

LGBT: THE DARKNESS OF SOCIETY WHERE LIBIDO IS SILENT

¹*Kushal Nandi, ¹Shayari Dutta, ¹Amrita Chakraborty, ¹Dr. Dhruvo Jyoti Sen and ²Dr. Dhananjay Saha

¹Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, School of Pharmacy, Techno India University, Salt Lake City, Sector-V, EM-4, Kolkata-700091, West Bengal, India.

²Deputy Director, Directorate of Technical Education, Bikash Bhavan, Salt Lake City, Kolkata-700091, West Bengal, India.

***Corresponding Author: Kushal Nandi**

Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, School of Pharmacy, Techno India University, Salt Lake City, Sector-V, EM-4, Kolkata-700091, West Bengal, India.

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ABSTRACT

LGBT or *GLBT* is an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. In use since the 1990s, the term is an adaptation of the initialism *LGB*, which began to replace the term *gay* in reference to the broader LGBT community beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s. The initialism, as well as some of its common variants, functions as an umbrella term for sexuality and gender identity. It may refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual or non-cisgender, instead of exclusively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. To recognize this inclusion, a popular variant, *LGBTQ*, adds the letter *Q* for those who identify as queer or are questioning their sexual identity. Those who add intersex people to LGBT groups or organizing may use the extended initialism *LGBTI*. These two initialisms are sometimes combined to form the terms *LGBTIQ* or *LGBT+* to encompass spectrums of sexuality and gender. Other, less common variants also exist, such as *LGBTQIA+*, with the *A* standing for "asexual" or "aromantic". Longer acronyms, with some being over twice as long as *LGBT*, have prompted criticism for their length, and the implication that the acronym refers to a single community is also controversial.

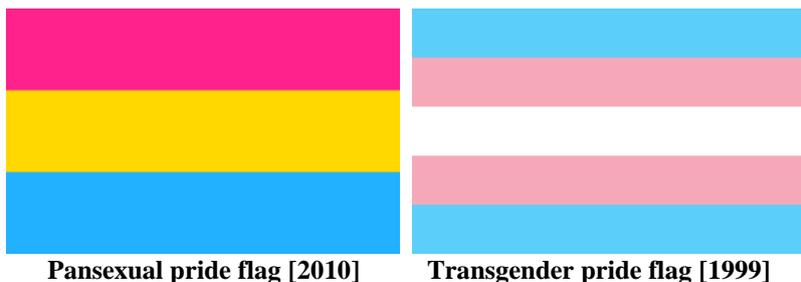
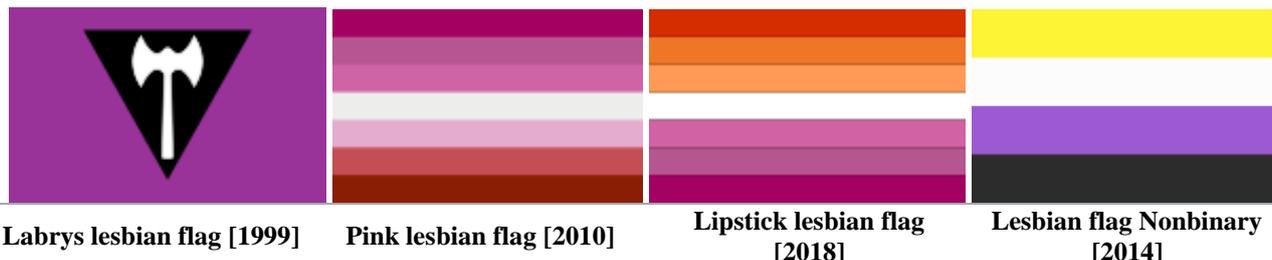
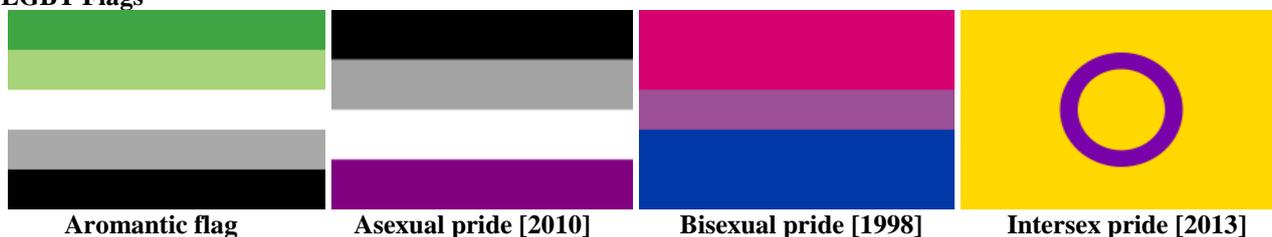
KEYWORDS: LGBT, GLBT, LGBTQ, LGBTIQ, LGBTQIA, LGBTIH, LGBTTQQAAP, QUILTBAG.

