



GENDER ACCEPTANCE ACROSS HUMAN ERA – A CHRONOLOGICAL VIEW

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ABSTRACT

This article examines and investigates the history of gender identities in Eastern and Western cultures especially focusing on the Indian culture by critically analyzing the prevalence and normalization of the LGBTQIA+ community throughout the human era. The purpose of this article is to provide base for the upcoming generation about the history of LGBTQIA+ community and their prevalence at those times with the mindset of decriminalizing the discrimination, disparities and stigma in order to promote the well being of the community. The synthesis of current research will be helpful to normalize and generalize the gender identities by critically evaluating the historical background. The finding shows that homosexuality was prevailing from the ancient times. The different cultures supported the LGBTQIA+ community by treating them with equal rights and privilege. The biological reasons which were responsible for the change in gender were already stated in the literature texts of the ancient Indian works. The Greek and Roman civilization expressed homosexuality through paintings, poems and art forms. The ancient Indian text Kamasutra written by Vatsyayava dedicates a complete chapter on erotic sexual behavior. They were given social roles for the upliftment of the society. They played roles as educators, promulgators, warriors in ancient times. The study purpose is to provide critically evaluated authentic historical evidence of all the cultures by not narrowing down, in order to establish an overall demographic realization of the LGBTQIA+ community people were prevailing in all the cultures.

Keywords: LGBTQIA+, history, gender identities, stigma, generalization, normalization

INTRODUCTION

Gender identity is assigned at birth but for some its based upon biological, social and emotional influences that happens within themselves. It refers to understanding and the experience of the person about their own sexuality. Gender identities are common among people and it doesn't fall under collective agreed terms.



The term gender identity was coined in mid of 1960's. The person's self concept about their gender develops over time regardless of their biological sex is referred to as gender identity (**Lev,2004**) Apart from the binary, there are totally 58 gender identities prevailing in the world. Sexual orientation is a pattern of romantic or sexual attraction to the person of the opposite sex, same sex or both sexes. Sexual orientation doesn't happen by choice at first, scientists do not know the exact cause but after some scientific investigations and experimental studies it gained supporting statements of biological reasons. Gender identity is influenced by environment, genetic and hormones. The realization of the sexual orientation is influenced by the culture and social systems. In 1990's Gender queer theory came into prevalence in order to understand the hetero-normativity among gender identities and to expand the vision of queer's in order to generalize the LGBTQ. The queer theory aimed at supporting the different gender by not constricting towards heterosexuality and fighting for the equality, rights and social acceptance of the LGBTQIA+. Sexual construction has been rooted deep in the mind of the people. Normalizing individuals from LGBTQIA+ community is challenging due to the lack of awareness and societal standards. The purpose of this literature is to provide a chronological & demographical history of the gender identities and sexual orientation. The term LGBTQIA+ gained attention only over the few decades and the community even today fights for their rights and equality. But history proves otherwise that different gender identities and gender expression were accepted by society. They were respected and given equal importance to people. Eastern and western historical and cultural background provide a clear picture about gender identities. Focusing on Indian culture helps us to understand their existence as a generalized and common one. The need of the study is to provide awareness to the people regarding the problems they are facing and how the historical evidences of the LGBTQIA+ community serves as a base for breaking the stereotypes prevailing among them. The problems faced by the community are discrimination, denied access to employment, education and health care. They are targeted solely for expressing their views and opinions unlike most other minority groups. They are also psychologically abused which in turn affecting their mental well-being. The hypothesis of the study is to evidently state that acceptance of the LGBTQIA people is no new for the society. History supports the acceptance of the LGBTQ community through painting, poems and art forms.

There is a long history behind the gender identity. The contemporary culture shows positioned gender as a new trend whereas history proves it as a normalized one. Documentations made by anthropologists show the different cultures prevailing in the world have different gender identities. The documentations shows that it starts from 3000 years during the time of copper age and stone age. The anthropological studies show that the gender identities had a cultural constructions and perceived biological differences (**Patterson,2006**) The scientific investigations made to determine the biology behind the homosexuality. The research found that epimarks, epigenomes that are wrapped tightly around the DNA sequence, convert



sexual preference in individuals without altering genitalia or sexual identity (**Rice et al,2012**) The cultural construction plays a versatile role in understanding gender and sexual orientation. The social constructionism theory states that the characteristics which are thought to be unchanged and biological such as gender, race, class and sexuality are just human made definitions that were shaped by our culture and historical context.(**Kang et al,2017**) One of the most foundational step in cleaning up misconceptions and bias among different genders is to normalize and locating some of the historical touchpoints of non-binary identities is an important tool for dispelling myth that different gender identities are somehow “new” or “trend” Identifying the different gender identities are prevailing in different geographies, culture or generations. We can see LGBTQIA+ people have existed throughout time and in every society.

