

THE LESBIGAY NEWSLETTER

# Sangha Mitra

February 99 Issue 2

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## Editorial Team

Sakha &amp; Vinay

Do not...presume the sexuality of anyone writing in this newsletter, or of anyone, ever !

## Disclaimer

Views expressed in this newsletter are the individual authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of Sangha Mitra.

## LesBiGay

In this term we include people who are not exclusively heterosexually inclined: gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trans-sexuals, transvestites, hijras, asexuals etc.

## Address for Correspondence/ Subscriptions

Post Box # 7859, Bangalore - 560 078, Karnataka, India.

Please superscribe "SM" on the top left hand corner of the envelope.

## "Good As You" Meetings

"Good As You" meets every Thursday evening from 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. All LesBiGay people are welcome. If you wish to attend the meetings, please call us at (080) 2238297 between those times.

## Our Gratitude

Thanks to all our supporters and well-wishers who have helped make Sangha Mitra possible. Thanks also to Samraksha for their support of Good As You.

## Contributions

Suggested contribution is Rs.10/-. Greater generosity will be more than welcome.

We welcome suggestions, reactions, news items, articles, researched features/ information from our readers.

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## From the Editor

We are late. Seven months late, but here we are - two steps ahead. The second issue of a proud movement. LesBiGay lifestyles supported and voiced through these pages. Personal stories, fiction, poetry, strongly worded articles and more. Offering a medium for every voice. A voice for every problem faced. And so much more. These are the voices of men and women who are beginning to understand the meaning of their identity. Understand that it is now in their hands to liberate themselves. To choose for themselves the path that will lead to their happiness. And it makes me so proud to read these stories, these poems, this prose.

They stand up and indicate the start of something big. An explosion of sorts. Of a people who look inside themselves and are comfortable with the idea of their sexuality. And not only comfortable, but proud of it. And isn't this the best thing to happen ?

And yet...there are many in our community who look inside themselves and only see pain. Pain they cannot tolerate, cannot face, cannot overcome. So many of them slip into that terrible delusion of suicide. We have heard of 3 suicides recently. Of men who slipped away from life because they could not, did not want to, handle it. Death wins so easily.

And how many more of our friends should we see dying or dead around us, before we wake and fight this irrational fear of ourselves - and others ? This irrational dilemma of mankind - where love is abhorred in any form but the "standard". Where life must follow a certain set of norms set by other people for all to follow. Where the law will not protect a man who loves another man, or a woman who loves another woman...? And how many more years should the youth of today wait, before they can find their solace in the arms of whoever they choose ? A future where they can fall in love with anyone without having to worry about whether society approves.

Bangalore, meanwhile, has been taking firm steps towards that future. A future for its LesBiGay community.

A public lecture on "Emerging Gay spaces in Bangalore", presented jointly by Sabrang and Good As You with complete write-ups of this lecture in major newspapers including the ones in Kannada. An extensive coverage of the gay lifestyles in the city and the people living them, in the "Bangalore Monthly" magazine in a cover story titled "Gay in the Garden City". An earnest interest shown by the media on these issues. And much more.

Each of these events is working towards a building of courage, confidence, support and awareness. In the LesBiGay community and the general public. And among these, this, our second issue makes its stand. Supporting so many voices in society. Voices waiting for some opportunity - for someone to listen. And now, we stand up to call you and tell you, you will be heard. Your voice is a part of our own. We fight together for our rights. And what you have to say now, in this newsletter, is important to the rest of us. To all of us.

So read these voices. And recognise your own.

*Vinay*

*Manish Datta*  
22/3/98



## Letters to the Editor

Dear Friends in Sangha Mitra,  
I'm writing on behalf of everyone in Counsel Club to wish you the very best for your venture...We have distributed all the copies you had sent us and managed to raise some money. A few more copies are with us which are also likely to go out soon. People are indeed excited to see something coming out of Bangalore! To my mind, Bangalore had always a lot going for it. The only thing missing was Sangha Mitra!

And now since we've had the first issue, how about the second? No I'm not pressuring you all to give up all your other work to bring out the magazine. I know better than that, having mothered (or is it fathered?) a dozen issues of Pravartak (along with other mothers and fathers, of course). But what I am trying to do is to encourage you to go on, to keep up with the initiative. Take your time, but don't give up...A lot must have happened in Bangalore which needs to be documented. And Sangha Mitra should be the best place to do so...The magazine looks neat and easy to read. On the whole, a welcome read!

Yours in solidarity

Pavan (Member, Counsel Club)



## Books every gay man should read

1. Becoming a Man - Paul Monette
2. Dancer from the Dance - Andrew Holleran
3. Leaves of Grass - Walt Whitman
4. Maurice - E.M.Forster
5. Remembrance of Things Past - Marcel Proust

## Books every lesbian should read

1. Herotica - Edited by Susie Bright
2. Possessing the Secret of Joy - Alice Walker
3. Loving in the War Years - Cherrie Moraga
4. Paradise - Toni Morrison
5. Jungalee Girl - Ginu Kamani

## Some Gay sites on the net

- [www.planetout.com](http://www.planetout.com)
- [khush-list-subscribe@egroups.com](mailto:khush-list-subscribe@egroups.com)
- [khushindia-subscribe@egroups.com](mailto:khushindia-subscribe@egroups.com)
- [www.trikone.org](http://www.trikone.org)

## Gay Positive Films

1. Maurice
2. My Beautiful Laundrette
3. Oranges are not the only fruit
4. My Own Private Idaho
5. Priscilla, Queen of the Desert
6. Therese and Isabelle

## Resources for LesBiGay people

**Bombay Dost** : 105A, Veena Beena Shopping Centre, opposite Bandra Station, Bandra (W), Mumbai - 400 050. A magazine for gay men and lesbians.

**Humsafar Trust** : P.B.No. 6913, Santa Cruz (W), Mumbai - 400 054. Runs helpline "Humsafar Ki Awaz" - 972 6913 (voice mail service) and "Humsafar Drop-in Centre" for gay men.

**Stree Sangam** : P.O.Box 16613, Matunga, Mumbai - 400 019. E-mail : [inforum@giabsm01.vsnl.net.in](mailto:inforum@giabsm01.vsnl.net.in). A collective of lesbian and bisexual women.

**Counsel Club** : c/o Pawan, Post Bag 10237, Calcutta 700 019. Annual membership of Rs.200 includes Naya Pravartak subscription, penpal listing. For gay men, lesbians and bisexuals.

**Saathi** : c/o P.O.Box No. 571, Putlibowli P.O, Hyderabad - 500 095. A gay support group in Hyderabad.

**Humrahi** : meetings 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays, 7-8 pm at Naz, C-1/E Green Park Extension, off Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi. Helpline #685-9113. Mon. & Thurs. 7 - 9 pm. Publishes Darpan, a newsletter.

**Women's Network** : P.O.Box 142, G.P.O., New Delhi - 110 001. For lesbians.

**Sakhi** : P.O.Box 3526, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi 110 024. For lesbians.

**Expression** : P.O.Box 5, Bolarum, Secunderabad 500 010. For gay men.

**Trikone** : P.O.Box 21354, San Jose, CA 95151-1354, U.S.A. Publishers of TriKone magazine for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals. [trikone@rahul.net](mailto:trikone@rahul.net)

**Aasra** : P.O.Box 68, G.P.O, Patna - 800 001. Gay men's support group; publishes newsletter "Timeshare".

**ABVA (AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan)** : Post Box No. 5308, New Delhi 110 053. Community work in issues of education, health, law, women, gay people, professional blood donors and drug abuse. Member meet Wednesdays, 6.30 to 9pm at Indian Coffee House, Connaught Place.

**Arambh Support Group** : P.O.Box 9522, Delhi 110 095. Ph : 011 227 0071 (10am - 12 noon daily). Runs walk-in centre for LesBiGay people; publishes newsletter "Arambh"

**Sangini** : New Delhi based helpline for lesbians and bisexual women on 011 685 1970 / 71 - Tuesdays, 6-8 pm.

**Friends India** : A group to promote amity and love, for all those men who love men. Annual Membership Fee : Rs. 150/- in favour of Friends India, Lucknow. Members will get group's magazine free of cost. Write to Post Box No. 366, G.P.O., Lucknow - 1.

**Sneha Sangama** : P.O.Box 3250, R.T.Nagar, Bagnalore - 560 032. Group for gay men.

**Bharosa (The Trust)** : An HIV/AIDS and sexual health counselling and drop-in-centre for males who have sex with males, operated by Friends India at 21/6/5, Peerpur House, 8-Tilak marg, Lucknow - 226 001. Timings: 4 pm to 8 pm. Weekly holiday : Thursdays.

**Sahayta** : A Friends India Helpline on issues related to HIV/AIDS, sexual health and sexuality. Call 0522 -275905 between 4 pm to 8 pm. Except Thursdays.

**Sacred Love** : A bimonthly magazine for men who love men. Single copy : Rs. 30/- Annual subscription : Rs. 175/- Send bank drafts in favour of FRIENDS India, Lucknow at Post Box No. 59, Mahanagar, Lucknow - 226 006.

**Sabrang** : A collective comprising of individuals of different sexualities working on issues of sexual orientation and sexuality. P.O.Box 7625. Bangalore - 560 076.

**Samraksha** : HIV/AIDS Counselling Centre, #402 Ground Floor, Block 4 Ranka Park Apartments 4,5 & 6 Lalbagh Road Bangalore - 560 027. Ph: 2238297.



## Homosexuality and the Law in India

### SECTION 377 :

In India, Homosexual acts are prosecuted under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. Section 377 reads,

"Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall be liable to fine.

Explanation: Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offence described in this section"

#### What follows from this section are:-

1. Homosexuality per se is not criminalized. What is punishable is carnal intercourse 'against the order of nature'. This implies that both homosexual and heterosexual acts 'against the order of nature' are punishable. Within the framework of the current criminal legislation in the country, instances of sexual acts with children are also brought under the ambit of this section.
2. Through decisions by judges since the formulation of the Indian Penal Code in 1872, a judicial understanding of what "carnal intercourse against the order of nature" is, has emerged. The judges repeatedly stressed that "the natural object of carnal intercourse is that there should be the possibility of conception of human beings"<sup>1</sup> If carnal intercourse takes place without possibility of conception of human beings, then such carnal intercourse would be 'against the order of nature'. This means that other sexual acts like anal sex and oral sex would also be against the order of nature regardless of whether the act takes place between a man and a woman or a man and a man etc.

#### DEFINITION OF "CARNAL INTERCOURSE" :

Carnal Intercourse has been defined by English judges with typical prudishness as "the temporary visitation of one organism by a member of another organism for clearly defined and limited objectives. The primary object of the visiting organism is to obtain euphoria by means of a detente of the nerves consequent on the sexual crisis. But there is no intercourse unless the visiting member is enveloped atleast partially by the visited organism, for intercourse connotes reciprocity".<sup>2</sup> If translated into plain English, what the judges mean is that anal sex and oral sex amounts to penetrative intercourse. Since these acts are not connected with the process of human reproduction they are also against the order of nature.

The judges have also broadened the scope of the term carnal intercourse to include "manipulation and movement of the penis of the petitioner whilst being held by the victim's legs in such a way as to create an orifice like thing, for making the manipulated movement of insertion and withdrawal up to the point of ejaculation of semen"<sup>3</sup>. What the judge seems to be saying here is that even manual & mutual masturbation falls within Section 377.

In a Kerala High court case it has been held that "Committing the act of intercourse by inserting the male organ between the thighs of another male is an unnatural offence punishable under Section 377". The reasoning

given by the judge is that when the male organ was inserted between the thighs kept tightly together there was penetration sufficient to constitute the unnatural offence.<sup>4</sup>

Though convicting a person under Section 377 is a reasonably difficult proposition, harassment of LesBiGay people in public spaces such as parks, especially by the police, is a reality and therefore it is important to look into (i) what the powers of the police might be and (ii) the rights of persons who have been subjected to police harassment.

#### POWERS OF THE POLICE :

The powers of the police are spelt out in the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973. Under Section 41 of this code "Any police officer may without an order from a magistrate and without a warrant, arrest any person who has been concerned in any way in any cognizable offence, or against whom a reasonable complaint has been made, or credible information had been received or a reasonable suspicion exists of his having been concerned". The offence under Section 377 is a cognizable offence (serious offence).

The police also have the power to arrest under Section 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure which states that "A police officer knowing of a design to commit any cognizable offence may arrest, without orders from a magistrate and without a warrant, the person so designing it, if it appears to the officer that the commission of the offence cannot be otherwise prevented".

This seems to indicate that the police have very wide powers of arrest and, in a homophobic society, even kissing can be seen to constitute a reasonable suspicion that an offence has been or will be committed. However since there is no case law on this point it is also equally possible that the judges may decide that kissing and holding hands in public places does not amount to suspicion and is not reasonable suspicion that an offence under Section 377 will be committed.

#### RIGHTS OF AN ARRESTED PERSON :

Noting that the powers of the police to arrest are reasonably broad, it is important to look at what the rights of an arrested person might be. Arrest gives the police powers to use all means necessary to make the arrest if the person to be arrested attempts to evade the arrest. However the power to use necessary force for making the arrest shall not extend to restraint beyond what is necessary to prevent the escape of the arrested person.<sup>5</sup> Arrest also requires that the police officer must actually touch or confine the body of the person to be arrested unless there is submission to custody by word or action.

On arrest, the arrested person has certain rights that have been laid out in the Code of Criminal Procedure, Case Law and in the Constitution. Broadly these rights are:-

1. **Right to be informed on the grounds of his arrest:** In every case of arrest the person arresting shall communicate to the arrested person without delay the grounds of arrest. This is a precious right recognised in the constitution.<sup>6</sup> Timely information as to the grounds of arrest gives the arrested person the opportunity to remove any mistake, misapprehension or misunderstanding in the minds of the



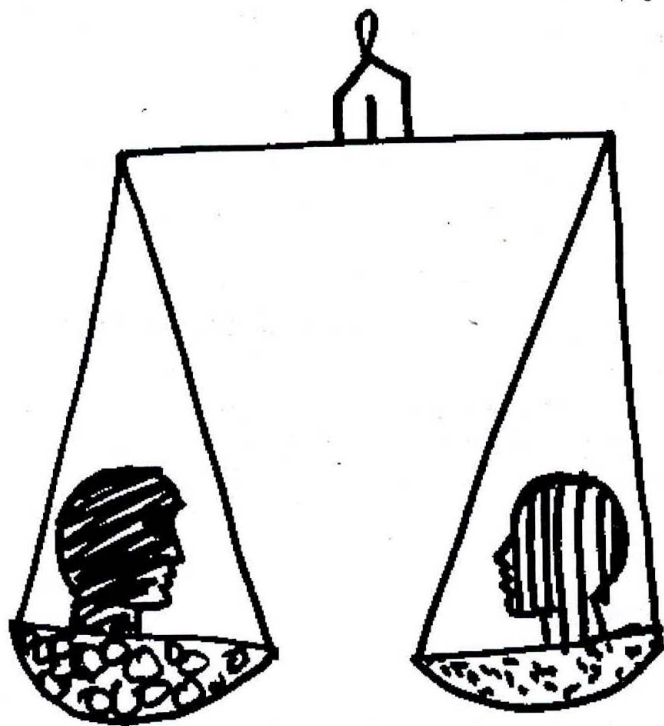
arresting authority. It also enables him/her to apply for bail or a writ of Habeas Corpus or to make other arrangements for his defence.

2. **Right to be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of arrest:** It has been categorically held by the courts that all arrested persons shall, not later than 24 hours after arrest, be produced before a magistrate, excluding the time of travel from the place of arrest to the magistrates court.<sup>7</sup>
3. **Right to consult a legal practitioner of the arrested persons choice:** This right begins from the moment of arrest.<sup>8</sup>
4. **Right to free legal aid and to be informed about legal aid:** Under the Constitution and through its interpretation, the state is under a constitutional mandate to provide free legal aid to a poor, accused person. Further the Supreme Court has cast a duty on all magistrates and courts to inform the indigent accused about his/her right to get free legal aid.
5. **Right to be examined by a medical practitioner:** If an arrested person alleges, when produced before a magistrate, that an examination of his body will afford evidence that will disprove the commission of any offence, then the magistrate is required to direct the examination of his body by a registered medical practitioner.

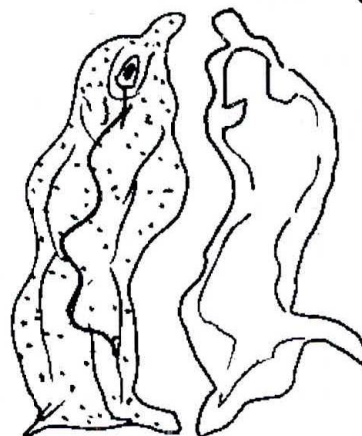
#### In Conclusion :

- A. LesBiGay people need to be clear that to commit an offence under

*Continued on page 7*



## Safer Sex



In the age of AIDS, everyone should know about safer sex. HIV can infect anyone, regardless of sexual orientation, sex, age, race or economic class. It is not who you are that can give you AIDS, it is what you do. Only you can decide what kind of sex is right for you and what risks you will take.

Sexual activities fall on a continuum from high risk to risk-free. Activities at the top carry a high risk of transmission (especially for the receptive partner). Upper middle range carry a minimal or indeterminate risk. Lower middle range activities carry a theoretical risk. Activities at the bottom are completely safe.

#### HIGH RISK

Unprotected Anal Intercourse  
 Unprotected Vaginal Intercourse  
 Sharing needles (for drugs, piercing)  
 Sharing implements that draw blood (Whips, knives)  
 Unprotected oral sex on a menstruating woman  
 Unprotected oral sex on a man, with ejaculation  
 Unprotected oral-anal contact  
 Getting urine or faeces in mouth, vagina, ass  
 Unprotected fisting or finger fucking  
 Unprotected oral sex on a man without ejaculation  
 Unprotected oral sex on a non-menstruating woman  
 Sharing uncovered sex toys  
 Anal intercourse with a condom  
 Vaginal intercourse with a condom  
 Oral sex on a man using a condom  
 Oral sex on a woman using a latex barrier  
 Oral-anal contact using a latex barrier  
 Fisting or finger fucking using a glove  
 Petting manual-genital contact  
 Deep (French) kissing  
 Spanking, whipping that does not break the skin  
 Bondage and discipline play  
 Masturbation (alone or with no partner)  
 Hugging touching  
 Massage  
 Talking dirty, phone or net sex, fantasy

#### NO RISK

Source - Safer Sex by Liz A. Highleyman



## Zen & the Art of being Gay

1. Look before you leap.
2. You are always alone... even in a crowd.
3. Never look back.
4. Life is transitory.
5. Take refuge in the small pleasures of life.
6. Don't forget to smell the flowers.
7. Take one day at a time.
8. Here and now - no yesterdays or tomorrow.
9. Life is too short to complain.
10. Break ups, changes are a part of life - move on.

- Anonymous

## My saga as a Bi...

When I was fifteen, I happened to stay in my cousin's place for my vacations. He was 22. Every night he would feel me down there and make me touch him. We had sex till he came. This continued for the fifteen nights that I was in his house. The experience never made me feel bad or disgusted, but the next day there was always guilt on both our faces. As days passed, this turned out into a regular affair. And every time we met, it never ended without it! It became so serious, I almost took it as a way of life. Though I did look at girls and dream about them, what I felt for them was nothing compared to the time and experience I had with my cousin. And I found myself becoming more comfortable with men. Especially, good looking ones.

I felt very uncomfortable when I had to be away from my cousin. For obvious reasons. Time passed, I fell in love with many girls, slept with a few even, but it was nothing like enjoying a guy. Though the girls enjoyed and credited me for the experience I gave them, mentally I never used to be with them even when I made love.

Then came D-day. I was forced to marry. That too to a professional who I did not think was good looking. I was blind to beauty, my blindness made me go haywire. And I now go through the agony of being a husband to a woman who I do not find attractive. Then came the typical Indian advice to give her a chance as a mother. Which turned things from bad to worse. I am now a father of two beautiful children. But chaos reigns. In this confusion, with several separations from my wife due to fights, I started to look out and luckily found one of my old students whom I had tipped about my experience a long time back. He has been my companion and a solace - to meet my sexual needs at least. Of course, for a cost.

It is sad though. Sometimes we get into trouble in our eagerness to enjoy ecstasy and romance, or the thrill and the madness of sex. In my case, I have been faithful in my duties and obligations as a husband and a father and committed as a bisexual to my student. The only contrast is that my student is neither gay nor bisexual. He respects me and knows all my problems. He does not sleep with me out of sympathy. He

makes the experience enjoyable and is rewarded.

I do not know if there are other people out there who are balancing such lives like I am. And no one in the world except the honest and committed guys who have had a relationship with me (one during my teens and the other now, my student) know about this.

I write this to make those who have experienced a somewhat similar kind of life to be bold enough to enjoy and experience life as they want. Every person has a right to live the way he/she wants it.

Good As You is place where people like us can get strengthened, meet others like us, talk about our lives and maybe get into a meaningful relationship.

I too am waiting for someone. Someone younger than I (below 30) who can be compatible with me, enjoy my company and is honest and committed. Not only in bed but social life too, as a good, reliable and trustworthy friend and partner.

Did someone say "Me?"

- Anonymous

## Mask

How easy is it to put on a mask;  
to act out a part;  
to pretend to be what one is not.

How easy is it to hide behind a facade;  
to smile and to laugh;  
to joke and to talk.

When all the while I see you both together;  
I die a little death.

- Sakha

## Some Books & Films...

### BOOKS :

1. **Less than Gay : A citizens report on the status of Homosexuality in India** - Aids Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan (1991)
2. **Sakhiyani : Lesbian desire in Ancient and Modern India**  
- Giti Thadani (1996)
3. **Lihaf (The Quilt)**  
- Ismat Chughtai
4. **Narman**  
- Ifti Naseem (1995)
5. **Funny Boy**  
- Shyam Selvadurai

### FILMS :

1. **Adhura** - Directed by Ashish Nagpal, 1995 (Hindi)
2. **Fire** - Directed by Deepa Mehta, 1996
3. **BomGay** - Directed by Riyad Wadia, 1996
4. **Bombay Boys** - Directed by Kaizad Gustad, 1998



## Dear Darling...

Dear Darling,

I am a gay man and have been living with my male lover for 2 years. Recently, however, I slept with my best friend, a woman, and realised that I'm not gay! To make things worse, I love my boyfriend as well as my best friend (who is now my girlfriend) but they expect me to choose between them. Help!

Yours, NG, Bangalore.

Dearest NG,

It is not unusual for bisexuals to live either a gay or a straight life before discovering their true sexuality and the dawning of awareness is understandably accompanied by feelings of confusion. Interacting with bisexuals at groups for sexuality minorities like GAY and SABRANG is helpful in alleviating the initial shock and confusion. South Asian Transsexuals, bisexuals and lesbians often allege that sexuality minority groups have a male homosexual agenda which does not adequately address their concerns. While largely and unfortunately true, this allegation underlines the urgent and felt need for bisexuals and others to articulate their concerns at GAY and other such fora. "We will call out to each other in the darkness of the great forest, so that we not be lost to one another."

Whew! I got a bit carried away there, but about the other little problem, may the god of bisexuals grant you the courage to change the things you can, the perseverance to accept the things you can't and the wisdom to know the difference. Your idea of bliss is obviously different from that of your lovers, both of whom seem very much inclined to a monogamous relationship. Hopefully their perceptions can change, with the assistance of a counsellor or mutual friends and above all the object of their desire, you. If things do change, you have a good thing going. However, should either of them retain their perceptions of what a relationship should be, there is this nasty proverb my gramma taught me about wishes and horses, but never mind.

Love, Darling.

Dear Darling,

I am a gay man, but have no access to gay material or photographs in Hubli. I would like to receive catalogues or photo albums from groups like GAY and from individuals. But I risk being exposed if my family opens my mail. What should I do?

Yours, SP, Hubli

Dearest SP,

The solution is in your nearest post-office where for a sum of around Rs. 150/- a year, you or a couple of gay friends together, could rent a post box or a post bag, from where you could collect mail a couple of times a week.

Love, Darling.

## Homosexuality and the Law...

*Continued from page 5*

## Section 377

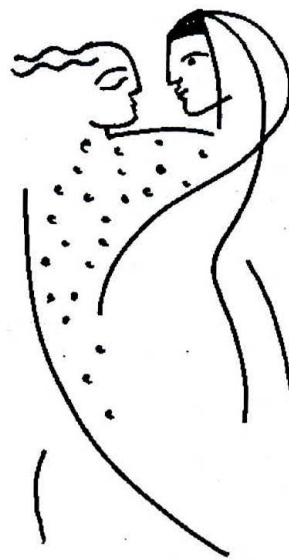
- i.) They need to engage in carnal intercourse against the order of nature.
- ii) Such intercourse must be voluntary
- iii) Intercourse must be accompanied by penetration as defined in the broad terms already outlined.

Unless all the criteria are satisfied, all persons are free from successful prosecution and conviction. Further, for a successful prosecution and conviction, the levels of proof required are also very high, requiring eye witness accounts or medical evidence.

- B. The police have wide powers of arrest and can pick up LesBiGay people if reasonable suspicion that an offence under section 377 has been committed or is going to be committed.
- C. If LesBiGay people are arrested they have certain rights guaranteed by the constitution and the Code of Criminal Procedure and those rights should be demanded before the police.

The police in India function through creation of persuasive fear among sectors of the oppressed population. There is thus need to combat that fear and confidently assert ones rights.

- Arvind



<sup>1</sup> Khanu v. Emperor AIR1925Sindh286.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Brother John Anthony v. State CrilJ1352. This is a position of the Madras high court and is one that has been given in the context of child sexual abuse; there is a possibility that a Karnataka high court decision could read such that manual & mutual masturbation does not amount to carnal intercourse.

<sup>4</sup> State of Kerala v. K. Govindan 1969CrilJ818. To state again the Karnataka High court could differ on this opinion.

<sup>5</sup> Sections 46(2), 46(3) and 49 of the Code of Criminal Procedure

<sup>6</sup> Sections 50, 55, 75 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India.

<sup>7</sup> Sections 56 & 57 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

<sup>8</sup> Sections 57 and proviso to Section 76 read with Article 22(2) of the Constitution.

<sup>9</sup> Section. 303 of the Code and Article 22(1) of the Constitution.



## "Fire" - The burning issue

The main issue raised by the film, "Fire", is whether the women fall "in love" and have a sexual relationship as the result of having no other choices or specifically because they made a choice. One could argue that given their unfulfilled marriages to men in the emotional, spiritual and sexual aspects they had no other choice but to seek one another's companionship. Does this situation suggest that gay men and lesbian women in Indian culture and in other cultures only occur because something is wrong in their environment? I do not believe the film conveyed such a negative message about homosexuality for several reasons.

First, we all have choices to make us human beings. Even within traditional Indian society where people feel that they are bound by customs to live their lives, each person makes a choice whether to live by these values. The film indicated that Indians do have a choice to make their lives fulfilling and meaningful rather than just existing in a relationship filled with duty and obligation. We all have a choice.

Second, the film identified a Hindu belief that if someone would walk through fire but remain unharmed it meant they were "pure". There was a scene towards the end of the film that reflected this belief. It occurred when the older woman confronts her husband about her relationship with the other woman and her saree catches fire. She escapes unharmed and therefore is able to join her female lover. She remains "pure" despite some people's belief that homosexuality is wrong and immoral. She remains "pure" because she truly loves this other woman and their sexual intimacy is a beautiful reflection of this love for one another.

Third, the film continues to flash back to childhood scenes from one of the women. When we truly fall in love with someone it brings out the inner child in us. Any unresolved issues we had from our childhood

*Continued in the next column*

## Autumn Muse

Autumn rains and funny skies  
Stories of love, hate and lies  
A strange unnerving primal call  
The years like leaves about to fall

The aching need to follow on  
The evening sun, the indifferent morn  
The memories of a different time  
A chant with a familiar rhyme

The priests at the altar of God  
The heavy yoke upon the sod  
The heedless early Yuletide thrill  
The desolation upon the hill

The succour of angels and of men  
The questions - how and why and when  
The melody of an autumn song  
A different muse - its been so long.

- P.P.Paikaray

## "Fire"...

surface very quickly in our relationship. The little girl in the flashbacks was searching for the ocean despite being in a field hundreds of kilometres away from the ocean. It was not until this woman found another woman to fulfill her emotionally, spiritually and sexually did she find the ocean that she had been seeking for so long.

The film provides an excellent opportunity for Indian society to have an open-minded dialogue about homosexuality. Will Indian society make the choice to have such a dialogue?

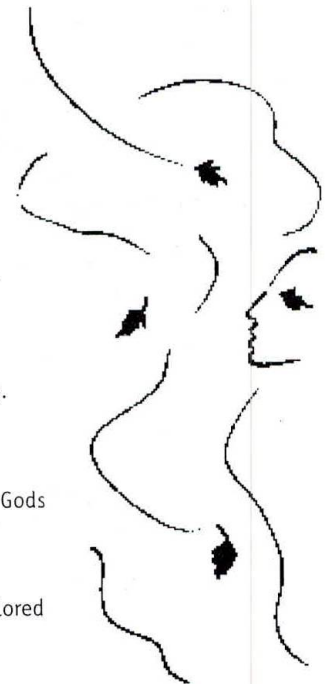
## Celebrations & Congratulations

**Good As You**, the support group for LesBiGay and sexual minorities in Bangalore, celebrates its 5th Anniversary in February 1999. **CONGRATULATIONS!!!**

**HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS** also to **SABRANG** which was registered as a society in January 1999. Our best wishes to them.

## He blew into my life

He blew into my life  
softly - scented -  
cool as a summer wind;  
caressed my heated body  
gently;  
blew across my sweaty brow  
and soothed my burning fever  
lovingly;  
held me close and the scent -  
oh so sweet and overpowering.  
Melted in my arms -  
lips sweet as honey  
their taste as nectar from the Gods  
lingered all night long  
over my body.  
Tickled, loved, kissed and explored  
leaving trails of moisture  
that cooled with his breath.  
Captured all my senses  
enslaved my mind  
and left me aching for more.  
He left as softly as he had come.  
Never to be seen again.



- Anonymous



## News Briefs

**SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN :** The Signature Campaign, to repeal Section 377 of the IPC, conducted all over India following the conference on **"Strategies for furthering Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay rights in India"** was taken up by the members of the SABRANG group in Bangalore, collecting over 1000 signatures in the city. SABRANG, as some of you may already know, is a collective comprising people from various walks of life, working together to document, publish and disseminate information on sexuality, promote dialogue among people through lectures, workshops etc. and thereby help them understand and be comfortable with their sexuality. Members from GOOD AS YOU, the LesBiGay group, also participated and helped collect signatures for the campaign.

**EMERGING GAY SPACES IN BANGALORE :** For several weeks in September, a public lecture given by Dr. Balachandran on 28th August 1998, was the talk of the town. Almost every major newspaper, including those in regional languages, wrote about the lecture on the "Emerging Gay Spaces in Bangalore" that was organised by SABRANG and GOOD AS YOU. Four broad points emerged from the lecture :

- 1) Heterosexuality is more commonly visible, hence more common
- 2) Homosexuality also exists widely, but is less visible
- 3) There is a gay life in Bangalore which is increasingly gaining visibility
- 4) The acknowledgment of this population's existence and engagement in a healthy dialogue with it can benefit the cultural landscape of Bangalore because individual lives can be improved.

The lecture was stimulating and raised a number of questions from the audience, which numbered over a 100. The lecture received wide coverage in the print media and extensive reports appeared both in the Times of India and The Asian Age. It was a proud achievement for both SABRANG and GOOD AS YOU. Primarily because it was the first lecture of its kind and also the first in a series of lectures being conducted by SABRANG. Secondly, because it brought into public focus an issue that always existed and was not talked about. Finally, it was an achievement because it brought in new members to both the groups. It was also a giant step forward for the LesBiGay movement in Bangalore.

**"GAY IN THE GARDEN CITY" :** On 29th August 1998, a day after the lecture by Dr. Balachandran on the emerging gay spaces in Bangalore, a local magazine, the "Bangalore Monthly" brought out a cover page story on the Gay life in Bangalore. An extremely sensitive article, it was written by Ms.Radha Thomas and was well received in the city. According to some sources, the issue, which was lapped up by the public, ran out of print! A couple of interviews of Gay men in Bangalore by Ms.Thomas was the chief attraction of the article. And the fact that the article carried no stereotypes nor asserted any of the popular myths held by the public about gay men, made it even more attractive. One true story of a gay man's life and how he had to undergo treatment at the hands of a doctor who claimed he could cure gayness(!) was extremely touching. GOOD AS YOU and SABRANG were mentioned in the article as groups and

support structures that were trying to bring into public focus, issues on sexuality and sexuality identities. The article proved a harbinger to many Bangaloreans and brought more members to the GOOD AS YOU meetings and also pushed the gay lifestyles of Bangalore into the public eye. We at SANGHA MITRA and members of GOOD AS YOU congratulate Ms.Radha Thomas on a job well done and wish her all the best. We hope many more journalists will follow her lead and write about these issues in an unbiased manner as she has.

**WORKSHOPS AND PUBLIC LECTURES :** Continuing their work on trying to bring issues about sexuality into the public forum, SABRANG helped organise two more events.

One, a workshop on **SEX AND SEXUALITY IN THE TIME OF AIDS** was presented by Ms. Anjali Gopalan, Executive Director, The Naz Foundation (India) Trust, New Delhi, on two consecutive days - October 2nd and 3rd.

The second was a public lecture on **LANGUAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY** by Ms. Sandhya Rao, Director, Hengasara Hakkina Sangha (HHS).

The workshop by Ms.Gopalan brought into focus all the questions about AIDS and the different means of transmission of the disease. A detailed 7 hour workshop followed, where a lot of questions were answered. All credit to Ms.Anjali Gopalan, who did a brilliant job of putting everyone at ease while they were expressing their views about sex and sexuality.

The public lecture by Ms. Sandhya Rao, second in the SABRANG's lecture series, was attended by more than 50 people and touched upon the aspects of Language and Gender issues in Sexuality. The broad points covered in the lecture were : While there was increasing tolerance to the discussion of sexuality, there was still very little physical space for these discussions. Many obstacles stood in the path of such a public discussion, viz., in religious texts, sex was mentioned as a means to procreation only, therefore any other aspect of sexuality was not to be discussed in public. The accepted norm among the general public seems to be "Participate, but do not explore". There is very little vocabulary in regional languages for people to discuss their sexuality and whatever vocabulary exists is in the form of curses or demeaning words. Throughout the lecture, another point that Ms.Sandhya Rao made was, that in each of these areas, gender seemed to play a more specific role, in that, men had it a lot more easy than women. Even in terms of vocabulary, while men had a huge collection of terms for their own sexual acts and desires, women had either very few or none at all. This was ironical, as Ms. Rao pointed out, considering that most curses in a language, regional or otherwise, had some reference to women in them - viz., son of a bitch, motherfucker etc. The same cannot be extrapolated in a woman's case, Ms. Rao said.

This lecture also saw the enthusiastic public coming up with many questions regarding sexuality itself and an elaborate discussion took place.



## Letter for my mother

I'm gay, mama.

I'm a queer woman  
whose lovers are women,  
have been, all my life.  
You gotta see it, mama :  
I'm no man's woman, mama  
& you better be proud,  
proud of your daughter, mama.

Remember, mama, when I was small  
I had a friend who stayed nights over  
through all the weekdays & weekends too ?  
Remember, mama, when you saw us once  
you gave me hell & more for our kissing ?  
"You gals : gals are not supposed to kiss..."  
Remember, mama, how you told me  
All about Buddhist scripts, the sins, et cetera,  
& I just sat silent... Remember, mama ?

I'm queer, mama,  
you gotta see it, mama :  
Your daughter digs women,  
So, what's wrong with this, mama ?

When I ran away  
I wanted things to change  
You cried, you cussed, but never understood :  
I wanted to be free of your indifference for me  
& father's tyranny (thank God, he's dead now, in my mind)  
Mama, but it never happened,  
& all I did was wrong,  
& then I gave up :  
stopped talking.  
going to college,  
seeing anyone...  
And you still wanted to know  
What was the meaning of my life.

True, mama, there was no meaning to my life  
just then : I woke up in the mornings  
bursting from a thought of another day in the cage  
which was your home, never mine.  
Sometimes, I wandered 'lone thru' the suburbs  
Till the night & never wished to go back...  
But I did, I always did go back,  
to your husband's house, never mine...

your daughter's queer, mama,  
you gotta see it, & that's all, mama.

Yes, I know you did your best  
to bring me up, & yes, I know  
you went sleepless the days on end when I was sick...  
but you know, too, mama, I tried my best :  
to be the ideal daughter, but not  
to get a boyfriend, date,  
get pregnant & get married...  
Mama, it never happened as you wanted :  
Sorry, mama, but I'm a dyke.

I'm a queer woman, mama  
& you gotta understand it :  
we all live once & make the best  
of what we can,  
and, oh, mama, it's not your fault  
that your baby is a dyke  
& stop your stupid guilt-trip...

I'm gay, mama,  
I'm queer woman  
whose lovers are women,  
have been all my life  
you gotta accept, mama :  
I'm no man's woman, mama  
& you better be proud,  
proud of your daughter, mama.



- Anaraa

## Why?...

I must have been 8 or 9 years then and was playing cricket. I was a fielder. When the ball came towards me, I caught it and threw it to the stumps. After a while, when the game was done, a few boys told me that I threw the ball like a girl. *Shit!!* I cursed myself but didn't know how to respond to that.

I grew very conscious about my throwing-the-ball style and though I found no problem with myself, I was repeatedly being branded a sissy. It grew to a point where I decided to quit playing cricket. To this day, I decline playing the game for the simple reason that I did not want someone to notice this "camp" style of mine.

The same thing happened a few years later when I started playing badminton. My father commented on the way I held the racket and played the shots. He said it was too effeminate. My normal mannerisms are not effeminate, but the small gestures which I made were unavoidable and ultimately made me nervous. Thereafter my interest in outdoor sports subsided and I started to become more of an introvert.

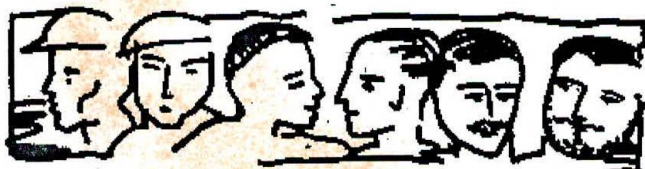
*Continued on page 11*



## Of learned lessons

dark shadows under a moonless night  
 long and lean in the neon light  
 riding the whirly white waves  
 creamy at the edges  
 like the pages in some god forsaken book  
 recollections of a dream  
 these sombre shadows  
 so long, so long  
 so horribly long  
 their legs and hands hobbling across seas  
 through childhood streets  
 where men walked on stilts advertising tea and cigarettes  
 in a land of milk and honey  
 hookah pani  
 of festival and celebrations  
 now selling fun in fairy stories  
 at conference sites  
 beaches and fairs  
 men still stalk on stilts  
 in copy dinsey lands  
 the foaming ocean cupped in the footprinted shore  
 twice lined  
 one ahead and the other following  
 as if beseeching  
 the man and the woman  
 yoked together  
 as the only natural way of being.  
 One over the other  
 the commander and the commanded  
 all levelled and laid bare  
 in the twinkling of a wave  
 on the shores of a sand smooth beginning  
 desires bred in a colonial port city  
 shake out like grains of sand  
 pricking in green old boots, under a moonless feet  
 I craft a path down an Ancient Knowing  
 coming home to a different choice  
 under dark, shadowy skies  
 I am born again.

- Maya Sharma



## Patra Mitra

**To respond to a Patra Mitra :** Please put your letter in an adequately stamped envelope and seal it. **Write only the listing number on this envelope.** Put this envelope inside another adequately stamped envelope, and mail it to **P.O.Box 7859, Bangalore - 560 078.** Superscribe "SM" on the envelope. All responses will be forwarded **UNOPENED.**

**PM001 :** 23 yrs old. Hobbies collecting autographs, reading books. Seeking, fair and charming person of same age.

**PM002 :** My Hobbies are reading novels and listening to music. I prefer age group 23-30, fair, athletic build, tall, good-looking and emotionally compatible.

**PM003 :** Hi! I'm 30, sensitive, quiet, hairy, sexually active. Looking for a handsome, less hair, smart guy as a pen pal.

**PM004 :** I am a tall, dark, good looking guy. Look forward to have pen pals with tall, fair, good looking guys. Hobbies can be anything other than sports.

Continued from page 10

## Why?...

Meanwhile, I was getting more interested in boys. I must have been about 10 years old then. I would love to touch a boy and whenever a boy brushed himself against me, or touched me, my whole body would quiver for no reason. I did not know what was happening to me. Neither had I any knowledge of sex then. It was not an age of contemplation, so I thoroughly enjoyed myself. In sports session, I enjoyed sitting back, watching boys struggle with each other, pushing each other in football, or falling on each other wrestling. For no reason, I wanted to be there with them, touch them, get touched and felt.

I also had a fetish for armpits. I could stare at a boy's armpits and my head would get dizzy. I was young, and hadn't realised that as boys grow older, they would grow hair in their armpits. The small golden brown stubs that would shine with sweat when a boy lifted his hand up made me crazy. I would control my urge to go and bury my face under his arms, smell the sweetness of his sweat and lick his armpits.

I didn't know why I got these thoughts. I could not relate myself to anything. My classmates, the boys, would incessantly talk about girls. I was never interested. I was not into sports. Or girls. Only books. I would ask myself questions every day. Why was I not normal like any other boy? Why don't I get the urge to run, go out with the boys, imitate Azharuddin, after he hit a century in the previous day's match? Why don't I feel the compulsion to enact Amitabh Bachchan after seeing the film "Mard"? Why did I feel like crying, seeing a woman die in that film - when all my friends were laughing at her plight ?

why...?

- Sakha





**For Private Circulation only**  
**Patron : Good As You, Bangalore**



MacArthur funds

## Population

### Purpose

To foster conditions for responsible reproductive choices by improving women's reproductive health and promoting shared responsibility between men and women for sexual behavior, childbearing, and childrearing.

Three basic principles guide the selection of population activities to be funded: that participation from developing countries and countries in transition is essential in decision making at all levels of population policy and action; that population activities must include a focus on the population implications of culturally specific systems of gender relationships; and that population activities must consider and encourage the interactions among research, advocacy, and leadership development.

### Strategies

#### Building international collaboration

Grants support networking and policy dialogues that address cultural values which support or threaten reproductive health and rights, and collaborative efforts that monitor the implementation of international agreements on population and women's rights.

#### Conducting activities in selected countries

Support for population activities is concentrated in four countries selected for their political and demographic importance — Brazil, India, Mexico, and Nigeria. Two mutually reinforcing strategies are pursued: strengthening of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and leadership development for creative individuals with extraordinary potential.

Grants are made at the national and international levels to help civil society organizations concerned with reproductive health and rights to engage in cooperative partnerships with governments and the business sector. Grants also support policy-relevant research in three areas where new knowledge is needed to guide social change: empowerment of women, male responsibility for sexual behavior and reproductive decisions, and the implications of fundamentalisms for women's reproductive health and rights. The Foundation supports exchange among NGOs from the U.S. and southern countries that are developing new ways of dealing with adolescent health and sexuality.



- **COUNSELLING:** Wise choices are made not on information alone. And when it comes to sexual and/or reproductive choices one's values, feelings, and concerns about possible effects on significant others, and perceptions of oneself as an autonomous agent, all come into play, often creating a conflictual situation. TARSHI provides a safe, non-judgmental, and confidential atmosphere within which such decision-making is facilitated. We help people help themselves in ways which feel right to them, ways that "fit" their lives.

- **REFERRALS:** To carry out decisions made, people need to act. We refer people to relevant medical, psychological and/or social services, with information that will make it easier for them to use these services - information on costs, time required, etc.

- **DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH:** We are in the process of documenting our experiences with a view to making available to a larger group our learning in the field of sexual and reproductive health.

- **LIAISON:** We liaise with individuals and organisations whose work has to do either directly or indirectly with sexuality and reproductive health. We are constantly on the lookout for service providers who are sensitive, caring, and respectful of women and men's dignity in the context of sexuality. We network with mental health professionals, gynaecologists, legal aid professionals, family planning clinics, HIV/AIDS prevention and care workers, and those whose work requires them to address issues of sexuality, gender-inequality and gender-based violence.

We look forward to meeting you and sharing our work and concerns with you.  
Radhika Chandiramani



**From:** tarshi@vsnl.com <tarshi@vsnl.com>  
**To:** chandana@hivos-india.org <chandana@hivos-india.org>  
**Date:** 25 March 1999 14:50  
**Subject:** Re: Fwd: reg. GL Study Team visiting Delhi

---

Dear Chandana,

Thanks for your interest in visiting various groups that are associated with the Campaign for Lesbian Rights. TARSHI would be happy to meet you and discuss the issues that your Study Team is looking into.

I believe that you are meeting the CLR on April 6th in the morning. You could come to TARSHI in the afternoon of the 6th, say at about 2:00 pm, if that is convenient. Once you are in Delhi you could call the admin number (4610711) and confirm the meeting with either Radhika or Prabha.

Visiting the Psychological Foundations (of which I am a Trustee) might not be very useful from your point of view as the PF is a group of practising mental health professionals whose aim in setting up the PF is to relieve the stresses of mental health practitioners. As Pramada has told you, there are many who support the CLR on the basis of opposing discrimination and are not directly involved in its activities.

Below you will find a brief note on what we do at TARSHI and the vision that informs our work. It might be useful if you circulate this to the members of the team so they have a sense of TARSHI.

**TARSHI - Talking About Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues.**

TARSHI is an effort towards enabling women and men enjoy lives of dignity and freedom from fear, infection, and, reproductive and sexual ill-health.

TARSHI works to provide women and men choices in their sexual and reproductive lives - choices about health services, contraception, actions, and so on. Our programme is addressed to people of all classes, communities, ages, and sexual preferences.

We recognise that reproductive choices cannot be isolated from sexuality and that sexual and reproductive behaviours emerge from and have an impact upon life contexts. TARSHI offers a variety of services to help individuals choose wisely. - -

· **HELPLINE:** TARSHI runs two telephone helplines on 462 2221 and 462 4441 from Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm, providing individuals easy access to information, counselling, and referrals on reproductive and sexual health issues. Helpline services are free, are available in Hindi and English, and are confidential and preserve the anonymity of the caller. The helpline is operated by a team of trained counsellors and is directed by a qualified clinical psychologist. On the TARSHI referral panel are specialists from areas related to reproductive and sexual health.

· **INFORMATION:** We make available accurate information through the helplines, publications, and outreach programmes in a simple, comprehensible manner on sexual and reproductive issues: sexual anatomy, sexual processes, reproduction, safer sexual pleasure enhancement, family planning, contraception, STDs, HIV/AIDS, safer sexual practices, and so on.



## **THE CAMPAIGN FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS**

Following the violent demonstrations orchestrated by the Shiv Sena in early December against the screening of Deepa Mehta's film *Fire*, a number of organisations and individuals in Delhi have been meeting to discuss the issues that have surfaced. Democratic rights and freedom of expression are issues that constantly arise in India and these are central here also. At the same time, the attacks on the film, the responses to the film and to the protests have pushed women's groups, human rights groups and secular organisations to address the lesbo-phobia which prevails within large sections of Indian society.

This country has a long history of discrimination—be it against Muslims, Dalits, Christians, women, tribals etc. However, people from these oppressed groups have been permitted a sense of public identity and can therefore try to seek recognition of their oppression. In the case of lesbians, their isolation and invisibility has meant the absence of collective identity. In the public domain there is no space for discussion of sexuality, leave alone women's sexuality. Culture, tradition, values and morals have consistently been used as tools of oppression and discrimination. Within this framework, one is marginalised as a woman and doubly so as a lesbian. Intolerance and fear of anything different from the so-called 'norm' results in the forced invisibility of minority groups. Is it any wonder then that there are not many 'out' lesbians in India?

The Campaign for Lesbian Rights is a group of individuals—lesbian, gay and straight—and organisations who feel strongly that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation/preference is a violation of basic human rights. The Campaign seeks

- to make lesbianism visible and dispel the myth that there are no lesbians in India

- to create awareness about lesbian issues and concerns
- to develop public and state recognition of the rights of all lesbians to a life of dignity, acceptance, equality and safety

Over the next year, the Campaign for Lesbian Rights (CLR) will engage in the dissemination of information, public debates and protest actions.

We seek the support of all those who hope for a world free of discrimination, intolerance and hatred.

PO Box 3526, Lajpat Nagar,  
New Delhi 110024. (until March 31, 1999.)

Email: [caleri@hotmail.com](mailto:caleri@hotmail.com)

### **Organisations supporting the mandate of The Campaign for Lesbian Rights**

1. Aarambh, New Delhi
2. Aids Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan, New Delhi
3. Ankur Jan Shikshan, New Delhi
4. Bombay Dost
5. CEHAT, Mumbai
6. Counsel Club, Calcutta
7. DARE, New Delhi
8. Dastkar, New Delhi
9. Fellowship of Blood Donors, New Delhi
10. IFSHA, New Delhi
11. Magic Lantern, New Delhi
12. MASUM, Pune
13. National Democratic People's Front, New Delhi
14. Naz Foundation, New Delhi
15. Nirantar, New Delhi
16. North East Network, Shillong
17. Psychological Foundations, New Delhi
18. Sabrang, Bangalore
19. Saheli, New Delhi
20. Sakshi, New Delhi
21. Shodhini Network
22. Stree Sangam, Mumbai
23. TARSHI, New Delhi
24. The Humsafar Trust, Mumbai
25. The Lawyer's Collective, New Delhi



## HIVOS and population - a survey

### 1. Introduction

The threatening imbalance between the size of the world population and available resources is affecting the possibilities for development and change. The call for a global policy aimed at curbing population growth is becoming ever louder and has been heard for many years in development cooperation circles. Every year the Dutch government devotes considerable sums to birth control programmes. The discussion about whether a population policy needs to be developed and the consequences thereof for development programmes has of course implications for HIVOS's activities.

So HIVOS has cause to reflect on the population issue. Various considerations come into the picture here.

First of all, there is concern about population growth in both absolute and relative terms. According to forecasts, world population growth will outstrip the long-term availability of resources, even if a fairer distribution of resources and income is achieved within the North and the South and between the North and the South. In various parts of the North and the South, population pressure is having a severe impact on the environment. That applies to the western countries, which are making the heaviest demands on available resources and contributing in large measure to global environmental degradation, but is true as well for Third World countries. Local population pressure in the South can have far-reaching effects on the environment, employment, distribution of land and water, social services, etc.

Second, HIVOS is concerned about the one-sided focus on population growth in the South. As Els Postel has fittingly observed, the daily traffic jams on Holland's roads do not immediately turn one's thoughts to contraceptives in the way pictures of starving African people often do. Yet it would be quite logical to argue that the earth can support only a very limited number of people who travel by motor car over a vast network of paved roads, as compared to people who normally travel on foot.

In the third place, there is concern about the way some countries act in either curbing or stimulating population growth. This is often at variance with the fundamental right of people to determine themselves how many children they'll have. There is a strong tendency to translate population policy exclusively into family-planning targeted mainly at -married- women. This focus on contraception means that other factors of influence to a birth rate decline are left out, like better education and employment for women. The lob-sided attention on contraceptives for female users, denies men's role and responsibility in the reproduction process. Furthermore, these contraceptives do not guarantee any protection against AIDS, a subject highly neglected in the discussions on population policy. Women run a high risk of HIV-infection because of their weak bargaining power in sexual matters. Moreover, the chances of virus-transmission to unborn children by pregnant HIV-infected women are high. In African countries AIDS already has led to the elimination of large proportions of the productive and reproductive active people.

### 2. HIVOS and population.

In HIVOS's view, there are clear interactions between population growth, local population pressure and development. The population issue is a global problem that cannot be reduced to a simple question of distribution of resources between North and South, or translated one-sidedly into family-planning. HIVOS view on population matters is determined by its integral development approach, in which an active global environmental policy, pursuit of fair trade relations, poverty alleviation and empowerment of poor people go hand in hand with strengthening the position and self-determination of women and changing the unequal power relations between men and women.



As a humanistic development organization, HIVOS wishes to contribute to the emancipation and autonomy of poor people. The right to regulate one's own fertility - without any pressure either by government, partner or family - is part of this process. The underlying idea is that responsible and independent individuals are quite capable of determining themselves how many children they want, on the basis of their economic situation, cultural values and wishes for the future. Yet this presupposes that:

- \* women and men have access to safe and reliable contraception, abortion and help with undesired infertility
- \* women can decide themselves whether or not to bear children
- \* women have some prospect of a better life.

It is well enough known that in practice shortcomings in these areas exist. Furthermore, there are certain tensions between women's self-determination over their own bodies and lives, cultural and religious values and the unequal power relation between men and women. This is one of the reasons why HIVOS stresses the importance of a gender-aware policy aimed at the empowerment and self-determination of women and the emancipation of men.

We could stop here and leave it at this. However, the question is whether it's desirable - if not necessary - for a development organization as HIVOS to formulate a population policy in order to overcome the dilemma of short-term/long-term solutions for population problems. If so, how do individual rights to self-determination relate to collective survival interests? Does HIVOS humanist vision lead to a different position in the population debate in comparison to religious development organizations? If so, what are the implications for HIVOS' policy?

Before dealing these questions, it is necessary to pay attention to HIVOS' partner organizations' view on population issues.

## 2.1 Population and reproductive rights in HIVOS's programme.

For many intermediary NGOs supported by HIVOS, population policy and local population pressure are sensitive issues. Discussions related to these matters are immediately associated with Northern hypocrisy. While the North refuses to tackle its own pollution and over-consumption or take serious steps to bring about fair trading relations, it's pointing an accusing finger at population growth in the South. Besides, the history of family planning in developing countries (in many cases financed by western governments) is loaded and programmes involving social coercion or financial incentives are still being implemented. Because of the large-scale approach, many family-planning programmes are not tailored to the needs of the user. Nor do they link up with existing ideas and beliefs on reproduction and sexuality. Where male resistance to, say, the use of condoms or vasectomy, can always count on comprehension and caution, female aversion or fears regarding certain contraceptive methods is seldom dealt with.

Partner organizations argue that population growth does not cause poverty but rather that population growth is stimulated by poverty. Children are needed as help in the home and on the land, as a source of income (child labour) and as old age insurance. Infant mortality rates and the fact that in different societies a large number of children (preferably sons) gives women and men status, are also to be taken into account.

Furthermore, subjects related to sexuality and sexual options, gender, shared parenthood and birth control are often regarded as private family affairs and as such out of the scope of development programmes. One of the reasons is that local development organizations are mainly directed by men, who have difficulties themselves in discussing sexuality or recognizing the reproductive rights of women and the importance of responsible parenthood. Those subjects are often considered to be the exclusive domain of either specialized (medical) institutes or specific women's organizations, which furthermore have to be very sure of their ground to promote the self-determination of women (and men), rejecting the ideal images of the family and motherhood propagated by the church and the media.



Women's organizations supported by HIVOS are stressing the importance of delinking population policy and family planning. They prefer to situate birth control within the broader framework of an integral approach of reproductive rights, embracing information, education, women's health care and the provision of safe and reliable contraceptives in accordance with the wishes of women and men.

Talks with the target group of rural development organizations with which HIVOS cooperates have shown time and again that there is a great need for information about sexuality and parenthood, for knowledge of the human body and for services in the area of contraception and women's health care. Although children are regarded as a gift of God in many societies, experience has shown that many women would consider it an even greater gift if conception could be deferred.

HIVOS therefore dares to question the prevailing view of many NGOs that poor people need to have many children for economic reasons. Quite apart from the fact that this presupposes some form of birth control, it is at variance with the wish expressed by millions of women to bear fewer children. Large families confront breadwinners and carers with enormous problems, and it is largely women who have to provide the solutions. Successive pregnancies limit women's room for personal development and leaves them physically exhausted. Furthermore, experience shows that women derive little joy from a pregnancy if they are already at a loss as to how to feed and care for the children and relatives they're responsible for. And if they succeed in keeping their children alive, there is still the problem of the future. The realization that there is no money to give all their children a decent education and not enough land to be divided later is a heavy mental burden for parents. The argument that children can help to increase the family income is only partially valid. Although calculations in India have shown that children (can) contribute more to the family income than it costs to feed and clothe them, one may ask oneself whether parents really deliberately choose to supplement the family income in this way. We are left with the argument that children are needed as carers for their parents in their old age. Children do often fulfil this role in countries where there are no old-age pensions or other welfare services for the old. Here the dilemma arises that poor parents might be better off financially if they had only a few children but with an education and prospects of reasonably paid work, whereas as regards physical care, they would derive more benefit from children who have no other option but to remain living at home or in the neighbourhood.

### 3. HIVOS and population policy

The concern about population growth in relation to available resources and the problems indicated above in the area of reproductive rights cannot but have implications for HIVOS policy. This does not mean that HIVOS should develop a separate population policy, complete with target figures. But neither does HIVOS wish to ignore the population problem. Between the two extremes a whole range of possibilities are to be explored. Starting point is HIVOS' integral approach which embraces poverty alleviation, environmental policy and emancipation.

An immediate clue for a more active line is the paradox of population policy, to which experts such as Els Postel have drawn attention. On the one hand, family-planning programmes put women under pressure to restrict the number of children they have, but on the other hand there are countless women who would do this voluntarily if only they had access to the means. It is particularly in this area of tension between demand and supply that HIVOS likes to contribute.

The reasons to do so can be summarized as follows:

- \* In the groups supported (directly or indirectly) by HIVOS there is an expressed need to be able to control one's own fertility.
- \* At the same time, there is a great lack of information and services in the areas of sexual education, safe contraception, fertility problems and women's health care.
- \* The demand side is not homogeneous. Women and men have different needs with respect to



information and means according to their age, background and sex. This should be kept in mind when providing these kind of services.

- \* The attitude of the Catholic church and fundamentalist religious groups and their extensive interference with the legalization and realization of reproductive rights constitute a major obstacle for people's right to control their own fertility, which HIVOS regards as fundamental.
- \* Education and information concerning sexuality, reproductive and sexual options and opening up public debate on these issues are important weapons in the battle against AIDS.
- \* If women have more control over their own fertility, this has a positive effect on her possibilities for personal development. On the other hand, if women have a better access to education and better paid jobs, fertility rates will tend to decline.
- \* Also the number of maternal deaths and infant mortality will decrease, if women have access to safe and reliable contraception.
- \* Reduction of (local) population pressure will in the long term help to slow down environmental degradation and improve the (local) food supply situation and employment.

What are the implications for HIVOS' activities and how can HIVOS respond to its concern regarding population issues and reproductive rights? In the next paragraph a few ideas are presented.

#### 4. Proposals

##### 4.1. *Implementation of gender-conscious policy*

There are close links between, on the one hand, the level of education/training, employment and adequate health care for women and, on the other hand, the number of children women have. If women and girls are better educated and are able to earn an income of their own, this has a positive effect on their "bargaining-power" vis-à-vis men.

The memo on HIVOS's policy on women and development indicates how HIVOS thinks it can contribute to a structural improvement in the position of women. One of the points of departure for this policy is the right of women to control their own lives and bodies. This right is not endorsed with the same enthusiasm by all partner organizations.

In the discussions with partner organizations engaged in a broad range of development activities, HIVOS should pay more attention to reproductive rights and physical autonomy of women and urge that these matters, along with sexuality and shared parenthood, be given greater prominence in these organizations' programmes and no longer be regarded as the exclusive domain of women's organizations. Partner organizations must become more aware of the fact that the democratization of society does not stop at the threshold of people's homes. Changes in relations between men and women and sexual behaviour are not after all a task solely for women. Men will have to become more involved in information and services in the area of sexuality and family planning and realize that their role in reproduction is not limited to procreation.

The raising of subjects such as reproductive rights in conjunction with population issues is certainly not an easy task, and HIVOS must prevent this from being seen as the latest donor fashion, fixed on the agenda next to environment and AIDS. Furthermore, the subject is not equally relevant to all the programmes supported by HIVOS.



#### 4.2. *Strategic choices*

Support of NGOs that operate in the tension-area between supply and demand for safe and reliable contraceptives, information on sexual matters and reproductive rights, women's health etc. is one to respond to our concern regarding reproductive rights and population matters. We have in mind here NGOs that provide services as mentioned above as well tackle ideological and legal issues, undertake steps to overturn the ideal images of the family and motherhood propagated by the church and the media, and make a stand in favour of the legalization of abortion, etc. Research on ideas concerning reproduction, sexuality and people's aversion to, or problems with, certain methods of contraception should form part of such programmes. It would be desirable to make use of the WGNRR network in searching for NGOs that are operating as above indicated.

However, most of the NGOs engaged in programmes on reproductive rights are (urban) women's organizations, with a limited access to rural areas. They could be encouraged, perhaps, to spread their wings and cover rural areas and/or advise partner organizations already active there. At the same time HIVOS should encourage partner organizations to a closer cooperation with them.

#### 3. *Inventory.*

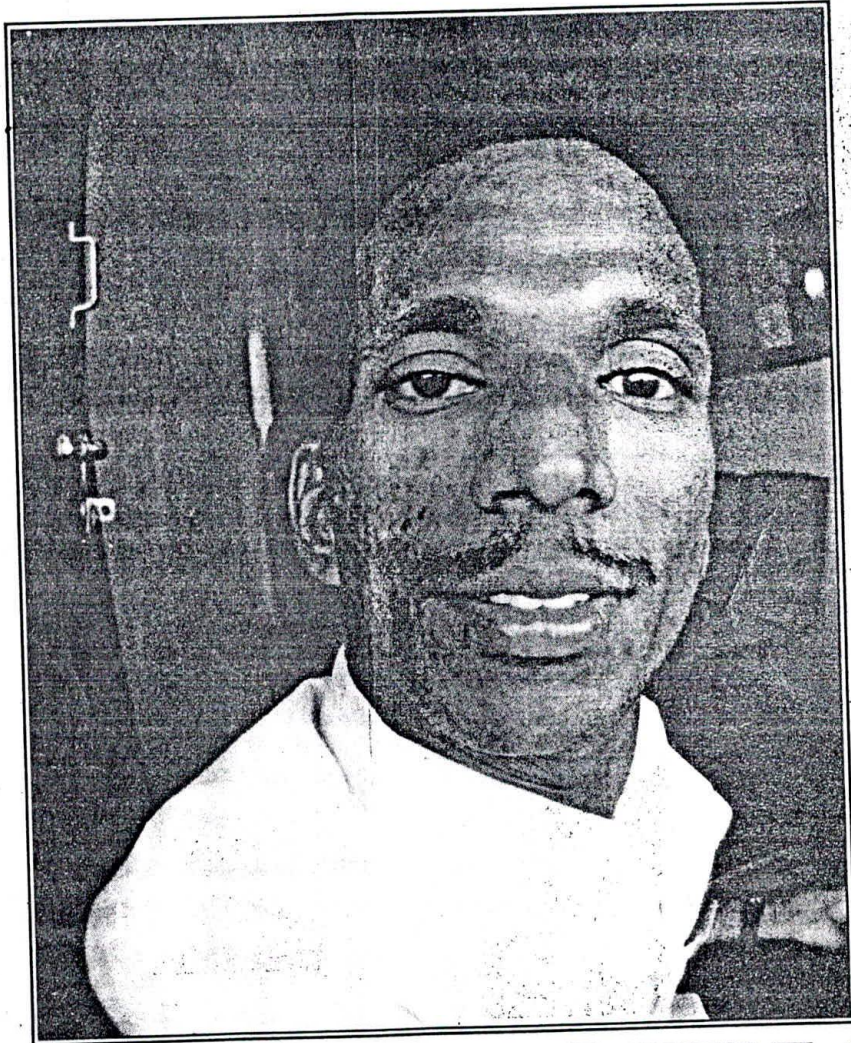
HIVOS already supports some NGOs concerned with reproductive rights in Asia, Latin America and Africa. In order to get a picture of what is being achieved in education, services and campaigning in this area -as far as HIVOS-partners are concerned- an inventory will be made in 1993 with the aim of collecting and exchanging successful experiences and detecting bottlenecks.

#### 4. *Innovation.*

On the basis of this inventory, which will be completed in the second half of 1993, recommendations will be formulated for research, for promoting the exchange of information, for supporting innovative projects in the area of reproductive rights and for overturning traditional images on motherhood and the family. Three countries will be selected from three continents. It's obvious that (modest) funds will be made available for these activities and the support of innovative projects.



ASIDE June 15, 1994



# DYING YOUNG

## Confessions of an AIDS Victim

Life is stranger than fiction, they say. Strange indeed, where on the one hand bright shines the sun, the roses flit across the cool breeze and the birds sing love notes to the clear blue sky. All reflected and imprinted on the innocent smile of a child. As if to balance the mirth of this merry, is the cloud of sorrow hovering over some unfortunate lot. Those who have none to share their miseries and sorrows with. No caring shoulders for them to support their weary heads on. Those like B Sekar in Madras who has perhaps gone

through one of the worst ordeals, cursed upon human beings.

This 32-year-old graduate from Madras is an HIV-positive case, and has fallen victim to the fatal disease, acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome, AIDS to you and me. So what's new, especially in a city which is second only to Bombay in the high number of AIDS patients in the country. Nothing, except that this one is also a homosexual. But to come out of closet and shout across such a fatality to the world outside is no easy

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joke. What with frowning faces, gossiping, and grumbling voices waiting to humiliate and ostracise the victims. "A homosexual after all deserves it," is the comment typical of the Indian society.

Sekar has gone through it all — anger, disgust, frustration, leaving a deep, nagging depression. And he is possibly the first person in these parts to have come out so openly to say that he is an AIDS victim, and a homosexual at that.

The reason for which, he says, is a by now deep-rooted desire to serve the society at this late hour in whatever little capacity, educate it and caution it. Sekar feels he could contribute to the AIDS awareness and prevention programme by narrating his story, and in the like manner requesting the rest to practise safe sex. If his message could get across to even a single person every day, he would have the satisfaction of having saved a life. Which view, as he reasons out, none else

among the 2000-odd HIV-infected people has taken. Fearing the society's wrath, which has not left Sekar alone.

An unsympathetic attitude from his family and society apart, Sekar faces a lot of criticism from other quarters too. Especially the homosexual community, and some voluntary organisations which feel that Sekar's disclosure, instead of "exposing" the "gay clubs" in town to contempt and ridicule apart from criminal prosecuting and helping out the AIDS prevention programme, could lead to a social backlash on both sections, depriving them of any sympathy from the society, whose creations they are.

It is with immense courage and will power that Sekar has prepared himself to face the misery and death in solitude. But touch upon his story, and he breaks down very often, as he did in his four-hour exclusive and exhaustive narration to L R Jagadheesan:

**G**od, why... Oh why, me? His cries rend across the room and fills the air. "I too had a home, cherished a dream to lead a normal life..." The inconsolable sobs again. "I come from an upper middle-class family," starts off Sekar. "My father is working in the Southern Railways, and my mother, a Corporation school teacher, both in Madras. While my elder brother and sister have settled down with their own families, my younger sister is yet to be married.

My siblings did well in studies and in a 'convent school'. I alone was put in a Corporation school. I did not mind this as I wanted them to study well, and also settle down well. Though, I never realised that I was jeopardising my own future and life. But I was good in sports, and used to go for regular practices and work-outs.

At home too, I was the one to do all the household chores, from washing to cleaning, everything. From 4.30 in the morning till late at night, it was the same routine, day in and day out, until that fatal experience which changed the course of my life.

I still remember the day. I was 16, and in my 11th standard. I had three close friends, slightly older to me, and quite often, our small talks used to drag towards sex. That was only for starters. And what then started off as a playful game, soon became a habit, pushing me into homosexuality soon. What with a 30-year-old bachelor-stranger of a co-passenger in the vendors' com-

partment of the city's electric train tempting me next year with a till-then-inexperienced joy-ride in his scooter. He was a doctor and what mattered most at the end of the day for the impressionable 12th standard student, that was me, was his loving care and soothing words, unlike my parents' constant harp on my poor showing in education. It was this 'friend' who introduced me to the world of homosexuals. He took me to all the homosexual cruise and joints and got me introduced to all his 'friends.' Soon I became quite popular in that circle and was the most-sought after partner.

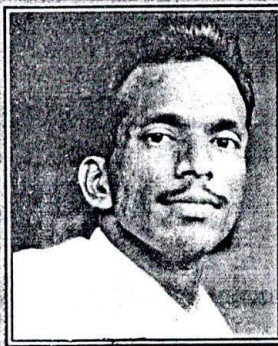
I joined college and took up political science in my degree course. An active participant in sports and the National Cadet Corps, I won many an award and shield for state-level marathon competitions. But I realised that my concentration was gradually drifting away from studies and sports to this 'new-found passion'. The sight of girls never interested me, and devious doubts pushed me further into my 'other activity'. At times I used to return

home late, and even started spending the night outside. That was when my family too started suspecting — that I might be visiting prostitutes. But not in the wildest of their dreams did they suspect that I could be a homosexual. They wanted me to get married, and I promised to do so after I settled down with a job.

I got selected for a constable's post under the sports quota in 1986 but could not join, for other reasons. Then I got a *khalasi* job in the Railways but gave it up, thinking it was not up to my status, especially when my brother and

elder sister were both well-placed. I explored a few business possibilities, but finally ended up with the family's 'gold-covering' business.

It was then that an issue-less grand-aunt who had always had a soft-corner for me bequeathed me with two houses. With my financial position and social status more or less comfortable, I decided to get married. A decision, which was motivated more so by my homosexual friends. 'Get married, for loneliness



**'It used to be  
terribly painful,  
but I couldn't  
help otherwise.'**



# Abnormality or Disease?

*Homosexuality is a difficult thing for many people to understand, leave alone accepting it and dealing with it. Homosexuals are feared, ridiculed, ostracised, despised. But you cannot pretend they do not exist. If in ancient Egypt those who lost a battle were forced into such acts, in Greece it was acceptable and proper. Nearer home, both Kama Sutra and the Khajuraho sculptures are proof enough. Yet in India where sex itself is considered a taboo, homosexuality is the least discussed subject. What is the scientific explanation for this kind of human behaviour? Is it an abnormality to be rectified, or a disease to be cured? Dr D Narayana Reddy, Madras-based sexologist, clears the doubts and misconceptions that plague the layman. Excerpts from an interview:*

## Is homosexuality the one main reason for AIDS?

AIDS was originally labelled as a homosexual disease, but now it has been proved wrong. However, homosexuals do run a higher risk than most others excluding intravenous drug addicts. They also run the same risks of acquiring sexually-transmitted diseases like gonorrhea, herpes and syphilis, as heterosexuals do. Being careful in the choice of sexual partners or having protective sex may help prevent the infection.

## Why a homosexual?

No one can choose to be homosexual or heterosexual. A homosexual orientation is a natural part of someone's personality just as the heterosexual orientation is. And there is this difference between a true homosexual and a person who has undergone a homosexual experience. There are five different scales between a true heterosexual and a true homosexual as American researcher Kinsey points out.

## Is the incidence of homosexuality on the rise?

No. By and large it has been at the same level. What is on the increase is the awareness about this sexual orientation, not the orientation *per se*. If studies put 37 per cent of all men and 13 per cent of women in the US, and five per cent of the adult population in

the UK as homosexuals, Ashok Row Kavi, of Bombay puts the figure at 10 million in the country, with another 40 millions having undergone some sort of a homosexual experience. And in a recent survey, I found that 2.61 per cent of the 8116 males interviewed were homosexuals. But few among the 2157 females admitted to it.

## What make them behave this way?

To be honest, nobody knows the answer. There are many theories but none has been proved. And that includes Kallman's genetic theory, the hormone theory, the psychoanalytic theory attributing it to things like unhappy childhood, and the peer influence theory. Only that in some cases people are deliberately trying to give a genetic or hormonal tilt to claim minority status and rights in countries like the US. The issue is more political than medical.

## Can homosexuality be cured?

It is not a disease. Nor is it an aberration to be rectified. It is a sexual preference. Hence the question of curing it does not arise. Nor can you convert a true homosexual into an exclusive heterosexual. Maybe he or she may be made a bisexual. Anyway, treatments like hormone replacement, psychoanalysis, electric shocks and biofeedback have not helped much.

## What is 'gay' culture?

Gay culture is a sub-culture built around a homosexual. If a person indulges in homosexual activities not just for sexual release, but for emotional fulfilment as well, he or she can be called a 'gay'.

## Is homosexuality an obsession?

No. A normal homosexual can abstain from sex for days together as a normal heterosexual can. But in general homosexuals tend to have more sexual partners than heterosexuals.



is the worst thing that could overtake you,' they would say. Life was taking its own course, smoothly, and I was happy for myself and for everyone. But not for long.

Senthilvel, a friend of mine and a volunteer in CAN (Community Action Network, a social service organisation) who knew about my homosexual activities advised me to get my blood tested for HIV-infection. I was so sure that I could never contract AIDS that I never took him seriously. 'AIDS is a foreigner's disease, and only prostitutes could get infected,' I would often dismiss his suggestion.

Even seven months back when I developed boils on the left side of

my abdomen, I never suspected anything. I got myself checked with a couple of skin specialists, who dismissed them as herpes. 'Nothing to worry,' they assured me. But worried I was, for the boils spread on to my hands, and I got myself admitted in a private nursing home. A young doctor there enquired about my habits, and when I confessed to everything, he asked me to go in for a blood test.

By this time I had shifted to my grandma's house nearby since my parents didn't want the 'herpes infection', as we were all still convinced about it, to spread. And at the insistence of my doctor and also my social worker-friend, I went to a

big hospital in the city for an Elisa test, the preliminary blood-test for HIV infection.

When I went to collect the report after three days, I was told that the doctor had gone abroad and would return only after a week. That week was one of the worst periods in my life. I used to feel restless and lonely, and my only diversions were music and books. By this time the boils had disappeared, but the anxiety and suspense over the blood test result was too much.

When I went to meet the doctor after the week was out, this time again with the cousin who had accompanied me for the blood test, he pronounced that I had "tested HIV-positive, and

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you would live for two to three years'. It was as simple as that.

Unable to react, I came out of the doctor's room, and handed over my report to the cousin. He was still reading it, but I couldn't hold myself any longer, and burst into tears. 'Do not worry,' he tried to console me. 'We'll go in for the Western Blot test wherein you may prove negative.' And you know, Elisa is only a preliminary test, and Western Blot alone is confirmative for HIV infection.

But nothing would console me. Everything was shattered, my life, my world, and my dream for the future. Death was gaping at me, its arms wide open. At the age of 32, that too when everything was starting to work out fine. I couldn't digest the shock. I came out of the hospital, but didn't know where to go. How to face my family and the society, I wondered. How to tell them that I had contracted the deadly and 'shameful' disease, and would die any moment. Everything before me swirled, call it cinematic, dramatic or what, and I fainted.

When I recovered, I managed to stagger to my grandmother's house with my cousin Sundaramurthy's help. My family knew nothing about it, and my cousin told my father that I was worried over some blood test report. My father smelt something fishy, and came in on the fourth day and caressing my forehead, asked me 'Ennada aachhu?' ('What is the matter?'). I couldn't hold myself any further, and disclosed everything to him, and broke into inconsolable sobs. Unable to trust his ears, he too started crying and cursed the dieties.

The news spread within hours and the whole family came to know about it. Every one was obviously sorry for me, but wouldn't dare touch me, or come near me. For fear of infection, I was given a separate room in my own house, and food came to be served through the window. As if this isolation was not enough, my elder brother moved away with his family, and my sister

too wanted to follow suit. When I realised that I was the cause for this disintegration of the family, I decided to stay at the place my grandmother had given me. From then on, whenever I feel like, I visit my parents, but speak to them only from a distance.

It used to be terribly painful in the initial stages, but I couldn't help otherwise. All the while, it has been a close friend of mine, a businessman who had also been my 'partner', who has stood by me, and showered so much love, much more than what my parents had given me all my lifetime. And in one of my desperate moments when I attempted suicide, it was he who dissuaded me against it: 'You're

and also the world. I did come across some friends from my dark past, and they too showed the same affection and love they had shown me earlier. It was also CAN that suggested I come out of my closet, and serve the society instead, by narrating my tale, and by rendering counselling service to the ignorant lot.

Initially I was reluctant for various reasons. Well-wishers dissuaded me from it, arguing that I would only end up making my life more miserable than ever, having to face antagonism from the society as well. I thought over it. After a period of mental agony and dilemma I finally arrived at the decision — that I should do something constructive before dying young, and



**'Initially, I was reluctant...  
Now I  
dedicate my  
life to the  
cause of AIDS  
patients.'**

going to die anyway. Why advance it? You can still live and do a lot of good for the society, and contribute in your own way to the AIDS awareness programme.' I must admit that it is his solace and consolation that has sustained me, and restored my confidence in me, then and now.

It was also at this point of time that I came to be associated with the CAN organisation in Virugambakam, Madras. Senthilvel who had known about my HIV condition got me introduced to Dr Usha in CAN, who started off with counselling sessions, for both me and my family members. But for the moral support of these people, I would have perhaps been dead long back. It was the CAN people who fished me out of my depression. I gradually gained confidence to face myself,

that I should dedicate my life to the cause of AIDS patients.

I know what turmoil an AIDS victim goes through. I have faced it myself. I also wanted the society to get to know his feelings, the miseries that he has to face. And most importantly I want people to know that AIDS could spread through homosexuality too, as in my case.

Four months back when CAN organised an AIDS awareness programme, 'Temple of Love', at Marina beach, Madras, I publicly confessed that I was an HIV-positive victim, dying young, and narrated my story. Since then I have been giving interviews and speeches, in college seminars, to the rural masses, and general public, wherever possible.

And in doing so I have incurred the wrath of a good number of



people. My relatives hate me, and treat me like dirt, claiming that I've spoilt their name and honour. The public refuses to even talk to me when they come to know about my condition. I have also been beaten up by some of my sexual partners who cry out that I might have infected them. I try to reason out even if I had, it was not done with my knowledge. And the day I came to know that I had AIDS, I have abstained from sex altogether.

I am not deterred by all this, and am determined to go about with my

propaganda. 'A second's carelessness could ruin your life,' I tell my audience. And it is no use crying over spilt milk, for it is known that at a time when the victim is in utmost need of love and affection, everybody including his mother, deserts him. I will be attending a course in counselling in Vellore, and also plan to visit Japan to attend an AIDS awareness programme. And in the near future, I would also be going to the US to attend a seminar, to assess how they have successfully introduced safe sex in the 'gay circuit' in California. And

thus would my crusade against AIDS continue.

I have nothing more to lose, nor gain. I have already willed the bequeathed property to the children of my brother and sister, and have asked my father to dispose off my share of the family inheritance the same way. And I would like to emphasise that I am not lecturing at seminars and giving interviews for publicity. I *want* the message to get across, and I will fight for *the cause* till my last breath — now and forever."

## Whither Help?

A cry perhaps typical to the Indian homosexual. For, outwardly he — Indian homosexuals are mostly men — may appear to lead a life like anyone else with his wife and kids but actually he is spending a lot of his time, cruising. The mental turmoil in this apart, he is now threatened by another fear: AIDS.

**T**he invitation reads simple: "The Community Action Network (CAN) invites you to the launch of the HRSB intervention and the positive people." Apart from the date, time, and place, and, intimating the invitee about an entertainment programme, there is also a one-liner: "Use condoms, stop AIDS." It doesn't convey anything much. A mere glance at the card, and "just another voluntary group to fight AIDS", you dismiss it.

That is what the media perhaps did over the launch of a forum for HIV-positive people in Madras recently. The forum is the first of its kind in the country, and the invitees to the inaugural were either homosexuals or *hijras*. That the occasion provided the opportunity for them all to exchange pleasantries apart it "was basically aimed at providing the homosexuals with all the support, and at imparting AIDS awareness among them", says K Pradeep, CAN director.

The homosexuals are more prone to AIDS than heterosexuals as a

majority of them tend to have multiple partners. "We have worked among them as part of our AIDS awareness programme," says Dr S Sundararaman of the AIDS Research Foundation of India (ARFI), who has been into social work for over seven years. "We distributed nearly 50,000 condoms," he adds, recalling how difficult it was to establish a rapport with the 'pleasure circuit', who prefer to remain unnoticed. "They don't trust a heterosexual," and ARFI had to recruit volunteers from within the closed community to spread AIDS awareness among them. And CAN's Pradeep says he has five homosexual-volunteers working among this community in Madras.

Sundararaman feels there is need to device a separate awareness programme for the homosexuals. But says another researcher-cum-social worker Dr Sunithi Solomon: "Instead of segregating them, I think, we can give the message to all. Wherever I address, people have all kinds of doubts. Some of

them are homosexuals, and they seek clarifications later in private." Kalaiarasan, a commercial sex worker in Madras, concedes as much. "It is true a homosexual has better acceptance in 'our community'. But if a heterosexual makes a sincere attempt he too can work among us on AIDS awareness. It is his patience, sincerity and dedication that matter, not his sexuality." At present the homosexual community lacks any such person to work among them. For a heterosexual to gain their confidence, understand their feelings, he needs a lot of courage and will power — which very few possess.

Going by American researcher Kinsey that "five per cent of all sexually active males are permanently — practising homosexuals," you have around 10 million homosexuals and another 30-million bisexuals in India, where 60 per cent of the 35-million male population is sexually active. Applying the same scale to Tamil Nadu, for instance, you have 8.5 lakh homosexuals in a



# Figure it Out

AIDS. The word has no doubt generated a big noise in all quarters, doctors, scientists and social welfare organisations, voluntary and government-oriented. And in spite of their anti-AIDS drive and prevention programmes, neither the Centre nor the state governments have fool-proof statistics on the prevalence of AIDS. The available data is only of those people who come in for blood tests, or those who are full-blown cases. That for each AIDS case reported, 10 others go unreported or undetected is another matter. For instance, in deaths due to diarrhoea, no attempt is made to find out if AIDS was the cause. The same is true of other AIDS-related diseases.

If this is the case with statistics on AIDS patients, it is worse when it comes to HIV-infection among homosexuals. Detecting one is a herculean task, for the sexual orientation of a person is not recorded when a blood sample is tested for HIV-infection. The same is true even in cases of voluntary bloodtests. Only a low percentage of homosexuals are known to admit their sexual behaviour, fearing social condemnation.

Thus an accurate statistics on the number of HIV-positive patients among homosexuals is extremely difficult to acquire. But a humble beginning has been made by Dr Suniti Solomon, formerly associate professor in charge of the AIDS cell at the Madras Medical

College. Having started the Y R G Centre for AIDS Research and Education after taking voluntary retirement, she has recorded the sexual history and orientation of those who come for voluntary HIV-tests, as seen from the table.

Year	Total		Homosexuals	
	Tested	HIV+	Tested	HIV+
1990	224	—	2	—
1991	236	2	11	—
1992	560	20	21	1
1993	1307	107	31	2
1994 (till April)	438	34	16	2

- So far, 712 full-blown AIDS cases have been reported in India, of which three are homosexuals.
  - Of the 14,807 HIV-positive cases, 41 are homosexuals (0.28 per cent).
  - Among heterosexual men in the promiscuous category 6,377 are HIV-positive (43.07 per cent).
- Suniti Solomon feels among these, a sizable number may be homosexuals leading a bisexual lifestyle. And Tamil Nadu comes second after Maharashtra in the HIV-positive graph:
- Of the 185 AIDS cases one is a homosexual in Tamil Nadu.
  - Of the 5,65,126 blood samples screened, 2,766 are confirmed HIV-positive.

population of 5.56 crores (1991 census), 60000 of them in Madras city. Incidentally, a high figure, says Ashok Row Kavi, the Bombay-based journalist-activist of the community. And his magazine *Bombay Dost* in English reportedly sells about 10,000 copies in Madras. A WHO report by social worker Sunil Menon puts the number of MSM (man having sex with man) sex workers in Madras at 3000, each attending to one or two clients a day.

The figures may sound incredible, but very little awareness has been created about this community. "The reason is that in India we have homosexuality as a practice, or as a concept, but not as a culture," says Pradeep. "Our society is homophobic. The

homosexuals are happy as they are, and don't want to 'come out,'" adds Sundararaman.

How does the circuit operate? "Just as how the drug-peddlers or the prostitutes operate," answers Sundararaman. "They have their own code words which they alone understand. They are familiar with

all the cruising areas from parks to beaches, from railway platforms to public toilets." They also have their own pick-up points.

"It is in the way you communicate with the other person," says Kalaivasan. And in the commercial circuit, each person is allotted an area of operation, and there are brokers too.

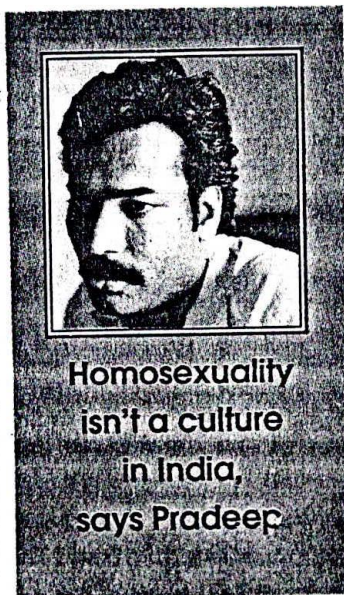
But there are those like Raghu, a 24-year-old student working part-time, who has been living

with the same partner for three years now. "I think the relationship will last," he says adding. "There are 10 other couples like us in Madras".

Crimes, black-mailing and suicides may all be incidental, but the perpetual problem of a homosexual is gaining social acceptance. "We are ridiculed, abused, called names, and at times, beaten up. The same society which glorifies the likes of 'Auto' Shankar and Phoolan Devi treats us worse than criminals," says Ganesh, a businessman, bitterly.

It is rather surprising that such a community which has chosen to remain unnoticed and isolated so far is waking up to form a forum of their own, even if only the HIV-positive among them are its members now. A factor basically motivated by the fear of AIDS. The forum could perhaps give them an opportunity to gain sympathy, if not respect, and give them a chance to interact and impart the message of AIDS prevention. Which is only the latest and the most significant of all their struggles.

Reported by L R Jagadheesan, Madras





समस्या निवृत्ति - गणितकृत - २०१२

कायर फिन्स के बाद हमारे आसपास के समाज, औरतों के समूह व शहर के अन्य प्राविशिल समूहों में समलैंगिकता पर चर्चाएँ चल पड़ी हैं। यह एक नया मोड़ है। हमें लगता कि इस मोड़ पर सबसे पहले ज़रूरी है कि हमें इन चर्चाओं को संभट कर आपस में अपने विचार बाँट दें। यह एक नया मोड़ है - उनकी भी दूर करें। जो चर्चाएँ आपसी यौन संबंध रखती हैं वे 'समलैंगिक' की अपेक्षा संबंधों को लेकर कुछ मिथक धारण हैं।

'समलैंगिक' शब्द से ज़्यादा नज़दीकी महसूस करती हैं।

'समलैंगिकता' अथवा "एजी-समलैंगिकता" दो चर्चाओं में यौन संबंध का नाम है। यौनिकता पर चर्चा करना हमारे समाज में आसान नहीं रहा है, इसी कारण प्रेस, रेडियो व टी.वी. पर भी समलैंगिकता पर चर्चाएँ या तो अनुमान पर आधारित रही हैं या फिर सनसनीखेज़। साथ ही साथ, डूर और भेदभाव की वजह से समलैंगिक चर्चाएँ भी अपने जीवन के बारे में बात नहीं कर पाती हैं। यह चुप्पी भी एक कारण है जिस वजह से समलैंगिक चर्चाएँ और उनकी जिन्दगियों के बारे में इतनी गलतफहमियाँ लोगों के मन में घर कर गई हैं।

कुछ आम मिश्रक इस प्रकार है :

मिश्रक : समधौनिकता पाश्चात्यीकरण का एक अंग है।

वास्तविकता : अनेक पाश्चात्य देशों में पिछले 35-40 वर्षों में समधौनिकता व समधौनिकता के विषयों पर अनेक आन्दोलन, अध्ययन

व शीघ्र हुए हैं। समलैंगिक व समयागिक अध्ययन पर कई महत्वाधान्ता व तदनुबन्धालान्ता में कांस ना ही है। जिससे इन विषयों पर आम चर्चाएँ करना संभव हुआ है। परिवार में मानव अधिकारा आंदोलन को जोर पकड़ने के साथ समलैंगिक जीवन शैलियाँ अधिक दृश्य हुई हैं। कई देशों ने समलैंगिकता को अपराध की श्रेणी से निकाल दिया है। उदाहरण के लिए अफ्रीका में समलैंगिक व समलैंगिक लोगों के प्रति भेदभाव को गैरमान्य करने का सरा कर दिया है। समलैंगिकता परिवार में भारत की अर्थशास्त्राधिक प्रत्यक्ष रूप से सामने आई गई है इस कारण ऐसा जाना जाता है कि यह एक पाश्चात्यात्मक प्रक्रिया है।

महाराणी विक्टोरिया की सरकार द्वारा बनाया गया एक पुराने कानून जिसके अन्तर्गत समलैंगिकता को एक अपराध माना जाता था इंग्लैंड में हट चुका है पर भारत में अब भी लागू है। अर्थात् समलैंगिकता को अपराधीकरण परिवर्तन से आयातित है, समलैंगिकरण नहीं।

प्रश्नक : समसैनिकता नैतिकता है।  
 : ईश्वर धन कोड की धरा 377 में "अधार्मिक धर्म संबंध" का जिक्र है जिसके आधार पर पुलिस समसैनिकता वास्तविकता

पुरुषों से अकस्मर प्यसा एतली है और परधान करता है। हम इस शोधक कानून के खिलाफ ले डूने वाली के साथ हैं, पर इस कानून के आधार पर भी समर्थनकला, समर्थनिक संबंध और समर्थनिक सिद्धांतों को दर्शाना अपराध की श्रेणी में नहीं आता।

प्रियक : समर्थानिगत एक मनीषाशक्ति सम्पत्ति है।  
: समर्थानिगत ७ ती शरीर की बीमारी है और ७ ही मन की। ब्रह्मिकस्मृती से कुछ मनीषाविकसक्त अपने समर्थानिगत व  
समर्थानिगत कल्याणरूप को यह मानने पर मजबूर कर देती है कि उनकी धार्मिकता का "इलाज" किया जा सकता है।  
यहाँ तक कि वे इलाज (जैसे कि अवलोकन ध्यानी) को साध प्रयोग भी करती हैं। यह एक खराबतक चलने रहा है।  
और ब्रह्मिकता शास्त्र के मत और साध के विपरीत जाता है।

1. एक : पुष्पों के साथ अग्रिम अग्रव वही के कागज लिखी समझाने का है।  
 2. : पुष्पों के साथ अग्रिम अग्रव वही के कागज लिखी समझाने का है, जो शाखा समझाने के लिखने को सहायता के लिए पुष्पों के साथ अग्रिम अग्रव वही के कागज लिखी समझाने का है।  
 3. "बन" इसी प्रकार लिखी के साथ अग्रिम अग्रव वही के कागज लिखी समझाने का है।  
 4. वही के वही शाखा, लाली, और शाखा लिखी वही है ?

हमारे समाज में यौनिकता पर, खासकर स्त्रियों की यौनिकता पर चर्चा करना हमेशा ही मुश्किल विषयमैलिनिकाता रहा है जिस वजह से समर्थनिकाता की अदृश्यता और इस पर खामोशी की बढ़ावा मिला है। जब एक स्त्री यौनिक और भावुक तौर पर लोक से हटकर महसूस करती है, तब वो समाज के बनाए उन नियमों पर सवाल उठाती है जो विषममैलिनिकाता को "समान्य" मानते हैं। रीडियो, टी.वी. अन्य माध्यम व संस्थान केवल पारंपरिक जीवन शैलियों को दर्शाते हैं। इसी "अवैकल्पिक परंपरिकता" के कारण समर्थनिक स्त्रियों के लिए अपनी यौनिकता स्वीकार करना मुश्किल हो जाता है। इतने बुनियादी तौर पर जो विषय स्त्रियों की सामाजिकरण को चुनौती दे, उसके बारे में लगाना या शर्म होना क्या आवश्यक की बात है?

[illegible]

जो भी पाठ्यपुस्तक, प्रत्यूपायक जैसे से "अलग" दिखे, रहे, या व्यवहार करे, उसे शांति-दा होने के लिए समाज मजबूर कर देता है। यह पूर्ण जाहिर है कैम्पन फॉर लॉक्सेशन राइटेस-है व्यक्ति के भेदभाव रहित जीवन जीने के मूल अधिकारों में विरोधा रखने वाले लोगों और संस्थाओं के समूह-द्वारा जारी किया गया। अधिक जानकारी के लिए संपर्क करें : कैम्पन फॉर लॉक्सेशन राइटेस, पोस्ट बाक्स 3526, लायापल नगर, नई दिल्ली - 110024. (यह पता 31 मार्च 1999 तक के लिए है) या [caleri@hotmail.com](mailto:caleri@hotmail.com)



# MYTHS AND REALITY - LESBIANISM

After the screening of the film Fire, there has been a lot of debate and discussion around the issue of lesbianism. Some of us - groups and individuals- have been meeting to discuss our concerns and we would like to share our views with you.

Lesbianism (or "samyonikta" or "stree-samlaingikta" in Hindi) is a sexual relationship between two women. Sexuality has always been a difficult subject to discuss in our society, therefore, till very recently the discussions around lesbianism in India have consisted of speculative and sensational articles in the media. Moreover, because of fear and prejudice, lesbians themselves have not spoken of their own lives. This silence and secrecy has resulted in a lot of misrepresentation and perpetuation of myths around lesbians and lesbian lives.

**Some of the common myths are:**

**MYTH: Lesbianism is an import from the West.**

**REALITY:** The invisibility of lesbians in India has led to the belief that lesbianism is a western phenomenon. During the last 35 - 40 years there have been numerous movements, studies, and research that has built up around Gay and Lesbian issues in a number of Western countries. Various colleges and universities offer courses in Gay and Lesbian Studies and the movement has been able to create a public space for discussion. Gay and Lesbian lifestyle are now very visible in the West because of a strong human rights movement. More and more countries have decriminalised homosexuality. For example, in South Africa the constitution has made discrimination against lesbian and gays illegal.

An archaic law formulated by the government under Queen Victoria, which criminalised homosexuality in the British Empire, has now been scrapped in England whereas in India these laws are still in force. It is in fact the criminalisation of homosexuality that is a western import.

**MYTH: Lesbianism is a psychological problem.**

**REALITY:** Mental health professionals no longer consider lesbianism an illness or a problem. Most unfortunately, some ill-informed psychiatrists lead their clients to believe that sexual orientation can be "cured" and have experimented with aversion therapy etc. This is a dangerous trend and goes against human rights, and medical studies, ethics and opinion that clearly state the opposite.

**MYTH: Women become lesbians because they have had bad experiences with men.**

**REALITY:** If all women who have had bad experiences with men become lesbians, then there would be more lesbians than heterosexual women. Bad experiences with men do not "make" heterosexual women lesbians. In the same way, a lesbian's bad experience with a woman does not "make" her heterosexual.

## WHY IS THERE SO MUCH SHAME, GUILT AND SECRECY AROUND LESBIANISM?

- A discussion around sexuality, especially women's sexuality, has always been difficult in our society. This has reinforced the silence and invisibility around lesbianism. When a woman feels "differently", sexually and emotionally, she is questioning the norms of a society that views only heterosexuality as "normal". The media and other institutions project only heterosexual lifestyles and role models. This "compulsory heterosexuality" makes it very painful for lesbians to accept their own sexuality. Is it any surprise that there is so much guilt and shame associated with something that so fundamentally challenges one's social conditioning?
- Women are seen as the upholders of family and traditional values. When one identifies as a lesbian, one challenges patriarchal structures. Within families, lesbians come under tremendous pressure to conform and are often forced into marriages. Lesbians who have managed to opt out of marriages choose to keep silent about their relationships.
- Anyone who looks, behaves or lives "differently" from the norms laid down by a traditional, patriarchal structure is made to feel shame.

*This note has been issued in the public interest by The Campaign for Lesbian Rights - a group of individuals and organisations who feel strongly that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation/ preference is a violation of basic human rights. For further information you may contact us at: caleri@hotmail.com. or at P.O. Box 3526; Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi - 110024 until March 31, 1999.*



- समर्थनिका से जुड़े विषयों व मुद्दों पर जागरूकता बढ़ाना।
- सभी समर्थनिक स्त्रियों के सम्मानपूर्वक जीवन, स्वीकृति, बराबरी, और सुरक्षा के अधिकारों की जनसाधारण व प्रशासन से पहचान कराना।

इस वर्ष में कैम्पेन फॉर लैस्बियन राइट्स जागरूकता का प्रसार, आम चर्चा, व विरोध प्रकट करने के कार्यक्रम करेगा। हम उन सभी का समर्थन आमंत्रित करते हैं जो भेदभाव, असहजशीलता और नफरत से मुक्त विश्व की आकांक्षा करते हैं।

पी. ओ. बॉक्स 3526, लाजपत नगर, नई दिल्ली - 110024 (मार्च 31, 1999 तक) Email: calexi@hotmail.com

कैम्पेन फॉर लैस्बियन राइट्स का समर्थन करने वाली संस्थाएँ:

1. अंकुर जन शिक्षण, दिल्ली
2. आरंभ, नई दिल्ली
3. एड्स भेदभाव विरोधी आंदोलन, नई दिल्ली
4. बॉम्बे दोस्त
5. सैहत, मुम्बई
6. काउंसिल क्लब, कलकत्ता
7. डेयर, नई दिल्ली
8. दस्तकार, नई दिल्ली
9. फेलोशिप ऑफ ब्लड डोनेर्स, नई दिल्ली
10. मैजिक लैंड फाउन्डेशन, नई दिल्ली
11. मासूम, पुणे
12. नेशनल डेमोक्रेटिक पीपल्स फ्रण्ट, दिल्ली
13. नॉन फाउन्डेशन (इंडिया) ट्रस्ट, नई दिल्ली
14. विरेतर, नई दिल्ली
15. नार्थ ईस्ट नेटवर्क, शिलांग
16. सायकलोजिकल फाउन्डेशन, नई दिल्ली
17. सहेली, नई दिल्ली
18. सखी, नई दिल्ली
19. सबरंग, बेंगलोर
20. शोधिनी नेटवर्क
21. स्त्री संगम, मुम्बई
22. तारक्षी, नई दिल्ली
23. द हमसफ़र ट्रस्ट, मुम्बई मेट्रो





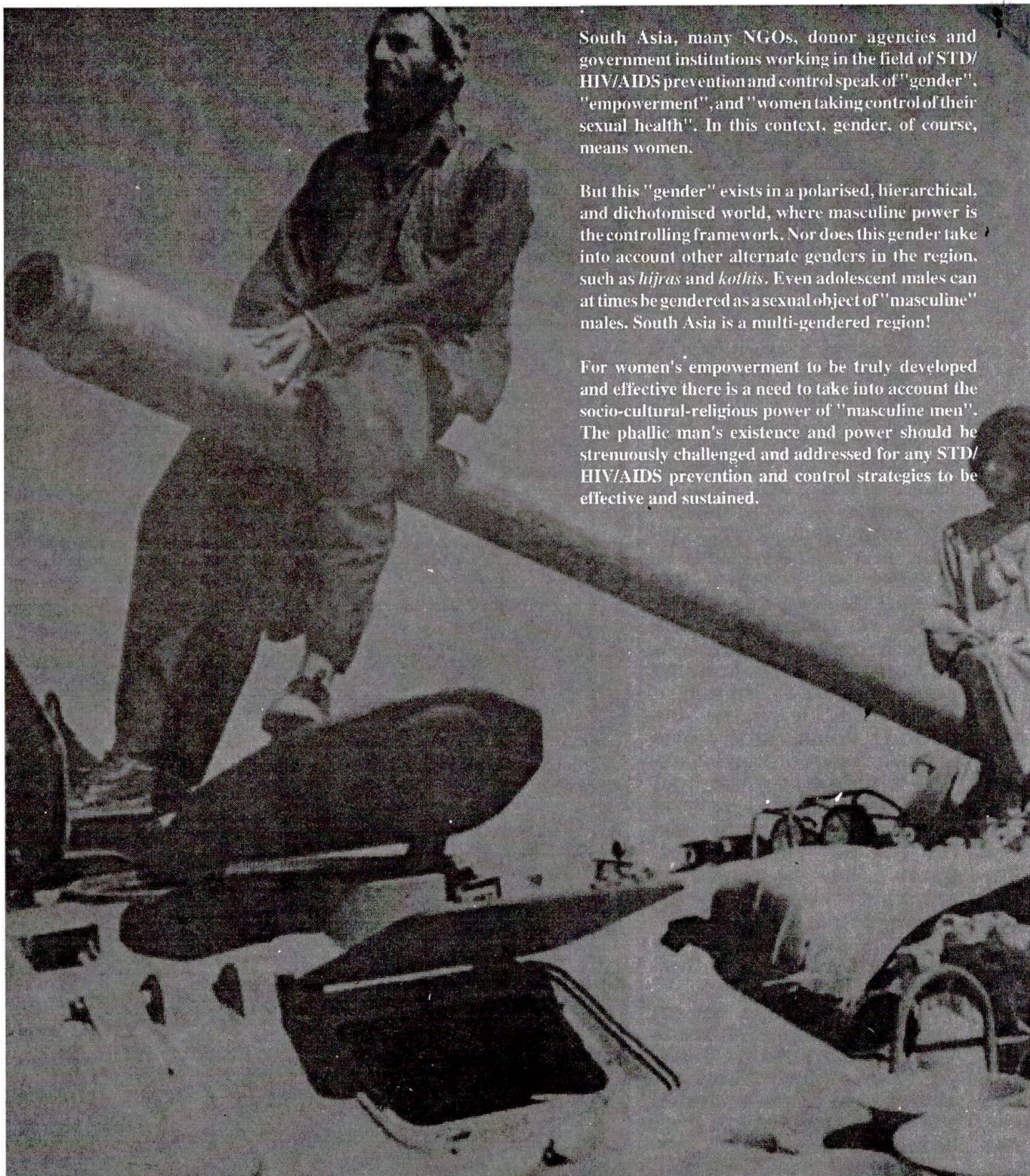


# Naz Ki Pukaar

the newsletter of  
Naz Foundation International

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APRIL 1999



South Asia, many NGOs, donor agencies and government institutions working in the field of STD/HIV/AIDS prevention and control speak of "gender", "empowerment", and "women taking control of their sexual health". In this context, gender, of course, means women.

But this "gender" exists in a polarised, hierarchical, and dichotomised world, where masculine power is the controlling framework. Nor does this gender take into account other alternate genders in the region, such as *hijras* and *kothis*. Even adolescent males can at times be gendered as a sexual object of "masculine" males. South Asia is a multi-gendered region!

For women's empowerment to be truly developed and effective there is a need to take into account the socio-cultural-religious power of "masculine men". The phallic man's existence and power should be strenuously challenged and addressed for any STD/HIV/AIDS prevention and control strategies to be effective and sustained.

An HIV/AIDS Journal With International News And Features



The Naz Foundation is an international development agency specialising in the sexual and reproductive health of males who have sex with males in South Asia

## Mission Statement

We will work in the Asia region to ensure that issues of sexualities and all types of sexual practices, with the HIV/AIDS and human rights concerns that arise from them, are appropriately and adequately addressed in the provision of HIV/AIDS and sexual health services

Wherever possible we will provide technical assistance, capacity building and support to local sexual networks, groups and organisations for the development of community-based and beneficiary-led HIV/AIDS and sexual health services and advocate on their behalf.

We believe in the innate capacity of local peoples to develop their own appropriate sexual health services, where the beneficiaries of a service are also the providers of that service. We will always support such initiatives.

## Naz Foundation's Ethical Policy

Naz Foundation is an international development agency focusing on male to male sexualities and sexual health concerns in South Asia. In its work Naz Foundation will fully consider the implications of males who have sex with males, for themselves, for any male or female sexual partners such males may have, and for any clients of those males who do sex work.

In this work Naz Foundation will be guided by the following principles:

1. promoting the reproductive and sexual health of males who have sex with males by encouraging sexual responsibility and safer sexual practices
2. encouraging males who have sex with males to access STD treatment whenever necessary
3. respecting confidentiality in the relationship between males and their sexual partners and/or clients
4. promoting the protection of children and non-consenting adults from abusive sexual relationships
5. promoting the reproductive and sexual health of any female partners of males who have sex with males by encouraging greater sexual responsibility of their male partners
6. encouraging communication of sexual health information between sexual partners and promoting partner notification of STD/HIV infection, irrespective of the gender of the partner
7. working with female reproductive and sexual health services in order to facilitate appropriate access to infected female partners of males who have sex with males.

