



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Addressing Genderqueer Identities Through Education

Shree Krishna Panthee, PhD 

Prithvi Naryan Campus, Tribhuvan University, Pokhara, Nepal

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Corresponding Author : Shree Krishna Panthee, **Email:** shreepanthee@pncampus.edu.np

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the challenges faced by genderqueer individuals and members of the LGBT community, while also proposing educational strategies to address these issues. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data collection methods included interviews, observations, and field notes, while secondary data were gathered from literature reviews, previous research studies, published materials, and online resources. Data presentation and analysis involved verbatim transcription, paraphrasing, and reflective and reflexive processes, with queer theory serving as the framework for interpreting the findings. The literature and collected data affirm that the LGBT community faces numerous challenges, particularly in educational settings. These include misconceptions related to gender stereotypes and sexuality, involvement in the sex industry, gender-based violence, identity struggles, conflicts between rights and relationships, social exclusion, consumerist pressures, barriers to school enrollment, workplace and

housing discrimination, polysexuality-related stigma, sexual violence, and legal issues surrounding same-sex marriage or partnerships. To effectively address these challenges, this study calls for the development of policies and laws that are inclusive of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities; the dismantling of gender binaries, stereotypes, stigma, and superstitions; increased budget allocations for educational opportunities; the implementation of school-based sexuality education (SBSE) and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE); the creation of LGBT-friendly school environments; and the establishment of a commission dedicated to advocating for LGBT rights.

KEYWORDS: Education, identity, issues, genderqueer, LGBT

INTRODUCTION

The idea of gender has long been shaped by genderism and limited to two fixed ends: masculine and feminine. Yet, in the broader view, gender exists on a spectrum that also includes non-binary sexual orientations such as heterosexual

and queer identities. It shows how people express themselves through biological, psychological, and social means, defining who they are and how they interact with the world around them. The belief that two sexes (male and female) and two genders (man and woman) exist is wrong. Instead, gender forms through the interplay between how people see themselves and how society views them, changing over time both for individuals and society as a whole. Sex and the roles linked to it play a big part in shaping gender identity.

In education, gender has many meanings. It covers biological, mental, and social aspects. It is, therefore, a bio-psycho-social process. Society often pushes people to act in ways that match cultural norms. These norms favor straight relationships and male power. How a person acts has an impact on their sexual orientation. This, along with social sex roles, helps define their gender. "Sexual orientation is an enduring pattern of attraction, behavior, emotion, identity, and social contacts" (American Psychological Association, 2010, p. 74). Culture shapes how we see gender. This comes from watching how people act and talk with others over time. People also think of gender as cultural differences between folks based on sex. For example, the differences between a woman and a man, or between a straight man and a gay man.

The LGBT community in Nepal faces social, political, legal, educational, and economic challenges, despite Nepal becoming the first South Asian country to recognize LGBTIQ+ individuals in official documents and decriminalize same-sex relationships. However, homophobia continues to create barriers for LGBT individuals. One of the significant challenges is social discrimination, as many LGBT individuals face rejection from their families and communities, leading to isolation and mental health issues (Human Rights Watch, 2021). In education, LGBT students often face resistance to enrollment, issues with uniforms and toilets, as well

as bullying and harassment in schools, which negatively affect their academic achievement and mental well-being (OECD, 2022). Additionally, employment discrimination remains a significant problem, with many LGBT individuals struggling to find secure jobs due to biases in hiring practices (Knight et al., 2015).

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) for the first time recognized and protected the rights of LGBTIQ+ people (UN Women, 2023). Despite legal recognition, there are still gaps in marriage and property rights for same-sex couples, limiting their ability to access the same rights as heterosexual couples (Pant, 2020). These challenges highlight the need for stronger enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and more inclusive policies to ensure equality and dignity for the LGBT community in Nepal. Educational reforms could serve as the best alternative to address these challenges.

