



A Report

Maha Kumbh & UPSACS's HIV/AIDS Campaign



UPSACS

UTTAR PRADESH STATE AIDS CONTROL SOCIETY

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Disclaimer

This document is made possible by the generous support of the district AIDS programme control unit (DAPCU), Uttar Pradesh network for positive people (UPNP), NGOs and people in and around Mahakumbh fair.

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Preface

It's a privilege for Allahabad to host Mahakumbh-2013. It is a matter of utmost pleasure that Mahakumbh 2013 is well known religious fair all over the world. From the purans till today, connection of spiritual and social references with its historical and colossal festival has remained live. Mahakumbh is just not a big fair but a very big opportunity and hub of multiple activities at one time. Although royal bathing (shahi snan) is the prior event for which this largest congregation takes place. But people from all over the world and from the corners of the country have gathered here for different purpose. From educational, religious and research perspective to the business, marketing, exhibiting and spiritual point of view,

Mahakumbh is a complete package of all in one solution for different angle of sphere. So ultimately administration, tourism, spiritualism, marketing, glamour and crowd of layman are taking knowledge under the shade of Mahakumbh fair. Seeing to this, Uttar Pradesh government took a sincere initiative towards awareness and show casing the real situation and programmes running in UP. UTTAR PRADESH STATES AIDS CONTROL SOCIETY is an advent towards a happy state, which is free from diseases and problems.

While covering all the events and activities of UPSACS stall, I get to learn a lot of new things which nobody can make me understand better. Before this project, there were many stigma and pre-conceived notions I had regarding HIV AIDS but during documentation, I experienced a new world of happy living. After meeting positive people and drugs users, much of my self-perception has changed and re-shaped. This project includes not only about the activities, visitors and report of UPSACS stall but also deal with the inside story of a common man's thinking about HIV AIDS and how the event held successfully after crossing many natural and man-made problems. No matter how tough the circumstances were! The stall stood strong like its mission.



Acknowledgment

Initially when I was given this project, I thought UPSACS as an aquarium in which I had to count some small-big fishes and articulate statistics about the issue and submit the report. But later on, layers unveiled and I realized that it is a big ocean which has various in-depth issues interconnected with each other. Completing this project would be an impossible thing without some people whom I want to mention and give credit for contributing their indispensable role in completing the report. First of all, I wish to thanks that almighty 'GOD' who gave me enough strength to keep working and covering all possible aspects related to report. Then to the team of DAPCU and all the organizing committee's fraternity who's each and every member extended their hands whenever I needed it. Special thanks to District tuberculosis officer/district AIDS control Officer Dr. O.P. Shahi who always provided me all possible support followed by District programme manager Dr. Rohit Pandey who guided me throughout the project and also helped in covering the events of the stall. Acknowledgement list has so many names to mention upon but that will not be possible. I also acknowledge the efforts of my team at DAPCU whose support has been instrumental in developing this report. This report would not have become a reality without the support of UPNP and NGOs, who provided their unconditional support for the cause. I would also like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to stall members and organizing committee who have been instrumental in structuring this.

In the end, I would like to thank all the people from magician, counselors, lab technician to all those who visited stall and contributed their single share in completing my story. I am highly obliged to get an ace response from visiting officers whose important comments and suggestions worked as an icing on the cake. Thanks to faith based organizations and foreigners for being so kind and cooperating during questionnaire. Administration's work is commendable and appreciable for all possible help in making Mahakumbh as well as UPSACS stall a successful event.



Mahakumbh 2013

Allahabad, one of the prominent and sacred cities of India, is described with great reverence in ancient scriptures as Prayag or Teerathraj, i.e. 'the holiest pilgrimage center'. The city is situated at the confluence of India's holiest rivers - The Ganga, The Yamuna and The Mythical Saraswati. The Sangam, as the confluence of these three rivers is called, is the venue of sacred fairs & rituals and attracts large number of pilgrims throughout the year. With the irresistible attraction of Kumbh Fair, from shops, folk arts and cultural diversification to the center of spirituality, research, marketing and bathing, it is hailed as the world's largest congregation of Devotees, the glory of the city is certainly doubled.

Kumbh mela is a mass Hindu pilgrimage of faith in which Hindus gather to bath in a sacred river. It is the world's largest religious gathering. It is held every third year at one of the four places by rotation- Haridwar, Allahabad, Nasik and Ujjain. Thus the Kumbh Mela is held at each of these four places every 12th year. 'Kumbh' means a pitcher and 'Mela' means fair in Hindi. The pilgrimage is held for about one and a half months at each of these four places where it is believed

in Hinduism that drops of nectar (amrit) fell from the Kumbh carried by gods after the sea was churned. The festival is portrayed as the "world's largest congregation of religious pilgrims". This is the main reason crores of people from all walks and beliefs of life gathered



The waters of the Sangam are not deep but icy and electrifying. The long processions of Naga babas and priestly orders are richly colorful, spectacular and a satisfyingly 'Oriental' freak show for the Western media.

here by an open invitation. Mahakumbh 2013 has different aspects to cover e.g. - spiritual traditional, economical, religious, marketing, administration, tourism, historical etc. Since the fair is spread widely in 69sq Km, various shades of kumbh can easily be captured. Cultural and spiritual Diversification has its great significance all across the world. The advent of the kumbh provides a rare opportunity of a sacred dip in the sangam, of worship, contemplation, charity and alms giving.

On the sandy banks of the river, the pilgrim or *kalpvasi* undertakes his austere pilgrimage, performing small household rituals alone or surrounded by family.

The Mahakumbh is a paradox of the spectacular and the ordinary, of the mystical and the humdrum. For some, the Kumbh is simply a large dusty village fair and for others, it is a transcendental experience with a river, a moment of surrender and remembrance.

Makar Sankranti dawns foggy and dark on the banks of the Sangam. The gigantic human procession that proceeds for the *shahi snan* is in itself an uplifting experience. In a massive crowd, one becomes an individual, with one's own unique relationship with the river and the sun.