## Naz Foundation

providing technical assistance  
resource development  
training  
behavioural research

Executive Director: Shivananda Khan  
Tel: +44 (0) 181 563 0191  
Fax: +44 (0) 181 741 9841  
email: Nazfounduk@compuserve.com  
Palingswick House, 241 King Street,  
London W6 9LP, UK

## Partner Agencies

## Naz Project London

providing male sexual health services  
female sexual health services  
client support services  
community education

Director: Krishna Maharaj  
Tel: 0181 741 1879  
Fax: 0181 741 9609  
email: nazlon@dircon.co.uk  
Palingswick House, 241 King Street,  
London W6 9LP, UK

## Naz Foundation India Trust

New Delhi, India

providing male sexual health services  
female sexual health services  
client support services  
community education/training

Executive Director: Anjali Gopalan  
Tel: +91 11 685 9113/1970/1971  
Fax: +91 11 685 9113  
email: info@Naz.unv.ernet.in  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 3910, Andrews Gunj,  
New Delhi 110 049, India  
Office address: D-45 Gulmohar Park  
New Delhi 110049, India

## Praajak

Calcutta, India

providing male sexual health services  
community education

Project Coordinator: Deep Purkayastha  
Tel: +91 33 400 0455  
Fax: +91 33 400 0592  
Address: 468A Block K, New Alipore,  
Calcutta 700 053, India

## Bharosa Project

Lucknow, India

providing male sexual health services  
community education

Project Coordinator: Arif Jafar  
tel: +91 522 208689  
Address: 21/6/5 Peerpur House, 8 Tilak Marg  
Lucknow, 226 001, India

## Sahodaran Project

Tamil Nadu, India

providing male sexual health services  
community education

Executive Director: Lalita Kumaramangalam  
Project Coordinator: Sunil Menon  
Tel: +91 44 825 2869  
Fax: +91 44 825 2859  
email: sahodara@md3.vsnl.net.in  
Address: 1st Floor, 127 Sterling Road,  
Chennai, 600034, India

## SHRAMA

Cochin, India

providing male sexual health services

Project Coordinator: Shikand Rajan  
tel: +91 484 354549  
Address: Kolangat House, Pullepady Road  
Cochin 682 016, India

## Bandhu Social Welfare Society

Dhaka, Bangladesh

providing male sexual health services  
community education

Project Coordinator: Shale Ahmed  
Tel: +880 2 933 9898  
Fax: +880 2 835224  
email: bandhu@bdmail.net  
Address: 106/2 Kakarail,  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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## Naz Foundation of Canada

providing technical assistance  
resource development  
training  
behavioural research

Director: Al-Qamar Sangha  
Tel: +1 604 528 9275  
Fax: +1 604 528 9275  
Address: Box 345-1027 Davies Street  
Vancouver, BC, Canada V6E 4L2

## Naz Foundation in Germany

Representative: Ali Firat  
Tel: +49 30 32 60 82 31  
Fax: +49 30 32 60 82 31  
Address: c/o BGTM, Oranienstr. 34  
Berlin 10999, Germany

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## Comment

### Conspicuous by their absence?

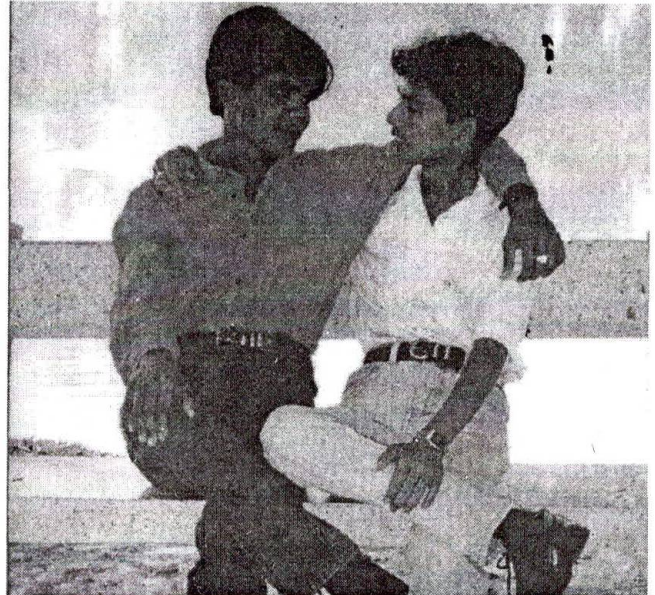
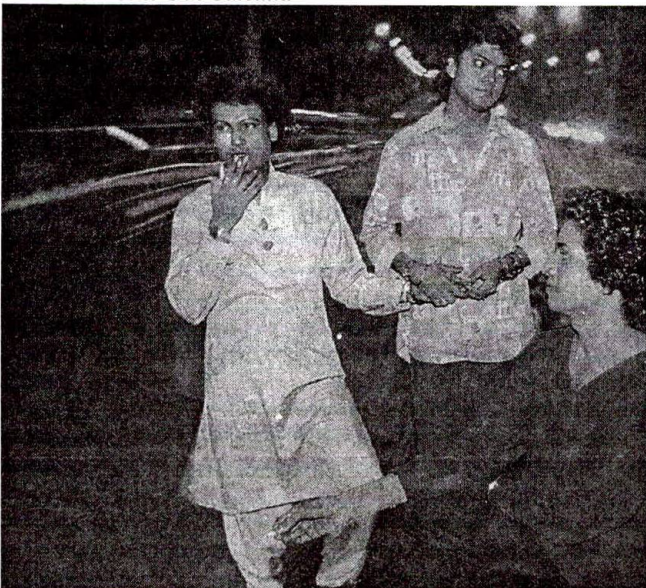
#### Men who have sex with men in developing countries - implications for HIV prevention

*The text below is drawn from the concluding statement of a paper written by Richard Parker, Shivananda Khan and Peter Aggleton, with the above title and published in Critical Public Health, September 1998*

Ultimately, the kinds of prevention programmes that have been implemented for men who have sex with men in the different countries and regions of the developing world are a testament to the perseverance and courage of community activists and community-based organisations that have confronted ongoing stigma, discrimination, and in some cases, outright violence yet have persisted, often with impressive success, in the face of such difficult conditions. These programmes have demonstrated the fundamental importance of recognising the diversity of men who have sex with men, as well as of the HIV prevention and broader sexual health needs that these men have. Precisely because in so many contexts outside of the industrialised Western world, concepts such as 'homosexuality', 'bisexuality' and 'gayness' have little meaning, prevention programmes have necessarily drawn upon a range of local vocabularies and conceptual frameworks in order to develop messages and to create culturally appropriate contexts for risk reduction and safer sex. Yet they have also recognised the fundamental changes that are taking place in cultures and communities around the globe at the end of the twentieth century, as processes of globalisation, late-industrial capitalism, and HIV/AIDS itself have influenced the gradual emergence of gay and other alternative subcultures even in settings that until quite recently had organised same-sex experience in quite different ways and HIV prevention has itself become an important motor of change in building and mobilising such communities as part of a broader process of political awareness and mobilisation.

Yet if such experiences have highlighted the degree to which HIV prevention is more dependant upon a transformation of consciousness on the part of vulnerable communities than on the technocratic delivery of large-scale education programmes, the sad history of denial and neglect that has so clearly characterised the international response to the needs of men who have sex with men reveals something of the moral bankruptcy with which we have addressed the

*male sex workers in Calcutta*



*two young men in a park in Bangladesh*

global pandemic. Responding to HIV and AIDS has been acceptable only to the extent that vulnerability can be packaged in politically acceptable or appealing ways, and the long history of blame that has so often characterised the social response to AIDS in the Anglo-European world has sadly been reproduced and extended in other parts of the world. The assertion, heard repeatedly in countries like the United States, that HIV infection has moved from socially privileged groups such as gay men into marginalised communities of colour (which may represent epidemiological fact, but at best a questionable sociological formulation), seems to have been reproduced internationally in the perverse assertion that only those perceived to be innocent victims of HIV infection merit official attention and that to expose the HIV-related vulnerability of undesirable groups such as sex workers, injecting drug users, and, above all, men engaging in same-sex relations, is somehow to question the nobleness of the cause.

The notion that gay men in the industrialised West are somehow a privileged population must of course come as a surprise to anyone who has suffered (as virtually all gay men in the Anglo-European world surely have) discrimination in employment opportunities, denial of immigration and inheritance rights, the threat and often the reality of both verbal and physical violence and abuse, and the almost constant experience of stigma and difference in everyday life. The notion that men who have sex with men in the countries of the developing world, who live with almost intolerable levels of discrimination and violence on a daily basis (and who at least thus far have rarely benefited from the kinds of civil rights protections that have gradually been put into effect in at least a few settings in the industrialised West), are somehow less worthy of their status as especially vulnerable to HIV infection is, if anything, even more perverse and unjust. Conspicuous by their absence, the widespread denial of the needs of men who have sex with men in the developing world is another example of the long record of neglect that should bring shame not only to government agencies and international donors, but to all of us who work not only for an end to the epidemic, but also for a more just and tolerant world.



# Naz Foundation

## Naz Foundation Training Manuals

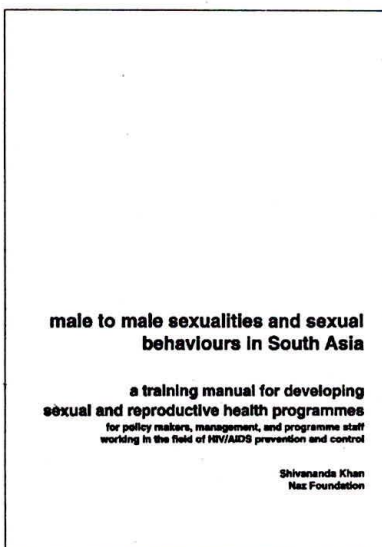
*male to male sexualities and sexual behaviours*

### Male to male sexualities and sexual behaviours in South Asia

A 127 page training manual for developing sexual and reproductive health programmes.

For policy makers, management and programme staff working in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention and control

The training manual details a 3 day intensive workshop towards enabling participants to understand the context of male to male sexual behaviours and develop frameworks of addressing issues and sexual health needs



### Project Development: Volume I

*sexual health promotion for males who have sex with males*

A 221 page training manual for peer intervention projects. The training manual details a 6 day intensive workshop for males who have sex with males who are developing a sexual health promotion service.

It explores:

the socio-cultural context of male to male sexualities and sexual health concerns in South Asia

sexual behaviours

stereotypes

cultural and social expectations

the body

local structures of male to male sex

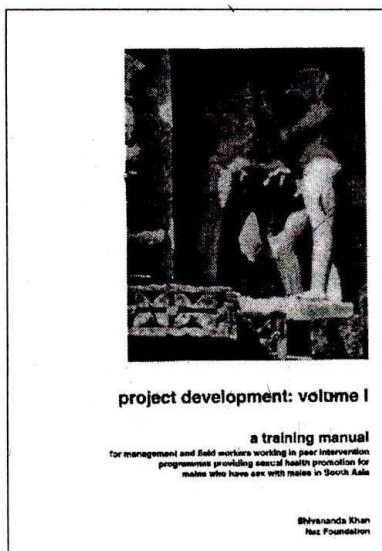
mapping the area

sexual health

STDs/HIV/AIDS

prevention

sharing information



Also includes 61 overhead transparencies pack which are a part of the training programme, and a 62 page booklet on "setting the context" for the workshop, consisting of a range of reading material for the facilitator.

### Project Development: Volume II

*developing sexual health promotion projects for males who have sex with males*

A 125 page training manual on capacity building for developing a sexual health promotion project. The training manual details a 5 day intensive workshop for males who have sex with males on project development and management.

It contains:

developing project goals and purposes

promoting behaviour change

developing appropriate services

approaches to education and prevention

resource development

project implementation

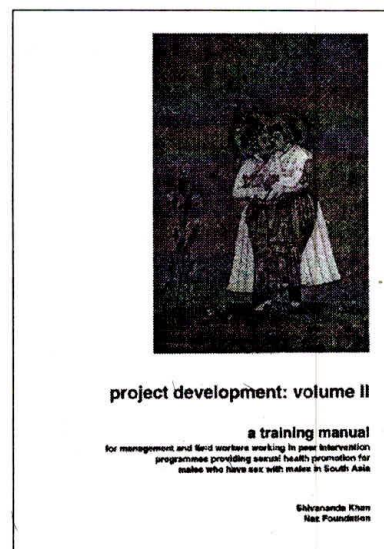
organisational structures

project management

developing policies

monitoring and evaluation

Also includes 20 overhead transparencies.



### Male sexual behaviours and STD/HIV prevention a peer educators training manual

A 183 page training manual for peer educators. The training manual details a 5 day intensive workshop.

It explores:

the socio-cultural context of male sexualities and sexual health concerns in South Asia

sexual behaviours

stereotypes

cultural and social expectations

the body

local structures of male to male sex

mapping the area

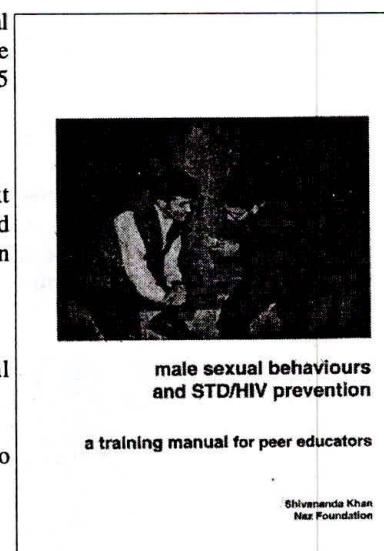
sexual health

STDs/HIV/AIDS

prevention

sharing information

It also includes 54 overhead transparencies which are a part of the training programme.



### Project Workbook

*for sexual health projects for males who have sex with males*

Consists of a range of documents to assist new and emergent sexual health promotion projects, including sample monitoring forms, job descriptions, policies and guidelines. This resource book is a valuable guide and assistance tool for developing new projects.



## AIDS and Men: Taking Risks or Taking Responsibility?

A new book - "AIDS and Men: Taking Risks or Taking Responsibility" published in December 1998 and edited by Martin Foreman of Panos Institute, brings to the fore the concept that men are the driving factor behind AIDS pandemic.

In every country, the behaviour of men drives the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Men tend to have more sexual partners than women - and therefore more opportunity to contract and transmit the virus. Men generally decide the frequency and form of intercourse - and many men refuse to use condoms or to have fewer sexual partners. Men are more likely than women to inject drugs - and sharing needles allows the virus to pass quickly from one person to another. Some men have sex with other men - and in some societies the authorities refuse to acknowledge such behaviour exists.

Men's behaviour is frequently determined by social concepts which identify masculinity with sexual prowess - in many cultures to "be a man" is to have frequent sexual intercourse, often with more than one partner - and with risk, such as using drugs or refusing condoms.

Men's actions make women vulnerable. Not only do many men prevent women from protecting themselves, but women are physiologically more susceptible to HIV than men. Worldwide, the number of women with the virus is growing at a faster rate than the number of men; sometime in the next decade there may be more women than men living with HIV.

Programmes devised to persuade men to change their sexual behaviour have not always been successful. It may be that deep-

rooted changes in society's concepts of masculinity are needed before the HIV/AIDS epidemic can be contained.

AIDS and Men illustrates the above points with reports from eleven countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Eastern Europe. These include

- domestic violence in Mexico
- changing attitudes towards sexual behaviour in Tanzania
- men, religion and HIV in Ghana,
- male adolescence and sex education in Uganda
- men who have sex with men in Kenya
- drug injection in Russia
- men in prison in Brazil
- men in the military in Malawi,
- men living with HIV in Thailand
- men as fathers in the Ivory Coast
- HIV prevention programmes directed at men in Bangladesh

This book challenges many concepts in the way HIV prevention programmes have been developed, how women have been victimised as the "carriers of AIDS", and how reliance has often been put upon women to change men's behaviours. It is time to recognise the urgent need to teach men sexual responsibility.

For a copy of the book, price £15.95 (sterling) contact AIDS Programme, Panos Institute, 9 White Lion Street, London N1 9PD, UK, fax: +44 171 278 1111,

email: [aids@panoslondon.org.uk](mailto:aids@panoslondon.org.uk) or from Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF fax: +44 171 833 3960

Email: [sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk](mailto:sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk)

## Family disowns HIV patient

Two years ago, Paul, an assistant accounts manager in an international pharmaceutical company at Chandigarh, was thrown out of his job when a routine blood test, done as a part of his company's policy, showed he was HIV positive. Paul, who is in his forties, belongs to one of the most prestigious families of Bangalore. When they learned of his HIV status, they threw him out too.

Today he stays at Snehsadan, a shelter for HIV/AIDS victims in the city and works as a bartender in a hotel. Paul's story dates back to a cylinder explosion in 1995 at Chandigarh in which he lost both his wife and 16-year-old daughter and was severely burnt himself. Admitted to a Bangalore nursing home, he was given 15 bottles of blood. It wasn't until he went through a blood test one-and-a-half years later that he learned of his HIV status.

Paul, who thinks he was infected with the disease after the blood transfusion he was given following the cylinder burst, says, "I was devastated when I came to know that I was HIV positive. All my life I have been a one-woman man. I don't know if my relatives, especially my brother, donated contaminated blood since I am involved in a property litigation with him." When his company, which had earlier offered to take him back after his accident, learned that he was HIV positive, it lost no time in firing him.

"When I was burnt in the cylinder explosion, the company asked me to resign, saying that once I was okay I could re-join them. But when I went back and the fitness test showed I was HIV positive, they threw me out. I was wrecked. By the tragedy of losing my family and of seeing myself on the streets with a disease for which I was not responsible."

Paul returned to Bangalore, expecting to be welcomed by his family. His father was a former general manager in the railways, and his mother is a prominent social worker in the city. "I thought they would accept me, especially as my mother does a lot of social work, helping a great many people. But to my distress, I was told to leave and never to come back. I became a vagabond." Years ago, Paul's grandfather had started the Malleswaran Cooperative Society. *Asian Age* 03/12/1998.

## "China Faces Increased Spread of HIV"

While China has downplayed the incidence and prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases and factors leading to STDs in the country for a number of years, the government seems to be making more of an effort to be open about the subject in order to address and prevent the spread of HIV. Some public health experts fear that high HIV levels exist in China and that the country may have a problem similar to that in Africa. China has taken steps to try and prevent further spread, by banning the sale of blood for transfusion as of October 1; approximately 17 percent of HIV cases in China were the result of tainted blood products. At a recent meeting in Geneva, the Chinese vice minister of public health, Dakui Yin, said that of the more than 10 million Chinese who had been tested for HIV antibodies through March 1998, nearly 10,000 were positive. Yin noted that two-thirds of the infections were the result of injection drug use. The government's goal is to keep the number of infected people under 1.5 million by 2010, Yin said. However, Dr. David Ho, director of research at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Centre in New York, asserts that there may already be as many as 400,000 HIV infections in China, as estimated by the World Health Organisation. Ho, who has travelled to China every year for the past five or six years, adds that the virus has spread to other provinces besides Yunnan, which has the highest number of infections in China.

*Nature Medicine* (11/98) Vol. 4, No. 11, P. 1216; Watanabe, Myrna

## PM reassures women over law

Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has dismissed suggestions that his proposed Islamic Shariah law would shackle women to the home.

He promised that women would have a greater role in society if the reluctant Senate pass his constitutional amendment to adopt it. Many ordinary women fear that Pakistan's more liberal attitude to women will harden and perhaps become similar to the radical policies of the Islamic Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan, which has banned women from most work and schooling outside the home.

*Eastern Eye*, 27/1/98



## Archbishop urges dream of world without war (excerpt)

By Katie Kerwin McCrimmon, News Staff Writer

South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu danced in the streets of Denver on Saturday.

The ebullient 67-year-old Nobel laureate grinned and swayed with nearly 300 high school students at a street party downtown. Then he got down and watched some break dancers spin.

All in the name of peace.

Tutu told the teens who are participating in a Peace Jam Youth Conference this weekend at Regis University to dream of a world without war and to make peace in their own communities.

"Your dreams are really God's dreams. Do what you can now," Tutu said.

During a session at Regis, Tutu talked about what his priorities are now that South Africans are beginning to heal from apartheid.

When a student asked Tutu what injustice he would most want to reverse, he gave a surprising answer.

"Will you give me two?" he said with a grin.

First, Tutu called on world leaders to forgive the mounting debts owed by developing nations. Then he said the persecution of homosexuals is as unjust as apartheid.

Sexual orientation is just like race, Tutu said. People do not decide to be gay any more than they decide to be black or white, he said.

Tutu condemned the killing of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming last month.

"For me it's a matter of human rights and a deeply theological issue," Tutu said. "I believe they are as much God's children as anyone.... I can't be part of a scheme for clobbering them." . . .

excerpt from Rocky Mountain News, 15/11/98

## AIDS in India - invisible no longer

(from UNAIDS update, 31 December 1999)

By the end of 1998, according to new estimates from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), the number of people living with HIV will have grown to 33.4 million -10% more than just one year ago. The epidemic has not been overcome anywhere. Virtually every country in the world has seen new infections in 1998 and the epidemic is out of control in India.

Until recently, it was commonly assumed that HIV infection in the world's second most populous country was concentrated in urban sex workers and their clients and also among IDUs living in the Northeastern states. The last round of sentinel surveillance in antenatal clinics show that in at least five states more than 1% of pregnant women in urban areas are now infected.

India's rural areas, home to 73% of the country's 930 million, were thought to be relatively spared from the epidemic. However, new studies have shown that in some areas, HIV infection has become increasingly common in villages as well as in the cities. A recent survey of randomly selected households in Tamil Nadu found that 2.1% of the adult population living in the countryside were HIV infected, as compared with 0.7% of the urban population. For this small state with a population of 25 million, the study's findings suggest that there are close to half a million people already infected with HIV in Tamil Nadu. Considering that nearly 10% of the people surveyed had gonorrhoea, syphilis or another sexually transmitted disease, HIV clearly has fertile ground for further transmission.

The virus is firmly embedded in the general population, found among women whose only risk behaviour is having sexual relations with their own husbands. In a study of nearly 400 women visiting STD clinics in Pune, 93% were married and 91% had never had sex with anyone except their husband. All of these women were infected with a sexually transmitted disease, and a shocking 13.6% of them tested positive for HIV.

Internet posting from Global Health Council

## A score of 90 wives at 74, but he remains insatiated

If marriages are really made in heaven, then the Almighty surely must have spent a long while working on this man's marital fate. The man is only ten short of a century. With 90 wives in tow, 74-year-old Udayanath Dakshin Ray has only one ambition left. "I must have 100 wives before I die. In fact, I know I will," he says determinedly.

It is difficult to believe that this man who compares his wives to his shoes, was once a staunch believer in monogamy. His Ms-adventure, however, began when his first wife Sibapriya was taken away from him by his in-laws. In a bid to get her back, Udayanath filed a suit against them which got him only a liability of Rs 3 lakh. And thus began his tale of revenge.

Born in 1924 in Keonjhar district's Orali village, Udaynath got his B.Sc. degree from City College, Calcutta. He married Sibapriya, the daughter of an influential man of Dhenkanal. Polygamy, however, was not new ground for Udaynath. His father had two wives. His first father-in-law, too, had an extramarital relationship. Within 14 days of his marriage, he swore to have as many as 100 wives and "set an example".

"I am not proud of my record. But it is something that I will do," Udaynath says. Strangely, one of his daughters, Mitarani, a Plus-III student at Bhadrak College, supports his view. "It's a glorious thing that he wants to do. In olden days, many kings had more than one wife," she says. Money was never an obstacle in Udaynath's path. His family received *nakhraji* rights from the king of Keonjhar for looking after famine victims for an entire year. Being the eldest son, Udaynath had exclusive rights over the family's properties. Added to this, he received 420 acres of land from his childless uncle. He now has seven sons and five daughters from his 90 wives. Although 24 of his wives are already dead, Udaynath still desires to add another 10 to his "bevy of maharanis." *Asian Age* 17/11/98

## 300000 Bangladeshi children sold to Indian brothels

India has become a major hub in the illegal trafficking of people in Asia, with thousands of women and children sold into prostitution either arriving in India, transiting or being shipped out every year.

According to the details of a UN report published in December in New Delhi, some 200,000 Nepalese women and girls, together with around 300,000 Bangladeshi children have been sold to Indian brothels in recent years.

India also serves as the main transit point for Bangladesh and Nepalese women being smuggled to the Middle-East.

"Estimates put the figures at more than two million women in commercial sex work in India, of which 25 per cent are below 18 years, said the 'trade in human misery' report compiled by the UN Development Fund for Women.

"More than 90 per cent of them are of Indian origin and about 5 per cent from Bangladesh and Nepal.

Whilst prostitution remains the main purpose of illegal trafficking, other areas where women and children get trapped include the carpet, garment, fishing and brick industries.

The UN report said more than two million children were abused and trafficked globally every year with Southeast and South Asia taking the lead. *The Daily Star, Dhaka, 15/12/98*

## 18-year-old girl forced to marry 8-year-old boy

An 19-year-old girl was forced into marrying the eight-year-old brother of her husband who was massacred in a caste conflict so that the compensation money would stay within the family, a newsweekly reported in Delhi.

Punia Devi told the Week magazine that her in-laws forced her into marrying Dhaman Chaudry in November 1998 so that they did not have to part the 200,000 rupees (US dollars 4,700) she got from the government for the deaths of her husband and two children.

*The Independent, Dhaka, 13/12/98*



## Vietnam Will Require 180 Million Condoms by Early 2000s

Vietnam will need almost 180 million condoms a year early next century to help prevent the spread of HIV, according to a study by the National AIDS Committee. The committee also reported that the annual expenditure for condoms could double over the next five years, with \$2 million being spent next year. The study was presented Thursday at a meeting on contraceptive requirements in Hanoi that focused on ways to address the \$55 million in funding needed for contraceptives through the year 2007 in Vietnam.

Contraceptive use has increased by 2 percent annually over the last eight years, according to the report. *a sea-aids posting, 26/11/98*

## US, Kazkhstan, South Asia top list of worst child abuse in labour report

In 1997 a group of children was arrested in Jeddah. Their crime? The children were allegedly concealing heroin on their bodies. Accused of drug trafficking, the group, comprising infants, has since been tried and sentenced to death.

In February, last year, a 14-year-old boy testified that he was stripped and given electric shocks by policemen in Turkey. Though a member of the Turkish Parliament made a statement that he saw the boys blindfolded and naked, the 10 accused police officers were let off.

Many such incidents scarred the record books last year as the treatment of children plummeted from bad to worse. South Asia, Kazkhstan, the US, and West Asia topped the list of offenders as far as mistreatment of children was concerned in a year in which ill treatment and torture of children were a major issue. As governments around the world celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the attention in the field of children's rights seems to be shifting from stories of young children sewing Nike soccer balls in Pakistan sweatshops or child labourers in India's carpet sector to torture, disappearance and killings of children according to a report released here on Monday by Child Labour Action Network.

A new trend of intense violence against children was noted around the world.

According to the UN human development report at least 1.3 billion people live on an income of less than \$1 a day. Feedback received by the Child Labour Action Network suggests that 117 governments torture their citizens; at least 55 governments unlawfully kill their citizens; at least 40 governments jail prisoners of conscience; at least 31 governments make their citizens disappear and at least 40 governments execute their citizens.

The report points out that while the issue of torturing children in Congo, Venezuela, India and Bahrain were taken up by NGOs, the disappearance of children made headlines in Argentina and Australia.

The disappearance of hundreds of children took place years earlier but the cases were reopened in 1998 and created quite a stir in Argentina and Australia. In Pakistan the year spelled gloom for children. Seven children were sentenced to death for drug trafficking by Saudi Arabia. Many others were taken from madrasas and sent to Afghanistan to fight for the Taliban.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh were not far behind in child torture. In Sri Lanka children suffered not only at the hands of government forces but the LTTE also killed seven children. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam was also investigated by the UN special rapporteur for using children as soldiers.

Sexual abuse of children formed a major form of torturing children. In April, last year, women and children in Manipur and Assam were subjected to abuse at the hands of Indian security forces. The National Human Rights Commission took up cases only to be told that the behaviour of the Army was outside its jurisdiction.

The case of illegal detention of a schoolboy by the 17th Rajputana

## Nonoxynol-9 "an HIV threat" by Roger Goode

Gay men are being urged to stop using any products containing the spermicide nonoxynol-9 after tests on mice revealed it could be helping to spread HIV when used during anal sex.

Nonoxynol-9 is found in a wide range of lubricants, including those put directly on to many condoms by their manufacturers. It is used to kill sperm and to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as hepatitis and herpes. Many gay men also use nonoxynol-9 lubricants to provide an additional barrier to HIV.

But research by scientists at New York's Population Council research laboratories now suggests the chemical may attack rectal linings, creating hundreds of tiny lesions which could dramatically increase the chances of infection taking place. The chemical is thought to do far less damage in the vagina.

In experiments, hundreds of mice had nonoxynol-9 put into their rectums before being inoculated rectally with HSV-2, the herpes simplex virus. Astonishingly, in a group of 40 mice given high doses of nonoxynol-9, all but three later developed herpes. None of the mice in a control group receiving a saline lubricant became infected.

"We are advising that until tests are completed on humans, gay men should not use any products with nonoxynol-9 in them, including condoms," said leader of the research team Dr David Phillips.

"Surveys in the United States have shown that many gay men use nonoxynol-9 lubricants as an additional precaution. It is quite possible that HIV may have been transmitted this way along with many other diseases. It will be a year before the effects on humans can be established."

The London International Group, manufacturer of the Durex range, does not put nonoxynol-9 on its Ultra Strong condom, the only one of its brands suggested, unofficially, for gay sex, nor its Gossamer or Select ranges. But it is used with the Elite, Featherlite, Extra Safe and Safeplay Durex brands. The latter two are sometimes used by gay men through preference or because of confusion over their names.

Mates Super Strong, also indirectly recommended for gay sex, does not have nonoxynol-9, though other Mates brands do.

A Mates spokeswoman said: "Since 14 June we have been subject to an EU directive which requires nonoxynol-9 to be indicated on condom packs but not on the foil wrappings. Older ones may not carry this advice."

Stephen Speight, deputy director of The Metro centre in Greenwich, one of many organisations around the country working directly with gay men in bars and clubs, said they had always offered a choice of strong condoms because of the problems nonoxynol-9 caused.

"This research does not exactly surprise us and in future we may have to replace choice with a recommendation," he said. "Our policy is to make sure gay men are fully informed of all the options."

*Positive Nation, October 98*

Rifles in Manipur caused an international uproar and Amnesty International made an appeal for his release. The boy never returned.

"The situation in the Northeast is prevailing in contravention of the Child Right's Convention, to which India is a signatory. Similar trends were noticed in other parts of the world including Argentina and Bahrain," the report added.

Releasing the report, chairman of the Child Labour Action Network J. Gathia said: "Despite the bleak scenario there are few signs of hope."

"Launching of campaigns against child soldiers and initiatives on many education worldwide by the international NGOs and UN specialised agencies are positive a development."

But the most significant development is the decision to set up an international criminal court which will make it possible to prosecute the perpetrators and bring them to book. Voluntary organisations and human rights groups in South Asia face a big challenge as 40 per cent of the region's population are children, the report said.

*Asian Age 5/1/99.*



## Angry spirits make healer work hard

For a living saint Mian Shamshuddin looked tired. He smoothed out his white beard, rubbed his eyes and rearranged his white robes. It had been a tough week, he explained apologetically. There had been a lot of work to do - a lot of people had been possessed by *djinns* or spirits and it had been draining to exorcise them all.

Mian Shamshuddin is a *pir* - a religious healer, a spiritual leader and, by virtue of a distant ancestor, a living saint. For tens of millions of poor, uneducated Pakistanis their *pir* is their doctor's surgery, stress counselling service and citizens' advice bureau rolled into one. If your neighbours have cast a spell on you, your husband beats you or there is just a pain in your right molar the *pir*, who holds the accumulated wisdom of generations of holy men, will sort it out.

Every day from 11am until 1pm Mr Shamshuddin dispenses charms, verses, medicine and advice in about equal proportions, sitting on a bed in his home in a run-down area in the centre of the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore. The room is bare, with white-washed walls, straw matting on the floor and a single, fan and a clock. Mr Shamshuddin sits with a green chest full of potions, herbs, bits of paper and rupees open in front of him.

On Thursday he spent two hours conducting a mass exorcism. With those possessed sitting in front of him with saffron garlands round their necks he chanted verses - some from the Koran, some his own - and blew gently on them all. Then he tapped them with a metal spatula before slapping it hard on the ground "to show the spirits what they would get if they didn't go away immediately". The threat of violence seemed to work, as it so often does in Pakistan. The spirits appeared to make a speedy exit and the *pir's* patients filed out, all smiles and salaams.

Wednesday's audience had been different. A dozen men and women sat on the mats before Mr Shamshuddin and told him their problems. A woman was troubled by visions of dead children, another's cloth business was failing because envious relatives had cast a spell on it, a third was treated badly by her husband. One man had travelled 100 miles because "once he had been a good worker but now felt lazy all the time".

To each the *pir* listened and nodded sagely before chanting over them and tapping them with his metal spatula. For some he prescribed medicine - concoctions of herbs and oil he dispensed personally. For others he wrote out charms on bits of paper - to be burnt and then eaten. Quite how effective the ingested ashes would be against serious physical conditions Mr Shamshuddin did not say.

*Pirs* are an important part of the Sufi tradition of Islam - a mystical, devotional strand of the faith that emphasises a personal, emotional and often unorthodox style of worship. But, though millions believe deeply in their holiness, Pakistan's *pirs* are increasingly the target of criticism.

Human rights activists say that many *pirs* abuse their authority to sexually and physically abuse women placed in their care. A series of books, one by the wife of a well-known *pir*, has revealed a seedy vicious and venal side that has provoked widespread controversy.

Many of the *pirs* have enormous followings and, as such, huge political power. A number of *pirs*, who are often big landowners too, sit in provincial and national parliaments in Pakistan and lead secular lifestyles. Others have become rich on the gifts of their followers. And some, in this deeply conservative country, cause outrage. One *pir* believes everything can be cured by watching girls dance.

Mr Shamshuddin, who is 62 and has been a *pir* since his father died 40 years ago, says there are many frauds who give all *pirs* a bad name. "I am not interested in politics and never ask for money. I learnt my knowledge from my father who learnt from his father and so on back four hundred years," he said. Next to Mr Shamshuddin's house is a shrine to the 17th-century ancestor who started the family business.

Yesterday, Mr Shamshuddin said, he had his toughest case for months. It required all the knowledge gained by his forefathers over generations. A man came to him who had recently been to India where he had been possessed by an Indian spirit.

## The forgotten people

Spit, leer, jeer, push and shove. It's Tuesday afternoon on the crowded streets of Gulistan, Dhaka, where only men seem to roam the streets. 'Pathetic joke' says a passer by, 'hijra' sniggers another. Confused and ashamed they recoil from the outside world and take solace in their own kind. They are the forgotten people. They are the eunuchs, the hermaphrodites who have no place in a society where ignorance rules.

A welfare worker belonging to the Bandhu Social Welfare Society threads his way through a slum of Mirpur, inhabited by eunuchs, rickshaw drivers and stone-cutters. It's hot and humid. Eventually he enters the room of 24-year-old Dila, a male hijrah, clad in a green sari and bright red lipstick. "They are a very sensitive group and do not like to mix with others so when we deal with them we have to call them guru - master. It's like an ego boost," says the NGO member. Perhaps it is the us against them mentality that makes anyone daring to break conformity outcasts.

Meanwhile 24-year-old Dila explains how he left home when he was 6 years old and has been living in Dhaka ever since. "Making a living here is very difficult. There is no way people are going to give us jobs. Maybe a few taka from shop owners around this area if they have any sympathy for us. Otherwise we sing and entertain people in their houses in groups - roughly 300 taka (about \$6) between the four of us." According to sources, hijras are also known to solicit other services in the evenings to make ends meet. Their clients are males aged 16 years and upwards.

Today at age 30, Sharmi who has been a hijra since age 10 is very bitter. "Tell me how we are supposed to survive. It is our fate to live this way and for people to treat us differently. I got kicked out of my parents home when I was eight." They say being victimised and abused has become a way of life. "It is mainly women who snigger and jeer at us. They make offensive comments. People think we are freaks and most of the time it is better just to keep quiet," explains Sharmi. His face looks wrinkled beyond his years perhaps resigned to his fate of segregation from mainstream society. "All we want is equal rights, we want to be able to gather in public without being vilified. We need help."

An organisation that deals with groups like the hijras is the Bandhu Social Welfare Society. It is an NGO that develops and provide educational programmes on STD/AIDS in Dhaka for males. "We have 14 full-time health workers operating in the Dhaka region. Most of the time we go out on the field visiting bus stands, railway stations, taking to people about the danger of AIDS and how to prevent it," says Anisul Islam Hero, chairperson of the organisation. He also added that hijras and some other males consume birth control pills like Ovacon to maintain female hormone levels, whatever the cost. Many are isolated and abused by their own families at an early age due to a lack of education. It is a clash between the rigid dictates of religion and the individual desire for personal expression. As a result the so called outcasts tend to abandon the rest of society and interact only with their own kind. Sohail Arafat, a doctor with the organisation says: "It is up to the rest of society to show a little compassion and understanding. Aren't we all human beings?"

(Note: Bandhu Social Welfare Society is one of Naz Foundation International's partner agencies.)

Weekend Independent, Dhaka, 18/9/98

"He was staring and rolling his eyes. I knew he was about to attack me so I started reciting verses. He started shivering and the spirit was getting very angry. I had to beat him hard. Finally I told him to go back to India and not to attack Pakistan and Muslims and, thanks be to God, he went."

But, said Mr Shamshuddin, now he was exhausted.

"These Indian *djinns* really take it out of you. I hope I don't get any more like that for a while. I don't know why they are so strong. It must be all those lentils."

The Independent 5/12/98.



## Army puts out golden rules on sex

The Army has a new mantra for its commanders to prevent the spread of AIDS among its troops — divert attention to sports, reading and God, and encourage masturbation to satisfy the sexual urge. According to a *Commander's Handbook on AIDS* brought out by the Army's directorate-general of medical services, 85 per cent of HIV infections in the force have been "acquired due to sex with prostitutes," and masturbation is one of "five golden rules" to stop the spread of the killer disease.

The handbook, in addition to providing information on the transmission of the AIDS virus, asks commanders to drive home the message that "sleeping around" is "neither a sign of manliness nor a soldierly attribute."

It also asks them to remove misconceptions about sex, such as "having sexual intercourse with various women is a sign of virility."

In absolute numbers, however, the number of HIV infections in the Army is relatively low when compared to national figures. The handbook says epidemiological estimates have indicated "there are likely to be at least 6,000 HIV positive persons in our services," of whom 1,432 have been detected till July 1997. And the Army is

determined to ensure that the disease does not spread too rapidly within the force as it considers AIDS "more than a nuclear threat."

The director general of the Armed Forces Medical Services, Lt. Gen. R. Jayaswal, said on Monday a survey was being conducted to determine the exact number of HIV positive cases in the forces.

The AFMS will also take a decision soon on the status of personnel who test HIV positive. At present, all HIV positive cases are kept under "immune surveillance" and placed in a lower medical category.

"Health education and attitudinal changes are the main factors in combating AIDS," said Gen. Jayaswal. The handbook emphasises that the troops, who are subjected to enormous physical and mental stress, are a high risk group, and personnel below the age of 35 were in the "main risk group."

The Army, which has its own AIDS Control Organisation, has received Rs 13 lakhs from the National AIDS Control Organisation for surveillance programmes. It has also produced films and booklets to awareness about the disease among the troops.

*Asian Age 20/12/98*

## The campaign for lesbian rights

Following the violent demonstrations orchestrated by the Shiv Sena in early December against the screening of Deepa Mehta's film *Fire*, a number of organisations and individuals in Delhi have been meeting to discuss the issues that have surfaced. Democratic rights and freedom of expression are issues that constantly arise in India and these are central here also. At the same time, the attacks on the film, the responses to the film, and to the protests have pushed women's groups, human rights groups and secular organisations to address the lesbo-phobia which prevails within large sections of Indian society.

This country has a long history of discrimination—be it against Muslims, Dalits, Christians, women, tribals etc. However, people from these oppressed groups have been permitted a sense of public identity and can therefore try to seek recognition of their oppression. In the case of lesbians, their isolation and invisibility has meant the absence of collective identity. In the public domain there is no space for discussion of sexuality, leave alone women's sexuality. Culture, tradition, values and morals have consistently been used as tools of oppression and discrimination. Within this framework, one is marginalised as a woman and doubly so as a lesbian. Intolerance and fear of anything different from the so-called 'norm' results in the forced invisibility of minority groups. Is it any wonder then that there are not many 'out' lesbians in India?

The Campaign for Lesbian Rights is a group of individuals—lesbian, gay and straight—and organisations who feel strongly that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation/preference is a violation of basic human rights. The Campaign seeks to make lesbianism visible and dispel the myth that there are no lesbians in India to create awareness about lesbian issues and concerns to develop public and state recognition of the rights of all lesbians to a life of dignity, acceptance, equality and safety.

Over the next year, the Campaign for Lesbian Rights (CLR) will engage in the dissemination of information, public debates and protest actions.

We seek the support of all those who hope for a world free of discrimination, intolerance and hatred.

Email: [caleri@hotmail.com](mailto:caleri@hotmail.com)

Organisations supporting the mandate of The Campaign for Lesbian Rights:

Psychological Foundation of India, New Delhi, TARSHI, New Delhi, Dastkar, New Delhi, Stree Sangam, New Delhi, Sangini, New Delhi, 6. North East Network, Shillong, Aids Virodhi Bhedbhav Andolan, New Delhi, Saheli, New Delhi, DARE, New Delhi, Arambh, New Delhi.

from sea-aids 21/1/99

## Children among top earners in flesh trade

Prostitution in India is a Rs 40,000 crore annual business. Thirty per cent of the sex workers are children who earn a whopping Rs 11,000 crore. This was revealed in a study on child prostitution in India by the Centre of Concern for Child Labour, a non-governmental organisation.

National Human Rights Commission chairman Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, while releasing the study here on Monday, said, "I am amazed at the degradation of our children. We all have become silent spectators of the worst human rights violations. All of us have to pay a price for indifference to this social problem."

Commented the Centre's director Joseph Gathia, "The flesh trade is the biggest industry in this country."

According to the study, the number of sex workers in India is estimated to be about nine lakhs. Of these, some 30 per cent are children, numbering between 270,000 and 400,000. The number of children below 14 years in prostitution is increasing at the rate of eight to ten per cent per annum.

The demand for 'pre-puberty girls' is increasing in cities like Mumbai, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Delhi and Chennai, as well as in the rural areas on tourist routes.

The situation is acute in the Pink Triangle - Delhi-Jaipur-Agra - and certain goods transport routes like Calcutta-Siliguri-Guwahati-Shillong and Kandla-Rajkot, Udaipur-Jaipur-Delhi. Mr Gathia described Delhi as the "consuming area", adding, "Delhi is not the supplying area." Among the 'clients', a new category - youth - has fast emerged. About 20 per cent of the 'customers' are students, particularly in the urban areas.

The report further stated, "Explicit sex education can tear down natural inhibitions and defences of both young boys and girls, leaving them vulnerable to sexual predators."

Pimps and paedophiles are using pornography 'to lure their young victims'. Pornography is also acting as a 'public relations arm' of the sex industry in South Asia.

About 60 per cent of girl children among the 'traditional entertainer groups' in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were ushered into the profession by their own families.

Four pockets in India are said to be the 'recruiting grounds'. These are Andhra Pradesh - Adilabad, Kurnul and Enadi, Bihar - Dhanbad, Dumeka, Sahebganj, Ranchi and Purnea, West Bengal - Murshidabad, Nadia and Jalpaiguri and Tamil Nadu-Karnataka, covering Madurai, Coimbatore, Belgaum and Raichur. A majority of the girls belongs to the scheduled castes and tribes. Nearly 78 districts are child prostitution-prone areas. (Note: one lakh is 100,000 and one crore is 100 lakhs. 42 Rupees to the US \$). *Times of India*, 10/11/98



## US medical journal editor loses job trying to define 'sex'

The Journal of the American Medical Association fired a senior editor over an article on US college students' definition of sex, which was seen as an intrusion into politics.

George Lundberg, a 17-year JAMA veteran editor, was fired over a research article slanted for publication in January at a time when President Bill Clinton was facing an impeachment trial for perjury and obstruction of justice over his affair with a former White House intern.

The article stated that around 60 per cent of respondents in a 1991 sex survey of 599 undergraduate students at a major Midwestern university felt that oral sex did not constitute having "had sex" with a partner.

This interpretation approximates Mr Clinton's answer in his grand jury testimony to independent counsel Kenneth Starr last year.

"Dr Lundberg was focused on sensationalism here, not science," said E. Ratcliffe Anderson, executive vice-president of the American Medical Association. "It grieves me greatly that a magnificent journal, that should be about science and medicine, has been used, possibly, to extract political leverage."

And 19 per cent of survey respondents said that they did not consider anal intercourse as having "had sex", according to the article written by researchers, Stephanie Sanders and June Reinisch, of The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction at Indiana University.

Dr. Lundberg himself refused to discuss the specifics of his firing but told a local radio station: "I'm very sad, because I worked there (JAMA) for 17 years and 15 days and I had hoped to break the all-time record of JAMA editors, which is 25 years."

"Dr Lundberg, through his recent actions, has threatened the historic tradition and integrity of the Journal of the American Medical Association by inappropriately and inexcusably interjecting JAMA into a major political debate that has nothing to do with science or medicine. This is unacceptable," a JAMA statement said.

"We apologise to JAMA's readers, its contributors, and to any others who feel that JAMA has been misused in the midst of the most important congressional debate of this century," it added.

The article, under an embargo which has now been lifted, was based on an anonymous survey in which respondents were asked: "Would you say you 'had sex' with someone if the most intimate behaviour you engaged in was...."

Scenarios range from hand contact with genitals and oral contact with breasts or nipples, to oral-genital contact to penile-anal intercourse.

Nearly 100 per cent of respondents considered penile-vaginal intercourse as having "had sex", while roughly 85 per cent felt that manual stimulation of the genitals (either as given or received) did not qualify as having "had sex".

The authors noted that the data suggested that general agreement regarding what constitutes having "had sex" and how sexual partners are counted could not be taken for granted.

"The virtually universal endorsement of penile-vaginal intercourse as having "had sex" in contrast with the diverse opinions for other behaviours highlights the primacy of penile-vaginal intercourse in American definitions of having "had sex", they said.

But they said the attitudes about penile-anal intercourse had disturbing implications for sexual history-taking and prevention education, as the study was conducted during an era of widespread public information and education campaigns on the association of risk of HIV infection and unprotected anal intercourse.

Asian Age, 17/1/99

*(Editor's note: the issues of definition of what constitutes having "had sex" also occur in South Asian countries, where Naz Foundation research show similar attitudes to oral and anal intercourse, these being defined as "play" and "not sex"!)*

## HIV thrives on jail sex, drugs abuse

Researchers in India have found alarming levels of homosexuality and mounting incidence of HIV infection in the country's jails.

Ghaziabad jail, on the outskirts of Delhi, is the archetypal Indian prison. Conclusions can be drawn from the study pointers that similar situations may prevail in many other Indian jails.

Tests were conducted in Ghaziabad jail on 245 male and nine female inmates. Three microbiologists from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, S. Singh, R. Prasad and A. Mohanty, screened them for pulmonary tuberculosis, various skin ailments and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, syphilis, and blood borne Hepatitis B.

It was found that of the 184 men who admitted to having any form of penetrative sex, 53 were either homosexuals or bisexuals, while 131 had had sex with women only. Of these 184, only 60 were sincere to their partners while the remaining 124 were promiscuous.

The high incidence of homosexuality and bisexuality suggests that "forced homosexuality" or rape of male adolescents, which was a common feature in Indian jails even a decade ago, continues to trouble inmates. Researchers have not looked into this aspect of "forced homosexuality" but it is more than apparent that warders do little to check this trend.

In another finding by the team, 80.6 per cent of the inmates said they had unprotected sex, showing why they had become a high risk group for HIV infection. The team also came to know 83 per cent of the heterosexual and bisexual males had visited commercial sex workers before being jailed.

Another revelation was that 80 per cent of teenagers were drug addicts. with intravenous drug (IVD) use recognised as a source for spreading HIV, three men were found to be positive.

The team has concluded that sexually transmitted and blood borne infections are high in jails and pose a threat of "rapid spread through IVD use and homosexuality" (sic). Incidence of Hepatitis B which has a very high fatality percentage was quite significant at Ghaziabad prison. *unknown source- newspaper cutting 9/7/98, India*

**don't think about it - do it - use a condom**

## Indian Supreme Court suspends rights of HIV+ people to marry

In a highly controversial judgement the Indian Supreme Court recently suspended an HIV positive individual's right to marry. By breaking the medical confidentiality of the individual concerned the court has enraged legal activists and human-rights groups.

In June 1995 an individual donated blood and was found to be HIV positive. As a result his proposed marriage was cancelled and he suffered embarrassment and was ostracised by the community. He then sued the hospital for damages for disclosing the information and violating his confidentiality.

The judges involved rejected his claim on the grounds that the women he was about to marry was saved "in time by such disclosure". They added that "so long as a person is not cured of the communicable venereal disease....the right to marry cannot be enforced through a court of law and shall be treated as a "suspended right". Under the Indian Penal Code, if a person with AIDS knowingly marries and transmits infection to their spouse they are guilty of an offence.

This judgement has serious implications since it violates a person's right to privacy and confidentiality totally without setting down any proper guidelines. This could have serious implications for AIDS patients in the future.

To make matters worse the judge deemed "AIDS a product of undisciplined sexual impulse" suggesting that AIDS awareness campaigns on the sub-continent have bypassed the courts. *from sea-aids posting 17/1/99*



## In war, Taliban separate men from boys

If he's too young to grow a beard, he's too young to join the Taliban army.

This latest diktat comes from the Taliban's reclusive supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar in a broadcast yesterday on the Taliban-run Radio Shariat.

Omar warned his commanders that they would be punished under Islamic law if young boys were found carrying guns and fighting on the frontlines. He, however, did not specify the penalty. The Taliban, which rules nearly 90 per cent of Afghanistan, is battling a northern-based Opposition, of mostly minority ethnic groups, on at least three different frontlines. The predominantly Sunni Taliban is also at odds with Shiite Iran. The confrontation between the two reached a flash point recently when Iran rushed nearly 200,000 troops near the Afghan border. The heaviest fighting has been in northern Takhar province where the opposition retook the capital of Taloqan several days ago. It was not immediately clear what prompted Omar to issue his latest edict.

With their country wracked by fighting for much of the past two decades, many of Afghanistan's boys have neither been to school nor received technical training.

In Afghanistan there are few jobs and for many young males the only source of income is the army, which pays 90,000 Afghanis per month (approximately three dollars). This compares to a doctor who receives 80,000 Afghanis a month.

Omar did not specify any age limit for enlistment in the Taliban army, only referring to whether or not the recruit has facial hair. Both sides in the Afghan civil war have used boys as young as eleven or twelve on the front lines.

Omar also expressed concern about reports that young boys were being forced into homosexual relationships and threatened to impose

Islamic justice on anyone found guilty of having a homosexual affair.

In Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, where a harsh form of Islamic justice has been applied, the death penalty is imposed for crimes of murder, sodomy and adultery. Under Taliban law, men found guilty of homosexuality are forced to stand in front of a mud or brick wall, which is collapsed on top of them, usually with the help of a tank. The men remain buried for 30 minutes and if they are alive when the debris is removed, the sentence is commuted.

Such a punishment has been applied to at least eight men accused of homosexuality, and only two are reported to have survived the ordeal. The Taliban adheres to a rigid form of Islam that bars women from work, girls from school and demands that women be accompanied by a close male relative outside the home. It also demands that men grow a beard, pray at the mosque and wear a turban or head covering. *AP Indian Express 31/10/98.*

## 113 people die from AIDS in Nepal

By the end of last year, 1,189 people in Nepal were afflicted with HIV, the virus which causes AIDS, and 113 people had died from AIDS, the official RSS news agency reported Wednesday.

Among them, 650 contracted AIDS through sex, 298 through prostitution, 150 from syringe use and 87 through blood transfusion, RSS said, quoting information from the National AIDS and the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Centre. And 690 of them were aged between 20 and 29 and 11 were children under the age of five, the news agency added.

It noted that according to an estimate of the World Health Organisation, 100,000 people in Nepal will be afflicted with HIV by the year 2000. Some 300,000 Nepalese women and girls are working in Indian brothels and half of them are believed to have contracted AIDS, it said. *sea-aids posting 17/1/99*

## Rural poor are overtaken by desperate urban underclass

Forget images of starving children in a barren drought-baked countryside. The stark new face of global hunger, says the United Nations, is to be seen in rapidly growing African and Asian cities where up to 1,000 million people now face severe malnutrition and food shortages.

A new UN Food and Agriculture Organisation report paints a bleak prospect for the poorest urban dwellers in developing countries. Infrastructure in these burgeoning, chaotic cities is unable to keep pace with the demand for food. People are being forced to spend up to 80 per cent of their income on what they eat, while paid work is scarce or non-existent.

According to World Bank figures, the number of poor people in cities has more than doubled globally in 10 years and should reach a billion by the end of next year. The urban poor now outnumber the rural poor in many countries, a trend that is expected to grow as the world becomes more urbanised.

Cities are exploding world-wide, says the report. Asian cities are growing by 3 per cent a year and African ones by approximately 4 per cent. Some cities, such as Dhaka in Bangladesh, are growing by more than 1,300 people a day, or almost 500,000 a year.

People are exchanging rural poverty and lack of opportunity for appalling city conditions and dismal living standards, says the report.

The implications for food security, says Rachel Nugent, one of the FAO economists who wrote the report, are alarming. "The poor are growing in number every day. They often have neither access to nor the money to buy food."

The price of food has risen as cities have grown, and urban food prices have risen more than the cost of living and more than incomes, says the report. One study showed that consumers in cities spend, on average, 30 per cent more on food than rural consumers do, but get fewer calories.

Physical conditions also pose problems for the poorest, who lack transport but have to go long distances to markets and their food is

often contaminated because of crowded conditions.

Food supplies, says the report, do not always reach the consumer. "Up to 30 per cent of all food has been lost by the time it reaches the market, which adds to prices and further marginalises the poorest."

As cities grow, they require bigger and more developed transport and distribution to get food to consumers. But in many cases there is little public money available for roads, vehicles and market places, and the private sector is less interested in feeding the poorest.

Many cities have been unable to cope with the extra demands of their new inhabitants. A city of 10 million people may need to import 6,000 tonnes of food every day; this requires much coordination between producers, transporters, markets and retailers. City administrators and private sector find themselves struggling to cope.

What is needed, says the report, is more investment in infrastructure and more encouragement by the authorities to allow people to grow more food in cities. In China, up to 20 per cent of the food needs of cities is met by urban farming. Havana provides almost 5 per cent of Cuba's food.

"The poor are being ignored," says Dr Nugent. "The situation could get worse. It's pretty scary."

*The Guardian, 11/12/98*

*Editor's Note: How do you think the above situation will affect STD/HIV/AIDS in your city - particularly amongst poor MSM?*





## UNAIDS report finds global HIV infections increased by 10% in 1998

*World AIDS Day report*

**- HALF OF ALL NEW INFECTIONS NOW IN 15-24 YEAR OLDS**

- Development gains being wiped out
- Sub-Saharan African countries hardest-hit
- Already 34 million infections and almost 12 million deaths
- Fewer deaths in North America, Western Europe, but no progress in prevention; HIV infection rates unchanged for a decade

According to a report issued today by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) - The AIDS Epidemic Update, December 1998 - during the past year a further 5.8 million people were infected with HIV - approximately 11 men, women and children every minute - and the total number of people living with the virus rose by one-tenth, to 33.4 million worldwide.

Half of all new infections are now occurring among young people aged 15 to 24. This year's World AIDS Campaign "Young People: Force for Change" was prompted in part by the epidemic's threat to those under 25 years old, for as HIV rates rise in the general population, new infections are increasingly concentrated in the younger age group.

The global epicentre of AIDS continues to be sub-Saharan Africa. Since the epidemic began, 34 million Africans have been infected, and almost 12 million of them have already died. In 1998 the region experienced four million new infections and rising AIDS death tolls, seen in an estimated 5,500 funerals per day. In the southernmost countries of the continent, where HIV spread took on epidemic proportions only recently, infection rates continued to rise dramatically during the past year. Four countries now estimate that 20% to 26% of adults are living with HIV, and South Africa alone accounts for one out of every seven new infections on the continent. In contrast a number of countries in West Africa remain relatively less affected, in part as a result of early and sustained prevention efforts.

In the regions of North America and Western Europe, the availability of new more potent anti-HIV drug combinations has helped people with HIV live longer, healthier lives. In the United States, for example, the number of people dying from AIDS dropped by two-thirds between 1995 and 1997, when these antiretroviral combinations came into wide use. Alongside this undoubted therapeutic success, there is a disturbing lack of progress in prevention. Every year for the past decade, the numbers of new HIV infections have remained stagnant in North America and Western Europe, with close to 75 000 people acquiring the virus in 1998 alone.

Two decades into the AIDS epidemic, we know better than ever before about prevention - how to persuade people to protect themselves, make sure they have the necessary skills and back-up services, and remove social and economic barriers to effective prevention," said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS. "Yet almost six million people became infected this year. Every one of these new HIV infections represents a prevention failure - our collective failure."

In many Asian and Eastern European countries, where the epidemic started later than in other regions, HIV is rapidly gaining new footholds. In India, for example, recent research shows that HIV is now firmly embedded in the general population and is spreading into rural areas that were previously thought to be relatively spared. In the state of Tamil Nadu (population: 25 million), a new survey reveals that almost half a million people are already infected with HIV and that the infection rate is three times higher in villages than in the cities.

In Latin America, while infections are concentrated in men who have sex with men and drug injections, transmission through sex between men and women is on the rise.

### **Development gains being wiped out**

In the worst-affected countries the AIDS epidemic is now making significant inroads into precious development gains that have been

built up over the past decades.

In nine countries where at least 10% of the adult population is HIV-positive, it has been estimated that AIDS will soon be costing an average of 17 years of life expectancy, compared with what these countries could look forward to in the absence of the epidemic. These dismal declines are not only due to adult deaths. Over half a million children — most of whom acquired the infection before or at birth, or through breastfeeding - died in 1998 alone. By 2005-2010, the infant mortality rate in, for example, Namibia is expected to reach 72 per 1000 live births as opposed to 45 per 1 000 without AIDS.

The onslaught of AIDS is also denting the prospects for economic development in hard-hit countries. In Zimbabwe, some companies have reported that AIDS costs are now absorbing as much as one-fifth of company earnings and, for instance, in Tanzania and Zambia, other firms estimate that AIDS illness and death cost them more than their total profits for the year.

Says David Heymann, Executive Director, Communicable Diseases Cluster, WHO, "AIDS is a deadly serious public health threat. But as the epidemic continues to spin out of control, countries face more than just a health crisis. They face a growing threat to human development and to economic and social stability."

### **Forces that fuel the epidemic**

Some of the reasons behind HIV's spread remain undetermined. It is not fully understood why, for instance, HIV infection rates take off in some countries while remaining stable in neighbouring countries over many years. What is known is that a number of factors clearly influence the shape and scope of the epidemic in different parts of the world.

Wars and armed conflicts generate fertile conditions for the spread of HIV. The UNAIDS/WHO report notes that in Rwanda, before the political turmoil of the mid-1990s, infection rates were approximately 10% in cities and towns and around 1% in the countryside, where most people lived. Yet by 1997, both urban and rural rates were just over 11%. A revealing fact is that HIV infection rates rose six-fold among the mostly rural people who had fled to refugee camps.

In many places people have no access to voluntary HIV testing and counselling. Yet even when these services are offered, many do not want to know or acknowledge their HIV status because of the blame and shame attached to AIDS. For example, in Cote d'Ivoire, where more than 13,000 pregnant women were offered interventions to increase their chances of having a healthy baby, fewer than half accepted testing and returned for the results.

In Zimbabwe's city of Mutare, surveillance data indicate that close to 40% of pregnant women are HIV-infected and probably 30 000 adults are living with HIV. Yet the sole HIV support group in the city has just 70 members, leaving thousands of others to struggle alone with the implications of their infection, including the dilemma of how to explain the sudden need for condom use with a spouse or other stable partner.

Secrecy can persist even in the face of sickness and death, which in immunodeficient people is often caused by tuberculosis or other common illnesses. In one study of home-based care schemes in southern Africa, fewer than 1 in 10 people who were caring for HIV-infected relatives at home acknowledged that they were suffering from AIDS, and the patients themselves were barely more open.

"One might think that in a country with a quarter or third of the population infected, people would become more open about the epidemic. Experience teaches us that this doesn't happen automatically," said Dr Piot. "The silence needs to be broken, publicly and courageously, by leaders who encourage their people to face the truth about AIDS." *UNAIDS, Geneva, 24 November 1998*



## Helping gay men in a provincial Vietnamese city to protect themselves from AIDS

David Wilson and Paul Cawthorne (*Medecins Sans Frontieres*) - June 1998.

### Gay sex and the risk of AIDS in Vietnam.

In Asia, HIV is mainly transmitted by heterosexual intercourse or from sharing injecting equipment during drug use. Information is often unavailable on the incidence of homosexual transmission of HIV. Sex between men is not specifically prohibited under Vietnamese law, but is regarded by the authorities as a "social evil". We lived in Vietnam, working with *Medecins Sans Frontieres*, in the provincial cities of Vinh and Nha Trang from 1992 to 1996. Young gay men who we met in these provincial cities had frequent changes of sexual partners and are therefore at high risk of contracting and spreading HIV.

### The City of Nha Trang

Nha Trang is a town of 300,000 people on the coast of southern Vietnam. Industries include fishing and tourism. Many people go to the beach after dark for sex, with either regular or casual partners. Vietnamese people we met in Nha Trang say the beach has been popular for this purpose for many years. There are three cruising areas for MSM which are busy at different times of the night. The busiest time is between 3 am and 5 am.

### Finding a way to work with gay men.

In 1996, we met a 33 year-old gay man who wanted to help other gay men. He asked MSF to help him with peer education work on the beach. We provided him with information and paid his expenses.

Because he had a full-time job during the day, he chose to work on an area of beach where men went between 8 pm and 11 pm, although there was less activity than in other areas. For seven months, from

Most of the men in this study did not understand that HIV is an infection, but thought that AIDS somehow happened when body fluids came into contact with each other. Most thought anal sex was safe because the anus is dry. They thought oral sex was dangerous because the mouth is wet. Also they thought AIDS can pass through the skin, so masturbation to orgasm was dangerous (more dangerous than anal sex) if semen landed on the skin. Only one man knew about condoms for gay sex (*sic*).

Ten of these men identified themselves as being gay, but were very afraid of other people finding out.

Most of them needed sex very often and went to the beach every night. Masturbation and oral sex were the commonest sexual activities, but all of them had anal sex occasionally and some had anal sex almost every night. Even after hearing about condoms, they thought that trusting someone (even a casual partner) meant not using a condom. Condoms were only used during anal sex with a foreigner.

Making friends and developing relationships was very important for them. They would often meet someone on the beach and then go to live with them after a very short acquaintance. These relationships broke up very quickly and both partners were back on the beach.

### Helping them to have safer sex.

It was urgent to correct some basic misunderstandings about HIV transmission and to show them how to use condoms. Our peer educator found that if he demonstrated how to put a condom on his fingers, his audience was not interested. So he demonstrated on his own penis, or on their penises. Then they wanted to try themselves. Common mistakes they made were failing to squeeze the air out of the end of the condom, or rolling it on inside out.

The young men could not use their knowledge about why and how to use condoms without improving their self image and changing their attitudes to making relationships. As well as giving information and condoms, it was equally important for our peer educator to find messages, such as the following, which helped his target group believe in him.

"You think being gay is not normal, but what is being normal? Be honest with yourself, then you will feel good about yourself."

"You can do something useful pass on information about AIDS to other people you meet on the beach. Not many other people can do this."

"Face up to the truth. You have a partner already. You have just

met me and now you are telling me you will be faithful to me, but you expect your partner to be faithful to you."

### Lessons learned

There is a clear risk of homosexual transmission of HIV in Vietnam. There is a subculture of young men who have frequent high risk homosexual behaviour, with changes of regular partner more often than once a month and high numbers of casual partners.

Health education messages must be clear and direct. "Top down" messages can lead to dangerous misunderstandings. For example, what does the term "body fluids" mean? Gay men in Nha Trang think it means that unprotected anal sex is safer than oral sex.

If we want to access marginalised groups, we need to find out their needs and hopes, share their feelings and improve their self image.

If we want people to use condoms, we need to present them in an interesting way



Hon Chong Beach at Nha Trang

August 1996 to February 1997, he visited the beach once or twice per week. On a typical evening there would be about 20 men on this area of beach at any one time. The majority were aged 16 to 28. He spent several weeks observing and making initial contact.

His main achievement was to make close contact with and support 12 young men. Before they would accept his advice, he had to make friends with them. The group included students, teachers, soldiers, construction workers, an unemployed man and a male sex worker. He was not able to make contact with any older men.

**Knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the group of young men** Following intensive government campaigns in 1992, most people in Vietnam have heard about AIDS and know that drug users and prostitutes are at risk. Campaign messages have exhorted people to stay away from "social evils" but have not given precise information about risk behaviour. One example of an AIDS prevention message is, "For the sake of future generations, stay away from AIDS." Information leaflets often state that HIV is transmitted by body fluids, but don't state which body fluids are most risky.



## Male to male sex behaviours and HIV/AIDS in South Asia

Shivananda Khan

### Definitions

Male to male sex can be configured by sexual desire, the felt need for semen discharge, power dynamics, economic need, love and affection, situation and opportunity, as well as other frameworks. In terms of this essay, I have taken MSM to mean any male who has genital sexual encounters with another male, whether regularly, frequently or infrequently, for whatever reason.

### The context of AIDS and males who have sex with males in South Asia

It is extremely unfortunate that the AIDS pandemic in South Asia has been defined as 'heterosexual', rather than sexual. This definition is, I believe, an ideological construct. The structures of epidemiological research and analysis are usually based upon Western frameworks of sexuality and identity. Heterosexual/homosexual or perhaps bisexual. Sexuality/identity rather than actual behaviour. It presupposes that South Asian identity constructions are the same as in the West.

This convenient convergence between Western constructs of sexuality and epidemiology, and the existent socio-cultural frameworks of invisibility and denial of male to male sexual behaviours, appears to confirm the spread of HIV and AIDS in South Asia as a purely "heterosexual" disease.

But do we really know? Very little research done on male sexual behaviours in South Asia generally, and almost nothing on male to male sex. At the same time the majority of STD treatment and reproductive health centres do not ask either their male or female patients whether they had any anal sex encounters. Anal STDs are more often than not, ignored. In this sense "heterosexual AIDS" can be seen as a political description and probably does not truly reflect the reality. As a consequence, AIDS prevention programmes reflect this invisibility.

Frameworks of male to male sex in South Asia reflect indigenous identities and patterns, different from that assumed to exist in the West. Local patterns of male to male sex are not an exclusive practice of a few "homosexual" men, but are a part of the general sexual practices of a significant number of males in South Asia and symptomatic of male homosociability in South Asian cultures, where public shame and masculine dishonour configure denial and invisibility.

Such frameworks have additional constraints arising from patriarchal structures creating the public domain as a male space, gender segregation, females as vessels of male honour, male homosociability, compulsory marriage and procreation through family and community pressure, lack of welfare social structures, poverty driven economics and personal survival strategies, huge population levels, and mass movements of males from rural to urban areas for employment, as well as the extremely low status of females.

What sexual identities do exist centre on being sexually penetrated from which "feminised" behaviour is exhibited, primarily as a tool to attract the penetrator. In the majority of cases, the penetrator does not have an identity based upon his sexual experience. His labelling is given by the penetrated - the *giriya* or *panthi* which basically means a "real" man.

This does not deny the existence of gay-identified men in South Asia or those with emerging gay identities. Such men are there, but they usually tend to be from the urban and educated classes. Access to western media and terminology is having an impact in reconstructing sexual identities and all that implies in changes to sexual practice.

What does exist in South Asia are male sexual behaviours within many differing forms of "sexualities" where male to male sexual encounters play a significant role, behaviours that arises both from both desire and semen discharge.

20% of men in one Pakistan rural area have male to male sex

25% of men in a Karachi prison have male to male sex

40% of men living in Karachi's squatter settlement have male to male

sex.

*On average transvestite prostitutes have 60 partners a week.*

*A survey amongst truck drivers from central Karachi:*

*76% visited female commercial sex workers*

*72% had sex with other males*

*AIDS Analysis Asia, July, 1996*

### Comment from a man in Karachi

*"Of course I am married. We have four children. But I don't enjoy sex with my wife. Always she complains. So I find other males to do it with. It's easy to get boys. Much easier than finding women. I can go to the park, on the bus, on the street, anywhere." And fucking a boy is more fun. They are tighter. My wife is so loose."*

What little research has been done amongst males who have sex with males has identified extremely low condom usage, high levels of multiple partners (which for many include female partners, often wives, for some female sex workers, and for other "girlfriends") risky sexual practices, low levels of knowledge of STDs and HIV/AIDS, and low access to STD treatment, if they exist at all!

*In a recent study in Dhaka, Bangladesh, STD doctors were questioned on whether they provided treatment services for males who have sex with males, or even treated anal STDs. Not one doctor asked their patients about anal sex, no tests were done for anal transmission of gonorrhoea, and all stated that Bangladeshis do not have such behaviours. Naz Foundation report, 1997*

Because of these levels of invisibility, denial and inappropriate sexual ideologies being imposed upon AIDS policy, training, and development of responses to the epidemic, extremely little work has been done regarding male to male sex and sexual health issues in South Asia, nor has much been done in exploring the consequences of reproductive and sexual health amongst females and youth that arises from such male to male sexual behaviours.

### Comment from a man in his thirties visiting a park in New Delhi for sex.

*"It's dangerous now to have sex with women. I heard you can catch all sorts of diseases from them. You can even catch AIDS and then you will die. It's safer to fuck a male. I haven't heard anything about that. So I stopped fucking women and now only fuck males."*

There exists an enormous risk to any effective HIV/AIDS control programme by the countries of South Asia ignoring and/or denying what appear to be relatively high levels of anal sex and males who have sex with males. There have been no public campaigns about anal sex as a risk behaviour.

*In Tamil Nadu, India, \$10m had been donated by USAID to be used exclusively to support and develop responses to the epidemic in the non-government sector managed by the Voluntary Health Services agency.*

*As the director stated homosexuals are "not an important route of HIV transmission - there are not that many... and its is only a passing phase."*

*AIDS Analysis Asia, July, 1996*

The political and social will to address the sexual health needs of males who have sex with males, and the associated risks for STD/HIV transmission arising from unprotected anal sex, whether between males or between males and females, doesn't appear to exist. Perhaps the phrase "over my dead body" takes on extra meaning here.

One major NGO working in New Delhi had produced a new leaflet about risks of sexual transmission of HIV for the general public for World AIDS Day in 1996. In the whole leaflet there was no mention of anal sex as a risk behaviour. As a representative said "I didn't think about".

In South Asia, a region of over 1.4 billion people, where there are

*continued on page 24, col. 1*



## The Big Crisis: Avoiding Marriage In India

by Parivaraj

For the Western homosexual, 'coming out' to his parents is a way of becoming closer to those he loves. It is also a statement: the politics of gay liberation demands it. To the gay man in India, these motives are not strong. Here, the relationship between father and son is a formal one. A father rarely attempts to understand his children as adults. And so far as the politics of homosexuality is concerned, the peer pressures indeed are to remain in the closet, not to rock the boat.

So 'coming out' in India is not an idealistic thing. That way it serves no purpose, as it does in the West. To announce your homosexuality to your parents for the sake of telling the great truth is a naive notion, an irrelevant argument, a luxury which a young man in Indian society cannot afford.

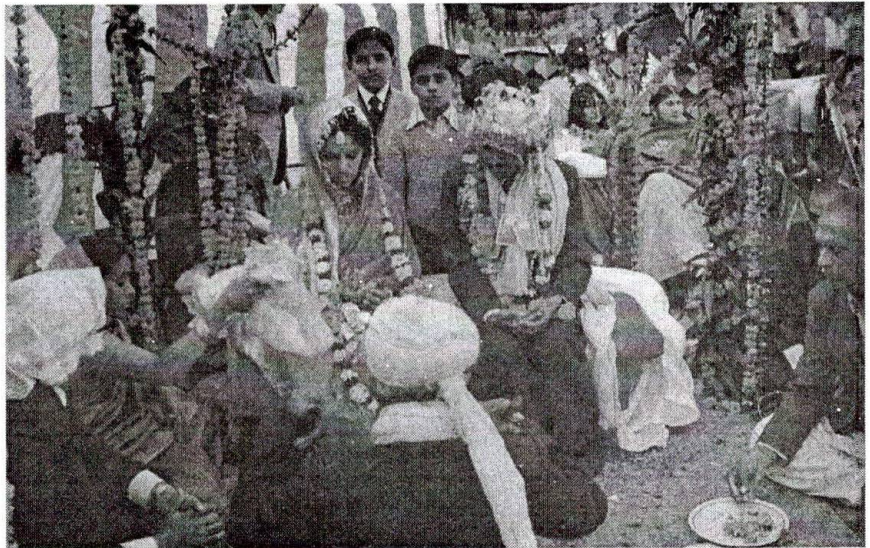
However, in the Indian situation, there exists a motive for coming out that is far stronger than the West's motive. It is a very practical motive. It has to do with the question of marriage. The Western man has no obligation to his society to get married. In India, such an obligation is very real. In some parts of India the pressure is on from the time a boy is in his late teens. In some parts it comes later on, when the boy has finished his education and started earning a living. But come it will, and when parents start 'looking for a girl' for him, the homosexual Indian man faces the big crisis he has been dreading so long.

Most Indian men consider marriage to be inevitable. At best, it can be put off for as long as possible. They do not look forward to it, but they accept it. Do they see it as sentencing themselves to a lifetime of unhappiness and hypocrisy? In most cases, the answer to this is 'no'. Hypocrisy is a difficult word to translate into any Indian language. It is not a big issue. If such stark questions were faced up to, the Indian gay might resist the prospect of getting married. But most don't. And since the reality of their own tragedy is not evident to them, the feelings of the girl whose chances of happiness they are about to kill are not an issue at all. It is assumed that so long as she is not mistreated (abused or beaten up!), and so long as she has the "security" of a husband and home, she will be happy. That she will never know love is not a big issue (she doesn't quite know what it is anyway, and won't miss it. Besides, heterosexual husbands can be pretty nasty sometimes, so she may just be lucky here).

So to a majority of Indian men, the idea of avoiding marriage is alien. Someone may have told them it's possible, and they may have read about how things are in the West, but in India they have no role models. Everyone they know is married and they must get married too.

But there still exist a few men in this subcontinent who recognise the sheer perversity of homosexual men getting married. These are the men of substance, and like in all societies, such men are few. It requires enormous moral courage in India to decide not to get married. Those who decide so must then figure out a way to get out of the web their families spin around them. To a son telling his parents that he does not ever want to get married, the question comes: Why? Why do you not want to get married? What is wrong?

It is to such men of moral courage that I address myself here. When you are faced with this question from your parents, let them know the reason why. If you cannot face telling them in person, it's all right. Write a letter instead. Or ask a close friend to tell them. But tell the truth, because any other reason to them would be unconvincing, and the result might be that you will find yourself getting married against your will.



*Punjabi wedding scene*

Recently, a friend of mine asked me to tell his father that he was gay. I'd known his family well for the past two years, and I got along very well with all of them, especially his father. Aditya, my friend, is 26, a warm and very sensitive person, and works as a Territory Manager for an Indian company. His father is an erudite soft-spoken man, a Professor of English at the local University.

Aditya had been resisting the pressure to get married for years now, and his parents had dropped the subject. But a couple of months ago a family friend had introduced a girl to the family, and the subject had been broached afresh. And this time things seemed to have gathered a momentum of their own, and if it wasn't stopped, the wedding would surely take place before the year was through.

The families met, the date had been fixed. Everything had been set. He had hesitated too long really. But now he was convinced that he could not go through with it. He had told his father so, and now the father must be told once and for all the reason why. And I was to do it.

I went to meet the Professor at his office. I told him I had come to speak to him on behalf of Aditya. I told him I thought marriage would make his son and everyone concerned very unhappy and must be stopped. I then paused, hoping he would now ask me the reason ~ his son did not want to get married. (That's how I planned the dialogue!). Unfortunately he didn't. (Things never quite go as planned!). Instead he launched into a long, rather rambling monologue that lasted a good twenty minutes, while I sat and listened silently. He told me he wanted his son's happiness first and foremost, but he could not understand why marriage would make him unhappy. He said he had got into an arranged marriage at the age of 29 himself with many apprehensions, but it had worked out well. He said without the stabilising effect of marriage, men tended to have loose lifestyles. Already Aditya stayed out very late at nights, and had a rather dubious circle of friends. And an unmarried man was tempted to indulge in sexual perversities.

My job became more difficult. He had given it the label of perversity, and had referred to the gay crowd as possibly bad company. Before this conversation was through I had to change his opinion on both counts.

He spoke on, telling me the story of Aditya's childhood, his own childhood, the family problems, his aspirations for his son. I guess he sort of dreaded getting down to what he knew was the main reason for my visit. He knew that I knew why his son did not want to get married.

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## Community mobilisation in the context of male to male sexual behaviours in South Asia

by Shivananda Khan

### 1. Purpose

To reduce the risks of STD/HIV infections amongst males who have sex with males.

### 2. Goal

To enable males who have sex with males to practice safer sex as a normative behaviour, increase use of appropriate STD treatment services and reduce levels of STDs.

### 3. Belief

It is understood that safer sex practices amongst males who have sex with males can only be encouraged and maintained over the "long haul" if such practices become a normative behaviour. To achieve this goal, it therefore requires such safer sex practices to be adopted as a community behaviour, which requires the whole community to be involved in promoting and adopting such practices. However, this pre-supposes that an MSM community exists as a cohesive force. This is not a valid assumption in South Asia, where no such community (ies) exist.

There is therefore an urgent need to understand the psycho-social-sexual constructions of male to male sexual behaviours, their frameworks within South Asian cultures, and their particular socio-sexual dynamics. From such an understanding appropriate strategies can be developed towards utilising shared characteristics as a form of "psychological community" as a means of mobilising shared actions.

### 4. Behavioural Summary

In South Asia, the vast majority of males who have sex with males fall within a range of behavioural dynamics. These are:

#### a. *khotis*

Males who feminise their behaviours (usually in specific situations/context) and who state that they prefer to be sexually penetrated anally or orally - this should really be seen as a gender identity rather than a sexual identity.

Note: for a *khoti* to take on the role of penetrator is seen as shameful and where this occurs is kept secret. Most male sex workers are self-defined as *khotis*, but not all *khotis* are sex workers

#### b. *panthis/girayas*

A term given to males who sexually penetrate *khotis* by *khotis* themselves. The vast majority of *panthis* do not label themselves as such

#### c. *do-parathas/double-deckers/etc.*

Those who practice sexual behaviour mutuality. This term given to such males by *khotis*, where such males are often not respected as such by either *khotis* or *panthis*

#### d. others who may practice male to male sex as

- i. a regular part of their sexual repertoire
- ii. non-access to females
- iii. all male institutions
- iv. "hotness"
- v. opportunistic discharge
- vi. desire
- vii. curiosity

Most of these males are considered *gopon/gupti* or secret

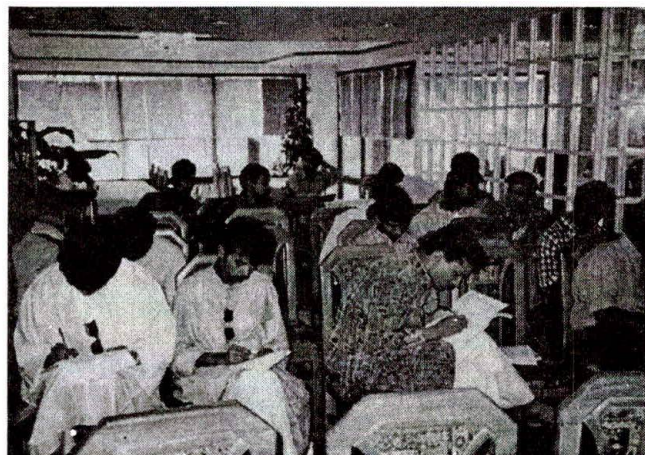
#### e. gay identified males

In the main small, English speaking, educated male networks.

Whilst *khotis* may participate in a number of over-lapping social/friendship networks, these tend to be small and site-based, rather than within frameworks of "community".

*Panthis* and others as such are involved in different social networks that are to do with non-sexual friendship networks, ruralised frameworks, employment affiliation and so on. These tend to be neighbourhood based.

In other words, for males who have sex with males in South Asia, communities based around sexual behaviour and/or sexual identity as



MSM sexual health project in Bangladesh

a primary focus does not exist.

To attempt to use the model of community mobilisation as a methodology towards empowerment and development of safer sex as a normative behaviour within an imagined community requires the construction and development of a community. This means defining what community means, and how affiliations to a community are developed, nurtured and explored.

What sort of community is needed then? On what basis is this imagined community emerging? Can such a community develop? What do people share in such a community?

In the male to male sexual environments in South Asia as has been pointed out before, the only emergent groupings that sexual health projects targeting male to male sexual behaviours can currently work with in developing such a community are the *khotis*. However, *khotis* do not form a community.

In South Asia, *khotis* are usually within small social/friendship personal networks, based upon sites and sexualised localities. Networks can overlap, with members within one network, also belonging to another network (s).

*Khotis* are stigmatised as feminised and penetrated males. They are perceived as not-women and not-men. In many ways the *khoti* is gendered as not-woman/not-man. Such characteristics enable *khotis* to recognise themselves as a "gender" apart, and to also recognise each other with shared characteristics of desire, behaviour and sexuality.

Since the primary community frameworks and social identities within South Asia revolve around family (the joint and extended family system), rural origins (shared village experiences), locational (where you live), work affiliations (truck-driver, rikshaw driver, student, etc.), marriage and children, making shared behaviour characteristic a basis for community building becomes a major initiative and a challenge to the social basis.

*Khotis* are the most vulnerable in terms of male to male sex. Multiple penetrations in a day, multiple partners, extremely low condom usage by their penetrating partners, low levels of knowledge, extremely low access to STD treatment services, high levels of anal bleeding, and no lubricant use (apart from saliva - perhaps). Apart from these, the majority of *khotis*, like their penetrating partners, will choose to marry and have children due to social necessity.

In terms of community development, *khotis* represent the most effective opportunity. Their sexual choices enable them to access *panthis* from different socio-occupational communities, as well as a

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## Community mobilisation and MSM

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cross-section of society. They are already, for the most, embedded within behavioural and identity social frameworks, and their shared characteristics can be the basis for community building.

For the penetrating male, the most obvious route towards behaviour change would be to work through occupational and neighbourhood strategies. This means to ensure that those NGOs working with community/occupational based methodologies to promote safe sex must include anal sex within their discussions, whether they be working with truck drivers, rikshaw drivers, adolescents, schools, colleges, slums, low income groups, or whatever.

### 5. Process

*What makes a community?*

Recognising the strengths of community affiliations as they exist, this requires ensuring that *khotis* as a behavioural group/network are specifically targeted to draw them into an emergent community where affiliation is based upon behavioural and emotional characteristics as well as on personal friendships

In this sense Naz Foundation promotes its partner agencies to work with *khoti* networks, expanding these networks, and networking amongst networks towards encouraging an emergent community.

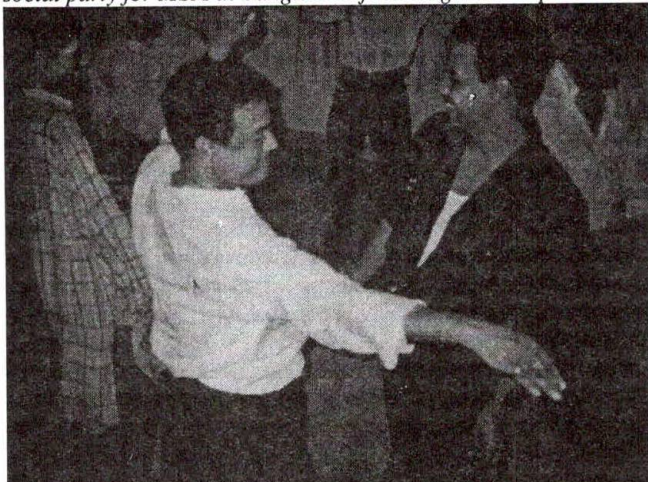
Recognising social, cultural and religious realities in South Asia, enabling community development amongst *khotis* may be seen as very problematic and unobtainable in the foreseeable future. However, mobilising networks, encouraging network development, and networking of networks is feasible under current social realities and is being used as first entry points into networks.

Our partner agencies working on sexual health promotion amongst males who have sex with males are developing a series of mechanisms to enable such mobilising of networks and towards building an emergent community amongst *khotis* with all the characteristics of a community, which are:

- shared gender/sexuality/behaviours
- affiliation to a shared consensus
- solidarity as a "community"
- mutual support mechanisms
- social support services
- shared ideologies and social characters
- socialising frameworks
- mutual concerns
- shared needs
- shared rituals

These agencies thus manage a *khoti* sexual health promotion project (under the term male reproductive and sexual health programme as a screening device in conservative societies). However, the sexual partners of *khotis* and male sex workers are also being drawn into

*social party for MSM in Bangladesh following workshop*



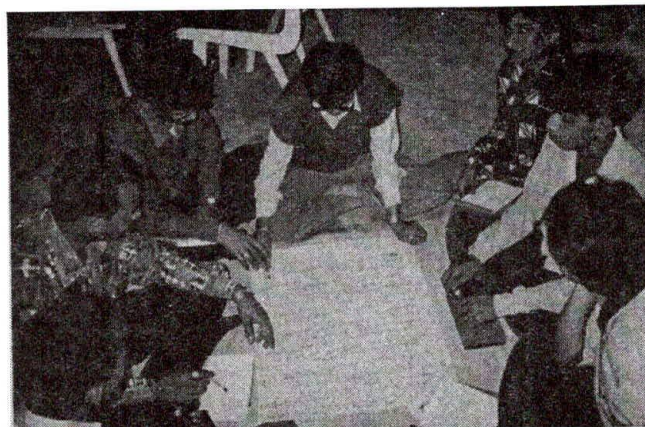
these service framework through contacts established by *khotis* and through collaboration with other sexual health promotion agencies and services.

Our partner agencies who specifically work with male to male sex ensure that all Board members, staff and volunteers are drawn from localised *khoti* social networks.

In this situation, community is not defined by some geographical space or locality, but rather as a sensibility, a psychological realm of shared concerns, sexual behaviours, needs, histories and desires.

### 6. Development

The following briefly outline the components being used towards developing a sense of community affiliation, of mobilising networks, and networking of networks creating frameworks in which condom usage and STD treatment can be promoted as normative behaviours.



*Lucknow MSM workshop*

#### 6.1 Outreach/Networking

Using field workers drawn from these *khoti* networks to be site specific -based developing friendships in that specific site that can be extended beyond the sites through shared characteristics, socialising, support and enabling access to service provision.

Using site-based "key informants" (although the term informant is problematic, and we would rather use the term "site-friends/dostis/bandhus") who can provide supportive frameworks to the field worker with their knowledge and insight into specific sites and provide continuity within a site when the field worker is not present.

#### 6.2 Socialising meetings

A range of off-site social groups developed, each facilitated by a Field Worker, drawing upon his own personal, social and field work networks. These groups can act as a space within which personal friendships and bonding can be developed, experiences shared, and common purposes evolve.

#### 6.3 Personal skills development

A range of educational classes offered including literacy, social skills, life skills, health seeking knowledge, vocational skills, income generation skills, and so on.

#### 6.4 Employment and accommodation networks

Using *khoti* networks to identify employment opportunities and vacant accommodation, as well as emergency housing.

#### 6.5 Savings and Loans Club

Using the Grammen Bank model, encouraging small scale savings and loans amongst the *khoti* networks.

#### 6.6 Advocacy

Police and maastan harassment are common factors amongst *khotis* who use public environments as social spaces, for sexual encounters and to sell sex. By developing legal aid services, challenging human rights abuses, and providing counselling and support, a framework of service use and access can be developed which can be seen as a "community service", encouraging affiliation to an "emergent sexual community".

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# Features

## First International Retreat for GLBT Muslims A Success!

### Formation of an international organisation announced!

"We have finally taken the first steps to come together to address the issues that are important to us as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Muslim community." - Faisal Alam, Coordinator, First International Retreat for GLBT Muslims & Founder of Al-Fatiha.

It was indeed a historic occasion as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) Muslims and non-Muslims came together for the First International Retreat for GLBT Muslims, held in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, from October 9-12, 1998.

The thirty participants represented the cultural and religious diversity of the entire Islamic world, coming from all over the United States and abroad. Countries that were represented included Belgium, Canada, Egypt, India, Germany, Holland, Lebanon, Maldives Saudi Arabia, Syria, South Africa, Pakistan.

The retreat served as a forum for the discussion of issues important to GLBT Muslims. Workshops and sessions addressed such topics as faith and sexuality, the oppression of GLBT persons in the Islamic world, GLBT identity in Islam, and the historical perspectives of GLBT behaviour in Islamic societies. Additionally participants examined the opinions of the Prophet Mohammed on sexual minorities in his time, as well as the different interpretations of Quranic verses which appear to address homosexual acts.

The highlight of the retreat was the decision to establish an international organisation to address the concerns of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Muslims around the world. Titled after the first chapter of the Quran, "Al-Fatiha" (The Opening), which was also the theme of the retreat, the organisation will work together with other organisations, gay and straight, Muslim and non-Muslim to address the social and political issues facing GLBT Muslims around the world. In most Islamic countries, homosexuality and transgendered behaviour is a crime, punishable by imprisonment, flogging, and even death. "Homosexuality is so highly stigmatised in Muslim communities, that many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and those questioning their sexuality end up internalising the shame and disgust which surrounds them in their families and communities. They are often unable to come to terms with their own sexuality, fearing ostracisation and even physical punishment," said Faisal Alam, coordinator of the retreat, and founder of Al-Fatiha. "We (Al-Fatiha) see it as our moral obligation to help in whatever way we can," he added, "and we have decided that we need to implement different strategies to address the various problems, both on a local level as well as on an international one."

Based in the United States, Al-Fatiha will establish chapters across the U.S. and abroad to support gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning Muslims on a local level. The organisation will also work with human rights organisations to advocate against abuses of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in Islamic countries.

Organisers of the retreat said that the event was something that has been needed in their community for decades. "The retreat has given us the opportunity to come together as a community in a way that was never possible before," said Alam. "But the GLBT Muslim movement has only just begun. Much of the prejudice and discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in Islamic societies is culture-based and does not stem from Islam as a religion. We want to celebrate our identity as GLBT people who are also believing Muslims. The noble and fundamental principles of respect, human dignity, tolerance, understanding, and justice, in Islam have been ignored when dealing with the issue of homosexuality and gender identity. We hope to change all that - God willing."

The Second International Retreat for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Muslims is tentatively scheduled to take place in June of 2000 in Capetown, South Africa. Meanwhile, plans are already underway to organise a meeting for GLBT Muslims in the United States, tentatively planned to be held in New York City in April of

1999.

"The First International Retreat for GLBT Muslims was sponsored by the Gay-Muslims Listserv, an internet-based, email discussion group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning Muslims. The purpose of this list is to bring gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender Muslims and those questioning their sexuality together in a forum to communicate issues of common concern. By using our own individual experiences, our knowledge, and our faith in Islam and in Allah (God), the goal of this listserv is to bring two important aspects of our lives together. Being Gay and Muslim is not mutually exclusive, nor is it an oxymoron. By participating in this list, the hope is that each and every one of us will realise that God certainly does not discriminate. Indeed we can be both practising Muslims and still identify ourselves as being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. To subscribe or for more information, send an email to gaymuslims@yahoo.com."

*a sea-aids posting from John Ballard, 11/11/98*

## Are we driving him into the arms of another man?

*Bachi J Karkaria, Bombay*

A friend came in, looking pale and shaken, and said, "I was having a drink with a guy I've known for years when suddenly he reaches out, clasps my hand and asks with unmistakable innuendo if we can go over to his flat." So, what's new? Only this: my friend is male.

I've been hearing with increasing frequency about men - all macho babe-watchers, all high profile habitués of the heterosexual party circuit, most of them married - getting into a homosexual relationship. They may not have been named in the gossip columns, partly out of consideration (it would detonate their careers) and partly out of survival (legal fees would drive the 'defaming' paper to bankruptcy). But it's an open secret.

People's sexual orientations are entirely their own business. However, a column that's supposed to deal with shifting gender attitudes and equations must deal with this sudden fluttering open of closet doors. Past experience forces me to clarify that the discussion is generic, with no intention to brand.

The phenomena takes two discussion forms. One is nothing more than a fashion statement... where in Pali Hill penthouses they're flaunting Gayness with the same insouciance as their Gabbanas. If they get shredded for it, you can still call them fashion victims. However, this latest version of the 'Style Queen' accounts for the smaller segment of the new homosexuality. There's much more of the real thing.

What's brought all this about? For one, today's young have fewer sexual inhibitions of any kind - and 'identity politics' is big news. Those who've decided that they'll be MSMs (men who have sex with men) for longer than their burgundy tints actively seek out a Gay network - there are now seven established groups in Indian cities. But, more relevant for the purposes of this column, how much does the new woman contribute to this phenomena?

Five per cent of Indian males are a 'species constant', permanently practising homosexuals. Another 23 per cent have occasional sex with men. Some of it is for want of a woman; in prisons, hostels, or other homosocial ambiances. But, as AIDS has forced us to confront, there's a tremendous amount of bisexuality, a huge invisible area of libidinous release.

The man-woman-man linkage is multidimensional. The female-male ratio has been drastically falling; on Mumbai (Bombay) island there are only 700 women per 1,000 men, and 40 per cent of industrial

*continued on page 22. col. 2*



## Pakistan's wall of silence on child abuse

*Some in the North West Frontier Province see sexual abuse as normal*

*By Richard Galpin in Pakistan*

A new report on attitudes to child sex abuse in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province paints a horrifying picture of widespread abuse. The report shows that many of the population believe that the sexual abuse of young boys is a matter of pride.

The United Nations is shortly to publish the first nation-wide survey on child sex-abuse in Pakistan - an acutely sensitive subject in this deeply conservative Islamic country.

The first indications of the scale of the problem have been revealed in this early report from North-West Frontier Province.

It shows that one third of those who took part in the survey did not even believe that child sexual abuse was a bad thing - let alone a crime.

The UN believes the sexual abuse of young children is widespread in some areas of the country but that until now it has been hidden behind a wall of silence.

In Pakistan much of the population lives in squalid slums where children are forced to play their part in the day to day survival of the family. That means working in places such as the notorious Pirwadhai bus station in Rawalpindi.

Here there are hundreds of young boys at work in the grimy workshops and sleazy hotels on which the bus station's reputation is based. For this is a centre of child sexual abuse.

One boy told me that local hotels encouraged the trade: "The hotel-owners employ children who are used to attract customers. The customers are then told what kind of services are provided and that they can do what they want with the children. The hotels here are very well known for these services. And it's good money for us."

Their clients are men from all backgrounds - travelling from one part of the country to another - thus freed from the constraints of life at home in this conservative society. With girls mostly kept at home - they prey on these working boys who are extremely vulnerable to abuse.

Although at present there is little data on child sexual abuse in Pakistan, experts such as the clinical psychologist, Kamran Ahmad, believe it is widespread: "There is a lot of repression of sexuality so

what happens is that it shows up in unhealthy forms. You rarely find healthy expressions of sexuality in everyday life so sexual abuse becomes very common"

For the victims it is a terrifying ordeal. A boy told us how he had been raped when he was just 7 years old. He said the men in his village were like dogs - 'they would eat you like a dog' he said. 'It was not safe for any young fair-skinned boy to go out alone. It was a tradition to molest boys'.

According to the report many people in Frontier Province are also well aware that men in the area keep boys specifically for sex.

All this seems to be a result of the rigid segregation of men and women in Pakistan, which is most seriously enforced in the Pashtoon areas of the North. Under Pashtoon culture it is very difficult for a young man to interact with the opposite sex - particularly in the rural areas.

Young boys therefore become the targets of abuse.

But the government is starting to recognise the issue. The Secretary at the Ministry of Women's Development and Social Welfare, Muzzafar Quresh, says: "We're beginning to realise that it is a serious problem.

"We've initiated several studies to try to measure the extent and there's also some evidence coming out about what happens to children and the need for greater attention to rehabilitate them and to bring them back to a normal social life."

But in reality only a handful of organisations are helping children at risk of being exploited and abused. The subject is still far too hidden for there to be a concerted campaign to rescue the many victims.

The publication of the nationwide survey on child sexual abuse is a critical test for both the government and Pakistani society as a whole.

It will prompt painful introspection - but the hope is that it will lead to positive reform.

*UN report (date unknown). An internet posting from Omar Khan, Jon Hopkins University, 4/1/99*

## Today's angels know too much too soon

Six-year old Ashu catches her elder sister Suvarna (only 12, by the way!) embracing their next-door uncle, and exclaims, "Tai! what are both of you doing? Are you making love?"

The *uncle* had never imagined the little girl catching him in an awkward position with her *grown-up* sister. But she is not the only one of her age, who knows about *love-making*. A nationwide official survey, just concluded, has established that an increasingly worrying proportion of children (if you they still are) indulge in sexual acts.

The survey done among 5,000 children of six states by the Indian Council of Medical Research, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has many shocking revelations. It shows that sexual awareness among adolescents is tremendously growing and their sexual attitudes are fast changing.

"It appears that children start experimenting with sex at an early age. Their level of sexual knowledge - right or wrong - has increased", Dr M C Watsa, who conducted the survey in Maharashtra, says.

While statistics from other states are still being analysed, the trends available from Maharashtra, are representative and disturbing enough. The finds indicate that adolescents have become sexually very conscious and active.

An earlier survey done by Family Planning Association of India had brought out that average age at which first sexual encounter was experienced by males and females in the eighties was 17.2 and 19.9 years respectively. The ICMR survey shows that it now happens by 14. About 12 per cent of them have had an intercourse.

The survey, findings of which are yet to be released, is aimed at assessing adolescents' knowledge about AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), to study their sexual behaviour, to assess their willingness and eagerness to learn more about reproductive health and to study the views of their parents and teachers about sex-related matters.

About 2,000 adolescents from Mumbai (Bombay) and two district towns (Vashi and Pune) were asked to fill a questionnaire. Respondents were classified in three different age groups of 10 to 14, 15 to 17 and 18 to 21.

It has been noted that around 75 per cent of those attending STD clinics in Pune are in the age group of 18 to 19. Other significant finding of the survey is that around 27 per cent of adolescents in Bombay, having a sexual encounter, have had it with male members. The percentage of homosexuality was even higher at 83 per cent in Pune. The moral crusaders in the city may be shocked to know that 60 per cent girls in age group of 15 to 17 (and 27 per cent in that of 18 to 21) admitted in indulging in lesbianism.

The World Health Organisation norms suggest that adolescence starts at 10 and lasts till 19 with the stage up to 14 being described as that of early adolescence. Accordingly, about 5000 adolescents from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, West Bengal, and Maharashtra were picked at random and were asked to fill a

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## Indian Law And The Homosexual

by Shrikant Bhat

In March 1988, the media was ablaze with the story of the marriage of two women constables of Special Armed Forces from Madhya Pradesh (Vidisha District). The reason was the two women constables Urmila Srivastav (20 years) and Leela Namdev (28 years) were getting married to each other!

Some time back, the two girls from Gujarati Jain families, the very citadel of orthodoxy, went to a well-known Gujarati journalist. They wanted to marry each other.

As the taboos break, sexual relations between the same sex become manifest in India.

How does the Criminal Law in India view the rise of homosexual identity?

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code says:

"Of Unnatural offences:

Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall be liable to fine.

Explanation:

"Penetration is sufficient to constitute carnal intercourse to the offence described in this Section."

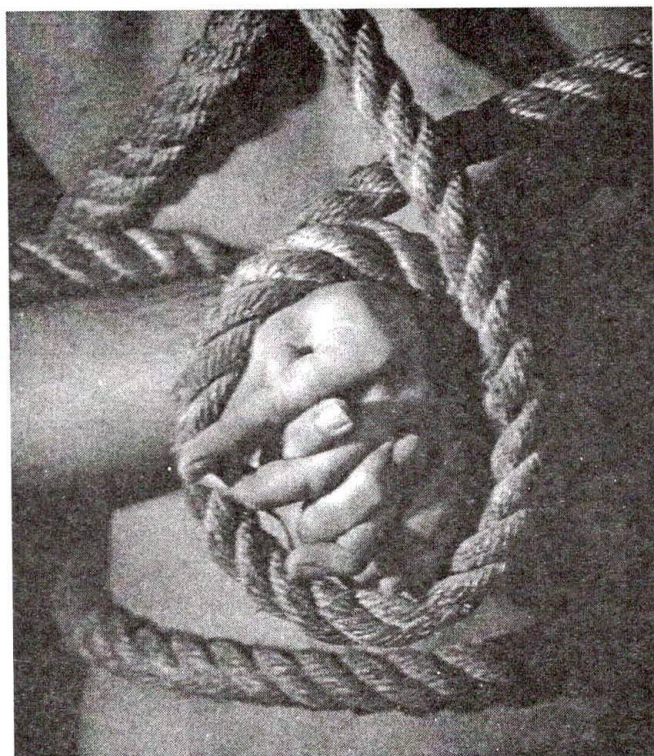
The Section worded by Thoman Babington Macaulay as early as 1833 raises questions of wide ramifications:

What exactly is meant by Macaulay when Macaulay postulates "order of nature"? What is 'order'? What is 'nature'?

To get down to specifics: Would the now fashionable male genital to female mouth (and vice versa, female genital to male mouth) position be against the "order of nature"? "Nature" conceived by whom? "Order" perceived by whom?

Any serious student of Social and Religious history would discern in such a definition a projection of the typical Christian feelings of guilt about natural sex. For Christianity, sex has always meant sin unless it is within the four corners of marriage and unless it is for procreation. Any other form of sex was decried by the Pope.

In 1990, fellatio and cunnilingus are a bit blasé even for college students. But for the Indian Penal Code, even when it works in 1990, such things still appear not only "dirty", but even downright criminal!



There is however no reported judgement of the High Court or the Supreme Court declaring that cunnilingus or fellatio would constitute an offence punishable under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.

Conventional homosexuality is still an offence under the Indian Penal Code.

In England, homosexuality between consenting adults is not an offence. However in India, even between consenting adults it would constitute an offence for which the partners can be sentenced to life imprisonment. And let me immediately clarify what life imprisonment means. It means that a man is sent to jail alive and he will come out of jail only when he is dead. This should correct the popular impression that life imprisonment is only for 14 years. It is not. It is an imprisonment for life.

The offence of homosexuality is cognisable. This means that the Police can arrest without a warrant from the Magistrate.

In a landmark judgement, i.e. *Fazal Rab vs State of Bihar*, the Supreme Court was dealing with a case where a man had homosexual relations with a boy with the consent of the boy. The Supreme Court said: "The offence is one under Section 377 Indian Penal Code which implies sexual perversity. No force appears to have been used to omissions of permissive society nor the fact that in some countries homosexuality has ceased to be an offence, has influenced our thinking." Considering however that there was the consent of the boy, the Supreme Court reduced the sentence from three years rigorous imprisonment to six months rigorous imprisonment. This was in 1983. There is no reported judgement of the Supreme Court after 1983 to date.

The wording "order of nature" connotes the adjective "natural". But what is "natural"? We may consider the word "natural" in a nonsexual context. To a Muslim, eating animal flesh is natural. But it is not for a Gujarati Jain. Music is natural for Kumar Gandharva and Bhimsen Joshi but not for Dhirubhai Ambani. For Dhirubhai Ambani making crores of rupees is natural. Cricket is natural for Sunil Gavaskar but not for Mother Teresa!

Secondly, why is homosexuality sought to be punished? What is the social justification? What is its rationale?

### Can Section 377 IPC be challenged?

Protagonists of the Law would immediately point out to the epidemic of AIDS. If homosexual contact causes AIDS, then the ban of homosexuality would have complete justification in Constitutional Law.\* It is easy to argue that what two people do in privacy is their business and not of others. Such an argument requires close scrutiny. If what two people do in privacy adversely affects others, it is also the business of others to ban the 'private activity'. Section 377, then would come under reasonable restriction on a man's freedom.

Therefore, it is for medical experts to decide the legal issue.

However, there cannot be any risk to anybody's life by cunnilingus and fellatio. In that case and to that extent, the constitutional validity of Section 377 IPC is open to serious challenge. The constitutional validity is also open to serious challenge on the grounds that the Section is utterly vague.

### 'Personal Liberty'

However, till recently no one in India had challenged the constitutional validity of Section 377\*\*. It can be challenged also under the broad parameters of Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Article 21 of the Constitution of India says:

"No one shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except by a procedure established by Law."

The Supreme Court, starting between 1976 and 1990 has given dozens of judgements. Today, the article can be summed up to reach: "No one can be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to law i.e. that can be regarded as a reasonable restriction

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## Early warnings of certain HIV epidemic in Bangladesh

By Dev Raj.

Bangladesh is far from prepared for a HIV/AIDS epidemic that authorities here say will lash this calamity-prone country in the coming years.

In fact, the country's foremost expert on HIV/AIDS, Professor Nazrul Islam wonders why the virus has not yet laid the country low given that it has every ingredient for a raging epidemic - low awareness, high-risk behaviour, unscreened blood transfusions and no worthwhile control programme.

Professor Islam, who heads the Virology Department at the Bangabandhu Medical University here, says there is a possibility that a genetic factor may be protecting people in this country, but hastens to add that there is no medical evidence for it.

"Commercial sex workers (CSWs) tested under a targeted surveillance programme for high-risk groups indicate less than one percent sero-positivity for HIV although up to 60 percent were found afflicted with syphilis or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)," Islam said.

STDs are a problem with young people as 50 percent of those coming into the clinics for STD treatment in the area surrounding the University were found to be students who said they contracted it from CSWs.

"Such statistics show the high level of ignorance about HIV and its spread even among students - a literate section of people in Bangladesh," Professor Islam said. He said he preferred not to label students as "high-risk".

Apart from unprotected sex there are other reasons why he expects a "wildfire" spread of the virus that often leads to the fatal AIDS over the coming year starting with the fact that blood used in this country is still largely unscreened for the deadly virus.

"Screening is done for syphilis and for blood grouping but practically nothing else," Professor Islam who spent a three-year stint with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) here as a consultant said. Alarm bells began ringing with the 100-odd known HIV positive cases in this country traced to infected blood transfusions from a flourishing business plied by professional blood donors and private unregulated blood banks.

In spite of proximity with known global hotspots for HIV such as Burma, the north-east of India and Thailand, Bangladesh appears to be an oasis against the disease unless the statistics are grossly off or the epidemic is in too incipient a stage to be detectable.

According to David Lockwood, chief of the UNDP, the evidence so far is misleading and the epidemic is certain to surface within a year unless drastic measures are taken without delay.

"It is difficult to get any focus on the problem - but at least we are past the stage of denial," Lockwood said describing official inattentiveness despite the UNDP's extraordinary influence in this aid-dependent country.

Still UNDP has kicked off a modest start by helping Bangladesh to clean up its blood transfusion act and has spent 3 million dollars on screening equipment over the last three years and thrown in another million on training modules and capacity building.

Both Lockwood and Islam say whatever story the statistics tell, the real worry is the spread of HIV transmission as amply demonstrated in neighbouring India, Burma and Thailand, while Bangladesh remains woefully unprepared.

To compound the problem, Islamic conservative Bangladesh is reluctant to resort to awareness campaigns that may involve explicit sex and the state-run electronic media has refused to air programmes dealing with HIV.

Lockwood said when UNDP brought publicity material on condom use from other countries and showed them to Bangladesh officials, they reacted by covering their faces.

Religious orthodoxy is another matter. "We had meetings with religious leaders on condom use after some of them accused us of condoning promiscuity by promoting condoms," Professor Islam said.

Condom use in Bangladesh is estimated at less than 20 percent - one reason being sheer lack of availability and the other male refusal to use them, says Parul, a field trainer working for the Cooperative Agencies for Relief Everywhere (CARE) in Bangladesh.

