

QUEER ACTIVISM AND IDENTITY OF SEXUAL MINORITIES: A SITUATION ANALYSIS OF INDIA AND SRI LANKA

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Abstract— *The subject of gender and sexuality is intricate and complex to the extent that it unlocks a wide-ranging troubles whenever it is tried to be tamed under any universalized social order. Sexuality and sexual rights has suffered an extensive period of silence within the society. Open discussions and debates about sexuality is something which till now is not common, unveiled and appreciated. Therefore, this research aims to reveal the comparative situation analysis between Indian and Sri Lanka with regard to queer activism and identity of sexual minorities. The conceptual framework of this research is designed to evaluate the subject matter through a quantitative research methodology mainly based upon secondary sources. The outline of the paper will be focus on the analysis the following key factors of defining sexual minorities, discourses of sexuality, sexual identity and cultural essentialism, sexual identity and cultural hybridism, locating queer movement in identity politics and finally to emphasize the importance of rights of sexual minorities through a comparative situation analysis between India and Sri Lanka. By making a comparative analysis of Indian Queer activism and Queer Activism in Sri Lanka, as a reference point, this paper will seek to overview identity politics engaged with the question of sexuality. It shall apply theoretical understanding in a local setting, and thus explore sexuality as an identity issue, begins with historicizing sexuality in the Indian and Sri Lankan context by historicizing sexuality in the both the contexts, to explore the multiple and complex ways in which patriarchal and hetero normative institutions of the state have shaped and constrained discourses on sexuality and maintained a hetro patriarchy in the both the societies. Ultimately, the research outcomes would assist the alternative ways in which sexuality was present in India and Sri Lanka but was veiled up by the forces of hegemonic sexuality dictated by the state.*

Keywords— Sexual minorities, India, Sri Lanka

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Imposition is a concrete reality in the present society, be it in the name of law, morality or culture. It has become such an integral and unquestionable part of our daily lives that to act against it is considered a sin or something which cannot

be called normal. The same holds true ground for the existing sexual minorities around the South Asia. The individuals who try to assert their identity as different from the ones that are given by the society; they are discarded, discriminated and looked down upon as abnormal. In this regard, sexual minorities are the worst sufferers. The supreme hetero normative structure of the society attached with the higher moral purpose of clubbing sexuality with procreation have always been able to shatter the desires are crushed the voices by of sexual minorities in their own ways (Narain and Bhan, 2005:50).

The present social set up which is a unique blend of norms, laws and institutions gives meaning to everything in the human world be it individuals or desires; whatever is left unnamed becomes unsocial and abnormal. What one fails to acknowledge is that behind this social setup is some ideas which represent the dominant strand of thought and these ideas are concretized by someone who holds that power on their hand. The structure of heterosexuality is nothing but one of such ideal creation of the state and society which represent someone's thinking at a particular juncture of time.

II. SEXUAL MINORITIES

The term sexual minorities, in this study, would mean all the different sexual identities which do not fall within the hegemonic categories of man and woman and are those who deviate from the overarching structure of heterosexuality as the only dominant way of organizing sexuality. In simplest term, sexual minorities include all those individuals who cannot define themselves within the heterosexual male female binaries of the society. *Gender Equity and Resource Centre*, in 2013, defined sexual minority as "members of sexual orientations or who engage in sexual activities that are not part of the mainstream. It refers to members of sex groups that do not fall into the majority categories of male or female, such as inter-sexual and trans-sexual". Further, the UNESCO report on Human Rights Protection for Sexual Minorities in Insular South Asia: Issues and Implications for Effective HIV Prevention (2011) holds, "The term "sexual minority", or "sexual minorities", refers to people whose

sexual orientation or practices differ from the dominant heterosexual paradigm. This term encompasses sexual orientation and gender identity, including those who identify as being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex, or are MSM¹ or women who have sex with women". Thus, sexual minorities are the ones who challenge the dominant paradigm of sexuality and rubbed the boundaries of male and female as binaries.

III. SEXUAL MINORITIES AND THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY

Identity constitutes a fundamental aspect of expressing and articulating ones individual self. Of course, there are differences in what constitutes the self and what aspect is to be considered supreme in constituting that self. In the present social scenario ones identity is largely associated with a group of which an individual, on the grounds of his/her similarity, recognizes himself/ herself to be a part. Such groups may evolve from the idea of race, ethnicity, gender or even sexuality. But the question remains how far the alignment of an individual to a group describes his/ her overall personhood by association of just one aspect of it to a group? Thus, the term identity is a complex blend of many qualities that defines a person. Today, the term identity is further complicated when it is mixed with politics and given a socio political backdrop.

