

MSM and HIV/AIDS in South Asia

Naz Foundation International

*providing technical, financial and institutional support to
MSM collectivities, groups, and networks in South Asia to
empower them to develop self-help sexual health services*

South Asia

Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan

MSM **Men Who Have Sex With Men**

Males Who Have Sex With Males

MMSB **Male To Male Sexual Behaviours**

The term men who have sex with men ignores the different cultural and social constructions of adulthood, manhood, and differing gendered male identities.

It is often treated an exclusive group, a “target group” rather than an inclusive behavioural framework.

It should mean any male who has a sexual encounter with another male, whether exclusively, regularly, frequently, or infrequently, for whatever reason

Sexual Labeling - MSM 1

Hijra

A self-identified term used by males who define themselves as “not-men/not women” but as a “third gender”. Hijras cross-dress publicly and privately and are a part of a social, religious and cultural community. Ritual castration is part of the hijra identity. Sex with men is common. They also have their own language, known as ulti.

Kothi/Zenana

A self-identified label used by feminised males who have sex with men, and used their feminine behaviours in public spaces to attract men for sex. They usually are sexually penetrated. However, many kothis will also be married to women and have children in a culture with “compulsory heterosexuality”.

Sexual Labeling - MSM 2

Panthis/Giryala/”Real” Men

A label given by kothis/hijras to “real” men who sexually penetrate whether this be a woman or another male. Panthis do not have a label for themselves other than MAN. Panthis may have sex with kothis/hijras because they like having sex with males, or they like having anal sex, or they want “semen discharge” at that moment. Called “body heat” in the region.

Do-Paratha/Chavas/Double-Decker/AC-DC/Dublis

A label given by kothis to other males who are sexually penetrated and also penetrate other males, and whose public behaviour is normatively masculine. Most of these males do not have a label for themselves. Some will act like kothis in public spaces to access panthis.

MALE-TO-MALE SEX

| city | population | sample size | public sites | Reported sex partners in one month |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Hyderabad India | 5,000,000 | 200 | 102+ | 8100 |
| Sylhet Bangladesh | 700,000 | 200 | 28+ | 8800 |

MALE-TO-MALE SEX

- 20% of men in one rural area have male-to-male sex
- 25% of men in a Karachi prison had male-to-male sex
- 40% of men living in a Karachi squatter settlement had male-to-male sex
- A survey amongst truck drivers from central Karachi reported:
 - 76% visited female commercial sex workers
 - 72% has sex with other males

From AIDS Analysis Asia, July 1996

WHO IS INVOLVED IN MALE TO MALE SEX?

THE KOTHI RESPONSE? ANY MAN!

To kothis these were not homosexuals
Only “real men” who penetrate them

Also street males, hotel staff, rickshaw
drivers, truck drivers, taxi driver, male
prisoners, migrant workers, construction
labourers.....

