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Sexuality and Power: A Follow-up Workshop on Sexuality and Rights

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A Follow-up Workshop on Sexuality and Rights
October 8, 2009**

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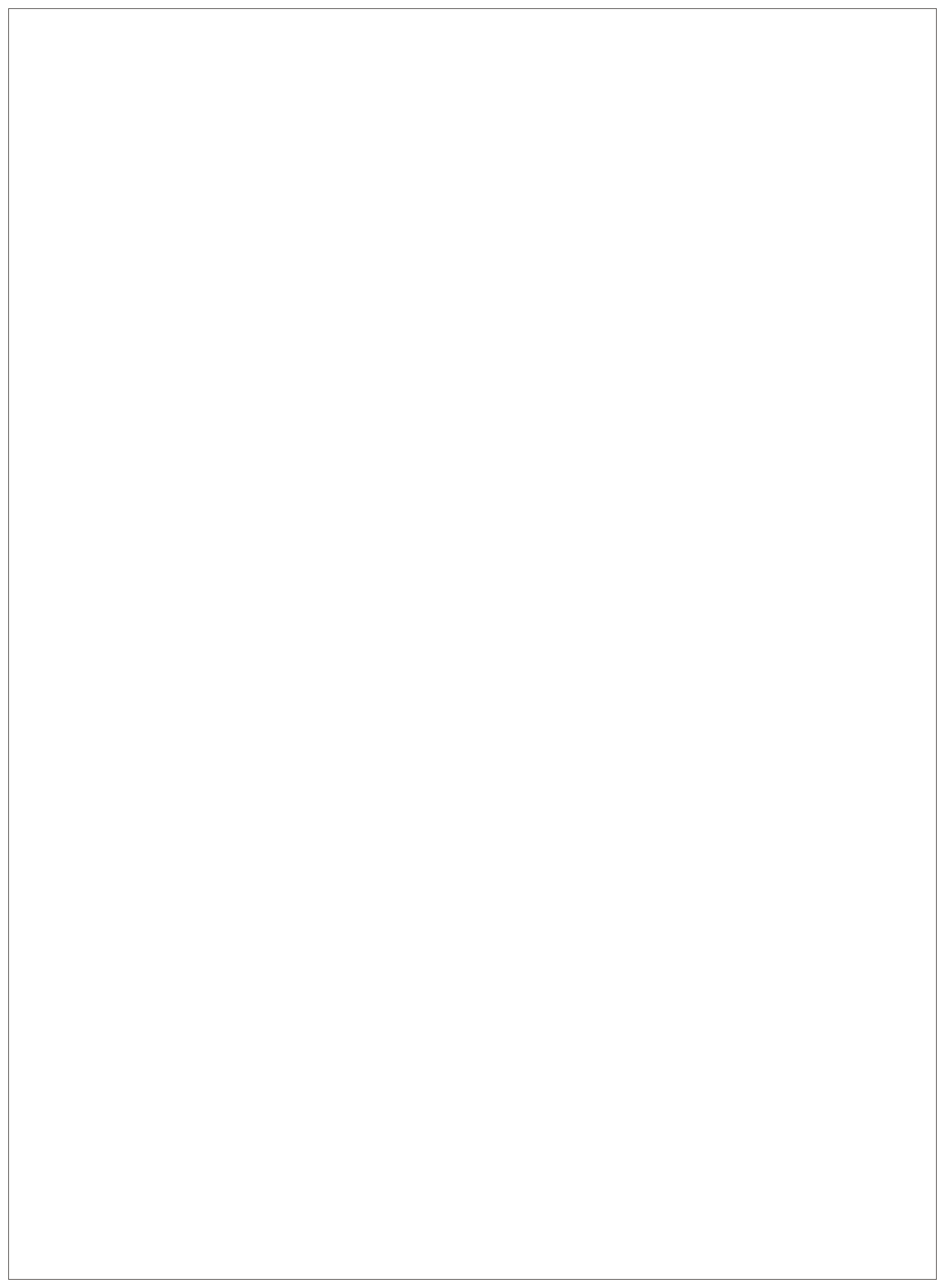


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Introduction

The Centre for Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS (CGSH) at the James P Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University arranged a one day follow up workshop on *Sexuality, Power and Rights* on October 8, 2009. The event brought together participants of two workshops that the Centre had organized earlier in the year. The first was a workshop on Sexuality, Health and Media, held in March 2009 with participants from leading advertising agencies, media houses and newspapers from around the country. Trainer of the workshop was Shohini Ghosh, feminist filmmaker and Sajjad Zaheer Professor at the AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. Barrister Sarah Hossain also facilitated sessions on legal issues and rights at the workshop. The second workshop on Gender, Sexuality and Rights took place in May and included activists, NGO professionals and academics. This series of workshops organized by the Centre was part of the International Women's Health Coalition's (IWHC) aim to build capacity and was partly supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the Realising Rights Research Programme Consortium (RPC).

