

NACO NEWS

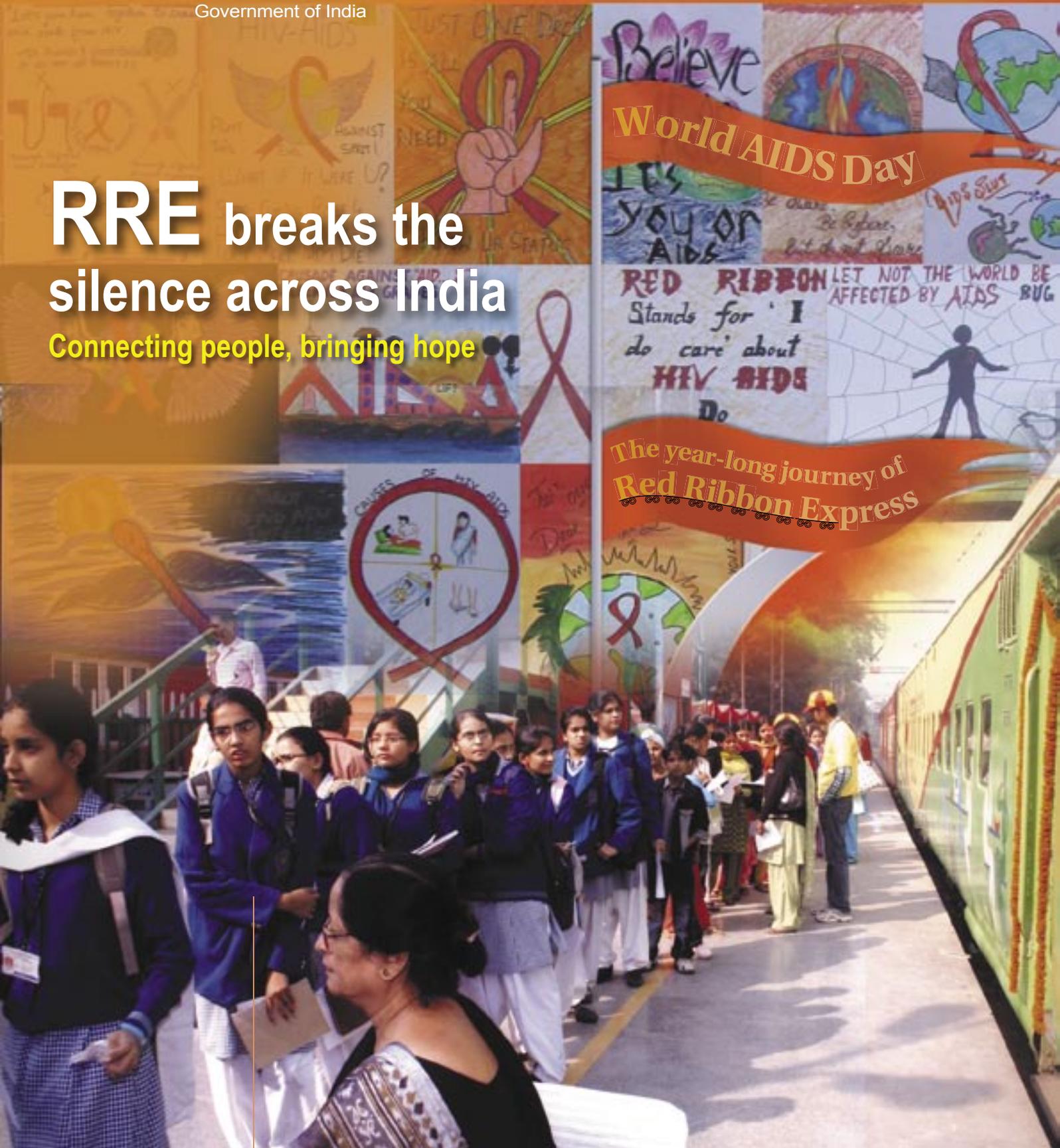
A Newsletter of the
National AIDS Control Organisation

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Government of India

Vol. IV Issue 4
Oct - Dec 2008

RRE breaks the silence across India

Connecting people, bringing hope



In the Mail



The NACO newsletter has focused on the real threat that HIV and AIDS pose to those in the age bracket of 15-49 years. But, beyond the professional circle of those who are concerned with its actual management and administration, there is scant awareness about HIV and AIDS. Therefore, its mainstreaming is of seminal concern, so that the entire community becomes an equal partner.

The newsletter is just the kind of initiative that is needed and I am glad that there is emphasis on the right issues. The efforts by the corporate bodies and NGOs are valuable as they can greatly reinforce the government initiative. Also, I loved the comic strip

representation of socially relevant information.

Manoje Nath
 Director General
 Civil Defence
 Government of Bihar



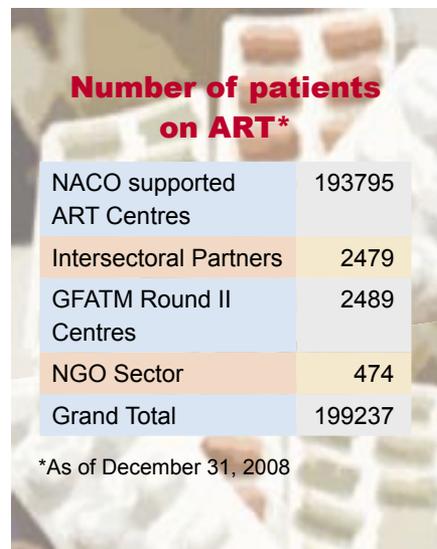
The latest issue of NACO newsletter has comprehensively covered issues and challenges related to mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in India. It is good to learn how different states and ministries are responding to the challenge. It highlights the efforts and willingness of different stakeholders to stand up and fight against HIV and AIDS. The newsletter has given some good insights and has been documented well.

It would be useful to translate this newsletter in other regional languages. Also, it will be helpful, if the most vulnerable group, that is, youth is made aware of moral and ethical dimensions of sexual behaviour.

Vijay Kumar Verma
 Principal Secretary
 Vigilance Department
 Government of Bihar

The article on mainstreaming raises some important issues from the field, the most important being integrating PLHA in the workplace. Such processes would further help in eradicating stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS. Apart from this, the newsletter is an interesting piece of information, and should be disseminated widely.

Vasudha Mohanka
 Monitoring and Information Officer
 Project Buniyad
 LEPRASociety
 Indore



Help us in our constant endeavour to make NACO newsletter more participative by contributing:

- Case studies
- Field notes and experiences
- News clips
- Anecdotes
- Forthcoming events
- Suggestions

For back issues and for information on HIV and AIDS, log on to: www.naonline.org or mail mayanknaco@gmail.com

– Editor





From the Desk of the Director General

At the outset, let me wish all our partners, donors, implementing agencies and NGOs a very happy new year. The year has started off with a lot of promise and hope. We have scaled up our ART services through 190 centres that provide free ART to over 1.9 lakh patients. In addition, nearly 35,000 patients are receiving ART in the private sector. We have also started the second line of ART treatment in a number of hospitals. We are hopeful of reaching the NACP-III target soon.

The Red Ribbon Express, apart from being the largest advocacy campaign in the world in the field of HIV and AIDS, has reinforced what we already know. A lot has been achieved but a lot more needs to be done, especially in the interiors of India where information and news flow remain a mere trickle. A mass media initiative like this, which goes to the people rather than wait for them to come to you, has the power to bring about change. The way people responded, asked questions and shared their own experiences showed an extremely positive and healthy approach. We intend to sustain that momentum and our SACS will intensify ground level work in a more imaginative manner with full support from NACO.

The World AIDS Day is a time to renew commitments, update communities about the work done and expand the human chain in an effort to create greater understanding and empathy for the infected and affected people. Every year, the number of people aligning themselves to the cause of HIV is increasing. Each state has its own unique programmes that are suited to their socio-cultural ethos. This year, activities across the country were held on the occasion of WAD but the nature was a bit subdued in the wake of the Mumbai blasts. The

highlight remained the Red Ribbon Express campaign that took off on last year's World AIDS Day and culminated with this year's WAD. The train that chugged along the states, districts and villages returned with many stories that will soon be documented and shared with a wider audience.

