

MUSKAN; The MSM support group

Muskan works for the prevention and care of HIV/AIDS within hijra, gay, koti, pantsi, and bisexual male communities in the district. Muskan provides STI/HIV/AIDS information, care and support, awareness raising and free condom distribution to the MSM populations. Last year, the program saw a marked improvement in the health conditions of positive MSM who access Muskan - for example, evidence of more MSM adhering to ART treatment regimes - made easier by the support given through home visits and facilitating access to the Civil hospital facilities. These aspects continued to be an integral part of the program. Counselling is also continued to be essential to Muskan's work, helping men make safe and responsible sexual choices. Muskan provides drop-in clinical services for testing and the treatment of STIs and opportunistic infections. The Drop-in-Centre is to provide a safe space for MSM to build solidarity and self-esteem and as a place for meeting others, trainings and crisis management. A significant change in human rights situation of MSM in Sangli and across India is the recent reading down of Section 377, a law which previously criminalised anal sex and same sex behaviour.