

## **EK MADHAV BAUG**

*Ek Madhav Baug* written by Late Chetan Datar is one of the pioneering plays written on homosexuality and acceptance of LGBT rights and mainstreaming gay issues. The poignant play tells the story of a 21 year old young boy coming to terms with his sexuality. The play is seen from the view point of the mother of the young man who is reading his personal diary in which he speaks to his mother about growing up gay, conflicts faced in coming to terms with ones sexuality and final acceptance of being a normal person whose preferences may be different but not deviant. The play strikingly brings out the emotions of the mother and son and will leave no soul untouched through its intensity and heartfelt content.

Chetan Datar had performed the original Marathi version of the play at The Humsafar Trust back in 1998 and since then it was a dream to have the play translated into Hindi language and provide it a platform where the play can be performed at various forums like educational institutions, theatres, conferences, workshops and film festivals. The play is a simple heartfelt effort to mainstream gay issues in the Indian Society.

We are now using this play reading as an advocacy tool at various colleges and corporate houses in Mumbai to initiate a dialogue with the student community and general society on the subject of homosexuality.

The play was premiered on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at PVR Juhu for Kashish Mumbai International Queer Film Festival. In 2011-12, the play is being performed in educational institutions, corporate houses and various other forums. It has already had successful performances that met with standing ovation at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, SNDT University (For Pride Week 2011), Kala Ghoda Festival, National Institute of Design (Ahmedabad ),Goldman Sachs ( Bangalore ),American Center (Mumbai), Pattuck Gala College of Commerce and Management (Mumbai) and RD National College (Mumbai). QAM Pride Week (Mumbai), Weavers Studio Resource Center for the Arts (Kolkata), UNDP (New Delhi), Google Offices (Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Bangalore), English premier at XI International Aids Conference (Washington DC), SEIU Conference Centre (Washington DC), Writers Center (Bethesda, MD), Johns Hopkins Institute (DC), Natya Bharati (Potomac Community Center, DC), Godrej main office, SNDT University (Churchgate), Sampathik Trust (Pune) and Infosys (Pune) ,Sarathi trust (anniversary event) and at the Gujarati Mandal Hall (Pehchan Advocacy initiative), Jaaga (Bangalore), Atta Galatta (Bangalore), Mahatma Gandhi Nagar Gruh (For Lakshya Trust, Gujarat), Ravindra Natya Mandir (Mumbai), Prithvi Theatre (Mumbai), IES Auditorium, BITS Pilani, IBM Bangalore, NITTR Bhopal (Pehchan advocacy initiative), Rachana Sansad, Mumbai (For Retract).

We also operate a face book page to promote Ek Madhav Baug and to send out invitations. The play has a good amount of fan following, and the community actively uses it as a tool for coming out. The general population is successfully sensitized through these performances. There has been a lot of demand from other cities to perform outside Mumbai and we have successfully done so in the second year of this project.

The play has been extremely successful where we managed to get performances among all kinds of audiences and always has a discussion that is on for more than an hour. It compels people to

really think and change their attitude towards the LGBT community. Most of our performances have been, invited performances on word of mouth, after successful performances.

Educational institutes still seem to be uncomfortable with this subject and sensitization attempts should not be stopped. The play should also be taken to other cities owing to huge demand and its popularity.

An effort has been made under this project to initiate a dialogue in setting up of work place policies and policies in educational institutes that will prevent discrimination of LGBT in workplaces and educational institutes.

**SUPPORT AGENCY:** This play was supported under Project Sandesh from 2010-2012 by RFSU SIDA.