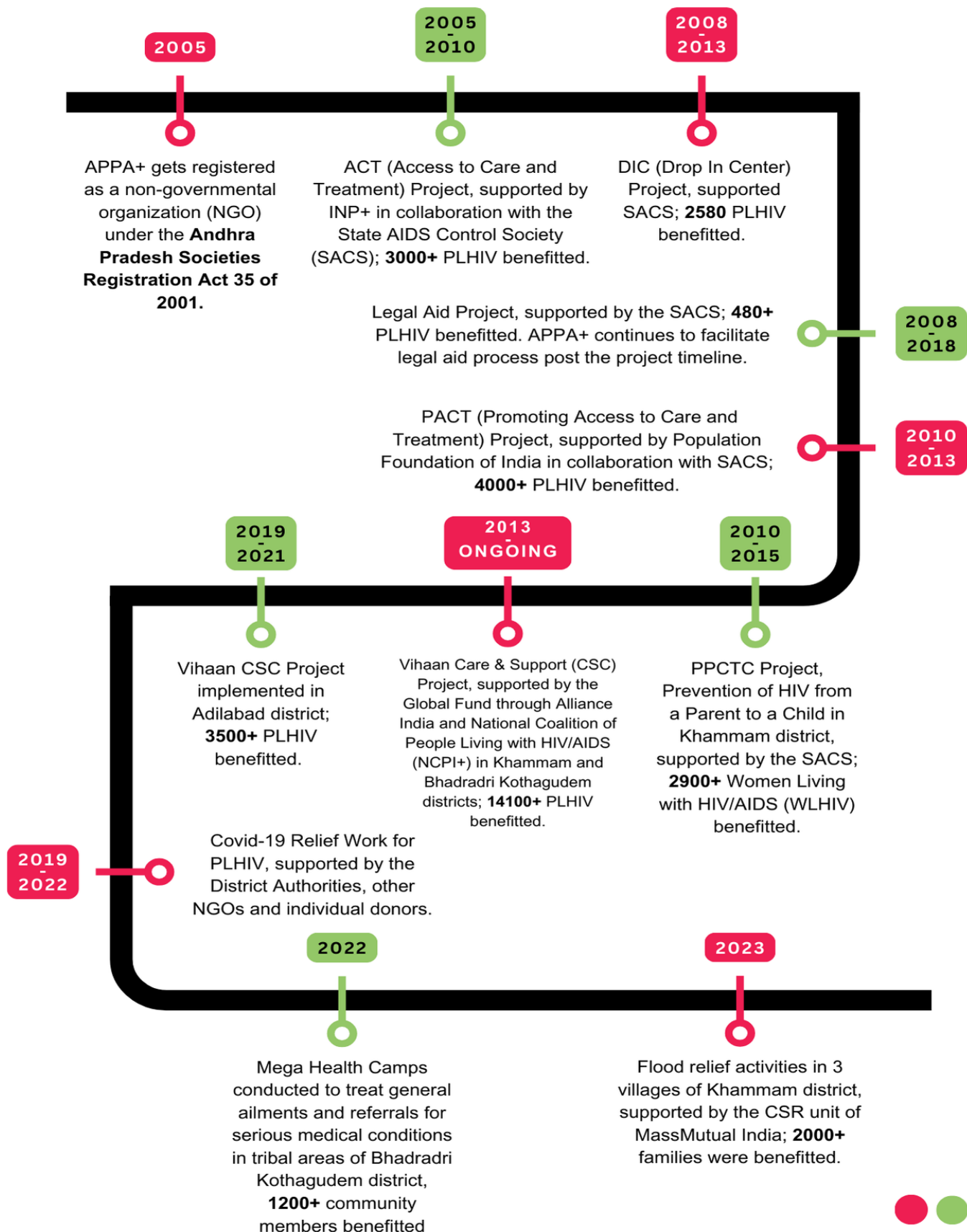
Geographical Coverage:

APPA+ currently operates in 2 districts of Telangana – Khammam and Bhadradri Kothagudem. For a couple of years from 2019-2021, the organization also worked in Adilabad district, providing HIV/AIDS Care and Support Services through the Vihaan CSC initiative to 3500+ PLHIV.

