



## Psychological Well-being Among Transgender Women in Nepal and Implication on Social Work

Rajesh Bhusal<sup>1</sup> Saroj Giree<sup>2</sup> Sumina Machamasi<sup>3</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** Using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, the article examines the life experiences of transgender women and their cumulative effects on their psychological well-being. The conceptual framework enabled discussion series with the twenty-five respondents, which consisted of seven different discussion topics. The result shows that the participants have both positive and negative aspects of well-being; in particular, it was found that the positive aspects of well-being were higher among them. These findings later discussed the possible implications on social work practice and education in Nepal.

**Keywords:** transgender people, transgender women, social work, psychological well-being, Nepal, LGBTIQ community



©2022 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

In the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community, transgender women suffer from social exclusion on both an individual and an institutional level. They are deliberately abused when conventional gender boundaries are enforced by others (Burdge, 2007). According to the Yogyakarta Principle (Flaherty and Fisher, 2008), LGBTI people are exposed to persistent human rights violations worldwide because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.

Nepal is progressing toward ensuring equality for the LGBTIQ population by taking some legal steps. In December 2007, the Supreme Court of Nepal ruled that LGBTIQ individuals are 'natural persons' and legally established a gender category called "third gender" in addition to male and female (Bochenek & Knight, 2012). In February 2008, Everest Bank (one of the commercial banks of Nepal) prepared an application form that included the option "Others" under the gender category (Yun, 2008). Similarly, only men and women categories were included in the census, but the latest census held in 2011 added a 'third gender' category".

---

<sup>1</sup>WESTIR, New South Wales, Australia <sup>2&3</sup> Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

The forms used by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) for the household registry allowed Nepalese citizens to identify whether someone is male, female or other (CBS, 2011). However, the national census report only gave the total number of males and females (Chhetri, 2017). Following the court orders, the Government of Nepal (GoN) also started issuing passports denoting 'O' for others category to sexual minorities. These remarkable changes have brought dignity to these groups.

Regardless, discrimination against transgender people in Nepal takes many forms, such as negligence, rejection and hatred, and often leads to violence against them. Undoubtedly, such incidents question the psychological well-being of transgender people, which can lead to depression, anxiety, and suicide. Much literature has focused on the psychological well-being of the transgender community. Katz (1990) found that people identified as transgender tend to suffer from mental health problems more often than the general population. Approximately 6.7 percent of the general United States (US) population suffers from depression, and 18% struggle with some recurrence of an anxiety disorder. Almost half of all people who identify themselves as transgender experience these problems (Katz, 1990). Crocker et al. (1998, p. 505) also indicated that "stigmatized persons have or are believed to possess) an attribute or characteristic that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context." This article complements this new literature by placing a strong focus on the psychological well-being of transgender women in Nepal.

### **Operational definitions**

In relation to the psychological aspect, '*psychological well-being*' can be defined as the adaptation to daily activities. Psychological well-being is the capability of an individual to cope with everyday problems and build a positive relationship with the factors associated with an individual's life. In this paper, psychological well-being refers to the ability of transgender people to deal with the ignorance, discrimination and stigmatization that they have experienced in their lives. Similarly, '*transgender*' is a term used to describe a person whose gender identity does not "match" the biological sex assigned to them at birth (Benner, Green, & Pear, 2018). Their identity and gender expression are different from the gender they are born with, which means that transgender people are devoid of sexual orientation. In this paper, the term 'transgender' includes/refers to 'transgender women' in general. "*Transgender women*" are people who identify themselves as women but were assigned male at birth. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with "Trans women," "transgender women," and 'male-to-female transgender.' In

this paper, 'Transgender women' are a group of participants who were assigned male at birth but who identify themselves as women and currently adopt female gender expressions.

## **Methods**

### ***Research design***

This study followed the approach of participatory action research (PAR). The purpose of participatory action research is to encourage and bring together the community population in research directed toward their usefulness (Bolda, 2001). Reason and Bradbury (2001) note that the PAR process engages the communities of inquiry and action by addressing the key issues for those participating as co-researchers. This research has used the PAR process to look into the psychological well-being of transgender people. The study aims to record the psychological well-being of the participants based on their life experiences and to examine whether it is relevant to the practice of social work with the transgender community in Nepal.

