

Chapter 34

LGBTQ+ Population in Asia Pacific (Malaysia): LGBTQ+ Populace

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ABSTRACT

The topic of LGBTQ in Malaysia was chosen as this issue is relatively new (as compared to Western society) and perhaps not as open due to the different religious, cultural, and familial taboo surrounding it. Individuals who face a crisis in their sexuality, hence, face insurmountable challenges and conflicts and may need to seek help from the counselling/helping professionals. This chapter that focuses on LGBTQ+ population in general, and particularly in Malaysia, it is hoped that it would facilitate the relationship between the counsellor with a member of this particular population.

INTRODUCTION

It seems that today's society, its members are segregated into groups using subjective labels e.g. gender (male/female) religion, race, age, socioeconomic level, marital status and now there seems to be another "recognized" group based on the group members' sexual identity and orientation namely, the LGBTQ group. The origin of why groups are labelled accordingly is unclear but perhaps it is to accord the members certain rights and privileges (certain discounts, membership, services) but it seems more often than not groups/ members of a certain labelled group have received negative treatment from others ranging from being ignored to even being killed. While many groups have experienced one kind of prejudice or another, groups that have faced extreme forms of discrimination are those that are based on religion, race and at present the group based on sexual orientation and sexual identify, namely the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual and Queer or commonly known as LGBTQ.

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While other groups that had faced discrimination have achieved some sense of equality and a less obvious the LGBTG is the latest group to battle for equality and general acceptance by others. In recent times the group has gained much exposure and this topic has been addressed through media in more liberal societies (Hollywood, Australia etc) and have gained much traction in the battle to be treated equally as their heterosexual counterparts, the LGBTQ population still face daunting and insurmountable challenges in more conservative and religious societies, particularly in Islamic societies like Malaysia . They face hostility from families and even capital punishment from authorities.

As a group, LGBTQ population is still in the pioneering days of its struggles to achieve equality or at its basic core, the right to live a “normal life” and recognition as its heterosexual counterpart. As such counsellors/prospective counsellors, who wish to journey with the LGBTQ clients, would want to gain some insight on the different aspects of this group. A brief outline on the following topics, though in no means an exhaustive list, could be helpful in helping counsellors offer and maintain a healthy helping relationship in which an LGBTQ client can find a secure, empathetic relationship. The sections below address the following

1. The historical journey of the LGBTQ
2. Vocabulary involving LGBTQ
3. Challenges in Muslim countries
4. Methodology
5. Evaluation of Methodology
6. Counselling in a Malaysian context

HISTORICAL JOURNEY OF THE LGBTQ POPULATION

In order to understand another’s present situation, it would be useful to know the other’s some background. So it is with getting to know and understand the LGBTQ. When did it come to be? What has been its important challenges? What is the present situation? Only then can client and counsellor be able to map out its future either a group or as an individual. This section will summarize evidence of LGBTQ existence in early history, treatment and attitudes towards LGBTQ and some victories gained by them.

Existence of Homosexuality /Transgender

Earliest recording of homosexuality goes as far back as 9600 BCE in Mesolithic art in Sicily and Zimbabwe shown in drawn figures of phallic male figures in pairs. There were also religious depictions of male homosexual intercourse.

There are figurines believed to have been drawn during the Bronze age (7000 BCE) around the Mediterranean area that depicts the “third sex”, which is of male figure having female breasts or no distinguishable identifying sexual characteristics

Historical Figures

The first recorded same sex couple were Khnumhotep and Niankhkhnum who were Royal Egyptian servants.

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