

# Queer Position: A Study on the Psychosocial Acceptance of Queer People and Their Issues in India with Reference to Hansal Mehta's Aligarh

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## **Abstract:**

*This paper tends to analyse the psychosocial imbalance between a homosexual character and his inner conflict, which ends with uncertain death. It has tried to bring back the communal distance of a homosexual character in India. Prof. Siras is identified as a queer character eventually faces enormous unsolved problem due to his indifferent identity. Besides the investigation on homosexual character's inner conflict with the reference to the historical background and scientific suggestion, the reception of social perspective also examined. Depth picture of Siras' conflict between life and death has been identified through continues reading which has proved the forces by the society which leads to death. So the paper has proven the prolong disturbance of psyche may cause to ending life.*

**Keywords:** *psychosocial, communal distance, homosexual*

## **I. Introduction:**

In India, especially after the colonial period queer has been understood as a means of strange thing, odd object to comprehend, unusual to others, abnormal in physic, and sick to nature. It is unimaginable to figure out its nature as it is either misinterpreted or misunderstood. So by nature or the involvement of human it has been transformed as a being of alien to earth especially queer has been propagated as a creature against God. By continues contribution of miscarrying the quality of one's originality in other culture developed as a concept of unusual things. So automatically queer sex becomes a sexual inversion or reverses sex brings back the impact of existential crisis to their livelihood.

For centuries, queer sex has been carried with the negative ideology of themselves without any science and scientific proves. Initiation of modern queer movement was lately effected from the incident *The Stonewall Riots* in

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1969 at New York's Stonewall Tavern in the United States of America. It gives a big impact on existing culture becomes a new culture. During the 1980's after ten years of Stonewall Riot, many writers and thinkers produce new ideology on queer character as a positive terminology.

Teresa De Lauretis coined the term *queer theory* for a conference at The University of California in 1990, in a special issue of *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* from a feminist perspective. So major proponent on queer subject emerged from feminist thinking and later it evolved as an independent theory. In the commonwealth countries like India, Queer as a recent concept has been taking a long time to be understood and accepted. The oppression on queer had been for a long time in India and continued even as they come out as their original gender core. When the theorist comes out with the new concept or a different theory, the situations slowly changes from its direction on subjugation.

In the earlier period, Queer had been interpreted and used as adjective-noun later it becomes a word of the noun. At present it is being used as a verb: "Queering in Indian society". To eradicate the misconception of queer in the present era, many proponents tried to eradicate the stereotypes. For instance, Paul Halsal noted that till 19<sup>th</sup> century the terminology sodomy was used for pointing queer people, later after the mid of 19<sup>th</sup> century the new term for sodomy, 'homo-sex' was created and onwards considering as a medical problem.

In 1953, American Psychiatric Association's (APA) journal '*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*' categorised homosexuality as a pathological emotional disturbance later the same journal in 1973 restated that homosexuality should not be considered as a disease in forthcoming eras means it's not a mental disorder. Besides due to lack of lessons about homosexuality, people's conception on queer is always a taboo, but there are some shreds of evidence that before colonial India queer did not misunderstand or underestimate. Despite APA advised avoiding using the terminology of queer as abnormal, the unawareness and clear policies in India pave a way for a long dilemma in comprehending. For the 21<sup>th</sup> century, according to Gobi Shankar's statement about homosexual life is a "Modern Marginalization". To the support of APA's suggestion, in 1990, the World Health Organization removed the word diseases from the homosexual test.

*Aligarh* (2015) directed by Hansal Mehta gives a real picture of naïve story in ample directions on the queer. The same-sex character Prof. Srias plays a major role in this movie represents a real-life situation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in India. In this reflection of the homosexual role, Indian perpetual disturbances against homosexual as gender minorities abundantly depict the crucial life structure. The technical inclusion of suffering about a gender minority community in this movie panelled the camera on all sorts of pathos and grief. So eventually this grief brings back the politicized agenda between genders and develops in psychological depression. The temperament of grief leads a character to uncertain suicide though he got the legal victory.

## **II. The Evolution of Queer Theory:**

The theorist Michel Foucault reinforced the statement of homosexuals is Invented as a species in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which gives immense impact on the subjugation of this homosexuality. From Gobi Shankar's reading, there

is a word about the subjugation of same-sex gender for some centuries in the ancient and medieval period it was not been misrepresented or not recognised. They got their dignified life in this regardless ruler like Hindus and Moguls. According to Gobi's statement, the Buggery Act in 1533 gave subtle replication to their social life as minorities. So in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Michel Foucault classifies the supporter of homosexual and opposes vis a vis the essentialists and constructionists.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick a 20<sup>th</sup>-century feminist developed the concept of homosexuals as minoritizing themselves from mainstream society and universalizing themselves as a brand to this mainstream society. So David Halperin added strength to Sedgwick concepts of universalizing terminology is an anxious one and minoritizing themselves is a comforting concept instead of living in the neglecting society. So from the exponents' perception is a double edge sword on homosexuality because either they mingle themselves with the mainstream culture or minoritize from themselves to the mainstream culture because according to Aristotle's conception the cultural impact on socializing a gender claims their orientation that what the crowd claims their pleasure. He coined the word for claiming gender in quantitative as *to pleion*. Crowd claiming psychology is partially hitting in a wrong way to this society without any scientific attachments, so the consequences of this fact will bring a quarantined culture to the particular community. This falls and flaw makes secular life in a crowded community.

