Transgender women and HIV: an Indian perspective

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Hijra, Kinnar, Jogta, Jogappa, Jogti, Aravani, Thirunangai

Ardhanarishvara
image from deviantart.com

Yuvanashva
cover art of Devdutt Pattnaik’s “The Pregnant King”

Mayana Kollai
photography by Candace Feit for The New York Times
Transgender women in India today

Findings from the 2011 census: total population 1.2 billion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Transgender women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number (%)</td>
<td>487,803 (0.04)</td>
<td>62,37,24,248 (51.5)</td>
<td>58,64,69,174 (48.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy (%)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural distribution (%)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working (%)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://censusindia.gov.in/
HIV in India

Estimated number of people living with HIV, new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, 2000-2015

HIV in India

HIV prevalence among sentinel populations, HSS reports 2008 - 2015

HIV in transgendered women

- 84% experienced sexual or physical violence
- 43% moderate to severe depression
- 37% frequent alcohol use
- 28% mistrust medical establishment
- 15% no access to ARV


The People Living with HIV stigma index: A Report from India (2010)
HIV risk behavior

Proportion of transgender people who sold sex or had sex with clients, countries where data is available, 2009-2014

HIV risk behavior

Proportion of transgender people who reported consistent condom use with casual partners, 2009-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% last month</th>
<th>% last six months</th>
<th>% last year</th>
<th>% undefined period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Dhaka
** Port Moresby

Characteristics of HIV-infected transgendered women in Pune

• Large public sector teaching hospital

• 90 miles southeast from Mumbai

• National AIDS Control Organization of India site

• ART center has about 60,000 HIV-infected registered individuals
• **Database used:** Observational programmatic database, collected under provisions of the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) of India

• **Period:** January 2006—December 2014

• **Inclusion criteria:** Self-identified HIV–infected transgendered women ≥ 18 years of age, registered at the ART center

• **Analytical techniques:** Descriptive analysis using medians, proportions

• **Characteristics assessed:** Demographic (Age, Mode of HIV acquisition, marital status, ART status at registration); Clinical (CD4 counts, WHO disease stage); Treatment outcomes (Initiation of TB treatment, Loss to follow up, death)
129 transgendered women were registered from 2006-2014 out of a total 55,561 HIV-infected individuals.
Loss to Follow Up

- Cis-gender women: 5.5%
- Men: 8%
- Transgender women: 11.6%

National average: 7%

Deaths

- Cis-gender women: 6.8%
- Men: 12.3%
- Transgender women: 7.8%
Where are the HIV-infected transgendered women?

- Estimated number of transgendered women in Maharashtra: 41000
- Estimated number of transgendered women with HIV: 7790
- Estimated number of transgendered women in Pune: 1020
- Estimated number of transgendered women with HIV: 200
- Number registered in HIV center: 126
Initiatives for TG women in India

• National AIDS Control Program Phase IV – targeted interventions
• Pehchan funded by the Global Fund – rights based collectivization, community involvement, self efficacy
• Recognition as the third gender by the Indian Supreme Court in 2014
Conclusion

- Much needs to be done in improving linkage to and retention in care among transgendered women in India
- Legal recognition needs to go hand in hand with social recognition, economic empowerment and integration into “mainstream” society
Acknowledgements

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