

Exploring Intersections of Identity among Individuals who are Homosexual in Sri Lanka: A Sociological Study

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In Sri Lanka, the intersections of identities among homosexual individuals are influenced by a complex interplay of socio-cultural, legal, and personal factors, including the criminalization of homosexual relations under Sections 365 and 365(A) of the Penal Code of Ceylon. This sociological study investigates how intersecting identities such as gender, ethnicity, and religion affect the self-perception and social interactions of homosexual individuals. Using a qualitative methodology, the research employed snowball sampling to identify 10 participants aged 20–30 from Colombo and Kandy, ensuring diversity in ethnicity and religion. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically. The findings reveal significant regional differences: individuals in Colombo reported greater openness about their sexual identity, engaging more freely with LGBTQ+ social networks, while those in Kandy often concealed their orientation due to pervasive social stigmas and fear of repercussions. Gender emerged as a crucial factor, with female participants generally being more open about their identity compared to male participants, who exhibited higher levels of repression and internalized stigma. Ethnicity and religion also played a significant role: Tamil participants experienced slightly more familial acceptance compared to Sinhalese participants, who faced greater family pressure to conform. Additionally, individuals from conservative religious backgrounds, including Buddhism and Christianity, encountered more severe discrimination, with some facing exclusion from religious and community events. Discrimination was pervasive across genders and sexual orientations, particularly impacting access to healthcare, education, and employment, especially for those of lower socio-economic status. LGBTQ+ communities and personal relationships were vital for providing support and resilience. This study highlights the complex dynamics of intersecting identities among homosexual individuals and advocates for targeted, evidence-based interventions to foster inclusivity and uphold human rights. By amplifying diverse voices and experiences, the research aims to contribute to broader societal acceptance and equality.

Keywords: Intersections, Homosexual, LGBTQ+, Sexual Orientation, Stigma