In Nepal, the LGBT community faces numerous challenges across various public spheres, including school enrollment, workplace harassment, discrimination in hospitals, transportation, and other public institutions. They also experience exclusion within their own families. Despite increasing discussions on inclusive education in Nepal, the specific challenges faced by genderqueer (LGBT) individuals both in and outside of school remain largely underexplored. Students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or somewhere else on the gender/sexuality spectrum ... (LGBTQI+) are among the diverse student groups in need of extra support and protection to succeed in education and reach their full potential (OECD, 2022). In this context, this study aims to identify the challenges faced by the genderqueer (LGBT) community both in and outside of school. It also seeks to outline the implications of these challenges for education and explore strategies to address them

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research-based studies have provided conceptual understandings, methodological ideas, and guidelines for understanding gender and sexuality issues in schools. Thapa (2007) focused on teacher bias and discrimination against girls in the context of gender issues in Nepalese schools. An ethnographic study by Valentin (2011) on Kathmandu tackled modern dilemmas associated with modernization and the school. According to her findings, globally disseminated notions and a linear approach to education planning may not be applicable to the urban poor while at the same time asserting that schools can be a site where people may have their dreams fulfilled.

Similarly, Bista's (2011) research addressed issues of sexuality and identity within the LGBT community while emphasizing the negative educational ambiance prevailing in Nepal against the LGBTI community. She discovered that the LGBTI community has experienced discrimination and exclusion in various spheres of society, and the education atmosphere is not supportive of them. However, she could not delve into the underlying factors related to sexual identity, intersex status, social relations, formal education, and access to employment that lie behind all this.

In the same vein, a study by Sunar (2012) on the LGBTI status and discrimination pointed out that the social status of LGBTI is very low and they are segregated in society based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. All these studies give profound testimony to the conditions prevailing in Nepal and beyond against the LGBTI community, thereby reinforcing the structure of modernity in dealing with problems of sexuality associated with urban impoverished populations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE QUEER THEORY

The study applies queer theory, which

challenges heterosexuality, to examine the flexibility of concepts like sexuality and the philosophical range of LGBT issues. It is used to critique binary gender explanations. This approach highlights the difference between one's self and assigned roles, which shakes up the usual knowledge. Queer theory claims that identity consists of sex, gender, and desire. These parts don't always match up. It also suggests that gender and sexual identity can change and are linked to other identities. Foucault (1987) said that society and history shape sexuality, not nature. This idea is popular in queer theory and goes against the old-fashioned belief that sex is natural (Dean 2000, as cited in Feldman 2009). The queer theory doesn't accept the idea of one gay identity. It sees the straight/gay divide as shaky. It argues that sexual identity is tied to other things like race, class, and nationality (Fuss 1991, as cited in Poudel 2010). In the end, queer theory takes a hard look at straight culture. It does this through debates between materialism and idealism. It focuses on change, power, and where people stand in today's world.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study employed a phenomenological approach with an explanatory research design to gather qualitative data from the cities of Kathmandu, Butwal, Nepalgunj, and Pokhara. The researcher selected experts and activists using purposive sampling and recruited LGBT participants through seed informant and snowball sampling methods. The study aimed to represent and provide reliable insights into the experiences of LGBT sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. Data was collected through direct field observation, interviews, document review, and in-depth interview techniques. Analysis involved the use of direct quotes, paraphrasing, and reflective and reflexive processes. To ensure reliability, the researcher validated data using the tool triangulation technique and applied data verification methods to capture the reality embedded in interviewees' views,

expressions, and experiences. To protect participants' privacy, pseudonyms were used throughout the text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The education policy in Nepal continues to be guided by a gender-binary framework. International research shows that in schools where LGBT content is included in the curriculum, discrimination, and violence against LGBT individuals are significantly lower. Recently, the government of Nepal has attempted to incorporate LGBT content into the school curriculum for grades six to eight. However, the key question remains: can the curriculum alone address LGBT issues, or does it also require a supportive school environment alongside orientation programs for students and teachers? Additionally, gender and sexuality-related violence could be creatively addressed by incorporating stories and dramas into school textbooks, helping students understand the principles of being gender-responsive.

