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THANKS GOD THAT I AM STILL LESBIAN AND HEALTHY: CIVIL SOCIETY AND SEXUAL RIGHTS IN MOZAMBIQUE

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This paper explores the influence of the global public health strategies in the course of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people's activism in Mozambique. It explores how, within the homophobic inconsistency in the implementation of the bill of rights, the health language reinforces "normative violence" that makes lesbian and bisexual women invisible in society. A Purposeful and snowballing samplings were applied to select 117 participants who introduced themselves as heterosexuals or LGBT in ten Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), 30 Semi-Structured Interview (SSI) and 16 in-depth interviews. Based on feminist post colonialism and inter sectionality, some categories and sources of oppression are identified in the narratives of lesbian and bisexual women participants such as compulsory marriage and corrective rape which, in turn, challenges the discriminatory notion of "key population most at risk to HIV/AIDS". The study suggests that, the use of the global public health language by activists and stakeholders of civil society organization working in the field of sexual and reproductive health programs empowered them to speak more about protecting the "key population most at risk" to HIV/AIDS. This perspective leaves no space to visualise lesbian and bisexual women's rights violation in the cities of Nampula and Maputo. Therefore, our findings suggest the need of an intersectional approach and action in the public health strategies in order to link gender to diversity and to take into account the "harmful cultural practices" that cover secret and discreet realities.

Biography

Maria Judite Mario Chipenembe Ngale is a lecturer at Eduardo Mondlane University - Mozambique since 2004. She holds a bachelors honours degree in Anthropology and Master Degree in Sociology. She is interest in researching the health and wellbeing of the sexual minority groups in Mozambique.

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