Slogans of Gay

Slogans	Notes
"Gay? There's nothing queer about it"	This slogan is used in a TV-commercial about homosexuality in name of the Royal Dutch Football Association. It is a translation of the original Dutch pay-off "Homo? Boeit geen flikker" by Delight Agency, an advertising agency from Amsterdam.
"Gay Is Good"	Coined by early gay activist Frank Kameny, modeled on the African American slogan "Black is beautiful".
"Gays Bash Back"	This slogan is often used by more militant gay people and implies self-defense against gay bashers.
"Majority doesn't exist"	This slogan was popularized by MAKEOUT in Belarus during the 2016 opening of the "meta- queer festival".
"Hey, hey! Ho, ho! Homophobia's got to go!"	Used by National Organization for Women (NOW).
"We're here, we're queer and we'd like to say hello!"	A variation of the above used by Queer Nation during the 1992 opening of the "Queer Shopping Network".
"Silence=Death/Action=Life"	Designed by six people, including Avram Finkelstein, this slogan was used by ACT UP to draw attention to the AIDS crisis in America. It was often used in conjunction with a right-side up pink triangle.
"Two, Four, Six, Eight! How Do You Know Your Kids Are Straight?"	This slogan against heterosexism was also used by Queer Nation. Another variation is "One, Two, Three, Four! Open up the closet door! Five, Six, Seven, Eight! Don't assume your kids are straight!"
"Out of the Closets and into the	This slogan was also used by Queer Nation.

Streets"	
"Rainbows Reign"	Used most notably on banners of the Pink Pistols organization.
"Gay by birth, fabulous by choice"	Made popular by Birmingham City University LGBT Society
"Let's get one thing straight, I'm not"	Made popular by Rob, Bureau of matters concerning discrimination of The Hague area and mid-Holland, The Netherlands
"Why be afraid to be enGayged"	Brooks foundation
"Sorry girls, I suck dick"	Used on shirts by the Swedish magazine and Internet-community QX.
"Love Wins"	Rob Bell
"Armed gays don't get bashed"	The slogan for the Pink Pistols organization.
"Let's get one thing straight, I'm not"	Made popular by Rob, Bureau of matters concerning discrimination of The Hague area and mid-Holland, The Netherlands
"Free Mom Hugs"	Emotional support slogan made popular by Sara Cunningham of FreeMomHugs.org.
"Be bold, be proud, be gay"	Anti-assimilationist and anti-capitalist slogan.
"Be gay, do crime"	An anti-authority and anti-capitalist slogan.
"Sounds gay, I'm in"	Used by the community.

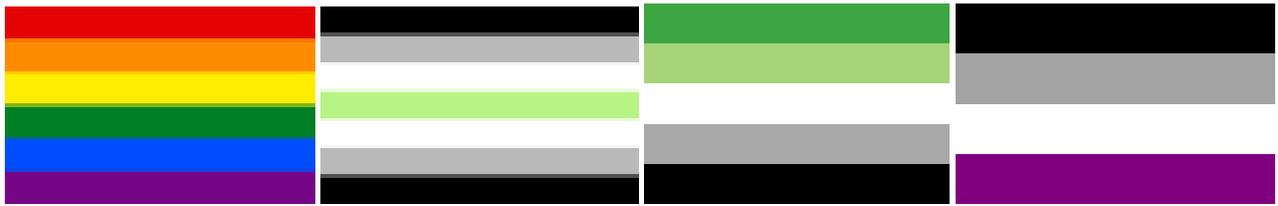
LGBT Flags



LGBT symbols



Pink triangle [homosexual men] Black triangle [homosexual women] Pink & Yellow triangle [homosexual prisoners]

