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Kistoo, Kerisha

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Kerisha Kistoo (MA)

POWER, PRIVILEGE & PERCEPTIONS: WHAT DO STRAIGHT CISGENDER INDIAN SOUTH AFRICANS THINK ABOUT GENDER AND SEXUALITY DIVERSITY?

ABSTRACT

Indian South African communities have been a part of South Africa for centuries, starting with the Indentured Labourers brought to South Africa in 1860 and growing into the current developing communities of people. What the ending of the racial segregation enforced during colonialism and apartheid permitted, was the merging of Indian South Africans into what is now considered the dynamic Rainbow Nation of South African social identities. However, little is known about what Indian South Africans think about gender and sexuality diversity – a continuously growing topic advocating for the rights and equality of the LGBTQIA+ community. What this dissertation aims at, is an understanding of what do straight, cisgender Indian South Africans think about the topic, when falling under the cisheteronormative privilege historically assigned to them by society. This brief qualitative research with three focus groups and nine diverse Indian South Africans, tasked individuals with answering questions and being a part of multimodal activities. Whether it was discussing gender roles and expectations, education, or the necessity of these conversations, it is evident that Indian South African communities are not made up of perceptions that are monolithic or dichotomous. Rather these communities are made up of diverse perceptions that are indicative of South Africa's growing intersectional experiences with the LGBTQIA+ community. This dissertation attempts to highlight the importance of experience and the necessity of intersectional narratives when understanding how power works to develop perceptions. While short and unable to encompass all that makes up the experiences of every Indian South African community, it attempts to gain some understanding of where we stand with regards to LGBTQIA+ rights and freedom – a hopeful contribution to the many hardworking individuals who compile knowledge striving to build up this much needed database of information.