The revised life skills education toolkit has incorporated suggestions from all the stakeholders. We are hoping that this will be used extensively by a committed group of carefully chosen trainers who will find effective ways of reaching out to the youth. While we focus on treatment, support, care and voluntary testing, all of us working in the field of HIV and AIDS must know that prevention is the key of our programme. At no stage can we afford the luxury of complacency. With the young people exposed to all type of media at an early age, it is imperative that we shed our traditional mindsets and find ways of going out there, to schools, colleges and communities to create platforms that allow healthy discussion that will eventually lead to responsible behaviour, not just from the point of view of sexual health but in a broader civic and social sense.

As NACP-III moves forward, it will see the scaling up of targeted interventions. In 2009, processes will be set and ways outlined to enable TIs gradually evolve into full fledged CBOs that are successfully owned, managed and led by the people for whom it is intended.

My best wishes to everyone in a year that is going to test us in many ways, given the global recession that looms large on the horizon.

*Ms K. Sujatha Rao
Special Secretary and Director General
National AIDS Control Organisation*

Regional Workshops on LSE Set the Agenda

Selected resource persons led the LSE initiative in the states



Regional Training of Trainers on LSE

A National Consultation on Life Skills Education (LSE) Programme, the erstwhile Adolescent Education Programme (AEP), was held on July 29, 2008 under the chairpersonship of Special Secretary & Director General, NACO. A decision was taken that SCERT and SACS would nominate six resource persons comprising teachers, parents and local NGOs. A core group

comprising those who had prior experience of working with children; who were familiar with the school system and its functioning; and were gender sensitive and articulate in group settings was finalised.

Regional Training of Trainers workshops were thereafter organised for selected resource persons in various states (see table).

Regional Training of Trainers Workshops

Date	Venue	States covered
15-18 October, 2008	Hyderabad	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu
4-7 November, 2008	New Delhi	Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Jharkhand
18-21 November, 2008	Guwahati	Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Mizoram, Goa and Meghalaya
17-20 December, 2008	New Delhi	Kerala, Tripura, Nagaland, Manipur, Gujarat and Dadra & Nagar Haveli

The workshop was designed to ensure maximum participation through an interactive programme structure. A pre-test questionnaire assessed the knowledge level of the group and their insight into LSE. Each trainer was urged to develop his own unique style of treating the module developed by CBSE, NACO, UNICEF, NCERT and DoE, jointly with the aim of empowering adolescents to make informed choices and develop life skills for addressing psychological, social and health concerns.

Each state made an action plan and presented them. The key points of the action plan included aspects related to capacity building, awareness and sensitisation programmes at the district level and stakeholder meetings.

Regional training of trainers on revised LSE toolkit

Experience sharing and state-wise action plans on methodologies that will be adopted to use the LSE toolkit marked the training programme. The four-day Regional Training of Trainers workshops on revised LSE toolkit emphasised the need for accurate knowledge and skills for prevention of new infection among youth. Participants were updated on the process the state had followed in developing the toolkit and its revision in the local contextual framework.

They were told that a series of advocacy workshops would be conducted with different stakeholders for seeking approval on the toolkit with focus on selecting state resource persons and district resource persons with the right attitude. They were also told to ensure that methodology used in transacting modules must be participatory and student friendly, and

efforts to be made to ensure minimum information loss from one level to the next.

Resource persons from Mamta Health Institute talked of how LSE implementation in states would be a success if there was commitment and ownership.

The training programme addressed concerns of participants on issues relating to what the toolkit contained; how it could be made more participatory; what the new games and activities were; how state-specific advocacy initiatives could be used; and how a common format for monitoring tools for



An activity in progress during the workshop

The training programme addressed concerns on issues relating to what the toolkit contained; how it could be more participatory; and how state-specific advocacy initiatives could be used.

reporting was to be used. The need to focus on school level sessions/ training, information on Red Ribbon Clubs (RRCs) and impact studies on LSE was also stressed upon.

Details that could be included were based on views of parents, children and teachers on knowledge-focused life skills, exercises in the work book, tilt towards abstinence, role of master trainers and multi-disciplinary areas. Group work on menstruation, night ejaculation, physical changes and question box was taken up. Key messages revolved around dealing with these issues as normally and spontaneously as was possible.

(Contd. on page 7)

State-wise Action Plans

The concept of life skills development was extensively discussed and participating SACS suggested the following modifications in certain parts of the manuals.

Karnataka: Ready to take up advocacy activities immediately with a plan to cover 13,000 schools under LSE.

Puducherry: Planning for school level activities to be undertaken in March 2009. This would be their first year with the programme for which they wanted to be well prepared.

Maharashtra: It was mounting a strong advocacy plan besides training state resource persons and translating toolkit, life skills, documentation and RRC.

Tamil Nadu: Their schedule was drawn up in terms of training, material, school sessions and advocacy.

Andhra Pradesh: It presented its plan which was clear in terms of timelines clearly spelt out for each activity. The translation and editing of the LSE toolkit was completed in Telugu and Urdu languages and was ready for print after obtaining approval from NACO.

Sikkim: Their feedback was that the revised LSE toolkit was good. Their only request was to change some pictures keeping the local context in mind.

Arunachal Pradesh: Revised material should consist of teachers' hand book, facilitators' guide, ready reckoner and advocacy kit. Also, expanded forms of abbreviations and

glossary of difficult words to be included at the beginning and end; state-specific date sheet on the state along with a map showing educational and health indicators of adolescents to be included; content-specific audio visual materials to be made part of the kit; include awareness materials; cover page and illustrations to be contextualised keeping state's ethnicity in mind; local situations, names and characters to be used; in the teachers' work book, in Section I, 'Understanding Adolescence' to be taken up first and 'Introduction to Life Skills' in the end; logical sequencing of content and illustrations, questions and answers to be made wherever needed; and content on 'care and support services for adolescents' to be made a part of teachers' hand book.

Mizoram: Changes in some pictures requested. They also suggested names of drugs be given and not just their consequences. Supplementary toolkits to be developed by SACS.

Goa: Introduce STD, mental health and road safety chapters. Names of characters to be localised. Strong objection raised to some pictures and captions in life skills development like those with sharp blade, high risk (sharing razor to shave) which they felt added confusion.

Assam: While funds for starting the fifth phase of LSE had been released to DIET/education department by ASACS, there were no funds for monitoring and evaluation.

Meghalaya: Names to be changed to suit local understanding.

Easy Access to Safe Blood: Motto of NVBDD

The common theme of eliminating blood scarcity and providing easy access ran through all events held on 1 October, the National Voluntary Blood Donation Day

To eliminate scarcity of blood and ensure availability of safe and quality blood and blood components all through the year, even in far flung remote areas was a pledge that was shared by all the organisations that are working in the field of blood safety.

The Indian Society of Blood Transfusion & Immunohaematology (ISBTI), National Blood Transfusion Council (NBTC), State Blood Transfusion Council, NCT Delhi & Department of Transfusion Medicine, Apollo Hospital organised a national seminar on promotion of voluntary blood donation & felicitation of Centurion Blood Donors in the capital on October 1, 2008 to commemorate the National Voluntary Blood Donation Day. Various state chapters recommended the names of 31 Centurion Blood Donors who

On National Voluntary Blood Donation Day, more than 30,000 posters and 5,00,000 leaflets were distributed to all the blood banks in Maharashtra.

were felicitated on the occasion. A *nukkad natak* (street theatre) was also enacted on the theme of blood donation.

Volunteers throng the streets of Chandigarh

Blood Donation Day was celebrated in Chandigarh by holding a candle light walk. A sea of red caps brightened the long stretch along the picturesque Sukhna Lake with over 500 volunteers walking sprightly, pledging themselves to the cause of voluntary blood donation and talking about how good they felt to be regular donors.

Extensive IEC campaign in Maharashtra

A well planned out IEC strategy was implemented by Maharashtra SACS to promote voluntary blood donation. More than 30,000 posters and 5,00,000 leaflets were distributed to all the blood banks in the state. For a month, radio spots in local language were played besides running a high impact parallel campaign in the print media. Newspaper advertisements and special reports were released in several newspapers. Catchy slogans were put up on 125 bus panels of state corporation transport buses for three months. Under the category of infotainment, various programmes were aired on blood safety and the importance of VBD. Special SMS with the message, 'donate blood, save a life' was sent to subscribers in the state. For children, competitions were organised and within communities, *prabhat pheris* and blood camps were held.

Local NGOs and citizen welfare societies take charge in Agartala

Eleven sub-districts and two district headquarters collaborated with local NGOs to put together a massive mobilisation of people in Agartala. Indian Red Cross Society, Voluntary Blood Donors Association, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), Democratic Youth Federation of India, local clubs, academic institutions, health and professional associations, *panchayat samities* and *nagar panchayats* all joined hands to put up a large show of solidarity.