Map of
Telangana,
India



Work Journey:



Impact: **2005-2024**



14100+

**PLHIV and their families
received timely HIV/AIDS
Care, Support and Referral
services**

7600+

**PLHIV and their families
availed Social Welfare and
Protection Schemes**



Monthly review meeting with staff

480+

**PLHIV received Legal
Aid, enabling them to
effectively exercise their
constitutional rights**

170+

**PLHIV are regularly
receiving Nutrition
Support**

VIHAAN Care & Support Centre (CSC) Project:

Vihaan CSC is a comprehensive program targeted at improving the survival and quality of life of PLHIV and reducing further transmission. Supported by the Global Fund, Vihaan CSC is a national initiative, focused on provide expanded and holistic care and support services to PLHIV and their families.

Since **2013**, APPA+ is implementing the Vihaan project in Khammam and Bhadradri Kothagudem districts of Telangana. The organization also implemented the Vihaan project in Adilabad district of Telangana from **2019 to 2021**.

Objectives of CSC:

- Early linkages of PLHIV to care, support, and treatment services
- Improved treatment adherence and education for PLHIV
- Expanded positive prevention activities
- Improved social protection and wellbeing of PLHIV

Vihaan CSC follows a differentiated service delivery model, adapting and prioritizing HIV services that reflect the preferences and expectations of various groups of PLHIV.

High Priority Group includes – 1. People who are yet to be put on ART 2. People newly initiated on ART 3. People with less than 80% treatment adherence 4. Loss to Follow Up (LFU) cases 5. Newly TB detected PLHIV 6. Pregnant Women.

In addition to limited knowledge of treatment adherence, socio-economic factors such as poverty, poor accessibility, etc. are also responsible for LFU cases and poor treatment adherence. To address this, our team provides comprehensive information, addresses concerns and facilitates appropriate linkages for health and non-health needs of the PLHIV. Nutrition support is regularly mobilized for the marginalized PLHIV and CLHIV. The CSC staff provide information on social entitlements and welfare schemes and also facilitate access to the same.

PLHIV and their care givers in the family are also trained on basic infection control practices at home, management of general ailments and minor infections and identification of signs and symptoms of health issues requiring immediate medical care.

The testing of spouse/partner, children and family members of the PLHIV is also conducted and appropriate referrals are established.

In 2023-24, 13500+ PLHIV benefitted through the Vihaan CSC project.

VIHAAN CSC

Service Model:

Counselling	Need based Individual and Group Counselling at the CSC centre ensure that PLHIV get Psychosocial Support and Information on 1. Treatment literacy 2. Treatment adherence 3. Nutrition 4. Sexual and Reproductive Health 5. Positive Living and Positive Prevention
Outreach	By means of Prioritization and Outreach Mapping, home visits are made to ensure 1. Early linkages of PLHIV to care 2. Improved treatment adherence and retention in care 3. Periodic HIV testing of discordant couples 4. Regular screening for TB symptoms among PLHIV and family members 5. Treatment Compliance among TB positive cases 6. LFU and MIS people are linked back to ART Centre
Referrals & Linkages	Through Coordination and Collaboration, Linkages are established with various govt. and non-govt institutions to ensure that the health and non-health needs of the PLHIV are met 1. Social Entitlements and Welfare Schemes 2. Legal Aid 3. Treatment for General Health and Opportunistic Infections 4. Nutritional Support 6. Education Sponsorship 7. Skill building and Livelihood
Support Group Meetings	Support group meetings held at the CSC, provide a safe space for the PLHIV to share their problems and concerns and learn from each other on how to cope. Theme based discussion, prioritized based on the needs of the group provide emotional support, enhance their knowledge about HIV/AIDS through experiential sharing and motivate them to have a positive outlook.
Advocacy	CSC strives towards creating an enabling environment for the PLHIV to receive stigma free services by repeatedly sensitizing important stakeholders about the issues and concerns of the community. A discrimination response team (DRT) has been set up to deal with issues of discrimination faced by the community. Activities at district level are organized on special occasions such as World AIDS day, World TB Day, etc. to sensitize and strengthen partnership with critical stakeholders.

