

[our story] THE DESI QUEER DATEBOOK



1870

Anti-sodomy law imposed on entire British Empire including India

1941



Ismat Chughtai's short story "Lihaaf" published

1978



Shakuntala Devi publishes *The World of Homosexuality*

1985

May *Anamika*, a newsletter for South Asian lesbians and bi women, comes out

1986



FILM:

My Beautiful Laundrette directed by Steven Frears

BOOK:

The Conversations of Cow by Suniti Namjoshi

• First case of HIV reported in India, in Chennai



Jan

First issue of *Trikon* newsletter, editors Arvind Kumar & Suvir

1987

• Sneha Sangam gay group forms in Bangalore



Jan *Society* magazine in India carries story about Trikon

Jul **Khush** formed in Toronto

Nov Trikon becomes incorporated as Trikone

Dec Bhopal policewomen Lila and Urmila marry and get fired

Feb Ashok Row Kavi discusses his homosexuality in Savvy magazine
 Apr Hijra conference in Bhopal, India
 Jun Trikone marches in San Francisco pride parade for the first time ever
 Nov Trikone Los Angeles (later Satrang) formed
 Dec Trikone Chicago (later Sangat) formed

1988

Jun Shakti formed in London
 Sep Trikone, Khush & Urvashi Vaid make the *Illustrated Weekly* of India
 Oct First Shakti Bhangra disco in London

1989



Jun

Urvashi Vaid becomes Executive Director of NLGTF

1990

• Red Rose Meetings start in New Delhi for gay men
 • Indian lesbians attend Asian Lesbian Network conference in Bangkok
 Apr Lila's father files case under Sec. 377 against Lila's partner Tarulata who underwent FTM sex change to marry Lila Chavda in 1989
 Jun *ShamaKami*, newsletter for South Asian lesbian & bi women comes out
 Jun *Bombay Dost* comes out in India
 Sep *Freedom* newsletter published in Gulbarga
 Dec Fun Club starts in Calcutta to organize social gatherings

Jan *Khush Khayal* published in Toronto
 Jan *Shakti Khabar* published in London
 Feb Dominic D'Souza arrested placed in solitary confinement in India because he is HIV+
 May Khush organizes Salaam Toronto! Festival
 Jul South Asian AIDS Coalition (later ASAP) formed in Toronto

1991



Dec

Pravartak published in Calcutta

FILMS:

Jareena: Portrait of a Hijra by Prem Kalliat

BOOK:

Trying to Grow by Firdaus Kanga

Flesh and Paper

by Pratibha Parmar about Suniti Namjoshi

Feb South Asian Gay Association forms in New York
 Jul Sakhi formed in New Delhi
 Jul SAGA in New York becomes SALGA
 Oct Naz Project formed in London
 Nov ABVA publishes *Less than Gay*, the first citizen's report on homosexuality in India

1992

Jan Companions on a Journey founded in Sri Lanka
 Jan Activist Siddhartha Gautam passes away in New Delhi
 Feb Udaan founded in Mumbai to work with MSM
 Apr Atish Network formed in Vancouver
 May Dominic D'Souza, AIDS activist, dies
 Aug SALGA marches in New York's India Day parade

FILMS:

Bolo! Bolo!

By Gita Saxena & Ian Rashid

Khush

by Pratibha Parmar

Eunuchs, India's Third Gender by Michael Yorke for BBC

Khush Refugees by Nidhi Singh

BOOK:

Invisible Minority – The Unknown World of the Indian Homosexual by Arvind Kala

- Jan** Friends of Siddhartha Gautam organize a film festival in Delhi in his memory; 400 attend
- Mar** Discovery '93, the Khush gay men's conference in Toronto
- Mar** Khush Club forms in Mumbai of gay men
- Mar** *Samiyoni* magazine debuts in Toronto
- Jun** Pratibha Parmar receives Frameline Award for contributions to queer cinema
- Apr** Khushlist born
- Aug** Counsel Club formed in Calcutta
- Sep** *Aarambh* magazine debuts in New Delhi
- Nov** Trikone Atlanta born
- Dec** Naz and Sakhi Seminar on Alternative Sexualities in New Delhi
- Dec** Samraksha AIDS organization formed in Bangalore



BOOKS:

Out on Main Street by Shani Mootoo

A Lotus of Another Color edited by Rakesh Ratti

Queer Looks edited by Pratibha Parmar, John Greyson, Martha Gever

Feminist Fables by Suniti Namjoshi

- SAGrrls listserv launched
- Saathi forms in New Delhi with chapters in Hyderabad and Cuttack