In Greek, the approach to genders is completely different from the other's ideology. They have seen as two different edges between heterosexual and homosexual. Their sex and love life is always towards other opposite their gender because in same-sex love they looked like a male lover for a male is feminine and similarly, female lover for a female is masculine, the physical body may be different to their eyes in regular mode but they searched one's self rather the outer body. The body is the integral mechanism for the desire which imposes way to attain pleasure. So for same-sex gender desire play a vital role in gaining their opposite pairs but to the mainstream society of heterosexuals, it would have seemed like a taboo.

Defining homosexual as a taboo, Anna marrie Jacose in her book *An Introduction to Queer* describes that "queer acquires its meaning from its oppositional relation to the norm. Queer, by definition, is *whatever* is at odds with the normal, the legitimate and the dominant...It is an identity without an essence" (Day, 2007). In the Jacose's definition queer is being considered as a form oppositional norm to heterosexuals' protocol. Aristotle's definition of desire has slightly deviated to Jacose's explanation of queer. He states whoever gets desire could be signified as a matter of opposite gender. However, after Buggery Act, Jacose's idea on queer would be applicable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century's approach. Jacose emphasises that queer is to be a deviant subject in the centre and it is an identity without a core. David Halperin's (1995) approach on queer is supporting to Aristotle's view on desire i.e., "queer acquires its meaning from its oppositional relation to the norm. Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence" (Day, 2007). Here there is a question arise which that that is normal and what is a common norm? it pertains to the paradoxical in common ground. On God's creation, all are same and equal to nature so how the homosexual becomes odd to nature and against the normal? On what way they deviated from the common norm? or the common norm is not the same as to all.

So the definitions and perceptions should be reframed according to the time and develop the priority in crowd claiming function. The scientific conclusion for this chaos is gender is not single and sex is not particular. The secular part of the sex is changeable in time and gender decides following the orientation. For example, gender has classified as Male, Female, Transgender, Transwomen, Transmen, Gender Queer, Androgyny, Pangender, Bigender, Trigender, Agender, Neutrois, Retransitioners, Appearance gendered, Transbinary, Transcrossdressers, Crossdresser, Intersex and so on. Similarly the sexual orientations are divided into as Heterosexual, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Polysexual, Homoflexible, Heteroflexible, Asexual, Bicurious, Autosexual, Skoliosexual, Androphilia, Gyenophilia, Transfans, Demisexual, Gay asexual, Transgay and Translesbian. Among all these categorizations the identification of single-gender and giving more priority is slightly tough and practically impossible. So the general norm has been so far created chaos in society and homosexuals' personal life. Without evidence, it is heavy to understand a person and his orientation in common ground. So it creates a psycho-social imbalance in their social and personal life brings back ended the possibilities of living spaces.

### **III. Historical background of Queer in India and Outside India:**

According to Gobi Shankar's research the availability of homosexuality in begins since life started in the earth, means it has crossed more than 7000 years with research record but it will increase more than that. In India, according to the 2011 census, there are more than 4.9 lakhs homosexual people prevailing. So the priority and equal rights in all the level should be provided and monitored as long as everyone benefitted. Devdatt Patnayak finds during the 6<sup>th</sup> century in India is a boon to homosexual culture because in that period constructing temples were started and it could be found many homosexual statues in the temples, later between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century enrich in worshipping transgender as a God from normal life.

Similarly in Rome and Greek, there are some traces has been found about the rich culture of homosexual in their mainstream culture. Plutarch has written the Spartans' law in Greek where he has made a space for homosexuals' welfare and policy. The first migrant tribal group to Rome called Dorian has called homosexual as *pederasty*. Plato has painted about his teacher Socrates' homosexual relationship. Aristophanes has written an imaginative story with a charter like two head, 4 legs and hands mean a mingled structure of male and female.