Challenges faced by LGBT Students

Homophobia or transphobia is the most common issue faced by LGBT individuals both in and out of school. For instance, Sujit, a Female-to-Male (FTM) transgender individual, shared, "There was a problem with uniforms for us, but nowadays, that issue has improved. However, misbehavior from teachers continues."

Similarly, Pari, a transwoman, recounted her experience, "I started experiencing different sexual feelings at the age of eight. I felt shy around boys and preferred sitting with girls, where I felt more comfortable. The boys and even teachers would laugh and tease me. The boys would harass me, which led me to quit studying altogether."

Education can play a pivotal role in addressing social issues related to human sexuality. Marshall (2012) highlights that recent developments in sexuality education emphasize the social, cultural, economic, and spatial factors influencing young people's attitudes and decisions about

sexuality. Teenage schoolgirls often explore websites that rarely offer sexuality-related education. For example, Bay-Cheng (2003) found that only 9 of 52 sexuality education websites in a 2001 study used an expanded definition of sex,' extending beyond heterosexual penile-vaginal intercourse. His research further indicates that class significantly impacts how teens subjectively experience sexuality. Nepali schools are not exempt from such dynamics. Sujit, the FTM individual, shared another experience:

When I was in eighth grade, my school discovered my gender identity. They prohibited me from wearing pants, forcing me to leave school temporarily. I failed the final exam that year but later returned to school. Eventually, the school allowed me to wear pants, and other friends started wearing shirt pants too.

Sujit further added, "In the past, the people used to say, what a boy like a girl? But today people used to say directly "hijra or chhaka". Therefore, the degree of discrimination is increasing differently even in the school. The cause might be that we are aware of the forms of abuses against us continued Sujit.

The LGBT individuals in modern schools I visited were found to be facing numerous challenges, such as bullying, sexting, social media misuse, pornography, and student fashion trends. According to the BDS members, the MSM and MSW have been widespread in the town in recent years. I observed one peg house with a gay man Rohan at Nepalgunj and a cruising site at Kathmandu, which was quite unsafe. During an interview with a sex worker (TGW) in Kathmandu, she also offered me a massage service in her parlor which I denied. The sex work is very common among the LGBT sex professionals. As I found, many LGBT were found to be involved in sex activities with a big risk. Therefore, BDS has established several drop-in-centers (DIC) in the towns to provide quick health service to those who are involved in such unsafe sexual activities.

Students also used to get involved in such works while I visited a cabin restaurant and dance center at Butwal. Trans women Binita, Garima, and Sunita shared such experiences with me. These issues can be addressed through sexual health education tailored to LGBT people, sex workers, MSM (men having sex with men), and MSW (male sex workers). This approach can be supplemented by insights from the U.S., where it is illegal for anyone to produce, possess, or distribute nude or sexual images of individuals under 18. Federally and, in many states, sexting (the digital exchange of sexually explicit images) among adolescents under 18 is legally considered *de jure*, child pornography (Campbell & Park, 2014).

Nowadays, immoral sexual practices have become a common phenomenon. In a study based in Kathmandu, Liechty (2010) found that Nepali students had easy access to nude images and videos. A significant number of young people, including students, were engaged in sexting and viewing explicit content, even within school and college settings. He also found that advances in technology and the widespread use of mobile phones have made such practices more accessible and common, particularly among the youth of Kathmandu.

Consuming pornography can influence sexual behavior in ways that may either reinforce or challenge stereotyped mindsets about sex and sexuality. This underscores the need for appropriate education on topics such as marriage, gender roles, relationships, and sexuality. Women, particularly LGBT individuals, have often been objectified as mere sexual beings. Similar to Western societies, where critics have highlighted the containment of women within the rhetoric of "nature" and private domesticity, Kathmandu's cultural logic of *ijjat* constructs women as "naturally" sexual objects whose sexuality must be confined and protected (Liechty, 2010).

Stigmatized perceptions of sexuality and femininity have been increasingly

challenged by postmodern women and LGBT individuals who embrace the notion of "my body, my choice." Education today must address these issues by promoting the idea of "me vs. us" through school curricula, textbooks, pedagogical practices, and both curricular and extracurricular activities.