Identity politics as a mode of organizing is intimately associated to the concept that some social groups are oppressed and browbeaten, such as women, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, etc., and that this makes one vulnerable to cultural imperialism, hostility, exploitation, marginalization, or helplessness. Identity politics starts from analyses of oppression to recommend a restructuring of the existing society. It aims for bringing a process of consciousness-raising for those who feel oppressed to articulate their felt oppression in terms of their own experience. One of the very important aspects of one's identity is his/her sexuality which defines one intimate life and have sufficient influence in constituting ones personality. One of such identity based movement on sexuality which gained popularity in the recent past is the LGBT movement.

IV. DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY IN INDIA

Hence, in the evolution of any concept, history played an important role, so is the case with the evolution of the concept of sexuality too. History had its own role in interpreting and reinterpreting the concept with the change in time and power equations in the world. History defines the past that gives meanings to the present. History exposes

the unholy alliance of power and knowledge which remains hard hidden from the common masses. The same is true for the history of sexuality too. As one of the renowned historian Jonathon Katz (1995) puts in his famous work *The Invention of Heterosexuality* that when the normal is made the object of a scrupulous historical study, simultaneously a pure truth and a sex-radical goal is perused which does not go well with the basic preconceptions. In that process, it is discovered that the heterosexual, the normal, and the natural have a history of changing definitions. Studying the history of the term test its power and question its supreme authority (Kartz, 1995).

It is this reason because of which considering the history of a term is very important to have a detailed understanding of any concept. History breaks the rigidity, universality and objectivity of any term that it portrays to have. Instead, history poses challenge over those concepts that are taken as universal and unchanging in nature.

When analysing the history of sexuality in the Indian subcontinent, according to Kapur, there are two views which runs parallel here. The first one is that of a cultural essentialist one which views heterosexuality as a western project and unknown to India before colonial incursions. While the second one views homosexuality from a 'cultural hybridity' point of view, which saw it as an integral and important part of Indian culture and thus has been present in the subcontinent from a long time before the British empire even came here (Kapur, 2001: 333-84). Now let us analyse both the views in terms of India and Sri Lanka.

V. SEXUAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL ESSENTIALISM

It is clear that cultural essentialism played a very important part in colouring the Indian subcontinent with the shades of the preconceived ideas of sexuality that was not only thought to be normal but also moral in nature. This brand of understanding on sexuality preached a hetero normative structure for the society which was deemed as the only natural way of organizing sexuality. It was also successful in showcasing homosexuality as a colonial thing which was unknown to India until the British landed up in the Indian soil. They were able to reassert Indian sexuality as solely its own; although it just re-echoed the hetropatriarchal model that was in existence in the society for a long time.

After many years of subjugation under the British rule and living under the British laws, it was very difficult to reconstitute an identity which was independent of British

¹ Men who have Sex with Men

influence. However, by reinvigorating the space of culture on truly Indian lines, the nationalists tried to reconstruct the idea of home and as well as sex and sexuality (Kapur, 2001). The nationalist tried to paint a picture of sexual discourse which they thought to be completely Indian and pure. Imbued with morals and values, heterosexuality was reinstated and celebrated as the only natural way of practicing sexuality and the argument given in support to it was that heterosexuality can procreate while other forms of sexuality were sidelined as foreign to Indian culture. Therefore, a kind of sexual morality was introduced within the subcontinent which played important role in the constitution of the identity of an individual. And a need for recognition by the state made everyone regulate their subjective consciousness with the rules of sexual morality.

Thus, the Victorian ideas of “self” played an incredibly important role in the construction of the Indian society and shaping the Indian mind-set during that period. One of the important institutions through which the institutionalization of Victorian ideas took place was the legal system. With regard to sexuality, section 377 is of utmost importance which criminalized all sexual interactions against the ‘order of nature’. Thomas Babbington Macaulay, the president of the Indian Law Commission in 1835, was charged with the testing task of drafting the Indian Penal Code also as a unifying effort to consolidate and rationalize the “splintered systems” that existed in the country before this act (Gupta, 2006: 4815). The act was more or less similar to the other anti-sodomy laws existing in other parts of the world at that time. The text reads: “Unnatural offences: Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment...which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine. Explanation: Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offense described in this section.”

