

# Analyzing the Drivers of Targeted Violence and Health Issues Affecting Lgbt Community

Deepanshu Pachauri<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Lalnunhlimi<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Law, Sharda University, Knowledge Park 3, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

<sup>2</sup> Department of Law, Sharda University, Knowledge Park 3, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

**Abstract – These days, LGBT rights have become an important issue. In many regions, this group of people is deprived of basic human rights. Though much debate have been taking place across the globe, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals are deprived of even the basic human rights in many parts of the world. Though several governments have come forward proactively and implemented systems ensuring all human rights to this group of individuals, the issues still looming large. LGBT people face discrimination in different ways in many societies. Abuse, physical and psychological tortures and state-sponsored execution for showing different sexual orientation are quite common in many countries. Thus, the most pressing problem is the criminalization of LGBT people. For the violations of human rights, there are laws that the governments or appropriate authorities can implement to punish the offenders. Violence and abuse that the LGBT people face these days is a contentious issue today. In this research study, we explore violence against the LGBT community and different health issues they face in details.**

**Keywords:** LGBT Community, Violence, Victimization

## I. INTRODUCTION

The social section of the LGBT fraternity has slowly attained increasing importance in the domain of academic research. In the last couple of decades, a larger number of investigations have been done into this section talking about the challenges that are faced by the people of the said domain. LGBT – or the lesbian, gay, bisexual and the transgender people often have to face a number of health issues. Often LGBT is considered to be a single section that is classified as a distinct homogenous community which is much opposed to the reality that this is a section of people with considerable variations in their natures and characteristics. LGBT consists of four broad divisions of human nature with their own distinct and unique challenges, which are much different from each other. This is a section that also exhibits other finer communities on the basis of their race, ethnicity, geographical locations, socioeconomic conditions and status, age and other aspects. You can also find points of commonality and overlapping elements between the sects. This also adds considerable challenge for the study of the group. People within this community often might not be comfortable openly talking about their conditions, or know others of the same community. They might not be related to LGBTI organizations and might not

be open to attend events like chat shows, seminars or open talks on the topic.

## II. CHALLENGES FOR THE STUDY SECTION OF LGBT COMMUNITY

It is evident and students attempting this genre of research have to face a number of issues. In order to understand these problems, it is important that you must understand the nature and the depth of the social work researches done to address the LGBT issues. An analysis of these issues has revealed the fact that a number of academic social researches often overlook the challenges and the problems of the LGBT section of the society. Amongst the attempted researches done on this section, only 19% of the students involved in the process have been found to be competent enough for the task (Burkhart, 2013). One of the main reasons that explain the lack of student competency is that there are no set standards or measurements of basic competency level that needs to be ascertained for the students who are involved in these research projects with the LGBT population.

The following are some of the leading issues that are often found in students doing their research on this domain.

- One of the leading problems rests in the presentation of the problems and the dynamism which are often much different to the real traditions of the community and its people.
- Operating with the Trans phobic staff, homophobic supervisors and other clients is also a considerable challenge.
- Looking for field agencies that are friendly to these sections is also a considerable problem.
- Keeping the aspect of sexual orientation and the elements of gender identity discreet is also a challenge.
- Keeping matters discreet from co-workers, seniors and clients is also a considerable challenge.
- Keeping matters of heterosexuality and the aspects of gender normativity secrete from related agencies and seniors are also pressure.
- Managing the discriminations of the staff's actions in relation to LGBT clients is also a considerable challenge faced by the students.

Often the field instructors and the educators do not prepare their students well to handle the issues of the LGBT related clients and other individuals like their colleagues.

### III. VIOLENCE AGAINST THE LGBT COMMUNITY

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed in 1948 declares that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". This is a statement that implies clearly that the LGBT section is protected in terms of their safety and dignity [2]. However, the group of the section is not mentioned in particular in the document or any other related text. Nevertheless, this does not protect the people of this community to face several discriminative barriers in different walks of their lives. The members of the LGBT section often have to face violence, discrimination, and abuse. Often some members of the group have to face pervasive physical abuse, discrimination, and harassment leading to hate-related killings even in different parts of the world. The United nation's 2015 reports that were developed on the Geneva-based Human Rights Council have spoken about the various violence and abuse related cases that have emerged about the

members of the LGBT section. Here you can hear of incidents here Transsexual women were killed in Uruguay and the case of a black lesbian woman being killed in India, a gay man in Chile being met with a similar fate at the hands of the Neo-Nazi killers. In the month of February 2015, the world came face to face with the gruesome photos where Syrian men were being pushed off a high building by the Islamic extremist groups on the account of being homosexuals.

