

Advocacy, policy and support on male sexualities

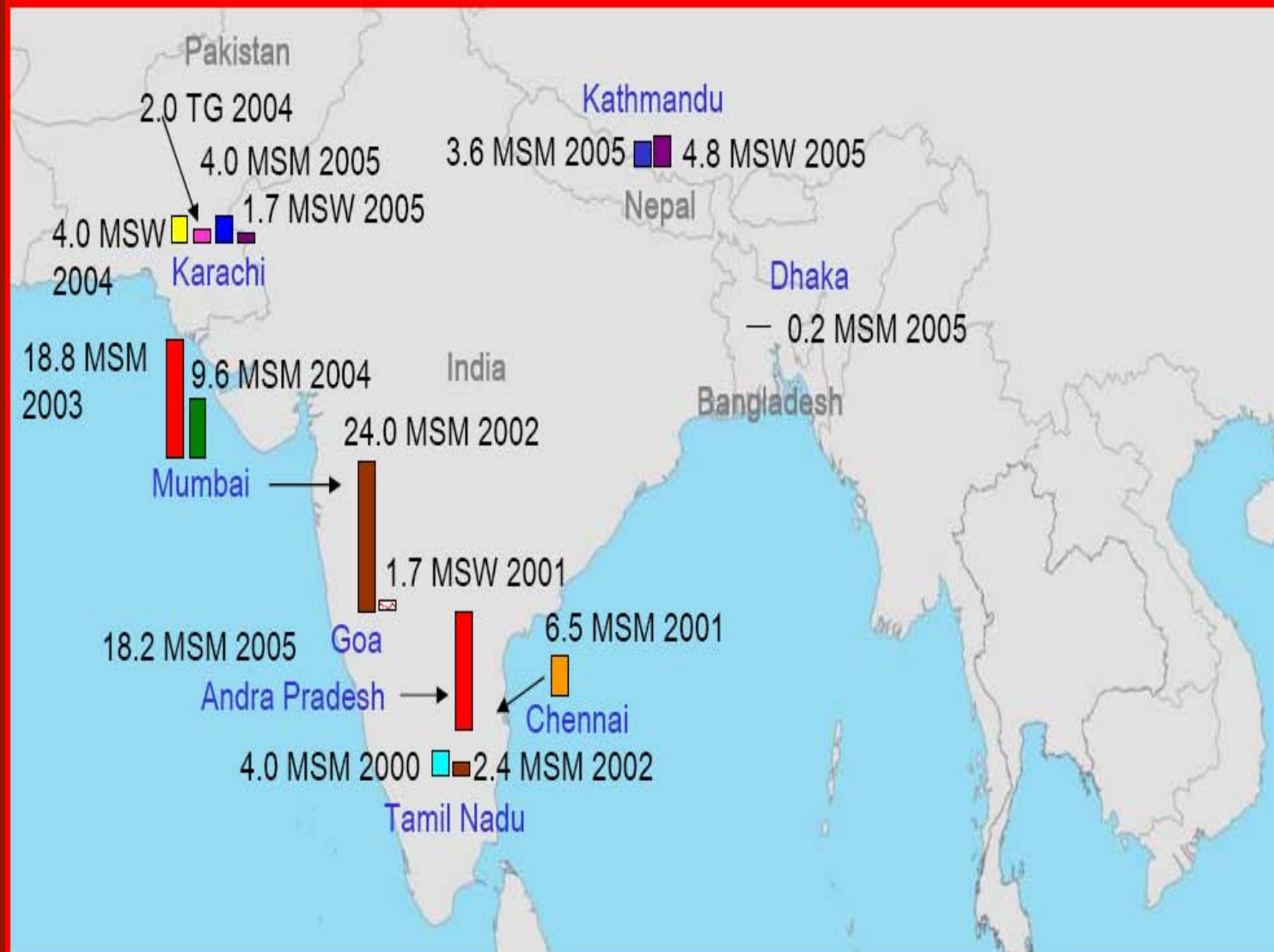
Why is MSM and sexual diversity important in the response to HIV?

**Media training and advocacy workshop on MSM, sexual diversity and human
rights**

24-26 November 2009, Sri Lanka



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Why work with MSM and HIV prevention, care and support?

