



Anti-Domestic Spaces and the Evolving Queer Domesticity

Subham Mandal

PhD Student, University of North Bengal

Abstract

Despite Indian religion being rife with homosexual activities, yet there has been widespread prejudice against the concept. Significant laws have been passed to safeguard the rights of the LGBT community. Yet, homophobia and its consequent problems are still rampant in India. The stigma is still persistent. Without any proper recognition of marriage, homosexuals tend to be more promiscuous knowing there is no future. The domestic partnership will help bring stability and companionship not only between two individuals but will bring families together. With the changing times the society's views on gender roles can be improved and their binary understanding of masculinity and femininity can be broken. Indian culture, always being enmeshed within rigid binary systems of cultures and norms, finds it difficult to accommodate the LGBT community in their family culture. The institution of marriage prevents heterosexuals from being explicitly promiscuous and will make them more domestic thus keeping a track of various sexually transmitted diseases. More often than not homosexuals out of fear of social threats are unable to come out and are forced to participate in sexual liaisons in public spaces. When legalised by law and accepted by the society, same-sex couples will open up more freely, having more faith and trust in a relationship; thus engaging in more domestic aspects of life.

Keywords

anti-domesticity, homophobia, domesticity, marriage, ordinariness

Historically, India always had the concept of homosexuality embedded in its culture. It is called *samalingikata* (same-sex) or *samakamita*. There is a lot of historical evidence which suggests that homosexuality has been widespread across the Indian subcontinent throughout history. Yet, intolerance against the LGBT community is still prevalent in India. Vikram Seth, the writer of “*A Suitable Boy*” was furious with the Section 377, which made homosexual sex in India illegal. It stated that homosexuality is “unnatural” or “against Indian culture”. “Look into our history before you say, this is Indian and this is not Indian”, said Seth. India has shifted from queer domesticity to anti-domesticity. Its ordinariness has turned into an abomination.

In her book *Domesticity* by Monica F. Cohen, “Domesticity refers to the lived experience of private life, the material dimensions of the home, and an ideology that imaginatively organizes complicated and often contested ideas about privacy, work, gender identity, family, subject formation, socioeconomic class, civilizing morality, and cultural representation”. Such instances of queer domesticity can be seen in *Kamasutra*, an ancient Indian text on love and sexuality written by Vatsayana which recognises eight types of marriages. For example, the term ‘*gandharva vivah*’ acknowledged gay marriage or lesbian marriage. The temples of Khajuraho have images of women erotically embracing other women and men displaying their genitals to each other. The *Kamasutra* also mentions a “third” sexual nature that deviated from the heterosexual norm. Third nature sex is today’s Hijras (transgender) of India. Vatsyayana dedicates a complete chapter on erotic homosexual behaviour. *Rigveda*, one of the four canonical sacred texts of Hinduism say *Vikriti Evam Prakriti*, meaning what seems unnatural is also natural. Chapter nine of *Kamasutra* by Vatsyayana discusses oral sexual acts, termed *Auparashtika*, homosexuality and sexual activities among transgender persons.

Again, *Mahabharata*, one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India has an interesting story about Shikhandini, the feminine or transgender warrior who was responsible for the defeat and killing of Bhishma. The other major Sanskrit epic of ancient India *Krittivasa Ramayana* enunciates the tale of King Bhagiratha, who was born of two women. King Dilip had two wives, and he died without leaving an heir. Following this, Lord Shiva appeared in the dreams of the queens and told them that they would bear a child if they made love to each other. The widowed queens did as directed, and one of them got pregnant, eventually giving birth to King Bhagiratha. He is a famous king known to have brought River Ganga from heaven on earth.

Matsya Purana, one of the eighteen major Puranas, and among the oldest and better preserved in the Puranic genre of Sanskrit literature in Hinduism, has a fascinating story where Lord Vishnu transitioned into a gorgeous woman, ‘Mohini’. He intended to dupe the demons so that the gods drank all the holy water. Upon seeing Mohini, Lord Shiva fell in love with her, and their union led to the birth of Lord Ayyappa. The *Rig Veda* references the tale of Varun and Mitra, invariably cited as Mitra-Varun. They are same-sex couples believed to be the representatives of the two halves of the moon. Indian history is bursting with images of queer domesticity, which has been portrayed in the texts, with complete everyday ordinariness.