One thing that clearly comes into our minds after reading this text is the constitution of the self shaped by the ideas of law, morality and the grounds of being natural. When law itself which is the protector of one’s identity becomes the one which criminalize a very important aspect of that identity, then it not only effects the personality of the individual upholding that identity but it is also able to create a worldview about that identity being unnatural and restricted. It is only the repetition of hetero normative understanding and a patriarchal structure that is safely regarded and cherished by this law.

Moreover, as Alok Gupta points out that there are two things which is vividly clear in this act, firstly, the phrases like the

“order of nature” and “carnal intercourse” needs proper elaboration as to wipe out the vagueness imbued in its understanding (ibid). Further, nowhere in the act there is a mention about homosexuality, thus this act may be applied to both heterosexuals as well as homosexuals if they involve in sexual activities outside the “order of nature”. But most of the time what happens is that on the sheer doubt that homosexuals are more likely to conduct sexual activities outside the parameters of what is natural, they are arrested and harassed by the police (ibid). The effects of this law would be analysed in a more detailed manner in chapter three.

Now, law does not only create a regulation to conduct the lives of the individuals that fall under it, but it also presents a world view and tags itself the supreme arbiter of morality and rightful authority to decide the right and wrong for the society. Thus, law plays a very important role in constituting social norms and influences the society not only in terms of legality but also shaping the conscience of the individuals. And the role of section 377 of the IPC undoubtedly played a very important role (but not the only role) in shaping the homophobic environment in the present Indian society.

Thus what basically comes out from the above discourse is that sexual identity of an individual is considered to a very important aspect of constituting ‘self’ and is influenced by a variety of factors. Right from the hegemonic notions of sexuality, gender, law, family or marriage to the biomedical constructions of sexuality, all subscribes and in one way or the other, adds to the preservation of hetero normatively in the social structure. Whatever the purifying forces of Indian culture might hold in their hands, the end result is same as that was during the colonial period. Identity of an individual based on his or her sexuality is always seen from a heterosexual point of view. The identities that do not fit within these predetermined categories are excluded, submerged and subjugated in the names of law or religion or culture. But how sexual identity is politicized and thereby contribute towards the Indian queer movement will be discussed in the proceedings of this chapter.

VI. SEXUAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL HYBRIDISM

From the past two decades another lens for understanding sexuality have evolved within the subcontinent which is able to build an alternative to the hegemonic notions of sexuality that swept the Indian minds from ages. The vanguards of such alternative view of sexuality challenges the hegemonic hetero normative structure of the society by looking into the history of homosexuality within the country that was present in the Indian society. In doing this, they challenge

one of the most important aspect of cultural essentialism that homosexuality is external and was unknown to India before the exposure of colonial rule. Going into the history, they try to show how homosexuality was present in literature, architecture and society in the ancient India.

This group looks at the history of sexuality from a cultural hybridism approach. According to Kapur, cultural hybridity argues that, "culture is and continues to be in a process of construction. And this process creates space for the possibility of alternative sexual practices and behaviour that both challenge and subvert dominant sexual ideology" (Kapur, 2001). It represents a post-colonial moment or "the point of recognition that a return to a set of uncontaminated values is impossible" (ibid). Thus, this perspective presents the argument that homosexuality has existed historically in India, and is, in fact, not a Western import. Many have pointed to the historical Hindu festivals and sects that celebrate homosexual activity, discussions of sodomy in the *Kama Sutra*, the court customs of Babar, lesbian references in the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* epics, and the Tantric initiation rites which center around the idea of universal bisexuality (Joseph, 1996; Jones, 2014).

Though it is true that one of the most celebrated texts in terms of sexuality with reference to queer life is undoubtedly Vatsanaya's *Kamasutra*, but it is not the only text which gives profound evidence of the presence of homosexuality within the country. Scholars like Vanita and Kidwai (2000) have contributed greatly in tracing back the presence of homosexuality in Indian culture. Since Indian culture is a melting pot of several other cultures which interacted with it time and again, thus it represents a mixture of multiple views. The present attitude towards sexual discourses is thus the result of complex blending of the earliest Vedic culture up to the colonial era.

