

Project Avsar Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025

The Humsafar Trust x BMC Software India Pvt. Ltd.



Project Avsar (Opportunity)

**Bridging Access to Education,
Upskilling, and Livelihood Opportunities**

SDGs addressed



Project Avsar, supported by BMC Software India Pvt. Ltd. and implemented by The Humsafar Trust, aims to bridge access to education, upskilling, and livelihood opportunities for LGBTQ+ and sexual minority communities across India.

The project focuses on providing financial aid to economically disadvantaged LGBTQ+ individuals, fostering inclusive educational environments, and enhancing employability through initiatives like sensitization workshops, job fairs, and capacity-building events.

By addressing barriers to education and employment, Project Avsar seeks to empower marginalized individuals and promote long-term socio-economic inclusion.

Project Details

“Avsar aims to Bridge Access to Education, Upskilling, and Livelihood Opportunities”

This project aims to continue the efforts taken by BMC Software Pvt. Ltd. in the last three financial years (2021-24) sustaining the outcomes of the previously implemented activities with allied steps to them.

Project Beneficiaries:

LGBTQ+ persons, Transgender Persons, individuals living with HIV, other Marginalized & Vulnerable Groups

Project Location:

Pan-India implementation.



Objective 1: Crafting Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments

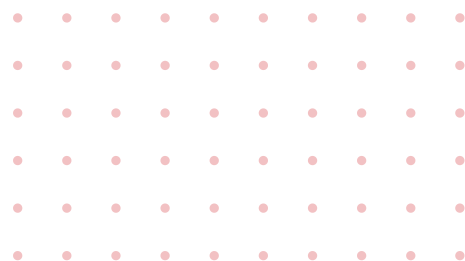
- Activity 1.1: Educational / Upskilling Support

Objective 2: Enhancing inclusion in education

- Activity 2.1: Creation of LGBTQ+ resource material for the promotion of inclusion
- Activity 2.2: Sensitization Workshops in Academic Spaces

Objective 3: To advance employability, livelihood, and sustainability prospects among LGBTQ+ and sexual minorities.

- Activity 3.1: Saksham - Job Fair - A Recruitment Program for LGBTQ+ Employment in Formal Workplaces
- Activity 3.2: Gulabi Mela

