

Faith, cultures and sexualites

**A pilot study on the impact of Islamic beliefs,
traditions and customs on Muslims males who
have sex with other males**

**Study conducted by Naz Foundation International, 2005
for the International HIV/AIDS Alliance**

Advocacy, policy and support on male sexualities

Key Findings

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The primary framework of male-to-male in South Asia is highly gendered represented by man/not-man dynamic.

Thus those who self-identify with a feminised identities (kothis, hijras) do not see themselves as men who have sex with men, but as ‘not-men’ who have sex with men. At the same time their sexual partners do not see themselves as men having sex with men, but as men having sex with ‘not-men’. These men do not identify with their sexual practices, but rather with their manliness - as men.

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This small study focused on those males who self-identify as kothi (a feminised identity) and who are practising Muslims.

Number of study participants

City	FGD participants	Interviews
Hyderabad	10	5
Lucknow	7	5
New Delhi	13	5
Dhaka	11	5

Key themes and questions

- **What knowledge does one have regarding Islam**
- **What does Islam say about masculinity and sexuality?**
- **What impact does one's religious beliefs have on one's gender/sexual identity?**
- **What are the psychological implications of these teachings and beliefs on the sexual self?**
- **What are the religious, family and cultural expectations upon the Muslim individual?**

Methodology

Literature review conducted and report produced

**Focus Group Discussions with Muslim identified kothis identified by
study partners**

Structured interviews

Total number of participants: 61

Study partners: 4

Data analysis was done through thematic approaches

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Socio-Economic Status

Age:	18 - 20	8
	21 - 30	37
	31 - 40	16

Education:	No schooling	9
	1 - 4 years	8
	5 - 10 years	26
	more than 10 years	18

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Socio-Economic Status

Employed:	Yes	49
	No	12

Sex work	14
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Monthly income:	below 2000 Tk/Rps	22
	2001-3000	24
	3000-5000	13
	more than 5000	1

2000Tk/Rps = \$35/\$45

Marital Status:	Yes	15
	No	46

Marital status is more of an indicator of age than of desire.

Knowledge and Practice of Islam

All respondents were practising Muslims

- **59/61 respondents stated that Islam was very important in their lives**
- **35/61 respondents reported doing namaz at least once a week**
- **4/61 respondents reported doing namaz five times a day**
- **36/61 respondents reported going to the mosque every Friday for prayers**

Knowledge and Practice of Islam

All respondents were practising Muslims

- **38/61 respondents had read the Quran - 30 in Arabic and 8 in the vernacular**

- **Source of knowledge of Islam**

Mother 45/61

Father 39/61

religious teacher 20/61