One of the dominant tropes of same sex love in ancient India is through friendship, often leading to a life of celibacy or the forming of some very intimate relationships. In the ancient Hindu epic, *Mahabharata*, Krishna and Arjuna, frequently referred to as 'the two Krishnas' (Vanita and Kidwai, 2000: 3) reflect bonds of friendship which go beyond marriage and procreation. In fact 'Krishna clearly states that Arjuna is more important to him than wives, children or kinsmen-there can be many spouses and sons but there is only one Arjuna, without whom he cannot live' (Ibid: 5). Another trope which is used to justify same sex love in ancient India is through rebirth. Vanita and Kidwai argue that 'The concept of previous births serves to legitimise actions perceived as improper in the present life' (Ibid: 28). Rebirth makes several social constructs and divides less important and love

between two people of conflicting gender, class or caste seem involuntary as a result of their past life.

Similarly, in Somadatta's *Kathasaritsagara*, Somaprabha falls in love with the beautiful princess Kalingasena and attributes this love to her previous birth. Same sex desire amongst women is also found in the Bengali text *Kritivasa Ramayana* (Ramayana written by Krittivasa). In the text, the sage Bhagiratha's birth is ascribed to the sexual union between two females. Bhagiratha's father died before he was conceived and his birth was only possible through divine sanction of the god Sankara, 'You two have intercourse with one another. By my blessings one of you will have a lovely child' (ibid: 101). A third trope is sex change which is again brought through divine intervention. The Hindu deities were multidimensional and fluid in their form and one of their remarkable features was 'their multiplicity and variability' (ibid: 58). Thus a deity might appear in any form- male, female, neuter or even in a nonhuman form. Vishnu, one of the three primary Vedic gods in the Hindu pantheon was also known to take the form of a beautiful woman- Mohini. Shiva, another of the three principle gods, on hearing about his beautiful female form approaches him and asks to see it. Thus he is aware of the ambiguous nature of Mohini's gender and becomes attracted to her and 'followed her as a lordly elephant would a she elephant' (ibid: 71; Dasgupta, 2011: 651-53).

These aspects of understanding gender and sexuality with the reference of Indian history and mythology, brings out two important points. Firstly, it denounces the claim that homosexuality is a western concept and came into the country with the colonial interventions. In fact these instances vividly portray the presence of alternative sexualities within the subcontinent since a long period of time. Secondly, it also highlights the fluidity of sexual and gender identities. By the examples of multidimensional Hindu deities, it is clearly expressed how gender is not rigid and given, but potential of alterations are much at hand. Thus, identity as a concept based on sexuality or any other, itself is a fluid one.

When we try to understand all such cultural bases of historicizing sexuality in the Indian context, we basically get the idea that the concept of homosexuality, asexuality or other forms of sexuality that is practiced within the closed circles in India is not totally a foreign concept devoid of authentic Indian cultural base. But it was the colonial act that criminalized such practices and builds a negative attitude towards all those forms of sexuality that divert from the hegemonic one. Though it is true that no one till date have been executed under this law, yet the challenges put

forward by it; invading the privacy of the individuals and their freedom of expression is not unnoticed. The law was created to criminalize sexual minorities and its effect in the society could be felt till now in form of a social norm and a hierarchy of sexual acts that benefit the persons attuned to the hegemonic structure and penalize those are not.

VII. DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY IN SRI LANKA

In Sri Lankan context, discourse on sexuality has now become a trending issue. Previous societies considered discourse on sexuality as a fact of shame. But in the present context, there seems an escalation of sexual minorities in the present Sri Lanka. Some have interpreted the root cause for this expansion is the negative impacts of usage of internet, which has capable to manipulate the users with regard.

Similar to the Indian phenomenon, many historical facets prove the existence of sexual minorities in different eras. The first Sri Lankan case law based on material facts of murdering the minority sex partner by a parcel bomb was reported in the case of Jayawardene in 1946. (Pieris 1998). Initial facts of the case provided that a man has had an unnatural lust with regard to a school boy, where both have even lived together thus later when the boy refused to live together man has murdered the boy as well as his family members by a parcel bomb sent to his house. This story was able to initiate a big haul in this era.