The discrimination against same-sex love was not inherent in Indian history but acquired with the advent of British colonial rule. Under Governor-general Lord

Macaulay, the British set up various law committees in 1833 to codify Indian law under colonial rule. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code attempted to control “unnatural offences”. Like everything they colonised, they have colonised the notion of love too. “Among other things, they also anglicised India’s moral lens”.

Despite Indian religion being bursting with homosexual activities, there has been widespread bigotry against the concept. Homosexuality, which was decriminalised in 2008, in India, was again criminalised in 2013 by the bench of Justices Singhvi and S J Mukhopadhaya. The Supreme Court stated that a minuscule portion of the country’s population constituted the LGBT community. It was finally again decriminalised in 2019. Still, India does not have a thorough anti-discrimination code. While the Constitution prohibits discrimination but it only applies to the government authorities and discrimination is still prevalent in private sectors in matters of employment.

The Naz Foundation implored that Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code be declared unconstitutional as it violates the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution. Sexual relations are a very private issue of an individual’s life. State interference in such a sensitive issue was an infringement of the right to privacy, implicit in the right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. Homosexuals were forced to become anti-domestic under such a section, where private space and domestic space were also encroached upon by the authorities. The victims were not being given the right to freely express their sexual preferences.

In the views of the homophobic oppositions, getting rid of Section 377 was baseless and goes against the ordinance of nature as every organ in the human body has been allocated discrete functions by nature and man should not violate such naturally set norms. They further argued that repealing the section will tempt the youth towards homosexual activities and same-sex marriage which they considered as against the culture. People forcefully try to make homosexuality look as anti-domestic so that it is not accepted in a civilized society. The Court, however, sensitised on the issue of harassment of homosexuals in the society and declared Section 377 as violative of Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21 of the Constitution. They declared that Section 377 transgresses the private sexual activities of consenting adults. Thus, using it to criminalize sexual relations and activities between consenting homosexual adults, would be a ‘misutilization’ of the Section.

In contemporary times, no doubt the new generation of India has started accepting alternative sexuality with open arms. Significant laws have been passed to safeguard the rights of the LGBT community. Yet, homophobia and its consequent problems are still rampant in India. There are several social and legal problems that the LGBT community still have to face. The stigma is still persistent.

Instances of domestic partnership can be witnessed in the two Indian Kerala based couples, Nikesh Usha Pushkaran and Sonu MS who got married in July 2018, despite it being illegal in India. The ceremony which was supposed to be sacred was rushed and made a hush-hush affair with only two friends accompanying them. There weren't any celebrations because they “were scared”, but they got married to satisfy their hearts. "People still don't see us as a couple and laugh at us - with legal recognition this will stop".

In December 2012, another same-sex couple got married in December 2012 in the presence of parents and 100 guests at a Hyderabad resort, with all the Indian traditions of mehndi, sangeet and haldi. The couples had to opt for more covert commitment ceremonies to celebrate their love. The Hyderabad couple, Supriyo Chakraborty and Abhay Dang got Covid and realised that they don't have any legal rights over each other", and in times of dire need, they were unable to help each other. With the lack of any proper legal recognition, queer domesticity and spaces are fraught with immense problems.

In rural areas of India, being homosexual is considered a mental illness and homosexuals are subjected to extreme mental, physical, emotional, and economic violence. The same-sex couples cannot register for maintenance, allowances, succession, pensions etc. They cannot even get a complaint registered if they are raped or physically abused because there is no proper law in India which protects their rights. Homosexual couples in India face a lot of trouble when it comes to acquiring property, health insurance, opening a bank account, getting passports, getting gratuity funds, pensions and other benefits that cover spouses and partners. Making same-sex relationships legitimate is not enough. There should be proper laws that give legal distinction to their homosexual relationship and protect their rights. All the domestic spaces are closed off for homosexuals and give them a look of aberrations which shuns them to the marginality even more.

In 2015, Kolkata residents Suchandra Das and Sree Mukherjee had a traditional Bengali wedding at a friend's apartment, with other friends officiating the rites. They could not book a wedding venue and were anxious that they would be arrested. Das said, "Since we live in a society which still denies acknowledging such love stories, it is important that such unions are talked about so people know that they do exist and are beautiful". Delhi High Court at the moment has 8 petitions trying to seek legalisation of same-sex marriages. However, the Centre still remains adamant that only a marriage of a biological man and biological woman is plausible.

