

Inspiring Virus!



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Aiyushman Dutta 18 January 2009 7200 views

There is no doubt that HIV and AIDS is one of the greatest scourges ever to affect mankind, but at the same time, it has also given rise to a lot of creative works. Ever since its discovery, artists, musicians and writers have all used this virus and its associated disease as the base for unleashing their creativity. Many writers have authored works on HIV and AIDS, while a few have also chronicled the lives of victims of this dreaded disease — the dread and despair that is reflected in each and every aspect of their lives.

One of the latest additions to the archive of literary works on this subject is a collection of short stories titled, 'Dangshan' (meaning bite). Published by Guwahati-based Purbanchal Prakash, the collection has been planned and edited by senior producer of All India Radio and acclaimed film critic, Utpal Dutta. All the stories of the collection have HIV and AIDS as the principal element of the story. Several authors portrayed HIV/AIDS as the principle element of the story. The stories of the collection are not based on AIDS victims, but the author and editor has taken care to see that the disease is presented as a social problem.

HIV and AIDS is not a new subject for Dutta. Having produced a radio serial on HIV and AIDS awareness earlier, Dutta had also won the RAPA award for his radio production on 'AIDS orphans, which he had jointly

produced with Prabal Sarma. “Disease is a subject which has fascinated writers and artists for decades. I have been personally reading a lot of short stories on this subject. During my childhood, I saw artists use TB as the chief element in their works. Later on, many writers and directors made references to cancer in their creative works,” he says, referring to the reasons which compelled him to plan a collection on this subject. Dutta continues, “Though I found a lot of books and other creative works on human diseases, I was unable to find a collection of short stories where HIV and AIDS has played the principal role. I guess the first writer to have introduced this subject in the world of Asomiya literature was Badal Chakravarty, who had written a short story, Bijanu. That was the main inspiration for this collection.”

Dangshan is perhaps the first collection of short stories on HIV and AIDS. The writers who have contributed to this collection all hail from different and diverse fields. The writers who contributed to this collection are Badal Chakravarty, Dr Dinesh Chandra Goswami, Dilip Bora, Anil Phukan, Dr Dipak Kumar Sarma, Pranjal Sarma Basistha, Gurmile Sing, Meenaxi Buragohain, Bharati Bharali and Manikuntala Bhattacharya. The book is available at the Purbanchal Prakash stall of the ongoing Guwahati Book Fair.

Aiyushman Dutta

Journalist and Founder Secretary, Eastern Beats Music Society.

BY AIYUSHMAN DUTTA

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