A mass rally was organised and was telecast live through Doordarshan. Quiz competitions in schools, street theatre in residential localities and blood donation camps



Candle light walk in Chandigarh

covered different age groups and cross sections of society. On October 2, a well attended blood donation camp was held. It was preceded by a discussion where a poster and book on voluntary blood donation were released. Citizen welfare societies also organised awareness camps on AIDS and safe blood transfusion.

Uttarakhand makes efforts to battle blood shortage

The state government announced its decision to maintain a detailed database of donors. An elaborate plan was mounted to bring school children into the programme by sensitising them to the subject so they could be the next generation of active donors. An MoU was signed between the Lions Blood Bank and Haridwar CMS. Procurement of mobile blood bank vans has been made and the state will soon have these running 24X7.

A camp was organised in Haridwar where substantial number of blood units were collected. According to NBTC guidelines, Sahayak Welfare Society has been formed in Dehradun which will receive funds from SACS and will serve the interests of the local community.



Facilitating Centurion blood donors

Shimla beckons youth to be regular donors

The British summer capital wore a festive look on October 1 with posters, placards, banners and flags denoting different messages related to voluntary blood donation. The youth were reached through competitions, talks and interactions. Many myths relating to blood donation were dispelled and young people urged to step forward to donate blood not just once, but multiple times.

Rare honour for Rohtak's blood donors

A state level function was held to honour voluntary blood donors at

PGIMS in Rohtak on December 12, 2008. More than 80 regular voluntary blood donors, 96 voluntary blood donor organisations and 13 best organisations were awarded state recognition. While most people working in this field do so as nameless, faceless entities, without expecting anything in return, an honour like this reiterates the fact that the community and the administration values their efforts.

The function saw many moist eyes and even more pledges supporting the cause of voluntary blood donation.

■ Dr Debashish Gupta
Programme Officer
Blood Safety, NACO

Regional Workshops...

(Contd. from page 5)

The "Udaan" experience from Jharkhand was well received. It covered objectives, activities, responsibilities, review of state LSE programme and training needs assessment, development of training modules for classes IX and XI and documentation of navigation from antagonistic press to positive and favourable media advocacy.

Expressions India, a Delhi-based NGO handling adolescents' issue-based programmes in schools, in and around Delhi talked of

Young people were told how they could join Red Ribbon Clubs and become change agents. Corporate sector initiatives in the South also led to creating large scale awareness in schools and colleges.

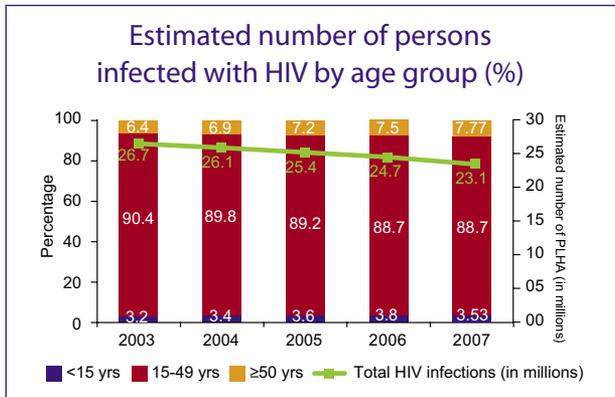
substance abuse. Different IEC materials were displayed with the aid of posters and charts. Young people were told how they could join Red Ribbon Clubs and become change agents. Corporate sector initiatives in the South also led to creating large scale awareness in schools and colleges.

■ Bilal Naqati
TO (IEC & Mainstreaming)
NACO

NACO Update

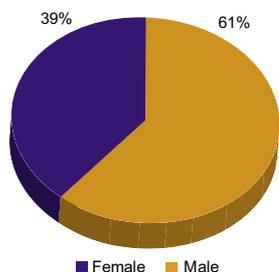
HIV infection in India: Status update

NACO's clear and effective response to the epidemic has led to an increase in access to services. Mainstreaming activities and focused efforts with SACS, partners, donors and NGOs is helping convert awareness into behaviour change. The graphs given below give a clear picture of how much has been achieved so far.

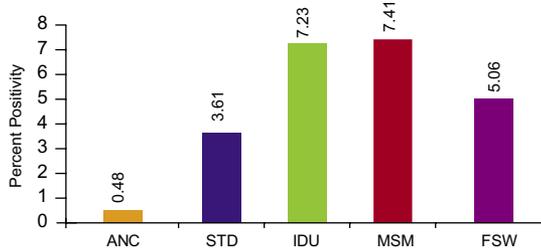


Estimated adult HIV prevalence in India is 0.34% in 2007

Gender distribution of HIV infected persons (2007)

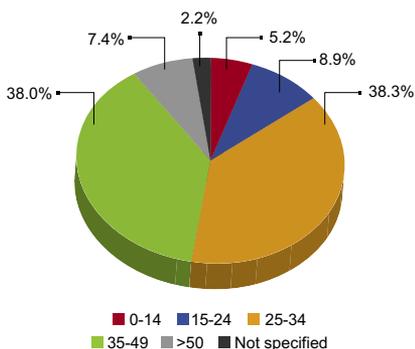


HIV infection among different population groups, 2007 (%)

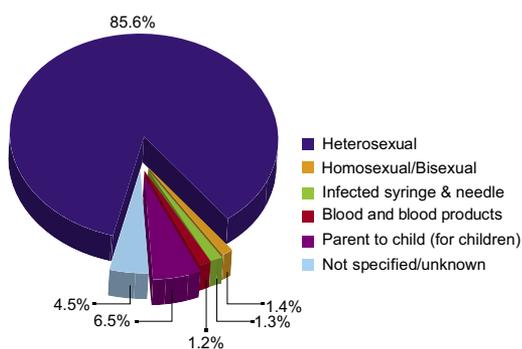


No. of HIV positive cases detected at ICTCs from Jan-Oct, 2008: 2,29,935

Age-wise distribution of HIV positive cases (Jan-Oct, 2008)

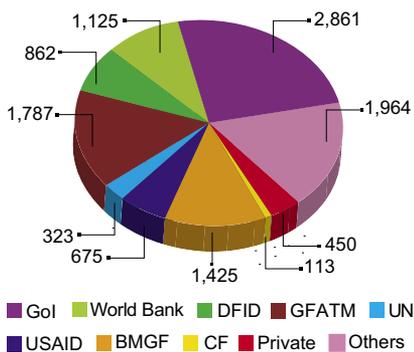


Modes of transmission among HIV positive cases (Jan-Oct, 2008)

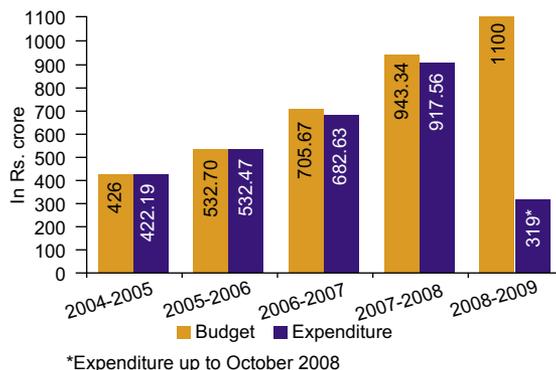


Financial Progress

NACP-III investment plan
Total Rs. 11,585 crore

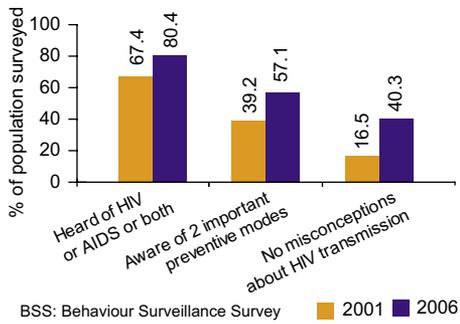


Year-wise financial progress

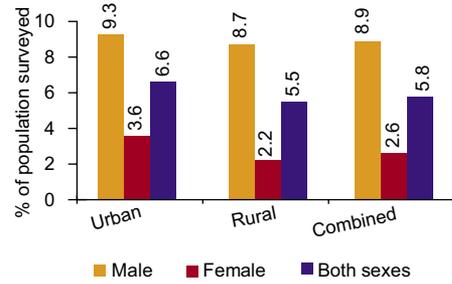


Awareness & Condom Promotion

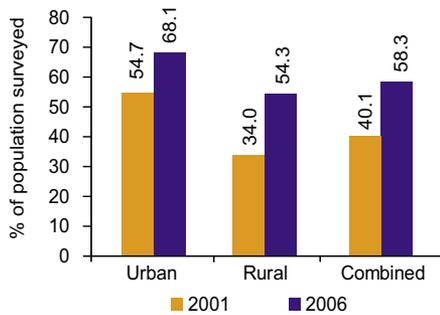
HIV-related awareness among general population (BSS 2001 & 06)



