I am Different

Article III, Section I of the 1987 revised Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines states that “No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the law”. But how can we say that this is sufficient to cover the right and protection of everyone, especially the LGBT Community? The LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) Community is frequently challenged by the struggles and disadvantages it faces in accordance to human rights. Different human perspectives seemed to be a factor why until now, it is still hard for them to get a career, rights for marriage, and universal freedom. Human Right is for everyone. Furthermore, LGBT Rights are also Human Rights which advocate equality and non-discrimination.

Concentrating in the Philippines, the LGBT community here created a movement to fight for their rights and for our countrymen to recognize their voice, not just for being different but rather a voice to make a difference. The said movement was the 21st LGBT Pride March which was held on the 27th day of June 2015 in Luneta Park. With its theme “Fight For Love: Iba-iba, Sama-sama,” this effort aimed to put an emphasis on leaving a mark and a statement that their fight for LGBT rights is not a fight for LGBT rights per se but also a fight for human rights.

In a global survey, out of the 39 countries that was assessed, only 17 countries accept homosexuality including the Philippines which ranked 10th. In addition, according to the Pew Research Center, 73% of Filipinos in the legal age agreed that “homosexuality should be accepted by society”. But although some studies have regarded our country as one of the most gay-friendly nations, we do not have a government organization that focuses on the LGBT that is why the LGBT Community here solely raises their concerns and advocacies.

Some of the concerns, have already been heard specifically their fight for discrimination. An Anti-Discrimination Act was proposed and introduced by Hon. Kaka J. Bag-ao, District Representative of Dinagat Islands, in which it seeks to inform “that all person regardless of sex or sexual orientation must be treated the same as everyone else, wherein conditions do not differ in the privileges granted and the liabilities enforced”. Afterwards, the Anti-discrimination bill was conducted by the House of Representatives after the privilege speech of Representative Geraldine Roman, a first transgender elected in congress from 1st district of Bataan before the 17th Congress.

The LGBT –society labeled them “different” for their sexual orientations, gender identities, and a different concept of life and love. Because of this, it is as if they have been restricted and stereotyped to have lesser rights than any other people. Just like anyone else, they are just human: being and living like a human usually and normally do. They are just being themselves as they want to be. Being different does not mean you are not human to demand a right, but being different means you have to fight for your freedom to express, to love, and to live.