Violence against the LGBT community in the Philippines

The LGBT or Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender in the Philippines go way back, they are known for having a distinctive, influential culture however they are bounded due to limited legal rights. There are a lot of variations between the members of the LGBT however, the most visible members of the LGBT culture in the Philippines are known as the Bakla. Gays and lesbians are generally tolerated, if not accepted, within the Filipino Society however widespread discrimination remains.

While the Philippines do not have laws criminalizing homosexuality, it also does not have laws protecting the LGBT community. Therefore, the violence against the LGBT community is aggravated in the Philippines as long as the number of hate crimes against the community increases. Without a national law, several LGBT Filipinos continue to live in layers of fear and inequality. Knowing that the fight against hate is better fought with legislation, the LGBT community was firm in declaring the need for legal means to protect their dignity and human rights, and to redress their grievances. Because of the lack of investigative and identification mechanisms by the government, LGBT rights advocates depend solely on independent reports which are but a glimpse of the real situation of gender-related hate crime incidence in the country.

Up to this date, the LGBT community still continues to fight for their right and to stop other incidents of hate-motivated discrimination and violence against LGBT.

According to the Philippine LGBT Hate Crime Watch, since 1996, there have been 164 cases of murdered LGBTs, 16 of which happened in 2012 alone. What’s worse is that the way that they were killed was very disturbing. During an interview with an emotional Marlon Lacsamana, who knows crimes against LGTBs all too well. “Two of my friends were murdered, one with 72 stab wounds and another strangulated to death.” Obviously, the Philippines have one of worst records of violence against the
community. These troubling statistics offer a glimpse into the marginalization and abuse that the LGBT community faces in the predominantly-Catholic archipelago.

In a 2013 Pew Research Center report about global opinions of the LGBT community, more than 70 percent of Filipinos said homosexuality should be “accepted by society,” making the Philippines the most “tolerant” nation surveyed in the Asia-Pacific region after Australia. However, though we might be hailed as the most tolerant, the hate crimes just show that we do not fully accept the community.

In an interview, Ron De Vera of Amnesty International - Philippines (AIP) said that while legislative reform is important, community engagement also matters in the fight for LGBT rights. De Vera explained that it is the fear of the unknown and ignorance on the science behind LGBT that leads to prejudice, which breeds hate and violence.

All people have an equal right to live free from violence, persecution, discrimination and stigma. International human rights law establishes legal obligations to ensure that every person, without distinction, can enjoy these rights. Human rights are universal – cultural, religious and moral practices and beliefs and social attitudes cannot be invoked to justify human rights violations against any group, including the LGBT community. With serious obstacles to their right to productive lives, LGBT activists say their main target, for now, is passage of an anti-discrimination law that reflects the needs of the sector. They also made it clear that LGBT Filipinos are not seeking special rights, but full respect for the human rights they should enjoy as citizens of the republic.

The end of discrimination starts with you.
Background of the Study

The LGBT or Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender in the Philippines go way back, they are known for having a distinctive, influential culture however they are bounded due to limited legal rights. There are a lot of variations between the members of the LGBT however, the most visible members of the LGBT culture in the Philippines are known as the Bakla. Gays and lesbians are generally tolerated, if not accepted, within the Filipino Society however widespread discrimination remains.

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Statement of the Problem

Three years ago, Jennifer Laude, a transgender woman was found dead inside a motel room in Olongapo City. The motel staff found her naked body on the floor of the bathroom and her head leaning on the rim of the toilet bowl. U.S. Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton admitted in strangling the woman.

Change is inevitable and constant. Only when one change and grow, they’ll see a world we will never know. The emergence of diversity in social norms has led a way for the LGBT members to stand up in a world sitting down. But is the world ready to embrace and totally accept them? Prior to their wake, the LGBT community has been discriminated, hated, abused, and not given the same right as others not only here in the Philippines but also across the globe. The Philippines has one of the worst records of violence against the LGBT community. The murders of 29 transgender people have been documented in the Philippines since 2008 and this is the highest number in the Southeast Asian region, and the second highest in Asia, though activists say that many murders of trans-people go unreported in the country, so the number is likely much higher.