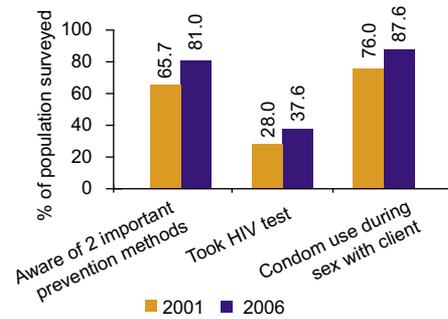
Reported sex with non-regular partners (2006)



Condom use in last sex with non-regular partner (BSS 2001 & 06)

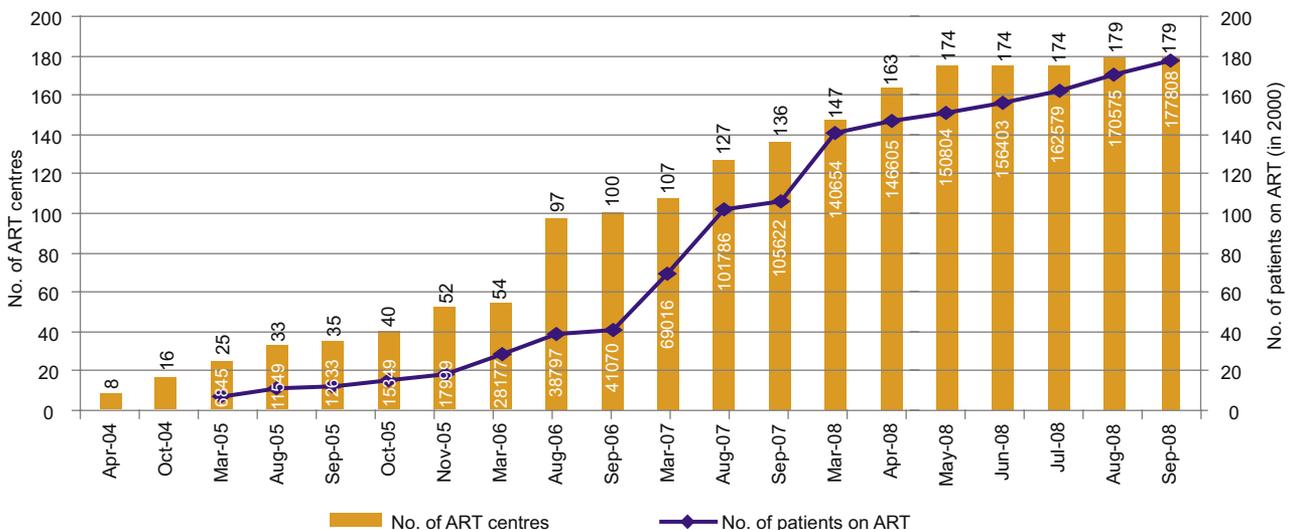


Awareness and condom use among FSWs (BSS 2001 & 06)



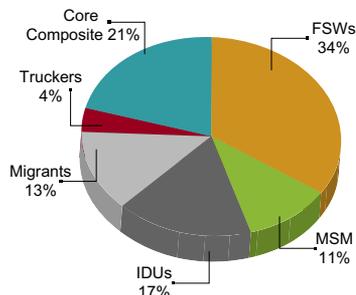
Care, Support & Treatment

Number of ART centres and patients on ART

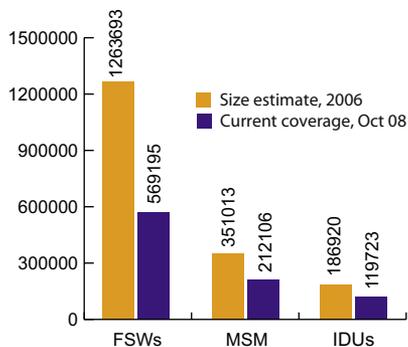


Targeted Interventions

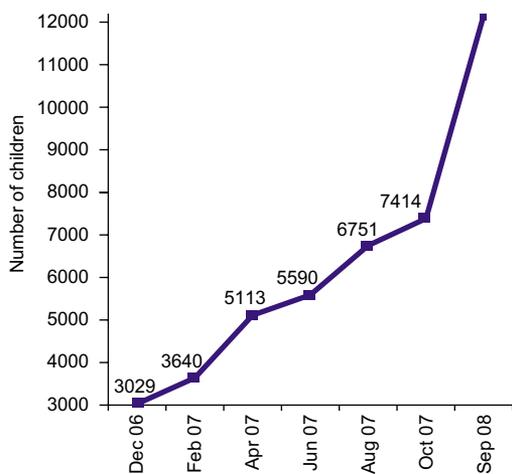
Distribution of TIs by typology (Total no. of TIs: 1251 till Oct 2008)



Current coverage of high risk groups (Oct 2008)



Number of children on ART

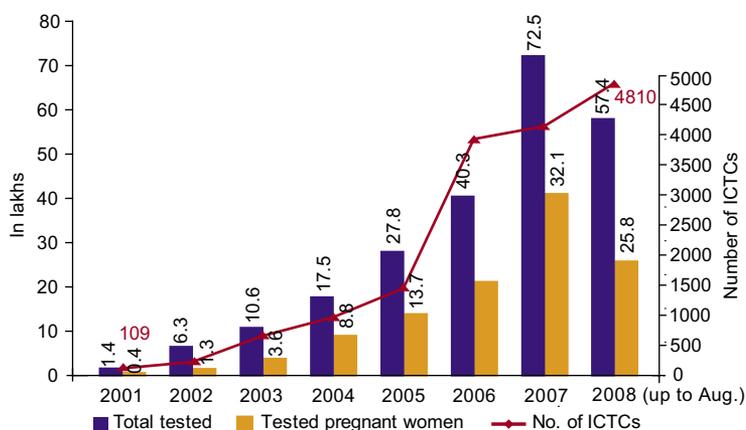


Scaling up ART: Need of the hour

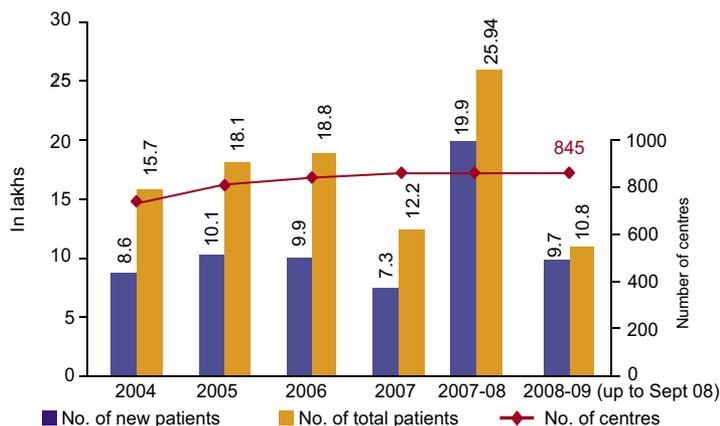
There has been an increase in the number of people stepping forward for voluntary counselling and testing. Training of medical officers and health workers has led to a more positive approach towards the infected. ART services have been stepped up and emphasis is on adherence to treatment. A strong PPTCT programme is also working towards bringing down infection amongst children by 2012.

