

68 Pages

from a counselors diary....

A film titled 68 Pages is produced by The Humsafar Trust to support advocacy efforts of NACO in NACP – III. Department for International Development (DFID) supports this advocacy film. It is the story of Mansi, an HIV/AIDS counselor who ethics demand that she maintain confidentiality of her clients and not get emotional about their issues. However, there are some counselees whom she cannot leave behind in the counseling room. She writes their stories in her diary and the film is seen through 68 pages of her diary. The stories revolve around Mansi's understanding of Paayal, a sex worker from Kamathipura (red light district) in Mumbai, Nishit, a young ambitious executive who gets addicted to Intravenous drugs, Kiran, a gay man who has firm faith in his partner of over three years and Umesh/Umrao, a young transsexual bar dancer who is forced into prostitution when dance bars close down. The film is their journey as people from marginalized communities and their lives before and after becoming HIV positive. The film attempts to bring hope into the lives of HIV positive people and is a tribute to the ultimate spirit of human optimism and survival.

The film was awarded an Adults only certificate by the Censor board of film certification in December 2007 and with a view of Promoting rational attitudes in society for rights and health of sexual minorities and enabling their participation in the social and political life of the country as equals.

The film made an effort to reach out to mainstream population with a special emphasis on health care providers, police department, officials of State AIDS Control Society operating under NACO guidelines and officials of various other donor agencies in India, lawyers, media persons, political parties and municipal corporators. A special effort was made to reach out to counselors and community persons working on HIV /AIDS programs in the country. The film was made with support from DFID PMO funds in 2007 to support NACP-III of the NACO.

A project proposal with the purpose statement of Enhancing understanding of issues of HIV positive people from the marginalized community and mainstreaming them in society as equals was submitted to HIVOS India office in 2009 to reach out to 2,400 stakeholders, community members and counselors through the screening of the film 68 Pages and initiate a healthy debate on the issue of people living with HIV. Screenings of the film 68 Pages were held in 12 prominent cities of the country. These cities included Mumbai, Pune, Goa, Bangalore, Chennai, Pondicherry, Hyderabad, Trivendrum, Baroda, Delhi, Kolkatta and Chandigarh. The 12 screenings were done over a period of 12 months to coincide with the first year of NACP-III. Later in 2010 the film was used as an advocacy tool to sensitize stakeholders like police, lawyers, legislative forums and Media with support from SIDA RFSU.

**The Humsafar Trust
Presents
In Association with
Solaris Pictures**

**A film inspired by
Reflections of true life incidents**

"68 Pages"

**Marked by pain, bound by hope
Six stories from 68 Pages of Mansi's diary**

Two people, a gay man and a young transsexual, who have taken a road that, will lead them to HIV infection. Mansi's diary deals with their sexuality... their dreams... their desires and the truth that society has to offer them, the risks they took in life.... But was it worth taking the risk?

Two people, a female sex worker and a young ambitious guy, whom Mansi meets as HIV positive people, deal with the stigma attached with being HIV positive. Will they come to terms with their status as HIV positive people?

One person, an insignificant person, whom Mansi met everyday but never thought of... dies of HIV/AIDS as there was no support available.... Will we ever stop and think about people we never think of?

One woman named "**Mansi**", an HIV /AIDS counselor, binds the stories of five people in her diary, but is there a place for herself in the pages of her diary? Carrying the baggage of her past, she aspires to pursue her Masters in Public Health from Columbia University, New York. Eventually, Mansi wants to return to India to work with people whom she belongs to...whom she considers her own.

The film, **68 Pages**, deals with issues of sexuality, issues of HIV positive people and a section of society we never care about. The stories are seen through the eyes of a woman who feels marginalized in her own space, and together the people in her diary are coming to terms with the present of their lives.

The film is a sincere effort to address issues that are still considered taboo in our society. The issues of being part of marginalized communities before and after becoming HIV positive.

The Humsafar Trust with support from **DFID** (UK Govt) has produced its first film "68 Pages" (90 minutes) in Hindi in association with Solaris Pictures.

Cast

Mouli Ganguly as Mansi

Joy Sengupta as Kiran

Jayati Bhatia as Paayal

Zafar Karachiwala as Nishit

Abhay Kulkarni as Nathu

Introducing

Uday Sonawane as Umesh / Umrao

Original Soundtrack

Sang mere... chal mere sang mere
Xen@BOB

Lyrics

Saagar Gupta

Story/Dialogues

Vivek Anand
Sridhar Rangayan

Editor

Praveen Angre

Director of Photography

Subhransu Das

Executive Producer

Vivek Anand

Associate Producer

Solaris Pictures

Produced by

The Humsafar Trust

Screenplay and Direction

Sridhar Rangayan

Some viewer reactions

“The film is a sensitive and touching portrayal of marginalized communities.”

Dr. Rajeev Jerajani, psychiatrist

“I screen hundreds of films in this preview theatre but hardly watch them. Today, I just started watching and saw the entire film and had tears in my eyes.”

Projectionist, Star preview theatre, Mumbai

“Your film is a slap on the face of society.”

Gitanjali Dhulekar, a viewer

“Good Job... Good Performances”

Bindu Madhav Khire, Samapathik Trust, Pune

“Excellent Performances”

Sujal, a viewer

“Good Potential for mainstream”

Sanjay Thakur, a viewer

“Outstanding”

Kevin Menezes, a viewer

“I had actually come to attend another function at this venue but I did not leave the auditorium when I started seeing this film even though I realized my mistake. The film says a lot about HIV positive people.”

a viewer

“Never realized that people like Umrao exist in society. Umrao’s character is amazing.”

Avinash Mehto, Head of Avi Creations, an edit set-up

“The film was so compelling that I had to come for the second screening too”

Abhijit Aher, a viewer

“This film has inspired me and I want to become a counselor.”

Umang Sheth, a viewer

“For the first time, there’s a film that recognizes the efforts of counselors.”

Kalpita Patil-Lanjekar, a counselor

“In one stroke, you have made counselors more important than doctors and destroyed the myth that only doctors can help”

Dr. Maninder Setia, Ph.D. student at McGill University, Montreal

“The discrimination shown in the film is so real. We have seen it all and lived it all.”

Dr. Hemangi Jerajani, Head of the Department, Skin and Dermatology, LTMG Hospital, Mumbai

“A sensitive portrayal of a real-life counselor and a true profile of a TISS student.”

Brinelle D’Souza, professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

“Extremely touching and sensitive, the film deals with issues of HIV positive people in a real manner.”

Rita Sonawat, Head of the Department, Human Development, SNTD University, Mumbai

“I am grateful to Rita m’am for bringing me along to watch this film. It should be made mandatory viewing for all youth in the country.”

a student of SNTD University

“There are many times when I have gone home from work and cried for the pain of my counselees. And this film reflects my feelings.”

Rajashree, a counselor

“V. Good ! an eye opener ! Good educational film”

Kanchan Karani, a viewer

“The film is an eye-opener to the kind of good work being done with HIV positive people.”

Rekha Shah, a viewer

It can be used as an excellent educational tool not just to sensitize counselors, but also for the masses on issues involving sexual minorities and positive people. It throws light on the role of a counselor as a professional and as a human being too

Manvendra Singh Gohil, Gay Activist and Chair Lakshya Trust, Gujarat

“Four years of my life flashed in front of my eyes. I thought I was reliving my life at Humsafar once again.”

Vrushali Deshmukh, ex-counseling head at The Humsafar Trust, Mumbai