The order of the bath is a slowly unfolding canvas of fantastical images. The different *akharas* of sadhus - among others Mahanirvani, Niranjani and Juna - bathe according to the order of their importance.

The Panchdasnam Juna Akhara is called the Hell's Angels of the Kumbh, performing tricks with their penises and dreadlocks, and dancing with their trishuls held aloft. When the Juna Akhara roars down towards the Sangam to bathe, crowds of pilgrims scatter in fear and awe.

The Rituals to be performed at the Kumbh Mela

The main ritual is the royal bath. Hindus believe that submerging themselves in the sacred waters on the most auspicious day of the new moon will absolve them and their ancestors of sin, thus ending the cycle of rebirth. Pilgrims start lining up to bathe from around 3 a.m. on this day.

As the sun comes up, the different groups of sadhus move in procession towards the river to

bathe. The Naga sadhus usually lead, while each group tries to outdo the others with more grandeur and fanfare. The moment is magical, and everyone is absorbed in it.

After bathing, the pilgrims wear fresh clothes and proceed to worship by the river bank. They then walk around listening to discourses from the various sadhus.

No one goes back starved from kumbh

Just like its big coverage and extent mahakumbh has a big welcoming heart for rich, poor and each category of people. Open kitchens (langhars and bhandaras) serve equally to everyone. From saints and sages to the common masses all receive prasads from different akharas and other social ashrams who have come to the mahakumbh for social service and charity. Especially poor vendors and beggars are earning their dues in the fair. They have absolutely no tension of searching for food as they enjoy three times treat from open kitchens and sometimes even receive gifts on shahi snans from prominent babas.

For continuous one week I brought my lunch box but gradually I noticed that there is no need of it. Getting an opportunity to have my breakfast, lunch, supper and tea in the mahakumbh at famous and prosperous saint's ashram is one of the best things I experienced among many other fine experiences.

From Chiling Cold, Panicking Rain To Happy Spring

MAHAKUMBH fair has been through various good and bad circumstances from 10 January to 10 March. The journey of kumbh 2013 has left no stone unturned to show its multiple shades and different colors to the world.

All the main dates of bathing-kumbh-2013 (shahi snans):

- ✽ makar sankranti snan- 14 January
- ✽ paush purnima snan- 27th January
- ✽ **mauni amavasya snan- 10th February (the biggest royal bathing)**

- ✧ basant panchmi snan- 15th February
- ✧ maghi purnima snan- 25th February
- ✧ mahashivratri snan- 10 March,

All shahi snans travelled through chilling and shivering winters, very disappointing heavy and distressing rains which destroyed many huts and temporary living of mahakumbh followed by happy spring season and a relaxing conclusion of the fair. Though Kumbhnagari has many aspects to write and discuss about. But this pitcher of knowledge and information has one very special thing to churn and showcase to the world, i.e. **UTTAR PRADESH EXHIBITION**, which is located in the sector-1, at Kumbh Mela entrance gate.



Uttar Pradesh Exhibition

Among many cynosures in the fair, one of the worth watching place is the exhibition installed by Uttar Pradesh government. It incorporates the glimpse of various departments which runs for people's awareness, information, rights and well-being. Kumbh Mela is the confluence of multi-cultured and multi-linguistic people from all across the country. Hence, Government acknowledged and welcomed everyone to its 22 different stalls with extreme creative strategies of promotion and awareness:

1. Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam
2. Department of Environment UP
3. National Rural Health Mission
4. Indian Farmer's Fertilizer Cooperative Limited.
5. Department of Jail Administration and Improvement
6. Department of Cultural
7. Social Welfare Society UP
8. National Clean Ganga Mission
9. Uttrakhand Tourism
10. Department of Information
11. Indian Forestry Development Cooperative Ltd.
12. Department of Rural Development UP
13. UP State Agro Industrial Corporation Ltd.
14. Bharat Nirmaan Chitra Pradarshani
15. UP Tourism
16. Pollution Control Board UP
17. State Urban Development Agency
18. Rajya Nagariye Vikas Abhikaran
19. Department of Sugarcane Development UP
20. National Literacy Mission
21. Department of Child Development
22. Uttar Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (UPSACS)



Uttar Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (UPSACS)

In 1999, the Uttar Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (UPSACS) a para-statal agency was formally registered. The governing board includes the Principal Secretary (Medical and Health) as the President, Secretary (Health), the Vice President and the Project Director of UPSACS as Member Secretary. In all districts, District AIDS Control Coordination Committees were formed with the District Magistrate as President and the Chief Medical Officer as Member Secretary. Under NACP II (1999 to March 2007), the services of integrated testing and counseling centers (ICTC) were expanded to the district hospital level. More sentinel surveillance centers were created, communication campaigns to improve knowledge levels were launched and the involvement of NGOs for targeted interventions was taken up.

Other components such as treatment of STI, promotion of condoms, blood safety, treatment of OI and inter-departmental coordination and support were also taken up. components of surveillance, monitoring and evaluation, ICTCs, PPTCT, ART, targeted interventions, STI management, counseling, IEC, school health education, condom promotion, care and support, training, blood safety and finance. The coverage and service delivery of NACP living with HIV has access to quality care and is treated with dignity. Effective prevention, care and support for HIV/AIDS is possible in an environment where human rights are respected and where those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS live a life without stigma and discrimination.

UPSACS has taken measures to ensure that people living with HIV have equal access to quality health services. By fostering close collaboration with NGOs, women's self-help groups, other government departments, corporate/private sector, positive people's networks and communities, working to improve access and accountability of the services. It stands committed to building an enabling environment wherein those infected and affected by HIV play a central role in all responses to the epidemic – at state, district and grassroots level. UPSACS believe that people need to be aware, motivated, equipped and empowered with knowledge so that they can protect themselves from the impact of HIV. It confronts a stark reality – HIV can happen to any of us.

Its hope is that anyone can be saved from the infection with appropriate information on prevention and following effective prevention measures. The principles of GIPA (Greater Involvement of Persons living with HIV/AIDS) and Gender Equity are cross-

cutting across all programmes. UPSACS is built on a foundation of care and support, and is committed to consistently fabricating strategic responses for combating HIV/AIDS situation in India.

