



## **Knowledge and Belief about HIV/AIDS among the Higher Secondary Standard of Schoolgirls of Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal, India**

**Mahua Samanta and Sovanjan Sarkar\***

*Department of Anthropology, Vidyasagar University, Midnapore,  
Paschim Medinipur, 721102, West Bengal, India*

*E-mail: <mahuasamanta123@gmail.com>, \* <sovanjan@mail.vidyasagar.ac.in>*

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**ABSTRACT** The present study has investigated the awareness pertaining to Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) among the rural schoolgirls of Paschim Medinipur District of West Bengal. Four hundred and sixty eight (468) schoolgirls (aged 15 to 19 years) were chosen from Daspur II Block of Paschim Medinipur District. A pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect data, which comprises 55 questions on the knowledge and awareness about various aspects of HIV/AIDS like modes of transmission, diagnosis, treatment and sources of information. Majority of the girls heard the term HIV/AIDS, while few have some misconceptions pertaining to transmission of the virus and preventive measures. Health professionals and teachers were the main sources of information regarding HIV/AIDS, while more than ninety-eight percent of them were not aware about their own HIV infection status. Exposure to mass media, better education of the parents and regular contact with teachers and health professionals helped the rural girls together information about HIV/AIDS.