Can the Statistics Speak?
Counting Desire and Genders

Presentation for
The Power of Data: How Women- and Gender-Focused Research Organizations Can Advance SDG 5
Parallel event by Wellesley Centers for Women, UN CSW60
By
Shiv D. Sharma
Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality, Ashoka University
March 16th, 2016
Section 377: A Minuscule Minority?

- "Do you know any person who is homosexual?"
- No empirical data to show there is a homosexual "community"
- Constitutional vs. Popular Morality
- Identities vs. Acts
- Tyranny of the majoritarian data

‘25 lakh gays in India, 7 pc are HIV-positive’

The “Third” Gender

- Hijras, Transgender
- Counting communities
- Targeted intervention- HIV statistics, Section 377
- “Classified empowerment”
- Visibly other in the social landscape
- Limited scope of GBV

**STATE STATS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. of third gender persons ('000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
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<td>Maharashtra</td>
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<td><strong>INDIA</strong></td>
<td><strong>488</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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“Who Let The ‘Data’ Out?”

- Criminal records data: National Crime Records Bureau
- Census data: Ministry of Home Affairs, National Sample Survey Organisation
- Health services records: National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), HIV AIDS Alliance

- NALSA, Humsafar Trust, Voices Against 377, Lawyer’s Collective, Naz Foundation
- Absence of think-tanks: Heinrich Boll Foundation, ORF
- Absence of GBV officially to trans-, lesbians
Who gets counted?

• Unreported cases & violence by state actors
• “Marked bodies”
• Out & loud
• Spectrum of identities
Reading Lives, Measuring Experiences
Emphasis on qualitative data

- Surveys & Interviews – subjective-type responses
- Attitudes survey – e.g. World Values Survey data; time-use data
- People sensitive data collection
- Oral Histories – e.g. Project Bolo
- Audio/Visual archives – e.g. SPARROW
- Orinam
Intersections with Gender

Gender Equity and Sexuality

- Homophobia isn’t only about sexuality; it’s also about sexism
- How to count sexual pleasure?
- Preventing gender-based violence
Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality

Workshop modules (FGDs)

Media research

Public Archive

Web-series

Interviews