The Penal Code of Sri Lanka, which was enacted in 1883, made sex between men an offence. The Sri Lankan Penal Code is a carbon copy of the Indian Penal Code which was formulated by the British Parliament in the 19th century. Both Sri Lanka and India were colonies of Britain, so it is clear that Sri Lankan Code is also based on British criminal laws as they then were. The existence of lesbianism was not even acknowledged by the 1883 Penal Code. The Victorian laws introduced under British colonial rulers did not acknowledge that women could have sex with each other and therefore lesbians could not be prosecuted. However, with the amendments made to the Penal Code in 1995, substituting the word 'males' with the gender neutral 'persons', women too now face anti-homosexual regulations. Though this law is rarely enforced in this country, its mere existence is enough for the police and anti-gay groups to brand gays and lesbians as perverts and law-breakers. Sections 365 and 365A of the Sri Lankan Penal Code of 1883, as amended by Act No.22 of 1995, are the provisions that criminalize homosexuality. The term of imprisonment under section 365A being two years or less allows this offence to be prosecuted by the police in the Magistrates Court, unlike an offence which entails a prison term of three or more years which makes it an indictable offence that has to be prosecuted by the Attorney General. Moreover, it is a sad

fact that those who are charged under this penal provision are made to undergo a great deal of harassment and humiliation at the hands of unsympathetic police officers. Not only are these individuals submitted to various forms of blackmail, there are many instances where demands of bribes were made from these helpless victims. Extreme humiliation, sexual harassment and sexual abuse at the hands of police officers too are known to take place on these instances. It is clear that in Sri Lanka people are discriminated because of their sexual orientation despite the fact that the Sri Lanka constitution of 1978 recognise non-discrimination or Sri Lanka is a party to the several United Nations Conventions which decriminalises homosexuality. Though Sri Lankan penal provisions based and imported from England yet Sri Lanka has failed even to reach some of their development like non discrimination which England adopted as far as in 1967. (Chandratilaka and Mahanamahewa 2015)

On the other hand, in recent Sri Lanka some has tried to interpret Sri Lankan famous song "Gahaka Mal Pipila" by Karunaratna Diulgane as a song about sexual minorities based on its lyrics. (Song Meanings 2011) Thus, it is the standpoint of this research that the truth of this fact is totally depending on the true meaning set with the lyric writer and not other's views. However, it is the view of the researchers that the attempt to interpret the lyrics favourable to sexual minorities by some groups reveals a positive environment to sexual minorities. However, according to situation analysis it is obvious that population of the Indian sexual minorities are much more than the Sri Lankan population of sexual minorities.

VIII. POLITICS AS IDENTITY POLITICS

As Narrain and Bhan (2005) puts, Act of political resistance is the formation of identities that arise out of an understanding of one's sexuality. These identities have given a space to many same-sex desiring people to name their desires, as well as putting a face to the queer movement. The shared sense of identity and the coming of the queer community openly to protect themselves and their rights have become the corner stone of the Queer activism. In this aspect Narrain and Bhan brings the reference of Familia. When she was called upon to introduce herself, she described her as a 'bisexual hijra sex worker'. This statement disrupted the assumptions that biological sex determines gender, that prostitution is not work, that the categories of gay, lesbian, bisexual, hijra, transgender, etc are rigid and clearly defined with no chance of overlap (Narrain and Bhan, 2005: 14). The taboo about many silenced aspects of the society is clearly broken by her statement. Thus, her

deployment of her identity as a political strategy can be said to be one of the very conscious moves which stand against the societal categorization of normality and abnormality (ibid: 14).

The proliferation of identity and identity politics is closely associated with the coming of a new political language that uses rights based activism and emergence of support spaces like NGOs, self help groups, dedicated for the cause, where the lives of sexual minorities is validated and understood instead of condemned and stigmatized (Narain and Bhan, 2005 :15). The political articulation of the movement is nonetheless supreme in its own aspect because it is through the creation of consciousness towards one's own rights and freedom that the societal point of view can be changed to favour the sexual minorities and create a more inclusive and tolerant society in terms of understanding and accepting diversity in sexuality.

The identity based activism which is practiced in terms of viewing queer movement in India, relates not only to how sexual minorities relates to their own selves but also with each other and also the political field that they desire to influence, thus it becomes a part of identity politics. One of the most important aspects of this movement is the repeal of section 377 of the Indian constitution which facilitates all forms of violence imparted to the sexual minorities. This makes the movement more legal and political in nature. Identity politics as stated above is based upon the idea of politics revolved around identity categories and their shared experiences. If we take this into consideration, then, the shared experiences of marginalization among the community makes a valid case for viewing the issue from the lens of identity politics.

