

## **Development in a Homosexual's Experiences: Childhood Encounters of Gay Individuals.**

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### **Abstract:**

The aim of this study was to highlight the childhood experiences in the developmental stages of the life, of gay men. Although homosexuality has been studied vastly by multiple disciplines over a century; yet, very few of them have emphasized upon gay men specifically from a particular geographical area. Eight men identifying themselves as gay were chosen for this study. A semi-structured interview procedure was used for the data collection and the analysis was done using a thematic-narrative approach. Six major themes were identified as a result of a 40-60 minutes interview with each participant. These were: (1) The Beginning – Realization of Sexual Preferences, (2) Expression – The Coming Out Process, (3) The Reactions of Others – Acceptance/Rejection, (4) Interpersonal Relationships, (5) Struggles in day-to-day life and, (6) The General Outlook – Attitude towards the social world.

**Keywords:** Homosexuality, sexual abuse, rejection/acceptance, romantic relationships, identification, thematic, social factors.

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### **I. Introduction:**

Homosexuality can be defined as romantic, emotional and behavioral attractions towards individuals of the same sex (Adam, 1987). Although there isn't even a universally accepted definition of someone's "Sexuality", or sexual orientation, till date; yet, most definitions do cover the fundamental and indispensable aspects of it relating to human existence and explores the diverse possibilities through which it can be expressed (Alves et al., 2016). Its influence is studied through all the three aspects of our personality. For instance, in the cognitive domain the thoughts, fantasies, beliefs and assumptions about one's own as well as others' sexuality. In the affective domain there are the positive/negative feelings, values, prejudices and stigmas held towards someone's sexuality. And lastly, in the behavioral domain the sexual expressions through practices like sex, masturbation, developing intimate relationships and taking up gender-specific social roles.

With respect to sexuality of "Gays", this term has been used for centuries referring to the sexual desires or behaviors directed towards people of one's own sex (Archie, 2001). However, from the advent of the late nineteenth century till the mid-twentieth century, this term specifically started to be used for male individuals having sexual attractions towards other males, only (Douglas, 2006). For a layperson, they are simply conceptualized as men who are emotionally or sexually attracted exclusively to their own gender. This common sense notion about gays highlight major components of their individual identity (a major influential factor in one's sexual orientation). However, there is no clear research based evidence in terms of genetics for their sexual preferences. Although five spots in human genome are found to be linked to same-sex behavior; yet, there's no "gay gene" and none of these markers are reliable enough to predict someone's sexuality (Ganna, A. et al., 2019). Hence, more focus must be emphasized upon the social and environmental conditions these individuals are brought up in.

This so-called 'process' of sexual orientation formation has also been emphasized by many researchers across multiple disciplines including politics, sociology, anthropology and philosophy. In psychology, this process mainly involves searching answers related to questions about one's sexuality, desires and orientations. This leads to major transitional changes in the individual cognitively, emotionally and physically. Interaction between father and son has a life-long effect on sons' development (Keown & Palmer, 2014; Lucassen et al., 2011; McCord, McCord, & Thurber, 1962; Pleck, 2010; Zhang, Zhao, Ju, & Ma, 2014). Parents play an

important role in creating safe spaces for their sons to become autonomous and develop a positive self-concept, by providing room for exploration, and guiding them to establish their sexual identity (Bregman et al., 2013; Conley, 2011; Dubeau, Coutu, & Lavigueur, 2013; Hay & Ashman, 2003; Jones et al., 2014; Keown & Palmer, 2014; Rah & Parke, 2008).

Even after all these studies and explorations done in this field; still most people see Sexuality as a "Socially Acceptable Role". Very recently have the biological factors like hormones and genetics have also been recognized as a determining factor in an individual's sexual orientation. Although there are enough theoretical constructs regarding both the "Nature" and "Nurture" aspects of people's sexuality; yet, gay individuals continue to suffer and struggle through various challenges at societal as well as personal levels. Another possibility of the negative outlook towards the homosexual communities could be due to the contribution of psychoanalytic literature against homosexuality.

According to the Psychoanalytic school of Personality development Homosexuality is a part of maladjustive personality development during childhood. Freud along with most contemporary psycho-dynamists considered it to be a fault in the *Phallic* stage of Psychosexual Development. Freud (1924) considered the determining factor in homosexuality of the boy, was his love for his mother and his identification with her. Fear of his father was another leading contributor to this since; according to Freud, it led to repression of sexual desires for his mother and eventually for all other women (in case of "Gay" homosexuals). Some psychoanalyst even went to the extent of classifying "Homosexual Traits".