The follow up event provided participants the opportunity to share and reflect upon their efforts to weave sexuality and rights concerns into their professional and personal lives following their earlier workshop training. Discussions focused on strategies for success and obstacles in the field. In light of their experiences, participants brainstormed about the ways in which the Centre can enhance its role in promoting sexuality and rights issues



Dr. Farah Mahjabeen Ahmed, Coordinator of Continuing Education JPGSPH and Dr. Golam Samdani Fakir, Pro-VC of BRAC University

in society. The workshop continued the Centre's efforts to promote a broader understanding on gender and sexuality; increase the visibility of these topics in the media; and include issues of sexual rights in mainstream discussions of human rights and social justice. The workshop in March on Sexuality, Health and Media had encouraged participants to create visibility in the media around sexuality and rights. The follow up workshop awarded certificates of appreciation to recognize journalists' concrete contributions in the field of sexuality and rights.

The workshop started with an introduction on the day's goals and expected outcomes from Dr. Dina Siddiqi, Visiting Professor and Sexuality Network Coordinator at the Centre who was the facilitator of the event. Dr. Farah Mahjabeen Ahmed, Coordinator of the Continuing Education Programme at the James P Grant School of Public Health, welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of the Centre's work. A special address was delivered by the Pro-Vice Chancellor of BRAC University, Dr. Golam Samdani Fakir. Dr. Samdani stated that the media has a crucial role and responsibility in raising awareness about HIV in Bangladesh. He highlighted the necessity of designing appropriate messages in order to reach populations who are especially vulnerable to AIDS, including adolescents and sex workers.

Workshop Objectives

Overall Goals

A primary purpose of the follow-up event was to track and assess the impact of the two earlier workshops. The intent was to create a space for participants to critically reflect on their work and the insights they gained by attending the workshop. Participants would share experiences since the training, including successes and challenges. They would discuss with one another the obstacles they faced in their work and possible strategies to overcome them. By building alliances based on common goals, participants could explore how they can support each other and collaborate to strengthen the impact of their efforts.



Dr. Dina Siddiqi and Eram Cooper during a discussion with participants

This workshop was also an opportunity to bring into conversation individuals and groups working on sexuality and rights from a variety of backgrounds who would not meet otherwise. In particular, it brought media personnel in conversation with activists and researchers. Earlier workshops indicated that the gap between the media and activists and academics who work on sexuality and rights is a serious obstacle in creating visibility around the subject.

In addition, the workshop aimed to create a space for participants to work together in order to refine advocacy strategies in relation to the role of the Centre. This would help to shape the direction of future work at the Centre. On the basis of workshop outcomes, the Centre could identify strategies that would create an enabling environment to best support and further the process of coalition-building.

Specific Objective

For the facilitator, a central objective of the workshop was to build on the two earlier workshops by exploring the intimate relationship of sexuality and power and the role sexuality plays in regulating power relations in society. In this respect, the workshop aimed to address sexuality in a comprehensive way, looking at its complex interconnections with social relations, identity and rights. Instead of focusing on populations who are most visibly marginalized based on their sexuality, the facilitator wanted participants to recognize how all sexualities are integrated into systems of power. The objective was to extend conversations about sexuality and rights beyond the margins and uncover the ways in which the subject has relevance and consequences for everyone.

Participants' Expectations

After the opening ceremony, participants introduced themselves and shared their expectations from the workshop as well as their individual reasons for attending a follow up event despite a hectic schedule. From the responses, it was clear that participants were looking forward to a follow-up meeting. Many said that following up was critical to continue the discussions and efforts that the original workshop had initiated. They noted that too many workshops are organized as one-time events; as a result, important



Participants at the workshop

exchanges and plans are not followed up on. This undermines the potential for continued strategizing and action. Participants expressed appreciation for the Centre's continuing engagement with them after the initial workshops.

Many expressed their desire to continue learning about sexuality and build on the insights they had received from the previous

workshop. A few of the participants also stated that they wanted to gain more clarity around some of the concepts discussed in the previous workshop. Participants emphasized the importance of the space that the Centre is working to create through these events to discuss sexuality. They wanted to help build and extend those spaces. Some wanted to know about the Centre's work so far including its accomplishments, successes and obstacles in serving its purpose.

