

A Qualitative Study On Concerns Faced by Homosexual Community (LGBTQ) in India

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Background: LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) functions as an umbrella term for marginalised sexualities and gender identities (Parent, et al.,2013).
Objective: To study the concerns faced by the LGBT community in India. **Methods:** The whole sample was constituted with 40 participants (aged between 16 and 25 years) constituted with four groups namely Lesbian (L), Gay (G), Bisexual (B), Transgender (T). Each group consists of equal participants i.e. 10. The Questions were framed to obtain the response on their concern. Responses were collected on semi- structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews took place between October 2019 and May 2020. Interviews were transcribed, verbatim, and anonymised. and reflective member-checking were used to develop a thematic framework. The reflexive approach to Thematic analysis was used. The reflexive approach to TA highlights the researcher's active role in knowledge production (Braun and Clarke 2019) **Result:** LGBTQ+ individuals may experience rejection, isolation, or even disownment by their loved ones, leading to a loss of support networks and emotional difficulties. These concerns caused for poor Quality of life and low level of happiness among this community. **Conclusion:** LGBTQ+ community suffer without any mistake of them but there only mistake is that they belong to the community which is still treated like outcasts.

Keywords: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Quality of life, Happiness, Rejection, Isolation.

LGBTQ is an initialize that stands for “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer”. LGBTQ functions as an umbrella term for marginalised sexualities and gender identities (Parent, et al.,2013). According to a new global survey nearly 1 in 10 adults across 30 countries identify as LGBTQ. The Prevalence of Homosexuality in India is 3% of the Indian population identify as homosexual (gay and lesbian), 9% identify as bisexual, 1% identify as pansexual, and 2% identify as asexual, 69% identified as heterosexual (Kumar, & Gupta, 2023).

In the extended form the Acronym LGBTQ stands for:

Lesbian: Refers to women who are emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women.

Gay: Typically used to describe men who are emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other men

Bisexual: Describes individuals who are emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to both men and women.

Transgender: Refers to individuals whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Queer: An umbrella term that includes individuals who do not identify as heterosexual or cisgender.

Despite the landmark alteration of Section 377 in 2018, the LGBTQ community in India continues to grapple with pervasive challenges in various facets of life, including academia, social interactions, employment, public spaces, and marriage, highlighting the ongoing struggle for their acceptance (Manohar, 2021). These challenges in turn raise various concerns for this LGBTQ community.

Certainly, LGBTQ+ community have historically faced discrimination, prejudice, and

marginalization simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. This discrimination can manifest in various forms, including social stigma, legal barriers, and even violence. It's important to acknowledge that being a part of the

LGBTQ+ community is not a mistake, but rather a fundamental aspect of a person's identity. Efforts have been made in many parts of the world to promote inclusivity, acceptance, and equal rights for LGBTQ+ individuals. However, progress varies widely depending on the cultural, legal, and social context of different regions. Advocacy, education, and fostering empathy and understanding are crucial steps toward creating a more inclusive and accepting society for everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

If a person is struggling with discrimination or other challenges related to being part of the LGBTQ+ community, there are organizations, hotlines, and support groups available to provide help and resources.

In addition, quality of life has gained great concern in recent research the quality of life in this community guarantees a significant role in accelerating global well-being. So, in present study an attempt was made to state the quality of life and happiness among the LGBTQ Community by using qualitative approach.

Objective

- To identify the the concerns faced by the LGBT community in India

Method

The methodology deployed was a qualitative method (Themetic Analysis). This Semi Structured Interview were framed to obtain the response on the concern of lesbian, gay and bisexual (Q=12). Since for transgender the concerns were observe different the questions

were framed separately for them (Q=13). Semi structure Questionnaire comprised of total 9 items. Ambedkar University Queer society and Delhi University Queer Society. A total of 50 participants were included in the present study. To be eligible, participants had to be (1) Able to read and respond in Hindi or English; (2) between 17-28 years of age; (3) self-identify as LGBTQ. The responses of items were obtained from sample. Interviews were transcribed, verbatim, and anonymised. the reflexive approach to TA (Braun et al. 2019) was used to develop a thematic framework. This approach was chosen with the aim of exploring concern of LGBTQ without developing it into new theory. Four main themes were identified: rejection, isolation, or even disownment by their loved ones, leading to a loss of support networks and emotional difficulties.