Kumbh Mela at Allahabad is one of the most auspicious occasions. It continues for the whole one and a half month. During this time, pilgrims and tourists not only from the country but from all over the world visit Allahabad. Uttar Pradesh State AIDS Control Society initiated to sensitize people about different aspects of HIV/AIDS, as it has a huge participation of people from different walks of life. For sensitization, different activities are being organized such as – rally, exhibition, magic shows, nukkad natak and Information campaign in the Kumbh Mela. It has counselor and lab technician for free counseling and testing facilities. IEC materials are well displayed all over the city (banners, posters, hoardings).

Why is there a need for awareness campaign?

The belief that people should only be taught about sex and drugs in terms of them being 'wrong' may perpetuate stigmatization of people who are living with HIV. If people are being taught that indulging in 'immoral' sex and drugs will lead to HIV infection, educators risk implying that anyone who has HIV is therefore involved in these 'immoral' activities.

In order to prevent becoming infected with HIV, people need comprehensive information about how HIV is transmitted and what they can do to stop themselves from becoming infected. This information should be delivered without moral judgment.

AIDS v/s HIV

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is an infectious disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). It was first recognized in the South Africa in 1981 in a chimpanzee. In India it came in 1986 in 10 prostitutes of Chennai. AIDS is the advanced form of infection with the HIV virus, which may not cause recognizable disease for a long period after the initial exposure (latency). At present, all forms of AIDS therapy are focused on improving the quality and length of life for AIDS patients by slowing or

halting the replication of the virus and treating or preventing infections and cancers that take advantage of a person's weakened immune system.

The first case of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection was identified in UP in 1987. HIV infection is present in all parts of the state, though at varying levels. Major risk factors includes unsafe sex and low condom use, injecting drug users,

Indian statistics about HIV/AIDS

- ✳ In every 15 seconds, a person gets infected with HIV AIDS in the world.
- ✳ In India, it was first spotted in 1986 in a female sex worker at Chennai.
- ✳ 1987-a HIV case was found in Uttar Pradesh.
- ✳ 1987-National AIDS control organization (NACO) came in to existence.
- ✳ India is the second largest country after South Africa (33%) infected with HIV AIDS in the world.
- ✳ The epidemic disproportionately affects women, who account for 40 per cent of the total infections in the country.
- ✳ In India, the epidemic is more pronounced in urban areas than rural ones and decreases with increasing education levels.



Programs running by UPSACS

Targeted Intervention

The basic purpose of the Targeted Intervention program is to reduce the rate of transmission among the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. One of the ways of controlling the disease from further spread is to carry out direct intervention program among these groups through multi-pronged strategies, beginning from behavior change communications, counseling, providing health care support, treatment for STDs and creating an enabling environment that will facilitate behavior change. It envisages a comprehensive and integrated approach to marginalized and vulnerable populations such as sex workers, intravenous drug users, men having sex with men, truckers, migrant labor and street children. All over the world, it has been commonly found that particular groups of people are more vulnerable than others to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These groups, because of their behavioral attributes, are prone to contract the infection more quickly and spread the disease in a very short period.

Targeted Interventions (TI) are a specific set of intervention in HIV/AIDS Control Programmes meant specifically to reach out to groups seen to practice High-Risk behavior (HRG). High-Risk behaviour Groups (HRGs) are divided into:

Core Groups comprising of:

- ✱ Female Sex Workers (FSW),
- ✱ Injecting Drug Users (IDUs),
- ✱ Men having Sex with Men (MSM)

Information Education Communication (IEC)

In UP, more than 99% of the population is still uninfected, therefore it becomes imperative to continue intensive communication efforts that will not only raise awareness levels but also bring out behavioral change. Both information and knowledge are necessary but not sufficient for behavior change. A key priority is to motivate behavior change in a cross-section of identified population at risk, including HRGs and bridge population. The

ultimate goal is to increase demand and utilization of HIV and AIDS related health services that would create an enabling environment and which eventually reduces stigma and discrimination at individual, family, community and institutional level. IEC being the tool of behavior change is a cross-cutting and integral strategic intervention in all components of HIV and AIDS prevention, care, support and treatment programme. UPSACS, through its IEC programme, focuses largely on the youth, as well as the general population, with the objective of raising awareness, furthering knowledge about HIV and AIDS, its spread and control to increase self risk perception for safe and health-seeking behavior. The IEC programme covers different cross-section of populations at risk, including the core groups and bridge populations, while also creating an enabling environment for prevention of HIV, as well as providing institutional and community care and support, providing proper information, education and communication with the propagation of messages through display boards and leaflets etc.

STD Clinics

HIV Surveillance closely monitors and tracks the level, spreads and trends of the epidemic as well as the risk behaviors that prompt the growth of epidemic. Estimation of HIV prevalence and the number of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) is done annually that gives the scenario of HIV epidemic at the national as well as the sub-national levels.

Condoms Promotion

The heterosexual route constitutes the major route of HIV transmission in UP. Therefore, the most successful, cost- effective and practical way to prevent the transmission is the use of condoms. Condoms have the added advantage of providing protection from STIs. Both male and female condoms are available in the state. The continuous intervention and efforts of UPSACS through different agencies in condom promotional activities during the year has increased the utility of condom in the state. The

social marketing of condoms is done through partner NGOs and Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust (HLFPPT). Along with these the free distribution of condoms is also done by UPSACS through ICTCs, ART Centers, STI Clinics, TI and Non TI partner NGOs as well as through other agencies.



Blood Safety

Proper counseling and encouraging people for blood donation and also pursuing the importance of safe blood in our life. Human blood is an essential element of human life and there are no substitutes. Blood transfusion services occupy a vital space in any National Health Service delivery system. Blood is also a precious resource.