India is a country in which religion is given the predominant space. The majority of the Indians and most of the earlier generations are fully herded by this aspect. Indian is formed of diverse religions which occupy the majority and the minority places in India. So it is quite normal for people to look into their spiritual scriptures before they approve same-sex love into their domesticated family culture. Hindu Marriage Act states that marriage can be solemnized between any two Hindus using only words like bride, bridegroom, making it heteronormative in nature. As per the traditional Islamic Law, homosexuality is a sin and is liable to different punishments, including the death penalty. Marriage in the Quran is heteronormative in nature. Christian Marriage Act does not expressly prohibit same-sex marriage but is heteronormative in nature. Also, the Christian religion sees homosexuality as an abomination. Legal recognition of same-sex marriage is very important in India as it will protect the members of the LGTQ community from violence, abuses and discrimination. Unless the community is domesticated and accepted into the normal family space, it will remain anti-domestic. Marriage laws will help the domestic partner in buying property together, health insurance, securing address proof, adoption, pension and other benefits that cover spouses and partners.

This week too, two women held a ring commitment ceremony in Nagpur, with 150 guests partaking in the singing, dancing and feasting. Hrishikesh Sathawane, an NRI and his Vietnamese partner made headlines in Maharashtra 2017, saying, “that these weddings are important for visibility and awareness”, as it “creates confidence among other members of the community, that even they can have a wonderful committed relationship and to others, it makes a point that such ceremonies are normal”. Braganza says. "As more people start getting married openly and normally, the younger generation will be inspired".

Without any proper recognition of marriage, homosexuals tend to be more promiscuous knowing there is no future prospect. The domestic partnership will help bring stability and companionship not only between two individuals but it brings families together and ultimately the society.

In the novel *The Boyfriend* written by Raj Rao, we see that the male protagonist of the novel, Yudi, at first is obsessed with the gents' toilet at Churchgate which procured for him a twenty-four-hour supply of men. In another novel *Hostel Room 131*, when the male protagonist is unable to copulate with his boyfriend and is “seized by the sexual urge” he starts venturing off to numerous public parks and toilets in the city to have sex.

In the novel, *The Boyfriend*, the hot cruising place is the Azad Maidan “from times immemorial”. The protagonist had his first taste of gay love in the Azad Maidan way back in the 1970s when he was barely a teenager. In the introduction of the book, *Twenty-One Queer Interviews*, edited by R. Raj Rao, it is stated that “the homosocial spaces include the nukkad or street corner, the public urinal, the beer and country liquor bar, the betel nut and cigarette and tobacco stall, the hair-cutting saloon, the auto-rickshaw stand, the chai tapri, the second-class local-train compartment, and so on, where mischief rules, where the watchword is masti and the idiom macho”. These anti-domestic spaces or public spaces are spaces that are related to homosexuals. These sites are neither personal nor does it allow any personal connection to transpire.

In another novel *Hostel Room 131*, the two main protagonists start their sexual trysts in the dark cinema hall where Siddhart lures Sudhir and undid his fly and shoved his hand into his trousers. Again, another couple that Siddhart and Sudhir met at the college hostel said that they were couples or partners but swapping was typical at such orgies. “Then their eyes got accustomed to the dim psychedelic lighting and they were able to see that this was no run-of-the-mill stag party ... they smooched as they danced, in full view of others. Here, most of them were not wearing shirts, but shorts. That is to say, they were topless”.

Yudi said that “Most men disengaged their hands after the first few minutes, saying, 'People are watching’”. The LGBT community is always in constant dismay of being exposed. Due to this fear, they are unable to formulate their craving for love. Homosexuals are more inclined to one night stands in impersonal and detached spaces. This never allows them to form any attachment with their partners. The illegality and the constant fear of being exposed prevent them from being at ease and come out of the closet. Lack of such communion and impersonality, no doubt brings suspicion. Yudi grew apprehensive when the guy he picked up from the public toilet asked him unreliable questions. “Beware of jobless youth, he frequently told himself”. The community is

always in constant fear of being blackmailed and outed, “Even as he uttered it, Yudi regretted that he'd used the word 'blackmail'. It amounted to putting ideas in people's heads”.

