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## Representation Of LGBTQIA+ People in Selected Indian Web

### Series: A Study

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### Guide

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#### Abstract:

LGBTQIA+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual. These terms describe the gender identity of those who do not come into the male and female categories. Before 2018 homosexual act between adults was unconstitutional in India under section 377 but on 6th September 2018 Indian supreme court neglected this and their sexual activities or homosexuality became a legal act in India. In the whole world, the media plays a very important and fascinating role to represent any controversy. Now our media like television, OTTs, and cinema also represent the content that discusses the idea of LGBT people. Nowadays the younger generation is moving or shifting towards OTT platforms. On the OTT platform, presenting this kind of content is becoming useful. OTTS is becoming the most trending and easy to represent the difficulties, trauma, depression, raising questions for identities, gender trouble, and the bitterness of life lived by LGBTQIA+. The



aim of this article is to drill the concept of representation and acceptance of third-gender people in Indian society through OTT platforms and also it will put light on myths regarding third gender. It has been more than five years since the LGBT+ community and homosexuality are becoming a legal act in India but it has given only legal acceptance. In our society and especially in a small town their acceptance and their sexual acts are still unacceptable and odd. So, media and screens have the power to bring both positive and negative change in the stereotype myths regarding queer people.

This research will focus on 'Mismatched season 2', 'Four More Shots Please' 'Made in Heaven', and 'His Storyy'.

**Keywords:** LGBTQIA+, Indian web series, OTT, New Media.

## **Introduction:**

Now the world is moving to the acceptance of the third gender. LGBTQIA+ is an abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual. Earlier it was a very derogatory term but now our perception is changed. In popular culture, media is a very much magnificent role. Now new immerging media like OTT is a huge platform to represent any idea to youth. In the worldwide OTTs becoming the talk of the town and the youth generation is also fascinated by it. If anyone considers the last three years for these OTTs then we come to know people are very much interested in web series and OTT platforms. Third gender relations or homosexuality is now legal in India. Since 2018 homosexuality is becoming a legal act in country India. So now it's time to think about the third gender. So, OTT is a good platform to represent the difficulties and acceptance issues of queer people. This study will focus on the representation of the third gender in Indian web series like Mismatches Season 2, His Storyy, Hamde in Heaven, and Four More Shots Please. Following is a detailed explanation if the term LGBTQIA+.

**LESBIAN:** Usually refers to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation toward women. Some nonbinary people also identify with this term.



**GAY:** Used in some cultural settings to represent men who are attracted to men in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who engage in same-gender sexual behavior identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with caution.

**BISEXUAL or BI:** A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.

**TRANSGENDER:** A person whose sense of personal identity or gender does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth or does not conform to gender stereotypes. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.

**QUEER:** a multi-faceted word that is used in different ways and means different things to different people. 1) Attraction to people of many genders. 2) Don't conform to cultural norms around gender and/or sexuality. 3) A general term referring to all non-heterosexual people. Some within the community, however, may feel the word has been hatefully used against them for too long and are reluctant to embrace it.

**QUESTIONING:** An individual who is unsure of and/or exploring their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

**INTERSEX:** An umbrella term that describes people born with any of 30 different variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals.

**ASEXUAL:** A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behavior. They may or may not experience emotional, physical, or romantic attraction. Asexuality differs from celibacy in that it is a sexual orientation, not a choice. People who are asexual may call themselves ace.: (Vanderbilt University)



## Review of Literature:

Lauren B. McInroy & Shelley L. Craig in their research has discussed “Throughout this stage of life, both traditional and new media continue to have a considerable impact on young people. While traditional media, especially television, may offer chances for a shared discussion and identity validation among developing adults, it often portrays LGBTQ individuals as stereotyped and one-dimensional and ignores many of their needs. Additionally, it may restrict how LGBTQ youth view their future paths and provide limited options for LGBTQ emerging adult customers to voice their concerns. In contrast, new media provided significant and valued areas for debate and innovation for a population going through a time of heightened individualism and provisional independence.

According to Hannah J Johnson “There is a mental health crisis in the bisexual community, and though the issues of mental health and media representation are analyzed separately in bisexual literature, they are rarely put side by side. Media such as television, film, and music often contribute to the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and stigmas about people who are bisexual. How do these issues contribute to the high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide among individuals who are bisexual? What issues do individuals who are bisexual face when they choose to seek help? This research project contributes to bisexual literature by drawing connections between media representation and mental health by firstly examining existing literature on bisexual issues such as biphobia, bisexual erasure, media representation, and mental health, and secondly discussing the results of an online survey to determine how other people who identify as bisexual feel about media representation and its relationship to the mental health crisis in the bisexual community.”