The availability of safe and adequate blood saves lives. If not properly screened, however, blood becomes a conduit for transmitting viral, bacterial and protozoan in sections e.g. hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, Syphilis and Malaria. Characteristically, two categories of persons need blood transfusion: those with emergent requirements e.g. victims of road accident, civilian and military debacle and those with repeated, frequent and regular requirement e.g. patients with thalassemia, hemophilia, renal dialysis, severe anemic and cancer patients who must undergo repeated transfusions are at great risk of acquiring transfusion transmitted infections.

The only way to protect recipients of blood is to put in place structures, processes and procedures that will ensure access to safe and sufficient blood supply. As per the WHO guidelines annual requirement of blood units is estimated at around 1% of the total population in developed countries or by the number of hospital beds; taking an average requirement of 7 units per bed per annum. On the basis of number of hospital beds the annual requirement for Uttar Pradesh during 2010-11 was 7 lakh units of blood required. Of the total requirement the target was to collect 90% of the blood units through voluntary blood donation, including outreach. Roughly 50% was to be met through the Govt. Blood Banks and the remaining 50% was to be catered by the blood banks established in non- government sector.

Integrated counseling and testing center (ICTC)

ICTC is not a place just for testing a sample for HIV, but much more than that. One of the basic elements involved is a confidential discussion between the client and the trained counselor and the focus is on emotional and social issues related to possible or actual HIV infection. The aim of the ICTC is to reduce psycho-social stress and provide the client with information & support necessary to make decisions; therefore it needs a private and peaceful setting. Separate enclosures for male & female clients have been set up to provide confidential environment for encouraging disclosure and providing IPC.

For the effective functioning of the ICTCs, two trained counselors and one laboratory technician have been provided in each ICTC. In order to ensure that the result of the HIV test is given on same day to the individual after post-test counseling, Rapid HIV Test Kits have been supplied to these centers or the client is asked to meet the same counselor for post counseling on appointed date. Waiting space, trained Microbiologist/Pathologist, training to staff functionaries of ICTC, two trained counselors and one laboratory technician have been provided in each ICTC. In order to ensure that ICTCs provide quality counseling services, stress has been laid on pre-placement in-service training of counselors & technicians by master trainers & resource persons. Orientation training is also conducted for these functionaries.

Care and Support

The care, support and treatment needs of HIV positive people vary with the stage of the infection. The HIV infected person remains asymptomatic for the initial few years; it manifests by six to eight years. As immunity falls over time the person becomes susceptible to various opportunistic infections (OIs). At this stage, medical treatment and psycho-social support is needed. Access to prompt diagnosis and treatment of OIs ensures that PLHAs live longer and have a better quality of life.

Prevention of parents-to child transmission (PPTCT)

· In India, the transmission of the virus from the mother-to-child during pregnancy, labor and delivery or breastfeeding is called parent-to-child-transmission to emphasize the role of the father in both the transmission of the virus and management of the infected mother and child.

- ✱ Nearly five per cent of infections are attributable to parent-to-child-transmission.
- ✱ It is estimated that out of 27 million pregnancies every year, nearly 49,000 occur in HIV-positive mothers.
- ✱ One of the best practices in PPTCT in India is the outreach approach, used by the ICTC to ensure that HIV-positive women who are tested are followed up before, during and after an institutional delivery, and provided with anti-retroviral prophylaxis.
- ✱ The core principle of this approach rests on the continuum of care for women, children and their families – a chain of interventions that begin before pregnancy and continue through pregnancy, labor and delivery and subsequently as part of routine or specialized chronic care services for after the child is born.

Taking care of all the aspects and programmes running by UPSACS, the government planned to run awareness campaign against HIV AIDS during mahakumbh 2013. In this direction, UPSACS stall has been implanted with beautiful infrastructure and amazing management inside as well as outside the stall.



Overview of the Campaign

Getting Towards Zero: Zero Discrimination, Zero Infections and Zero AIDS Related Deaths

The above mentioned lines are the actual mission of Uttar Pradesh states AIDS control society. *The overall goals of national AIDS control programme phase III are to halt and reverse the epidemic in India by integrating programmes for prevention, care and support and treatment. For this very cause, UPSACS's stall is lodged in the Mahakumbh 2013 from 10th January to 10th March.* It is embedded there with the intention of spreading awareness, informing, educating and entertaining the people and also acquaints them with the issue of HIV AIDS.

Entrance of the stall is festooned with two marvelous red ribbons. One is for entry point and the other one is for exit. That is the catchiest and different thing about the stall which makes it better from the other one. Inside the stall there are 23 display boards in total in which 20 are large and 3 small. All displays boards are significantly written and showcasing information about HIV AIDS and short value education's stories for persuading people to be honest with their partners and does not mislead from their path.

Concept of HIV is shown through a diagram of HIV virus. Other important display includes reasons, consequences and precautions against HIV AIDS. Public coming to the stall is curious and interested towards all the activities running in the stall. Most of the people have enrolled themselves only in having glimpse of display boards and writing their comments in the visitor's diary. There are three sections or rooms made in the stall for counseling, testing and blood donating respectively.

Youths and administration actively took part in testing and blood donating. Many women seem interested in testing their HIV test but they are hesitant and scared of their husbands. Magic show is the main source of activity for attracting people towards the stall. According to magician Uday raj Singh, 'folk art is mostly used to please and seeking attention of rural population. Incentive of magic show is that it equally entertains urban, rural and other genre of population.

It is thrilling and we try hard to make it as much informative as we can'. Magicians prompt people to go for counseling and testing and then, activities like documentary

presentations and awareness campaign runs parallel with it. For informing and promoting the UPSACS stall, hoardings have been implanted in the city so that people visit and get informed.