In the Introduction of the book, *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews*, the editor writes, “One of the implications of subversive or transgressive sexuality is that one is not looking for sexual compatibility and intellectual compatibility in the same partner”. The gap between domestic spaces and anti-domestic spaces enlarges here. The domestic spaces in India are not allowed for homosexuals hence they venture out to the public spaces but on the other hand public spaces are crammed with prejudices while private space (closet) allows them to live. Under such circumstances, it is normal for transgressive sexuality to renounce any form of monogamy in domestic spaces and endorse multiple partners in public spaces for instant gratification.

Out of fear of being blackmailed or exposed Yudi allowed the strangers an active role in the bed, whenever he took them home because he believed that when “men were allowed to penetrate, there was no fear of their returning afterwards to demand money or beat you up”. The homonormativity stands that the penetrator's “sense of valour” did not allow them to take advantage of a “eunuch”. Neither are they satisfied with the sexual liaisons which are always fraught with danger, nor are they happy with ‘love’ in such tumultuous condition as they consider it to be exploitative. Yudi thought, “Wasn't he too an exploiter of all the young men he slept with, even if it was they who screwed him?” Neither the public space nor the private space provides them with any solicitude.

Sexual promiscuity brought along with it the lack of sex education and safety. The quick pleasure and relief bring the burden of sexual diseases. “We'll do it without a condom, the boy suggested, instantly reminding Yudi of the suicidal fool at Churchgate who swallowed a stranger's cum”. If homosexuals have turned to the anti-domestic places for their sexual relief, it is so because the private space, the family culture has not accepted them. In the novel, *The Boyfriend*, the women infatuated with Yudi surmise that all men were by essence supposed to be attracted to women and if they have gone awry could be “reclaimed and reformed”. Even Yudi's mother thought that the reason for Yudi's problems ensued from the lack of women in his life to take care of him. The mother was exceptionally excited with Gauri as she thought that the girl was turning her son “normal”.

In *Hostel Room 131*, Siddharth's friend, Deepak, was sickened by Siddharth's fiery passion for the effeminate boy, Sudhir. Sudhir's friend Ravi Humbe wrote a letter to Sudhir's father, faithfully reporting to him that he had witnessed Sudhir with another man in his bed and to control Sudhir before he “went completely astray”.

Sudhir's family locked him in the house and beat him violently when Sudhir finally mustered up the courage to tell his family that he wished to leave home with Siddharth and move in with him. The family took him to a holy sage to exorcise him where Sudhir was held down on a bed by his family and ward boys and was given electric shocks repeatedly. “They were outraged. They never imagined that a nice boy from their family could say such things”. Siddharth could not seek help from the police on such an occasion because he did not have any official right over Sudhir. “So it makes no sense that I should lodge an FIR”. The problems of queer domesticity and lack of recognition

from the law proves an impediment for the community, where they can't stand by or protect their loved ones.

Sudhir under family pressure is also forced to give up his love and confess that he was not imprisoned or tortured by his family to the police. As R. Raj Rao has aptly said, "Rebellion eludes us because we've been to college". Education is supposed to make us fight for justice but paradoxically it makes us conformists. Sushil Patil in *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews*, tells the editors that he did not consider "rebellious or walking out" with his homosexual partner because his mother is a heart patient. Yudi resumed his "single-gay-man-in-Mumbai routine" after Milind's parents forced him to get married and have babies.

In *Hostel Room 131*, the police raided Gaurav and Vivek's room because they were homosexuals and were taken into custody and finally shamelessly asked to vacate their hostel room immediately. "They tried to take it as stoically as they could, yet they were terrified". Everyone agreed that homosexuality was "against Indian culture". Reporters and parents commended the college authorities and the police for busting the "racket".

With no security from the authorities or the world, the associations homosexuals engage in becomes like a barter system. The old ones thirst for a stable relationship and have to take the younger generations as their partner while the younger generations most often thrown out of their house seek monetary help and support from the older ones. "By connecting Yudi to daddy, what Milind was unconsciously saying was that he was unhappy with his father, badly needed a substitute, and who other than Yudi could bring his search to an end".