School as the Place of Hope for LGBT Students

The school can be a place of hope for LGBT individuals. To achieve this, schools can foster awareness and sensitization among the public to enhance understanding of the issues faced by the LGBT community. Additionally, schools can provide a platform for dialogue between indigenous and postmodern values related to LGBT identities. They can act as mirrors of society and agents of social change. In this regard, a study by Russell et al. (2006) has made several recommendations:

For students: Participate in discussions on current LGBT issues and advocate for an LGBT-inclusive curriculum.
For teachers: Prevent bias-related comments, incorporate LGBT issues into the classroom curriculum, invite community-based organizations (CBOs) to present on LGBT topics, advocate for anti-LGBT bullying prevention, and encourage colleagues to adopt an LGBT-inclusive curriculum.
For non-teaching staff: Integrate LGBT topics as a regular part of the curriculum, collaborate with textbook publishers to include LGBT issues, identify and eliminate barriers to LGBT inclusivity in the curriculum, and support teachers in addressing LGBT topics within the existing curriculum framework.
For policymakers: Ensure the representation and contributions of LGBT individuals in the curriculum, and communicate with textbook publishers about developing and promoting an inclusive curriculum for schools. (pp. 2-4)

The inclusion of LGBTQI+ students can also be promoted by using an inclusive

curriculum (OECD, 2022). In Nepal, recently, sexual health education has been incorporated into the Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum. However, HPE has not effectively become a medium for inclusion from the perspectives of gender and sexuality. The concept of binary gender inherently excludes individuals who do not identify strictly as male or female. This issue is further complicated by debates surrounding gender-segregated versus coeducational physical education classes, which hinder the inclusion of queer students due to the assumption of gender as a binary variable (Konopack, 2011). In this context, a school can serve as a bridge between nature and science or between indigenous and scientific values. To provide a holistic education—one that integrates both scientific and spiritual elements—modern scientific education should be linked with indigenous knowledge systems.

In recent years, sexuality and gender in sports have become fascinating areas of scholarly inquiry. In Nepal, sociosexual norms in schools remain dominated by the binary gender framework and heteronormativity. Physical education, while focusing on physical skills and motor development, often conveys latent messages about sexuality and gender. It typically presumes heteronormativity, especially for male students (Konopack, 2011). Schools often made extra-curricular policies taking a gender binary framework and hence, genderqueer students remain beyond the box. However, research shows that when transgender and nonbinary students are allowed to play sports, they tend to receive higher grades and experience increased feelings of belonging, higher self-esteem, and lower levels of depression (Education Law Center, 2024). This needs to be critically reviewed from an LGBT perspective. In this regard, schools hold immense potential to contribute to the development of LGBT individuals, yet they are not acting as catalysts for change. A study conducted by the Society for Local

Integrated Development (SOLID) in 2003 examined sex education in various districts of Nepal. The findings highlighted several gaps:

Teaching sex education at schools has not been fully implemented. Some topics, such as changes during adolescence, the reproductive system, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), are addressed. However, the focus remains on biomedical aspects rather than psychosocial dimensions. Existing subject matter is poorly taught in schools, leaving students dissatisfied. Teachers themselves have acknowledged their inability to address these issues effectively. (p. 29)

I also investigated the situation in schools and observed teachers' behavior toward students with diverse sexualities. Additionally, I interviewed several LGBT individuals. One of them, Sunita, a transgender activist (FTM or female-to-male), shared her school experiences:

I was under SLC, sir, and my father treated me like a son. I started attending a school in my village wearing a shirt and pants (traditionally considered male attire). However, one day, I was forced to leave the school due to my transvestite character, even though my family supported my education. I studied up to class four there. Later, my family enrolled me in a school in Pokhara for class five. The school teachers insisted, "You must wear a skirt and shirt, not pants and a shirt." My father complained to the teachers, but they refused to listen to our request. By the time I was in class 10, the situation had not improved. Finally, I was compelled to leave the school.