List of installed UPSACS hoardings in different places: (size 10 x 20 ft.) total: 20

S.NO	PLACES	No. of Hoardings
1.	Before shastri bridge on mela entrance gate	01
2.	Mirzapur road and new bridge tiraha	01
3.	Pani tanki/ high court choraha	01
4.	Police watch tower/ media tower sangam nose	01
5.	Kali sadak turn	01
6.	Lal sadak tiraha	01
7.	Triveni sadak tiraha	01
8.	Media camp lal sadak	01
9.	S.S.P office near mela adhikari office	01
10.	Exhibition area	01
11.	Akshaywat marg, near lete hanuman mandir	01
12.	On the way to Arail ghat near foot over bridge	01
13.	Civil lines, bus stand	01
14.	Mela area, harshwardhan chouraha	01
15.	Mela area – sector-09	01
16.	Mela area- sector-10	01
17.	Naini region	04

There are three components in which the stall activities took place-

1. **HIV AIDS Awareness:** It is one of the major components of the stall which is made purposely to inform, educate and communicate with people through displays, leaflets, brochure and pamphlets which is fairly supported by magic show, nukkad natak (street play) followed by documentaries shows. Total number of displays is 23 with pictures and thoughtful messages with the distribution of 34,000 IEC material including leaflets, brochures, and pamphlets etc., consisting information about causes, signs, symptoms and treatment of HIV AIDS.
2. **Free counseling and testing:** Counseling of people is done not only to aware them about HIV/AIDS but also to motivate them for HIV tests. It also includes free circulation of more than one lakhs condoms. Condoms are given on the condition of not giving the outlet directly but through counselors only on public demand. Number of people visited the stall is more than 6 lakhs.
3. **Blood donation:** With the help of motivational messages, goodwill, display boards and counselor's encouragement, more than 61 units of blood has been donated during Mahakumbh fair.

Staff is updated and regular in the stall. Testing and counseling takes place in two shifts from 8 am to 2pm and 2pm to 9pm.

Magic show is kept as a striking activity four show per day to catch people's attention. It is seen that this strategy is especially made to entertain rural population. Spreading awareness about the disease is very important especially for rural population. Magician not only entertains the audience through his magic tricks but also informs and encourages people for free HIV testing and counseling respectively. Magician Uday Raj Singh who has been working in this field for six years says, 'magic enthralls people in such a way that they listen to everything and understands it more clearly.'

Many other programmes run successfully during mahakumbh which not only entertained the audience but its multiple activities made the stall better than the other.

Total no. of magic shows: 240

Street Play (Nukkad Natak) is one of the appealing activity which is shown on every pre and post day of royal bath (shahi snan).

Total no. of shows of Nukkad Natak: 30 plays.

It is followed by four documentaries shows daily from 3 to 8pm from 18th January to 10th March, which illustrated awareness related visuals and beneficial messages in the form of short movies and documentaries. Officials of the camp admitted that due to budget problem, they have also encountered some technical problems in between the shows. Like lack of sufficient loudspeakers and proper sound management.

Total no. of documentaries shows: 156

Other than UPSACS stall there were other unit of UPSACS active in the mahakumbh. UPNP is one of them. It is the network of positive people who set a great example in front of society. UPNP stall exhibited its activities in the fair from 10th January to 27th February.

Uttar Pradesh network of positive people (UPNP)

Withstanding all the difficulties of life, some people are alive only because they cannot surrender to the circumstances. But Naresh and Ajita Yadav are special – they are a 'positive' couple bound together by HIV virus. Founder President of the Uttar Pradesh Network of Positive People (UPNPP),

it was Naresh who took the bold step of lending their faces to the HIV/AIDS campaign and initiating a movement to bring together the HIV positive people of Uttar

Pradesh on to one platform. Starting from the holy city of Prayag (Allahabad) in April 2004, UPNPP today has branches in 20 districts of the state. It has a dedicated membership of 2,500 HIV-positive people and an equal number of volunteers. The UPNPP centers provide networking, counseling and service delivery, including capacity building and advocacy. Total number of people connected with UPNP in the states is 22,000 while in district it is more than 2,000 people. 'Government is very cooperative and optimistic towards the mission of getting towards zero. But government needs public support to full fill their goal' says Naresh.

With this edge ZINDAGI ZINDABAD is also an institution which not only provides care to those who have been hurt by their own loved ones, but also provides them employment opportunity to live life with dignity. The outreach workers, in this institution, have become hope of life for those people who are HIV positive and come here to seek help or advice concerning with HIV / AIDS. They provide them care despite their own sufferings. They provide advice, companionship, help them in searching the new way to start their life again, take them to the hospital, give medicines and take care of their family with fooding and lodging.

These groups named “Zindagi Zindabad” have around 600 members in their network. Apart from struggling for their own rights, they help others too. This is a common goal of UPNP and Zindagi Zindabad of spreading awareness and motivating positive people to improve their lifestyles. UPNP also mounted its stall in mahakumbh from 10 January to 27th February.

Activities took place in the UPNPP Stall are following:

- ✧ Exhibitions
 - ✧ Silent walk on the theme of 'HIV Mitao'
 - ✧ Distribution of IEC
 - ✧ Counseling sessions
-
- ✧ Total Number of counseling session during Mela Period (14th Jan to 27th Feb-13):
1250 session

- * Total Number of people reached through counseling session during Mela Period (14th Jan to 27th Feb-13): 3100 person.
- * Total Number of visitors of exhibition in camp during Mela Period (14th Jan to 27th Feb-13): 107100 person visit.

*** Nukkad natak**

Date	Place	No. of Show
23 January 2013	UPNP+ Camp	1 Shows
	Near R.B.I.	1 Shows
29 January 2013	Sangam Nose	1 Shows
	Hanuman Mandir, Bandwa	1 Shows
03 February 2013	UPSACS Camp	1 Shows
	Sector 12 (Khakh Chowk)	1 Shows
08 February 2013	Sector 7 (Kali Road)	1 Shows
	Near R.B.I.	1 Shows
	Sangam Nose	1 Shows



The UPSACS stall and the Visitors

Relevance from various view point

People coming in the exhibition are cooperative and friendly to talk. Most of them know about HIV AIDS and they appreciate government initiative. Ram Singh (48) an advocate complains about improper propagation and awareness campaign in rural areas. When one of the ICTC counselors interrupted in between and told him about their CHC (community health centers) programs running successfully in rural areas then he told us two severe cases and perception of people in the village regarding HIV positive victims.