One university professor present at the workshop stated the need for academics to not stay confined in the theoretical sphere, but to engage in the intersections of theory with practice. In order to do so, he said, it is necessary to make connections with the work of activists. Activists came to create partnerships and coalitions with each other and connect with people working in the media. People who have worked with sexuality and rights expressed that they meet many obstacles in the field and would like to share strategies with each other in overcoming them. Some said they wanted to foster the connections they made in the previous workshop, network and support each other.

A participant from a sexual minority community stated she typically felt burdened with labels at most workshops on sexuality and rights. However, she found that in general she was treated with respect as an individual, not a token representative, at BRAC events. As a result, she felt she could engage equally with the other participants. She had found the previous workshop enriching and informative and appreciated the opportunity to connect with members of the media.

From these comments, it appeared that the expectations of workshop participants were similar to those of the organizers.

Evaluations from Previous Workshops: Sexuality, Health and Media & Gender, Sexuality and Rights

Dr. Siddiqi highlighted some of the key findings from participants' evaluations from the initial workshops. They illustrated a range of diverse opinions and views. A discussion with workshop participants followed. Important themes, issues, insights and challenges which surfaced in the discussion are summarized below:

Earlier Workshop Successes

The evaluations demonstrated that many participants recognized the importance of creating spaces like these workshops to talk about sexuality. Many participants felt that

the cultural silence surrounding sexuality is a major barrier we have to work against. They appreciated the opportunity to further educate themselves in these workshops and take part in these discussions.

From the pre and post evaluations, it is clear that the workshop helped participants develop a more complicated sense of what sexuality is and what it encompasses. For example, there is an inherent assumption of heterosexuality and a focus on biology in the pre evaluations while post evaluations take into consideration other orientations and recognizes "desire" and "pleasure" as important components of sexuality.

The evaluations revealed how important and successful the screening of the documentary "Tale of the Night Fairies" was to workshop participants. The effect the film had on participants is evidence of the power and potential that visual media has in bringing up and stimulating important discussions. This has important implications for our work as it shows the value of engaging the media as a tool/strategy.

Limitations of Earlier Workshops

The written evaluations of the workshops revealed that they had not been entirely successful in persuading all participants of the relevance of sexual rights. Some comments in the evaluations reflect a dominant viewpoint that we have to struggle with. This is the argument that sexuality has no place in rights discourses for Bangladesh. This argument trivializes sexuality as a legitimate social justice platform. Activists and academics need to argue that sexuality, far from being a luxury, is something that everybody experiences and practices, and which is constructed by culture and social structures.

Another common view against discussions for the rights of sexual minorities are the deep rooted prejudices that many people hold against non-normative sexualities. Dominant understandings of sexualities which deviate from social norms might deny their existence, see them as diseases which need to be cured, or view them as immoral or criminal individuals. All of these common beliefs resist arguments for sexual rights.

Ways forward

Dr. Siddiqi's presentation of findings from the initial workshop evaluations was followed by a discussion with participants. They identified some significant challenges that were reflected in the evaluations that should shape our work in the future:

Participants expressed the need to think about effective ways of extending conversations about sexuality and rights beyond safe spaces such as seminars and workshops. In order to break the silence surrounding sexuality, we have to bring change to our everyday realities. This means confronting not only cultural, but also personal obstacles. Part of this challenge is to face the discomfort we have in talking about our own sexualities.

In order to create effective strategies, we have to consider the concrete ways in which the law, the economy, and institutional power structures limit our work. We have to have conversations with people in power such as policy makers and religious leaders.

A crucial concern for academics and journalists working with marginalized communities is the ethical implications of their work. While working against the invisibility of non-normative communities, the very real dangers that visibility poses for these communities cannot be ignored. Unequal power relations between academics and the communities they work with is another crucial ethical consideration.

One participant pointed out that people who tend to undermine sexuality's central location in maintaining structures of inequality lack a clear and deep understanding of sexuality. This limits their ability to connect sexuality with wider social issues, thus bringing up the question of its relevance in discussions of development and human rights. Therefore, part of our work is to educate ourselves and others and make these connections clear.



A participant joins the discussion

Obstacles and Successes: The Impact of the Initial Workshops in Retrospect

Participants reflected on the impact that the initial workshops had made in their own professional and personal lives. They shared with each other both the ways that attending the Centre's workshop had assisted them in their work and the obstacles they have faced since then.

Successes

The workshops effectively initiated discussions on the connection of sexuality with rights among participants and encouraged them to incorporate this connection in their work. A major success was screening the documentary "Tale of the Night Fairies" at the Sexuality, Health and Media workshop and distributing copies of the film to participants.