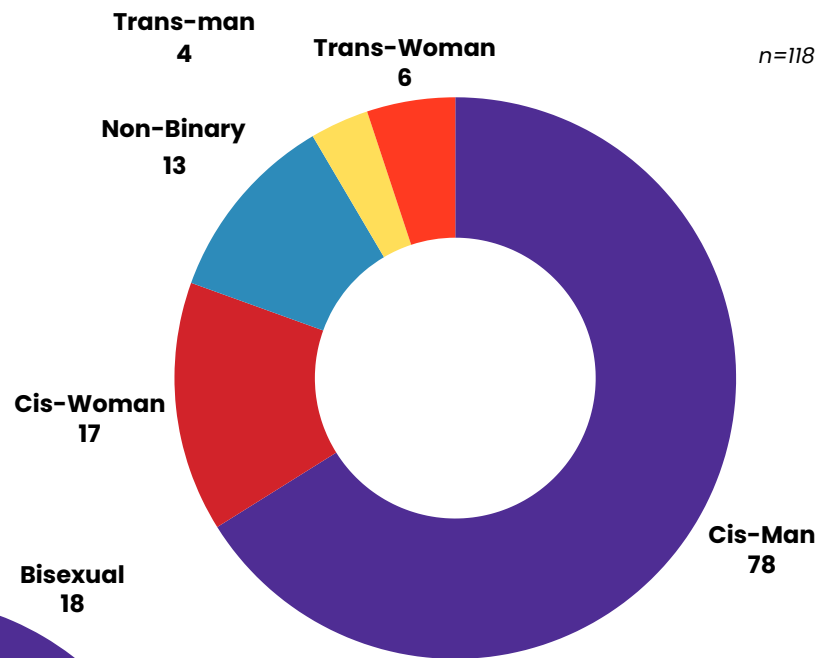


Activity 1.1

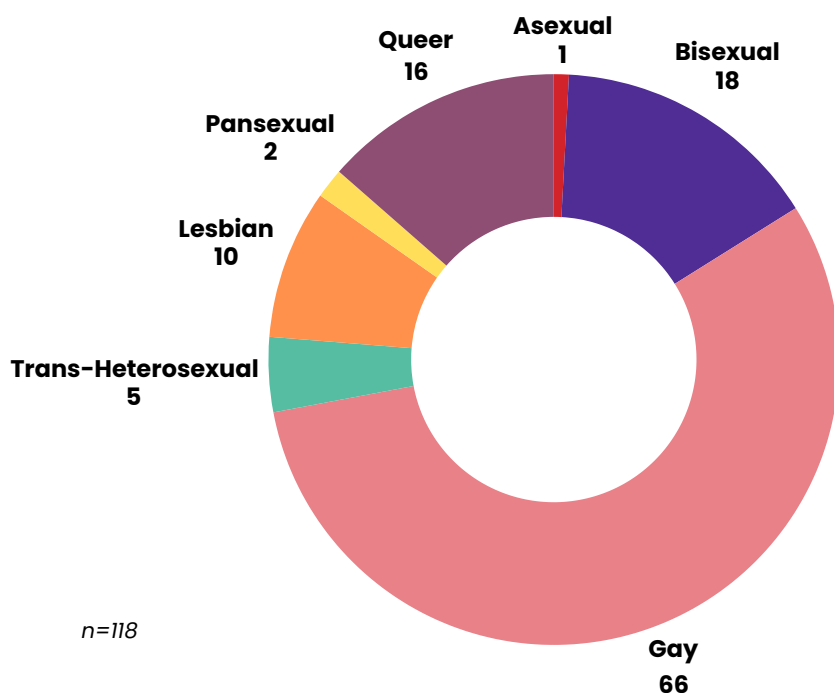
Educational / Upskilling Support

Since April 2024, through this activity, we have supported **118 individuals** from the LGBTQ+ community in enhancing their skills and pursuing their educational aspirations. Here are the demographics of these 118 students and the courses they are pursuing:

Gender Wise Analysis

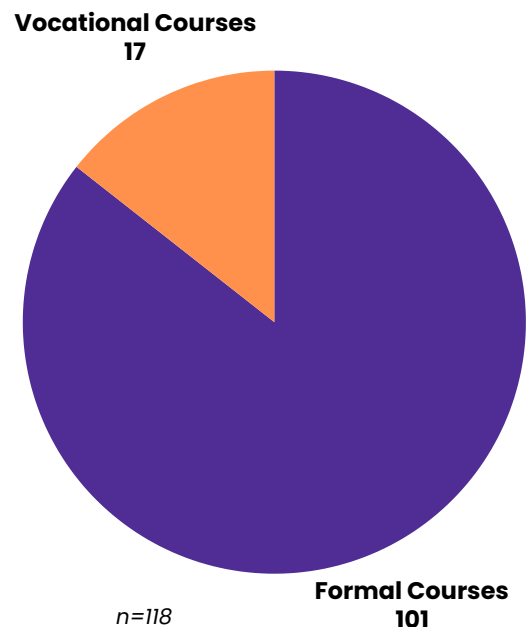


Sexuality Wise Analysis



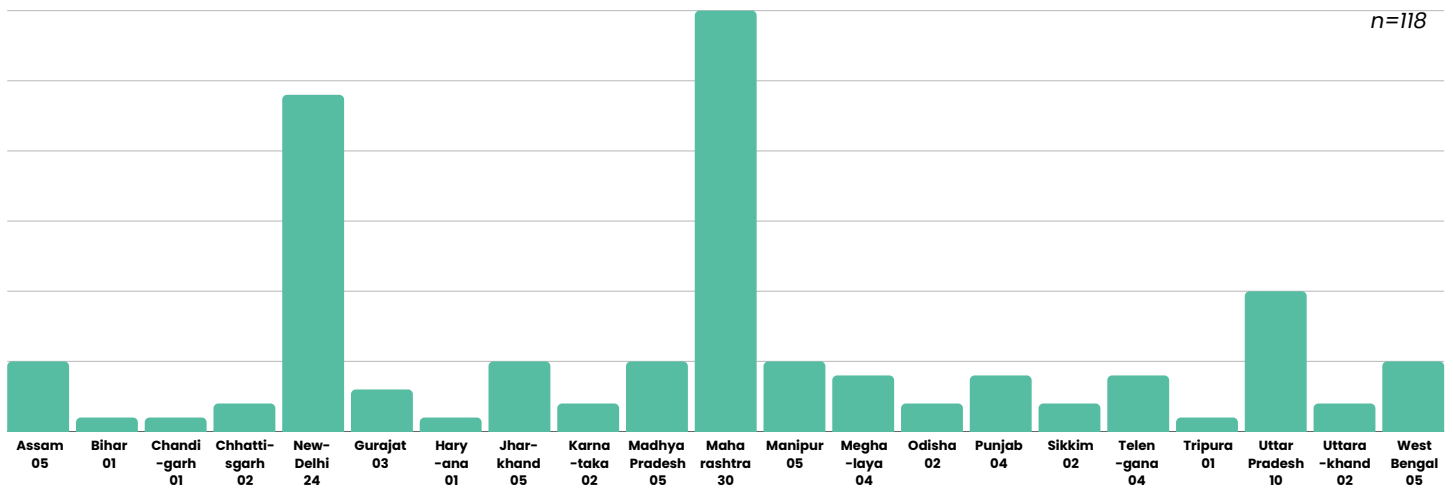
Academic and Vocational Focus

While analyzing the types of courses opted for, we identified a distribution of formal and vocational upskilling courses the communities took.



State Wise Analysis

This year we have successfully supported students from over **21 states** in India.



Testimonials



MOUSMI

I am Mousmi, a cis bisexual woman from Shillong, pursuing a BSc in Biochemistry. The support I received has greatly reduced my financial stress, allowing me to focus fully on my studies. I've been able to access essential resources and improve academically without the burden of part-time work. This project has empowered me to pursue my goals.



ROSY

I am Rosy, a cis lesbian woman from Shillong, pursuing an MA in English. The scholarship has helped me continue my education without having to financially rely on my natal family. It has allowed me to focus entirely on my studies, and I am incredibly grateful. I highly recommend this project for anyone in need of financial support.



MANASVI

I am Manasvi, a cis bisexual man from New Delhi, pursuing a B.Tech. The support I received helped me with travel, books, and research expenses, allowing me to focus on my studies. This project has empowered me to succeed, and I highly recommend it to anyone needing financial help.



SANJEEB

I am Sanjeeb, a cis gay man from Bhubaneswar, pursuing an undergraduate degree in Commerce. The scholarship covered my admission fees, which was crucial since my family isn't supportive of my education. I'm thankful for the assistance and hope the project continues to help others in need.

Activity 2.1

Creation of LGBTQ+ Resource Material for the Promotion of Inclusion

The LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Podcast, titled "**Queering the Syllabus: A Podcast on Inclusive Education**", is now live and available for public viewing on YouTube. Developed as part of our ongoing efforts to foster inclusive educational environments, the podcast brings together queer academicians, educators, and community members to share lived experiences and discuss inclusive practices within academic spaces.

The podcast is presented as a two-episode series:



Click on the thumbnail to watch the episode!



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Episode 01: Queering the Syllabus – Part 1

- Released on: 21st March 2025
- Views (as of 31st March 2025): 26,231
- Likes: 413
- Comments: 8

This episode introduces the need for inclusive education and features diverse voices from the LGBTQ+ community discussing the current gaps and future hopes for educational spaces in India.

Episode 02: Queering the Syllabus – Part 2

Released on: 25th March 2025

Views (as of 31st March 2025): 1,300

Likes: 9

Comments: 2

The second episode continues the conversation, exploring actionable steps educators and institutions can take to build affirming and safer spaces for queer students and staff.

In addition to the main podcast episodes, seven promotional Instagram reels were created and shared via The Humsafar Trust’s official page to increase awareness and engagement. Each reel focused on a different aspect of inclusive education or related reflections from the community.