For instance, a major classification of types of homosexuality was made by Ferenczi in 1916. This classification was based upon the expression of homosexual traits by the individual. These traits were categorized as: (a) **the object homoerotic type** depicted their homosexual traits explicitly and actively. They depicted the obsessive-compulsive nature of denoting injury to the same sex individuals due to the *Oedipus/Elektra Complex*. (b) **The subject-homoerotic type** depicted their homosexual traits passively by repressing them in social contexts but imagining themselves in the positions of their same sex parent through *latent fantasies*.

The male homosexual's strategy for preserving the scene of maternal desire resists patriarchal oedipalization, but, as Freud describes it, it is also a different kind of oedipal tragedy; it is a different kind of destruction of the erotic mother-son bond that enables desire even as it demands to be eradicated. Just as the heterosexual male child must abandon the mother as an erotic object, using her as a model for exogamous erotic attraction, the homosexual male must leave behind the mother to proceed with his desiring life. The difference is that the homosexual child devises a brilliant strategy for preserving the mother's role in his desire. This is, of course, only one difference among many (Bender & Paster, 1941).

Although these theories regarding development of homosexuality as a personality maladjustment are largely rejected today. Still certain researches regarding phallic stage maladjustment among homosexuals is evident. For instance, a paper published by Blum, Danson and Schneider in 1997, proposes that homosexuality among men may be linked with problems of sexual expressions developed in early childhood due to *Repression*. It was a case study exploration of two gays namely, John and Rogers from which the researchers concluded that almost all gay men have witnessed certain rejection, hatred and (even) physical abuse for expression of their sexual development during the childhood developmental stages.

Also recently, another research highlighting issues in relationships with same sex parent among homosexuals was published by Fischer and Kalmijn in 2020. It was a correlational study conducted upon homosexuals of Amsterdam. The findings reveal that the strength of relationship ties in a daughter-mother relationship had a correlation of -0.37 whereas, in a father-son relationship the correlation was found to be -0.39. These negative correlations predict maladjustment during phallic stage of the homosexuals.

Thus, this existing research tries to highlight all the factors encircling a gay individual during the developmental phases of his life. In this article the researcher aims to portray a holistic picture of the individual based on numerous factors like intimacy with parents, conflicts in romantic relationships and preferences as well as the interactions with their peer groups and friend circle. It also takes into account the socio-cultural and economic backgrounds of the individuals.

## II. Method:

### Participants

The participants in this study, consist of individuals above the age of 18, who are sexually oriented towards a Gay identity. The researcher uses a narrative approach to take into account the real life experiences of the individuals. Thus, a sample size of 10 participants provided the impetus to compare and contrast a variety of experiences in different dimensions of their life. The technique of sampling used in the study can be considered as a Snowballing Non-Probability Sampling type. Here, the researcher circulated Google forms to register for participants through his known networks. Moreover, this selection of sampling techniques was based upon the researcher's judgment that these individuals are in the best position to provide genuine and authentic data required for an unbiased and non-judgmental conduction of the study. The researcher also assumed that the

subjects will have the will as well as the desire to express the required information, appropriately. Apart from that, the researcher also set certain inclusion and exclusion criterias for selecting the most appropriate participants for his study. Some of these are mentioned in Table 1.

One of the important criterias as mentioned in the inclusion section of table 1, was selecting all the participants from the same geographical region, Maharashtra which is a state in India. This was done to ensure that the socio-demographic and cultural backgrounds of the participants were constant. The Google forms circulated to the participants made them enlist their name, phone number and email address. These information were used for further contacting them, during the data collection process.

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Inclusion Criterias</b>	<b>Exclusion Criterias</b>
<b>1</b>	Sexual preference of the individual towards males was set as an important criteria for being part of this study.	Individuals with unstable mental or cognitive attributes weren't included as participants in the study.
<b>2</b>	Gay individuals who have lived in and around Maharashtra for most parts of their lives were chosen for this study.	Straight individuals as well as individuals from other transgender communities like lesbians, bisexuals, queer, inter-sex and asexual were excluded from this study.
<b>3</b>	Individuals from all ethnic, cultural, economic as well as religious backgrounds were also included.	Individuals unwilling to open up and talk about their traumatic sexual experiences during childhood also, weren't included in the study.