### ***Recruitment of participants***

As a graduate of social work, the researchers had the opportunity to consult with the university researchers/mentors from the Department of Social Work (Tribhuvan University)<sup>i</sup> on the issue, which helped in approaching the participants through the organizations working on the same theme in Nepal. The Department of Social Work of Tribhuvan University issued an official letter asking them to collaborate with the relevant organizations for the study. The researchers then conduct an intensive consultation with the representatives of the Parichaye Samaj.<sup>ii</sup> as part of a preliminary meeting. From the preliminary meeting with them, it was decided that purposive sampling would be most appropriate for this study, and a total of twenty-five transgender women, ages 19 to 50, were selected on the recommendation of the organization's executive committee. There were three main criteria for recruitment *i) the participants should identify themselves as transgender women, ii) the participants should agree to participate in a total of eight meetings, iii) and the participants are in constant contact with the organization and accessing the relevant services too.* The sample represents a total number of seventeen districts.<sup>iii</sup> (out of 77) of Nepal. The study took place from January 2018 to August 2018 in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal.

### ***Data creation measures***

In Participatory Action Research (PAR), Fals Borda and Rahman (1991) suggest using the term *data creation or generation* instead of *data collection* (Dhungel, 2017). The participants and the organization's representatives participated from the beginning to the end of the research. Several solidarity group meetings and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the

participants. The purpose was clear to understand the current psychological well-being of transgender people in Nepal. The interviews avoided following the rigorous questions and answers format but maintained in-depth discussions to meet the research objectives. However, interview guidelines/checklist was created to prevent the discussion from going beyond the topic.

### **Data analysis**

The data analysis followed six phases/steps of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). These six phases involved '*familiarization with the data*' to '*preparation of the report.*' The collected data was initially read out several times for training purposes, and major errors were corrected as part of the data cleansing process prior to data transcription. All recorded interviews and discussions from solidarity meetings were transcribed from the Nepali language into English. The participants were involved during the process. The answers to the open questions were merged with the relevant topics from semi-structured interviews. The inductive coding process was followed to build the relevant themes from the data. The participants were encouraged to involve in the coding and data categorization analysis. In general, the participatory process was followed at different stages of data analysis where the transgender people could validate and provide feedback on the themes identified from the research. The analysis process focused heavily on the study's original research questions and objectives to achieve the best possible research results.

### **Results**

This section is concerned with describing the psychological well-being of the participants with the conceptual framework presented above. In general, the result showed that the participants felt positive about their life experiences. However, in some sections, the respondents make significant remarks on negative aspects of well-being that are worth discussing. The psychological well-being of the participants is discussed in the following sections.

#### **Identity issues and psychological well-being**

Regarding identity issues, indicators of positive well-being such as self-acceptance, happiness, excitement, activism, resilience, and motivation were ubiquitous among the study participants. Participants' experiences of positive well-being can be categorized into two subject areas: support for identity promotes enthusiasm & happiness, and identity is a personal choice.

#### ***Support for identity promotes enthusiasm & happiness.***

Participants reported that it is difficult to hide their identities as their body physique becomes visible to others. Because of this, all the respondents shared their identity with someone

at some point and were excited and joyful to live as a transgender person. This has strengthened their motivation for their identity issues. Twenty-four (24) year old who identified as a Transgender woman from the Sunsari district of Nepal said:

*When I was 16, I realized I didn't belong to that gender. I wanted to be a girl from a boy. I enjoyed watching TV series, wearing girls' clothes, and dancing like a girl. I shared this feeling with my closest friend, who was around 18 years old. Fortunately, he understood and supported my feeling. Since then, I always felt happy about my gender identity.*

Some participants have shared their sense of identity/gender with their family members. With the support, they felt delighted and motivated to move on. Twenty-one (21)- year old transgender women from the Kavrepalanchowk district of Nepal narrated:

*I became interested in same-sex when I was 12 years old. I love hanging out with guys and living in a fantasy that I am their princess. Fearing the consequences, I shared this with my elder sister. For some weeks, it was a strange response from her and my family. Later, they accepted my identity and supported me. From now on, I always feel very much happy for who I am.*

### **Identity is a personal choice.**

Participants of the study expressed that they live their lives the way they wanted, and they are happy with it. They wanted to live like a girl and live the same way. One of the participants, who is 24 years old, shared:

*I am proud of who I am, even when faced with various humiliation and stigmatization from society. However, this is the only way I have ever wanted to live and enjoy my life. My family also loves and supports me, and here in Kathmandu, I can dress like a girl and do what I want. I can also spend some time going to an organization that is committed to protecting people like us and meeting friends like me.*

Another participant, who is 31 years old from the Ilam district of Nepal, lamented:

*I feel very happy to live as a transgender person because I've been waiting for this for so long. I don't emphasize what others think of my dress, my behaviour, or me as a whole. I am enjoying my life and will be doing the same for the rest of my life too.*

### **Family Response and psychological well-being**

The results were used to inform that the majority of the respondents felt a sense of excitement and joy in their relationship with their family. The family reaction develops positive well-being in the participants by developing personal and social well-being and strengths. The

study shows that family acceptance and support relate to inner strength and promote connectedness of the spirit and mind. The majority of respondents shared their common experiences;

*.....a fear of being rejected turned out differently with the love and support we received from the family. This helped us to feel connected with them. We are in regular touch with the family members as they live outside Kathmandu City. We don't feel isolated and live our lives happily.*

Another respondent from Pokhara city of Nepal resonates;

*I can proudly say that I have a high level of self-esteem and self-confidence all because of my family. This has proudly assisted me to become an extrovert and build up the relationship with others. This also helped me to develop my leadership skills. I am particularly grateful to my brother for understanding my feeling and convincing it to our family.*

### **Social Response and psychological well-being**

After family, society is the most prominent and inevitable space where people socialize, learn and understand each other. The result shows that respondents have expressed the feeling of positive aspects of well-being as they feel loved and supported by their society. In particular, social response fosters the participants' activism, leadership, and determination.

#### **Promotes activism**

The study identified that support from the people around you generates activist feeling among the participants. One of the participants commented:

*I accept that there is stigma and injustice in Nepalese society for us. However, I believe this is also an opportunity for people like me to speak out against discrimination. When there are no challenges, there are no changes. We should see this as an opportunity rather than an obstacle.*

#### **Strengthens leadership ability**

Participants reported that existing pervasive social behaviours (stigmatization, hatred, and rejection) are the source of leadership among them. One of the participants reported:

*We are facing widespread stigma because we believe that the Nepalese community, unlike the developed nations, is not yet aware of our identity. We should spread mass awareness through the campaign against the stigma. I am very much determined to lead such a program. One day you will see me as a leader of leading such a campaign. People will*

*understand and respect us, but it will definitely be some time before we get there.*

### **Enhances determination**

Determination is believed to be a key value in being a successful person in life or in reaching the peak of your career. Research demonstrated that the majority of the participants had a higher level of determination with the reaction they received through their societal relationships. They agreed to the commonality and recalled:

*Almost every day, we think of a different way of dealing with the injustice we face in society. Sometimes we think of one thing, and sometimes of the other. However, we think that such a stigma hurts on the one hand but also helps us to make firm decisions on the other. It is. We will fight to the end of our lives to secure the rights of gender and sexual minorities in Nepal.*

### **Employment issues and psychological well-being**

The result shows that 60 % of the respondents are employed in organizations that campaign for the rights of LGBTIQ in Nepal, such as Parichaye Samaj, Inclusive Forum Nepal, Blue diamond society etc. They said it is difficult to find employment in other settings.