To address cases like the one mentioned above, schools can play a significant role in supporting the LGBT community by reorienting teachers, students, parents, and community leaders at every school level. My study found that LGBT students often face discrimination instead of

receiving support from their schools. This discrimination typically arises after they come out, especially during their teenage and adolescent years. Psychologists argue that adolescence is one of the most stressful periods due to hormonal changes, which may lead to sexual orientations that challenge existing societal norms. This often hinders their education and career development. Therefore, it needs peace education and pedagogy to adopt while teaching adolescences.

Moreover, according to my findings, school teachers and students were generally unsupportive of LGBT individuals, as shared by LGBT students themselves. Research suggests that teachers with advanced training and professional development in human sexuality are more likely to approach sexuality as a healthy and holistic aspect of life. These teachers align their responsibilities to create inclusive and supportive environments for their students (Preston, 2013). Some transgender individuals I interviewed reported experiencing misconduct from teachers. As Preston (2013) notes: for teachers, sexuality is a normative and healthy part of everyday life, and they work to bring that discourse into their classes by normalizing sexual talk, integrating sexuality across the curriculum, and exploring issues of embodiment.

Such situations can be addressed by educating teachers, students, and parents about notable LGBT personalities, such as Greek philosopher Socrates, King Henry III of France, British philosopher Francis Bacon, Italian scientist Leonardo da Vinci, Swedish Queen Christina, and British economist J.M. Keynes (BDS et al., 2013). Historical records show that LGBT individuals have played significant roles in society, such as Alexander the Great, who is known to have been bisexual (The Ancient World, 2010). Teaching about these figures in schools can help foster a positive attitude and a sense of respect toward LGBT peers.

In this regard, the Blue Diamond Society (BDS), a leading LGBT organization in

Nepal, has suggested incorporating LGBT-related content into the curriculum from an early age (BDS et al., 2013). BDS has also conducted orientation sessions for teachers and students in schools and colleges. A transgender woman (MTF), Chari, shared her experience:

We periodically provide orientation classes to teachers and students. So far, we've conducted sessions in twelve schools and two colleges. School-aged students are often surprised when we teach them about our sexual orientation.

While these efforts are commendable, they remain sporadic and limited in impact due to inadequate resources and networking. However, such practices could be institutionalized by teacher training institutes to ensure broader and more consistent outreach.

Additionally, student-led platforms like the Sexual and Gender Minorities Students Forum Nepal (SGMSFN) could serve as a vital resource for organizing guest lectures in schools and colleges. This approach has been effective in the U.S., where more than 3,500 student organizations share the mission of creating safe spaces for all members of the student body, regardless of sexual orientation (Ghaziani, 2011).

Introducing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

Introducing comprehensive sexuality education is another way to address LGBT issues. Sexuality education equips young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed decisions about their sexuality and lifestyle. Strong international commitments, from human rights, health, and youth empowerment perspectives, advocate for promoting comprehensive sexuality education ("Youth and," 2009, p. 2). In the U.S., sex education is often offered through health classes. However, research has shown that many teachers, irrespective of their specialization, lack confidence in addressing issues of sexuality both inside and outside the

classroom (Klein & Breck, as cited in Preston, 2013, p. 21). This model could also be adopted in Nepali schools to ensure inclusivity and support for LGBT students.

Sexuality education can provide students with knowledge about various aspects of sex and sexuality, including biological factors (chromosomal, hormonal, and genetic), physical factors (bodily functions and the role of sexual organs), and psychological factors (mental and emotional dimensions). The discourse of health in teaching sex and sexuality education often dictates that these topics are primarily addressed through biological and pathological knowledge, such as body parts, sexual mechanics, and techniques for preventing infections. However, Marshall (2012) argues that contemporary approaches to teaching sex and sexuality education are characterized by a "missing discourse of history." Implementing School-Based Sexuality Education (SBSE), as practiced in the United States, could help address sexual issues, particularly those affecting the LGBT community, in Nepal.

