

MSM and HIV/AIDS in Nepal

Sunil B Pant
Blue Diamond
Society





MSM in Nepal

Meti

A self-identified label used by feminized cross dressing males who's sexual partner is/are usually men.

Ta/ Panthi/Giryala''Real'' Men

A label given by Metis to “real” men who sexually penetrate whether this be a woman or another Meti.

Dohori

A label given by Metis to other males who are sexually penetrated and also penetrate other males, and whose public behavior is normatively masculine.



Present situation of MSM in Nepal

- Violence against MSM
- Law and policy around MSM
- HIV prevalence
- MSM programs
- Targets achieved so far
- Gaps
- Recommendations

BDS-CREPHA-SACT- FHI/Nepal: Study of 350 MSM in Kathmandu

- More than 57% of the MSW and 8% MSM have faced some kind of violence in the past 12 months
- More than 37% MSW and 3% MSM were raped and beaten in the last 12 months.
- 5% HIV prevalence amongst MSW and 4% amongst MSM in Kathmandu valley

Freedom From Torture?

- Many field staff of BDS are threatened not to conduct HIV/AIDS awareness raising and safer sex education programs. They are also frequently arrested by police for a few hours or overnight and often beaten or blackmailed whenever they have been found carrying condoms.
- Metis and gay men have been subjected to harassment, humiliation and abuse by the police, including verbal, physical, and sexual assault, including rape

The violence against Gay-MSM



- 6th December 2003, Two Metis (Jayabhadur and Nepti) were raped, beaten and left to die by Armed Police

In 6th August 2004, attempted murder of a Meti after rape: Jaya



Policemen attacked a group of Metis on the Nepali New Year's Eve 2062



Outreach educators and Peer educators are attacked by police



Civil Code, Supreme Court and Blue Diamond Society

- Nepal's Civil Code talks about “unnatural sex” under the chapter “Bestiality” (having sex with animal is unnatural) but it doesn't specify what is natural and unnatural sex between humans
- Last July 2004, a private lawyer filed a case against the government in the Supreme Court of Nepal accusing the government of being silent and doing nothing against the openly homosexual activities (i.e. Blue Diamond Society's HIV and human rights program for LGBT) and demanded to issue an order to close down Blue Diamond Society.

Civil Code...

- The Supreme Court has asked the Home Ministry why openly homosexual activities shouldn't be banned?
- The Home Ministry responded saying there is no law against homosexuality, so it can't ban Blue Diamond Society and its activities.
- The hearing dates has been differed many times already

Arbitrary detention

- On August 9 2004, 39 members of Blue Diamond Society were arrested arbitrarily and kept in prison for 13 days without any charge. Later on they were released on bail for the charge of public nuisance





BDS activities To address MSM issues

The National Action Plan 2006-2011 recognizes MSM as a Most at risk group. This plan proposes a comprehensive approach in terms of HIV/AIDS intervention in which BDS is a dominant stakeholder. In relation to the action plan BDS is implementing the following-

- HIV and STI Prevention
- Care and support, counseling
- Advocacy
- Networking
- Sexual Health Rights

Apart from the National Action Plan BDS is also working on

- Human Rights: Working with police and violence



Working with MSM in Nepal since 2001

| Category | Quantity |
|---|-----------------|
| MSM contacted Since 2001 (Through Outreach work) | 50028 |
| Condoms distributed | 647532 |
| BCC materials distributed | 29749 |
| MSM trained on HIV | 1616 |
| MSM PLWHA contacted since 2005 | 350 |
| MSM PLWHA on ARV | 11 |
| MSM PLWHA received hospice service | 42 |
| Article written in local press about BDS work | 500 |



Gaps on MSM HIV/AIDS intervention

- DIC and outreach services are reached only to 7 cities and more than 15 cities has no MSM HIV/AIDS program
- The local government is still unfriendly with MSM issues thus difficult to access condoms from the local government for MSM
- Lubricant is not available in the country since Population Services International stopped the lubricant social marketing program in Nepal.



Gaps...

- Not enough research on MSM and HIV/AIDS
- Limited treatment available in the country
- Only two care, support and hospice for MSM in Nepal
- Only very limited funding goes to MSM compare to other groups

Recommendations

- Recognized homosexuality in a positive manner legally, with legal provision for male rape
- Publicize and promote awareness of rights protection and how to use them
- More resource for MSM HIV/AIDS and Human Rights issues
- Ensure legal representation/remedies are economically and practically accessible to all MSM; and
- Sensitize local government and district aids programs on MSM issues and ensure their cooperation.