HIV Prevention Services

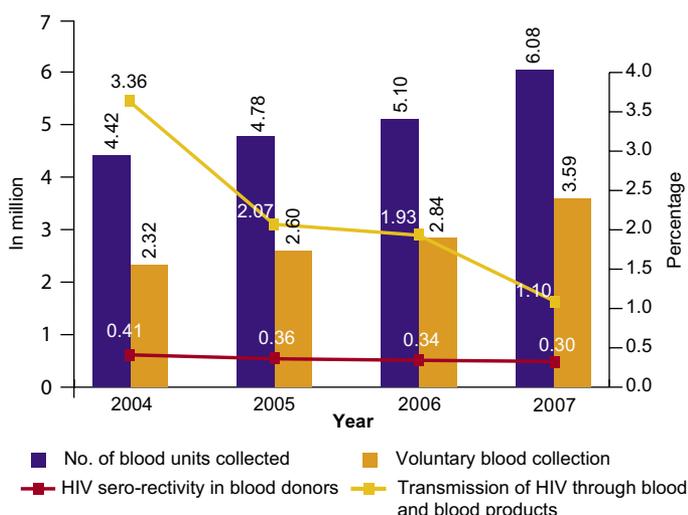
Progress in integrated counselling and testing services in India, 2001-2008 (Calendar year)



Year-wise progress in STI services in India, up to Sept 2008 (Calendar year)



Blood safety



The Red Ribbon Express (RRE) is the world's largest mass mobilisation campaign on HIV and AIDS. It flagged off from New Delhi on December 1, 2007, World AIDS Day, the train travelled across 24 states during its one year journey, halting at 180 stations, covering a distance of over 27,000 km. Vignettes of its journey are captured in our special feature on RRE.

RRE outreach coverage during its year-long journey from December 1, 2007-December 1, 2008



People trained through RRE

- 68,244 resource persons were trained in the training coach on board.

Total number of outreach

- Over 6.2 million people were reached by train and through outreach activities by bus and cycle troupes.

People counselled

- 1,16,183 people were counselled including 22 percent females.

Non-traditional condom outlets

- About 1,300 non-traditional condom outlets were set up during this campaign.

Condoms distributed

- More than one million condoms were distributed through the train and bus caravans.

Kerala's Advertising Campaign Wins International Award

Healthcare communication comes of age with campaign done by Stark Communications for KSACS, winning global certificate award

Kerala AIDS Control Society's campaign that positions 'Love as the Vaccine for AIDS' was chosen as a finalist for the prestigious Global Healthcare Awards. Winning a certificate for creating an awareness advertisement, Stark Communications, a Thiruvananthapuram-based creative agency, empanelled by Kerala SACS, was one of the six finalist certificate winners from India, and the only agency from South India.

The coveted Global Awards have been setting industry standards for creative and marketing excellence in healthcare communication for over 14 years.



Winners were chosen from over 5,000 entries, submitted by 300 agencies and organisations spanning 30 countries. They were judged by an international panel of Healthcare experts and creative directors from leading agencies.

The campaign was conceived and written by B. R. Swarup, national creative director of Stark with art direction by A. V. Madhu. Based on the creatives developed by them, KSACS rolled out the HIV prevention campaign with Padma Shri Mohanlal, icon of the Kerala film industry, as goodwill ambassador.

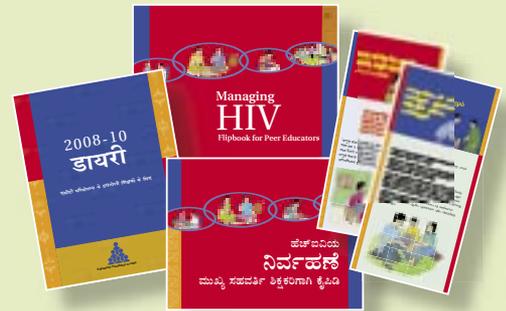


New Music Video Released

Singer Shaan who is a popular youth icon lent his voice to a theme song on HIV and AIDS. *Yahan kuch sapne Rahte Hain* that was released on the occasion of World AIDS Day. Targeting young people, it used a light and breezy way to connect with them, calling upon them to demonstrate responsible behaviour. The music video was produced by the Johns Hopkins University Centre for Communication Programs (JHU CCP) in collaboration with NACO. It was written by Gulzar and set to music by Shantanu Moitra.

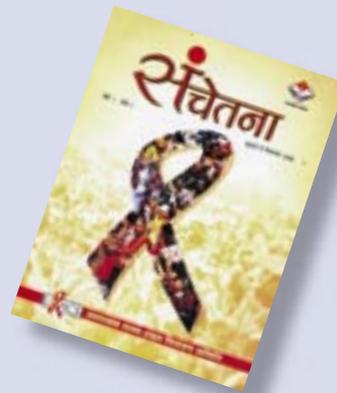
IEC Toolkit for Peer Educators

Population Foundation of India (PFI) is implementing care and support programme for People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLHA) in 24 states, with the support of The Global Fund to Fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). PFI has developed an IEC toolkit consisting of two flipbooks, four leaflets and a diary. The toolkit is available in six languages – English, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. The PFI-ACT kit, as it is called, is meant for Peer Educators who are engaged in providing information on prevention, care and support, and treatment. By making use of this kit, the Peer Educator can inform his peers and others in the community about how to better understand HIV, and lead a healthy and fulfilling life.



Short Film on RRE

Capturing the entire year-long journey of the Red Ribbon Express was a special short duration film that was released and shown on the occasion of World AIDS Day. Unique footage of Indian cities and towns was captured. The film was a montage of hope, despair, joy and sadness. Through the voices of thousands of people living in different corners of the country, speaking multiple languages, it allowed viewers to experience the present status of the HIV epidemic in the country.



Uttarakhand SACS Launches Quarterly Newsletter in Hindi

Sanchetna, the newsletter of Uttarakhand SACS looks at all aspects of HIV and is being brought out with the support of the Government of Uttarakhand. It documents stories, case studies and updates on all aspects that surround HIV and AIDS. It focuses on making information available on the infection, its prevention and treatment. Through human interest stories it brings out state-specific instances where myths and misconceptions have impacted the infected and affected. The first issue of this newsletter was brought out in July-September 2008 in Hindi.



Bi-lingual Training Manual for Health Workers

NACO in collaboration with the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare and Rural Development has developed a booklet on women, HIV and AIDS – “Shaping our Lives: Learning to Live Safe and Healthy” with support from UNDP and UNIFEM. It is a resource material for ANMs, AWWs, ASHAs and members of self help groups. The booklet covers varied aspects of women’s life and is not just restricted to imparting knowledge on HIV and AIDS. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the inter-related issues like health, stigma, discrimination, poverty and empowerment. The booklet is available in English and Hindi, and is being translated into other languages.



Living Positively, Living Courageously

Sahil, a 25-year old from Darbhanga in Bihar has no rancour or bitterness as he talks about getting infected through blood transfusion. Carving out a new identity for himself in a new city, he found the motivation to live and be of use to others, like him. He has experienced stigma and discrimination but is hopeful that with the support of media, communities will understand the infection better and accept positive people, in their fold. Also he is convinced that we all need to talk more about HIV. For, only when you see HIV, will normalisation happen. Excerpts from an interview with him:

Q: How did you get infected?

A: I contracted HIV through blood transfusion in Mumbai's KEM hospital when operated for injuries suffered in a road accident at the age of 13. After the accident, my family took me to the village. After two years, I started getting fever, experienced weakness and weight loss. From 44 kg I was reduced to 24 kg. My mother ran from pillar to post to get my mysterious ailment diagnosed. She even sold our ancestral land and spent a huge amount on my treatment.

Q: How did your status get known?

A: It was only when she took me to the district hospital that the doctor could after blood tests confirm that it was HIV that had infected me. He informed my mother who in turn told the immediate family. At that time, not much was known

about HIV and AIDS. All that they knew was that it was sexually transmitted and that it was a deadly infectious disease.

Q: Did you suffer discrimination from the family and villagers?

A: The moment the villagers got to know that I had HIV, they discarded me like a social pariah. They were convinced that it would kill me and anyone who came near me. The collective decision was to throw me out immediately. The *panchayat* however took a more compassionate view, knowing I had neither the place nor the means to go anywhere. After much deliberation, they decided to create a shack for me outside the village in the open fields. The only human contact I had was with my mother who came and left my meals, that too at a safe distance.

A counsellor dispelled myths as she told me I was not dying. She even sat and had food with me and bought me a clean pair of clothes.



Q: At what point did things change for you?

A: A respected village teacher gave me Rs. 2,000 to go to Delhi and get myself treated in a government hospital. The moment I alighted from the train, I saw a billboard at the station mentioning HIV, with an NDMC hospital landline. From here began my journey towards hope and confidence building. A counsellor dispelled myths as she told me I was not dying. She even sat and had food with me and bought me a clean pair of clothes. At that time, CD4 count was tested only in private hospitals. She gave me money to get that done.