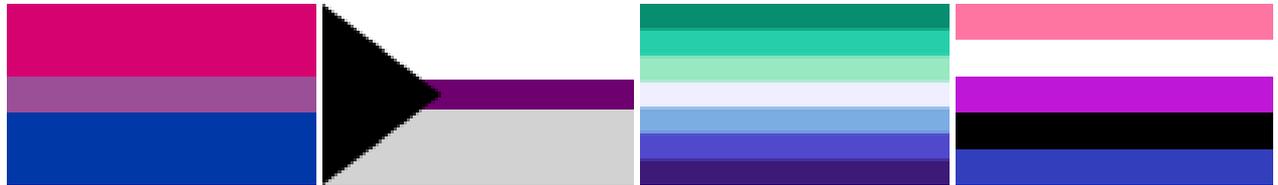


LGBT Gay pride

Agender

Aromantic

Asexual

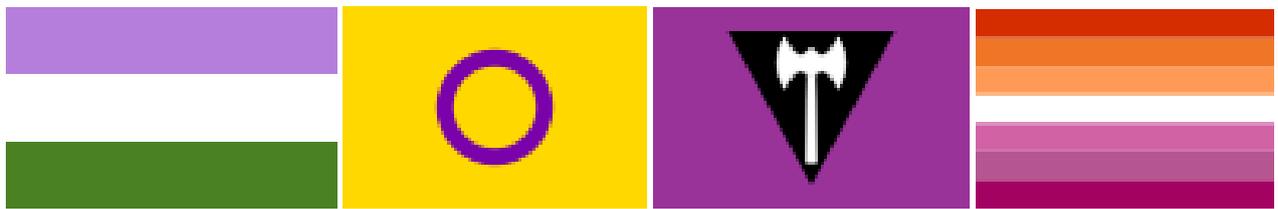


Bisexual

Demisexual

Trans gay

Gender fluid

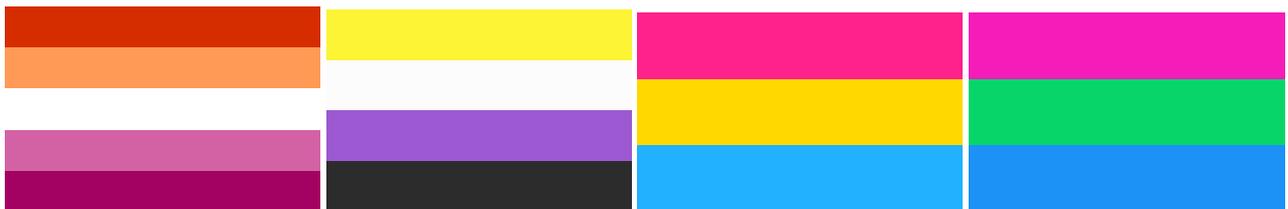


Gender queer

Intersex

Lesbian

Lesbian-pride

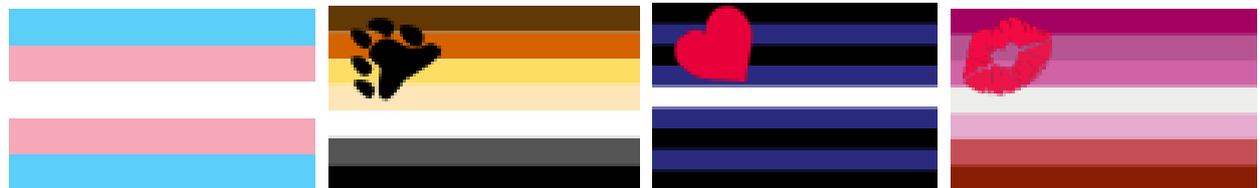


Lesbian flag [social media]