Because it is the right thing to do:

- **on humanitarian grounds;**
- **epidemiologically, and;**
- **from a public health perspective**

Males who have sex with males, whether their self-identity is linked to their same-sex behaviour or not, have the right to be:

- **free from violence and harassment;**
- **treated with dignity and respect;**
- **treated as full citizens in their country;**
- **free from HIV and AIDS**

and MSM who already are infected with HIV have the right to access appropriate care and treatment equally with everyone, regardless of how the virus was transmitted to them.

What do we mean by MSM and sexual diversity

MSM: Usually known as men who have sex with men

BUT

What do we mean by the word “MEN” and the word “SEX”?



Male-to-male sexual frameworks

Gendered

Age

Sexual orientation

Institutional

Masti and discharge

Some South Asian terms

Afghanistan	Ezak, Murat, Baccha Baresh, zenana
Bangladesh	Kothi, Hijra, Panthi, Do-paratha
India	Kothi, Hijra, Panthi, AC/DC, Double-Decker
Nepal	Meti, Ta
Pakistan	Zenana, Hijra, Mailashia, Chawa
	Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

On the margins

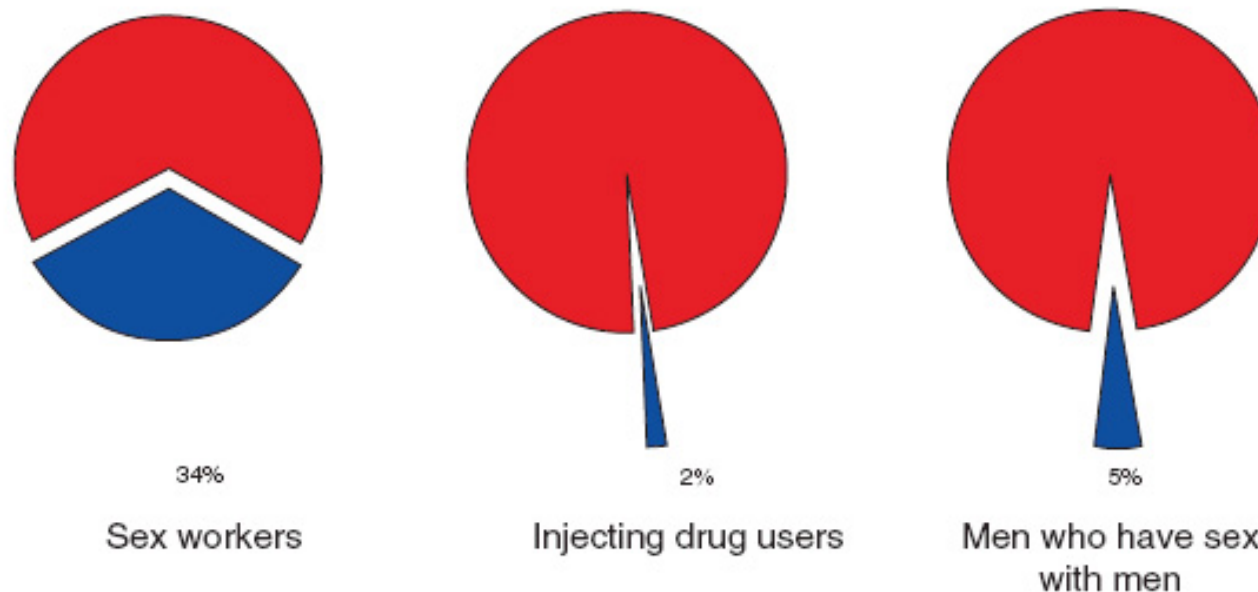
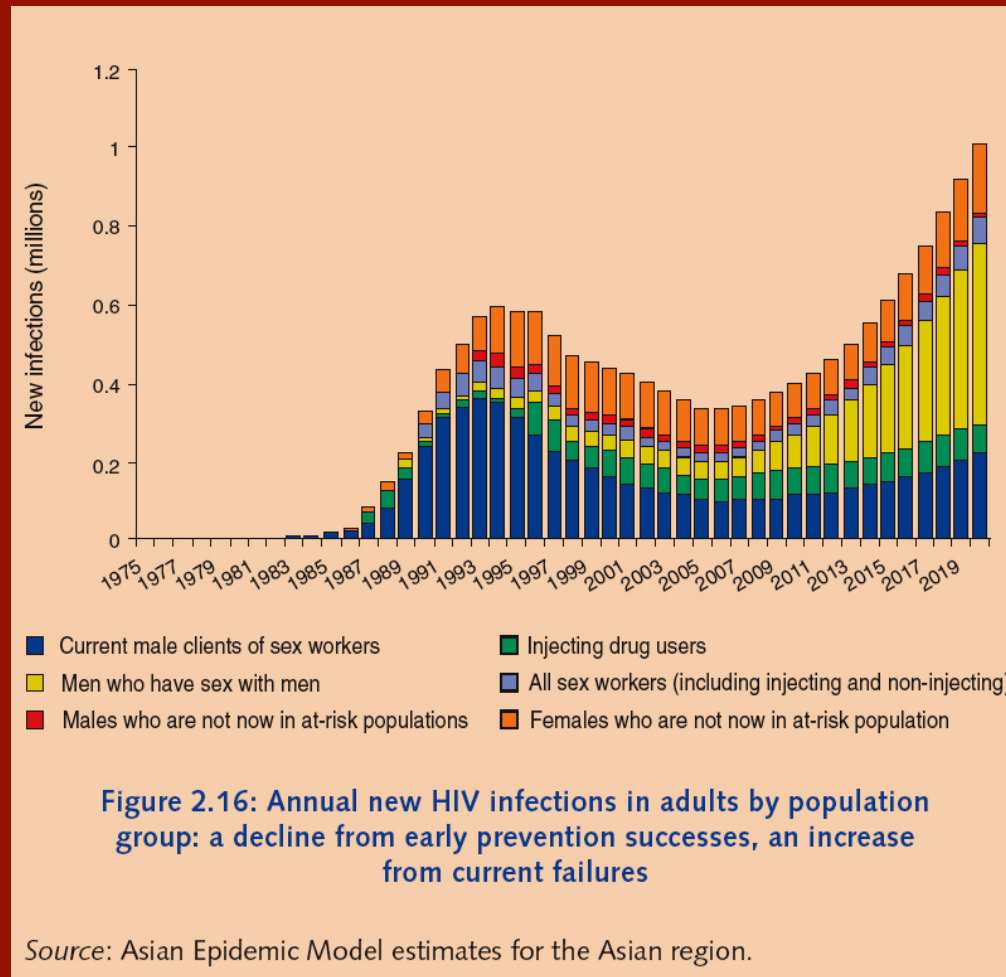