**Table 1**

## **Data Collection Procedure**

### **Tool Development**

The researcher used a Semi-structured Interview approach for data collection. Thus, the researcher developed a comprehensive interview schedule enlisting the questions to be asked to the subjects. This schedule (questionnaire protocol) was also validated by couple of experts in the field of research and psychology (Gopal, B. 2021). However, the presentation of these questions were quite subjective and flexible. There weren't any specific order or pattern of asking the questions and the interviewer even eliminated certain questions on a couple of occasions, depending upon their irrelevance in the given context of that particular subject.

### **Technique and the Process of Interview:**

The interview sessions were more in the form of an interactional conversation rather than an interrogation. This kind of encouraging probing style was used to make the subjects more comfortable while expressing their childhood sexual and other intimate encounters. The interview duration was mostly around 45-60 minutes for each participant. This process of interview was conducted in three stages. (a) Opening of the Interview: This stage involved rapport building and goal establishment between the interviewer and the interviewee. It was just a general conversation to know each other better. (b) Body of the Interview: This is the phase where the interviewer shifted the conversation into topic specific questions. The questions in this phase were aimed specifically to gain information about the subjects' childhood experiences. (c) Closing/Termination of the Interview: Here, the interviewer summarized and paraphrased all the information he has gather. While ending the interview, the interviewee was also given a chance to ask questions and offer comments. Finally, the subject was warmly thanked for his cooperation during the entire interview process.

### Data Analysis

After the collection of interview responses from the subject, in a raw inscribed format, the researcher attempted to develop certain norms in order to transcribe the information into meaningful themes. The steps in this transcription process might resemble similarities with a Thematic Content Analysis Procedure. The major steps involved in this process were: (a) Identification of Specific Themes: The first step began with highlighting the concepts that the researcher was looking for. It involved deciding upon the number and variety of themes to be studied. (b) The second step got a bit complicated as it involved deciding upon whether to report the quantity (frequency) or quality (degree) of these lived experiences or both. (c) The next step involved a screening process where similar themes were connected together to assign meanings to the subject's responses. Simultaneously, different themes were reported separately, in order to distinguish between them. A hypothetical example of this type of Screening is:

[Terms like "Anger", "Shame", "Pain", and "Rejection" were assembled together by interpreting them as "Pain and rejection led to increased shame and anger within the individual". Whereas, a term like "Responsibility" was reported separately from these terms as it doesn't sync with them in the given context of the study.] (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

(d) The final step involved deciding upon what to do with the irrelevant information, in the context of the study. Whether to report such information as "Other Influential Factors" or to completely ignore them was mostly dependent upon the degree of presence of such information in the subject's experiences.

Finally, the researcher had enough themes to present the information of each subject through a detailed and elaborative format. In this process the researcher also tried to translate the themes into a narrative account.

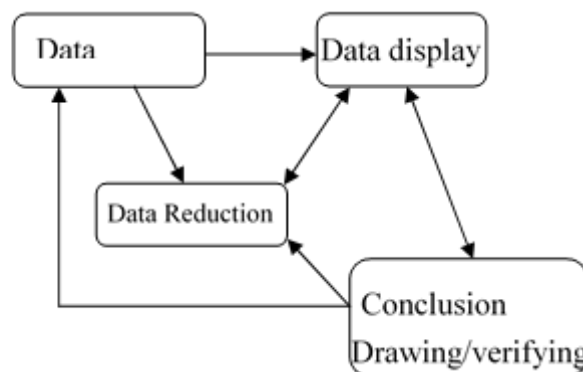
After, reporting each subject's experiences separately the researcher further attempted to draw some general conclusions and discussions from the findings. This involved reporting of certain newly emerged themes during the process of the study as well as reporting links with existing literature in the field of Psychology (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

### The Process of Coding:

In the initial phase of the data analysis, the researcher looked for specific experiences of the subjects, as narrated by them during the interview. At this stage data is broken down into discrete parts and "codes" are created to label them. The main reason behind this breaking up of data is to allow the researcher to continuously compare and contrast between the similar events in the subjects' data. For example, in the case of most subjects; discovery of sexuality and homosexual orientation, has been revealed through the first manifestations of the recognition of emotional and sexual attraction, to people of the same sex (men, in this instance) occurring in childhood.