With the changing times, society's views on gender roles can be improved and their binary perception of masculinity and femininity can be broken. Indian culture, always being entangled within rigid binary systems of cultures and norms, finds it difficult to include the LGBT community in their family culture. The institution of marriage prevents heterosexuals from being explicitly promiscuous and will make them more domestic thus keeping a track of numerous sexually transmitted diseases. More often than not homosexuals out of fear of social threats are unable to come out and are forced to participate in sexual flings in public spaces. When legalised by law and accepted by society, same-sex couples will open up more freely, having more faith and trust in a relationship; thus engaging in more domestic facets of relationship.

At the beginning of the novel *The Boyfriend*, written in 2003 by R. Raj Rao, Yudi the male protagonist picks up Milind, a working-class boy, from a gents' toilet at Churchgate. Yudi was constantly wary of this stranger about whom he had no idea. He blindfolds him before taking him to his house. "All he wanted to do was ejaculate and give him the slip". Once they were done having sex he at once got tired of him and wanted to get rid of him. With so much distrust developed out of the fear of society and being exposed, domesticity and involvement of same-sex 'devious' behaviour with home life, takes a back step. However, the personal space of Yudi's home allowed them to connect. Yudi for the first time sought the guy out. Their love for each other blossomed.' In *Hostel Room 131*, Siddharth meets Sudhir in a hostel room and due to the availability of private space available, they could get to know each other and fall in love. In *Whistling*

in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews, we come across a couple Christopher Benninger and Ram Naidu, who are committed lovers and have been living together for over a decade. They are not married to each other due to the lack of any same-sex marriage laws in India. Indians, by contrast, are much more susceptible to domestic life but the prejudices of parochial Indian society prevents them from coming out and declaring their love or even allowing the love to blossom at most times. Under such hostile circumstances, it is very difficult for any homonormative queer domesticity to flourish, yet it does.

Sushil Patil, a college professor, in his interview, said that he was deeply in love with his male partner who was a security guard and was solely committed to him. They are both married to their wives but they think of themselves as life partners. Yet, Sushil Patil confesses that he is “sceptical enough to realise that a relationship of this kind cannot last long”

In Indian society, marriage is considered sacred and most often than not, is arranged or forced by the family. Under such circumstances, even closeted homosexuals who are married off and burdened with family responsibilities have to turn their back to their love life.

In novels like *The Boyfriend, Hostel Room 131* or even in *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews*, R. Raj Rao has beautifully shown that once the relationships of the protagonists shifts from some anti-domestic space to some more domestic, homely setting it allows the couples to really know each other, fall in love and have something more meaningful. Their life becomes like any other heteronormative couple, on a normal day. In *Hostel Room 131*, by R. Raj Rao, Siddharth lied on the bed and slept after coming back from a hectic day, while Sudhir, meanwhile, finished all the myriad of chores including cooking, cleaning, washing and attending to his books. Even Yudi and Milind in *The Boyfriend* loved sitting in their own drawing-room at the end of the day and drinking rather than going out as their usual routine everyday Friday at Café Volga. Siddharth and Sudhir made love instead of fooling around with others and after they were done, Sudhir was amazed that they slept on the same narrow bed all night when there was another bed in the room, vacant. For Yudi and Milind, days passed in the house like some “delightful holiday resort”, where their lovemaking continued all day. When Yudi could not meet Milind for a long time he fell ill. “With every passing day, his distress increased. He ended up with fever, diarrhoea and vomiting. The sickness, as a local physician explained, defied diagnosis”.

In the novel, *Hostel Room 131*, a transgendered woman Anarkali falls in love with Raj Kumar and they went on dates every Sunday night. They went out to Public Park, not for any sexual cruising but just for conversing, gossiping, singing, playing chess and just spending time with each other like any other couple. They realized that by committing themselves to each other, they were essentially defying the vicious society “that saw them as freaks and exploited them without remorse”.

In *The Boyfriend*, Siddharth had fished out a chiffon saree of his mother and draped himself in it. Milind decked him up with Vicco Turmeric paste, bindi, kajal, nail polish. He was the bride. Milind then applied sindoor in Yudi’s head and tied one end of the sari to his own pyjamas. They then went around the fire seven times, with Yudi and Milind

saying, “I promise to be your humsafar, trust me, till death do us apart”. They did all the Hindu rituals of marriage with great dexterity. After this ceremony, they ate laddoos and sweets. The next morning they embellished their house with rangoli as any other newly-wed couples did.