EASTERN AND WESTERN HISTORY

In 2000 BCE at the time of Egypt's ruling period, they found records of three genders inscribed in ancient Egyptians' culture with three genders namely man, women and transgender. When ancient Egyptians died, they were buried with their spouses. The hieroglyphs of tombs show evidence of two men to have been married to one another. We need to look at the ancient Roman and Greek civilizations to see the history of homosexuality. News and evidences about homosexuality has been mentioned a lot in such civilizations. The famous paintings of Spartans have been proof for unilateral attraction and then ancient laws of Spartans supported homosexuality (**Babits,2018**). In ancient Greek Plato was the pioneer in expressing the homosexuality through his paintings, poems and art forms. Paintings are the first evidence of ancient gay love that is shown. The story and essay from Theognis to Aristophanes by Plato has been the greatest proof of different genders prevailing at that time. The recent research shows that homosexuality began in Greece. It led to a cultural recognition in the sixth and seventh centuries because of the increased massive population at that time. It can even be said that homosexuality is essential at many times, as it is natural for men to meet in many places alone. In the end of the fifth century Sappho's wrote a lot of poems about the female- female relationship. The contribution of Greek literature to the history of homosexuality is immeasurable. During Pre-western colonization among the Indigenous North American cultures the term “*Two-Spirit*” was coined in 1990 by indigeneous peoples as a Pan-Native identity and umbrella term that bridged indigeneous and Western understandings of sexual orientation and gender identity going back much further to that time. In Pacific islands, a multiple- gender tradition existed among the Kanaka Maoliindigeneous society. The “*mahu*” referred to biological males or females or encompassing both masculine & feminine had given sacred social role as educators and promulgators of ancient traditions & rituals. Muxe is a third gender identity. Those identifying as Muxe have been recognized and celebrated as playing an integral role among the Zapotec community in Oaxca, Mexico since Pre-colonial times. In Asian , “*Waria*” recognized as third gender in Indonesia. One ethnic group, Bugis recognizes five genders.



Their language offers five terms referencing various combinations of sex, gender and sexuality: *makkunai* (“female Women”) , *oroani* (“male men”) , *Calalai* (“female men”) , and *bissu* (“transgender priests”). In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the hijras are officially recognized as third gender by the government , being neither completely male nor female (**Vincenzo,2006**)

INDIAN HISTORY OF GENDER IDENTITIES

Homosexuality in India has been prevailing from ancient to modern times. Hindu texts describes the homosexual characters and themes (**Hirschfield&Magnus,1914**) Ancient days the Hindu sculptures were carved related to erotic and pan relationship. Most of them are surprising to see that they are Transgender sculptures are also referred to as unnatural. Such sculptures are showing evidence that at those days the homosexuality and different genders were prevailing (**Moleiro&Pinto,2015**) There are Ancient Indian texts which are relevant to modern LGBT causes. The ancient Indian text Kamasutra written by Vatsyayava dedicates a complete chapter on erotic homosexual behavior. The idol of Arthanarisvara tells the world is two, they are the one. At present people gather for special worship on Sivaratri(a festival occasion to worship arthanarisvara). People think that apart from male, female and other third sex people have such power and worship them as God. The vedic literature called Manusmriti, created during the vedic period, contain messages of homosexuality. Even though this was not recognized, homosexuality is clearly mentioned in collections about sex. The third gender was clearly mentioned and also we can see the alternative thoughts that were normalized at those times. As Vedic period was recognized as civilized part of the society. People of the third gender lived together with everyone in the community. They were constantly on the lookout for all the important auspicious things that had happened in the community. People saw the third gender as a sign of good luck. There are nine genders in the Kannada grammar book “*Shabtamanitarpana*” written by Kesiraja whereas modern Kannada literature has only three genders, male , female and arbitrator in the case. References to the opposite gender can be found in Tamil grammar literature. Tholkappiyam texts speak not only the duality of male and female, but also of other genders. Tholkappiyar has shown the gender differences. DevaduttPattanuik summarizes the place of homosexuality in Hindu literature as follows: “though not part of the mainstream, its existence was acknowledged but not approved (**Devadutt,2021**)