One activist stated that attending the workshop on Gender, Sexuality and Rights gave her the language to talk about sexuality. It helped her articulate the connection of sexuality to human rights and hold law enforcement accountable to protecting the rights of her community. This enabled her to organize a workshop with the police about the rights of sex workers and hijras.

Another activist shared a story of how after the initial sexuality workshop, she was able to make a presentation on the rights of sex workers at a large human rights convention. While answering questions and arguments from the audience, she emphasized the relationship of sexual rights with rights in general. She was able to successfully show how a marginalized cause is actually connected to the larger and better established one for human rights. Furthermore, she successfully created visibility and discussion on behalf of a population that remains largely silenced in mainstream rights discourses.

Challenges

A difficult and common challenge in working with sexual rights was the negative association of researchers and activists with the stigmatised populations with whom they

work or carry out research. The stigma that non-normative communities face is then extended to all people who work with those communities. This can play a powerful role in discouraging activists and academics from working in the field of sexual rights.

A participant noted that she had been prevented from getting a position as a lecturer at a major university due to the fear and stigma generated by her interest in sexuality as a social justice issue. Her involvement in discussions in favor of sexual rights branded her as a "leftist". Her experience recalled the point participants made earlier about how researchers and activists face the stigma that is attached to the subject they work with. This participant pointed out how discrimination in employment institutionally excluded discussions on sexuality from entering important and influential spaces such as academia.

A BRAC employee used an example from her personal life to illustrate the stigma that sexual minorities face in our society and the entrenched silence that the struggle for sexual rights has to combat. She recounted the story of a lesbian couple who were her mother's tenants. On the death of one of the women, who had been living with her lesbian partner until she passed away, none of the neighbors called the authorities or went to check on her. The participant went to the house a few days after the woman's death and was shocked that the neighbors chose to remain silent even though a very bad and noticeable smell had started coming out of the apartment. Newspapers that covered the event avoided addressing the fact that the woman had been living with a female partner, erasing her sexuality and portraying her according to social norms.

Successes and Challenges in the Media

Participants working in the media shared some of their experiences since attending the workshop on Sexuality, Health and Media in March. They highlighted how the workshop had influenced their work and shared some of the serious challenges they faced working with sexuality in the media:

A journalist from Natore made connections with a local NGO working with sex workers. She stated that there used to be many brothels in Natore which were evicted. As a result, the place has a high number of street based sex workers who are vulnerable to law enforcement violence. She wrote an article on the rights of sex workers, critiquing the lack of clarity in the law. She also shared that a seminar for sex workers in Natore screened "the Tale of the Night Fairies" and the film inspired local sex workers to organize for their cultural rights.

A participant worked with NTV on a series that aims to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. They made one episode that directly addressed homosexuality. The intent was to bring attention to the existence of msm's and homosexuals in Bangladesh. While they were successful in making the episode, the producer made some very problematic comments which blamed sexual minorities for the prevalence of AIDS. The participant emphasized the necessity to engage with people in different positions in the media to raise awareness about sexual rights and to work against marginalization. He also stated that vulnerable communities need to be included in these conversations with the media to effectively work against their silence and exclusion.

A journalist working in Khagrachhari wished to write an article on sex workers after attending the Centre's workshop on Sexuality, Health and Media. After failing to find information on sex work in the area, she decided to organize a screening of the "Tale of the Night Fairies" at her home. She invited people from different fields to watch the movie and it was followed by a rich and interesting discussion. It helped her make connections and find sources for information for her article. The participant gained a sense of the subject's complexity and learned about sexual harassment, marginalization of indigenous people and law enforcement abuse of sex workers in Khagrachhari.

Another journalist spoke of her repeated attempts to have an article published about sexually marginalized communities. She originally wrote a report on lesbians but decided not to try and print it as the women she interviewed were nervous about the impact it might have on their community. She then wrote an article about sex workers but it had not been published. Finally she wrote an article about a group of hijras that she managed to speak to after many difficulties.

Media Responsibility and the Double-Edge Nature of Visibility.

Participants discussed the complexities and challenges they face working for sexuality and rights in the media. People in the media have to locate their work within its larger context and address the cultural and institutional barriers to increasing the visibility of these topics in the media. One of the biggest challenges for journalists is gaining access to vulnerable communities. Since sexual minorities in Bangladesh are extremely vulnerable to violence, their communities can be invisible from mainstream society. Exposing these spaces has very complicated and potentially dangerous consequences for people. Participants agreed that the ethical implications of publishing their stories has to be a core concern for journalists and others working in the media. A participant working for the rights of sex workers provided an example to emphasize this point. She narrated that a newspaper article had unintentionally provided the police with enough information to arrest and abuse several sex workers over the weekend.

