

Chapter 4

Breaking the Silence: Understanding the LGBTQ+ Community – A Study of *Alternative Realities: Love in the Lives of Muslim Women*

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ABSTRACT

*Gender equality has been a can of worms. From the waves of feminism till LGBTQ, some people, due to their otherness, have endured bigotry and social stigma. We've been fed with heteronormativity for a long time and there exists a void when it comes to homosexual tolerance. Although a lot has been written about them, transgender people still have not been legally recognized worldwide. Their demand for identity and getting rid of the derogatory terms they were labelled with like hijras, chakka, kinnars, jogappa, aravani, aruvani, etc. is visible everywhere. Recently, LGBTQ is considered taboo in society because of some stereotypical mindsets. This chapter focuses on the lives of transgender people in and around Pakistan majorly by dwelling deep into the kind of behavioural patterns society shows toward them by taking the text of *Alternative Realities* (Nighat M. Gandhi, 2013) as a representation of the LGBTQ community's voice.*

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INTRODUCTION

If every gay person were to come out only to his/her own family, friends, neighbours and fellow workers, within days the entire state would discover that we are not the stereotypes generally assumed - Harvey Milk

Queer was initially considered as a pejorative term, but now the non-heterosexuals have embraced it. In fact, it is used as a self-affirming umbrella label. Queer theory has its origin from LGBT studies and feminist theory.’ Queer theory has its origin from LGBT studies and feminist theory.’ Queer’ was originated from the works of Teresa de Lauretis on gay and lesbian sexualities. “Historically, the term queer has been used to silence, suppress, and shame practices, identities, and values located outside of perceived social boundaries.” (Butler, 2006). Though much has been changed after gay and lesbian rights were given to them at workplaces and other services, politically but their condition is deteriorating culturally and because of the preconceived norms. “The deployment of queer in this manner is also an attempt to move beyond the hegemonic and historic practice of institutionalized systems using identity-categories (e.g., a “homosexual” identity) to shame, regulate, and eradicate same-sex sexual behaviour.” (Foucault, 1984) (Gedro and Mizzi, n.d., p.448)

Homosexual marriages are also known as gender-neutral marriage, equal marriage, and gay marriage. The literature drawn from Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and modern fiction also testifies the presence of same-sex love in various forms. Ancient texts such as the Manu Smriti, Arthashastra, Kamasutra, Upanishads and Puranas refer to homosexuality. Also there are reports that same-sex activities are common among sannyasins, who cannot marry. Thus instances of homosexuality are available in historical and mythological texts world over and India is not an exception to this (Tanweer, 2018, p.2)

We can trace the existence of same sex marriage culture in various ancient texts. It was completely normal but now the approach has changed. This paper examines the life of LGBTQ community in the Muslim society by taking various aspects of their lives in other parts of the world too. Pakistan and other Islamic states were the primary focus. Pakistani law is a mix of both Anglo-Saxon colonial law as well as Islamic law. Lord Macaulay wrote the Indian Penal Code 1860, and made same-sex sexual acts illegal under the Anglo-Saxon law of “Unnatural Offences”. Post-independence (1947), in Pakistan, the Parliament decided to continue using the same Penal Code, changing the title to Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860) within the Penal Code, Article 377 also referred to as “Unnatural Offences “.

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