

Perception of Youth Towards LGBTIQ Community: A Study Among College Students in Kathmandu

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the attitude of youths towards LGBTIQ community. It highlights few emergent issues on gender identities particularly the sexual and gender minorities. The major aim of this paper is to identify knowledge of youths and their attitude about the third-gender community. For this purpose, one hundred students of bachelor degree level at few selected colleges in Kathmandu Valley have been sampled for a structured questionnaire. The result shows that the perception of youths toward LGBTIQ community is becoming positive and the overall perception of society has been changing gradually from stereotyped to normalized. The crux that this paper finds with regard to the LGBTIQ community is that they have begun to be accepted as dignified human beings.

Keywords: gender minorities, knowledge of youths, perception of youths, human beings

Introduction

The acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer people is LGBTIQ. These terms are used to characterize one's gender identity or sexual orientation. While the term "gender" refers to the socially built traits of men and women, the term "sex" refers to the biological aspects of male and female. People can be born either female or male, but they often start out as girls or boys, who grow up to be women or men. Gender roles are established by this cultural behavior, which also defines gender identity. When it comes to opportunities, the distribution of resources and rewards, or access to services, gender equality, according to WHO (2002), means there is no discrimination based on a person's sex. In terms of advantages and responsibilities, gender equality refers to fairness and impartiality in the distribution of each. The idea recognizes that there are differences between the wants and power of men and women, and that these differences need to be acknowledged and resolved in a way that reduces the power imbalance between the sexes.

Gender equality is one of the biggest and most persistent challenges facing Nepal and many of the South Asian countries. In custom, this means the harvests of development are spread haphazardly through ethnic, gender and geographic classifications. Geographical and environmental factors exacerbate vulnerabilities and inequities. Women, children, people with disabilities, senior citizens, members of sexual and gender minorities, people living in poverty, and members of

socially marginalized groups like the Dalits, Muslims, and indigenous people are some of the groups that are more vulnerable than others due to their current socioeconomic and physical circumstances.

In Nepal, gender roles vary depending on the situation, caste, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic level. Generally speaking, views that males have superiority over women and reverence for elders encourage traditional family systems. Traditional customs in Nepal such as the dowry system, early marriage, son-preference, discrimination of widows, family violence, polygamy, and the segregation of women make women and girls less fortunate. Third-gendered people deal with a unique and specific set of gender inequality problems. The condition that women and girls experience has changed in recent years. The post-conflict government has been making laws to promote greater gender equality: in 2011, Nepal became the first nation in Asia to adopt a National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security, and the Comprehensive Peace Accord protects the rights of women and girls (OCHA, n/d).

Even though there are more women than men in the country who are of working age, women still lag behind men in terms of employment, and there remains an extensive wage disparity between the sexes. Only 22% of Nepal's entire paid workforce is made up of women. Only 8.3% of working-age women receive compensation. In Nepal, women do better than males in all types of employment, even unpaid jobs. Men work less than an hour of unpaid labor per day on average, compared to women's four hours. Action Aid discovered that Nepali women put in 1.4 hours for every hour put in by Nepali males across all paid and unpaid employment.

One common way to describe someone's sexual orientation is whether they are erotically attracted to men, women, or both. The ninth amendment to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems specifies that "Sexual orientation alone is not to be viewed as a disorder." Homosexuality has not been categorized as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association, the World Health Organization, or the Chinese Psychiatric Association since 1973. It is currently thought of as an alternative way of living. "Sexual desire or behavior focused toward a person or persons of one's own sex" is the definition of homosexuality. (Feng, n/d).

Concept of LGBTIQ

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer is what LGBTIQ denotes. Here are the broad definitions of these concepts. 2019 general statement from the Human Rights Commission. A lesbian is mostly attracted to other lesbians. A gay person is primarily drawn to other people of the same sex. Lesbian is occasionally the phrase favored for women who are interested to women, despite the fact that it may be used for any sex (for example: gay man, gay woman, or gay person). Being considered a homosexual is preferable. Bisexual: The Anti-Discrimination Act of 1991 uses this term to refer to sexuality. Bisexuality is defined by the dictionary as being attractive as sexual partners for both men and women. also known as bi. A person is considered transgender if they do not identify with the biological sex they were assigned at birth. Intersex: People who are intersex possess physical sex traits at birth that violate medical expectations for either female or male bodies. Queer is a catch-all phrase that is occasionally employed by members of the LGBTI community to denote to the whole LGBTI community. It is important to realize that the term "queer" is an in-group term and that certain people

may find it offensive based on their generation, locality, and relationship to the word (owing to its historically negative connotation).

