

Explanation of MSM sub-groups

Please refer to the Humsafar MSM circle. The explanation is as follows for each sub-group.

The MSM sub-groups on top are all classified around gender. The MSM sub-groups at the bottom are all sub-groups around sexual behaviors. The ones of the left are MSM sub-groups that are vulnerable due to their workplace situations while the ones on the right are bisexual categories of bridge populations.

Explanation for each sub-group.

The large bubble on the top is the general umbrella category of 'transgender'. These groups are basically men who cross dress and are involved with gender self-allocation. The categories within are 'akwa' and 'nirwaan' hijras. Akwa means 'in preparation for castration after rites between guru and chela'. These hijras are biological males who cross dress or wear male attire (khada-kothis) and have joined hijra 'gharanas' by leaving their biological families. They are also mostly asked to leave their biological families because of societal pressure.

The 'Nirwaan' hijras are ritually castrated men who are then part of ritual 'houses' called 'gharanas'. This group is at highest risk to HIV/AIDS.

Jogtas are Hindu hijras who are male temple prostitutes. They are mostly male children dedicated to a goddess and then ritually cross-dress for religious purposes. They require different strategies in HIV/AIDS and STI intervention.

The sub-groups classified below in the MSM circle are mostly self-identified behaviorally homosexual men. Among them, are Indian identified 'kothis', allegedly effeminate men who are penetrated but this is proved wrong as there is a cross-over. They are not only penetrating other men (dhoru-kothis) or also married effeminate men (pav-bata-wali-kothi). The male partners of kothis are named 'panthis', who happen to be identified as such *by the kothi* and nobody else. These are very fluid identities that are not inflexible.

The sub-groups on the left are sub-populations who are vulnerable due to their occupations/profession. Thus male film extras are vulnerable for the same reason as their female counterparts. They are into 'survival sex' as work is intermittent and irregular and they may have to offer sex in exchange for work. Similarly, beer drinkers pick up beer-parlor boys after bars close, for sex. This vulnerability is also there among gym-boys, room boys, and truck cleaner boys.

Most Indian cities have 'maalish-wallahs' who also offer sex for a little more than the cost of a regular massage. This is mostly masturbation or other forms of sexual gratification. Also many health club masseurs, instructors also may offer sex in exchange for money.

Many such groups exist in Indian cities and it requires peer leaders from these groups to identify the groups that are vulnerable to STIs and HIV/AIDS.

The groups who are supposed to be bisexual may be divided into two – self-identified bisexual men and behaviorally bisexual men. The second category may be migrant labor, jail inmates, remand home in-mates, and police personnel in male quarters, hostels, orphanages etc. Here the question is migrant patterns and the movement of men across state and national boundaries. Thus Nepali men in Mumbai, Bihari/UP migrant labor in dormitory situations, truckers and construction teams of workers have all to be covered under this category.

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