Participants have mentioned the following reasons for having difficulty finding the employment opportunity for them:

- The job opportunities themselves are limited, and unemployment is higher in the country
- Employer views transgender as a sign of bad luck
- Employers, especially in the hospitality sector, believe that most transgender people are involved in social vices (theft, robbery, prostitution etc.)
- For stigma reasons, the owner's business partner and family members also do not want to hire transgender people

With this, it comes to the understanding that their well-being is marked with disgrace and shame, which makes them angry and upset about the existing scope of employment. Respondents gave the following reason for being much upset about the employment scope available to them:

- Without an employment opportunity, survival becomes more difficult and extremely limited
- Making money through prostitution is not sustainable and only available until we are young and beautiful
- For the money, we get involved in nightlife and prostitution, which have intrusive health and hygiene problems

- For those who have been rejected by the family, not finding employment is also a secondary rejection
- Getting a job is also closely related to getting a good response from the people around us
- Not getting jobs provide frequent frustration and feeling of worthlessness

According to most respondents, employment opportunity for transgender people is closely related to a sense of economic security and win and loss with life. This makes them feel very discouraged and demotivated because they don't get the jobs. For those who have already been rejected by their families and have left their homes, unemployment is considered a secondary rejection.

### **Public Spheres/response and psychological well-being**

All of the respondents in the study have mentioned that they have to face stigmatized behaviour in public places almost every day. According to the respondents, they used to face such behaviours, especially in busy places such as Bus stations, dance bars, public parks, streets, shopping centers, cinema halls and Thamel<sup>iv</sup> area. They also shared that the chances of encountering derogatory words are very high. They perceived three intrusive words 'chakka,' 'hijra.'<sup>v</sup> and besya<sup>vi</sup> to be derogatory, which are often used by the bus conductor to make them feel desperate and desolate.

The following themes have been discovered from the research, which denote the negative well-being of the participants.

### **Envy and targeted discrimination**

The participants felt that within the entire LGBTIQ community, they are particularly targeted for discrimination. They mentioned that such targeted discrimination is higher in the highly urbanized cities of Nepal, such as Kathmandu and Pokhara. Most of them jointly resonated: From a gender perspective, LGBTIQs are generally stigmatized and discriminated against in our country. However, in practice, we 'transgender women,' are highly discriminated against. We feel that derogative words like 'Chakka' and 'Hijara' are purposely intended only for us.

### **Hopelessness and humiliation**

Participants stated that the disgraceful behaviours received in public places are the source of growing hopelessness and frustration. They believe this has a higher chance of developing traumatic experiences and lifelong tragedies. A Twenty-seven (27) years old respondent from Bhaktapur district described:



*I have no hope for my future. Wherever I go, I face ignominy and intrusive reactions. Such a reaction makes me feel extremely humiliated, and at times, I think of committing suicide. The stigma towards the LGBTIQ community is deeply entrenched. It is very difficult to break such misconceptions. Now I am young but worried about what I will do in my old age.*

### **State service/intervention and psychological well-being**

The result shows that the participants have both negative and positive feelings about the reaction received through the state mechanisms. However, they have a sense of happiness with the state response a bit higher as they believe that the Government of Nepal is making progress in examining the LBGTI issues. In addition, participants made other significant remarks on 'citizenship issues' and 'reservation system.' The following paragraphs attempt to comment on these questions.

#### **Citizenship issues**

Citizenship matters are always vital for everyone and are always the top priority and most important achievement for the LGBTIQ community. The debate is always about bringing out the "other," as there is a common practice of mentioning either "male" or "female" in the category. Separately, in some cases, Nepal has started to mention the 'other' category in the form/documents, but it is yet to be rationalized across the country. Not all LGBTIQ people are seeking citizenship in the category of "other" has succeeded. The citizenship issues created some legal obstacles for some of the participants. One of them stated:

*I got my citizenship when I was 21 years old. Back then, I got it in the male category. Nowadays, our bodies have changed, and the photo of our citizenship is very different. For this reason, I face various obstacles and hurdles in the legal and documentation process in the country. We are confronted with harassment in government offices and banks. Even the remittance company keeps debating with us before releasing the money transferred to us.*

#### **Reservation/Quota system for LGBTIQ**

The finding demonstrated that reservation or quota regulations are very important for LGBTIQ people to secure their livelihood and to provide them with the opportunity to overcome the existing stigma in Nepal. Respondents gave the following prominent reasons for having the reservation system for LGBTIQ people in the country:

- The reservation system offers opportunities for livelihood and income generation. It offers employment opportunities
- The implementation of the reservation system shows state-level protection for the transgender community
- It motivates LGBTIQ people to reveal their identity and avoid the suppression of their identities

The reservation system will provide opportunities to the LGBTIQ group, and people will gradually learn about the existence of the LGBTIQ community.

