Multiple Stigma, Discrimination and Violence Amongst Female Sex Workers and Men Who Have Sex With Men in Andhra Pradesh, India

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Methods

- **Description of the Study**
  - A mixed-methods, baseline study to examine stigma and discrimination experience among FSWs and MSM.
  - Two focus groups with FSWs, two focus groups with MSM.
  - One in-depth interview with FSWs and MSM.
  - Focus-group discussions: 10 FSWs and 10 MSM.
  - Was randomly selected with assistance from NGOs and key informants.
  - Transcripts were translated, transcribed, coded and entered into ATLAS.ti.
  - Ethical approval was provided by the study team and reviewed prior to all interviews.

**Family members** are major sources of stigma, discrimination, and violence

Signs and discrimination experienced by FSWs from family and relatives included:
- **Abandonment**
- **Rejection**
- **Exclusion**
- **Stigmatization**

Husbands, relatives, or friends: ‘...or husbands, relatives of FSWs who were aware of their occupation were not always prepared to accept this, and some rejected them out of their occupation. From husbands, FSWs experienced:’
- **Rejection**
- **Abandonment**
- **Stigmatization**
- **Discrimination**

Signs and discrimination experienced by MSM from family and relatives included:
- **Rejection**
- **Exclusion**
- **Stigmatization**
- **Discrimination**

Respondents face discrimination, and violence from family and community, and the police.

Community:
- **Discrimination**
- **Abandonment**
- **Stigmatization**
- **Discrimination**

Police:
- **Discrimination**
- **Abuse**
- **Discrimination**

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Signs, discrimination, and violence dominate the lives of most FSWs and MSM. FSWs and MSM are struggling daily with creating an enabling environment for HIV-prevention.

- **While there are specific variations in the language and expression of stigma, discrimination, and violence against FSWs and MSM, all suffer negative impacts from these domains and the role of the FSW, their occupation. Both groups dealt with feelings of rejection, isolation, rejection, low self-esteem, and self-esteem, and isolation.
- **While friends and relatives, spouses, and partners, can be a source of stigma and discrimation, families and friends are also a source of support and understanding for FSWs and MSM.**

- Although stigma and violence are widespread, personal and public policies need to be addressed to mitigate the impact of these domains on the health of FSWs and MSM.

To engage with such people in creating enabling environments, public policies and programs need to create safe environments in which people can disclose their experiences and develop strategies to reduce the social cycle of stigma, discrimination, and violence.

To learn more about this study, contact Fiona Samuels (f.samuels@odi.org.uk).

References

- **World Health Organization (WHO). 2010.** " Cottage environmental factors are of concern with regard to discrimination and violence experienced by key populations in the Indian context."