The UN reports of 2015 also speak of a lesbian woman in Bangladesh who was raped by the police who had taken her in custody (McNeil, 2012). Similarly, four Egyptian men were also taken into custody and were also sexually harassed during their detention. As per the Geneva-based Human Rights Council reports there are a minimum number of 76 countries in the world who protects their LGBTI community from violence, abuse, and physical and mental harassment (McFarlane, 2008).

In India alone, the LGBT section has to face a number of challenges of which corrective rape, stigma and discrimination and a high index of AIDS/HIV infections are considerable ones. All this is a reality in spite of the Indian constitution providing protection to each of its citizens who cannot be discriminated on the basis of their sexual orientations. In fact, the constitution of the nation has also legalized marriage within the same sex. Evidence of violence and physical abuse and other forms of harassment against the members of the community is not hard to find and is said to have a long-lasting effect on the individuals and also the community as a whole (Russell & Keel, 2012). Instances of suppression, bullying by people around them and also brutal physical assault can have damaging emotional and psychological effects on the members of the community from the tender stages of their childhood. It can also lead to severe depression in their adulthood.

Such attitudes and reactions towards the members of the group often stop people from owning up about their homosexuality as it is seen as a negative thing bound to give rise to social stigmas. This is why many of these LGBT individuals do not ever come up with their real sexual orientation and also does not get the right support for their HIV treatments.

#### A. *Victimization*

Many LGBT youths have reported of school victimization and have expressed safety concerns for them. Surveys have revealed that a number as high as 63.5% of LGBT individuals have growing concerns for their own safety. Nearly 18.3% have been brutally beaten up as per the research reports of the last year. A staggering number of nearly 81.9% of LGBT people have been verbally abused for their sexual orientations and 38.3% people have

been physically mishandled like being shoved and pushed. 55.2% of people of the LGBT community have been harassed through mobile text messages and other electronic means of communication (Carter, 2010). Many incidents have not even been reported since the victims were not given adequate protection and no strong action was taken against the people doing the misdeeds. LGBT students with lower levels of academic achievements were found to face a greater amount of harassment. The LGBT youth is reported to have high indexes of depression and a lower self-esteem level.

#### **B. Forms of Victimization**

- **Homelessness** - As per the reports of the Institute of Medicine nearly 26% of the LGBT youth gets thrown out of their homes by their own families and parents. Hence homelessness is a big issue with the LGBT section. These youth who have been thrown out of their homes has to face a larger amount of sexual harassment. Nearly 58.7% such LGBT youth has to face much brutal violence against them. It is also much difficult for them to find a new house for themselves.
- **Bullying** - There is a considerable disparity in the cases of bullying done on LGBT individuals as compared to the general people of the same age or the same socioeconomic strata. A survey done on youth within the age group of 14 to 22 reveals the fact that the section of the homosexual males and females has to face a greater amount of abuse and violence as compared to the heterosexual individuals. Such bullying is said to have really adverse effects on LGBT individuals that later affects their behavior leading to depression and even suicidal attempts. LGBT individuals are also more likely to indulge in substance abusers like alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
- **Parental rejection** - LGBT youths often find the experience of acknowledging their reality to their families, friends, relatives, and peers as a rather daunting one. It has been seen that nearly 50% of the LGBT youths often experience a negative reaction from their parents once they do acknowledge their reality. This renunciation from their families can often have a rather negative effect on their mental state. This renunciation from the families where the LGBT youth faces a lack of support from their family members often encourages discriminator to be extra aggressive towards them. To explain better family and parental rejection can lead to homelessness that will expose the LGBT youth to a greater amount of violence and

abuse from the outer society (Williams, 2013).