Q: How did you support yourself?

A: I found support from another positive person who took me to his house and let me stay there for nearly six months. I set up a small business buying shirts from the wholesale market and selling them on a cart in the evenings. During the mornings, I started going to the RML hospital and was happy to counsel and talk to other positive people, telling them that being infected was not the end of the world. From here I got picked up by Delhi SACS and other positive networks who provided me a platform to turn myself into an effective outreach worker. I was slowly becoming hopeful.

Q: How are you now?

A: Ten years have gone by. I am recovering from bone tuberculosis that paralysed the lower half of my body last year. The Arshiya Care Centre referred me to the Delhi

Spinal Injuries Centre. Under their free bed scheme, they admitted me and performed three surgeries free of cost. But in spite of the hospital waiving off Rs. 5 lakh, I am struggling to fund my second line of DOTS treatment that entails an expenditure of Rs. 10-12,000 for a period of 18 months. My fellowship of Rs. 8,000 earned as a counsellor from ActionAid, goes towards my treatment but I still miss some doses which is why my recovery is taking longer and I am hobbling around with a stick for support. I do try to take care of my food and diet but most importantly I try to keep my chin up and maintain a cheerful demeanour.

Q: Do you think there is enough support for HIV positive people?

A: NACO through its interventions provides us with support and linkages to hospitals, care and support homes for free treatment but when opportunistic infections, tuberculosis and abyss recur, like in my case, money tends to fall short.

Q: Living in a middle class colony, do you face stigma and discrimination?

A: In the last few years, media hype has resulted in greater acceptance. I was living with a couple as a paying guest but they did not charge me a penny. They knew my positive status and were extremely kind. My neighbours know that I work in the area of HIV and AIDS but not that I am infected. Though I feel that even if they come to know, they would not shun me. It is lack of information that makes you harbour misconceptions. It is different in the villages where superstitions are deep rooted and there is a lot of denial. Like people in my village continue to believe that they die of TB when

Media hype has resulted in greater acceptance. I was living with a couple as a paying guest but they did not charge me a penny. They knew my positive status and were extremely kind. It is lack of information that makes you harbour misconceptions.

it is HIV that is destroying their immune system.

Q: What role do support groups play?

A: Poverty and an unaccepting social milieu force people like me to turn to support groups. HIV positive people networks have been set up in different states to bridge this gap. My story is similar to many who have been infected, who are poor and who are taking one day at a time. For a person with limited means and access to knowledge, it is a blessing to find any support group that understands his predicament and is willing to refer him to organisations that can aid his cause.

I registered my own NGO with 350 positive people, mostly children, to whom I want to provide food and nutrition. When I see children who have got infected for no fault of theirs, some of my own pain and anguish gets reduced. I now only want to make things better for these children.

I have been fortunate in finding help and support at every step.

Q: Do you think people's attitude towards a positive person is undergoing change?

A: Education and awareness definitely help in making people aware of facts but behaviour change is a slow process. I remember going to my village in between, hoping my family would be happy to see me alive and well. I had after all, outlived local village doctors' predictions. But was deeply saddened to see that most of them kept a safe distance from me (physically) and even my own mother served me food in vessels that were reserved for me when I had lived as a castaway in the village. I left without eating and haven't gone back since.

Q: What do you look forward to?

A: I registered my own NGO with 350 positive people, mostly children, to whom I want to provide food and nutrition. I have been on ART since 2007 and am carefully tracking the second line ART that started earlier this month in select ART centres and am hoping these would be available free in all government hospitals, so that I can live longer. When I see children who have got infected for no fault of theirs, some of my own pain and anguish gets reduced. I now only want to make things better for these children.

Q: You are young. Any plans of marriage or finding a partner for yourself?

A: (Shyly) There have been proposals. Companionship is important. I may look at them, but not till I have recovered fully and am off these crutches.

Peer Convention in Mysore Looks at Capacity Building of Educators

The convention engaged peers in group learning processes and helped build collectivisation



Peer convention organised by KSAPS

The state level peer convention organised by KSAPS at Mysore was held to strengthen organic linkages among members of the community to lead ownership building processes among key populations. It aimed at strengthening outreach activities by engaging peers in self assertiveness and responsible action; cross learning about best practices, challenges and opportunities; and strengthening capacity and confidence level of peers making HIV prevention efforts state-wide. A total of 224 peers, 24 ORWs and CBO members from FSW, MSM and TG communities were selected from each district.

In NACP-III, the concept of peer rotation and peer-led outreach activities is significant for empowering the community in leading the intervention. Over 300 sex workers and members of sexual minorities were re-assured

that efforts would be made to reduce discrimination and other occupational hazards faced by them. Facilitators from the community based organisation conducted sessions on access to basic services, stigma and discrimination, mobilisation and crisis management.

Police Commissioner, Mysore, said it was high time HIV was treated as a social issue and not isolated as a health problem. According to him, it was a good move to mainstream marginalised communities. Suggestions included making life skills education compulsory for the 16 to 20 age group. In Karnataka, nearly 26 NGOs are working in this area. The convention outlined strategies on how to build capacities of sex workers and sexual minorities, who were in the forefront of HIV prevention programmes through community-led initiatives. These marginalised communities have formed CBOs under KSAPS and Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) and are part of public health programmes in HIV prevention. They would get complete support to build on their existing activities.

■ Inputs from Karnataka SACS

HIV prevention messages on AIR

In order to create awareness on health and HIV related issues, KSAPS has used various forms of media to do many programmes through Doordarshan, radio, print and folk media. It helped to reach people with the message of HIV prevention. KSAPS has recently begun to use radio for the purpose. *Jeevana Jopana*, the new programme on radio began to be aired from September 1, 2008 and will be on till March 2009.

Most of the people infected and affected by HIV are youth and women. Even newborns run the high risk of HIV infection. Thus, the possibility of reaching these populations with prevention messages through radio was explored and *Jeevana Jopana* was born.

Specific and well tailored programmes for youth and women have been designed. This is a call for everyone's cooperation to ensure that these programmes are accessed by women and youth which will help publicise the programmes and gather good listenership.

The state of Arunachal Pradesh witnessed a sustained advocacy campaign which filtered through to the remotest, most vulnerable parts of the region, where HIV prevalence is high and yet there is little awareness about how the infection is spread and what kind of treatment is available. Different activities targeted specific age groups and concerns.

A rally with 3000 volunteers, mobile skits, IEC exhibitions and blood donation camps was held in Itanagar. The inauguration of a condom stall on wheels was a special attraction. Hon'ble Minister of State for Health C. C. Singpho drew attention to the urgency to address the infection, saying it was preventable. He also emphasised that the infected person could lead a long and healthy life with the support from the community.

A month-long multimedia campaign with audio visual spots, phone-in programmes, panel discussions and print advertisements ran from November 15 to December 10, 2008 creating awareness and opportunity for healthy dialogue on the subject.

The launch of the official website of Arunachal Pradesh SACS, www.apsacs.org.in was significant, for now people from all parts of the state could access information and avail services at the click of a button.

Events which addressed the concerns of people in the districts was the focus of WAD observance. At Bhalukpong in West Kameng district, the education department organised a run with 200 students. Local MLAs, civil administration, medical community, NGOs and students also attended a seminar on the occasion. At Koloriang, one of the most far-flung and inaccessible areas, schools, members of student unions and the general public

Official Website of Arunachal Pradesh SACS Launched

Information percolated down to district level, especially in far-flung and inaccessible areas



participated in a campus rally. Competitions were held for older people and the youth were taken to ICTC to make them aware of the services available.

At Khonsa, healthy discussions were held amongst students. In Aalo, rallies and quizzes marked the



Inauguration of condom stall on wheels

day and in East Siang district, voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) was conducted on the site of the ongoing Indigenous Youth Festival.

At Yingkiong, a mass rally was held and in Tezu, which has the second highest prevalence of HIV, the In-charge of ICTC/PPTCTC urged youngsters to use the condom machine installed in the district hospital. In a startling revelation, the Medical Superintendent said that 28 cases of HIV had been detected so far and that the district falls in the "A" Category based on ante-natal check ups undertaken so far. A sustained build up of these events through 2009 will hope to bring down infection and reach treatment and services to the infected and affected.

