MENTAL HEALTH OF LGBT OF KATHMANDU VALLEY: THE ROLE OF VICTIMIZATION, DISCRIMINATION, CONNECTEDNESS AND IDENTITY AFFIRMATION

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Background

- LGBT(lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) individuals are among the most oppressed, least visible, and marginalized groups in Nepal.[1]

- They endure persistent social marginalization, harsh discrimination, and violence in both public and private settings leading to poor mental health outcomes.[1]

- According to the recent survey by the National LGBTI health Alliance, conducted in Australia in 2020, 74% of LGBTIQ+ people reported moderate to very high levels of psychological distress compared to 49% of the general population.[2]

Background

- Though the constitution of Nepal recognized the LGBT right as fundamental human right in 2007 LGBT people continue to face wide range of discrimination and inequalities affecting their mental wellbeing. .[3]

- There is still lack of clarity regarding the specific barriers LGBT people face in Nepal while seeking and attending health institutions, educational institutions, and other sociocultural activities.

- It is essential to fill the knowledge gap we now have regarding, mental health, well-being, and social care of LGBT people.

- Many research conducted worldwide showed strong association between social stigma faced by LGBT people and their mental health. Therefore, this research will help to find out whether the situation of LGBT people in Nepal is different from international context or not.

Objectives

General Objectives	Specific Objectives
• To assess the mental health status and the role of victimization, discrimination, connectedness and identity affirmation in the mental health status of LGBT people of the Kathmandu valley.	• To identify the gender related discrimination, rejection, victimization, non-affirmation, internalized transphobia, negative expectations, and non-disclosure faced by LGBT people • To explore the resilience measures adopted by LGBT people • To assess the depression, anxiety and stress level of LGBT people • To assess the role of victimization, discrimination, connectedness and identity affirmation on the mental health status of LGBT people

Methodology

Study Method	Quantitative research method
Type of Study	Cross-sectional, Descriptive and analytical
Study time	Total: Jestha 1st week – Chaitra 2nd week Data collection: Ashoj 1st week – Ashoj last week
Study site	Kathmandu valley
Study Population	LGBTIQ+ individuals
Study Unit	lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals
Sample Size	115
Sampling Technique	Snowball sampling

Methodology

Inclusion Criteria	• LGBTIQ+ people above 18 years of age
Exclusion Criteria	• LGBT people with cognitive difficulties were excluded
Data Collection Tool	• Gender minority stress and resilience measure • Depression, anxiety and stress scale
Data Collection Technique	• Face to face interview

Result

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

n= 115

Socio-demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency (n= 115)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18-25	82	**71.3**
	25 above	33	28.7
Ethnicity	Brahmin	15	13
	Chhetri	19	16.5
	Janjati	67	**58.3**
	Dalit	8	7
	Madhesi	4	3.5
	Others	2	1.7
Gender identity and sexual orientation	Lesbian	26	22.6
	Gay	32	**27.8**
	Bisexual	25	21.7
	Transgender	32	**27.8**
Socially open	No	46	40
	Yes	69	60

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

n= 115

Socio-demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency (n= 115)	Percentage (%)
Relationship status	Single	**63**	**54.8**
	In a relationship	14	12.2
	In more than one relationship	7	6.1
	Married	26	22.6
	Engaged	3	2.6
	Divorced	2	1.7
Education	Illiterate	8	7
	Literate	10	8.7
	Primary	10	8.7
	Secondary	**49**	**42.6**
	University	38	33
Current employment status	Employed	**59**	**51.3**
	Unemployed	16	13.9
	Student	26	22.6
	Others	14	12.2

Mental Health Status of LGBTIQ+ community

n= 115

Level	Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Normal	62	53.9	21	18.3	36	31.3
Mild	31	27.0	6	5.2	23	20.0
Moderate	16	13.9	30	26.1	26	22.6
Severe	6	5.2	15	13.0	17	14.8
Extremely Severe	**20**	**17.4**	**43**	**37.4**	**13**	**11.3**

Level	Stress	Anxiety	Depression
Normal	0-14	0-7	0-9
Mild	15-18	8-9	10-13
Moderate	19-25	10-14	14-20
Severe	26-33	15-19	21-27
Extremely Severe	34+	20+	28+

Independent Variables

n= 115

Independent Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender related discrimination	Never	25	21.7
	At some point in life	90	**78.3**
Gender related rejection	Never	15	13.0
	At some point in life	100	**87.0**
Gender related victimization	Never	6	5.2
	At some point in life	109	**94.8**
Non-affirmation	Less stigmatization (0-10)	65	**56.5**
	High stigmatization (11-24)	50	43.5
Internalized transphobia	Less stigmatization (0-11)	54	47.0
	High stigmatization (12-32)	61	**53.0**

Association between Stress and Independent Variables

n= 115

Independent Variables	Category	Stress		p-value
		Stress n (%)	No Stress n (%)	
Employment status	Employed	33 (28.7)	26 (22.6)	**0.002**
	Unemployed	**46 (40.0)**	10 (8.7)	
Gender related discrimination	Never	10 (8.7)	15 (13.0)	**0.000**
	At some point in life	**69 (60.0)**	21 (18.3)	
Gender related rejection	Never	7 (6.1)	8 (7.0)	**0.048**
	At some point in life	**72 (62.6)**	28 (24.3)	
Gender related victimization	Never	1 (0.9)	5 (4.3)	**0.005**
	At some point in life	**78 (67.8)**	31 (27.0)	
Internalized transphobia	Less stigmatization	31 (27.0)	23 (20.0)	**0.014**
	High stigmatization	**48 (41.7)**	13 (11.3)	

