



## The Cult of Homosexuality

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### Abstract

Identity can be termed as one's individual personality. The aspects defining identity varies from time to time and place to place for example: race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc. holds a control over a person's identity. Women and other marginalized sections of the society, including the third gender, referring especially to homosexuals, bisexuals and LGBT groups needs an independent identity in the society. But they face major problems regarding their status, position and identity in the society. Homosexuality is considered as a mental illness and numerous treatments have been determined to cure it. Besides homosexuals, transgender are also suffering posthumously in the society. While the Indian society believes that homosexuals in India are just certain individuals influenced from the western tradition but tracing the history has proven that homosexuality has been a part of our society since long. Thus, the term paper deals with the atrocities faced by the third gender in the Indian society and how far our country and its individuals have opened up their minds and hearts to embrace their 'other' brothers and sisters.

Keywords: homosexuality, identity, crisis.

For once accept who we are;  
we choose others but are no different.

Identity can be termed as one's individual personality. By the way it has been implied in the text and the way we have heard and understood it since ages, identity represents ones individuality and personality. What we read might hold the capability to be true, but incidents prove that the written truth cannot always be believed or followed. The aspects defining identity varies from time to time and place to place.

Many stories indicate factors like race, caste, gender, ethnicity, religion and disability holding a control over a person's identity. Something which comes natural to a human being becomes a measure of his identity. History supports the fact that these discriminating measures have a great power over a human identity which is still prevalent in the world.

Stories like "Jhootan" by Omprakash Valmiki describe how caste can form a false perception in the minds of people leading to prejudice relating one's identity. Similarly, poems like "Telephonic conversation" by Wole Soyinka and "Harlem" by Langston Hughes displays race as an important

aspect of analyzing identity. Factors like caste and race are natural, over which one lays no control. The gender crisis has always managed to be the center of concern in the society back then and today as well. The inequalities between men and women continue to prevail since life started. The biological differences continue to define the identity of the individuals.

In modern era which consists of the same age old patriarchal society, certain things have remained unchanged. The paternal laws continue to exist on a tremendously large scale and people have begun to accept this as reality. Women, for an example, are bound to be known by the name of their father before marriage and husband after marriage. This concept of dependent identity is so deeply engrossed in the soul of the society that changing or improvising it, for any better, seems close to impossible.

With the passage of time, people have started talking about their individuality and the need for an independent identity in the society which includes equal rights and empowerment of people. Women and other marginalized sections of the society, including the third gender, referring especially to homosexuality, bisexuality and LGBT groups. These groups have begun to open up socially and have demanded a status in the society. The world has always nourished men and women, though not alike, but when we talk about the third gender, people have always neglected them and offer them nothing else except hostility and inequality. They face a major problem regarding their status, position and identity in the society. People see these communities differently and generally oppose their rights. This kind of gender crisis has been kept before important determinants like individuality, intellect and emotions. According to the new rules of government, there is a different option for third genders in a gender column, but, does it really ensure that we have accepted these people at par with men. John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (1869) stated: "So true is that unnatural generally means only uncustomary, and that everything which is usual appears natural."

*Un-freedom*, a movie directed by Raj Amit Kumar (2015) portrays the mental setup of this

inhuman society and about the identity of LGBT which is in dilemma. Leela the protagonist is forced to hook up with a man whom her father Devraj had looked up for her. Nevertheless, she revolted against her father with a video tape revealing her sexual identity of being a lesbian. She tried attracting herself towards boys but failed consecutively. She fell in love with a bisexual artist named Sakhi Taylor. She was the apple of her father's eyes. Devraj, though concerned about his daughter, was also concerned about his honor and dignity in society. "Society" plays a pivotal role in guiding the mental setup of parents towards their children. He thus followed the rules of the society and was torn within the conflict between "honor" and "shame".