Voluntary Testing Gains Momentum in Guwahati

CM announces five new link ART centres and one new CCC

The focus of WAD observance in the state was on stepping up voluntary counselling and testing. Hon'ble Chief Minister announced a new scheme for HIV infected people which will enable them to claim travel expenses related to laboratory testing and availing of medicines from the ART centres, besides getting a DA allowance. He also said one new Community Care Centre (CCC) in Dibrugarh and five link ART centres in Golaghat, Sonitpur, Nagaon, Bongaigaon Civil Hospital and CRPF Base Hospital at Kamrup will come up in 2009.



A street play for awareness on HIV and AIDS

Colourful rallies and awareness activities marked WAD with active participation of volunteers, NGOs and government officials. District administrations held voluntary blood

testing camps. Government departments like NF Railways, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Civil Defense, PRIs, Mazdoor Union conducted different events reiterating messages related to awareness, testing, treatment and stigma. NGOs focused on youth and community organisations with quizzes and street plays.

ASACS organised 10 street plays in vulnerable locations of Kamrup district. Phone-in-live programme by Doordarshan Kendra, and AIR created interactivity with youth. FM stations had HIV and AIDS awareness as the theme of the day with all aired programmes talking about different aspects of the infection, creating high recall amongst listeners while reinforcing messages. Newspaper advertisements and mobile messaging complimented the exercise.

UTTAR PRADESH

Migrants, Truckers and Vulnerable Groups at Centre of WAD Observance

Special campaign on 'lead, empower, deliver' evoked great interest

Uttar Pradesh has a large presence of high risk groups. Almost 50 percent of its 170 million population is in the reproductive age group. There are approximately 10 million migrants and 52,741 truckers plying on its eight national highways and along the long porous Indo-Nepal border. With a low literacy rate (rural 36.66%, state 57.2%), the challenge of fighting the HIV and AIDS epidemic is one that is daunting.

A wide range of activities were carried out during December 2008 to reach out to these communities

and groups. Information on ART, PPTCT, ICTC, care and support, IEC and counselling was provided in 17 divisions that have nearly 70 districts, 303 *tehsils*, 813 community development blocks and 52,028 *gram panchayats*.

A 10-day awareness generation campaign on the theme of 'lead, empower, deliver' was launched. A mass media campaign saw a special IEC mobile van running through the districts evoking a lot of interest. Hoardings, banners, road shows and street plays were held in the last week of November, highlighting key

messages. Students were reached with creative writing competition, badminton tournaments, painting/slogan competitions and advertisements. The general population expressed their solidarity to the cause by turning up in large numbers to participate in the candle light vigil and a marathon at the closing ceremony. A condom vending machine (CVM) that was installed in the Fun Republic Mall at Lucknow generated a lot of debate and interest. Hindustan Latex announced that 600 more CVMs would be placed at public places in the coming months.

Chandigarh SACS Boosts Employment Opportunities for Positive People

Sewing machines gifted to PLHA and fresh round of training carried out in hospitals to tackle new cases of HIV

Sewing machines along with raw materials were donated to members of the Chandigarh Network of Positive People with the aim of making them self-sufficient and to enhance their social security and self employability. As a goodwill gesture, pretty dinner sets too were gifted to them. PLHA at the city's Drop-in-Centre were also felicitated.

With more people in the garden city coming forward to get their HIV status known, it was felt that doctors and the medical community needed renewed training and preparedness to deal with new infections. An awareness and training session for paramedical staff at CHC was inaugurated by Director Health



Paintings on display

Services, Chandigarh. The event was held in association with the city's laboratory technologists. Another awareness and training session was held for the medical and paramedical staff of ESI Hospital, Ramdarbar. There were about 70 participants and the In-charge, Blood Bank, GMCH-32 spoke about standard precautions that must be observed during testing and counselling.

In association with the youth organisation AIESEC, competitions on the theme of HIV and AIDS were held with over 400 students from different schools competing in categories that included poster making and declamations. A panel discussion engaged professionals from different spheres of working life.

WAD observance for 2008 concluded with a candle lighting ceremony at the Sukhna Lake where about 300 people participated. They expressed their support to the cause and many stepped forward to get voluntary testing done at the booths and counters that Chandigarh SACS had put up.

Karnataka Commits to Sensitising PHC Staff and Training Nurses

Role of PHCs highlighted in the battle against AIDS

The state of Karnataka sees nearly 25,000 new HIV infections a year. On World AIDS Day, a commitment was made to ensure that this number sees a drastic reduction through intensified prevention activities. In the second phase of the Avahan programme, free ART services would be reached to a larger population and every attempt would be made by the government to provide the second line of treatment. Plans include the



Role play in Kannada

operationalisation of 27 new ART centres in Gadag, Mandya, Chitradurga, Madikeri, Ramnagar and Chikkaballapur districts.

In the battle against AIDS, the critical role of primary health care centres, especially in rural areas was emphasised. A new initiative was announced wherein all nurses in PHCs would be involved in raising awareness about different aspects of the epidemic. More than 300 nurses have been short listed for training at NIMHANS to enable them to play a more proactive role in prevention of HIV.

Red Ribbon Awards: Highlight of Orissa's WAD

Live telecast of WAD events with ISRO's cooperation generated tremendous response

In the two months preceding the World AIDS Day, a number of high impact programmes were launched across the state. A 30-day media campaign ran on Doordarshan, All India Radio, private FM channels, local cable channels, ETV and OTV with panel discussions and live phone-ins peppered with video spots and radio jingles, bringing home messages related to stigma and discrimination, voluntary testing and awareness.

Ground level activities with youth, children and women were carried out through essay and poster competitions in association with IRSC-OSB, Bhubaneswar with the aim of making positive living a reality. Leaders at the grassroot level came together on a shared platform. *Sarpanches*, ward members and district level functionaries apprised themselves on where the state was on prevention, control and treatment.



WAD tableaux on the streets of Bhubaneswar

On December 1, a rally of over 1,000 HRG members, PLHA, partners and volunteers was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister Shri Sanatan Bisi, Health & Family Welfare, Government of Orissa in Bhubaneswar symbolising support and cooperation of multiple agencies and individuals. A state level meeting was also held.

For the first time, Red Ribbon Awards were given to honour the

stellar contribution of those who played key roles in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Director, Social Welfare was appreciated for including PLHA in state government's Madhubabu Pension Scheme; Honorary Secretary, IRCS was given an award for generating a movement among youth through formation of Red Ribbon Clubs and support of OSACS in blood banking activities; and Ballarpur Industries Ltd was recognised for setting up an ART centre at Koraput. IEC exhibition, street plays, mobile tableaux, stickering campaign in motor vehicles and banner displays were the other highlights of WAD.

Live telecast of the HIV and AIDS programme was done through Village Resource Centre (VRC) at CYSD, a voluntary organisation having expert node at Bhubaneswar. This was in collaboration with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Youth Icons Propagate HIV and AIDS Messages

An integrated district campaign covering 1,200 villages was the highlight of WAD initiatives

Popular artistes from films, television and sports took to the dais in Surat addressing large congregations and mobilising support for HIV infected and affected people.

A rally of 4,000 persons was organised and workshops and

seminars held for police personnel and counsellors of the Municipal Corporation. More than 25 district authorities, 95 TI NGOs, 12 integrated rural HIV and AIDS programme partners, 20 *Jeevandeep* partners, 14 Drop-in-Centres, along with schools and

colleges participated across the state.

An interactive district campaign, *Zindagi Zindabad* was launched with five IEC vans, and flagged off in five districts. Each van traversed for 100 days and covered 15 districts and 1,200 villages. Also, one million special posters with M. S. Dhoni endorsing the activities of GSACS were printed and distributed across the state in collaboration with the Bhaskar Group of newspapers.

West Bengal Focuses on Mainstreaming

Commitment of public and private enterprises to HIV and AIDS was reflected with active participation at all levels of the management hierarchy

Public and private sector enterprises observed WAD across the state of West Bengal with active participation from all employees. Navaratna Enterprise Coal India Ltd held a seminar at the head office in Kolkata attended by the Chairman, senior directors and officers. PepsiCo disseminated information through a bevy of infotainment programmes while Ambuja Cements put up an IEC stall in Dhuliagarh of Howrah district and ONGC sprinkled their premises with messages on HIV and AIDS. The Railway Department made announcements on prevention and stigma through the public address system at all platforms. The Howrah Orthopaedic Hospital and B. R. Singh Hospital at Sealdah held day-long events including drama performances by PLHA networks.