In *Hostel Room 131* Siddhart while having sex with Sudhir fantasized that he was the husband and Sudhir his wife. He fantasized during their lovemaking with Sudhir that his “seed would travel and lead to the flowering of a child in Sudhir's womb. They would go to the Jangli Maharaj temple and get married”. Siddharth even thought of travelling to Belgaum, Sudhir's hometown, to meet his prospective in-laws and ask for Sudhir's hand in marriage. In *Hostel Room 131*, after their marriage, the transgender couple, Anarkali and her husband always bought clothes, jewellery, slippers, perfumes and sweets, and other things never for themselves but always for each other.

In *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews*, Sushil Patil tells that when he gets married to his partner he would be happy to take up the role of doing all the household works and cooking, while his partner goes out to work. Another committed couple Christopher and Naidu said that they “would be insecure if I were in a relationship that wasn't sanctified by anything religious, legal. For that reason, marriage is sacred. For us in India, marriage is for life”. Majority of the Indian homosexual are in the closet because of the law and societal prejudices. This prevents them from involving themselves in any kind of relationship which might threaten their identity. Hence, queer domesticity in India is not that prevalent; however, for couples like Christopher and Naidu it does prevent them from going out and indulging themselves in a promiscuous lifestyle. They attend to the domestic side of their home and also go out to party together.

When the couples come together, it is not two individuals that are involved but also their families are involved. For any Indian individual family acceptance and approval plays a vital role in him or her maintaining their relation; whether homosexual or heterosexual. In *Hostel Room 131*, Siddhart loved Sudhir's parents because Siddhart thought his own father only ridiculed him and Sudhir's mom seemed “to be the incarnation of Indian womanhood” with her motherly love for her children. “She was the sort of mother who would massage his head with oil on Sundays, and in whose lap he could place his head and cry”. Siddhart considered his own mother a fierce career woman disinterested in her own son. In *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews*, Christopher went with Naidu's family to fancy restaurants. The entire family even went to the Chaturshrungi temple in Pune where Christopher and Naidu got married. “Christopher, he regards my family as his own. Whenever my parents and brothers--one of them is also unmarried-visit Pune, they stay with us. Both Chris and I try to make them as comfortable as we can”.

Love allows the partners to learn a lot from each other. Siddhart in *Hostel Room 131*, taught Sudhir English diligently and Sudhir's parents were very happy about it. In *The Boyfriend*, Yudi taught the labour class boy Milind, the significance of hygiene and cleanliness. The LGBT community prevents the festering of religious prejudices. In the face of hundreds of prejudices and regionalism and casteism existing in India, there is no religious bias among homosexuals. Yudi, an upper-caste and class man dates a lower caste, labour class man, Milind. Yudi explained that he “was only trying to show you it

doesn't matter what caste you are. I'll tell you what. What I am saying is that homosexuals have no caste or religion. They have only their homosexuality". Again, Siddharth, an upper-class man is taught to empathize with the poor class and see things from their point of view. Sudhir made Siddharth realise that people couldn't be "compared and judged when they had not been born with the same privileges".

Just like any domestic couple, Yudi gave Milind money whenever he needed it and vowed to take care of him if he loses his job. "All expenses would be borne by him, so the boyfriend had nothing to lose on that score". In *Hostel Room 131* too, Siddharth restricted his romancing and lovemaking to the night as, during the daytime, Siddharth considered himself a "male bird preoccupied with building his nest". He thought of himself as a householder who had responsibilities and intended to set home with his beloved and bring food to the table.

In *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews*, Hoshang Merchant said that more and more homosexual couples are adopting children or birthing them through artificial insemination. Hoshang sees this as a defeat of the prejudiced heterosexuals who consider the fact that queer domesticity is an abomination and beyond any culture. He goes on to talk about the advancements made by science in sex reassignment surgeries or test-tube babies and also changes in adoption laws that allows queer people to adopt children in foreign countries. Shivji Panikkar and his partner adopted a young boy who followed him home one night. The kid was living on the pavement with his father who coerced him to beg and ill-treated him. Since single men over forty years old could legally adopt a child he reported everything to the child care department. He and his partner took care of the child together.

