

## 16. Narratives of So-Called Abnormal and Invisibles in Indian Cinema

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### Abstract

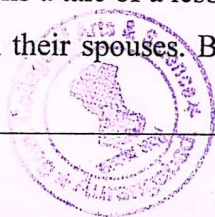
Indian Cinema has evolved over the years in the depiction of characters, plots and showcased an intellectual perspective with a vision to revolutionize the society. Cinema is undoubtedly revolutionizing the queer movement in India. India is one of the many countries where homosexuality is still considered taboo. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code which criminalizes homosexuality was introduced by the British in colonial India in 1861. Invisibility of statutory laws makes LGBT community victims of gender violence and other human rights abuse. Indian Cinema has witnessed a steady display of LGBT characters. This research paper aims at exploring various issues and problems related to the community depicted in the Indian cinema. Indian cinema can play a vital role in depicting realistic characters on screen.

**Key words :** Gender identity, LGBT, Queer, Cinema, Section 377

### Introduction

Human society is a complex organization of human relationships. The implication of such a structure is that the human beings act and interact with each other in accordance with the role they play. The basic criterion of defining status and role of any individual in the society has been sex and gender. In the given socio-economic and cultural gestalt of Indian society homosexuality is considered as an abnormal activity. With spoiled identity and engagement in the non normal activities these people are assumed to be deviant and their activities as deviant behavior. The Indian film making culture somehow still appears confused towards forming a universal opinion about projecting homosexual characters. How many of us know that LGBT is in fact short form for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transexual, Trasgender, Queer, Questioning, intersex, intergender and asexual?

Deepa Mehta was one of the early Indian directors to make a film that openly dealt with homosexuality. Fire tells a tale of a lesbian relationship that ignites between two people enduring similar problems with their spouses. But, again the question arises the people had relationship



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because of failed marital relationship? Actually, if we move away from the famous works of Indian cinema we can trace a number of films that have dared to put an equitable depiction spreading across vast corners of time. In 1981 a love ballad between two college girlfriends was screened. Late Marathi Playwright Vijay Tendulkar wrote 'Mitrachi Gostha'. Discussion on same sex relationship was a screaming taboo in that period but still the filmmaker was bold enough to screen it. Similarly, the first film to hit the viewers after decriminalization of 377 was 'Arekti Premer Golpo' this Bengali film dealt with transgender filmmakers obsession about his bisexual cinematographer focusing on the psychological upheaval faced by transgenders.

This film is poignant and spot on in achieving the desired representation it is also a masterpiece in its narrative and interwoven with complex characters. Rituparno Ghosh, who plays the role of a transgender will break your heart by his melancholic performance. Award winning film Aligarh, in which Manoj Bajpayee has lived the character and attempted to transform the society's regressive thought process by his portrayal of Dr. Shrinivas Ramchandra Siras.

### Research Objectives

- 1) To study Indian cinema as a means to understand what being queer means?
- 2) To study the problems and issues of the LGBT people as raised and discussed in LGBT cinema.

### Hypotheses

- 1) Indian queer cinema portrays stereotypical LGBT characters.
- 2) The issues and problems of LGBT people in Indian Cinema are always sub plots

### Research Methodology

The research methodology adopted for the research study is Content Analysis. Content Analysis of the Indian cinema featuring LGBT characters was done.

### LGBT community and Queer Indian Cinema

LGBT community in Indian cinema always had an affinity for creating a comic situation by cracking highly offensive jokes on LGBT communities. Men dressed in skirts, drag-acts, ridiculous jokes singling out the mannerism and peculiarity of people from LGBT community is very common. Films like Bol Bachchan, Partner tops the list when it comes to ridiculing gay characters who were portrayed to be either overtly horny persons or weird in their behavior. But, in the past few years the Indian Cinema thankfully has opened up about the queer characters.



Fawad Khan's character in Kapoor and Sons is one of the biggest bonanzas of 2016. The success of the movies like Aligarh, Kapoor and Sons was an indication that the society is slowly accepting people from the LGBT community on screen.

### Conclusion

While there is still so much confusion regarding what constitutes gender and what is one's sexuality, how it is interchangeable, filmmakers hold supreme responsibility in being sensitive, empathetic and rational while making films.

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