Instagram Reel Highlights (as of 31st March 2025):

Sr. No.	Tittle	Release Date	Views	Likes	Shares	Comments
01	<u>Queer Book Recommendations</u>	12th March 2025	4440	126	24	03
02	<u>Inclusive Films & TV Show Recommendations</u>	15th March 2025	7055	172	28	28
03	<u>Facts vs Opinions on Queerness</u>	18th March 2025	4032	114	11	02
04	<u>Dr. Aqsa – What Shapes Our Identity?</u>	21st March 2025	4454	183	25	11
05	<u>Suditi – Asexuality and Lack of Support</u>	22nd March 2025	2126	78	03	01
06	<u>Tejasvi – Feeling Secluded & Lack of Peer Support</u>	23rd March 2025	5696	310	41	19
07	<u>Meghna Kulkarni – Adults Enforcing Binaries</u>	24th March 2025	3398	76	10	00

This multimedia initiative successfully amplified the voices of queer individuals within educational discourse, providing a valuable resource for educators, allies, and institutions striving for inclusivity.

Activity 2.2:

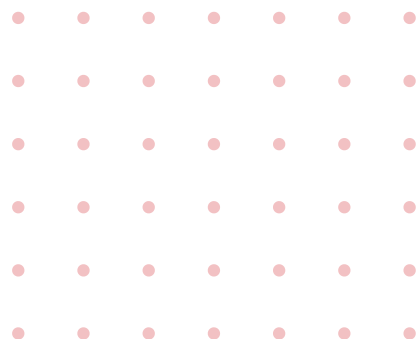
Sensitization Workshops in Academic Spaces

From April to December 2024, awareness workshops were conducted at academic institutions, **engaging 217 teachers, 112 support staff, and 1,280 students**. The workshops focused on schools and colleges, aimed to educate youth about LGBTQ+ issues, promote inclusivity, and combat bullying in educational settings.

Topics including Sex Characteristics, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and expression (SOGIESC), were covered with discussions on distinctions and proper usage and addressed the legal progress of LGBTQ+ rights in India.

Sr. No.	Name of the Institute	Category	City	No. of Participants
1	Masoom Education	Teachers	Mumbai	47
2	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Vidyapith Mahavidyalaya	Students	Aurangabad	38
3	Smt. K.L. Tiwari Degree College of Commerce & Science	Students	Mumbai	78
4	J M Rathi English School & Junior College - 01	Teachers	Roha	48
5	J M Rathi English School & Junior College - 02	Teachers	Roha	37
6	Dyal Singh College	Students	Delhi	30
7	Sw Jatadhari Memorial Inter College	Students	Mirzapur	176
8	Hindu College, University of Delhi	Students	Delhi	231
9	Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute	Students	Prayagraj	19

10	iTeach Schools	Teachers	Pune	28
11	Government College Of Dentistry	Students	Indore	151
12	Prasanna School of Public Health	Students	Manipal	31
13	Lokmanya Tilak College of Physiotherapy	Students	Kharghar	92
14	Samatva, Delhi Technological University	Students	Delhi	66
15	Maharashtra National Law University	Students	Nagpur	87
16	Vinoba Bhave University	Students	Hazaribaug	137
17	XITE Gamharia	Students	Jharkhand	58
18	IIT Roorkee - 01	Students	Roorkee	38
19	IIT Roorkee - 02	Students	Roorkee	38
20	IIM Nagpur - 01	Teachers	Nagpur	57
21	IIM Nagpur - 02	Security Staff	Nagpur	18
22	IIM Nagpur - 03	Mess Staff	Nagpur	10
23	IIM Nagpur - 04	Housekeeping Staff	Nagpur	84