Attitude in Social Work

Our overall assessments of the individuals, social groupings, and things in our surroundings reflect our attitudes. Making a choice about whether to like or dislike, or favor or disfavor, an attitude object is having an attitude. Because they influence how we view the world and behave, attitudes are important. Definitely, Gordon Allport stated that the attitude idea is the most crucial topic in social psychology more than 70 years ago. The report of attitudes continues to be at the forefront of social psychology theory and research, and that assertion is still true today. The content, structure, and function of attitudes are the three main focuses of this page (services).

"Attitudes" refer to brief assessments of individuals, organizations, concepts, and other items, indicating whether people like or hate them. The study of attitudes in social psychology has a prominent role. Years of study have shown that attitudes are crucial for comprehending how people act and view the environment.

The cognitive, emotional, and behavioral content of attitudes is one of their essential characteristics. In other words, a person may link an attitude object to thoughts or beliefs, feelings, intentions, or previous deeds. The attitude itself may also be simple (e.g., positive or negative) or more complex, ambivalent (e.g., simultaneously positive and negative); it may serve a variety of psychological purposes (e.g., knowledge simplification, value expression); and its strength may vary. Different methodologies have been developed to assess attitudes, demonstrating that they are useful behavior predictors and that the strength of this relationship relies on a variety of circumstances, including the degree to which the attitude is held, the person's personality, and the situation. The extensive body of research on attitudes has generally endorsed their significant theoretical and applied importance (Wolf, 2020).

Following are some definitions of the term attitude by some psychologists:

Allport (1935) described attitude to be “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, and exerting a directive or dynamic impact upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related”

According to Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), an attitude is “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object”.

According to Hogg and Vaughan (2005), an attitude is “a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies regarding socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols”

“An Attitude is a psychological tendency that is stated by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) (Niwlkar, October 22, 2020 Author).

Katz and Shavitt (1989) included a reference on the usefulness of attitudes for forming human impressions, or the extent to which attitudes seem to provide information about the people who hold them. According to Shavitt and Nelson (2000), products tend to serve a utilitarian purpose to the extent that they are perceived to express identity and values, are frequently displayed in public or are visible to others, or are widely understood to represent membership in a particular group. For instance, social

identification aspirations may have a significant role in the decision to purchase an Indian flag on Republic Day. In addition to examining how individuals' attitude functions vary, current studies in the subject also take into account the possibility that certain attitude objects may in fact serve various purposes for various individuals. People could purchase certain items to satisfy their practical demands (computers, televisions, etc.) and other products to satisfy their value-expressive wants (such as a specific brand of automobile). In conclusion, an attitude shifts when a person feels dissatisfied or hindered and the attitude no longer fulfills its intended function. Therefore, those who are interested in influencing the attitudes of others must first ascertain how such attitudes benefit the persons they are trying to influence, and then adopt the proper strategy. (Niwlikar, Attitude Psychology: Definition, Components, Types, Properties and Functions, October 22, 2020Author).

Perception in Social Work

Perception is the method through which we select, organize, and interpret our sensations in a meaningful way. It occurs when we view any objects in the environment around us. The perceiving way of two-person perhaps cannot be the similar. Psychologists signify to perception as a top-down process as they have constructed not only based on what our senses identify but also our experiences and expectations. If the receptors do not receive stimulation from the atmosphere or are unable to process the information they receive, information is not transmitted and perception does not occur. Thus, in perception, the simple process is to activate the receptor and then transmit the information to the brain to make sense of it i.e. interpretation (tyonote). There are individual distinctions in persons. They perceive the same object differently. It is affected by several factors. The information we obtain from the atmosphere and the personal characteristics of an individual lead us to act in that particular way. The main factors affecting perception are:

- The Perceiver
- The Target
- The Situation

(tyonote, p. 1999)

Methodology

The motive of research is to find out about a particular subject that has significance to generate knowledge and information. While doing research, different method have been adopted like qualitative, quantitative, explorative and so on. For this research, analytical descriptive method is used and written thoroughly. Whilst, this research is primarily based on direct observation and interviewing method in regards to know about the problems. Similarly, for the further knowledge, secondary sources are undertaken like book studies, articles, and websites. Hence, with an intention to obtain authentic information for the study, both primary and secondary research is done. For those rituals which can be obtained by observation are collected with personal field visit and some are taken from the secondary sources or by interviewing with the peoples.