Even in the U.S., sex education remains a complex issue for curriculum implementers and society. A study of elementary teachers' responses to sexuality-related questions found that many felt ill-equipped to adequately address these issues. Nearly 46 percent of teachers reported feeling pressured by the community, parents, or schools to be particularly cautious when answering sexuality-related questions (Landry, Singh, & Darroch, 2000, as cited in Preston, 2013).

A recent survey of U.S. public schools revealed that only one-third of lead health education teachers had received formal sexuality education training in the previous two years. Additionally, while a median of 77 percent of schools across states provided a written health education curriculum, including sexuality, only 18 percent offered comprehensive education on condom use (CDC, 2012, as cited in Preston, 2013). To complicate matters further, there is no

standardized curriculum for school-based sexuality education in the U.S. However, the National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K-12, published by a leading consortium of health education programs, offers a potential model (Future of Sex Education Initiative, 2012, as cited in Preston, 2013).

While sex education can benefit LGBT individuals, implementing it in societies rooted in gender binaries and hetero-patriarchy is challenging. Data suggests that sex education is not only insufficient but also inconsistent. Teachers often find themselves unprepared due to a lack of formal training in sexuality curricula (Preston, 2013). The U.S. experience highlights the importance of rigorous teacher orientation and training to effectively implement sex education, as untrained teachers often encounter unexpected challenges.

Reflecting on U.S. research, I concluded that addressing LGBT issues in Nepal requires an in-depth understanding of the psychosocial perspectives of Nepali teachers regarding sex, gender, and sexuality. For instance, a female teacher named Uma I interviewed revealed a duality in her mindset, shaped by both traditional and postmodern perspectives. As a teacher, she supported LGBT rights, but as a member of society, she expressed reservations about homosexual marriage. She remarked:

The first and foremost problem is exclusion within the family. They are not receiving any facilities apart from citizenship identity. This is because our society neither recognizes nor accepts them. I think ensuring homosexual relationships as a right might spoil society. But... (hesitantly) *unihaarulai adhikar ta dinu parcha holani* (they should be given their rights).

Analyzing recent education initiatives from an LGBT perspective, expert Shreeram noted:

In the latest master's degree course in gender studies (sociology), there are some topics related to LGBTI.

However, one department alone cannot cover all aspects. All departments should contribute to addressing these issues. The curriculum should be flexible to incorporate contemporary issues. Similarly, classrooms should eliminate discriminatory behaviors on one side while including LGBTI-related content on the other. Teachers need orientation about LGBTI issues, but separate teaching methods are not necessary.

The duality expressed by the female teacher and Shreeram's suggestions can be addressed by providing orientation to teachers on topics related to gender, sex, and sexuality; encouraging discussions between students and teachers on topics such as personal choice versus cultural beliefs, and incorporating LGBT-related content into school and college curricula.

The government has recently introduced LGBT topics as part of CSE into the school curriculum and allocated a small budget for related initiatives. However, these sporadic efforts will not yield meaningful results without an integrated approach to sexuality education.

Like SBSE, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is designed to provide age-appropriate, medically accurate, and culturally sensitive information that empowers students to make informed decisions about their sexuality. It adopts a holistic approach to human development and sexuality. According to UNESCO, the primary goal of sex education is to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to make responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships ("Youth and," 2009). The issues of LGBT individuals can be effectively addressed through comprehensive sexuality education.

The key elements of CSE include: instruction on anatomy, physiology, and sexuality; prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); emphasis on abstinence as a method to

prevent pregnancy and STIs; discussion of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression; exploration of healthy relationships, intimate partner violence, and negotiation; and guidance on contraception and safer sex practices ("What is," n.d.).

CSE has been introduced in several countries with varying objectives. For instance, Zambia implemented CSE to address the spread of HIV and other STIs. Programs there include behavior change communication, peer education, life skills training, and youth-friendly services (Kapata & Minister, 2012). By providing reproductive health education, Zambia aims to empower young people to make healthier choices. Similarly, Kentucky recently enacted a bill to include sex education in schools, highlighting global efforts to integrate CSE into formal education.