- May** Abraham Verghese's *My Own Country* wins Lambda award
- Jun** Pride Utsav hosted by Trikone in San Francisco
- Jun** Activist Kalpesh Oza passes away in Toronto
- Aug** Sulaiman Mohammed, founding member of Atish, passes away
- Sep** South Asia lesbians & bisexual women at Beijing Women's Conference
- Oct** Humsafar Center inaugurated in Bombay
- Oct** Trikone gets San Francisco Gay & Lesbian Historical Society Award
- Oct** Anuja Gupta testifies at tribunal on human rights violations against sexual minorities in New York
- Oct** Khuli Zaban forms in Chicago for lesbian and bisexual partners
- Nov** Trikone and SALGA get NGLTF Community Service Award

BOOKS:

Virtual Equality by Urvashi Vaid

1993

1994

- Trikone's website debuts, the first ever for a South Asian LGBT group



Stonewall

- Feb** G.A.Y (Good as You) group formed in Bangalore
- Apr** Humsafar Trust registered in India
- Jun** SALGA hosts Pride Utsav in New York
- Jun** ABVA challenges Sec. 377 of the Indian Penal Code in court after condom distribution prohibited in Tihar Jail, Delhi
- Aug** Khush-DC formed in Washington DC
- Aug** SALGA barred from India Day Parade
- Oct** MASALA formed in Boston
- Nov** Vimla Farooqui of National Federation of Indian Women asks PM to stop gay meet, claiming homosexuality is Western
- Dec** SALGA-Philadelphia formed
- Dec** Naz/Humsafar Gay Men's Conference in Bombay
- Dec** *Time* names Urvashi Vaid one of top 50 leaders under 40

FILM:

Destiny, Desire and Devotion
by Zahid Darr

BOOK:

Funny Boy
by Shyam Selvadurai

1995

1996

- Naz Foundation (India) Trust starts helplines: Sangini for women and Hamraz for men

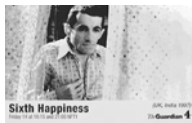


Oct

Poet **Ifti Nasim** inducted into Chicago Lesbian and Gay Hall of Fame

1997

- *Darpan* newsletter launched in Delhi
- Mahila Samanwaya Committee for sex workers in Calcutta opens membership to male sex workers
- Bandhu Social Welfare Society established in Dhaka to work on HIV/AIDS and the MSM community.



Sixth Happiness

- Jan** Counsel Club organizes Network East conference
- Aug** Copies of *Trikone* seized by Indian customs on grounds of morality
- Aug** Javid Syed, AIDS activist, included in best and brightest activists under 30 by *Advocate* magazine
- Sep** Sabrang, a mixed group, forms in Bangalore
- Sep** National Seminar on Gay Rights organized by students of National Law School in Bangalore
- Dec** First edition of *Gender Just Laws Bulletin* produced by India Centre for Human Rights and Law, Mumbai
- Dec** Meeting for Women who love Women is part of VITH National Conference of Women's Movements, Ranchi

FILMS:

Tamanna
by Paresh Rawal

Darmiyan
by Kalpana Lajmi

BOOKS:

Sex, Longing and Not Belonging – A Gay Muslim's Quest for Love and Meaning
by Badruddin Khan

- Apr** Kali becomes first hijra to stand for elections in Bihar (Judicial Reforms Party)
- Jun** Stree Sangam organizes First National Gathering of Women who Love Women in Mumbai
- Oct** Trikone-Tejas formed in Texas and hosts first public event
- Oct** *Outlook* magazine says Lucknow leads the pack in India for gay sex

FILMS:

BomGay
by Riyad Wadia
based on R. Raj Rao's poems

BOOKS:

Sakhiyani: Lesbian Desire in Ancient and Modern India
by Giti Thadani



A Mermaid Called Aida
by Riyad Wadia

Cereus Blooms at Night
by Shani Mootoo

Fire
by Deepa Mehta



The Invisibles: A Tale of Eunuchs of India
by Zia Jaffrey

1998

- Aanchal Trust forms in Bombay with helpline for women
- Womens Support Group founded in Sri Lanka

- Jan** Playwright Mahesh Dattani awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in India
- Jan** Campaign for Lesbian Rights launched in India partly as a response to the violent demonstrations against *Fire*
- Feb** *Fire* re-cleared by Central Board of Film Censors
- Feb** First edition of *Humjinsi – Resource Book on Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Rights in India* published
- Feb** Yaarian, national gay conference in Hyderabad
- May** Al-Fatiha hosts first national conference for LGBT Muslims
- May** Trikone wins New California Media award
- Jun** Sappho forms in Calcutta for lesbian and bi women
- Jun** The White Party (a gay party) in Bombay raided by police
- Jul** Counsel Club and Integration organizes Friendship Walk in Calcutta
- Aug** *Khamosh! Emergency Jari Hai! Lesbian Emergence* published by Campaign for Lesbian Rights in India
- Sep** LGBT India conducts Operation Sparsh to educate political parties on sexual minority rights
- Nov** Olava (Organized Lesbian Alliance for Visibility and Acceptance) forms in Pune