Harsh Vardhan in his article *Representation of LGBT Community in Web Series: A Study Of Netflix*, mentioned that “Internationally, still there are shows being made with gay characters, be them in supporting roles or in the main roles. In India, people are still thinking that it is a disease or something, they are not accepting that there is something like LGBT present in society and is a part of the society.”



## Research Design

### Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the representation of LGBTQIA+ characters in selected Indian Web series.
2. To Study the trauma, taboos, and situation of the third gender.
3. To study the effect on the audience of presenting the third gender.

### Hypothesis.

This hypothesis will focus on both the negative and positive presentation of the third gender. Secondly, it will try to examine the impact on the audience and third-gender characters. Changing norms of society toward the LGBTQIA+ community.

### Methodologies and techniques to be used.

First, this research includes the descriptive method, as it is about the representation of the third gender. Secondly, this is qualitative research.

### Analysis of the web series:

#### 1. *Mismatched season 2. (2022)*

Mismatched Season 2 is the follow-up to the coming-of-age romantic drama web series Mismatched, which had its Netflix debut in 2020 in the Hindi language. Mismatched season 2 is becoming trending on OTT Netflix. The central theme is focused on the love story but simultaneously there is a very interesting character Namrita, who is a lesbian, and Celina a bisexual character. Throughout she is struggling for identity and also suffering from homophobia. According to Upasana Dandona “Namrata, like many other lesbians in this world, has to make peace with the fact that even if she finds acceptance in society, she won’t ever find the same at home. In fact, her mother asks her to lose all her hope regarding her father changing his heteronormative mindset. Namrata’s situation with her family explains that homosexuality, especially lesbianism, is still an alien concept in a lot of Indian households.”



## 2. *His Storyy.* (25 April 2021)

His story is Indian-Hindi web series by Zee5 and ALTBalaji. It was realized on 25th April 2021. This is a story about a gay couple. The main character Kunal is gay and the whole theme focused on the representation of homophobia and identity acceptance. Kunal's own son won't be able to accept his father's Identity. The concept of an ever-happy married life is broken and the point of view turns toward homosexual people and their acceptance. "Ekta Kapoor has shared the teaser of AltBalaji and ZEE5's upcoming web series, a relationship drama titled His Storyy. It explores the life of a married man who is scared to come out of the closet about his sexuality until he meets the love of his life. How society and his family react once his 'secret' is out, makes for the narrative of the web series." (Jain). In nutshell, the series put emphasis on homosexuality, acceptance, identity, and homophobia.

## 4. *Four More Shots Please.* (2019,2020 and 2022)

Amazon prime original series. It has three seasons, the first season was released in 2019. Second season in 2020 and the third season 2022. The story focuses on three women and one bisexual person whose name is Umang. Later on, in season, two the story reaches its high point when Samara(a well-known actress) and Umang(a Gym Trainer girl) reveal their homosexual relationship. Umang is depicted as a strong character who ran away from their family and accepted her identity openly. On the contrary, Samara became a victim of depression and anxiety due to her homosexual relationship. Umang and Samara got married. "The show wanted a big fat, Indian, lesbian wedding, and they got to have that. But upending one of the few same-sex relationships in mainstream Indian media, in a country that only just decriminalized homosexuality three years ago, where same-sex marriage isn't even legal, at a wedding of all things feels like a slap in the face to the community the series is theoretically championing." (Himani)

## 5. *Made In Heaven* (2019)

Made In Heaven original Amazon prime and directed by Zoya Akhtar. It has nine episodes and these nine episodes are dealing with the marriage of different families. Actually, Made in heaven is a company of two wedding planners Tara and Karan. Karan is a Gay man and



throughout we come to know that he is getting afraid to reveal his identity. “Karan is more than a token gay character who steps beyond the hetero-normative structures of society. While his life is full of secrets and ‘shame’, he doesn’t fear owning his sexuality. He acknowledges his privileges of being an educated, upper-middle-class person in Delhi, and the time he realizes the consequences he had to face in jail in spite of this, is one of the turning points of both the series and his life. There is a scene where a ‘mehndi vali’, who is sexually assaulted by a rich powerful man, is offered money in exchange for her silence on the crime done to her. The entire situation echoes the #MeToo movement and the power imbalances that women are often victims of. (Trivedi)

## **Conclusion.**

In nutshell, if anyone considered the time after the amendment of act 377 so our Otts and screens started the depiction of the third gender people. The story becomes central around their identity, and the perspective of society and media is changed toward the LGBT+ community. Depiction of homosexuality and same-sex relation is another kind of revolution. The third gender people are also depicted in a positive way and this representation is one kind of depiction of their life. It also creates a positive impact on the audience and the LGBTQIA+ community. Slowly and steadily the perception of society is going changed towards the third gender. Also, with the help of screens, society comes to know the situation, struggle, and question of acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people.



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