Procedure

Initially, we started with rapport formation after they were seated comfortably and verbal consent was taken, information about this research was given to them beforehand the tools and aim of this study were told to them clearly and any doubt was cleared before we began with the data collection they ensured that their information will be confidential and won't be disclosed to anyone. The given responses were recorded by researcher. The recorded responses were used in thematic analysis.

Ethical Consideration: Informed consent was taken from participants. The participants were assured that personal information would keep confidential.

Statistical Analysis

Responses on Semi-structured interview were analysed under thematic analysis

Result

Table 1. Responses to the research questions by Gays (N=10), Lesbians (N=10), and Bisexual (N=10)

Questions	Responses	Gay (n=10)	Lesbian(n=10)	Bisexual (n=10)
How was your childhood?	Happy	5 (50%)	2(20%)	10 (100%)
	Traumatic	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	0(0)
	Suppressed	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	0(0)
	Responsibility	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	0(0)

When did you get to know u were different	15-17 Yrs	5(50%)	8(80%)	0(0)
	18-20 Yrs	3(30%)	2(20%)	2(20%)
	21-23 yrs	2(20%)	0	8(80%)
Have you faced any sort of assault physically or mentally?	Yes	8(80%)	7(70%)	0(0)
	No	2(20%)	3(30%)	10(100%)
Have you heard of sex change operation or sex reassignment surgery?	Yes	10(100%)	10(100%)	10(100%)
	No			0(0)
Have you thought of doing any surgery to change your sex or modify it?	Yes	8(80%)	8(80%)	0(0)
	No	2(20%)	2(20%)	10(100%)
Any prejudice or social discrimination that you have faced in your early childhood or nowadays?	School	5(50%)	4(40%)	0(0)
	College	3(30%)	3(30%)	2(20%)
	Public Place	2(20%)	3(30%)	8(80%)
	No			
Was the journey of being your true self was difficult, did you find yourself all alone in that state?	Difficult	6(60%)	9(90%)	1(10%)
	Supportive	3(30%)	1(10%)	9(90%)
Who was the first person you came out to and how was their reaction?	Mother	6(60%)	5(50%)	0(0)
	Father	2(20%)	0 (0%)	0(0)
	Sister	1(10%)	3(30%)	0(0)
	Friends	1(10%)	1(10%)	1(0)
	Husband	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9(90)
	No one	1(10%)	1(10%)	
Is there a feeling of guilt?	Yes	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0(0)
	No	10(100%)	7(70%)	10(100)
	Sometime	0 (0%)	3(30%)	
Does your life change after being a member of the LGBTQ community?	Yes	10(100%)	10(100%)	0(0)
	No			10(100)
Were you ever attracted to the opposite sex?	Yes	0 (0%)	10(100%)	10(100)
	No	10(100%)		
Were your family and Friends supportive towards your decision?	Yes	4(40%)	0 (0%)	10(100)
	No	6(60%)	10(100%)	

Discussion of the Research

Q1: How was your childhood?

Gay: In our observation, it was shown that the childhood of all gay people was divided into 2 parts of life either it was a happy childhood where they were raised by their mother with all the values of a good women inherited in them that they wanted to be like her as a caretaker of the family with lots of inspiration towards them and motivation to do the same and take forward all the values they have inherited from the female energy which was surrounded in their childhood.

But if we see the second aspect of it where the domination of a father or a male authority

suppressed their feeling and a traumatic event like beating them up or forcing them to meet up the male society or the male standards of our Indian society made them suppressed and timid which scare them off with these standards and they start to hate the perspective and rebel by acting opposite of it.

Lesbian: In lesbians, we see that they were forced to suppress their feminine traits and act like the head of the family or son to their father because there was no son but all the daughters this commonly happens to firstborns when they are forced to suppress all the female traits and to make the male traits more dominating so they can handle the family and take all the

responsibilities to them and support their family like a son. When these things happen were unable to generate that feminine trait inside them and got caught up by the responsibilities and somewhere got confused with their sexual orientation and started to seek comfort with women.

Bisexual: it was a beautiful childhood.

Q2: When did you get to know u were different?