Case-1

Unsafe Sex is the only reason for HIV AIDS

Balram singh (45) a businessman returned to his village pratapgarh from Bombay as he was unwell. His health was degrading day by day and he started losing weight. Later on when people came to know that he was HIV positive, they started neglecting and blamed him for not being loyal with his wife and family without knowing the actual reason. According to Ram Singh, rural population still thinks that HIV AIDS is only caused due to keeping relations with multiple partners. So, Balram could have lived happily more than what he lived in disguise and disregard due to least awareness and minimal knowledge among people.

Case-2

"Sometimes I have a terrible feeling that I am dying not from the virus, but from being untouchable."

HIV/AIDS is caused by touching

Kapurchand (39) was told as HIV positive by a local medical doctor who even did not keep his report confidential and claimed him as positive. Kapurchand was badly treated by society and his family member. The extreme happened when his clothing, eating and shelter was separated by his own parents. He was treated like an animal in his own home. Everyone who wishes to meet him would wash his/her foot and hands with soap after

meeting so that they would be prevented from the disease. This story does not end like this! An ICTC lab technician visited Kapurchand's house and retested his blood for confirmation and treatment and finally his result came negative. Now Kapurchand is leading a happy and healthy life with respect.

Hence, rural population needed to be informed correctly and effectively so that HIV patients in villages could be able to create a happy life for themselves.

Mentioning about females then there is a big difference between footfalls and the number of HIV test done by them. Most of them are hesitant to talk about the HIV AIDS issue and half of them have fear of needle. Especially 16 to 25 age group girls gave the collective excuse for not getting their HIV counseling and testing done.

It is difficult for people to understand and accept the fact that HIV/ AIDS is not only spread by unsafe sex but also from three other reasons. So, there is a keen need to know its reasons:

- ✱ **Unprotected sex with an infected partner**
- ✱ **Infected injections**
- ✱ **Infected mother to her unborn child**
- ✱ **Infected blood**

In Allahabad district all these four reasons are especially treated by different public and private organization:

Unsafe sex is directly dealt by NGOs who approach high risk group through direct intervention. They move to red light areas and other targeted places to persuade FSWs and MSMs the high vulnerability of HIV AIDS. Many programmes have been conducted for their awareness. Such as red ribbon express, IEC, counseling and street plays.

Cases of Infected injections and injected drugs users(IDUs) is taken care by NGOs like lok smriti sewa sansthan(LSSS) who counsel people and help them in quitting drugs with the treatment like oral substitute therapy(OST) and encourage them to improve their life style and motivate them for new beginning.



Walk Among Public

Sex education and information of HIV AIDS is well communicated by counselors. Worth mentioning thing is they maintain and acquired a good comfort level with every visiting and curious person. They patiently give answers of all the questions.

People reached to the stall to just have a glimpse of the stall and quench their curiosity as this issue is still a matter of no public speaking and confidentiality. Youths gave their active participation in each and every activity: viz. testing, counseling, blood donating, and even as a magic show and play's audience.

Many school going students who came mostly in the group took HIV testing to be very interesting and fun going. But after counseling and acquiring information their thought process became quiet in-depth about the disease.

Sanjogyata (41) a high court service holder whose husband is a block development in-charge and he more often moves out of home for work. When asked to sanjogyata whether she and her husband ever went for their HIV test she burst into a big laughter and straight away moved out of the stall. This case shows that people still think HIV AIDS as taboo and do not prefer to discuss over it. One more perception which comes into light is that people belongings from good family do not accept the fact that anybody can get infected with this disease in their family.

Public reached through other media

Mostly all the visitor who came to the stall are devotees and tourist who have especially came for Mahakumbh fair and not purposely for the UPSACS stall. Hence the impromptu visit of a layman to the stall is such impressive that they started coming with their family and friends for knowledge, information and their safety. There is no such promotion or advertisement published in any newspapers but 92.7 big FM and 93.5 RED FM aired information about the UPSACS stall.

Non-reached Public

Non- reached public is indeed non-informed or less –informed than the public who attended the exhibitions and counseling. Most of them especially foreigners and people

from south India abstained themselves from going to the stall even after a strong appeal and persuasions. Vendors and lower strata people also registered their absence in the stall. It seems much of the HRGs and targeted audience should also attend the programme but the ratio of such group is low compared to youths and administration's active partaking.

Foreigners

After interviewing a dozen of foreigners from different countries one outcome is common i.e. most of them have half boiled information about HIV AIDS.

Kombi bobby (33) who has been in the kumbh nagari to shoot his movie when asked about HIV AIDS then he said, 'it is a sickness spread usually through genitals during sexual intercourse. It attacks our immune system and weakens our WBCs and leucocytes which lead our body to get weaker. When asked about other three reasons for HIV to get spread, he remained unanswered and admitted that he didn't know it. After questioning how would he behave with a positive person who is close to him then he answered that he'll be more careful and cautious in every possible way he can! Cloth Ladino (55) from Germany also did not have much knowledge of the disease. He also believed that it is an infection causes only by unsafe sex.

One of an American tourist, who ended the conversation with lots of interrogations, was feeling very uncomfortable to talk about this issue. It was perceived that ramkali (fictions name), a woman from any small village would not answer these questions due to hesitations but worth grinning moment was that an American woman has the same value concept. It is well said that two extreme opposite conditions leads to the same conclusion.

Sadhus and FBOs

Most of the saints did not make any comment upon any of the questions regarding AIDS and they diplomatically dealt with these questions.

Mahendragiri ji maharaj, a saint when asked about what he thinks about promotion

of HIV AIDS awareness in a religious fair 'Mahakumbh', he said promotion of anything for the mankind is good. Mahakumbh is a big fair in which spreading awareness is certainly an excellent initiative by government.

One of the seers named kashinath said he has nothing to say about the disease as it is not his genre to talk about on such issues. He also suggested contacting to any doctor and not a saint for this.

