

LOOKING INTO THE NEXT MILLENIUM

- January 1989: Three friends in a coffee shop explore the possibility of starting a magazine exclusively to cater to needs of gays and lesbians.
- * January 1990: The first issue of BOMBAY DOST is out.
- * January 1991: The magazine is flooded with letters from all over India. Gay men seek help from all over the place. This brings forth a very vital need to the focus of people concerned.
- * April 1994: The birth of HUMSAFAR TRUST.
- * December 1994: The first ever conference of gay men is organized in Mumbai titled "Emerging sexual identities".
- About 65 gay men from all over the country selected from the subscription list of Bombay Dost magazine are invited to the conference.
- The conference is a big success.
- The 65 individuals who attended this conference have now grown into more than 26 registered and non registered organizations all over the country.
- * The Humsafar Trust has been actively involved in the formation of
 - a) Saathi Hyderabad
 - b) Integration Calcutta
 - c) Samabhavana Mumbai
 - d) Daai Mumbai
- October 1995: The Humsafar center at Vakola Santacruz in Mumbai is opened on the Diwali Day. Initially the center was kept open only on Fridays for gay men but over the next six years it has grown into a large organization with over 30 full time activists' workings towards betterment of not just gay men but the entire LGBT community.

The Humsafar Trust offers the following services to the entire LGBT community in Mumbai Metro.

- COMMUNITY WORK:
- Telephone Help lines
 - a) Voice Mail Services - 9726912
 - b) Manned Help line - 6187476 (12.00 noon to 8.00 p.m. from Monday to Saturday)
- Face to Face Counseling
- Drop in center
 - a) Workshops and games
 - b) Lectures and Video shows
- Library Archives
- STREET OUTREACH
- Condom distribution
- Rapport Building
- IEC Dispersal
- STI / HIV VOLUNTARY TESTING CENTER
- WORKSHOPS ON MSM ISSUES
- RESEARCH BASELINE / BEHAVIOUR STUDIES.

- VOICEMAIL REACH: (Sample size: 2078 Calls 1999 - 2000)

The Average age of the caller varies between 16 to 60 years.

An average of about 6 calls are received everyday on the voicemail totaling to about 2200 calls per year.

Trained outreach community counselors' access and attend to these callers.

- NATURE OF CALLS

* Blank calls	30%
* Information seekers	5%
* Sex Calls	7%
* Coming Out Cases	20%
* Emotional Problems	15%
* Health Problems	20%
* Identity Crises	3%

- METHODOLOGY OF COUNSELLING

- Meeting at a public place.
- Discussing the Problem
- Trying to Resolve
- Referrals (Dr. Chitra Subramaniam/ Dr. Watsa/ Dr Brahmabhatt/ Vrushali Deshmukh)
- Medical help from STI / HIV clinic of the center or other Hospitals

- MANNED HELPLINE (Sample size: 348 people)
- Calls are received at the center.
- Attended by the trained counselors
- Counseling is offered on phone directly
- If need arises the person concerned is called to the center
- The nature of calls is similar to what is being attended by the voicemail
- The Age group also remains similar i.e., between 16 to 60 years
- The Referral procedure also remains the same
- The Medical help procedure too remains the same

NEED FOR MAY 2000 CONFERENCE IN MUMBAI

a) The calls received on the voicemail and manned help line brought forth a very interesting point to our notice. People from all over the country called up Humsafar Trust for help and it was not possible for us to reach people who were not based in Mumbai

b) In February 1999 we received a call from Hyderabad to set up Saathi. The Humsafar Trust extended all the possible resources available in terms of financial and technical support to set up Saathi Hyderabad and realized that NGO's all over the country need to know the ways of accessing funds and technical support independently.

c) Humsafar Trust was also the first NGO to access funding through NACO and did a base line study with four main indicators.