Gay: There was a realisation that they were different in their teens when they are more sexually aware of their feelings and whom they are comfortable with and gay people were more outspoken about their preferences.

Lesbians: It all comes down to the society we live in where being a lesbian is a shame to the society and the parents, suppressing their original feelings and going by the standard of society that the opposite gender attracts these females never cross the thought of liking the same gender until they were not comfortable, satisfied and unable to feel the void in a relationship with men.

Once they address these feelings in a 'Normal Relationship' they somehow encountered their true feelings and insight about their preferences on sexual orientation to fill the void of that emptiness they were feeling with the opposite gender.

Bisexual: In college when students were little more mature and be into exploring options

Q3: Have you faced any sort of assault physically or mentally?

Gay: It is a harsh reality of Indian society that we never accept change and if someone is changing we pull them down with all the man-made standards to live in a society by calling them a Natural or Authentic way to live, and if we see any change the pre assume prejudice and looking upon them different shapes into harassment and assault because then we don't treat them as a part of society but just a trash that we can misbehave with anytime.

Eg: call them "chamiya", "Meetha" or whatnot

but people do not realise what kind of mental trauma they are getting, also rape them as if they are not human which leads to lifelong physical trauma.

Lesbian: If a woman is rebellious or wants to live her life on her own term it outcast her from society and leads to bad shame her no matter what. The predetermined notions that we have to suppress women and call them a weaker section of society say it all and if she is open about her sexuality and her preferences then she is just a burden on earth which gives all rights to people for harassing her and outcast her from the society because even their parents don't want to live with them and call them as a burden which is god for nothing as she cannot be the ideal daughter to them just by going against the norms of society.

Bisexual: Never

Q4: Have you heard of sex change operation or sex reassignment surgery?

Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual: Being a member of the LGBTQ community people are well aware of the other terms which are used in it like sex reassignment surgery where it is really common because everything gives freedom to be what they are or to be the true self of their version.

Q: Have you thought of doing any surgery to change your sex or modify it?

Gay: Many of the people denied to change their body and be happy in their skin but there are some dissatisfied with it all of those people were who does not want to unpleased their partner and wanted to satisfy their partner with their physical appearance or to be more attractive.

Lesbian: Many lesbians were against it but some who wanted to do it were all those who want to rebel and were outspoken about the way they want to live and for them, it was a highway or my way kind of deal. And they want to showcase how happy they are after certain changes but none of them go through the actual surgery but the normal changes in their appearance.

Bisexual: Never thought of it

Q5: Any prejudice or social discrimination that you have faced in your early childhood or nowadays?

Gay: Everyone has faced any kind of prejudice and discrimination whether it is coming from family, friends or society things get pretty different and difficult once you step aside from general norms or societal standards. Living prejudice-free or discrimination free is just a myth no matter how liberal society you live in people do have many kinds of prejudice and discrimination against this community and they don't want to consider this community any same but different in a derogatory way.

Lesbian: women coming out in society in a general way has always been a task and here women coming out of the social standards rebelling about their sexuality is like a storm to the society we have always seen how women are suppressed in Indian society because their sexuality and modesty are the so-called pillars that she needs to protect and here she is fighting for sexuality and her own preferences is just a task, in this case, there are the high chances that she will face lots of backlash and many kinds of prejudice and discrimination like calling her stigma to family, getting married forcefully and being a helpless towards herself.

Bisexual: Not as such any prejudice was faced by us

Q6: Was the journey of being your true self was difficult, did you find yourself all alone in that state?

Gay: Participants have stated that being a LGBTIQ community member it's really difficult for people to support them because everyone is following standard societal norms and being rebellious and doing something which is not acceptable in society always brings out that how life going to be difficult with minimum support or no support. That's why 3 participants who had more female energy in their house supported their choices no matter what society say but for rest, of the participants had to go through a bloodbath, they lived in the street, and families disowned some of them calling them stigma to society and house and no support was provided to them.

Lesbian: Patriarchy does exist in our society in India. Gay somewhat gets support from family but lesbian participants stated that they were having no support from family or friends or anyone else. After knowing that they have changed their sexuality in a different way. People want to suppress women in many cases so they do not outshine them in another way.

