



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Social Science

SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION: WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON LGBT POPULATION.

KEY WORDS: LGBT, Social Exclusion, Social Inequality.

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the social inequalities and social exclusion, faced by the LGBT population (lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people collectively referred to herein as sexual minorities). Equality is the significant constitutional value as any other. The Indian Constitution ensures equality of status and opportunities to every citizen of the country for the development. As a human being everybody has a dignified self and to ensure its full enjoyment, inequality in any form present in our country and society has been prohibited, and also The social exclusion is something that can happen to anyone in the society, but certain groups, such as poor people, low caste groups, women, religious minorities, sexual minorities, and some ethnic communities are disproportionately at risk of social exclusion. Sexual minorities (LGBT population) are treated inhumanly, unequally even though the Indian constitution assures that, 'equality before law irrespective of their caste, religion, and place of residence, gender and sexuality'. The basic purpose of this study titled "*SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON LGBT POPULATION*" is to know the perception of the respondents (LGBT population) about the Social Inequality and Social Exclusion they faced in their life. This research paper will look at various determinants/ indicators of Social Inequality and Social exclusion which are experienced by the researched. This paper is based on primary data.

INTRODUCTION:

What is Social inequality..? In every society some people have a greater share of valued resources money, property, education, health and power than others. These social resources can be divided into three forms of capital.

- Economic capital in the form of material assets and income.
- Cultural capital such as educational qualifications and status.
- Social capital in the form of networks of contacts and social associations.

Often these three forms of capital overlap and one can be converted into the other. For example a person from a well-off family can afford expensive higher education and so can acquire cultural or educational capital. Patterns of unequal access to social resources are commonly called social inequality. Social inequality reflects innate differences between individuals for example their varying abilities and efforts. Someone may be endowed with exceptional intelligence or talent or may have worked very hard to achieve their wealth and status. However by and large social inequality is not the outcome of innate or natural differences between people but is produced by the society in which they live. (http://www.sociologyguide.com/socia_inequality_exclusion/index.php)

What is Social Exclusion..? Generally, Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole.

The term "social exclusion" was originally coined in France in 1974. It has a variety of different definitions based on the historical use of the word,

In French republican tradition, social exclusion was defined as consequences of rupture of bond between society and individual (*De Haan, 1999, 1-2*).

In boarder perspective social exclusion has been defined as "The process through which individual or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live (*DEHaan 1999.5*)

"Social Exclusion" the term is very much used in the field of intellectuals and policy planners worldwide for identifying the gaps for the development of the neglected people and the pertaining country. Social Exclusion is lack of access to resources and consequent inability to utilize them. It is further accentuated by denial of opportunities which enhance access to resources and their utilization. In all Social exclusion is defined as the processes by which individuals and population groups face barriers in relation to their access to public goods, resulting in inequitable social attainments, capabilities, and development, justice and dignity outcomes. These barriers may arise from a number of causes, including through social or state neglect, social or state discrimination, tacit or active social or state denial, social or state violence and dispossession, customary practices and cultural norms, and/or by faulty design and implementation of state laws, policies and programmes, or a combination of all of these'. (*India exclusion report*)

LGBT Population: Sexual Minorities is an umbrella term covering a very heterogeneous group of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender collectively known as LGBT. Sexual minorities are a group whose sexual identity, orientation or practices differ from the majority of surrounding society. Usually sexual minorities comprise of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals. (*PUCL-K-2001*)

Sexual minorities or Sexual minority community: Refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered/transsexual persons as well as persons with other identities (such as Kothis and Hijras) as a minority group in a predominantly heterosexual total population.

LGBT: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender; an inclusive term for groups and identities sometimes also grouped as "sexual minorities."

Lesbian: A person who identifies as woman and has significant (to oneself) sexual or romantic attractions towards another woman, or who identifies as a member of the lesbian

community. In India, this term is used to indicate bisexual women also.