Association between Anxiety and Independent Variables

n= 115

Category		Anxiety		p-value
		Anxiety n (%)	No anxiety n (%)	
Age in years	18-25	**71(61.7)**	11(9.6)	**0.034**
	Above 25	23(20.0)	10 (8.7)	
Education	Up to secondary	**67 (58.7)**	10 (8.7)	**0.037**
	Above secondary	27 (23.5)	11(9.6)	
Employment status	Employed	41 (35.7)	18 (15.7)	**0.000**
	Unemployed	**53 (46.1)**	3 (2.6)	
Gender related discrimination	Never	16 (13.9)	9 (7.8)	**0.009**
	At some point in life	**78 (67.8)**	12 (10.4)	
Gender related rejection	Never	8 (7.0)	7 (6.1)	**0.002**
	At some point in life	**86 (74.8)**	14 (12.2)	
Gender related victimization	Never	2 (1.7)	4 (3.5)	**0.002**
	At some point in life	**92 (80.0)**	17 (14.8)	
Internalized transphobia	Less stigmatization	38 (33.0)	16 (13.9)	**0.003**
	High stigmatization	**56 (48.7)**	5 (4.3)	

Association between Depression and Independent Variables

n= 115

Independent Variables	Category	Depression		P-value
		Depressed n (%)	Non depressed n (%)	
Employment status	Employed	44 (38.3)	15 (13.0)	**0.020**
	Unemployed	**51 (44.3)**	5 (4.3)	
Relationship Status	Single	47 (40.9)	16 (13.9)	**0.013**
	In relationship	**48 (41.7)**	4 (3.5)	
Gender related discrimination	Never	16 (13.9)	9 (7.8)	**0.006**
	At some point in life	**79 (68.7)**	11 (9.6)	
Gender related rejection	Never	8 (7.0)	7 (6.1)	**0.001**
	At some point in life	**87 (75.7)**	13 (11.3)	
Internalized transphobia	Less stigmatization	39 (33.9)	15 (13.0)	**0.006**
	High stigmatization	**56 (48.7)**	5 (4.3)	

Binary and Multiple Logistics Regression Stress

n= 115

Variables	Category	COR	CI	P-value	AOR	CI	P-value
Discrimination	Never	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	At some point in life	**4.929**	1.930-12.585	0.001	**1.838**	0.560-6.033	0.315
Rejection	Never	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	At some point in life	**2.939**	0.974- 8.867	0.056	**1.563**	0.436- 5.597	0.493
Victimization	Never	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	At some point in life	**12.581**	1.412- 112.073	0.023	**7.365**	0.730- 74.266	0.090
Internalized transphobia	Less stigmatization	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	High stigmatization	**2.739**	1.211- 6.197	0.016	**2.794**	1.142-6.833	0.024

Binary and Multiple Logistics Regression Anxiety

n= 115

Variables	Category	COR	CI	P-value	AOR	CI	P-value
Discrimination	Never	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	At some point in life	**3.656**	1.321-10.119	0.013	**3.826**	1.415- 10.346	0.008
Rejection	Never	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	At some point in life	**5.375**	1.683-17.164	0.005	**4.610**	1.129- 18.818	0.033
Victimization	Never	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	At some point in life	**10.824**	1.835-63.829	0.009	**8.907**	0.894- 88.756	0.062
Internalized transphobia	Less stigmatization	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	High stigmatization	**4.716**	1.593-13.962	0.005	**6.044**	1.724-21.189	0.005

Binary and Multiple Logistics Regression Depression

n= 115

Variables	Category	COR	CI	P-value	AOR	CI	P-value
Discrimination	Never	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	At some point in life	**4.040**	1.440-11.337	0.008	**2.750**	0.850-8.895	0.091
Rejection	Never	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	At some point in life	**5.856**	1.818-18.865	0.003	**6.081**	1.541-23.992	0.010
Internalized transphobia	Less stigmatization	Ref	Ref		Ref	Ref	
	High stigmatization	**4.308**	1.446-12.832	0.009	**5.113**	1.506-17.366	0.009

Conclusion

- The objective of the study was to assess the mental health status and the role of victimization, discrimination, connectedness and identity affirmation on the mental health status of LGBT+ people of the Kathmandu valley.

- Based on the results of this research it can be concluded that a high percentage of LGBT+ individuals experience stress, anxiety, and depression as a result of gender related discrimination, rejection, victimization and internalized transphobia.

- The study was conducted among LGBTIQ people of Kathmandu Valley, so the study might not be the representative of all the LGBTIQ people of Nepal

Recommendations

The government should
- Create gender friendly policies to prevent discrimination and promote equality.
- Provide funding for mental health services specifically designed for LGBTIQ individuals.

Non-government organization
- Especially, Blue Diamond Society in collaboration with the other organizations working in Kathmandu Valley for LGBT+ individuals and mental health organization should.
  - Organize campaigns to raise awareness about mental health among LGBT+ individuals
  - Screening of mental health issues of LGBT+ people and
  - Provide counseling and necessary support

- Organize campaigns to raise awareness of the unique challenges faced by LGBT+ individuals and promote acceptance and equality

Recommendations

Individuals should
- Promote acceptance and equality for LGBT+ individuals
- Create safe and supportive environment for LGBT+ individuals at homes, schools, workplace and communities.

References

1. Kelleher C. Minority stress and health : Implications for lesbian , gay , bisexual , transgender , and questioning (LGBTQ) young people. 2009;22(4):373–9.

2. LGBTIQ+ Health Australia. Snapshot of mental health and suicide prevention statistics for LGBTI people. 2021;(October):1–16. Available from: https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/statistics

3. White Hughto JM, Reisner SL, Pachankis JE. Transgender stigma and health: A critical review of stigma determinants, mechanisms, and interventions. Soc Sci Med [Internet]. 2015;147:222–31. Availablefrom: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.11.010

Thank you