Nepal's government has made substantial strides toward ensuring equality for LGBTIQ persons in recent years (Bista, 2012). The participants of the study believe that it is evident that Nepal still lacks the protection of rights and issues of the LGBTIQ community in many ways. Nonetheless, they also happily acknowledge that Nepal's government is doing comparatively better than other countries. Most of them have a common understanding that:

*Yes indeed! We have to expect that we have very limited protection from the government; however, compared to some other countries, we should also be happy that our country is doing well in the issues of LGBTIQ. We are well ahead of those of the South Asian countries. It takes time, and I am very much excited. We should feel motivated by what our country is doing for us.*

Other participants said that the government has a lot to do for the LGBTIQ community, and they believe that LGBTIQ populations need to support the government through cooperation, dialogue and sensitization. They share a common ground of understanding that the LGBTIQ community has a complementary role to play for the government.

### **Career Aspiration and Psychological well-being**

The study shows that despite having had different tragic and joyful life experiences, participants had higher levels of positive well-being concerning their career prospects. Their career goals/future dreams, and determination are solid. Accordingly, modelling is the most desirable career goal, especially for Transgender women. It is further found that they are truly determined to do so. Participants shared their goals of being entrepreneurs and establishing an organization for LGBTIQs soon. To achieve such goals, participants engage in different events and gain relevant skills to reach there.

### **The Implication of Social Work**

Several research suggests that transgender issues are largely absent from social work education, which often puts the practitioners on the stage of being uninformed or unfair against transgender issues (Austin, Craig & McInroy, 2016). There is a need to incorporate a knowledge base of good practice into the social work curriculum to combat the limited knowledge or training of social workers with the issues related to the transgender community (Hudson, 2009: p.4). In social work practice, there is a need for mainstreaming the social work practice with transgender people in Nepal. The study shows that the major factors such as rejection, lack of family/societal support, visible/invisible discrimination, torture, making fun, stigmatization, prejudice, denial of identity, the feeling of gender dysphoria, uncertain and insecure future, poor employment scopes and moderate legal provisions that contributed and challenged the well-being of the participants. These findings built the social work practice methods that social casework, group work, community social work and social work research can help deal with the problems of LGBTIQ groups in Nepal.

### ***Social casework***

Although the 'third sex' people have been part of human societies for many years, the denial of their existence helped them understand that sex is just as binary (either male or female) (Chhetri, 2017). Therefore, their acceptance remains a major challenge in which social workers could play a major role. The study observed some of the significant problems faced by transgender women at the individual and family levels, which can be intervened through social casework approaches. Although most participants received love and support from their family members, which helped strengthen their psychosocial resilience, some of the issues experienced, such as family rejection, family breakdown and separation, and stories of depression and frustration, were overarching. Through this, it realizes that there is a need to provide psychological education regarding gender dysphoria for the concerned family members of the participants through different social casework approaches. This helps in reducing family breakdown and assists in the promotion of harmony between them. Social workers can provide both one-on-one and family counselling to transgender women who experience challenging issues related to psychological well-being and struggle to deal with them. Alternatively, social workers, in coordination with the LGBTIQ organizations, can facilitate such services and act as a moderator between the client and the services.

### ***Social group work***

Social group work is a method in which a group worker helps the individual in group settings through integrated experiences, interactions, exchanges and suggestions from a member

of the same group who sits together for common goals. Social group work can be facilitated through different group interactions and therapeutic approaches to promote the well-being of Transgender women and the LGBTIQ population in general in Nepal. An example can be the facilitation of peer-group discussion and sharing sessions between small groups of transgender people that can include their good and bad experiences. This can be organized once a week in relevant organizations or at some social work colleges/universities in Nepal with some self-developed slogans like 'Sharing Friday,' 'Common Friday,' and 'Experiences of the Week.' Such interactions help them to gain deeper socio-behavioural insights and get help with some of the issues from the group members.