Gay: A gay person is one who has significant (to oneself) sexual or romantic attractions primarily to members of the same gender or sex, or who identifies as a member of the gay community. One may identify as gay without identifying as a member of the gay community and vice versa. Though 'gay' is a common term for all homosexual persons, it is often used to describe people who identify as men who are attracted to other people who identify as men. Self-identified gay men do not necessarily have sex only with men, but occasionally may engage in sex with women.

Bisexual: A person who is attracted romantically/emotionally/ sexually to both men and women.

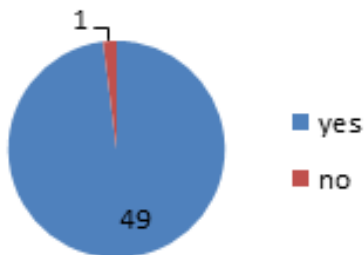
Transgender (TG): It is a broad term for all people who do not identify with or choose not to conform to the gender roles assigned to them by society based on their biological sex. Transgender are those who transgress the social gender norms of the society they belong to; TG is often used as an umbrella term to mean all the people who defy rigid, binary gender constructions, and who express or present a breaking and/or blurring of culturally prevalent/stereotypical gender roles. This includes a wide range of identities and experiences, including but not limited to: pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexual people; male and female cross dressers (sometimes referred to as "transvestites", "drag queens", or "drag kings"); intersex individuals; and men and women, regardless of sexual orientation, whose appearance or characteristics are perceived to be gender atypical. (A male-to-female transgendered person is referred to as 'transgender woman' and a female-to-male transgendered person is referred to as 'transgender man') (CHLET 2012)

OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT STUDY: The sole objective of this paper is to know the perception of the respondents (LGBT population) about the Social Inequality and Social Exclusion they faced in their life.

METHODOLOGY USED: A sample of 50 persons from an NGO in Hubballi (Dharwad District) was considered for this study, Data is collected by using Self-Structured Interview schedule, Data analyzed by using SPSS. This paper is based on primary data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

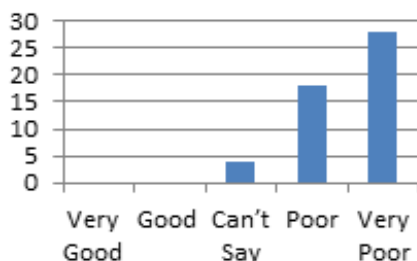
01: Have you ever felt that the society does not accept you normally?



Respondents were asked to say 'yes' or 'no' to the question, have you ever felt that the society does not accept you normally? Among the total respondents (n=50), majority of the respondents felt that, the society does not accept them normally that is (n=49).

LGBT population or Sexual minorities remained neglected population group in the society, in Fig. 01: 49 out of 50 respondents said that society does not accept them as normal persons; this shows the discrimination by the society and inequality in the society.

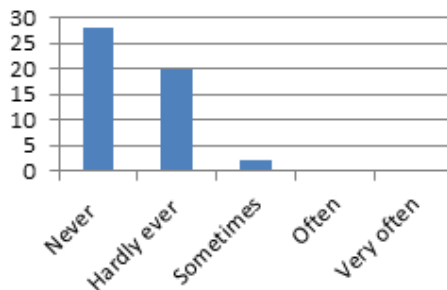
02: How you describe your status in the society?



Respondents were asked to rate the question, How you describe your status in the society? Among the total respondents (n=50), majority of the respondents felt that, their status in the society is very poor n=28, followed by poor (n=18) and 4 respondents marked can't say.

Fig. 02: shows the response of LGBT respondents against their status in society, Most of them said its Very Poor, and poor, this clearly shows the social exclusion of this group.

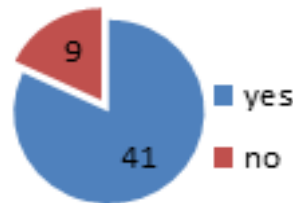
03: Do you participate in social functions organized by the cis gender people?