Research Design

This study follows non- experimental, descriptive, non- explanatory and quantitative research design, as the research seeks to describe the general understanding about the prospective of youth towards LQBTIQ community. In the study the descriptive research design has been used to understand various aspects of topic. The overt research design has been followed, where respondents were fully aware about the study to be conducted for the research.

Area of Research

This research has been conducted with young students studying in different Schools and Campuses of Kathmandu Valley, namely the Saraswati Multiple Campus, Ratnarajyalaxmi Campus and Sahid Sukra Higher Secondary School. These institutions were selected to access the required number of respondents, because youths normally are available in educational institutions than in random place. Also, the research area was feasible primarily for me to access the respondents.

Sampling

The researcher has applied simple random sampling method in collecting data from the field. The sample size included 100 students aged 18 years to 27 years including both the girls and boys. Out of the total 100 respondents, 40 were taken from Saraswati Multiple Campus, another 40 from Ratnarajyalaxmi Campus, and the remaining 20 respondents from Sahid Sukra Higher Secondary School.

Data Analysis

The primary data has been collected through the interview schedules and was further analyzed by using different data analyzing software such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel which has been shown by using graphs and figures according to the categorization of the different variables.

Rational of the Sampling

One of the rational of simple random sampling is that it does not require a complete survey frame, its speed and less time consuming, easy and effectiveness, and ease of availability of the sample. Another rational is that the sample conveniently available to the researcher.

Ethical Consideration

Prior to beginning, the research had to clearly state its objectives to the research community and get the participants' informed permission. Finding out who the people are and whether they would want to have their names or another name used in the written report are both crucial steps in the identification process. If respondents would want to read the research's findings, they can do so at the library of Tribhuvan University's department of social work. Most significantly, the researcher made sure that the subjects on whom the research is being conducted are neither harmed or exploited. The researcher is responsible for obtaining the informed permission from all people impacted in order to prevent misuse.

Here, the goal, scope, and methods of the study were explained to the research participants. The respondents received clear explanations of the study's objectives and methodology. Giving respondents the information they needed to make an educated decision about participating in the study and giving them the chance to do so were both necessary steps to getting their permission. Respondents were asked whether or not to provide their identities during the unstructured, unplanned interviews, which

ensured that any information obtained from them would be kept in confidence and utilized exclusively for the study's objectives.

Analysis

This section includes data presentation and findings which are as follows.

Table 1

Knowledge about sex and gender

Knowledge about sex and gender	Percentage
Yes	76
No	24
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, majority (76%) of the youth have knowledge about sex and gender. In the other hand, only (24%) of the student respondents have no idea about the concept of sex and gender.

Table 2

Knowledge regarding sexual orientation

Knowledge regarding sexual orientation	Percentage
Yes	25
No	75
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, majority (75%) of the students have no idea about their knowledge regarding sexual orientation while few (25%) of the students were able to answer this question. 75% of either didn't understood the term or were confused about sexual orientation.

Table 3

Knowledge about LGBTIQ

Knowledge about LGBTIQ	Percentage
Yes	77
No	23
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, most (77%) of the students have knowledge regarding LQBTIQ community, either they have heard about LGBTIQ or as a third gender or other gender. And few (23%) of the students don't have any idea regarding LGBTIQ community, third gender or other gender.

Table 4

Full form of LGBTIQ

Full form of LGBTIQ	Percentage
Yes	44
No	56
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, almost half (44%) of the students knew the full form of LGBTIQ, whereas other (56%) students didn't know the proper full forms of these terms.

Table 5

Perception of being different

Difference noticed while interacting	Percentage
Difference in behavior	12
Didn't noticed	32
They are weird	2
No difference	23
Difference in body language	11
Difference in voice	6
No idea	14
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, few (12%) of them noticed difference in the behavior, some (32%) of them didn't noticed any difference, a few (2%) of them said they are weird, some (23%) said there is no difference in them, few (11%) of them explained difference in body language, few (6%) said their voice is different, whereas few (14%) of them

don't have any idea regarding any difference in LGBTIQ community.

Table 6

Reaction towards them

Reaction towards them	Percentage
Respect	48
Nothing	38
Love	8
Ignore	6
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, almost half (48%) of the students have feeling of respect to the people of LGBTIQ community, likewise some (38 %) of youth have no feeling towards this

community, similarly few (8%) of youth love this community, whereas rare (6%) of them ignore this community.

Table 7

Family or friends from this community

Family or friends from this community	Percentage
Yes	21
No	79
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, majority (79%) of students responded that they don't have any friends or family members from this community, whereas minority (21%) of the youth said that they have either friend or family member from this community.