FILMS:



Chutney Popcorn
by Nisha Ganatra



Summer in My Veins
by Nishit Saran

BOOKS:

Love in a Different Climate: The Meaning of Men who have Sex with Men in India by Jeremy Seabrook



Facing Mirror (lesbian writing from India for Penguin India) edited by Ashwini Sukhtankar



Yaraana (anthology of gay writing for Penguin India) edited by Hoshang Merchant

Cinnamon Gardens a novel by Shyam Selvadurai

The Splintered Day a novel by V.K. Mina

1999



Nov

Fire released in India and theaters are vandalized

- GayBombay Internet group formed
- Khushnet.com (Nobody knows I met my boyfriend through Khushnet's personals) launched

- Feb** *Sangha Mitra*, newsletter in Kannada and English, published in Bangalore
- Apr** Sarani experimental group stages *Coming Out with Music* in Calcutta
- Oct** First International Retreat of LGBT Muslims in Boston

FILMS:

Bombay Boys
by Kaizad Custad

BOOKS:

On A Muggy Night in Mumbai
play by Mahesh Dattani explores gay life

Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India
by Serena Nanda

2000



Mar

Shabnam Mausi, a hijra, wins election in Madhya Pradesh to state assembly



Jun

Trikone organizes **DesiQ2000** conference in San Francisco

- Jan** Delhi hosts its first officially "out" lesbian and gay film festival
- Feb** Gay Bombay has meeting with parents
- Feb** SAATHIII founded in Chennai and New York as an NGO working on concerted response to HIV/AIDS epidemic in India
- Feb** Shaleen Rakesh starts regular gay column in *Around Town* magazine in New Delhi
- Mar** 172nd Law Commission Report of the Law Commission of India recommends deletion of Sec. 377
- Mar** Women's Support Group in Sri Lanka marches on International Women's Day
- May** Humsafar Trust organizes Looking into the Next Millenium conference in Mumbai
- May** Surina Khan appointed Executive Director of International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
- Jun** Sri Lankan Press Council supports Island newspaper which said rapists should be unleashed on lesbians
- Jul** Poet Ifti Nasim receives Aadeb International Award
- Sep** Dosti group launches in Toronto
- Oct** Ash Kotak's Hijra staged in London
- Nov** National Human Rights Commission in India recommend reformulating Sec 377 to legalize sexual activity between consenting adults

FILM:

Bombay Eunuchs
directors
Alexandra Shiva,
Sean McDonald an
Michelle Gucovsky

BOOKS:

Ek Madhav Baug
play by Chetan Datar



Same Sex Love in India – Readings from Literature and History
by Ruth Vanita and **Saleem Kidwai**

2001

- Blue Diamond Society, Nepal's only organization for sexual minorities, founded
- *Journal of Homosexuality's* issue on queer Asian cinema includes several articles on Indian cinema
- Sholay Productions in New Yorks starts the popular Desilicious parties
- *Lakshyaa*, first Gujarati gay magazine, comes out

- May** Companions on a Journey and Womens Support Group win Felipa DeSouza award from IGLHRC
- May** Delhi hosts India's first public gay wedding for Vijay and Naseem
- May** Milan Project (Naz India) files case with National Human Rights Commission against psychiatric abuse of a homosexual patient subjected to aversion therapy
- Jun** *Trikone* wins South Asian Journalists Association award
- Jul** Four activists of Naz Foundation International arrested in Lucknow under Sec. 377 in "gay area"; Naz and Bharosa offices raided
- Aug** Trikone organizes first ever QFilmistan film festival in San Francisco
- Aug** *Advocate* magazine names Faisal Alam, founder of Al Fatiha, as a queer trendbreaker
- Oct** Naz Foundation (India) Trust awarded 2001 Commonwealth Award for Action on HIV/AIDS
- Dec** Naz Foundation files petition in Delhi High Court challenging constitutional validity of Sec. 377
- Dec** Poet Agha Shahid Ali succumbs to brain cancer

FILMS:

For Straights Only
by Vismita Gupta-Smith

BOOKS:

Queering India
edited by Ruth Vanita

2002

Aug
Nepal's **Blue Diamond Society**
hosts Gaijatra Pride festival

2003

Aug
Openly gay painter
Bhupen Khakkar passes away

Oct
Larzish, 1st International Film Festival
of Sexuality and Gender Plurality in
Mumbai