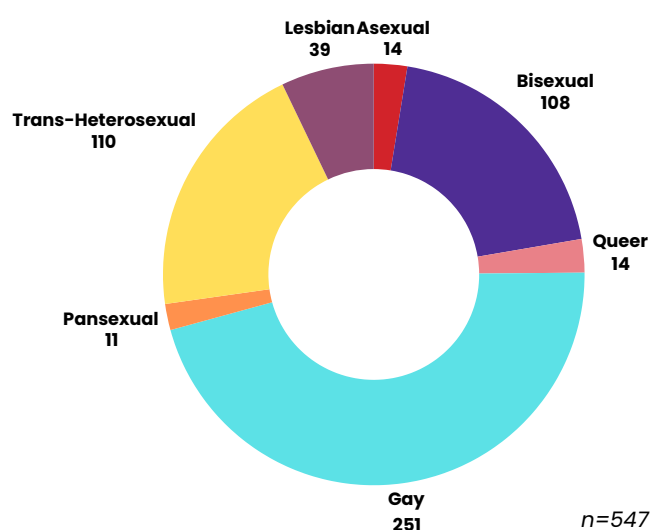


Activity 3.1: Saksham – Job Fair

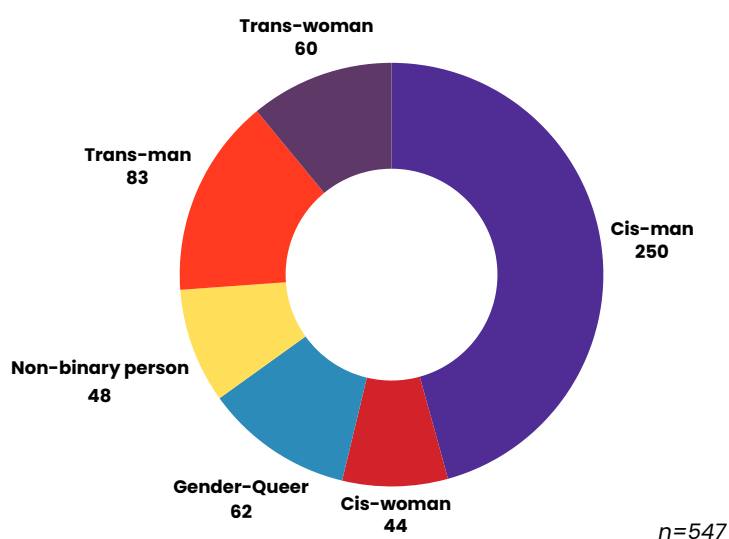
The **SAKSHAM Job Fair 2024**, hosted by The Humsafar Trust, aimed to boost inclusive employment for LGBTQ+ individuals in India, drawing over **18 employers and 180+ attendees from 500+ applicants**.

Demographics of applicants are as follows:

Sexuality Wise Analysis



Gender Wise Analysis



List of Employers at SAKSHAM 2024

	CitiusTech Healthcare Technology Pvt. Ltd.	BMC Software India Pvt. Ltd.	The Humsafar Trust	Believe Digital Pvt. Ltd.	
P&G – Procter & Gamble India	Future Generali India Insurance	Drip Capital Services India LLP	Goldstar Jewellery Pvt. Ltd.	Mysfit Trans Youth Foundation	Glad Foundation
ITC Hotels Limited	Spacewithin – Your Wellbeing Partner	Piramal Pharma Limited	Godrej Consumer Products Limited	Qonnect Community	VFS. Global

The event opened with remarks by Co-Founder Suhail Abbasi, honoring the Stonewall March and advocating for year-round LGBTQ+ inclusivity at work.

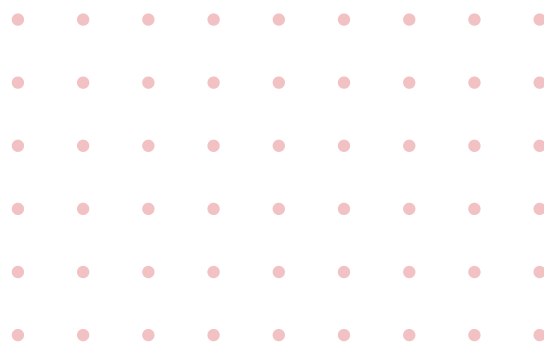
Highlights included:

- Panel Discussions: Moderated by Vivek Anand and Dhruv Goenka, with DEI leaders from P&G, Believe Music India, and Welspun discussing inclusive hiring and skills-based recruitment.
- Skill Development Recognition: Certificates were awarded to participants in a P&G Shiksha skill-building program.
- Film and Performances: Screening of "#UnheardStories – Vijaya," showcasing resilience, and cultural performances by Color Positive Foundation artists, celebrated LGBTQ+ diversity.
- Employer Engagement: Employers like BMC Software and Godrej offered jobs and networking, with a 'Dolphin Tank' for community entrepreneurs.
- Closing Ceremony: COO Murugesan Sivasubramanian honored partners and employers, thanking participants.

The SAKSHAM Job Fair emphasized DEI's role in innovation, talent development, and aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals for Decent Work and Economic Growth..