Lesbian flag

Nonbinary

Pansexual



Polysexual

Transgender Brotherhood

Leather pride flag

Lipstick lesbian flag



Philadelphia gay flag South Africa



Gay pride flag of South Africa

Symbols



Biangles-bisexuality



Double moon-bisexuality



Lesbian male



Gay



Bisexuality



Labrys-lesbian



Lambda-gay



Pansexual



Transgender



Trans feminist



Transgender restroom

Variants: General

Many variants exist including variations that change the order of the letters; *LGBT* or *GLBT* are the most common terms. Although identical in meaning, *LGBT* may have a more feminist connotation than *GLBT* as it places the "L" (for "lesbian") first. *LGBT* may also include additional Qs for "queer" or "questioning" (sometimes abbreviated with a question mark and sometimes used to mean anybody not literally L, G, B or T) producing the variants *LGBTQ* and *LGBTQQ*. In the United Kingdom, it is sometimes stylized as *LGB&T*, whilst the Green Party of England and Wales uses the term *LGBTIQ* in its manifesto and official publications. The order of the letters has not been standardized; in addition to the variations between the positions of the initial "L" or "G", the mentioned, less common letters, if used, may appear in almost any order. Longer initialisms based on *LGBT* are sometimes referred to as "alphabet soup". Variant terms do not typically represent political differences within the community, but arise simply from the preferences of individuals and groups. The terms *pansexual*, *omnisexual*, *fluid* and *queer-identified* are regarded as falling under the umbrella term *bisexual* (and therefore are considered a part of the bisexual community). Some use *LGBT+* to mean "LGBT and related communities". *LGBTQIA* is sometimes used and adds "Queer, Intersex, and Asexual" to the basic term. Other variants may have a "U" for "Unsure"; a "C" for "Curious"; another "T" for "Transvestite"; a "TS", or "2" for "two-spirit" persons; or an "SA" for "straight allies". However, the inclusion of straight allies in the LGBT acronym has proven controversial as many straight allies have been accused of using LGBT advocacy to gain popularity and status in recent years, and various LGBT activists have criticised the heteronormative worldview of certain straight allies. Some may also add a "P" for "Polyamorous", an "H" for "HIV-affected", or an "O" for "Other". Furthermore, the initialism *LGBTIH* has seen use in India to encompass the hijra third gender identity and the related subculture. The initialism *LGBTQQIAAP* (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Ally, Pansexual) has also resulted, although such initialisms are sometimes criticized for being confusing and leaving some people out, as well as issues of placement of the letters within the new title. However, adding the term "allies" to the initialism has sparked controversy, with some seeing the inclusion of "ally" in place of "asexual" as a form of asexual erasure. There is

also the acronym *QUILT*BAG (Queer and Questioning, Unsure, Intersex, Lesbian, Transgender and Two-spirit, Bisexual, Asexual and Aromantic, and Gay and Genderqueer). Similarly, *LGBTQIA+* stands for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual and many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual)". The + after the "A" may denote a second "A" representing "Allies". In Canada, the community is sometimes identified as *LGBTQ2* (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two Spirit). Depending on the which organization is using the acronym the choice of acronym changes. Businesses and the CBC often simply employ *LGBT* as a proxy for any longer acronym, private activist groups often employ *LGBTQ+*, whereas public health providers favour the more inclusive *LGBT2Q+* to accommodate twin spirited indigenous peoples. For a time the Pride Toronto organization used the much lengthier acronym *LGBTTIQQ2SA*, but appears to have dropped this in favour of simpler wording.

Transgender inclusion: The term trans* has been adopted by some groups as a more inclusive alternative to "transgender", where trans (without the asterisk) has been used to describe trans men and trans women, while trans* covers all non-cisgender (genderqueer) identities, including transgender, transsexual, transvestite, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, genderfuck, genderless, agender, non-gendered, third gender, two-spirit, bigender, and trans man and trans woman. Likewise, the term *transsexual* commonly falls under the umbrella term *transgender*, but some transsexual people object to this. When not inclusive of transgender people, the shorter term *LGB* is used instead of *LGBT*.