Table 8

Is it wrong being LGBTIQ

Is it wrong being LGBTIQ	Percentage
Defect	20
Disability	17
Curse	16
Not	47
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, some (20%) of the youth said it is defect,

Some (17%) of the youth said it is a kind of disability, few (16%) of the youth believed that it is curse, whereas almost half (47%) of youth believe there is nothing wrong being LGBTIQ.

Table 9

Reaction if family or friend would be from this community

Reaction if family or friend would be from this community	Percentage
Normal reaction	64
Support and love them	14
Shocked	5
Respect them	13
No idea	4
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, more than half (64%) of the youth of Kathmandu said that their reaction would be normal if their friend or family member would be from LGBTIQ community, some (14%) of the youth would support them, few (5%) of the youth would be shocked, likewise some (13%) of the youth would respect them and a few (4%) of the youth have no idea what to do.

Table 10

Support towards this community

Support towards this community	Percentage
Yes	85
No	15
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, majority (85%) of the students said they support them, whereas minority (15%) of the youth do not support this community as they are against them.

Table 11

Knowledge regarding Same sex marriage

Knowledge regarding Same sex marriage	Percentage
Yes	72
No	28
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, minority (28%) of the respondents have no idea about same sex marriage, they don't even know it exists and majority (72%) of the youth from Kathmandu district have knowledge about same sex marriage.

Table 12

Opinion regarding same sex marriage

Opinion regarding same sex marriage	Percentage
Against nature	16
Good	8
Normal	51
Bad	6
Don't care	19
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, half (51%) of the students said it is normal, some (16%) of the youth said it is against the nature, some (19%) of the youth don't care about it, likewise few (8%) of the youth think it is good, whereas few (6%) of the youth believe it is bad.

Table 13

knowledge about legalization of same sex marriage

knowledge about legalization of same sex marriage	Percentage
Yes	41
No	59
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, almost half (41%) of the youth have knowledge about the legalization of same sex marriage in Nepal, whereas more than half (59%) of the youth don't have knowledge about the legalization of same sex marriage in Nepal.

Table 14

How has social media portrayed them

How has social media portrayed them	Percentage
Very badly	13
As a victim	6
Both good and bad way	11
Normal way	22
Negative way	27
Mistreated	4
Comedy way	5
Good way	12
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, some (13%) of the said very badly, few (6%) said as a victim, some (11%) of them believed LGBTIQ are shown in both good and bad way, some (22%) of youth said they are shown in normal way, likewise some (27%) of youth believed that they are shown in negative way, few (4%) of youth said they are mistreated, few (5%) said they are represented in comedy way and some (12%) of the youth said they are shown in good way.

Table 15

Ways can we support them

How can we support them	Percentage
By giving respect and treating equally	52
By identifying whether they are male or female	3
By normalizing it	20
No idea	25
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, Around half (52%) of the youth of Kathmandu believe that we can support LGBTIQ community by giving respect and by treating them equally, few (3%) of youth said we can support by identifying whether they are male or female, some (20%) of youth said that by normalizing it we can support them and some (25%) of youth don't have any idea how can we support them.

Table 16

Solution to their problem

Solution to their problem	Percentage
Accepting them	38
Support them	34
No idea	28
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, Less than half (34%) of the youth of Kathmandu district said by supporting them we can solve their problem, some (38%) of youth believed that by accepting them we can solve their problems and some (28%) of the youth don't have any idea how can we support them.

Table 17

Ways to reduce discrimination against them

How to reduce discrimination against them	Percentage
Giving respect, supporting, help them to face against society	30
Through awareness, education and policy	45
Don't know	25
Total	100

Source: field survey, 2022

According to the field survey, 2022, some (30%) of the youth of Kathmandu district believe that we can reduce discrimination against LGBTIQ by giving respect, by supporting them and by helping them to face against society, almost half (45%) of youth believed that through awareness, education and change in policy we can help them and some (25%) of youth have no idea how can we reduce discrimination against LGBTIQ community.

Data Finding

Followings are major findings of this study:

Knowledge of youth

1. We can see most of the youth have knowledge regarding sex and gender. They can easily differentiate between sex and gender.

2. Though most of the youths are still confused regarding sexual orientation. They are not habitual of these terms but most of them know about either LGBTIQ community or third gender.
3. Most of them don't have knowledge regarding same sex marriage and its legalization in Nepal. We can see concern and thoughtfulness in the youth and they have started to accept the difference in each and every individual which can be helpful for the people of this community to get and exercise their rights.
4. Though most of the youths don't have idea what is the full form of LGBTIQ but they understand its meaning and importance and this community too. They are still confused regarding actual meaning but can recognize as a third gender or as other gender. They are not being able to specify the exact term used for this community.
5. Most of the youth know about same sex marriage but don't have idea about its legalization in Nepal. And youths are still confused regarding same sex marriage as most of the youth believe it is unnatural and beyond law.