METHODOLOGY

The review provides an explanation for the normalization and generalization of the LGBTQIA+ community by critically comparing and analyzing the historical evidences that are presented chronologically and demographically. The chronological approach provides a long historical view



showcasing the past and present studies about the different genders among different cultures. Thus provides base for argumentative stand for the normalization of the LGBTQIA+. The demographical approach provides world wide analysis and particular target focus towards Indian culture to serve the overall evidences as a supporting statement for the paper objective. Systematic searches were carried out using electronic databases like PUBMED, SPRINGER JCAP and from authorized journals, articles and blogs. Books and reports were used for the evidences. The books which were used transgender emergence written by Lev. A.I and The homosexuality of Men and Women written by Hirschfield and Magnus. The search Database searches were conducted using keywords such as history, gender identity, culture and LGBTQIA, Normalization. The search was limited to 1904 to 2018 studies references through books, journals and articles. In order to prevent the process of duplication additional database been exculded and limited the searches from particular timeline.

FINDINGS

The literature serves historical evidences of different genders among different cultures. The buildings are during the precolonisation time the LGBTQIA+ people were demeaned and undervalued. But after the rise of feminism and women rights that flourished during mid 18th century. The LGBTQIA+ people were started to given rights and took a stand for their community. A long history shows that during 2000 BC where the rise of Greek, Egypt and Roman culture homosexual people were normalized and lived with respect in the society. They were treated with equal rights by giving power position. The stigma's that were prevailing about the LGBTQIA+ people was significantly lesser at those times than current recent times. The tribal people were considering them as equal and treated them with equal priviledge. The Indian culture provides a literatical evidence of the Gods, by showing the diversified religion during the vedic times normalized and generalized those people. The vedic texts, and literature texts of different states provides as an base of LGBTQIA+ community people were considered as normal people among the society.

DISCUSSION

We can clearly understand that apart from different religions, cultures that we have seen so far. The idea of homosexuality was common one throughout the history. Though there are inconsistencies and gaps while collecting sources such as the supporting statements provides evidences of normality among LGBTQIA+ throughout the ancient time. There were not fully accepted by all the cultures & religions which the review mentioned above. A part of the society or a group of that particular culture opposed the idea of homosexuality. In the past, various sections have viewed homosexuality from a negative point of view and had punishments for same –sex relationship. Social construction based on beliefs, customs and traditions



accepted the heteronormativity despite of homosexuality. The literature inspite of inconsistency provides evidences and facts that serve as a tool to acknowledge the insight of different gender identities was normal during different periodical times. The recognition for LGBTQIA+ community was given before pre-colonization time the third gender people were given respect, rights and treated with equality. They were given social roles for the upliftment of the society. They played roles as educators, promulgators , warriors at those times (**Hirschfield & Magnus, 1914**) They were considered as a good luck. The current LGBTQIA+ community faces a lots of discrimination and stigma that psychologically, economically and socially affecting the community people. Research shows that stigma against homosexuality and ignorance about gender identity are widespread in society at large. This is due to the unchanging beliefs & opinions of the group without proper oversight, develop a basis of speculation. Such misconceptions are multi-ethnic. Such misconceptions widens the gap between people and the truth. Ignorance and neglect adds even more fuel to the opinions. By providing a clear investigation and supporting statements historically it creates a idea of insight of these things as a general and common one.

CONCLUSION

From the aforementioned theoretical inferences, the historical evidences provide a background about the sexual orientation & gender identity. The future purpose of this literature is to provide a evidence for the upcoming generation to investigate the history of any LGBTQIA+ community and their prevalence at those times with the mindset of decriminalizing the discrimination, disparities and stigma inorder to promote the well being of the people on the basis of overall development.

LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation of the study was to avoid restraining and focus on the overall demographics. Though the study tried to review the overall demographics as separated cultures they were certain challenges in constructing a hypothesis. The construction of the hypothesis was to state the acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people is not new in society. contemporary culture expresses it differently. It was a breakthrough subjectively to realize the understanding and cruciality of providing authentic evidence from various sources. The chronological view of the study presented only the important evidence but it had endless information. The future purpose of the study was to provide insight for the readers to implant the idea of normalization of LGBTQIA+ people and impart the knowledge of how these people survived across the human era. The paper's solemn purpose is to change the perspective of the reader's stereotypical, discriminated, and archetypical view of the LGBTQIA+ community and promote a positive light for these people, and support them through these authentic evidences.



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