In India, there are some evidence has found *Ardhanarishwara*, *Bahuchara Mata*, *Aravan in Mahabharata story of Tamil version*, *Sikhandhini* and *Bhagiratha*. They are the historical pieces of evidence which reflect the availability of homosexual worship in India for centuries because Mahabharata has more 2000 years old history. The shreds of evidence and incidences traced in India have been given hope in understanding the presence of their relationship with mainstream society. Since India has a rich culture in homosexual impact, as Gobi Shankar states after colonial period due to the impact of the colonial period and Buggery Act produced an immense effect in controlling the power of free ambience public life. So this paper is especially finding the reason for how the agony against homosexuality occupied through power construction. In the course of understanding the knowledge sharing

in history make proves the step of the crux on monopolising the minor culture. The audacity of destroying the power structure occupied over the minority community on gender can be eradicated by re-reading a history of evading.

History will teach a lesson to all the chaos where it ends up with new rules. Earlier in the name of God, homosexuality was propagated as a sin and practising homosexuality in a restricted place may cause death or execution as already written on the ground of law. Many cases have ended in execution due to their homosexual attraction that sooner gets reward on public execution. So this exercise may cause to death not been monitored their reasons and situations. In modern society should go with the scientific evidence just for preserving the lives of many in future. Execution alone can't be a solution for controlling a different gender in a country where Article 14 ensures the equal rights for all regardless of caste, religion, language and gender.

Indian Penal Code Act 377 has added in Oct 1860 to the Indian Constitution which offers, "Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine" so the penal code restricts freelance relationship fellow same-sex partners in every level. It is strictly prohibiting homosexual act against nature but the same Act has removed on Sep 06, 2018, after 157 years when it stated "Sexual orientation is natural. Discrimination based on sexual orientation is a violation of freedom of speech and expression" based on Article 14. There are two things has been concentrated in this study which has given immense consequences to queer nature. Most often the act and history focus on homosexuality without any scientific reasons which mean of pseudoscience impact. Pseudoscience has made blindly give a belief on unnatural and unscientifically proven things to society. The lawmakers and historian says pseudoscience is a present date dilemma to modern society. In an imaginative point of view, the story might have written but the same will not be applicable for all sorts of time. So there are parameters which affect queer's personal life individually like harassments, identity crisis, mental stigma, marginalization & social isolation, stereotyping, hostility and negative self-concept. The unbalancing life structure leads to death in the end by over depression due to the linear of problems faced by them.

#### **IV. Queer's Life in Aligarh:**

In the Hansal Mehta's movie *Aligarh* (2015) endow with hocus-pocus picture of the stigmatised social killing of homosexual. His death is unidentified by the camera but makes to realize that it is an uncertain death in the democratic country. His name is Prof. Ramachandra Siras; a Marathi professor at Linguistic department in Aligarh Muslim University who stays at Medical colony and leads a married bachelor life. The allegation against Prof. Siras was that he has an unnatural contact with a rickshaw puller, an unmarried young man. Deepu Mathew a young and energetic reporter to a news channel brings light to all controversial incidents along with scientific and witness proof. Prof. Siras' death is mysterious but he has succeeded in the legal fight against the Indian Constitution. Deepu's struggles are unpredictable and unimaginable during his protest and striving legal support from various platforms. So Deepu's effort got a wide range of attention from various fields through the agony of homosexual

impact which slowly gets dig its own grave through the law. No senior colleagues have supported when Siras was suffering and wandering for legal and ethical support.

One fine night Siras and his friend were captured by a cameraman for a local channel. The essence of plight starts. Students at AU fired the effigy of Prof. Siras, local protest against his actions on another side, fellow professor's allegation and local media's telecast in one side altogether he is like a fish out of water. For him, all the ways were closed to survive though he collects his courage and moves for legal support from the local court. The movie reflects the mind-set of conservative completely against science and creation of nature.

The fellow professor Sridharan acts as an honest man to Siras as to help him eventually he deceives Siras' obedience. Sridharan collects letter from Siras and submits to AU as he confessed the crime which he did not commit. It is a sarcastic attire of our society who always deceives for personal self. It is a reverse atmosphere of forwarding society who believes and spread a falls statement which either on public or individual. Even in this movie, a paper titled an article 'Gay professor suspended after sting', the pathetic fact is the journal never did a fact check before spreading news which reaches all corner and nook.

Siras: We knew each other for just 8 months. At my age, people often get lonely.

Deepu: Was he your lover?

Siras: You people are so obsessed with the word 'lover'. At last, try to understand 'love'. It is a beautiful word. You're making it sound like a dirty word. I have a problem with this. (Mehta, 2015, 01.18.18)

Siras explains the meaning of his relationship in his expression, that people's obsession with the meaning of love and the very expression of real meaning from the lovers both are completely two different extremes. From his elucidation, the bond between rickshaw puller and Siras is significantly infinitive. He is questioning how the word 'lover' can simply define with a normal word? It's an expression of the soul between two spirits. It has misinterpreted in an alternative way to control a group to occupy their life. In the end, Prof. Siras confesses that it has happened to deconstruct his profession. He is not differentiating love from gay love, because both are from an expression of souls. It could be understood that,

Deepu : Is it because you're gay?