Eventually, in the climax, he made his cop colleagues rape his daughter in front of him. This atrocity implies his need and determination towards imposing heterosexuality upon her. Raj Amit Kumar splendidly portrayed the insanity and rigidity of human beings who are not ready to accept the novelty and are still bound in the old tradition and customs of society. Thus, Mill's description of the concept of "unnatural is uncustomary" comes into account. While something which is so natural to a human body and psyche happens and the society disregards it, for it has not been in our customs, and thus it appears to them as being unnatural. So ironical can be life, that one's sexual orientation changes with the situation. At times it is the emotional and physical desire of a person which links with the person of opposite gender and other times it happens irrespective of gender.

It is generally found that sex orientation /homosexuality is by birth and considered as "natural" but it can be seldom seen that circumstances tend to mold ones longing for love. An exemplary showcase of a shift in desire has been exquisitely illustrated in Deepa Mehta's directed film *Fire* (1998). It was the first film which represents a shift in sexual desires resulting in a homosexual relationship between two sisters in law. Radha and Sita, name of the two characters, are married, but neither of them is satisfied with their matrimonial life. Ashok, Radha's husband was under the spell of Swamiji; who taught that desires are the cause of suffering and need to be suppressed. Ashok never

loved Radha and considered sex as a sinful act. Sita faced the correlative problem. Sita was united in wedlock with Jatin, the younger brother of Ashok. Jatin hardly showed interest in Sita because he loved his Chinese girlfriend. This way, both these women, were ostracized by their respective husbands.

Radha being cultured and sophisticated accepted the situation and cocooned herself in the social tantrum of tradition and customs; whereas Sita, being rebellious and much ahead of her time, revolted against the society, and cajoled Radha. Hence, they became complete and felt complacent with each other. After facing many difficulties and ignoring the hypocritical rules of the society, Radha and Sita actually united, mentally as well as physically. Well, here it is found that when there is no light anywhere and one finds a silver lining in the form of a person of the same sex to share, to love, to care, to pour oneself entirely into it, and that person seeks that pleasure from the other, even then the society retaliates. Homosexuality is not only about sexual desires or attractions, but it's much more than that. It's also about emotional bonding and peace and a comfort which one receives on being with another person.

The society didn't accept the movie based on homosexuality, thus, accepting homosexuals as part of the society is out of the question. Some similar rebellion from the society was witnessed in the movie, *Fire*. Shiv Sena burned the posters and Bajrang Dal workers created chaos and havoc on the streets by their hypocritical display of disgust against the movie. They considered the film's theme to be alien to Indian society. Shiv Sanais announced *Fire* as immoralist well as against the culture and tradition of India. They put lesbianism as equaling to AIDS and believed it to be a curse on society which can spread like an epidemic.

On one hand the society wants to control the female sexuality while on the other men are left open to a number of choices. This is directly against the Article 19 of Indian constitution which guarantees freedom of speech and expression. This real incident splendidly stresses the same plight of situational change in orientation. A bosom friend

Ambala (name changed on request) was repeatedly and regularly sexually molested and later sexually assaulted by a close relative. It impacted her mind, heart, and soul so deeply that she developed a severe abhorrence towards males. This disgust and hatred towards men continued her entire life. Eventually she developed immense liking towards the same sex. She felt complacent and complete by being involved with women. So, the question remains that where lays the fault of the mere innocent creature who was crushed and contuse in her childhood?

Besides homosexuals, transgender are also suffering posthumously in the society. They lack identity and are deprived of all rights and opportunities given by the government to the general public. They are not accepted by orthodox society because they are considered unnatural and against the nature's law. The discrimination lies because homosexuals and Transgender are considered worst than other sexual deviants like pedophiles and incestuous couples. One of the most important reasons is that, according to society they also carry the some of the most fatal diseases including AIDS and various STDs. To blame homosexuality for such diseases is equivalent to blaming electricity for electrocution of people, when they themselves just need to be more careful with their use.

