

Propositions

Attached to the thesis

Living Sexualities: Negotiating Heteronormativity in Middle Class Bangladesh

By Shuchi Karim

International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University, Rotterdam

1. The strictly heteronormative socio-cultural structure of middle class Bangladeshi households constructs, disciplines and controls sexualities in a gendered way. It privileges male erotic desires and various non-normative practices but turns a blind eye to women's sexual desires, needs and expressions outside institutionalized heteronormativity (Chapter 4)
2. Heteronormativity is oppressive to both men and women, especially for those who have non-normative inclinations towards either gender or sexualities. Therefore, the subjective self's own erotic desires cannot be practiced without many negotiations and strategizing, depending on the actor's gender, age and class.(Chapters 5 and 6)
3. Heteronormativity creates both constraints and possibilities for individuals to be sexual beings of their own choices. (Chapters 6 and 7)
4. In the context of Bangladesh, it is marriage normativity, more than compulsory heterosexuality that is at the core of heteronormativity. Women who resist marriage normativity are commonly seen as a social anomaly, and are deprived of the entitlement to sex and expressions of sexuality and therefore expected to perform some degree of asexuality. (Chapters 4, 5 and 8)
5. Within the development sector and in fund-based activism in Bangladesh, there are major gaps in the knowledge base about sexuality and the socio-sexual conditions of people of different genders and sexualities.(Chapter 8)
6. The religious frameworks of all major religions practiced in Bangladesh influence discourses of sexualities in one way or the other, but it is the dominant Bengali-Muslim discourse that has the power to govern over peoples' lived experiences of gender and sexualities.
7. Sexuality studies with a positive perspective, focusing on pleasure and safety can contribute greatly to an otherwise increasingly regressive population policy as well as Sexuality and Reproductive Health and Rights policies and interventions.
8. Sexuality is increasingly being interlinked with migration, especially for non-heteronormative men and women.
9. Ready-made Western development frameworks for sexuality rights handed over to countries like Bangladesh restrains them from the possibilities of understanding and devising their own frameworks of rights on gender and sexual diversity.
10. Legal reforms regarding sexuality rights should not be limited to the decriminalization of homosexuality, but needs to include the broader gendered and sexually discriminating laws that impact anyone who wants to live a life of individual choice and freedom.
11. Reflexive, qualitative, long term research methodologies are essential for studying sensitive and tabooed topics like sexualities.