In the next phase, attempts are made to connect the codes or discrete parts of the interview transcripts with each other. Here, an attempt is made to categorize the data and organize it in some sort of a hierarchical order. This has allowed the researcher to process the data in a structured way and then eventually report the information in the form of continuous narratives. For instance, while arranging the information the researcher has put realization of sexual desires and preferences of gay men always before their expressions or behaviors. This is because, for all the participants the identification process towards homosexuality occurred before the actual opening up or expression related events.

Eventually, in the last phase the researcher has tried to assemble all the specific codes of information obtained. Here, the codes were labelled and defined properly and then; they were culminated together to fulfil the theory and objectives of the study. Thus specific themes were created that will be used as indicators of the developmental process of homosexual orientation in gay men.



#### Creation of Themes:

At first an attempt was made to visualize the data by using a number of different display techniques, such as, quotations, narrative text, figures, tabulating differences and similarities and clarifying the relationship including its associated complexity of data (Miles and Huberman 1994; Gibbs 2002; Yin 2010).

Then, with an attempt to achieve this organizing objective, the researcher engaged in continuous analysis, cross referencing, and refining theme categorization. After that, three refinement activities associated with axial coding, (adopted from: Strauss, 1998, p. 109) that enable and advance effective content categorization, were chosen. These were:

- First is possessing a clear understanding of the analytic methods used in refining data and category construction. As the researcher reviewed the thematic material collected through preliminary coding, the materials were examined in the context of inductive and deductive analysis.

- Second is the constant comparison method. While there are differing approaches to implementing the constant comparison method, its focus here was to compare continually data collected, emergent themes, and their coding in order to continually create, refine, and newly create categories in preparation for creating global themes.

- Third is "line-by-line" coding. In line-by-line coding, each textual line of the interview was scrutinized with the goal of maintaining the researcher's focus on the text. Through this approach, the researcher deeply engaged the text, and, in turn, recognized and codified nuances and discrete thematic connectivity with other themes.

In the final stage of the data analysis process, links were formed to arrange and organize the research's concepts and thoughts. This was achieved by building coherent findings and drawing structures of the results from the data that is displayed. During this stage, the meaning of contradictory and identical data were also clarified. In other words, each statement or idea contributed towards understanding the issues, which lead to an appreciation of the whole picture. This is because every statement was valid in understanding a single concept or ones shared with other statements. Concepts were thus constructed to give a full picture of the learner's views and actions. Furthermore, presenting similarities and differences between the participants' perspectives will assist the readers to obtain a global view (Joffe & Yardley 2004; Blacker 2009).

### **III. Results and Discussions:**

The participants in this study were 10 members of sexual minorities, with the predominant sexual orientation of gay men. Of these 10 participants, all of them had the male biological sex; with 9 also being male gender identity. One of them considered himself non-binary. Importantly for them, gender refers to the social construction of sex on the distinction between cultural attributes allocated to each gender and biological dimension of beings. Complementary to these concepts, gender identity corresponds to the way the individual perceives and presents socially. This is a much broader aspect, in comparison to the focus of this study; hence, these aspects of the participants were kept flexible. The study accepted individuals with any gender identity and fluidity; provided their sexual orientation was of a gay man.

The predominant age group (n = 10) was concentrated between 20 and 35 years old. Concerning skin color, the participants were characterized as predominantly brown (n = 10). Most of them (n = 7) said they were not experiencing amorous practices. They were sampled out from the Indian state of Maharashtra; mostly by using snowball and purposive sampling techniques. Regarding school and professional trajectory, it was identified that (n = 9) reported having an education higher than high school, but only five have completed higher education.

The method of analysis used in this study is kind of a Thematic Analysis procedure as proposed by Alhojailan and Ibrahim (Alhojailan, et al. 2012). Here, the data is understood in terms of specific segments or parts that express certain ideas or viewpoints of the subjects.

#### The Process of Developing a Sexual Orientation:

After careful analyzing and scrutinizing of the data transcripts; the following 6 themes were finalized with respect to all the subjects. It was found that the developmental process usually involved all these aspects; typically in a specific order. These themes also consisted of certain sub-themes which were also present in all subjects; but with varied responses and opinions from a few participants. For example, "Showcasing Feminine Characteristics" can be considered a sub-theme under the first theme of "The Beginning – Realization of Sexual Preferences"; since it was reported by most, if not all the subjects.