Intersex inclusion: The relationship of intersex to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans, and queer communities is complex, but intersex people are often added to the LGBT category to create an LGBTI community. Some intersex people prefer the initialism *LGBTI*, while others would rather that they not be included as part of the term. Emi Koyama describes how inclusion of intersex in *LGBTI* can fail to address intersex-specific human rights issues, including creating false impressions "that intersex people's rights are protected" by laws protecting LGBT people, and failing to acknowledge that many intersex people are not LGBT. Organisation Intersex International Australia states that some intersex individuals are same sex attracted, and some are

heterosexual, but "LGBTI activism has fought for the rights of people who fall outside of expected binary sex and gender norms". Julius Kaggwa of SIPD Uganda has written that, while the gay community "offers us a place of relative safety, it is also oblivious to our specific needs". Numerous studies have shown higher rates of same sex attraction in intersex people, with a recent Australian study of people born with atypical sex characteristics finding that 52% of respondents were non-heterosexual, thus research on intersex subjects has been used to explore means of preventing homosexuality. As an experience of being born with sex characteristics that do not fit social norms, intersex can be distinguished from transgender, while some intersex people are both intersex and transgender.^[1]

Gay: *Gay* is a term that primarily refers to a homosexual person or the trait of being homosexual. The term originally denoted being "carefree", "cheerful", or "bright and showy". While scant usage referring to male

homosexuality dates to the late 19th century, that meaning became increasingly common by the mid-20th century. In modern English, *gay* has come to be used as an adjective, and as a noun, referring to the community, practices and cultures associated with homosexuality. In the 1960s, *gay* became the word favored by homosexual men to describe their sexual orientation. By the end of the 20th century, the word *gay* was recommended by major LGBT groups and style guides to describe people attracted to members of the same sex, although it is more commonly used to refer specifically to men. At about the same time, a new, pejorative use became prevalent in some parts of the world. Among younger speakers, the word has a meaning ranging from derision (e.g., equivalent to *rubbish* or *stupid*) to a light-hearted mockery or ridicule (e.g., equivalent to weak, unmanly, or lame). The extent to which these usages still retain connotations of homosexuality has been debated and harshly criticized.



Figure 1: Gay Couple.

Sexualization: The word may have started to acquire associations of immorality as early as the 14th century, but had certainly acquired them by the 17th. By the late 17th century, it had acquired the specific meaning of "addicted to pleasures and dissipations", an extension of its primary meaning of "carefree" implying "uninhibited by moral constraints". A *gay woman* was a prostitute, a *gay man* a womanizer, and a *gay house* a brothel. An example is a letter read to a London court in 1885 during the prosecution of brothel madam and procureress Mary Jeffries that had been written by a girl while slaved to a French brothel:

"I write to tell you it is a gay house...Some captains came in the other night, and the mistress wanted us to sleep with them." The use of *gay* to mean "homosexual" was often an extension of its application to prostitution: a *gay boy* was a young man or boy serving male clients. Similarly, a *gay cat* was a young male apprenticed to an older hobo and commonly exchanging sex and other services for protection and tutelage. The application to homosexuality was also an extension of the word's sexualized connotation of "carefree and uninhibited", which implied a willingness to disregard conventional or respectable sexual mores. Such usage, documented as

early as the 1920s, was likely present before the 20th century, although it was initially more commonly used to imply heterosexually unconstrained lifestyles, as in the once-common phrase "gay Lothario", or in the title of the book and film *The Gay Falcon* (1941), which concerns a womanizing detective whose first name is "Gay". Similarly, Fred Gilbert and G. H. McDermott's music hall song of the 1880s, "Charlie Dilke Upset the Milk" – "Master Dilke upset the milk, when taking it home to Chelsea; the papers say that Charlie's gay, rather a wilful wag!" – referred to Sir Charles Dilke's alleged heterosexual impropriety. Giving testimony in court in 1889, the prostitute John Saul stated: "I occasionally do odd-jobs for different gay people."