In *Hostel Room 131*, Siddharth begins his sexual liaison in the cinema hall by taking advantage of the darkness in which he hugged Sudhir, kissed him and shoved his hands inside his pants. They went to Sambhaji Park, a cruising spot and then to another where they mated. Gradually, Sudhir told Siddharth a little about himself. But as their love thrived in the personal space of the hostel room, Siddharth and Sudhir turned into monogamous, domesticated couples and abstained even during orgies. "They were spectators at the party, rather than performers".

In *The Boyfriend*, Yudi said that he never felt nostalgic about any of his one night stands but it was different for Milind because for Yudi his other one night stands "were just one-night stands. Memories of Milind were so intense that as he had his lonely drink that Sunday evening, Yudi found himself close to tears". Yudi had shifted from his parent's house to his own flat just so that he could have a constant flow of one night stands. But now that he falls in love with Milind, his perspective changes and according to him, "human beings were not meant to live alone; there was something to be said for being in a relationship".

The prevalent marriage system in India is the arranged marriage, with parents taking full control of the choice of the prospective groom or bride for their sons and daughters. Raj Kumar, the partner of Anarkali, had to get married to a girl of their caste. He was doomed to live a double life, comprising of "his parents, wife, children and job in the plaza by day, and Anarkali, sex work and the company of fellow kotis by night". This

is the circumstance of maximum closeted homosexuals in India. Under such conditions any kind of domestic stability between two same-sex couples becomes difficult.

In a place where homophobia is so prevalent and the majority of the people are unaware of the existence of homosexuality or have a prejudiced mentality, the community is unable to thrive. In *Hostel Room 131*, Sudhir's friend Gaurav cannot stand homosexuals and divulged everything to Sudhir's parents, exhibiting Siddharth as a culprit, destroying their son's life. However, the community is advancing towards more domesticated aspects of love. Yudi tells his ignorant, half-educated boyfriend that, *Swayamwar* is a magazine which "is for homosexuals who wish to meet other homosexuals and for lesbians". This magazine is for seeking out prospective partners looking to settle down together or for conveying any information viable for the community. The entire picture of queer domesticity and space is changing and evolving.

Relationships like Christian and Naidu's send a positive message to the entire LGBT community. In their daily correspondence and relation, they appear no different to any other heterosexual couple. They project the image of healthy queer domesticity and the ordinariness of their relationship. They have office by day and entertainment in the evening and also travel quite a lot. According to them, "Most gay men want to avoid that because of the social conditions prevalent in our country. As a result, the gay community has earned a bad name as people who only want sex". Society and its resentments are responsible for shaping the LGBT community's attitudes. The community and its members are not incompatible with family cultures and the discriminatory and rigid mentality of Indian people has to accept that.

Gayatri Spivak said that 'gay marriage is writing back into heteronormativity'. However, a monogamous relation will allow the tackling of sexually transmitted diseases when the community forfeit their promiscuous lifestyles. According to Sushil Patil, an interviewee in *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews*, said that "relationships, we do not just share our bodies, but also our emotions. Bodies we can get a dime a dozen, but not the soul, which matters much more. Sex is for a few years; love is for life. So I do not like promiscuity. In a way, I am monogamous". This is one of the utopic ideologies of queer domesticity and with changing times it might just evolve into queer ordinariness.

Works Cited

- Cohen. Monica. (1988). *Professional Domesticity in the Victorian Novel: Women, Work and Home*. Cambridge University Press.
- IANS. (2013, December 17). Homophobia came into India, not homosexuality, says Vikram Seth. *Business Standard*. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/wap.business-standard.com/article-amp/news-ians/homophobia-came-into-india-not-homosexuality-says-vikram-seth-113121700654_1.html>
- Rao. R. (2003). *The Boyfriend*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- . (2009). Introduction. In R. Rao and D. Sharma (Eds.), *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty-One Queer Interviews*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- . (2010). *Hostel Room 131*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- . (2010). *Criminal Love?: Queer Theory, Culture, and Politics in India*. New Delhi: Penguin. <<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.indiatoday.in/amp/india/story/10-instances-of-homosexuality-among-lgbts-in-ancient-india-1281446-2018-07-10>>
- Joshi. Sonam. (2022, January 03) *Times of India*. Law says their marriage isn't valid. These gay couples did it anyway - *Times of India* <[indiatimes.com](https://www.indiatimes.com)>