Shri jyotipeethadheeshwar jagatguru shankracharya swami vasudevananda saraswati ji mahahraj who is a shankracharya of jyotipeeth have never heard about HIV AIDS before this. He whispered to his secretary asking him what is that? And finally he concluded that he doesn't know of such disease and neither has he wanted to know! He also advised to adopt a healthy and honest lifestyle which will prevent humans from such danger.

Initially during magh mela and kumbh mela of haridwar, FBOs and mahamandaleshwars of different akharas protested against condoms promotions and related messages through releasing balloons in the air. That is why this time to avoid any king of protest; organizers have lifted their hands up from doing such kind of open promotional activities.

Cooperative administration

Administration has been very cooperative and supportive throughout the kumbh mela. Whether to talk about bringing blood van after permitting and passing it from various checking departments or to donate blood and encourage their staff members to do the same. When I was wandering to other stall I met some jailers and their sub-ordinates in the karagar department. When I told them about UPSACS stall they curiously listen to my preaching about HIV AIDS. I even encouraged them for testing and counseling which I told them is free of cost. Many policemen and cops get their HIV test done and also brought their acquaintance for testing and counseling. They even helped in crowd management, security and management issues are also significant contribution of administration.



Impact of the Campaign

- ✧ More than six lakhs people visited the UPSACS stall and it laid a remarkable impression over everybody who visited the stall. From information, displays, hoarding to counseling, testing and presentation all the arrangement made in the stall is commendable.
- ✧ People gained much important information about HIV AIDS and exclusion of myths and pre-conceived notions also took place.
- ✧ Growing children (school going), employees and house wives get to learn the things easily with the help of street plays and magic shows. People learnt and get to know about the signs, symptoms, consequences and precautions of HIV AIDS.
- ✧ Counselors fed in each visiting person's mind 'jaankari hi bachav hai' means information is the cure for HIV AIDS.
- ✧ There are lots many people who bring their acquaintance and friends for testing after getting their test and result done.
- ✧ Impact of this exhibition in a layman's life is fruitful and definitely a step towards nation's building.
- ✧ Visiting officials actively monitored and discussed the future challenges and achievements with other high officials which is again an advent of a new dawn.
- ✧ Since the exhibition is not in the direct reach of HRGs so, many other programmes are being done in this direction to approach the targeted intervention.
- ✧ UPSACS stall in Mahakumbh-2013 has proved a successful event with fulfilling maximum expectations of getting towards zero discrimination, zero death by HIV and zero new infection of HIV.



Some Highlights

- ✧ Stall has been inaugurated by Commissioner Allahabad Division, Mr. Devesh Chaturvedi.
- ✧ It has been inspected by officials viz.: Miss Aradhana Johri (AS /Chairman NACO), Mr. Ashish Goyal (PD), Dr. Nitin Bansal (CDO), Dr Padmakar Singh(CMO), Dr. O. P. Shahi (DTO/DACO), Dr. Sageeta Pandey(JD IEC UPSACS), Dr. Mannu Bhatnagar (JD Basic Services UPSACS), Mr. Ashok Shukla (JD Blood Safety, UPSACS). All of them are content with the management of the stall and also admit that UPSACS stall is comparatively better than other 21 stalls.
- ✧ Arrival of super luxurious VOLVO blood bank VAN with fully air conditioned rooms. It arrived on every Shahi Snan day for maximum blood donations and also as a striking feature of the stall. It is with well-equipped infrastructure and facilities inside it. This kind of buses are running in only two places in Uttar Pradesh- (1) BHU Varanasi (2) KGMU Lucknow.
- ✧ People are thrilled to enter into the bus and donate their blood. Outside infrastructure of the bus is very marvelously made, including catchy messages like 'Raktdaan Mahadaan' means blood donation is a great donation. This easily inspired and catches attention of the common mass.
- ✧ Communication is a very good technique to encourage people for testing and blood donating. I have inspired people from administration and other stalls to get their HIV testing done, but they got convinced on the condition that the testing would be free of cost.
- ✧ Visit of Dr. Mannu Bhatnagar, JD Basic Services UPSACS, who not only inspected the stall but also been to SRN, NCR, CMO office, DAPCU for mapping the future proposals and to discuss the problems and their suitable solutions.
- ✧ To mainstream HIV/AIDS issue in all ministries and departments by treating it as a development challenge and not merely a public health problem.
- ✧ Planning is to look forward towards railways, paramilitary and other hospitals to coordinate with them for training, workshops, and other UPSACS programs.



Case Studies

Blood Donation

According to traffic inspector Mr. Shyam Prakash Upadhyay, Kumbh Mela is the diversification of different culture and everybody is equally responsible for the success of the mela. 'Staff selection of each department is perfect and that is why no big problem has arrived in the mela so far', says Upadhyay. Mobile blood van would never have entered to the peripheral of mela because of its enormous size. Mr. Shyam Prakash personally supported UPSACS in permitting the VOLVO in the fair. Donating and contributing some unit of blood is also in their account. He and his staff members donated the blood not for the sake of earning contemplation but for the society and mankind. Water cycle is the finest example given by him to describe the benefits of donating blood. As it returns back to us whenever we need it. The only thing a person should do is to sow good seeds to harvest them later. The best part of administration is they believe to be the part of UPSACS and always give their support whenever needed.

A Positive Counsellor

" View all human beings as beautiful gardens that must be cultivated and watered frequently. They're worth it"

Sachin Kumar (36) is popular as Sachin Tendulkar in his group. Reason behind so is he is a master blaster and a winner of his life battle. He is continuously fighting against his HIV infection and works as an outreach worker for Umang community care center. He is still a happy go lucky man who works with full energy and dedication for positive people. Meeting to him is definitely like a treat! A person who lives his life with full enthusiasm than a normal person lives.

No positive case could be spotted in the stall during Mahakumbh but after visiting Umang community care center (CCC), I came to realize that HIV Positive people are just like a normal human being, hence they should be treated normally from the society.