Figure 5.3: Coverage of most-at-risk populations by HIV prevention services in Asia, 2005

Source: J. Stover and M. Fahnestock (2006), *Coverage of Selected Services for HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care and Treatment in Low- and Middle-Income Countries in 2005*, Washington, DC: Constella Futures, POLICY Project.

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On the margins



Issues

- **Invisibility and denial**
- **Stigma, discrimination and social exclusion**
- **Violence, abuse and rape**
- **Illegality**
- **Self-stigmatisation, low self-esteem and disempowerment**
- **Conflict in state policies**
- **Low service coverage**



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- **Denial of social justice and human rights**
- **Low to non-existent financial and social investment in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support**
- **Apart from possibly infecting each other through high-risk activities, many MSM are also married, and/or have sex with other females.**

What would the psychological and social experience be of a person who experiences a major conflict between what these social, religious and cultural expectations and roles he is expected to express and perform, and his own sense of self?

- **Disempowerment**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Low self-worth**

Unless we address the social, cultural, judicial and legal impediments to effective HIV/AIDS and sexual health interventions among MSM, and deal effectively with stigma, discrimination, masculine violence, and social exclusion, the “fight against AIDS” could be lost.



For many MSM, silence still means death

But we can make a difference!

Effective responses to HIV occur when those most affected are directly engaged in the response.

- Community development and empowerment**
- Reduce risks and vulnerabilities**
- Address psychosocial issues**
- Create an enabling environment**

The SAMAN Project

Community strengthening, reducing vulnerability, and minimising risk of the further spread of HIV for men who have sex with men and transgender populations in South Asia

A South Asia multi-country Global Fund round 9 proposal



Countries involved

- 1. Afghanistan**
- 2. Bangladesh**
- 3. Bhutan**
- 4. India**
- 5. Nepal**
- 6. Pakistan**
- 7. Sri Lanka**

Goal

To reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS on men who have sex with men (MSM), and transgender populations (TG), in South Asia*

***We use the term South Asia here to cover the seven countries specifically addressed in this proposal**

Objectives

- 1. To increase capacity and improve the delivery of HIV related services for MSM and TG in South Asian countries**
- 2. To improve the policy environment with regard to MSM, TG, and HIV related issues in South Asian countries**
- 3. To improve strategic knowledge on MSM, TG, and HIV related issues in South Asian countries**

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