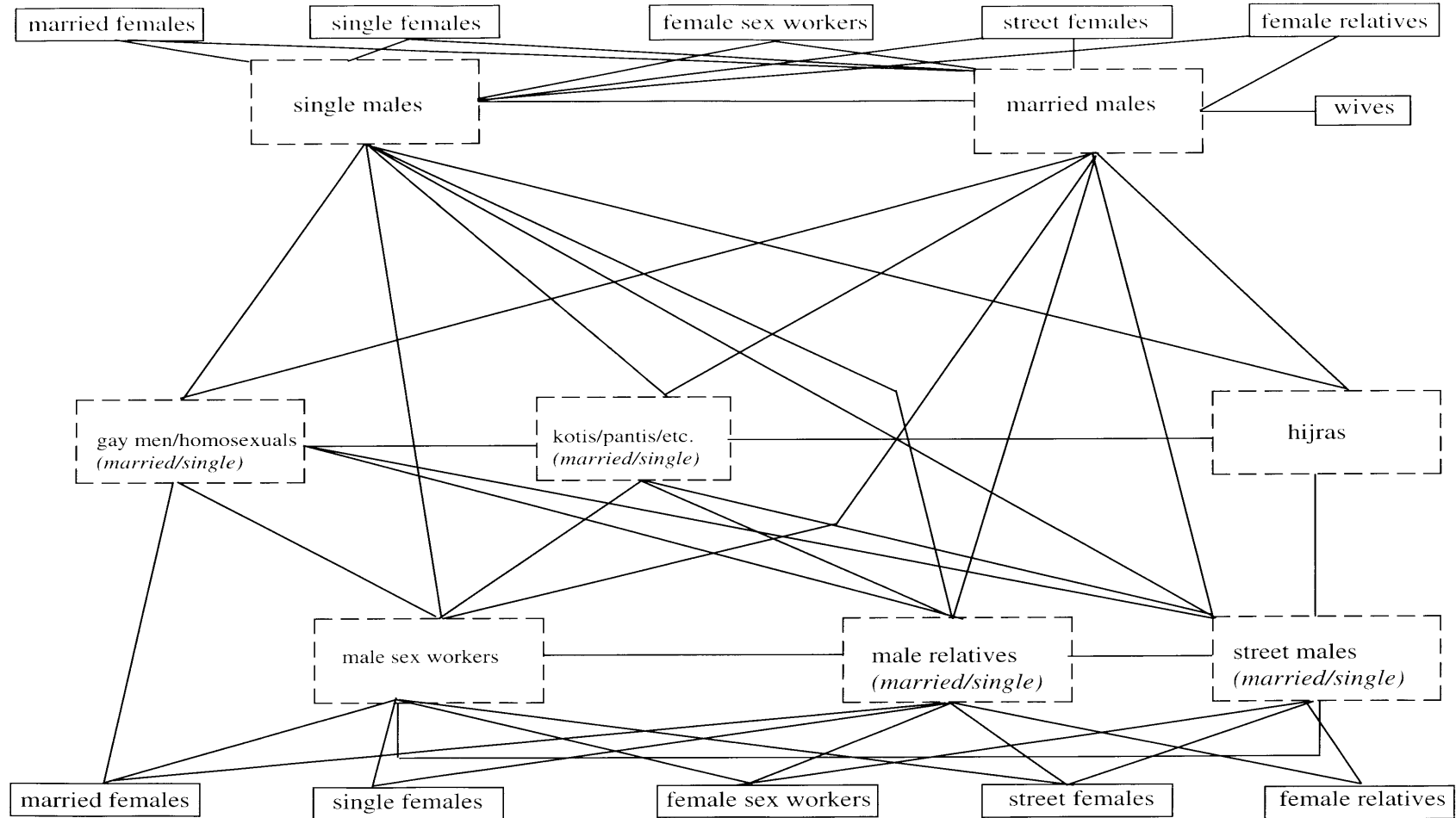
WHY DO MALES HAVE SEX WITH MALES?

- Desire for other males
- Pleasure from discharge
- Females don't do anal/oral sex
- Males are easier to access
- Anus is tighter than vagina
- Nobody is suspicious if we mix with other males
- Females difficult to access
- For play and/or curiosity
- Meeting physical needs
- Girls virginity must be protected

WHY DO MALES HAVE SEX WITH MALES?

- No marriage involvement
- Making money
- Respect for elders
- Getting “hot”
- No chance to be friendly with girls
- Females not available
- No chance of making a boy pregnant
- No financial involvement
- Living with other males
- Sharing beds
- Maintaining chastity
- Anal sex with males is safer than vaginal sex

mapping male-to-male sex in South Asia



SEXUAL HEALTH

a WHO definition

*the integration of physical, emotional,
intellectual and social aspects of sexuality in a
way that positively
enriches and promotes personality,
communication and love*

what we have done since 1997

| | |
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| Regional Liaison Office established | Lucknow, India, 2000 |
| Develop new MSM sexual health projects | 22 MSM sexual health projects developed, reaching over 500,000 MSM |
| Recruit and train MSM trainers/consultants | 28 MSM trainers from the region trained and regional trainers network developed |
| Provide technical assistance and support to MSM partner projects | 22 projects receiving on-going technical assistance |
| Training programmes conducted | 112 programmes conducted: over 2200 MSM trained |
| BCC resources developed | 5 education leaflets: 8 languages HIV-The Facts Condom Use STDs Female Partners of MSM Legal Rights 8 Briefing Papers 5 Handbooks 3 Training manuals 24 editions of Pukaar distributed |
| Range of research conducted | 10 situational assessments conducted: 2000 MSM interviewed in a range of cities across south Asia Human rights and MSM study in Bangladesh Masculinities and sexualities among male adolescents |
| Information and Resource Centre for MSM | Established in 2001 in Regional Office |