Well into the mid-20th century a middle-aged bachelor could be described as "gay", indicating that he was unattached and therefore free, without any implication of homosexuality. This usage could apply to women too. The British comic strip *Jane*, first published in the 1930s, described the adventures of *Jane Gay*. Far from implying homosexuality, it referred to her free-wheeling lifestyle with plenty of boyfriends (while also punning on Lady Jane Grey).

A passage from Gertrude Stein's *Miss Furr & Miss Skeene* (1922) is possibly the first traceable published use of the word to refer to a homosexual relationship. According to Linda Wagner-Martin (*Favored Strangers: Gertrude Stein and her Family*, 1995) the portrait "featured the sly repetition of the word gay, used with sexual intent for one of the first times in linguistic history," and Edmund Wilson (1951, quoted by James Mellow in *Charmed Circle*, 1974) agreed. For example: They were ... gay, they learned little things that are things in being gay, ... they were quite regularly gay.

— Gertrude Stein, 1922

The word continued to be used with the dominant meaning of "carefree", as evidenced by the title of *The Gay Divorcee* (1934), a musical film about a heterosexual couple.^[2]

Shift to specifically homosexual: By the mid-20th century, *gay* was well established in reference to hedonistic and uninhibited lifestyles and its antonym *straight*, which had long had connotations of seriousness, respectability, and conventionality, had now acquired specific connotations of heterosexuality. In the case of *gay*, other connotations of frivolousness and showiness in dress ("gay apparel") led to association with camp and effeminacy. This association no doubt helped the gradual narrowing in scope of the term towards its current dominant meaning, which was at first confined to subcultures. *Gay* was the preferred term since other terms, such as *queer*, were felt to be derogatory. *Homosexual* is perceived as excessively clinical, since the sexual orientation now commonly referred to as "homosexuality" was at that time a mental illness diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). In mid-20th century Britain, where male homosexuality was illegal until the Sexual Offences Act 1967, to openly identify someone as homosexual was considered very offensive and an accusation of serious criminal activity. Additionally, none of the words describing any aspect of homosexuality were considered suitable for polite society. Consequently, a number of euphemisms were used to hint at suspected homosexuality. Examples include "sporty" girls and "artistic" boys, all with the stress deliberately on the otherwise completely innocent adjective.

The 1960s marked the transition in the predominant meaning of the word *gay* from that of "carefree" to the current "homosexual". In the British comedy-drama film *Light Up the Sky!* (1960), directed by Lewis Gilbert, about the antics of a British Army searchlight squad during World War II, there is a scene in the mess hut where the character played by Benny Hill proposes an after-dinner toast. He begins, "I'd like to propose..." at which point a fellow diner, played by Sidney Tafler, interjects "Who to?", suggesting a proposal of marriage. The Benny Hill character responds, "Not to you for start, you ain't my type". He then adds in mock doubt, "Oh, I don't know, you're rather gay on the quiet."

By 1963, a new sense of the word *gay* was known well enough to be used by Albert Ellis in his book *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Man-Hunting*. Similarly, Hubert Selby, Jr. in his 1964 novel *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, could write that a character "took pride in being a homosexual by feeling intellectually and esthetically superior to those (especially women) who weren't gay...." Later examples of the original meaning of the word being used in popular culture include the theme song to the 1960–1966 animated TV series *The Flintstones*, whereby viewers are assured that they will "have a gay old time." Similarly, the 1966 Herman's Hermits song "No Milk Today", which became a Top 10 hit in the UK and a Top 40 hit in the U.S., included the lyric "No milk today, it was not always so; *The company was gay*, we'd turn night into day."^[3]

In June 1967, the headline of the review of the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album in the British daily newspaper *The Times* stated, "The Beatles revive hopes of progress in pop music with their gay new LP". Yet in the same year, The Kinks recorded "David Watts". Ostensibly about schoolboy envy, the song also operated as an in-joke, as related in Jon Savage's "The Kinks: The Official Biography", because the song took its name from a homosexual promoter they had encountered who had romantic desires for songwriter Ray Davies' teenage brother; and the lines "he is so gay and fancy-free" attest to the ambiguity of the word's meaning at that time, with the second meaning evident only for those in the know. As late as 1970, the first episode of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* has the demonstrably straight Mary Richards' downstairs neighbour, Phyllis, breezily declaiming that Mary is, at age 30, still "young and gay."