She said attempts to get CSWs to insist that their clients use condoms failed because they lacked negotiating power and feared losing business. The "mastans" or pimps and musclemen who control the trade, always sided with the clients.

Says Md. Alamgir Hossain, UNDP program officer, "Even in the 18 recognised brothels in Bangladesh worked by about 7,000 licensed CSWs, condoms are never used - less so among the floating unlicensed ones who may be many times that number."

Hossain is sure that HIV must be making steady inroads into the rural hinterland through truck drivers and migrant labourers who contract the virus in cities and take it to their village.

The surveillance reports, for what they are worth, showed slum dwellers in Bangladesh having 23 percent more sero-positivity than CSWs.

*from an internet posting from John Ballard, Australia National University, 21/12/98*

## Today's angels

*continued from page 19, col. 2*

questionnaire.

"When children of 10 were asked questions about body parts, there was giggling and laughter around the mention of some of them - irrespective of their teachers' or parents' presence," the survey notes.

Narrating her experience, a teacher from a reputed high school in North-West Bombay says: "Students from eight standard onward carry condoms in their pockets. Girls also do not feel offended, if one of the boys approaches them with proposal for sex. If we try to object, they snub us, saying it's their personal life."

Sociologist Neha Madhiwala explains to say, "Schools now play little role in shaping the morality of children. Teachers have little say in this process because they don't fear or respect teachers."

Sex and relationship counsellor Dr Rajan Bhonsale feels that a majority of children get sexual knowledge from the wrong sources.

Says he, "Having irresponsible sex without knowing its consequences is dangerous. Today's children know about sex and love from unchecked exposure to satellite television. Carrying risky sexual experiments may result in guilt complex."

"Their sources of information should be healthy. Sex education from fifth standard is one way of clearing their doubts and fulfilling their curiosity. Parents must also talk more about these topics."

But as the survey reveals parents and teachers continue to avoid open discussion about it. A large majority of them felt that allowing these types of questions and answering them would spoil children. However, as the survey shows, the case seems to be exactly the reverse.

*Sunday Observer, New Delhi, 17-23/1/99*

*(Editor's note: the survey was done through self-completion of questionnaires, implying that the respondents were literate and easily accessible. What about children who are not literate, not at school, living in slums, and working in the informal sectors?)*



## Avoiding Marriage

*continued from page 15, col. 2*

"Sir, the reason your son must not get married has to do with his sexuality. He is not attracted to women. He cannot love a woman, either physically, or more important, emotionally."

I was pausing at each sentence, going slowly, hoping he was getting the message.

"Are you telling me he is homosexual?"

And it was in the open. "Yes," I said, and went on talking to give him time to digest it. "Marriage would be a charade for him. It would really kill his soul. He is not the type of person who can live a double-life all the time..

The Professor never lost his composure. We spoke for two hours after this. At first his reaction was "No, this can't be" he spoke of Aditya's very normal childhood and teenage years, of his "girlfriends" he was purported to have had, but soon he understood that this was pointless, and then he began to ask me questions. Since when had Aditya been a homosexual? Who were his lovers? How did he meet them? What did he do with them?

I tried to explain how the homosexual network in the city worked. I told him Aditya was not the promiscuous type, and didn't have anyone in his life right now. But it was possible someone might come along, who he could really love, and maybe choose to live with. "But he doesn't earn enough to support a boy," he said. "It would more likely be a man" I explained, "and probably earning more than him."

"You mean he likes men? He's a passive homosexual?"

God! I thought, he's got the classic Greek concept of homosexuality in mind here! But rather than get into a complicated and academic explanation of sexual mores right then, I simply said, "Yes, he's passive." Which I'm glad I did, because he said later on, "I think it might be easy for an active homosexual to switch from sex with boys to sex with girls."

The Professor continued to speak of it as a perversity, the definition being anything that was unnatural was perverse. I tried to make him see that such an attitude would hurt his son more than anything. I told him of how I had struggled against this feeling of being abnormal all through my teens before I had finally come to terms with myself and begun feeling good about what I was. I struggled for the right words as I tried to explain what it was like to grow up homosexual.

I think he began to understand what I was trying to say he began to talk of his own sexuality, about a brief stay in New York where he had encountered homosexuality for the first time (he said he rejected it). He spoke to me of other things, of his son's character traits: he spent his money too quickly, he sometimes didn't take his career seriously. It was all because of his homosexuality. The future looked terrible; if he didn't live his life right, who would take care of him after his parents were no longer around?

I tried to assure him as best as I could that his son was fine, and was perfectly capable of taking care of himself. Like Walt Whitman, the Professor's favourite poet, his homosexuality was just part of his total self, and he would have a brilliant career, if he could have a well-adjusted personal life. I told him about some of the eminent homosexuals I knew of in India.

By the end of the conversation the Professor and I exchanged confidences neither of us had shared with others before. In those two hours I had grown very close to the old man. I was sure he would ultimately come to accept and maybe appreciate what Aditya was: an exceptional boy, who loved and trusted his father enough to let him know his deepest secret. Even if it was through me, his closest friend. I just happened to have a better gift of the gab and could talk with his father man-to-man without the complication of a father-son role play.

As we closed up his office and walked down the road, I asked, "Are you going to discuss this with your wife? Or anyone else?"

"No," he said. "For the present I'll keep it to myself. I don't need anyone to lean on. My body is frail, but my mind is still quite strong."

What more could be said? I had helped my friend in a difficult - indeed a heroic task. I hoped things might work out this well when it came to telling my own parents. I would wait till the time came when my own marriage was being talked about. And then, like Aditya, I would do what must be done.

*Parivaraj's first novel has been published by Gay Men's Press in London. Called Shiva and Arun is the story of two "men who love men" as they struggle through their developing sexualities, identities and family pressures.*

## Into the arms of another man?

*continued from page 18, col. 2*

labour is migrant. Not all their sexual activity is taking place in the red-light area nor is it confined to their own squalid tenements. Every night, the shadowy parks in some very stylish neighbourhoods break class barriers with a determination which would be considered exemplary on other contexts.

This link between gay identity and urbanisation is well documented. It's link with women's liberation is now also being recognised. The guy who made a pass at my male friend expressed it crudely. He said that he could no longer handle the aggressive females in Mumbai's sexual jungle. He felt not just threatened, but emasculated. No longer confident of being the alpha male or even the dominant partner in an individual relationship, he'd found a new dimension to the old, socially sanctified male-bonding. The innocuous hand-holding and hugging so common in Indian men can turn erotic.

There's a more sophisticated way of putting it. Women's liberation has helped the liberation of gay identity. As long as a woman wasn't a free agent, a man could keep her trapped in a facade-marriage. She got nothing out of it, while he had both the social respectability as well as sexual satisfaction on the side. Now, as women finally summon the courage to speak out, demand their conjugal rights, men have to confront their identity - the first step to coming to terms with it and later demanding acceptance.

It's not your usual pretty family picture, but denying the fact could be decidedly tougher.

*Sunday Times of India, 22/3/98*

*(What do you think readers? Write in and let us know)*

## Indian Law and the Homosexual

*continued from page 20, col. 2*

on a man's liberty."

Life as defined by the Supreme Court does not mean mere survival. It means life in all its manifestations. It means that environment for a person in which a person fulfils himself, seeks out his destiny as he feels that destiny. Life means a person acting out his natural impulses. Life also means a right to privacy. In *KHARAK SINGH vs STATE OF MADHYA PRADESH* (1964) S.C.R. 332(63)A.S.C. 1295 - the Supreme Court has recognised the right to privacy as a fundamental right under the Constitution of India.

The scene is therefore set for a debate that would be vital, profound and one whose repercussions shall go down the corridors of time. (*Reprinted from Bombay Dost, Issue No 2. Bombay Dost wishes to thank Mr Shrikant Bhat, Advocate for this enlightened article. Mr Bhat specialises in Criminal Law. He was an Examiner at the Bombay University for Papers on Criminal Law. Mr Bhat is a well wisher. Mr Shrikant Bhat is a heterosexual.*)

*\* Editor's note: homosexual contact does NOT cause AIDS! The HIV virus can be transmitted through specific sexual activities between two partners, whether they are of the same gender or not. where there is an exchange of bodily fluids.*

*\*\* A challenge is being made by ABVA, a leading human rights organisation based in New Delhi.*



## Community mobilisation and MSM

continued from page 17, col. 2

### 6.7 STD treatment services/PWLHA support systems

Extremely problematic in main stream services because of the stigmatisation of behaviours, *khotis* have extremely few choices to access appropriate treatment services, particularly around anal sex behaviours. *Khoti* services providing such appropriate STD treatment services, either as syndromic management, or through direct testing, ensures that *khotis* will be treated sympathetically, with respect and consideration, and access correct information and treatment.

### 6.8 Condoms and lubricants

Many *khotis* feel very ashamed to access condoms in regular outlets (particularly if they are young and unmarried), nor do they access family planning clinics. Further South Asia does not have appropriate condoms for anal sex, nor any appropriately and cheaply packaged lubricant. Provision of condoms and lubricants in ways that are affordable and easily accessible through site distribution can increase condom usage.

### 6.9 Needs assessments

Regular surveys of service users, site surveys, and focus group discussions, ensures that assessments are conducted regularly as to how needs are being defined by the *khotis*. These needs can be felt needs, expressed needs and/or projected needs. These discussions and surveys built up consensus on shared needs, which can also be used towards building a sense of community. Such needs do not necessarily directly relate to STD/HIV/AIDS. However addressing such needs can build a sensing of shared concerns which can be developed as a community sensibility.

Such needs can be:

#### 6.9.1 Social needs

- education
- employment
- economic development
- human rights
- family, marriage and children
- vocational skills
- socialising spaces

#### 6.9.2 Personal and emotional needs

- sexual abuse and violence
- counselling
- personal hygiene
- friendship
- identity and desire
- emotional support
- empowerment
- personal skills development
- personal health issues

#### 6.9.3 Sexual health needs

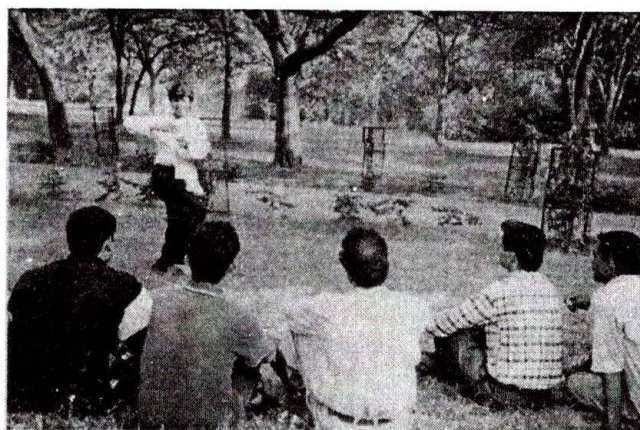
- appropriate condoms
- appropriate lubricant
- sexual spaces and privacy
- access to appropriate treatment
- psycho-sexual issues
- counselling
- knowledge
- empowerment
- negotiating skills

### 6.10 Responding to needs

It is essential that the service provision should build upon these needs and find appropriate ways to ensure that these needs are being adequately and appropriately addressed.

Thus, for example:

6.10.1 a health service that can look at non-sexual issues and provide appropriate treatment and care, i.e. chest infections, TB, and other potential illnesses



*khotis entertaining themselves in the park in Delhi*

6.10.2 an employment agency/network

6.10.3 vocational skills development including reading and writing

6.10.4 an emergency housing network

6.10.5 address poverty issues, such as subsidised medicine and treatment, and access to low interest credit and small savings

6.10.6 socialising spaces that allow non-sexual friendships to be developed amongst *khotis* and non-*khoti* identified MSM

6.10.7 access to legal aid

6.10.8 addressing discriminatory laws and regulations

6.10.9 addressing police and maastan harassment

6.10.10 a sexual health service that is appropriate and sympathetic and easily accessible

6.10.11 a non-judgmental service provision irrespective of class, economic group, work affiliation, sexual behaviour/desire and feminisation

6.10.12 development of socialising rituals for community bonding, such as dance, music, prayer, songs, food rituals, etc.

The frameworks of all these actions is to create a psychological community that transcends family, locality, origin (where rural or urban), class, economic group, work affiliation. It is a psychological community with shared concerns and needs. It is utilising networks to network and build a community (ies).

## 7. Summary

7.1 In South Asia there is no community amongst males who have sex with males, and those who practice male to male sex

7.2 *Khotis*, however, do have a shared sense of identity and behaviour

7.3 *Khotis* are self-defined males who feminise their behaviour and are sexually penetrated.

7.4 There is a proviso to this, in that this is a performed and public identity. *Khotis* may penetrate other males, and/or have sex with other *khotis*, but this is perceived by *khotis* to be bad. Hence such behaviour is kept secret from other *khotis*.

7.5 However *khoti* should not only be seen as a sexual identity, but also as a gender term in the South Asian culture

7.7 *Khotis* are mainly within social/sexual networks, which are spread around in a range of public sites.

7.8 These sites are used for socialising as well as for sex with *panthis*

7.9 To enable a development of a sense of community identity is to use these networks towards creating a psychological community.

7.10 Using socialising and community development process, such a community sensibility can be evoked

7.11 In evoking this community, sexual health promotion can be configured towards community normalisation.

*Editor's note: for example. Bandhu Social Welfare Society, based in Dhaka Bangladesh is promoting - no condoms - no sex in a range of khoti sites as part of its community building strategy.*



# Naz Foundation

## Male to male sexual behaviours in South Asia

*continued from page 14, col. 2*

almost 80 million more males than females, I have been able to identify only nine locally-based sexual health projects focusing on males who have sex with males. Of these six were initiated with Naz Foundation support.

There are also a few emerging gay groups in India who are trying to share educational materials within their networks. There are also the Indian gay magazines, Bombay Dost, edited by India's leading gay activist, Ashok Row Kavi, Pravartak from Counsel Club in Calcutta, and Sacred Love by Friends India in Lucknow. There is a person in Peshawar telling "homosexuals to stop their behaviour". There is a small scale initiative amongst males in prison in Kathmandu, amongst taxi drivers in New Delhi, and a few other scattered responses, usually by those who themselves are not involved in MSM activities.

Prison populations, street males, rikshaw drivers, taxi drivers, truck drivers, hotel staff, students, military personnel, boarding schools, hostels, slum areas, business men, migrant workers, Gulf workers, construction labourers, shop-keepers and assistants, male sex workers, IV drug users, the list can go on. What is being done? Very little, if anything at all.

And I haven't mentioned issues around the availability of appropriate condoms for anal sex, nor the lack of water-based lubricants appropriately packaged, nor appropriate educational resources, STD services dealing with anal STDs, advocacy, or ..... or what?

As the song says, "there is the sound of silence". Or as ActUp in New York once said,

**"silence = death".**

## Naz Ki Pukaar

**Naz Ki Pukaar** is the quarterly newsletter published by **The Naz Foundation**. It aims to provide a forum for discussion, information, advice and general interest to the HIV/AIDS voluntary and statutory sector as well as those from our communities affected by HIV/AIDS and others who are interested in the issues.

The opinions expressed in **Naz Ki Pukaar** reflect the writer's views only and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The Naz Foundation** unless specifically mentioned.

We will always try to ensure that what we report is relevant to our readers, and we ask you, the reader, to keep us informed as to what is happening in your corner of the world. Send us your questions, letters, articles, stories (fact or fiction), poetry, drawings, photographs. Tell us about what you think and feel, whether it concerns HIV/AIDS, your sexuality, or whatever. Names will be changed and addresses will be withheld if required.

Send all material to **Naz Ki Pukaar, The Naz Foundation**, Palingswick House, 241 King Street, London W6 9LP, UK.

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### Opening statements :

One is immediately confronted by the term ALTERNATIVE SEXUAL PREFERENCES. A term which evokes strong reactions in me, and in particular the words alternative and preferences.

The term preference denotes that the person has a choice in their sexual orientation. The term preference is used by religious organisations, institutions and society at large as a weapon to instill further feelings of guilt, shame and isolation.

The term preference is disempowering to those that are struggling to come to terms with their sexual identity and orientation and

The term preference is devoid of any of the aspects that go with a sexual identity and orientation – empowerment, awareness and normality.

Alternative goes against mainstream, which leads to hostility

Alternative makes you believe that you are different, do not fit, out of place

Alternative emphasises isolation so what about sexual orientation, or sexual minorities – which deals with people, their feelings, courage and emotions.

The team members who all come from different backgrounds, decided to conduct the interviews from his/her own perspective, and had debriefing or sharing sessions before and after every interview. It was also agreed upon that the reports would be written from the individual perspectives, and will be accompanied by an executive summary.

A self identified Indian lesbian who has been involved in the women's and lesbian movement for a long time. A writer and poet and a teacher on 'sabbatical'.

An Indian medical doctor involved in community health, involved in the NGO field with a short bout with an international HIV/AIDS NGO. A professional classical dancer to ensure balance in his life, and adding colour to his inputs and interactions

A South Africa activist, with a long history in the national and international field of HIV/AIDS and homosexuality. A self identified HIV positive homosexual, with strong emotional bonds with Mother Africa, and on a 'break' from international activism.



### Personal interview strategy :

The interviews are recorded in a verbatim format, and reflects what I had heard during the interviews, and what I had understood during the interviews. Any misinterpretation is regretted. The main focus of my interviews was five fold.

1. to understand what is happening in India with regards to GLBT
2. to understand what it is that the various GLBT movement or culture is trying to achieve
3. to understand how the groups/organisations/individuals are working together
4. to understand what the challenges, priorities and obstacles are
5. to understand how the issue of HIV/AIDS is impacting the work that they are trying to do

The report (or verbatim's of the interview) are in no way meant to judge, evaluate or favor any one organisation or individual over the other. It is simply an trying to create a personal as well as professional understanding of the situation and to convey this to HIVOS to assist them in making informed choices about the work in this area.

My initial reaction to the TOR was that it was totally unrealistic and that we would not be able to cover all those issues. My reaction was confirmed in that, I believe, we only managed to touch *the tip of the tip of the iceberg*, in this very complex and diverse issue of sexual orientation.

The schedule was demanding, and perhaps also a little unrealistic as it was constant interviewing for 22 days. The interviews themselves were filled with emotion, courage, ignorance, passion, anger, empathy, inspiration and sadness – which all took its toll on me. Dealing with interviews of such intensity day after day, and having to try and do justice to the process by capturing it in report form was difficult and challenging.

If for some reason the emotions of the interviews have not been captured, it is not for lack of trying, but simply because of the inability to transfer such power into words.

A personal thanks has to be extended to my team members, and all the interesting people that I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing. Although I may not agree with your viewpoints, it was an opportunity to put things into perspective – both personally and professionally. The courage and determination with which many of you work under very difficult circumstances touched me greatly, and for that I can only but be grateful.



## Stage 1 – Bangalore :

### Interview with Anita Ganesh - Samvada :

The main focus of SAMVADA is on youth, and the organisation tries to link youth with other social movements or issues via networking, discussion forums/groups, theatre and workshops.

The organisation has fortnightly discussion groups with youths every second Saturday, and these discussions are around specific issues and "hot topics" of the moment. Sexuality forms part of these discussions, and the organisation concentrates on sexuality from a very personal level, and a space for youth to explore the term sexuality and what they term as sexuality. The methodology is to address the issue of sexuality, which is a societal taboo in India from a very personal level, and then take it to the wider social environment and bring it back to the personal level.

The issue of homosexuality has come up in some of the discussions with the students by the students, but this has been more in terms of inquiring. The issue is also brought up (or made available) in the discussion groups by the organisation through various mediums such as films, books and discussions. When the issue does come up whether it is an exploratory or self identifying the staff at the organisation encourages youth to talk about it, and they themselves never "*Look down upon it in a bad way*". They try to respond to it in the broader sense of sexuality.

Personal comment :

The organisation could be useful in terms of 'training' society or making society more aware of the issues and complexities of homosexuality by ensuring that homosexuality is discussed in the sexuality aspect of their work, and by addressing the taboos, misconceptions and discriminatory thoughts and ideologies towards homosexuals by society in general. This would be the one aspect of the multi faceted approach towards sexual orientation/minorities (ASP) work in India.

### Interview with MANASA and SABRANG :

Manasa : Is a dynamic and interesting womens group who has been involved in the womens movement for the last 15 years. Their main form of activity is a newsletter which is issue based and deals with issues such as communalism, gender, globalisation, sexuality – and most of the perspectives are from the feminist perspective).

The organisation has been operating for 15 years without any external funding, as there is a fear that "*taking money will take away our autonomy*". The newsletter and activities of the organisation is therefore funded by personal members donations or from subscription fees of the newsletter. The main target audience is obviously women but specifically teachers, lecturers, and individuals. The newsletter is in the local language "Kannadiga".



*Sabrang : "all colours"*

*Sabrang concentrates on sexuality, and it is an organisation made up of different sexualities and dealing with different sexualities. A group of heterosexuals started the group about 18 months ago with the main aim of addressing the issue of sexuality and concentrating on lesbian, gay identities. They are a voluntary group and are also registered.*

*There are many self identified 'heterosexuals' in the group and the reason is that violations around gay and lesbian rights are seen in the context of Human Rights violations. It is therefore important that the issue of sexuality is seen as any other issue and not only gay people should fight for the rights of gay people, but the more people there are who believe in the cause, and being able to link it to other social issues the fight becomes stronger and more effective.*

*The groups activities are currently limited to public lectures, symposia, documentation as they are also a voluntary organisation with a temporary office space to work from.*

MANSA feels that it is important to work or support the issue of lesbianism (and gay/bi/t communities) because sexuality is an important and critical issue. The issue of lesbianism is seen within the context of other issues related to womens health, empowerment, sexual health. 'Outside opportunities' also allows the issue to be discussed in greater detail and in a more 'safer environment', the screening of "FIRE" is seen by many organisations as having had a positive impact on bringing a lot of the issues to the fore.

Before the issue of ones own sexual identity could be discussed or addressed it is important that a woman is able to feel comfortable with her own sexuality and find the safety and space to accept this and speak about issues such as menstruation, masturbation, sex etc before addressing the issue of LESBIANISM.

Manasa mentioned that they do not have any lesbians in their organisation, but when further questioned about this statement (is it because there are no self identified or self aware lesbians) the response that came back was interesting.

Lesbianism is more than (just) a physical relationship. Women within Manasa are very close to each other and they share secrets, wishes and hopes with each other, they are able to talk and confide in their women friends and many of these relationships are seen as very important and precious to the women involved.

*"one can be very passionate without being physical"*

The family entity and concept of family has to be redefined, as family is integral and part of "Indian-ness", but the family concept is also hypocritical, patriarchal and dictatorial.

The issue of sexuality, and in particular homosexuality has to be seen within the reality of society, in order to abolish myths about it effectively. A lot of this awareness creating begins with personal awareness and acceptance first, before it can even be



expected to impact on, and change the attitudes of greater society. This is done by addressing the issue within the context of adolescents and youth. In particular during sex education or life skills training of school and college programmes, the issue of sexuality and homosexuality is introduced via other mediums.

In terms of addressing the issue in Colleges, students feel that it is important to incorporate the issue via another medium, as trying to address it directly (or calling a spade a spade) would not get very far, and would make people become more offensive before the issue has even been discussed.

The idea of creating a "Film club" on one of the college campus' to address the issue of sexuality via film, and other mediums would create political awareness amongst the students. (or it will become part of the popular culture so often found on college campuses). It could lead to more controversial issues and topics in the broader environment.

### ***Gay culture and the homosexual movement :***

Social change happens through movements, and therefore it is important to link the issue of sexuality to other movements. To date the politicisation of the complex issues have been carried forward and initiated by lesbian/bisexual women groups, and this could be because of the strong women's movements in India, and the politicisation of women through this process.

Gay men on the other hand feel that they are more empowered to participate simply because they are men in an Indian society and culture. However, being gay does not imply that one is gender sensitive or that the gay culture and gay movement is not or cannot be discriminatory towards people within its own movement and culture.

Gay culture in India is linked to consumerism, classism, castism and all the other "isms" that are so closely related to Indian-ness. Gay groups do not come from a sense of political action groups and are therefore not necessarily political<sup>ii</sup>. People interviewed felt that 'a-political-ness' is a problem and in order to bring about change, to appreciate that change and to enjoy that change and freedom it has to be seen as a political issue by gay groups.

*"Activists and other oppression try and silence homosexuality, why should we?"*

The issue of 'taking away silent space', which is interpreted by some as being a safe space has been debated and discussed at great length and the two issues need to be balanced out with each other.

There is also awareness of the difference between and organisation working on sexuality (including issues of homosexuality) and an organisation working specifically on Gay and Lesbian Issues. There was an interesting discussion about the differences (real or perceived) between the different types of groups.



### Gay groups :

- specifically work on gay and lesbian issues
- gay groups attract a certain type of person (gay or msm, very few lesbians are involved)
- gay groups only address certain issues (culture, literature, cruising, sex) and do not address real issues of gay bashing, married men being gay etc

### Sexuality groups/organisations :

- work on the issue of sexuality ( perhaps as homosexuality as a priority, but not in isolation)
- sexuality organisations attract a wider range of people, and therefore a wider support and outreach (women, heterosexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian)
- sexuality organisations address the issues of homosexuality in the wider context

A need was seen by some (although hesitantly) that there is space for both to exist, and both types of organisation have their part to play, and in their own way make a contribution to the movement

*"democratic politics means an effective movement"*

### **Funding, structure and maintaining the organisational autonomy :**

This was an interesting and confusing discussion for me, as there is this strong 'fear' that an organisation would lose its autonomy if it accepts funding and becomes more structured. At the same time there was the recognition that an organisation cannot progress on such a big issue without being organised, and being organised effectively sometimes requires full time staff and full time work, and this cannot be done without funding. (refer to section on funding).

### AIDS money and AIDS politics :

It is important to address the issue of men who have sex with men, AIDS education and AIDS funding. There was concern that some 'gay organisations' are hiding behind the HIV/AIDS banner in order to get funding (as opposed to being able to do their work), and as a result the gay agenda is being overtaken by the HIV/AIDS/MSM agenda.

Identities and sexual identities are new in the field of HIV/AIDS, and AIDS has to be seen as part of sexual health, but these organisations who have climbed onto the "msm" bandwagon are not able to do much apart from creating HIV/AIDS awareness amongst these communities. Even then the effectiveness of this is being questioned as the issue of sexual identity is being ignored or swamped by HIV awareness – *"it cannot be seen in isolation"*



### Interview with Ramdas Rao

The issue of gay liberation is more than just reworking the constitution, it moves beyond that into social movements. The movement should be working for the protection of civil liberties within the legal sense, and also ensure that it expands into the various other social and political movements as well.

The immediate priorities are to repeal Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. To this extent a signature campaign was started in 1996/7 and is still ongoing. A case to repeal this was filed in 1994, and has still not been heard. (*Which is apparently not uncommon in the Indian Court system – it has not been delayed because of its nature, but rather because of the court system, which can take up to 8 years to hear a case.*)

The second priority would be to develop anti-discrimination laws to protect lesbian/bisexual/gay (LBG) people.

There does not seem to be any resistance amongst Human Rights Organisations to **talk** about the issue, and make space available for LBG organisations, however there is still a passivity and indifference to the issue or to do anything more pro active. If an issue is not in the public discourse then it is not taken forward with a real sense of urgency. The difficulties that many LBG face in coming out has prevented the campaign from being strident, and the issue is not seen as visible enough for Human Rights Organisations to take on. There is also still a fair amount of institutional homophobia around these issues.

There is a need to pressurise HR organisations into taking a stand on these issues, and at the same time it is important that it is a co-ordinated campaign. This 'pressure' has to come from LBG organisations, but granted there are major challenges in doing this, especially communalism, which has certainly not stopped other issues from erupting within society. Strong connections between communalism and a society that produces homophobia.

The LBG organisations need to ensure that they are heard loud and clear by HR organisations, by setting up time to discuss the issues and concerns from the perspective of the LBG movement. It is also very important to tie the issue in, or connect it with other social movements, and groups working for these movements. At the same time it is important to create safe space for the gay specific groups with a gay specific identity.

### Interview with Dr Shekar Seshadri – NIMHANS (National Institute for Mental Health and Neurological Sciences)

Sexuality is more than sexual intercourse, and homosexuality is an **orientation**.

The issue of LBG has always been associated with hysteria and disorder. As interns they were not taught how to ask questions related to sexuality, sexual identity or how to take a sexual history from their clients. This led him (in partnership) to develop a awareness training in which medical students on rotation at the NIMHANS are given an orientation of the various issues.



*"how can knowledge be more of a problem than ignorance?"*

Life skills training has to be given in schools, but this in itself creates a number of problems. What is the space and environment within the school like, what is the understanding and awareness of the teacher about his/her own sexuality, what is the awareness of the parents about their own sexuality, and indeed their viewpoints on it.

Sexuality is often seen in a 'negative sense' (rape, violence against women, child abuse etc) and needs also to be seen in a more positive aspect. Children are taught from a very young age, that to be masculine you have to strive for sexual conquest. The implications for this are that the girls(women) could suffer abuse and violence, and the boys could have increased high risk behavior.

The training is therefore also aimed at parents, (in terms of counselling and empowerment) so that parents are OK with the issue being discussed in schools. Usually schools expect parents to deal with the issue of sexuality, and parents expect the schools to deal with it.

In terms of NIMHANS, the diagnosis of homosexuality as a mental disorder was removed from the 'books' 15 – 20 years ago (*Please refer to further interview with Samraksha*). When a patient is referred to the Psychiatric department for counselling or assistance, the viewpoint that is taken is that the person is 'normal' and born that way, and the only help that they need, and what they get is to assist the client in legitimising his/her sexual orientation with the family.

The health sector has a huge role to play in making space available for persons of 'alternative sexual orientations' in order for them to be able to explore and develop their sexuality. This has to happen by making society more accepting, and making students more comfortable and open with their own sexuality.

*"We should reassure parents that sex education is not a how to do it, and that sexuality is not only about making love, and making love is not only about intercourse"*

Dr Seshadri is trying to influence institutions within the "medical institution" by meeting with other departments and discussing the issue, and wants to make sure that it gets introduced as a mandatory subject during the students rotations. It is a long process, and should be introduced in a gentle slow way as the language for sexuality is very different to what people perceive sexuality to be about.

There should also be greater use made of the mass media with this regard. A person sees many movies where a girl has been abused, raped or harassed and is given the blame for having caused it or asked for it. There is no movie in which the parents say that it was not her fault, and as a family they will get through it. A young women when sexually harassed, abused, raped is scarred for life – not just emotionally, but in terms of being impure, not having a future and not being a suitable bride anymore, whereas a man has a different and less crushing issues to deal with.



### Personal comment :

This interview seemed almost too good to be true, and I questioned whether these were his personal feelings or those of NIMHANS. If they were his personal feelings and viewpoints, then how far does it reach within the institutions that he is working in. He certainly is a very valuable 'asset' to have, and more people like him are required to bring about meaningful and far reaching change.

### Interview with Good as you (G.A.Y.)

G.A.Y has been in existence for 5 years and during the first 2-3 years the group struggled. The group, interestingly enough was started off by an American Woman who is no longer in the country or part of the group.

The group meets every Thursday and has no structure as such. It has been kept alive by its long standing members and is in essence a voluntary organisation. The aim of the organisation is to create a space for alternative sexualities and minority sexualities. It publishes a newsletter called *Sangha Mitra* and in a touching and inspiring editorial it says

*"LesBiGay lifestyles supported and voiced through these pages. Personal stories, fiction poetry, strongly worded articles and more. Offering a medium for every voice. A voice for every problem faced. And so much more. These are the voices of men and women who are beginning to understand the meaning of their identity. Understand that it is now in their hands to liberate themselves. To choose for themselves the path that will lead to their happiness....."*

The strong points and needs of the group were identified as

- one could be yourself within the group
- it is a democratic group, and diverse in its makeup and opinions
- the organisation is a 'stepping stone' for many LesBiGay people in creating the opportunity for people to become comfortable with their own identity first, before identifying how to move on
- it provides a valuable space for people to come and meet people who are the "same as them"
- need for information to men about finding ways and avenues of meeting other people in similar positions as themselves, or locating 'spaces' where it is safe to express ones sexuality
- resources for LesBiGay people to read and access information about their own situations
- outreach to other LesBiGay people, providing appropriate relevant information to them and people close to them about the issues facing sexuality and sex
- Financial support to become more independent and structured

G.A.Y is seen as providing a social space first and foremost and there was discussion (and still needs to be a lot more) as to whether it should remain to provide a social space, or whether it should move into becoming and providing a political space. The other option is that they network with other organisations to deal with political issues while still maintaining the social space within the organisation.



*"To see and meet another gay man who identifies as a gay man is such and empowering and powerful experience"*

It was felt by some members of the group that if G.A.Y was to move into activism and politics to soon it could scare people away from the organisation, and deny them that social and safe space which is required. There was also acknowledgement that activism has to be centered around social spaces.

Yet again there was interesting discussions about the need for Gay men to sensitise themselves about womens issues and in particular lesbian issues. Because a man is gay it does not mean to say that he is more sensitive or aware of the issues related to lesbians.

*"If G.A.Y wishes to attract lesbians and provide that safe and social space to lesbians as well it needs to do more than say we are pleased when lesbians come to the organisation",*

There was however more acceptance of the need for funding if the organisation is to grow and develop and become more effective in what it is trying to achieve.

*G.A.Y is all dressed up and has nowhere to go...."*

#### Interview with SAMRAKSHA

*A very emotional and disturbing interview.*

This interview was difficult to write about, and I will therefore concentrate on the two areas that caused a deal of emotions and discomfort within me.

The organisation is reputed to be one of the more credible and influential NGOs working in HIV/AIDS. They primarily offer counselling, as well as training counsellors to work in STD clinics.

It is clear that the counsellor or counselling programme does not deal in great deal with issues of sexuality, and personal prejudices of the counsellors. This was highlighted during the interview process. When a client present himself as a 'troubled' homosexual/bisexual or msm, and has trouble in his behavior and requests from the counsellor that he wants to change, he is referred to the NIMHANS institute for "**behavior therapy**". Behavior therapy was described as the person seeing a psychiatrist and then being shown pictures of naked men. Every time that the client would react to these pictures (by getting an erection one assumes) he would receive a shock.

When further questioned as to what the counsellor believes in terms of whether the person could actually change, the response was that it depends on the individuals motivation, and that this problem does have a solution. Counselling tends to concentrate on sexual practice versus sexuality, and that sexual practice is limited to condom use. There is no mention of negotiating skills when it comes to talking about



safer sex for women. A lot of emphasis is placed on the women to ensure that her partner uses a condom when they have sex. When a woman presents herself with an STD it is suggested to her that it could be because she is unhygienic, or that her partner is possibly having an affair. There is no enquiry or possibility that the woman could also have been having an affair.

There was also the feeling that they could not speak to Christians or Muslims about condoms, as it was difficult to do this, and they never abstain from sex.

The counsellors are trained by various institutions including NIMHANS and the London Lighthouse.

### **Stage 2 Chennai – (Madras)**

#### **Interview with Saker at SIAPP offices.**

*This was a very interesting, encouraging and inspiring interview.*

Saker immediately came out as being HIV positive and gay. He explained about his life story and how he first realised that he was homosexual. He was aware of his sexual orientation from a very young age, but in 1993 his parents arranged a marriage for him. Soon after this he was diagnosed with Herpes Zoster and was then diagnosed as being HIV Positive.

He did not want to go through with the marriage, partly because he knew of his sexual orientation and also because of his HIV Status. He convinced his parents to call off the marriage. Soon after this he took the brave decision to go public about his diagnosis **AND** his sexuality. The reason he says is the desire to educate and serve society, to educate it and to caution them about the risks.

He then started an organisation with the assistance of SIAPP, and the organisation that he started is very grassroots in terms of their activities. All of the people that come to the organisation are homosexual or bi-sexual, and most of those that identify as bisexual are married.

The organisation works with Gay and transsexual populations, and in particular the boys that are into commercial work. They also primarily focus on the middle/lower and lower class. The organisation attempts to meet the very basic needs of the people that they work with, and the people that work for the organisation. In their office they have space for cooking, eating, dancing and listening to music as they feel that it is important to create an environment where people want to come and can feel as if they belong. A lot of men enjoy coming to the organisation, because it allows them a space to be who they are – a space to express themselves whether it is wearing make up, wearing a Sari or meeting people who are into the same thing as they are. When they are at home they are expected to “be a man” and fulfill the role of being a man.



The dynamics of the group was very interesting in terms of many of the Kotis or workers of the organisation are 'married' to other members of the groups, and quite openly refer to them as 'my husband'. They also frequently have 'marriage ceremonies' amongst couples.

There is a fairly large amount of HIV positive people within the organisation, as well as on the staff. They only see gay doctors and refuse to go to the STD clinics or government hospitals. All their referrals are only to these gay doctors. Many of the Kotis are transsexuals who often wear Sari's and wear make up while working the respective cruising areas. They are able to attract clients more easily than their obviously male counterparts, as they have a way of concealing the penis within the Sari. The client is only interested in anal intercourse anyway.

There seems to be a silent acceptance of what they are and the lifestyle that they lead. Only a few amongst them actually talk about it, and mostly their discussions focus on the physical act of sex. A number of the 'husbands' within the group are also married to women, have children and at the same time have a third relationship with a 'husband' of their own. In between these men also cruise in the popular spots (which are not the cruising parks), but areas around the TV tower, train station and carriages, market and channels/beach areas. Many of these men do not only lead a double existence but what can only be described as a multiple existence. The one life supports the other (financially, emotionally, sexually) and in terms of societies expectations of the man.

'Husbands' in the organisation, who themselves have 'husbands' do it more for economical reasons, as most of these 'husbands' are wealthier and from a different class background. They support their koti financially, and the koti often travels with the 'husband' when he goes on business trips. The 'husband' often supports the koti's family financially. The koti is however expected to perform lengthy sexual sessions with the 'husband', and do sexual things that the 'husbands' do not get at home.

An interesting phenomena was in relation to bisexual men who are married to women. Often they are not able to have sexual intercourse with their wives, as they say

*"I am not a pure man, (do not feel attracted to a women, and cannot get an erection) and then my 'husband' (who is a pure man) has sexual intercourse with my wife".*

[This could be seen as a form of sexual abuse towards the women, but from the man's perspective he is fulfilling the needs of his wife, and therefore doing what is expected of him as a husband).

Interaction and access to other gay groups is seen as a barrier because of class and language. They are not accepted by other groups, and therefore they have created a small world within their own realities. The organisation is not political active, nor does it align to any other social movement. They are meeting the immediate needs of their community, and providing a space and education to express their sexuality in their own way.



They do a lot of face to face education in terms of meeting people at their place of work or in the cruising areas. Sarek is open to everyone in the organisation and community and often uses his own experience to educate and warn others. They have also employed women to do door to door education to housewives about HIV and its implications.

### Interview with Indian Community Welfare Organisation - ICWO

The Organisation is funded by USAID and the Tamil Nadu's Government's AIDS control society. Interestingly, the aspect that the AIDS control society is funding is the m.s.m intervention.

The msm programme started in September 1998, and they have identified 72 different cruising areas where they do outreach, (HIV education) and distribute condoms. The aim of this programme is to prevent the spread of HIV amongst men who have sex with men. The interview in the beginning was quite official, and questions were answered with the appropriate and proper language (NGO speak).

The project has a Director, Project Co-ordinator and contact persons. All contact persons are either homosexual, bisexual (self identified), or koti identified. They are given a "skills development training programme" before doing any field work. The training programme does not concentrate on sexuality at all, and is primarily designed to give interpersonal skills development, and train the contact persons on how to gather information and report on the information that they have gathered. The contact persons need to be good in communication, self identified homosexual or bisexual and have some interpersonal skills.

(We requested time to meet the field workers). During the interview process we got a better understanding of how it is that they do their work. They work in the cruising areas (primarily the parks) and would introduce themselves to men walking around. They would first socialise with the man, and then broach the subject of HIV and safer sex. If the 'client' refuses the condom they then try to explain the dangers of unprotected sex, but they do not force the 'client' to take a condom.

The team then decided to personalise the questions a lot more, and direct them to the contact persons within their own contexts and realities.

- Those resource persons that are married, do not inform their wives either of their sexuality or of the work that they are doing. Many of them have other jobs as well. They do not tell their wives, as society and their wives will not be accepting of it, and will see them as a lesser man.

*"I enjoy being gay, but I also love my wife and children"*

- If society or a community knows that a husband is gay then his wife will be harassed, as it will be seen that the husband is not performing his 'husbandly' (sexual) duties, and lead to sexual advances and come on's from other men towards the wife. Even if he fathers a child, it will not be seen as his own.



- When the question was asked to the men who are fathers, what they would do if their child comes to them and tell them that they are gay, the response was an emphatic NO, they will not accept it or their child.
- Many of them said that they were still interested in sex with a women

*"What I do is different to what I speak, people are only interested in what I speak and not what I do"*

The contact persons also spoke about the harassment that they were facing from the police in the parks. (Even though it is a Government funded initiative), and a number of them have had to pay bribes or perform sex with the policeman. They say that there is a lot of police harassment partly due to the low wages that the police receive, and also because the police work on a quota system; in that they have to file a certain number of cases every month.

It was unclear as to whether the contact persons also actually indulge in sexual activities while doing their work, and trying to address larger issues of resisting the pressure to get married or the understanding of sexuality was not very successful.

#### Interview with SIAAP

SIAPP was initially set up to be an HIV/AIDS prevention programme, with its primary focus on counselling, truckers and care.

It is now a programme which supports 4 other focus areas/programmes :

P.A.G.E – Positive Action Group Echo  
 W.A.D.S – Women and Development Society  
 A.A.F.O.B – AIDS Action forum of the blind  
 S.W.A.M.M – Society Welfare Association for marginalised me

SIAPP has initiated a huge counselling programme with the support of HIVOS (The counselling programme will not be dealt with in great detail in this report. It will however be discussed with regards to the terms of reference of this study group).

The issue of sexuality within the training of the counsellors (and ultimately the trainers) is *"a small component in the training, it is not absent, but it is also not their"*. The programme is trying to get counsellors to look at their own sexuality in a limited way, but not in a position to deal with the clients sexuality. It is seen as a process of integration.

Gay and bisexual men are included in the programme to be trained as counsellors and go back into their communities to become counsellors. It was stated that the issues about sexuality and identity would be identified by these people and addressed accordingly. This would then lead to an gradual integration of the issues of sexuality. (This was not quite clear). The interview highlighted the need for issues of sexuality and identity within counselling training, even if the counselling was concentrating on pre/post test.



There was a number of community representatives at the meeting, and we discussed the concept of counselling in the field. (as opposed to counselling in an office or STD clinic).

"Counselling" is a term that is not understood in the field, but it was clear that there is a fair amount of peer counselling happening within the various communities. This happens in terms of discussing issues and concerns with each other, trying to educate one another on the aspects of HIV/AIDS and safer sex and 'looking out' for one another when people are working or cruising. *(these are people from the field, who have not been employed in a counselling capacity, or for that matter any other capacity, but are integral to the work)*. There was also an interesting dynamic in terms of sex workers and gay men communities coming closer together through the project, or the work of the project.

Sex workers did not know what gay meant, or what it involved – but now that the two communities have had an opportunity to talk to each other and understand the various issues they have become 'friends'. Sex workers usually have different hunting grounds to gay men, but the two communities have started inviting each other to their own hunting grounds, which has resulted in them looking out for each other, and identifying suitable clients or partners for the various identity. They feel that this has created more of an awareness and understanding of the various issues faced by each other, and has brought them closer together. Women are often vulnerable in their hunting areas, but feel safer by the presence of 'men' in the area, as they offer a sense of security.

#### The SWAMM project :

The project works under the umbrella of HIV , as this is more socially acceptable. It allows the workers to be active within their own community without having to self identify or come out as being gay.

The training concentrates on two specific target groups, namely 'money boys' and men who have sex with other men for pleasure. The training covers areas of safer sex, condoms, group building, and dealing with police harassment.

The SIAPP project waits for needs and issues as identified by the various groups that they work with (which is understandable as this is a fairly new project). However, it seems as if the project is more about HIV/AIDS awareness, safer sex and economical survival than awareness of sexuality, gay liberation and rights involved with LBG issues. This is not per se a negative thing, and depends on the focus of the organisation or group.

#### Interview with Sahodaran :

The organisation is promoted as a drop in center for msm's. It is totally msm, and people who do not identify as being msm, bisexual or gay are not welcome at the organisation. *(It was stated that heterosexual men would see it more as an opportunity to have employment or be involved with a 'hot political issue' as opposed to being involved because of commitment)*.



The center has recently started a Thursday evening discussion group for gay men (*men who identify as being gay, and this was explained as being upper middle, and upper classes of men, who are educated and speak English*). The gay group does not want to identify or mix with the koti group of men.

The project has 5 koti's who work as outreach workers in the cruising areas. They do HIV/AIDS outreach within these communities. The Sahodaran center offers a drop in center for the outreach workers as well as the men that they work with. It attempts to address their basic needs in terms of fulfilling their identities (dancing classes, acting, developing street plays), as well as giving them a 7 days training programme before they actually work in the field.

The programme seems to concentrate on sexuality and identity in terms of addressing the issues of who they are, why they are like that, what they feel and what they think.

*"The training programme goes down to the Koti's level"*

It was explained that the koti's are a very fractured community, and a community with a low self esteem and worth. It is therefore felt that it is important to address those needs of empowerment and community development before trying to address the wider issue of being part of a gay movement and gay liberation. However the issue of gay and lesbian rights is addressed to a certain degree in addressing issues of police harassment and community development.

*"The organisation does not do anything in terms of gay politics and gay identity as it is only the educated who understand the concept of gay identity".*

The gay group which happens on a Thursday evening is also supposedly the only gay group in Madras. There is not much networking or collaboration with other msm organisations for various reasons including personalities and different approaches and structures.

Personal :

Organisation that is doing something for the various communities koti and gay. However a lot of it is under the banner of HIV/AIDS awareness and not much in terms of the greater picture. Sadly there is also no discussion or interaction between the koti and gay group within the same organisation, and the obvious and blatant exclusion of men because of their heterosexuality.



**Interview with Vina Mazumdar (Check with shalini)**

*"Lesbian rights are virtually impossible"*

There are some form of gay organisations in India, and lesbian groups are small and limited in outreach. The reaction to gays is different to those of lesbians, and there are many reasons for this.

The women's movement and the women's study movement has been 'vocal' on the issue of lesbianism, but do not feel that it is a priority in the Indian context. On principle the movements agree with the freedom of expression and the freedom of the individual. However, most people and womens organisations prefer not to get involved in a discourse that could impact and effect other issues 'negatively'. Issues such as struggle with politics and culture, globalisation and the social structures. It is felt that it is not the time that the womens movement can afford to fracture further 'consensus' on national issues. (They are trying to address priority and basic issues first, and it has been a long struggle in achieving consensus on these issues). There are substantial and widespread divisions within the women's movements, both ideological and strategically.

It is doubtful whether support for the lesbian movement will be more than support in principle. However this also depends on what kind of support. Relatively less high profile activities will be more easily supported. Issues such as doing research, as the current information base is small (and therefore the needs and priority issues of the lesbian community are less clear and visible).

*"Research information is a weapon to mobilisation and having issues addressed"*

If issues are connected and related to other rights (rights to livelihood, rights to public employment etc) would also more easily be taken up by the women's movement. Trying to talk about sexuality in the context that the majority live in is not going to help, as the majority is more concerned by basic issues of poverty, ill health, illiteracy, employment etc, and they concentrate on getting a feeling of self esteem and self worth. The majority of women are not aware of their rights, they are aware of their responsibilities, as these have been enforced within family, society and religion. Women therefore need education on their rights.

*"life cannot bring you everything you want  
we need to maintain ourselves and our dignity"*

It was felt that trying to address the issue of lesbianism more proactively (as opposed to just in principle and without the above mentioned issues) would be taking the discourse to a level that takes the movement backwards as opposed to forward, and perhaps even to the point of reactionary.

In terms of the gay movement and 'homo-sexuality', it was felt that this has been wide spread and can be traced back within India's history. Society is aware that it does happen, but they do not make a big issue out of it, it is not spoken about. There is no cultural reaction to 'homo-sexuality' (or gayness) as it has existed forever.



Interview with Dipa – MacAurthur Foundation :

The MF does not have a specific policy on LBG issues, but are open to funding sexual minority groups. Initially the MF did not fund openly gay groups in India, but since 1993, and because of the incidence of HIV, the foundation has become more open to issues and proposals from and about sexual minorities.

The concern of supporting openly gay and lesbian organisations is addressed by referring to it as "initiatives around sexual minorities", as it does not always help if the issue is introduced in an open 'in your face' manner.

The controversy created by the film 'fire', was addressed by a number of larger organisations as it was seen as an issue of 'freedom of expression' as opposed to an 'issue of lesbianism'.

There is also the danger that sexuality is being seen as sexual orientation only, and therefore the foundations focus is on something that is tangible, concrete, sustainable, and could have impact and influence on the community that it perpetuates to help. It is important that gay/lesbian and msm organisations learn to work with each other in order to bring about any meaningful change on this issue.

**Stage 3 - Delhi:**

Interview with Shivananda Khan :

Shivananda spoke about the work that the NAZ Foundation UK was doing in India and South Asia.

India is a homo-erotic culture, and within this homo-erotic culture is a sub gender referred to as Koti (Queens). Koti's themselves see it as a gender as opposed to an identity, and they often use their effeminate behavior to attract men, by accentuating their walk (swagger) and the way in which they talk. Koti's focus on anal penetration, and a real man does not touch the genitals of the Koti, he just fucks (insert and release). Interestingly Koti's also sometimes have penetrative sex with each other – but this is seen as 'shameful' and is not spoken about amongst themselves or each other.

Being Koti identified also encourages anal sex, and the project is trying to educate and encourage the koti's to shift the thinking in such a way that it moves away from anal sex, and into more of a sexual identity (in which other forms of sexual acts are explored).

There is also separation and division between the koti's and gay identified men. Koti's see gay men as secret koti's and gay men see koti's as effeminate men, not real men. The gay movement is class based, and primarily developed and supported by middle and upper middle class self identified gay men – with English as the language of communication.

The repeal of section 377 of the Indian Penal Code System should not be seen as a gay issue, but as a sexual health issue. Sexual health is a right that everyone in the country has claim to. It is felt that section 377 should be repealed, not modified, but



also with the understanding that it could take away from other real 'basic' issues, or make them invisible ; issues such as harassment, black mail, sexual abuse and rape etc.

In order for men to come out as gay there needs to be a social economical structure that would support them to come out, and to this degree the NAZ foundation is trying to encourage the establishment of emergency shelters, setting up of employment networks, subsidised treatment. In so doing they hope to create mini social welfare structures within the community.

**The msm issue has become an identity**, and the gay movement is being replaced by msm identity as it impacts on gay culture. To have a gay identity one needs a language that is created and could be accessed by all. There is also the danger (as was the case in Indonesia) that when gay and lesbian issues become more of a public issue then anti gay violence increases, and that homo-bonding (men showing affection towards each other) declines, as these men are afraid of being identified as gay.

The NAZ foundation therefore trains project leaders to advocate within the gay network, and train "friendship builders" within the community. All these men are msm's or identify as bisexual, gay or koti. The "friendship builders" develop friendships with men in the cruising areas, and as a result become a lot closer to the men that they work with – the relationship is therefore seen on a more equal footing, as opposed to a provider (fieldworker) and a client (man cruising).

This system also helps with the monitoring of treatment compliance with regards to STD's, as the "friendship builders" develop a relationship within the msm community. They become confidants who are trusted and allow for ongoing education and empowerment through this process.

The men (msm's, gay identified and koti's) that NAZ works with are 'taught' how to have sex. Within the community sex with another man is largely seen as a release as opposed to desire and passion. The man available for sex may not necessarily be seen as an object of desire, but his anus or his mouth is seen as a form of release, or a way of achieving a release. The sexual act does not last long and is usually rough. (Masturbation is seen as a waste of semen). Therefore there is training on how to have sex in terms of masturbating, oral sex, penetrative intercourse and how to increase the pleasure value as opposed to seeing it as an act of release.

The project also wishes to set up (and has set up a few) specialised STD treatment clinics, as there is a great deal of ignorance in treating anal STD's (not just in India, worldwide), as well as the fear of discrimination and refusal of treatment by doctors in mainstream clinics and hospitals. (*Because of the taboo and the ignorance around treating anal STD's as no one seems to know how to treat anal STD's*). It is therefore important that the advocacy role is improved in training doctors on how to treat STD's in gay or msm men, and to get them to train other doctors through appropriately developed training programmes. Students in medical colleges also need to be educated in this aspect.



Condoms on the other hand are being seen as a family planning device, as opposed to a recreational device. Condoms need to be encouraged in terms of recreational pleasure and not only in terms of family planning. However, they in themselves create problems in that they are not always readily available (hence the need to educate to move away from anal intercourse), are not used properly. Condom distribution is not sustainable as the demand is greater than the supply in India – especially with the large population of sexually active men.

South Asia is seen as a multi-gendered society, but often funders are locked into a bi-polar gender world. Field work is not just about handing out condoms on a one-to-one basis, as this does not sustain behavior change. **Behavior change is not an individual action, but a community collective action**, and therefore the approach cannot consist of only one activity (condoms) but needs to involve the community in its development, and funders need to realise this.

#### Interview with TARSHI project.

The project has a sexual health helpline that operates 5 days a week from 09h00 – 17h00. Since its inception the helpline has received more than 30 000 calls. The majority of the calls received are from men.

The project is described as only for women and it is run by women. Women are at the core of the organisations focus and men are on the peripheral. The incoming calls are documented, as one cannot collect the same type of information from people if this had to be done via one on one interviews. The research is therefore used as an advocacy tool and to increase peoples knowledge.

The organisation networks and collaborates with a number of other organisations/institutions that are working in the field of sexuality and sexual health. Sexuality in this country is now more spoken about compared to 4 years ago, but it is still only addressed seriously if there is a 'crisis' or related to a 'crisis' e.g. HIV/AIDS, abortion, child abuse, sexual violence. Sexuality is therefore only being seen as a sexual behavior.

The counsellors (all women) are trained about their own values, comforts and discomforts around sexuality and are told that it is OK to have their own personal values, but these cannot be allowed to interfere with or intrude onto their clients. An interesting viewpoint on the "FIRE" issue is that lesbian women did not want to talk about the movie in fear of being identified as lesbian, but it created the opportunity for heterosexual women to speak about lesbianism.

When talking about sexuality too many people are inclined to focus more on 'negative aspects' and failing to see the positive aspects of sexuality. Issues of well being, desire, passion are part of sexuality, but are not being covered by either training programmes or media/society



### Interview with NAZ Foundation India :

The NAZ foundation (India) was initially started as a msm programme, but it was soon realised that NAZ could not keep its focus only on msm initiatives.

The programme now concentrates on the following aspects ;

**HIV/STD Clinic :** It is a clinic that operates on 2 evening during the week as well as 1 afternoon. It is both for diagnostic and treatment purposes, and the clinic has links with various laboratories and counselling centers in hospitals .

**Truckers intervention :** This intervention has a huge component of msm activity. Field workers were moved from the msm project into the truckers programme, which had a positive impact on the project. There is a lot of clinic based work as truckers come in for STD treatment and follow up.

**Peer Education Project :** Working with Colleges, teachers and churches

**School Programme :** Address issues of sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS

**Male and Female Sex workers Programme :** The programme is Delhi based.

Over and above this there is a gay men and lesbian telephone counselling service as well as support group meetings and space for Gay Men, Lesbians and Kothi's. These initiatives are not part of NAZ Foundation (India), but space and technical assistance and some resources are being provided by the foundation.

The gay telephone help line was first started, but it was receiving a lot of calls from lesbian and bisexual women, which was the motivation to start the lesbian and bisexual help line.

**Hamraz :** The gay telephone hot line service, is a bilingual service and operates during certain hours of the week. All the counsellors are volunteers. Most of the calls are from gay identified men or bisexual men who have issues of coming out, guilt, wanting to meet other men etc.

This resulted in the creation of a gay men's support group (Hamrayi), which meets one afternoon every week. They organise frequent parties, and advertise in various forums, including on the internet "Gay Delhi". The group advertise via advertisements and flyers, and have not had any serious comebacks or backlashes from the advertising.

**Sangini :** Support for lesbian and bisexual women

This service provides telephone counselling for 2 hours per week on Tuesday's and a support group meeting twice a month.

There are a variety of issues that are discussed on the telephone counselling service, which vary from fear, depression, wanting a sex change (as some woman have been led to believe that to be able to love another woman they have to have a sex



change), to calls inquiring as to whether Sangini provides other women for threesomes with their husbands.

The terminology used for advertising the service is both direct and indirect (lesbians and women loving women). The counsellors are all volunteers, and identify as lesbian or bisexual. Advertising is wide, including the handing out of brochures and pamphlets in public spaces (public toilets, bus stops), as well as through the newspapers (who are prepared to advertise for them)

The support group meets on Saturday afternoons, and is made up primarily of referrals from the helpline. The group creates space for women to meet other women, and discuss issues such as 'month of sex' in which they talk about their bodies, sexual awareness, masturbation, sex toys, what to use if there are not sex toys and watch porn videos as a form of learning and self discovering.

There are also some outdoor activities planned such as parties and discussions.

The Koti group :

The NAZ foundation has created a safe space for the Koti's to meet. The group is self identified Koti and within the safe space that has been created the group identifies its needs and priorities. From there on the activities are planned accordingly. Majority of Koti's do not speak English and come from a different class background to the men that identify as gay or bisexual.

There is no interaction between the Koti group and the gay group and vice versa.

Both the Hamraz and Sangini counselling telephone service are difficult to access by members of the public as they are only open during certain hours of the week, and then for a limited space of time. The counsellors are voluntary and therefore it is not always possible to have a full team on duty to respond to the calls.

There is no interaction or crossover between the gay and lesbian groups. They feel that it is important to get and identify own space and priorities first before any cross over or collaboration can happen. At the same time they do realise that they are not free until everyone is free

*"I, as a lesbian am not free if a Koti is beaten up by the police"*

#### Interview with Gita Thadani (Film maker)

Gita has a long history in being an 'out' lesbian, and has very been involved in instrumental in the formation of a number of gay and lesbian groups.

The 'movement' as such was given a starting push by the International AIDS Conference which was held in Delhi 1992. It was the first time that there was the opportunity for gay and lesbians to meet in a public fora, and although there was 'official discrimination' in the conference programme, there was a euphoric feeling amongst the gays and lesbians as it was seen as the beginning of the 'movement'.



The gay and lesbian activities during the conference received a fair amount of liberal media coverage.

After this historical event they realised that there was the need to talk about sexuality in a cultural, societal and historical context. The NAZ Foundation was started as a 'cover organisation' for gay and lesbian activities as gay and lesbian organisations could not register as such. The NAZ foundation therefore had two foci; HIV/AIDS and Gay and Lesbian aspects (looking at it from the historical perspective). However the Gay and Lesbian aspect of this within the NAZ foundation collapsed and the NAZ foundation then concentrated solely on HIV/AIDS issues.

There is a lot of sexism and insensitivity amongst the gay movement and little or no dialogue between the lesbians and the gays. The onset of HIV/AIDS has given people the momentum to talk about sexuality, but this has now become a gay male issue, and there is no space for lesbian within the AIDS movement. Lesbian women therefore feel that they can be more effective within the larger women's movement. There is little space within the women's movements for lesbian issues to be discussed and tackled – more than just being supported in principle.

Public spaces in India are male, without a support structure or something local there is not much that women can do in terms of public spaces. Aspects of Indian culture (Bollywood and Religious culture) are not taking up the issues of sexuality, and lesbian and gay temples are being defaced.

Gays and Lesbians are being told that there is no LBG culture in history. Gita has come up with a lot of evidence to prove that it does exist, and has existed throughout history. In some instances the gay and lesbians have a far more positive sexual tradition than what is believed.

*"historically we do not exist, therefore you do not have the right to exist"*

Funders are not keen to fund films which concentrate on the historical perspective and history of gays and lesbians. Partly because there are limited channels of distribution and outreach within India, and partly because the distribution channels within India are so complex. In response to this different models of culture need to be developed (and understood and supported by funders).

The 'movement' as such is a middle class movement, as people from the middle classes are those privileged enough to create a space. Nothing is going to change, if people do not come out. There is little or no space to deal with issues externally at the moment, and when this happens the issues become internal and as a result the movement does not grow.

*"People **have** to come out ! People in the middle classes are the ones who have the privilege of coming out"*

The only culture that the gay men have is the cruising culture, and men have more public spaces to express this. Lesbians and bisexual women do not have these spaces. At the same time the issue of safety is becoming more and more important as popular culture is brutal and growing. Therefore networks of solidarity need to be



developed and strengthened. The movement is not going to grow and develop as it is only being referred to, or categorised as men who have sex with men. This is possibly because of the onset of AIDS. AIDS is also money politics and as a result everyone seems to be getting into the issue of men who have sex with men.

Gay and lesbian activists are feeling isolated, leaving the country and dropping out. There needs to be ways of keeping these activists involved and supporting them in the work that they are trying to do. Scope needs to be given to the movement to grow without being involved in power politics and fighting with each other.

Interview with Campaign for lesbian rights and DARE :

The women's movement has never really taken up the issue of sexuality, but it is felt that when lesbians themselves (as opposed to the womens movement) take up the issue the response has been quite positive. The lesbians cannot expect the womens movement to do the work for lesbians, although lesbians are part of the women's movement. Although the women's movement is finding it difficult to deal with the issue in a meaningful way (for reasons described in other interviews), the important thing is that there is a willingness to take it on.

The term lesbian is more widely used, accepted and understood in the middle and middle upper classes of society. The group also feels that the terms lesbian is a rally cry for the lesbian and bisexual women to mobilise – it is a clear term and has no confusion about it.

Interestingly, most of the cases that have been reported in the mainstream press about lesbianism has come from the rural areas. Fact sheets about lesbianism need to be translated into local languages and circulated within rural areas as well. Mainstream magazines are talking about the issue in a factual and meaningful way, which contributes to the discourse of lesbianism.

For a variety of reasons public acceptance is increasing and the hostility that was expected is not materialising. However being personally out within the community and what the reaction to these are have not been tested as a number of the women that we spoke to are not 'out' within their communities. (although they may be out within their immediate families).

The lesbian movement wants visibility; to be part of a society; have the opportunity to speak for themselves and enter into debate with as many groups and segments of society as possible with regards to the issue of lesbianism.

In terms of law it is felt that it is more important to educate lesbians that section 377 of the IPC cannot be used against them. (This law is often used by family members to threaten or scare lesbians). It is important to decriminalise the issue of lesbianism and to engage people in the debate. In so doing it is felt that the isolation will be broken, coalitions will be built and more effective outreach will take place.

The Coalition for Lesbian Rights does not want funding at this stage, as it is felt that funding will take away from the spirit of volunteerism. Receiving contributions from the public, friends and 'members' allows the group to focus activities in a clearer manner. The strength of the initiative lies in the fact that it is a campaign, and does



not have to deal with issues of leadership and beaurocracy. The communication happens within the group and via e-mail, and it is felt that funders have their own agendas and would want to create icons from the movement. Funding could cause people to leave the campaign.

DARE on the other hand needs funds to achieve what they want to achieve with their documentation center, and require staff to work on the center on a full time basis.

#### Lesbian Movement and the Gay Movement :

The 'movements' tried to work together in the past, but this has not happened for different reasons. (Personalities, different ideologies, different ways of working and thinking), and it was felt that the two movements need to develop individually and then come together to be "a force to be reckoned with".

Lesbians need to work within the women's movement, but also identify that they need to create initiatives with gay groups as well. An effort also needs to be made from them to pursue the issue of collaboration with the gay movement as opposed to waiting for them to approach the lesbian movement.

On the question of whether they believed that there was such a thing as a gay movement the response was an ambiguous NO. One of the reasons given was that funding priorities are confirming gay issues as an HIV/AIDS issues. There were attempts to do political work as a collective, but this has primarily fallen on individuals as opposed to a collective. It was felt that the reason for the gay community being so closely linked with the issue of HIV/AIDS is because they were identified as a target group in terms of HIV/AIDS prevention in the beginning of the epidemic. It is therefore difficult to see the gay movement as separate from the HIV/AIDS movement.

#### Stage 4 - Mumbai

##### Interview with SPARROW :

The organisation is not doing anything specific on lesbianism, as there are other important issues within the womens movement that needs to be done and collected before the issue of lesbianism becomes a priority.

The organisation however does support the issue in principle, and if it is brought up in discussion during the workshops or in their research they address the issue appropriately.

As for placing the issue of lesbianism within the womens movement there was a feeling that there has not been much scope for it with the movement.

*"not the appropriate moment to carry it forward"*

SPARROW holds a series of workshops in which they question stereotypes and do not ignore the possibility of same sex relationships, and therefore create a climate for questions and discussion on the issue if it is brought up.



### Interview with Stree Sangam :

Stree Sangam is a support group for lesbian and bisexual women and was formed after an attempt to make their presence felt in the men's movement was ignored. A group of lesbians got together to give support to each other and to make their presence felt. The group organises national retreats to give the opportunity for women to meet each other, support and share with each other and share and define political visions. There is some tension within the group between the social space focus and the political vision focus.

The political vision is that the agenda and needs of lesbians has to be addressed through the womens movement, as there is no lesbian movement outside of the women's movement. Part of this agenda is getting specific rights for gays and lesbians; the right to marriage, decriminalisation, anti-discrimination (*although it is felt that it is difficult to talk about this or achieve this as many of the lesbians are so invisible*).

Lesbians who are visible within the wider context are from middle classes and their realities of their lives are different to the women on the ground. It is felt that the lesbians in the middle classes need to make an attempt to understand the issue of women on the ground and make them visible as well.

On whether they felt that there was a gay movement the reply was again an ambiguous NO. Although gay men are more in numbers, and have more opportunity and spaces to meet, there is no unified movement, but rather several independent movements. There is also no joining point between the gay and lesbian movements as there are different priorities, the gay movement is not gender sensitive, and they gay movement is unable to identify its needs.

*"there is no collective thinking of moving beyond oneself"*

Intimate relationships are not being spoken about within the gay movement (and this is a big issue within the womens movement). Self education has to happen within the gay movement (especially around issues of gender and sexuality), as at the moment it was seen that the two movements are speaking different languages and live in different worlds. The movements are moving on a parallel, and there was no possibility seen of working together at this stage. *[It was also admitted that if there were more identified lesbians who are not part of the feminist movement, dialogue could be more constructive between the two movements]*

The plans of Stree Sangam are to begin a telephone counselling service, and to open a sort of drop in center; a safe space where women could get together and meet.

Stree Sangam wants to continue with its newsletter and to encourage a space for lesbians within the HIV/AIDS discourse.



### Interview with Dr Chitra Subramaniam :

Chitra started her own AIDS NGO in 1993 (CASA – Counselling AID Service for AIDS), and has been doing therapy for gay/lesbian identified individuals in her private capacity. (Advertises in the Bombay Dost).

She works closely with the Hamsafar Trust, and has a two way referral system with the Trust. The issues that are discussed by her clients are varied ;

- Most of the individuals are out to their families, but have no other gay contacts. They often express the need to meet other people who are in a similar situation as them.
- Some men talk about the desire of a permanent relationship, and discuss issues of why the gay culture seems to be so centered around sex.
- Issues of relationship breaking up are also quite common, which sometimes also leads to discussions around suicide
- Cyber relationships are becoming more and more common amongst the clientele. Cyber sex ( and the 'guilt' feelings associated with that, having relationships with men on the internet but when photos are exchanged or people meet in person it ends abruptly, and in some cases devastatingly.
- Gay men who are married, and want to know whether they should come out to their wives

She described the immediate needs (from her perspective and experience in dealing with gays and lesbians through therapy) as

- having access to a counselling telephone service, which provides a basic service which provides resources as well as referrals to groups, safe space, information etc
- safe space, where people can find someone to talk to and meet with them in a safe non judgmental environment
- Library/resource center, where people can access their kind of information for their kinds of needs.

### Interview with Aawaaz-niswaan:

This was a powerful interview in terms of personal testimony from Hasini and Nazim. It was also a difficult interview as it was done through interpretation, and therefore the verbatim is through the words of the translator.

The organisation attempts to be the voice of grassroots muslim women. Women come to the group with real and emotional issues, which in turn makes the organisation take them up and as a result makes it grow. The issue of "personal law" within the muslim religion is a big issue for the organisation. The discussions within the group are therefore around real and specific issues and needs. Lesbian relationships is a reality with women on the ground, and it is important how these relationships are seen by the women and within the community.

The organisations organised a retreat for 15 women, to create a opportunity for them to share and bond. There was no specific agenda to the retreat, but a lot of



discussion on sexuality started happening. Women then had the opportunity to speak about intensely personal and family issues, which assisted the group in forging its own identity. A space was 'self' created for women to discuss issues of sexuality within the group and with each other.

There is a verse in the Koran that says when a woman starts to menstruate, a husband has to be found for her. The women questioned this verse, and it was felt that once a woman starts to menstruate she is becoming more aware of her sexuality and choices around sexuality. It is therefore needed to put the woman into the heterosexual mold before she 'chooses' to become a lesbian.

*"we have thoughts (of lesbianism) in our minds – but have never had an opportunity to give them a voice"*

It is important to create the opportunity and platform for women to speak of their own reality, immaterial of sexual orientation and as a result identify her own needs first. Women must have the independence to have a choice for her own decisions. Many women do not want to be in relationships with their husbands, and the possibility to have a relationship with another women gives them a great deal of strength.

*"If we knew that it existed, why would we want to be in relationships with men?"*

#### Interview with Indian Center for Human Rights :

The ICHR is a support and campaign organisation, and when they see a demand or initiative they will collaborate together with the relevant organisations. During the 1996 Gender Just Laws Conference, the issue of gays and lesbians was brought to the public platform. This was the first time that the issue was brought into the Human Rights platform. No Human Rights organisation has taken up the issue seriously, although many of them support the issue in principle. It was felt that for the H/R organisations to take up the issue seriously, the direction and initiative would have to come from the gay and lesbian movements.

The discussion on terminology (preference, choice or orientation) has also not yet happened within the H/R movement. The ICHR sees the legal battle around the issues as follows :

- Sexual (orientation) should be an "individuals freedom to choose ones own life without interfering with anyone else". In terms of the law male homosexuality is clearly a criminal offence with regards to sodomy. The move to challenge this has to come from the movement itself, as HR organisations would not challenge it without a clear mandate from the movement or individual.
- there are no anti discrimination laws
- there are no partnership laws

There are no questions of needing to reach consensus on the first two issues, as there seems to be consensus amongst the movements. The point of disagreement is seen as the partnership laws. The HR movement could draft partnership law and circulate this amongst the gay and lesbian movements to have discussion and try to reach consensus about it.



## **10. Final comments:**

The workshop was challenging – a huge challenge, but the inspiration, courage and willingness of the staff highlighted for me why it is important to continue the work that I am doing. The process which was started with PP is only a very small beginning, and the organisation would require a lot of support to continue redefining and establishing its focus, role and potential.

There was a lot of confusion as to the real reason for the process on my arrival. Staff at PP were under the impression that there was going to be specific workshops on advocacy, formation of a self help group and human rights – and they were led to believe this by HIVOS RO. I only received a very broad terms of reference, and this was only received after arriving in Goa. Communication before my departure in Amsterdam however led me to believe that there was some aspect of organisational development required. So mixed messages received by different parties led to some resistance by some staff members at the beginning of the process.

By the end of the process there was a feeling of understanding and mutual respect by everyone. The process was a difficult one for the organisation to go through, and it is a process, which I believe, should have happened a long time ago. The organisation has been in existence since 1991, and it is the first time that they have had a form of participatory evaluation and organisational development. It seems (and was acknowledged by staff) that PP was an organisation 'directed' by funders requirements. An example of this is when HIVOS RO brought up the issue of advocacy and human rights, that they suddenly appeared as programme areas in the proposals. All the funding proposal since its inception are very similar in nature, only a few interventions have been changed, or monetary figures changed. It seems as if proposals have been 'copied' and adjusted from year to year – and it has been allowed to happen.

An important change process that happened during the workshop was in terms of communication (a number of participants commented on this). On the first day of the workshop there was little big group discussion but by the end of the workshop there was a lot more input from all staff, and staff felt an opportunity to express themselves for the first time – a testament to the courage of the staff.

There are still a number of issues highlighted in the report that have not or could not be addressed in the workshop. These issues need to be addressed and a concerted effort by both PP and HIVOS RO should be made to address them (particularly around the issue of letters of employment, job descriptions and staff benefits).

I believe that PP is now well on its way to creating its own image and own focus, supported by funders, as opposed to a funders image and focus. It is a major step in the development of the organisation, and it is a step that should be encouraged and supported. PP has not 'restarted', it has only clarified its own vision from its own perspectives, based on the needs of the community from where it originates

***"it is better to light a candle, than to curse the dark"***



## **Study on Alternative Sexual Preferences (ASP)**

Terms of reference :

The main objectives of the study is to assist HIVOS in making appropriate and informed choices in its efforts to support relevant initiatives of groups with ASP, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender groups. (GLBT)

In specific :

- (a) Analyse the social, economic, cultural and political context in which GLBT groups are living and working at present
- (b) Identify the main constraints faced by these groups (social stigma, denial, discrimination, invisibility etc)
- (c) Identify the various needs of GLBT groups
- (d) Analyse the various issues related to GLBTs, with a specific human rights perspective
- (e) Assess the nature and strategies adopted by various GLBT groups, their support organisations and appropriateness of policies and strategies in defending and realising the rights of GLBTs
- (f) What is the current status and to what extent do the groups at present address issues of policies and legal advocacy ? Identify what is desirable in terms of legal environment for people with ASP
- (g) How do GLBT initiatives structure their work in terms of gaining public acceptance of their status, identity and human rights. What are the existing institutional linkages with similar groups/networks; other mainstream organisations? Do they have any links with other mainstream civil liberties or organisations ?
- (h) To what extent do GLBT groups consider themselves as part of or be associated with mainstream social movements, e.g. women's movement or the labour movement or human rights movement. What are the problems related to such an integration process ?
- (i) Suggest areas of work that might require support along with your assessment of the most appropriate forms of support. How does the mission see these initiatives being contextualised in the overall HIVOS policy perspectives ?

Methodology :

The study team was to travel to 4 urban cities; Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai. A number of interviews were set up with a wide spectrum of organisations working with, related to or the potential of working with the issue of GLBT.



## TOR for the Alternative Sexual Preferences (ASP/ GLBT) Study

Hivos is The Netherlands based development funding institution. The India regional office was set up in Bangalore in 1991. Hivos supports a wide range of the programmes in about ten states of India on Women, Gender and Development, Environment, Culture, Economic Activities and Human Rights & HIV/ AIDS.

HIV/ AIDS constitutes an important policy priority for Hivos. Hivos's interest in HIV/ AIDS is not so much from the medical side alone but from the overall development perspective and from the point of view of human rights and prevention.

In this context of our work Hivos has been receiving a number of requests from groups to support:

- a) HIV /AIDS prevention among Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgender (GLBT) groups.
- b) Activities related to prevention of Human Rights violations of these groups.

Hivos in principle is willing to extend support to the above related request. While Hivos has sufficient experience & knowledge in HIV/ AIDS related work, it has limited knowledge of issues and problems related to GLBTs human rights.

### Objectives:

The main objective of the study initiated by Hivos is to assist Hivos in making appropriate and informed choices in its efforts to support relevant initiatives of groups with ASP, including GLBT.

In specific :

- \* a) Analyse the social, economic, cultural and political context in which GLBT groups are living in and working at present.
- \* b) Identify the main constraints faced by these groups ( social stigma, denial, discrimination, invisibility, etc)
- # c) Identify the various needs of GLBT groups.
- \* d) Analyse the various issues related to GLBTs, with a specific human rights perspective
- # e) Assess the nature and strategies adopted by various GLBT groups, their support organisations and the appropriateness of policies and strategies in defending and realising the rights of GLBTs.
- # f) What is the current status and to what extent do the groups at present address issues of policy and legal advocacy? Identify what is desirable in terms of legal environment for people with ASP.
- g) How do GLBT initiatives structure their work in terms of gaining public acceptance of their status, identity and human rights. What are the existing institutional linkages with similar groups/ networks; other mainstream organisations? Do they have any links with other mainstream civil liberties organisations?
- h) To what extent do GLBT groups consider themselves as part of or be associated with mainstream social movements, e.g. women's movement or the labour movement or human rights movement. What are the problems related to such an integration process?
- i) Suggest areas of work that might require support along with your assessment of the most appropriate forms of support. How does the Mission see these initiatives being contextualised in the overall Hivos policy perspectives?



The study team will visit and meet with groups, organisations and individuals in the cities of:

Bangalore - Karnataka  
Chennai - Tamil Nadu  
Delhi  
Mumbai - Maharashtra

A draft report (outlining the main findings and recommendations) will be submitted to Hivos on the 16<sup>th</sup> April during debriefing. The final report has to be submitted not later than 30<sup>th</sup> April 1999.



## 9. Workshop Evaluation :

Two flipcharts were placed at the back of the room (terrace), and were labeled simply "I liked" and "I did not like". Participants were then asked on their own time to write on the flip charts.

I liked	I did not like
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I liked the programme very much as it was participatory</li> <li>- Participation and openness of all participants</li> <li>- All the topics brought out for discussion have given me deeper insights into the programme</li> <li>- Introspection to our activities, attitudes and behaviors</li> <li>- The focussed nature of the sessions</li> <li>- I liked services very much during the 3 days and also the participation from all members</li> <li>- Assessment of needs by funder agency</li> <li>- Open communication, and the games were very good</li> <li>- I trusted in your process and I got a lot of good things out of it. It was more explanatory and clear for me what I have to do</li> <li>- I liked the whole workshop</li> <li>- Time management and total focus on the relevant issues were excellent</li> <li>- My project made clear to me</li> <li>- I liked the games played, food, refreshments and the place</li> <li>- The exercise of the HIV+ game, I got a lot of insight</li> <li>- Having been given more chance for personal input</li> <li>- I liked everything about the workshop</li> <li>- Trainer was good, I got a lot of information about a lot of things</li> <li>- The process of needs assessment for the organisation. The exercises will really help in terms of development. It was more participatory. The different exercises really helped me a lot to identify the requirements for assessment (programme and staff). I got an opportunity to review PP not as a self help group but as a professional organisation. I got the opportunity to learn the entire process. I also learnt that self development will lead to organisational development. Got the opportunity to put forward our needs and expectations. It gave a clear picture of how an organisation should work. It clarified the doubt and brought indepth understanding. It was a good learning experience, and gave an opportunity to learn the weakness in the organisations development. I enjoyed the excellent workshop to better understand and know the opportunities to speak up. I liked the seriousness and concept of the workshop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- it was only for three days</li> <li>- I felt insulted a little bit (during a report back session)</li> <li>- Very little time was spent on internal and external communication</li> <li>- No adequate input from Shaun</li> <li>- The food</li> <li>- Questions that were asked on the last day</li> <li>- The process in which I placed my trust</li> <li>- It was too short</li> </ul>



Sadique:

1. I take on the responsibility for undertaking my job honestly and sincerely keeping in mind the cause of HIV/AIDS
2. I expect a clear understanding of each persons role and proper co-ordination between the staff
3. We will take on the responsibility for carrying the programme as a team and tackle the issues amicably

Beethoven:

1. I take on the responsibility for steering the truckers project in the right track and co-ordinating the day to day activities of this project, and to be a part of the advocacy programme
2. I expect everyone to take on the responsibility for their own job descriptions
3. We will take on the responsibility of PP as an NGO working in the field of HIV/AIDS with prevention, support, advocacy, counselling, care and support, intervention as the organisations forte

Saulan :

1. I take on the responsibility to prevent HIV/AIDS amongst the trucker community by awareness, leaflets, demonstration, through services for STD cases
2. I expect my superior to address our needs and understand our problems towards any difficult questions of truckers programme (if any)
3. We will take on the responsibility to achieve or to reach the goal for what we have to do amongst the trucker communities around Goa through our commitment

Prasad:

1. I know that HIV/AIDS has attained such a horrifying position. Today it is somebody else and tomorrow it could be me. This has made me take up this responsibility
2. I expect Beethoven to take this responsibility because of his great dedication to the cause and habit of social working
3. We have to take the responsibility because it cannot become one mans work. We have to bring about change in social and psychological behavior in society.

John:

1. I take on the responsibility for the prevention project
2. I expect senior management to take on the responsibility for fundraising
3. We will take on the responsibility for organisation growth and success

Utkarsha:

1. I take on the responsibility for the advocacy project if required for counselling and prevention. To communicate with staff even if it is unpleasant. To give my stand on issues. To support policies which are benefiting the betterment of the masses
2. I expect the management to take on the responsibility to create a conducive environment for communication in the organisation
3. We will take on the responsibility of having a definite stand on issues, and create an image for PP



*Benedicta:*

- 1. I take on the responsibility for effective counselling and preventive strategy*
- 2. I expect the ED and PC to take on the responsibility of guiding me to carry out the mission of counselling*
- 3. We will take on the responsibility for the promotion of our planned mission on HIV/AIDS*

*Geetha:*

- 1. I take on the responsibility for care and support*
- 2. I expect Senior staff to take on the responsibility for fundraising*
- 3. We will take on the responsibility for PPs development*

*Carol:*

- 1. I take on the responsibility for 'development' of the care and support*
- 2. I expect HIVOS/PP to take on the responsibility of helping us obtain information on various topics (staff motivation and development)*
- 3. We will take on the responsibility for providing a good quality of life to PWAs, to fulfill (with their help) their urgent felt needs*

*Maya:*

- 1. I take on the responsibility for covering the industries for preventive education decided by the proposal*
- 2. I expect Shakeel to take on the responsibility for co-ordinating all projects and supervising them as well as decision making within PP*
- 3. We will take on the responsibility of working more effectively with a common stand for a common aim*

*Priya:*

- 1. I take on the responsibility for GCP+ development*
- 2. I expect the board, ED, PC, and PO to take on the responsibility for forming the organisation and running it smoothly with unity*
- 3. We will take on the responsibility for our goal and vision of our founder*

*Reggie:*

- 1. I take on the responsibility of getting the board to meet with staff once in three months, at least, if not every month*
- 2. I expect Elizabeth to take on the responsibility for the proper functioning of PP*
- 3. We will take on the responsibility for fundraising and rapport with staff of PP*

*Elizabeth:*

- 1. I take on the responsibility for a focused development of PP, in terms of the programme areas identified in the workshop, for institution building and staff training and growth*
- 2. I expect each and every member of PP to take on the responsibility for their individual job responsibilities*
- 3. We will take on the responsibility of the cause of our organisation*



Area	Action
	A possible HIVOS partner organisation intervention, or through contact of the AFI
5. Training modules	5. PP is 'hungry' for examples of different and various training modules around issues of basic awareness, infection control procedures, workplace policies, advocacy etc. Attempts would be made at HIVOS R/O and HIVOS NL to supply with appropriate information, as well as with organisations in South Africa who are involved in these areas.
6. Funders and organisation directory	6. These are easily available and will be forwarded to the organisation either from HIVOS R/O or NL and other appropriate organisations
7. Information on how to conduct effective appraisals of staff	7. This is a relatively new area for PP, and information sheets would be sought to forward to PP

Staff will in return give their commitment, services, efforts, integrity and expertise to the organisation and the cause.

### **8. Responsibilities**

The group was asked to answer three basic questions in terms of responsibility and commitment to the organisation. The questions were

1. I will take on the responsibility to do.....
2. I expect.....to take on the responsibility to do.....
3. WE should take on the responsibility to do .....

Responses :

*Shakeel:*

1. *Development of the organisation – programme, staffing, implementation and training*
2. *I expect the staff members (programme officers) to be responsible for the quality implementation of the programme and achieve the output (objectives).*
3. *We will take on the responsibility for collective strategies, for programme development and also the organisation as a whole. It requires a lot of thinking and working as a team to achieve the workshop objectives*

*Shirin:*

1. *Take on responsibility for the organisations benefits*
2. *I expect Elizabeth to take on the responsibility for internal communication*
3. *We will take on the responsibility for our commitments*

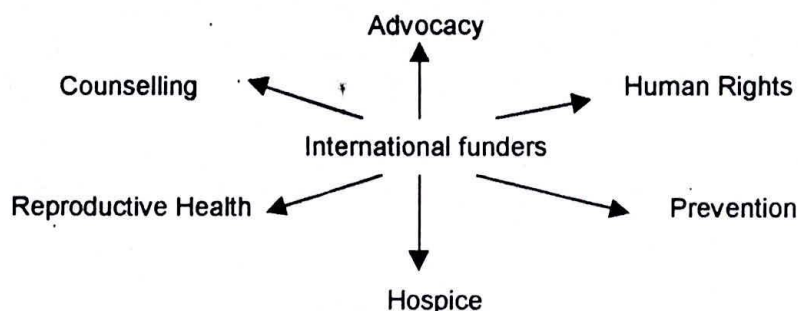
*Pushpa*

1. *I take on responsibility for the better quality of my service*
2. *I expect management to take on the responsibility for the development of the organisation*
3. *We will take on the responsibility for the betterment of the organisation as a whole*



## International funding :

The issue of dependence on one funder has been highlighted, and with the revised organogram the organisation can package programme areas to funders.



International funds would be used for project support and a wider outreach in terms of funding would lead to the organisation being more sustainable, independent and wider outreach and growth in the process

## 7. Staff development and motivation :

There were a number of areas that staff felt could be improved increasing their motivation and as a result their development.

Area	Action
1. Counselling	1. As per counselling session in this report. It was felt that there needs to be an intensive (professional) counselling training for staff done by a HIVOS partner organisation in India. Further intensive counselling programmes could be identified for staff involved in the counselling programme
2. Advocacy	2. A specific workshop on advocacy. A number of staff were under the impression (before the initial visit) that the reason for my visit was on the issue of advocacy, human rights and beginning a support group. Staff members could either attend or a HIVOS partner could conduct a training programme for the organisation.
3. Self Help Group	3. A lot of need was expressed for support and development in this area. For this purpose contact has been made with Dr Sundar Sundaraman of the AFI who will facilitate an exchange visit to Chennai and assist in whatever way possible the formation and development of GCP+
4. Home base care	4. Home base care is going to be an important area as the cases of HIV increases. PP staff are involved to some extent with home based care, but it was pointed out that specific minimum requirements need to be met in terms of home based care. A person needs a home in the first place, sterile, hygienic and access to clean water. This is not possible for a large portion of Indian society and possibly PP needs to look at community based care and have a training programme specially developed around this area.



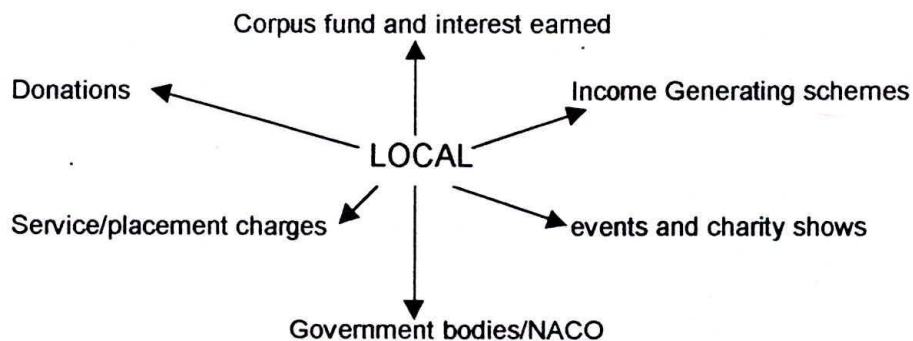
- letters of appreciation could be given, in order to include in CV's
- The issue of communication with the board did not come in on this discussion, and it was pointed out to the staff that the board have to take the opportunity to discuss amongst themselves first as to what they think and see their role is, and then communicate this to the staff. Staff however did also feel strongly about two issues that should be brought to the boards attention when they meet.
- Communication and a meeting with staff : Staff felt that this should happen on a more regular basis. There are a number of staff that do not know all the board members, and in fact have never met them. (A board member was in attendance during the workshop which was much appreciated by staff).
  - Staff would like 'access' to the board in some way to deal with issues related to staff relations. There should be an appointed board member who deals with this.

## 6. Fundraising :

In order to be more effective in fundraising there are two important issues that PP need to deal with

- 80 – G certificate (allowing for tax exemption)
- FCRA number

There are also different levels of fundraising that PP could concentrate on



Local funds would be used for project activities and more effort needs to be placed in accessing local funds and making use of offers made. There was also a suggestion to approach one of the board members to host a charity benefit play/concert for Positive People Goa.



## **5. Communication :**

The next issue which was to be discussed, and highlighted in the report was communication. Communication was divided into internal and external communication.

### External communication :

A clearer message needs to be developed to communicate with the 'external world'. In some of PP's literature PP is still defined as a self help or support group for people with HIV/AIDS. This is certainly not the case, as has been acknowledged by staff within the organisation. Some segments of the Goan, Indian and International Community are under the impression that PP Goa is an organisation of HIV positive people, and is indeed a support group. This could in some cases impact negatively on their ability to come across as a credible and professional organisation providing a high quality service – especially with the current environment within society at large.

In some other literature PP is being described as an HIV/AIDS NGO, and it was acknowledged by the group that more effort needs to be placed in this.

Avenues for external communication are

- through pamphlets, leaflets, handbills, stickers, posters etc
- media print, audio and visual (by writing articles, responding to articles, writing letters, entering into debates and doing interviews)
- networking with other NGOs and Governmental organisations.

### Internal Communication

This was an area which was highlighted by a number of staff during the interviews, and was challenged in the 'feelings on report back session', as senior staff believed that they did have open and effective communication. The group that worked on this session was very brave and courageous in being open and honest with what they felt and thought, and interestingly it was the group with the most group dynamics for this exercise (body language, heated discussions, disagreements, laughter etc)

The group divided the communication into two broad areas :

#### 1. Communication between staff members :

- Communication should be open and clear
- There should be mutual understanding around communication
- Staff should be conscious of verbal and non verbal communication
- There should be more motivation and positive reinforcement amongst the staff members of each other and each others work
- Staff should be more polite and humble to each other
- Any misunderstandings should be clarified and forgotten there and then

#### 2. Communication between staff and management :

- communication should be open, direct and clear
- appreciation of staff can be expressed in the group
- criticism can be done on an individual basis and not within the big group
- when some decisions are taken they should be communicated with the staff



## **Advocacy :**

Aim of the advocacy programme was to address the Human Rights issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS by giving a voice to the 'voiceless'.

The date for presentation to the rest of the group : Mid June 1999

The rationale for this date is

- to survey the possibility of persons interested in participating in the forum from various sectors
- collate some kind of database of issues and existing policies
- define a clear cut methodology and process to address the issue
- training and exposure visits are required
- meet and discuss within ourselves

## **Counselling :**

The group members acknowledged that it was difficult to come up with an effective aim of counselling, as their knowledge of HIV/AIDS counselling was limited to pre and post test counselling. It was felt that it is important (as a priority) to arrange for an inhouse counselling training after which this programme area could be more defined.

## **Care and support :**

The aim is to facilitate (improve) the quality of life for people affected by HIV/AIDS. As there are a number of issues that need to be discussed within the organisation about this issue (and that the support group has been 'replaced' by the formation of GCP+) the group members felt a need to talk a lot about the issues and receive a lot of information about this issue.

Time frame : 6 – 8 months. Latest by the end of November

## **Prevention :**

This was 'easier' to identify as PP already has a number of activities within this area. Further exploration and development would also happen.

The aim of the prevention programme is to reduce the prevalence of HIV (amongst the educational institutions, women and industrial community) through high quality health education and resource material.

To promote non discriminatory attitudes towards PWAs and reduce the stigma attached to the HIV pandemic

Time frame : 28 April 1999

It needs to be pointed out that the areas defined by PP within their organisational focus is going to require a lot more work, and what was discussed during the short 3 day workshop was only planting a seed. The seed (like any other) needs to be nurtured, cared for and watered to ensure that it blossoms and grows – this is both from the perspective of the individuals that make up PP as well as the organisation that fund PP.



The group was asked to give reactions (within the big group) to give reactions to the "organogram" – and there was a fair amount of silence. After breaking the big group into smaller groups the real discussion started. Reactions were as follows ;

Group 1 :

Reactions:

- It gives a lot more clarity, it is more focused
- There is clear scope for further development in each area
- A concern was that specialised training would be required to fulfill some of the areas (*this was also an identified need – specialised training, articulated earlier on in the programme*)
- Hospice is a big step and an even bigger challenge (*and requires a lot more discussion and thought*)

Doubts :

- Doubtful about the formation of a self help group, is it going to happen ?
- Home based care ; will it not reveal a persons HIV status within the community, isolation and discrimination may take place

Group 2 :

- It has given a lot more clarity with regards to programmes
- Change outreach to intervention (*intervention in the organogram was first outreach*)
- It is task orientated and reaction/output will be there
- Programme will be more concrete
- Goals and objectives will be clear and achievable
- Concerns are home based care (we require more input into this).
- Counselling should be put into prevention (*this statement created a lot of discussion amongst the group, and it was felt that counselling has to be a separate focus of the organisation for arguments stated earlier in the report*)

Group 3 :

- replace outreach with intervention, and keep outreach as a separate category which could be used as required
- it has given a lot more clarity
- this group concentrated more on issues highlighted in the report (own admission ☺)
- The issue of the board has not yet been defined as to where they fit in.

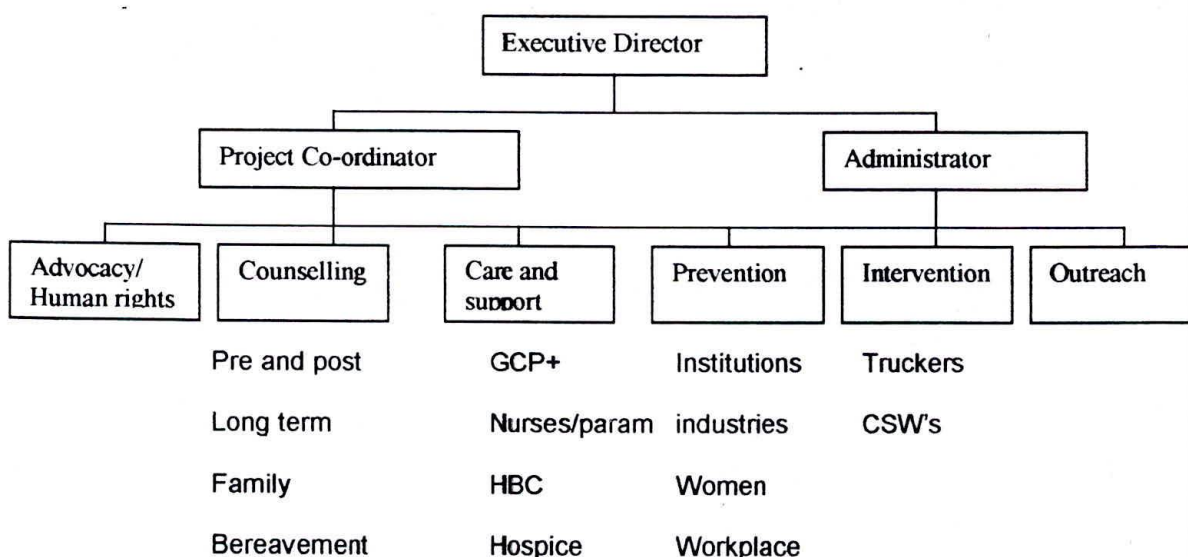
The larger group was then asked to identify an area of interest where they feel they can best contribute to. It was understood that this was for the purposes of the exercise and could change as the organogram becomes clearer and more defined. The groups were asked to come up with an initial aim and a date by which a more defined and concrete module would be presented to the rest of the organisation for input. It was also pointed out that this was a medium to long term vision, and PP could not immediately adapt this as there is still a lot of work that needs to be done on it.



Issues	Outcomes
<p>projects and through developing public opinion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhances the dignity of HIV issue and avoids cases going underground</li> <li>- Addressing our needs en masse</li> <li>- <i>Founders vision</i></li> <li>- <i>Needs of PP Goa are addressed by positive people</i></li> <li>- <i>Help them to help themselves</i></li> <li>- <i>Develop group based comfort and support</i></li> </ul> <p>It was felt that the why question was not yet answered, and the bottom of the problem tree the words " we care" were written.</p> <p>So what could PP do in terms of addressing all the above mentioned problem causes.</p>	<p>It is therefore important for PP to take its cue from people with HIV/AIDS themselves, allow them the opportunity to identify their own needs, their own direction in a space of their own. It is hoped that GCP+ goes some way in addressing this, and PP could support this initiative externally and continue to address the surrounding issues that impact on the lives of people with HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>PP could continue to support the staff member that is involved in GCP+, and provide a physical space for people with HIV/AIDS to meet.</p> <p>The staff member is still quite inexperienced in terms of organisational work and issues of people with HIV/AIDS groups. In this regard discussions have been had with Dr Sundar Sundaraman to arrange (and fund) an exchange visit to Chennai in order for her to meet with other PWA organisations and have the opportunity to discuss issues related to the formation of a support group.</p>

The other activities of PP with regards to the prevention programme was a little more difficult to go through point by point. Reasons for this was that it would require an entire workshop to do that and this workshop was concentrating on organisational development.

With this in mind; trying to focus the organisation and give clearer, more defined and less restrictive outputs the following "orgo – gram" was presented to the groups for discussion, comment and input.



The motivation behind presenting the "organogram" was that through discussions in the preceding days, the initial report and current visions of PP is led one to believe that staff within the organisation were "jacks of all trades and masters of none" – through no fault of their or the organisation. This would enable staff and the organisation to focus on programme areas and not be restricted to activities.



Issues	Outcomes
<p><b>2. Formation of a self help/support group:</b></p> <p>This discussion was interesting, challenging and intense. A lot of time was spent on it intentionally as this was one of the areas that PP has been struggling with since its inception.</p> <p>The group was given a 'problem tree' and asked to define what they saw as the cause of the problems in starting a self help group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a fear of coming out. Goa is a small state and 'everyone knows everyone else'.</li> <li>- There is a great deal of discrimination and ostracisation from the community</li> <li>- There was no need felt yet by the PWA community for a self help/support group</li> <li>- PWAs had real needs in terms of medications, economical problems and employment which PP could not provide yet</li> <li>- There is little motivation from PWAs to become involved</li> <li>- PWAs have little knowledge about their own rights</li> <li>- The concept of 'self help' is foreign</li> <li>- Being part of a support group was a constant reminder that one was positive</li> <li>- PWAs often think that everything is lost and they are going to die. (This message is being reinforced by doctors and health care workers, community and the media)</li> </ul> <p>These are huge obstacles in the formation of a self help/support group. The group was then posed the question</p> <p><b>"In light of all these problems and obstacles, why does PP want to begin a self help/support group?"</b></p> <p>This question was intentionally provocative, and it was met by a stunned silence. The question could not be immediately answered and the group was divided into two smaller groups to answer that question.</p> <p>The responses were as follows :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to bring the organisation back on the track of its founder members vision</li> <li>- 'self help' is 'best help'</li> <li>- support and security by identification</li> <li>- 'Organising' leads to better access and insights of the felt needs, problems, difficulties et.al</li> <li>- A self help group provides a support in terms of emotional, economical, psychological and social</li> <li>- It provides support through income generation</li> </ul>	<p>A recent initiative of INP+ called GCP+ (Goan Community of people Living with HIV/AIDS) has been supported and developed within PP Goa.</p> <p>The initiative was started by people living with HIV/AIDS and is for people living with HIV/AIDS. One of its office bearers is also a staff member at PP Goa.</p> <p>However even with this initiative PP was still feeling a certain sense of difficulty and frustration at supporting or getting the initiative off the ground in terms of issues identified in the 'issue column'.</p> <p>Possible positive change that PP could do in addressing the issues identified as 'cause of problems' were as follows ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- make space available within PP</li> <li>- create awareness about HIV/AIDS and the needs of people with HIV/AIDS within the community</li> <li>- embark on an advertising/media campaign to encourage non discrimination and understanding</li> <li>- have discussions with drug companies, doctors and others for medications</li> <li>- raise funds for the benefit of people with HIV/AIDS</li> <li>- create a strong referral service</li> <li>- do advocacy and awareness creation amongst the influential and key institutions within society (judiciary, PWAs, health care institutions etc).</li> </ul> <p>These areas and possible solutions were commended, and also pointed out that they already form an integral part of PP overall programmes. It was then put to the group that perhaps all that PP can do is to <b>provide the space</b>, and address the wider environment issues through their programmatic work.</p> <p>Contact with people with HIV/AIDS are made in a professional capacity, in clinics, hospitals and counselling centres. The staff of the organisation are therefore seen as professional social workers providing a 'clinical service'. There is a real possibility that people with HIV/AIDS are not interested in attending PP run support groups because it could be seen as a clinical service. PP advertises itself in all its outreach materials and brochures as ' a self help group for people with HIV/AIDS'. It is clearly not a self help group, it is a professional organisation, and this perception could be picked up or misinterpreted by the very people that PP is trying to help.</p>



- makes decision about Human Resources in consultation with Executive Director
- preparation of IC material
- writing (newsletter and articles)
- budget planning and forecasts (in consultation and on own initiative)
- public relations
- deals with logistics for meetings and workshops

#### 4. PP's programmatic areas, areas of focus and vision :

Participants were divided into three different groups and each were asked to develop how they saw the current vision of PP. The three different visions certainly had areas of similarity and also covered issues of what the organisation would like to cover (human rights, advocacy, hospice more effective home based care).

The workshop then concentrated on specific programmatic areas which have been divided into two general areas ;

**Care and support** and **Prevention and awareness**

Issues	Outcomes
<p><b>1. Counselling :</b></p> <p>All staff are involved in counselling (as well as other project areas). Counselling happens at government hospitals, STD clinics and to a limited degree at the PP offices and during home visits.</p> <p>Counselling training for staff is has been very limited, and some staff had the opportunity to attend a counselling training soon after they joined the organisation. Staff also have some opportunity to have supervision with an external supervisor where various cases are discussed.</p> <p><u>Aim of counselling :</u> Most of the counselling that happens is on a pre and post test counselling basis. Specific aims were listed as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- educate the client through the counselling process</li> <li>- provide emotional support for the client</li> <li>- assist the client in coping with difficult situations "help them to help themselves"</li> <li>- Behaviour change conduct in order to bring about positive change in that person</li> <li>- Ensure that counsellors are non judgmental</li> </ul> <p>It was pointed out that trying to achieve all the above, with a limited counselling training and exposure was perhaps unrealistic. 'Being a professional social worker does not mean that you are a good counsellor'. It seems as if the counselling within PP depends on an individual focus versus an organisational focus. A lot of interesting discussion followed after this, and the group identified issues that need to strengthen and define the counselling programme;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PP should consider making counselling a core focus and programme area of PP</li> <li>- There needs to be specialised and professional counselling training for staff</li> <li>- Exposure visits (with other organisations, workshops etc)</li> <li>- Support and supervision for counsellors. It was felt that it could be more appropriate if the support is external. Supervision would need to be internal</li> <li>- There needs to be a greater focus on 'educating the educated'. Doctors and other health care workers in terms of stressing the importance of counselling</li> <li>- 'Humanitisation' and 'de-professionalisation' of counsellors (to a point). <i>Counselling is not a science but an art. It is not necessarily taught, but it is cultivated and expressed.</i></li> </ul>



- Zilch (which changed to home base care, advocacy, self help group, support services, strategic planning, diversion of activities, hospice and income generation project)

The organisational expectations was intentionally left blank, until a staff member commented on it. It was then pointed out to the members that the individual expectations make up the organisational expectations, and whether the expectations are 'right' or 'wrong' or 'achievable' is besides the point, as it is important to realise that there are individuals within the organisation and all have expectations within and of the organisation. If those are not listened to or addressed it creates difficulty and confusion.

### **3. Roles of senior staff (management)**

There was first discussion as to who senior staff actually were. The senior staff positions were then asked to be quite for a while, while the other staff identified their roles within the organisation. After this input senior staff were allowed to give inputs.

#### Executive Director :

Input in italics comes from the persons filling the positions.

- Position has overall responsibility for organisations
- Responsible for overall management of organisation
- Makes financial decisions in consultation with other management staff
- *Optimise staff potential*
- *Planning for organisation*
- *Fundraising*
- *Developing the organisation*

#### Project Co-ordinator :

- oversees project officers
- supervisors project officers
- deals with difficulties and concerns of staff
- makes decisions with the consent of Executive Director
- Mediator between Executive Director and project officers
- Selection of staff (in consultation)
- Project module development
- Orientation training
- *Programme review*

#### Administrator :

- administration
- communication (internal and external)
- human resources and issues related to it
- project formulation
- project input
- deals with daily running of organisation



*The report has helped me to understand individual opinions and an opportunity to learn from each other. It highlights the problems and difficulties that we are facing and will help us to focus and define what we want.*

*Is total staff development possible ? Staff do have the opportunity to speak out and we do develop and motivate the staff. I see the participatory approach as 'motivation'. I was disturbed to see that staff felt that there was no support or encouragement.*

*It is important that we create an atmosphere of understanding and trust, we are all together in this. At first I saw the report at quite negative, but as I read more I realised that it is for our benefit.*

*It has highlighted the change in organisational focus, and highlighted the confusion about decision making. There are also positive aspects in the report, and will help us sort out the organisational structure.*

*Through the report I have come to know of any peoples viewpoints, in a positive manner. It has helped me to clarify issues and understand Dominic's initial vision.*

*The report contains a lot of issues that seem real, but may not be real, in other words issues that have been highlighted may not be real issues and just need to be clarified.*

*Has shown that there is an internal difference and conflicting viewpoints. My own personal decision is that staff have no 'right' in the decision of programme areas.*

*I see the report as very positive, it has highlighted the talent and professionalism of the staff as well as their different qualities – a combination of professionalism and activism.*

## **2. Expectations of the workshop :**

Two sheets of flipcharts were put up with the headings of Individual and Organisational expectations. Staff were asked to come up to the 'individual flipchart' and to write their own personal expectation down.

Expectations were :

- Would like clarity of the report
- Understanding individual members and each other better
- Clear understanding
- Problem solving
- Modus operandi – 'functioning the democratic way'
- Problem solving
- Inputs on formation of self help groups
- Exercise to learn each others feelings, needs and problems at the workplace
- Constructive
- Inputs on the development of the workplace
- More open but not debatable
- Clues for professional development
- Inputs on advocacy



### **Day 3 :**

- 09h30 – 09h45 : Warm up
- 09h45 – 10h30 : Developing support services (exercise)
- 10h30 – 11h00 : Tea
- 11h00 – 13h00 : Developing support services and support groups
- 13h00 – 14h00 : Lunch
- 14h00 – 15h30 : Advocacy and fundraising
- 15h30 – 16h00 : Tea/coffee
- 16h00 – 16h30 : Staff development and motivation
- 16h30 – 17h00 : Evaluation and closing

### **Report on workshop :**

It is difficult to record the discussions word for word (minutes of the meeting), as the meeting is facilitated by only one person, and it was felt important that ALL staff concentrate and participate in the workshop.