- **Absenteeism** - Investigations, and researches have revealed the fact that nearly 30% of the LGBT students who did openly acknowledge their sexual orientation remained absent for a greater span of time from their schools. This was behavior on their end since they felt unsafe and insecure at school. Apart from this a large number of LGBT students also skipped their classes since they felt unsafe and insecure due to acts of threat and violence. Some of them even remained absent since they felt unsafe due to the open criticism that they had to face from their peers.
- **Cyber Bullying** - Cyber bullying is a very common form of harassment that is faced by the LGBT community. Different electronic mediums are put to use such as emails. Text messages, picture messages, message boards, website blogs, instant messaging and chat rooms have been put to use to harass the LGBT individuals rather prominently. This is a form of harassment and hurting the dignity and the esteem of the people of the LGBT community which can have far-reaching effects. Bullying LGBT people over social media is a common thing and has gained attention in the last few decades.

#### **IV. HEALTH ISSUES IN LGBT COMMUNITY**

Individuals of this community have their own health issues and requirements. These needs could also be much affected by the factors of ethnicity, race, socioeconomic conditions, age and even the geographical locations where the individual is based. Different social stigmas that exist in relation to aspects like homophobia, sexual orientation. Heterosexism, Transphobia can also adversely affect the health of the LGBT community as a whole. The outcomes can be particularly volatile for the youth of the community. Researches of IOM conducted in 2011 has revealed that the LGBT youth are much more susceptible to adverse psychological health and statement of mind that can lead to depression and suicidal attitudes in general [8]. These youth are also more prone to indulge in substance abuse as compared to the general youth.

These LGBT youth are also exposed to a higher rate of other implications such as IPV or intimate partner violence, unprotected sex that can lead to HIV and AIDS and victimization and other forms of discrimination and harassment. These youth might

also have to face problems with eating problems and obesity.

Determining the exact number of LGBTI community globally is much of a challenge since members are not often conducive to openly admit their conditions. However, having said that the number of HIV patients is on an incline amongst these strata. Male to male home sexual transmission is one of the prime reasons that have increased the number of HIV patients amongst the LGBTI community. The LGBTI community is at a higher risk of getting infected by HIV due to needle sharing during substance abuse, careless and irresponsible sexual contact, problems of healthcare access, commercial sex profession, lack of education and even violence.

In fact, social discrimination and stigma are one of the main reasons that have led to the rising number of HIV cases in this community. Researches in China have revealed that AIDS/HIV due to homosexual activities between men has more than doubled between the last decades. What was at 12.3% in 2007 rested as 32.5% in 2009? The number of men who have acknowledged having sex with men has also increased nearly 4.5 folds in the last single decade (Chestnut, 2013). What rested at 1.4% in 2001 shot up to 6.3% in 2011? Even when these figures of China remains to be much lower when compared to countries like Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, and several other Asian nations.

An increasing number of LGBTI community researches are being undertaken in India. These are the investigations that are helping the students of the domain to understand the point of view of having a same-sex relationship. These viewpoints can also help the students to understand the impact of such relations on the health of the community as a whole. The main aim of these researches is to understand the ways and the means through which better protection can be provided to the LGBTI community as a single entity. These researches also aim at providing better health supports to the individuals of the LGBTI community. However, there is a requirement of understanding the relationship between the LGBTI community and the spread of HIV disease (Berlan, et. al., 2010). This is because in 1980s HIV made its emergence amongst the gay men in Western Europe, Australia, and North America. This is a research that must also cover the other related aspects of the social stigma and the discrimination that is rather common towards the patients of HIV and AIDS. Increased and in-depth researches will only help in educating the youth of the world in general regarding the transmission of the deadly disease of HIV and AIDS that is intricately linked with LGBTI community and homosexual behaviours.

#### A. Sexual Health

One of the most pressing health issues among LGBT populations is HIV/AIDS. Though there exists legislation prohibiting all kinds of violence, discrimination, and abuse to these people in India, acceptance of these people in the larger social setup is too low in India. Out of fear and anticipation of outrage, many LGBT people conceal their identity and sexual orientation. Non-disclosure of identity keeps them away from availing the opportunity of availing some essential healthcare needs that are tailored to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) such as HIV/AIDS. As these people are still not out of fear or people at large still to accept this community, our universities, and society at large need to accept these people as any other common citizen. In this matter, an overall change in attitude is expected so that people of the LGBT community do not feel unsafe or so not find any necessity of expressing their sexual orientation. Including of LGBT issues as a part of our very own society where any other persons could express their own issues would make LGBT people comfortable in expressing their problems openly. It will help in addressing the health issues of these people especially STIs like HIV/AIDS.