Having a sexual intercourse in a heterosexual or a homosexual relationship, for that matter, cannot be blamed for various STDs; one is required to be careful while indulging in the act of love. They are blamed for earning their living by selling their body while it is the government who has discriminated and discarded them from society by depriving them of any jobs as well. They are left with nothing but to beg while people, in the fear of preventing themselves of the "curse", offer them money as pity. Transgender are often compared to "Ardhanarishvara" (the androgynous form of lord Shiva) which portrays intermingling of the two sexes in a body. Though, the power of fertility has not been granted to the transgender unlike the composition of Ardhanarishwara, one cannot ignore the fact that transgender build in the strongest maternal instincts for children. The half male represents Lord Shiva and

the half female represents Goddess Parvati. Recently for the first time in Kolkata, during Durga Puja, the people rebelled against the pervasive social norms by creating transgender Durga Idol, inspired from Shiva's Ardhanarishvara. So that Transgender, who were marginalized for years, were also given a chance to participate in the ceremony. While many Indians appreciated this concept, there were still people who criticized this act of rebellion.

People tend to believe that the origin of homosexuality has been in the West and that the Indian society has got influenced by the Western traditions and recently adopted themselves to the concept of falling in love with people of same sex. While if we trace it back, historical evidences prove that homosexuality has been a part of our society since long. The religious texts including the Bible, the historical sculptures and caves like Ajanta and Elora, texts like Kamasutra, etc. discuss about the existence of homosexuals in the society and in an elaborative way describe their form and functions. Having been denying these historical traces, people turned a blind eye towards their existence and presumably passed on the burden of acceptance on the Western culture.

While the Indian society believes that homosexuals in India are just certain individuals influenced from the Western traditions, one would believe that since India's history signifies their existence and it's just our culture's negligence to accept them, homosexuals have gained the inspiration from the West to come out as they were in public. One cannot argue that homosexuals did exist in the past, though they gained the confidence to accept their identity openly, for which one should have no hatred but gratitude towards the West.

Time is known for its tendency to change. Things change with time. There was a time where certain sections of society were suffering discrimination and untouchability. People who belonged to Lower grade caste were not allowed to blend with the so called high class society, i.e. they were not allowed to sit or to enter the houses of upper castes. Education played a vital role in the abolition of untouchability in our society. Gandhi ji took the first initiative towards the justice to these

people; therefore, he named them as Harijans which meant people of god. This gave some relief to people belonging to backward castes. In the 20th century, one can say that we have swiped off untouchability from our society. Similarly, earlier when racism was on its peak, blacks were subjugated all over the country. More power and wisdom lied to fairer ones while the black people were considered barbarous and animal-like. This sentiment of the world changed with time and now blacks are given equal rights and opportunities. Likewise, steadily one expects that homosexuality will be accepted win our society. There are many evidences which show us that some Indians do accept them. *Satyamev Jayate*, an Indian talk show hosted by Amir Khan beautifully comes up with the social issues prevailing in our society like female feticide, child molestation, rapes, domestic violence, untouchability, etc. In one of the episodes, it discusses about accepting alternative sexuality. Parents like Bhajan Pratap Singh Dhaliwal and Sukarni Dhaliwal are there who supported their son and allowed him for sex exchange. Divya being a lesbian was encouraged by her husband, who set her free from the cage of wedlock and allowed her to be with the person she is in love, attracted and comfortable with. Also, Mrs. Rani Sharma, who despite of being from an old generation and deprived of the knowledge of the concept of homosexuality, supported her grandson who was gay and took steps for protecting him from the society, she stood beside him at every stage of his life and this let him marry his gay partner in the same Indian big fat wedding style with all those cultural wedding stuff, forgetting about the baseless and inhuman norms of the society far behind. Thus we can see certain people accepting homosexuals these days.

The thing required now is patience. We just need to wait and watch for the time when every Indian will wholeheartedly embrace them and accept them as their own, and treat them as humans and not aliens by involving them in the society as their folks. We await the day when homosexuality will no more remain a taboo.

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