In Nepal, sex education has been incorporated into the school curriculum, but its implementation remains inadequate. Teachers, often untrained and influenced by stereotyped mindsets, feel unprepared to teach sexuality-related content. A study by SOLID (2003) found that many teachers reported feeling shy or embarrassed when addressing such topics, citing insufficient training as a significant barrier ("Society for," 2003, p. 32). Additionally, sex education in Nepal suffers from low prioritization because it is not an examinable subject. Consequently, it is often relegated to guidance counselors, who lack the necessary time, resources, and skills (UNESCO, 2011, as cited in Kapata & Minister, 2012).

The school environment plays a pivotal role in supporting LGBT students. My study reveals that sociosexuality in schools is largely guided by gender binary norms and heteronormativity. Many LGBT students face physical abuse, discrimination, and ignorance from teachers and peers. This hostile environment contributes to higher dropout rates among LGBT students, who are also affected by economic hardships and societal stigma. Creating an inclusive and

supportive school environment involves: Training teachers to address gender, sex, and sexuality without bias; incorporating flexible, inclusive content into curricula; bridging indigenous and scientific perspectives to offer holistic education; and providing sexuality literacy to address issues of discrimination and ignorance.

CSE offers a pathway to challenge and change societal norms. It promotes human rights, healthy lifestyles, and inclusivity by teaching students that gender and sexuality exist on a continuum. Queer theory underscores the fluidity of sexuality, rejecting the rigid masculine-feminine binary and emphasizing that human sexual preferences are natural and diverse (Introduction, 2010). To address these issues effectively, Nepal needs an integrated education policy that prioritizes sexuality education across all levels of schooling; links modern education with indigenous and spiritual perspectives; provides economic and social empowerment opportunities for LGBT individuals, and challenges the gender binary framework currently guiding education policies.

In conclusion, CSE is not merely about imparting knowledge; it is a means to foster equality, inclusivity, and understanding in society. By addressing the sociosexual challenges faced by LGBT students and integrating comprehensive sex education into curricula, schools can create safer and more empowering spaces for all students. This approach will ensure that education serves as a transformative tool for social justice and human rights.

Introducing School-Based Sexuality Education (SBSE)

The practice and provisions on sex education reveal that education can be a powerful means to alter societal norms and values. A well-designed school curriculum holds the potential to transform people's thoughts and behaviors. School-based sex education is an important strategy to increase awareness about sexual health

among youth and adolescents, and the importance of training teachers to deliver comprehensive sexuality education (Olufadewa, Adesina, Oladokun, Oladele, Ayorinde, & Abudu, 2021). Implementing School-Based Sexuality Education (SBSE), as seen in the United States, could serve as a valuable model for addressing sexual and gender issues, particularly those affecting the LGBT community in Nepal.

Sexuality-based education in schools could help tackle these issues, but it requires a broader perspective. Unfortunately, curricula are often limited to textbooks and predefined courses of study, neglecting the broader context of school culture. Content alone cannot resolve LGBT issues—it must be complemented by a supportive school environment and enriched by the experiences of students and teachers. Schools must become places of hope for LGBT individuals, fostering awareness and sensitization among the public to understand their challenges and rights.

Moreover, schools can serve as platforms for meaningful interactions between indigenous and postmodern values concerning sex and sexuality. However, implementing such initiatives remains challenging in societies entrenched in sexually stereotyped moralities. For example, societal resistance to sex education was evident in the community where I conducted my study. This resistance stems from traditional moral frameworks that hinder the inclusion of comprehensive sex education.

Interestingly, international comparisons show how societal attitudes shape outcomes. For instance, attitudes toward teenage pregnancy are more negative in Europe than in the United States, contributing to lower pregnancy rates in Europe (Darroch, 2001, as cited in Hausauer, n.d.). Similarly, the quality of instruction significantly affects the success of sex education programs. Patricia Donovan (1998, as cited in Hausauer, n.d.) highlighted that many sex educators lack adequate training in human sexuality, which

limits the effectiveness of such programs.