The silence surrounding homosexuality in Bangladesh makes it extremely hard to talk and write about gays and lesbians in the country. While they are very marginalized, the existence of sex workers, hijras, and to an extent, msms is not denied in same way that self identified gay and lesbian communities are. This makes it more feasible for journalists to print articles on hijras and sex workers and discourages them from writing about gay and lesbian communities in Bangladesh. This enforces the invisibility of these Communities.

Hierarchy and the decisions of editors constrain the work of individual journalists. Effective strategies to create visibility around issues of sexuality and rights has to address this reality. While we may want to push the boundaries of existing discourses on sexuality, we also have to strategically approach our subject from angles that make our articles "acceptable" for printing.

Screening of Dushomoy (A Mother's Lament)

Dushomoy (A Mother's Lament) is a documentary made in 1999 by prizewinning filmmaker Yasmine Kabir. The film tells the story of a young garment worker named Shima Choudhury who was picked up by the police one day while walking down the

street with a male friend. Shima was arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which allows the police to make arrests without warrants. She was raped by the police while in "safe custody" where she was not allowed to see her family. She died in jail a few months after her arrest.

Sexuality, Power and the Law: Section 54

The discussion started with a critique of the law and how the state regulates our sexualities. The state is embedded in larger society and operates with cultural notions of sexual norms. The criminalization of sex workers allowed the police to claim that Shima was a sex worker as an attempt to justify their abuse. Dr. Siddiqi pointed out that while discussions about gay rights commonly targets section 377 as a law which regulates our bodies and sexualities and violates human rights, the documentary illustrates how we also need to discuss section 54. Section 54 allowed the police to arrest Shima even though she was not breaking the law. Section 54 gives law enforcement the power to arrest all people who deviate from what is considered to be the norm. It is commonly used to target MSM and hijra communities but its reach extends beyond sexual minorities to enforce a specific definition of "acceptable" sexuality. Section 54 is an example of how heteronormativity is ingrained in our social and legal system and institutions of power.

Participants talked about why the concept and practice of safe custody is so problematic. In safe custody, women trying to access justice can be kept imprisoned for an indefinite period of time. Survivors of rape are further victimized by the law. Several participants spoke of their personal experience working with rape victims. They related stories about the insensitivity and hostility of doctors towards women and girls who had reported being raped. This illustrates how legal support and protection does not extend equally to all citizens. This discrimination in the justice system is defined by cultural notions and values about women's sexuality with which the state operates.

Power, Sexuality and the Intersections of identity

The facilitator pointed out that sexuality was a marker of class, among other things. What happened to Shima was possible because she was a single, poor, young female garment worker and marginalized on multiple fronts. Sheema's poverty made it possible for the police to claim that she was a sex worker and therefore not "deserving" of social or legal protection and to justify their violence and abuse. At the time of the incident, garment workers were highly stigmatized in society based on cultural assumptions about their sexual deviancy. This was another factor that made Shima, who worked in a garments factory, "undeserving" of legal protection and vulnerable to sexual abuse.

The discussion on the film also drew out the ways in which women of different classes embody different cultural meanings and are markers of class boundaries. The film generated a heated discussion on how this is reflected in language used by the media about sexual violence against women. Some participants saw a difference in how sexual violence against women of different classes was portrayed in the media.

A stark example of class identity and consciousness tied to women's bodies and sexualities is the euphemistic language used in reports during the BDR massacre about the sexual violence committed against female family members of army officers. Specifically, participants referred to the media's avoidance of the word *dhorshon*. The choice in language reveal that different aspects of identity intersect and define how much power one has in society and the value placed on the individual's sexuality. While marginalization based on notions of "acceptable" sexualities most visibly affect people at the margins, it is important to recognize that heteronormativity regulates our bodies and society in much more complicated and subtle ways that can only be explained by analyzing entire social structures.

Sexuality, Language and the Media

In a related vein, participants discussed the role of language in constructing cultural notions of sexuality. Language reveals how society regulates and controls different people's sexualities based on notions of norms and deviancy. Participants used the example of the different cultural and political implications between the words "prostitute" and "sex worker". The change in language used by the media is an outcome and success of social movements. Participants referred again to the media's use of the word *dhorshon*, stating that it was commonly used in relation to women who had very little power in the class hierarchy. In contrast, the media articulates sexual violence against upper class women much more vaguely. The media, through language, enforces the role of class in defining the place of women's bodies and sexualities in society.

The media is an incredibly important arena to make changes in the language used in our culture to fuel and reflect social change. While it can enforce and maintain heteronormativity, the media can also collaborate with activists working for sexual rights. One participant used as an example, the brothel evictions in tanbazaar in 1999 as a time when the media played a supportive role to activists and helped strengthen a movement for human rights.