#### B. Suicide/Suicidal Ideation

Several studies have been done on LGBT youths and their problems in revealing sexual orientation. Many of these studies reveal that the younger generation of the LGBT community is more depressive and suicidal in comparison to their heterosexual counterparts. In DC, about 31% of LGBT youth are identified with suicidal attitude whereas 13.8% of heterosexual youth are identified with the same problem. General risk factors that develop suicidal attitude such as depression, social isolation, substance abuse, feeling unsafe, etc. are higher in LGBT youth than heterosexual youths. Homophobic victimization and related stress are also closely linked with the increased risk of suicidal attitude among LGBT youths.

A number of studies have revealed that LGBT youth are at higher risk of suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts. In comparison to heterosexual youth, a higher number of LGBT youth remain depressive. In DC, more than 30% of LGBT youth are reported considering suicidal attempt whereas approximately 14% of heterosexual youth possesses the same attitude. Of these 30% LGBT youth, almost 28.9% said that they had made a suicidal plan whereas 10.3% heterosexual youth said that they had made this plan (Austin, 2009a). The risk factors related to suicidal behaviour like depression, feeling unsafe in public places, social isolation, and substance abuses are high among LGBT youth. Homophobic victimization and related

stress are also closely linked with the increased risk of suicidal attitude among LGBT youths.

### **C. Eating Disorders, Body Image, and Obesity**

Some gender-specific eating disorder patterns have been reported among LGBT youth. One study reports that bisexual and gay boys are more prone to imitate the images of males depicted in media than heterosexual boys. This study further reports that such behaviour of imitating media images is not common among lesbian and bisexual girls. Lesbian and bisexual girls are found to be more satisfied with their physical appearance and less concerned about what media shows whereas this media depiction of female images is more popular among heterosexual girls. Moreover, it is found that youth who describe themselves as bisexual, lesbian, and gay are more prone to binge eating than their heterosexual counterparts. Apart from that difference, LGBT youth except lesbians are more prone to purging in their adolescence.

### **D. Mental Health**

In general, people belong to LGBT community are mentally healthy and well-adjusted with their social status but there are thousands of LGBT youth who have developed different psychological disorders due to social pressure and abuses (Eliason, 2010). The study shows that LGBT youth are 1.8 to 2.9 times more likely to have different psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, and panic attack. In DC, more than 40% of LGBT youth are found to have a repetitive mood swing, sad feeling, and feeling that they are hopeless every day. These youth face problems in doing normal activities. At the same time, 25.7% of heterosexual youth have these problems.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Exploring what factors are mainly responsible for developing social stigma against LGBT people in our society that makes these people lead a fearful life and conceal their sexual orientation forms the rationale behind this study. Therefore, this study is designed to establish discrimination, abuse, and violence against LGBT community as the prime factors hindering the implementation of health and wellness related drives such as HIV/AIDS programs for this sexual minority group. Non-probability samples are mostly used to study the health status of LGBT people. This process has been found to yield some valuable information that the researchers can use for studying this community and their subgroups. Apart from providing normal descriptive data related to LGBT populations, non-probability samples also reveal the presence of certain other phenomena. These are also used to develop hypotheses and formulas that can be authentic sources of further studies in the future. As the LGBT

community is a part of the society, addressing their health and wellness issues benefit the society as a whole. We hope that this study will be able to address the different issues related to the LGBT community. These different issues related to the LGBT community necessitate that people change their attitude towards this community and stop criminalizing LGBT people. This can be achieved if the university authority takes proper strategy to develop an environment where LGBT youth could express their issues freely. This will help in implementing different programs for the LGBT community like HIV/AIDs awareness campaigns successfully.

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#### Corresponding Author

**Rebecca Lalnunhlimi \***

Department of Law, Sharda University, Knowledge Park 3, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India