

LGBTQIA+Community

Same Sex Relationship: A Bliss or Curse

O. S. Verma

In 2001, Netherlands became the first country in the world to allow gay couple to marry. Fourteen European countries followed the suit: Belgium, Britain, Ireland, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Luxemburg, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. Over the passage of time, in 26 countries same sex marriage became legal. Recently, on 17 May-2019, Taiwan joined the list. It is the first nation in Asia to allow gay marriage. In China, homosexuality is classified a mental illness until 2001. India decriminalized homosexuality but same sex marriages are not legalized. Australia and Newzealand are the only places in the wider Asia-Pacific region to have passed gay marriage laws. Homosexuality is outlawed in the region's Muslim countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Pakistan. Brunei sparked a worldwide backlash when it introduced laws that include death by stoning for gay sex. A month later, it withdrew this law. Homosexuality is punishable by death in 10 countries: Yeman, Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Somalia, and UAE. In Russia, homosexuality is considered a crime and mental illness. About 30 African Countries have banned homosexuality with Mauritania, Somalia, and Sudan having the death penalty for same sex relations. South Africa is the sole nation on the African continent to allow gay marriage. Israel leads the way in terms of gay rights recognising same sex marriage that performed elsewhere. Such union, however, are not allowed in the country itself. Some countries allow only gay civil partnerships which come with fewer rights including Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and Switzerland. Mexico's federal capital is the pioneer in Latin America authorising gay civil unions. Same sex marriages are also legal in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay, and Chile.

Ashis Senapati (2019) reported that a 19 year old girl was dragged from her house, abused, kicked, tied to a tree, and beaten up by the residents of her own village simply because she was in a Lesbian relationship with a girl of the same village. Villagers were angry and opposed what they termed it “Immoral Activity”. In conservative societies like India, indulging in consensual and casual sex especially with the same sex partner is still considered a relegated immoral activity in the realm of fear and shame. This is what some people say that LGBTQIA is a curse, a blot on society, and deplorable state of things.

Debarati Sen (2019) has revealed that LGBTQIA Support Group is now emerging in tandem with ongoing times out and proud campaign for this community.

Love Wins

In 2017, Taiwan's constitutional court ruled that same-sex couples had the right to legally marry. Parliament was given a 2-year deadline and was required to pass changes by May 24



A look at 26 COUNTRIES where same-sex marriage is legal

- 1 Argentina 
- 2 Australia 
- 3 Austria 
- 4 Belgium 
- 5 Brazil 
- 6 Britain 
- 7 Canada 
- 8 Colombia 
- 9 Denmark 
- 10 Finland 
- 11 France 
- 12 Germany 
- 13 Iceland 
- 14 Ireland 
- 15 Luxembourg 
- 16 Malta 
- 17 Mexico 
- 18 The Netherlands (1st to legalise in 2001) 
- 19 New Zealand 
- 20 Norway 
- 21 Portugal 
- 22 South Africa 
- 23 Spain 
- 24 Sweden 
- 25 Uruguay 
- 26 USA 

SCENARIO IN ASIA

- Not all of Mexico and Britain is open to marriage among same-sex couples. It is legal in some parts. **Northern Ireland** is the only part of the UK in which same-sex marriage is **not allowed**
- Same-sex parents can legally adopt in 30 countries, while 28 allow joint adoption
- According to a 2016 WaPo report, homosexuality may be punishable by death in 10 countries: Yemen, Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, UAE

- In a historic decision, **India's** Supreme Court decriminalised gay sex in September 2018. Same-sex marriage, however, is yet to be legally recognised
- **Vietnam** decriminalised gay marriage celebrations in 2015 but stopped short of full legal recognition for same-sex unions
- While same-sex marriage is still illegal in **China**, homosexuality was decriminalised in the country in 1997, and officially removed from its list of mental illnesses in 2001
- Homosexuality is outlawed in the region's Muslim countries, such as **Bangladesh, Malaysia and Pakistan**
- **Brunei** sparked a worldwide backlash in April when it introduced laws that include death by stoning for gay sex. A month later it said the laws would not be enforced

LAWFULLY WEDDED | You Ya-ting (L) and her partner Huang Mei-yu got married in Taiwan's first same-sex Buddhist ceremonial wedding in Taoyuan on August 11, 2012. The couple can now celebrate the legal recognition of their marriage



This Group is recently formed in Mumbai by the rainbow Parents for the purpose of granting Acceptance to their own children for their sexual orientation. This Group is named as “SWEEKAR”. It has become a lifeline for Parents come to terms with their children's sexuality. Kudos to them for being the torch-bearers and showing the way. This Group sees LGBTQIA+ Community's same sex relationship a Bliss. Sweekar is now expanding by mobilising support from International Parents so as to make it an invaluable organization like PFLAG-Group in China which has more than 130 chapters.

The Indian Sprinter Duty Chand, an Olympic athlete, when recently disclosed that she is Lesbian in same sex relationship was beaten up and thrown out of the house by her own family. Divya Kaushik (2019), an Activist, says that this kind of harassment, social isolation, and discrimination is nothing other than outcast, illegal detention, and always under threat from the Parents. Although Indian Supreme Court verdict for equal rights has won just one battle, a lot more is yet to be done to protect this community from discrimination.