Rashmi's Story

Rashmi, 32, from a village near Sardhana, started sex work at the age of 20. She is a young widow and needed money for meeting the day to day needs of her children. Rashmi serves 3-5 clients a day and the rate is not fixed as it depends on the client and their demands. The clients are mostly factory workers, rickshaw pullers, factory owners and others. She was completely ignorant about HIV and other STI. But now she has started using condom since last two years after getting associated with the TI implemented by NGO GRAVIS. Initially she was quite resistant to HIV testing but after counselling and regular visit by the Peer Educators and Outreach Workers, she visited the ICTC thrice and got counseled and tested for HIV. She was also offered the opportunity to become a Peer Educator but she refused as her children are too small and it is quite difficult for her to commute to NGOs office which is around 35 kms from the village where she is staying. She goes for her routine medical check-up and also does motivate her partners to get tested at the ICTC for HIV. She now works as a volunteer. Rashmi places demands for condoms for other FSWs of her area. As a result of her awareness and perception of risk, Rashmi has been able to now convince some of her clients to practice behaviors that of lower risk.

Story of Imran

Staff from Lok Smriti Seva Sansthan in Kydganj (Allahabad) came across a client who was an IDU, Mr. Imran. Within 15 days of his getting associated with the organization, 154 more IDUs came in contact with the NGO and were enlisted as Imran had a big circle of IDU friends with regular counseling and support from the NGO. Imran started working voluntarily with the NGO and over a period became a Peer Educator and is now an Outreach Worker. He now reaches out to his friends with HIV prevention messages and related services such as needle-syringes etc. When he had come in contact with the organization, his appearance was no better than a rag picker. Now over a period of time situations had changed. His family members including his brothers have started accepting him and consulting him on important matters. Though they are not very convinced that he has completely left drugs but he gets some level of support and respect from his family.

Story of Manju

Manju (33) from Janghai village has got the HIV infection from her late truck driver husband who passed away with the same disease two years ago. She has three children and thankfully all of them are negative. Manju was not talking much about her but she told that she reside at her sister's place and visit in every 3rd month to the city for her medicines. She has no expectations from life and she smile so rare. The reason is indeed big for that but social taboo and negligence plays an important role in taking away the smile of a person. She just wants her children to study harder and earn good money and that is all she has to say.....

Story of Dharmendra

" THE GREATEST DISCOVERY OF ANY GENERATION IS THAT A HUMAN BEING CAN ALTER HIS LIFE BY ALTERING HIS ATTITUDE"

A 26 year old gentleman whom I misconcepted a college going student but he was a married man and also father of three children. He recently came to know about being HIV positive in February 2013. According to Dharmendra he does not even know how he has got this infection. But after talking to the counselor separately got to know the reason for his infection was unsafe sex! Counselor also added that people do not accept the reality more because of shock and lots of pressure they go through this time period. When asked to Dharmendra about his dreams and goal in life then he said, ' karna toh bahut kuch chahte the...., As if his world is finished! After boosting his morale he told about buying a land and opening a shop nearby his village. Dharmendra is still struggling between his life, dreams and disease.

There are many Manju who innocently get the infections through their husbands and there are many Dharmendra who commit blunders and go for unsafe sex beneath the shade of youngness and passion.

UPSACS mission is to getting towards zero discrimination, zero new infections and zero deaths by HIV AIDS and also to acquire control over the prevalence of HIV AIDS, towards a safer UTTAR PRADESH.

In this awareness campaign everybody's contribution and support is needed!!

The Counselor's POV

After examining the patience of counselors I quickly asked them that how do they manage to answer all repetitive questions so humbly? Then one of them replied that it is not just our work but also a social service. We try hard to persuade people and aware them about the disease. When the virus entered our body it weakens the lymphocytes present in the WBC. When a person become infected with HIV, the virus attacks your CD4 lymphocytes (also called T helper or T4 cells), a type of white blood cell that is responsible for fighting certain infections (germs). The virus first attaches to the CD4 cell (1) and inject its genetic material (RNA). The RNA then instructs the CD4 cell to produce more of the virus (2). These new viruses (virions) are then released into the bloodstream (3) and the CD4 cell is destroyed. Full explanation of the disease and its related issues helped in removing myths and pre-conceived notions of people.

It seems training sessions of counselors and lab technicians are well planned and efficiently done. That is the main reason that they are giving their hundred percent in their work. Their contribution in making UPSACS stall a successful event is worth mentioning.



Conclusion

Though it is a successful happening but it went through many difficult times as well. From the Mauni Amavasya's post Snan stampede to the heavy rain lashes almost destroying the temporary life of Kumbh Nagari. Even maximum stall went through renovations and painting again to strive out the difficult situation. Due to increase in the water level people were not visiting stall and situation becomes extreme. Beyond this entire incident, one special thing about UPSACS stall is that it stood still with no maintenance demanding condition. Visiting staff also complimented that the stall is comparatively better among all 21 stall of UTTAR PRADESH EXHIBITION. From activities, punctuality of the staff, management, and guest room and over all presentation of exhibition is praiseworthy.

Visitors have gained information and many of their myths regarding the disease got cleared up. For example – people still thinks that using the toilet of a positive person or the razor used by a positive person can lead to catch the infection. But counselors cleared all the related doubts very sincerely. VIPs also candidly attended the meetings in the directions of future planning and improvement of programs of UTTAR PRADESH AIDS CONTROL SOCIETY. If the working of these programs would work in the same pace that day will be near of acquiring zero discrimination, zero new infections and zero deaths by HIV /AIDS.



Photo Gallery



UPSACS's Stall



IEC Distribution



Magic Show



Street Play "Nukkad Natak"



Students Crowd



Counseling & Testing



**Mr. Devesh Chaturvedi
Commissioner Allahabad**



Ms. Aradhna Johri Chairman NACO



Dr. Mannu Bhatnagar JD UPSACS



With CMO Allahabad



To the NCR



DTO Office



Stall Of NRHM



Stall of Information Department



Stall Of Jail Department



Stall of NCGM



Uttarakhand Tourism



Farmers Department



Study, Writing, Report making & Layout designing by
Thoda Sa Aasman
20, Gopal Nagar, Alambagh, Lucknow
Ph.:- 09839285070
E-mail: drmanjushukla@live.com