Therefore only highlights, and a synopsis of the discussions, issues and decisions are recorded here.

Programme :

#### ***1. Reactions to report :***

Participants were asked to first find one word to describe what the report evoked in them.

<i>Intuitive</i>	<i>Insightful</i>	<i>disturbing</i>	<i>upsetting</i>
<i>Startling</i>	<i>eye opener</i>	<i>thought provoking</i>	<i>positive and negative</i>
<i>Controversial</i>	<i>debatable</i>	<i>aware</i>	<i>help to improve PP</i>
<i>Explanatory</i>	<i>narrative</i>	<i>learning the needs</i>	<i>development stress</i>
<i>Worrying</i>	<i>not reached all that we had set out to do</i>		

The group was then asked to further expand on their initial reactions.

*The report was disturbing because it did not make sense, it was contradictory in some instances both in terms of the work that PP was doing as well as what some of the individuals were saying – 'rubbish'.*



## **Part II**

The second part of the visit to PP Goa was to concentrate on the actual workshop. It was discussed with HIVOS that the workshop would take the form of organisational development.

The programme for the workshop was devised according to the draft report, and in a brief consultation with HIVOS (although the workshop programme could not be discussed). The programme was as follows :

### **Day 1 :**

- 11h00 – 11h15 : Warm up exercise
- 11h15 – 12h30 : Reactions and discussions on report  
individual expectations for the workshop  
further devising the programme with the group
- 12h30 – 13h30 : Group exercise (Current vision of PP)
- 13h30 – 14h30 : Lunch
- 14h30 – 15h30 : Vision exercise continued  
clarity on programmes  
clarity on roles of Senior management
- 15h30 – 16h00 : Tea/coffee
- 16h00 – 16h30 : Continuation and closure of first day.

### **Day 2 :**

- 09h30 – 09h45 : Warm up exercise
- 09h45 – 10h30 : Activities, programmes and focus  
Individual reactions to 'own' programmes
- 10h30 – 11h00 : Tea/coffee
- 11h00 – 13h00 : Activities programmes and focus  
(Planning and focus)
- 13h00 – 14h00 : Lunch
- 14h00 – 15h30 : Organisation structure – roles and responsibilities
- 15h30 – 16h00 : Tea/coffee
- 16h00 – 16h30 : Communication and outreach



## **5. Closing summary**

It has been an inspiring, emotive and tiring experience being at Positive People, and it has been a privilege to be allowed and welcomed into the organisation in the manner that I was. Positive People has a number of challenges facing them in the future, and they have the commitment and appropriate staff to ensure that the challenges are overcome. Ownership and responsibility for ensuring that these problems and challenges are overcome lies with the staff and board of PP Goa.

The organisation has developed and grown considerably since its inception nearly 9 years ago. It certainly has the potential to develop and become more focussed and service orientated in the coming years. At the same time I do feel a hesitancy to move beyond Dominic's initial vision of what PP should be and could be, and a hesitancy to adapt that vision.

It should be pointed out that the environment and situation has changed since Dominic's initial vision and it is OK to have developed on the initial vision, or changed and adapted it according to the needs and priorities of the current situation – while at the same time remembering the roots of the organisation and the passion and commitment with which it was started. Dominic, I am sure would be in favour of progress and flexibility. PP also has to make more of a concerted effort to move away from total dependency on one funder for all its financial requirements, and should look at targeted funding from different funders for different projects. The organisation has gone some way in this regard with their innovative and exciting truckers programme.

The proposed workshop would therefore concentrate on aspect of organisational development, and issues that come with the growth and development of an organisation. It is going to be a challenging workshop, it is going to be difficult – as it is a workshop based on issues and needs as identified by individuals within the organisation. I feel confident that the honesty, openness, passion and commitment that I experienced during the 'interview visit' will continue during the workshop. After all an organisations greatest strength, could also be its greatest weakness – but it needs to be treated as its greatest asset – its staff that build and carry the organisation.



A number of attempts have been made by PP to have fortnightly support group meetings, but the attendance at this meeting have been very low. PP is certainly aware of the fact that the care and support is multi faceted and cannot be provided by them alone. It involves various institutions, organisations and partners and it obvious that PP is grappling with this issue.

The organisation is also aware of the "tip of the iceberg" scenario in terms of what will happen when the current HIV diagnosed people start becoming ill and requiring more effective medical and palliative care. It has been highlighted as an area that needs to be developed and focussed on within the strategic plan. Strategies need to be put into place now, and partnerships developed in order to deal with this situation when it comes a lot more acute.

Positive People certainly needs to be commended for what it has managed to achieve within its own limitations, and those placed upon it by its environment and society in terms of care and support, as well as having the foresight to highlight this as a major challenge and priority area for the future.

PP has also supported the INP+ initiative called GCP+ (Goan Community of Positive People), a recently started organisation of positive people for positive people. The dynamics of how this organisation fits in or related to PP Goa still needs to be further discussed and planned. The GCP+ is an innovative initiative which seems to be making impact. It is however a fragile initiative (both in terms of finances, vision, staff and development) and it is going to be an initiative that is going to require a lot of support and assistance in these initial phases.

The GCP+ has submitted a proposal to the DHS for core costs, and it is currently envisioned that once this is approved, GCP+ would be required to move into its own premises, develop its own infrastructure and employ its own staff. The current board member of GCP+ (who is also a staff member of PP) certainly has a lot of courage and motivation, and will certainly need a lot of support in developing and maintaining her motivation and determination. I am therefore not convinced that it is productive for GCP+ to cut all ties with PP at such an early stage, and this issue would need to be carefully thought out and discussed amongst all the relevant players.

- ***Organisational history, archives and achievements***

Positive People is an organisation rich in history, it is the only HIV/AIDS specialist NGO in Goa, it is an organisation that was started and formed by a very courageous and special person, but it is also an organisation without a proper recording of its roots or history. It is sad if a legacy cannot remain after the last person has closed the doors, and it is strongly recommended that a serious attempt is made to record the organisational history and achievements in an effective and sustainable manner. A manner which reflects and respects its strong roots and traditions, and a manner which tells the story and rich history of the organisation for generations to come, and allows it to take its rightful place in the global history of the PWA movement.



There are justifiable reasons for the organisation changing or readapting its focus, and the decision to cut programmes by half is certainly going a long way in redefining the strategic plan and vision (although the process and motivation for which programmes were cut are still not quite clear).

It seems as if the organisational focus has been carried on from year to year without any real or meaningful evaluation of the programmes or the organisation. As one staff member remarked " A new ED = A new policy = A new vision".

The current Executive Director certainly seems to have the understanding, ideas and vision of where she would like to take the organisation and what the priority or focus areas of the organisation should be in the new millenium, and the staff should certainly have the opportunity to further develop, create and adapt this vision together, as all the different and varied "personal visions" of the staff can certainly complement that of the Executive Director (and vice versa) and lead to a clearer more concrete and achievable vision that can be realised and have impact on the community that PP serves and works for.

A number of staff mentioned that it was a strong point that PP was reliable on only one funder, as this allowed them to be more focused in their work. It at the same time is also a major weakness and threat to the existence of the organisation (– something which is recognised by both organisation and funder).

- ***Networking and collaboration***

Although Positive People seems to have effective relationships with the various government departments, institutions and organisations in Goa, its networking and collaboration links outside of Goa ; within India and Internationally are limited or non existent. Reasons given have been that networking and collaborating takes place on as " as needed basis", or it has not happened for various personality reasons and clashes.

- ***Providing care and services to people with HIV/AIDS***

This was the primary motivation for setting up Positive People Goa, and is still a motivational force behind the organisation today. It is also the most challenging and difficult aspect of the organisations work.

There is no other public person with HIV in Goa, and people with HIV live in a world where they fear discrimination, ostracisation and ridicule from family members and society at large. PLWHIV/AIDS are scared to come to the organisation for the reasons stated above, as well as the fact that they feel that PP is not able to meet their basic needs ; food, employment, medication, treatment.

At the same time PP is unable to identify the needs over and above the basic needs of survival of PLWHIV/AIDS because the contact that they have with them is limited and of short duration – mainly through pre or post test counselling sessions.



what scope for development and creativity they have – this does not currently seem to be the case, as this was a point mentioned by a number of staff.

A number of staff also seemed to be working in different programmatic areas (while being employed in one), and not being encouraged or motivated to make suggestions within their own programmatic areas.

*“ We are too few staff to work in the different projects, and I am currently working on 3 different projects, with no support or encouragement”*

- **Role of the board (Governing Body)**

An integral and important part of any organisation – non governmental or commercial – and a requirement by law. Nevertheless there was a confusion expressed amongst the staff as to the size of the board, the role of the board and who the board actually are.

The brief interview with some of the board members was certainly inspiration and helpful in clarifying what they see as their role within the organisation. This certainly needs to be further developed amongst the members of the board, and then communicated to the staff. It is certainly not a requirement for the board to be a working board and available to the staff all the time, nor is it necessary for the board to be a phantom board which are unknown to the staff.

A number of staff do see the board as an inspiration for the organisation, and equate the board members with the continuation of Dominic's vision. It would therefore be constructive for there to be an annual opportunity for the board to meet with the staff, not only to 'put a name to a face', but also to encourage and congratulate staff on achievements in the previous year.

It is also strongly suggested that the board amongst themselves define what their role within PP should and could be, and once this has been decided to make it known to the staff. Often the vision and creativity comes from the board, and at this stage it is not clear whether the board is certain of PP's vision beyond that of Dominic, or indeed whether they have a role or a responsibility in developing this vision.

- **Activity, programme areas, focus and vision\***

The vision of the organisation has certainly changed from its original vision (which is not necessarily a bad or negative thing), but it seems as if the organisation has tried to maintain the original focus of the organisation with an unclear vision.

Prevention and control of HIV is now its primary focus and assistance to people with HIV/AIDS and the formation of a support group somewhat lower on the list. As mentioned earlier in this paper it certainly does seem as if PP has had a lot of activity areas, and tried to do too much (as acknowledged by PP themselves)

***“A lot of work was not achieved due to various problems”<sup>6</sup>***

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<sup>6</sup> Positive People Annual Report 1996 – 1997



amongst and between the staff. There is no opportunity for open communication, or the chance to communicate amongst each other about "controversial and sensitive issues" in fear of hurting each other or creating a hostile environment.

It was also felt that PP's external communication could be more focussed, targeted and effective. Some members interviewed felt that it would certainly be of great assistance if the board took a stand on core issues, and make these known to the organisation and the outside world. It is felt that PP is not clear or unanimous about "hot topics" or controversial issues, and if these were communicated and discussed within the organisation, and the organisation takes a clear united stand on some of these issues, it would certainly improve the organisations external communication strategy and effectiveness.

- ***Staff training, development and motivation :***

It is clear that Positive People has qualified and committed staff, it is equally clear that in some cases staff moral and motivation is low. PP also has a history of high staff turnover ( even before the "mass resignation"), although it was difficult to ascertain what the reason for this was.

Contributing factors are certainly, just like in any other similar NGO ; leaving for better prospects, marriage, family life, relocation to mention a few. It is also quite evident that the staff training and development could be developed and encouraged. As one staff member remarked *"we give a lot to the organisation, but we get nothing in return"*.

The staff induction period seems to vary from person to person and according to the person qualifications, and once in employment the courses seem to be limited to a two or three day counselling programme. (with the exception of staff who have had the opportunity to attend external training programmes).

Suggestions from staff on how to improve this include the following :

1. To have a uniform induction training
2. To have a preparatory training before staff actually work in the field. A number of staff commented that they were ill prepared to begin work in the field, and a training programme in this area would certainly have made them feel more confident
3. To have specialised and external thematic trainings scheduled into the workplan and according to work area or activities planned. (This could be a quarterly training programme held on aspects of the organisational work)

There seems to be little or no staff benefits or social security provided to the staff. It is the understanding that staff are requested to do this on a personal basis, and a number of staff commented that doing it from an organisation perspective would certainly be beneficial.

Staff also commented that they would appreciate clearer letters of employment in which it is clearly stated what their respective role is, where their authority lies, and



- **Positive People** has a dedicated, committed and passionate Governing body, some of whom have had personal relationship with Dominic, and are committed to carrying his vision forward
- **Positive People** has a HIV/AIDS resource library (*which admittedly needs to be updated and increased to cover a wide range of issues related to their activities*)
- **Positive People** has good contacts with the media, and the media usually gives appropriate coverage for activities planned by PP
- **Positive People** is the first AIDS organisation started by a person with HIV/AIDS. Dominic d'Souza's vision, spirit and memory clearly still lives in the organisation and the community in which he worked.
- **Positive People** have a established infra structure in terms of office space and equipment that is needed to run an organisation

#### **4.2 Challenges and threats**

In some of the challenges that have been identified no suggestions or 'solutions' have been proposed as these will be addressed in the workshop that will be held on the 12 – 14 April 1999 in Goa. These are marked with an asterisks\*

##### • ***Organisational structure and decision making : \****

The organisation is hierarchical in nature, and its methods of working is democratic, which has led to a fairly flexible working environment. This type of working environment is not uncommon to NGOs and is per se not problematic. It does however become problematic when it leads to confusion and insecurity amongst its staff.

From the interviews it is clear that there is a great deal of confusion and insecurity amongst the staff about decision making of management, as well as decision making amongst the Project Officers and various activities and programme areas. An example of this was when the programme areas were cut from 11 to "5 or 6". In both the individual and group interviews staff were not clear or in consensus as to why the programme areas were cut. Another example is why the daily allowances were cut.

Currently policy decisions are made by the board, with the input of senior staff (Executive Director and Project Co-ordinator), and decisions made about the management and activities of the organisation are made amongst the senior staff. There is confusion as to the process and manner in which decisions are made, and how these are communicated to the staff.

At the same time certain staff members feel that the Executive Director and Project Co-ordinator need to be more direct, transparent and forceful in the decisions that are made – *"to have the last word, and their word is final, to show some authority"*.

##### • ***Organisational communication: \****

Although PP has weekly Wednesday staff meetings, it is felt that there is a communication breakdown and barrier within the organisation – which definitely needs improvement. The most common comments on the issue of communication was around major decisions that affected programmatic areas, no uniform standards of communication within the organisation, and non transparent communication



- It is acknowledged in different reports and proposals that a lot of work for previous years proposal had not been achieved because of various reasons
- PP has had a high staff turnover since its inception
- PP has a professional and qualified staff (mostly from the social work background)

#### **4. Interviews with staff and board members :**

The interviews tended to be a lot longer than was originally planned, and were difficult, inspiring and encouraging.

Methodology :

Questions were divided into 6 sub categories ;

1. Organisational structure
2. Organisational Focus
3. Organisational strengths
4. Organisational weaknesses
5. Organisational challenges
6. General

Some interviewees were asked more specific and in depth questions depending on their role within the organisation and how the interviews were going. The project co-ordinator was interviewed twice, and as the Executive Director was away on a conference I was only able to interview her once (which was quite thorough).

#### **4.1 Positive points, aspects and discussions :**

- **Positive People** has a far reaching outreach amongst the community in Goa
- The network and collaboration with the Government and Government agencies has improved dramatically, to such an extent that PP are now being asked to submit proposals, or are being called in to do certain work
- **Positive People** seems to be the only specialised NGO working in HIV/AIDS in Goa
- **Positive People** has a professional staff, mostly with a degree related to Social work
- **Positive People** is in a position to offer assistance and relevant services at a moments notice to other agencies or organisations
- **Positive People** is in the process of setting up 4 permanent counselling centers, in areas which are closer to the community and therefore more accessible. These counselling centers are planned at the Goa Medical Centre (GMC), HOSSPICIO, ASILO and STD clinic in Vasco
- **Positive People** has space available for people with HIV/AIDS, and have established links with relevant organisations for people with HIV/AIDS to access
- **Positive People** is reputable and well known in the community
- **Positive People** has a more qualitative than quantitative approach to its work and activities, which sets it apart from other NGOs and organisations



*work, beach boys at the service of tourists, workers and labourers, young people, truck drivers and motor cycle pilots. It would like to seek the assistance of teachers, parents, NGOs, religious leaders, lawyers, Government health and social services and those interested citizens and well-wishers who recognise the destructive potential of HIV/AIDS and consequently the urgency and magnitude of the task.*<sup>4</sup>

The 'recorded' organisational history unfortunately only begins from 1995, with limited history from or about the inception (apart from the Organisational Bylaws or registration, which was drawn up during Dominic's period). The reason given for this is that during that time there was little organisational structure and little to record.

### **3. Review of documents at PP Goa:**

"None of us is as strong as all of us"

These striking and inspiring words create the introduction to the Employee Manual of Positive People. It is a motivating welcome address, that makes one feel as if you want to belong to this organisation, and contribute to making "**society a better place to live in**".

The employee manual goes on to talking about the importance of "*socialise ourselves into the culture of the organisation*", obviously aimed at new employees. The hierarchical status of the organisation is to improve efficiency and functioning, and team spirit and group performance will be given utmost importance in the organisation. **Commitment, dedication and team spirit** will be the hallmark of a social worker in Positive People Goa.

Without going into too much detail of the various documents that were read, it is worthwhile to highlight common trends that have surfaced through all the documents:

- In all the project proposals there is mention of the organisational problems that PP has had to deal with. These problems unfortunately do not go into much detail but are briefly mentioned in the opening paragraphs ( problems of organisation, staffing, clarity of project goals, lack of proper organisational structure, lack of sufficient experience)
- The goals seem to have shifted in focus from the original idea of Positive People (see page 2) from being a support group for Positive People to prevention, outreach and providing services where these are needed. (Reasons for these are stated later in the proposal)
- *PP has accepted the goals of the National AIDS Control Programme and state that "we feel confident that we can shoulder the responsibility in this daunting task of HIV prevention and control in Goa"*<sup>5</sup>. It seems as if the goals of the National AIDS Control Programme have been integrated or adapted as this is reflected by its high number of proposed activities in all the proposal and its wide intended outreach. (9 specific target groups with different aims for each – please see Annexure)
- Dominic D'Souza has had a strong influence on the organisation, and all the staff know of him, and this is also reflected in all the documentation in the PP archives

<sup>4</sup> Proposed Employee Manual – Positive People Goa, ( pgs 3 and 4)

<sup>5</sup> Positive People project proposal 1995 - 1997



It is to be noted that interviews were only conducted internally, and a group interview was held with the board members. If time and proper preparation and clearer guidelines permitted, then collaborating and partner organisations would also have been interviewed – as at the moment, the successes, failures, challenges, strengths and weakness are from an internal perspective.

The consultant in no way wishes to pass judgement on the quality of the work of PP, and is writing this report from interviews conducted, and research material from PP itself. I have taken the liberty to make some recommendations and suggestions as well as drafting a workshop programme (in consultation with HIVOS regional office) with input from the Executive Director and Project Co-ordinator of Positive People Goa.

## **2. Organisational History :**

*"I have to live, I have to take it as it comes. It was very difficult in the beginning, but now I have learned to live with it. Being tested HIV positive has made me very strong inside. I am able to cope with situations that normally people would not be able to cope with"*<sup>3</sup>

***Dominic D'Souza – PP founder member***

Positive People Goa (PP Goa) was started in December 1991 by International AIDS Activist, Dominic D'Souza. His vision was to have a national PWA organisation with branches in all the major metros of India, and the headquarters in Goa.

The objectives were as follows :

- To offer membership and support to positive people
- Provide information on self care to people with HIV/AIDS
- Provide counselling services
- Educate the public to prevent discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS
- To make an impact on national and regional policy makers
- To work with other related and appropriate NGOs in the region.

After Dominic's death in May 1992 his friends decided to continue what Dominic started and wished to keep the initial identity which was *"a community organisation meant for HIV infected people and the community of Goa"*

*After Dominic's death it seems as if the organisation changed focus, but still maintaining "the principal aims of care and advocacy of the rights of HIV+ persons and the prevention and control of AIDS in Goa continue to be its major concern"*

*PP's programme is designed as a state-wide response to the HIV/AIDS question and is open to the community at large. Yet, as an implementation strategy, PP has targeted certain groups as priority concerns. These are men and women in the sex*

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<sup>3</sup> "Wise before their time" – a confessional compilation of Positive People (published after the 5 International Conference for People Living with HIV/AIDS – London, United Kingdom 1991)



## **Organisational Development assessment of Positive People GOA – PP Goa.**

PP Goa, Panjim Offices

24 – 26 March and 12 – 15 April 1999

### **Terms of reference**

Assignment with Positive People Goa to help develop their work with formation of Self Help Groups of Positive People.

### **1. Methodology:**

#### **First impressions**

I was met at the hotel by Shakeel, the Project Co-ordinator, and brought to the offices of PP Goa. I was struck by the scarcity of the offices and was graciously offered the office of Shakeel for my period with the group.

It was difficult coming into the organisation, as I had not received any prior information about the group or about the terms of reference – so I literally came into the office quite blind. I therefore decided to play it by ear and take it moment by moment. The group has a customary Wednesday meeting, which was incidentally the day that I met with them.

I was first under the impression that PP Goa was a support group for positive people (*from communication with HIVOS R/O, and articles that I had managed to read from when Dominic D'Souza was in Amsterdam*), but it soon became very clear that the group was everything but a support group.

I was also struck by the number of staff employed by the project (19) and the amount of programmes that they told me they were working on. I felt a state of initial panic fill me, as suddenly this part of the mission seemed to be a lot more involved, daunting and complex than what I had first imagined.

#### ***"It is better to light a candle, than to curse the dark"***

I then decided to try and get as much information about PP Goa as was possible, and to read and understand as much of the organisational history within the time allowed to me. This information was received from the archives of PP Goa, and limited news cuttings that I could read while in Holland.

I also decided that one-on-one interviews with as many staff members, and board members would certainly give me a better picture into the insight and complexities of this organisation. The interviews would be recorded interviews of between 15 and 30 minutes each. It was stressed to all participants that the interviews are confidential, and would not be shared with PP Goa or HIVOS in a way that could identify them. It would be for the purposes of trying to develop an appropriate training programme for the workshop to be conducted in April.



### **Indian-ness :**

When mankind's attention is directed to India, it will find a society that has, like Europe's, the diversities of a continent and the unities of a civilisation. Moreover, these diversities and unities extend to the boundaries of the subcontinent which India shares with its neighbours. Within these boundaries, as within Europe's, political borders have changed over time and correspond only partially to ethnic boundaries and sometimes cut across them. So, how do the unities of civilisation then give coherence to a society so diverse as contemporary India's? What in other words makes an Indian society, what constitutes Indian-ness. Like European-ness or African-ness it is something like a complex of characteristics which those who share identify with themselves and each other, and by which they distinguish themselves from others and are distinguished by others.

However, first, second and permeating almost all of the sacred, both giving life to the characteristics of Indian civilisation and living in them, are Hinduism and Islam. (Eighty five percent of Indian's population is Hindu). To be born into a Hindu family is to be born into a caste. To be born into a caste is to be born Hindu, there is virtually no other way. To be born a Hindu is to have a place according to one's caste, in Hindu society. Its rules are for the most part Hindu rules. For old, male and female, husbands and wives, relationships, adoptions, inheritances; appropriate behaviour within a caste, among its members and between castes among their members; right deportment, occupation and exchange of goods and services within a village – all are prescribed, thought to be prescribed, represented as being described by Hinduism.

No less than great and folk culture, is popular culture in India infused with Hinduism. Hinduism suffuses Indian politics and some of its most popular issues, and has provoked some of the most contentious questions in India politics. Second only to Hinduism is Islam, and the social and religious practices of Muslims have been profoundly, characteristically affected from their having grown over the centuries among converts from Hinduism and in a Hindu heartland. The civilisation of India is an amalgam of Hindu and Muslim contributions, and Hinduism and Islam in India are analogous to Christianity in Europe in this sense : they are at once major sources of social conflict, cultural cohesion and morals and standards by which society are expected to live by or within.

With this limited understanding of Indian society and Indian-ness, I was privileged to form part of a study team to India on behalf of HIVOS regional office to look into the issues of sexual preferences as well as to do organisational development for an HIV/AIDS NGO in GOa. What follows is a report of the various aspects of the study tour and mission.



## Introduction :

Of every seven people in the world right now, one is an Indian. Contemporary Indian society is beneficiary and benefactor to one of the world's great and enduring civilisations, and being able to witness just one small part of this incredibly emotive, contrasting, emotional and draining society has been difficult to put into words or capture on film. An attempt to understand the civilisation has been made through research and speaking to people (outside of the terms of reference). The paragraphs that follow are therefore from a purely personal experience, in an attempt to put the research into perspective.

From having read books, articles, searched the web and spoken to people from varying walks of life in India, the dominant pattern of change in India could rightly be called a "bourgeois revolution", and as Barrington Moor, Jnr says "Bourgeois revolution's essential institutional contribution is to the development *together* of capitalism and parliamentary democracy". In India, it began and continues as a revolution from the top down; and increasingly it has become a revolution from the middle up.

There is little confusion that in India bourgeois revolution's leaders, families who have profited by it or even experienced its changes, have come largely from the middle classes. Accompanying bourgeois revolution in India, and congruent with it, is substantial and accelerating embourgeoisement, i.e., the rush of new entrants into the ranks of the middle classes.

The development in tandem, more or less, of capitalism and parliamentary democracy has not effected any fundamental structural change in Indian society though, because the development together of capitalism and parliamentary democracy has brought fundamental political changes and fundamental changes in their family economies to the rapidly growing middle classes. It has however, yet to profit more than a minority of Indian families.

India's development is not taking place per capita. It is taking place in its upper quintile of households. The poor certainly outnumber the Indian middle classes, but the poor are not directors of change, nor the major participants in it, and certainly not its major beneficiaries. The poor are certainly not passive. They are increasingly assertive, non-violently and violently. They affect the course of change and its pace to some degree. They are the recipients of some varying and significant trickle-down effects of bourgeois revolution. But the engine of change is in the hands of the middle classes. In India's constitution, its eight successive five-year plan, hundreds of party manifestos, thousands of its laws and myriad speeches of its politicians there is rhetorical commitment to a process of change whose chief beneficiaries are the poor.

A remarkable statistic is that the combined population of the twentieth century's two superpowers was never more than three quarters of India's. India's population has more than doubled since it became an independent nation, and India still has far too many hungry people. Their plight is a consequence *not* of the unavailability of food but of its maldistribution: as poverty in the West is a product of maldistribution not of scarcity.



Do people who identify themselves as experiencing alternative sexual pref. necessarily need such groups?  
What problems do they then face by identifying with such groups?

## STUDY ON ALTERNATIVE SEXUAL PREFERENCES (ASP)

Terms of reference:

The main objective of the study is to assist HIVOS in making appropriate and informed choices in its efforts to support relevant initiatives of groups with ASP, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT)

In specific:

- Analyse the social, economic, cultural and political context in which GLBT groups are living and working at present
- Identify the main constraints faced by these groups (social stigma, denial, discrimination, invisibility etc)
- Identify the various needs of GLBT groups.
- Analyse the various issues related to GLBTs with ~~a~~ specific human rights perspective
- Assess the nature and strategies adopted by various GLBT groups, their support organisations and appropriateness of policies and strategies in defending and realising the rights of GLBTs.
- What is the current status and to what extent do the groups at present address issues of policies and legal advocacy? Identify what is desirable in terms of legal environment for people <sup>who practice</sup> with ASP.
- How do GLBT initiatives structure their work in terms of gaining public acceptance of their status, identity and human rights. What are the existing institutional linkages with similar groups/networks <sup>and</sup> other mainstream organisations? Do they have any links with other mainstream civil liberties or organisations?
- To what extent do GLBT groups consider themselves as part of or be associated with mainstream social movements, e.g. women's movement or the labour movement or human rights movement? What are the problems related to such an integration process?
- Suggest areas of work that might require support along with <sup>an</sup> assessment of the most appropriate forms of support. How does the mission see these initiatives being contextualised in the overall HIVOS policy ~~perspectives~~?

The study team met with individual, groups and organisations working with the issue of GLBT or related directly and indirectly to the issue of GLBT. The study was done in the cities of Bangalore, Chennai, New Delhi and Bombay.

GLBT

It seeks to politicise and raise the consciousness of those in the community.

Such activities politicize young people about power relationships as they exist in day-to-day life on a broader social level.

Samvada's activities include working for women's rights, sexuality issues and violence, child sexual abuse and youth education. <sup>seek</sup> They try to politicise the thinking minds to understand the power equations that exist in our society and day-to-day life. They have worked with college students, encouraging free exchange of ideas and encourage discussions on social constructs. They have fortnightly discussions with youth groups centres around contemporary issues chosen by the group. During this work they found out prevalent child sexual abuse in our society. To get a better understanding they conducted a Child Sexual Abuse Study in 1994. In collaboration with qualified mental health specialists they studied 350 girls in the age group of sixteen to twenty one years. Child sexual abuse was studied in terms of mildest to severest (touch-molestation to rape). The final report will be out in a couple of months. They discussed



Guardian figures opt for silence, citing a variety of reasons. Some sought silence as a form of reputation & damage-control to the family and the abused while others focus on retaining future marital matrimonial viability.

which revealed a pathological oppression of those who are vulnerable.

some of the findings which brought out the oppressive/pathological attitude towards weaker person. Some of the gender biases were stereotyped. A boy's experience was termed "boys need experiences". A girl affected was termed loose in spite of being an innocent victim. She was more often made to feel worthless, dirty, dishonest. (Protectors remaining silent due to various reasons, some which ranged from mitigation of the slur on character to preserving future matrimony prospects.) They are planning on a student led, student based LIFE SKILLS HEALTH EDUCATION. Samvada works with the women groups too.

Some forms of oppression are gender-based.

Samvada does not work on GLBT issues. But their work with young adults in which sex and sexuality has been discussed has sensitised them to the existence of alternate sexual orientations. The issue of GLBT is not taken forward from there as it is not deemed critical. This leads one to infer that the heterosexual constructs the 'normal' milieu to such an extent that it excludes any social discourse on other sexual orientations. This has been taken by a group facilitating discussions on sex and sexuality makes one think on the 'constructs' of the trainer finalising the agenda of the training. This stand might perpetuate the blind spots of sexuality education in the general population. The opportunity for understanding the various sexualities is lost. For an adolescent belonging to the alternate sexuality group the path is dark, silent and lonely. An opportunity for understanding, empathising and even bonding of a non-sexual nature vanishes. Prevalence of child sexual abuse in the community very much inside the family structure is unnerving. The tensions, clashes, ignorance, helplessness, silence and unjust power equations inherent in this structure lie uncoiled in the sub conscious of its members. When certain issues are not addressed at an appropriate level at the family level, it might unconsciously spring into a venomous life at the smallest opportunity. This forces one to think the power equations that rule the family structure are iniquitous. Alienation's within the family structure might be happening earlier than one envisages. A child who is uninformed, unprotected and not responded to in the event of an insensitive abuse/oppression might not be able to develop in to a full fledged sensitive and responsible individual capable of navigating an adult life where inequity is more a rule than an exception safely and productively. The complexities of adult life.

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adult life.

The organisation could be useful in terms of training peer groups in 'sexuality' education.

MANASA is a women's group working for women's rights and gender issues. They believe fund-raising

is a political activity which cleaves voluntary group along its fault lines. They raise funds for activities

from the members, community and subscription money for their newsletter. They have held together for

the last 15 years and have made significant contributions in creating awareness among women on political

and contemporary issues of relevance. They feel intimate issues such as sexuality cannot be discussed

openly and hence have not tackled the GLBT issues directly on their own. The personal spaces (of

sexuality) have not coalesced to public spaces and personal sexuality issues have not been brought out for

public debate. The limitation of time and resource prevents them from taking on these issues forward.

They have empathy with the GLBT issues and they relate closely with SABRANG. Women, they feel are

much more sympathetic to people with alternate sexual preferences. They have definite reservations about

taking funds for their activities from funding agencies. They fear outside agendas undermining their

autonomy.

SABRANG is a collective comprising people from various walks of life, working together to document,

publish and disseminate information on sexuality, promote dialogue among people through lectures,

workshops and thereby help them understand and be comfortable with their sexuality. They try and bring

into public focus, issues on sexuality and sexuality identities. They have organised one workshop on SEX

AND SEXUALITY IN THE TIME OF AIDS by Ms. Anjali Gopalan of NAZ foundation Delhi. Lectures

on Emerging Gay Spaces by Dr. Balachandran and lecture on LANGUAGE, GENDER AND

SEXUALITY by Ms. Sandhya Rao of Hengasara Hakina Sangha, Bangalore.

There is an accepted common feeling among the GLBT's and the groups working for them that the

GLBT's are oppressed. The quintessence is the issue of identity and relating to the larger context (the

general community in all denominations, smallest to the biggest). The fight is against something which is

unified, and has a collective mindset. It appears that the oppressor and the oppressed are without definite

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2



contours and have a fluid identity. Initiatives have been undertaken to forge a common force among the oppressed groups. This is evident from the linkages established between the groups working for women's rights, GLBT groups, groups working with street children, groups working for human rights. They hope the movement will gain strength from the coalition movements where the bottom line is equal space and dignity for all. Even when there is no common agenda, sympathetic groups have mutual support.

Much discussed film 'FIRE' has helped merge issues of gender equity, relationships, sexuality etc.,. For too long issues of sexuality were seen in isolation. The film has put sexuality in the larger context and has helped groups to articulate a total picture to the public with clarity. The groups feel that isolated movements <sup>will not</sup> work and any desired social change or at least <sup>open discussion</sup> ~~an open mind to discuss~~ marginalised issues can be brought about by movements. They have made attempts to sensitise people who are involved in movements other than sexuality. Things have not changed beyond tokenistic reference. This makes one infer that more political correctness has gone in to the conscious mind than a permanent change at the subconscious. Sabrang feels that

barring 'gossip' on sexual orientations, people do not discuss issues of sexuality even in the spaces created to discuss sexuality. Every one could be either perpetuating oppression or being oppressed always. Sabrang wants to politicise the issues of sexuality. There is a fear that the some people comment on gay culture being connected to the consumerist culture. Socio-economic stratification of the gay groups is a reality, implying divisions along the lines of education, class and languages. There is a perception that lesbian groups are pushing for collective answers with in the large context of family. Sabrang is trying to build bridges so that different groups can be sensitised to the issues of GLBT. Sabrang feels they need funds to start work on legal interventions, outreach programmes at cruising spaces, helplines, train the counsellors and to have an office with staff and conduct sensitisation workshops. They have already started documentation and dissemination of information on a small scale.

#### PEOPLE'S UNION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES (PUCL)

PUCL is an organisation started by JP, along with few others including the citizen's for democracy with a primary intention of promoting participatory democracy. Social and economic issues of rural poor have been the main focus along with the working class and minorities. Local groups have worked to combat communalism and promote women's representation in panchayats. Electoral reforms, issues of globalisation and local issues such as slum development have also been taken up. They express their reservation about patriarchy.

Their connection with Sabrang is on the human and individual rights in terms of sexuality and gender. Immediate concern is repeal of Section 377, fighting discrimination in general and at the employment levels specifically. No apparent hostility has been faced by sabrang group with PUCL, but there has not been any enthusiasm too. Passivity/<sup>lack of</sup> understanding GLBT issues by the PUCL group is felt by the sabrang group. They might provide signature to memoranda on GLBT rights but would not try and make it into a public intercourse. Oft heard excuse is, "this does not concern whole lot of people". <sup>perhaps</sup> invisibility abets ignorance and apathy.

Dr. Shekar Sheshadri, Associate Professor in the field of child psychiatry in National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience's. He works with many NGOs in various fields of mental health.

It appears that even mental health professionals are quite unaware of the dynamics of alternate sexuality and more often they are not sensitive to alternate sexual orientations. Significantly, taking 'sexuality' history is not taught/included in formal psychiatry education. Attempts at integrating sexuality aspects of education have been met with resistance at the teacher and parent level. Question <sup>remains</sup> how can knowledge be more harmful than ignorance. Some groups working in the field of HIV/AIDS have started working with adolescents in schools. The educators need to <sup>be</sup> taken through emotional dimensions, personal location, and space and legitimacy within school. The sessions on sexuality should help in conflict resolution than perpetuate conflicts. Workshops/sessions could be converted into therapeutic experiences. The conceptual framework for sexuality education could include HIV/AIDS, patriarchy. The information

what is Sabrang's definition of "discussion"?

as opposed to gay male groups



may be calibrated for age and there can be a gentle way of imparting education with a multilateral spread across issues.

Good As You (GAY) has been in existence for the past 5 years. There was an initial struggle of 2 to 3 years to get the group going. At present the group informally meets every Thursday at "Samraksha". GAY gives space for Lesbians and gay people to informally meet, think and act. It is an unstructured group, but provides a safe space for the GLBT group. They bring out a newsletter called Sangha Mitra, which is bilingual. The group is deliberating issues, whether to maintain GAY as just a social space to meet and chat or convert it to a political movement. Though GAY says it has a space for all minority sexual identities, it has more gay population than the lesbians.

*is this not also an issue - do gay dominated orgs understand and deal equitably with lesbians?*

GAY movement is for the time being restricted to socialisation, sharing and bonding. It would be worthwhile to follow developments in this organisation so as to see the needs of the community beyond social and physical bonding. In other words, if the needs of the GLBT constituents are just social spaces, the groups will create the spaces by themselves without outside interventions.

Samraksha was initiated in December 1993 as a response to the growing epidemic of AIDS. The dual objectives of this project are:

- \* to control and contain the spread of HIV infection among a defined vulnerable target population, through education, awareness and the promotion of safer sex
- \* to provide counselling, care and support to those already infected and their families.

Samraksha's primary focus is to offer counselling and support to those people who are vulnerable to HIV infection as well as to people living with AIDS and their families. This involves preventive, pre and post-test counselling. The people living with HIV and AIDS are followed by the counselling team.

Samraksha is not working with GLBT issues. They provide space for GAY group to meet in their premises.

Their counsellors have undergone training with NIMHANS, London Light house and Gujarat Aids Programme. There appears to be glaring gaps in their understanding of issues of sexuality. It was sad to know that the counsellors refer the subjects (homo and bisexuals) to NIMHANS for "behaviour therapy", if the subject desires so. The whole endeavour of safe sex is limited to condom use and equally important issue of negotiating skills, specially for women are not included. They are at a loss to deal with issues of religion and condom use.

#### SWAMM( Society Welfare Association for Marginalised Me)

SWAMM was initiated by Mr. Sekhar with the assistance of SIAPP. The interview was an intense one and emotionally draining as the protagonist, Mr. Sekhar gave us a recap of events of his life. He narrated his sexual experiences, sexual orientation and finally his HIV status. His case study revealed the gay sub-culture, its networks, blackmail, helplessness of the powerless youngsters when faced with the organised groups, ignorance of family members with issues of sexuality and much more. It also revealed the shortcomings of the medical services to deal with health issues beyond the bio-medical knowledge. The treachery of the media was obvious.

Sekhar recounted that he was molested when he was around 16 years by a medical person practising in his area. He was an athlete then and gradually developed a relationship with the doctor. Later he was coerced into the commercial sex work, to cater to a well developed network of the gay groups. His marriage was fixed by his parents. A little later sekhar found out that he was suffering from herpes zoster, and sought medical help with a STD specialist. The doctor sent him for an HIV test, without the necessary pre-test counselling. When the results came the doctor asked sekhar to go to the laboratory to get his result. The person in charge announced in the open that sekhar's blood was tested positive. He did not bother to counsel him or inform him about what HIV/AIDS meant. Sekhar was shattered as his world collapsed around him suddenly. He could not go back to his parents. But they had to be informed so that the



marriage preparations had to cease. The information caught on in the area of his residence. Parents accused him of bringing disrepute to them and banned him from seeing them. Sekhar was more hurt by the social attitudes than the HIV infection. A magazine ASIDE took his interview and promised not to publish his pictures. They went back on their promise and his photograph was on the cover of the magazine. Sekhar's ostracisation was complete. He could not do anything to the magazine but his cover was blown, making him vulnerable with everyone in his own city. He was economically sound and he could sustain himself in some way. Sekhar also narrated that with the HIV positive community the Gay +ves are treated badly compared to other HIV +ves. The gay groups have located some medical doctors who are sensitive to GLBT issues and seek treatment from them. They do not access help from doctors who work with the heterosexual constructs as they found out after certain experiences, that medical education doesn't guarantee a sensitive, humanistic and non-judgemental medical practitioner. HIV/AIDS has torn many family bonds and has called the bluff of social relationships. In most cases social bonds and relationships are fine as long they are undemanding and fun. The movement the equation changes to any demands, social support systems are found wanting. Communities hold together in greatest of the calamities and sexuality vitiates the equations. ??

#### INDIAN COMMUNITY WELFARE ORGANISATION- ICWO

The group started working at Mamallapuram with commercial sex workers. They are receiving funds from USAID and the Tamil Nadu Governments AIDS Control Society. They are conducting barber's training programme to prevent HIV/AIDS. They distribute condoms through barbers. They have trained 16,320 (?) auto drivers in HIV. They have mapped 72 cruising areas in madras and have established contact groups in cruising areas to get into the community. The organisation has a band of volunteers (self identified homosexuals and bisexuals) who are trained in HIV and group skills before taking up work. They have made contacts with all the groups in the cruising areas. They educate the msm groups on condom use and provide condoms 'on spot'. The volunteers talked about the sexuality issues, mainly the sexual acts. They told us about their condom awareness and distribution programmes. They would make eye contact with the potential partners and discuss things of general issues and later discuss condoms. They faced certain tricky situations too. The client thought that the volunteer has STD! The volunteers also stood the risk of losing client to a person who did not talk about these ticklish issues.

#### SIAAP

The groups met the steering committee members along with Shyamala Natarajan. SIAAP was started as a HIV/AIDS prevention programme. It focuses on truckers, counselling and care.

It supports four programmes

Positive Action Group Echo (E.C.H.O)

Women and development society (W.A.D.S.)

AIDS action forum of the blind (A.A.F.O.B)

Society Welfare Association for marginalised me (S.W.A.M.M)

SIAAP does not deal with GLBT issues. One significant thing is that they have a huge counselling programme where sexuality issue are included. This training programme forces the participants to look at their own sexuality's. How far it empowers them to look at patients' sexuality could not be ascertained. Gay and bisexual men are included in the programme. They are deemed to be much more able to deal with the communities when they get back to their work, and hence integrate issues of sexuality in terms of HIV/AIDS.

#### SAHODARAN

Funded by the Naz foundation, this is a drop in centre for msm. Any male who doesnot belong to this sub-group is allowed admission. They have Thursday meetings and discuss things of their interest. These meetings are attended by the outreach workers and the communities they work with. Certain group



activities are also conducted. A dance teacher teaches at the centre. The group was busy preparing for the show, and the main concern was what to wear for a costume?!. They provide training in STD and AIDS. Community education for self esteem building and development of skills for a socially and economically productive life are in the pipe line. They have a doctor conducting weekly clinics in the organisation.

Brokers of commercial sex trade are trying to poach on the group. Socio economic division in the gay group is perceptible. The well educated English speaking gays are more concerned with activist issues in sexuality and the ones with lesser or no accomplishment it is the number of conquests. Some have an understanding that sex with a nice man(what ever that means)doesnot include a condom. || ! ! !

#### Interview with Veena Mazumdar

Lesbian rights groups are very small and with a limited outreach. It has not drawn much media attention. Public hue and cry was witnessed on both sides with the film 'FIRE'. 'Lesbian rights are virtually impossible in today's ground realities'. The women's groups are working for individual freedom and freedom of expression as part of women's fundamental rights(note' not sexuality). This position has been taken by the women's movement, as they would not like to get involved with other issues which could affect the vital struggles. Their concern was more with the fascist politics against culture, liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation contexts and its fallout on Indian democracy. There are worthwhile struggles and not so worthwhile struggles. In one were to add on lesbian rights the movement could get fractured, hence the group should fight the larger concerns first. Women's movement suffered from being apolitical. Women are constitutionally protected but historically oppressed. The present women's movement is political, substantial and pretty wide spread. Also, Indian culture has been homo-erotic and people have not been overtly hostile. Society is aware but does not speak about it. Women's group took upon the issue of Lesbian rights indirectly when two police women decided to get married and the government dismissed them from service. Women's group went on the offensive to restore individual rights(not lesbian rights) and got the government to withdraw the order. The GLBT groups have kept a relatively less high profile activities. More so the demand for rights have not gathered strident voice so far. Few are willing to take positions of GLBT rights. One has to know what the groups are asking through research and information base. From that one can take it forward for right to livelihood, public employment. From there one can demand for right of property and progeny.. With the political and intellectual crisis reverting things back rather than forward, general mood is reactionary. It would be wise to get to know the micro issues involved in GLBT before others jump in and stir up issues

#### Interview with Deepa Nag Choudary( MacArthur Foundation)

MF was forced to look in to the sexuality issues in the aftermath of HIV/AIDS. They do not have a policy. They do not have large programme but fund selective programmes doing cutting edge work. They do not fund open groups who are just vocal about GLBT as it is a politically sensitive issue. They have funded a 'helpline' project for sexual health. Under this issues of sexuality, sexual health, including GLBT are discussed.

#### Interview with Shivananda Khan

Shivananda Khan runs the Naz Foundation UK. The project has set up a few STD treatment clinics, in lieu of the need specially among the gay community. There is a great deal of lack of information and awareness about anal STDs and reluctance on part of doctors to deal with it, even in mainstream hospitals with specialists. There is need for advocacy among the medical profession for training and counselling on STDs.

Shivananda gave the figure of condom use at 6% which if true would negate the whole lot of work done by HIV/AIDS. The quality of some of the condoms in the market are suspect, specially if it is used for anal



intercourse. This could have a significant bearing on the HIV prevention programme. He felt that there was no commitment among the msm group for taking forward the gay movement. The jump from homo affection to homo orientation has not happened. Lack of social security for ASP and lack of language has retarded even the nascent movements. Emotional bonds with the family are very intense which has overridden the sexual identity.

*this needs further explanation*

TARSHI ( Talking about Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues)

TARSHI is an effort towards enabling women and men enjoy lives of dignity and freedom from fear, infection and reproductive and sexual ill-health. TARSHI works to provide women and men choices in their sexual and reproductive lives-choices about health services, contraception, actions. The programme is addressed to people of all classes, communities, ages and sexual preferences. TARSHI runs a helpline five days a week from 9 to 5, providing easy access to information, counselling and referrals on reproductive and sexual health issues.

It was not surprising to hear that the helpline meant for women was accessed by men (upto 80%). The questions were related more to simple doubts on basic sexual information, erectile dysfunction, contraception and conception, HIV/AIDS, emotional relationships and sexual abuse. The documentation of information has helped TARSHI in advocacy, counselling, research and in increasing affirmative sexuality.

Women's movement, sexual abuse, violence issues have not been resolved and hence this baggage comes in way of ration and pro-active sexuality.

NAZ foundation of India.

NAZ foundation programmes are:

- a. Truckers' intervention
- b. Male and Female sex workers programme
- c. HIV/STD clinic
- d. Peer Education Project
- e. School Programme

NAZ started as an msm project but soon realised that there were allied issues of equal importance to deal and hence expanded to address those. Naz also conducts National Training Programmes. Training of the Trainers is on issues of HIV and issues of sexuality, testing and counselling, care and support, ethics and human rights. The counselling programme is done as an outreach activity in the Safdurjung Hospital. NAZ itself runs an STD clinic in its premises on evenings in a week. Diagnosis and treatment are done in these clinics.

There is an gay and lesbian helpline for counselling services run by volunteers and support group meetings. This support is also available to parents of gays and lesbians for counselling. They have helped establishing an informal parental network of gays and lesbians.

Interview with Geethi Thadani

Geethi started the NAZ foundation in India in 1992 with twin objectives of working on HIV/AIDS and Gay and Lesbian aspects. The latter work didn't go far and geethi left NAZ. Geethi felt that the onus of the GL movement in India can happen only if the middle class involves. They are the only group privileged to create a space, otherwise there is very little hope. Dialogues haven't happened between the gay and lesbian groups and very little sensitivity among the gays for lesbians. This has resulted in cleavages between the groups and hence the movement as a whole has suffered.

*this is a big name*



Geethi has done extensive studies of Lesbianism in the Indian Art History. Her attempts at getting funds films and documentation has not met with success and the funding agencies feel the distribution networks for such films are unavailable. There is little space for the movement grow externally forcing some of the activists to emigrate.

Interview with D.A.R.E( Documentation, Archive, Research, Education) and CALERI(Campaign for Lesbian Rights)

Sexuality issues are one of the cornerstones on which the Women's movement is built. But the movement cannot take up lesbian rights as senior feminists say 'this is not the right time'. CALERI avers that there never was a right time for this or there will never be a right time for it. Is it going to be addressed at all in this 'either or' contexts of prioritisation of women's issues. CALERI is slowly building up local solidarity and at the same time fighting the construct of "lesbianism is an upper middle class phenomenon". CALERI does not intent to get funded as they construe that funding will take away the democratic nature of the organisation. They do not want any one clear leader as they believe in collective leadership. The ethos of volunteerism will be lost. Agendas might get diluted and there could be clash of wills. They would rather live on donations and they would rather collect money linked to a particular activity. Their aim is to remove invisibility, to make people aware that lesbianism is as much an Indian phenomenon and to lesbians should speak for themselves. They are willing to ally with anyone who wont say no to the lesbian issues.

DARE is a group of people who care. They hope to:

- a. Generate awareness on lesbian, gay and bi-sexual history in the sub-continent.
- b. Counter negative stereotyping, especially the impression that homosexuality is a western import.
- c. Provide information on legal, health, and psychological issues
- d. Encourage academic research in various fields by providing bibliographies, source materials and guidelines to scholars
- e. Build an archive to preserve and visibilize our history.

DARE is willing take funding. At present they donot have any funding. They are working on voluntary basis. They intend to provide a reading room, staffed full time, with felicities for photocopying materials and referral support services.

DARE organised a film festival n supported by Siddarth Gautam foundation. They <sup>rk</sup> gay groups didnot participate but for one film on Oscar Wilde. That is but one example of the sensitivity of the gay groups. how?

SPARROW is working on women's issues. They are not as such involved in GLBT activities, but have collected material on the issue. SPARROW has fought for the hijda community as there was no else taking up the issue. Regarding lesbian rights, they have an understanding of it as a human right. They donot ignore it nor wish it away. They feel that there are more vital issues to struggle and lesbian rights can wait. As far as letting the lesbian groups fighting for rights with in the women's movement they say 'lesbians have to sort out lots of things before the issue is let in'. The organisation conducts workshop of young girls to question constructs and stereotypes. Issues of sexuality are discussed in groups, but not much enthusiasm is shown to discuss GLBT issues.

STREE SANGAM is a support group for lesbian and bi sexual women. Their main agenda is to get visibility for lesbian identity in many movements. Started as an informal networking and counselling initiative, they have been arranging retreats for the past three years. Retreat is mainly for meeting, mating, sharing and bonding. The sangam has the twin objective of creating social and political space. Former objective has been achieved to an extent where has there has been very little on the latter. Much of the struggle has been to keep lesbi agenda in women's movement. There are tensions in the groups as majority are happy with comfortable physical spaces and minority opt for the inconvenient political focus.



They feel the basic nature of gay and lesbian movements are different and gay men are insensitive to lesbian issues in particular, gender insensitive in general. There are very few meeting points between the two movements, Gay movement should think more in terms of intimate relationship and not just physicalities, and lesbian movement should include more of the latter.

SS plans to start a helpline and a drop in centre. They would like to continue with their occasional newsletter and provide space for lesbians within HIV/AIDS.

Dr. CHITRA SUBRAMANIAM is a specialist in family therapy and psychotherapy.. She has worked with India Health Organisation for a couple of years and later started her own organisation, CASA in 1997 with funding from Ford Foundation. She has been providing counselling services in HIV/AIDS and sexuality issues. They run a tele counselling services and drop in centre, which is open for 6 days in a week. Apart from counselling services, they also help in support services such as arranging delivery services for HIV+ve pregnant women and financial help in certain specific cases.

CASA works closely with HUMSAFAR Trust and has a two way referral system. The issues that are most commonly discussed in counselling sessions are: coming out to the families, lack of partners, intimate permanent relationships, Instability in relationships, cyber sex and cyber relationships and dilemmas of married gay men wanting to come out to their wives.

According to Dr. Chitra Subramaniam the following are the current needs of the GLBT community:

- a. Help line manned by qualified, quality counsellors
- b. Safe spaces
- c. Information services
- d. Training for doctors, social workers, MSW students and institutions on sexuality and communication with issues of sexuality.

#### Interview with Haseena and Naseem (AWAZ-E-NISWAAN)

They work with women in neighbourhood and deal in issues as diverse as Health, Education, inflation and personal laws. They have created discussion space within the organisation where women can cast off their role identities and relate to each other just by themselves. They talk openly their fears, highs and lows. They feel very much part of the group and feel energised by the association. A great amount of bonding has happened in the group. They discuss issues of sexuality without the usual fear of the community.

They feel the politicians from the right wing party has done much more for the cause of sexuality by banning the film 'FIRE'. This could not have been done even by the organisations themselves even if they had worked for five years on the issue! There are many divorced and widowed women in the neighbourhood. Many might not want to be in relationship with men. They even quoted averse from Quran which says 'As soon as menarche is established a husband has to be searched' and discussed at length the implication of that on lesbian movement. They felt lesbian movement could strengthen women in general and their sexuality in particular.

#### THE GLBT COMMUNITY

The quantitative assessment is difficult as invisibility is the rule and few who are openly working for it are notable exceptions. Invisibility could be due to many reasons. The 'Denial syndrome' at the level of self, with the immediate social circles and the community at large. This has resulted in marginalisation of GLBT groups. The transsexual and transgender group were thought to be open and definitely defined. But that is not the case. The group suffers deprivation and marginalisation at different stages of life because of their sexual orientation. Fear is that the most productive years might be lived under existential



crisis/dilemmas. Statistics, even if available hardly reflect the intensity of discrimination, rejection and physical hardships.

The interviews/ discussions offered stimulating and intense interface with GLBT groups. Sexuality is a difficult area to study as it straddles personal, societal and public realms. To develop a certain amount of adeptness in handling the GLBT issue is hard even if one is sensitive, non-judgemental and has total empathy with the group.

Many organisations have begun to work with determination and have secular profiles. They are trying to create 'safe places'. Their personal interactions were the proverbial 'tip of the iceberg'. Trying to make an elbow room in the 'straight' value oriented society, which recognises heterosexuality as the normal, they have not received support.

They elaborated about the 'closet' psychology as integral to majority of GLBT's. Immediate agenda is to put alternate sexuality on the public agenda. Groups have had to battle on scores of issues i.e, orientation constructs, social constructs of patriarchy, social conditioning masculinity constructs, abuse and politics of domination and oppression. Media has helped occasionally. But many times it is largely in a 'victimology' strategy. This has been counterproductive by taking focus away from the issue of sexuality. Many a times the press has sensationalised issues of sexuality without much reference to objective information. The issues that get mentioned are more of a reaction to issues of sexuality than pro active information on sexuality.

Rationalists in the movement are pressing for a 'just space', and acceptance of plurality in sexuality. They clarify that it is for acceptance of pluralism and not for any endorsement of alternate sexual orientation. At this juncture the question of how does the social construct come into being? How does one construct the knowledge of behaviour and sexuality in the absence of general discourses? At present, the available sources are misconceptions, myths, media and pornography. So far sexuality has been in the confines of patriarchy and in marital and procreative context, ignoring variability in a larger context. At the microlevel the problems are guilt, depression, wanting multiple sexual contacts, inability to avoid sex with men, fears of someone finding out, force to get married, premature ejaculation, problem with the size of the sexual organ, gynaecomastia, gender confusion, wanting sex with real heterosexual men, religious beliefs..., the list is endless.

The 'medical profession' is straight jacketed in a bio-medical realm. An organised history taking of sexuality is not present even in psychiatric education let alone in the under graduate medical education. Perhaps the sole contribution is taking homosexuality off from the list of psychiatric aberrations. GLBT groups have felt widespread homophobia amongst medical doctors including psychiatrists. Even the neutral professionals come across as taking a political location than a personal or an emotional location on GLBT issues. The tragedy of this lack of empathy is that most GLBT suffering from sexually transmitted diseases don't seek help of a qualified medical personnel. Help is sought from quacks and outcomes of such treatments are fraught with danger of partial or wrong treatment, complicating the issue further. There are problems even with qualified doctors as most of them are not knowledgeable when it comes to anal STDs. It is not discussed openly and most doctors are uninformed and unprepared. Outcomes of medical treatment are replete with omissions and commissions.

Counselling centres which relate to conflict resolution on issue of sexuality are very few and that too in major metropolis. When globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation are happening at a rapid rate presence of qualified and capable counsellors is essential. Global sexuality setting the trends through the ubiquitous media into every household, the burden of issues of sexuality on uninformed population will be enormous. The sensitivity of the counselling training for emerging issues and understanding of pluralism in sexual identities is vital. It was sad to note that one of the organisations working in the field of counselling in HIV/AIDS refers the msm to a premier institute for "shock therapy" to cure sexual orientation, if the person desires so.



The public perception of alternate sexual orientations vary depending on the situation. Hidden alternate orientations are tolerated to a large extent. But if the same person were to suffer from illness, instance show how inadequate our counselling services are in terms of quality and quantity. HIV the reactions are of a different magnitude. One typical case of a person infected with HIV stands as an shining example. As long as the person was economically productive and healthy he was an equal in the family. Once he came out with his sexuality and HIV status he was humiliated and ostracised. Families find it easier to accept HIV status than sexuality. This would inform us the phobias that rule the social constructs. Gay men are marginalised in HIV/AIDS care. There are many instances of community rehabilitation of heterosexual HIV +ve persons in our country. But when it comes to a homosexual HIV+ ve persons the reactions are qualitatively very different.

Availability and utilisation of available health services takes a quantum change when seen from sexuality angle. There are very few medical professional providing a comfortable space for people affected by issues of sexuality. Corroborative evidence of mushrooming of quacks in the areas of 'sexology' makes one infer that quality sexual health services are absent. One has to just see newspapers wherein one could find many of these specialists claiming wonder cures for all problems related to sexuality. Pasted pamphlets on public and cinema toilets are another example of modus oparendi to garner clientele. So far this aspect of sexuality related problems have been pushed away from public glare as a convenient measure. If one can imagine the loss of health, money and time spent by a chunk of suffering public with quacks specialising in sexuality disorders time has come to put issues of sexuality on public agenda.

The reproductive health programmes has stopped short of including sexuality and sexual health issues. This makes one question the wisdom of the programme itself and sexuality and reproduction are inter related and leaving out one of them will seriously compromise the efficacy of the programme.

Dual existence/double lives. Many men in the gay community are married. The wives are totally ignorant of the sexual activities of their men out side the partnership. Few would also tolerate this as an aberration. The strands of sexual behaviour, ignorance, infidelity, insensitivity and lack of awareness of the mental and health problems are all woven into the fabric of such partnerships. Men are scared that their wives would desert them if they come to know about the hidden sexuality of their husbands. It would be difficult for both the partners to hold their head high in the society. It also appears that during the time of sexual encounter their sexual identities are delinked from their total identity.

Majid Medicine and HIV. Many HIV +ves in Nammakkal area have been treated by the perpetrators of Majid Medicine which promises to turn HIV + ve status into a HIV -ve one. Scores of people have tried this form of medicine and have returned with complications and lighter pockets. The response of HIV/AIDS organisations in this field has been nil, and one person has got away with dubious claims with pathological outcomes. Hope is an elixir for life but the person who advertises hope should be indoctrinated with ethical values. It is sad that few family have mortgaged their belongings to get the treatment.

Police and GLBT. The gay groups take over certain public areas for their activities. When the activities get established more and more msm's use the space thereby attracting public attraction. The police come into the picture on their own or due to a complaint lodged by civilians. The police use it their advantage. The regular one's are harassed for money or free sex under duress. Later the police use these men as decoys to get at other men and fleece them monetarily. Police even check them bodily to takeout watch, gold chain or whatever is on the body of the men caught. They are threatened with disclosure, which is enough for the one caught to part with what ever the policeman wants. Many a times when police have to file a certain number of cases they use these spaces to makeup projected number of cases.

Medical labs, profit and absence of counselling. The government and private medical lab used for diagnosis have functioned in a narrow margin of economical concerns to the exclusion of human concerns. Labs have done tests without the pre test counselling. Worse, they have announced results to



patients in the open laboratories and have not tried to do post test counselling for the HIV positive. A scary scenario indeed. A big gap exists in theory of HIV work and the field realities.

#### Truck owners and GLBT

##### CSWs and gays

Female Commercial Sex Workers are not aware of alternate sexual preferences of men. In one group interaction with a CSW, it was a surprise element in her sexual knowledge. At first, they felt why should do men do it this way? She was full of empathy with the gays, specially kothis who assume the feminine role in male to male relationships. One could not trace any animosity though both groups vie for the same clientele group, though for different stratifications within that group. They even collaborate with each other depending on the client's sexuality and preferences.

Ethical problems with confidentiality. There was this specific case of an HIV+ve old man having sex with young men. The volunteer privy to his HIV status did not know ways and means of stopping unsafe acts.

Commercial Sex Trade is present in the gay sub culture. There is an organised group of procurers and users. The pimps use blackmail in certain cases, though in most cases it is voluntary. Money is earned by offering services. There are also times when gay, male commercial sex workers pay money to seek pleasure.

#### IMPRESSIONS AND INFERENCE

The ground realities are hazy. There is a small group of GLBT urban activists hurtling towards integration with contemporary global sexuality. Large sections of semi-literate and illiterate rural remain untouched in their own little 'constructs' within the larger 'family constructs'. There is a constant aversion to get into semantics of their own sexuality or sexuality in general. In most arrangements 'deceit' is as much to the self as it is to the innocent partner. Notion of 'family' scores over the individual identity. In circumstances of nascent individuality and a modicum of understanding of sexuality, the parental forces subdue individual orientations. Marriage is 'accepted' and marital sex becomes a chore to be done however infrequently and perhaps in a dispassionate way. It is ironical that most are bound legally to marriage without being totally committed.

It seems that the Indian psyche refuses to understand, discuss and accept sexuality as an integral to personality and life. The issue is regarded as a taboo. This is at variance with the discourses available in books of pre/British era, in fact centuries ago. Much maligned Manu refers on issues of indulgence: 'na mamsa bhakshane doshah, na madhye, na cha maithune, pravrutthihi yesha bhothanam nivrutthisthu maha phalah'. There is nothing wrong in consumption of meat and alcohol. There is nothing wrong in sex. These are but natural instincts. But if one can go beyond these it is highly rewarding. He also mentions that pluralism is a characteristic of humanity. Another great intellectual and an administrator par excellence Kautilya says: what is present in nature and is not 'changeable' has to be regularised or restrained. It would be matter of interest to know that Kautilya had legalised commercial sex work. He had wide ranging regulatory measures for the trade! He had put in place a licensing system for alcohol too. He mentions: 'suppressing the unsuppressible is impossible'. As a counter point to freedom he says that the majority sentiment should not be hurt. Awareness should be carried out in an inoffensive way! Profound statements indeed. Whether they accepted different sexual orientations or not there was a prevalent sense of equity. One cannot but admire the minds behind those thoughts which accommodated myriad possibilities in orientations.

The present situation no different. In terms of GLBT people are at various levels of understanding. There is a large section of population unaware of alternate sexual orientation, unless one is differently oriented. There is a section of population who have just the information. After these two large chunks of population there is a smaller section of knowledgeable group (knowledge is a conscious product of one's own



7  
realisation/actualisation of the information). There is an intellectual group who understand things in a homogenising way in their subconscious. This group often see symmetry in asymmetry. Their philosophical outlook gives them the wisdom to analyse a situation from outside. It is a case of 'involving' without involvement. They stand on a bedrock of objectivity, understanding and appreciation. Sadly for GLBT issues they are but a minority. An average person appears to be basically very attached, possessive with own opinions and strong identification with it. This group constitutes the majority. Majority follow the heterosexual and procreative construct. If one want to dive little deeper into this construct, one has to go back to a different existential conditions way back. Progeny was the greatest asset due to lack of resources. Deaths and devastation's made it imperative for people to have large families to create and utilise resources. The Constructs were set. At present procreation element is not as vital. But the corrections into the constructs has been very difficult. Texts say that even ethics are part of normative science. More for the convenience and conscience. Ethics are not based on facts but conventions of heritage, graded acceptance of a construct and observation of experiences. This is subject to change in a dynamic and accommodating community. But the change is difficult and doesnot happen always, immediately.

Disparity exists Exploitation is wrong. This is where our endeavour should be, that is to stop exploitation of people with alternate sexual orientation. This is the mandate of Hivos too..

### COUNTER POINTS

On most fronts 'problem avoidance' is a better answer than 'problem solving'.

Most of the groups we met and interacted were the urban, English speaking middle class. How much of their observations and opinions include the realities of the rural majority of India is debatable. With different levels of education, awareness and lack of language the needs of rural GLBT will be different and needs to be understood, assessed and articulated.

? How much 'sexual identity' contributes to the real identity of an individual could not ascertained as the team spoke to groups and not individuals. It was not clear whether the existential identity was synonymous with sexual identity. The human microcosm is made up of many identities They could be social, cultural, materialistic, sexual and spiritual. Any endeavour for improvement has to be in all identities. How much space is given by GLBT groups to other identities is not exactly known. One observation in this mission was the age group of members of GLBT groups. Most of them were young adults with age group ranging from 20 to 40yrs. This forces one to think about the drop outs from the group. What do they feel? How have they come to terms with their sexuality? Have they found a via media in the maze of sexuality? Have other identities scored their sexual identity? Are they looking at sexuality from a different viewpoint or from a different plane? Does issues of sexuality recede in priority as a natural progression of age? Have the semantics of existential dilemma changed course? This group could throw light on the issues of GLBT in a much different way than the one's we were able to talk to.

Humane approach to the individuals in essential and at the same time it is vital that the larger context of 'family' as a sustainable basic unit of community/society is equally understood. Most of the development work aims at sustainability which in other words means we are a just a link in the chain of existence. We have a responsibility to our future generations. Do we go on dividing the community into groups of different denominations while crying hoarse about unity and integration? Do we work for spaces with in the community? There are already many examples of people of alternate sexual orientations, who have made a mark in life without brandishing their sexuality. Could that be one of the immediate answers for the 'crisis' in sexuality?

Clinical answers arrived at alleviation could lead to more problems than one with a sociological approach. Sociological changes in terms of the ways in which alternate sexual orientation are perceived are changing visibly, albeit slowly.



The institution of marriage in the 'heterosexual' construct is under severe onslaught. Equal rights as demanded by the GLBT groups, even if gleaned cannot assure the stability and quality of family if one understands the highly unstable partnerships in the GLBT groups.

Support/advocacy processes have not progressed much beyond 'sex' because people inside the group haven't tried as it could disturb individual balances/positions they have built for themselves, specially the socially-educationally and economically forward. Any movement cannot make any headway without leaders and the alternate sexual groups don't have many leaders. The reasons are very much clear. It is a very divided constituency and the constituents have contrasting interests and stakes.

There is no law that bars people of same sex staying together in India.

There is an understanding that if the percentage of population of people from broken homes exceeds 30% the social pathology increases. Even if the statement is hypothetical there is a grain of truth in the logic.

*What does this mean here?*

## IMPRESSIONS

it might not be prudent to come out with specific strategies for support to GLBT groups at this stage due to following reasons.

1. The groups working on GLBT issues are small and are trying to understand the micro issues at personal and community levels. The understanding of issues achieved is more of their own personal experience and outcomes of interactions with small groups they belong to or work with. More information is needed on the micro issues as they have a major bearing on the lives of GLBTs than the policy changes at present.
2. The 'constituency' is not well defined. There are more estimations and projections rather than data collected scientifically or statistically.
3. 'Constituents of this constituency are hard to define because of the varying behaviour at various times in their lives. Defining terms such as: Kothi, gay, msm, panthi, depending on the sexual behaviour are interchangeable and self defeating for the purpose of classification.
4. Schism amongst the GLBT groups is common and this division is mainly due to different identities and ideologies. It seems that MSM groups are more concerned with physical spaces whereas the lesbian groups concerns are legal and family space.

## SUGGESTIONS

There is a need to get a clear understanding of the community and assessment of its needs. A detailed study is essential to come out with specific needs of the GLBT community.

GLBT groups need safe space which could act as laboratories of thought processes and initiatives. The community could decide democratically the issues that can be taken forward.

Networking is in a nascent stage. It needs to be supported so that the groups can come together for common agendas.



Information is not available at present. Need for information is one of the felt needs of the GLBT community all over.

Helpline and counselling are vital as it helps as an outreach programme for the community. This could also define the contours of the problems and pressures faced by the GLBT community.

A study of the anal STDs in general and specific to the msm groups would help the groups get better quality medical care. This would also help in educating the medical profession, who at present do not have any information. This could help reduce the bias on information and research on anal STDs.

2. It appears now that a bi polar sexuality is a misnomer. It is a multi gender society with a range of sexualities locked in a bipolar gender world. There is more between 'he' and 'she' than at the two poles. It is the existence of masculinity and femininity in various permutations and combinations. With the resurgence and resilience of the third force the gender equations are never going to be the same. Sexuality and gender might be recasted within self, within communities and society at large. I would like to end my ambiguous understanding of sexuality and GLBT with this 'vachana' of Devara Dasimayya, as translated by A.K.Ramanujam:

If they see breasts and long hair coming  
they call it woman,

if beards and whiskers,  
they call it a man:

But, look, the self that hovers in between  
is neither man nor woman,  
Ramanatha.



## **Executive Summary for the Alternative Sexual Preference (ASP) study.**

*(Title changed to GLBT study)*

*It is important to read this Executive Summary together with the 3 individual reports*

Introduction :

### **Aspects and overview of the study tour :**

The TOR :

The team felt that the TOR highlights the complexities of the issues involved, but the schedule and limited time has only begun to highlight the many issues that need to be addressed in such a study tour. (the tip of the tip of the iceberg).

As the study tour consisted of individuals, from very different backgrounds and perspectives, it was felt that it would certainly have been helpful and encouraging if the team had time to 'get to know each other' before the actual study tour began. This would have given us the opportunity to read more and get a better understanding of the situation as well as understanding the different perspectives that we all brought to the study.

Given all of this, the team decided on the following aspects to try and make the study as insightful and 'effective' as possible within the limitations :

1. We would use the TOR as a reference rather than attempting to respond to each of the aims within the interview and study framework
  2. Each of us would concentrate on our own perspective and 'expertise' within the interview process, which would lead to a three part individual report accompanied by a joint Executive Summary.
- acknowledgement that HIVOS has taken on the study tour

The issue of GLBT is a sensitive and delicate issue, and one in which uninformed choices and decisions could have a negative impact on the people and the community that the funder is trying to 'support. It has to be pointed out though, that this report can only serve as a beginning explanatory reference, and a lot more extensive dialogue would have to happen DIRECTLY with the various groups, or representatives of the groups (as identified by the groups).

- selection of different groups interviewed

It was felt that Calcutta had to be included vs Chennai as the groups in Chennai were more involved in the issue of HIV/AIDS and msm related activities. Calcutta seems to have more active gay and lesbian groups. There is also a lot of work being done on male sexual health in this area, and this would have allowed for a wider perspective.



The groups met in Chennai were primarily focussed on HIV/AIDS issues, which slanted the study towards the issue of HIV/AIDS on this part of the tour. (The TOR mentioned that HIVOS RO has sufficient information with this regard).

Some interviews were felt as not being important or contributing to the understanding and achievement of the TOR, as their focus had little or nothing to do with the issue.

The groups that we were fortunate enough to meet with, are only a small sample of the many diverse groups working on this issue in India. The groups that were met were also very specifically urban based (both in location and activities)

Organised and "well funded" organisations were represented by individuals during the interview process, whereas small, "unfunded" voluntary organisations were represented by groups of individuals.

The willingness and openness of different groups wanting and willing to meet with the interview team after hours, can only be acknowledged and appreciated. The reasoning for groups willing to meet with the interview team were from different perspectives. Some had formal links with HIVOS (partial or full funding), and therefore felt an obligation as opposed to the importance of the issue. Other groups were driven by the importance of the issue, and obtaining an interest and better understanding of what HIVOS and the study team were all about.

It would have been helpful if the identification of organisations to meet was also extended to contacts outside of HIVOS (other agencies, organisations and individuals)

The schedule for the study tour was demanding, and a little unrealistic in terms of allowing the interview team to process and record feelings and insights gained, and being allowed the 'luxury' of having time out. The schedule was for a full 22 days without a day off planned. Many of the interviews were emotionally draining and difficult – and there was little time for the team to 'offload' with each other, before having to go into the next interview.

Timing between different interviews was often unrealistic and had to be rescheduled, and one was cancelled (as we had met with the partner organisation twice), and one interview did not turn up (IWID, Chennai – Good Friday holiday).



## Observations :

We met a kaleidoscope of different groups and individuals, ranging from lesbian identified, gay identified, msm, male sexual health, sexual health, HIV/AIDS, women's groups, human rights, funding agency, mental health professionals and organisations working with youth.

While there is a clear indication of some form of movement, (and what that movement or indication is, is perceived differently amongst the team members), the movement is very fragile and at its beginning. This needs to form the basis of any understanding or attempt to work with and within the various components that currently make up the 'movement'.

This issue would be discussed in greater detail during the debriefing session, and reference should also be made to the individual reports submitted by the team members.

*Agg - pp 9. members of organisation / Homophobia among Homosexual*  
The issue of the sexuality and sexual identity has an opening within the msm community via HIV/AIDS activities (although this is only limited to sexual intercourse and release), whereas with women the issue of women's sexuality has limited space, (although this is being discussed within the lesbian groups to some extent) and in some cases is being discussed via reproductive health. Male sexual health is being compartmentalised as HIV/AIDS and safer sex, and women's sexual health is limited to their reproductive health. There needs to be discussion between the different groups on the issue of sexual health – and more information and understanding needs to be 'obtained' about projects/organisations working in women's and male sexual health. *(and not just be an organisation with the cover of male sexual health working in HIV and msm activities).*

To make this study more insightful and meaningful it is felt that we should have met with more organisations working specifically on women's health.

*[women's rights & working in sexual orientation & HIV/AIDS]*  
Perspectives : - please refer to individual team members reports (not yet finalised)

There is very little that has been done by lesbian and gay groups together for this to be termed as a movement. What is clear is that there are lesbian groups, gay groups and groups who are working within the gamut of HIV/AIDS and within that finding space to talk of male to male sex. Then there are groups who are talking of les-bi-gay rights and support the activities of the lesbian/gay groups. Then there are the groups who are working with sexuality or sexual health issues or human rights issues. The issues and concerns as well as the perspective with which these groups work are very different.

Also the needs of the communities, which themselves are very unclearly defined and in the case of lesbians very invisible, are very different too and need to be looked into separately. The public and social spaces that men and women have or do not have are very different and the issues that concern gay men and those that concern lesbian women too are very different. It is vital to keep in mind these differences and



not to link them up in the ways they are not. For example male homosexuality is much more public and has a much wider acceptance in society, while women's sexuality as such is hardly on the map of public discourse. In these conditions understanding the issues should be a priority than interventions. Then again, it will be important to see how much of a "common " space will be for women also. There is a clear need for separate spaces along with associations.

### Recommendations :

Based on the various conversations with groups and individuals and on their recommendations and visions for further work that is needed in the area of les-bi-gay issues, have come up with the following suggestions and comments.

One of the strongest reservations expressed by some groups was with the whole question of funding itself. We need to dwell on it in some detail to understand what these apprehensions are and why they exist.

It is also important that the major reservations on the issue of funding came from non-funded, voluntary based groups, especially women's and lesbian groups. Most of these groups have a broad perspective from which they come to the issue of les-bi-gay rights and a history of activism. One clear reservation has to do with the state of the nascent les-bi-gay movement itself. (also need here a discussion on whether there is any lesbian or gay movement to speak of – individual comments by team members here.)

In this scenario funding two or three large visible projects will be a very unviable solution, both from the feasibility and the outcome points of view. (*More discussion during de briefing*). At the same time there are many small and community based work that can be helped by funding. In the case of no other support funding can be important for some initiatives. Care should be taken to confirm that funding does not hinder the voluntary processes, even if small, that are already in place or endanger the efforts being made by the community. Some steps that will be useful in this direction:

- there should be an accountability to the community for which the work is being done.(accountability needs to be implemented by the group and supported by the funder). More interactive and meaningful monitoring is encouraged by the funder.
- collective projects even if those by two or three individuals rather than huge organisations or individuals who are likely to become icons within and without the country. Collective processes are also more welcome as they may be more equipped to set up guards against hierarchy and have more spaces for multiple voices.
- possibility of small fellowship grants for research, documentation, collection and dissemination of materials and support networks within the communities. Care should be taken though that there is not much replication of work being done. One guard could be to have a study on work that has already been done or is in process.

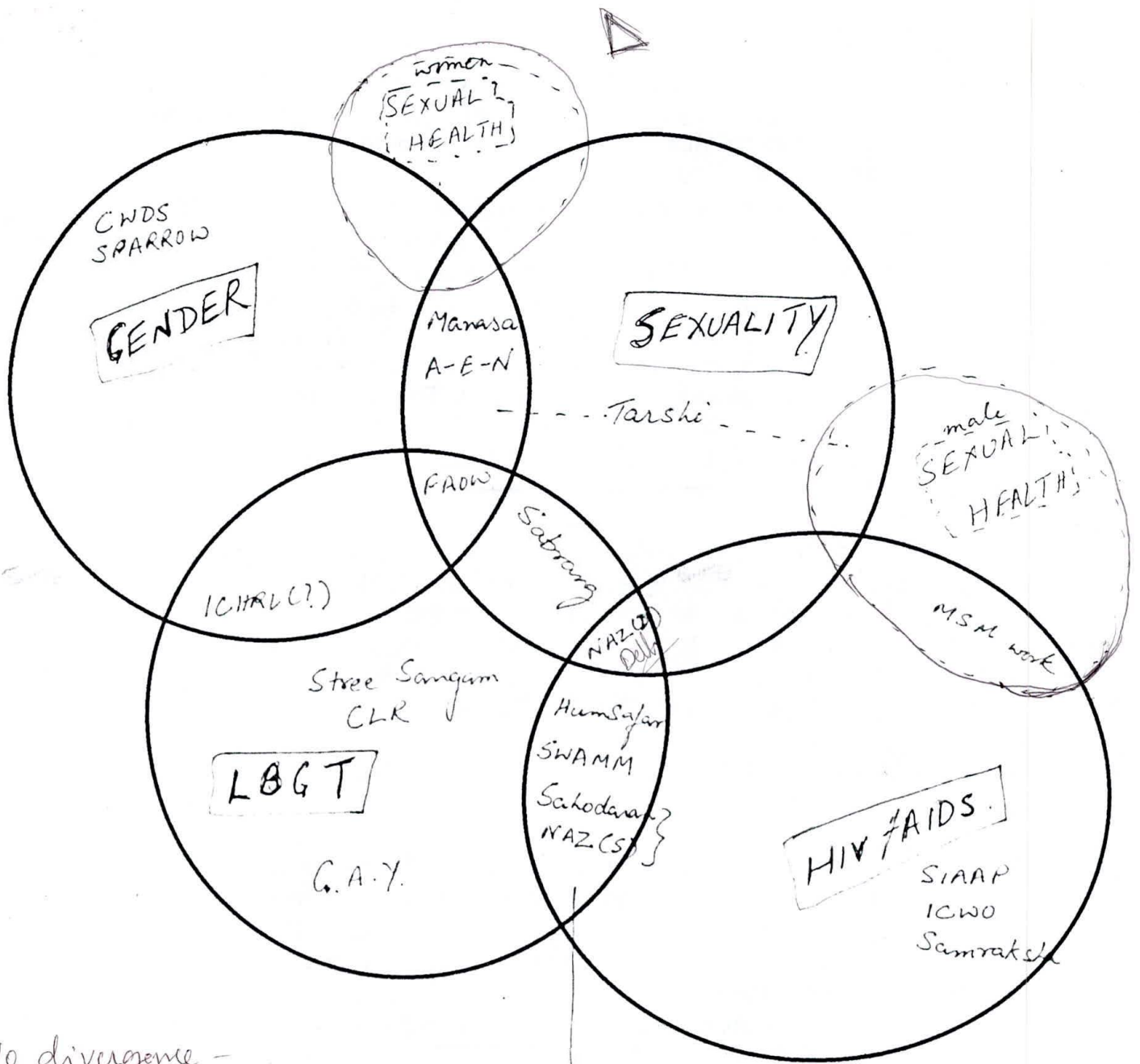


- HIVOS RO is encouraged to have a consultation with the various groups/individuals (or representatives as identified by the groups) in order to ensure a co-ordinated funding mechanism and a more effective outreach and working methodology of the various groups
- HIVOS should clearly differentiate between LBG issues and HIV/AIDS issues in their funding criteria
- While there should be support for work that is directly on les-bi-gay concerns, there is **also** an urgent need to move towards a more vocal and public discourse on sexuality and intimate relationships with the larger population. Most groups that we spoke to felt that much work can be done with students, especially college students, and adolescents. Thus initiatives for materials, film-shows, workshops, development of modules for such work with students on gender, sexuality, and intimate relationships, will be important. While there are many "trainers" who may be doing work like this either with students or with NGO's it is of utmost importance that their perspective and materials be looked into carefully. ( in the case of the NGOs that we met in this trip their understanding of sexuality was limited to say the least and gender was something "they needed to talk about" even for the training of their own workers and counsellors.) It should be pointed out strongly that the one should not be at the expense of the other, as the issue of sexuality and sexual health surely impacts on other programmatic areas of HIVOS as well.

Thus other projects like the following could also be supported to some extent or the other

- Helplines with trained counsellors (both specific helplines for les-bi-gay people as well as those on sexual health issues). Within these too there must be clear separate space for women as the experience of the helplines we spoke to shows that most of the calls are by men, even on the helplines meant only for women.
- Counselling services for les-bi-gay people and also for their immediate families.
- Drop-in centers for communities run by the communities that they are meant for





2) No divergence -

→ Dr. S. Seshadri  
Dr. C. Subramaniam.



MANASA  
A&W  
TARSHI

Gender

CWDS  
SPARROW

Sexuality

Dr. SS  
SABRANG

Dr. C.  
NAZ (ND)

ICHRL

SIAAP  
SAMKASAM  
ICWO

GLBT

HIV/AIDS

CALERI

S.S.

GAY

Humsafar  
NAZ Shivananda

SS. Dr. Sekhar Seshadri

c. Dr. Chitra.  
Subramanyam



## *Recommendations*

Based on the various conversations with groups and individuals and on their recommendations and visions for further work that is needed in the area of les-bi-gay issues, have come up with the following suggestions and comments.

One of the strongest reservations expressed by some groups was with the whole question of funding itself. We need to dwell on it in some detail to understand what these apprehensions are and why they exist.

It is also important that the major reservations on the issue of funding came from non-funded, voluntary based groups, especially women's and lesbian groups. Most of these groups have a broad perspective from which they come to the issue of les-bi-gay rights and a history of activism. One clear reservation has to do with the state of the nascent les-bi-gay movement itself. (also need here a discussion on whether there is any lesbian or gay movement to speak of – individual comments by team members here.)

Very clearly if there is any such thing as the les-bi-gay movement, it is at the very beginnings in India. This needs to form the context of our understanding of whatever future plans are to be looked into. Also, les-bi-gay rights and concerns are very difficult to speak about openly in the present society. Thirdly, there is very little that has been done by lesbian and gay groups together for this to be termed as a movement. What is clear is that there are lesbian groups, gay groups and groups who are working within the gamut of HIV/AIDS and within that finding space to talk of male to male sex. Then there are groups who are talking of les-bi-gay rights and support the activities of the lesbian/gay groups. Then there are the groups who are working with sexuality or sexual health issues or human rights issues. The issues and concerns as well as the perspective with which these groups work are very different.

Also the needs of the communities, which themselves are very unclearly defined and in the case of lesbians very invisible, are very different too and need to be looked into separately. The public and social spaces that men and women have or do not have are very different and the issues that concern gay men and those that concern lesbian women too are very different. It is vital to keep in mind these differences and not to link them up in the ways they are not. For example male homosexuality is much more public and has a much wider acceptance in society, while women's sexuality as such is hardly on the map of public discourse. In these conditions understanding the issues should be a priority than interventions. Then again, it will be



important to see how much of a "common " space will be for women also. There is a clear need for separate spaces along with associations.

In this scenario funding two or three large visible projects will be a very unviable solution, both from the feasibility and the outcome points of view. At the same time there are many small and community based work that can be helped by funding. In the case of no other support funding can be important for some initiatives. Care should be taken to confirm that funding does not hinder the voluntary processes, even if small, that are already in place or endanger the efforts being made by the community. Some steps that will be useful in this direction:

- there should be an accountability to the community for which the work is being done. Monitoring and accountability processes should be set in place.
- collective projects even if those by two or three individuals rather than huge organisations or individuals who are likely to become icons within and without the country. Collective processes are also more welcome as they may be more equipped to set up guards against hierarchy and have more spaces for multiple voices.
- possibility of small fellowship grants for research, documentation, collection and dissemination of materials and support networks within the communities. Care should be taken though that there is not much replication of work being done. One guard could be to have a study on work that has already been done or is in process.

*While there should be support for work that is directly on les-bi-gay concerns, there is also an urgent need to move towards a more vocal and public discourse on sexuality and intimate relationships with the larger population. Most groups that we spoke to felt that much work can be done with students, especially college students, and adolescents. Thus initiatives for materials, film-shows, workshops, development of modules for such work with students on gender, sexuality, and intimate relationships, will be important. While there are many "trainers" who may be doing work like this either with students or with NGO's it is of utmost importance that their perspective and materials be looked into carefully. ( in the case of the NGOs that we met in this trip their understanding of sexuality was limited to say the least and gender was something "they needed to talk about" even for the training of their won workers and counsellors.) The work being done on HIV is very limiting in its scope and its practice.*



Thus other projects like the following could also be supported to some extent or the other:

- Helplines with trained counsellors (both specific helplines for les-bi-gay people as well as those on sexual health issues). Within these too there must be clear separate space for women as the experience of the helplines we spoke to shows that most of the calls are by men, even on the helplines meant only for women.
- Counselling services for les-bi-gay people and also for their immediate families.
- Drop-in centers for communities run by the communities they are meant for.



Movements:

msm - terms of funders.



## Talking About Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues with Youth: A Telephone Helpline

By Radhika Chandiramani

# Young Adult Reproductive Health project highlights

TARSHI (Talking About Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues) is a telephone "helpline" based in New Delhi, India, that offers information, counseling and referrals on reproductive and sexual health issues. It is an effort to enable women and men to enjoy lives of dignity and freedom from fear, infection, and reproductive and sexual health problems by providing them with choices in their sexual and reproductive lives—choices about health services, contraception, and their sexual behavior. The program reaches people of all classes, communities, ages, and sexual preferences, over 60% of whom are between the ages of 15 and 25.

### The Theoretical Basis

TARSHI believes that reproductive choices cannot be isolated from sexuality, and that sexual and reproductive behaviors emerge from and have an impact upon life contexts. Therefore, TARSHI wanted to create a program that could be gender-sensitive; provide simple and accurate reproductive and sexual health information in an interactive, non-threatening manner; provide people information relevant to their particular life-spaces; explore the pros and cons of particular choices, while never taking away the right of choice; refer people for particular services; and be easily approached and effectively used by individuals.

Additionally, we were concerned that the program be affordable, accessible, confidential, simple and user-friendly. TARSHI decided that a telephone helpline offering information, counseling and referral to appropriate agencies for sexual and

reproductive health needs was the most effective program strategy to meet these criteria.

### TARSHI's Program

The helpline began in February 1996 and is operated by a team of six full-time trained counselors under the supervision of a qualified clinical psychologist. The helpline is publicized through radio advertisements, posters, press articles, and word of mouth. Both men and women call the helpline, and it has so far received more than 25,000 calls. While the age



range of callers is 10 to 70 years, over 60% are between 15 and 25 years of age. We are popular with youth because we listen to their concerns and confusion with respect, and—unlike many other adults in their lives—we are open with them about sexuality. Though originally designed for women, 80% of TARSHI's callers are men. TARSHI has attempted to increase the number of women callers through radio advertisements, recorded messages on the phone, press articles in women's magazines, and posters and fliers stating that the helpline is meant especially for women. TARSHI also encourages

its male callers to pass the numbers on to their female partners and friends.

Approximately one-third of TARSHI's callers call more than once; continuity of service is ensured by giving them a code number that protects their anonymity, but allows counselors to reference their case number. All calls are documented in writing in registers and index cards. The main details of the calls are documented to provide continuity to the caller and also to keep track of the nature of calls and concerns. Youth call mainly for basic information about things such as contraception and HIV/AIDS, and to discuss sexual concerns like premature ejaculation, masturbation, body image, sexual urges, conception, abortion, relationship problems, and sexual abuse. If they require medical or other professional services, they are referred to appropriate agencies. Because of TARSHI's policy honoring callers' anonymity, it has no reliable means of checking how many referrals are successful.

The success of the helpline lies in its guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity, and providing a non-judgmental and 'safe' space to its callers. Information is provided in a simple manner, so as to facilitate comprehension and applicability. All callers are treated with respect and encouraged to find their own solutions to their problems. The number of callers who call back and new callers who say they have been referred to TARSHI by their friends indicates that TARSHI has been able to provide a service that young people find useful. On subsequent calls, callers ask questions



*"Documentation of real individuals' experiences, perceptions, fears and expectations is important for advocacy and understanding."*

#### **Contact Information:**

Radhika Chandiramani  
TARSHI

49 Golf Links, 2nd Floor  
New Delhi 110003

INDIA

Helpline: 011-462-2221,  
011-462-4441

Office: 011-461-0711

Fax: 011-461-0711

Email: radhi@unv.ernet.in

that become increasingly 'sophisticated' and report decisions they have made after having spoken to TARSHI on an earlier occasion. For example, young men report delaying penetrative sex, masturbating instead of visiting a commercial sex worker, and adopting other less risky sexual practices. Independent evaluations conducted annually over the last three years have found that we are a rich source of information and are providing a much-needed service in our community.

In addition to the helpline, TARSHI distributes and displays written reproductive and sexual health material during public events such as fairs and bazaars. It also distributes materials to schools and other organizations, and acts as a resource for members of the press when they write about sexuality. The press has approached TARSHI and quoted it on a range of topics including sexuality education, child sexual abuse, lesbian and gay issues, and adolescent sexuality. TARSHI also documents all calls to the helpline (main details of the calls are documented), and presents its findings locally, nationally, and internationally to contribute to the body of knowledge and advocacy on sexuality issues. For example, the data from the helpline have gone towards influencing journalists to write responsible articles on sexuality, which in turn feeds public opinion.

*"We are popular with youth because we listen to their concerns and confusion with respect...and are open with them about sexuality."*

One of the problems that TARSHI faces is being careful that its public messages are not misconstrued. In this age of sexlines and chatlines, TARSHI finds that people mistake it for an undercover "sex service." TARSHI's public messages state that it offers information, counseling and

referrals on reproductive and sexual health issues, and the message on the phone machine also states that TARSHI is not a sexline. However, crank and abusive callers are a common occupational hazard. TARSHI has developed ways of keeping their numbers down to 10%; callers are dealt with firmly and professionally, but never rudely, as TARSHI believes in keeping doors open for people who might need help. This strategy has paid off, as TARSHI has had callers apologizing for a crank call made earlier and, once "converted," they act as allies of the program by dissuading their friends from making crank calls.

#### **Lessons Learned**

- Young adults, like anyone else, need to be heard and treated with dignity. Often they experiment with risky sexual behaviors in order to get information that no one else in their surroundings seems willing to share with them;
- Those working on sexuality issues cannot afford to be judgmental or moralistic if they wish to truly empower individuals;
- Documentation of real individuals' experiences, perceptions, fears and expectations is important for advocacy and understanding;
- Proper training, security, safety, comfort with sexuality issues, and understanding of ethical issues prevents staff burnout and helps the program function more smoothly and effectively;
- Keeping tabs on events occurring in society and the media is helpful as it helps staff understand what informs public perception;
- Conventional mechanisms to publicize the helpline are complemented by grateful callers who pass on the helpline numbers to others; and
- A telephone helpline can address the needs of many types of people—irrespective of gender, sexual preference, class, caste, and age.

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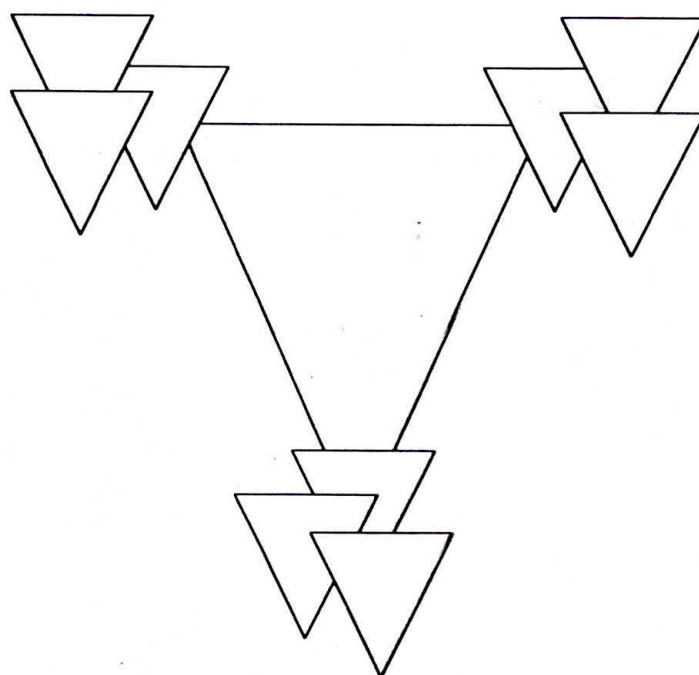
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**The invisible triangle – homosexuality<sup>1</sup>, men who have sex with men and  
HIV/AIDS**

**(and the visibility within the invisibility)**



*A study on alternative sexual preferences in India<sup>2</sup>  
And an organisational development review of Positive People - Goa*

Report submitted by Shaun Mellors as a three part report

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<sup>1</sup> Homosexuality (in the title page) includes aspects of Lesbians, Bisexuals and Gays

<sup>2</sup> Title of the study as described in the terms of reference (see comments about title)



- funders could (and sometimes do) impose their ideologies and views onto the organisation
- Western funders could impose western norms on organisations
- Objectives as stated in proposals have to meet funders expected outcomes as opposed to real outcomes
- Funders reporting requirements are sometimes unrealistic
- The movement is still quite fragile, and it was felt that funding could impact on people coming out and joining the movement.
- Funding is seen as more than money, as it generates the issue of power and connections. These individuals are ideologies (expressed by a few) begin to 'represent' the masses and become icons of the funders
- Funding impacts on the issue of leadership, as in a voluntary organisation it was felt that people come together to express their own needs and needs of the organisation, people identify with these expressed needs and decide whether to join or not join the organisation and from their leadership automatically emerges. However with an individual who receives funding to begin an organisation, contact is first made with the funder and the individual becomes the 'leader' (in the eyes of the funder) who tries to get people to join organisation based on fixed aims and ideologies.
- Womens groups cannot take up the issue of lesbianism because they have accountability elsewhere (funders). That accountability could prevent the organisation taking up the issue of lesbianism as it does not fall within the policy of the funder.
- Volunteerism will always be democratic if there is no funding

### **"Making money more transparent and credible"**

There was strong suggestions to funders in terms of making the issue of funding more credible and transparent.

- Funders should not encourage individual proposals (both in terms of proposals working in isolation and proposals from individuals)
- 'Big funding' should not be encouraged
- Seed funding and smaller grants should be more encouraged
- Grant more fellowships, as some gays and lesbians do not want (or cannot) come out in order to work within an organisation, but can and do want to pursue activities within the movement
- Funders need to ensure that there is proper accountability of money used by groups claiming to work in the field of Gay and Lesbian rights. Not only in terms of funding, but also that the organisations who submit proposals are credible with the community that they work with



## **"Funders, funding and autonomy"**

As has been described in a number of interviews conducted, there were many fixed feelings around the issue of funding, accepting funding and still being able to maintain ones autonomy. Interestingly, a lot of concern expressed came from lesbian or women's group – which is perhaps as a result of some lessons learnt during the women's movement.

### **Concerns around funding :**

Some of the 'fears' or concerns expressed in receiving funding are (but not limited to):

- conflicts of 'outsiders' versus 'insiders' (funders vs organisation) in that the funding agencies criteria for funding could influence the focus of the organisation or impact negatively on the work that the organisation is doing – especially if the work that they wish to do is not covered by the funding agencies criteria
- the organisation will become an organisation of full timers, activism could then become a form of 'professional social work'
- Government funding is influenced and biased, it could be seen that the organisation is working hand in hand with the state, and as a result loose its credibility
- The reporting requirements to funders have to be discussed with 'outsiders' in terms of meeting the report requirement and showing the effectiveness/impact of the projects work (This was mentioned in terms of writing reports for the funders, in which organisations are asked to evaluate the success of the work. This then also has to be done by outsiders, which could perceive the success' as very different to how the organisation does)
- Funders have their own agendas and organisations could become dependant on funders by sometimes 'choosing' to change the focus of their work to meet the funding criteria of the funders.
- Many organisations also seem to be dependant on one funder, and if that funder suddenly changes it focus or funding priority, it could effectively close an NGO (a few examples of funders changing funding focus were stated)
- Funding brings control (on the part of the funders)
- Money is a cause for conflict between different organisations



*Q – Do you believe that there is such a thing as a gay movement ?*

There is a gay men sub culture emerging, and then there are also the identities and sub cultures of Kotis, men who have sex with men, bisexual men, phantoms. We all come from very different backgrounds and understandings and we are all trying to come together which obviously leads to contradictions.

So there is no movement as such, (too much infighting because of various issues). There is also more empowerment (perhaps even opportunism) amongst the various communities with a male to male identity. With the onset of HIV/AIDS it has created the opportunity for men to come out as gay or msm, but on the other hand it is also disintegrating the movement.

*Q – What has to happen to make it a movement ?*

- First, we (gay men) have to survive the HIV/AIDS epidemic. There is estimated to be a 60% prevalence rate of HIV amongst homosexual men
- The survivors have to ensure that their identities gel together, at the moment it is emerging, but it is not gelling
- There should be some kind of hierarchy, working together to create a community within the movement
- The emerging identity needs a support system

*Q – What about the comparison between the Gay and the Lesbian Movements ?*

There is at this stage no common meeting points between the movements, we do not know each other and we cannot force the issue of working together. At the moment we keep our social spaces separate for various reasons including the issue of the fragmented gay movement having to sort out its own internal issues before trying to work together with the lesbian movement. We can, and should develop the social environment when the time is right.

Lesbians awareness of HIV/AIDS and its complications is very limited. The personal impact is not being felt yet (personally or as a movement), and when more and more gay men die from HIV/AIDS, this could be a common point to bring the two movements together.

On the other hand the possibility of creating a gay culture is being impacted by the HIV/AIDS issue, and we see it as important to create spaces where we can discuss issues about being gay without the issue of HIV/AIDS.

*There is a huge gulf between married gay men and single gay men because single gay men can have a gay identity, which presupposes individuality, and that presupposes the that the basic unit of society is in the individual, not the family – as it is in India.*



The issue of HIV/AIDS is not seen as having a positive impact on the issue of homosexuality, and if anything it would have a negative impact as it is seen by society as connected. (one causes the other).

The ICHR has launched a web page, which also has a sub page on gay/lesbian issues, (and is offering other G/L organisations an opportunity to advertise on this page), and have started a sexual minorities section within their library and documentation centre. They are also planning to have a **Indian Penal Tribunal** on the issue of homosexuality.

Interview with Ashok Row Kavi – Hamsafar Trust :

The verbatim will take the format of an interview as there is such a huge amount of information to absorb from Ashok.

*Q – You say that there is a gay sub culture emerging in Asia, why do you refer to it as a sub culture, with specific reference to India ?*

The Gay sub cultures is emerging because of parameters. These parameters are

- break up of large traditional families
- concept of nuclear family
- industrialisation
- economic power of women

All these factors lead to the empowerment and enabling of a political gay movement. There is a growth of the lesbian sub culture (as it is seen by some that the women now have completed their reproductive duties, and can now therefore do what they want, as well as having the time to do it). Economic empowerment also allows women to say no to a gay husband.

*Q – What about the other side, empowering gay men not to get married in the first place?*

“What is wrong if gay men get married ?” is the question asked by some people. It is the concept of convenience, being looked after in terms of having meals prepared, house cleaned, clothes washed and who would look after me in old age. Women are not that keen to get divorced, as a divorced women is a stigmatised women, and often gets the blame for the divorce, whether she had anything to do with it or not.

On the other hand young men are more empowered to make decisions about living alone, but as a result it has led to the fact that single men seem to be the inheritors of culture; gay single men have to look after the home and aging parents, when the heterosexual siblings have moved out.



possible joining issue between the two movement, and the role that lesbians would play in terms of caring for 'gay brothers' (See interview with Ashok), it was felt that why does the responsibility fall on women again ? Men should learn to care as well. It was also acknowledged that the issue of HIV/AIDS and how it would impact on both movements (especially the lesbian movement) was not yet discussed in great detail.

There was again a lot of interesting discussions around the issue of funding, and the effect that funding could have on the movement. There were some very clear apprehensions about receiving funding, and also acknowledgement of the important role that funding could play. (see section "funders, funding and autonomy")

Funding can also have a major positive impact on the work of an organisation is described by the following situation

*" Within our organisation it is easier to do a workshop on HIV/AIDS versus a workshop on lesbianism; especially with regards to our board. But if HIVOS makes a grant available for a workshop on lesbianism, this would allow discussion to happen amongst the board and create more opportunity and scope to have the workshop on lesbianism"*



Interview with Forum against oppression of women :

The Forum was a spontaneous formation in response to a severe rape case in 1980 – and therefore started as a forum against rape. The group took up issues of rape victims and encouraged talking and discussions around the issue of rape in various forums. Women within the forum then started bringing their own domestic violence issues into the forum, and it was then decided to change the focus of the group to include all aspect of oppression against women.

Issues taken up by the forum included (not limited to); rape, violence in the family, personal law (which the forum has been working on for the last 15 years), health, sex determination and reproductive health. The forum also acts on issues in campaign format as they arise.

Lesbian and bisexual issues were first discussed in the forum in 1987, when the forum had discussions around the issues of personal laws. They decided to draft personal laws in such a way that they reflected just laws for all women, and took all the issues related to law and women and came up with a draft for women. In 1989 the draft was complete, and it did include issues of marriage amongst two persons, and spoke of same sex marriages. They did not, at this stage differentiate between heterosexual and lesbianism.

The issue of the just laws for women was ‘ put on the back burner’ during the communal violence riots in 1992 and 1993. But in 1994 the campaign was taken up in earnest again and the forum decided to redraft what they had drafted and circulate it amongst a wider audience. In this draft the issue of lesbianism was mentioned explicitly, as well as the issue of homosexual marriages.

Within the women’s movement, the Forum has been most open about lesbianism, and has pushed for issues on family, marriage and sexuality. The forum has also been trying to push for the inclusion of lesbian and bisexual women’s rights in the constitution of the women’s movement.

*“How do we support and maintain autonomy, while still creating space within the women’s movement”*

Admittedly there are still some homophobic reactions to the issue, and at the same time there are also very supportive reactions (from heterosexual women as well). Women’s acknowledgement of her own sexuality is important, and the difficulty has been to find a way to begin talking about it amongst themselves and the movement as a whole. It is important to create space for women from various backgrounds, and create spaces within the women’s movement for minorities. The lesbian movement require autonomous spaces and it was felt that it is best to provide them within the wider movement.

*“It is not just about lesbian rights, but about a women’s right to her own sexuality”*

The issue of the gay movement was also discussed, and it was felt that the gay movement has a lot of work to do in terms of gender, sexuality and identifying their own needs. When the discussion around HIV/AIDS came into the picture, as a



- Funders should consider small grant initiatives, as often Gay and Lesbian Organisations need small amounts of seed money. The focus of funders seem to be on bigger projects with bigger money, and are not interested in small grants.
- There is no follow up or meaningful evaluation of projects by the funders, and little accountability is required on behalf of the organisation in terms of showing real results

Some priority areas for funding were seen as :

- supporting and encouraging work on legal aspects (repeal of Section 377)
- literature; newsletters, publications, periodicals and research in local languages
- counselling and hotline services
- creating social safe spaces for gays and lesbians



## Feelings and reflections :

*"how does it feel to be a secret?  
How does it feel to be invisible?  
How does it feel to be unutterable?  
How does it feel to be forbidden to be free?  
How does it feel to choke on the truth*

*How does it feel to be a transgressive phenomenon?  
How does it feel to violate safe categories?  
How does it feel to exist between the lines?  
How does it feel to live in fear?  
And yes, how does it feel to go to sleep in a heterosexual  
Household and wake up each morning  
Thanking God that you are gay?"<sup>iii</sup>*

I have struggled with the formulation of my personal feelings and reflections. Struggled because of the enormity of the task, and struggled because there was so much courage, inspiration and emotions felt during the interviews that I am afraid of not doing justice to those uniquely special moments and know that it is almost impossible to capture 'the moment' in mere words.

What follows is therefore my words and my understanding of the situation, a situation which was reflected during the interviews and through personal experiences. It is certainly not a judgement or evaluation but merely an opinion expressed. It is also important to stress that what we have learnt or observed cannot be taken as the viewpoints of the different movements, identities or organisations. We only had the privilege to meet a small gathering of GLBT organisations working in this field, and therefore the feelings and opinions expressed are also taken from the individuals that were interviewed and not reflective of the 'movements' as a whole.

There were very clear threads that were highlighted in the process, and in order to try and maintain them I have taken the TOR as a compass point in covering as many of them as possible. Before even beginning to attempt to capture my reflections, I feel that it is again important to speak on the issue of terminology.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender groups :

The terms are invisible and literally foreign to a large segment of society. The terms are being claimed, emphasised and strengthened by a few groups (especially within the Lesbian movement). The groups/organisations/individuals that are using the words and laying claim to the identities are from middle and upper middle class backgrounds, and some of them are making a concerted effort in creating awareness amongst rural populations and other populations of society about the concept and terminology. As one woman said to me "just because we do not understand the term does not mean that it is not happening, or that I do not love another woman".