Nutrition Support:

A nutritious balanced diet helps PLHIV to maintain a healthy weight, supports overall health, strengthens the immune system and aids in the absorption of HIV medicines. APPA+ team persistently strives to mobilize nutrition support for the marginalized PLHIV community.

In 2023-24, **664** PLHIV benefitted from the nutrition mobilized by the APPA+ team.



Nutrition support to PLHIV at Bhadrachalam supported by Christen Service Unit

In collaboration with the Christian Service Unit (CSU), 100 nutrition kits were distributed twice every month; officials from DMHO and DAPCU are often invited for these events.

In January 2024, team from CSU United States visited our office and discussed about the issues of the community and the services offered by APPA+. The interaction concluded with CSU agreeing to provide lifelong nutrition support to the marginalized PLHIV and free health check-ups in their hospital.



Satya Sai Trust distributed Nutrition to PLHIVs

With support from the Satya Sai Trust, **45** nutrition kits were **distributed every month to the PLHIV** in Khammam district.



Satya Sai Trust distributed Nutrition to PLHIVs

Social Entitlements & Welfare Schemes:

	No. of PLHIV benefitted
e-Shram Card	209
ART Pension	25
Nutrition	498
Labour Insurance Policy	70
Health Card	15
SC Loan	1
PAN Card	15
Voter Id Card	150
Driving License	60
Income Certificate	28
Caste Certificate	28

APPA+ Vihaan CSC Team:

The Vihaan Project is being guided by the President of APPA+, Mr. Shankar Rao, who also serves as the Director of the project. The implementation of the varied activities is through a team of a Project Coordinator, an Accountant, a Peer Counsellor and 20 Health Promoters/ Outreach Workers.

Our Reach 2023-24:

13500+ PLHIV benefitted through Vihaan CSC Centre	925 New PLHIV registered	912 PLHIV received counselling	726 Loss to Follow Up (LFU) cases restarted ART
2651 Follow-up of missed cases	409 Follow-up for CD4	429 Linked to HIV/AIDS Targeted Interventions Programs	836 Testing of Family Members of PLHIV
709 Referrals for TB and other opportunistic infections, STIs & General Health	24 Support Group Meetings (SGM) organized	664 PLHIV benefitted from Social Protection	26 PLHIV benefitted from Social Entitlement
8 Issues addressed by the Discrimination Response Team (DRT)	8 PLHIV supported with Legal Aid	4 Advocacy Programme Conducted	664 PLHIV supported with Nutrition



Awards:



APPA+ President Mr. Shankar Rao receives the Best CBO Award from the District Medical Superintendent, Khammam on World AIDS Day 2023

For the past 10 years [2014 – 2023], APPA+ team has been felicitated on the World AIDS Day by the District AIDS Prevention Control Unit (DAP-CU) and the Collector for the Best HIV/AIDS Outreach Services to the PLHIV community.

- Felicitated by the Collector and the District Health and Medical Office (DHMO), on the occasion of World TB Day [2014, 2018, 2019]
- Felicitated by the Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), on World AIDS Day 2020
- Facilitated by the District Women and Child Welfare Department, on the International Women's Day 2011

Partners:

- Alliance India
- National Coalition of People Living with HIV/AIDS in India (NCPI+)
- Network of Telangana People Living with HIV/AIDS (NTP), Telangana
- Indian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (INP+), Chennai
- Telangana State AIDS Control Society (TSACS)
- Christen Service Unit
- Satya Sai Trust
- SAATHII
- LEPRA Society

Organisation Capacity Building:

APPA+ is being mentored and provided with technical assistance by Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC) project of Family Health International 360 (FHI 360) since 2024 through LEPRA Society on organizational development and on sustaining services to PLHIV community.

Through EpiC project, APPA+ board and team shall self-assess their performance, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, along 9 core areas of organizational development –

1. Organizational Strategy & Governance
2. Finance Management
3. Human Resources
4. Program Management
5. Program Quality
6. Client Needs & Participation
7. Monitoring & Evaluation
8. Networking, Partnerships & Knowledge Management
9. Resource Mobilization

A Capacity Development Plan (CDP), prioritized by a participatory process, shall be made in consultation with the EpiC team. The identified priority areas shall be strengthened through workshops and mentoring visits conducted by the EpiC team.