Bisexual: NO my husband/wife was supportive towards my decision

Q7: Who was the first person you came out to and what was their reaction?

Gay: It was really difficult for men to own up to their sexuality in a way people will tend to see them in a less manly way and society will be questioning their manhood but they come up to this with their mothers because the empathy and conviction of loving them without any judgement motivated them to get out their shell and be proud of what they are.

Lesbian: The participants reported that most of them talked to their mothers about their sexual preferences but only a few get supported and others faces the heat or the backlash about what they wanted to be and does not get any support.

Bisexual: They were supportive but shocked at first didn't know about the terminology

Q8: Is there a feeling of guilt? Does your life change after being a member of the LGBTQ community?

Gay: Many participants reported that there wasn't any guilt or shame but the feeling of satisfaction to be free of all the regular standards be what they are. Realise what are their callings and be truthful to themselves.

Lesbian: There wasn't any guilt but a sense of realisation that what if they weren't like this or would have normal preferences like any other people won't make them feel they do not belong here or have done a crime to open up about their sexuality which is the basic right of a human being to choose whatever or however they want to live until and unless they are harming anyone.

Bisexual: There was not guilt but regret if we had known about it initially.

Q9: Were you ever attracted to the opposite sex? Were your family and Friends supportive towards your decision?

Gay: Many reported that they weren't attracted towards the opposite gender they know what they want from the start and were pretty clear about it that they want things to be and they should be done. They got realisation in their teens that they were different and not meant for regular relationships. Their families weren't supportive many left their houses but some of the families understand and deal with it.

Lesbians: The reaction of lesbians was the opposite they all tried to work their regular relationship but always felt the void and emptiness so they didn't take it forward and tried to explore more options when they did they realise they were different and weren't made for the standard relationship and decided to change their preferences. These women never got any support from their families and friends and they eventually move out or our stuck their parents still thought they can change them by marrying off them to a regular guy so they can pursue a normal life without being a stigma towards the family.

Other non-binary does not get much affected because they do not label in any category so people can't judge them or discriminate against them these people look similarly act similarly and behave like any other of us also these people reported that they are different with their social identities and do not want to be open about their experiences and are not much open about their sexuality as well so people think they are just exploring which shows exploring isn't the problem but putting yourself into the labels hinder them all.

When did u get to know you are not comfortable with your body?	Traumatic Forced Found someone like	6(60%) 3(30%) 1(10%)
Have you faced any sort of assault physically or mentally?	Yes	10(100%)
Have you heard of sex change operation or sex reassignment surgery?	Yes	10(100%)
Have you thought of doing any surgery to change your sex or modify it?	Yes	10(100%)
Any prejudice or social discrimination that you have faced in your early childhood or nowadays?	Yes	10(100%)
Was the journey of being your true self difficult?	Difficult	10(100%)
Did you find yourself all alone in that state?	Yes; alone	10(100%)
Who was the first person you came out to?	No one	10(100%)
Is there a feeling of guilt?	Yes Sometime	7(70%) 3(30%)
Does your life change after being a member of the LGBTQ community?	Yes	10(100%)
Were your family and friends supportive towards your decision?	No	10(100%)

Table 2. Responses to the research questions by Transgender (N = 10)

Question	Responses	Transgender
How was your childhood?	Traumatic	10(100%)
At what age (in years) did you get to know you were different?	17-19	3(30%)
	20-22	5(50%)
	23-25	1(10%)
	26-28	1(10%)

Discussion

Q1: How was your childhood?

We talk about transgender and the childhood they lived was just traumatic and unbelievable and this is how they are shaped by the past they have been through which was full of trauma and hardship there were many events that shattered them, making them believe that they are worthless and the feeling of being avoidant

and sorrow they go through was disheartening towards them and concluded with hating themselves to the extent of changing their gender and doing modification into their body just because of the trauma that they have faced in the childhood.

Q2: At what age (in years) did you get to know you were different?

Most trans get to know about their actual identity when they were in their early twenties because after realising their trauma the process of getting over it and realising their true identity was like healing but the battle between gender and self-identification was hard the power they brought into themselves to realise what they are and their true calling is helped them to realise their true identity and what they want to be and how they want to fight with their traumas because early 20s is the time when they are struggling with the real world and all the hardships they were into. The self-actualization they got was like medicine to heal the whole trauma and start a new journey with a new identity.