Case Study: Umang Garg, currently working at P&G India

Finding an LGBTQ+ friendly workplace felt like an uphill battle. Connecting with employers who genuinely valued diversity and inclusivity was challenging—until I attended the Saksham Job Fair organized by The Humsafar Trust. The quality of companies exceeded my expectations, with each one showing a real commitment to creating inclusive workspaces. Saksham provided a warm, welcoming environment and connected me with organizations that truly align with my values and respect my identity. I am deeply grateful for the support, resources, and encouragement I received. Thanks to Saksham and The Humsafar Trust, I found a role in a truly LGBTQ+ affirming environment, and I couldn't be happier with the outcome."





Activity 3.2: Gulabi Mela 2025



Gulabi Mela 2025, the annual flagship event organized by Yaariyan, the youth initiative of The Humsafar Trust, was successfully held on 26th January 2025 in Mumbai. The event, supported by BMC Software India Pvt. Ltd., Blackrock Services India Pvt. Ltd., KPMG Global Services Pvt. Ltd., Sony Pictures Networks India Ltd., BDO Rise Private Ltd., and Dorf Ketel Chemicals India Ltd., witnessed an overwhelming turnout of over 1,300 attendees, celebrating queer entrepreneurship, creativity, and community spirit.



This year's edition of Gulabi Mela provided a dynamic platform for **52 LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs** to showcase and sell their products and services, which included handmade goods, accessories, clothing, stationery, food, and more. These entrepreneurs, including several supported by The Humsafar Trust's Dolphin Tank initiative, had the opportunity to connect with a larger community and gain visibility and support for their ventures.

The event came alive with more than **15 spectacular performances** by queer artists and groups, ranging from music and dance to spoken word and live art. One of the most crowd-pleasing moments was an electrifying flash mob performance that captured the audience's attention and embodied the spirit of pride and inclusivity. Gulabi Mela also emphasized interactive engagement and wellness.

Attendees participated in free workshops, including a lively Bollyqueer dance session and an energetic Zumba workshop led by Lokesh Rane. These workshops encouraged movement, joy, and togetherness, contributing to the festive atmosphere.



On the health front, the event featured a **SAHYOG pop-up clinic** that offered free consultations with dermatologists, gynecologists, endocrinologists, general physicians, and counselors. This initiative aimed to promote holistic healthcare and spread awareness around safe sex practices within the LGBTQ+ community.

One of the highlights of the Mela was the screening of 'Tutti Frutti Cake', a poignant short film produced by The Humsafar Trust with CSR support from Dorf Ketal Chemicals India Ltd. Centered around the theme of parental acceptance, the film resonated deeply with the audience. A heartfelt Q&A session followed, featuring the film's director, writer, and lead actors, who engaged in a powerful conversation with the viewers.



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In conclusion, **Gulabi Mela 2025** was not only a celebration of queer identity and artistry but also a powerful reminder of the strength and solidarity within the community. The event reinforced the importance of safe, inclusive spaces that support queer youth, entrepreneurs, and artists, and showcased the continuing efforts of Yaariyan and The Humsafar Trust in building a future where diversity is not just accepted but celebrated.



Challenges Faced

Despite the project's impactful outreach, a few operational challenges emerged. Delayed responses from some scholarship recipients affected timely documentation and disbursement. The number of applicants QAFAB (Queer Assigned Female at Birth) individuals was lower than expected, indicating a potential need for wider outreach. Many students expressed that while financial support eased burdens, it wasn't always sufficient to cover them significantly. In our outreach to academic institutions for sensitization sessions, scheduling proved difficult as many prioritized core academics over inclusive education. Additionally, the podcast production faced delays due to the extended turnaround time by the production team; multiple rounds of feedback and follow-ups made it challenging to release the content within the originally planned timeline.

Conclusion & Impact

Project Avsar successfully continued its mission of bridging access to education, upskilling, and livelihood for LGBTQ+ communities. From supporting **118 students across 21 states with scholarships, to sensitizing over 1,600 academic professionals and students** and curating impactful multimedia resources, our work echoed through classrooms, institutions, and digital spaces. The Saksham Job Fair further **connected 547 LGBTQ+ individuals** with inclusive employers, and Gulabi Mela celebrated **52 queer entrepreneurship, and 15 artists**. The initiative fostered affirming spaces, built resilience, and strengthened socio-economic inclusion, reminding us that while the journey has its hurdles, the collective impact is transformative and far-reaching.