Respondents were asked to rate the question, Do you participate in social functions organized by the cis gender people? Among the total respondents (n=50), majority of the respondents answered Never (n=28) followed by hardly ever (n=20) and 2 respondents answered sometimes.

Fig. 03: shows the response of LGBT respondents against their participation in social functions organized by the cis gender people, Most of them said they Never participate, followed by hardly ever, this shows that Sexual minorities do not mingle with cis gender people, the truth behind this is, actually cis gender people do not agree the participation of LGBT population in the social functions organized by them.

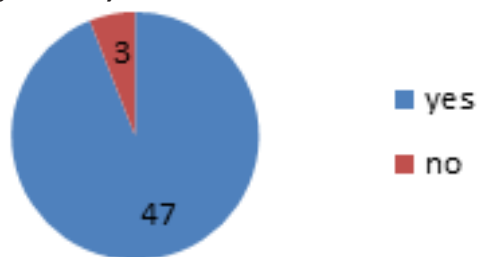
04: Did you ever experience discrimination from the members of your family because of your gender identity?



Respondents were asked to say 'yes' or 'no' to the question, Did you ever experience discrimination from the members of your family because of your gender identity? Among the total respondents (n=50), majority of the respondents said that, they experienced discrimination from the members of their family (n=41).

Fig. 04: says that, as soon as family comes to know, one of its member is a LGBT person, then other members of the family starts discriminating that LGBT person, in the matters of decision making, property distribution, respect, privacy etc. this shows the Exclusion of LGBT person in the basic unit of the society i.e. the family.

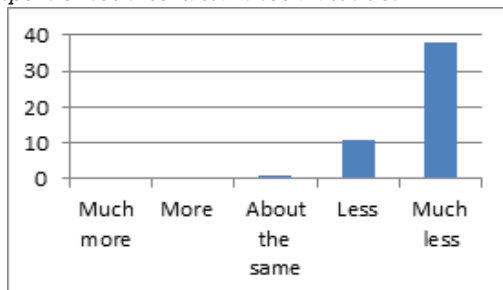
05: Do you face any discrimination like no invitation for common dining, community feast etc on the festival occasion?



Respondents were asked to say 'yes' or 'no' to the question, Do you face any discrimination like no invitation for common dining, community feast etc on the festival occasion? Among the total respondents (n=50), majority of the respondents said that, they experienced discrimination like no invitation for common dining, community feast etc on the festival occasion from the cis gender people in the society (n=47).

Fig.05: shows that, majority of the respondents face discriminations like no invitation for common dining, community feast etc on the festival occasion, this shows that LGBT population is living on the edges of the society.

06: Compared to cis gender people in society how much time do you spend on social contact and social activities?



Respondents were asked to rate the question; Compared to cis gender people in society how much time do you spend on social contact and social activities? Among the total respondents (n=50), majority of the respondents answered much less n=38, followed by hardly Less n=11, and 2 respondents answered sometimes.

Fig.06: speaks about the social contacts and social activities of LGBT persons Compared to the cis gender, usually LGBT persons feel cut off from the society because of less social contact and less involvement in the social activities, the cis gender people will not accept their participation in social activities very easily.

Concluding Remarks:

Finally, from the above foregoing discussion it may concluded that, a very different picture came into focus when the researched (LGBT population) were questioned about their perception on the Social Inequality and Social Exclusion they faced in their life. There is nothing wrong about being LGBT, as no one chooses to be so, but the LGBT community being one of the marginalized sections of the society whose visibility is less; there are varied forms by which the members are discriminated. As we know the family is the basic unit of society but a lot of participants of the study spoke about their experience of discrimination from the members of their own family because of their gender identity, they said the society does not accept them normally, compared to cis gender population their status in the society is very poor, they do not get invitation for common dining, community feast, common community functions organised by the cis gender people, and they are having less social contact and much less involvement in the social activities, this result shows the Social Inequality and Social Exclusion of LGBT population in the society.

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