Siras : I don't understand this word.

Deepu : So you're not gay?

Siras : How can someone describe my feelings in three letters? It's like poetry that is deep within. A burning desire that cannot be controlled, an uncountable urge...Poetry is found in-between the words...in the silences... the pauses. People can interpret it in different ways according to their age, their maturity." (Mehta, 2015, 00.40.22)

The conversation between Deepu and Siras goes a little deeper on Siras' intimate relation. He hates 'gay' a word which contains three letters until it gets a soul within it. A male and female lover alone is not describable, including male and male lovers also a bond or a union of two souls. In India, due to lack of awareness and misguidance against the queer community, for more than 157 years when IPC Act 377 was actively available, they were quarantined either among the public or in society. So the original meaning of love has been evacuated slowly from people's mind and different meaning has deposited gradually.

The dialogue brings out the truth of no compassionating humanitarian quality to the public against homosexuals. The purpose of the news channels also for spreading reasonable information about the incident but the common ground reality is upside down to journalism ethics. Deepu Sebastian's effort is completely biased sometimes due to increasing their television rating point. So their notion of spreading news many times never rule out with ethical lines. Ultimately to a victim, public reactions and media's fake telecast against Siras lead frustrating condition. Sometimes even doctors also refuse to treat him for his high blood pressure, so it is been he crossed the level of doctrine ethics. To a common man, next to God, the doctor is a life saves but to Siras' case, it is highly pandemic to life threat. Sometimes TV channels trying to take an interview, when he reveals his ideas and truth, the channel deliberately changes the dialogue to the favour of culprits who made him suffer.

In university campus after an allegation against him, they didn't give a time for vacating the room, despite he approached a legal fight, university estate officers ordered to cut the power supply to his house by the way outsiders also never willing to give him room for a stay some time. So it is obviously a sort of social quarantine to a homosexual despite the American Psychiatric Association has removed homosexuality from a mental disorder.

Vijay Grover : You said AU followed their rules. 'Their' rules are not the rules of the Indian Constitution. You're forgetting that in the court we argue within legislatures and laws. Article 21 clearly states every citizen of this country is entitled to the right to privacy and dignity which means, every citizen in this democracy is equally entitled to solitude and boundaries. My client was deprived of his constitutional right. Some people forcefully entered his home and filmed him in his private moments. When the university officials proctor Zuber Khan, Deputy proctor Ferozkjrid, PRO Shadab Qureshi and Media Advisor AK Murtuza arrived they couldn't stop this violation, your lordship. But instead of reprimanding those two reporters the university officials persecuted my client. They humiliated him and the next day, without any inquiry...AU suspended Dr Siras without giving him a chance to even appeal he was charge-sheeted. He was given only 7 days to vacate his home during which the electric supply to his home was also disconnected. (Mehta, 2015, 00.57.00)

The real trespass is depriving the Indian Constitutional rule for an Indian citizen and without his knowledge enter into his premises with a video camera. University also didn't respect the Constitutional rule for him by sending him out without any prior intimation with proper reason. So altogether everything put his dilemma in his personal life and made to think like a failure person in the mainstream society. The evidence and reasons are coming from

outsourcing and not an inner conflict. However, the epidemic mental distress sustains for long times closer to end his life.

## V. Conclusion:

The mysterious death of Prof. Siras and its uncertainty is equivalent to the uncertain position of him in the environment despite his designation and knowledge. The unacceptance and uncertainty in terms of his identity despite his designation and knowledge has been constantly emphasized throughout the movie to help us understand the trauma the protagonist is going through.

The only expectation for Prof. Siras is a dignified life as others live. He is revealing his opinion, obeying for rules and getting support from legal rights despite all public's reception and the reaction would be cruel and unhand to give a console. His only comfort is Deepu because he is alone among all taking useful effort without any personal benefit besides his journalist duty. So in India, an awareness of acceptance on queer is meagre due to various reasons. In this study it has been studied that people have practised and exercised prolong as a queer hater, so the sudden changes would not be given the right solution. The second reason is the policy when Siras was appearing for legal rights based on Article 21, the government lawyer defends against homosexuality. The request of this study is policy and constitution should be available according to the time needed subject and should not be older of 157 years.

The Lawsuit and awareness should become at the same time to create possibilities of ensuring dignifies to queer people in India, the probable solution to them those are suffering self-quarantine in India due to queer orientation. Besides awareness through policy, counselling is more important for those who are affected and tortured when they come out as a queer. Though Prof. Siras' death is uncertain, his stress and silence occupied throughout his entire life after his identity come to the light. So it has been prepared in the creation of policy, making awareness, consoling and counselling for getting back strong future.

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