There is no specific word or terms in the various Indian language that adequately describe the identity of gay or lesbian. That is why some groups feel that "a spade should be called a spade" and are using the terms lesbian or gay in their outreach material.

Gay identified groups are at particular risk of loosing their identity to that of msm, and a very few groups/individuals that we met are trying to fight for the recognition of a gay identity. (within the larger homo-social environment). In India there is homosexuality as a practice, or as a concept but not as a culture.

*"When sex happens between men it is not seen as sex, it is seen as release – depositing semen into something, it is not sexual desire, it is not pleasure it is fun and fulfilling a need."*

There was one Gay (or sexuality) organisation that we met that did not want to speak about Gay empowerment and issues in the context of HIV/AIDS. I find it a little sad (and understandable) that gay issues are only being seen in the context of HIV/AIDS. (This is a general issue and is not specific to the Indian context). Whenever one speaks of gay issues the issue of HIV/AIDS is not far behind – and as result the gay identity runs the risk of becoming the gay/HIV identity.

The term transgender/transsexual is perhaps the most foreign of them all, and terms used are Koti and Hijra. Koti's are effeminate men who only indulge in anal penetrative intercourse. Some of them cross dress in safe spaces, and some cross dress to attract clients for sexual activities. The koti community seems to be a strong and independent community with clear wants and desires. The traditional Hijra community is also to a certain degree at risk of being 'invaded' by the koti community (with all due respect to the Koti community). An example of this was the annual Hijra festival or gathering, where a number of Koti's that we met were busy preparing and making outfits, deciding on jewelry and sharing Sari's from the closet to wear at this festival.

Hijra's, traditionally did not seem themselves as either male or female and went through what seems to be a very painful experience of circumcision. The hijras would perform at festivities such as births and weddings and would live in a community of their own, self dependant and reliant. There are now terms for castrated and uncastrated 'hijras' and more and more koti's are between the two communities.

(In Chennai I had the privilege of being taken to a hijra community/household. I was honored by this opportunity, as traditionally men are not allowed within the complex. I had brief discussions with the 'leader' who was in her own words a true hijra (castrated). Her fear was the Kotis are giving the hijras a bad name, and as a result are forcing the hijras into prostitution for survival).

We met some inspiring Koti initiatives as well (please refer to interview verbatims for this)



## **the social, economic, cultural and political context**

The context in which GLBT live and the one in which they work are very different. The one in which they live often conforms to society, and the roles are fulfilled as is expected of them. A number of people that we met admitted that they had the privilege of either living alone or living with a partner. (Admittedly all these people were self identified middle/upper middle class).

The work environment, specifically the GLBT environment is an opportunity for people to be. Most people involved in this field do so on a voluntary basis – as their 'other lives' (including economical reasons, safety, acceptance) require them to have mainstream careers, and as a result the work for and with their organisation happens after hours.

Interesting for me was that a number of bisexual, koti, and msm identified men, working in projects emphasised the fact that when they were at work they could be free and express themselves within their own reality, and not have the burden of fitting into the stereotype of being a man in society. Most of these people that we met were employed specifically to work on the issue and were receiving a salary to do so. Those of them who were married, or living at home did not tell their wives or families what kind of work they were doing (some of them also had a second more 'acceptable' job).

There was for me, a clear distinction between the working environment of gay identified groups, lesbian groups, koti groups and msm groups.

Lesbian groups were often working from peoples homes or borrowed spaces from other organisations, or part of other organisations. Even when these initiatives were housed in a well established organisations the lesbian project was working with volunteers, almost no budget and little resources. I was impressed by how much has been achieved by the various lesbian groups with what seems to be little infrastructure and financial support.

Most of the koti and msm initiatives were part of HIV/AIDS programmes or initiatives, and as a result were part of established and funded organisations, or initiatives of funded organisations. This allows more opportunity for these identities to identify and develop their own needs as they have a safe space from which to operate and meet. ***(This again is only from the people that we meet, and is no way reflective of the larger koti and msm movement)***

Gay identified groups are being formed within the larger HIV/AIDS organisations, space is made available for them on certain days of the week. The focus of this is more in terms of creating a safe social space. Gay non identified groups are working under a broader heading of 'mens sexual health' or 'sexual minorities' or 'sexuality' and are more political, more educated and more aware of the issues that relate to the bigger picture of GLBT rights. There were also some gay groups/individuals who were trying only to work on defining and developing a social space, and in most cases the initiators of these were working on a voluntary basis or from within an HIV/AIDS organisation.



## "The movements"

To me there are clear distinctions between the gay and lesbian 'movements' within the larger context. I do not think that there are strong indications of a movement within any identity currently. However there is a stronger indication of a movement within the lesbian identity. The term movement, therefore is used very loosely.

Lesbian	Gay
<p>Lesbian groups are closely linked to women's movements, and many of the lesbians have been involved in the women's movement for a long time.</p> <p>There were mixed feelings as to how the women's movement is dealing with the issue of lesbianism, some individuals from within the women's movement were very supportive, while others felt that now was not the time to take on the issue in great detail. It was felt by some lesbians and heterosexual identified women that the women's movement is prepared to support the issue only in principle and is reluctant to take it on as a bigger issue especially in the context of basic needs for the majority of women who live under the poverty line.</p> <p>Lesbians do not have public space in which they can identify, meet or socialise</p> <p>The lesbian movement seems to have had more effect in raising public awareness of the issue. This was certainly 'helped' by the screening of the film called "FIRE".</p> <p>The lesbian movement seems to be more activist with regards to what they want to achieve in terms of legal reform and public acceptance. (I do not refer to the 'in your face activism', but rather consensus through dialogue type activism. Issues are being discussed and being brought into the wider debate.</p> <p>There seems to be a greater emphasise on encouraging lesbian writing, development and the formation of a culture</p> <p>There is little collaboration with the gay 'movement' in terms of achieving a common ideology. There were various reasons given for this – please refer to interviews, and this emphasises the difference in needs between the different 'movements'</p> <p>It is clear that the lesbian movement is still very young and fragile, and I believe that there is certainly some form of lesbian movement happening at the moment</p>	<p>The few gay specific groups (without being involved or under the banner of HIV/AIDS) were not aligning to any movement. There was some discussion of becoming more proactive within the Human Rights movement, but there still seems to be a sense of hesitancy from both the gay movement and the Human Rights movement. The momentum around the repeal of section 377 and other discriminatory laws seems to be at a slow pace. There is a case pending at the Supreme court, but as one Human Rights Organisation pointed out, "we are waiting for homosexuals to come to us and tell us what the next step should be"</p> <p>Public space in India is owned, defined and dictated by men. Therefore gay men have more of an opportunity to meet each other (in terms of sexual activities), but social activities and social spaces defined as gay, for the purposes of social activities, are non existent.</p> <p>Sex (as in any other country in the world) seems to be a major focus of the homosexual men's movement. "Desire and discharge". There is little attention paid to issues of sexuality, gender, health in general and intimacy. This is not necessarily a bad reflection on the male homosexual community – it is a reflection of mans position within Indian society, roles expectations and "do's and don'ts" are clearly defined by religion and society.</p> <p>There is more public awareness (I would not call it acceptance) of homo-sexuality, as it is normal to see men showing affection towards and with each other. It is not looked down upon by other people, as it is seen as the norm rather than the exception – it is not seen as sexual. If it was clear that two men were obviously homosexual I am sure that the reaction would be very different.</p> <p>There is little collaboration and communication with, and understanding of the lesbian movement. Even in terms of common platforms and issues – conferences, workshops etc have not been successful or as successful as it could be</p> <p>I did not see much indication of a gay movement, grouping, and this is not because of unwillingness – but perhaps the reality of being overtaken by an</p>



<p>The lesbian movement places a lot of emphasise on the issue of coming out to oneself first, and then deals with the issue in the broader context of sexuality, intimacy, health and gender. (Granted there still needs to be gender sensitisation amongst the lesbian community towards the gay community as well)</p>	<p>HIV/AIDS agenda, with little support or acknowledgement for the formation and strengthening of a movement. I refer to a movement here as a grouping or identity working together for a common cause.</p> <p>The challenge for the gay community/movement is perhaps to transpose two (or various) social worlds and identities with similar concerns into a common struggle.</p>
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## Human rights and the issue of GLB:

In almost all the interviews conducted, where the question was posed of what would people like to achieve in terms of the legal struggle the answers were

- repeal of section 377
- decriminalisation
- anti discrimination laws
- same sex partner issues (benefits, marriage etc)

It was clear to me that there needs to be more dialogue amongst the various groups as to what it is exactly that is required in terms of the 4 issues mentioned above. There are varying viewpoints and varying priorities, which could hinder a collective force in bringing about change within the legal system.

Human rights organisations (as stated earlier in this report) support the issues in principle, but are not being 'forced' to address the issue by the various GLB groups, and as a result find 'excuse' in the fact that there are many other pressing issues.

It seems to me (from previous experience in South Africa) that one of the biggest allies, and most forceful and influential partners are not being used adequately and a platform or partnership should and could be forged with the human rights movements. It took Amnesty International until 1994 to acknowledge that gay rights was also human rights – and that happened through a lot of community advocacy and pressure. This does not imply that all groups should get involved with lobbying and advocating the human rights movement, but I feel that their needs to be discussion amongst the various groups about their respective roles and abilities, which would lead to a co-ordinated approach and effort to Human Rights organisations.

All categories within the Indian constitution are based on the premise of heterosexuality. The constitution at this stage does not give gay and lesbians the possibility to function as an identity. Even the cows have a right to exist in the constitution, but gays and lesbians do not have that right. "Freedom of expression" does not guarantee lesbian and gay rights, it is a right supposedly enjoyed by everyone. But, it could make the issue of gays and lesbians invisible, if the gays and lesbians groups do not address it in an appropriate manner. Specific rights for gays and lesbians or sexual minorities are needed. Just as there is much discussion around the terminology for gays and lesbians, I also think that it is crucial that there is discussion around the issue of homosexuality being a preference, a choice or an identity (as explained in the introduction of this section).



It is clear that a community that has been unnoticed (unspoken of) and isolated is waking up to form a movement. It seems as if the movement is being driven and runs the risk of being overtaken by the message and issues of AIDS prevention and care. It is the latest and most significant of all their struggles, but is no more important than that of liberation and equal rights.

*"There can be no disguising the pain of change, the terror of confronting the unknown. Transformation is as much about the fracture of old ideas and patterns as discovery and new beginnings, but the interviews (changed text from pieces) reflected in this report, speak for the most part, of the euphoria of possibility"*<sup>iv</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press )

<sup>ii</sup> Political in the sense of being aware of ones own identity, and a activist within the constraints of reality (not the in your face type activism)

<sup>iii</sup> Extracts from "how does it feel to be a 'problem' written by V.S – Facing the mirror

<sup>iv</sup> "Facing the mirror – Lesbian writing from India" Edited by Ashwini Sukthankar pg xxxi



# Talking about Sex

Radhika Chandiramani

*This paper describes a telephone helpline on sexuality based in New Delhi, India, and analyses the language used by the men and women who have phoned the helpline to talk about sex and their experience of their bodies and their sexuality. Eight out of ten callers are men and many people phone more than once. The men seem to place their women sexual partners in certain categories, which are defined by the activities they engage in with them, or think they can engage in, and the social and emotional relationships they share with them. Callers' perceptions of sexual acts and bodily processes appear to be based on and restricted by male-centred and male-defined assumptions. Women seem to accept these, even at the expense of their own uncertain understandings and experience. The penis is seen as central to sex and to any sexual problems men may have, and only penile-vaginal intercourse is considered real sex. Men commonly complain about women's body shape and size, and how they smell and taste, but they understand little about how women's bodies are constructed or what gives women sexual pleasure. Thus, both women and men are perpetuating a male-dominated set of values about sex and sexuality and classifying women's sexuality on the basis of the little they know about women's sexual desires and needs.*

INDIVIDUALS use language to express themselves, make their needs known, and relate to others. Experiences, and the ways in which people make sense of them, inform the usage of language. Language, in turn, is used to give shape and meaning to experiences and impressions and provides a framework, so to speak, so that experiences can be categorised. It is true that language is limited – there are only so many words and so many accepted ways of stringing them together. New combinations are always possible, however; the fact that people regularly choose to use certain words in certain ways reflects more on people and less on the restrictions imposed by language.

Sexuality is not confined only to a well-demarcated area of people's lives; it permeates and impacts on so much of who we are and how we are with ourselves and others. In turn, how we construct sexuality impacts on so much else in our lives. As a clinical psychologist and in my work in the past two and a half years as the director of a project that runs a telephone helpline on sexuality, I have spoken to thousands of callers, had case discussions with and supervised other counsellors who work on the helpline, read through case documentation and

browsed through the information that is computerised. I find that the way people use language to categorise their experience of sex and of other people is revealing.

My colleagues and I are all struck by the way that phrases and words seem to crop up repeatedly, though spontaneously, in callers' conversations with us. I continue to wonder why people consistently say things in one way rather than another, and what this says about the ways in which they conceptualise these matters. These connections have become stronger as I go back to what people say, re-read the documentation, and then take more calls. This paper contains my reflections on the language used by callers to the helpline and what this indicates about their perceptions of sex and sexuality, focusing on the phrases they use and their underlying meanings, which are far more revealing than numbers can quantify. The actual language used by callers to the helpline is reported here.

## The TARSHI helpline

The TARSHI helpline was set up in 1996 to address sexual and reproductive health in a nonjudgmental manner and to provide people of



all ages with a safe space in which to talk freely about matters they may never have discussed with anyone else. TARSHI is a non-governmental organisation based in New Delhi.

Two phone lines operate from Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm, providing information, counselling and referrals on a wide spectrum of reproductive and sexual health concerns, in Hindi and English. The information available includes sexual anatomy, sexual processes, reproduction, safe means of enhancing sexual pleasure, family planning, contraceptive methods, STDs, HIV/AIDS, safer sex practices, heterosexuality, lesbian and gay issues, and so on. It is provided in a manner that is easy to understand and apply. The counselling is intended to create an atmosphere in which conflicts can be resolved and decision-making facilitated. The aim is to help people to help themselves in ways that feel right to them and 'fit' their lives. Referrals are made as and when required, to relevant medical, psychological and social service specialists who are known to TARSHI. The helpline services are free and confidential, and preserve the anonymity of the caller.

The helpline is normally operated by a team of four trained counsellors, all of whom undergo in-house training for about six weeks. Following the training, all the calls they take are supervised for four weeks, until they have demonstrated their ability to handle calls well. To ensure a high quality of service and prevent burnout, continuing training is given through presentations, book reviews, discussions and monitoring. Counsellors are encouraged to give each other feedback on their handling of calls. Counsellors are usually not alone when on a call – another team member is there in case they are required, particularly if calls are about sexual abuse or suicide. All counsellors are trained to take all kinds of calls, but they may shift a call to another counsellor if they feel ill-equipped to handle it.

The four counsellors currently working at TARSHI are women, aged 26 to 33 years old and post-graduates in the social sciences. Although they were recruited for their personal qualities and skills, their academic qualifications are definitely an asset. There have been male counsellors in the past, but we prefer having women counsellors since we have needed to invest far more in training and monitoring for male trainees, especially on gender issues and boundary issues. We have also found that both

male and female callers are more comfortable with women counsellors.

### **Who the helpline is for**

The helpline was initially set up exclusively for women, and all policy and administrative decisions were made on that basis. This soon changed, however, because we realised not only that men needed these services too, but also that men needed to be sensitised about women's issues for women's sake. Thus, we began to describe TARSHI as being especially, though not exclusively, for women. When talking to men we make sure that we do not encourage them to continue holding stereotyped views of how women are or should be. We also encourage them to question their assumptions about gender and power, which, although often covert, are as important as what they say overtly.

Initially, only about five per cent of callers were women. Given the social milieu wherein a woman does not have enough privacy, may not have access to a phone and has less access to information about groups like TARSHI, this was not very surprising. A variety of low-cost ways of reaching out to more women have therefore been used. All messages about TARSHI state that the helpline is especially for women, including the recorded message on the answerphone. Radio advertisements are recorded by a woman and are addressed to women.

### **How TARSHI's helpline is promoted**

Publicity is mainly done through radio and some press advertisements. The radio advertisements are aired in the afternoons, when most men are at work. Even so, more men than women have responded to these, calling from their offices, especially when TARSHI first started. This was because a lot of the food stalls they use play the radio station on which TARSHI's advertisements are aired. Further, women said that although they had heard about TARSHI through a radio advertisement or in the press, they did not feel comfortable about calling until a male partner suggested they do so. As a result, male callers have been recruited as allies in getting more women to call, and with this strategy the number of women callers increased. The proportion of women callers is now about 20 per cent.



TARSHI has been covered in the local and national press, and become known to a wide range of people. One-third of callers say they got the phone number from 'a friend', a partner or a relative. The rest cite articles or advertisements. Many mention more than one source.

### Characteristics of callers and how calls are documented

To date, TARSHI has responded to more than 25,000 calls from people in all socio-economic strata. Of these, data from the first 15,000 calls have been partially analysed and are presented in tables below. Of these 15,000 calls, 82.3 per cent were from men and 18.3 per cent from women. There are an average of 60 calls per day when publicity is low and twice that number when it is high. They come from all educational and professional backgrounds, but mainly from the middle classes. Callers can phone in as often as they wish. In order to preserve anonymity and confidentiality, counsellors never phone them, although this makes follow-up dependent on callers. Callers have mainly been from an urban background, ranging in age from 10 to more than 70 years old, of whom 20 per cent were aged 15-19, 42 per cent aged 20-24 and 25 per cent aged 25-29. (Table 1)<sup>1</sup>

Table 1. Callers to the TARSHI helpline by age and sex\*

Age of Callers	Women	Men
10-14	33	52
15-19	544	1871
20-24	1179	4018
25-29	471	2665
30-34	137	718
35-39	63	355
40-44	38	107
45-49	15	46
50-54	7	40
55-59	2	15
60-64	0	5
65-69	0	4
70+	0	2

\* From a total of 12,396 calls that include caller's age, out of 15,000 records analysed. Sex unknown for nine calls.

Table 2. First concern raised by callers\*

First Concern Raised	Women	Men
Basic information about sex	481	4072
Sexual problems	128	1951
Conception and contraception	614	943
Sexually transmitted infections	190	881
Menstrual problems	393	158
Relationship problems	168	249
Infertility	69	92
Emotional problems	62	72
TOTAL	2105	8418

\* Data from 10,528 calls in which there was substantive discussion of sexual and reproductive health topics, of the 15,000 calls analysed. Sex of caller could not be determined in five of these.

TARSHI has built up a rich collection of data about the practices, beliefs and misconceptions of callers relating to sexual matters and reproductive health. We do not ask questions that are not directly relevant to callers' concerns, or that might seem intrusive to them, or jeopardise their anonymity. Our primary purpose is to provide help, not to collect data. However, we do have a policy of bringing in safer sex information when this has some connection with what the caller has raised, even if they have not specifically asked for this.

Every call taken on the helpline is documented for two purposes: to enable continuity and a high quality of service for repeat callers and to analyse the documentation for emerging trends. If we feel callers might need to call again, they are given a code number for identification. The code number system makes for easy retrieval of information about their previous calls and also allows the same counsellor, if she is available, to take the call. About one-third of calls are from repeat callers.

Each call is recorded in a short form first, while the call is being taken. This includes the caller's age, sex, language spoken, and the first concern they voice, which is coded. Only the first concern they mention is noted down at this stage, even though this is not necessarily the caller's only or most pressing concern. (Table 2)



The category 'basic sex information' in this table has been further broken down (Table 3) to indicate which types of basic sex information sex callers have asked about.

Calls often take a meandering path, moving from one concern to another depending on what is of importance to the caller. There are times when not all of this information can be taken down, particularly age, because the call is disconnected too soon. Thus, the caller's sex could not be identified in 1.3 per cent of calls and the caller's age was not recorded in 17.4 per cent of the 15,000 calls analysed. After the call is completed, a synopsis of the conversation and the different concerns raised are recorded, with particular phrases used by the caller being noted down. All the documentation is currently being computerised.

Most of our callers speak in Hindi, some a mixture of Hindi and English, and some only English. The duration of calls ranges from a few minutes (for very specific information) to over an hour (abuse, suicide, relationship problem, etc). The length of a call is generally determined by the caller except in cases of crank calls and abusive calls, or when the counsellor feels the caller has begun 'chatting' and no helpful purpose is being served.

TARSHI makes it clear that the helpline is not a chat-line or sex-line. In spite of this, some men 'sexualise' the interaction with the counsellors and 10 per cent of calls are either crank calls (eg. giggle giggle...the TV is not working...) or abusive calls (eg. 'Can I fuck you?' or 'What is...*pant, pant*...the best way to masturbate? *pant, pant...groan*...I've come!...*silence*...ok, now tell me....'). In the early days, there was a higher proportion of such calls, but we have learned how to deal with and even pre-empt them without losing our tempers or shutting out people who might need help. The counsellors have become highly attuned to the meanings of voice modulation, ways of breathing and other sounds. For example, in the case of 'the masturbator', as soon as we have caught on (usually when the panting starts), we say that he appears to be highly aroused and will not benefit from talking to us in his state of excitement, so we will talk to him when he is calmer. Then we disconnect the call. Some men call in later to apologise and we have developed a helping relationship with them. However, such calls seem to be an occupational hazard.

**Table 3. Types of basic sex information requested by callers as their first concern**

Type of Basic Sex Information as Caller's First Concern	Women	Men
	(n = 481)	(n = 4072)
Masturbation – male	25	1227
Masturbation – female	43	34
Sexual techniques and positions, pleasure enhancement	39	418
Sex for the first time	19	123
Proof of virginity in a woman	61	58
Male genitals	1	373
Foreskin	4	92
Female genitals	7	75
'Loose vagina'	7	30
Breasts	137	95
Sexual and reproductive anatomy (internal)	3	16
External genitalia – hygiene, pubic hair, etc	5	33
Semen – quantity and quality	1	69
Nocturnal emission	7	405
Semen in urine	1	39
Homosexuality – male	2	69
Homosexuality – female	7	7
Other sexual practices (voyeurism, partner-swapping, cross-dressing, etc)	1	27
Other information (eg. morning erection, sex with older woman, etc)	111	882

### Sexual partners and how they are described

The men who phone TARSHI place their women sexual partners in certain categories, which is revealed by the language they use when referring to the women, the activities they engage in with them or think they can engage in, and the social and emotional relationships they share with them.<sup>2</sup> Unmarried, younger men have sex with girlfriends their own age or younger, and also report having sex with older, married women, whom they call 'aunties' and who are



from their neighbourhoods or are female relatives. These relationships are emphatically sexual and only rarely is there any emotional involvement; these young men talk about being paid in cash or in kind by older women for sexual favours. Most of these older women are having sex with other men also. Young men also have sex with sex workers.

Married men have sex with their wives, with women they describe as 'other women' or 'mistresses', and also with sex workers. The 'other woman' is a woman who is not the married man's own wife. Men refer to her in English as 'the other one, not my wife', or as '*doosri aurat*' in Hindi, which also means 'other woman'. She may be married or unmarried herself; she is not a sex worker and the relationship she shares with the man may be both sexual and emotional.

Homosexual relationships are not sanctioned in the Indian context, but this is not how our callers talk about them. Same-sex behaviours are considered by most callers to be situational, temporary and 'substitute' activities and are not considered part of the person's sexual identity. Many a time, having sex with another man is not considered sexual by the man who has engaged in it – rather, the term men use to describe it is *masti* or *khel* (fun or play). A large number of male callers report having engaged in homosexual behaviours, including anal intercourse, but say that it was 'not real sex'. Sex between women is seen by both men and women callers as less threatening than masturbation on the part of women, probably because a large majority of men and women consider sex between women as an impossibility:

*'How do they have sex without a penis? It just cannot happen.'* (Ling bagair kaise sex karte hai? Ho hi nahin sakta.)

Female masturbation is considered by callers as much more harmful than male masturbation. The sense of guilt and shame over masturbation that is reported by women is extremely high.

### **Sexual relations between young men and women**

People may wonder how relevant the category of 'girlfriend' is in the Indian context, given that

pre-marital heterosexual relationships are not socially sanctioned. TARSHI's experience shows that pre-marital sexual activity is common at all levels of society. Many young, unmarried people, especially young men, are having furtive, frenetic and reportedly consensual sex from secondary school onwards – in parks, hostel rooms and friends' rooms – either arranging these trysts in advance or seizing the opportunity whenever it arises. Young men who call TARSHI report having sex with unmarried girlfriends, who are around their own age or a couple of years younger, and whom they may not go on to marry because of the arranged marriage system. This is corroborated by the calls we get from young women inquiring about contraception and abortion services, either for themselves or for an 'unmarried friend'.

### **Sexual pleasure and sexual dissatisfaction**

Not surprisingly, women have not been as forthcoming about their views as men have been. By and large, women call less often for sexual information than men do. Women have tended to call about sexual problems only when they experience pain or physical discomfort during sexual relations, using the helpline service in a medicalised way.

Men who call TARSHI's helpline are very forthcoming on the subject of sexual pleasure and dissatisfaction, and are also more comfortable asking for information on enhancing sexual pleasure. Complaints from male callers of sexual dissatisfaction, when these centre around relations with their wives, are expressed in terms such as: 'She does not cooperate' (*Cooperate nahin karti*) almost as if there is a work project he expects to be completed by both of them. In the marital relationship, the man's concern is about being deprived of a pleasure which he sees as his by right:

*'This happens in marriage, as a matter of course.'* (Shadi main to yeh hota hi hai)

The ramifications and implications of this perception in the context of sexual rights of men and women and the Indian legal system, which views a woman as her husband's property, disregards the possibility of marital rape and by



implication, does not consider a man forcing himself on his wife as rape.<sup>3</sup>

If a man expresses any concern at all that his wife is not satisfied with him sexually: 'She does not get sexual satisfaction' (*Woh santusht nahin hoti hain*), his main fear about this is that she will go on to seek sexual pleasure elsewhere: 'She will go to someone else' (*Kisi aur ke paas chali jaayegi*), which would be bad for his 'status'. Men also say in such a case that they fear they will not be seen as man enough in other men's eyes, because they have not taken adequate care of their 'possessions':

*'What will the other chaps think of me, that I am not in control - I'll fall in their eyes.'* (Aur bande mere baarein mein kya socheingein, sambhaal bhi nahin sakta...main unke aankhon mein gir jaonga.)

The differences in the ways that men speak of their wives as opposed to their girlfriends or mistresses have led us to speculate whether this is because a girlfriend or mistress is not considered sexual property in the way that a wife seems to be.

Girlfriends seem to have a different sexual status than a wife, and a complaint of sexual dissatisfaction with a girlfriend or a mistress is phrased differently. The sexual relationship is described as a somewhat more equal one, with the man being concerned about the woman's pleasure ('She is not satisfied' *Woh satisfy nahin hoti*), wanting to please her sexually, wanting to be desired by her and needing to know that he can fulfill her sexual longings.

While the man's concern in the marital relationship seems to be with his own pleasure and resentment if his wife is not 'cooperating', with a girlfriend there appears to be no resentment. Instead, there is apprehension of not being good enough, of losing someone precious. Callers troubled about their sexual relationships with their girlfriends are keen to learn how to give them sexual pleasure; they ask questions about the signs of arousal and orgasm in a woman, and are more receptive to information about foreplay than callers who are talking about their wives. Further, in the relationship with the girlfriend, there is greater weight given to her saying 'no'. As one caller said: 'A girlfriend can't be forced.'

According to the men, the 'other woman' is seen as a giver of pleasure and also as deserving of sexual pleasure, which they hope will ensure that the partnership will continue. When men speak of this woman, what they have to say goes something like this: With the other woman a man can do things that he cannot or must not do with his wife. A wife cannot have oral sex, for example, or try out adventurous and exciting positions for intercourse. According to male callers who are involved in relationships with other women, a man has urges, wants to do fun things sexually and cannot have these urges met by his wife, who is a 'decent' woman. A wife might be shocked at his suggestions and even if she is not, no decent woman would want to do those things for pleasure:

*'With the missus one doesn't do such things - she is a decent woman.'* (Missus ke saath aisa nahin kiya jata hai - woh decent aurat hoti hai.)

It must not be assumed that the 'other woman' is therefore viewed by the man as 'indecent'. If this were truly the case, the questions that would naturally arise are: What does this say about the man himself, if he is involved with someone he sees as indecent? Is he himself indecent to want to engage in such things as oral sex, for example? Exploring the construct of 'decency' with these callers, we have found that they use the word decency to mean someone who is and should be bound by the social convention of a wife, as someone who is sexually dutiful, giving and available to her husband, but not sexually assertive or independent. The 'other woman' is not bound by the same conventions and so cannot be evaluated with the same criteria. In addition, male callers' standards for themselves are different from those they have for their wives:

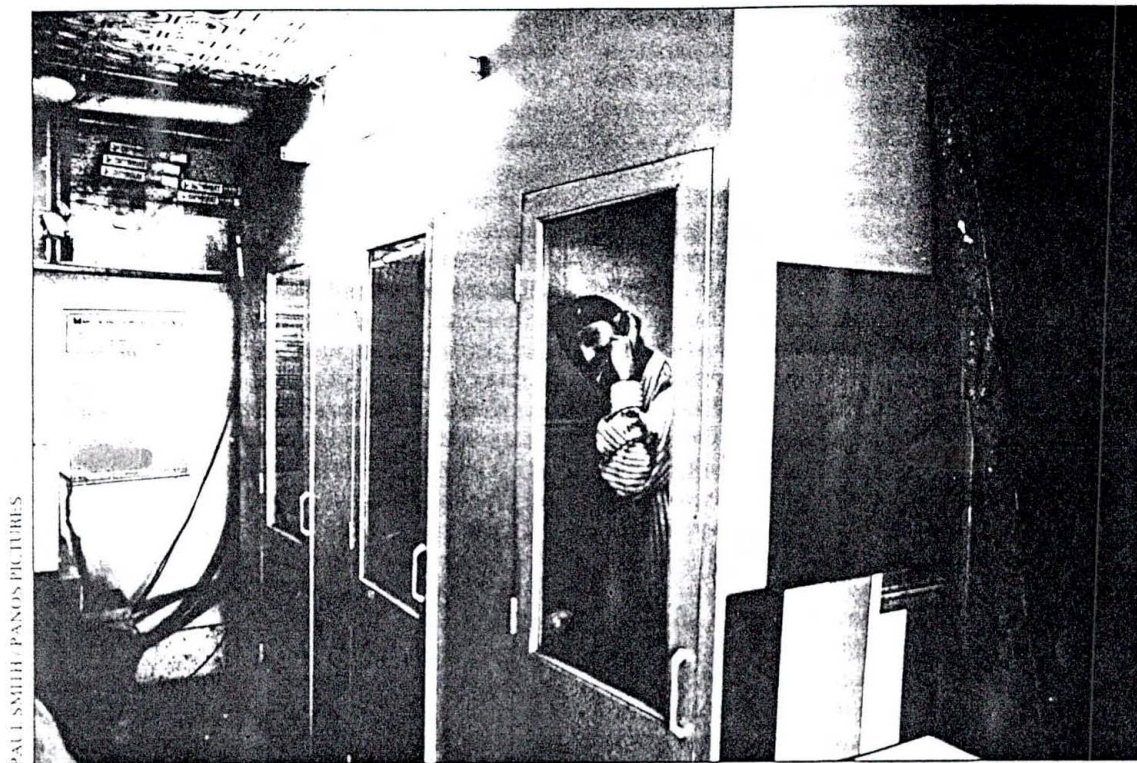
*'Men naturally want all this, women are different.'* (Aadmi to yeh sab chahte hi hain, aurat alag hoti hain.)

### Reasons for visiting a sex worker

Women sex workers are seen by TARSHI's male callers as a channel for sexual release:

*'I badly wanted sex so I paid for it.'* (Bahut sex chada tha, to maine paise de kar kar liya.)





Some men in their teens and early twenties seem to view sex workers as sexual trainers; visiting a sex worker is seen as a way of getting sexual experience before marriage, a way of testing 'virility' or 'masculinity', and to ensure that the male sexual equipment is in working order:

*'It must be done once before marriage to see if I can do it.'* (Shaadi ke pahle ek baar kar ke dekhna hain ki mujh se hota hain.)

### Fears about the harmful effects of sex

Younger men having sex with older women, including older women who pay them for this, report being worried about 'harmful effects', not in connection with sexually transmitted infections but in terms of a weakening effect on their bodies, as if they think an older woman could draw out a young man's vitality or virility:

*'Will having sex with an older woman have a bad effect? Will it lessen my virility? Will I have problems later?'* (Age main baddhi aurat ke saath karne se kuch bura hoga? Mere shakti pe asar hoga, aage chal ke mujhe koi problem hoga?)

### Perceptions of sexual practices and the body

We have accumulated many more comments from men about sexual practices, but even when women talk about these issues, their views are male-centered. 'Real sex' is seen by the majority of callers to be an exclusively heterosexual, penetrative interaction. In Hindi, as in English, the word 'sex' is used to mean 'intercourse'. The centrality of penile-vaginal intercourse is not shaken for men even when their female partners say they prefer oral sex. Oral sex is perceived and experienced as being very exciting, yet it is seen as second best if penile-vaginal penetration does not also occur. Both cunnilingus and fellatio are seen by both men and women as part of foreplay only – not the real thing – and an orgasm resulting from these is not valued as an orgasm.

*'But it is not the real thing – the real pleasure lies in penetration.'* (Par woh asli baat to nahin hai – asli mazaa to andar jane mein hi hai.)

At times, oral sex is viewed as a last resort – a last ditch effort to satisfy the partner when all else has failed:



*'Sometimes there is no option but to do it, or else she becomes apathetic.'* (Kabhi kabhi aur koi chara na ho to woh hi karna padta hai, nahi to woh rookhi si ho ja ti hai.)

Manual stimulation is also put into the category of 'not the real thing' by callers. This is tied up with the popular belief that a woman's orgasm is triggered off by, dependent on and consequent to a man's ejaculation. And it is this that is considered the norm in practice. A woman's enjoyment of and satisfaction from manual or oral stimulation arouses questions and doubts about her sexual orientation in some cases. We have had male callers wanting to know if their wives are 'normal' because the women enjoy manual and oral stimulation, sometimes more than genital stimulation. 'Does she have lesbian tendencies?' is what these men go on to ask.

The centrality of penile-vaginal intercourse is echoed in the English term 'foreplay', a concept which imposes an artificial break, defined by the act of penetration, in what could instead be seen as a continuity. However, more than the act of penetration, it is the involvement of the penis that is the defining criterion. After all, the fingers, the tongue or the toe can perform the act of penetration, but these all seem to be viewed as part of foreplay. In everyday language in Hindi, however, there is no equivalent term for foreplay. Hence, on the helpline we use a particular combination of common Hindi words to convey and explain the concept of foreplay (ie. describing the activities of caressing, kissing, stroking and so on, and the sexual excitement and pleasure these may produce) before we are able to engage in a meaningful dialogue with callers about it. For example, the Hindi word *aalingan* means a hug or 'an embrace without necessarily conveying any' erotic connotations, while *chumma-chaati* (literally, kissing-licking) is considered vulgar.

Not many men are aware of the particularities of the female genitalia and even less aware of the different ways of creating pleasure for a woman:

*'Where do we put it, how many openings are there, where do women bleed from?'* (Kaun si jagah mein daalte hain, kitni chchedh hoti hain, aurat ka khoon kahan se nikalta hain.)

Not many women callers feel able to express their desire for or enjoyment of certain specific

activities, for fear of being seen as wanton:

*'How can I tell him? He will think I am a fast woman.'* (Main kaise kahoon? Fir woh sochenge ki mein fast type ki hoon.)

For men, the penis, what it does and how it looks, is central and all-important. All sexual problems are attributed directly or indirectly to it. The most common attribution of problems with the penis is what one man called the 'bad habit' of masturbation. Callers believe that masturbation has led to stunted growth or curvature of the penis and is also the cause of problems like premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. Table 3 shows how predominantly masturbation figures in men's concerns.

Magical properties are attributed to semen and there is tremendous ignorance and anxiety about basic body processes such as nocturnal emission and pre-ejaculatory fluid:

*'Because my semen has been destroyed, I have less power.'* (Veerya nasht hone ke karan shakti kam ho gayi hai.)

Women callers complain about their bodies - that they are either too fat or too small-breasted in the eyes of men, and in their own eyes too. However, we have yet to hear a female caller complain about the physical attributes of her male partner, though we have had many men complaining about women's physical attributes:

*'She does not have a good figure, she has very small breasts, it's no fun, how can they be enlarged?'* (Uska figure achcha nahin hain, mamme bahut chchote hain mazaa nahin aata, unhe baddha kaise kiya jaye?)

We also get calls from women who want to change the shape and size of their bodies, especially of their breasts. Yet no man has ever called because he feels that his being overweight may turn off his partner or make sex difficult. The following call history illustrates this difference succinctly: A male caller phoned because he wanted suggestions for different positions for intercourse; his wife was fat, he said, and could we bear that in mind. When several of the counsellor's initial suggestions were met with a negative reception, she asked the caller about his own



body, only to discover that he himself was obese, which he had not thought it relevant to mention.

The smell and taste of women's body parts and bodily fluids is a common cause of both men's and women's concern, with men complaining about it and women feeling embarrassed or disgusted by it, eg. 'There's a strange taste'. Sometimes when we ask about cunnilingus, men say they do not engage in it because 'women smell'. When told that these smells and tastes are natural and that semen also has a distinctive taste and smell, most callers (especially the men) act very surprised. Are the lack of complaints or comments about male smells and tastes because, in some way, these are considered to be a given and 'natural' and are consequently treated as non-objectionable, in contrast to those of women? Or is it because men like their own smells and tastes, and women feel unable to articulate their responses to these, especially any complaints they may have?

Bodily responses to sexual arousal are defined in male terms; a notion common among many callers is that when women have an orgasm they ejaculate like a man. Although women do have a comparable physical response, many callers have said they are waiting for an external manifestation of female orgasm comparable to the flow of semen:

*'There is no discharge, no outflow of semen.'*  
(Discharge nahin hota, veerya nahin nikalta.)

Interestingly, many men even use the word *veerya*, which means semen, when referring to vaginal fluids. The other word commonly used by both men and women to refer to semen as well as to vaginal fluids is *pani*, which means water.

Arousal in a woman is also expected to occur in the same way, with easily discernible signs (barring erection), as it does in a man. Many men and some women also expect a woman to become instantly and visibly aroused when her male partner is aroused. Most do not know what the signs of arousal in a woman are. One woman caller wanted to know whether there was something wrong with her because her nipples were not always erect; her husband thought this was a deformity and she was not sure herself.

Sexually, men are seen as the giver ('I put it in - give it to her' - *Main dalta/ deta hoon*) and the woman as the receiver ('She takes it in' - *Woh*

*andar leti hai*). It is then difficult for a man to understand how or why he may be at risk for sexually transmitted infection because nothing is entering his body. As he sees it:

*'It comes out of my body, there's no place for infection to get in through.'* (Hamare sharir se nikalta hai, andar jane ki jagah to nahin hai.)

## Discussion

Among the men who have telephoned the helpline, the language they use and their thinking about heterosexual sex and sexuality seem to contain a strange contradiction. At one level they do not view women as independent, active sexual beings. At another level, they express fears which imply an underlying belief that women are independent, active sexual beings who may seek sexual pleasure outside marriage or from other partners. Thus, men do seem to acknowledge that women have sexual desires, but do not want to see these as independent from themselves. In addition, it seems that women's own perceptions of their sexual needs and their sexuality are not validated or affirmed by men, nor by women themselves. Women are never described or discussed as autonomous sexual beings, but as delightful sex toys and often as sexual objects. Perhaps the construct in the male caller's mind is that women have a dormant sexuality, and there is always the danger that it may be turned on; therefore, this must be done only by him.

Among the women callers too, there seems to be a belief that their sexuality is in some sense subordinate to that of men and exists mainly for the pleasure of men. There is no overt assertion of the woman's own right to sexual pleasure. It is also interesting, that even on the helpline, most women approach pleasure in a rather circuitous fashion, mostly through exploring ways of reducing discomfort. Many men and a considerable number of women do not know what might be erogenous for a woman (unless of course they have experienced it), and even what lies within the labia majora. Though men complain of women's lack of active engagement in sex, it seems that most women would rather be passive and reticent about their sexual desire than arouse their male partner's suspicions regarding their 'virtue'. It is more complicated than that, however, because at times it also seems that this so-called inactivity



during sex is perhaps one of the few ways in which a woman can hold out against her partner. To add to an already complex scenario is the fact that women seem to see themselves as having to please their male sexual partners, or at the very least, appease their sexual appetites.

Both men and women callers expressed dislike and criticism of women's bodies, their shape and size and their smells and tastes, as well as a lack of knowledge about bodily and sexual processes and responses. In contrast, both men and women are silent on the subject of men's bodies, and their smells and tastes.

The reluctance to accept the necessity of adopting protective behaviour while dealing with the sexual reality of multiple partners, including in premarital, extra-marital and same-sex sexual relations, has many consequences, not least of which is increased vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections and HIV. In the Indian heterosexual and marriage-driven society, there is no public space for lesbian and gay relationships, and this often leads to individuals living dual lives, being forced into marriage and producing the mandatory offspring, whilst surreptitiously engaging in what so often become unsafe sexual encounters, with potentially disastrous consequences for the sexual and mental health of all concerned.

According to what is said by TARSHI's callers, most sexual acts, experiences and perceptions are defined from a male perspective and seen and experienced in a male-centered way, and are important only if they are heterosexual and involve the penis and intercourse. This is a perspective that women have also adopted, no matter how much they have needed to twist their own thinking or reject their own uncertain perceptions in order to conform to that perspective. It also contributes to the view that the penis is central and at the same time, the source of any and all sexual problems. Thus, both women and men are perpetuating a male-dominated set of values about sex and sexuality and classifying women's sexuality on the basis of the little they know about women's sexual desires and proclivities.

This male-centered perspective restricts the healthy and full expression of sexuality especially of women, but also of men. Both are trapped in ossified ways of seeing things and dealing with themselves and each other. Not only does this prevent people from achieving and maintaining a

sense of personal and sexual well-being, but it also has negative consequences on their health because of the link between misinformation and harmful behavioural practices. The socio-cultural context contributes to this by way of popular media and so-called 'traditional' beliefs and customs. Some beliefs are so deep-rooted and culturally reinforced (eg. masturbation is harmful) that it takes many repeat calls from bewildered callers before they are able to allow themselves the luxury of enjoying guilt-free masturbation. Perceptions of the roles of men and women are even more deep-rooted and difficult to change, especially on a large scale.

Fortunately, culture and society are dynamic and perceptions are slowly changing. For this to be more than merely superficial, there must also be change at an individual level, which again feeds back into the social context, and thus it goes on. We help our callers (especially the men) to question their assumptions so that both women and men can begin to move towards a position of autonomy. We also manage to sow seeds of doubt regarding existing power hierarchies (gender, family, society and so on).

We remain uncomfortably aware of the need for larger systemic transformations to sustain the positive changes in individual lives. We are therefore also engaged in other activities such as bringing out small publications on sexual health, as a resource for the media, and writing a regular column on sexuality for a youth tabloid.

The helpline is meant to be especially for women, but by talking to many more men than women we hope that we have been able to effect some positive change in the lives of women indirectly. That this has not been unsuccessful is borne out by the fact that we have had male callers reporting that they have postponed sexual intercourse in an arranged marriage until such time as both partners felt ready for it, that they and their partners have benefited from learning about foreplay, that women callers have reported getting our phone number from male partners, and similar types of concrete evidence. The 20 per cent of women callers have been directly helped by being able to talk at all about these issues, by gaining access to information and by finding a space that honours their desires, if nothing else. They have also been able to make some decisions and in some cases to seek further care after talking with us.



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### Correspondence

Radhika Chandiramani, c/o TARSHI, Fax: 91-11-461-0711. E-mail: radhi@unv.ernet.in

### Notes

1. Data in the tables were first presented at a Population Council workshop on Men as Supportive Partners in Reproductive and Sexual Health, Kathmandu, Nepal, 23-26 June 1998.
2. All quotes present the English text first, followed by the Hindi, no matter which was the original language, for ease of reading for an international audience.
3. Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with rape, makes no mention of marital rape. It defines rape as being committed when a man has sexual intercourse with a woman against her will; or, without her consent; or, with her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested, in fear of death, or of hurt; or, with her consent, when he by deception, makes her believe that he is her lawful husband; or, with her consent, given on account of her unsoundness of mind, or intoxication, when she is incapable of understanding the consequences of her consent; or, with or without her consent, when she is under 16 years of age.

### Résumé

L'article décrit la ligne téléphonique de secours pour les questions sexuelles ouverte à New Delhi (Inde). Les appelants sont en grande majorité des hommes (huit sur dix) et beaucoup téléphonent à plusieurs reprises. Les hommes semblent classer leurs partenaires sexuelles féminines dans certaines catégories, définies par le type de rapports qu'ils ont ou pensent pouvoir avoir avec elles, et par les relations sociales et émotionnelles qu'ils partagent avec elles. Les perceptions qu'ont les appelants des actes sexuels et des processus corporels paraissent fondées sur, et limitées par, des postulats définis par les mâles et centrés sur eux. Les femmes semblent les accepter, même s'ils vont contre leurs propres expériences et conceptions incertaines. Le pénis est considéré comme au centre des relations sexuelles et des problèmes sexuels que les hommes peuvent éprouver, et seul un rapport pénis-vagin est considéré comme un véritable rapport sexuel. Les hommes se plaignent communément de la forme et de la taille du corps des femmes, de leur goût, de leur odeur, mais ils connaissent mal la façon dont est bâti le corps féminin, ou ce qui donne aux femmes le plaisir sexuel. Cela conduit les hommes et les femmes à perpétuer en matière de sexe un ensemble de valeurs dominé par les mâles, et à classer la sexualité féminine sur la base du peu qu'ils savent des désirs et des besoins sexuels des femmes.

### Resumen

Este ensayo describe una línea de ayuda telefónica sobre la sexualidad basada en Nueva Delhi, India. Las llamadas masculinas constituían ocho de cada diez, con muchos usuarios llamando repetidamente. Al parecer los hombres clasificaban a sus compañeras sexuales en varias categorías definidas por el tipo de actividad que realizaban con ellas, o que creían que podían realizar, así como por el tipo de relaciones sociales y emocionales que compartían. Los que llamaban percibían los actos sexuales y los procesos corporales en base a asunciones y definiciones masculinas. Aparentemente las mujeres aceptaban esto, incluso a costa de sus propias experiencias y entendimiento. El pene se ve como el eje del sexo y de los problemas sexuales que los hombres puedan tener, y sólo se considera sexo verdadero el que incluye penetración del pene en la vagina. Con frecuencia los hombres se quejan de la forma y el tamaño del cuerpo de las mujeres y de como huelen y saben pero tienen poco conocimiento sobre como es el cuerpo de las mujeres o lo que les da placer. Por lo tanto, tanto los hombres como las mujeres siguen perpetuando una serie de valores masculinos sobre el sexo y la sexualidad, y clasifican a la sexualidad femenina en base a su limitado conocimiento sobre las necesidades y los deseos sexuales de las mujeres.



## Why "Gay-sensitive" Therapists?

*Radhika Chandiramani*

Psychotherapy is informed by prevailing socio-cultural thinking. And so are therapists. The way sexuality issues are looked at by most people does influence, to some extent, the way therapists view and respond to these issues. Conversely, the opinion and reactions of therapists and other so-called experts shapes larger public opinion. One has only to look at the way the media cites a particular line of thinking to be the 'expert's opinion' to realise how strong a role this thinking plays in moulding attitudes.

Sexuality issues themselves are not discussed easily in a professional setting, even when they need to be, by most people. There is much hesitation to talk about extra-marital affairs, casual sexual relationships, or any sexual activities that are commonly regarded as being somewhat risqué. The fear is of revealing to the therapist that one has passions different from others, or engages in activities that might reflect a lack of 'decency' - what if the therapist is shocked, suprised, disapproving...? Talking about one's sexual life is, in any case, difficult.

In a society where heterosexuality, unlike homosexuality, is the dominant sexual style/choice/preference, so much so that it is frequently unquestioned and goes unchallenged, many questions arise. If most therapists are heterosexual and/or assume heterosexuality in their clients, what does this

mean for homosexual clients, and potential clients? And what does it mean for therapists who themselves live out a different sexuality?

Until two decades ago, homosexuality was seen as a pathology and only after intense campaigning was it removed as an illness category from the DSM. Unfortunately, there are still many mental health professionals who subscribe to the view that homosexuality is "unhealthy". Worse, because more insidiously damaging, there are those who are informed enough to know that it is not a diagnostic category and will state this view, but who believe homosexuality to be a sign of psychological immaturity, a result of trauma, and hold other such unexamined beliefs that are based on the assumption of pathology. Faced with heterosexual clients do these therapists ever question their clients' heterosexuality or arrive at formulations to "explain" heterosexuality?

The scenario is not totally bleak, however, as there is a growing number of therapists who are becoming more open to looking at gay issues with an unprejudiced eye. These are the ones who are perceptive enough to know that 'partner' does not always refer to one of the opposite gender. The usage of gender-neutral pronouns may deliberately camouflage the gender of the person being spoken about. Clients often resort to these techniques to put out feelers and check the sensitivity and openness

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Radhika Chandiramani is a clinical psychologist and a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation. She works on sexuality issues with TARSHI, a helpline in New Delhi.

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of the therapist. Of course there are naive therapists who unwittingly stumble by unthinkingly using a gender specific pronoun in response. This then makes it even more difficult for the client to come out to the therapist as it reinforces the client's apprehensions that the therapist "will not understand".

Just what is it that the therapist "will not understand"? Many lesbian and gay friends have discussed with me their hesitation to enter therapy as they have heard (often sensationalized) stories of therapists trying to 'cure' homosexuality, using from their arsenal techniques such as aversion and electroconvulsive therapy. Even when potential clients see that not all therapists operate from a pre-70s stance, there is always the desire to find a gay or lesbian therapist. "Can you suggest a gay-friendly or at least a non-homophobic therapist?" A valid request, I think, given that in daily life there is so much denial and erosion of lesbian and gay issues.

The issue here is not one of discussing details of the therapist's personal life which, in any case, is not the subject matter of the therapeutic endeavour. The matter becomes clearer if viewed through a "cultural minorities" lens. The situation is somewhat analogous to finding a cultural match between client and therapist. A Chinese client would be justifiably nervous about entering into therapy with, say, a Scandinavian therapist. No-one would doubt that cross-cultural variables might lead to comprehension difficulties on both sides. One might turn around and say that heterosexual clients do not worry about the sexuality and sensibilities of their therapists. They do not need to as yet. In a predominantly gay subculture they might need to if they feel that their sexuality is being falsely held by a gay therapist to be the source or cause of whatever it is that ails them.

It is true that a sexuality and lifestyle different from that of the majority does at times place a person in situ-

ations of greater stress and also prevents them from using stress-relieving mechanisms that others may use. A lesbian who is not out to her heterosexual friends cannot speak of ups and downs in a current relationship with the same openness, facility and spontaneity as they do. To conclude from this that it is therefore the 'different' sexuality that is the 'cause' of the stress is not only fallacious, but also demeaning to the client. Similarly, lesbian and gay clients are, at times, hesitant to discuss, or even to mention in therapy, sexual difficulties with their partners in case the therapist is uncomfortable or uncomprehending. There is a desire to protect the therapist from discomfort and oneself from voyeuristic curiosity.

However, there are times when clients themselves attribute far more to their homosexuality than the situation warrants. When this is pointed out by the therapist, the client reacts by saying that the therapist is not gay-sensitive and does not understand. Therapists must adequately comprehend the issues if they are to avoid both insensitivity as well as a bending over backwards to appear sensitive and gay-sympathetic.

There is no way of predicting your next client's sexuality though of course you might wish to refer a client to someone who knows more about, or is better equipped to handle gay and lesbian issues. That does not take away from the fact that therapists need to be sensitive to these issues because the first contact with a mental health professional influences clients' attitudes about, and expectations from, therapy.

Therapists who themselves are gay or lesbian are few and far between and are often not out in the larger community. This may be because they do not wish to be defined professionally by their sexual choices. It may also be difficult for them to be open about their sexuality in a society that tends to view homosexuality as an aberration and might then, because of a lack of aware-



## Heterosexual Questionnaire

Many lesbians and gay men- in therapeutic situations, as well as in the "outside world" - are put into situations where they have to defend their sexuality. This places a considerable burden on people who are frequently only wanting to deal with a relationship problem, "coming out" on the job or with family and friends, or some non-sexuality-related situation. To help non-gay people understand how it feels to be put into such a position, Alan K. Malyon, Ph.D., devised a questionnaire, parts of which are excerpted here. This questionnaire is based on "heterophobic" premises, rather than homophobic premises, which exist chronically in our society.

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you'll grow out of?
4. Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of people of the same sex? Maybe you just need a positive gay experience?
5. Heterosexuals have histories of failures in gay relationships. Do you think you may have turned to heterosexuality out of fear of rejection?
6. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know you wouldn't prefer that?
7. If heterosexuality is normal, why are a disproportionate number of mental patients heterosexual?
8. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
9. Your heterosexuality doesn't offend me as long as you leave me alone, but why do so many heterosexuals try to seduce others into that orientation?
10. If you should choose to nurture children, would you want them to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face?
11. Most child molesters are heterosexual. Do you consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexuals? Heterosexual teachers, particularly?
12. Why must heterosexuals be so blatant, making a public spectacle of their heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
13. Heterosexuals always assign themselves such narrowly restricted, stereotyped sex roles. Why do you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?
14. How can you have a fully satisfying, deeply emotional or sexual experience with an opposite-sex person, when the obvious physical, biological, and temperamental differences are so vast? How can a man possibly understand what pleases a woman sexually, and vice-versa?
15. Heterosexual marriage has total societal support, yet the divorce rate continues to spiral. Why are there so few stable heterosexual relationships?
16. Since there are so few happy heterosexuals, techniques have been developed to help people change. Have you considered trying aversion therapy?
17. Could you trust a heterosexual therapist/ counselor not to try to influence you toward his/her own sexual leanings?
18. Do heterosexuals hate and/or distrust others of their own sex? Is that what makes them heterosexual?
19. A disproportionate number of criminals, welfare recipients, and other irresponsible types are heterosexual. So why would someone hire a heterosexual in a responsible job?
20. Why are heterosexuals so promiscuous, always having "affairs", etc.?



ness, denigrate their professional standing on account of their sexuality. There are those who feel that gay and lesbian therapists have a responsibility to be open about their sexuality so that they are not reacting defensively, or operating from positions of shame, or being apologetic about their own sexuality. Such openness would help dispel myths about homosexuality being psychologically unhealthy. Be that as it may, the fact that a psychologist does something does not make that action right or wrong or healthy or unhealthy. It is true that individuals in positions of power can, and do, bring about change in attitudes by the actions they take in their personal

and professional capacities; however, these are personal struggles that each one undertakes and ultimately resolves for oneself.

In the Indian context, there are many misconceptions about sexuality issues and problems and the lesbian and gay community is still not strong or visible enough to bring about substantive change. Lack of visibility does not mean lack of existence.

Existence transcends mere physical existence. It implies social and psychological existence as well. The rejoinder to why therapists must be gay-sensitive can well be a one-line question-why must therapists be sensitive at all?



Mr. Sathish Kumar  
Victory Youth Association  
Palanipet  
Arakkonam  
N.A.A. District  
TAMIL NADU

THREE YEAR PROJECT PLAN FOR AIDS PREVENTION IN  
EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS  
(August 1996~ March 1999)

AIM:

To implement an AIDS Prevention Education Program in Victory Youth Association project, in Arakkonam area of N.A.A. District of Tamil Nadu State so that by March 1999, at least 6,000 youth in educational institutions answer correctly basic questions on HIV/AIDS.

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the first six months:

- \* all necessary permission to implement this plan would be sought from the our President, E>C members, our team, Director of Health Services, C.E.O., D.E.O., Inspectors of Schools and Heads of Schools to implement the AIDS Prevention Education Program in educational settings.
- \* relevant educational materials will be prepared / received to help in disseminating AIDS Prevention information.
- \* initial contact will be made with heads of at least 50 educational institutions through visits and letters to extend their support for this project by August 1996.
- \* Workshops on AIDS education will be conducted for Heads of institutions (2 from 20 institutions and 5 of our staff) by end-September 1996.



- \* visit hospitals and government departments to collect HIV/AIDS related statistics

**By the end of each project year: (April' 97 ~ March '99)**

- \* AIDS Prevention Education will be conducted in 5 schools, 1 V.T.C, 2 T.T.Is and 2 NFE centres for at least 2,000 population.
- \* a six monthly HIV / AIDS reinforcement will be designed and disseminated to the target population covered in the form of Newsletters with help from INSA/India, Tamil Nadu State AIDS Cell, T.N.V.H.A., Voluntary Health Services and others .
- \* a facility/process/measure will be established to provide continuous information on HIV / AIDS as per need of target population ( for e.g., like establishing an AIDS Info. Cell, training of teachers, etc.).
- \* plans will be made to observe World AIDS Day ( 1st December) through the following activities: Debate Competition in 1996; Essay Competition in 1997 ; and Drama and Role Play in 1998.
- \* all data collected from the pre- and post-test questionnaires used during AIDS Prevention Education sessions will be compiled at the end of each session and its results analysed for adapting data for future sessions and for inclusion in the six-monthly narrative report to INSA/India.
- \* six monthly narrative and financial reports on project plan implementation will be sent to INSA / India. This will include an annual audited statement of accounts of moneys received from INSA / India.
- \* an internal evaluation of the project will be undertaken with the help of the team, INSA team, students and teachers to assess plan implementation , budget utilisation and plan onwards.

**By the end of the third year:**

- \* plans will be made to attend INSA /India's follow up Workshop to share experiences and make onward plans regarding this AIDS education project.
- \* all data and reports and the audited statement of accounts and remaining moneys from this project will be submitted to INSA/India by March, 1999.
- \* Arrangements will be made to seek funding to continue this project, if required, with the help of the organisation , government and local community



# Year Plan

S.No.	Activities	Prepared by Month and	Expected Month and	Reported Month and
1.	Permissions	✓		
2.	Workshop on AIDS	✓		
3.	AIDS Cdn in school	✓		
4.	Report	✓	✓	
5.	Audited statement of k/c	✓	✓	
6.	Debate (World AIDS Day)	✓		
7.	Competition (World AIDS Day)		✓	
8.	Drama or Role play (World AIDS Day)			✓
9.	Yearly Evaluation	✓	✓	



## REPORT OF FOLLOW-UP VISIT

Name of the Participant : Satish Kumar  
Place : Victory Youth Asscn., (VICYA)  
Palanipet, Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu  
Dates of Visit : 7th & 8th September, 1998.  
Visited by : Mrs. Agatha

### INTRODUCTION:

Satish Kumar has undergone CHDTP at INSA/India after which he has undertaken various developmental awareness building activities. Satish heads the organisation with 15 - 20 volunteers working with him. The Victory Youth Association is working in 25 villages in and around. Satish has very good rapport with the youth at Arakkonam. He receives funds from various sources. Since Victory Youth Asscn. was running short of funds, it has shifted from a rented building to Satish's own campus. The thatched hall has been partitioned to function as an office also. The other half functions as a tailoring unit.

### OBSERVATIONS:

Satish has taken interest to document all the proceedings of the programmes based on the suggestions given after the 2nd Follow-up visit. He has made use of all the channels possible to do A.P.E. for various groups, apart, from schools and colleges e.g. I.T.I., Tuition Centres, NFE Centres, Tailoring Units, Women Sanghas. VICYA has observed World AIDS Day - December, 1997 by organising a Rally with the help of the school students and volunteers. All India Radio has broadcasted the programme in the News Bulletin. Many of the local newspaper reporters have written about the Rally. After the Rally the general public, many of them have written or phoned in to express their appreciation. So far Satish has conducted A.P.E. in 3 High Schools, 2 Tutorials and 2 Computer Education Centres. He is planning to have Sex, Sexuality and AIDS Workshop sometime in the month of October or November, '98. VICYA is making out plans to have a human chain as a World AIDS Day activity together with the State AIDS Cell and VHWS.

Satish has good collection of Audio Visual aids from different sources. During my visit he had fixed up a follow-up visit to one of the schools where he had done A.P.E. VICYA team was present. One of the team members handled the session. The students had many more clarifications still. The team member was not so comfortable talking about sex. At the end of the session, Satish discussed about setting up peer education programmes in the school. The students were very interested about it. Satish and I discussed together about having a follow-up with a Newsletter, personal visit or some questionnaire. I suggested that one should be comfortable speaking about sex to the students without any inhibition.

### CONCLUSION:

Satish is very enthusiastic in the work. He enjoys working. He is a valuable person for INSA. We wish him all the best for the future.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

*Agatha*



## VICTORY YOUTH ASSOCIATION

### AIDS Prevention Education in Schools sponsored by INSA/India Bangalore.

#### DETAILED REPORT.

- Name of the organisation : Victory Youth Association (VICYA)  
Regd.No.16/91.  
Palanipet, Arakkonam-631 002  
Vellore District. TAMIL NADU.
- Nature of the Programme : AIDS Prevention Education in Schools  
more than 3655 students covered and  
Observance of World AIDS Day nearly  
5000 students covered.
- Target Group : School Students, Teachers, Tailoring  
Students, Typewriting & Computer students  
Technical students, NFE centre students,  
Women sangam members and general public.
- Communication method : Lecture, Question and Answer, Group  
Discussion, Role play, Games, Video  
and Audio, Debate, Posters, Phamplets,  
Debate, Quiz, Hand Bills, Placards,  
Banners, Rally catching slogans, memmicry  
etc.,
- Institutions Covered : High and Higher Secondary Schools, ITIs,  
Polytechnic, NFE, Typewriting and Computers,  
Tailoring unit, Tution centres & Women  
sangams.
- Resource Persons : Our Team members, Teachers, School Heads,  
and other NGO persons.
- Resource Materials used and  
produced under this programme : Posters and other materials from  
INSA/ India, Bangalore.  
Tamil Nadu State AIDS Control Socidey Madras  
Voluntary Health Services, Madras.  
Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Assn., Madras.  
Christian Medical College, Vellore.  
South India AIDS Action Programme, Madras.  
YRG Care, Madras.



Media Coverage

- : Vedio Coverage, Photos, The programme was published in all local News papers, All India Radio & Madras Doordharsan

Permission granted

- : We got permission from Chief Educational Officer, Vellore, to conduct HIV/AIDS awareness programme & Rally for Adolescent students. He also issued orders to all Government schools and private schools.

Evaluation Plan

- : Our team went to schools and evaluate the students by the method of question and answer, group discussions, and the teachers also cooperated with us to evaluate. So that 86% of the students answered correctly the cause, spread and prevention of HIV/AIDS. The students thanks for our association and the sponsoring agency for conducting such programme they were having wrong thoughts of these fatal disease now they well known about HIV/AIDS and also in English II Paper for Plus Two Exam there is 15 marks essay about AIDS Awareness.



Amal Susairaj James  
Community Health Dept.,  
Reaching the Unreached  
G. Kallipaatti, Ganguvarpatti,  
Periyakulam Tk., Madurai District  
TAMIL NADU 624 203

January 19, 1999

Dear James,

We hope that you are keeping well. This is to let you know that the evaluation of the INSA/India supported AIDS prevention education projects is underway. In this connection, Dr. Sreedhar is planning to visit Sr. Lillyan on the 31st of January, 1999. Dr. Sreedhar will be arriving in Trichy by the Rockfort Express {T.No 6877} and will arrive in Trichy early in the morning of the 31st of January. He will be at Lillyan Mary's Project the whole day and will leave that same day to reach Dindigul before 10 pm. Would it be possible to let me know how long it takes from Trichy to Dindigul? Does the Chennai Kanyakumari Express { T.No. 6721} pass through Trichy? He plans to catch that train to go to Kanyakumari to visit another participant, Sarasam after visiting Lillyan.

It will not be possible for him to visit all the participants, but he would be interested to meet you for discussions. We invite you to be at Lillyan Mary's place on the 31st of January at 2.p.m noon for discussions.

The purpose of his visit is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and its effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing the project { e.g. the problems encountered by you, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached, and your feelings when carrying out this project}
- ◆ observe the educational materials and records you have either prepared or received from other sources to carry out this project.
- ◆ *Speak to some of the target group e.g. Students, teachers, educational authorities, mahila sangha members, non formal education groups etc.} ..not applicable in your case.*
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation.

I have also requested three other participants in this area { Sr.Juliana, Sr. Mary Jacob and Mr.Satish Samuel {Addresses and phone nos attached } to come to Lillyan's place at noon of the 31st of January. It is not possible for Dr. Sreedhar to visit every body, but like this, he will be able to meet every-body, hopefully. You can leave in the evening for your respective place. If you require Lillyan to make arrangements for the night, please let her superior know. Her address is as follows: Rev. Sr.Superior, Servite Social Service Society, Keelamulaikudi, Sarcarpalayam, Trichy: 620 010 TAMIL NADU { The phone number has recently changed }. Please write to Lillyan's Superior to let them know of your arrival and to find out directions to reach the place. I request you to **PLEASE RING US TO CONFIRM THIS VISIT OR SEND US A TELEGRAM**. We appreciate your support and the work you are involved with.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India including Sujatha who is on leave.  
Yours sincerely,



EDWINA PEREIRA  
Asst. Programme Director  
Training

sreedhar.doc/ep



Mr. Satish Samuel  
AROGYA AGAM,  
Aundipatti,  
Vagai V.A.M. dISTT.,  
TAMIL NADU 625 512

Dear Mr. Satish Samuel,

January 19, 1999

We hope that you are keeping well. This is to let you know that the evaluation of the INSA/India supported AIDS prevention education projects is underway. In this connection, Dr. Sreedhar is planning to visit Sr. Lillyan in Tiruchy on the 31st of January, 1999. Dr. Sreedhar will be arriving in Trichy by the Rockfort Express {T.No 6877} and will arrive in Trichy early in the morning of the 31st of January. He will be at Lillyan Mary's Project the whole day and will leave that same day to reach Dindigul before 10 pm.

It will not be possible for him to visit all the participants, but he would be interested to meet a representative from Arogya Agam for discussions. We invite you or somebody involved with the AIDS prevention education project supported by INSA/India to be at Lillyan Mary's place on the 31st of January at 2.p.m noon for discussions.

The purpose of his visit is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and its effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing the project { e.g. the problems encountered by you, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached, and your feelings when carrying out this project }
- ◆ observe the educational materials and records you have either prepared or received from other sources to carry out this project.
- ◆ *Speak to some of the target group e.g. Students, teachers, educational authorities, mahila sangha members, non formal education groups etc.} ..not applicable in your case.*
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation.

I have also requested three other participants in this area { Sr.Juliana, Sr. Mary Jacob and Aralsusairaj James {Addresses and phone nos attached } to come to Lillyan's place at noon of the 31st of January. It is not possible for Dr. Sreedhar to visit every body, but like this, he will be able to meet every-body, hopefully. You could leave in the evening for your place. If arrangements for the board at night is required, please let her superior know. Her address is as follows: Rev. Sr.Superior, Servite Social Service Society, Keelamulaikudi, Sarcarpalayam, Trichy: 620 010 TAMIL NADU { The phone number has recently changed }. Please write to Lillyan's Superior to let them know of your arrival and to find out directions to reach the place. I request you to **PLEASE RING US TO CONFIRM THIS VISIT OR SEND US A TELEGRAM**. We appreciate your support and the work you are involved with.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India including Sujatha who is on leave.  
Yours sincerely,

  
EDWINA PEREIRA  
Asst. Programme Director  
Training

sreedhar doc/ep



Col. Abraham,  
The Salvation Army,  
Territorial Head Quarters  
Kowdiar  
Thiruvanthapuram  
KERALA: 695035

January 19, 1999

Dear Col. Abraham,

As discussed in an earlier letter, this is to let you know that the Evaluation of the AIDS prevention education projects supported by INSA/India is at present underway I have been trying to call your telephone number from yesterday to let her know that Dr. Sreedhar , an external evaluator would be interested to visit Naomi, Edwin George and/or the rest of the AIDS prevention education team and you to get to know your AIDS prevention education programmes. He will be arriving from Nagercoil on the 2nd of February, 1999 morning. I request you to call up before the 23rd to let me know if this isn't convenient.

The purpose of his visit is to :

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project supported by INSA/India, its reach and effects.
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing this project {e.g. the problems encountered, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached and feelings when carrying out the AIDS prevention education project}
- ◆ observe the education materials and records you have prepared and/or received from other sources to carry out this project
- ◆ speak to some of the target group { students , youth club members etc.; either in the schools or in their houses}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation

INSA/India values all your help and support.

Please convey our greetings to Naomi and all the staff at the Salvation Army.  
With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.  
Yours sincerely,



**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Program Director  
Training

sreedhar doc/ep  
cc. Commissioner Mohan Masih



Mr. John Dalton,  
Director , AROGYA AGAM,  
Aundipatti,  
Vagai V.A.M. dISTT.,  
TAMIL NADU 625 512

January 19, 1999

Dear Mr. John Dalton,

We hope that you are keeping well. This is to let you know that the evaluation of the INSA/India supported AIDS prevention education projects is underway. In this connection, Dr. Sreedhar is planning to visit Sr. Lillyan in Tiruchy on the 31st of January, 1999. Dr. Sreedhar will be arriving in Trichy by the Rockfort Express {T.No 6877} and will arrive in Trichy early in the morning of the 31st of January. He will be at Lillyan Mary's Project the whole day and will leave that same day to reach Dindigul before 10 pm.

It will not be possible for him to visit all the participants, but he would be interested to meet a representative from Arogya Agam for discussions. We invite you to depute Mr. Satish Samuel or somebody involved with the AIDS prevention education project supported by INSA/India to be at Lillyan Mary's place on the 31st of January at 2.p.m noon for discussions.

The purpose of his visit is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and its effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing the project { e.g. the problems encountered by you, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached, and your feelings when carrying out this project}
- ◆ observe the educational materials and records you have either prepared or received from other sources to carry out this project.
- ◆ *Speak to some of the target group e.g. Students, teachers, educational authorities, mahila sangha members, non formal education groups etc.} ..not applicable in your case.*
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation.

I have also requested three other participants in this area { Sr. Juliana, Sr. Mary Jacob and Analsusairaj James {Addresses and phone nos attached } to come to Lillyan's place at noon of the 31st of January. It is not possible for Dr. Sreedhar to visit every body, but like this, he will be able to meet every-body, hopefully. He/she can leave in the evening for your respective place. If arrangements for the board at night is required, please let her superior know. Her address is as follows: Rev. Sr. Superior, Servite Social Service Society, Keelamulaikudi, Sarcarpalayam, Trichy: 620 010 TAMIL NADU { The phone number has recently changed }. Please write to Lillyan's Superior to let them know of your arrival and to find out directions to reach the place. I request you to **PLEASE RING US TO CONFIRM THIS VISIT OR SEND US A TELEGRAM**. We appreciate your support and the work you are involved with.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India including Sujatha who is on leave.  
Yours sincerely,

  
EDWINA PEREIRA  
Asst. Programme Director  
Training

sreedhar doc/ep



Rev. Sr. Tarcisia  
Nirmala Hospital  
Marikunnu,  
Calicut  
KERALA: 673 012

January 19, 1999

Dear Rev. Sr. Tarcisia,

Thank you for permitting Sr. Lizzie to call to let me know that Dr. Sreedhar would be welcome there. As discussed in an earlier letter, this is to let you know that the Evaluation of the AIDS prevention education projects supported by INSA/India is at present underway. He will be arriving from Trivandrum on the Malabar Express { T No 6329 } on the 3rd of February, 1999 morning. In Trivandrum, he will be meeting both Naomi and Susan.

The purpose of his visit to Lizzie is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project supported by INSA/India, its reach and effects.
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing this project {e.g. the problems encountered, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached and feelings when carrying out the AIDS prevention education project}
- ◆ observe the education materials and records you have prepared and/or received from other sources to carry out this project
- ◆ speak to some of the target group { students , youth club members etc.; either in the schools or in their houses}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation

I request you to make the necessary arrangements to pick up Dr. Sreedhar from the station. I have requested him to wait by the Ladies waiting room in the station so that it will be easy to spot each other. Also, I request you/ Lizzie to please book him on a private luxury bus from there to Bangalore for the 3rd February night.

INSA/India values all your help and support. We do appreciate the good work you do.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.  
Yours sincerely,



**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Program Director  
Training  
sreedhar doc/ep



Naomi David,  
The Salvation Army,  
Territorial Head Quarters  
Kowdiar  
Thiruvanthapuram  
KERALA: 695035

January 19, 1999

Dear Naomi,

How are you, Naomi ? It is a long time since I wrote but you are constantly in my prayers. We hope that you are better now.

I write to inform you that Dr. Sreedhar , an external evaluator would be interested to visit Edwin George and/or the rest of the AIDS prevention education team and you to get to know your AIDS prevention education programmes. He will be arriving from Nagercoil on the 2nd of February, 1999 morning. He is very much interested to meet you.

He will be staying for only a day and will come whenever he is free to meet you. Will you let Col. Abraham know what time will suit you for this meeting. Maybe for half an hour. We do not want you to strain your-self.

INSA/India values and remembers all your help and support.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.

Yours sincerely,



EDWINA PEREIRA  
Asst. Program Director  
Training  
sreedhar.doc/ep



Bro James Kimpton  
REACHING THE UNREACH  
G.Kallipatti, Ganguvarpatti,  
Peryakullam Tk., Madurai Distt.,  
TAMIL NADU : 624 203

January 19, 1999

Dear Bro. James,

We hope that you are keeping well. This is to let you know that the evaluation of the INSA/India supported AIDS prevention education projects is underway. In this connection, Dr. Sreedhar is planning to visit Sr. Lillyan in Tiruchy on the 31st of January, 1999. Dr. Sreedhar will be arriving in Trichy by the Rockfort Express {T.No 6877} and will arrive in Trichy early in the morning of the 31st of January. He will be at Lillyan Mary's Project the whole day and will leave that same day to reach Dindigul before 10 pm.

It will not be possible for him to visit all the participants, but he would be interested to meet a representative from RTU for discussions. We invite you to depute Amal Susairaj James to be at Lillyan Mary's place on the 31st of January at 2.pm noon for discussions.

The purpose of his visit is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and its effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing the project { e.g. the problems encountered by you, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached, and your feelings when carrying out this project}
- ◆ observe the educational materials and records you have either prepared or received from other sources to carry out this project.
- ◆ *Speak to some of the target group e.g. Students, teachers, educational authorities, mahila sangha members, non formal education groups etc.} ..not applicable in your case.*
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation.

I have also requested three other participants in this area { Sr. Juliana, Sr. Mary Jacob and Satish Samuel {Addresses and phone nos attached } to come to Lillyan's place at noon of the 31st of January. It is not possible for Dr. Sreedhar to visit every body, but like this, he will be able to meet every-body, hopefully. James could leave in the evening. If arrangements for the board at night is required, please let her superior know. Her address is as follows: Rev. Sr.Superior, Servite Social Service Society, Keelamulaikudi, Sarcarpalayam, Trichy: 620 010 TAMIL NADU { The phone number has recently changed }. Please write to Lillyan's Superior to let them know of your arrival and to find out directions to reach the place. I request you to **PLEASE RING US TO CONFIRM THIS VISIT OR SEND US A TELEGRAM**. We appreciate your support and the work you are involved with.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India including Sujatha who is on leave.  
Yours sincerely,

  
EDWINA PEREIRA  
Asst. Programme Director  
Training

sreedhar doc/ep



Mr Satish Kumar,  
Victory Youth Association  
No 11, A.N.Kandigal  
3rd Street, Palanipet  
Arrakonam : 631 002  
N.A.A. District  
TAMIL NADU

January 19, 1999

Dear Satish,

Thank you for agreeing to have Dr. Sreedhar visiting you and getting to know your AIDS prevention education programmes. He will be arriving in Arakonnam from Chennai on the 30th of January, 1999 morning. I heard about your call to the office to say that schools may be closed on that day. This is a letter to confirm that the visit still will be as scheduled.

The purpose of his visit is to :

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing this project {e.g. the problems encountered, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached and feelings when carrying out the AIDS prevention education project}
- ◆ observe the education materials and records you have prepared and/or received from other sources to carry out this project
- ◆ speak to some of the target group { students , youth club members etc.; either in the schools or in their houses}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation

He will be arriving on the 30th of January morning and will get in touch with as to the exact time and place of arrival. It will be nice if you could pick him up.

I have also asked Sr. Lilly Matthew to come to your place in the afternoon of the 30th of January' 99, so that Dr. Sreedhar can have discussions with her also. Can you please let her know the directions to reach your place. Her Address is: St. Thomas Hospital, Chetpet, TSR district, TN 606801 {PH# 04181-52263,52261}.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.

Yours sincerely,



**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Program Director  
Training

sreedhar.doc/ep



Commisioner Mohan Masih,  
The Salvation Army,  
Territorial Head Quarters  
Kowdiar  
Thiruvanthapuram  
KERALA: 695035

January 19, 1999

Dear Commissioner Mohan Masih,

As discussed in an earlier letter, this is to let you know that the Evaluation of the AIDS prevention education projects supported by INSA/India is at present underway I have been trying to call your telephone number from yesterday to let her know that Dr. Sreedhar , an external evaluator would be interested to visit Naomi, Edwin George and/or the rest of the AIDS prevention education team and you to get to know your AIDS prevention education programmes. He will be arriving from Nagercoil on the 2nd of February, 1999 morning. I request you to call up before the 23rd to let me know if this isn't convenient.

The purpose of his visit is to :

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project supported by INSA/India, its reach and effects.
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing this project {e.g. the problems encountered, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached and feelings when carrying out the AIDS prevention education project}
- ◆ observe the education materials and records you have prepared and/or received from other sources to carry out this project
- ◆ speak to some of the target group { students , youth club members etc.; either in the schools or in their houses}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation

INSA/India values all your help and support.

Please convey our greetings to Naomi and all the staff at the Salvation Army.  
With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.  
Yours sincerely,



**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Program Director  
Training  
sreedhar.doc/ep







Rev. Fr, Servatius,  
KSSS, Tirumalai Ashram Social Centre,  
Community Health and Development Programme  
Chunkakadai PO  
Kanyakumari District  
TAMIL NADU 629 807

January 19, 1999

Dear Rev. Fr, Servatius,

I spoke to Ms. Pushpam yesterday to let her know that Dr. Sreedhar , an external evaluator would be interested to visit Sarasam and you to get to know your AIDS prevention education programmes. He will be arriving in Nagercoil from Chennai on the 1st of February, 1999 morning. I had told Pushpam to request Sarasam to call up before 11am to let me know if this wasn't convenient. Since she did not rung, this is a letter to confirm that the visit still will be as scheduled on the 1st of February. We request you to confirm this assumption.

The purpose of his visit is to :

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing this project {e.g. the problems encountered, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached and feelings when carrying out the AIDS prevention education project}
- ◆ observe the education materials and records you have prepared and/or received from other sources to carry out this project
- ◆ speak to some of the target group { students , youth club members etc.; either in the schools or in their houses}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation

He will be arriving in Nagercoil on the 1st of February morning by the Chennai Kanyakumari Express {T.No 6721}. It will be nice if arrangements could be made to pick him up from the station. I have requested him to wait near the Ladies Waiting room for you. We request you to make arrangements for him to stay the 1st February night . He will leave for Trivandrum on the 2nd of February,99. INSA/India values all your help and support.

Please convey our greetings to Fr. James and Sr. Lieve and all the staff at KSSS.  
With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.  
Yours sincerely,



**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Program Director  
Training  
sreedhar.doc/ep



Ms. P Sarasam  
Community Health and Development Programme  
Chunkakadai PO  
Kanyakumari District  
TAMIL NADU 629 807

January 19, 1999

Dear Sarasam,

I spoke to Ms. Pushpam yesterday and I hope you got my message about Dr. Sreedhar visiting you to get to know your AIDS prevention education programmes. He will be arriving in Nagercoil from Chennai on the 1st of February, 1999 morning. I had told Pushpam to request you to call up before 11am to let me know if this wasn't convenient. Since you have not rung, this is a letter to confirm that the visit still will be as scheduled on the 1st of February.

The purpose of his visit is to :

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing this project {e.g. the problems encountered, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached and feelings when carrying out the AIDS prevention education project}
- ◆ observe the education materials and records you have prepared and/or received from other sources to carry out this project
- ◆ speak to some of the target group { students , youth club members etc.; either in the schools or in their houses}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation

He will be arriving in Nagercoil on the 1st of February morning by the Chennai Kanyakumari Express {T.No 6721}. It will be nice if you could pick him up from the station. I have requested him to wait near the Ladies Waiting room for you. Thank you Sarasam for all your help. We request you to make arrangements for him to stay the 1st February night at your place. He will leave for Trivandrum on the 2nd of February, 99.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.

Yours sincerely,



**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Program Director  
Training  
sreedhar.doc/ep



Sr. Juliana  
Bon Secours Convent  
Velanganni 611 111  
Tamil Nadu

January 19, 1999

Dear Sr. Juliana,

We hope that you are keeping well. This is to let you know that the evaluation of the INSA/India supported AIDS prevention education projects is underway. In this connection, Dr. Sreedhar is planning to visit Sr. Lilyan on the 31st of January, 1999.

Dr. Sreedhar will be arriving in Trichy by the Rockfort Express {T.No 6877} and will arrive in Trichy early in the morning of the 31st of January. He will be at Lillyan Mary's Project the whole day and will leave that same day to reach Dindigul before 10 pm. Can you let me know how long it takes from Trichy to Dindigul ? Does the Chennai Kanyakumari Express { T.No. 6721} pass through Trichy ? He plans to catch that train to go to Kanyakumari to visit another participant, Sarasam after visiting Lillyan.

It will not be possible for him to visit all the participants, but he would be interested to meet you for discussions. We invite you to be at Lillyan Mary's place on the 31st of January at 2.pm noon for discussions.

The purpose of his visit is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and its effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing the project { e.g. the problems encountered by you, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached, and your feelings when carrying out this project}
- ◆ observe the educational materials and records you have either prepared or received from other sources to carry out this project.
- ◆ *Speak to some of the target group e.g. Students, teachers, educational authorities, mahila sangha members, non formal education groups etc.} ..not applicable in your case.*
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation.

I have also requested three other participants in this area { Sr.Mary Jacob, Mr. Amal Susairaj James and Mr.Satish Samuel {Addresses and phone nos attached } to come to <sup>Rev. Lilyan Mary's</sup> place at noon of the 31st of January. It is not possible for Dr. Sreedhar to visit every body, but like this, he will be able to meet every-body, hopefully. You can leave in the evening for your respective place. If you require Lillyan to make arrangements for the night , please let her superior know. Her address is as follows: Rev. Sr.Superior, Servite Social Service Society, Keelamulaikudi, Sarcarpalayam, Trichy: 620 010 TAMIL NADU { The phone number has recently changed }. Please write to Lillyan/Superior to let them know of your arrival and to find out directions to reach the place. I request you to **PLEASE RING US TO CONFIRM THIS VISIT OR SEND US A TELEGRAM.** We appreciate your support and the work you are involved with.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India including Sujatha who is on leave.  
Yours sincerely,



EDWINA PEREIRA  
Asst. Programme Director  
(Training)



Rev. Sr.Superior,  
Servite Social Service Society,  
Keelamulaikudi, Sarcarpalayam,  
Trichy: 620 010 TAMIL NADU

January 19, 1999

Dear Rev. Sister,

We hope that you are keeping well. This is to let you know that the evaluation of the INSA/india supported AIDS prevention education projects is underway. In this connection, Dr. Sreedhar is planning to visit Sr. Lilyan on the 31st of January, 1999. I have been trying to ring you up to find out if this is convenient but the number seems to have changed. We would appreciate it if you let us know your new phone number ?

Dr. Sreedhar will be arriving in Trichy by the Rockfort Express {T.No 6877} and will arrive in Trichy early in the morning of the 31st of January. May I request you to make arrangements to please pick him up from the station ? I have asked him to wait near the ladies waiting room of the station. He will be at your place on the 31st and will leave to reach Dindigul before 10 pm. Can you let me know how long it takes from Trichy to Dindigul ? Does the Chennai Kanyakumari Express { T.No. 6721} pass through Trichy ? He plans to catch that train to go to Kanyakumari to visit another participant, Sarasam after visiting you.

The purpose of his visit is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and its effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing the project { e.g. the problems encountered by you, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached, and your feelings when carrying out this project}
- ◆ observe the educational materials and records you have either prepared or received from other sources to carry out this project.
- ◆ Speak to some of the target group e.g. Students, teachers, educational authorities, mahila sangha members, non formal education groups etc.}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation.

I have also requested four other participants in this area {Sr. Juliana, Sr.Mary Jacob, Mr. Amal Susairaj James and Mr.Satish Samuel {Addresses and phone nos attached } to come to your place at noon of the 31st of January. It is not possible for Dr. Sreedhar to visit every body, but like this, he will be able to meet every-body, hopefully. They will leave in the evening for their respective places so you won't have to make arrangements to accommodate them at night unless they request you. I request you to **PLEASE RING ME TO CONFIRM THIS VISIT OR SEND US A TELEGRAM.** We appreciate your support and assistance.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India including Sujatha who is on leave.  
Yours sincerely,



EDWINA PEREIRA  
Asst. Programme Director  
Training



Sr. Lillyan Mary,  
Servite Social Service Society,  
Keelamulaikudi, Sarcarpalayam,  
Trichy: 620 010 TAMIL NADU

January 19, 1999

Dear Lillyan,

How are you ? We hope that you are keeping well. Lillyan, you are aware that the evaluation of the AIDS prevention education projects is underway. In this connection, Dr. Sreedhar is planning to visit you on the 31st of January, 1999. I have been trying to ring you up to find out if this is fine with you but the number seems to have changed. When you reply, can you give us your new phone number ?

Dr. Sreedhar will be arriving in Trichy by the Rockfort Express {T.No 6877} and will arrive in Trichy early in the morning of the 31st of January. May I request you to please pick him up from the station ? I have asked him to wait near the ladies waiting room of the station. He will be with you on the 31st and will leave to reach Dindigul before 10 pm. Can you let me know how long it takes from Trichy to Dindigul ? Does the Chennai Kanyakumari Express { T.No. 6721} pass through Trichy ? He plans to catch that train to go to Kanyakumari to visit Sarasam after visiting you.

The purpose of his visit is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and its effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing the project { e.g. the problems encountered by you, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached, and your feelings when carrying out this project}
- ◆ observe the educational materials and records you have either prepared or received from other sources to carry out this project.
- ◆ Speak to some of the target group e.g. Students, teachers, educational authorities, mahila sangha members, non formal education groups etc.}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation.

I have also requested Juliana, Mary Jacob, Amal Susairaj James and Satish Samuel {Addresses and phone nos attached } to come to your place at noon of the 31st of January. It is not possible for Dr. Sreedhar to visit every body, but like this, he will be able to meet every-body, hopefully. They will leave in the evening for their respective places so you won't have to make arrangements to accommodate them at night unless they request you. They will be writing to you also. **LILYAN, PLEASE RING ME TO CONFIRM THIS VISIT OR SEND US A TELEGRAM.** We appreciate your support and assistance.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India including Sujatha who is on leave.  
Yours sincerely,

  
**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Programme Director  
Training

sreedhar.doc/ep



CATS ADDRESSES.

1. Mr. Amal Susairaj James.  
Community Health Department,  
Reaching the Unreached,  
G. Kalupatti,  
Ganguvarpatti P.O.,  
Periyakulam Taluk,  
Madurai District,  
TAMIL NADU - 624203.  
STD - 04546 - 36230  
Fax - 0091 - 4546 - 36282.
2. Mr. Satish Kumar.  
Arogya Agam,  
Aundipatty,  
Vaigai V.A.M. District,  
TAMIL NADU - 625512.  
STD - 04546 - 42306  
Fax - 04546 - 44311.
3. Sr. Juliana.  
Bon Secours Convent,  
Velanganni,  
TAMIL NADU - 611111.  
STD - 04365 - 63439 (Office)  
Residence - 04365 - 63446.
4. Sr. Mary Jacob.  
Holy Cross Convent,  
Ganeshapuram P.O.,  
Namakkal,  
Salem District,  
TAMIL NADU - 637002.  
STD - 04286 - 22552.



Sr. Lizzie  
Nirmala Hospital  
Marikunnu,  
Calicut  
KERALA: 673 012

January 19, 1999

Dear Lizzie,

Thank you for calling to let me know that Dr. Sreedhar would be welcome there. As discussed in an earlier letter, this is to let you know that the Evaluation of the AIDS prevention education projects supported by INSA/India is at present underway. He will be arriving from Trivandrum on the Malabar Express { T. No 6329 } on the 3rd of February, 1999 morning. In Trivandrum, he will be meeting both Naomi and Susan.

The purpose of his visit is to :

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project supported by INSA/India, its reach and effects.
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing this project {e.g. the problems encountered, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached and feelings when carrying out the AIDS prevention education project}
- ◆ observe the education materials and records you have prepared and/or received from other sources to carry out this project
- ◆ speak to some of the target group { students , youth club members etc.; either in the schools or in their houses}
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation

Lizzie, I request you to pick up Dr. Sreedhar from the station. I have <sup>9</sup>requested him to wait by the Ladies waiting room in the station so that it will be easy to spot each other. Also, please book him on a private luxury bus from there to Bangalore for the 3rd February night.

INSA/India values all your help and support. We do appreciate the good work you do.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.  
Yours sincerely,



**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Program Director  
Training  
sreedhar doc/cp



Ms.Sucila Pandian,  
Community Action For Social Transformation  
Poothathankuudieruppu,  
Thiruviruthanpalli,  
Cheranmahadevei,  
Tirunelveli District,  
Tamil Nadu 627 414

January 19, 1999

Dear Sucila,

We hope that you are well. It was nice to write to you after such a long time. As discussed in an earlier letter, this is to let you know that the Evaluation of the INSA/India supported AIDS prevention education projects is at present underway. In this connection Dr. Sreedhar will be visiting the team at K.S.S.S. in Chunkakadai on the 1st of February '99. He would be interested in having discussions with other participants in the area. Sucila, would it be possible for you to send either Murugan or Nargis to K.S.S.S on the 1st of February ?? They could reach there by 12 noon and leave by 5pm of the same day. I have informed Sarasam and Rev Fr. Servatius about their reaching there at noon. They have already gone there once for the CATS workshop in March last year.

The purpose of his visit to Sarasam is to:

- ◆ gauge the extent of implementation of the AIDS prevention education project, its reach and effects
- ◆ study the processes involved in implementing this project {e.g. the problems encountered, the successes, your experiences, planned and unplanned results reached and feelings when carrying out the AIDS prevention education project}
- ◆ observe the education materials and records you have prepared and/or received from other sources to carry out this project
- ◆ *Speak to some of the target group { students , youth club members etc.; either in the schools or in their houses }*
- ◆ discuss other matters of relevance to this evaluation

With you, he may not be able to meet the target group, but through discussions, he will be able to meet the rest of the objectives. Take some of your visual aids, records and photographs to help them share C.A.S.T.'s experiences.

Their Contact Person at K.S.S.S. is Ms. Sarasam or Rev. Fr. Servatius. Please write to them and let them know that you are coming. Also let us know. It would be nice if you could also go, but I know how busy you must be. What's new at C.A.S.T. ? Convey our Namaste and greetings to Mr. Pandian, Bhanu, Ravi, Akka and all there.

With best wishes from all at INSA/India, including Sujatha who is at present out of station.

Yours sincerely,



**EDWINA PEREIRA**  
Asst. Program Director  
Training  
sreedhar doc/ep





# Points of View / ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನ

## The HIV/AIDS Newsletter

### A TREATMENT OF CARE

In August of '97, Mr. Narayana Swamy aged about 30-35 years reported to the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Government Dental College, Bangalore. He was in extremely bad physical condition. He was examined in the OPD and it was confirmed that he had suffered a poly trauma as a result of a road accident. On further questioning it was revealed that he had initially been admitted to a private hospital where he was kept in the Intensive Care Unit for 2-3 days under observation and routine investigation (including a blood test). He was suddenly discharged without explanation which was what brought him to a government hospital seeking help. He underwent a thorough general check up and was referred to the other departments in order to get his various problems treated. From the examination in the Dental Department we observed that his lower jaw was broken in two places- known as Bilateral Parasymphysis Fracture (compound type). Meanwhile we did the routine blood investigations including those for Hepatitis and HIV.

We were not amazed when we discovered that he was HIV+ as we had prior experience of handling such cases that had been rejected by the private hospitals. Knowing well that HIV is not transmitted through saliva, sweat or mucous secretion, we undertook the treatment of this 'rejected' patient. He was treated as an out-patient and it was done without surgery (closed reduction). The steps involved were: the two operators used disposable masks, gloves, gowns, eye-protection glasses and they used bactericidal/ virucidal solution for scrubbing their hands before and after treatment.

The lower and upper jaw were anaesthetised by injecting local anaesthesia using a disposable needle and syringe.

As the patient was poor we happened to treat the fracture with minimal expense. We used ordinary stainless steel wires of 26-28 gauge, elastics and Erich Arch bar which is a modified stainless steel plate used to align the fractured jaw.

#### THE PLANNED TREATMENT

On the first day he was given oral hygiene aids to enable him to keep his mouth clean. The small intra-oral wounds were cleaned with germicidal/ virucidal agents. The cut / lacerated oral wounds were sutured with great care. The patient was then rested for 2 days and was given higher antibiotics as prophylactic and therapeutic measures. During these 2 days proper planning was done to promote inexpensive, good and efficient treatment. The Arch Bar was fixed to the upper and lower jaw using stainless steel wires. The plates were connected together with the elastics which brought the jaws into position. This traction was given upto a period of 24-48 hours. He was instructed not to open his mouth and he was on a liquid diet. After 48 hours the jaws were examined. The elastics were replaced by wires and a check x-ray was taken to ensure that the fractured part was in position. It was in position so it was maintained so. Regular check-ups were done every once in 7 days for up to 6-8 weeks and this was supplemented with good oral fluids and hygiene aids. The weekly progress led to an initial reduction and later discontinuation of the antibiotics and analgesics. After 6-8 weeks of Inter-

Maxillary Fixation, final x-rays were taken to confirm primary/ fibrous healing after which the jaw binding wires were removed leaving the arch bar in place. Initially the patient had difficulty in opening his jaw as there was a muscular spasm due to the prolonged period of the mouth being closed. This in turn was corrected by advising him to do some exercises for 15-20 days. A final x-ray revealed good healing of the fracture. Then the remaining Arch Bar was removed and he was on a soft diet for a month after which he went back to regular food.

**It was wonderful and fulfilling to see a person with a cheerful face; that which had been robbed earlier on due to unethical ignorance and discrimination. We made a joint effort to inform his family about his condition educating them on matters of precaution. This is just one of the many people who come to us shunned and hurt. We need to stop and think. People living with HIV/AIDS need our support and help. This is best medication we have and the most meaningful one we could give them.**



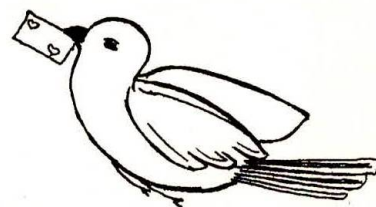
**The whole treatment was supported, encouraged, operated and treated by our HOD, Dr. Jayaprasad N. Shetty, Dept. of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Govt. Dental College, Bangalore.**

**Assisted by Dr. V. Sreenivas Prasad, Post Graduate student, Dept. of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Govt. Dental College, Bangalore.**



# Deepjyothi

- A Positive People's Newsletter



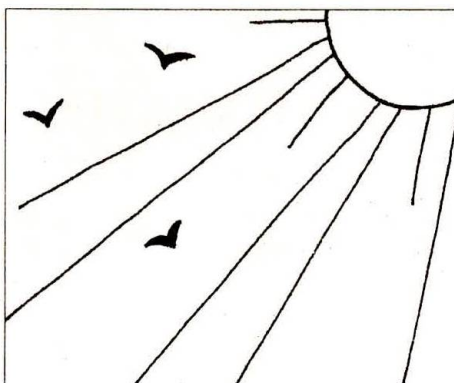
## DAYBREAK

I need to take you back to a time before my infection. I was in my late teens. My ties with the head of the family was strained. I made my own decisions relating to life and my future. It was a carefree existence. I had a good job overseas, worked hard without much of a social life.

Things changed with the discovery of my positive status. Depression, loneliness and aloofness were my companions. Hope was destroyed, I was direction-less without any interest for a while. Life was tough. Things changed for me. I lost my job because of my status and was immediately deported back to India. Suicidal thoughts plagued me and I made futile attempts with crime. Anger towards my family and society consumed me and so I left home.

### Life today in Freedom Foundation ....

Today I have my basic needs provided for. I am now in a place where I can provide care and support to those in need. The different levels of rejection due to the ignorance of our community at large, and death of other positive people have emotionally moulded my suffering. I have received encouragement and motivation to play a lead role in creating awareness and facilitating acceptance of people who are positive with the hope of having a community that will respond with care and support to those who are / will be infected. It has been a deep spiritual



journey that has induced a positive attitude within me and has enabled me to realize my true self. My relationship with my family is restored and interaction with the society strengthened. My hope today is focused on leading a productive life. This has become my work ; my commitment to the cause is primary. I want to be an encourager. I am involved in awareness programs highlighting issues like : prevention, basic human right of positive people, the gravity of this issue. We need to eradicate the stigma associated with HIV and bring about behavioural change in today's world.

### The way I see it ....

HIV/AIDS has brought about an opportunity for positive social change. It enables us to learn about sexual behaviour, gender relations, importance of human rights, individual and collective responsibilities and create a community involvement in health care and development. It is an opportunity to build bridges and

forge alliances between health professionals and various groups and organisations outside of the health system. A majority of those who are infected today are young adults who are at the peak of their productive and reproductive lives. They generally have dependents, young and old, dependent on them for education, social support and moral guidance. After their premature death, the elderly are forced to fend for themselves while trying to raise a generation of orphaned children. It threatens basic human rights such as medical confidentiality, security of employment, the right to privacy and human dignity.

### No other disease affects human society in this way or to this extent.

I do not deplore my positive status now for being here has been a positive experience in my life. I write this not simply to share my life but to encourage you to search your hearts, look and see the light at the end of the tunnel.

### Readers Write-in ....

**JAMES D.D.**

**FREEDOM FOUNDATION**

180, Hennur Cross

Off. Hennur Main Road

St. Thomas Town Post

Bangalore 560 043

Please write in with your comments / queries for information, counselling, safe blood, care and support to

### AIDS FORUM-KARNATAKA

C/o Madhyam, No. 1, 10th Cross, 10th Main, Vasanth Nagar, Bangalore - 560 052.

Tel : 080 225 3889 Fax : 080 528 7903 E-mail : [aidskar@mahiti.org](mailto:aidskar@mahiti.org)

Website : <http://www.hivaidssindia.org>



## ಸಹಾನುಭೂತಿ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ

1997 ರ ಆಗಸ್ಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಸುಮಾರು 30-35 ವರ್ಷ ವಯಸ್ಸಿನ ಶ್ರೀ ನಾರಾಯಣಸ್ವಾಮಿ ಅವರು ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ದಂತ ವೈದ್ಯ ಕಾಲೇಜಿನ ಬಾಯಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಮುಖದ ಮೇಲ್ದವಡೆ ಭಾಗದ ಶಸ್ತ್ರಚಿಕಿತ್ಸಾ ವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದರು. ಮೊದಲು ಅವರನ್ನು ಹೊರರೋಗಿಗಳ ವಿಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು. ರಸ್ತೆ ಅಪಘಾತವೊಂದರಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಅನೇಕ ಬಗೆಯ ಗಾಯಗಳು ಆಗಿರುವುದು ದೃಢವಾಯಿತು. ಅವರಿಗೆ ಮತ್ತಷ್ಟು ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಕೇಳಿದಾಗ ಅವರನ್ನು ಆರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಖಾಸಗಿ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಯ ತೀವ್ರ ಆರೈಕೆ ವಿಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಎರಡರಿಂದ ಮೂರು ದಿನಗಳ ಕಾಲ ಇರಿಸಲಾಗಿತ್ತು. ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆ ಹಾಗೂ ವಾಡಿಕೆಯ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಗಳನ್ನು (ರಕ್ತ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಯೂ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ) ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಆ ತರುವಾಯ ಯಾವ ವಿವರಣೆಯನ್ನು ನೀಡದೆ ಅವರನ್ನು ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಯಿಂದ ಒಮ್ಮಿಂದೊಮ್ಮೆಲೆ ಬಿಡುಗಡೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಕಳುಹಿಸಿದರಂತೆ. ಆತ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಗೆ ನೆರವು ಕೋರಿ ಬರುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಕಾರಣ. ಆತನ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಯನ್ನು ಕೂಲಂಕುಷವಾಗಿ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು ಮತ್ತು ಆತನ ವಿವಿಧ ತೊಂದರೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನೀಡುವುದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಇತರೆ ವಿಭಾಗಗಳಿಗೆ ಕಳುಹಿಸಿ ಕೊಡಲಾಯಿತು. ದಂತ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸಾ ವಿಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿನ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಯಿಂದ ಆತನ ಕೆಳದವಡೆ ಎರಡು ಭಾಗಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮುರಿದಿತ್ತು. ಇದನ್ನು ಬೈಲಾವರಲ್ ಪ್ರಾರಾಸಿಂಫಸಿಸ್ ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಟರ್ (ಸಂಕೀರ್ಣ ಮೂಳೆ ಮುರಿತ) ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಅದೇ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ನಾವು ಹೆಪಾಟೈಟಿಸ್ ಮತ್ತು ಎಚ್.ಐ.ವಿ. ಕುರಿತ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆಯೂ ಸೇರಿದಂತೆ ವಾಡಿಕೆಯ ರಕ್ತ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ನಡೆಸಿದವು.

ಆತ ಎಚ್.ಐ.ವಿ. ಸೋಂಕು ಪೀಡಿತ ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿದಾಗ ನಮಗೇನೂ ಆಶ್ಚರ್ಯವಾಗಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಏಕೆಂದರೆ ಈ ಹಿಂದೆ ಇದೇ ರೀತಿ ಖಾಸಗಿ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಯವರು ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನೀಡಲು ನಿರಾಕರಿಸಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆಗೆ ನಮ್ಮ ಬಳಿಗೆ ರೋಗಿಗಳು ಬಂದ ಅನುಭವ ನಮಗಿತ್ತು. ಎಂಜಲು, ಬೆವರು, ಸಿಂಬಳ ಮುಂತಾದವುಗಳಿಂದ ಈ ರೋಗದ ಸೋಂಕು ಹರಡುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಈ ಸೋಂಕು ಹರಡುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂದು ನಮಗೆ ತಿಳಿದಿತ್ತು. ಆದ ಕಾರಣ ಈ 'ತಿರಸ್ಕೃತ' ರೋಗಿಯ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ಕೈಗೊಂಡೆವು. ಆತನನ್ನು ಹೊರ ರೋಗಿಯಾಗಿಸಿ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನೀಡಿದೆವು. ಶಸ್ತ್ರ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ಇಲ್ಲದೆ (ಕೊಸ್ಟ್ ರಿಡಕ್ಷನ್) ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಒಳಗೊಂಡ ಕ್ರಮಗಳು ಹೀಗಿವೆ.

ಇಬ್ಬರು ಶಸ್ತ್ರಚಿಕಿತ್ಸರು ಬಳಸಿ ಬಿಸಾಡಬಹುದಾದ ಮುಖವಾಡ, ಕೈಗವಚ, ಗೌನುಗಳು, ಕಣ್ಣಿನ ರಕ್ಷಣೆಗೆ ಕನ್ನಡಕಗಳು ಬಳಸಿ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನಡೆಸಿದರು. ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನೀಡುವ ಮುಂಚೆ ಮತ್ತು ತರುವಾಯ ತಮ್ಮ ಕೈ ಶುದ್ಧಗೊಳಿಸಲು ಸೂಕ್ಷ್ಮಾಣುಹಾರಕ/ವೈರಸ್ ಹಾರಕ ದ್ರಾವಣಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿದರು.

ಬಳಸಿ ಬಿಸಾಡುವ ಸೂಚಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸಿರಂಜು ಬಳಸಿ ಮೇಲ್ದವಡೆ ಮತ್ತು ಕೆಳದವಡೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಅರಿವಳಿಕೆ ಚುಚ್ಚುಮದ್ದು ನೀಡಿ ಅರಿವಳಿಕೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು.

ರೋಗಿ ಬಡವನಾಗಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ನಾವು ಆತನ ಮುರಿದ ಮೂಳೆಗಳನ್ನು ಆದಷ್ಟೂ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಖರ್ಚಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ಮಾಡಲು ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸಿದೆವು. ನಾವು 26-28 ಗೇಜಿನ ಸಾಧಾರಣ ಸ್ಟೆನ್‌ಲೆಸ್ ಸ್ಟೀಲ್ ತಂತಿಗಳನ್ನು, ಎಲಾಸ್ಟಿಕ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು, ಎರಿಕ್ ಆರ್ಚ್ ಬಾರ್ (ಕಮಾನುಪಟ್ಟಿ) ಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿದೆವು. ಎರಿಕ್ ಆರ್ಚ್ ಬಾರ್ ಇವು ಮುರಿದ ದವಡೆಗಳನ್ನು ಸರಿಯಾಗಿ ಪಂಕ್ತೀಕರಿಸಲು ಬಳಸುವ ರೂಪಾಂತರಿಸಿದ ಸ್ಟೆನ್‌ಲೆಸ್ ಸ್ಟೀಲ್ ಫ್ಲೇಟುಗಳು.