Meanwhile, social workers need to be aware of the personal issues of such events and focus on helping each issue through group interactions. LGBTIQ community members experience stigma, discrimination and victimization throughout their lives (Blue Diamond Society, 2018), which limits their opportunity to access the needed resources. Social workers can help bridge the gap between the individuals in the LGBTIQ community and the resources.

### ***Community social work***

Community practice (as part of social work) refers to the macro level that advances social work intervention, including service, social justice, individual dignity and worth, the importance of human relationships, integrity and competence (Gamble and Weil 2010). The study found that most factors (for example, making fun, targeted discrimination, violence, using derogative words etc.) hindered the well-being of participants. Participants reported these factors were experienced highly in public settings, in employment arenas and through societal responses. As the main reason for such experiences was found to be associated with the entrenched stigma and prejudice against the identity of the participants, community social work can help reduce stigmatization and to spread awareness of the issue in Nepal. To this end, various awareness campaigns can be organized to inform people on a larger level about discriminatory practices against transgender people and, if possible, to reduce them. A gateway to the wider community can be made through audio/video and media communications along with various e-dramas and documentaries that can be shown in different schools with the support of school social workers. In Nepal, every year, a program called "Parents Day" is celebrated, which brings together the schoolteachers, community leaders, security personnel, students and their parents in the school. Such programs often include prize distribution, student competition, dance and entertainment and behold an opportunity for showcasing the issues of transgender women in front of all the community stakeholders.

An example can be showing the suffocation and emotional state of a young transgender adult whose family has rejected their gender identity and who regularly faces bullying and discrimination in schools and elsewhere. This can be achieved through different artistic creations such as stage dramas, poems etc. This helps reduce family rejection and promotes understanding of gender dysphoria among the family members. In addition to school settings, other promotional events such as '*A New Year with Transgender*' and '*A Day with Transgender*' can also be created. Suppose social workers can convince different prominent figures to participate in such campaigns, such as national actors, players, politicians and media personnel. In that case, there is a significant chance that these events can create a conducive environment for such gender and sexual minority group.

### **Social work research**

Chhetri (2017, p. 101) states, "Transgender issues and rights have not received adequate attention from researchers and academics, and therefore the issues and problems faced by such people are still poorly understood." In Nepal, it is assumed that the rights of gender and sexual minority groups are outlined in different documents which attempt to assure different rights in legal spheres; however, its implementations are ignored. This subject demands attention from researchers and policymakers as well (ibid). Currently, in Nepal, there is a lack of understanding of health and well-being, social exclusion, stigma, and discrimination as experienced by these populations. Hence, by incorporating transgender issues in social work research, another crucial environment can be established in education in Nepal. Social workers from across the country, including graduates and faculty members, can help fill the gaps in social work practice while addressing the issues of gender and sexual minorities in Nepal. In relation to social work education, social work students during their undergraduate and graduate studies should be encouraged to complete their field placement/internship in LGBTIQ organizations even more than what they are doing now. Various LGBTIQ activists and transgender representatives can be invited to different social work events as guest speakers to strengthen the solidarity between the LGBTIQ community and the social work profession.

### **Conclusion**

The study reveals that participants are resilient against the pervasive stigmatization and discrimination they have experienced in their path throughout their life. Meanwhile, participants' state of emotions dictates their negative well-being in employment and public spheres. The results were derived from various indicators like identity, family, society, employment opportunities, state services & career aspirations. In addition, the study discusses the relevant social work implication

against the issues and problems identified from the research. Research briefly recommends social work intervention through social casework, group work, community social work and research and education in social work at this stage to address the issues, although the fact that several other approaches can be brought together for the comprehensive intervention.

Similarly, social work researchers and practitioners should be aware of how different factors can trigger different consequences related to the well-being of the gender and sexual minority people in Nepal. We should still be aware that social work intervention for the LGBTIQ population is just rising in Nepal. Holistic intervention is necessary for Nepalese social work students, academicians, researchers and practitioners.

