

Naz Foundation International

*providing technical, financial and institutional support
to MSM sexual health interventions, collectivities,
groups and networks in Asia*

MSM AND HIV/AIDS IN SOUTH ASIA



MSM **Men Who Have Sex With Men**
Males Who Have Sex With Males

MMSB **Male To Male Sexual Behaviour**

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 as an identity term, an exclusive 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

Working with MSM in South Asia

January - December 2001

Category	Quantity
MSM contacted	167,501
condoms distributed	655,758
STI referrals	29,831
BCC materials distributed	533,670
MSM counseled	23,927
drop-in service users	83,359

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.

SOCIO-CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS 1

- Marriage is considered a social, religious and family obligation and is socially compulsory
- To remain unmarried is often considered aberrant and can bring shame to the family
- Male adulthood is often conferred upon marriage, while female adulthood upon the production of a son
- Sex with one's wife is often seen as a duty while some married women see sex with their husbands as work

SOCIO-CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS 2

- Marital sex is seen as reproductive and a source of discharge and pleasure for the husband
- Women are considered as vessels of male honour
- A concept of *maasti* exists which means sex as play - not real - and is used to cover much of male to male sex

SOCIO-CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS 3

- A husband often cannot ask his wife to do oral or anal sex as this would dishonour her as the mother of his children
- Here what matters is the sexual pleasure of the man, not the woman
- Women are usually socially policed through gender segregation, female virginity and male honour

SOCIO-CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS 4

- While male virginity is an ideal state prior to marriage, male sexual “needs” are tolerated and are expressed through the concept of “body heat” and “discharge”
- South Asian cultures are homosocial and homoaffectionalist, and with the policing of women, males are easier to access and less problematic particularly in a gendered framework

MALE-TO-MALE SEX 1

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 2

- 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 1?

- ❖ Desire for other males
- ❖ Pleasure from discharge
- ❖ Females don't do anal 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

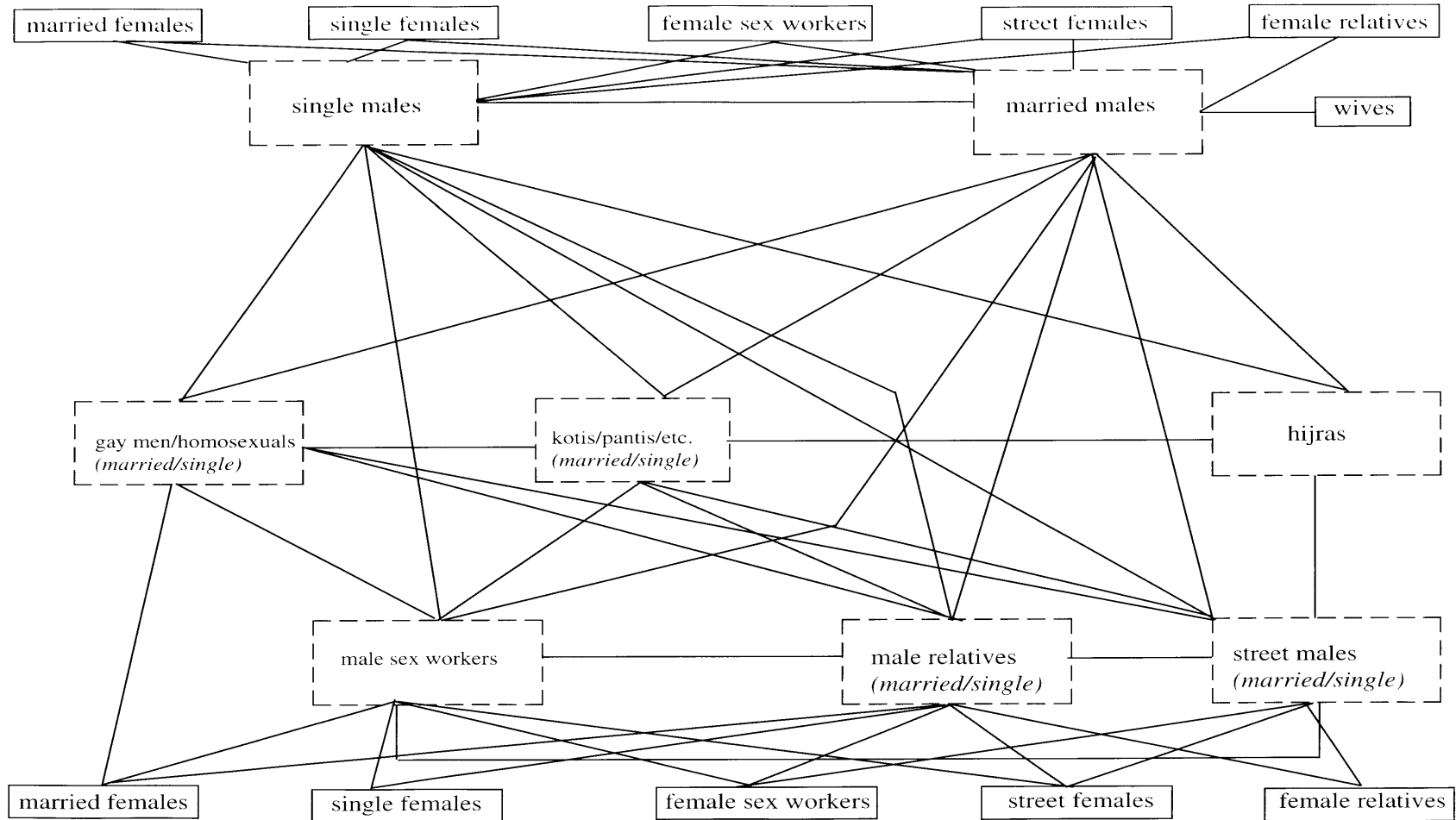
WHY DO MALES HAVE SEX WITH MALES 2?

- ❖ 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

WHY DO MALES HAVE SEX WITH FEMALES?

- ❖ Desire for sex with females
- ❖ To have children
- ❖ Like vaginal sex
- ❖ More socially acceptable
- ❖ Marriage is compulsory
- ❖ Friends do it
- ❖ More manly
- ❖ Socially acceptable

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*

NFI Services

- ✓ Technical assistance programme for MSM HIV / AIDS interventions
- ✓ Regional MSM Training and Resource Centre
- ✓ Regional Network of MSM Trainers / Consultants
- ✓ Masculinities and sexualities research
- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ MSM Partnership Programme
- ✓ BCC Resource Development