#### The Beginning – Exploration of the Unknown:

The first step in forming a gay orientation usually necessitates identification of one's sexual desires and sex-typical characteristics. Some of them called this the "Exploration Phase"; where they were exploring their sexual desires and preferences. It is this phase where they begin to distinguish between two major components of their self-identification. These are:

- The sexual self: It involved developing sexual desires for men during the puberty phase of life. Almost all participants reported having sexual activity or at least certain experiences; before confirming their homosexual identity. Some also highlighted certain aspects of childhood sexual abuse that they would like to forget.

- The non-sexual self: This kind of realization requires the influence of factors like choice of activities, habits and characteristics which in turn lead to depiction of excessive feminine characteristics and qualities. For instance, playing “ghar-ghar” with female friends during childhood.

While the first component has a direct impact on the formation of one's sexual identity; it was found that second component too had some subtle influences. It was also evident from the conversations that the individuals faced a lot of hindrances while exploring this component of their sexual orientation. For instance one of the participants said that:

[Internet wasn't that available in that time.....so I used to rely on friends and social contact only mostly....to explore mostly. There is one memory I have that illustrates just why this is the case. That is, it illustrates just how natural I thought it was to be gay. In grade six, I remember many of my friends started talking more about girls they liked, celebrities and classmates alike. Some started asking girls out. First attempts at dating. One day I was sitting in class wondering why it was that I wasn't feeling any of these same feelings for girls. I looked around the classroom at each girl there and tried to think about whether or not I thought they were attractive. Or, to be more crude, if any of them turned me on. None really did. But I did know that thinking about boys did excite me in the way that I thought was supposed to happen when I thought of girls. It didn't occur to me that this was significant at all, it was just what I thought, and that was all.] **Participant 4**

Expression – Dissemination from a disguised life:

Uptil this point gay individuals have usually lived a fake life. A life controlled and directed by their family, peers and other social agencies. This expression of homosexuality usually starts with talking to family, peers and other close ones about their sexual orientation and trying to attain their acceptance. The consequences of such bold expressions can be manifested positively as well as negatively in their future lives. A positive manifestation would lead to the person developing more self-confidence, autonomy and a boost in inner pride and self-esteem. On the contrary, a negative manifestation leads to feelings of hopelessness and development of an overall worthless attitude. Various factors and sub-themes like conversations, interactions and discussions (in groups/individually) were involved in this stage. Some of the conversations with the interviewee clearing expressed their ideas about the stage of Expression! For instance:

[It was my sister's marriage in 2017 after that my number was going to come. As soon as her marriage got over....I told my parents 2-3 months later. I told my mother who was comparatively more accepting and supportive than others. It was a mild kind of reaction....I showed them a video through my cousin....and they eventually accepted it...however, initially they resisted.] **Participant 2**

The Receptive Outcomes – Acceptance/Rejection:

This theme included narration of experiences involving abuse, harassments and teasing (with derogatory terms like “chakka” and “hijra”) incidents in their life. Some participants also narrated a few positive experiences where some of their close ones were supportive with regard to their sexual orientation. This theme turned out to be a crucial factor in most of the participants' life; as a positive outcome (like acceptance/support) led to a development of inner-strength and confidence within them. Whereas, negative outcomes pushes them further back into their respective closets. The sub-themes in this stage revolved around terms like abuse, harassment, teasing as well as support. One specific life event related to this theme as narrated by a subject was:

[It is very difficult for gay/lesbian people to walk in community streets without being harassed or intimidated. They call us names, 'chakka', 'abnormal', 'criminals', 'sinners', 'dirty things' and 'people who are cursed in the face of the community'. On one occasion I came across two boys in the streets. One of the two boys greeted me and said, 'I hate you.' When I asked him why, he answered by kicking me hard and I nearly fell. I just ran away. Fortunately, my room was not far from the grocery shop.] **Participant 3.**

Another importance pattern noticed through this theme was the indefinite loop; that most subjects used to trap themselves in due to these external inhibitions. Their thought process revolves around the same fear “What would people say?” Thus, their actions and expressions within the society are limited to this particular thought and they have a hard time getting passed it.