The School of Tropical Medicine witnessed the roll out of the second line ART for PLHA where two recipients were put on treatment. There was much dialogue on the subject. A programme was also organised at the central hall by the West Bengal Voluntary Donors Forum. Seminars covered topics related to prevention and myth breaking, importance of condom use, information on government health infrastructure, health system and management and available services that can prevent and control infection.

NGOs, TI partners and stakeholders took out tableaux in different districts with messages propagating the promotion of ICTC and use of



Second line ART treatment being administered

toll free number - 1097 for Kolkata callers and features of Buladi's Phase-IV campaign. Students took out rallies in five districts including different locations in Murshidabad between 1-10 December. A cycle rally by the Football Lovers Association was a huge hit. Also on the occasion, the Thalassaemia & AIDS Prevention Society conducted Alope Yatra. Elsewhere in the state, 150 Red Ribbon Clubs held district level workshops.

The "MSM Advocacy Network for Social Action, Bangla", the only

partner organisation voicing MSM issues organised special awareness initiatives through a seminar on 'Marginalised Sexualities: HIV and Human Rights Struggle' with over 200 participants.

An elaborate media campaign was rolled out. The metro railway allowed use of its 17 metro stations for 90 days through spots displayed on 117 televisions at different platforms. Buladi campaign stressed on safe sexual practices based on responsible protected sexual behaviour with single partner, condom promotion, anti-discriminatory messages for PLHA mainstreaming on a right based approach comprising audience segment, age bracket and demographic profile. Advertisements on electricity bills reached households and commercial establishments with a view to reaching local communities on a monthly basis.



Buladi Phase-IV campaign in Kolkata

Puducherry Reaches Out to High Risk Groups

Sensitisation sessions for prison inmates was followed by a commitment to cover all inmates across the Union Territory

Puducherry along with Karaikal, Yanam and Mahe saw a series of audience specific programmes on WAD. Workshops for police officers, family counsellors and AWWs were held in Puducherry. More than 112 police officials above the rank of head constables attended the session where the theme was on how should the police officers conduct themselves when dealing with high risk populations without creating legal or human right violations.

Sensitisation programme for prison inmates was a well received

initiative in both the Central prison at Puducherry and Karaikal prison. There were sessions on the basics of HIV and AIDS, prevention methods and a brief session on Yoga. All prison inmates (convicted and under trial) will be covered in 2009.

Training programme for the first batch of AWWs and family counsellors was held in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare with 50 participants. PSACS announced that they would train all workers in the UT within the current financial year.



One day workshop on HIV and AIDS for the police officers

To create awareness among the masses, a comedy show by well known television stars was organised in Puducherry. Activities that engaged the youth included a cycle rally, an innovative drawing competition on the theme of HIV using mud pots, sewing competition for women besides staging 165 dramas and 20 light musical programmes by different cultural troupes. Signages displaying messages were prominently positioned for high impact and recall among the general population at bus stands, busy market areas and traffic signals.

Maharashtra Develops Cost Effective Strategy to Reach Masses

Radio, television and SMS to mobile subscribers were used extensively over two weeks to cover more than 30,00,000 people

WAD observance in the state was pegged on two themes – on finding new and novel ways of spreading awareness and on promoting facilities that are provided by MSACS.

Television, radio and SMS were smartly used to expand their reach and coverage on the occasion of WAD. Recognising the impact television has on middle and lower income families, special television spots were conceptualised on HIV and AIDS, ICTC and blood safety in

the local language. These were telecast on regional infotainment and news channels. Scrolling messages were displayed during all popular programme slots and news hours. Simultaneously, audio-visual

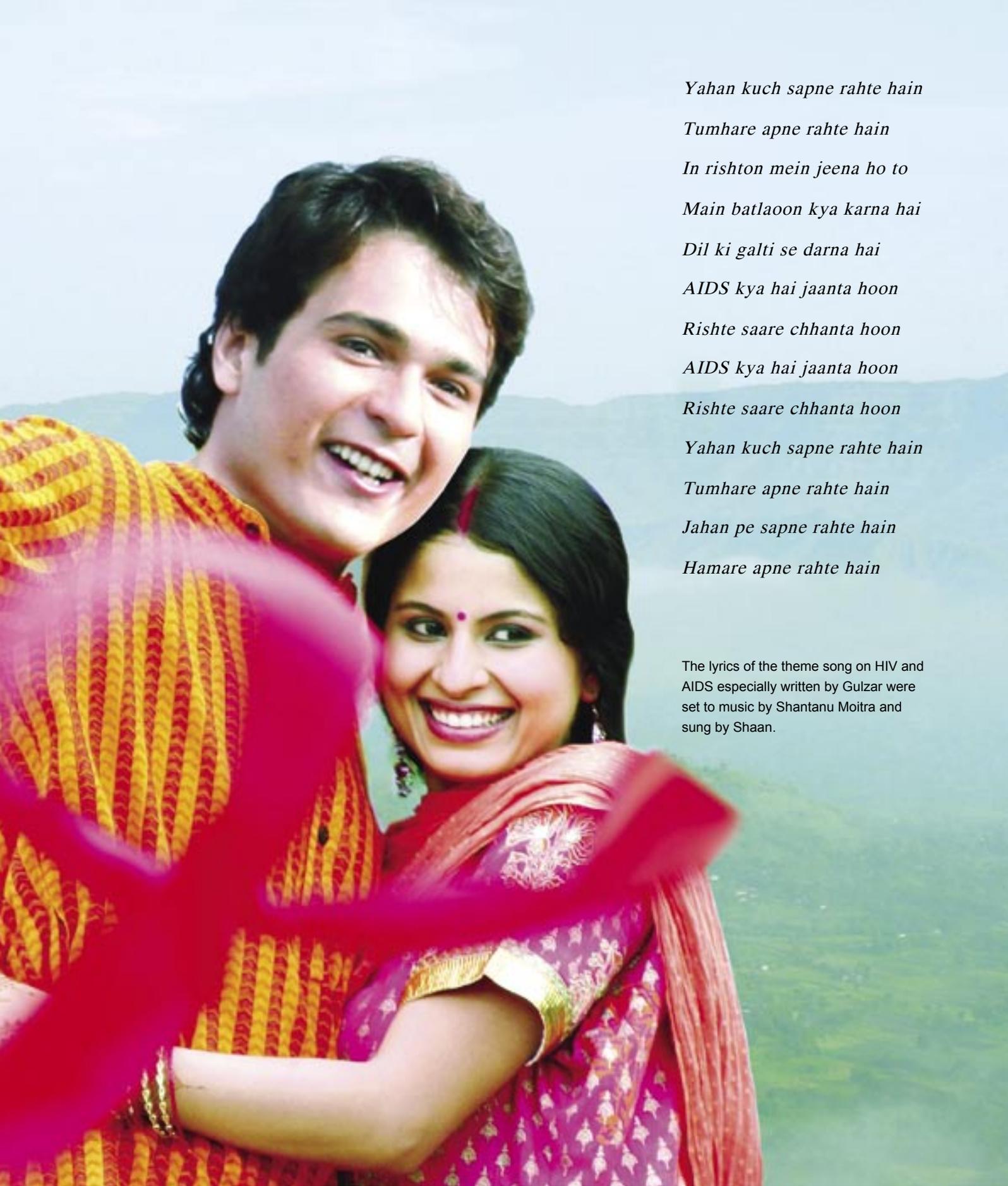
SMS sent on World AIDS Day

A single, unprotected sexual encounter can lead to HIV infection. Use condoms correctly and regularly.

Remember...People living with HIV are like all of us! Don't discriminate against them.

spots were shown in 120 cinema theatres of "B" and "C" category district across the state.

Radio that has maximum audience in rural areas was tapped effectively. Popular FM stations delivered messages in the form of spots, jingles and by chirpy radio jockeys. SMS were used to reach mobile users in urban, semi-urban and rural segments. Messages on HIV and AIDS were sent to 30 lakh subscribers by leading service providers.



*Yahan kuch sapne rahte hain
Tumhare apne rahte hain
In rishton mein jeena ho to
Main batlaon kya karna hai
Dil ki galti se darna hai
AIDS kya hai jaanta hoon
Rishte saare chhanta hoon
AIDS kya hai jaanta hoon
Rishte saare chhanta hoon
Yahan kuch sapne rahte hain
Tumhare apne rahte hain
Jahan pe sapne rahte hain
Hamare apne rahte hain*

The lyrics of the theme song on HIV and AIDS especially written by Gulzar were set to music by Shantanu Moitra and sung by Shaan.

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