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to acknowledge Mr. Bhibhuti Bista and Dr. Nandita Sharma for their constant support during the development of this paper. The authors are equally grateful to the Department of Social Work, Tribhuvan University, for the mentorship and guidance received during this study.

### **Conflicts of Interests**

There are no conflicts of interest.

---

<sup>i</sup> Tribhuvan University is the largest and most renowned public university in Nepal. Researchers attended the university's MSW program from 2014 – 2016

<sup>ii</sup> One of the leading LGBTI organizations in Nepal

<sup>iii</sup> Bhaktapur, Dhanusa, Dharan, Gorkha, Ilam, Jhapa, Kathmandu, Kavrepalanchowk, Lalitpur, Morang, Nuwakot, Ramechhap, Sarlahi, Sindhuli, Sindhupalchowk, Sunsari and Surkhet

<sup>iv</sup> Major tourist accommodation area in Kathmandu, Nepal

<sup>v</sup> *Chakka* and *Hijara* are considered local derogative words for the LGBTIQ community in Nepal

<sup>vi</sup> Sex worker

### **References**

- Austin, A., Craig, S. L., & McInroy, L. B. (2016). Toward transgender affirmative social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 52*(3), 297-310.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2016.1174637>
- Bista, S. (2012). Living on the edge: Exclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) population in Nepal. *Himalayan Journal of Development and Democracy, Vol. 7*, No. 1.
- Blue Diamond Society. (2018). Discrimination and violence against lesbian and bisexual women and transgender persons in Nepal. Shadow report
- Bochenek, M., & Knight, K. (2012) Establishing a third gender category in Nepal: Process and prognosis. *Emory Int'l L. Rev.*, 26, 11.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Burdge, B. J. (2007). Bending gender, ending gender: Theoretical foundations for social work practice with the transgender community. *Social work*, 52(3), 243-250. <http://doi.org/10.1093/sw/52.3.243>
- Central Bureau of Statistics, National Population Census 2011-Nepal: House/Household Listing Form (2011). <http://www.census.gov.np/images/pdf/HHListing%20FormEng.pdf>
- Chhetri, G. (2017). Perceptions About the "Third Gender" In Nepal. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol.11, 96-114. <https://doi.org/10.3126/dsaj.v11i0.18824>
- Crocker J, Major B, Steele C. (1998). Social stigma. In *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. DT Gilbert, ST Fiske, 2:504-53. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill
- Dhungel, R. (2017). "You are a busy": Microaggressions experienced by trafficking survivors exploited in the sex trade. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice*, 26(1-2), 126-138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2016.1272519>
- Fals Borda, O. (2001). From Cartagena to Ballarat: A report on the joint Fifth World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research, and Process Management and the Ninth World Congress on Participatory Action Research. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 14(2), 125-134. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1011399504204>
- Fals Borda, O., & Rahman, A. (Eds.). (1991). *Action and knowledge: Breaking the monopoly with PAR*. New York, NY: Apex.
- Gamble, D. N., & Weil, M. (2009). *Community practice skills: Local to global perspectives*. Columbia University Press.
- Green, E. L., Benner, K., & Pear, R. (2018). Transgender. *Could Be Defined Out of Existence Under Trump Administration*. The New York Times.
- Katz, Jonathan N. (1990) *The Invention of Heterosexuality*. [http://www2.umt.edu/sociology/faculty\\_staff/ellestad/documents/275\\_Katz1990\\_s10.pdf](http://www2.umt.edu/sociology/faculty_staff/ellestad/documents/275_Katz1990_s10.pdf)
- O'Flaherty, M., & Fisher, J. (2008). Sexual orientation, gender identity and international human rights law: contextualizing the Yogyakarta Principles. *Human Rights Law Review*, 8(2), 207-248.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (Eds.). (2001). *Handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and*

*practice*. Sage.

Regmi, P. R., & Van Teijlingen, E. (2015). Importance of Health and Social Care Research into Gender and Sexual Minority Populations in Nepal. *Asia-Pacific Journal of public health*, 27(8), 806–808. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1010539515613413>

Yun, W. (2008). Not merely Queer. WAVE.