### ಯೋಜಿತ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ

ಮೊದಲನೇ ದಿನ ಅವನಿಗೆ ತನ್ನ ಬಾಯಿಯ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಪಾಲನೆಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಕ ಸಾಧನಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಬಾಯೊಳಗಿನ ಚಿಕ್ಕ ಪುಟ್ಟ ಗಾಯಗಳನ್ನು ಕೀಟಾಣುಹಾರಕ/ವೈರಸ್ ಹಾರಕಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿ ಸ್ವಚ್ಛ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಕುಯ್ಯ, ಸೀಳಿದ ಬಾಯಿಯ ಗಾಯಗಳನ್ನು ಬಹಳ ಎಚ್ಚರದಿಂದ ಹೊಲೆಯಲಾಯಿತು. ಇದಾದ ನಂತರ ರೋಗಿಗೆ ಎರಡು ದಿನಗಳ ವಿರಾಮ ನೀಡಿ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ಹಾಗೂ ರೋಗ ನಿರೋಧಕ ಮದ್ದಾಗಿ ಬಹಳ ತೀವ್ರವಾದ ಆಂಟಿಬಯೋಟಿಕ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಕೊಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಈ ಎರಡು ದಿನಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ದುಬಾರಿ ಅಲ್ಲದ, ಉತ್ತಮ ಮತ್ತು ಪರಿಣಾಮಕಾರಿ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನೀಡಲು ಸರಿಯಾದ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಆರ್ಚ್ ಬಾರ್

(ಕಮಾನುಪಟ್ಟಿ)ಯನ್ನು ಸ್ಟೆನ್‌ಲೆಸ್ ಸ್ಟೀಲ್ ತಂತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿ ಮೇಲ್ದವಡೆ ಮತ್ತು ಕೆಳದವಡೆಗೆ ಜೋಡಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಈ ಫ್ಲೇಟ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಎಲಾಸ್ಟಿಕ್ ಬಳಸಿ ಒಂದಕ್ಕೊಂದು ಜೋಡಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಇದರಿಂದ ದವಡೆಗಳು ಸ್ವಸ್ಥಾನಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದವು. ಈ ರೀತಿ ಎಳೆದು ಕಟ್ಟಿದ್ದನ್ನು 24 ರಿಂದ 48 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ ಬಿಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಬಾಯಿ ತೆರೆಯಲೇ ಬಾರದೆಂದು ಅವನಿಗೆ ಹೇಳಲಾಯಿತು. ಆತನಿಗೆ ದ್ರವರೂಪಿ ಆಹಾರ ನೀಡಲಾಯಿತು 48 ಗಂಟೆಗಳ ತರುವಾಯ ದವಡೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪರೀಕ್ಷಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಎಲಾಸ್ಟಿಕ್ ಬದಲು ತಂತಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕಟ್ಟಲಾಯಿತು. ಮುರಿದ ಭಾಗ ಸರಿಯಾದ ಜಾಗದಲ್ಲಿದೆ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಖಚಿತ ಪಡಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಒಂದು ತಪಾಸಣೆಗೆ ಕ್ಷ-ಕಿರಣ ತೆಗೆಯಲಾಯಿತು. ಅದು ಸ್ವಸ್ಥಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಇದ್ದ ಕಾರಣ ಹಾಗೆಯೇ ಅದನ್ನು ಉಳಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಬರಲಾಯಿತು. 6 ರಿಂದ 8 ವಾರಗಳ ವರೆಗೆ ಪ್ರತಿ 7 ದಿನಕ್ಕೊಮ್ಮೆ ನಿಯತವಾಗಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಆತನಿಗೆ ಬಾಯಿ ಮೂಲಕ ಉತ್ತಮ ಪಾನೀಯಗಳನ್ನು ಆರೋಗ್ಯಪಾಲನಾ ಸಾಧನಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಲಾಯಿತು. ವಾರದಿಂದ ವಾರಕ್ಕೆ ಸುಧಾರಣೆ ಆದಂತೆ ಆಂಟಿಬಯೋಟಿಕ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಮತ್ತು ಆನರ್ ಜೆಸಿಕ್

ಗಳನ್ನು ಆರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಡಿಮೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಆ ಬಳಿಕ ನಿಲ್ಲಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. 6 ರಿಂದ 8 ವಾರಗಳ ತರುವಾಯ ಇಂಟರ್ ಮ್ಯಾಕ್ಸಿಲರಿ ಪಿಕ್ಸೇಷನ್ (ದವಡೆ ಮೂಳೆ ಕೂಡಿದ ಮೇಲೆ) ಆದ ಮೇಲೆ ಕ್ಷ-ಕಿರಣ ತೆಗೆದು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಕ/ಪೈಬ್ರಸ್ ಗುಣವಾಗಿದೆ ಎಂದು ದೃಢವಾದ ಮೇಲೆ ದವಡೆಗೆ ಕಟ್ಟಿದ ತಂತಿಗಳನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದು ಕಮಾನು ಪಟ್ಟಿಯನ್ನು ಅಲ್ಲೇ ಬಿಡಲಾಯಿತು. ಬಹಳ ಕಾಲ ಬಾಯಿ ತೆರೆಯದೇ ಮುಚ್ಚಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಮಾಂಸಖಂಡ ಹಿಡಿದಂತಾಗಿ ರೋಗಿಗೆ ಮೊದಮೊದಲು ಬಾಯಿ ತೆರೆಯುವುದು ಕಷ್ಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. 15-20 ದಿನಗಳವರೆಗೆ ಕೆಲವು ವ್ಯಾಯಾಮಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲು ಸಲಹೆ ನೀಡಿ ಅದನ್ನು ಸರಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಅಂತಿಮ ಕ್ಷ-ಕಿರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಮೂಳೆ ಮುರಿತ ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿ ಗುಣವಾಗಿರುವುದು ಕಂಡುಬಂತು. ಆ ತರುವಾಯ ಉಳಿದ ಕಮಾನುಪಟ್ಟಿ ತೆಗೆಯಲಾಯಿತು. ಒಂದು ತಿಂಗಳ ಕಾಲ ಆತ ಮೃದು ಆಹಾರ ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಂಡನು. ಆ ತರುವಾಯ ಮಾಮೂಲಿ ಆಹಾರ ಸೇವಿಸಲಾರಂಭಿಸಿದನು.

ಒಬ್ಬ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ನಗುನಗುತ್ತಾ ಇರುವುದನ್ನು ನೋಡುವುದಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಅದ್ಭುತ ಹಾಗೂ ಮನತುಂಬಿ ಬರುವ ವಿಷಯ ಬೇರೊಂದಿಲ್ಲ. ಅದರಲ್ಲೂ ವೈದ್ಯ ಧರ್ಮಕ್ಕೆ ಸಲ್ಲದ ಅಜ್ಞಾನ ತಾರತಮ್ಯಗಳ ಕಲಾಳ ಛಾಯೆಯಿಂದ ಮಾಸಿ ಹೋಗಿದ್ದ ನಗೆ ಮತ್ತೆ ಬರುವಂತೆ ಮಾಡಿದಾಗಿನ ಅನುಭವಕ್ಕೆ ಮಿಗಿಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಆತನ ಕುಟುಂಬದವರಿಗೆ ಅವನ ಈ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ತಿಳಿವಳಿಕೆ ನೀಡಿ ಎಚ್ಚರಿಕೆ ವಹಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಅರಿವು ಮೂಡಿಸಿದೆವು. ಮಿಕ್ಕವರಿಂದ ತಿರಸ್ಕೃತನಾಗಿ ನೋಂದು ನಮ್ಮ ಬಳಿ ಬಂದ ಅನೇಕರಲ್ಲಿ ಈತ ಒಬ್ಬ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ಮಾತ್ರ. ನಾವು ಒಂದು ನಿಮಿಷ ನಿಂತು ಆಲೋಚಿಸಬೇಕು. ಎಚ್.ಐ.ವಿ/ಎಡ್ಸ್ ಪೀಡಿತ ಜನರಿಗೆ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಮತ್ತು ಸಹಾಯ ಬೇಕೆಂಬುದನ್ನು ಅರಿತುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು ಇದೇ ನಾವು ಅವರಿಗೆ ಕೊಡಬಹುದಾದ ಅತ್ಯಂತ ಅರ್ಥಪೂರ್ಣ ಔಷಧ.



ಇಡೀ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆಗೆ ನಮ್ಮ ಇಲಾಖಾ ಮುಖ್ಯಸ್ಥರು ಬೆಂಬಲ, ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹ ನೀಡಿದರು, ಶಸ್ತ್ರಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನೀಡಿದರು.

ಡಾ|| ಜಯಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಎನ್.ಶೆಟ್ಟಿ ಬಾಯಿ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾಕ್ಸಿಲೋ ಫೇಶಿಯಲ್ ಶಸ್ತ್ರಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ದಂತವೈದ್ಯಕಾಲೇಜು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

ನೆರವು ನೀಡಿದವರು : ಡಾ. ವಿ. ಶ್ರೀನಿವಾಸ್ ಪ್ರಸಾದ್, ಸ್ನಾತಕೋತ್ತರ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿ, ಬಾಯಿ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾಕ್ಸಿಲೋ ಫೇಶಿಯಲ್ ಶಸ್ತ್ರಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ದಂತವೈದ್ಯಕಾಲೇಜು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

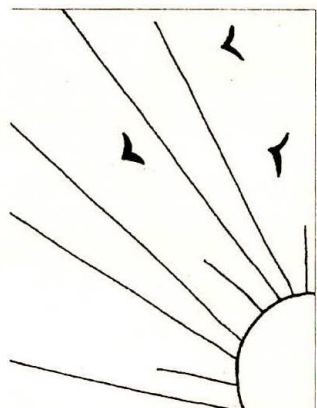


# ದೀಪಜ್ಯೋತಿ

- ಸೋಂಕು ಪೀಡಿತ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗಳಿಂದ ವಾರ್ತಾಪತ್ರ

## ಮಂಜಾವು

ನನಗೆ ಸೋಂಕು ತಗಲುವುದಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಮುಂಚಿನ ದಿನಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನಾನು ನಿಮಗೆ ಹೇಳಬೇಕು. ಆಗ ನನಗೆ ಹದಿಹರೆಯದಿಂದ ಹರೆಯಕ್ಕೆ ಕಾಲಿಡುವ ಕಾಲ. ನನ್ನ ಮತ್ತು ನಮ್ಮ ತಂದೆ ನಡುವೆ ಸಂಬಂಧ ಸರಿ ಇರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ನನ್ನ ಬದುಕು ಮತ್ತು ಭವಿಷ್ಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನಾನೇ ನಿರ್ಣಯಗಳನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳ ತೊಡಗಿದೆ. ಅದೊಂದು ಯಾರಿಗೂ ಹೆದರದ ಸ್ವೇಚ್ಛಾ ಜೀವನವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ನನಗೆ ಹೊರದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಳ್ಳೆಯ ಕೆಲಸ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಸಂಪರ್ಕ ಇಲ್ಲದೇ ಶ್ರಮ ಪಟ್ಟು ದುಡಿದೆ.



ನನಗೆ ಎಚ್.ಐ.ವಿ. ಸೋಂಕು ಇದೆ ಎಂಬುದು ತಿಳಿದು ಬಂದ ತರುವಾಯ ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಬದಲಾಗತೊಡಗಿತು. ಖಿನ್ನತೆ, ಒಂಟಿತನ, ಯಾವುದರ ಬಗ್ಗೆಯೂ ಅಂಟಿಕೊಳ್ಳದ ನಿರ್ಲಿಖತೆ ನನ್ನ ಬಂಧುಗಳಾದವು ಬದುಕಿನ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಭರವಸೆ ಸುಟ್ಟುನೂರಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಒಂದಷ್ಟು ಕಾಲ ನಾನು ದಿಕ್ಕು ಕಾಣದಂತಾಗಿದ್ದೆ. ಯಾವುದರ ಬಗ್ಗೆಯೂ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಬದುಕು ದುರ್ಭರವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಬದುಕಿನ ಗತಿಯೂ ಬದಲಾಗತೊಡಗಿತು. ನಾನು ಸೋಂಕು ಪೀಡಿತ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ತಿಳಿದ ಕೊಡಲೆ ನನ್ನ ಕೆಲಸ ಹೋಯಿತು. ಕೂಡಲೇ ನನ್ನನ್ನು ಭಾರತಕ್ಕೆ ಹಿಂದಿರುಗಿ ಕಳುಹಿಸಿದರು. ಅತ್ತೆಹತ್ಯೆ ಮಾಜಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕೆಂಬ ಯೋಚನೆ ಬಿಡದೆ ಕಾಡಲಾರಂಭಿಸಿತು. ದಂಡಾಪರಾಧಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲು ಪ್ರಾರ್ಥನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ. ನನ್ನ ಕುಟುಂಬ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಾಜದ ಮೇಲೆ ಸಿಟ್ಟು ಮೆತ್ತುಂಬಿಕೊಂಡಿತು. ಮನೆ ಬಿಟ್ಟು ಹೋರಬಿಟ್ಟೆ.

## ಪ್ರೀಡಂ ಫೌಂಡೇಷನ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನ ಈಗಿನ ಬದುಕು....

ಇಂದು ನನ್ನ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಅಗತ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸಲಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಆರೈಕೆ ಆಕ್ರಮಗಳು ಅಗತ್ಯವಿರುವವರಿಗೆ ಅದನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸುವ ಪರಿಶ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಈಗ ನಾನಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆ ಸಮಾಜದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಇರುವ ಅಜ್ಞಾನ. ಅದರಿಂದ ಒದಗುವ ವಿವಿಧ ಹಂತದ ನಿರಾಕರಣೆ ತಿರಸ್ಕಾರಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಸೋಂಕು ತಗಲಿದ ಇತರ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗಳ ಸಾವು ಇದು ನನ್ನ ಮನದ ದುಗುಡವನ್ನು ಮಾರ್ಪಡಿಸಿ, ನನ್ನ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನ ಬದಲಾಯಿತು. ಸೋಂಕು ಪೀಡಿತರಾದ/ಮುಂದೆ ಸೋಂಕಿಗೆ ಈಡಾಗಬಲ್ಲ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸಹಾನುಭೂತಿ ತೋರಿ, ಅವರಿಗೆ ಬೆಂಬಲ ನೀಡಬಲ್ಲ ಒಂದು ಸಮುದಾಯವನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಮಿಸುವ ಆಶೆಯಿಂದ ಜನರಲ್ಲಿ ಸೋಂಕು ಪೀಡಿತರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸರಿಯಾದ ಅರಿವನ್ನು ಮೂಡಿಸುವ ಹಾಗೂ ಎಚ್.ಐ.ವಿ. ಸೋಂಕು ಪೀಡಿತರನ್ನು ಸಮಾಜ ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವಂತೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಅನುಕೂಲ ಕಲ್ಪಿಸುವ ಕಾರ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ನಾನೂ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಪಾತ್ರ

ವಹಿಸುವಂತೆ ನನಗೆ ಉತ್ತೇಜನ ನೀಡಲಾಯಿತು ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರೇರೇಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಅದೊಂದು ಅಳವಡ ಗಹನವಾದ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸಿಕ ಯಾತ್ರೆ. ಅದೇ ನನ್ನಲ್ಲಿ ಬದುಕಿನ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಅಕ್ಕರೆ, ಮುನ್ನುಗ್ಗಿ ಬಾಳಬೇಕೆಂಬ ಆಶಾಭಾವನೆಯನ್ನು ಬೆಳೆಸಿತು. ನಾನು ನನ್ನ ನಿಜಸ್ವತ್ತವನ್ನು ಅರಿತು ಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾರಂಭಿಸಿದೆ. ನನ್ನ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಜೊತೆಗೆ ನನ್ನ ಸಂಬಂಧ ಮತ್ತು ಉತ್ತಮವಾಗಿ ಬೆಸೆಯಿತು. ಸಮಾಜದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸ್ನೇಹ ಸಂಪರ್ಕ ಬಲವಾಯಿತು. ಇಂದು ನಾನು ಉತ್ತಾದಕ ಬದುಕನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಲು ಕೇಂದ್ರೀಕರಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಇದೇ ನನ್ನ ಕೆಲಸ. ಈ ಉದ್ದೇಶಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ನನ್ನ ಬದ್ಧತೆ ಮೂಲಭೂತವಾದದ್ದಾಯಿತು. ಇತರರನ್ನೂ ಪ್ರೇರೇಪಿಸುವ ಕೆಲಸಕ್ಕೆ ನಾನೂ ತೊಡಗಲಾರಂಭಿಸಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ರೋಗ ತಡೆಯುವ ವಿಧಾನಗಳು, ಸೋಂಕು ಪೀಡಿತ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗಳ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಮಾನವ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳು ಈ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯ ಗೆನತೆ ಮುಂತಾದ ವಿಷಯಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಬೆಳಕು ಚೆಲ್ಲುವ, ತಿಳುವಳಿಕೆ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಎಚ್.ಐ.ವಿ. ಸೋಂಕಿಗೆ ಅಂಟಿರುವಂತಹ ಕಳಂಕವನ್ನು ಹೊಗಲಾಡಿಸ ಬೇಕಾದ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆ ಬಹಳ ಇದೆ. ಅದೇ ರೀತಿ ಇಂದಿನ ಜಗತ್ತಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಆ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನಡೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬದಲಾಯಿಸ ಬೇಕಾದ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿದೆ.

## ನನ್ನ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಕೋನ ....

ಎಚ್.ಐ.ವಿ/ವಿಡ್ ಸಮಾಜದಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಸಹಾಂತಕ ಬದಲಾವಣೆ ತರುವ ಅವಕಾಶವನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಮಿಸಿದೆ. ಇದು ನಾವು ಲೈಂಗಿಕ ನಡವಳಿಕೆ, ಗಂಡು ಹೆಣ್ಣುಗಳ ಸಂಬಂಧ, ಮಾನವ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳ ಮಹತ್ವ, ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಸಮಷ್ಟಿ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿ ಇವುಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಅರಿತುಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ನಮಗೆ ಸಹಾಯ ಮಾಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಅದೇ ರೀತಿ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಪಾಲನೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಇಡೀ ಸಮುದಾಯವೇ ಒಳಗೊಳ್ಳುವ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ ನಿರ್ಮಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ವೈದ್ಯ ವೃತ್ತಿಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಆರೋಗ್ಯಪಾಲನಾ ರಂಗದಿಂದ ಹೊರಗಿನ



ಇತರ ಸಮುದಾಯ ಹಾಗೂ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳ ನಡುವೆ ಸಂಪರ್ಕ ಸೇತುವೆ ನಿರ್ಮಿಸಲು ಹಾಗೂ ಸ್ನೇಹ ಸಂಬಂಧಗಳನ್ನು ಕಲ್ಪಿಸಲು ಒಂದು ಉತ್ತಮ ಅವಕಾಶ ಉಂಟು ಮಾಡಿದೆ. ಇಂದು ಸೋಂಕಿಗೆ ಒಳಗಾದ ಜನರಲ್ಲಿ ಬಹುಪಾಲು ಇನ್ನೂ ಕಿರಿಯವರು ಸ್ವರಾಧವರು. ತಮ್ಮ ಉತ್ತಾದಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಪ್ರಜನನ ಬದುಕಿನ ತಿಖರದಲ್ಲಿ ಇರುವವರು. ಅವರನ್ನು ಅವಲಂಬಿಸಿದ ವಯಸ್ಸಾದ ತಂದೆತಾಯಿಗಳು ಎಳೆಯ ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಇರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ವಿದ್ಯೆಗಾಗಿ, ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಬೆಂಬಲಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಮತ್ತು ನೈತಿಕ ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶನಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಇವರನ್ನು ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಅವಲಂಬಿಸಿರುತ್ತವೆ. ಇಂತಹವರು ಅಕಾಲ ಮೃತ್ಯುವಿಗೆ ಈಡಾದರೆ ಇವರ ವಯಸ್ಸಾದ ತಂದೆತಾಯಿಗಳು ತಮ್ಮ ಬದುಕಿಗೆ ತಾವೇ ಬೆಂಬಲವಾಗಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ ಮತ್ತು ದುಡಿಯಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ ಅಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲ ಅನಾಥರಾದ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಕ್ಕಳ ಒಂದು ಪೀಳಿಗೆಯನ್ನೇ ಅವರು ಬೆಳಗುತ್ತಾ ಬರಬೇಕಾದ ಕಷ್ಟದ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಒದಗುತ್ತದೆ. ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಗೋಪ್ಯತೆ, ಉದ್ಯೋಗದ ಭದ್ರತೆ, ಏಕಾಂತತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾನವ ಘನತೆ ಕುರಿತ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳು ಇವುಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಮಾನವ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳಿಗೆ ಈಗ ಧಕ್ಕೆ ಒದಗುವ ಭಯ ಉಂಟಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಬೇರೆ ಯಾವ ರೋಗವೂ ಮಾನವ ಸಮುದಾಯವನ್ನು ಈ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಥವಾ ಇಷ್ಟರಮಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಭಾದಿಸಿಲ್ಲ.

ನನಗೆ ಸೋಂಕು ತಗುಲಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ನಾನು ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಇರಬೇಕಾದ ಪರಿಸ್ಥಿತಿ ಬಂತು ಎಂದು ನಾನೇನೂ ದೂರಲು ಹೋಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ನನ್ನ ಬದುಕಿನ ಇದೊಂದು ಮುಖ್ಯ ಭಾಗ, ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಮುನ್ನುಗ್ಗಿ ಬದುಕಬೇಕೆಂಬ ಭಲ ಬೆಳಕಿನ ಪ್ರಸಂಗವಾಗಿದೆ. ಈ ನನ್ನ ಕಥೆಯನ್ನು ಕೇವಲ ನನ್ನ ಬದುಕನ್ನು ನಿಮ್ಮೊಡನೆ ಹಂಚಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕೆಂಬ ಬಯಕೆಯಿಂದ ಬರೆಯುತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ನಿಮ್ಮ ಅಂತರಂಗವನ್ನು ಶೋಧಿಸಿ ನೋಡಿ. ದೂರ ದಿಗಂತದಲ್ಲಿ ಏಳುತ್ತಿರುವ ಮುಂಜಾವಿನ ಹೊಂಗಿರಣವನ್ನು ಕಾಣಿರಿ, ಸ್ವಾಗತಿಸಿರಿ ಎಂದು ಉತ್ತೇಜನಲು ಬರೆದಿದ್ದೇನೆ.

## ನಿಮಗರ ಬರಹ...

ಬೇರ್ಮಾ ಡಿ.ಡಿ.

ಪ್ರೀಡಂ ಫೌಂಡೇಷನ್

ನಂ. 180, ಹೆನ್ನೂರು ಕ್ರಾಸ್,

ಹೆನ್ನೂರು ಮೈನ್ ರೋಡ್

ಸೇಂಟ್ ಥಾಮಸ್ ಚೌನ್ ಪೋಸ್ಟ್

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು - 560043

ದಯವಿಟ್ಟು ನಿಮ್ಮ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯ, ಮಾಹಿತಿ, ಸುರಕ್ಷಿತ ರಕ್ತ ಸಹಕಾರಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಭೇಟಿ ನೀಡಿ / ಬರೆಯಿರಿ.

## ವಿಡ್ ಪ್ರೋರಂ-ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ

C/o ಮಾದ್ರಮ್, ನಂ. 1, 10ನೇ ಕ್ರಾಸ್, 10ನೇ ಮೈನ್, ವಸಂತನಗರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು - 560 052.

ಫೋನ್ : 080 225 3889 ಫ್ಯಾಕ್ಸ್ : 080 528 7903



# SAMRAKSHA

## Fact Sheet

**SAMUHA** is a development agency working in the South Indian State of Karnataka. It was formed in 1986. SAMUHA's goal is to improve the quality of life of the people we work with and to do this within defined periods of time.

**SAMRAKSHA** was initiated by SAMUHA in December 1993 to combat the growing HIV epidemic. The dual objectives of this project are:

- to control and contain the spread of HIV infection among a defined vulnerable target population, through education, awareness and the promotion of safer sex;
- to provide counselling, care and support to those already infected and their families.

Bangalore city has been the initial operational area, and work in Raichur district has evolved as a separate project due to its different needs.

### COUNSELLING

1



SAMRAKSHA's primary focus is to offer counselling and support to those people who are vulnerable to HIV infection as well as to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and their families. This involves preventative, pre and post-test counselling. PLWHA and their families are also followed up by the counselling team.

SAMRAKSHA's counsellors refer clients to the Asha Kiran care and support programme for other services.

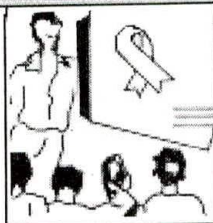
In addition, these services are available at the following outreach points:

- SAMRAKSHA office
- the STD clinic at Victoria hospital;
- TB Sanatorium
- the Microbiology department at Bowring and Lady Curzon hospital;

In addition the counselling team offer training in HIV/AIDS counselling to professionals & volunteers.

### EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

2



SAMRAKSHA is also involved with educational programmes on HIV/AIDS for male/female undertrials at the Bangalore Central Jail three times a week.

The focus for educational programmes is on reaching those populations who do not appear to have access to media messages. We are also working in garment/tailoring units, youth hostels and with construction workers as our baseline information indicates that these groups are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection.

TV ads giving out HIV/AIDS messages are being telecast on DD1 and Siti Channel. Theatre slides with HIV/AIDS messages have been prepared and will be shown in the near future. We also conduct educational programmes

on request from other agencies or as support to existing programmes.

### VULNERABLE PEOPLES PROTECTION PROGRAMME



SAMRAKSHA is also involved with a programme for the protection of sex workers in Bangalore city. The main activities associated with this programme are intensive educational work with women sex workers, backed up with condom distribution and STD clinic referrals. This is one of our most challenging programmes because the sex work scenario in Bangalore is very complex. There is no defined red light area, so women are a hidden population, scattered all over the city in innumerable small groups of three and four. There is no informal or underground network connecting them. We also educate sex workers who are remanded at the State Home for Women with information on STDs and HIV/AIDS.

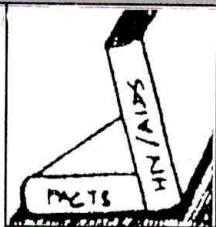
SAMRAKSHA is also reaching out to men who have sex with men and the transsexual community with information on STDs and HIV/AIDS, methods of prevention, condoms and STD referrals.

We are also aware that the clients of sex workers are really the consumers in condom promotion and also the decision makers. If safer sex practices are to become a reality, we really need to target this elusive and invisible population.



#### INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION UNIT

# 4



The unit collects and disseminates HIV/AIDS information. Collected material is from books, journals, newsletters, newspaper clippings, video and audio cassettes and from the Internet. A Bibliography is also available. As part of the "AIDS Forum - Karnataka" the I&D unit takes responsibility for the production of a HIV/AIDS Newsletter, Question & Answer column, pamphlets and posters. Information is also given through visits to the SAMRAKSHA office, by correspondence and over the phone.

#### ASHA KIRAN CARE AND SUPPORT

# 5



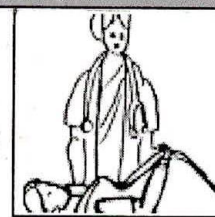
This programme offers PLWHA care and support services according to the different stages of their illness. The services provided include

- A weekly medical consultation at the Seva Clinic.
- Hospital outreach and Home Based Care.
- Short stay residential facilities.
- Access to a self-help group.
- A network of referrals to other agencies and institutions.

Asha Kiran staff also offer tailor made training programmes in care and support to PLWHA, their families and other institutions/agencies.

#### WELL WOMAN CLINIC

# 6



SAMRAKSHA also looks at improving the Reproductive Health of Women.

The Well Woman Clinic provides clinical services for gynaecological problems and STD diagnosis and treatment. It also provides Reproductive Health Education, counselling on STD and implications of HIV infection.

The immediate target groups have been women in general population and sex worker groups.

The WWC staff have become involved in training other NGOs to set up similar services in other areas of Bangalore.

Volunteer

Would you like to Volunteer?

Can you help us fulfill the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS?

Do you want to make a contribution ?

If you would like to know more about us, please contact R. Elango / Sulekha K.

## SAMRAKSHA

Monday to Saturday 9 to 5 pm

402, G Floor, Block 4, Ranka Park Apts, 4, 5 & 6 Lalbagh Road, Bangalore - 560 027

E-mail : [samraksha@samuha.ernet.in](mailto:samraksha@samuha.ernet.in) Web site : <http://www.samuha.org>

☎ 2238297

## WELL WOMAN CLINIC

(ONLY FOR WOMEN)

Tuesday and Thursday 2 to 4 PM

Chellarams Maternity Hospital, 1st Floor, Opp. Abhinay Theatre,  
BVK Iyengar Road, Bangalore - 560 001.

## SEVA CLINIC

Every Thursday 12-30 to 1-30 PM

37, St. John's Road, Bangalore - 560 042.

☎ : 5512375



The tentative schedule for the GL study team is as follows:

**BANGALORE:**

Mr. Manohar, Sabrang will be coordinating with Good As You, Manasa, Samvada and others.

Date	Time	Place of Visit	Organisation/groups/ individuals	Accommodation
28.3.99		Bangalore		Hotel Rama, 40/2, Lavelle Road, B'lore-01 Tel: (080) 2273311
29.3.99	10 am to 12.30 pm	Team briefing at Hivos	Hivos, No.20, Vittal Mallya Road, B'lore-01 Tel: (080) 2210514	-"
30.3.99	Time to be confirmed by the team  1-4-99 10 AM	Samraksha, Bangalore  Sanganikere	Samraksha No.402, Ranka Park Apartments, Ground Floor, 4 <sup>th</sup> Block, 4,5 &6, Lalbagh Road ✓ Bangalore - 560 027 Tel: (080) 2238297/ 2279318 Contact Person: Mr. Ilangoan Sajitha	-"
30.3.99	1 pm	Samvada, Bangalore  ✓	Samvada No.33, Grace Home Apartments 9 <sup>th</sup> Cross, Wilson Garden Bangalore - 560 027 Tel: (080) 2234475 Contact person: Ms. Anita Granth	-"
30.3.99	Evening  7 PM	Hotel Rama, Bangalore	Sabrang ✓ Manasa. Email: <a href="mailto:sabrang@mailcity.com">sabrang@mailcity.com</a> Tel: (080) 6688214 Contact person: Mr. Manohar ✓	
31.3.99	Morning - Time to be confirmed by the team	Hotel Rama, Bangalore	Mr. Ramdas Rao 233, 6 <sup>th</sup> Main 4 <sup>th</sup> Block Jayanagar Bangalore - 560 011 Tel: (080) 663 9414	-"
31.3.99	Evening - Time to be confirmed Contact Mr. Manohar	Bangalore	Ms. Saraswathi Manasa ✓ 119, West of Chord Road II stage, Mahalakshmi Puram Bangalore - 560 086	-"
31.3.99	Evening - Time to be confirmed	Bangalore	Good As You Contact person: Mr. Mahesh Dattani Tel: (080) 665 7386	-"
1.4.99	Yet to be confirmed	Bangalore	Mr. Sanjay Tel: 336 6105 ✓	-"
1.4.99	Yet to be confirmed	Bangalore 1 PM Nimmannur	Dr. Shekar Seshadri Tel: 664 2121 ✓	-"
1.4.99	Yet to be confirmed	Bangalore	Dr. Latha Hemchand Tel: 663 3116	-"



Tommangalam  
100 ft Rd.

1<sup>st</sup> Evening Dep. To Chennai by 9W 446 a3t 16.10 hrs. Stay at Hotel Woodlands

**CHENNAI:**

SIAAP will be coordinating with SWAMM, IHWO, Sahodaran Office, Mr. Gnanasekharan and others.

Date	Time	Place of Visit	Organisation/groups/ individuals	Accommodation
2.4.99	Morning ✓	SIAAP, Chennai	Mr. B. Sekar, SWAMM 5, Natarajan Street, Balakrishna Nagar, Jafferkhanpet, Chennai -83	Hotel Woodlands 72-75, Dr. Radha Krishnan Road, Mylapur, Chennai - 600 004 Tel: (044) 8273111
2.4.99	1.30 pm to 3.30 pm <i>Student Xerox</i>	ICWO, Chennai <i>Jayapalika Konging Mishra hda</i>	Mr. Hariharan, India Community Welfare Organisation, Plot No.1369, 18 <sup>th</sup> Main Road, 6 <sup>th</sup> Street, I Block, Vallalar Colony, Anna Nagar West, Chennai -40	<i>6260192 6283530</i>
2.4.99	4.00 pm ✓	IWID, Chennai	Ms. Martha Pushparani IWID E2, B Block, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor 109, G.N.Chetty Road T.Nagar Chennai - 600 017 Tel: (044) 826 0689	-
3.4.99	Morning <i>10-12 9:30</i>	SIAAP, Chennai	SIAAP 65, Kamraj Avenue 1 <sup>st</sup> Street Adyar <i>Shyamala</i> Chennai - 600 020 Tel: (044) 441 6141	-
3.4.99	Afternoon <i>2.00</i>	Chennai	Sahodaran Office, 127, Sterling Road, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Opposite Loyala College, Chennai - 34 Tel: (044) 825 2869	-
4.4.99	Yet to be Confirmed <i>SIAP 10</i>	Chennai	Mr. T. Gnanasekaran, Trichy	-
4.4.99	Yet to be Confirmed	Chennai	Ms. Geeta, SNEHIDI <i>Shalini</i>	-
4.4.99	Willing to meet if Team has the time	Chennai	Mr. Ossie Fernandez Tel: (044) 235 3503 <i>Human Rts Advo Foundation</i>	-
4.4.99	Mr. Shaun to contact ✓	Chennai	ARFI <i>8256842</i>	-

*Amal*  
*8555353*



Heethi Thadani - 464-6036 } B-44  
460-8970 } Dy. Wm.

4<sup>th</sup> Evening Dep. To Delhi by 9W 624 at 18.10 hrs. Stay at Maharani Guest House.

DELHI:

Ms. Pramada Menon will be coordinating with Stree Sangam, PFI, Dastakar, TARSHI, Saheli, DARE and Aarambh

Date	Time	Place of Visit	Organisation/groups/individuals	Accommodation
5.4.99	9 am to 12 pm	Delhi	Stree Sangam Email: calerie@hotmail.com  Contact person: Ms. Pramada Menon, The Campaign Support Group	Maharani Guest House, No.3, Sunder Nagar New Delhi - 110 003 Tel: (011) 4693128 or 4693134
5.4.99	12 noon - to be confirmed by Shobha on 1.4.99 2.8 PM	Delhi ✓	Ms. Vina Mazumdar CWDS, 25, Bhai Vir Singh Marg (Near Gole Market) New Delhi - 110 001 Tel: (011) 334 5530/ 3365541 Hotel Ambassador! hmt	-
5.4.99	3 pm to 4 pm	Delhi	Psychological Foundation of India (PFI) X	-
5.4.99	4 pm - to be confirmed by Shobha on 30.3.99	Delhi	Ms. Deepa Nag Choudhari Programme Manager MacArthur Foundation, No.55, Lodi Estate New Delhi - 110 003 Tel: (011) 461 9441	
6.4.99	9 am to 11 am	Delhi	Dastakar X	-
6.4.99	2 pm	Delhi	TARSHI Contact: Radhika/Prabha Tel: (011) 4610711	D-45 Gindrapur 2 Pl. ND-11049.
6.4.99	3 pm to 5 pm (A)	Delhi	NAZ Foundation Email: anjali@naz.unv.ernet.in Anjali Gopalan.	6567049 6563929. 6518445 (Res)
7.4.99	9 am to 12 noon 10	Delhi	Saheli Heethi Thadani	Rajchhe
7.4.99	2 pm to 3.30 pm ✓	Delhi	DARE KALERI	-
7.4.99	4 pm to 6 pm	Delhi	Aarambh	-

Anjali  
Heethi  
Shivaram

AIDS Bhadrach  
wordh Andolan  
'ABWA'

'RAHI'  
'Amiya Gupta  
(Siddharth Gauram Foundation)

UNV AIDS



8<sup>th</sup> Morning Dep. To Mumbai by 9W 334 at 8.00 hrs. Stay at Hotel Athithi

**MUMBAI:**

Ms. Shalini will be coordinating with Forum against Oppression of Women, India Centre for Human Rights and Law.

Date	Time	Place of Visit	Organisation/groups/ individuals	Accommodation
8.4.99	2 pm to 5 pm/ Evening	Mumbai	Stree Sangam  Contact person: Ms. Shalini Tel: (022) 401 0482	Hotel Athithi, No.77, A&B Nehru Road, Vile Parle (E) Bombay – 400 099 Tel: (022) 6116124/25/26
9.4.99	9 am to 12 noon	Mumbai	India Centre for Human Rights and Law 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor, CVOD Jain High School, 84, Samuel Street, Dongri, Mumbai – 400 009 Tel: (022) 370 2592/ 379 0699	- "
9.4.99	2 pm to 4 pm	Mumbai	Dr. Chitra Subramanian Counselling & Allied Services for Aids, Lokmanya Nagar, K. Gadgil Marg, Mumbai – 400 028 Tel: (022) 444 5647	- "
9.4.99	5 pm to 6 pm	Mumbai	Ms. C.S. Lakshmi SPARROW B-32, Jeet Nagar, J.P. Road Versova Mumbai – 400 061 Tel: (022) 632 8143	- "
10.4.99	11.30 to 3 pm	Mumbai	Mr. Ashok Row Kavi Humsafar Trust Email: humsafar@vsnl.com Tel: (022) 646 3590 <i>+ Bombay Dist.</i>	- "
10.4.99	4 pm	Mumbai	Ms. Sandhya Gokhale Forum against Oppression of Women, 29, Bhatia Bhavan, Babrekar Marg, Off Gokhale Road Dadar (west) Mumbai – 400 028 Tel: (022) 431 0160	- "

*Mihir Desai*

11<sup>th</sup> April - Mr. Shaun Mellors – Dep. To Goa and Dr. Sreedhara – Dep. to Bangalore.

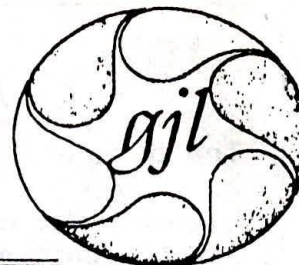
16<sup>th</sup> April - Debriefing at 10 am in Hivos, Bangalore.

*17<sup>th</sup> April*



# GENDER JUST LAWS bulletin

No. 2, April 1998



## INVITATION TO "OWN" THE GJL BULLETIN

We want to make this bulletin a dynamic medium of exchange and networking between groups that are committed to gender justice. So send us your comments, views, and news of events in your area. We hope dialogue on the issues raised in these bulletins would be ongoing through such communication. We would also like to experiment with the possibility of different groups "guest editing" the bulletin - i.e., on a specific issue, a group deeply involved with the issue would be invited (or could volunteer) to edit. The next issue of the bulletin will be on SEX-WORKERS & THE LAW, and *Sanlaap* (Calcutta) has agreed to be the guest editor. Articles or news for this issue can be sent directly to *Sanlaap*, or to us at ICHRL by June 30th, 1998.

The August 1997 Supreme Court judgement on Sexual Harassment of working women in the case of *Vishakha vs. the State of Rajasthan* has initiated debate on the issue not just among women's groups, lawyers and activists; but also among women in the workplace. Sexual harassment has now been explicitly legally defined. The guidelines are significant in that, for the first time sexual harassment is identified as a separate category of legally prohibitive behaviour. Considering sexual harassment a separate legal offense is important not because it is less serious (as some have argued), but because it is taken less seriously.

The critical factor in sexual harassment has been identified in the guidelines as the *unwelcomeness* of the behaviour. Thus it is the *impact* of behaviour on the recipient, rather than the *intent* of the perpetrator should be considered. By doing so they conform to the internationally accepted standards for sexual harassment. However, as experiences both in India and in other countries shows, the complainant has to prove the "unwelcomeness" of the behaviour. Anything less than a clear rejection of sexual advances could then create problems. Particularly in

the absence of witnesses or other concrete proof, it often becomes the complainant's word against the harasser's.

Also notable is the fact that the guidelines have - again in accordance with international standards - identified sexual harassment as a question of power exerted by the perpetrator on the victim. Further, in addition to sexual harassment being defined as a violation of the right to safe working conditions, the Guidelines also proclaim it to be a violation of women's right to equal opportunity in the workplace.

Highlights of the Supreme Court guidelines were included in the last edition of this bulletin as a run-up to this edition. In this edition, we outline the debates on sexual harassment in the international context and in India. We include reports of cases; and the response of women's groups and trade unions to the Supreme Court guidelines. Potential strategies for implementation of the Guidelines, and other interventions towards comprehensive legislation on sexual harassment are presented. There is also a pull-out pamphlet on "myths" about sexual harassment, and strategies to deal with it.

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# **NOT** "just flirting"

The types of sexual harassment include:

**I. Verbal or physical contact with the intention of sexual relations**

A. **Quid pro quo** - i.e., "in exchange" for favours such as promotions, employment perks, better grades, etc. The power of the person in authority (employer, supervisor, professor, etc.) to sexually harass increases in direct co-relation to lack of organization of the potential victim group. Women labourers in the informal sector, temporary workers, students, women in institutions for the mentally / physically handicapped, etc. are among the most vulnerable groups.

B. **Sexual harassment by colleagues**

C. **Sexual harassment by clients** - particularly in professions where women's role is "sexually packaged" - such as air hostesses, workers in beer bars, etc.

D. **Sexual harassment of women in authority** - to undermine the position of women. Recent - and increasing - cases of newly elected, active women members of panchayats being stripped naked and paraded - are examples.

**II. Sexual objectification of an individual though sexual relations not intended**

This includes not only work situations, but also harassment in other public or social situations - for example, on the roads in colleges etc. This can also include negative comments like "you're fat / ugly" etc.

**III. Hostile, anti-woman environment** - (pornography in public places, foul language etc.) This may not be directed at any woman employee in particular, but the effect on women is one of discomfort.

## landmark judgements on sexual harassment in india

OFFICIAL STATISTICS (1991) : 1 WOMAN MOLESTED EVERY 26 MINUTES

These statistics refer to the reported cases. If the unreported cases were to be added, it would probably be a question of seconds, not minutes. As women's groups know all too well, many women who come for assistance do not register their complaints. For the women who do, it is only in the past three years that there have been significant victories. Even then, it has taken the women who have won these victories at least 10 years of tortuous court process.

**N. Radhabai vs. D. Ramachandran**

In 1973, Radhabai, secretary to D. Ramachandran (the then State Social Welfare Minister) protested against his abuse of girls in welfare institutions. He attempted to molest her; and then dismissed her. In 1995, the Supreme Court passed a judgement in her favour, with back pay and benefits from the date of dismissal.

**S.C Bhatia**

Professor in the Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Delhi University was finally dismissed in 1992 after a campaign by women's groups demanding judicial inquiry into his sexual harassment of several women.

**Rupan Deol Bajaj vs. K.P.S. Gill**

A senior IAS officer, Rupan Bajaj was slapped on the posterior by the then Chief of Police in Punjab, Mr. K.P.S Gill at a dinner party in July 1988. Despite the general public opinion that she was "blowing it out of proportion", and attempts by all the top officials in the state to suppress the case, she pursued it through the lower courts. In January 1998, the Supreme Court fined Mr. K.P.S Gill Rs.2.5 lakhs in lieu of 3 months rigorous imprisonment, for offenses under Section 294 and 509.



## INTERNATIONAL DEBATES ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT LEGISLATION

(Source: *Combating Sexual Harassment at Work, ILO Conditions of Work Digest*)

Sexual harassment as a criminal offense first began to be recognized by courts in the United States in the late 1970s. In 1980, the first prohibitory statute was drafted by the *Equal Employment Opportunities Commission* which issued Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. Other countries followed - either through judgements or statutes - though many of them have only been introduced in the 1990s.

The debate on where to situate the legal remedy to sexual harassment depends to some extent on the accepted definitions of sexual harassment, as well as on legal traditions (statutes enacted if any, or case law) in that country. In countries where sexual harassment is seen as a general phenomenon, the legal remedy is situated in the framework of criminal laws. In other countries where it is seen as a workplace phenomenon, the civil and /or labour laws framework is applied. Within the workplace, there is the further question of whether the country's laws recognize *quid pro quo* and /or "hostile working environment" cases of sexual harassment.

Broadly, then, sexual harassment is covered by four types of laws internationally which are not necessarily mutually exclusive (i.e., a country can have more than one type of law).

### Criminal Law

This framework holds the accused liable irrespective of the context (workplace or general). It is necessary particularly for cases of sexual harassment that do not fall within the employment context. The disadvantages of such a law is that it generally implies a fine levied on the accused; and does not include compensation for the victim. Further, it does not take into consideration the discriminatory aspects of sexual harassment in the workplace, and consequently there is no employer liability.

France is an example of a country with criminal laws prohibiting *quid pro quo* harassment. Until the enactment of the Supreme Court guidelines, India also had only specific criminal statutes.

In 1986, a landmark judgement in the U.S in the *Vinson Vs. Meritor Savings Bank* case ruled that sexual harassment is a violation of an individual's right to equal employment opportunities, and further defined the employer as liable for sexual harassment claims.

### Civil (Anti-Discrimination) Law

These apply particularly to work situations. In addition to the accused, the employer is liable for not providing a work environment that is free from discrimination on the basis of sex. The complainant is entitled to compensatory damages from the employer.

This framework depends crucially on the definition of "*unwelcomeness*" of sexual harassment. Each complainant determines what is offensive/ unacceptable behaviour. This has led to considerable debate in countries adopting the civil laws framework, on the right to freedom of expression (pornography and offensive language in public places) vis-à-vis the right to equal opportunity in the workplace.

Countries which have laws/ judicial decisions within this frame work include United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Ireland, Canada.

### Labour Law

These laws are applicable in work situations. They have primarily been used in *quid pro quo* cases. In these, unfair employment practices have been shown to result from the rejection of sexual harassment by the complainant. As in civil laws, the employer can be shown to be vicariously liable. The disadvantage of addressing the issue through only labour laws is that sexual harassment outside the workplace is not covered. Further the offense may not be seen as a distinct category of illegal behaviour.

New Zealand has the most comprehensive statutes covering sexual harassment as a personal grievance in the workplace. Other countries that have judgements on "unfair dismissals" due to sexual harassment include Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden.

### Tort Law

These are non-contractual, judgement made civil laws, used in cases of sexual harassment on grounds of mental anguish, negligence, etc.



## what the laws say: sexual harassment in india

Amendments to the laws on sexual violence enacted in the last two decades have failed to cover sexual harassment. So far, the rather inadequate provisions in the IPC and labour laws continue to be used. We have listed the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) here. We have also included other legal provisions under which prosecution for sexual harassment can be made - though these provisions have not yet been used to our knowledge.

### I. Indian Penal Code

**Section 209, IPC - *Obscene acts and songs*** - Whoever, to the annoyance of others:

- a) does any obscene act in any public place or
- b) sings, recites or utters any obscene song, ballad or words in or near any public place shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 3 months or with fine or both. (Cognizable, bailable and triable offense).

**Section 354, IPC - *Assault or criminal force to a woman with the intent to outrage her modesty*** - whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine or both.

**Section 509, IPC - *Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman*** - whoever intending to insult the modesty of any woman utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen by such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or both. (Cognizable and bailable offense).

### II. Industrial Disputes Act

**Rule 5 Schedule 5 - Cases** can (and have been) argued on the basis of unfair labour practices listed in this schedule of the Industrial Disputes Act. Such cases can be filed if an employee suffers unfair dismissal or denial of employment benefits as a consequence of her rejection of sexual harassment. However, this would only be applicable in *quid pro quo* cases.

#### ***Shehnaz Mudbhatal vs. Saudi Arabian Airlines***

Shehnaz was subjected to sexual harassment by her boss in 1985, and dismissed when she complained to higher authorities. Her case was won in 1996 when the Bombay labour court judged it to have been a case of unfair dismissal under the Industrial Disputes Act. It ordered her reinstatement with full back payment, perks and promotions.

Analysis of the existing laws in the Indian Penal Code by lawyers and women's groups have exposed the following important lacunae (aside from the general problems of non-implementation; and stereotypical responses of judges based on myths) which need to be highlighted:

- ⊗ The Victorian terminology of "outrage" and "modesty" is vague and moralistic; and does not cover the range of behaviours that are sexually harassing.
- ⊗ The sexual history of the complainant can (and usually is) brought on record to disprove her credibility by the following provision in Section 155 (4) of the Indian Evidence Act (1872)  
Section 155 - *Impeaching the Credibility of witness*  
(4) When a man is prosecuted for rape or an attempt to ravish, it may be shown that the prosecutrix was of generally immoral character.
- ⊗ The "intent" of the perpetrator is considered primary, rather than the "effect" on the victim. The accused can argue his "friendly" behaviour was misinterpreted by the woman.

### III. Civil suit

A Civil suit can be filed for damages under tort laws. Hence the basis for filing the case could be mental anguish, physical harassment, loss of income and employment caused by the sexual harassment.





#### IV. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1987)

The provisions of this act have the potential to be used in two ways. First, if an individual harasses another with books, photographs, paintings, films, pamphlets, packages, etc. containing "indecent representation of women"; they are liable for a minimum sentence of 2 years.

Second, a "hostile working environment" argument can be made under this act. Section 7 of this Act (Offences by Companies) - holds companies, where there has been "indecent representation of women" (such as the display of pornography) on the premises, guilty. This is a cognizable, bailable offense, with a minimum sentence of 2 years.

### what the women say: dialogues on reform

Dialogues on meaningful legislation on sexual harassment in India have until recently been located within the sexual assault discourse. Subsequent to the amendments in the rape laws in the past decade, two detailed documents were prepared on sexual assault: the *Draft Bill on Sexual Assault* prepared in 1993 by the National Commission for Women and the *Memorandum on Reform of Laws relating to Sexual Offenses* prepared in 1996 by the Feminist Legal Research Centre (FRLC), New Delhi. The former views sexual harassment as an offence on the continuum of sexual assault (see box for provisions of the Bill relevant to sexual harassment). The latter document critiqued this formulation as diluting the seriousness of the offense of rape. It instead advocated treating sexual harassment as an offense separate from sexual assault. It also recommended a separate civil law that would treat sexual harassment as a violation of the right to safe working conditions.

The FRLC however, has revised its perspectives post the Supreme Court guidelines. (Refer to *The Legal Regulation of Sexuality - A Double Edged Sword* in this bulletin)

#### Highlights of the Draft Bill on Sexual Assault (Ad-hoc Sub-committee of National Commission for Women, 1993)

- ❖ Emphasizes the violence aspect of sexual assault, rather than the sexual aspect, and articulates a gradation of categories of violence, and punishments.
- ❖ Proposes amendment of Section 375 to cover the range of sexual assault as follows:

##### **Sexual Assault**

1. Person commits sexual assault against another where such person engages in any of the activities set out in sub-section 2(a), 2(e) against the will or without the consent of the other person against whom such offense is committed.

2 (a).....2(c)

2(d) Where any person with a sexual purpose utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object or part of the body intending that such word or sound shall be heard or that such gesture or exhibition shall be seen by a person or intrudes upon the privacy of such person.

- ❖ Proposes the repeal of Sections 294 and 509 since they would be rendered redundant by the above section.
- ❖ Proposes that the "burden of proof" be on the accused: i.e., in cases where sexual assault has been proved, presume that the woman did not consent in all cases, not just in cases of custodial rape (as is currently the law).





# The Legal Regulation of Sexuality: A Double-Edged Sword

Ratna Kapur, Shomona Khanna & Shohini Ghosh, *Feminist Legal Research Centre, Delhi.*

The recent Supreme Court decision in *Vishaka v. the State of Rajasthan* (August 1997) sets out guidelines on sexual harassment in the work place. The legal definition of sexual harassment provided by the Court is as follows:

"...sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as :

Physical contact and advances

A demand or request for sexual favours

Sexually coloured remarks

Showing pornography

Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature".

The Court places an obligation on employers, in both the public and private sector to "take appropriate steps to prevent sexual harassment" and "provide appropriate penalties" against the offender. The criminal law should be resorted to where the behaviour amounts to a specific offence under the Indian Penal Code. The Court also recommends that a complaint mechanism be created in the employer's organization for redressal of the complaint made by the 'victim' and that such a committee should be headed by a woman, and not less than half its members should be women.

The *Vishaka* judgement is significant at a symbolic level for its validation of the problem of sexual harassment and recognition of the fact that it is an experience many women are almost routinely subjected to in the work place. As regards the definition, there are no doubt certain clear cases of sexual conduct that constitute sexual harassment - for instance, what has been called *quid pro quo* sexual harassment, in which a threat is made or a benefit offered in order to obtain sex. The employer who tells his office manager that she will receive a promotion if she has sex with him, and the professor who informs his student that she will not pass the class unless she goes on a date with him are engaging in this type of sexual harassment. In these situations, certain individuals use their positions of relative power to coerce or intimidate others in positions of lesser power to engage in sexual

interactions. This type of behaviour, clearly constitutes sex discrimination and a remedy ought to be made available to the woman who is harmed.

The Supreme Court attempts to incorporate this experience into the law, and redefine the lines between legitimate and illegitimate sexual behaviour, to better capture women's experience of consent. We are of the view that this is a good thing, but are interested in raising for debate the recommendation by the Court to formulate codes, as well as the broader implications of this decision on women's rights. We are concerned about the breadth of the definition and the type of behaviour that is deemed to constitute sexual harassment. We are also concerned about the implications of the decision on sexual behaviour more generally, and women's sexual behaviour and conduct more specifically. Our concerns must be considered within the broader political and cultural context. This context presently includes a conservative sexual morality, a BJP government at the Centre as well as the increasing assertion of a cultural nationalism that regards sex and sexuality, their current representations and practices, as external contaminants which are eroding "Indian cultural values and ethos."

## *Regulating Women's Sexual Conduct?*

Our primary concern is the impact of the harassment guidelines on women's human rights and sexual behaviour. Harassment is contingent on proving that the sexual behaviour or conduct in question was unwelcome. But, the history of the legal regulation of sexuality should lead us to at least question the way in which conduct is likely to be judged. For example, in rape trials, the courts have long focused on women's conduct in attempting to determine whether or not there was consent. And in the absence of "reasonable resistance", the courts have over and over again concluded that the woman must have consented.

There is reason to be concerned that a woman's conduct in the context of allegations of sexual harassment may be judged in similarly problematic ways (even though the standard of proof will presum-



ably be less stringent than the criminal standard). A woman's conduct will be key in determining whether or not the sexual behaviour is welcome or unwelcome. Her dress, speech, demur, personal history and relationship with the harasser will all be called into question to determine whether or not the sexual conduct in question was indeed unwelcome.

### *The Role of the Criminal Law*

The Court does not suggest that the wrong of sexual harassment be treated as a criminal offence. And we endorse an approach that the criminal law has only a limited role to play in regulating sexual conduct. Historically, it has been seen that resorting to the criminal law ends up empowering the state and its institutions, rather than empower-

are being uncritically invoked to protect women from sexual harm. On the one hand, rape is clearly the sort of sexual harm that needs to be punished by the criminal law. However, appealing to the repressive power of the criminal law to stop an individual from singing a song or staring is a bit of overkill. Taking recourse to notions of outraging a woman's modesty does nothing to advance women's rights to bodily integrity or sexual autonomy, but reinforce notions of sexual purity and honour. This is not to suggest that staring and the singing of songs do not, at times, constitute sexual harassment. But we need to ask ourselves whether invoking the criminal law is the right place to start or, more importantly, whether it can change behaviour or help a woman at the end of the day. Or are we content to have

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the State, in particular, the police monitor the sexual behaviour of its citizens using the blunt instrument of the criminal law? The criminal law does not have a history of helping women. On the contrary, it has a long history of hurting women... Mathura's case, Suman Rani's case and Bhanwari Devi's case are but a few well known examples. Are we

ing women. However, the Court makes specific reference to the fact that the criminal law should be resorted to where the behaviour amounts to a specific offence under the Indian Penal Code. Several provisions under the Indian Penal Code that refer to women's chastity and modesty, have been critiqued by feminists and others as being based on an outmoded sexual morality. Unfortunately, several Delhi based women's groups have recently advocated the use of these provisions as a means to counter a range of sexual behaviour from such obvious harms as rape to less obvious harms such as singing a song or staring. These provisions include section 354 (assault or criminal force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty), and section 509 (words, gestures or acts intended to insult the modesty of a woman).

It is ironic that provisions based on outmoded Victorian notions of sexual morality

content with pursuing a criminal law strategy in the hope that one day we will succeed, or do we want to take a step back and critically reflect upon what women have gained or lost by resorting to the criminal law for redressing sexual harms?

### *Employer Drafted Codes*

Another associated concern is the fact that the codes to prevent sexual harassment are to be formulated by the employer. If the power to evolve these codes is to be in the hands of the employer, then given the conservative sexual climate in which we live, what is to prevent the employer from producing a code that encourages gender segregation in the workplace. As one retired judge recently remarked, the codes could be formulated so as to discourage gender interaction in the workplace, or encourage the establishment of same sex schools and universities instead of co-





educational institutions. Perhaps more specific guidelines are required which provide that such sex segregation is not an appropriate response for dealing with sexual harassment. Employer liability for sexual harassment could also discourage employers from employing women. Of course, this argument can be a double edged sword as it can be used to argue against affirmative action measures more generally that are designed to provide substantive equality to those who have been historically discriminated against and excluded from the market. The point here is simply that sexual harassment cannot be discussed outside of the social climate in which it operates and the manner in which it mediates/determines sexual behaviour.

Given the conservative and censorious sexual environment in which we live, we submit that the codes will be drafted and/or used in a way that will intensify the moral regulation of sexual behaviour. CFLR has conducted a preliminary survey of the possible implications of sex codes in four university campuses that are currently discussing this issue. The concerns of those that favour a code range from the fact that campus rapes go unnoticed and are not effectively addressed, to the view that the campuses should not be a sexual space per se. The former concern is already addressed by the Indian Penal Code under the rape provisions. The fact that these provisions have not been effective is no a reason to further regulate sexual behaviour. (see CFLR Memorandum on the Reform of Laws Relating to Sexual Offences, March 1998). In the latter case, if sexual activity on campus is to be completely impermissible, then the university should make such a declaration. However, it is our belief that people will oppose such regulations or declarations as they will discourage rather than encourage dialogue between the sexes, and therefore be undesirable.

#### *What happened to Sexual Rights?*

A further concern emerging through our tentative survey is that when people are asked to identify sexual wrongs, their lists are endless. However, when they are asked to identify sexual rights, that is, what kind of sexual conduct should be allowed on campus, there is a debilitating silence. The inability to speak about consensual sexual relationships, or consensual sex is not new. But things are changing. Television and radio

talk shows bear witness to the opening up of sexual speech and the articulation of "sexual rights". Some examples of these include Bindaas Bol, Balance Barabar, and Kaam Ki Batein,. Such a development needs to be encouraged, not curbed. However, we are of the view that rules and regulations concerned with prohibiting or regulating sexual conduct will serve to reinforce the idea that sex per se is a bad or dirty practice from which good and decent people ought to be protected. Such regulations will reinforce the stigma associated with sex (whether consensual/welcome or non-consensual/unwelcome).

And things are not going to get better under a BJP regime. Indeed there is now a greater urgency to articulate women's sexual rights and the rights of sexual minorities within such a context as they are so vul-

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nerable to restrictions and curtailment. A prime example is in the context of the Information and Broadcasting ministry, and Sushma Swaraj's controversial effort to impose a dress code on female news readers during the BJP's 13 day regime in 1996 or her current effort to prohibit condom advertisements 'between the sheets.' Remember also the recent disapproval expressed by the mayor of Delhi, Shakuntala Arya, of hugging and kissing in public, which she regards as a debauched Western practice. Suggestions that the definition of sexual harassment is deficient and recommendations to the National Commission of Women that "sexual favours...sought by homosexual or lesbian employers from employees of the same sex" also be included, seem to validate our concerns that the sexual harassment codes/regulations will be used to reinforce a conservative sexual morality. And the current right wing context will only intensify this approach.

#### *A Tool for Censors?*

Another concern is the extent to



which sexual harassment laws and codes will end up being a tool in the hands of the censors. The application of these laws in other jurisdictions has revealed that sexual harassment is a lot more about sexuality and a lot less about harassment than might first appear. The experience of a hostile work environment depends on the subjective experience of the complainant. If the complainant is offended by pictures of the Mohenjodaro dancing girl put into a diary, or the display of M.F. Hussain's nude Saraswati, under such codes, it can be removed for offending the sensitivities of the employee. These examples are all too recent and too real for us to ignore.

We need to learn from our experiences in lobbying for reforms in the rape law and domestic violence laws. The law or legal regulations will not be interpreted according to a feminist understanding. The meaning ascribed to such rules will depend on the traditional perceptions about sex and sexuality, in particular, female sexuality. We need to question whether we are not arguing for sexual rights from the wrong end of the stick in constantly focussing our arguments on the need for curtailment and restriction of sexual behaviour and conduct. Are such arguments not more appealing and seductive to those in favour of a more puritanical sexual environment?

#### *Questions for Debate*

We need to promote a culture of sexual rights that women are entitled to enjoy, and our efforts should consciously be directed towards that end, and not focussed exclusively on sexual wrongs. This would include the right to bodily integrity, the right to

sexual autonomy, the right to freedom of association, and the right to freedom of expression, which includes speech and attire. Arguing in favour of rights at the end of the day is a necessary step towards women's empowerment. Without it, any argument in favour of sexual restrictions will invite greater moral surveillance and state scrutiny of the citizens' sexual behaviour.

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*We need to promote a culture of sexual rights that women are entitled to enjoy, [which] would include the right to bodily integrity, the right to sexual autonomy, the right to freedom of association, and the right to freedom of expression*

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The questions that still require greater debate amongst lawyers, judges, human rights, and women's groups, is that in constantly raising issues of sex and sexuality in the context of violence, harm or injury, are we not just reinforcing the stigma associated with sex and the broader attitudes towards sex as something bad and corrupting? What is the responsibility of these different constituencies towards contributing to the creation of a healthy sexual environment, by supporting women's sexual rights? The Vishaka judgment marks an important first step in addressing concerns that affect most women. There is a need to ensure that women's rights to equality in the workplace are not secured at the cost of or set up in opposition to their rights to sexual autonomy, freedom of speech and association. The questions being raised in this article are intended to ensure that sexual harassment concerns are effectively addressed in support of and not at the cost of women's human rights.





The sexual harassment of a female crew member of Air India by a male crew member in December 1989 in Rome has led to what could be a test case for many aspects of the problems faced by working women. It raises a number of issues about the odds that have to be faced by a working woman who decides to register a complaint and fight the case. It also brings up questions about the interaction of criminal law, labour law and worker's rights and the Supreme Court guidelines seeking to prevent sexual harassment in the work place.

In early 1990, after a protest demonstration organized by several women's groups and organizations at their main office in Bombay, the Air India management charge sheeted the employee and conducted a domestic inquiry. Women's groups had demanded at that time that the management should consider sexual harassment at the workplace to be serious misconduct and spell it out as such in the Rules and Regulations. Air India, without changing anything in their Rules and Regulations, brought to bear on the incident an existing clause about misconduct and indecent behaviour. The in-house inquiry unanimously found the workman guilty of serious misconduct and his services were terminated.

Eight years later, this inquiry is going to be conducted all over again in the Labour court. The male crew member had challenged his termination and the inquiry findings before the Central government industrial tribunal in 1996 on mainly six grounds:

- 1) that he was not allowed legal representation at the inquiry,
- 2) that he had not been provided copies of all pertinent documents,
- 3) that the inquiry committee filled up lacunae in the case by asking prolonged clarifications from the main witness,
- 4) that the complainant/witness had tampered with the evidence,
- 5) that the charge sheet was converted from Regulations to Standing Orders and
- 6) that the inquiry report was given to him along with conclusions of the punishment to be imposed denying him the chance to challenge the findings.

He argued that the inquiry was against the principles of natural justice and the findings of the inquiry officer perverse and that he should be re-instated with back wages and continuity of service. While rejecting most of the workman's arguments, the tribunal accepted that principles of natural justice were indeed violated when the workman was not allowed legal representation and that the findings were "perverse" because there was no "proper" cross-examination. The tribunal wanted the hearing to be re-held in the Labour Court with the management leading evi-

dence to substantiate their penal action.

The points to be noted here are that the legal representative the workman sought to bring in was a prominent criminal lawyer in Bombay and that the aim was mainly hostile cross-examination of the complainant. The status of the complainant in the inquiry is only that of a witness. She does not have the right to be represented by her own lawyer and cannot even get a copy of the proceedings. This is indeed the principle in criminal law proceedings. A rape victim is only a witness and the public prosecutor leads the evidence for the State while the defendant's lawyer cross-examines the "witness", trying to take her story and her past to pieces. But should the same procedure and principles apply also to a domestic inquiry on the complaint of a working woman so that prominent criminal lawyers can be brought in to "cross-examine" the complainant, presumably questioning her character and conduct and past sexual history, thus effectively putting the complainant in the dock? Why is representation that workmen and women get during inquiries for other forms of misconduct not sufficient in this case? In the Air India case, a criminal complaint has also been filed, though it has not come up in the courts all these years. Does the complainant / witness have to go through the humiliation of the domestic inquiry, the criminal proceedings in the court if any and also labour court inquiry? Will any working woman or any woman stand up to three inquiries spread over 8 years? **In short, it is not clear why in-house inquiries have to proceed along the same lines as proceedings in a criminal court.** This will not empower women workers to register complaints or lead to gender equality in the workplace. The Bombay High Court has confirmed the need for re-conducting the inquiry on the ground that the Air India inquiry committee's procedure for eliciting clarifications from the witness runs into a lot of pages, that therefore it was an attempt to fill up the lacunae in the management case and this "vitilates" the whole inquiry. The Supreme Court judgement asks for a whole mechanism of grievance procedure to be set up by managements to give justice to victims of sexual harassment at the workplace. Penal action is called for, but not prescribed. **If all penal action in such cases can be challenged in the labour courts and fresh inquiries ordered on technical grounds, there is need for much greater clarifications about the points raised here.** The questions raised by this case point to some of the lacunae in the Supreme Court judgement at the level of implementation. The Air India case might set a precedent for the way in which criminal law, labour law and the procedure for domestic inquiries interact in future cases of sexual harassment of women workers.



## QUESTIONING THE GUIDELINES      WIDENING      THE      SCOPE

Since the onus for setting up the Committee appointed for investigation of sexual harassment complaints is on the employer, the uppermost concern of women's groups is whether these cases will be taken seriously. Another important question is legal basis of the inquiry conducted by the Committee. Would it be based on criminal law procedures (where guilt has to be proven beyond all reasonable doubt) or on civil law procedures (where the less stringent "balance of probabilities" is used to establish guilt)? In

*Supreme Court guidelines discussed at the Sixth National Conference of Women's Movements (Ranchi, December 1997)*

At a meeting called by *Sakshi* (Delhi) and *Forum Against Oppression of Women* (Mumbai), the guidelines were shared with 60-65 women. Identifying ways to widen the scope of these guidelines to include other institutions and contexts was at the core of the discussion.

It was suggested that the phrase "other responsible authorities" be interpreted broadly when constituting the Committee - that is, not just restricted to "employers". Within the rural context, the possibility of elected members of the Panchayat setting up such Committees to inquire into cases of sexual harassment in the village/ block was sug-

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*Within the rural context, the possibility of elected members of the Panchayat setting up such Committees to inquire into cases of sexual harassment in the village/ block was suggested. Another suggestion was the Construction Workers Tripartite Boards (employers, workers, and government) currently being constituted should set up the Committee for women construction workers.*

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either case, inquiry into the victim's morals and sexual history has not been explicitly prohibited as admissible evidence. Further, the lack of defined criteria by which the NGO for the Committee will be selected could be a loop-hole. This could be used by employer's to set up dummy or "stooge" NGOs to cater to their requirements. Women's groups are also looking for ways to include sections of women who have not been explicitly covered in the guidelines - particularly women workers in the informal sector, women in institutional settings such as schools & colleges, homes for orphans, mentally & physically handicapped etc, and even women sexually harassed within families.

gested. Another suggestion was the Construction Workers Tripartite Boards (employers, workers, and government) currently being constituted should set up the Committee for women construction workers.

There was also some debate on whether women's groups should, with the guidelines as support, push for enacting a bill on sexual harassment. However, representatives of *Sakshi* were against this move. They argued that until the guidelines are actually implemented and its scope tested, it would be difficult to offer a comprehensive critique and alternative suggestions.

*news flash!*



### TRAIN CAMPAIGN FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY WHILE TRAVELLING

Returning from the Ranchi conference, a woman was assaulted on the train. A common experience for women travelling. This time though, she, and the women with her protested. And they continue to do so in an ongoing campaign launched by *Jagori*, *Nirantar*, *Sakshi* and other women's groups in Delhi this March 8th. New Delhi Railway station was the venue for a unique celebration of International Women's Day. Women spent the day pasting posters inside train compartments and handing out pamphlets to travellers and railway employees. They have urged the Railway trade unions to actively take up the issue.



Within the formal sector, trade unions have largely been the guardians of *male* working class interests. Women's concerns therefore have a low priority on their agenda, and sexual harassment has not been taken up as an issue until recently. However, it is only in cases where an employer or manager is accused of sexual harassment that the issue might be addressed by the union. Male trade union members perceive a "conflict of interest" in cases of worker-worker complaints of sexual harassment. That is, they fear that such cases would be used with punitive or divisive purpose by the management. Further, often the victim herself may be too scared of the union to complain to the management

Public Sector Units and Government departments can now be forced to implement the Supreme Court guidelines but given

their disempowering working conditions, woman unionists are afraid of the male backlash if stringent punishments are applied. As the women employees of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited said in an interview to Jyoti Punwani: "If the committee [on sexual harassment] has the guts to punish those who tease us, who will protect us from them when we go home at night?" (Jyoti Punwani, "A Welcome Recognition." *The Hindu*)

Punwani canvassed the opinions of lawyers and trade union activists and found a general skepticism about the value of the guidelines. Some saw its usefulness as a deterrent, and as a measure for creating awareness at the workplace. Others emphasized the need for training of women to recognize sexual harassment and guard against it, and for training of men on what is offensive behaviour.



## TRADE UNION RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS WOMEN WORKERS - THE CASE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

*Sujata Gothoskar*

### *Women and Trade Unions - the background*

Trade unions have historically been an important organizational form for workers, including women. They have over the years struggled for issues that concern the working as well as living conditions of workers. Yet unfortunately, the history of trade unions is also a history of exclusion of various sections of workers, including women. In the earlier period, trade unions worked against the interests of women — by excluding them from membership, by campaigning against their entry into wage work, and by isolating them. (Lewanhak, 1977). Where it was no longer possible to continue with this exclusion, due to pressure both from the women and from the employers, men attempted, often successfully, to confine and segregate women to jobs which were graded lower than those of men. (Walby, 1986). The early twentieth century therefore witnessed the formation of several women's trade unions in Britain as a reaction to women's exclusion from the existing trade unions.

Trade unions in India were strongly influenced by the labour movement in Britain and were formed at a time when the major British trade unions were already being

opened out to women. (Rohini, Sujata and Neelam, 1983). However, the attitude and structure of the trade unions were no less patriarchal here than elsewhere.

For women, work has always meant much more than the eight or nine hours at the factory, office or farm. It means a large part of the time spent at home as well. The work as well as the anxiety involved in translating the wage earned into a cooked meal, a clean home and healthy household members is neither shared nor taken into account, nor is the impact of housework on paid work considered seriously by unions. So, "work issues" in a broad sense kept beyond the purview of unions.

On the other hand, work issues in a narrower sense as restricted to paid work are taken up only conditionally as we saw in the earlier period. By conditionally is meant that they are addressed when they do not conflict with the interests of other sections of union membership.

Hence, in effect what gets addressed in trade unions by and large could be considered the lowest common denominator of problems faced by workers, i.e.,



not the specific issues that concern the less dominant but only the most general issues. The result is that trade unions end up supporting the existing social hierarchy without challenging any of the elements that constitute it. It is in this larger context that we must examine the response of trade unions to the Supreme Court Guidelines on sexual harassment

### *The Issue of Sexual Harassment*

In a meeting organized by a newly formed central trade union in March 1998, one experienced trade unionist, who heads a union which used to have a large membership of women till the recent Voluntary Retirement Scheme introduced by the management, said about the recent Supreme Court Guidelines on Sexual Harassment : "They are attacking the working class by different methods. Now they are bringing a new Act against sexual harassment of women. When there are not enough jobs, where is the question of sexual harassment?"

There are several strands to this statement. There are several strands that this statement ignores.

1. A legislation that purports to "protect" women workers and give them rights against being sexually harassed is seen as an attack on the working class and trade unions. This could mean that women are not a part of either and it is only male workers who are represented in both. It could also mean that management will also "use" women to victimize male workers and unionists.
2. There seems to be no recognition that till today employers and male workers have been victimizing women without any compunction.
3. There is also no recognition of the fact that in a situation where jobs are scarce, women are most vulnerable and will be forced to tolerate any sort of harassment for the sake of retaining the job. (Gothoskar, 1990).

This is happening today, especially in the unorganized sector where women have to keep quiet whether the perpetrator is the employer, the supervisor or a colleague. It is a common experience with women whose jobs are insecure that they are forced to agree to and put up with inhuman and undignified written and unwritten rules in order to continue to earn for themselves and their households. The large majority of women are today in work situations where they are more or less completely

unorganized. No trade unions represent the interests of these sections of women.

4. The assumption is that where trade unions do exist, they represent the interests of all or at least the majority of workers and protect the interests of all sections of workers or at least the more dominant or vocal ones.

By and large, historically as well as in the current scenario, organized work forces are dominated by men workers, except in very few sectors like nursing. Also, historically, unions have been dominated by men. This more often than not, tilts the power equation against women.

Not many actual cases have been reported where unions have taken a stand on the issue of sexual harassment. Here we will look at a few of those that were either "discovered" in the course of discussions with women workers, or those where women took the initiative and fought it out at various levels.

In a large multinational company in Bombay, a woman employee who was not a union member was being continually harassed by one of her male colleagues who was a union member. The harassment reached such a level that she had to lodge a police complaint. The evidence against the man was overwhelming, and he was suspended from work. The union demanded that the suspension be revoked or alternately, the woman who had complained because she was harassed be also suspended. Ultimately the man was taken back to work. (Gothoskar, 1992)

In another diamond processing company in SEEPZ, where there were two factions of the union, a woman worker was targeted and sexually harassed by demeaning graffiti on the walls of the women's toilet. The "motive" apparently was to silence her and make her withdraw from being active in the union.

The common experience of women workers in several industries has been that "....going to trade unions or other men has not helped; whilst their employers have attempted to curb sexual harassment or bring the culprit to book. Trade unions have taken the issue lightly with either a reprimand or with indifference. This is true of other unions as well. Older workers especially women usually



help out by reprimanding and appealing for better behaviour. But complaining to the boys never works. He and his friends will challenge and pick up a fight with the eve teaser...." (Gandhi, 1997)

This leaves women rather vulnerable. Given the "special interests" of women in the case of sexual harassment, in terms of being different and possibly antagonistic vis-à-vis those of at least some male colleagues as well as vis-à-vis the employer, separate pressure groups within unions possibly with the co-operation of women's organizations - need to be instituted. This may ensure that women's voices are not lost when they need to raise them the most.

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## INDIA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND LAW

5th Floor, CVOD Jain High School, 84 Samuel Street, Dongri, Mumbai 4000 009  
Tel.: 370 2592, 379 0699

E-mail: huright@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in





## "no means no" (or should!) : myths about sexual harassment

"She's saying no, but she really means yes" - the Hindi film heroine image re-inforced in film after film where the hero chases an initially reluctant heroine around the trees, singing and dancing - ultimately persuading her to fall into his arms. Men are "expected" to make the first moves in courtship, and women are equally "expected" passively receive male attention. This is the most pernicious myth about sexual harassment - it's just "normal male flirting" and women are being "over-sensitive". All women are supposed to "like" this male attention. Women who are beautiful, westernized, wear revealing clothes, are single or divorced supposedly "ask for it". To consider such "attention" as *unwelcome* and *offensive* to a woman would require a shift in thinking for many men.

Even when sexual harassment is accepted as inappropriate behaviour, it is often seen as a "personal problem" - i.e., a problem between the two individuals involved. If anything, it is viewed as the woman's problem in not being able to maturely handle the situation. The reality is that it is a pervasive public problem, needing public solutions. It is also an employer problem because of the costs of sexual harassment to employers of absenteeism, low productivity, employee turnover, legal fees and damages to victims in the case of law suits.

Another common assumption is that women use sex to get ahead - i.e. sleep their way to the top. A variation on the theme is: women misuse claims of sexual harassment. In other words, "she said yes, and now she's saying she meant no - she's doing it for per-

sonal gain". Some have argued that it is women's subordinate position within the workforce that compell some women to use sex to further their careers. Further, while this may be true for a handful of women, the majority of women suffer sexual harassment in silence.

Linked to the idea of women using sex as coinage is the myth that prostitutes cannot be sexually harassed. Sex is their work, and quite literally they "ask for it". In reality, sex workers are regularly harassed by the police who extract sex as a form of blackmail. Further often a sex worker can be harassed by a client with whom she may chose not to have sexual relations. Women sex workers too, should - but don't - have the right to say no to sex.

"Men cannot be sexually harassed" - is another notion that needs debunking, since sexual harassment is inextricably a question of power. A harasser is usually someone in a position of power. While incidences of men actually being harassed by women are few - primarily since the percentage of women in positions of power over men remains small in a patriarchal society. However, there have been cases of men being sexually harassed by men. In a recent case, Joseph Oncale a young entrant to an all male oil rig in the U. S was sexually harassed by his supervisor (*The Telegraph*, Calcutta, 28 January, 1998). Ruling in Oncale's favour, the Justice department argued that the purpose of the law prohibiting sexual harassment was to make a person's sex irrelevant in the work place.

## reality check: the effects of harassment on women

- **Loss of job** - A woman may quietly quit or protest and quit. Most women are ultimately forced to the point where they leave their job or are dismissed because they resisted. For some women however, changing their situation by changing their jobs is not an option due to the fear of unemployment.
- **Psychological rape** - in many cases, women go through the same reactions as they do post rape: nervousness, loss of self-esteem & confidence, humiliation, avoidance, changing dress and behaviour, guilty feeling that somehow they "caused the behaviour"
- **Restriction on women's mobility** vis-à-vis late night shifts and public transport
- **Victim turned into wrong doer** as her complaint is invariably turned on its head by slander against her morals and character. The threat of being pushed from the "izzatdar bahu beti samaj" to the "patita samaj" by slander effectively silences women (Kishwar, *Manushi*, No.68).



By: Bernice Sandler; Excerpted in *Women's International Network News* 23-4 Autumn, 1997, pp 37.

The idea behind many of these strategies is to break the cycle of sexual harassment by doing something unexpected. Not everyone will be comfortable with all of these responses, nor are all appropriate for every situation. Some harassers will keep on harassing no matter what you do or say.

- ✓ ***The Sexual Harassment Notebook:*** Buy a notebook and write in bold letters on the cover "Sexual Harassment". When the behaviour happens, take out the notebook and casually state, "Could you say that again? I want to write it down." Make a big show of asking for the date, time, etc.
- ✓ ***The Sexual Harassment Research Project:*** This is a variant of the Sexual Harassment Notebook and is particularly helpful in dealing with recurrent sexual harassment, including by a group..
- ✓ ***Writing a letter to the Perpetrator:*** This technique has been extraordinarily successful in dealing with sexual harassment as well as other forms of interpersonal conflict. The letter is in three parts: -first the writer describes what happened in a very factual manner.... Next the writer describes how she feels about the incident(s), again without evaluation... - Finally, a very short description of what the writer wants: "I want this behaviour to stop at once". The letter is sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.
- ✓ ***Create a Witness to the Behaviour-*** inform a trusted colleague and try to insure that s/he is an eye or ear witness to an situation where you are being sexually harassed. This will be useful later if you chose to file a formal complaint.
- ✓ ***Naming or Describing the Behaviour:*** "That comment is offensive to women; it is unprofessional, and probably is sexual harassment. That behaviour has to stop," or "This is the third time you have put your arm around me. I don't like it, and I don't want you to do that anymore".
- ✓ ***Pretending Not to Understand:*** This is particularly useful with sexist or sexual remarks and jokes. Keep a deadpan expression and state that you "don't get the point of this" or "I don't understand what this means". You follow up by asking the person to repeat what they just said, and again claim that you don't understand...
- ✓ ***The "Miss Manners" Approach:*** "I beg your pardon!" This coupled with strong facial expressions of shock, dismay and disgust can be used whenever you cannot think of anything else to say or do. A variant of this is "I can't believe you actually said that!"
- ✓ ***Keep a diary or some sort of record if sexual harassment happens more than once or if you experience a serious incident:*** write down the date, time, place, witnesses, what happened and what was your response. Months later it might be important to remember these details.
- ✓ ***Don't ignore sexual harassment in the hope that it will go away. It won't:*** When women ignore sexual harassment, it is often interpreted as a sign of approval
- ✓ ***Talk to others:*** You are probably not the only one who is being harassed by this person. Virtually all harassers are serial harassers...
- ✓ ***Read you institution's or office policy, brochures and any other materials published on sexual harassment:*** This may help you understand more about sexual harassment and help you decide how to deal with it.
- ✓ ***Send a copy of the institution policy brochure to the person who is making you uncomfortable, with the appropriate sections underlined***
- ✓ ***If you are a member of a labour union, talk to your union representative***
- ✓ ***Report the behaviour to the appropriate person, such as the individual in charge of sexual harassment at your place of work.*** You can bring a friend with you if that will make you feel more comfortable. The person in charge should be able to offer you options about how the situation could be handled, including formal and informal actions.
- ✓ ***File a formal complaint -*** If informal methods such as those outlined above, have not stopped the harassment, you should file a formal complaint. Generally this is done within the institution / business. If there is no action file charges with the appropriate government agency or explore what other formal actions are available.



# NEWSLETTER ON GENDER JUSTICE & LAW

Issue No. 1. December, 1997

## INTRODUCTION

At a workshop on Gender Just Laws held at Mumbai in June 1996, the need was felt to have a wider debate and discussion on the concrete aspects of Gender Just Laws and to have an All India Network of like minded groups to work towards debating, drafting and campaigning for Gender Just Laws. Despite very few women having access to the legal system, the laws have been affecting various aspects of their lives whether it is inheritance, streedhan or sexual harassment. It has been a shared experience that neither the present laws nor the legal system in its operation are of much help. At the same time these individuals and groups, on many occasions have to keep on coming back to courts for redressal. From time to time, the courts also do provide some solace to the women, but by and large the existing laws are often insufficient and women have been struggling to change the laws. For instance, cases have been filed challenging the discriminatory provisions concerning divorce in the Indian Divorce Act, demanding rights for tribal women in ancestral property, for repeal of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, for equal rights for Hindu women in Mitakshara Joint Hindu Property, for equal remuneration in various jobs, etc. On some occasions the courts have also reacted favourably as happened recently in the Supreme Court decision concerning sexual harassment. The legislature has been also promising from time to time changes in the law concerning women (egs. Bill of Reservation for Women).

Realising the importance which law plays in the life of women and the number of groups which are involved in this struggle, we felt the necessity of providing a platform where concrete issues concerning the recent developments as well as proposed changes in laws can be debated at the national level so as to make a concerted effort to react to developments and bring about changes. This involves two things. Critically examining the attempts of the legislatures and the judiciary concerning women related legal issues and to publicise and discuss various concrete efforts made by women's groups in the direction of formulating Gender Just Laws.

In the following discussions held by some members of the two Mumbai based groups- Forum Against Oppression of Women and Human Rights Documentation Centre, it was felt that one of the steps in this direction should be starting a periodic Newsletter on the issue of Gender Just Laws. The object is to initiate a national level debate on the concrete aspects of Gender Just Laws so that the discussion shifts from its present adhoc scattered level to a more practical, meaningful and relevant plane. The Newsletter can also act as a link between various groups interested in working towards Gender Just Laws. The Newsletter will discuss the existing laws, its lacunae, the impact of these laws on women, judicial and legislative responses and the proposed changes in these laws. The Newsletter will also publicise and report on activities of various organisations around issues concerning Gender Just Laws and report on important meetings involving these issues. We also see the Newsletter as playing the role of a platform for debate on changes in law and ultimately as a campaign weapon for these changes.

The Newsletter will be published as a quarterly in English. At a later date we would like to expand this initiative to other languages. Each issue will be devoted to a specific subject - such as sexual harassment, matrimonial property rights/disputes, divorce, reservation, rights of tribal women, gay and lesbian rights, etc. We would very much appreciate responses on the content as well as format of the Newsletter.

In November 1997, at Workshop on Gay & Lesbian Rights was held a Mumbai, in which both organisations collaborated. The issue is becoming increasingly important and legal challenges have also been mounted. It was felt that the first issue should be devoted to gay and lesbian rights. The next issue will be on sexual harassment and the following issues will be on reservation and women. Any contributions will be welcome.



## **Situation In Other Countries**

In India, male homosexuality has been criminalised and lesbian relations are not recognised at all. The question of granting any rights to homosexuals does not even arise. The situation is quite different in Western countries where some countries besides, decriminalising homosexuality have also enforced anti-discriminatory legislation while at least 5 countries have gone ahead and legalised partnerships and marriages between homosexuals.

### **DECRIMINALISATION**

France was the first country to decriminalise homosexuality. It did this in 1791 followed by Belgium and Luxembourg in 1792. Decriminalisation in Hungary and Czechoslovakia took place in 1961. In England the decriminalisation took place in 1967 and in Russia in 1994.

In Nicaragua, homosexuality was permitted during the Sandinista period but after the conservatives took over, they criminalised homosexuality again.

Most of the West European countries had decriminalised homosexuality by mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Ireland was the last country which decriminalised homosexuality in 1993, after it was convicted by the European Court of Human Rights in 1988.

In East European countries the situation is different but changing. Homosexuality is a crime in Romania with sentences up to 5 years and at the moment 50 persons are in jail on the crime of homosexuality. In Albania homosexuality entails imprisonment up to 10 years. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia, homosexuals face up to 1 year of imprisonment.

The situation in most of the third world countries continues to remain bad. For instance, in November, 1995 in a Middle Eastern country a man was ordered to be stoned to death for Sodomy. Homosexuality continues to be a criminal offence in most of Asia, Africa and Latin America - the notable exceptions being Israel, South Africa, Peru, Hong Kong, South Korea.

### **ANTI DISCRIMINATION LAWS**

In India, homosexuality is a criminal offence and hence discrimination against homosexuals is implicitly sanctioned in law. The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, but does not prohibit discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Under the present law, it would not be illegal if homosexuals are discriminated in the matters of housing, jobs, etc.

Even countries which have decriminalised homosexuality, have not necessarily followed it up

with anti discrimination laws. Only the following 11 countries have anti discrimination laws: (I) Canada, (II) Denmark, (III) France, (IV) Netherlands, (V) New Zealand, (VI) Norway, (VII) Slovenia, (VIII) South Africa, (IX) Spain, (X) Sweden, (XI) Finland.

Norway was the first country to establish such laws in 1981. France enacted this law in 1985 followed by Denmark, Sweden and Holland in 1993. Spain has the anti-discrimination law since 1995.

South Africa's new Constitution has a clause which prohibits discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, making it the first Constitution of its kind. Finland made a Constitutional amendment in 1995 making it clear that equal rights to all meant that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was prohibited. New Zealand enacted the Human Rights Act in 1993 which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation i.e. heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian or bisexual orientation. The prohibited areas of discrimination are as follows: (a) employment, (b) goods and services, (c) access to public places; (d) education; (e) land/house and other accommodation (f) partnerships; (g) vocational training bodies; (h) qualifying bodies; (h) industrial and professional associations. Similarly, Canada included sexual orientation in its human rights act.

In 1996, the statutory convention of Buenos Aires adopted a resolution forbidding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

### **PARTNERSHIP LAWS**

Only four countries in the world have partnership laws for homosexuals. These are:

- (a) Denmark;
- (b) Norway;
- (c) Sweden;
- (d) Iceland.

At the same time, the Parliaments of a number of countries such as Belgium, Finland and Netherlands are presently discussing partnership laws.

The Swedish law is a narrow piece of legislation which was enacted in 1988 which granted protection to the common house of the couple and inheritance rights for the partner who survived the other. Denmark enacted a wider law in 1989 allowing registration of partnerships and by 1994 more than 3000 couples had got married under the Act, 80% of them being males. In Belgium and Holland some of the cities have already started registering marriages between homosexuals.



## Gay & Lesbian Legal Rights

Through this Newsletter we are trying to project a new perspective about individual rights. Because we believe each individual's sexual orientation and preference concerning companionship is entirely the choice of the individual concerned. The State should in fact act in a manner to give much more freedom for these expressions. At the same time we should not be misunderstood as meaning that we are trying to justify gay and lesbian rights out of a principle of toleration of all kinds of individual behaviour. Such would be the case if we believed that homosexuality is unnatural but is to be tolerated on the basis of individual freedom. This is possibly the position of some of the human rights organisations throughout the country. We do not believe that there is anything deviant or unnatural about being homosexual but in fact it is as much 'straight' as heterosexuality. It is in this context that we talk not of liberties and concessions to homosexuals but of the rights of homosexuals.

Individual freedom and privacy need complete protection and we do not recognise the State as the moral big brother. Any law which tramples on this freedom is a violation of human rights. It is in this context that we understand and respect rights of gays and lesbians. We believe that it should be an important task of any human rights organisation to help preserve these rights and to fight against any curtailment of these rights.

### Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code

"Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order or nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life or either description for a term which may extend to 10 years and shall also be liable to fine.

Explanation: Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offence in this section".

This Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (1860) criminalises homosexuals acts. This statute based on the British - Offences Against the Person Act - (1861) which was subsequently imitated in all colonised countries including India and Ireland.

In the entire history of this statute from 1860 to 1992, there have been only 30 in the High Court or the Supreme Court of which,

18 were non-consensual

8 were unspecified

4 were consensual of which 3 were before 1940

15 out of 30 were assault on minors

The current usage of Section 377 is primarily by the police to sexually harass and blackmail gay men whom they catch in public areas; despite the fact that it is a criminal offences to blackmail

people. An example of this is the following incident in Delhi which is just one of many such incidents taking place all over the country.

"There has been a well planned effort by the Delhi police to arrest gay men under a "Clean up the Parks" drive. In July 1992, for almost a week, plainclothes policemen acting as decoys roamed around Central Park, one of the popular cruising spots for gays in the heart of Delhi. They approached gay men - inviting them for a cup of coffee or a walk and other such seemingly harmless acts. When the men accepted, they were arrested and taken to a police vehicle waiting nearby. In total, 18 men were arrested within 3 days.

This time the police did not use Section 377, but Sections 92, 93 of the Delhi Police Act for public nuisance. The campaign ended with a press conference hosted by the Delhi police. At the press conference, the police provided to the press the names and work addresses of those arrested.

To protest against the campaign the AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan (ABVA) an HIV/AIDS activist group held a demonstration outside the police quarters. This was the first public demonstration in defence of gay rights to be held in India. When the officer in charge was presented with the memorandum, he was unable to hide his amusement at what he felt was a non-issue.

With lesbians the situation is even worse. Though gay men are harassed by police in the parks; they at least have access to public space, something which is completely denied to lesbian women. The silence surrounding lesbians is in itself powerful evidence of the violation of their rights." (Excerpts from Anuja Gupta's testimony at the International Tribunal on Human Rights violations against Sexual Minorities, October 1995)

Section 377 has also been used especially by families to intimidate women - particularly in the cases of women who have run away together, or if they make their relationship known.

April 18th, 1990, *India Today* carried the story of Tarulata/ Tarunkumar who in 1987 underwent a female to male sex change operation and married Lila Chavda in 1989. They had met five years previously, when Tarulata's sister who was running for elections was campaigning in Dasade. Muljibhai Chavda, Lila's father has gone to the Gujarat High Court saying that it is a lesbian relationship and that the marriage should be annulled. The petition contends that, "Tarunkumar possesses neither the male organ nor any natural mechanism of cohabitation, sexual intercourse and procreation of children. Adoption of any unnatural mechanism does not create manhood and as such Tarunkumar



is not a male." Muljibhai has called for criminal action under Section 377. The Gujarat High Court has accepted the petition in this case.

August 8th, 1995; *The Bombay Times (Times of India)* reported "Another tutor, student 'scandal'" in which two young women - Parul and Mehernaaz (names changed in report) ran away from their respective homes and spent 10 months roaming around the country (Madras, Calcutta, Siliguri) trying to live together. Finally they returned to Bombay only to be put in custody, as a case of kidnapping had been filed against Mehernaaz by Parul's father.

#### **Some comments on Section 377**

1. It does not distinguish between consensual and coercive sex.
2. The act of sodomy, and not homosexuality *per se* is a cognizable offence.
3. It has not been used in cases against lesbian women, except for intimidation, and in the exceptional case of Tarulata / Tarunkumar described earlier
4. Heterosexual couples engaging in sodomy can be indicted under Section 377, and this is often cited by women as a cause for divorce.
5. It is currently being used most actively by groups working to register cases of child sexual abuse, since the rape laws do not have the scope. "Against the order of nature" is broad enough to include the abuse of children.

#### **The Case for the Repeal of Section 377**

First of all, the definition of "unnatural acts" is Victorian and obsolete. Consensual sex between two adults (over 18) should be protected by an individual's constitutional right to privacy. Further, section 377 violates Article 14 of the constitution since it discriminates against persons on the basis of sex and therefore sexual orientation.

In fact, the extent to which this statute is antiquated is proved by the fact that it has been repealed even in Britain, the country of its origin.

Along with the repeal of Section 377, there is an urgent need for the enactment of a comprehensive Sexual Assault Law which firstly, broadens the definition of sexual assault beyond the limited scope of "penile penetration" (heterosexual or homosexual); and secondly differentiates assaults on minors and adults. Such a law should also determine a common Age of Consent (18) for sexual activity (lesbian, gay or heterosexual).

The history of the public debate on the repeal of Sec 377 begins soon after the release of 'Less than Gay', when a petition was moved by Aids Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan in the Petitions Committee of Parliament. This has, however, remained dormant till date for want of a member of parliament to argue the petition in parliament.

Meanwhile, in 1994, media attention focused on Tihar Jail where Inspector General of Prisons - Kiran Bedi - refused to allow distribution of condoms to the male prisoners on the grounds that there was no homosexual activity in the prisons, and even if there was, the prison authorities would be encouraging a crime. Aids Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan used this incident to initiate a public interest litigation in the Delhi High Court for the repeal of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code challenging the Constitutional validity of Sec.377 of the Indian Penal Code.

While Section 377 explicitly criminalises homosexuality, there are a host of other civil laws that also violate the human rights of lesbians, gays and bisexuals on two specific grounds.

One, the way in which the law defines "family" as a heterosexual unit. As a result, lesbians, gays, and bisexuals are denied custody, adoption, maintenance and acquisition of property rights as in inheritance and succession from partners. In addition, they are also denied several benefits at the workplace such as gratuity, provident fund, pension, insurance, compensation for accidents/death, and health.

Second, under obscenity laws homosexuality is considered offensive to public morality. This leads to misuse of several civil laws to persecute lesbians, gays and bisexuals. For instance, the summary termination of Leela and Urmila, two policewomen from Bhopal who wanted to live together was on the grounds of "...conduct unbecoming of public servants"

Therefore, the debate within the lesbian and gay rights struggle is not confined to Sec 377 alone. There is already a debate and dialogue on recognition to homorelational partnerships and families. This was evident at the meeting on 'Gender Just Laws' held in June 1996 and in the national workshop "Strategies to Advance Lesbians, Gay, and Bisexual Rights" held for the first time in India in Mumbai. This was organised on 7th- 9th November 1997 by Forum Against Oppression for Women, Stree Sangam, Human Rights Law Network, and Counsel Club. It was attended by 30 participants from lesbian and gays groups, women's groups, human rights groups and groups working on AIDS, as well as individuals, lawyers and activists.

"In the last decade there have been several reported cases (like Leela and Urmila's) of people in same sex relationships wanting to live together. But they have been denied legal and social sanction to do so. The discussion at this workshop sought to redefine the concepts of marriage and family to include same sex relationships which are a lived reality for many people.

Besides a nationwide campaign for the repeal



of Section 377, other strategies agreed upon to increase the visibility of lesbians, gays, and bisexual lives and the movement were:

a) To document lesbian, gay, and bisexual events, activities, histories, etc.

b) To network for solidarity amongst lesbian, gay, and bisexual groups, women's groups, human rights activists, health activists and other progressive groups.

c) To step up support activities for isolated lesbians, gays, and bisexuals.

d) To initiate a public debate that would create awareness and remove biases against lesbians, gays, and bisexuals."

(Excerpts from the press release given after the national workshop)

We give below the petition drafted for the signature campaign initiated at this workshop. Please collect signatures on this and send them to us as soon as possible preferably by the end of January. If as an organisation you agree with the petition please write it on your letterhead and send that to us.

## **PETITION FOR THE REPEAL OF SECTION 377 OF THE INDIAN PENAL CODE**

### **Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code:**

Violates a person's liberty and privacy guaranteed by Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

Is arbitrary and oppressive and is therefore violative of Article 14 of the Constitution.

Criminalizes sexual practices between two consenting adults.

Is currently being used to blackmail, harass and intimidate same-sex adult partners.

Is also being used to deny prisoners access to condoms which is necessary for the prevention of HIV/AIDS which consequently has serious implications for public health.

Is an archaic law passed under the colonial government. It was repealed in England in 1967 and most countries have repealed similar statutes.

Hence we demand its immediate repeal. We also ask for enactment of laws for addressing all cases of sexual assault and non-consensual sexual acts.

**NAME**

**INDIVIDUAL/  
ORGANISATION**

**ADDRESS**



**CONTACTS OF GAY & LESBIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIA**  
**(LG) - Lesbian & Gay (L) - Lesbian only (G) - Gay only**

**Arambh (LG)**  
P.O. Box 9522,  
Delhi  
India 110095

**Bombay Dost (LG)**  
105, Veena Beena Shopping Ctr.  
Bandra(West)  
Bombay, Maharashtra  
India

**Counsel Club (LG)**  
C/O Pawan  
Post Bag No. 10237  
Calcutta, West Bengal  
India 700 019

**Good As You (LG)**  
C/O Samraksha  
201, 2nd floor, Royal Corner  
1&2 Lalbagh road  
Bangalore, Karnataka  
India 560 027

**Humsafar Centre (LG)**  
P.B No.6913  
Santa Cruz (W)  
Bombay 400 054  
Voice Mail 91 (22) 972-6913

**Friends India (G)**  
Post Box - 59  
Mahanagar  
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh  
India 226 006

**Men India Movement (G)**  
C/O Nikhil  
Post Box 885  
Cochin, Kerala  
India 682 005

**Saathi (G)**  
Post Box No. 571  
Putlibowli PO  
Hyderabad, Andra Pradesh  
India

**Sahayak Gay Group (G)**  
C/O Naresh Bhatti  
Laxmi Narayan Sadhan  
Prasad Colony, Jathar Peth  
Akola, Maharashtra  
India 444 004

**Sakhi (L)**  
P.O Box 3526  
Lajpat Nagar,  
New Delhi 110 024

**Stree Sangam (L)**  
Post Box No. 16613  
Matunga  
Mumbai 400 019

**Women's Network (L)**  
P.O Box 142, G.P.O  
New Delhi 11001

**SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIA**

**Siddhartha Gautam Trust for Sexual Minorities and Survivors of Sexual Abuse**  
85/207 Sajdarjung Enclave  
New Delhi  
India 110 029

**AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan**  
Post Box 5308  
New Delhi  
India 110 053

**Naz Project (India) Trust**  
Attn : Anjali Gopalan  
D-45 Gulmohar Park  
New Delhi  
India 110 049

**SOUTH / ASIAN GAY & LESBIAN ORGANIZATIONS**

**Nepal Queer Society**  
Attn. K.P Sharma  
GPO 8975  
EPC 5203  
Kathmandu  
Nepal

**Asian Lesbian Network (ALN)**  
P.O. Box 7-760  
Taipei  
Taiwan 106

**Women Supporting Women Committee, WEDPRO**  
Giney Villar, Co-ordinator,  
44-43 U.P. Shopping centre  
Diliman, Quezon City  
Phillipines

**Shamakami (L)**  
P.O. Box 460456  
San Francisco  
California  
USA 94146

**Sami Yoni (L)**  
P.O.Box 891  
Station "P"  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M5S2Z2

**Trikone (LG)**  
P.O.Box 21354  
San Jose, California  
USA 95151-1354

**Khush Khayal**  
P.O Box 6172  
Station A  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M5W 1P6

**Pazy Liberacion**  
P.O Box 66450  
Houston, Texas  
USA 77266

**Trikone - Atlanta**  
787, Ponce de Leon Terrace  
Atlanta, Georgia  
USA 30306

**MASALA**  
P.O. Box 1182  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
USA 02142

**SALGA - (Philadelphia)**  
c/o Action AIDS  
1216 Arch St, 4th Fl,  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
USA 19107

**SALGA**  
P.O Box 50, Cooper Station  
New York, New York  
USA 10276-0050

**Trikone - Los Angeles**  
c/o The Center  
Admin Box 400  
1625 Schrader Blvd,  
Los Angeles, California  
USA 90028

**NAZ PROJECT**  
Palingswick House  
241 King St  
London  
United Kingdom W6 9LP

**SHAKTI**  
BM Box 4390  
London  
United Kingdom WC 1N 3XX



**Sangat**  
Box 268463  
Chicago, Illinois  
USA 60626

**Alliance for South Asian Aids Prevention**  
399 Church Street, 3rd floor  
Toronto, CANADA

Of Colour  
c/o Gay Lines Calgary  
201-223 12th avenue SW  
Calgary, Alberta  
Canada T2R0G9

**INTERNATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN ORGANIZATIONS**

**International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission**  
1360 Mission Street,  
Suite 200  
San Francisco, California  
USA 94103

**International Lesbian Information Service**  
Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 68-70  
NL 1012 SE Amsterdam  
Amsterdam,  
The Netherlands

**International Lesbian & Gay Association**  
c/o Administrative office  
81, Rue Marche-au-Charbon  
B-1000, Brussels  
Belgium

**International Lesbian & Gay Youth Organization**  
P.O. Box 542  
NL-1000, AM  
Amsterdam  
The Netherlands

The following is a summary of the sexual harassment guidelines judgment passed by the Supreme Court of India on August 13, 1997 prepared by Sakshi (New Delhi):

**Sexual Harassment: Definition, Prevention & Related Matters**

In view of the increase of cases reported on sexual harassment of women, the Supreme Court of India, on a writ filed by women's NGOs, has laid down guidelines to obviate such harassment at places of work, and at other institutions including universities, hospitals and other professional bodies. In the absence of any legislation, the court has held that these guidelines shall be legally binding and enforceable. With respect to employment, the guidelines are applicable to the government, public, and private sector, and cover women drawing a salary or an honorarium or working as volunteers. The court has directed all employers and other responsible persons in workplaces and other institutions to ensure the prevention of sexual harassment of women and to provide procedures for resolution, settlement and prosecution of acts of sexual harassment. Most significant, the Supreme Court has brought sexual harassment within the purview of human rights violations.

**Definition:** Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexually determined behaviour, direct or by implication, and includes physical contact and advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, any other unwelcome physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct of a sexual nature.

Acts of sexual harassment can be humiliating, can create a hostile work environment and may constitute a health and safety problem for women. Employers and responsible persons need to ensure that a woman objecting to harassment is not disadvantaged in respect to her employment and promotion.

**Prevention:** In order to prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment, the Court has directed employers and persons incharge of the workplace to take the following steps -

- (a) Express prohibition of sexual harassment as defined above at the work place should be notified, published and circulated in appropriate ways.
- (b) The Rules/regulations of Government and Public Sector bodies relating to conduct and discipline should include rules/regulations prohibiting sexual harassment and provide for appropriate penalties in such rules against the offender.
- (c) As regards private employers steps should be taken to include the aforesaid prohibitions in the standing orders under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.
- (d) Appropriate work conditions should be provided in respect of work, leisure, health and hygiene to further ensure that there is no hostile environment towards women at work places and no employee women should have reasonable grounds to believe that she is disadvantaged in connection with her employment.

**Complaints:**

Employers are expected to set up within their organisation an appropriate complaints mechanism. The Court has recommended provision for a complaints committee, a special counsellor and other support services for handling complaints. With respect to the committee, the following guidelines have been laid down:

The committee is to be headed by a woman. At least half of the committee members should be women. To prevent undue pressure from within the organisation, the committee should include a third party representative from an NGO or any other body conversant with the issue



of sexual harassment. The complaint should be handled confidentially and within a time bound framework. The committee is required to submit an annual report to the concerned Government department. Employers and persons in charge are required to report to the appropriate Government Department regarding compliance with the aforesaid guidelines.

#### **Disciplinary Action:**

Where such conduct amounts to misconduct in employment as defined by the relevant service rules, appropriate disciplinary action should be initiated by the employer in accordance with those rules.

#### **Other Provisions:**

In addition to preventive and remedial measures, the Court has also stressed the need for awareness-raising in the workplace:

Employers should be allowed to raise issues of sexual harassment at workers' meetings and in other appropriate forums. Sexual harassment should be affirmatively discussed in employer - employee meetings. The guidelines stressing the rights of women workers must be prominently notified.

**Criminal Law:** In addition to the above the court has also addressed sexual harassment and criminal law remedies.

- a) Where such conduct amounts to a specific offence under the Indian Penal Code or under any other law, the employer shall initiate appropriate action in accordance with law by making a complaint with the appropriate authority.

In particular, the employer should ensure that victims, or witnesses are not victimized or discriminated against while dealing with complaints of sexual harassment. The victims of sexual harassment should have the option to seek transfer of the perpetrator or their own transfer.

Where sexual harassment occurs as a result of an act or omission by any third party or outsider, the employer and person in charge will take all steps necessary and reasonable to assist the affected person in terms of support and preventive action.

These guidelines are binding and enforceable in law until such time as the Government passes appropriate legislation.