Dec
Filmmaker **Riyad Wadia** passes away
in Mumbai

- May** Nepal hosts first drag beauty contest
Jun Black and White, first GLBT AIDS charity event in Colombo
Jun Rainbow Walk, gay Pride march in Kolkata
Aug QFilmistan, the sequel, in San Francisco
Aug Openly lesbian Kaashish Chopra wins Miss Congeniality
at Miss India USA

BOOKS:

Trouble with Islam by Irshad Manji
(results in death threats)

The Boyfriend a novel by R. Raj Rao

Desilicious by Masala Trois
Collective



Aug
Hijra Habba festival organized in Bangalore

- Mar** Police harassment of Sangama organization in Bangalore
Apr Filmmaker Nishit Saran killed in car accident in New Delhi
Apr Ashok Pillai, president of Indian Network of People Living with
HIV/AIDS, passes away
Sep Lovers Geethalakshmi and Sumathi commit suicide in Tamilnadu
Oct First ILGA summit in India organized by Humsafar Trust & Aanchal
Oct Sahayatrika group set up in Thiruvanthapuram, Kerala to tackle
increasing lesbian suicides
Dec Fashion designer Wendell Rodricks marries partner Jerome in Goa

FILMS:

Flying With One Wing
a film by Ashok Handagama about a woman
who lives as a man released in Sri Lanka

BOOKS:

Ode to Lata
a novel by Ghalib
Shiraz Dhalla



Mango Souffle
directed by Mahesh Dattani
film version of *Muggy Night*

Gulabi Aina
by Sridhar Rangayan
a drag queen movie

Kaashish
by Sangini

*The Man who Was
a Woman and
Other Queer Tales
from Hindu Lore*
by Devdutt
Pattanaik

2004

May
Mala & Vega sue Washington state
for the right to marry

- Jan** Blue Diamond Society in Nepal launches weekly newspaper
Jan Blue Diamond Society, Nepal wins 2004 Utopia Award
Mar Onir's award-winning film *My Brother Nikhil*, about a gay
swimmer and AIDS, releases in India
May Ismail Merchant passes away
Jul First Sri Lankan Pride Celebration in Colombo
Jul Pegasus, gay music video by Bangla band Cactus, airs on TV
Aug Protesters march in Mumbai against Sec. 377
Oct Purported "first" same-sex marriage in Pakistan between
Liaquat Ali and Markeen in Khyber region

FILMS:

My Brother Nikhil
by Onir

Shabnam Mousi
by Yogesh Bhardwaj

BOOKS:

*Because I Have a Voice
- Queer Politics in India*
edited by Arvind Narrain
and Gautam Bhan

*Impossible Desires - Queer Diasporas
and South Asian Public Cultures*
by Gayatri Gopinath



**Love's Rite
- Same-Sex Marriage
in India and the West**
by Ruth Vanita

2005

- Apr** Humsafar opens first Indian gay & lesbian drop-in center in Mumbai
Apr Rosanna Flamer-Caldera re-elected as Co-Secretary General of the
International Lesbian and Gay Association
Jun Equal Ground, an LGBTIQ organization, forms in Sri Lanka
Aug Theaters vandalized in India over screening of *Girlfriends*
Aug Hijra activist Famila dies in Bangalore
Aug Pushkin Chandra and Kuldeep, gay men, killed in Delhi
Aug 39 gays arrested in Nepal on grounds of "disturbing society"
Sep Delhi High Court dismisses Naz India's public interest litigation
petition seeking repeal of Sec.377

FILMS:

The Journey by Ligy Pullapally

Touch of Pink by Ian Iqbal Rashid

Yours Emotionally by Sridhar Rangayan

The Bath by Sachin Kundalkar

Happy Hookers by Ashish Sawhney

BOOKS:

Madras on Rainy Days by Samina Ali

*Red Threads: The South Asian Queer
Connection in Photographs*
by Poulomi Desai and Parminder
Sekhon

Swimming in the Monsoon Sea
by Shyam Selvadurai

Babyji by Abha Dawesar

2006

- Jan** Four men arrested in Lucknow for operating
an Internet "gay racket" and "unnatural sex"
Jan Rosanna Flamer-Caldera of Sri Lanka wins 2005 Utopia Award
Mar Men Community Development Society for homosexuals
formed in Chennai
Apr NACO estimates 5.2 million people living in India with HIV/AIDS
Apr The Dalai Lama expresses concern at violence
against LGBT people and urges human rights for all
May Abha Dawesar's *Babyji* wins Stonewall Award