Baseline Assessment of APPA+ being conducted by LEPRA team under the EpiC Project



Preparation of Capacity Development Plan for the APPA+ team with the LEPRA team under the EpiC Project

Glimpses of our work:



Flood Relief Activities in Khammam district, supported by the CSR unit of MassMutual India



Team participates in the celebration of World AIDS Day, 2023



APPA+ participates in the Race against HIV, Youth Festival Walkathon 2023



APPA+ team interacts with the Senior Medical Officer, ART Center, Khammam



Interaction with the Superintendent of Government General Hospital, Khammam



Flood Relief Activities in Khammam district, supported by the CSR unit of MassMutual India

Our Team:



Mr. A. Shankar Rao,
Founder and President

Mr. Atika Shankar Rao, the Founder and the President of the Asha Positive People Association (APPA+), is an inspiring and committed leader leading the organization since its inception in 2005. He has played a significant role in mobilizing the PLHIV community to advocate for their rights and sensitize the key stakeholders to identify with the issues of the community. He has established partnerships with important stakeholders such as TNP+, NTP, NCPI+, INP+, PFI, Alliance HIV/AIDS India, FHI-360, LEPRASociety, SAATHII, DAPCU, CSR, etc. During the initial years, Mr. Shankar has worked as a PPTCTC Coordinator for the ACT Project. He plays an important role in ensuring legal aid for the community by coordinating with the District Legal Services Authority.

The Journey of Mr. Shankar Rao:

- Speaker in Asha Program conducted by State AIDS Control Society (SACS) in 2005 at Village, Mandal and District Level.
- Elected as President of APPA+ in 2005.
- Positive Speaker at the Red Ribbon Clubs of Degree and Engineering Colleges, 2007 - 2010.
- Organized pap smear cancer screening in liaison with District Health department, 2011.
- Successfully completed family planning surgeries for PLHIV in collaboration with the District Health department, 2011.
- Elected as the Vice President at the State level PLHIV Network (NTP+) in 2016
- Awarded as the Best Performing President District level by District Collector and ADMO, 2007- 2023

Mr. Namburi Sudhakar, the Vice President of APPA+, is a committed social worker and passionately works for the PLHIV community. He facilitates awareness programs, treatment adherence, skill building and life skill education initiatives and has also worked as a Health Promotor in Vihaan CSC Project.



Mr. Namburi Sudhakar,
Vice President



Ms. Pittala Lakshmi,
General Secretary

Ms. Pittala Lakshmi, the General Secretary of APPA+, has been part of the organization since its inception. She has worked in PPTCT project and Vihaan CSC project and has been felicitated at the district officials for her exemplary work. Currently, she works as a Health Promoter in Vihaan CSC project and guides the implementation of the programme at the field and the organization level. She motivates the PLHIV to lead a quality life and enables linkages with various Govt. schemes and social entitlements. She also actively mobilizes nutrition support for the community in Bhadrachalam district.

Ms. B. Padmavathi, a Joint Secretary of APPA+, works as a Health Promoter in the Vihaan CSC project. She has previously worked in PPTCT and DIC projects. She is also actively engaged in conducting Support Group Meetings and arranging nutrition support for the community. She also aids the process of linking the community members with the Govt. schemes.



Ms. B. Padmavathi,
Joint Secretary



Ms. Nirmala,
General Secretary

Ms. Nirmala, the Treasurer of APPA+, has been associated with the network since its inception in 2005. She is a committed leader and an active positive speaker, creating awareness and advocating for the rights of the PLHIV community.

Ms. G. Krishna Kumari joined the Board of APPA+ in 2015. She voluntarily supports the work of the organization w.r.t prevention, treatment and skill building initiatives and motivates the community to lead a healthy life during home visits and support group meetings.



Ms. G. Krishna Kumari
Board Member



Mrs. Kanchu Aruna
Board Member

Ms. Kanchu Aruna, actively works in the field to create awareness for prevention and treatment adherence. She works as an outreach worker for the Vihaan CSC project and motivates the community to lead a healthy life.

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