Should you require any further information with respect to the guidelines, please contact Sakshi at the following:

**Sakshi B-67 South Extension Part-I  
First Floor, New Delhi- 110065  
India**

**Tel/Fax: (91-11) 464-3946 Fax: (91-11) 338-1041  
e-mail: sakdel@sakshi.unv.ernet.in**

The second issue of this newsletter is being worked on for publication in February 1998. If you have views, queries, relevant information and/or suggestions please correspond at this address:

#### **India Centre For Human Rights & Law**

**C.V.O.D. Jain School,  
5<sup>th</sup> floor, 84 Samuel Street,  
Pala Gully,  
Mumbai 400 009**

**Tel: 3702592**

**email: huright@giabm01.vsnl.net.in**

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**Editorial Team:** Mihir Desai,  
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## **INDIA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND LAW (ICHRL)**

5th floor, Jain School, 84 Samuel Street, Dongri 400 009, Tel: 375 9657 / 379 0699

Email: [huright@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in](mailto:huright@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in) Web Site: [www.altindia.net](http://www.altindia.net)

*Inspired by Dr. A.R. Desai -Eminent sociologist and social activist  
To struggle as one for empowerment of all*

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India Centre for Human Rights and Law is a collective of people's groups, citizens, activists, lawyers and judges who have come together to form a comprehensive resource centre which focuses on human rights and law. The Centre looks at human rights in the widest possible way. Human rights as defined by us include civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights. We are particularly concerned with human rights issues relating to women, children, tribals, rural poor, dalits, lesbians, gays, slum and pavement dwellers, unorganised labour, prisoners, consumers and those affected by environmental degradation and retrogressive development policies.

The Centre's thrust areas are 1) Investigations, 2) Crisis Response and Legal Aid 3) Campaigns, 4) Training and Education, 5) Documentation and Research, 6) Publication of Educational Material.

### **1. INVESTIGATIONS**

Contact people: Preeti Verma & Deepika D'Souza

The Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights (IPT) the secretariat of which is housed at the Centre does investigations into major human rights abuses followed by campaigns. The Tribunal was established as an alternative "People's Court" in 1993 by a collective of social activists and lawyers who were fed up with the general apathy towards human rights in the judicial system. Retired Supreme Court and High Court Judges associated with the Tribunal conduct investigations into crucial human rights violations and environmental degradation. The reports published are then used by the local groups strengthen their struggle or form the basis for publication interest litigation. The IPT has undertaken 13 investigations and has been a part of several fact-finding commissions.

### **2. CAMPAIGNS**

#### **• Campaign for Gender Justice**

Campaign Co-ordinator: Bina Fernandes

In May 1996 the Centre in co-ordination with the Forum Against Oppression of Women and others organized a workshop on Gender Justice and the Law. This workshop was organized to draw up a consensus on removing the inequalities in various laws concerning women including personal laws and to propose a new legislation.

The ICHRL is actively involved in the follow-up Campaign for Gender Justice. The campaign concentrates on the following:

- Identifying strategies for advocacy
- Creating an atmosphere for discussion of new ideas and for the implementation of laws
- Information dissemination about Gender Justice Laws



- Establishing issue based networking and linking to existing networks
- Collection of resource materials

In the coming year the Campaign will organise workshops as a medium through which dialogue can be facilitated between various groups, lawyers and activists on issues of women's rights in the country. As a part of the larger campaign for gender justice, we are also actively part of a Mumbai level Campaign for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the workplace. The Centre has produced a poster delineating the Supreme Court Guidelines on Sexual Harassment for the use of the campaign.

As part of the campaign the Centre publishes a quarterly bulletin on 'Gender Justice and Law'. This bulletin is the first of its kind in the country and aims at generating a debate on women's rights.

- **The Mumbai MedWaste Campaign (MMW)**

**Medwaste Team: Conan Pereira, Mehzaheen Hoosein & Deepika D'Souza**

Medical waste management is a crucial issue as it has the potential to affect the health of the community, hospital staff and waste handlers. Unsegregated and incorrectly disposed off medical waste is a hazard to the community. The Centre along with a collective of citizen's groups initiated the MMW Campaign. The main objectives of the campaign are:

- To promote worker and community health.
- Through socially and environmentally responsible waste management practises
- By involving all the stakeholders - doctors, administrators, health care workers, ragpickers, citizens, students, government, and the municipality - in the process.

This is done by creating an awareness about the issue, campaigning for the implementation and formation of laws and by conducting training sessions for health care facilities to enable them set up safe waste management systems within their facilities and to conduct research and maintain a database on the issue.

- **THE CAMPAIGN FOR JUDICIAL REFORM**

**Campaign Co-ordinator: Dilipkumar Bhaskaran**

The Centre in collaboration with the Justice and Peace Commission will be looking at all aspects of judicial reform with special regard to campaigning for speedy justice and judicial independence. The campaign will initiate a nationwide discussion on the issue and plans to mobilise public opinion through workshops, meetings and conferences held throughout the country. On the basis of these discussions a strategy will be developed to get judicial reform implemented.

- The Centre is also an active member of the core group of the following campaigns:
  - a) Campaign for the Right to Information
  - b) Campaign to Repeal Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code
  - c) Campaign for the Voice of the Exploited (VOTE)
  - d) The Campaign Against Nuclear Testing & Armaments

### **3. CRISIS RESPONSE, SUPPORT AND NETWORKING**

The Centre functions primarily as a crisis response centre by offering victims of human rights violations and environmental degradation by immediately sending a team or organising a team to visit the area and reassure the affected people. ICHRI also helps the affected groups through legal intervention and advocacy, organising protest meetings, press conferences and by mobilising public opinion.

The ICHRI is also offers space for various organisations to function from. Some of the organisations who work from the Centre are as follows:

- The Centre has helped to put up a study centre – **REHNUMA** - for underprivileged women in collaboration with Awaaz - E – Niswan. Rehnuma provides a space for women to study, read and learn and to grow. For details contact: Hasina Khan, Yasmin Aga, Naseem, Mubina Sheikh.



- **CHILDREN'S LAW CELL:** The cell focuses on child rights, child sexual abuse and child prostitution and child labour. The Cell provides legal assistance to all organisations working with children. It also handles specific cases dealing with the general issue of law enforcement in relation to street children and children in conflict with the law. Apart from the legal aid the Cell networks with groups in the country and organises training sessions for these groups on issues related to children and the law. For details contact: Larissa Pitter & Krist Pereira
- **TOXICS LINK** - Mumbai Branch which functions as a database and clearing house for information related to Toxics contamination of the environment and occupation. For details contact: Mehzaheen Hoosein
- The Centre works closely with the **Human Rights Law Network, Forum Against Oppression of Women, Stree Sangam, Jagrut Goenkar Chi Fauz, Lawyers Collective** as well as large network of social activists and lawyers dedicated to the struggle for the implementation and extension of human rights.
- In collaboration with the **Human Rights Law Network** the Centre provides legal aid and assistance to victims of human rights violations. In the near future the Centre will also be providing on-line legal aid.

#### 4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**Co-ordinator: Dilipkumar Bhaskaran**

- The Centre alongwith the YMCA - Central Branch has formed a 'Forum for Social and Political Debate'. The Forum has a monthly debate on issues of contemporary social and political relevance. This platform is used to voice people's protests, form public opinion and to launch campaigns. The debates are usually held in the last week on every month. Issues covered till date have been the Bombay Rent Act, to atrocities on women and children in Kashmir, encounter deaths in Bombay City and other such issues.
- **A) For Human Rights and Law:** The Centre conducts specialised training sessions for lawyers and judges on certain aspects on human rights and environmental law. For example people working with children will be invited for a session on children and the law, application of the law, international law and the changes required.
- **B) For Activists and others:** In slum areas housing activists are legally trained to oppose demolitions and to deal with issues such as voter's rights, ration cards and amenities in slums.
- Women activists are trained in family law and property rights; to oppose violence against women, discrimination and sexual harassment and generally on the legal aspects of gender justice.
- In rural areas the legal rights of tribals, agricultural workers and forest workers are taught particularly in respect of displacement, minimum wages, malnutrition, rights to food and right of access to natural resources.
- Social workers are trained on the rights of children, child labour and on the legal issue relating to the sexual exploitation of children.
- Labour lawyers and trade union activists are trained in the law relating to contract labour, bonded labour, casual workers and domestic workers particularly in respect of permanency and better working conditions.
- For the enforcement of legal provisions and internationally accepted standards in respect of prisoners. Sessions are held for lawyers and social workers particularly in respect of torture, prison conditions and the fundamental rights of prisoners.
- Consumers rights education with special emphasis on the rights of the poor such as rights regarding the public distribution system.
- Training environmental groups and activists on environmental law.
- Health activists are trained to do public interest litigation and a special emphasis is placed on the rights of HIV positive persons, the aged and the disabled.
- Special human rights lectures are conducted in colleges to generate awareness among youth students on human rights issues.



## **5. DOCUMENTATION**

**Documentation Team: Chandana Shetye, Deepa More, Rashmi Divekar, Urmila Salunke, Amarjit Singh & Rajiv Jadhav**

- A special collection on books on the theory and practice of human rights donated by the British Council
- Dr. A.R. Desai's personal collection of books/ documents on human rights
- On human rights violations, that takes place in India and abroad.
- Landmark Public Interest Petitions and judgements.
- Publications of human rights organisations such as the U.N., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and SOS Torture including international instruments, reports and resolutions.
- Books, periodicals, reports and newspaper clippings on human rights and law.
- Biographies of social reformers, political thinkers and philosophers.
- Publications on philosophy, politics, economics, history, sociology and other social sciences.
- A collection of books on gay and lesbian rights.
- Documentation labour, tribals, women, dalits, housing and children in relation to human rights and law.

For further details on documentation contact the documentation team: Chandana, Urmila, Deepa, Rashmi and Amarjit.

**WEBSITE: [www.altindia.net](http://www.altindia.net)**

**Web Master - Abhay Mehta**

The Centre has created a website to offer space for the voices the Other India. This website is unique in that it is one of the few which has judgements on leading public interest litigations, the reports on various human rights and environmental groups, information about people's groups from all over India and the work they do. It also has links to various related and interesting sites as well as a chat room and notice board for posting notices.

## **6. PUBLICATION OF EDUCATION MATERIAL**

- The Centre is associated with a publication unit, which publishes posters, books and pamphlets and fact-finding reports on law and human rights.

## **SPECIAL SERVICES OFFERED:**

**Apart from the services and activities mentioned above:**

- Legal Aid especially for women
- The judgements, petitions and information on prominent public interest litigations.
- Crisis support for people/ groups affected by human rights violations.
- The Centre offers peoples' groups the facility of putting information about the group, their reports, activities, campaigns on the World Wide Web through the website run by the Centre.
- Support in form of organising investigations, public meetings and press conferences.
- Research facilities on human rights and law.



**FEEDBACK REQUIRED:**

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT ANY OF OUR ACTIVITIES DO CONTACT THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE ACTIVITY**

**DO PLEASE WRITE BACK WITH YOUR IDEAS, ADVICE AND SUGGESTIONS  
LOOKING FORWARD TO YOU VISITING THE CENTRE**

***TIMINGS: 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Sunday Closed***

***Nearest station: Sandhurst Road Station - Central & Harbour Railway, Grant Road - Western Railway. Prominent landmark: Budhia Surma Building, Pala Gully of Dongri Char Null***

**SUPPORT FORM**

**I would like to be a member of India Centre for Human Rights and Law**

**Written below is my name and address: (Please print clearly)**

**I want to be informed and to participate in your activities**

**Write your particular field of interest**

**I would like to volunteer to help the ICHRL with the following work:**

**If you would like to financially support the ICHRL please send a cheque in the name of Socio Legal Information Centre. The Socio Legal Information Centre is registered trust with 80g certification.**



## PUBLICATIONS LIST

### **Books:**

- 1) Women and the Law  
*Eds: Chorine Christine, Desai Mihir, Gonsalves, Colin,* Rs. 700.00
- 2) Humjinsi - A Resource Book on Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual in India Rs. 70.00  
*Edited and Compiled by Bina Fernandez*
- 3) Towards A National Coalition For Gender Justice, Published in English 1997  
*Proceedings Of The National Workshop On Gender Just Laws Held At Bombay Between*  
*30/5/96 - 2/6/96* Rs. 100.00
- 4) Prisoner's Rights Handbook, Published in English 1996, Revised Edition  
*Eds: Gonsalves, C., Sakrani, M., & Fernandes, A.* Complementary
- 5) Cases On Indian Labour Law, Published in English 1996, Vol. 1 & 2  
*Eds: Gonsalves, C., Bhatt, R. & Matthew, M.* Complementary
- 6) Leading Cases On Contract Labour, Published in English 1994, Revised Edition  
*Ed: Gonsalves, Colin* Rs. 100.00
- 7) Leading Cases On Occupational Health And Safety, Published in English 1993  
*Eds: Gonsalves, C., Bhatt, R., Adenwala, M & Anklesaria K* Rs. 50.00
- 8) Environmental Activist's Handbook, Published in English 1993, Revised Edition  
*Eds: Singh, Gayatri, Anklesaria Kerban & Gonsalves Colin* Rs. 200.00
- 9) Freedom Of The Press, Published in English 1989  
*Eds: Desai Shobha & Gonsalves Colin* Rs. 20.00

### **Posters:**

Rs. 10.00 (each)

Know Your Rights Posters

Sexual Harassment Posters

Contract Labour Publication: Marathi

- a) Communalism Publication: Hindi
- b) Criminal Law Publication: English & Marathi
- c) (The) New Pension Bill Publication: English
- d) Occupational Health And Safety Publication: Marathi
- e) Rights Of Under-trials

### **Proposed Publications:**

- 1) Reservation and the Law
- 2) Teachers and the Law
- 3) Environmental Activists Handbook - 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition
- 4) Children and the Law

To order any of the above publications please make a demand draft in favour of Socio Legal Information Centre. For the books that are complementary please could you send us a demand draft to cover postage only.



## THE INDIAN PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL ON ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### LIST OF REPORTS OF FACT FINDING COMMISSIONS

- First Report:** The Plight of the Bargi Oustees  
By Justice S.M. Daud (Retd. Judge, Bombay High Court)
- Second Report:** The Status of the Manibeli Oustees  
By Justice B.G. Kolse Patil (Retd. Judge, Bombay High Court)
- Third Report:** The Marathwada Earthquake Report – An Enquiry into the Relief Measures  
By Justice R.A. Jahagirdar (Retd. Judge, Bombay High Court)
- Fourth Report:** Rajaji – A Preliminary Report on the Rajaji Park  
By Justice P.S. Poti (Former Chief Justice, Kerala High Court)
- Fifth Report:** Forced Evictions – An Indian People's Tribunal Enquiry into the Brutal Demolitions of Pavement and Slum Dwellers Homes  
Justice Hosbet Suresh (Retd. Judge, Bombay High Court)
- Sixth Report:** Dispossessed, Hunted and Cast Into Oblivion: The Fate of the Gujarat Oustee.  
By Justice S.M. Daud (Retd. Judge, Bombay High Court)
- Seventh Report:** Wounded Valley... Shattered Souls  
An All Women's Fact-Finding Commission into the Plight of Women and Children in Kashmir.
- Eighth Report:** Jabalpur Earthquake - An Enquiry into Relief and Rehabilitation Measures  
By Justice B.N. Deshmukh (Retd. Judge, Aurangabad High Court)
- Ninth Report-Part I:** The Attack on the Catholic Hospital Association of India's Workers of Nandurga, Maharashtra  
Team Members: Deepak Lokhande & Sudhakar Kamble
- Ninth Report-Part II:** The Report of the Fact-Finding Committee into the Attack on Pilgrims of Pali-Naigon, Maharashtra

The prices for all the above reports is Rs. 10.00 each except Jabalpur (English) is Rs. 20.00 and Hindi is Rs. 15.00 each



# THE INDIAN PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL ON ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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5<sup>th</sup> Floor, CVOD Jain School, 84 Samuel Street, Dongri, Bombay 400 009

Tel: +91 22 3759657/ 3790699 Email: [hunight@piasbm01.vsnl.net.in](mailto:hunight@piasbm01.vsnl.net.in)

The tribunal was established in 1993 as an alternative "People's Court" by a collective of judges, lawyers, social activists and NGOs who were disillusioned with the general apathy in the judicial system towards human rights and environmental issues. June 5, 1998 marked the fifth anniversary of the IPT.

Retired Supreme Court and High Court Judges associated with the Tribunal conduct investigations into crucial human rights violations and cases of environmental degradation. The reports published are then used by the local groups to further their campaign and strengthen their struggle. On the basis of these reports, public interest litigations are filed to obtain relief for the victims.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To bring environment and human rights issues centre stage and to provide an alternative vision for both the judiciary as well as the public.
2. To investigate cases of gross human rights violations and environmental degradation and to report, campaign and litigate.
3. To highlight the plight of the oppressed and in particular children, women, tribals, slum dwellers, workers, prisoners, and to encourage victim communities to fight for their rights.

## STRUCTURE

1. A Panel consisting of eminent retired judges, academicians, economists, journalists and others. From among these individuals, benches are constituted to enquire into the various issues brought before the IPT. Justice S.M. Daud, Justice B.G. Kolse Patel, Justice R.A. Jahagirdar, Justice Suresh, Justice B.N. Deshmukh, Justice Gulab Gupta, Justice Rambushan Mehrotra and Justice Basu are some of the members of the IPT Panel.
2. A General Body of supporters comprising of struggle organisations, professionals, and activists and citizens.
3. A Council consisting of representatives appointed by the people's groups. This council guides the affairs of the IPT. The council consists of representatives of each region of India.
4. A Secretariat to execute the mandate of the Council. The secretariat is responsible for co-ordinating local struggle groups, arranging meetings,



**The FIFTH REPORT:** An Enquiry into Forced Evictions of Slum and Pavement Dwellers and Other Related Issues - by Justice H. Suresh (Former Judge Bombay High Court).

*This enquiry was undertaken to expose the brutal evictions of slum and pavement dwellers as well as the pathetic conditions under which they live.*

**The SIXTH REPORT:** Dispossessed, Hunted and Cast into Oblivion: The Fate of the Gujarat Oustees - by Justice S.M. Daud (Former Judge Bombay High Court).

*In his report Justice Daud narrates his experiences at the various rehabilitation sites in Gujarat and the state of rehabilitation of the Sardar Sarovar Project Oustees in Gujarat.*

**The SEVENTH REPORT** - October 1997: Women's Fact Finding Commission Probing into Army Atrocities on Women and Children in Kashmir by Katy Irani, Dr. Smita P, Dr. Kamakshi Bhate, and Hasina Khan.

**The EIGHTH REPORT** - February 1998: The Jabalpur Earthquake - An Enquiry into Rehabilitation and Disaster Management - by Justice B.N. Deshmukh (Former Judge, Bombay High Court).

*The report helped revive an issue that had been sidelined. The local groups are using this report to ask for a complete reassessment of the damage caused and to ask for a revaluation of the rehabilitation and compensation schemes offered by the government. Justice Deshmukh who conducted the investigation emphasised the need for a comprehensive national disaster management plan.*

**The NINTH REPORT (Part I)** March 1998: The Attack on the Catholic Hospital Association of India's Workers of Nandurga, Maharashtra - by Deepak Lokhande and Sudhakar Kamble.

**The NINTH REPORT (Part II)** April 1998: The Report of the Fact-Finding Committee into the Attack on Pilgrims of Pali-Naigaon, Maharashtra - by a fact-finding team of journalists, academicians, All India Catholic Union and representatives from dalit organisations.

*These reports were filed with the National Minorities Commission*

## **REPORTS AWAITED**

### **TENTH REPORT (PART I)**

In April 1998 Justice B.N. Deshmukh (Retired Judge, Bombay High Court) accompanied by local activists and members from the IPT undertook an investigation that covered three national parks - Pachmari, Bori and Pench. The focus of the investigation was on the rights of forest dwellers in national parks and sanctuaries. The investigation also covered the Multai massacre.



### **TENTH REPORT (PART II & III)**

In June 1998, the IPT conducted an investigation on the rights of forest dwellers and the need for conservation in the Seetanadi national park, MP. A similar enquiry was also conducted at Nagarhole National Park in August. The information gathered by these enquiries have been used to file a case in the Supreme Court asking for the customary rights of forest dwellers and tribals to be recognised as well as the right of forest dwellers to live within national parks and sanctuaries to be recognised. These IPT investigations also helped form the adivasi rights centre. This Centre will be co-ordinated by Raajen Singh and Sarbani Sarkar.

### **ELEVENTH REPORT (PART I & II)**

Justice Gulab Gupta (Retd. Justice Himachal High Court) accompanied by Sarbani Sarkar of the IPT conducted an enquiry in Alwar, Rajasthan on the water rights of the villagers in Alwar and on illegal mining within national parks and sanctuaries in that region. Subsequently Advocate Venkatramani undertook an enquiry in Alwar on the effects the shifting of polluting industries from Delhi to Alwar.

### **TWELFTH REPORT**

In January 1999 Justice Suresh accompanied by a team of thirteen experts undertook a detailed enquiry into chemical pollution in Valsad, Vapi, and Baroda - Nandesari Region. The investigation was conducted to gauge the effects of chemical pollution of the local residents, the workers and on the environment. This report will be used to challenge the present model of unrestricted and hazardous industrialisation and so called development.

### **THIRTEENTH REPORT**

Justice Wane accompanied by Raajen Singh conducted an enquiry into the status of bondage among the sugarcane cutters of Maharashtra. The report will be used to challenge the government of Maharashtra's statement that there exists no bonded labour in the state.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

The IPT organises public meetings, discussions and debates to create awareness and concern for environment and human rights issues. It also interfaces with other legal aid institutions and attempts to make people aware of their rights under law.



**IPT NEEDS YOU**

**As a SUPPORTER. Your donations will assist in on-going investigations and legal aid work, participate in protest, meetings and press conferences. You will be invited to attend meetings and other programs of the IPT.**

The IPT is housed within the Socio Legal Information Centre. Cheques and Drafts must be drawn in favour of the Socio Legal Information Centre, which is a registered charitable trust. Donations are tax exempted under section 80G of the Income Tax Act.

-----Tear Here-----

**SUPPORT FORM**

I would like to support the IPT

Enclosed is a cheque / draft in the name of the "Socio Legal Information Centre" for

Rs. \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque

No. \_\_\_\_\_ Drawn On \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Organisation / Supporter

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ Pin \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I am particularly concerned with the following issue/s:

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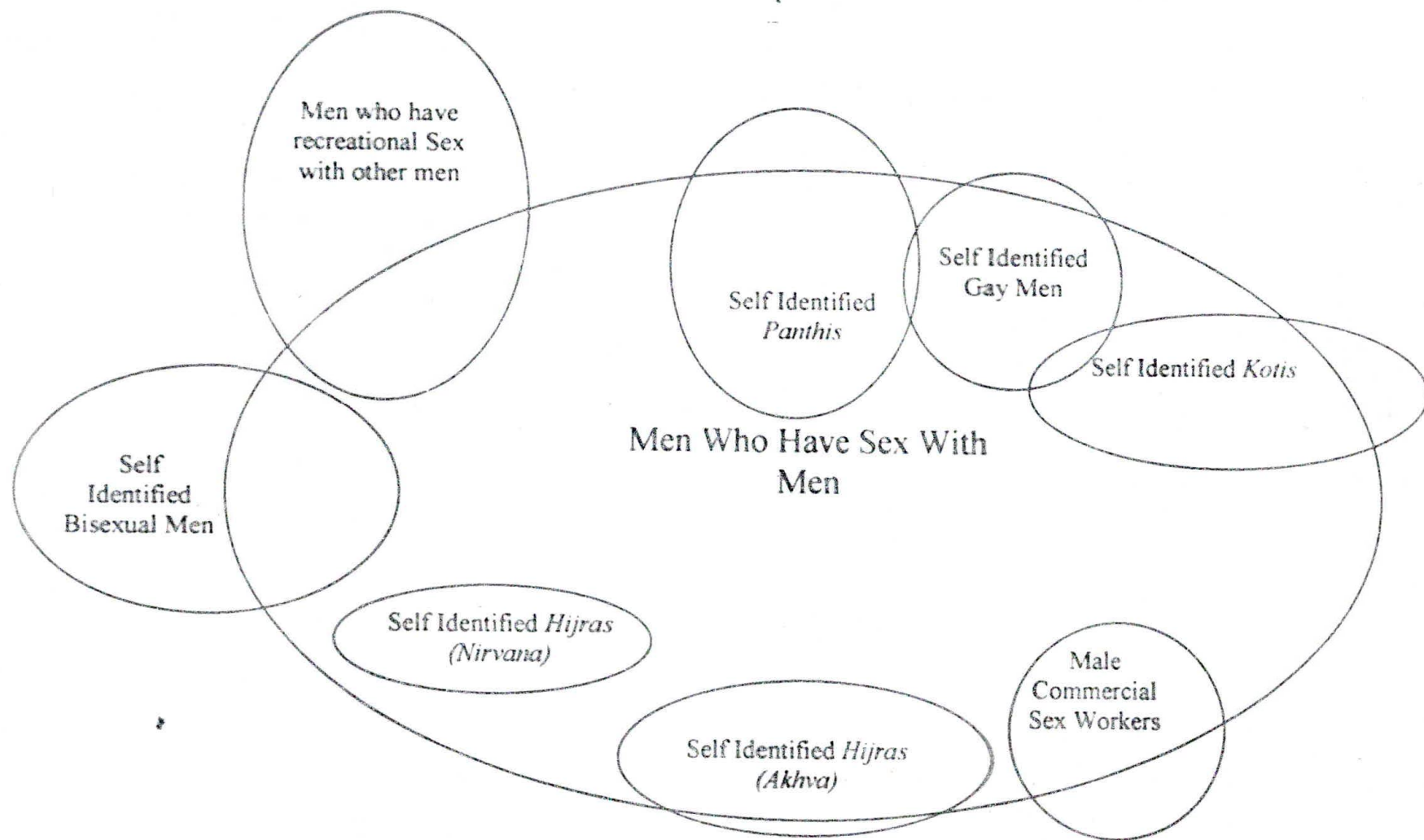
Help that I could extend to the IPT:

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**Documentation. Archive. Research. Education.**

**A RESOURCE CENTRE FOR LESBIANS, GAYS AND BI-SEXUALS**

### **Help Write Our History: Help DARE**

Remember growing up with the feeling that you were the odd one?  
That being attracted to a member of your own sex was abnormal or even a perversion?  
That you could never have a normal happy life unless you married and had children?  
That people like you had never existed before, at least in India?  
That you had no one to talk to, and nothing to read on the subject of your sexuality?  
Remember your helplessness when you could not help someone who felt like this?

Now you can help ensure that people today do not have to grow up overwhelmed by such feelings. That they can read about the present and the past, histories, creative achievements and contributions to society, of people inclined to same-sex love. DARE is the first of its kind in India - a resource center to generate, document and make available information on same-sex love in a friendly and safe environment to all those interested in the subject. This includes lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and anyone who is concerned and wants to be better-informed.

DARE is a group of people who care. People who hope to :

1. Generate awareness on lesbian, gay and bi-sexual history in the subcontinent
2. Counter negative stereotyping, especially the impression that homosexuality is a western import
3. Provide information on legal, health and psychological issues
4. Encourage academic research in various fields by providing bibliographies, source materials and guidelines to scholars
5. Build an archive to preserve and visibilize our history.

DARE has no funding at the moment, and we are working on a purely voluntary basis, out of an office space belonging to one member, with materials donated by individual supporters. We hope eventually to be able to provide a reading room - staffed full-time, with facilities for photocopying materials, with referral support services.

We urgently need contributions in terms of cash, kind, and your time. The kinds of material especially requested are:

1. Books and Journals
2. Academic papers
3. Newspaper, Magazine clippings
4. Films
5. Diaries, Letters, Oral histories on tape
6. Photographs, Drawings, Posters  
(Individuals donors can specify terms of confidentiality with respect to any personal material)
7. Stationery: Files, Folders, Paper, Pens, etc. for office use
8. Monetary contributions, big or small

Do write to us with your comments, suggestions and enquiries. Also, please tell your friends, students, classmates and colleagues about DARE, and help us reach all those who are isolated, frightened, ashamed, or searching.



## DARE: Statement of Purpose

2008  
2008  
2008

DARE (Documentation, Archive, Research, Education) is planned as a center that will generate, document and make available information on same-sex love in a friendly and safe environment to all those interested in the subject. As is evident from the media, both print and audiovisual, there is a great deal of curiosity, concern, and confusion in India today around issues related to sexuality, and especially same-sex sexuality, amongst large sections of the educated population. With the introduction of certain words such as "homosexual", "gay" and "lesbian" into the vocabularies of increasing numbers of people, many are not sure what exactly these words mean. People have many questions regarding the gay and lesbian communities which are emerging in different parts of the country as well as about individuals who claim a gay or lesbian identity. These questions are often directed to agony aunt columns in popular magazines or to talk shows on radio and TV. Sometimes these queries receive sympathetic and informative replies, but often they receive negatively biased and misleading replies. A number of stereotypes are beginning to come into circulation, especially in the climate of AIDS, which can only add to the anxiety and self-hatred that society generally inflicts on homosexually inclined people as well as the anxiety and fears of heterosexually inclined people.

At this nascent stage when lines have not been sharply drawn and most people are in an enquiring rather than an actively hostile frame of mind, it is very important that information be generated and disseminated by concerned citizens who have equipped themselves for this purpose. While there are in Delhi and other metropolitan cities a number of organizations that deal with AIDS and other health problems as well as with sexual problems such as molestation and rape, there is at present no organization in Delhi devoted to providing accurate information that can help homosexually inclined persons to develop a positive self image and heterosexually inclined persons to understand alternative sexualities in a non-fearful manner.

There is therefore an urgent need for a center such as DARE that will perform the following functions:

1. Provide information of the following kinds:

(i) *Information on sexual identity and behavior:* There has been a great deal of research done by psychologists, sexologists, sociologists, historians and others on same-sex love in



various times and places. Unfortunately, even well-known and acclaimed work such as that of Alfred Kinsey or John Boswell, is not easily available in India. No library in Delhi catalogues such material under entries like "homosexual", "same-sex", "gay" or "lesbian", nor does any library have a gay studies section as do libraries in other parts of the world. As a result, several information-seekers who have visited these libraries have been unable to access this material. The absence of reliable information fosters the dissemination of false and damaging myths. DARE will provide access to information on existing research and theory which would enable the individual to come to a rational understanding of the issues involved.

(ii) *Information on legal and health status:* The center will also provide information on the legal status of homosexual persons and activities in different countries and at different times in history. It will provide information on sexual and psychological health and on safe sex and protection against AIDS, and will direct people to resource centers or professionals who provide specific kinds of help, for instance, legal aid, health facilities and psychotherapeutic counselling on a regular basis.

(iii) *Academic guidance:* The silence and ignorance on same-sex love prevailing in Indian academies constitutes a major lacuna in comparison to academies in most other democratic countries. Indian university students are at a serious disadvantage when they travel outside India, because they find that research on this area in many disciplines such as literary studies, history, sociology, cultural studies, anthropology, psychology, religious studies, legal studies, is highly advanced and sophisticated. The absence of such work in India has severely stunted Indian understanding of civil society and its institutions. In addition, homosexually inclined students at Indian universities feel isolated, invisible and silenced. Research on same-sex love in India is beginning to emerge, and needs to be made available to all interested persons so that further research can be encouraged. DARE will make available books, journals and documents to be studied on the premises and, where possible, photocopied by researchers. It will also put scholars working on related subjects in contact with one another so that they can build on and learn from each others' research. Hopefully, universities, research institutions, libraries and bookstores will gradually become aware of the need to provide similar space to work in this area.

2. Build an archive: There are many individuals who have built up private libraries and collections of documents. DARE hopes to centralize some of this information and make it available to the public. We also intend to build an archive around the subject of same-sex



love, encouraging individuals to donate documents such as letters, diaries and manuscripts that will shed light on the history of homosexually inclined people in India. We intend to undertake research projects such as recording oral histories of individuals who may not have written their own lifestories. There are many such individuals in all walks of life in India who are now ageing and whose experiences constitute a valuable resource for all of us.

There is an urgent need to record the histories of homosexually inclined people in this country and to visibilize their positive contributions to society in all areas of life, so that they are not stereotyped as misfits or as problem-ridden, sick persons. A healthy positive self-image for all individuals, especially those belonging to stigmatized groups, is essential to developing a healthy and confident society. Such an image can only be developed when every individual has a sense of his or her own positive connections to the past. A group without a sense of its own history is a group without a viable present or future.

3. Generate public awareness: It is anomalous that although India is the largest democracy in the world and shares with other democracies a concern for the rights and status of oppressed and stigmatized groups such as women, the poor, and religious and cultural minorities, yet Indian politicians and social activists maintain an almost total silence on the rights and status of homosexually inclined people. Civil rights groups the world over are concerned about gays and lesbians along with other groups such as women and blacks, and with the right to freedom of sexual orientation along with other rights, but Indian civil rights groups have not taken cognizance of this particular group or this area of human experience. Consequently violations of the rights of people of alternative sexuality are perpetrated with impunity, and violence is often inflicted on them without any public protest.

Homosexually inclined people constitute a potentially uniting force in Indian society today since they are found in all classes, castes, professions, communities, regions, and in both genders. DARE will generate public awareness on the importance of creating a tolerant and informed atmosphere around different types of sexual orientation and will encourage political and social activists to take cognizance of human rights violations against persons of alternative sexualities.



THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION  
140 South Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60603 USA

(312) 726-8000  
e-mail: [4answers@macfdn.org](mailto:4answers@macfdn.org)

Complete information about the  
MacArthur Foundation is available on the Internet.  
The URL is: <gopher://gopher.macfdn.org:3016/>

THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T.  
MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

## *The Population Program*



## *The Population Program*

**T**he MacArthur Foundation established its Population Program in 1988 to advance the search for new ways to address the complex and evolving challenge of global population growth.

The Foundation perceives population issues as a set of diverse and multidimensional problems, encompassing traditional concerns of population studies and broader social and economic circumstances. Consequently, the program supports efforts to address population growth that take this larger context into account, including the roles and status of women, poverty, human rights, the role of men in reproductive decision making, and the environment. In forming the Population Program, the Foundation recognized that appropriate responses to population problems consider the interactions among social, cultural, economic, and environmental conditions and will vary significantly among different local settings.

The program is designed to respond to needs as defined by people in developing countries. It seeks especially to support locally-generated initiatives that may have potential for broader impact and applicability. From the outset, the Foundation's actions have been guided by an international advisory committee comprised primarily of leaders from Latin America, Africa, and Asia.



The Foundation is concentrating its grant-making at present in four selected focus countries: Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria, and India, nations with varied population problems. In each of the focus countries the Population Program developed a national strategy through consultation with local advisors, including demographers, activists, anthropologists, journalists, public health researchers, and medical practitioners.

To pursue these objectives, the program has established five distinct but interrelated areas on which it focuses:

*Women's Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights*

- *Population, Consumption, and the Environment*
- *Men, Sexuality, and Reproduction*
- *Communications and Popular Education*
- *Leadership Development*

## *Women's Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights*

*Objectives: To promote creative strategies for improving women's reproductive health and reproductive rights and to encourage the full participation of women in decisions that affect their health and reproduction at all levels of policymaking.*

The role of women is universally recognized as central to the health and well-being of their families. Their perspectives and needs as individuals have not, however, been addressed by many programs and policies. The range of issues affecting women's reproductive health goes well beyond their childbearing role and includes such factors as their legal rights, household responsibilities, and access to education and employment.

The program supports action, advocacy, and research concerned with the reproductive health and well-being of women and girls, particularly adolescents and poor women who are underserved by current programs. It places priority on programs initiated by women from the focus countries that emphasize the importance of social, cultural, and economic factors in influencing individual reproductive choices and behaviors.

In this context, the program makes grants for the following purposes:

- helping women to make informed decisions about sexuality, marriage, and childbearing;
- supporting programs of research and action on neglected aspects of women's health, including reproductive morbidities, infertility, abortion, HIV/AIDS, and the accessibility of safe, quality health care.



## *Population, Consumption, and Environment*

*Objective: To improve understanding of the linkages among population, consumption, and the environment through collaborative multidisciplinary research.*

The goal of this initiative, a joint activity of the Foundation's World Environment and Population programs, is to increase understanding of the demographic and economic aspects of human-environment interactions, especially the links between human welfare and the degradation of land and water. To this end, the program supports research on the environmental ramifications of economic change, consumption, and production patterns in developed and developing nations.

Proposed research may be conceptual or empirical in nature. Priority is placed on multidisciplinary work that draws on expertise in both the social and natural sciences. It also favors projects that involve partnerships and networks consisting of scholars from institutions in both developed and developing nations.

Priority is given to research in the Population Program's focus countries (Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria, and India) or in the World Environment Program's global priority regions (more detailed information about these regions is available from the Foundation's Office of Grants Management, Research, and Information).

## *Men, Sexuality, and Reproduction*

*Objective: To encourage and support research and experimental reproductive health programs that incorporate the participation of men.*

The program encourages partnerships between men and women to improve reproductive choice and health. Through grants for social science and sexuality research, and through experiments with service models, the Foundation hopes to increase understanding of how to involve men in reproductive decision making and parenting.

Special attention is given to projects involving male adolescents, since young men are often more receptive to change and role experimentation. The program places priority on projects that go beyond traditional areas of investigation, such as male use of contraception, and that build on recent advances in thinking about men in the context of sexuality education, HIV prevention, family planning, and family responsibilities. Funding is also available to identify successful program models and projects that seek to develop alternative male and female roles. All proposals should have a rigorous evaluation component.



## Communications and Popular Education

*Objective: To support experimental projects that use diverse communications media and local participation to inform people about issues related to their reproductive health, sexuality, and reproductive rights.*

The popular media possess great potential to affect attitudes toward family size, gender roles, health, and reproduction. In this area, the program supports organizations that merge intimate knowledge of local needs and perceptions with the most appropriate methods of popular communications. The program will consider a variety of approaches, including music, drama, and folk art as well as publishing, broadcasting, and film production.

The program supports communications efforts that take into account the social, cultural, and economic factors underlying individual choices and behaviors regarding reproduction. It gives priority to programs that use communications media to provide accurate and complete information about sexuality education, including HIV prevention.

The program also seeks to facilitate networking among individuals and organizations engaged in the use of popular communications for educational and social development. Emphasis is placed on enhancing local capabilities of women's groups, health care providers, and policymakers regarding these issues.

## Fund for Leadership Development

*Objective: To identify and encourage a new generation of leaders in the population field whose work is marked by creativity, vision, and commitment to improving the quality of life, especially for the most vulnerable people, in Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, and India.*

This component of the program is designed to strengthen and diversify leadership in the population field by supporting individuals who have demonstrated unusual initiative, pragmatism, and dedication to comprehensive responses to population issues. Those persons selected for support, generally at midpoint in their careers, work on the interrelated problems of reproductive health, reproductive rights, and the role of men in reproductive decision making. Grant funds support a variety of individually tailored projects designed to advance individual grantees' careers, including (but not limited to) new program development, training, research, and travel.

Detailed guidelines for this program are available on request.

Individuals apply directly to the Fund for Leadership Development by contacting the country offices:

*In Brazil:* Programa de Bolsas  
MacArthur No Brasil  
Alameda Ministro Rocha  
Azevedo 1.077  
4º andar, conj. 42  
São Paulo, SP 01410-003  
Brasil  
Tel: 55-11-852-4586  
Fax: 55-11-280-0548



*In Mexico:* Programa de Becas  
La Fundación MacArthur  
AP. 11-617  
Col. Hipódromo  
México, D.F. 06100  
México

*In Nigeria:* Fund for Leadership  
Development  
MacArthur Foundation  
2 Oshin Street  
U.I.P.O. Box 22483  
Kongi, Ibadan  
Nigeria  
Tel: 234-2-810-0139  
Fax: 234-2-810-0095

*In India:* The MacArthur Fellowship  
for Population Innovations  
MacArthur Foundation  
India Habitat Centre  
Core VA, First Floor Palm Court  
Lodi Road  
New Delhi 110 003  
India

## *General Application Guidelines*

To pursue its objectives in the Population Program, the Foundation provides grant support to not-for-profit organizations, universities, research institutes, and networks of such institutions.

Although the Foundation recognizes the value of many existing efforts, the Population Program does not provide support for basic research in reproductive physiology, clinical studies, research and development of contraceptive technologies, standard demographic research, or routine provision of family planning services. As a general policy, the Foundation does not solicit and will not consider proposals which seek any of the following:

- support of programs or activities that are among the routine or accepted responsibilities of government;
- support for political activities or campaigns, attempts to directly influence legislation, or the development or dissemination of propaganda;
- contributions to capital campaigns, plant construction, equipment purchases, endowment funds, debt retirement, or completed projects;
- general support of other philanthropic foundations or of regular development campaigns, annual fund-raising drives, institutional benefits, or honorary functions or similar appeals; and
- grants exclusively designated for publications or conferences.



## How to Apply

**G**rant proposals to the Population Program are reviewed throughout the year. A brief letter of inquiry, not more than four pages in length, serves as a preliminary application. No formal proposal should be submitted until it is requested. Letters of inquiry should include:

- a succinct statement of the problem and its significance, and of how it relates to the objectives of the Population Program;
- a description of the proposed program initiative;
- the amount of funds needed for implementation, including a breakdown of how the funds would be used; and
- a brief description of the applicant organization and its appropriateness for the undertaking, including a summary of the organization's budget.

The Foundation will request a proposal and provide specific guidelines for proposal development from applicants whose work fits the program's priorities. It is not necessary for applicants to meet in person with the board of directors.

Proposals will be evaluated by program staff with the assistance of consultants with relevant expertise. The board of directors makes final decisions on funding authorizations. Applicants will be notified in writing of action taken on their proposals.

Letters of inquiry should be addressed to:

The Population Program  
c/o Office of Grants Management,  
Research, and Information  
The John D. and Catherine T.  
MacArthur Foundation  
140 South Dearborn Street  
Suite 1100  
Chicago, Illinois 60603

For further information, call (312) 726-8000 and ask to speak to a staff member of the Population Program, or contact program staff via telex (213929 MAF UR) or fax (312) 917-0334.

Complete information about the Foundation is available on the Internet. The Foundation's gopher URL is: <gopher://gopher.macfdn.org:3016/>

The Foundation's e-mail address is [answers@macfdn.org](mailto:answers@macfdn.org)

All material submitted becomes the property of the Foundation. When appropriate, the Foundation may submit inquiries or proposals to outside review.



## About the Foundation

**T**he John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grant-making institution dedicated to helping groups and individuals improve the human condition. The Foundation makes grants through eight major areas: health, education, environment, population, international peace and cooperation, individual creativity, mass communications, and, in Chicago and Palm Beach County, Florida, the arts and community development. In addition, the board encourages collaborative work on problems that cross program boundaries.

Several assumptions underlie the policies of the Foundation: that the most important efforts to improve the human condition are those that seek systematic and sustainable change; that human progress requires reducing inequities in the distribution of power and resources; that the healthy, educated, creative individual is an essential instrument of constructive change; and that the Foundation's effectiveness depends in part on its capacity to learn from others, including grantees, about the problems confronting global society.

The Foundation seeks to create and sustain a culture within the Foundation that is diverse throughout all levels of professional responsibility, and to form relationships with other organizations and persons who are committed to incorporating a variety of perspectives into their work. The active involvement of a wide diversity of people and viewpoints is consistent with the Foundation's belief in the importance of pluralism and is essential to the fulfillment of its mission.



HIVOS IN ASIA  
Policy Framework  
1998-2002



HIVOS IN ASIA

Policy Framework

1998-2002

Juni 1998



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## Introduction

### 1. Asia's Political and Economic Context

This introductory chapter provides a brief overview of the major economic, political and social developments that inform the Asian region. It is restricted to the countries where Hivos is present, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Considering the enormous regional variations, and specificities that come to set apart the experiences of one country from that of another, this analysis tries to provide a macro-level understanding, providing a framework of policy commonalities while respecting the differences at the same time. This introduction also describes the global influences under which local development strives to carry forward its social, economic and political agendas. Finally, the opening macro-qualitative analysis serves as the setting from which the ensuing chapters develop instruments and strategies for Hivos's operations in Asia. The document as a whole supports the production of a regionally coherent programme.

#### 1.1 Economic Developments

The nineties have been characterised by tumultuous changes such as the end of the cold war, the creation of the WTO and the rapid consolidation of the global economy. The new global order has posed fresh challenges for developing countries in their efforts to narrow the divide that still sets them apart from the more affluent North countries. These changes have had far-reaching implications particularly for trade, North-South relations, and for the role of governments and institutions of civil society. So dramatic have been the changes wrought by liberalisation, globalisation, development aid, transition to market economies and human development agendas that non-government organisations are busy coping with these changes and implementing strategies for the future. Though the new era of intensified globalisation suggests that the East and West are no longer adversaries and that borders have given way to a two-way flow of technology, capital services, goods and trade, the world continues to be divided. These disparities, however, are common to both North and South; they exist within nations and regions.

The global economy has grown by a factor of 5 in the last four decades; yet the world's poor total 1.3 billion. Of these 675 million are Asians, who continue to live in absolute deprivation. In Asia the number of rural women living in absolute poverty rose from about 370 million in the 70s to almost 450 million in the 80s. The incidence of poverty in South Asia is much worse than in East Asia. The absolute numbers of poor are increasing in Asia even though the percentage of the poor in the overall population of the developing world is declining. In fact, on the basic health indicators of nutritional status of children under 5, low birth weight and anaemia in women, women and children fare better in sub-Saharan Africa than in Asia.

In consumption terms the gap between the rich and the poor has doubled since 1960. About 20% of the world's population consume 80% of 'prosperity-wealth creations'. The social-economic profile of poverty suggests that economic policies have been directed towards short-term economic growth rather than towards achieving sustainable development in the long run. Low income countries continue to be beleaguered by increasing debt and an incapacity to trade in the new regime of increasing corporatisation. They are also faced with the eroding political autonomy of the nation state and rising economic inequalities within their populations.

Within Asia however wide regional variations mark and set apart East Asia and Southeast Asia from South Asia. Until 1997, Indonesia and Malaysia had a high economic growth rate while a moderate growth rate is being realised in India. Sri Lanka, CIS and Vietnam show a more heterogeneous picture. In East Asia 'only' 11% of the population are below the poverty line and on the basis of food security index, the basic needs index and the relative welfare index the East Asian countries score very high. The East Asian tigers were able to achieve high economic growth because of a very strong regulatory state presence, high literacy levels etc., but also because of environmentally unsustainable policies and other policies pertaining to civil and political rights. In the South Asian countries the vulnerability of the poor has been deepened by the lack of land reforms, the lack of growth in productivity, the weakening of the role of the state in the welfare measures for the poor, the declining level and quality of basic needs services, disastrous state-led environment policies, and internal conflicts and civil strife.



In the Asian region the highest incidence of poverty is among the rural poor. 74% of the total population in Asia live in the rural areas and of these 31% are below the poverty line. The rural poor include small and artisanal fisherfolk, displaced refugee populations, the landless, farmers with small holdings, and socially disadvantaged and discriminated groups, such as scheduled castes and tribes in India. Landless households and those cultivating less than 1/100th of an acre have an incidence of poverty of 40%. Households in Indonesia with agricultural labour as their main source of income have the highest incidence of poverty at 38%, followed by self-employed households, again with agriculture as their main source of income. In Sri Lanka the proportion of the poor is highest in rural areas (33%), lower in urban (12%) and 14% in the estate sector. The large majority of the poor farmers have holdings of less than 1 acre.

Rural-urban migration continues to be a major factor in the growth of urban poverty as the poor move on a permanent or seasonal basis in search of livelihood opportunities. Internal migration in the South Asian region is a crisis of major proportions. Declining investments in agriculture and the inability of the State to stimulate rural industry have expelled millions of tribals, peasants, and subsistence farmers from their traditional occupations and forced them to migrate to towns in search of wage labour. There has been an increase of female-headed households in the rural areas and growing destitution for women. The megacities are incapable of providing necessary housing facilities for the growing migrant informal sector. 34% of Delhi's population live in slums. Famine is occurring among the urban poor in Bombay.

It is clear that policy makers have not given due emphasis to the issues of desirable growth-employment, environmentally sound policies, social integration, and the issues of humane governance. As the UNDP noted in its 1996 Human Development Report, decision-makers will have to pay attention to the quality of growth rather than to growth that is jobless, ruthless (the rich and poor divide grows), voiceless (democratic expression is suppressed) rootless (the cultural identity of communities are destroyed) and futureless (destroys the planetary life support system). For all those working to strengthen the capacities of the poor to combat deprivation it is crucial that growth with equity, with labour absorption, with environmental sustainability, and the building of local, decentralised and democratic institutions for the delivery of growth with justice be central.

Managing economic interdependence in the era of the economic reforms is not easy in societies marked by deprivation, economic and social bondage and civil conflicts. Globalisation because of the already existing maldistribution of wealth across the globe, further weakens the capacity of the underprivileged for self-representation at national and international levels. For developing countries and for their poor, the ramifications of the Uruguay round of negotiations, where measures prescribed have gone into wider areas than trade alone, are yet to be fully understood. The extension of patent rights to plant varieties and the patterns of food production being pruned to fit world markets may have serious implications for small farmers, for subsistence economies, and for consumption patterns for the poor. The patent regulations of MNCs may cause whole varieties of bio-diverse resources to disappear or be monopolised for both economic and patent reasons.

There appears to be no level playing field for the poor as economic agents and players when transnationals (TNCs) control 80% of world investment, 70% of world trade, 30% of GNP, and 40% of intra-foreign trade. Many local industries are mortgaging their production to TNCs as their national governments allow TNCs to increase their stakes in the local economy. Most of the TNCs are high capital and high-energy consuming. Most South countries will under several pacts devoted to neo-regionalism ensure that the richer and bigger nations among them will reap the benefits of economies of scale. The stabilisation measures further deepen the regressive redistribution of world capital, regrettably vindicating the state of affairs where the nominal flows of capital are more from the Third World to the First World. Ever mounting debt, and import-driven policies have forced Third World countries to export increasing volumes of a narrow range of goods.

Those in favour of SAP policies argue that the opening up of the economy will create opportunities for gainful employment, growth in industrial production, and an environment favourable for a highly export-oriented market, thus leading to a resolution of the monetary crisis and providing benefits for all sections of society. However, political activists have argued that one of the off-shoots of opening up the economy is the increase in the privatisation of natural resources in fragile rural economies. This has serious consequences for the poor, particularly 'indigenous peoples'. There is opposition to the grammar



of economic globalisation. Defence purchases, technology transfers, drug processing and bio-diversity are all major components in the global income ladder. The workers, who service the export of capital from their national economies, may very well be the new class of the displaced, alongside the unorganised labour. When poverty exists at the systemic level, the market mechanism if left to itself will gain further advantage. It is important that the campaigns being built up by social movements underscore economic justice, particularly the capability-building of the poor to access education, training, advice and credit, and knowledge of their rights.

The new economic policies have also resulted in the growing casualisation of labour and of the feminisation of poverty. In countries like India the organised sector accounts for only 10% of the labour force. Labour is predominantly unorganised - 99% in agriculture and 80% in manufacturing. Plant closures, retrenchment and unemployment, increasing differentials between regular and casual wage rates are some of the social costs of the reform process. The increasing roles of women in the service sectors and "free trade zones" call attention to problems of hazardous work conditions, minimum wages, social securities and human dignity. The high economic growth in Malaysia and Indonesia have not been without their high social and environmental costs.

In some countries, investments in agriculture are declining and budget allocations for rural areas are being increasingly used for urban development, thus accelerating the growing poverty of the rural poor. Liberalisation has also marginalised small farmers. Subsidies for fertiliser and pesticides are being reduced, extension services are no longer in place, unregulated import of cheaper products from other countries is on the rise, and alternatives are yet to be collectively established. In Sri Lanka the privatisation of plantations (tea) has reduced work for the labouring poor. With weak state roles in food-pricing the small farmers are overexploited with insufficient returns for their produce. Field realities in India show a decrease in food consumption levels for the urban and the rural poor.

Many NGOs today are also examining issues concerning the Asian states not being able to bargain successfully in the WTO, dominated as it is by American and European interests. Asian governments argue that although they follow the Euro-American trade agenda they need to accelerate intra-regional co-ordination. NGOs are examining the growing opinion that 1) unless an alliance is built up and investments are made by Asian governments, with political will, towards formulating an Asian trade policy in the era of globalisation they will not be able to consolidate on the gains made since independence, and 2) that, they will not be able to counter the WTO which has become an institutionalised motor for trade liberalisation. NGOs believe that regional economic groupings (ASEAN, SAARC, NAFTA) and interregional blocks (APEC, ASEM) when developing a strong united voice must demand that social equity and environmental concerns guide the regional co-operation and that the richer nations do not gain advantage over the poorer. The debates in the WTO include labour standards and child labour. Most Asian states and NGOs are united in their resistance to putting labour standards on the agenda of the WTO. They prefer labour standards being put on the agenda of other institutions (ILO) which are more qualified, more democratic and more transparent.

Financing poverty alleviation through budgetary allocations is a matter of massive mobilisation of resources by the Central and State Governments. Much of this has to be through an enlargement of governments' current revenues; but some part will come from the banking sector's investment in governmental allocations to the poor. The poorest Asian countries have insufficient availability of internal funds for social sector expenditures. To the extent that basic consumption needs are to be met, it is more often a grant than a loan problem, especially as long as the poor are unemployed, or underemployed. Development aid will need to combine the grant element in budgetary provisions with loan supplements so that over time the poor become empowered, and be able to develop their bargaining capacity and become self-reliant. Credit institutions are not accessible for small producers and the rural poor. The policy of directing some part of bank credit to the poor with simplification of the loan procedures, initiation of credit-guarantee schemes needs to be urgently considered. There is now growing recognition that hard-core poverty of the magnitude prevalent, e.g., in India cannot be resolved through purely market processes and the trickle-down of credit to the poor. Since at that level it is difficult to separate production credit from consumption loans, a certain measure of state involvement in the provision of financial resources to the poor is inevitable. There is also a realisation that along with credit, there is a need for market studies, information dissemination, economic development plans, and entrepreneurship training, particularly for women. Development aid should be effectively aimed at



providing the poor access to credit from government and other financial institutions. It should therefore be active in evolving appropriate instruments that make this possible, e.g., providing bank guarantees, and creating local financial intermediaries.

There has been a serious and concerted response from public-interest organisations to protect and also advance the interests of the poor. South-South networks for advocacy of WTO, joint strategies on SAP policies and multinationals with a view to safeguarding workers' and consumers' rights have been established all over the region. There has also been a continued debate on labour standards and child labour. The recent mushrooming of micro-finance institutions with foreign collaborations, have come in for criticism. The co-operatives have also undergone several changes in the various regions, with special emphasis on changing co-operative laws. The situation varies strongly between the Asian countries. In Indonesia co-operatives are still in the government's fold. Here financial institutions are expected to cater with an individual approach, although this tends to have very high economic costs. In India and Sri Lanka consistent advocacy efforts have resulted in changes in co-operative laws and spaces for alternative financial institutions. There has also been a growing realisation in most of the countries that credit alone is insufficient and that market-entrepreneurship, a legal framework that does not discriminate against the small-scale sector, and an informed utilisation of credit are all important areas for study and implementation.

A highly empowered population could set up people's commissions which can bring from below the reforms badly needed at the national (local) levels. Many NGOs today are working in the areas of data collection, lobby advocacy on the effects of SAP and what governments need to do. Various social movements, trade unions, consumer organisations, women's collectives, and co-operatives are all efforts from below to challenge both the terms of negotiations on reforms and options for strategic action by citizens.

## 1.2 The Asian State and the Political Context

Except for the CIS, most Southeast and South-Asian nation states have now completed five decades of independence. Increasingly in the last ten years the role of the state, markets and civil society have been called into question as destitution has continued to follow the poor across regions despite all the efforts of the governments, the injections of aid and the massive projects of social engineering. In most developing countries the state has played a strong regulatory and interventionist role in not only economic matters but also in social sector issues concerning the polity. The arrival of new economies and the emergence of regional political power in the post-cold war era have seen new challenges being posed to the role of the state, problems of legitimacy and authority, and the rule of the markets. In some countries with the intensification of civil and ethnic conflicts and various humanitarian emergencies, the collapse of the civil order has spawned debates on the nature of the state, its role and obligations in the present times. Voluntary organisations have fought for the democratic principle to be ascendant. In countries like Indonesia and India the governments have not been successful in guaranteeing the poor co-equal economic rights and civil liberties. Neither has it been able to in the implementation of development models, preserve the intrinsic merit and respect the worth of the communities. In these countries state driven development projects have been responsible for major displacement of large numbers of people as well as the careless destruction of the environment and people's habitat.

The rule of the state in the social order has also been eroded by ethnic, religious, economic and racial conflicts in civil society. These have often been backed by global arms deals. These (often) illegal market operations have crippled human securities, draining much needed resources from investments in human welfare. Asian states have also promoted rising defence/military budgets, thus intensifying and promoting arms trade by North countries. The displacements of civilian populations due to war, and ethnic conflicts have set the clock back for all the efforts that went towards promoting a better quality of life in terms of literacy, nutrition and life-expectancy.

Liberalisation has also encouraged the state to lift protective measures which earlier prevented the entry of foreign companies to exploit natural resources, including in the area of energy production. Not only are communities being displaced but few safeguards have been installed to protect the people and the environment from the polluting industries. The re-locating of polluting industries from North to South is a



major concern and governments in their efforts to "successfully reform and accelerate the pace of growth" have paid scant attention to this aspect of development. The loss of livelihood and the loss of cultivable lands is a major tragedy for the rural poor and voluntary organisations are having little success in influencing state policies. Natural resources such as forests, coastal zones, fishery resources and non-renewable resources such as minerals and metals and fossil fuels and oil are being today ruthlessly exploited for short-term economic gains. The environmental movements in the Asian region have not been able to prevent the state from being the major actor in the implementation of these projects. Although in Indonesia and Malaysia strong organisations operate on the national (and international) level, their presence at the grassroots level is weak. In India although the environmental movements have established their presence they have not been able to carry forward various sections of civil society and mobilise mass resistance. In Sri Lanka the environmental movement is at its initial stage. There is a need for the Colombo based organisations and the rural based organisations to come together as a broad coalition. In Central Asia whose populations endured some of the most devastating violence from toxic waste, nuclear pollution and the poisoning of the river ways and life-stock, the emergence of NGOs devoted to studying these problems, alerting the populations and mobilising resistance is a very hopeful sign. The record of the nation state in the Asian region is a dismal one as regards the exploitation of natural wealth, of people's commons and livelihoods. The deterioration of the environment and the lack of political will to make polluters pay and invest in safe technologies is a matter of serious concern. The poor are being forced to shoulder the long-term burdens of ill-health, poor sanitation, malnutrition and low life-expectancy because of the desire of the governments and markets for short-term gains.

In addition to the irresponsible and uneven development strategies in the post-independent societies there has been the crucial issue of employment where the state has shown little political will, especially in South Asia. The structure of employment has been less than impressive in countries like India, where the organised sector makes up only 10% of the labour force. Here, the Structural Adjustment Policies require the shouldering of large burdens in the short-run. Plant closures, retrenchment and unemployment will mean the loss of four million jobs by the year 2000, subsidy cuts and mounting debts. Migrants form the bulk of the unorganised sector in most Asian countries. The increasing differential between regular and casual wage rates has aggravated the conditions of distress migrations. Migrants cite the lack of local, small-scale industries in rural areas and the lack of developed market opportunities in their villages as their reasons for migration. Under the most unimaginable conditions of physical hardship, they exercise their rights to belong to civil society and economically regulate their lives. The problems lie in a state that may succumb to short-term political gains, use coercion on or manipulate those already immiserised, and do little about solving the problem of jobless growth and spiralling human rights violations.

The skewed development strategies have had severe implications for women. The Women's Decade (1975-1985) increased the general attention given to women's issue in Asia. However, it appears that, in real terms, women in Asian societies continue to be relegated to the position of passive receptors of policies. They continue to be the victims of social systems, neither subjects of their histories nor central to decisions about the kinds of social responsibilities they may wish to bear. For women in extreme poverty the condition is even more critical. Especially on the Southasian subcontinent due to patriarchy and other social causes, the pathology of inhuman violence combined with material inequality proves to be dehumanising and of the most severe kind. The inadequate support for compulsory primary education, adult-literacy programmes, health care for the poor, land reforms, and food security systems has meant, especially for women, a continuing violation of their rights. The Beijing declaration unanimously declared agendas for equality including goals for equitable and sustainable development, demands for safeguarding women's human rights throughout their life-cycles and commitments from governments to that end, and, also the agenda for upholding peace as an irreducible condition for development. The reform process has forced women to monitor the impact of national and international programmes on women. Women researchers are making available gender disaggregated data. Women's organisations are also looking into the implications of the new trade regime and the WTO. High on the agenda of the Asian countries will be the right to employment, regularisation of employment, minimum wages, maternity and paternity leave, right to association and collective bargaining, right to dignity, provision for safe and secure work environment, equal political representation at all levels, right to education, provision of constitutional guarantees and enactment of legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.



Democratic governance is also being threatened during global restructuring because of the unabated desire for economic growth and industrialisation. In Southeast Asia there have been restrictions on the freedom of expression and association. National security laws and practice have been sharpened, thus, enabling the state's legal forces to suppress social and political unrest. South Asia's more democratic polities are also not free from the extra judicial detentions and violence against those who oppose government policies. In more ways than one, the economic social justice agenda and the civil, political and cultural rights agenda remain not only unfulfilled but threatened. In the "transition" countries, on their way to establishing a full market economy, the reforms have been initiated in the absence of democratic reforms (Vietnam). In Central Asia the reforms have been crippled because of institutions still being very much part of the "old" order.

Development strategies as a whole have also been critiqued for showing little sensitivity to the communities in whose name the interventionist strategists were executed. The record of development efforts particularly when unleashed by the state has had a dismal record. Globalisation has further aggravated the problem of local communities and cultural identities. The problem of coercion is serious when local cultures are perceived as "lesser" cultures and dominant cultures as those which carry the majority and own the channels of communication. The homogenisation of culture has led to the genocide or disintegration of "lesser" cultures, breaking down seriously people's capacity to resist and to change on terms set by themselves. The state and the markets have also stimulated a highly consumption-oriented culture among the growing middle classes, often resulting in a decline of the cultural diversity and richness of the polity.

For the voluntary sector, democratic representation and political decentralisation continue to be major concerns. It is only through active participation that public interest institutions can force the state to collaborate in democratic decision-making on important needs such as equity, social justice, human rights and related freedoms. To maintain high standards of fiscal, political and social accountability, transparency, and enhanced powers for decentralised institutions, local bodies will have to insist on the reduction of mismanagement and misdirected policies and an enlargement of the state's responsibilities for the protection and the promotion of the vulnerable populations.

### 1.3 Civil Society in Asia

As Asian countries restructure their economies, major changes are occurring in trade and technology flows, stabilisation and growth patterns, social sector outlays. Many of these changes have called for a renegotiation of the roles of social movements, NGOs, Government, and markets in the polity. Traditionally, many civil organisations have perceived themselves as providing critiques of dominant systems, as 'conscience-keepers' of a nation, and as organisations 'closer to the field'.<sup>1</sup> Social issues concerning questions of equity and justice have been central to many South voluntary organisations. However, the voluntary sector in countries like India with a much older history is particularly heterogeneous in its affiliations, objectives, methods of action and internal structures. Many organisations are associated with entrepreneurial groups, thus, minimising the adverse impacts of certain types of economic growth. Some of the associations intervene directly on behalf of target groups (communities of tribals, fisherfolk, etc.), whereas others prefer to be catalysts, intermediary organisations, linking with others and hoping in the long run, to create self-reliance at the grassroots level. Several of the more professional bodies are large institutions, complex and hierarchical, with salaried staff, whereas others run as informal groups.

Grassroots NGOs today claim to be "promoting people-centred development at the micro-level", "promoting and upholding peoples policies and rights", and "promoting people's centred values and perspectives". Their primary concerns are mutual accountability, augmentation of human resources in the voluntary sector, enhancement of the autonomy and power of the voluntary sector vis-à-vis the government, organisational development and sectoral strengthening, catering to the need for advocacy and negotiation strategies, training in the areas of knowledge, analytical, managerial and technical skills. They recognise the need for local self governance, and for alternative micro-level coping strategies. There

<sup>1</sup> For the way Hivos distinguishes the different categories of civil society organisations, please refer to Ch. 3.



has also been clearly a shift to urban poverty concerns, to the promotion of equity issues, and towards the support of networking efforts in civil society.

Trade unions, women's organisations, social movements, corporate philanthropic organisations, churches, and associations of concerned people all represent voluntarism in some form or another. The growing acceptance of these public collectives by global agencies such as UNDP, or the Bretton Woods institutions all point towards dynamism in co-operation, its modalities, and the issue of democratic representation. The UNDP in 1993 claimed that there were well over 50,000 non-government organisations in South countries! These figures in themselves say little. However, they do suggest that the presence of organised dissent in civil society may not be taken lightly by policy makers. The real problem is in the terms of co-operation, especially when corrupt governments are relentlessly capturing resources, organisations, community platforms and bureaucracies. Voluntary organisations may find that co-operation, equal decision-making and equal participation with corrupt governments can leave only two options: rejection or co-optation.

From the mid '70s to the '80s there has been a significant growth of the professionalised voluntary sector in this region, because of the need felt by some public-interest institutions to engage actively in livelihood issues such as forestry, health, and the protection of the commons in collaboration with government welfare wings. Left parties and trade unions perceive this collaborative effort as co-optation, no better than 'contractorship', but many of these efforts are not without their commitment. Must all partnerships with government be perceived as a lowering of standards of political resistance and dilution of ideologies? Are they only a sharpening of the service-delivery-resource capabilities of the voluntary organisation? Governments have many mechanisms at their disposal for replicating good models that might emerge from the extensive micro-level experience that non-governmental organisations have with communities. This helps them to perceive genuine interests and to build organic links on the field. The state conceives of development in national terms. NGOs can be critically engaged by dealing with local interests. However, despite the competitive advantages at the micro level and the first-hand information that they often have, the question remains as to whether NGOs can really short-circuit the structures of domination created by local elites, which use the state apparatus to maintain themselves: Much depends on the internal political and social strength of the public-interest institution if it is to be an effective partner of government, consistently representing the poor and yet willing to share responsibilities in civil society.

Social organisations as intermediaries may at times reflect the biases of local elites, thus diluting the struggle of the poor everywhere to solve the problems of caste, class, gender and race in communities on their own terms. There is tension between the need for 'commitment' and the need for 'competence' among some voluntary organisations. There is also the endemic need among some to be accepted by donor institutions and governments. Both these factors have contributed to altering significantly the possibilities for radically altering dominant politics and returning to people at the grassroots control over their history.

Social movements in various parts of Asia (notably in environmental issues) are still engaged in protesting against, resisting and coping with the fall-outs of the gigantic projects of social development, variously termed industrialisation and modernisation. High on their agendas has been the critique of the uneven record of development, as envisioned in government plans and realised in the highly imbalanced social indicators of different regions and communities within states. In addition to their overall combat against poverty, they also have to contend with the growing loss of self-reliance, both at the level of communities and at the level of the nation state.

The failure of governments, over the years, to secure a minimum social economic justice agenda is today receiving great attention in the NGO sector. More efficiency is being demanded of the public social delivery institutions. The partial success of governments in poverty eradication has been offset by the thousands of community-level examples in social mobilisation and resistance and the experimental construction of alternatives all over the Asian region, from decentralised water-management systems to provisions of locally available indigenous-knowledge-driven health-care services. There have been, various intermittent upsurges of dissent, sustained protest, everyday resistance, calls for transparency in



government, and peoples' organisations in civil society building movements and carrying out campaigns. Social movements in their political practice are also 'globalising', and building up linkages.

There is also a crisis of governance in civil society, where major portions of the economy are being handed over to markets and corporate alliances, and where private interests override local democratic aspirations. The growing malaise in governments causes severe strains on productive co-operation between them and the voluntary sector, including mass-based people's organisations in the conception and execution of poverty-alleviation programmes. The terms on which institutions in civil society may be asked to integrate their efforts with the state, which is itself in the process of integration with global transnational interests, makes the issue of long-term political change a painfully protracted one. The mutual accountability that is being demanded of government-voluntary organisation relations requires institutional integrity (e.g., transparency), particularly to the communities involved.

NGOs today have to contend with the growing disenchantment among the poor. The poor are weary with ineffective state interventions on the one hand, and, on the other, with markets that remind them of their exile. Sustainability of development work over a period of time is another serious matter that faces the NGO sector. Several voluntary organisations have built-in strategies of withdrawal and disengagement consciously so that they may catalyse empowerment among the poor communities, because the dissolution of an intermediary organisation is the beginning of the sustainability curve for a local community itself. In this debate on self-reliance no one has the monopoly over the right strategies.

The challenges of long-term sustainable work can only be met by multisectoral linkages, associations and negotiations between governments, non-governmental organisations, community organisations, the corporate sector, people's movements, aid institutions, local bodies and political parties. High on the agenda of governments will be extensive cooperation of people's organisations if they are to have a meaningful role in making history. The social and economic justice agenda may, in many cases, be closely linked to the cultural and political rights agendas. Unfortunately the term 'participatory' often does not reflect democratic decision-making and the sharing of power in the best traditions. The term is often used by institutions in power to pretend that people's views have been sought, realised and their consent now secured.

As citizens in civil society will increasingly look towards voluntary organisations for resolving the crises in a divided world, it may be necessary for public-interest institutions to rethink the strategies required to begin a common programme of negotiation and action which involves both government, social movements, NGOs and the private corporate sector. Unless the voluntary sector and government open such doors for negotiation it may be difficult to begin the process of reforms within institutions that are involved directly in development programmes. All sectors must participate in debates on public accountability, and prevent governments from repeating systemic failures in the delivery of social justice.

The political and social experiences of social action in Asia have shown that during the crisis, and the contours of destitution, people's collectives have shown remarkable courage in resisting and in giving hope and courage to the affected. Through mobilisation, consensus-building and resistance people have demonstrated that social justice, equity, values and the enjoyment of fundamental rights do matter.



## 2. Hivos in Asia in retrospect

### 2.1 Activities in retrospect: in qualitative terms

This chapter briefly reviews Hivos's experiences in Asia and the CIS during the period 1992-1997. The starting point for this review, both qualitative and quantitative, is the earlier Asia five-year Policy Framework *Hivos in Asia: Beyond Traditional NGOs*. In addition, general policy developments are taken into account, particularly regarding the sector of culture.

During the past five years, there was a sizeable policy shift to supporting broader mass-based organisations which, as apex body organisations, could represent more strongly the struggles and demands of their constituencies. Before 1992, many of the new programmes supported by Hivos, were in fact local-level replications of successful efforts by other NGOs in nearby localities, many new partners the offspring of already existing organisations. This approach had a number of constraints. It resulted in a multiplication of small-scale efforts, the impact of which rarely went beyond the local level. The replication of existing partners often resulted in unhealthy rivalry between neighbouring organisations. It also led to a loss of expertise. As a result, both old and new organisations often lacked the expertise to implement the wide range of sectoral activities that were demanded by the then standard integrated rural development approach. Lastly, most organisations opted for a legal form which allowed little say in decision-making processes by their constituencies; they preferred to be intermediary development organisations (NGOs). In line with Hivos's basic policy document *Full Participation: A Question of Power*, the 1992 Asia Policy Framework contained the explicit intention to go 'beyond traditional NGOs'. Henceforth, Hivos's programmes in Asia strategised by supporting federated structures, which gave its constituencies a real influence on decision-making processes and which focused on decentralising responsibilities for its activities. Membership-based social organisations which emphasised greater involvement in political participation, and collective campaigning, received priority. Hivos co-operated with organisations that were able to combine grassroots work with policy advocacy at the state or national level. Organisations with cross-sectoral approaches were also supported, especially those that made serious efforts to integrate concerns of environmental sustainability with economic activities, with gender sensitivity and with rights perspectives. According to available statistical information, in Asia Hivos has succeeded in moving in the desired direction. This sets the Asia programme somewhat apart from the Hivos programme in other continents. In 1996, the percentage of Asia programmes falling within the category of pro-active grassroots organisations and social (interest and advocacy) organisations (in terms of numbers of partners) was 10 % and 45 % respectively (for the Hivos programme as a whole these figures were 10 % and 26 % respectively). In 1997 in terms of financial expenditures these figures for Asia were 6 % and 51 %, totalling 57 %. One may conclude from this that policies have thus been in tune with changing ground realities.

There were also areas where changing ground realities forced Hivos to reconsider its policy priorities. A serious set-back occurred in 1992 itself, when the Government of Indonesia directed local development organisations that they were no longer permitted to accept funds from Dutch funding agencies in case these funds originated from the Netherlands Ministry for Development Co-operation. The conflict was prompted by differences over human rights perspectives between the Indonesian and Netherlands governments. As a result Hivos was forced to dramatically scale down its programme in Indonesia. Remaining partners were supported from private funding sources. In the same year, a major innovative step ahead was that Hivos began operations in two ex-Soviet states - Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan - covering difficult territories which were essentially transition societies. Also, between 1992 and 1997 several missions were made to Vietnam, to explore the possibilities of starting a limited programme in that country.

The Asia 1992-1997 Kaderplan prioritised six areas of support:

- (i) the economy; conditions for production
- (ii) rights of minorities and indigenous groups
- (iii) environment and sustainable development



- (iv) women, gender and development
- (v) HIV/AIDS and development
- (vi) urban social organisation

In 1993, Hivos decided to give overall priority to the sectors Economic Activities and Culture (cf. the strategy document *A Two-Track Strategy*). General sector policies were further elaborated in the main policy documents on Culture and Development (1995), Human Rights (1996), Economic Activities (1996), Gender and Development (1996), Environment (forthcoming), and the policy note Hivos and Population (1992).

#### **The economy: Conditions for production**

In the past five years, virtually all Asian countries where Hivos is working have gone through a process of fundamental economic transitions towards an open market economy. These economic changes underscore the importance of Hivos's attention for economic development in Asia and the CIS. In Hivos-Asia, the sector of economic activities has grown, particularly in recent years. The role of Hivos in the economic sector has been at both the micro-level (loans, training) and the macro-economic level (lobby and campaigning for WTO, influencing national or state policies, networking on effects of SAP). Much attention has been given to micro-level activities such as specialised training in capacity building, HRD, micro-level rural enterprise, interfacing with rural lending banks, marketing strategies, promoting and developing primary thrift and credit coops, and fostering local resource mobilisation.

Against the expansion of training and support activities, the growth of the credit portfolio has, in Asia, stayed somewhat behind expectations. The reasons for this are:

- Due to availability of subsidised credit (e.g. India), quotations of HTF are not always attractive
- Due to extensive government control in the banking sector, decision-making regarding credit is often politically influenced. Thus, for HTF, there are relatively few private financial institutions with whom Hivos can co-operate.
- National credit institutions are protected from foreign competition. It is difficult for HTF to obtain formal approval to supply credit.

The CIS-countries were in the midst of currency reforms, a revision of the financial systems and reallocating property titles. This context was unfavourable for credit activities.

#### **Rights of minorities and indigenous groups**

During recent years in many Asian countries, authoritarian states have suppressed minority groups, including cultural/religious minorities and/or indigenous peoples. Furthermore, minority groups bear the brunt of increasing communalism in several countries in the region. These experiences have only underlined the importance of the issue of the rights of minorities.

Hivos has, in Asia, a considerable number of partners in the field of minority rights, some of whom can be regarded as pioneer organisations. These organisations are actively involved in areas like campaigning against communalism; prevention of ethnic conflicts; promotion of tribal economic/political rights; securing titles to land and access to factors of production (e.g. forest produce); opposing displacements and encroachments on (customary) lands with as a consequence loss of livelihood and food security; women's rights; and cultural identities of indigenous peoples. Institution-building in minorities' rights representation received serious attention because of the growing need to sustain campaigns and to create platforms where redressal can be sought by the affected.

#### **Environment and sustainable development**



In Asia, people's movements involved in environmental actions have contributed to the overall awareness of environmental issues, the issues of deprivation and people's relation and dependence on the commons, the problems of state-led development projects and their impact on the poor, and the shortcomings of top-down approaches to development planning. The 1992 UNCED-Conference may have helped in building up environmental concern among NGOs, social movements and community based organisations. It is, however, true that NGOs have had difficulty in slowing down the pace of environmental degradation caused by economic and development policies in Asia which often are aimed at maximising short-term returns. Therefore, the importance of focusing on countering the environmental degradation resulting from economic strategies including industrialisation and export-led agriculture policies, remains crucial.

During the period 1992-1997, Hivos doubled its financial support for 'environment and development' in Asia and CIS. Support has been primarily on organisational development, but also on dissemination of information, on action research and lobbying, and on activities related to, e.g., agriculture, fisheries, and mining.

In accordance with the Kaderplan, considerable support was given to research and lobby activities. In particular, support to lobby activities at the international level was substantial.

Support was given to grassroots level organisations promoting environmental awareness at the community level for protection of resources vital to their livelihood. Also local resource management and the promotion of LEISA (Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture) were given support.

Resource persons were invited to give training in environmental impact analysis. More can be done in this area.

Furthermore, support was furnished to organisations involved in issues like urban environment, rural and urban industries, the impact of mega-projects and issues confronting fisherfolk. These issues are prominent in Central Asia, but also in other Asian countries. Clearly, this reflects the severity of the problems and the strength of NGOs active in this field. In India, Sri Lanka and to a lesser extent Indonesia, the attempt of NGOs to co-operate with and lobby the government has sometimes increased the effectiveness of NGO-strategies and succeeded in influencing government policies.

In 1996/97, Hivos evaluated its policy on environment and development in terms of quality and quantity of its counterpart portfolio. It was concluded that not only the number of counterparts working on environmental issues has increased considerably but among these also the number of organisations having a pioneer role in their country.

### **Women, Gender and Development**

In all Asian countries, Hivos co-operates with strong women's organisations. In recent years, they have made substantial achievements, especially in the areas of strategic development and lobbying. The women's movement is, in Asia, gaining more and more clout; it is probably one of the more important and visible social movements.

During 1992-1997, Hivos's thrust in Asia was on support to the following:

- women's organisations (in campaigning for policies favourable to women's interests; e.g. economic security, violence);
- mass based organisations (on economic interests of women);
- more balanced gender relations in mixed partner organisations.

Has the position of women overall improved? Certainly in some aspects but countervailing powers have also been on the increase. Violence against women is in some countries as distressing as before; and achievements in emancipation are often followed by a turning back of the clock. Therefore Hivos has given strong attention to violence against women. In all Asian countries, Hivos supports women's organisations which play a pioneer role, e.g. in legal defence cases; shelter homes and crisis centres; combating trafficking in women; information dissemination; training; counselling; and lobbying.

Breaking down gender stereotypes is pre-eminently a social-cultural affair. Hivos supported a number of initiatives on the cross-roads of gender and culture (e.g. films, workshops).



Several Hivos's partners play a role at the national level, putting issues of women's rights on the agenda of policy makers, campaigning on the legal position of women, rendering services to individual women or women's organisations; and thus playing an important role in building up civil society and democratisation. Hivos provides institutional support.

Other Hivos's partners perform important roles in international circles; either through lobbying international policy makers (e.g. on trafficking in women), or in networking and strengthening member organisations in methods and strategies.

For 1992-1997, the following results can be mentioned:

Hivos facilitated the participation of partners in the UN conferences (the Cairo Conference of Population and the Beijing Women's conference in 1995) and their follow-up;

Hivos supported organisational and institutional development for women's organisations, for instance, by facilitating management training; in situations of organisational crisis Hivos would play a proactive role if it was invited to do so;

In the CIS new forms of women's organisations are coming into existence; Hivos played a role in fostering networking and preparing the ground for women's projects;

Towards mixed (men-women) partner organisations, Hivos engaged in a process of agenda-setting on gender issues. Gender trainings were facilitated. Unfortunately, these trainings were successful only under certain conditions. In Indonesia, e.g., an evaluation concluded that gender training of staff as a strategy for organisational change has limited impact and requires follow-up;

The contributions by women's organisations to direct improvement of women's socio-economic position, esp. for poor urban and rural women, has been limited, reflecting the systemic difficulties of the overall environment itself. Recently, Hivos built up new partnerships with organisations geared at strengthening the economic position of women (Sri Lanka, India, CIS);

#### **HIV/AIDS and Development**

In the former five year-plan, emphasis was placed on the following:

- HIV/AIDS as a human rights issue; protection of affected people, support to self-organisation, exposure of violation of human rights, prevention of victimisation;
- HIV/AIDS as a development issue; exposure of factual realities, integrating development work with approaches on the way HIV/AIDS further affects the already disadvantaged, confronting lack of government strategies, need for sexual education, and combating conservative and moralising stands.

In Asia, the prevailing taboo atmosphere around sexuality and sexual health proves to be a serious hindrance for the development of effective HIV/AIDS prevention strategies. In all programme countries, Hivos made efforts to identify organisations working along the above-mentioned lines. As a result, Hivos now has a growing number of partners in this policy thrust. Hivos has, however, not succeeded in all countries. In the CIS, attempts to support embryonic organisations were frustrated by the inimical environment in which organisations (and people) are forced to operate.

In the past years, support has been provided to self-organisations of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHIV/AIDS). Hivos took an active stand in facilitating networking and training in, e.g., methodologies of counselling.

In the Netherlands, Hivos organised a public campaign on AIDS & Development.

#### **Urban Social Organisation**

The former Asia five year-plan mentions the case of rural-urban migrants, self-employed people and slum dwellers; and calls for support to pressure groups engaged in housing rights, legal protection, and unionisation. Several organisations are being supported in this area, some of them being the first to engage in this area of work. The conditions for organising slum dwellers and migrants are, however, extremely difficult and volatile; as a consequence, it is a matter of deep significance that Hivos has been working with organisations that have fought and mobilised for the rights of the growing class of the urban poor, particularly women workers and migrant tribal workers, e.g., in India. New partners include a squatters' organisation in Central Asia, and organisations fighting for the rights of women migrants in South East Asia. Hivos is committed to giving close attention to this sector. It is clear that with the internal migrations that are a growing phenomenon in South Asia the urban poor are becoming a major



constituency. Issues include an economic-social justice agenda and civil and political rights, particularly violence, and fundamentalism.

## Culture

In 1995, Hivos selected 'culture and development' as a priority policy area. Previously several organisations were supported in Asia that make use of the arts medium (e.g. puppet theatre, film, publications) to spread a message (e.g. gender, environment). At present, some of these organisations are placed under the Hivos's umbrella of 'culture and development'.

Hivos realises that cultural expressions and the arts have the potential to visualise people's aspirations, dreams, values and self-respect, and that in this way they contribute to the building of civil society, a society of self-conscious citizens. Six disciplines are distinguished: film, literature, theatre, visual arts (Photography, art, sculpture, etc.), dance, and music.

In Asia, by 1997, the number of culture projects in Asia had increased although they still remain at a modest level of financing. Hivos engaged in:

- building up a network of resource persons (art critics, artists, intermediary organisations, journalists etc.);
- conducting surveys of existing activities in India and Indonesia;
- selecting a number of organisations for support;
- and organising a conference in Central Asia on 'culture and arts in a region in transition'.

## In Retrospect and Looking Ahead

In retrospect, the impact of five years' of Hivos's support in Asia has been innovative, focused significantly on broad-basing people's resistance to inequalities and building sustainable alternatives by encouraging support to membership organisations. It is useful to review the question of the position of NGOs, social movements and community-based organisations supported in Asia, their strengths, their weaknesses, also vis-à-vis countervailing powers, and the scope of their influence and action. One could point at a number of Asian NGOs that have been successful in 'making a difference': e.g., women's organisations in India, human rights organisations in South East Asia, environmental organisations in Central Asia or economic organisations in Sri Lanka. There are however many examples of efforts that have a minimal influence and are unable to alter significantly the existing environment. Development being a highly political issue, requiring a variety of social and technical skills, it is not surprising that any stock-taking will provide mixed results. It is important to learn from failures as well as from success stories. From an accountability perspective, it is important to promote transparency regarding results and impact (see chapter 5).

The political and economic developments in Asia over the past five years have reaffirmed the relevance of the priority areas decided upon by Hivos in the five-year policy document, *Hivos in Asia: Beyond Traditional NGOs*. After the commencement of the previous plan, one new sector was chosen as a general Hivos priority: the area of culture. Moreover, Hivos decided to arrange its internal organisation more along sectoral lines. Also new is the emphasis on alliances in the North, in particular with sectoral organisations, aiming at applying concerted pressure in the North to change policies but also with the aim of establishing new partnerships along sectoral lines. These new aspects of Hivos's organisational set-up have proven to be effective in substantiating the new sectoral priorities. North-South linkages of organisations over common issues has also been receiving attention, and this has been particularly enhanced during the support of Hivos to its partners for participation in the various international conferences (e.g., Consumers International, IFOAM) and the UN Summits, particularly, at Cairo, Copenhagen, and Beijing.

A conclusion reconfirmed during the latter five years of Hivos's presence in Asia is that increasingly Hivos will have to pay attention to strengthening community based organisations and be sensitive to the role of intermediaries (NGOs). Both represent the interests of the poor but in different ways and this may have varying effects on operationalising field action, sustainability and empowerment processes. In Asia, the entire gamut of social organisations can be found: welfarist organisations, service rendering



NGOs, intermediary organisations, apex bodies, trade unions, etc. Some NGOs are closely connected to people's self-organisations. A characteristic of people's associations (in particular, in South Asia) is a high level of spiritual motivation and dedication. In terms of effectiveness or accountability one type of NGO does not necessarily perform better than another.

This has also been an issue raised in the so-called Impact Study, commissioned by Hivos and the other Dutch co-financing agencies and published in 1991. This study reconfirms the value of the Dutch co-financing programme but also draws some critical lessons on the limitations of the NGO-sector, in particular regarding the lack of social embedding and the lack of effectiveness. In 1995, the co-financing agencies reported on their response to the Impact Study (*With Quality In Mind*) and also projected the future orientation of their activities (*New Directions*). The new organisational set-up of Hivos is another response to the Impact Study, as is the formulation of Hivos's sectoral priorities. The 1998-2002 Asia five-year Kaderplan aims at integrating the lessons learnt from the Impact Study and the conclusions drawn in the previous five-year Kaderplan.

As was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the Hivos programme in Asia has over the last five years distinguished itself from the overall Hivos programme in that it has had a strong emphasis on grassroots / community based organisations and social organisations; and within the last in particular membership-based organisations and interest organisations were strongly represented. This emphasis has increased over the years, all the more so as in the period 1992-1994 Hivos reviewed support to a number of 'integrated rural development organisations', strongly represented in particular in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Many sharpened their sectoral approaches, integrating at higher levels development work with the poorest of the poor. They augmented their expertise in fields as diverse as social forestry and watershed management to gender concerns and energy needs. In this process those organisations which were local-based, implementing a wide scale of rather unspecific and disparate activities, rarely exceeding their local activities to work on a higher advocacy level, had to either get more focused or seek support elsewhere.

Since 1992, Hivos's reorientation has been intentionally focused on increasing its support to more sectoral focused organisations; to more public interest organisations; to an appropriate mix of issue-based organisations and network and advocacy organisations; and to efforts aimed at building linkages between the different levels of institutional support. There has also been an effort to increase the share of large organisations, involving substantial amounts of Hivos support, both because these are expected to be more efficient and have a larger impact, and because Hivos has institutional constraints which prevent it from supporting a limitless number of smaller organisations. At the same time Hivos has made a conscious effort to keep its support to those smaller, organisations working on single sector policy thrust, which fit well within Hivos institutional approach and sectoral policy thrusts. Apart from the issue of the scale of Hivos support, there also have been the changes in the management debate: a shift from (primarily) social accountability, to professionalism, endowment, measurement of effect, and impact assessment. Organisations that work on the forefront making a difference is the commonality that binds the entire diverse kinds of funding Hivos is willing to do.

Hivos supports programmes that, overall, empower people to deal themselves with the basic challenges of poverty, unemployment, and political rights. Capacity building for pro-poor planning has been high on the agenda. Partners in Asia have demonstrated that social mobilisation is an important vehicle for activating commitments into action. Institutionalisation of participation has been a key factor. Exchange of experiences has been also high on the agenda of Asian partners through workshops, networking, information newsletters and use of the media. Creation of fora for mediation and conflict-resolution, for networking in civil society is being called for by political activist leaders. Hivos has actively supported good management practices and governance efforts in the development sector.

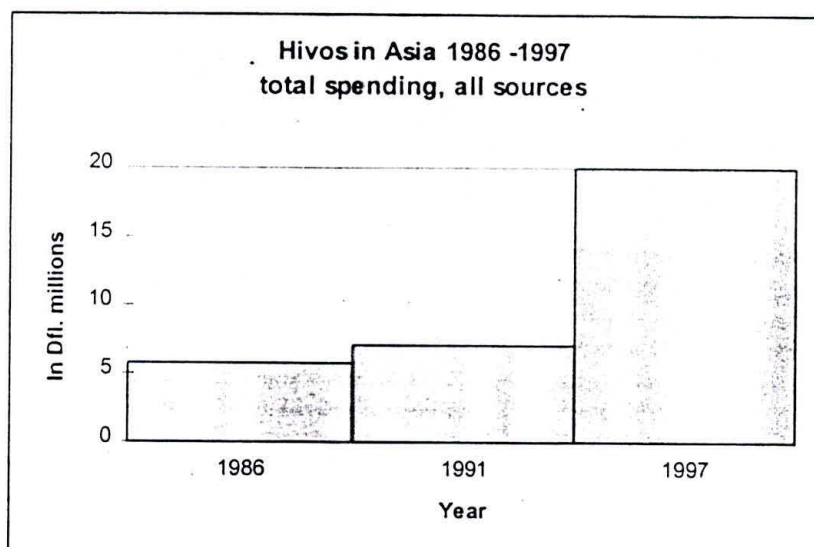


## 2.2 Activities in retrospect: in quantitative terms

During the previous Kaderplan, allocations for the Asia share from the co-financing budget line (Cat. IV) ranged from 19% in 1992 to 21% in 1997. However, actual expenditures in Asia both for 1996 and 1997 were higher, as a share of Cat. IV but even more so as a share of all sources (this includes the budget lines from the European Union, Additional Funds sanctioned by the Dutch Ministry for Development Co-operation and other institutional funders).

The diagram below gives an overview of financial expenditures in the Hivos Asia programme over the last ten years. It appears, that between 1986 - 1991 (the former five year period) the Hivos expenditures in Asia rose from Dfl. 5.7 million to Dfl. 7.1 million (an increase of 25 %); whereas in the subsequent five-year period (1992 - 1997) these increased to Dfl. 20 million. This comes to a remarkable increase of 182%.

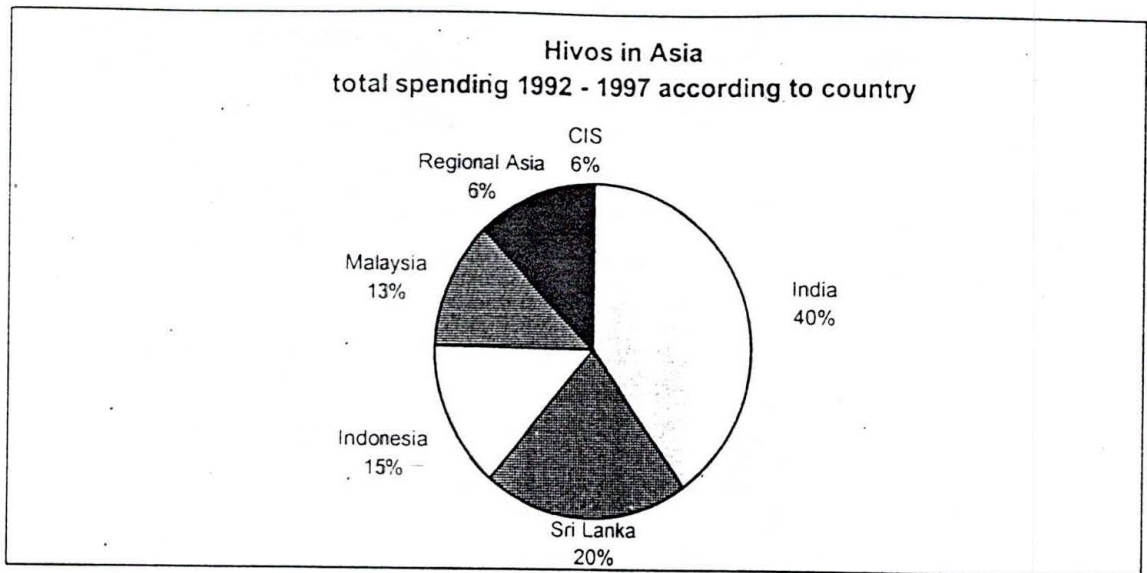
Fig. 1



Looking at the distribution of expenditures according country, we see that India over the years accounted for the largest share; its share varying from 40-50 %. The share of India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Regional Asia programme and the CIS over the period 1992-1997 can be seen in the pie chart below. For a more detailed overview of expenditures in Asia in the period 1986 - 1997, and for a country-wise breakdown, please refer to Annex 2.

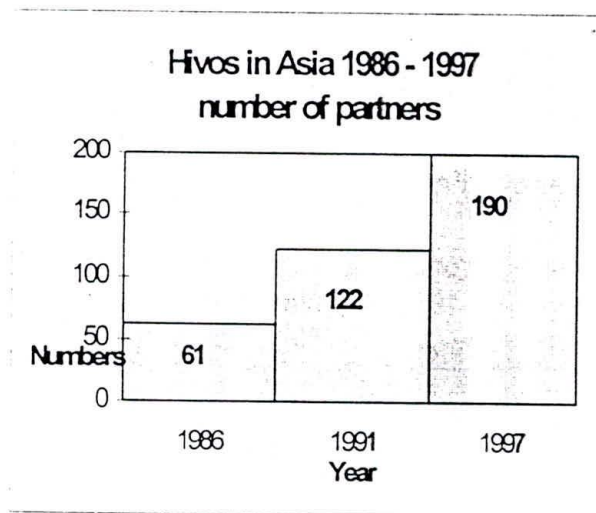


Fig. 2



Like the level of expenditures, the number of partners supported in Asia during the period 1992-1997 increased significantly. Whereas the number of partners supported in Asia in 1986 was 61, by 1991 this number had increased to 122; and it had increased to 190 by 1997. This is an increase of 56 % over the last five years. See the diagram, below (figure 3). For a country-wise breakdown please refer to Annex 1.

Fig. 3



The 56 % increase in terms of numbers of partners compares to a 182% increase of total expenditures (see above), which is an indication for the increase of the average amount of Hivos-support per counterpart . This increase of the average turnover (from Dfl.58.000 to Dfl.105.000 , 81 % ) , as well, is in tune with policy intentions.



As was mentioned before, in line with Hivos's overall policies in Asia there was an increase of support to more sectoral focused organisations, from 68% of total expenditures in Asia in 1992 to 89% of total expenditures in 1997. In this same period, Hivos refined its sectoral focus and modified definitions.

The sectoral distribution according to expenditures is presented in the pie chart below (figure 4). We see, that by 1997 (in terms of expenditures) the share of programmes in Asia focusing on Human Rights, Environment and Economic activities is particularly high (27%, 23% and 22% respectively); in terms of numbers of partners, however, the share of Gender, Women & Development is also significant: (see figure 5 below, see also annex 3).

Fig. 4

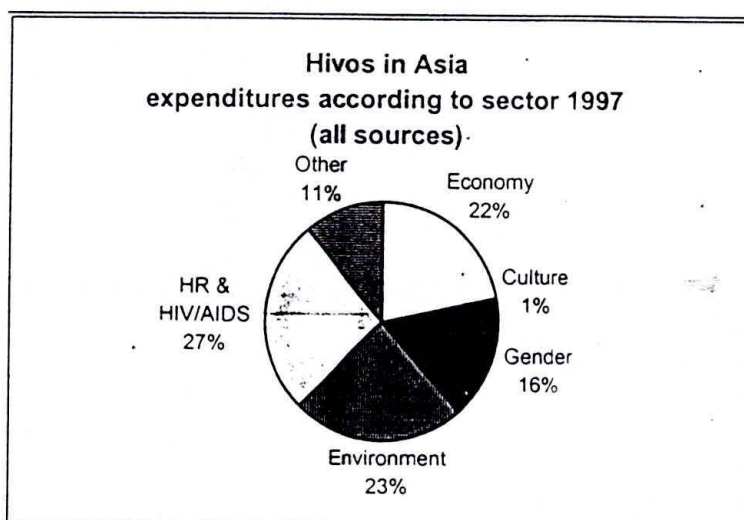
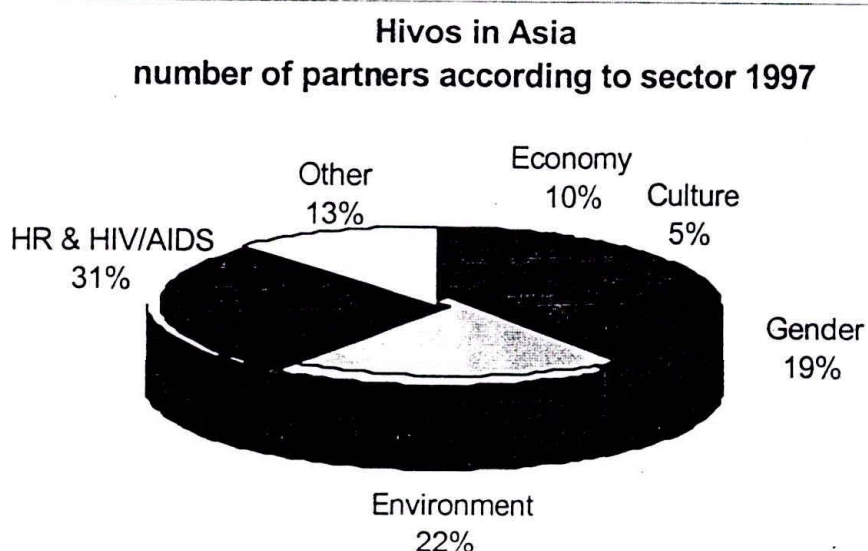


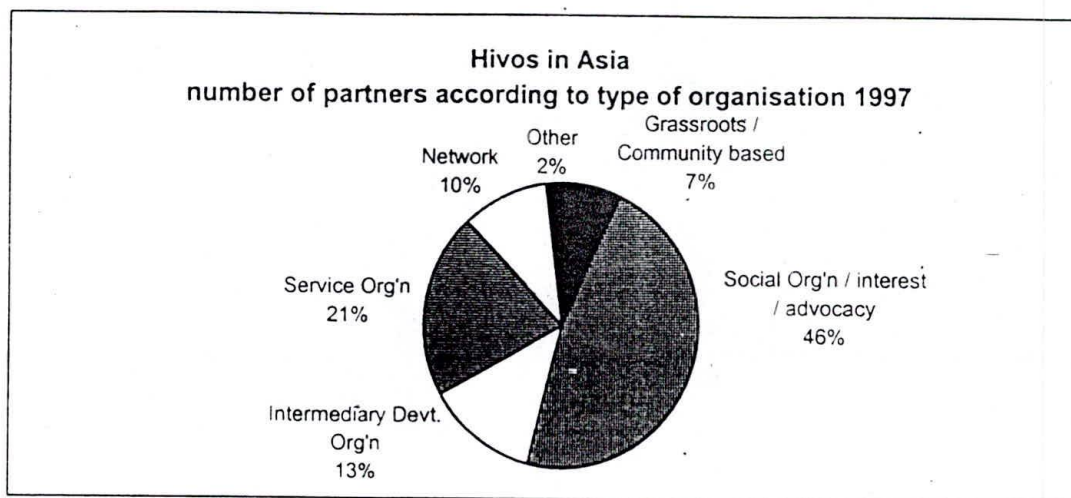
Fig. 5





Further, as was highlighted in the Chapter 2.1, Hivos made strong efforts to increase its support to grassroots and community based organisations, as well as to social organisations with a strong membership base. The percentage distribution of Hivos's support in Asia to the different types of organisations by 1997 is given below, in figure 6. Clearly, grassroots organisations and social organisations account for 7 % and 46 % respectively. For more details on the distribution of Hivos's support in Asia according to type of organisation, please refer to Annex 4.

Fig. 6



For a definition of the distinction between community-based organisations, social organisations, intermediary organisations, et cetera, please refer to Ch.3.



### 3. — Hivos interventions 1998 - 2002: General Outline

#### 3.1 Basic premise: Full Participation, a question of power

For the 1998 - 2002 period, Hivos's policy framework for Asia remains inspired by the analysis contained in its basic policy document, *Full Participation, a question of power*. According to this document, Hivos's fundamental objective is to contribute to the process of empowerment of marginalized people. The notion of empowerment first of all implies fostering institutions that facilitate access of the poor themselves to decision-making processes that affect the lives of the poor. This translates into support for a wide range of civil society institutions, with a preference for those that allow democratic control over their policies by the marginalised themselves. Empowerment is also strengthening the economic position of the poor. This means support for interest organisations, like membership-controlled co-operatives or trade unions working in non-traditional sectors, which work towards improving the bargaining position of the poor. This also includes support for financial intermediaries and for innovative institutional arrangements which facilitate access to credit, markets and support services for the poor.

Marginalisation involves social, economic, political and cultural exclusion of people at various social levels (household, community, nation, global), and is often being justified with arguments of race, ethnicity, culture, and economic exigencies. In those Asian countries which experience rapid economic growth per capita income may grow even for the poor, but income disparities often increase, restricting social opportunities (e.g., access to education and employment). In this sense marginalisation also is a relative phenomenon. Especially in countries with rapid economic growth, marginalisation often is the result of environmental degradation disproportionately affecting the livelihoods of rural and urban poor. In countries undergoing structural adjustment processes, the social and economic gaps have mostly widened, and reduced government spending on the social sector has again disproportionately affected the poor. In the transition countries of the CIS, especially during the phase of economic decline in the early 1990s, marginalisation was a country-wide phenomenon. Here as well, certain groups are affected disproportionately, e.g., rural people, the elderly, women.

Marginalisation on the basis of gender is a process in its own right and with its own dynamics, cutting across processes of socio-economic and political marginalisation.

Hivos's institutional approach implies that a major share of its means will be earmarked for supporting self-organisation, not only at grassroots level - in the form of community-based organisations - but also at apex and federated levels of social and public interest organisations. In some of the Asian countries where Hivos is active, repressive political systems prevent the emergence of such popular controlled institutions. Under such circumstances, Hivos will also support intermediary organisations which aim to increase the space for democratic processes.

Based on the analysis of *Full Participation, a question of power*, Hivos distinguishes the following categories of counterparts:

(i) **grassroots/community based organisations (CBOs)**, often membership-based, are embedded in local communities and attempt to shape a popular local development process;

(ii) **social organisations**, this is a broad category composed of 'interest' and advocacy organisations which have a demonstrable basis in a specific sector of society. **Interest organisations** focus on the defence and promotion of the economic, social and political interests of their members. These organisations reach beyond the local level; sometimes they are forms of higher level integration of grassroots or membership organisations. As community-based organisations, interest organisations supported by Hivos are largely organisations of the marginalised themselves.

**Advocacy organisations** educate, lobby and advocate on specific issues; membership is not a characteristic feature. Advocacy organisations (on issues such as human rights, press freedom, political democracy, violence against women, environment, debt, et cetera) play an important role in forging changes in society which - also - benefit the interests of the marginalised.



(iii) **intermediary development organisations** promote and implement out social development activities in local communities. Membership is not a characteristic feature.

(iv) **service rendering organisations** provide specialist -technical or otherwise- support to other organisations. Often they are contracted to implement specific projects or parts of broader programmes; membership is not a characteristic feature. This category includes non-profit organisations and organisations-for-profit.

Organisations in categories (iii) and (iv) can but mostly do not come from the ranks of the marginalised themselves.

(v) **networks** operate in the field of co-ordination, information, campaigning, communication, and lobby; they may bring together any of the above mentioned categories of organisations.

This way of categorising organisations is a working definition. It does not claim to be watertight. Categories (iii), (iv) and (v) cover organisations known as NGOs in the more strict sense of the word. For categories (i) and (ii), the extent to which the organisation is accountable to the communities with whom they work, is the decisive criterion for Hivos. This may range from full democratic control in the case of community-based and membership organisations, to more indirect forms of accountability, e.g., by making communities responsible for the management of substantial parts of the budget of a programme. To the extent that an organisation is more accountable to communities, it is more likely to qualify for Hivos support.

The very nature of marginalisation and exclusion limits the possibilities to unite and to pursue common interests and aspirations. Constraints include a limited scope for taking risks in terms of immediate survival, given poverty and environmental degradation, lack of access to information, knowledge and expertise, vulnerability to repression and control by authorities at different levels, and geographical and/or social isolation. Outsiders can facilitate and assist processes of organisation among marginalised people, and provide necessary protection and services. Intermediary NGOs (of the development and service type) can provide such direct support.

Indirectly, self-organisation of marginalised people will benefit from an overall non-repressive socio-economic climate which provides the space for people to organise, to demand their rights and to participate in decision-making processes. It is the creation of these spaces which is the making of civil society. Advocacy organisations (on issues such as human rights, press freedom, political democracy, violence against women, environment, debt etc.) play an important role in forging such a climate. Independent media, artists and their cultural initiatives are important facilitators for a diversity of opinions and interests, for enabling communication and exchange between various social groupings. Organisations involved in economic activities assist people in improving their living conditions and their bargaining position.

Building and consolidating countervailing power is never the work of individual organisations. Co-operation, networks and building of broad alliances between civil organisations are indispensable to achieving lasting changes.

Objectives for 1998 - 2002:

In chapter 2, it is shown that Hivos's Asia programme already includes a high proportion of organisations which fall under the categories of grassroots and social organisations. Thus, the aim will be to stabilise the proportion of this type of organisations in the overall Asia programme.

Approximately 7% of the financial resources allocated to the Asia programme will be earmarked for grassroots organisations (was 6% in 1997), and at least 45% will be earmarked for social organisations (51% in 1997). These targets apply to Asia as a whole and not to every country individually.

### 3.2. Sectoral priorities

As mentioned before, five sectors form the core of Hivos's activities in the South. The priorities within



each sector are detailed in chapter 4.

Hivos's basic policy is that 80% of its funds should be spent within these five policy thrusts, with 20% available for projects and programmes that fall outside these sectors. At present the Asia programme spends 89% of the total funds within the priority sectors. This will be difficult to maintain. For 1998 - 2002, the target for Asia has been set at 85%.

Hivos in Asia 1998 - 2002 sector emphasis according to country					
	Economy	Culture	Human Rights & HIV/AIDS	Environment & Development	Gender Women & Development
India	x	x	x	x	x
Sri Lanka	x	x	x		x
Indonesia			x		
Kazakhstan	x	x	x	x	x
Kyrgyzstan	x		x	x	x
Vietnam	x				
Malaysia			x		

As we see from the table above, not all priorities apply to all countries, for details see chapter 6. In Vietnam Hivos intends to concentrate on economic activities, and in Malaysia - where the Hivos programme will gradually be phased-out - Human Rights is the most important sector.