Verma (2006) mentioned that in most part of the world homosexuality is considered a taboo if not the crime. Marriage of homosexuals is lie, queer, and disgraceful. Hence, it should be rejected by one and all. He, however, pushed forward his arguments that the Fundamental Rights cannot be trampled upon. These rights are: (1) Right to equality, (2) Right to various freedoms, (3) Freedom for peaceful assembly, (4) Freedom to reside at any part of the continent, (5) Protection from detention and arrest, (6) civil rights. LGBTQIA+ Community is fully entitled to avail of these constitutional rights.

Mohua Das (2019) says that Mumbai is the “Gay Capital” with its fair share of LGBTQIA-friendly hotspots. In these establishments, they indulge freely in consensual and casual sex. This free sex for all with no safe sex in use has resulted in HIV-AIDS epidemic. According to UNAIDS data, India is the third largest HIV epidemic in the world with 2.1 million people living with HIV prevalence.

In order to tackle this menace, a Global Group is formed at Los Angeles-USA to promote sexual awareness in LGBTQIA+ Community. This Group rapidly expanded to 24 chapters across the Globe. Mumbai and Delhi are 2 Indian chapters. Aids Healthcare Foundation, a 38 Nations Non-Profit Organization provides collaborative support. This Group offers HIV education and rapid HIV testing with Reports within 20 minutes. This testing model is called “Moonlight” wherein testing team conducts HIV examination between 6 PM and 6 AM. Those who test positive are linked to the Clinic on the same very day. This is how HIV/AIDS stigma is tackled.



While in September 2018 the Supreme Court of India decriminalised homosexuality, same-sex marriages are not legally recognised in the country

AROUND THE WORLD



CAMPAINING COUPLE: A Chinese lesbian couple held a simple ceremony in Beijing on Thursday to announce their informal marriage. In their push to get same-sex unions recognized in China, the couple said they were inspired by the US top court's decision to extend gay marriage across all 50 states



PARTY PANGS: A gay party in Cape Town



WITH LOVE, FROM HOLLANDE

Readers of this Article are perhaps thinking of what actually LGBTQIA abbreviation stands for. Each letter of this acronym denotes some particular sexual preference and sexual orientation.

L = Lesbian : women to women sex

G = Gay : man to man sex

B = Bisexual : a person attached to both sexes

T = Transgender : one who has undergone a sex change

Q = Queer : eunuch, hijra, kinnar, a person whose sex never developed

I = Intersex : one whose anatomy is not exclusively male or female, born with genital defect.

A = Asexual : characterised by the absence of sexual attraction, not interested in sex.

Homosexual : one having a sexual orientation to persons of the same sex

Pansexual : one who is open to sex with people of all orientations and genders

Polyamury : one who has more than one intimate relationship with full consent of all partners.

Transsexual : one who adopts the dress, manner, and sexual role of the opposite sex.

Hermaphrodite : one having both male and female characteristics and organs.

Homoflexible : one who is homosexual but open to straight sex.

Heteroflexible : one who is largely straight but open to liaison with members of the same sex.

Bicurious : one who is largely of a particular sexual orientation but curious about others.

These gender-bender-pander are normally identified as “Third Sex”. Socially, they face discrimination but the law grants them some rights as any other citizen. The time now has come that societies should start recognizing their identity and welcome them into the mainstreams of human life.

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ADULTERY IS STILL A CRIME IN 20 STATES OF THE US

In a unanimous ruling, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court scrapped the law making adultery a crime. Deeming section 497 of the Indian Penal Code unconstitutional and saying women aren't the property of their husbands, the apex court delivered a victory for women's rights. But the 150-year-old provision, introduced under British colonial rule, isn't the only one of its kind. A look at how adultery is treated by the law around the world...



Islamic Nations Predominantly Criminalise Adultery

Countries where adultery is a criminal offence



- Most Islamic countries criminalise adultery
- Around the world, punishment for adultery particularly targets married women
- Married men, however, tend to face less or no punishment
- India and US are the largest secular democracies to criminalise adultery. In the US, only 20 states criminalise adultery but prosecutions are rare
- In several countries, like Indonesia, adultery is rarely prosecuted for but in some like Saudi Arabia, adultery is punishable by death

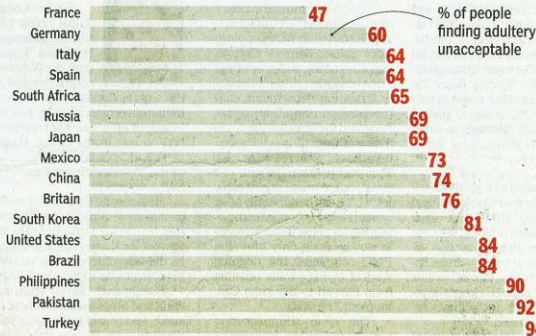
But In England Change Began In 1857

When adultery was abolished



France Most Accepting Of Adultery, Turkey Least

A 2013 survey from Pew Research Center studied the moral acceptability of adultery in 39 countries



Source: sexualrightsdatabase.org, Pew Research Center, media reports; Graphic: Karthic R Iyer