Group Work: Ways Forward

The last activity of the workshop divided participants into small groups to brainstorm on future strategies to take our work with sexuality and rights forward collectively and identify ways the Centre can provide support to these efforts. Participants identified what they viewed as our most pressing needs and possible ways of addressing them:



Participants work in groups

Dialogue with People in Power

Organize seminars and workshops with gatekeepers in the media. For journalists, a major problem is that editors and others are not convinced of the need to publish stories on sexuality and rights. Therefore, people with power in the media are the ones who need to be targeted to effectively create visibility around sexuality and rights. Gatekeepers also need to be aware that the media has a

responsibility to not exploit vulnerable communities or expose them to more violence. Therefore, it is crucial that they be included in discussions about media responsibility and the relevance and importance of sexuality and rights.

Hold discussions with policy makers about the law and its clarity, implementation and reform to protect vulnerable communities and prevent law enforcement abuse

Arrange workshops with sponsors, donors and people on the corporate level

Organize seminars with law enforcement

Sensitize religious leaders like imams and priests

Hold discussions with educators

Network and Build Coalitions

There should be better communication among people working in the media. Local and national newspapers should exchange ideas and thoughts with news correspondents and editors

Network with community organizations and mainstream movements. Strengthen connections between lesbian, gay and hijra communities and researchers, academics and journalists Work with mainstream feminist leaders, building on shared platforms

Strengthen existing governmental and non governmental institutions and infrastructure

Network with other organizations in South Asia working in the field of sexuality

Increase Visibility and Raise Awareness about Sexual Rights

Produce powerful and moving news stories to raise awareness. Be strategic about the angle with the audience in mind to make the subject of sexuality accepting to more people.

Raise awareness about sexual rights in urban and rural areas through:

- Documentary films
- Talk shows and debates on television
- Advertisements
- Art and music
- Soap operas
- Theater and street drama

Attend workshops and seminars to initiate discussions about sexuality, highlighting the relevance and interconnections of sexuality to different social issues such as health, human rights etc.

Have discussions about sexuality with family and colleagues, working to educate people in our daily lives about sexuality and rights and try to weaken the cultural denial of the existence of gays and lesbians in this country

Create awareness and visibility in educational institutions:

- Disseminate educational materials at schools
- Hold interactive workshops in schools and colleges.
- Address sexuality in textbooks
- Try to institutionalize sexuality education.

Publish editorials and opinion pieces in newspapers, specifically targeting section 54 and section 377

Educate the public about concepts that are central to sexual rights, such as: sexuality, identity, rights, sexual health, power (class, religion, race), discrimination, gender

Create Safe spaces and provide support to vulnerable communities

Create safe spaces for LGBT communities to come together and talk openly

Provide counseling and legal support for families affected by HIV

Create a help line

Raise Funds

What the Centre can do:

Establish an information and resource center

Make information available online

Raise funds

Train resource people

Arrange workshops with editors, advertising agencies, and other gatekeepers in the media to help create an enabling environment for journalists who seek to work with sexuality and rights



*Dr. Golam Samdani Fakir and a participant
at the awards ceremony*

Awards Ceremony

The day ended with an awards ceremony to appreciate the efforts of people in the media who, despite facing many obstacles and the threat of stigma, made concrete contributions to create visibility around the topic of sexuality. The workshop on Sexuality, Health and Media held in March had encouraged participants to bring visibility to issues of sexuality and rights. The follow up workshop awarded participants certificates and a cash reward

to recognize their efforts. Topics covered by participants ranged from women's reproductive health to the rights and healthcare of sex workers and the MSM and hijra communities. Please see Appendix II for the list of awardees and their work.

Conclusion

The positive response from participants to organizing this follow up event proved the importance of following up on workshops. The Centre hopes to stay connected with participants and provide support beyond initial workshops and seminars. The Centre



Workshop participants with facilitator Dr. Dina Siddiqi and special guest Dr. Golam Samdani Fakir

gained insights from the discussions with workshop participants that will help shape its future efforts. The barriers that participants faced in their field of work revealed that the Centre needs to focus on and communicate with gatekeepers. The Centre has to engage with important actors in the media like editors and sponsors to ensure that information about sexuality and rights reaches the public. The follow up event demonstrated that the

Centre can be a useful clearing house for information and activities. The Centre should continue its work to create spaces to talk about sexuality. Sexuality and its connection to power concerns everybody. The work against social injustice that lies ahead of us must address sexuality. It requires collaboration among movements and organizations who remain largely isolated from one another. The Centre can play a vital role in the process of coalition-building and help bring sexuality to the forefront of human rights and development in Bangladesh.

