

## TCIF holds Trucker Utsav in Jalandhar

FW BUREAU

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By D. S. SINGH

In an effort to acknowledge the contribution of truckers in our everyday lives, TCI Foundation (TCIF), the social arm of Transport Corporation of India Ltd, an integrated supply chain and logistics solutions provider, organised a "Trucker's Utsav" at Khushi Clinic, Transport Nagar here today.

The event was also organised nationwide at 73 trans-shipment locations across the country including Jalandhar.

The activity was organised as part of the events held to observe the World AIDS Day under the National AIDS prevention program among long distance truck drivers and helpers which is an endeavour to arrest the spread of AIDS amongst the trucking community, supported by National AIDS Control Organisation.

'Trucker's Utsav', an infotainment event, forms one of the core activities of national pro-

gramme as it acts as catalyst for communicating behaviour change messages to sizable groups in a fun, peer-supportive context. This is done in an informal setting through the medium of concert, street plays, song & dance, games quizzes and special award for audience participation.

Speaking on the initiative, Dr Indra R Singh, Project Director, TCIF, said, "Being the leading logistics company in India we think it is our responsibility to make life better for the truckers who are the lifeline for the sector. The Trucker's Utsav is an annual feature of TCIF that provides a platform to bring thousands of truckers together to spread out the message on prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases in an interesting, entertaining and stimulating way. We realise that owing to the nature of the work of the truckers, they are highly vulnerable to AIDS and other related diseases."

There are about 5 million

truckers in India, who travel across 3.3 million kilometres of India's road network, out of which an estimated 2 million truckers travel on long distance routes with an average of 8000-10000 km on an average in a month. The overall prevalence of HIV/AIDS among long-distance truckers has been reported to be 4.6% which is 12 times higher than the prevalence among men in general population.

Truckers play an important role in keeping the wheels of the commerce spinning while generating profits to the industry. At the same time, these truckers face a difficult life. There is job insecurity, rigorous working conditions and dangers around every bend. In addition, they exist without any respect from the society. It is therefore not rare that many turn to alcohol, drugs and resort to unsafe commercial sex to seek relief out of their itinerant and monotonous life, which places them at risk for STIs and HIV/AIDS. ◆