Thus, the research should be able to accord answers to;

- What role do prejudice and violence play in the lives of the LGBT community?
- What can people do to diminish prejudice and violence against LGBT community?
- Why do people perform such violence to the LGBT community?

Despite robust LGBT activism in the country, and a “growing awareness of LGBT Filipinos,” many members of the community continue to face discrimination, violence and abuse.

LGBT activists in the Philippines say their number one priority is the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation throughout the country.
Significance of the Study

The study on ‘Violence against the LGBT community in the Philippines” may be significant and beneficial to the following:

People

This study will have them understand equality and respect those who are part of the LGBT community. They will also hopefully find the morals as to why violence is done to these people, and gain the thought that we are no different from there, rather the same race as what they are, human.

Society

The findings of this study would do well in benefiting society in gaining knowledge and information as to how rampant violence in the LGBT community is, since said community is currently growing bigger and bigger. More awareness, the better chance we could get in avoiding and reporting such cases of violence.

Church

To be able to promote acceptance and respect to those who are part of the LGBT, every sign of unjust and discrimination against them should be avoided. It is to also grab their attention to the fact that it is killing, which is against the commandments they continuously preach.

Review of Related Literature

American Psychological Association: Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality

Since 1975, the American Psychological Association has called on psychologists to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with lesbian, gay and bisexual orientations. The discipline of psychology is concerned with the well-being of people and groups and therefore with threats to that well-being.
The prejudice and discrimination that people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual regularly experience have been shown to have negative psychological effects. This pamphlet is designed to provide accurate information for those who want to better understand sexual orientation and the impact of prejudice and discrimination on those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the United States encounter extensive prejudice, discrimination and violence because of their sexual orientation. Intense prejudice against lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people was widespread throughout much of the 20th century. Public opinion studies over the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s routinely showed that, among large segments of the public, lesbian, gay and bisexual people were the target of strongly held negative attitudes. More recently, public opinion has increasingly opposed sexual orientation discrimination, but expressions of hostility toward lesbians and gay men remain common in contemporary American society. Prejudice against bisexuals appears to exist at comparable levels. In fact, bisexual individuals may face discrimination from some lesbian and gay people as well as from heterosexual people.

Sexual orientation discrimination takes many forms. Severe antigay prejudice is reflected in the high rate of harassment and violence directed toward lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals in American society. Numerous surveys indicate that verbal harassment and abuse are nearly universal experiences among lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Also, discrimination against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in employment and housing appears to remain widespread.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is another area in which prejudice and discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people have had negative effects. Early in the pandemic, the assumption that HIV/AIDS was a "gay diseases" contributed to the delay in addressing the massive social upheaval that AIDS would generate. Gay and bisexual men have been disproportionately affected by this disease. The association of HIV/AIDS with gay and bisexual men and the inaccurate belief that some people held that all gay and bisexual men were infected served to further stigmatize lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
American Psychological Association: Psychological Impact of Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice and discrimination have social and personal impact. On the social level, prejudice and discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people are reflected in the everyday stereotypes of members of these groups. These stereotypes persist even though they are not supported by evidence, and they are often used to excuse unequal treatment of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. For example, limitations on job opportunities, parenting and relationship recognition are often justified by stereotypic assumptions about lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

On an individual level, such prejudice and discrimination may also have negative consequences, especially if lesbian, gay and bisexual people attempt to conceal or deny their sexual orientation. Although many lesbians and gay men learn to cope with the social stigma against homosexuality, this pattern of prejudice can have serious negative effects on health and well-being. Individuals and groups may have the impact of stigma reduced or worsened by other characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, religion, or disability. Some lesbian, gay, and bisexual people may face less of a stigma. For others, race, sex, religion, disability or other characteristics may exacerbate the negative impact of prejudice and discrimination.

The widespread prejudice, discrimination, and violence to which lesbians and gay men are often subjected are significant mental health concerns. Sexual prejudice, sexual orientation discrimination and antigay violence are major sources of stress for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Although social support is crucial in coping with stress, antigay attitudes and discrimination may make it difficult for lesbian, gay and bisexual people to find such support.

Bibliography