In financial terms more funds will be allocated to the policy thrusts "economic activities" and "culture and development". The shares of the sectors "human rights and HIV/AIDS" and "environment and development" will decrease slightly, whereas the financial allocation for "gender, women and development" will stabilise in relative terms. More in detail:

- Hivos plans to allocate 25 % of financial resources in the period 1998 - 2002 to the sector "economic activities" - this compares to 20% in 1996.
- Activities in the sector "culture and development" will be allocated 5 % of Hivos's financial resources in Asia on an average; this compares to 3 % 1996.
- The other three sectors will be allocated 55 % of Hivos's resources in Asia with "gender, women and development" stabilising at 17%; the allocation for "environment and development" will decrease to 19%; and the share for "human rights and HIV/AIDS" will gradually decrease to 19%.

These targets are for the Hivos programme in Asia as a whole and not for individual countries. Thus the programme in Indonesia will have a more concerted thrust on human rights, the programme in Vietnam will focus on economic activities, and the programme in the CIS will have a higher component of non-sector specific activities by investing in organisational development per se.

The percentages mentioned are minimum targets within the 85 % sector-specific programmes. Given the steep increase in budget allocations for Asia, it is to be expected that in 1998 - 2002 the budget allocations for the sectors 'economic activities' and 'culture and development' will increase both in relative and in absolute terms. The allocations for the other three sectors decrease in relative terms, still the absolute amounts spent on each of these three heads increases substantially, even for "environment and development" and "human rights & aids" (see annex 6) The remaining 15% of the budget can be spent within or outside one of the sectors. Hivos will make a special effort to increase its expenditure for basic social services programmes.



### 3.3. Geographical choices

In Asia, Hivos makes a distinction between two types of programmes (for details refer to Ch. 6):

#### 1. Core Country programmes.

In these countries all objectives of Hivos policies are equally applicable and Hivos will support activities in all its five policy thrusts. We distinguish:

- Core Programmes: India, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan. As the overall Asia programme will grow, core country programmes will have space to grow.
- low profile programmes: Indonesia.
- programmes for Hivos's withdrawal: Malaysia

#### 2. Core Sector programmes.

Here, the focus is on one or two sectors only. Two kind of Hivos's activities pertain to this category:

- The Regional Asia programme is a sector focused programme, addressing issues which transcend national borders. All programmes in this category should be firmly grounded in national constituencies to qualify for Hivos support.
- In some countries Hivos is focusing on one sector. Depending on needs and opportunities Hivos may expand to other sectors. This will be the case for Vietnam, where Hivos will focus on economic activities.

Furthermore; activities outside these core country and core sector programmes may qualify for support. This is the case in the framework of alliances with Dutch organisations like Max Havelaar, Fair Trade - Organisation & Assistance, Triodos Bank, and Milieudefensie (the Dutch chapter of Friends Of the Earth (FOE)). For details please refer to Ch. 7.

The share of the Asia programme in Hivos's overall budget allocations until 1997 has been substantially lower than those of the other two continental bureaux, Africa and Latin America. With 40 % of the total co-financing funds, Africa had received a clear priority within Hivos overall policy priorities. According to earlier prevailing budget allocations, Asia had a share of 22 % for the years 1998 - 2002. In 1997 there were serious discussions regarding the distribution of funds between the continents. Late 1997, the decision was taken to significantly increase the share for Asia, i.e., to 25 % for the years 1998 and 1999 respectively. For the subsequent years the Asia share is still to be decided. As the overall Hivos budget in the next five years will also increase, the absolute increase of the Hivos Asia budget towards the year 2002 is substantial. Hivos realises, that with limited overheads, Hivos will only be able to absorb this growth, if the share of larger partners continues to increase. The challenge thus is to arrive at a manageable mix of larger core partners, and small and micro projects.



#### 4. Sectoral Opportunities

##### 4.1. Economic Activities

In Asia, the trends of economic growth are heterogeneous. Till the onset of the 1997 East Asian crisis, high economic growth could be witnessed in Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam and moderate economic growth in India and Sri Lanka. In the former Soviet Republics, economic reforms were accompanied by a dramatic initial negative growth (see annex 7). All countries show large or even widening disparities between income groups, ethnic groups, women and men. Hivos will aim at economic empowerment of the poor to expand sustainable livelihood opportunities for the poor, and to increase investment in the local and rural economy. In this, access to resources, especially landownership, is considered a crucial factor. The core objective will be to strengthen people's capacity to bargain from a position of strength in a changing economic context, be it as an entrepreneur or as a worker.

The entrepreneurs Hivos intends to support are those active in the informal sector, small producers and small traders. Initiatives to support medium and large enterprises are not excluded from Hivos support; in this case Hivos will critically screen their track record as employer (working conditions etc.). Besides paying attention to improving opportunities for producers, Hivos gives importance to improving labour conditions of workers. Activities strengthening the economic position of women will receive special attention. Optimal use of natural resources will be promoted; negative environmental effects will be minimised. Hivos will support commercial as well as non-commercial ventures; the latter will be supported by means of grants, the former by means of credit (loans, guarantees, and participation).

There are some common features in the Asian economies; e.g., government regulations have liberalised the market for large companies while continuing to be restrictive for small companies. Similarly, promotion of and support for 'official' co-operatives has blocked spaces for community-controlled co-operatives. Also, the widespread political use of credit (undermining credit discipline) is a general phenomenon in Asia. Yet, there are many differences, in particular with respect to available financial institutions, interest rates, inflation rates, and availability and accessibility of credit.

The tools to arrive at economic empowerment can be improving access to credit, enhancing the savings base, skills training, economic literacy, advocacy, research and organisation building.

Depending on the actual state of affairs and needs in specific countries, Hivos will support activities in five fields.

##### 4.1.1. Savings and access to credit

Limited availability of savings schemes and of credit is one of the stumbling blocks for small producers and entrepreneurs in Asia. This is especially so for women, for certain ethnic groups and for entrepreneurs wishing to use sustainable production methods. Credit studies will quantify the actual need for credit (short and medium-term) and identify the appropriate channels for credit in the respective countries. Hivos foster improved access to credit by:

- facilitating small producers and entrepreneurs to access existing savings and credit institutions, preferably those that function on cooperative principles or are membership-based.
- supporting new financial institutions that service this target group, if the former possibility is not available, e.g., in the CIS, where there is a lack of financial institutions for small producers.

Besides access to credit, strengthening the internal savings-base is important for strengthening the financial position of marginalised groups.

Hivos will facilitate documentation and exchange of successful strategies of financial institutions in reaching the poor, promoting the interests of women and promoting environmentally sound production.

##### 4.1.2. Training and technical inputs

Access to credit alone is not enough to improve the economic situation of the marginalised, whether in



rural or urban areas. In the midst of the process of liberalisation and globalisation, many NGOs and social movements feel the need to reorient themselves strategically, and to develop alternative strategies for development. Hivos will support :

- entrepreneurship training for small producers to assist them in adapting to the changing economic context;
- feasibility studies of the economic potential of regions and specific groups through, e.g., diversification of production, creation of added value through processing and creation of off-farm employment opportunities.

#### **4.1.3. Organisation of small producers and of workers**

Effective promotion of the interests of small producers requires collective action, be it in the market (e.g., via cooperative organisation) or at a political level (via interest/lobby groups). The interests of women need to be well represented in these organisations. Hivos will continue to support the self-organisation of workers. The emphasis will be on:

- unionisation efforts in the unorganised sectors of the economy, where often workers are women (e.g. informal sector, domestic work, agricultural labourers). Asia has a large population of migrant workers and although organisation of migrant workers is extremely difficult, such efforts deserve priority attention.
- efforts to form independent unions in countries where this basic right is denied.

#### **4.1.4. Advocacy**

Hivos will support local movements and other initiatives aimed at influencing national and international policies in order to create an enabling environment for improving the economic situation of marginalised groups. Advocacy work could be in the areas of structural adjustment, land ownership, social development, trade, regional co-operation, debt, financing, foreign investment, privatisation, conflict resolution, reduction of military expenditure, regional co-operation etc.

Special attention will be given to support advocacy for change of restrictive co-operative laws. Support will further be provided to South-South exchanges and to networks that lobby for 'Southern' perspectives and alternative development models as well as policies on social and environmental issues, at international fora such as the UN, WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF. To qualify for Hivos support, such initiatives must be realistic, concrete, seek to develop a broad base of support, and be gender sensitive.

#### **4.1.5. Socially and environmentally friendly production processes**

Hivos will support environmentally friendly production processes (e.g., production of renewable energy, organic farming). Temporary subsidies are possible, but economic viability needs to be achieved within a limited period of time. Initiatives which pay better prices to small-scale producers while conforming with market principles qualify for Hivos's support. Support can be provided to companies that operate through Fair Trade channels.

### **4.2. Culture and Development**

Cultural identities are lost in the present stream of economic and social developments. The present developments seem to lead towards uniformity and cultural homogeneity. Borders disappear and international relations become more determining. The trans-nationalisation of culture has not been without repercussions, causing among others a disjunction in cultural identities. Migration has led to conflicts over access to resources, identity and space. Since traditions are dynamic, changes have always taken place but the current rapid developments combined with the loss of a strong cultural framework for decision-making are making people insecure. In some cases, people have reacted by turning towards fundamentalism, cramped traditionalism, chauvinism, sectarianism and isolationism. The revival of local



identities sometimes leads to confrontations between different groups if the lines drawn between the groups are also lines between having or not having access to land, jobs, education, etc. (e.g. Tamils/Sinhalese, Russians/Kazakh, dalit/non-dalit etc). Certainly, an awareness of one's own identity and past is a fundamental condition for authentic and sustainable development.

Another issue is, that in some of Hivos's programme countries, the lack of democratic conditions has hampered artistic expression, when arts, media and culture are curtailed by censorship and restrictive licensing. The creation of monolithic, centralised states during the post-colonial period has proven to be fatal for cultural pluralism. The state has also bureaucratised cultural links among artists of different countries.

In general, the number of cultural organisations and the number of artists is very high in the Asian region. Nevertheless, the economic position of artists is often insecure.

In India, both the film and literature sectors are strong. In Indonesia, poetry and traditional (puppet) theatre have been important areas of activity. In Central Asia, during the Soviet period, almost all disciplines were well developed though perhaps limited in terms of freedom of expression. Now, slowly, they are recovering from the political and economic upheaval. A few innovative experiments have taken place in theatre, journalism and film-making. In Sri Lanka, the film sector is at a developing and promising stage. The same is true for literature, visual arts and theatre.

Hivos's intends to:

- maintain a mix of product-oriented and organisation-oriented partners. Support will be extended to short-term projects to keep the Culture and Development programme innovative and open.
- support a mix of small and large scale cultural activities.
- support organisations and initiatives which help emerging artists to earn a living by identifying projects that enhance their productive capacity. Support to individual artists will be restricted.
- broaden its focus to include rural initiatives.
- maintain a gender-sensitive orientation, pay attention to the need for gender-sensitive media, and to challenge stereotypes regarding femininity and masculinity.
- support initiatives to revive local culture where 'own' traditions are being erased and people uprooted (e.g., CIS). Though Hivos's support will not be based on the preservation of 'traditional' culture per se, such initiatives may play a key role in reinventing one's own history, in creating common identities and in civic education;
- maximise co-operation with Dutch partners (i.e. Film Festival Rotterdam, Hubert Bals Fund, Poetry International);
- support activities that involve South-South exchange among artists.

As the present programme is in an embryonic stage, Hivos's knowledge of cultural issues in the region is still limited. Therefore, Hivos will develop a network of resource persons from the arts and culture sector. Through this network, Hivos intends to obtain feedback and further develop appropriate strategies.

**Regarding the specific disciplines, Hivos will support the following:**

- Literature: publishing works that are close to Hivos's priority policy sectors; work by under-represented constituencies (e.g., minorities, indigenous peoples, communities at the edge of extinction), promotion of books, including book fairs and writers' interest groups; focus on women writers and young, upcoming writers; activities to promote freedom of press/publications.
- Film & Video: co-operation with Hubert Bals Foundation to support individual film makers; emphasis on distribution/screening of films, film festivals.
- Theatre: support to festivals, street theatre, theatre in rural areas, theatre of minority communities.
- Music & Dance: survey to determine possibilities
- Visual arts: support to young, talented artists as well as to facilitating organisations; increase accessibility outside museums; increase influence/position of critical Southern curators; attention for women artists, and artists emerging from marginalised groups.



#### 4.3. Gender, Women and Development

The concept of gender refers to the need to analyse how development interventions either reinforce or transform the prevailing unequal relationships between women and men. This can include interventions focusing specifically on women and/or men. For Hivos, a commitment to gender equality implies a commitment to equal human rights for men and women in the broadest sense, including individual and collective rights to self-determination in the public and so-called private sphere.

During the past five years, the women's movement in Asia has grown considerably. The role of women's organisations in democratisation and building civil society is undeniable; their achievements in ensuring women's participation in civil society, in public life, are often impressive. Women and women's organisations are in the forefront of struggles for general social, political and economic emancipation. At the same time, however, women are disproportionally affected by some adverse consequences of economic growth.

Hivos's partners have highlighted these issues at the national and international levels. It is important to note that Asian women's organisations are strong particularly because many of them have a strong mass base or connections with mass-based organisations.

In Asia, during the next five years, Hivos will:

##### 4.3.1. Sustain support to strategic women's organisations

Hivos will support women's organisations which have a clear vision on gender equality and women's empowerment at the community, national and international levels; and have clear capacities for strategic planning.

- Support to women's organisations is prioritised in the areas of human rights, economic empowerment, sustainable development and culture. The number and calibre of partners working in the area of women and human rights/women's rights is already high. This support will be continued and expanded to sensitive areas like rights of migrants, trafficking, (sexual) violence. Efforts will be made to increase the number of partner relationships with women's organisations in the field of economy, environment, and culture.
- Hivos will give specific attention to strengthening and supporting mass-based organisations and groups having strong connections with mass-based organisations.
- Co-operation between community-level women's interest groups and intermediary women's organisations will be supported.
- Hivos already supports a number of strong women's networks in Asia. Where possible, networking and the building of strategic alliances will be further supported. The process of institutional development (ID) and institution building will be emphasised.

##### 4.3.2 Support capacity building in women's organisations

Capacity building of women's organisations relates to the development of expertise, including gender-specific aspects and special skills, in the field of Organisational Development (OD) and Organisational Change (OC). To this end, Hivos will support

- the establishment of support cells in Asia providing services and transferring skills to other women's organisations in Asia. These support cells could be either pools of experts or specific organisations specialising in OD and gender training.
- training in gender sensitivity among OD-consultants and OD counterparts.

##### 4.3.3 Provide support for the integration of a gender perspective in mixed counterparts of Hivos

A gender integration process will be promoted at the organisational level as well as in their programme activities. This includes:

- analysing the socio-economic context in terms of gender, including preparation of gender aggregated data;



- development of articulated programmes with a gender perspective;
- use of gender-sensitive methodologies, at all levels and activities;
- development of strategic gender planning in programme activities; including allocation of financial programme resources for activities geared towards gender equality;
- development of strategic gender planning at the internal organisational level, including issues like participation of women, decision making, position of women in the organisational structure, promotion of female staff in senior management positions, promotion of women in the board, internal gender equality policies, gender sensitivity among staff, provisions to counter sexual violence/intimidation, employment of staff with gender expertise;
- establishment of working relationships with women's organisations in the field of OD and/or with gender support cells.

During the next five years, the gender integration process of 3-5 large partners in Asia will be given special financial and related support.

Support to specific areas and sectors:

- follow-up of the conferences in Cairo and Beijing;
- expand support to women's organisations / initiatives in conflict areas; development of notions and strategies of women and conflict resolution / conflict prevention;
- South-South co-operation against communalism and fundamentalism;
- special attention for capacity building of women's organisations in the CIS.

#### 4.4. Environment and Development

Ruthless economic policies in all programme countries have had their impact on the environment in Asia/CIS as elsewhere in the world. Together with the general globalisation process (SAPs, the activities of TNCs, introduction of technologies which rely on an abundant and cheap supply of raw materials), governments have often opted to over-exploit natural resources (forests, coastal zones, fishery resources, agriculture), and non-renewable resources (mines, oil) and have undertaken large infrastructure projects including power plants (and often nuclear power plants) and dams. The disruption caused by these mega-development projects is exacerbated by the inadequacy of rehabilitation efforts and development expenditures by local authorities. As a result, several campaigns have focused on the customary rights of indigenous peoples to land and resources. Litigation has also arisen around these issues.

Although a system of environmental laws exists in Hivos's Asian programme countries, most laws are not adequately enforced. Despite the fact that all countries participated in the 1992 Rio Conference and acknowledged their concern for the environment, this has not led to the implementation of sustainable development plans by governments.

In Hivos's programme countries, there are a few well-organised national environmental movements. Although in Indonesia and Malaysia, strong organisations operate at the national (and international) level, their activities at the local, grassroots-level are weak. For quite some time, the opposite situation existed in India. In the last decade or so, however, several national campaigns have emerged that effectively link many relatively small grassroots groups with each other and with urban-based advocacy and support groups. These campaigns, on issues as diverse as forest policy, rehabilitation policy, and industrial aquaculture, have succeeded in capturing the attention of policy makers, judiciary, and the public. In Sri Lanka, the environmental movement is scattered. With a few exceptions, the majority are Colombo-based organisations lacking grassroots connections; on the other hand, the rural-based organisations are often not oriented towards influencing national policy. In Central Asia, the situation is altogether different with a newly developing NGO movement. During the last few years, many organisations have been started, often by scientists interested in nature conservation, and only slowly becoming aware of politically sensitive issues such as industrial or nuclear pollution, toxic waste management, and decrease of water quality and quantity. These issues call for urgent attention.

On the whole, it has been very difficult for NGOs to respond adequately to the increased pressures on the environment with its related impact on the lives of many, which further marginalises those who are



already at the edges of society and at the brink of exclusion (e.g., tribals, fisherfolk, women in these groups). These social, economic and environmental concerns require adequate answers that are lacking today. Alternatives like sustainable agriculture, community fishery techniques, etc., still need to be further developed to adequately answer the challenges posed by the economic development path promoted by governments.

In Asia, in the next five years, Hivos will:

- continue to pay attention to sustainable land use/ resource use, including forests, agriculture and fisheries, specifically in co-operation with the most marginalised groups, i.e., tribals;
- increase attention to water, air and soil pollution (nuclear, industrial including mining, waste including imported toxic wastes);
- continue to focus on alternative energy sources (anti-nuclear, pro-alternatives: in close relation with economic policy of Hivos);
- increase attention for urban environmental issues, i.e. wastes, pollution;
- focus on the issue of livelihoods, especially as it relates to economic trajectories and environmental degradation.

Hivos support to NGOs will focus on:

- lobby, advocacy and research organisations which are professional environment & development organisations. Issues include: protection of people's environment (against mega-projects, urban and industrial pollution, dumping of toxic wastes, etc.), environmental regulations development of viable alternatives and strategies;
- development of alternatives in agriculture, fisheries and forest use: sustainable practices at the local level (building on indigenous knowledge) and creating room for those alternatives at the (inter)national level;
- regional, South-South and South-North network organisations to enhance the impact of lobbying and to promote alternatives at the national and global level (thus also including the North);
- reform of and accessibility of environmental laws;
- mobilisation and organisation of peoples whose lives and livelihoods are affected by loss of customary access to resources and/or displacement.

#### 4.5. Democratisation and Human Rights

Impoverishment and social exclusion which accompany economic growth in most of Asia have implied serious violations of people's social and economic rights. Governments have been unable to overcome the contradictions of the rapid economic and social change and solve the clashes of interest at the local and national levels. Thus, Asian societies are confronted with mounting tensions within their democratic institutions and, in some countries, growing authoritarianism. In many Asian countries we see the following tendencies:

- a restriction of the freedom of expression and association
- violent suppression of social and political unrest; frequent incidents of arbitrary detentions, extra-judicial killings, missing people,
- a sharpening of national security laws and practices,
- repression of trade unions and NGO activists, and human rights activists in particular.

In the countries 'in transition' to a market economy, economic liberalisation has either not been followed by democratic reforms at all (Vietnam, Kazakhstan) or accompanied by a process of reform that is much too slow, with many setbacks and hindrances by the institutional remains of the old 'nomenklatura' (Kyrgyzstan). These reforms are complicated by the fact that many decades of totalitarian rule have left deep scars in peoples' thinking and attitudes.



The relations between governments in the North and in Asia have become increasingly marked by a contentious debate on human rights, whereby Asian governments, with South East Asian leaders as the main spokespersons, pay homage to so-called "Asian values". These values boil down to a questioning of the universality and indivisibility of human rights as reasserted in the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. NGOs generally reject the stand of their governments in this debate. Human rights activists consider the debate as a good starting point to theoretically underpin their arguments, particularly in relation to the cultural and historical aspects of the issue.

The economic and political changes have spurred a heightened dynamic within civil society. Across the board we have seen the following societal responses to the attacks on people's fundamental rights:

- local resistance (mass actions by farmers, workers, consumers) and a proliferation of action groups and closer linkages between NGOs and grassroots groups;
- the emergence of national and regional networks/alliances of NGOs and action groups, partly due to professionalisation in the means of communication and partly to renewed recognition of the need for and power of collective action;
- a broadening of the human rights perspective of human rights organisations; linkages between human rights organisations on the one hand, and women and 'development' NGOs, on the other,
- a more frequent use of international instruments and mechanisms (lobby at the UN and other regional/international bodies) to demand changes.

Human rights organisations have integrated the UN Conventions in support of economic and social justice, and civil, political and cultural rights in their work. Human rights organisations, especially in India, have often been resistant to foreign funding, given the perceived political sensitivity of their work.

In Asia, in the period 1998-2002, Hivos will:

- continue support to regional networks and initiatives, while ensuring that strong linkages with activities at the local level are maintained.
- support initiatives aimed at confirming and implementing the results of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993).
- encourage the incorporation of a human rights perspective into activities of NGOs in the sectors of women, environment, economic empowerment and culture.
- continue support to both advocacy (lobby campaign) organisations as well as organisations engaged in empowering people at the grassroots in defending their human rights, while encouraging linkages between the two;
- support capacity building within human rights organisations (human rights and civic education, the use of international instruments);
- support programmes concerning HIV/AIDS, especially to combat discrimination and to enhance emancipatory processes in relation to HIV/AIDS and sexuality; specific attention will be paid to the position of women;
- support programmes rights of specific groups, such as women, children, indigenous peoples and/or ethnic minorities, human rights activists, people discriminated on the basis of their (secular) philosophy of life or because of their sexual orientation; support programmes on lesbian and gay rights.
- pay special attention to the issue of violence, in particular of violence against women and children;
- support apex membership organisations built up with locally available resources.



## - 5. Parameters of Intervention

A number of inter-linked parameters will guide Hivos in its assessment of and relationship with counterpart organisations, irrespective of the sector in which they operate. These include: output and impact; accountability; sustainability of development efforts; and, the modalities of financial support. Hivos is also prepared to support efforts of partner organisation aimed at improving their performance with respect to these parameters. Such efforts can take the form of training, support missions, exposure, and financial support to take on additional qualified staff.

### 5.1. Output and Impact

Assessing the results of the work carried out by a partner organisation is of critical interest to Hivos. Such assessments will carry an increasing weight in the future. Various stake holders in development co-operation demand information on the results achieved with the resources pledged.

In the past, there has been unclarity regarding the levels at which assessments be made. Hivos distinguishes three levels at which the results of activities can be assessed: output; effect and impact. Outputs are defined as the specific products or services which an activity is expected to produce. Outputs can be in the form of physical outcomes and of services provided. Thus, outputs are related to the short-term objectives an organisation has set for itself and the activities that are planned for achieving these. Effects are defined as the medium-term outcomes of project outputs. Whereas outputs are realised during the project or programme, effects do not fully emerge until after the full development of a project or programme. Impact may be defined as the long-term change in the living conditions and capacities of the communities. The paradox of the assessment of results is that it appears desirable to focus on impact, since this relates to the ultimate overarching objectives of an organisation. However, the total impact of a project or programme only becomes evident over a long period of time. Long-term results, however, are by necessity influenced by a wide range of factors, many of them being outside the control of the partner organisation and the concerned communities. Thus, there is no simple one-to-one relation between output and impact in terms of development efforts. For these reasons Hivos has decided to place more stress on output than on impact measurement during the coming years.

The output of an organisation needs to be measured in qualitative and quantitative terms, and has to be compared with (technical) standards relevant to the specific field of activity (be it 'credit programmes', 'popular theatre', or 'legal aid'). In addition, Hivos will pay more attention to whether the resources made available to an organisation are commensurate to the outputs achieved (i.e., to cost-effectiveness). Hivos has observed that many development organisations tend to take many different kinds of activities on board. Often this is undertaken with limited specialisation and experience, and hence results in low output and poor cost-effectiveness.

Output measurement is not a prerogative of donors. Clarity on achievements is also demanded by other stakeholders, especially by communities with which development organisations work. During 1998 - 2002, Hivos will facilitate developing methods of output measurement that meet the needs of both 'outside' and 'inside' parties (stakeholders). In this it requires the active co-operation of its partners. Working towards improved progress reports will be a starting point. Starting with a selected number of partners, an effort will be made to enhance the information content of progress reports on the issue of achieved outputs. At the same time Hivos will limit the number of external evaluations, and assist partners to make more frequent use of internal evaluations, which should not only focus on institutional issues, but also on matters of achieved output and effects in relation to short- and medium-term objectives.

### 5.2. Accountability

Hivos itself has a range of instruments which help it account for its work to its funders and to the public in the Netherlands. Hivos also regularly informs its partners on policy and other developments. With the legitimacy of donor-driven interventions under scrutiny in most of Asia, it is of great importance for Hivos



to interact closely with the local 'development sector' in the countries where it works. Hivos commits itself to making its policies and actions - including funding decisions - transparent. Likewise, Hivos expects its partners to regard good governance, accountability and transparency, together with sound organisational structures as crucial concerns for all development institutions. These issues dovetail into the question of the long-term sustainability of development initiatives. Accountability is partly imposed from the outside, i.e., by the various government regulations, by local and foreign donor institutions, and by the media. In many countries the regulatory climate has become overburdening to the extent that it stifles independent initiatives. Development organisations in various Asian countries have demanded reforms in the government regulations, to make the existing legal framework more enabling and less stifling. At the same time there are voices that call for a reform of the development sector from within. NGOs and other development organisations have to become more responsive and more responsible to their communities, to their staff, their boards, and to the general public. Against this backdrop, internal and external audits go beyond fulfilling bureaucratic requirements. They assist an organisation to internally arrange, audit and set on record the management of financial resources on a systematic and timely basis. Equally important is that the entire exercise enables the organisation to provide transparency for itself in a wider setting and prove its accountability to its members. Within this framework Hivos discerns the following levels of accountability:

**(i) internal accountability**

refers to the need for transparent internal structures, with divisions of power and responsibilities, between members, board and staff. Clear and transparent decision making procedures and communication channels contribute to an organisation's internal checks and balances. Organisations should contribute to the building of a second generation of leadership, to avoid the 'founders' trap'.

**(ii) accountability to communities**

refers to the need for a participatory and 'organisation building' approach towards the communities with whom it works. This applies to intermediary organisations as well as to community-based and public-interest organisations (although in the last two categories 'beneficiaries' are mostly also members and as such have a say in the organisation's decision). Accountability of development organisations towards communities must be created by building an independent capacity within communities to make claims for themselves; it does not limit itself to including one or two people from 'beneficiary' communities into an organisation's board of directors. It also requires an adequate analysis of the critical problems of beneficiaries and an understanding of the social differentiation among them.

Intermediary development organisations must be conscious of their own role as facilitators, providing specific assistance to such a process. For NGOs to fulfil the role of a critical change agent, they need to have skilled, committed and strong leadership as well as skilled field-workers, organisers, animators who take local issues and processes to heart. This should not be confused with one-time OD interventions by consultants. It involves a participatory long-term approach to the work.

**(iii) accountability to the wider society**

refers to the need for an active positioning in society. Organisations may create successful "islands of change" which, however, run the risk of remaining isolated and vulnerable to external factors. In order to be effective and achieve sustainable results, organisations should build alliances, and participate in networks and movements. This provides a better starting point to engage in debate and to challenge those in authority and in power, such as the government and the private sector.

**(iv) accountability to the donor**

refers to the need for counterparts to account for the support received. Hivos's requirements as a stakeholder for such accountability are based on the assumption that the internal accountability of an organisation is well-developed, i.e., that financial and progress planning and reporting are normal instruments in the organisation's routine, which are not just prepared for the donor, but are also for internal purposes.

### **5.3. Sustainability of development efforts**

"Sustainability" is a term that is widely used in the ecological debate. However, more and more the



concept is becoming significant in the socio-political debate as well. For development efforts to be sustainable beyond the assistance of external funding agencies, a clearly defined strategy towards sustainability is a need. The lack of such a strategy jeopardises the very objectives NGOs stand for: empowerment of the poor, increasing control of the poor over their lives and development.

In the development sector there is a widely shared notion that growth towards self-reliance is a need; and CBOs and NGOs have a rich experience in strategies towards self-reliance. Clear and consistent overall policies or intervention strategies, however, are lacking. The challenge for all concerned (NGOs, people's institutions and donors) is to develop long-term strategies on sustainability, although it is acknowledged that not every organisation is, given its specific mission, in a position to achieve financial sustainability.

Such a long-term perspective will take into account:

- a gradual withdrawal of external funding;
- the development of a firm people's support base. This cannot be maintained without transparency and accountability (i.e. social sustainability).
- the willingness of the community to pay for (organisational) costs (increased local resource mobilisation); and,
- accessing state resources for social expenditures on basic needs.

Thus, a strategy on sustainability - or, from a donors point of view, on withdrawal - has to do with empowering at the community level, creating assets at the community level and enabling communities to improve their livelihoods, and empowering communities to negotiate for state resources.

Strategies towards sustainability should consider the following components:

- institutional components: including policy development, strategic planning, management, human resource components, the quality of the output (does it make a difference, ultimately, in terms of enhancing the capacity of the beneficiaries to take control of their development), measurement of output;
- social components: this is related to accountability, the level of local ownership, the type of feedback the organisation receives from the community;
- financial components: achieving financial sustainability. Studies assessing the success record of projects in terms of financial sustainability hold a common view that one can not expect projects to be sustainable at short term. Also there is evidence that certain conditions are more conducive to achieving sustainability (e.g. if the projects concerned are economic projects; if external support is increasing; if the local economy is expanding) while there is evidence that others are impediments (e.g. if the majority of the beneficiaries are very poor).
- ecological components (influence and impact on the environment).

Hivos will, in the next five years, in Asia:

- work towards a more consistent strategy on promoting self-reliance, allowing for critical differences between the sectors and socio-economic groups,
- expect from partners an explicit strategy on sustainability and mechanism to assess the extent to which they achieve financial and institutional sustainability, with an explicit time table.

For Hivos, this does not necessarily imply that the inability of a programme to achieve financial and institutional sustainability is always an impediment for funding such initiatives.

Assessment of the success of a programme in terms of its sustainability can not be done in a simple manner. Sustainability is achieved whenever the NGO achievements merge with the ongoing economic, social and other processes at the community level, and whenever they can not be clearly attributed to the external (aid/NGO) resources.

External support can not be for ever. For Hivos, the cycle of support is in principle 2-4-4 years, though continuation after this period is possible, under stringent conditions (among others, a pre-eminent record in terms of accountability and output), or otherwise if the need for continuing support is derived from Hivos's institutional alliances.



Sustainability of development efforts has another side: the development sector in the West including the Netherlands is dependent on a people's support base and a political support base. The development sector in the West has, unlike the consumers movement and the women's movement, no firm roots in western societies in the sense that it represents local (self) interests. For the development sector in the West the challenge is to create linkages between civil organisations in the West and organisations in the South: linkages based on enlightened self-interest. For Hivos this implies that development cooperation has to become more sector oriented and has to identify issues where citizens in the North and the South have common interests.

For development cooperation to survive in the long term (to be sustainable) it needs to depart from a notion of civil international cooperation, in other words: a notion of North - South partnership.

#### 5.4. Financial support

Hivos's core activity is providing development funding to organisations in the South. Hivos provides grants (directly) and credit-finance (indirectly). Non-commercial activities are financed with grants; credit is provided to funding of economic activities which have a commercial base.

Outside donor funding can never replace local financing. Hivos encourages organisations to develop a local funding base. In this respect the following considerations apply:

- Membership organisations must raise a certain amount of income from membership fees and/or in kind (labour, voluntary work) to demonstrate members' commitment to the goals and objectives of the organisation and to guarantee its functioning independently of external financial support.
- Ideally networks should be financed by contributions from their members, to ensure that the members decide upon the priorities of the network and to prevent that the network becomes another implementing organisation that competes with the work of its members. Therefore, whenever this is possible, Hivos will provide support to networks through the member organisations.
- Ideally service-rendering organisations should be paid by their clients. When needed and feasible Hivos provides financial means to client organisations in order to enable them to buy services. In exceptional cases Hivos also provides direct grants to service-rendering organisation
- Hivos is cautious in supporting counterparts who intend to start commercial ventures with the objective of generating income to cover part of their budgets. The reasons for this is this may result in the dilution of their primary work.
- Hivos encourages initiatives for the creation of local funding bases.

##### 5.4.1. Hivos grants

Hivos's funding is based on its institutional approach which is laid down in its basic policy paper *Full Participation: A Question of Power*. The Hivos grant funds are earmarked for supporting institutional development in two crucial areas: eradication of poverty and strengthening civil society. Within these broad objectives Hivos concentrates its support on the five policy thrusts mentioned in Ch. 4. Institutions should not be reduced to mere organisations; they also encompass shared values and policies, networks between core players in a certain sector. Thus strengthening institutions can be achieved in a variety of ways: by providing core support to organisations, but also by supporting one-time activities (a workshop, a campaign or a publication) which have a crucial impact within a certain sector. But in all cases, Hivos's funding decision will be informed by an assessment of the contribution a specific organisation, programme or project makes to strengthening the development of institutions in a particular policy thrust.

Membership-based organisations and social movements have in-built mechanisms of accountability to the communities with whom they work and often have made the transition from being mere organisations to becoming institutions. Thus they have a preferential status within Hivos's funding decisions.

Another criterion that influences Hivos's choice for project, programme or organisation support is the track record of the organisation involved. Well-established organisations will qualify for organisation support earlier than new initiatives. The length of the relationship Hivos has with a partner is another



determining variable.

Hivos will encourage counterparts to find more than one donor. Hivos has a preference for partners who are successful in broad-basing their funding. Hivos also encourages co-funding (where multiple donors support the same programme) and policy dialogues with partners on a consortium basis.

**(i) Project funding**

is meant for a well-defined activity or set of activities, with a clear starting point and end. It is mostly short term. Examples are a conference or workshop, a research activity or study, consultancy mission and capital goods. Hivos can either be the sole funder or a co-funder.

**(ii) Programme funding**

relates to a specific programme of an organisation, which not necessarily has a clear starting point and end. In general it is an ongoing activity and it belongs to the core activities of the organisation. Funding includes programme-related overheads. For small and young organisations Hivos may be the sole funder of a programme, but for others Hivos prefers an involvement of other financial sources as well.

**(iii) Organisational funding**

may be provided to organisations whose entire programme fit Hivos's policy priorities. The relationship between the organisation and Hivos must be older than two years. Funding is not earmarked for specific programmes. However, Hivos may stipulate a maximum of its contribution for overhead costs. Hivos will not finance the whole budget nor will it fund all overheads; financial support from other sources and possibly from their own incomes are required.

At a certain stage in their development organisations may need to build up financial reserves in the form of a corpus/endowment fund. The function of such a corpus is manifold: it allows an organisation to tide over lean times; it allows an organisation to invest in its own priorities; it offers a buffer to settle outstanding claims in case it decides to dissolve itself or in case it needs to restructure itself. Apart from a corpus fund, mature organisations of a certain size may also need to invest in fixed assets. Hivos is willing to provide support for both corpus funds and for infrastructure. Contributions to fixed assets or corpus funds during the first two years of a relationship will be exceptional. At a later point, a Hivos contribution to a corpus fund or fixed assets will depend on various factors such as whether an organisation has developed an explicit policy on this; whether the organisation has a firm record regarding financial and social accountability. Also, the vulnerability of an organisation vis-à-vis state intervention or counteracting forces may play a role.

#### **5.4.2. Credit**

Credit is provided for commercial activities as described in 4.2. Apart from exceptional cases, Hivos provides credit indirectly, via, e.g., the Hivos Triodos Fund (HTF), in three different forms. These are, in order of preference:

**(i) Guarantees**

to enable producers to access local credit facilities. Often micro- and small entrepreneurs, but also informal groups are unable to access local credit, because they are unable to offer collateral, though their undertakings are financially feasible. A guarantee for part of the risk may convince the local bank to provide credit.

**(ii) Participation**

in local financial institutions to enhance the working capital of the institution or for opening up the services to lower segments in the market. A participation can be through the purchase of shares or through provision of a subordinated loan.

**(iii) Loans**

for investments or working capital can be provided to economic groups or entrepreneurs, whenever they



are unable to access local funding for their undertakings and whenever Hivos cannot make use of the instrument of guarantees.

## **5.5. Additional support**

In addition and related to its financial support, Hivos provides a number of other services:

### **(i) enhancing the quality of programmes of counterpart organisations, including:**

- Organisational Development (OD). Hivos will promote and support activities which aim to enhance the organisational strength and capacity of its counterpart organisations;
- feasibility studies of proposals. Hivos will stimulate the use of external expertise for improving the quality and feasibility of proposals presented to Hivos by organisations;
- capacity building in the understanding of the relationship between economic, social and environmental aspects of programmes;
- capacity building in the integration of gender issues into programmes and organisations. With all its counterpart organisations, the discussion on this issue will be continued;
- internal evaluations. Hivos will stimulate counterpart organisations to adopt the practice of evaluations of their own activities and programmes as a regular feature of their work;
- external evaluations are carried out by Hivos, as a necessary component of its own work. These can be useful as a feedback to counterpart organisations, although the first aim is to provide feedback to Hivos.

### **(ii) activities related to networking, exchange, linkages and debate among and between organisations**

Hivos considers this of great importance and will promote such processes. Regional networking is facilitated by the Regional Office in Bangalore for programmes with a principal focus on India by and by Head Office in The Hague, for all other countries. In addition networking between South and Southeast Asia will be promoted where relevant. The sectoral expertise at Hivos's Head Office also provides opportunities for facilitating networking, cooperation and exchange.

Hivos is a Northern donor organisation with a local presence in the South through Regional Offices. Although its local presence allows it to engage in local development debates, Hivos realises that it cannot and should not endeavour to become a local actor in civil society.

The collaboration with like-minded donor organisations is an activity Hivos will actively pursue.

### **(iii) pro-active involvement in transition countries, emergency situations, and new issues**

Exceptional circumstances aside, Hivos will not act as an implementing agency. In countries or regions where the NGO sector is in a nascent state, Hivos has, however, actively promoted the emergence of new organisations, amongst other by providing support for Organisational Development. This has particularly been the case in Central Asia. Hivos takes on a similar pro-active role regarding new and sensitive issues, where local organisations addressing these have not yet emerged. Lastly, in emergency and rehabilitation situations, international NGOs sometimes have a direct implementing role to fulfil. Hivos itself does not have the capacity for this. In such cases it collaborates with the Dutch Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (DRA) and other donors who have a local presence.



## 6. Country Focus

### 6.1. India

#### Core Country Programme

Sector Focus: Econ, Cult, HR/A, GW&D, E&D

Rapid changes in the economy since the introduction of the structural adjustment policies in 1991. Increasing foreign investments and bilateral and multilateral lending. The picture of co-existing extremes continues. Very high degrees of deprivation in some states (illiteracy, maternal mortality, growing shortages of food, etc.). Social expenditure (as % of GDP) declined since the mid 80s. Inefficient delivery, poor strategies, lack of accountability, and lack of ownership by the communities concerned in the poverty alleviation schemes financed by public money continued. The Constitutional Amendments for decentralisation of powers and direct elections to local bodies are a major step forward, but must be complemented by advocacy and training efforts for effective utilisation of these powers. There is a need for focus on tribal livelihoods, minority rights, the advancement of women, the abolition of child labour, and accountable and focused expenditure for poverty eradication. Focus on a wide variety of partners, from broad based membership organisations working on economic activities to highly efficient service-rendering and advocacy organisations. Where required, direct support to establishment of powerful networks of people's organisations, representing constituencies from different regions. Mixed size of funding: simultaneous support to a few large institutions with a focus on one or more of the five Hivos policy thrusts, and to smaller programmes with a clear time-bound agenda and a clear thrust in one Hivos policy sectors. Reduce support to organisations which implement a wide variety of activities without a firm focus on one or two sectors. Continuation of support to projects and programmes in all five policy sectors.

#### Economic Activities, priorities for support:

- continued support to protection of the rights of farm labourers, small and marginal farmers, informal sector workers, fishworkers, workers in industry, rural women.
- step up efforts to operationalise HTF in India, or develop alternative strategies.
- increased support to financial institutions (esp. co-operatives) with focus on gender and environment.
- continued support to lobby for enabling financial policies, esp. greater autonomy for co-operatives and to make sure that banks will not withdraw from micro-credit.
- training, especially for women
- co-operation of RO on strategical orientation for NGOs (publications, workshops, training courses);
- support for eradication of child labour, combined with efforts to increase employment opportunities for adults, and advocacy for minimum wages (informal sector)
- investments in renewable energy (e.g. solar) and sustainable production (e.g. organic agriculture)

#### Culture, priorities for support:

- assessment of possibilities for support in all disciplines: film and popular theatre only to get support if they have a wide and popular outreach ;

#### Gender, Women and Development, priorities for support:

- partnership with major women's organisations which combine grassroots work with advocacy;
- support to reproductive rights and reproductive health of women.
- support to gender training and OD in all major CPO's, among others. via intensive gender trajectory.
- support to combination of gender with other policy focus (e.g. culture, economic activities).

#### Environment, priority problems:

- sustainable livelihoods of the rural poor as the crux.
- natural resource degradation (including land fragmentation, deforestation, soil erosion, fallow land, degradation of coastal zones, fisheries resources) and water (harvesting, alternative sources for drinking) and their impact on survival of the poor.
- energy (effects of large scale power plants incl. nuclear and hydrodams, development of alternatives)
- urban environmental issues (pollution, small scale industries, health of workers)

#### Priority issues for Hivos support:

- sustainable agriculture with a stress on LEISA and non-chemical pest management (through OD including community based experiments, involvement of indigenous knowledge, training, networking,



documentation, seminars, N-S and S-S exchanges, etc.)

- community managed and environmentally sound forms of aquaculture/fisheries
- alternative sources of income for forest dwellers/tribals: NTFPs, export of certified hardwood
- support to urban environmental movement active on pollution, health of workers, dumping of waste

**Human Rights**, priorities for support:

- rights of tribals, Dalits, women, children, and People Living with HIV/AIDS, and people discriminated against on the basis of their sexual preferences. Focus on right to livelihood of marginalised communities.
- HIV/AIDS: strategies for protection/safer sex, and counselling. Small-scale support for self-help initiatives of people discriminated on basis of sexual preferences.

## **6.2. Sri Lanka**

**Core Country Programme**

**Sector focus:** Econ, Cult, HR/A, GW&D

The ethnic conflict has escalated into a full war. Results among others: a war economy (government spending, economic disruption); displacements; increase of human rights violations. Peace efforts (a devolution package; lobby for demilitarisation) have been frustrated. Economic liberalisation. Poverty in rural areas. Extensive (female) labour out-migration.

Hivos will continue its present focus. Besides, Hivos will support NGOs with proven capacity on: rehabilitation efforts; reconciliation and peace building with all communities; alternative solutions to the conflict.

**Economic activities**, priorities for support:

- Economic development in the East, emphasis farmers, widows
- rural development, focus on youth, women; access to credit, training, alternative strategies.

**Human Rights/Aids**, priority problems:

displacements, gross human rights violations, emergency regulations, reduced press freedom, discouragement of trade unions in FTZ, lack of civil rights in plantations, labour migration.

Priority issues for support:

- peace/reconciliation; rehabilitation
- social economic rights (workers, trade unions, women, children, peasants).

**Gender, women and development**, priority problems:

- general women's rights; displacement; migrant workers; violence against women;

Priority issues for support:

- women's labour migration: lobby, efforts to organise women
- gender integration process
- capacity building of women's organisations
- support to rehabilitation
- cross-roads of gender and economic activities

**Culture & development**: priorities for Hivos support:

- culture in relation to peace and conciliation

## **6.3. Indonesia**

**Low profile core programme**

**Sector focus:** HR.

In Indonesia for 32 years there has been an authoritarian government with a strong role of the military; and a lack of freedom of expression and association.

Indonesia is one of the "New Tigers" that was in 1997/98 seriously affected by the financial crisis. The crisis sharpened the social divides in the country giving rise to a wave of people's unrest. The campaign for democracy (students, trade unions, political opposition forces) gained strenght and in May 1998 the aedifice of Suharto's support crumbled off forcing him to step down.

The process of democratic reforms and political transformation is expected to be tough. A new constellation of power groups will come up. As government control has been ubiquitous for over 3 decades, independent organisations have not been able to thrive. NGOs are numerous but as a movement they are still relatively weak.

Hivos support: In the 1980s Indonesia occupied a prominent place in the Hivos Asia programme; after the termination of the development co-operation between The Netherlands and Indonesia in 1992, the



programme had to be slashed down. Through an agreement with Novib and private funds Hivos managed to continue a limited programme with a focus on workers, the strengthening of people's resource base (access to land and natural and economic resources, sustainable agriculture), human rights and women. It is not unlikely that in the coming years possibilities for a re-establishment of the official development co-operation between The Netherlands and Indonesia may occur. At the moment of finalising the present plan (June 1998) it is difficult to anticipate on such changes. In case a co-financing programme is being re-opened, Hivos will consider to allocate part of its Cat.IV budget in Indonesia. This requires further decision making in the light of the priorities in other Asian Hivos-programme countries. As the situation stands, after 1999, the continuation of the programme is fully conditional on the availability of new (private, non-Cat.IV) funds. The following intentions are laid down here under the proviso that financial resources (Cat.IV or non-Cat.IV) will be realised.

**Human Rights/Aids, priority problems:**

Repression of opposition/HR activists, serious violation of freedom of expression, repression of indigenous peoples, land evictions, security approach by the state; dismantling of the rule of law, upsurge of ethnic conflicts.

**Priorities for support:**

- support to democratisation process
- support to democratisation process
- children's rights, child labour
- land rights (agrarian and customary), access to natural resources
- trade unions / workers rights
- political/civil rights
- cultural rights (indigenous peoples)
- capacity building for HR advocacy and lobbying
- HIV/aids

#### 6.4. Malaysia

Country programme subject to withdrawal by 2001

Sector Focus: HR

Among the "New Tigers" Malaysia is the fastest modernising country: high economic growth (slowed down by the financial crisis of 1997/1998); a growing middle class; high GDP per capita and HDI. Expectedly Malaysia will soon be lifted from the official list of developing (DAC) countries. Unemployment is very low and there is considerable labour immigration. An increasingly authoritarian government. Draconian laws control political dissent. Political opposition parties do exist but ethnic divides prohibit them from being effective. There are strong trade unions, albeit corrupt and 'yellow'; and relatively strong consumer organisations. A number of small NGOs are working on grassroots organising and advocacy. The government has seriously cracked down on NGO activists in 1987 and in 1996 renewed repressive measure were taken.

A motive for Hivos to start a programme in Malaysia in 1990 was the expected added value to the Indonesia programme. Since 1995 Hivos has started phasing out from Malaysia and discussed this with its partners. In 1998 - 2000 Hivos will withdraw its support to Malaysian NGOs. As from 2001, the final program will be closed. Within the decreasing small budget the core will be on Human Rights; a minor share of the budget is allocated for Gender, Wineb & Development and Environment.

**Human Rights/Aids, priority problems:**

lack of freedom of expression, curtailment of freedom of association; security laws, cultural repression of indigenous peoples; violation of the rights of migrant workers.

**Priority issues for Hivos support:**

- workers' rights including of migrant workers, indigenous peoples; legal aid; support to urban settlers, citizen's rights, Aids/HIV and sexuality,
- linkages with regional initiatives.

#### 6.5. Kazakhstan

Core Country Programme

Sector Focus: Econ, Cu, HR/A, E&D, GW&D, other (OD).

Economic and political transition. Disruption of production and marketing structure; careful restoration after initial steep economic decline; dismantling of social safety net; unemployment; decrease in living standards; differences in implementation of privatisation in combination with a slow, intransparent and corrupt bureaucracy (among others, problem of property structure, unequal control over and access to resources); qualifications of producers not appropriate for new economic requirements. Groups most affected: rural communities, women, pensioners. Political reforms: renewed centralisation of power; political control and control of media is predominant. Ethnic tensions have not escalated. Significant



environmental problems. A nascent NGO-sector is engaged in critical issues (HR, women, environment) but hardly dealing with the fundamental questions of political and economic reforms. Hivos supports NGOs since 1994. Programmes require intensive preparation (OD, methodology, planning & monitoring techniques) and -more than elsewhere- preparatory consultancy missions. A local consultancy structure is a prerequisite for maintaining a Hivos programme; the consultants are engaged in services on primary (identification, monitoring, logistics) and secondary (OD) tasks.

Emphasis for Hivos support will be on:

1. investment in OD, capacity building; strengthening voluntary organisations, CBOs, NGOs;
2. exchange with and exposure to other NGOs;

Expansion to new regions will only happen to the extent that Hivos's managing capacity allows so;

**Economic activities, priorities for Hivos support:**

- focus on rural producer groups;
- accessibility of financial institutions for small economic activities;
- increase of access to resources for small entrepreneurs;
- skills training for small farmers;
- integrated development of rural areas affected by nuclear radiation;
- gender and economic activities;

**Culture, priorities for Hivos support:**

- role of culture and arts in democratisation process, broadening of the cultural horizon in Central Asia and stimulation of the cultural debate (eye-opener and catalyst).

**Environment, priority problems:**

- water, air and soil pollution;
- land degradation/soil erosion;
- nuclear radiation;

**Priorities for Hivos support:**

- strengthening the environmental movement (environmental campaigning, advocacy)
- promotion of alternatives: sustainable agriculture (incl. organic agriculture), other environmentally sound economic activities (e.g., fisheries, alternative energy sources),

**Human Rights/Aids, priority issues for Hivos support:**

- support to defence of human rights (political, civil rights)
- support to initiatives on conflict prevention, freedom of association, civic education
- human rights training

**GW&D, priorities for Hivos support:**

- gender and economic activities;
- violence against women.

## **6.6. Kyrgyzstan**

### **Core Country Programme**

**Sector focus: GW&D, HR/A, E&D, Econ, other (OD)**

Economic and political transition. Disruption of production and marketing structure, careful restoration after initial steep economic decline; dismantling of social safety net; unemployment; decrease in living standards. Groups most affected: rural communities, women, pensioners. Privatisation process resulted in unequal control over and access to resources and unclarity of property structure. Qualifications of producers not appropriate for new economic requirements; financial services not available for small entrepreneurs/farmers. Political reforms: Kyrgyzstan is more open than other Central Asian republics; still media are controlled. Ethnic tensions have not escalated. Significant environmental problems. A nascent NGO-sector is engaged in issues (HR, women, environment) but hardly dealing with the fundamental questions of political and economic reform. Hivos supports NGOs since 1994. Programmes require intense preparation (OD, methodology, planning & monitoring techniques) and -more than elsewhere- preparatory consultancy missions. A local consultancy structure is a prerequisite for maintaining a Hivos programme; the consultants are engaged in services on primary (identification, monitoring, logistics) and secondary (strengthening organisational capacities) tasks.

Emphasis of Hivos support will be on:

1. investment in OD, capacity building; strengthening voluntary organisations, CBO's, NGOs;
2. exchange with and exposure to other NGOs;

Expansion to other regions will only happen to the extent that Hivos's managing capacity allows so,

**Economic activities, priorities for Hivos support:**

- focus on rural producer groups;
- gender and economic activities.
- accessibility of financial institutions for small economic activities.
- increase of access to resources for small entrepreneurs;
- skills training for small farmers;



- focus on women entrepreneurs.

**GW&D, priority problems:**

Women disproportionately affected by economic decline and transition: e.g. expulsion of women from political and decision making bodies at all levels, women's unemployment rising more than average; pensioners (in majority women) bearing the brunt.

**Priorities for Hivos support:**

- support to strengthening independent women's organisations, among others. through OD, training, networking and exchange; follow up to capacity building;
- gender & economic activities;
- violence against women;

**HR/Aids, priorities for Hivos support**

- conflict prevention; refugees;
- civic education;
- support to HR organisations (monitoring, advocacy, campaigning);

**Environment, priority problems:**

- land degradation/soil erosion;
- water, air and soil pollution;

**Priorities for Hivos support:**

- strengthening of environmental movement (esp. campaigning, lobby, advocacy)
- promotion of alternatives: sustainable agriculture (incl. organic agriculture), other environmentally sound economic activities (e.g. alternative energy sources); waste disposal and recycling;

## 6.7. Vietnam

### Core Sector Programme

#### Sector Focus: Economic activities.

Vietnam is a low income country. Poverty incidence is high and unevenly distributed (regions / ethnic groups). Vietnam is a transition country. Ten years ago the leadership introduced a programme of economic reform ("Doi Moi"). While at present experiencing high economic growth (1995-1996 9,5 %) much is to be done if Vietnam wishes to sustain this level of growth. Economic reform clashes with the slow pace of political/legal/administrative and social reform. The Communist Party leadership is in control of political life. There are sharp restrictions on freedom of assembly and association, and political dissent is distressed. Voluntary organisations, NGOs and private initiatives are under control. Foreign relations with neighbouring and western countries are stepping up (e.g. in 1995, Vietnam became a member of ASEAN and a large number of donors are giving financial support to Vietnam).

In 1996 Hivos decided to start a support programme on economic activities (credit, training); target groups rural, low income areas, women, ethnic minorities. A credit mission took place in 1996. A programme is envisaged for 1998. During the first two years (1998/99) the focus of the Vietnam programme will be on one sector.

Expansion to other sectors will depend on managing capacity (Hivos) and assessment of needs & opportunities.

**Economic activities: priority issues for Hivos support:**

- start cooperation with banking sector; expansion if the pilot project is well under way.
- organise bank technical training with support of the Rabo Foundation.
- organise business advisory services with other organisations active at field level and local institutions



## 7. Hivos and Asia in the North

Hivos's core activity is providing development funds to organisations in the South. Hivos originated and is based in the Netherlands and as such is a Northern organisation. Hivos positions itself as a non-profit organisation and attaches great value to global citizenship. Most of the work undertaken by Hivos is towards the South directly and consists of direct financial assistance and indirect support to counterpart organisations. At the same time, however, Hivos is aware that development problems are very much related to unequal North-South relationships. Efforts to counter these inequalities require North-South partnerships, but also action in the North. Hivos extends support to a number of regional and global networks that address global inequalities at the international level, such as the Third World Network and DAWN.

Hivos recognises that it has an active role to play in its own society to foster changes in global inequalities. During the past five years one of the more visible activities of Hivos in the Netherlands has been its campaigns. The campaigns involved a concentration of media-related and other activities with a focus on a particular topic. In the past this has included trying to create more political attention for Africa and a campaign on HIV/AIDS. Since 1995, Hivos plans its campaign with a number of like-minded Dutch organisations. This is an effort to broaden the public support base for international cooperation and for Hivos's work in particular. Campaigns aim at mobilising people, contributing to development debates, sharing of information, and influencing images. To a limited extent the joint campaigns are also geared towards lobbying for changes of policies of the Dutch government.

### Northern alliances

In 1991, Hivos was one of the organisations that took the initiative to form the South-North Federation. The Federation brings together some twenty organisations from the Dutch "Third World Movement", which are active in very diverse fields, such as alternative trade, research and lobbying, human rights, health, environment, funding, personnel cooperation. Hivos is aware of its own limitations as a relatively small Dutch organisation and therefore was in favour of this coming together of like-minded organisations. Hivos actively cooperates with the other members of the South-North Federation.

The GOM is the common platform of the four Dutch co-financing organisations in relation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is Hivos's main platform for ongoing consultations with the Dutch government on aspects of development policies. During the past years the GOM has consistently emphasised the importance of strengthening civil society in the South as one of the most important contributions to development. GOM has also advocated the need for a consistent Dutch foreign policy, which would not take a limited, self-interested starting point, but would aim to contribute to improving the quality of life for everyone in the "global village".

Hivos's five sectoral policy thrusts (economy; culture; gender, women and development; environment; human rights and HIV/AIDS) are not only structuring its work in the South, but also guiding the choice of alliances in the Netherlands. The sectors "economy" and "culture" have been singled out for intensified activities in the Netherlands. New alliances have been established with Dutch organisations in the areas of Social Banking (Triodos Bank), Fair Trade (Max Havelaar, Fair Trade Assistance), Poetry (Poetry International) and Film (Hubert Bals Fund, Cinemart). In other policy areas similar alliances have been forged, e.g. with the AIDS Fund and with the Dutch chapter of Friends of the Earth (Milieudefensie). Hivos envisages that these linkages will enable more concerted action in the future in the Netherlands (in the areas of information, lobbying and fund-raising). It has to be emphasised that these linkages can also directly benefit Hivos's counterpart organisations in the South.

In 1997, Hivos entered into separate agreements with two Dutch development organisations, Terre des Hommes and Simavi, to increase their cooperation in the South where this is advantageous for both parties.



At a European level, Hivos has joined forces with like-minded organisations. It is one of the two Dutch members of EUROSTEP, a collaboration of 23 European secular donor organisations from 15 countries. Hivos stood at the foundation of EUROSTEP in 1990. A central objective of EUROSTEP is to influence European/Northern policy-makers on issues concerning development cooperation and foreign policy. Eurostep co-publishes the annual Reality of Aid Report. The Social Summit and the subsequently launched Social Watch are an important focus of Eurostep's activities in the future. The important issue of bi- and multilateral debt is addressed by EURODAD, a European organisation based in Brussels. Hivos is on the board of EURODAD.

In the coming years Hivos intends to deepen its existing alliances and forge new short-term alliances on specific social development issues. Hivos also plans to cooperate with organisations representing the interests of ethnic minorities living in the Netherlands.

Hivos hopes to further the concept of 'good citizenship' by forging meaningful relationships between the Dutch people and those in Asian countries. This was strongly reiterated at the Partner Consultation (Asia & CIS) in Trivandrum in 1997. The challenge for both Hivos and its partners is to "open up spaces for people across the world" for dialogue, thus narrowing existing divides in civil societies globally.



## 8. Implementation and Organisation

The implementation of the 1998 - 2002 Policy Framework is the responsibility of the Asia Bureau. Implementation will be detailed in annual plans. Within the Bureau the responsibility for the India programme is delegated to Hivos's Regional Office (RO) in Bangalore. In terms of program staff the Bureau is organised in a matrix. The program officers in Bangalore and in the Hague (Head Office - HO) carry the charge for one or more country programmes or (in India) state programs; they are the Hivos contact persons with counterpart organisations. Sector policy officers in the Bureau are responsible for guidance and advice of programme officers in HO and RO, as well as for sectoral monitoring and evaluation. Also, they are responsible for the management of sectoral organisations operating on a supra-national level (the Regional Asia program). Sector policy officers can also supervise a major sectoral programme within a country, or be in charge of a whole country programme in case this has a focus on one particular sector (e.g., the Vietnam programme which has a focus on economic activities).

Decisions on funding are taken by the director of the Regional Office (for India) and the Head of the Asia Bureau (for other countries).

From time to time, the Bureau TEC (internal auditing and evaluation) carries out financial inspections of counterpart organisations, and internal audits of Regional Offices.

For credit funding Hivos created, together with the Dutch social bank Triodos, a separate window: the Hivos Triodos Fund (HTF). To a large extent Hivos has transferred to HTF the management and monitoring of credit activities. A request for credit, in addition to approval from the director of the Regional Office or the Head of Asia Bureau is contingent upon approval from the HTF credit committee.

Hivos is an active member of two donor platforms: GOM, with Balance, Icco and Novib, co-financing agencies, in the Netherlands; and Eurostep at European level. In GOM there is a regular exchange of information at the level of programme/country policy officers for creating synergies and avoiding duplication. Within Eurostep Hivos has actively promoted similar forms of exchange.

Furthermore, Hivos has established alliances with other Dutch organisations, primarily along sectoral lines, such as the ones with Fair Trade Assistance, Max Havelaar (fair trade), and the Hubert Bals Fund (film). These alliances allow Hivos to link up with additional sectoral expertise, and Southern partners of these organisations may have access to funding from Hivos. In the latter case Hivos may decide to extend funding outside its core countries.

Activities in the North are carried out in collaboration between the Bureau Communications and Marketing, the Asia Bureau and the officer for international relations.

### addresses:

Hivos Bureau Asia and CIS  
Raamweg 16  
2596 HL The Hague  
The Netherlands  
ph. 31-70-3765500  
fax 31-70-3624600  
e-mail: asia@hivos.nl

Hivos Regional Office  
Flat no 402 Eden Park no 20  
Vittal Mallya Road  
Bangalore 560001 India  
ph. 0091-80-2210514  
fax 0091-80-2270367  
e-mail: hivos@hivos-india.org



**Annex 1: Hivos in Asia, countries and number of partners**

Countries	1986	1991	1997
India	44	63	74
Sri Lanka	3	15	31
Indonesia	14	31	25
Malaysia	-	10	16
Regional Asia	-	3	13
Kazakhstan	-	-	19
Kyrgyzstan	-	-	12
(Vietnam)	-	-	-
TOTAL	61	122	190



Annex 2: Hivos in Asia, expenditures per country, all sources 1986, 1991, 1997 (in Dfl. Millions)

Countries	1986	1991	1997	1992-1997 total	1992-1997 % distribution
India	3.9	3.3	8.2	32.0	40
Sri Lanka	0.2	0.8	4.7	16.2	20
Indonesia	1.6	2.4	1.1	11.5	15
Malaysia	-	0.4	2.2	9.9	13
Regional Asia	-	0.2	1.5	4.9	6
CIS	-	-	2.3	4.7	6
TOTAL	5.7	7.1	20.0	79.2	100



Annex 3: Hivos in Asia per sector 1992, 1996 & 1997, all sources

	1992		1996		1997		1997	
per sector	No. counterparts	%	No. counterparts	%	No. . counterparts	%	Expenditure in Dfl. Millions	%
Economy	11	7	17	9	20	10	4.3	22
Culture	3	2	16	8	9	5	0.3	1
Gender	18	13	45	23	36	19	3.1	16
Environment	23	15	40	21	41	22	4.7	23
Human rights and HIV/AIDS	45	31	56	28	60	31	5.4	27
Other	47	32	23	11	24	13	2.2	11
TOTAL	147	100	197	100	190	100	20.0	100



Annex 4: Hivos in Asia per type of organisation, 1992, 1996 & 1997

type of organisation	1992		1996		1997		1997	
	No. counterparts	%	No. Counterparts	%	No. Counterparts	%	Expenditure in Dfl. Millions	%
(i) grassroots / community based	6	4	20	10	14	7	1.2	6
(ii) social org'n / interest / advocacy	3	2	89	45	87	46	10.2	51
(iii) intermediary development organisation	75	51	21	11	25	13	2.1	10
(iv) service organisation	51	35	43	22	41	21	4.0	20
(v) network	9	6	19	10	19	10	1.4	7
(vi) Other*	3	2	5	3	4	2	1.2	6
TOTAL	147	100	197	100**	190	100	20.0	100

\* 'other' includes a category "strengthening of local NGOs".

\*\* discrepancies between the single figures and the totals due to rounding off.

For a definition of the distinction between community-based organisations, social organisations, intermediary development organisations, et cetera, please refer to Ch. 3.



Annex 5: Hivos Budget Cat IV/Asia's share and distribution per country 1998-2002 (according to allocations and projections dated 23.10.97) in Dfl. Millions

	1998		1999		2000		2001		2002	
Hivos	68.214		77.358		82.367		87.543		n.a. **	
Asia	17.054	25%	19.340	25%	20.592	25%	21.886	25%	n.a	
India	7.65	45%	9.28	48%	10.30	50%	10.94	50%	n.a	50%
Srilanka	3.9	23%	3.87	20%	3.91	19%	4.16	19%	n.a	19%
Malaysia & *** Indonesia	1.8	11%	1.16	6%	0.62	3%	-	0%	n.a	0%
CIS	1.7	11%	2.51	13%	3.09	15%	3.28	15%	n.a.	15%
Asia Regional	1.3	7%	1.16	6%	1.03	5%	1.09	5%	n.a	5%
Vietnam	0.2	1%	0.77	4%	1.03	5%	1.75	8%	n.a	8%
Other incl. RO	0.4	2%	0.58	3%	0.62	3%	0.66	3%	n.a	3%
Total	17.054	100%	19.340	100%	20.592	100%	21.886	100%	n.a	100%

NB: Discrepancies between the totals and the single figures constituting the totals are due to rounding off.

\* 25% is a minimum. Final allocations will be decided upon before October 1999.

\*\* The present cofinancing agreement is valid till 2001. As such, no financial projections can be made beyond this date.

\*\*\* Indonesia: these projections may be revised depending on the political situation in Indonesia c.q. on the prospects of the cofinancing programme re-opening a programme in Indonesia



**Annex 6: Hivos Asia per sector/expenditures & allocations 1996 - 2002 (in Dfl. Millions), cat. IV**

Sector	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001		2002	
Economy	2.50	20%	3.04	19%	3.75	22%	4.64	24%	5.15	25%	5.27	25%	n.a	25%
Culture	0.36	3%	0.19	1%	0.51	3%	0.58	3%	0.82	4%	1.09	5%	n.a	5%
Gender	2.13	17%	2.90	18%	2.90	17%	3.29	17%	3.50	17%	3.72	17%	n.a	17%
Environment	3.00	24%	3.74	24%	3.75	22%	4.06	21%	3.91	20%	4.38	20%	n.a	19%
Human Rights & HIV/AIDS	3.13	25%	4.52	28%	4.26	25%	4.25	22%	4.32	21%	4.38	20%	n.a	19%
Other	1.36	11%	1.49	9%	1.88	11%	2.51	13%	2.88	13%	2.85	13%	n.a	15%
Total Budget Asia	12.503	100%	15.889	100%	17.054	100%	19.340	100%	20.592	100%	21.886	100%	n.a	100%

N.B.: Discrepancies between the totals and the single figures constituting the totals are due to rounding off.

N.B.: The projections presented above depart from the CAT. IV Budget, as these funds are the guaranteed minimum for the next Five-Year plan-period. The actual budget will be higher as additional funds will be available (EU, Ministry of Foreign affairs, private funds). There are no reasons to assume that there are significant differences regarding the availability of additional funds, for any of the sectors. The percentage projections pertain to the entire budget including other sources. For the sake of comparability the Cat IV figures for 1996 have been added. As, however, the possibilities and requirements of funds from sources other than CAT IV are not fully within the control of Hivos, the above mentioned projections will have to be used with a certain amount of flexibility.



# Annex 7: Regional Economic Performance Figures

	GNP pc \$	total GDP (billion \$)	growth GDP 90-94 (%)	defence (% of public ex- pend.)(1)	social services, (% of public expend.)	de- velopm ent aid (% of GNP)	debt service ratio (2)
India	.320	294	3.8	12.8	9.3	0.8	26.9
Sri Lanka	.640	12	5.4	11.6	33	4.6	8.7
Indonesia	.880	175	7.6	6.2	14.4	1.0	32.4
Malaysia	3.480	71	8.4	12.0	39.5	0.1	7.9
Vietnam	.200	16	8.0	n.a.	n.a.	5.2	6.1
Kyrgyzstan	1995 .690	n.a.	90-94 negative 95-96: 5.6%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Kazakhstan	1996 1.218	19.5	90-94: -25 %  (negative) 95-96: positive	1	7.8	0.7	n.a.

All data for 1994 unless otherwise noted.

source: 1997 Asia Yearbook; UNDP: Kazakhstan Human Development Report 1997;  
Kazakhstan National Agency of Statistical Research, 1997

n.a = not available

(1) defence expenditures : Official figures. Actual military expenditures may be considerable higher.

(2) Debt service ratio = external debt : exports (%)



# Annex 8: Asian Performances, Human Development Index and Gender Development Index

	life expectancy (years)	adult literacy rate (%)	GDP pc (PPP\$)(1)	HDI value (2)	GDI rank (3)	GDI value (4)
India	61.3	51.2	1.348	0.446	118	0.419
Sri Lanka	72.2	90.1	3.277	0.711	70	0.694
Indonesia	63.5	83.2	3.740	0.641	86	0.642
Malaysia	71.2	83.0	8.865	0.832	45	0.782
Vietnam	66.0	93.0	1.208	0.557	101	0.552
Kyrgyzstan	67.8 '95: 66 declining	97.0	'93 2.320 '96 1.297	'91 0.729 '96 0.61	88	0.628
Kazakhstan	'93 69.7 '95 64.9 declining	97.5	'90 5.440 '96 2.296	'91 0.848 '96 0.66	69	0.698

All data for 1994 unless otherwise noted.

source: Human Development Report (UNDP) 1997, Kazakhstan Human Development Report 1996

- (1) GDP pc (PPP\$) is GDP pc in US\$ corrected for Purchasing Power Parity
- (2) The Human Development Index measures the levels of three equally weighted primary opportunities for developing human potential: a. a long and healthy life; b. access to knowledge as measured by a combination of adult literacy (two-thirds weight) and combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratios (one third weight) and c. standard of living, as measured by real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (PPP\$). The maximum value (1994) was 0.960.
- (3) Rank: relative to other countries
- (4) GDI is a Gender - related Development Index, derived from the following indicators: relative life expectancy, relative access to knowledge, and relative earned income share. Maximum value (1994) was 0.939.

Note: strong decline in PPP-adjusted GDP and Human Development Indexes for CIS; in all other countries GDP pc is rising.



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## Annex 10: Glossary

BILANCE	Catholic co-financing agency
Cat.IV	The budget category pertaining to the budget of the four co-financing agencies.
CBO's	Community Based Organisations
C&D	Culture and Development
cfa's	co-financing agencies
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
cp's	counterparts
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAClist	official list of developing countries (actually countries qualifying for ODA)
E&D	Environment and Development
EDZ	Economic Development Zone
Eurostep	European Solidarity Towards Equal Participation of People
FTZ	Free Trade Zone
GOM	Common Platform of the four Dutch co-financing agencies
GW&D	Gender, Women and Development
HTF	Hivos Triodos Fund
ICCO	Inter-Church co-financing agency
ID	Institutional Development
LEISA	Low external input sustainable agriculture
NTPF	Non timber forest produce
NOVIB	independant co-financing agency
OD	Organisational Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
plwa	People Living With Aids
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policy
TNC's	Trans National Companies
WTO	World Trade Organisation



HIVOS

POLICY DOCUMENT HIVOS IN THE THIRD WORLD

FULL PARTICIPATION: A QUESTION OF POWER

An institutional approach

The Hague, November 1988



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"A [...democratic] society needs the active participation of as many people as possible in a great variety of small and large social groupings. For it is important that people with their ideas, wishes, physical and mental capabilities, ideals and preferences join forces to shape their way of living together and to give meaning to this.

By definition, a uniform society is incompatible with the presence of unique people, while a plural society is the only one that can, to a reasonable extent, do justice to all, by providing scope for people's social inclinations."

(A. den Broeder in "A humanistic view of development cooperation", October 1981)



## 1. Introduction

In 1978, HIVOS chairman Jaap van Praag formulated the ideological foundation of HIVOS's work in a document entitled "Policy Principles". This document reflects the emphasis on the 'basic needs approach', which was characteristic of that period, advancing the satisfaction of primary needs such as food, income, health and education as the central concern. While the emphasis has changed today, the humanistic principles that pervade and guide the reasoning of that document as well as its operational implications are still valid.

Thus, ten years later, the priorities stated in "Policy principles" are still the essence of HIVOS policy: cooperation with institutions that are averse to dogmatism; emphasis on collective responses to survival and development problems; simultaneous attention to material and non-material issues.

In HIVOS's actual work in recent years, each of these priorities can be traced. They persisted, were further elaborated in terms of policy and found particular expression in the two pronged approach that has all the while characterized HIVOS's position: economic advancement on the one hand, social and political emancipation on the other.

In 1988, these two principles still determine HIVOS's priorities and as such they feature again in the present policy document. However, they are now placed in a broader perspective, in which special importance is attached to the role of social institutions - both interest organizations run by the poor themselves and intermediary organizations of the so-called enlightened elite. After all, if one thing stands out in HIVOS's experience over the years, it is the finding that emancipation of marginalized groups requires a wide institutional embedding of their interests at the various levels of the social structure.

This implies the development of a different view on strategies for the eradication of poverty and, also, a new appreciation of the role of non-governmental organizations in such strategies.

The term 'institutional approach' reflects the essence of this perspective. It is an approach that aims at the promotion of social movements and institutional structures representing the poor. This is not a wholly new approach as far as HIVOS is concerned, but it does involve an increase in the number of dimensions that need to be taken into account by HIVOS. What is new about the institutional approach is, therefore, the requirement to assess projects, programmes, target groups and organizations explicitly in the framework of a social perspective.

## 2. Changing thinking on NGOs and society

One of HIVOS's contacts in India writes in an article that "there is a lot to be learnt from the experience of the numerous experiments, movements and organizational initiatives taking place generally outside the governmental and bureaucratic structures and away from the normal political processes of parties and elections; [they] can provide some authentic basis for alternate development models being proposed by some intellectuals at abstract level."



What is interesting in this quote is the appreciation of the individuality and autonomy of the nongovernmental sector, and the implicit approval of the apparent isolation in which the work of many NGOs is carried out, outside the official and formal decision-making processes.

However, it looks as if the organizations in question will not be allowed the opportunity to continue their activities in relative isolation much longer. Whether they like it or not, NGOs are increasingly being called upon to account for their function and role in a given context.

On the one hand, this growing interest in NGOs is inspired, and deservedly so, by international recognition of their effectiveness. In line with this, NGOs feature more and more prominently in new development strategies, which assign them the role of catalyst and generator of development of the poor. Thus every self-respecting international organization has its NGO desk by now. And, in the same way, Dutch development policy is providing more and more scope for nongovernmental initiatives, at least on paper.

On the other hand, one can observe a growing tendency among governments -those of India and Indonesia being prime examples- to be quite apprehensive about the results and effects of the activities of the very same NGOs. In more and more countries, this is leading to new regulations and legal conditions which the private development organizations have to comply with.

Presumably this apprehension is not just motivated by concern for the quality of NGO activities. The sheer numerical growth of private development organizations over the past twenty years has certainly also done much to confront national governments with the significance of so large a variety of institutional structures within their own society.

Both appreciation and apprehension, the positive as well as the negative attitude towards NGOs, are first of all inspired by the undeniable fact that private and socially based initiatives play a very substantial role in the ordering of society: a role which may go far beyond performing a mere watchdog function; a role which may become a powerful one with a significant impact on the interplay of social forces.

Within HIVOS, there has been a similar shift of attention, with increasing emphasis on the role and function of organizations.

Until 1981/82, a 'project approach' was employed, with assessment focusing on the relationship between project objectives/project activities and the problems of the target group. When that approach was replaced by the 'organization approach'- a change which mostly expressed recognition of the crucial role of the counterpart organisation in its operational capacity - it was not yet entirely clear how the latter might be operationalized. The assessment became three-dimensional, focusing on the counterpart at three levels: its relationship with the target group (insight into the problems, participation), with the project activities (technical expertise, efficiency) and with "itself" (management, stability, network). Only in this last dimension do we encounter the relationship between the organization and the outside world, but even then only in the passive sense, with the organisation as object rather than subject.

The policy discussions of 1984 were an important step in the further evolution of the organization approach. Obviously this had a lot to do with HIVOS's internal dynamics: in the meanwhile the number of contacts per country had greatly increased; networking among counterparts had started developing; HIVOS itself began formulating country policy documents (country strategies) in



which at least an attempt was made to interrelate target groups, type of organization and development potential.

Thus the discussions of 1984 extensively addressed the wider context of NGO operations and the active role which NGOs play - or can play - in the environment beyond their projects. The report recommends:

- "that HIVOS orient its strategy beforehand towards the creation of optimal conditions for its projects, e.g. by supporting programmes that try to influence power centres" and
- "that HIVOS recognize the importance of NGO networks at various levels, and support their operation."

This trend has continued since then. This is reflected, for example, in a memorandum to the board (Decision-making Procedure for Approval of Individual Projects in the Third World, 1986), in which the objective of "strengthening institutional structures which, directly or indirectly, represent and promote the interests of the poor" is nearly as important as the objective of "improving the material and non-material living conditions of the poor themselves". In the regional policy documents subsequently formulated by HIVOS, these two objectives are considered in close connection with each other, with priority being given not only to certain categories of the poor, but also to certain social movements and their institutions; for example, the cooperative movement in Zimbabwe and the labour movement in Chile. In addition, nearly all regional documents also contain the objective of 'network promotion', i.e. promotion of relations among organizations aiming at greater division and differentiation of labour, transfer of knowledge, joint promotion of interests, etc.

The conclusion can thus be drawn that in recent years HIVOS has no longer focused solely on the development potential of individual counterparts in their relationship with a specific target group, but that it increasingly takes into account the impact which NGOs can have on the organization and ordering of society as a whole. An impact which amounts to more than the sum of their separate efforts; it is this joint impact, actual or potential, which has become an important additional dimension in HIVOS's involvement in development.

However, this wider perspective can hardly be advanced without further argument. Consequently, further elaboration is needed on a number of questions relating to the causes of poverty and the process of development. In the following sections, an attempt is made to provide this.

### 3. Poverty: a question of power, - or the lack of it

#### 3.1. Marginalization

Although poverty is not exclusive to the Third World, it is especially distressing there because of its massive scale and the immense discrepancies in prosperity, knowledge and power which create a virtually unbridgeable gap between rich and poor.



Analysis of the dimensions and persistence of poverty cannot be properly undertaken without reference to the role of international power relations, with their direct impact on the economic relations between North and South. This impact was glaringly obvious in the colonial era, but in fact it remains just as visible today, in 1988, with UNCTAD nearly dead and gone, IMF increasingly dictating terms and Western economies concerned with protectionism as ever.

As long as the prevailing political relations in the world remain unchanged or alter only marginally, the struggle against poverty will remain subject to strict limits in numerous countries.

But the poverty problem is not only a question of skew relations in the global political system, it is also a matter of distribution within the borders of national units.

In the framework of the present document, which chiefly addresses the role of social institutions (NGOs) in societal development, the analysis will be restricted to national level.

A brief look at the recent history of most developing countries reveals that poverty often goes hand in hand with repression and limited freedom for large sections of the population. In most of those cases, the nations concerned have gone through an unbalanced social building process, usually in the wake of colonial domination during which the foundations of so-called "modern" society were forcibly laid. Even in the few instances where the colonial heritage was restructured after independence, the essence of the modern state (increases in scale, complex bureaucracy, industrialization, etc.) was hardly affected and it was basically imposed on traditional society.

That need not be catastrophic by definition, as there is little reason to glorify traditional society as such. The problem of the imported state structure -itself the product of at least two centuries of Western history- lies in the fact that it presupposes the existence of certain basic conditions such as socio-economic differentiation and the associated skills and institutions. But these basic conditions simply did not (and still do not) prevail in most developing countries: even nowadays the majority of people have not yet acquired the means to respond adequately to the new social and political structures. And this means quite simply that people are being incorporated in the new system as objects rather than subjects.

In this context, accumulation of power and wealth in the hands of a small political and economic elite obviously takes place at the expense of the large majority of the population. Control and monopolization of access to factors that co-determine this power and wealth -production factors such as capital and land, knowledge and information- maintain the position of the power elite and perpetuate the downward poverty spiral in which the masses find themselves caught.

On consequence of and at the same time a necessary condition for the process of monopolization of resources and concentration of power in the hands of the "happy few" thus appears to be the marginalization of large sections of society. A marginalization that takes the form of progressive loss of control over one's own material environment and ever decreasing access to the decision-making processes that determine the material and non-material living conditions of the large majority.

In HIVOS's philosophy, the central problem of the marginalized is thus their lack of access to the most elementary prerequisites for securing a decent



life: a problem which comes down to distribution of production, income, knowledge and power. The mechanisms that are in principle available in any society to promote a certain, reasonably just degree of distribution, are apparently absent or function defectively.

### 3.2. The role of the State

In Western societies, the state has been assigned an important role as a distributor and redistributor of available resources. In the democratic tradition, as it evolved over time, rules were established regarding the form and substance of the interaction between state and society.

The state can function as a factor of national unity and operate as a redistributor of resources because society has developed mechanisms to control and influence the exercise of state power. Such mechanisms usually take the form of more or less specialized institutions for the protection and promotion of specific class and group interests.

In many Third World countries, the modern post-independent state has been assigned the same role, while usually lacking a historical rooting of its own: the power of traditional forms of community life, based on family and tribe for example, has already eroded considerably; the increasing orientation of societies towards the West is fostering a stronger attitude of individualism and pragmatism; the new rules of the game are alien and cannot be counter-vailed by traditional forms of institutionalized social control. In this transition, the state has often deteriorated into a mere instrument to enable the power elite to perpetuate and strengthen its position.

Traditional norms and values that formerly legitimized inequality but, at the same time, protected the weak, are now being incorporated in the new political and economic order without retaining their protective elements. They are thus transformed into instruments of power reinforcement and no longer perform the function of redistribution. In Asia, such norms maintain a system of subjection and submission. In Africa, ethnic ties are utilized to concentrate political power.

In short, the state, pre-eminently the new redistributor in properly functioning democracies, seems to fall in that task; at the same time there is a process of incorporation and marginalization going on, brought about by the imposition of predominant systems upon the large majority of the population.

A belief in the value of the state as a redistributor clearly underlies this section and this might well be attributed to "Westocentric" thinking - always a real danger when Third World phenomena are assessed. One must realistically conclude, however, that modernization can no longer be reversed in developing countries. It is there to stay. The unavoidable consequence is that mechanisms must be developed which enable people to function in their own modernizing society on an equal footing.



### 3.3. The role of Social Organizations

A humanistic view of development necessarily implies a commitment to democratic social structures.

The development and self-fulfilment of individual human beings, the pursuit of equal opportunities can, after all, only be realized when society is based on the will of its members and on respect for those members, on community spirit and mutual responsibility; when there are guarantees of the active participation of each individual in the decision-making processes that determine the form and character of this society; when the exercise of power can be made subject to stringent requirements, so as to monitor and safeguard the plural character of society.

In developing countries, the process of society building has often proceeded along such lines that the conditions for democracy are not fully present.

Large sections of society do not possess the knowledge and skills required by the new socio-economic order. Because of their educational and material disadvantages, they have little or no opportunity to express and promote their own interests. The roads to participation are thus blocked.

At the same time, there is usually a lack of properly functioning intermediaries, protecting those groups and acting on behalf of their interests. Where potential intermediaries such as political parties and trade unions do exist, they often pay little attention to the marginalized or they suffer repression when they try to do so. Access to centres of decision-making is thus blocked as well.

In addition, the control mechanisms which are necessary to encourage the state to perform its role as the guardian of general wellbeing and thus to curb the power of the elite, are insufficiently developed. All in all, this indicates the importance and the role of social organizations as a determining factor in the democratic ordering of society. These organizations are the indispensable link between state and citizen, for the protection of rights and promotion of interests of the various strata and sectors. If such social organizations also comprise institutions of representation, coming from the grass roots, then the basic conditions for participation on an equal footing have been met.



#### 4. Policy priorities

##### 4.1. Precedence for the interests of the marginalized

HIVOS gives first priority to the interests of the marginalized. This commitment is more than just one policy priority heading a list of others: it is rather the essential point of departure that defines HIVOS's policy perspective as a whole, and as such it is the touchstone of each and every other priority. This should not be taken to mean, however, that all of HIVOS's approaches are exclusively directed at the marginalized themselves, but it does imply that they must all, directly or ultimately, serve their interests. What is need, therefore, is a target group definition of 'the marginalized', a more precise indication of the Third World masses whose opportunities for a decent human existence are at risk.

In view of the types of societies concerned, these people are often the small farmers and farm labourers in rural areas, who are faced with dependency and exploitation; they are the urban migrants who, under grinding slum conditions, seek to build up some sort of existence; they are the ethnic minorities, such as Indians in Latin America, who see their identity disintegrate under the pressure of dominant cultural patterns. But they are also the group who, within each of the previous categories, are doubly marginalized: women; since it is women in particular whose autonomy and social recognition suffers most under the impact of imported Western values during the transition from traditional to modern society.

Reversal of the marginalization process, the road to full and genuine participation of the poor and repressed in society, would be meaningless without the involvement of women on an equal footing. This requires the elimination of women's disadvantaged position within the target group itself, and that implies the necessity of strategies geared to the promotion of their autonomy.

##### 4.2. Near the grass roots

Proceeding from its view on development, HIVOS aims to support processes in the Third World that enable the poor to make a stand for their rights, to gain access to the sources of income and knowledge, and to exert influence on centres of decision; in other words, to develop countervailing power.

We are speaking of processes, to be sure; they take time and require persistent efforts at many levels of society. Further on in this chapter, some emphasis is placed on the necessity of a broad social platform for successful emancipation of repressed groups; but this should never divert attention from the absolute requirement that emancipation processes always be supported by initiatives from the poor and repressed themselves. Consequently, HIVOS's support will have to go primarily to those grassroots initiatives.

This is obviously the focus of any approach aimed at eradicating poverty, but it is furthermore the essence of the humanistic view of development: emancipation cannot be realized in a top-down fashion, it cannot be achieved and introduced by third parties; if emancipation is to be truly that, it has to be striven for by the beneficiaries themselves; only on the basis of such independent effort will people ever be able to develop their own instruments and skills, and only on that basis can they equip themselves to take part in determining the shape of their own society.



#### 4.3. Focus on organization

In the daily practice of HIVOS's work, the above means that attention is devoted not only to individual claims for elementary human rights, but also and especially to the collective expression of such claims made by groups of people who have organized themselves on the basis of their shared interest in an effort to secure effective and sustained improvement of the position of the poor.

Recent thinking on development has increasingly come to recognize organization at the grassroots level as one of the most important conditions for development of the marginalized. Organization of people and resources -often informal in nature- has always played a role in situations of scarcity, when just staying alive is the primary concern. But development presupposes more than bare survival and this is why strategies should be evolved to enable people to rise above that level and to participate fully in society. For this purpose it is necessary to unite to pursue common interests and aspirations, since only then can each man and woman effectively express, claim and exercise his or her rights.

But at the same time, practical experience has shown that a substantial number of preconditions have to be met before such an organization process can be successful. These conditions apply not only to the process of getting together and agreeing on goals, but also to the optimal setting in which goals can feasibly be pursued. As to the latter, the presence of broad support in society is indispensable: there should be wide recognition of the importance of the cause.

Isolated development activities have thus at best generated tiny "islands of growth", which are extremely vulnerable to external and possibly hostile factors. Such islands do not represent genuine development in the sense of lasting improvement of people's position. The same can be said of projects which are deemed successful by classic standards, but which have proven incapable of bringing about any appreciable impact beyond their own confines. Such instances of success, however useful for those immediately concerned, may reasonably be relegated to the category of "drops in the ocean". The principle of organized and united representation of the target group's interests should therefore not remain limited to local boundaries (e.g. village or district); it should rather be applied repeatedly, as it were in ever expanding concentric circles, if necessary until it assumes national or transnational dimensions. In that case, we speak of **movements**: the organized endeavour of marginalized groups in a broad sense, proceeding from shared interests, seeking to exert influence on power centres and, in the end, aiming at sharing of power.

The practical consequence for HIVOS's work in this regard is thus the need for activities and organizations of the target group to be based on an actual or potential movement and for the development of horizontal relations between target group and associated institutions.



#### 4.4. Strengthening the economic base

Strengthening the economic base of the target group has always featured high on the list of HIVOS priorities, even in the years when voluntarist thinking, with its emphasis on consciousness-raising and non-material approaches, prevailed in development work.

The deliberate decision to opt for improving the material position of the target group conforms with HIVOS's view of the causes of poverty and marginalization. Large groups cannot withstand the stronger market forces in the increasingly complex economic order of the modern state. They cannot continue their operations in competition with the large-scale commercial sector. They incur debts, lose their land and other production factors, lose their economic independence and get caught, almost inevitably, in the downward spiral of poverty and marginalization.

In HIVOS's view, therefore, strengthening people's economic base is an indispensable factor in an integral process of emancipation. Apart from improving the market position of the target group, this especially involves getting the state to recognize the economic value of large groups in society.

This approach lays the foundation for influencing the centres of power, since it puts people in a position to claim their rights and secure more favourable conditions for themselves. In Western societies, with their strong tradition of labour unions, this principle is now taken for granted. But not exclusively there. It also applies in Zimbabwe, for example, where the economic importance of the small farmer, producing nearly half of the national harvest, has been recognized, which has led to the provision of a good package of government services, ranging from extension to marketing.

Obviously, not all activities will to the same extent contribute to realization of the economic potential of the marginalized. The importance of a given activity depends on its place in the economic framework as a whole. Economic potential is very much a matter of economic feasibility, and experience has shown how essential it is to take the existing economic activities of the target group as the point of departure.

Here too, however, efforts may easily result in the creation of mere "islands of growth" whose cosmetic effect only confirms the dominant system in society as a whole. Here too, therefore, activities need to be supported by a movement, a network of social institutions that impart feasibility to the initiatives in question, nourishing them and carrying them further.

#### 4.5. Intermediary NGOs as allies

The basic tenet that liberation from poverty and repression involves a fight that must first of all be fought by the poor and repressed themselves in no way diminishes the necessity of having allies. Nongovernmental organizations of an intermediary type perform this crucial role. In the field of international cooperation it is they who act as interpreters of the needs and aspirations of the target group, but within their own societies too they play a similar role, towards national centres of power, speaking on behalf of the target group and promoting its interests. In this connection one might think of legal advice centres, or of research and development institutions that can exert influence on government policy, pressing for changes in favour of the poor and doing so from a position of authority.



But also at the level of actual development work, the intermediary NGOs play an indispensable role as providers of services to the target group (technical advice, education programmes) or as catalysts for new initiatives and processes. A new form of dependency of the target group is thus, more often than not, substituted for the old one; in most cases this cannot be totally avoided. However, this should not be taken as a self-defeating arrangement: it can be accepted as long as the NGO is aware of it and deals with it as an apparently necessary evil that should be phased out as the target group gets stronger. An obvious additional condition is that the new dependency should not place people at a greater disadvantage than they were before.

The diversity and range of these intermediary social institutions is of particular importance for the emancipation process. Professionalism and specialized sectoral expertise must be mobilized at all levels of society if the interests of the poor and repressed are to be advanced effectively. HIVOS is therefore explicitly in favour of developing a multilayered buffer of intermediary NGOs that are in a position to stimulate and support organization within the target group as well as movements arising from this organization.

Here again, a number of conditions met. Just as activities at the grassroots level require broader support, an intermediary NGO cannot and must not operate in isolation (see 4.3). Isolation means greater vulnerability and less impact on the ordering of society; in the end, it may have negative repercussions for the target group. This risk is obvious in the case of target group interest organizations, but it is equally evident with respect to intermediary NGOs. This is important in a passive sort of way: in terms of obtaining ideas and support from related social movements; but also and especially in an active sense: are they capable of creating more favourable conditions for participation by the target group; how can they spread ideas and what coalitions can they form?

This assessment applies to all intermediary NGOs. Organizations whose activities are mainly of indirect benefit to the target group certainly need a broad platform of social support to exert the necessary influence. But even organizations with less ambitious objectives -for example directed at technical aspects such as production, marketing and basic provisions- can ultimately only be successful if they link into a network of social institutions through which their initiatives are carried further.

#### 4.6. Democracy and control

At this point, the question presents itself whether all social movements are of equal importance to HIVOS and whether they are equally worthy of support. How is one to draw distinctions among and within the various movements?

A frame of reference is needed to do so, a frame derived from HIVOS's view of society, which must be sufficiently clear to assist the assessment of social developments. This brings us back to the humanistic principles that underlie HIVOS's view of development (see section 3).

A crucial principle must then be applied to the struggle for power and influence, namely the principle that the end never justifies the means. A movement engaged in that struggle will have to employ means that, by their nature, already contain the elements of emancipation and democracy. All too often, we have seen how a battle that was fought and won in the name of the



people, causes the winners to lose the ability to allow for real participation: the means by which power was gained then persist as the means of holding on to it, leaving the people again without any say in matters.

This implies that the end and the means must be consistent with each other within the movement; it also implies that active strategies to promote accountability and control over the leaders by the target group must be developed.

The requirement of internal democracy is obviously suggested by the internal dynamics that can be observed in many movements, whether they are socially successful or not. One must continuously guard against the danger of the movement becoming an end in itself; the danger that it, or rather its leaders, may become part of the establishment, sticking to old slogans and meanwhile becoming alienated itself from the members.

The institutional approach advocated by HIVOS is based on the maxim that social movements are a necessary prerequisite for reversing the marginalization process. Consequently, this approach includes the obligation to help ensure that those movements remain truly emancipatory in the practice of dealing with the target group. This presupposes active participation at grassroots level and an open attitude towards grassroots supporters; it requires emancipation within emancipation, a characteristic that should be actively and visibly pursued by all concerned: the target group as well as intermediary NGOs.

HIVOS should therefore give priority to those sectors and institutions, which exist within movements or are closely related to them and which are able to guard these movements against rigidity and alienation.

### Summary

Together, the above policy priorities make up the institutional approach favoured by HIVOS. An approach that aims at institutional embedding of the interests of the poor in society at large, working through organized and broadly supported expression and promotion of those interests, as a major condition for a democratic society.



## 5. Institutional approach in practice

In section 2, we sketched the development of HIVOS's thinking on NGOs and referred to the operational unclarities involved. It thus stands to reason that the institutional approach, as specified in the foregoing policy priorities, has yet to be elaborated in practical terms.

After all, the formulated priorities only indicate ideal directions in a generalized setting, whereas reality is highly differentiated and far from ideal. This section attempts to avoid the dangers of either absolute or inconsistent application of the institutional approach; this requires that stages be distinguished, each with its own operational implications, and that conditions and criteria be formulated.

### 5.1. Necessary stages

The essence of the institutional approach is the facilitation of access to the decision-making processes in society that bear on the immediate living environment of the poor. People cannot achieve this as individuals, nor can a single NGO do much in this direction. Organization of the target group is therefore a leading principle in all activities that HIVOS chooses to support. But, as repeatedly indicated above, if this principle is to be applied out effectively, the organization of the target group will have to tie in with in a movement or, at least, a potential movement.

However, it is quite obvious that social reality in many developing countries does not make this possible. Looking at Chile and South Africa, the labour movement readily presents itself as a suitable context for organization of the target group, and the same can be said of the farmers' movement in Nicaragua. But if we consider countries such as Botswana, Mozambique and even India, matters turn out to be rather less clearcut, apparently because the social structures are not so differentiated, latent conflicts of interest have not yet taken such a highly visible shape, or existing discrepancies are legitimized by a widely accepted ideology.

But the institutional approach was not adopted with the purpose of paving the way for easy and self-evident choices; on the contrary, one might say that the process of uniting forces, the emergence of movements, perhaps warrants even more attention than a context in which all this has long since crystallized.

This implies that HIVOS should have an understanding of the stages and components of the movement building process. Generalizations remain hazardous in this respect, but certain recurrent elements can be observed in the history of popular movements. Apart from the objective aspect of actual marginalization, an equally important role is played by subjective conditions such as people's awareness of their own identity and value, their awareness of existing and threatening disadvantages, and the presence of a legitimizing ideology. These aspects provide the binding factor amidst a diversity of organizations at grassroots and higher levels, possibly leading to a configuration which as a whole represents more than the sum of its parts.

However, those parts, as well as the subjective elements mentioned above, must be there before larger entities can evolve.



It follows that in situations where social dynamics have not yet produced movements, HIVOS's efforts should be directed at creating favourable conditions, supporting activities that contain the seeds of growth in that direction. Consequently, a major area of attention for HIVOS is selfmade target group organizations whose importance can be recognized and whose work can be replicated by related groups in society (for instance, the first farmers' cooperatives, from which a full-fledged movement can arise). But experience shows that few such organizations are to be found in social settings that are not very differentiated. And that increases the importance of intermediary NGOs engaged in consciousness-raising, group formation and provision of services among the poor. In most cases, HIVOS will have to ally itself with them. But not unreservedly, since it occurs all too often that, for lack of capacity or vision, the sincere intentions of intermediary NGOs degenerate into charity and paternalism.

This is why HIVOS should assess cooperation with intermediary NGOs -particularly at this stage- in the light of their actual contribution to an independent and broad coordinated representation of the target group's interests; in the light, that is, of their potential for creation of a movement. A counterpart or candidate counterpart will have to be assessed as to **outlook** (does it operate as part of a movement and does it employ a non-dogmatic philosophy), as to **methodology** (are its efforts aimed at the promotion of subjective conditions), as to **consistency** (in its cooperation with the target group, as explained below) and as to its own **social context** (cooperation with other intermediary NGOs).

## 5.2. Movements as counterparts

HIVOS's preference is for cooperation with a broadly organized target group. Where movements or associations of target group organizations have already developed, there is obvious eligibility for direct support. But here too, the criterion of internal emancipatory structure should be applied.

After all, within these movements just as elsewhere, institutionalization can easily lead to estrangement from the grassroots. Channelling financial support through secondary and tertiary organizations increases this danger and may actually promote authoritarian features and even the artificial perpetuation of structures that are basically empty. This is why HIVOS should always assess movements, like intermediaries, as to their rejection of dogmatic approaches, in theory as well as in practice. The check of formal internal democracy, in terms of elections and representation arrangements, is thus not enough. HIVOS should also promote internal control through its funding conduct. On the one hand, this implies priority for programmes that enhance members' responsibility by giving them a say in matters; on the other, it implies restraint in funding the non-professional apparatus of movements, as this financial burden should in the end be borne by the member organizations of such representative bodies.

## 5.3. Innovation: a permanent necessity

Respect for principles of participation and democratic standards within movements does not in itself guarantee alert and effective operation. In particular the well-established movements tend over time to become monolithic;



they start developing cumbersome organizational machinery and can no longer summon up the required creativity.

**Young organizations** are in a unique position to counteract this tendency and HIVOS considers it important that established movements should always have room for these recent arrivals on the target group scene, which may come up with inventive ideas and thus play an innovative role in development processes. As against that, certain obvious dangers are involved too: the newcomers' lack of experience may entail assessment errors and mismanagement; in their impetuous zeal and criticism of the established opposition they may furthermore create confusion and thus debilitate the movement, at least temporarily. Nonetheless, the advantages arguably outweigh the risks, as long as the latter are carefully contained. After all, the price of rigidity and paralysis is just unacceptable in the process of emancipation.

Similar considerations make it important for HIVOS itself to reserve room in its programme, in terms of funding and attention, for new and recently established organizations.

#### 5.4. The changing role of intermediary NGOs

In section 4, on policy priorities, the importance of intermediary NGOs as allies of the target group was emphasized. Above, in 5.1, the intermediary NGOs were also assigned a crucial role in the creation of favourable conditions for movements to arise. But the virtual omnipresence of this category of NGOs necessitates caution. The institutionalization processes they go through themselves and the vested interest they might evolve in maintaining a certain status quo may lead to their domination of the scene and thus to prevent the emergence of autonomous movements.

This danger is particularly present in the initial stages of the organization process, with the intermediary organization acting as a catalyst for development. For what, one may ask, legitimizes of its intervention? Who controls the NGO's performance? And to whom does the NGO render an account of what it is doing? The sincere organization is aware of its temporary role, seeing itself as serving rather than leading the target group, and it consequently creates the conditions for the latter's increasing independence and control. In this connection, one might think of setting up a structure to represent the various target group organizations, a structure to which the intermediate NGO will henceforth be accountable.

Eventually, a successful emancipation process will manifest itself in autonomous target group organizations that no longer need the intermediary NGO as a catalyst. The function of organizer and the role of promoter of interests can then properly be taken over by the movement. This does not mean, however, that the intermediary NGO has become redundant. It is duly assigned a new role as a resource platform, which the target group can always turn to. This role is purely one of rendering services, no longer on the 'mere' basis of solidarity but now also, and more especially, on the basis of proven professionalism and at the request of the target group as the principal. And it is these criteria that HIVOS should employ at this stage.



### 5.5. NGOs versus government?

Analytically speaking, the institutional approach proceeds from the assumption that in most countries there is a certain tension between the individual citizen and the state as regards distribution, and from the further assumption that the organized non-governmental sector is a necessary element in the build-up of countervailing power.

Does this automatically imply, however, that the conflict model should prevail in all situations and that any form of collaboration between local NGOs and government (as the direct embodiment of the state) is deemed undesirable? In view of the differences in character and policy of the governments concerned, only a qualified answer is appropriate. If we discount situations in which the legitimacy of the government must be seriously questioned, for example when human rights are being systematically violated, there are certainly instances of very effective collaboration with the authorities or certain government services. There need not be anything inconsistent about this either, as it fully accords with the view that access to resources must be gained in order to gain more power; and governments are, at least in theory, the prime controllers of such resources. On the whole, the details of arrangements for collaboration will be determined by the degree of compatibility between government policy and target group interests and by the practical condition that those interests must actually be served and that the NGO's autonomy must be respected.

The same criteria apply to cooperation between governments of developing countries and HIVOS itself. Policy priorities demand that such cooperation remain exceptional, but it can be considered when the local NGO infrastructure is insufficiently developed. In that particular case too, however, HIVOS cannot evade its own responsibilities and it explicitly does not wish to do so.

### 5.6. Emergency aid

An institutional approach like that favoured by HIVOS pre-eminently envisages a process of structural change. In contrast, the classic form of emergency aid has no other objective than relieving acute distress and helping people to survive natural disasters or serious repression.

Nevertheless, HIVOS policy makes certain allowances for the need to provide emergency aid under specific conditions. The decisive criterion for this is that the emergency aid activities should be geared to a current development process taking place in the framework of an existing relationship between the operational organization and the target group. When a disaster threatens to interrupt and set back this process, supplying emergency aid gains an added value that is appropriately classified as structural, as it is a condition for continued development.

In practice, this situation arises when disaster compels existing HIVOS counterparts to undertake emergency aid activities and to replan their programme on a temporary basis, usually for the sake of prevention and rehabilitation.



## 6. Operational choices

In addition to the policy priorities that give direction to its efforts, HIVOS has, over the past ten years, developed a range of operational choices that give practical shape to its daily work. These choices are of course inspired by considerations of efficiency, but they are obviously also derived from the policy priorities.

### 6.1. Target country policy

Engaging in development cooperation in line with the views set forth in the previous sections, typically requires in-depth investments. These investments pertain to the duration of HIVOS's involvement in a country, the diversity and the duration of relations with local counterparts, the time and effort needed to gain sufficient depth of knowledge for proper assessment of institutional processes and movements themselves, and the intensity with which financial and other resources that are brought to bear. In view of all this, HIVOS adopted a target country policy in 1981/82. Since then, HIVOS resources -funds, manpower, expertise- have been concentrated on a limited number of countries, preferably and as far as possible countries that form regional clusters with a similar social and political framework.

This choice enables HIVOS to assess the scope for its policy priorities and to translate these priorities into country-specific terms, so that well-targeted policies can be formulated per country or region. For this purpose, HIVOS employs the instrument of "country strategies" and "general regional plans", in which a tentative analysis is made of the processes leading to marginalization of certain groups in society, and -more important still- an attempt is undertaken to identify potential movements and processes to counteract those processes.

The value of this instrument lies in the assessment of the emancipatory value of current social developments and in the assessment of organizations and their initiatives in terms of their potential to influence macro processes.

### 6.2. Closer to the field

Since 1978, HIVOS has been using field offices, to whose initial liaison function further responsibilities and competencies were added in 1983 (regional offices). The liaison officers proved to be particularly valuable in situations where HIVOS's programme was just getting off the ground. But management considerations were not the sole grounds for of this operational choice. More important is the consideration that direct presence in the field facilitates better judgment of intangible processes of a potentially emancipatory nature in countries or regions where social differentiation and institutional development are weak. At this stage, there is an additional need for physical donor presence, personal dialogue and understanding, and assessment on the spot of the legitimacy of intermediary NGOs.



On the other hand, the value of donor presence has its limits. Where the NGO infrastructure of both intermediary and target group organizations has evolved sufficiently, HIVOS ought to exercise the necessary restraint.

### 6.3. Focus on counterpart organizations

Although there are a few exceptions in practice, HIVOS chooses not to carry out activities in the field but to function as facilitator of those activities, creating conditions that enable local groups and organizations to take their own development in hand. This requires a responsive attitude to initiatives, requests and ideas inspired from these sources, with the local operational organization occupying a central position throughout cooperation. HIVOS wishes to see that organization as a 'counterpart' in the true sense of the word: that implies the concerted pursuit of the same goal -to further the interests of the poor and repressed-, preferably working from the same philosophy, but each with distinct responsibilities.

Nevertheless, there is a given inequality between donor and recipient, which may create tension that cannot be ignored. Open dialogue and mutual respect for the autonomy of either party are therefore crucial. After all, both the counterpart and HIVOS are primarily accountable to the respective social contexts in which they operate and this places definite limits on the extent to which they may influence each other's policy. As far as HIVOS is concerned, it also limits the extent to which decision-making powers may be delegated to the counterparts: programmatic choices and allocation of funds are policy matters for which HIVOS remains answerable.

### 6.4. Cooperation and continuity

But the professed respect for each other's autonomy also entails an obligation on HIVOS's part to allow its counterparts the maximum flexibility in carrying out their own programmes. It is they, after all, and not the donor, who must do the job, coping with the harsh everyday reality of field work, with all the unpredictabilities of Third World circumstances. For this reason, HIVOS wants to do away with the pretentious supposition that the course taken by a project overseas can be controlled from behind desks in The Hague.

Funding arrangements are one of the ways in which this view can be expressed for example by means of longer term programme funding, which is widely practised now, including by HIVOS and other Dutch organizations; but this remains a limited solution. Where the relationship between HIVOS and the counterpart is sufficiently based on mutual trust, an obvious arrangement is extension to the counterpart of the same subsidy model that is in force between HIVOS itself and its major funder, the Dutch government. HIVOS is attempting to do this by means of **cooperation agreements**, in which commitments are made for a number of years, on the basis of general consensus, with a high degree of security as to the continuation of funding in the future. Under this arrangement, justice is done to HIVOS's own responsibility as well as its accountability to the Dutch taxpayer through the device of extensive subsequent evaluation and authorized reporting.

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