Appendix 1

Presentation of Evaluation Findings

Highlights from Evaluations of Sexuality and Rights Workshops

Sexuality, Health and Media Workshop Evaluations

Sexuality, Health and Media

Pre evaluation

Sex – Biological difference between males and females; biological identity; physical need.

Sexuality -what drives people to reproduce; desire; sexual relationships between males and females.

Post evaluation

Sex – biological distinction; natural, anatomical difference between men and women;

Sexuality -Expression of biological need; expression of desire; gender identity; sexual orientation; attraction; physical relationship

Issues related to Sexuality that seem important to you

Pre Evaluation

Creating Awareness; Sexual freedom and Repression; Cultural and Social Pressures; Health and Education; Birth control; Rights; Consent

Post Evaluation

Sexual Rights and Freedom; sexual orientation; sexual and reproductive health. Reproductive health;

Which specific gender issue would you like to see addressed in the Media?

Pre Evaluation

All issues important; The nature of sexuality; Sex education; The prevention of disease; Sexual health; sexual violence; Women's health and rights

Post Evaluation

Create awareness; changing people's perceptions; Sex education; More on people with different gender and sexual identities; Fluidity of sexual and gender identities; The rights of sex workers and hijras; their visibility; Reproductive health;

How do you plan to use insights from the workshop in your work?

It will affect my choice of topics
Intend to write articles;
Intend to make movies;
Will try to change perceptions; educate; make more aware;
Integrate the topics covered in my individual work

Name one concept that will stay with you/ struck you as new

Rights of transgender people and sex workers
 Homosexuality; the rights of homosexuals;
 Shohini Ghosh's documentary, The Tale of the Night Fairies
 Disturbed by comments made by some participants; shows how much work there is to be done.

What could have been done differently?

Needed more time;
 More on health; women's health.
 More on laws, policy and legislation;
 More in depth coverage;
 More on sexual rights in relation to other rights;
 Include more people from the media in different/higher positions;

Obstacles to press coverage on sexuality and gender issues

Pre evaluation

Editorial Board
 Lack of Reader Interest;
 Politics of the Country;
 Cultural Norms

Post Evaluation

Media Policy;
 Business and political considerations;
 Apathy; some visibility but not enough

Sexuality, Gender and Rights Workshop

Evaluations

Defintions: gender, sex, sexuality and Sexual rights;

Pre evaluations

Gender – male and female;
 social construct;
 Sex – physical difference; intercourse;
 Sexuality – attraction and desire; physical need;
 Sexual Health – mental and physical health related to sex;

Post evaluations

Gender – learned; socially constructed identity;
 Sex – physical/biological difference;
 Sexuality – mental/physical needs; relationships; desire and pleasure;
 Sexual rights – right to choose; rights to sexual identity; consent; rights related to sexuality; freedom;

Issues related to sexuality that seem important to you

Pre Evaluation

Inequality; gender roles; sexual orientation; sexual rights; sexual health; healthcare; sexual minorities and their rights; safe sex; sex education; need for a more environment to discuss sexuality;

Post Evaluation

Rights of sex workers; fighting discrimination against sexual minorities; sexual rights; women's rights; equality; expression of sexual identity;

How can sexual rights be taken forward in general?

Involve policy makers in dialogue;
 Trainings, workshops and discussions;
 Education;
 Strengthening human rights
 Advocacy;
 Cultural change;
 More visible discussions on sexuality and rights;

How will you use insights from this workshop in your work/peer groups?

Share knowledge and create awareness through discussions and conversations;
 Discussions with colleagues and allied organizations;
 More open discussions with friends;
 Through work in the media;

One concept that you will take back with you/that struck you

- Sexual rights;
- Sexual identity;
- Rights of hijras;
- Rights of sex workers
- Activism around these issues;

What was missing/should have been approached differently

- More detailed and personal look at LGBT communities;
- More connection to human rights;
- Exploration of conflict with cultural norms;
- More concrete details and statistics;
- More accessible language (both English and Bangla)

Other feedback

More frequent training;
This experience has really changed my way of thinking; this should also be arranged in university.
Whatever I've learned, I'll try to teach that to my close people; I'll also try to change the perspective of people I don't know. Thanks a lot to everyone. Please call me again, I'll be waiting.
Post Evaluation paper is too long!!!!