As Akshay Khanna (2014) puts, queer activism has arisen in response to violence, discrimination and the overarching homophobia surrounding the Indian society. This movement is galvanized by the experiences of violence and exclusion imparted by the heterosexual society. At the same time it also has to deal with the way in which power is addressed in 'progressive circles' in India today. One of the most effective aspect of post colonial politics is that for the working of power to be recognized and addressed it must be manifested through the framework of violence or discrimination. He says: *"The subtle and 'everyday' through which we are gendered and sexualized normatively simply cannot be the basis of a 'movement'. My point is not to suggest that violence does not need to be addressed. The issue to me is- to what extent does the framework we adopt limit or enable us to understand and address the context that enables violence"* (Khanna, 2014: 98).

Apparently Khanna says, queer activism is a part of human rights activism which is the only framework given, a framework essentially based on a politics of difference, on an understanding of the politics of sex in terms of the types of people. Historically, he says, the human rights regime is located in the relationship between the body and the state where the body is conceptualized as sacred and imbued with many entitlements. As such, the idea of human rights is based on a certain understanding of personhood (ibid). Human rights reassured the importance of body in organizing politics. It brought the power equation back into question where body was viewed as sacred and supreme in civilized societies. And this body which defines an important aspect of personhood must be allowed to live a life with dignity and self expression and not discrimination and stigmatization owing to their sex, gender or sexual orientation.

The idea of sexuality has become naturalized by various agencies of the society and along with it the categorization of people based on their sexuality has also become a natural phenomenon for all. Categories such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, hijra, etc. have also become straight jacketed in their own ways with the assertion to be recognized within a given category. Several interviews reveal the fluidity of these identities and switch of one to other, but the very desire to be standing somewhere within the given framework becomes so evident that to question the given framework or its inclusive nature is more or less ignored. And "to do so would be to question the very location from where we speak. To suggest that 'sexuality' is a historical category would be to open up the possibility that it is an anomaly that can be changed. This is to say our self-essentialisation seems to be the basic to our political activism".

Post modernists assert that identity markers falsely stabilize or reify group experience, creating essential identities. On a political level, these fixed group identities serve to define membership and thereby exclude and separate oppressed groups from each other (Stavro, 2007: 441). So, far from building solidarity, they contribute to exclusionary political movements. Since this tactic of celebrating minority identity falsely reifies attributes and behaviour that arise from subordinate subject positions, it is problematic (ibid). Moreover, the shared experience of marginalization is also influenced by many other social categories like class, race, ethnicity, nation, etc. and all these differences needs to be considered while understanding sexuality as identity politics issue (ibid). Upholding distinctive attributes or experiences as essential to group membership breeds inward-lookingness and animosity towards others who do not share

the same identity. Far from building bridges between marginal groups, it contributes to reifying specific differences and excluding others and ultimately fragmenting progressive politics.

an identity politics view point, we often are taken away by the political articulation of the term and narrow the entire issue by trying to fit it within the human rights activism by highlighting the shared experience of rejection and marginalization from the mainstream society. But we need to look deep within the very construction of these identity categories and the diversity in their experiences. The fact that identity as it is a fluid concept and depend upon an "other" to assert itself, needs to consider beforehand.

IX.CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the issue of identity and politics in India and Sri Lanka understands how the politics of power have direct impact on the construction of sexual identity. Different factors like bio-medicine, societal norms, laws etc. played their supreme part in assigning themselves the authority to speak about sexuality which is hold to be the ultimate truth. This truth is not inclusive of the sexual identities that have been existing within the society since time immemorial. However, restricted and exclusionary understanding about sexuality leads the society to render various discriminations to the ones non conforming to the overarching hetero normative structure of the society. Owing its origination in the discriminatory nature of British laws which criminalized homosexuality, the sexual minorities in both the countries suffer from stigmatization, discrimination and continuous subjugation in the name of religion, law and sexual morality. Such limited understanding of sexuality, also effects the way how queer individuals see themselves and the society. What one needs to understand is that sexuality is not a historical, universal and given, it is the result of many political, social and cultural processes that spoke the language of a hetero normative power and thus it is located in human construct and not *natural*. Opening up the discourse on sex and sexuality reopens many difficult questions that can challenge the set of controls that allow heterosexuality to be compulsory. Such discourses also bring in the questions of heterosexual marriage and family that is considered to the very base of modern societies of both countries.

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