Perception of youth

1. There are still youth who feel being different is some kind of disability or curse. They believe it as some kind of disease. Youths are still confused regarding this community, they accept the difference and at the same time they believe this difference is one kind of disability.
2. Most of the youths says that they have not noticed any difference in the behavior or appearance in the people of this community. Whereas some believe that there is difference in physical appearance, voice and behavior. There are youths who identify this community and know about them but don't have idea what are the problems faced by the members of this group and solution of it.
3. Social media has played important role to set perception of youth about LGBTIQ community. Most of them believe that social media has portrayed this community in negative manner. Youths believe that just for their own interest (to earn money through view) social media has used this community. Due to media people have wrong concept about this community.
4. Some of the youths believe that social media has played most important role to address problems faced by this community. It has shown the real problem faced by this community and their probable solution too.
5. Few youths have perceived this community as a source of comedy or as a comic character. They took this community as a source of entertainment. Some of them says this community are mistreated by the social media as it uses them to earn money but are not concerned regarding their actual problems.
6. Youths believe in the change in the policy. They think that if there is policy and law which ensures the rights of this community and gives remedy in case of disobedience of law, then it would be effective to protect rights of this community. There are various people who don't know about this community and youth says through awareness program we can provide knowledge to the people.

Attitude of youth

1. Attitude of youths towards youths have somehow changed than before. Youth have started to accept the fact that there are not only two genders rather other genders also exists. They have started to be used to with the LGBTIQ community.
2. Most of the youths have shown positive attitude towards this community. They have given very important and useful suggestion to this community. We can see change in society and this change is visible through the thought and behaviors of youths, and through this study we can say that this change is for the positive reform in society.
3. Youths outside of this community have so much concern regarding their rights and need and they believe that through policy and from state level problem faced by this community can be solved.
4. The age of youth has played important role in their perception towards this group. The youths from age group of 18-19 have less knowledge regarding LGBTIQ community where as youths from age group 20 to 25 have more knowledge and they are more conscious regarding LGBTIQ community.
5. The gender of youth also played vital role in the attitude shown towards this community. Male were less concerned about the problems of LGBTIQ community and they were less interested as they took this community as a joke. Females were more concerned about the problems faced by the people of LGBTIQ community and they also show positive attitude towards them. They suggested various solutions to the problems faced by this community. Education is another factor which helped to form perception of youth towards this community.
6. Youths from different faculty showed different attitude towards this community. The youths from Science faculty had less information towards LGBTIQ community and they have very few idea about them but showed passion to learn about this community in detail. The youths from Management also had less knowledge and they have limited information regarding LGBTIQ community. They have ideas which was shown by social media. The youths from Humanities have more knowledge regarding LGBTIQ community than other students. They had frequently heard about them and they also showed positive attitude towards them. The educational factor plays important role to shape mind set of people. The youths from humanities had more knowledge and showed positive attitude towards this community. Thus socio-demographic factors for example age, gender and educational qualifications helps to form certain perception about LGBTIQ to youths.

Therefore, youths have various ideas and knowledge regarding this community and they are much more aware about the rights of this community. They are also raising voice for the equal treatment in society, though constitution guaranties equality but in practical life equal treatment is not seen but society is changing and the attitude of people is also changing.

Conclusion

This research brings few conclusions about youths' views on LGBTIQ community. All the youths were known – the extent differs – of the issues particularly the problems faced by LGBTIQ community. They have uniformly taken the problem faced by LGBITQ community as a social problem. Besides,

they were in favor of organizing different programs to make people aware that the LGBTIQ community is a diverse community, and they also deserve to live a dignified life. Some youths said that they were reluctant to talk to them previously, but as they age, they found drastic change in their perception. They started thinking that the state should be highly active via different measures in changing the perception of all people toward the minority groups like LGBTIQ. Looking at the respectful words expressed by the respondents, except few exceptional cases, while referring to any of the LGBTIQ community, the youths were found really admiring to the community. I would further like to conclude that the Nepali society, looking at the positive tune and attitude of young generation toward the marginalized, minority and oppressed human groups like LGBTIQ, has moved far ahead with regard to accepting them as equally dignified human beings as other widely acknowledged cum dignified human groups.

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