Other feedback

Bangladesh has lots of problems like poverty, unemployment, dowry, violence sex work etc. Same sex relation is not the concern of the majority but is getting too much preference in your workshop. We should first focus on our major problems and then try to solve minor issues like MSM.
Correct information should be disseminated to young people, not proposing them to accept different concepts of sexuality;

Other feedback

- More real life examples to clarify concepts such as kothi, MSM, gay;
- Bangla literature that we can take home and keep in our room for wife, parents, young children to read;
- Ethics of taking and showing photographs of hijras;

Appendix II List of Awardees

Newspaper Articles:

1. Sherina Afroj
 - *Jey kotha jana joruri* ("What needs to be known": sex-workers and HIV) **The Weekly Pirojpur Khabar**
2. Anjuman Ara
 - *Jounokormider jownoshastho jhukipurno* ("The risky sexual health of sex-workers") **The Daily Janadesh**
 - *Ek Shundorir Kanna* (the rights of sex-workers) **Prothom Alo**
3. Chingme Pru
 - *Lokchokkhur bhoje jounokormira chikitsha niteyo ashey na* ("Sex-workers do not pursue healthcare in fear of social stigma") **The Daily Oronyabarta**
4. Henrieta Shuk
 - *Khagracharir oshonkho nari Proleps Shomoshshai bhugchey* ("Countless women in Khagrachari are suffering because of Proleps") **The Daily Khagrachari**
 - *Khagrachari tey jhukipurno obosthai jouno shasthosheba karjokrom cholchey* ("Sexual healthcare at risk in Khagrachari") **The Daily Khagrachari**
5. Smrity Chakraborty
 - *Paribarik obohelai matrimrittu rodhey badha* ("Family Negligence is a barrier to preventing maternal death") **The Daily Destiny**
6. Tamanna Islam
 - *Morar upor khara gha* (The health of sex-workers) **Shomokal**
 - *Shoehenotar obhabey kajey ashchey na projonon o paribarik shastho obokathamo* ("The infrastructure of reproductive and familial health is not effective due to a lack of awareness") **Ononyo**
7. Laili Begum
 - *Ke Bodlabe Tader Jibon?* ("Who will change their lives?" A hijra community in Koorigram) **The Daily Chawa Pawa.**
8. Moriom Shely
 - *Chuadangar Hijrara Kemon Achhe?* ("How are the hijras of Chuadanga?") **The Daily Mathabhanga.**

Radio News:

Shahnaz Sharmeen. "Human story" (The Hijra community) **ABC Radio**

Drama Series:

Ariful Islam. "Dilara Gattha" (HIV/AIDS and MSM and transgender community) **NTV.**

Appendix III List of Workshop Participants

From the Workshop on Sexuality, Health and Media (March 2009)

Name	Organization
1. Ariful Islam	Mattra
2. Bipesh Raj Bhowmick	Benchmark
3. Sahida Khondaker	Pathways, BDI
4. Syeda Farzana Zaman	Adcomm Ltd
Salma Sobhan Fellowship for Women in Journalism	
5. Anameka Saha	
6. Anjuman Ara	
7. Henryetta Sukh	Prothom Alo, Khagrachari
8. Laili Begum	Prothom Alo, Kurigram
9. Mariom Shely	Jai Jai Din, Chuwadanga
10. Sabia Siddique	
11. Shahnaz Biswas Yeasmin	Freelance, Boishakhi TV
12. Shahnaz Sharmeen	ABC Radio
13. Sherina Afroj	ETV, Pirojpur
14. Smrity Chakraborty	
15. Towhida Akhter	Freelance
16. Tamanna Islam Olly	Freelance
Members of Health and Environment Journalist Forum (HEJFB)	
17. Abdul Mannan	Jugantor
18. Kazi Hafiz	Kaler Kontho
19. Partha Sharothi Das	The Daily Kaler Kantho
20. Salahuddin Bablu	Inqilab

From the Workshop on Gender, Sexuality and Rights (May 2009)

Name	Organization
21. Aanmona Priyadarshini	Pathways, BDI
22. Abdullah Abusayed Khan	Khulna University
23. Evan Kotha Ahmed	Shocheton Shilpi Shongho
24. Mahfujur Rahman	CEGIS/BCAS
25. Md. Aminul Islam	Incidin Bangladesh
26. Md Hayatun Nabi	Northern University
27. Md Shahidul Islam	Khulna University
28. Nazma Akhter	Awaj Foundation
29. Sanjida Shashee	Sex Worker's Network of Bangladesh
30. Shakhawat Hossain Rajeeb	Boys of Bangladesh
31. Sumaiya Islam	BRAC Human Rights and Legal Services
32. Tanvir Alim	Boys of Bangladesh

Additional Participants

33. Khadija Leena	BRAC Gender Justice and Diversity Section
34. Rafiqul Islam Tutul	Sex Worker's Network of Bangladesh