Q3: When did u get to know you are not comfortable with your body?

All the Participants reported that their decision to be transgender is followed by posttraumatic events e.g.: Some of them got raped by their own father when they were in their early childhood because their father was accusing them of their mother's death and degraded that child forced him to have an escape by disliking his own body and convert into a transgender.

Some of the participants were forced to dress up like women and should work like women and earn for the family because there was no one to do it which leads to distortion of their masculine traits and they got confused by their identity and started to behave like women and loved dressing up in their attire and behave like them and the attention they used to get was like a recognition that they were seeking for this leads to satisfaction as a human being.

Some of the participants found a transgender and fall in love with her and thought if she convert herself to a man the relationship will be more

acceptable towards society and things will be easier for them.

Q4: Have you faced any sort of assault physically or mentally?

All the participants have faced any or the other kind of assault but the irony is the journey of their converting themselves into transgender started with the assault and to escape all those things they converted themselves into being transgender that if they will be the true self of them things will be better but things get worse after they become one and realise that how life got worse apparently "Normal" people do not consider them as a part of society and things are really difficult for them when they do not have any family or any support to be with but the only satisfaction they have is to be their true self and no matter how hardship they have gone through they have recognised their true calling and true identity that they are not at least lying to themselves.

Q5: Have you heard of sex change operation or sex reassignment surgery? Have you thought of doing any surgery to change your sex or modify it?

All of these participants have heard of sex reassignment surgery and many of these have gone through this surgery where they have changed or modified any kind of their body part to make themselves more feminine or masculine.

Q6: Any prejudice or social discrimination that you have faced in your early childhood or nowadays?

The prejudice they faced was people use to call them "AIDS HUB", making them feel as if the community is untouchable initially they do not even consider them as a part of society but after some amendment from Government. Society started this initiative for them to be a part of society but any government or any rule can't change the mentality of people overnight or cannot make them suddenly a part of society without breaking all the prejudice or stigma which comes with this community. People think if they will travel with them, or eat with them they will get infected with this disease and they will also join their community. Breaking all these stigmas

will take time and much more awareness of this topic.

Q7: Was the journey of being your true self difficult?

The journey was obviously difficult and they were all alone in it but there was a sense of realisation that they are true to themselves and society does not matter to them. They want to lead their own path no matter how hardship they face but at the end of the day, they are comfortable in their own body and do not want to be someone else just for the sake of society.

Q8: Is there a feeling of guilt?

The feeling of guilt was only present in 30% of participants because of the discrimination and stigma which people have for them. Which somewhat hinders their growth and minimises the opportunities for them to do something for them. They only want that people should see them as regular people and not the darker side of society or the community which is still struggling to be a part of this society.

Q9: Does your life change after being a member of the LGBTQ community? Were your family and friends supportive towards your decision?

Life does change 360 degree as a transgender it gets stated when they thought of being a transgender they all wanted this life but somehow this new identity comes with lots of struggle on various platforms like in terms of family, friends, interpersonal relationships and professional lives. Choosing between their true self and society it takes lots of guts to choose what your heart says and when you know that your own family and friends will be against you. These people stand for themselves and are proud of their decisions. All judgy stairs, prejudice and discrimination they get after being a transgender does make life a little harder but the mental satisfaction of self-actualization is always there to over shadow all these negative thoughts and people.

Conclusion

This study shows what the underline problems in our society are, how things are around us and we neglect them because we

don't want to face the harsh reality of our society and its problems with norms and morals that are distorted from our reality of daily life. People do not have compassion or empathy towards people who are different or we consider them as different like the LGBTQ community we always treat them as a different community and make prejudice against them by the stigma this community come with. But we never talk about what they go through and the struggle they have to keep up in this society, coming out and openly expressing one's sexual orientation or gender identity can lead to strained relationships with family, friends, or religious communities. LGBTQ+ individuals may experience rejection, isolation, or even disownment by their loved ones, leading to a loss of support networks and emotional difficulties. Because of all this the Quality of life among the Community is low and the happiness among the community is less. The people among this community suffer without any mistake of them but there only mistake is that they belong to the community which is still treated like outcasts.

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