Physical education also plays a role in shaping perceptions of gender and sexuality. While the primary focus of physical education is on skills and motor development, latent messages about gender and sexuality often accompany these lessons. Teachers must recognize and address these implicit messages to foster an inclusive environment.

Additionally, introducing students to renowned LGBT figures in history and contemporary society can help develop positive attitudes toward their LGBT peers. Highlighting the achievements of such personalities normalizes their contributions and counters stereotypes. Furthermore, incorporating indigenous practices and transvestite religious traditions into lessons on sexuality can enrich the curriculum by providing culturally relevant perspectives.

SBSE can be an effective model for addressing these issues, as it offers a structured approach to teaching and learning about sexual and gender diversity. By incorporating comprehensive sexuality education into the curriculum, schools can provide students with the knowledge and understanding needed to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

CONCLUSION

The primary challenge faced by genderqueer (LGBT) individuals in education is the overall school or college environment, particularly its psycho-social aspects. This study highlights that educational institutions in Nepal are not conducive to the inclusion and well-being of LGBT students. Sociosexuality in schools continues to be shaped by gender binary norms and heteronormativity, further marginalizing sexual and gender minorities. One of the most significant issues is physical abuse, which affects many school-aged LGBT students. They also experience sexual abuse and harassment, including teasing, bullying, and, in some cases, exploitation due to widespread ignorance

about sexuality. Disturbingly, the study found instances where some teachers were involved in inappropriate sexual activities with LGBT students. Economic instability and unemployment further exacerbate these challenges, forcing many LGBT students to drop out due to a lack of financial and social support. Additionally, the government has yet to implement educational policies that specifically address the needs of sexual and gender minorities. This study underscores that education is one of the most effective tools for addressing gender and sexuality-based issues. School-Based Sexuality Education (SBSE) and Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) offer promising solutions to tackle these challenges. However, in Nepal, these programs have yet to be fully implemented, leaving a significant gap in addressing sexuality-related issues in the education system.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

- a) Studies show that a school is a place of hope and change for the LGBT community, but they are often failing to fulfill this role. School-Based Sexuality Education (SBSE) can help address this issue. Therefore, teachers should be trained to effectively handle sexuality-related topics.
- b) Sexuality and education are closely intertwined - one cannot exist without the other. Education can address various social issues, including human sexuality. International studies indicate that students feel more comfortable when LGBT-related topics are included in the curriculum. Thus, governments should improve school curricula to reflect these issues.
- c) Gender and sexuality-based violence is prevalent in the LGBT community. Members face bullying and sexual harassment at home, in schools, and society. Even government officials, including police and teachers, may participate in such violence. These problems can be effectively addressed

- through awareness programs and SBSE.
- d) Gender and sexuality-based violence and discrimination are widespread in the LGBT community, especially in schools. These issues can be addressed effectively through education and empowerment. Educational initiatives such as teacher training, speech contests, and peace pedagogy can be organized in schools and colleges to combat these challenges.
 - e) Social scientists worldwide advocate for peace education as a way to combat gender-based violence through discussion and dialogue. Peacebuilding studies bolster these efforts. School-Based Sexuality Education (SBSE) is a valuable program for addressing LGBT issues. A positive school environment and the active participation of students and teachers are crucial in tackling these challenges.
 - f) LGBT individuals, sex workers, men who have sex with men (MSM), and male sex workers (MSW) often face a high risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Sexual health education can effectively address these issues. Physical education, which traditionally focuses on physical skills, should also include awareness of sexuality and gender. Teachers should incorporate these topics into their lessons thoughtfully.
 - g) Teenage schoolgirls often learn about the concept of sexuality through various media sources. The school curriculum should integrate Internet resources to raise awareness about different forms of human sexuality.
 - h) Sexuality issues can also be addressed by transforming classroom pedagogy. Including prominent figures from the LGBT community in the curriculum can promote positive attitudes toward LGBT individuals.
 - i) Queer theorists argue that sexuality is fluid and that there are many ways to express being gay or lesbian. Further

research is needed to explore the extent of this fluidity.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

I declare that this manuscript is originally produced by me.

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