Interpersonal Relationships:

A varied amount of responses were attained with respect to this theme. With regard to romantic relationships, participants preferred looking for online dates (using dating apps) on the basis of similar intellectual and emotional levels of functioning. Whereas, others just looked for temporary hookups lasting for just one or two days. Yet, there were a few who tried to engage in a serious romantic relationships; and were heart-broken after it ended. Some non-romantic relationships involved responses about the kind of people, the subjects engaged with; during their lifetime. Most of the subjects preferred to choose friends who were accepting, sensitive and understanding with regards to their sexual orientation. However, a couple of participants did also prefer to

choose friends on the basis of their sexual orientations. For instance, one of the subject was in a non-romantic friendship with another gay man for 12 years; even though, they had a hard time understanding each other. This stage had a variety of sub-themes like sensitivity, accepting and understanding, dating apps, emotional and intellectual similarities and serious romantic relationships. This was found on multiple accounts of interactions between the interviewer and the interviewee. For instance:

[I make friends only with people who genuinely understand and accept me. Still, now for whatever reason it's really hard for me to come out to anybody new. I don't know why. I mean I consider myself fairly well-adjusted. And I'm comfortable being gay, and I'm comfortable once I am out. But just that having to make a point of it, having to say it is still really, really hard. And I hate that] **Participant 1**

[As I have grown closer together to my partner; I've become more proud of who I am. And it seems like the prouder that I become of me: the stronger our relationship becomes."] **Participant 8**

[My first relationship turned out to be a bit traumatic and the other person started emotionally blackmailing me and stuff....that he'll tell others about my orientation and things....however, once I left him my second relationship was much better wherein, I was accepted and respected by the other person.....] **Participant 7**

The Closet – It's Challenges, and a new Outlook to the World:

This involved experiences relating to reactions of people in the subjects' work and home environment. The subjects narrated incidents relating to themes like people's mindset, attitude and body language towards them in various settings. For instance, one of the subjects claims to be scolded and rejected by most of his relatives for his excessively girlish nature. Certain instances of work life challenges as well as dual challenges between work and personal lives were also recorded. These kind of instances pushes them inside their own personal safe corners the "Subjective Closet". This involves their personal experiences, feelings and desires repressed over time due to the societal pressures imposed upon them.

One such instance was:

[Despite the family knows, it does not accept, is not something that is discussed in the house, it is something they know but do not want to see, or want me to show then that's a problem....is what I feel. Finally, it is difficult to them, and I know it, too] **Participant 5**

Many subjects also laid emphasis upon the "Social Environment"; claiming it to be a major contributor towards rejection of homosexuality. They assert that, the lack of supportive environment and open-minded attitudes from others lead to the struggles of gay men in our society. This became their "Objective Closet" which also involved important roles of major social players like the media and queer pride organizations. Differences of opinions were also expressed in this aspects as some claimed that these organizations work only to seek attention and for the benefit of elite class people only. Whereas, others claim that, they do good work even for the poorer sections; helping to reduce the societal stigmas and taboos, and also create awareness in this aspect. Some even talked about involvement of certain political agendas while expressing their opinions in this theme. In this regard, they talked about how the world views them and also how they expect the world to view them. This involved sub-themes like open social environment, safe space, social media, queer pride groups, political agendas, attention seeking, awareness, support and many other concepts which the participants involved in the conversations. Two of the narrative accounts of such conversations are:

[The media is filled with right wing hatred from the politicians. No one knows what this attitude is, where it comes from, or how it is transmitted. It only effects gays and Trans people. Both of these groups are expendable. I know that to stay accepted in society I must remain silent. I must not have sexually explicit side taking. If you were not a gay adult during this time of Section 377, you do not know the terror and hysteria that the media had whipped the general population into.] **Participant 6**

[Throughout my entire life I've been running for people's love while they only gave me rejection....People would mock me because I was little flamboyant and feminine. I didn't fit into the typical boxes of men and women....I have been heavily discriminated I was pretty girlish and I loved men. They used to call me "hijra", "lady boy", "ladies".....] **Participant 3**

However, despite all that the most disturbing scenario for the participants seem to occur when there is a lack of support from members of their own community. In such instances, they face criticisms for coming out and expressing themselves. These criticisms are evident as a fear of being exposed in front of the world. These fears instil hatred and rejection among each other, invite violence and sometimes even effect their self-esteem and confidence. These factors and conflicts within themselves together become their "Collective Closet" – A battle that they have to fight within as well as among themselves. This is why most people even after coming out to the world aren't fully satisfied with their lives. For instance, one of the participants claims that:

[I think it's a mixed bag. There are some areas of my life that have become much better, there are some areas that I've struggled with. But all through that process despite all that I was going through when I look back on it now I realize that it was all for a purpose, that I learned so many valuable things in life. So maybe I wouldn't even say that it's a mixed bag. It's probably towards the positive. I don't regret doing it, it was the right thing to

do. And I know that I went through a lot of personal hell since that point in time, but that every instance of that taught me valuable lessons about life and what was and wasn't important. So, forget the mixed bag. It's been positive.] **Participant 7**

Thus it is evident from these themes that, when it comes to discovery of sexuality/sexual orientation by the gay people, the awakening of emotional and sexual attraction to people of the same-sex still arises during childhood, although in the midst of an identity crisis. Freud believed that sexuality is constructed, arbitrary, not determined and influenced by biological and environmental factors. It is an unconscious choice, for which there is no guidance that the subject cannot escape. Similar to this claim, the results of this study also found that the heteronormative culture requires standardization of typical behaviors expected for child development of boys. Failure to comply with this standard, that is, the emergence of atypical behavior for a boy, is indicative of homosexuality caused by mixed feelings, especially when there is a lack of family support for the discussion of this issue.

Other researchers have proposed other models as well which are partly and conceptually evident in this paper as well. For instance, preservation of status quo and societal demands were actually considered secondary to self-preservation of identity and self-respect, contradicting some of the earlier studies (Achar, M; 2021).

Another contradictory finding from this study could be analyzed as an internalization and externalization of challenges faced by gay people (Alves, 2016). Evidences regarding this theory also weren't conclusive in this study. Challenges in the subjects' lives were mostly interpreted as a consequence of their developing experiences and not as their causes.

#### Final Conclusions:

The aim of this study was to highlight a holistic picture of a gay man and record all the experiences, events as well as challenges faced by him in the developmental phases of his life. The data assembled also represents numerous phases in the developmental process of a gay man's sexual orientation. It tries to cover numerous aspects in his life involving family, relatives, peers, social interactions, personal opinions and so on. Although, a lack of complex statistical analysis method can turn out to be a potential drawback of such a study. Yet, a fully qualitative methodology was expected to be appropriate for such a study.

Major reasons for using a thematic-narrative approach in this study were:

The study focuses upon individual experiences of gay participants. It tries to focus upon the variety and individual differences emerging from the interview transcripts. Thus structured and specifically well-defined themes are required to connect these subjective experiences.

This method provides the researcher with the flexibility to use both inductive and deductive approaches. At one end, precise and specific content of data were used to draw generalized conclusions and theories, as done in inductive reasoning. Yet, at the same time the researcher also had the leverage to use a detailed data transcript to precisely link with a specific theme. This method was very relevant for this study, as the kind of data collected varied from subject to subject. For instance, the interview process took more than 90 minutes with some subjects, who were very keen and enthusiastic to express their childhood experiences. Whereas, the interview with a few participants had to be wrapped up in just around 40 minutes, due to the lack of elaborations in their narrated experiences.

Moreover, a thematic analysis process analyses the data without engaging pre-existing themes, which means that it can be adapted to any research that relies -only on- upon participants' clarifications. In other words, each statement or idea contributes towards understanding the issues, which leads to an appreciation of the whole picture. This is because every statement is valid in understanding a single concept or ones shared with other statements. Concepts are thus constructed to give a full picture of the learner's views and actions. Furthermore, presenting similarities and differences between the participants' perspectives will assist the readers to obtain a global view (Joffe & Yardley 2004; Blacker 2009).

Lastly, different areas of life experiences were highlighted after forming the interview transcripts. This indicated the researcher that, multiple themes had to be connected with one another to form a specific pattern of life experiences of the gay individuals. Moreover, the varied form of data also prompted the researcher to look for more than one level of themes that is, to incorporate certain sub-themes; where eventually all gets connected to a global theme. By gathering data using the interview process, with participants in different environments, Thematic Analysis produced and presented the data more effectively and reflected the reality of the data collection (Miles and Huberman 1994; Creswell 2009; Hayes 1997).

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