

Identity Formation and Coming Out Process of Lesbian and Queer Women in Heteronormative Society of Kathmandu Valley

A Thesis

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “Identity Formation and Coming Out Process of Lesbian and Queer Women in Heteronormative Society of Kathmandu Valley” was prepared by Ms. Puspa Paudel under my guidance and supervision. The researcher has met the criteria prescribed by Central Department of Sociology. I hereby recommend this thesis for final evaluation and approval.

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APPROVAL LETTER

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Identity Formation and Coming Out Process of Lesbian and Queer Women in Heteronormative Society of Kathmandu Valley” submitted by Ms. Puspa Paudel in partial fulfillment for the requirements of Master Degree of Arts in Sociology has been evaluated and approved.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that MA thesis entitled “Identity Formation and Coming Out Process of Lesbian and Queer Women in Heteronormative Society of Kathmandu Valley” submitted to Central Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University is entirely my original work, prepared under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor, Dr.Youba Raj Luintel. I have fully acknowledged all ideas and information borrowed from various sources in the course of writing this thesis. The result presented in this thesis has not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree. I assure that no part of the content of this thesis has been published in any form. I am solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.

Signature:.....

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ABSTRACT

The male and female as two gender identities has been taken as 'normal' by default in the society which makes the heterosexual normativity its primary characteristics. In such a situation, the lesbian and queer 'women' being the different and diverse identities tries to communicate their identities in one way or the other.

Communication is an important aspects of community building which helps these gender and sexual minorities to stay intact with each other, build solidarities, create their spaces and claim such spaces. Through in-depth interviews, participant observation, conversations and content analysis this research tries to present how the identity and communication process happens.

The identity formation process is complex and lifelong process whereby the different trajectories of life shapes how, where and when the identities are shaped. Confusion, dilemma, comparison, are characteristics among many while realizing the diverse sexual and gender identity. Since, society is largely heteronormative, these identities thrive to maintain their existence after realizing their own self for which communication is the key. These communications range from the deconstruction of heteronormative language, formation of own signs and symbols, creation of the spaces and collective identity communication are important. These signs and symbols range from flags, colors to the non-verbal gesture and publicly organized pride parade and close group discussions, hikes or other socializing events. Similarly, in the age of social media, most of the communication and socialization happens in social media such as Youtube, Facebook, Instagram. In some of the social media, pages have been created to interact between the diverse gender and sexual minorities, for activism and to express oneself. There social media pages can be general or specific to gender or sexual identity. This has given much space for communication.

In all of these identity and communication process one of the important considerations is the acceptance of multiple identities, fluidity and intersectional identity which even the mainstream LGBTIQ+ right movement has failed to accept which has brought the movement in question. The linear notion of identities within the gender and sexual minorities has been problematic in shaping the LGBTIQ+ movement and for these diverse identities as well.

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Acronyms

BDS: Blue Diamond Society

GSM: Gender and Sexual Minorities

LGBTIQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer

MSM: Male having Sex with Male

MOGAI: Marginalized Orientations, Gender Identities and Intersex