- 1) Street Outreach and further integration with existing public and private health facilities
- 2) Syndromic approach to detection and treatment of STI's
- 3) Promotion of condom use with specific emphasis on anal sex
- 4) Promote partner reduction

d) Humsafar Trust also has NACO funded first gay STI/HIV-AIDS Clinic in India at the Humsafar Center where a sample of about 248 showed the following result.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 1) HIV + | 17% |
| 2) Latent Syphilis | 34% |
| 3) VDRLA+ | 38% |

e) Humsafar Trust has already completed first year of its three-year pilot project titled " A Baseline Study of Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour and Practices among the Men having sex with men in selected sites of Mumbai" funded by Mumbai District Aids Control Society (MDACS)

f) Humsafar has also begun work on a project "Regional strategies to stabilize prevalence of STI/HIV AIDS in MSM sector in Maharashtra" funded by Maharashtra State Aids control society (MSACS)

So, with the Basic Purpose of imparting information and sharing skills and resources within community a conference titled "LOOKING INTO THE NEXT MILLENIUM" was organized at the Gorai Beach on the outskirts of Mumbai between May 4 and May 6, 2000.

- Delegates from all over the country and all possible NGO's covering the entire spectrum of LGBT were extended invitation for the conference
 - The Conference was attended by over 120 delegates representing LGBT'S and PLWA's from about 26 NGOs from all over the country.
- * The agenda of the conference was discussed along the following lines.
- a) The emergence of sexual minorities, political identities and building the movement.
 - b) The Human rights issues around sexuality.
 - c) Formalization of groups/ Registration with government and networking, campaigning and accessing funds.
 - d) Social Research
 - e) ST I 's and HIV/AIDS in context of male/female/transgender sexual health.
- The Conference spread over three days began with lectures by guest speakers / Delegates. The 120 delegates then dispersed into five different groups for discussions. They returned with their individual inputs based on their group discussions to be shared by all. The consensus of it was gathered as data / workshop inputs. At the end of each session a final report of each plenary was written down.
 - Today a final report of the conference running into about 140 pages is ready to be dispatched to all the groups who attended the conference and otherwise. The said report will also be sent to various agencies to raise more funds to strengthen our cause.

- The Final outcome of conference was a need to form NETWORK INDIA. The need was very strongly felt and recognized. The groups decided that not only should they be interacting with each other regularly and exchanging views, skills and resources, but also work towards reaching people in smaller cities/ towns and rural areas. We intend to formalize NETWORK INDIA at the next conference that we hope to hold in Delhi next year around April.
- The Four Components of NETWORK INDIA
- NETWORK NORTH: Where HUMRAHI from Delhi would help and support small group formations in the northern region
- NETWORK SOUTH: Where SAATHI from Hyderabad would help and support small group formations in the southern region
- NETWORK EAST: Where INTEGRATION from Calcutta would help and support small group formations in the eastern region
- NETWORK WEST: Where Humsafar Trust would help and support group formations in the western region

HUMSAFAR TRUST - NETWORK WEST team has already started its work and helped in the formation of the following groups after the May conference.

- * Samantar Pune
- * Sahayak Akola
- * Laksha Baroda
- A LGBT group is right now being formalized in Goa under the aegis of Humsafar Trust - NETWORK WEST.

The Network West has been actively involved in condom distribution after the conference.

- * Aasra Patna

- * Sangram Sangli (A co-operative of CSW's)
- * Saathi Hyderabad

This condom distribution program is made possible through the funding received by us from the The Elizabeth Taylor Trust Fund.

The Mumbai Conference was funded by

- 1) UN Aids
 - 2) DFID
 - 3) SIDA
 - 4) India Funds at Tide Foundation
- The Humsafar Trust is right now rigorously working towards setting up of a 10-bed ward as continuum of care. Our inference from baseline studies indicates that of the 100 HIV + 80 are males and this population is our top priority today.

We at Humsafar take this opportunity to thank Richard Winger, Joe Maccormac, Paul Knox, Eric Rosenbam, Anil Hingorani and Tricone for inviting us to be a part of this conference. All our friends present here and all over the globe who have helped us achieve whatever little that we have so far. We hope that their continuous support will enable us to fulfill our dream of building a society where we all shall be treated as equals.

Friends! it has been a long journey, a difficult task and a tedious path. It was never a bed of roses.... but along the way there have been moments of happiness which brought a tear of joy and moments of grief, there have been moments of defeat and moments of victory when some dreams were realized while some dreams crashed, but we never gave up because we know that together we can and we will.... after all a wise man once said that a winner never quits and quitter never wins.]