Homosexuality



Figure 2: The rainbow flag is a symbol of gay pride.

Sexual orientation, identity, behavior: The American Psychological Association defines *sexual orientation* as "an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes," ranging "along a continuum, from exclusive attraction to the other sex to exclusive attraction to the same sex." Sexual orientation can also be "discussed in terms of three categories: heterosexual (having emotional, romantic, or sexual attractions to members of the other sex), gay/lesbian (having emotional, romantic, or sexual

attractions to members of one's own sex), and bisexual (having emotional, romantic, or sexual attractions to both men and women)."

According to Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter, Braun (2006), "the development of a lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) sexual identity is a complex and often difficult process. Unlike members of other minority groups (e.g., ethnic and racial minorities), most LGB individuals are not raised in a community of similar others from whom they learn about their identity and who reinforce and support that identity. Rather, LGB individuals are often raised in communities that are either ignorant of or openly hostile toward homosexuality."^[4]

The British gay rights activist Peter Tatchell has argued that the term *gay* is merely a cultural expression which reflects the current status of homosexuality within a given society, and claiming that "Queer, gay, homosexual... in the long view, they are all just temporary identities. One day, we will not need them at all."



Figure 3: Symbol of LGBT.

If a person engages in sexual activity with a partner of the same sex but does not self-identify as gay, terms such as 'closeted', 'discreet', or 'bi-curious' may apply. Conversely, a person may identify as gay without having had sex with a same-sex partner. Possible choices include identifying as gay socially, while choosing to be celibate, or while anticipating a first homosexual experience. Further, a bisexual person might also identify as "gay" but others may consider *gay* and *bisexual* to be mutually exclusive. There are some who are drawn to the same sex but neither engage in sexual activity nor identify as gay; these could have the term *asexual* applied, even though *asexual* generally can mean no attraction, or involve heterosexual attraction but no sexual activity.^[5]

Terminology: Some reject the term *homosexual* as an identity-label because they find it too clinical-sounding; they believe it is too focused on physical acts rather than romance or attraction, or too reminiscent of the era when homosexuality was considered a mental illness. Conversely, some reject the term *gay* as an identity-label because they perceive the cultural connotations to be undesirable or because of the negative connotations of the slang usage of the word.

Style guides, like the following from the Associated Press, call for *gay* over *homosexual*:

Gay: Used to describe men and women attracted to the same sex, though *lesbian* is the more common term for women. Preferred over *homosexual* except in clinical contexts or references to sexual activity.

There are those who reject the *gay* label for reasons other than shame or negative connotations. Writer Alan Bennett and fashion icon André Leon Talley are out and open *gay* men who reject being labeled *gay*, believing the *gay* label confines them.^[6]

Gay community vs. LGBT community: Starting in the mid-1980s in the United States, a conscious effort was underway within what was then commonly called the *gay community*, to add the term *lesbian* to the name of organizations that involved both male and female homosexuals, and to use the terminology of *gay and lesbian*, *lesbian/gay*, or a similar phrase when referring to that community. Accordingly, organizations such as the National Gay Task Force became the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. For many feminist lesbians, it was also important that *lesbian* be named first, to avoid the implication that women were secondary to men, or an afterthought. In the 1990s, this was followed by a similar effort to include terminology specifically including bisexual, transgender, intersex, and other people, reflecting the intra-community debate about the inclusion of these other sexual minorities as part of the same movement. Consequently, the portmanteau *les/bi/gay* has sometimes been used, and initialisms such as *LGBT*, *LGBTQ*, *LGBTQI*, and others have come into common use by such organizations, and most news organizations have formally adopted some such variation.^[7]

Descriptor



Figure 4: "R Place" Gay Bar in Seattle, Washington, United States.

The term *gay* can also be used as an adjective to describe things related to homosexual men, or things which are part of the said culture. For example, the term "gay bar" describes the bar which either caters primarily to a homosexual male clientele or is otherwise part of homosexual male culture.

Using it to describe an object, such as an item of clothing, suggests that it is particularly flamboyant, often on the verge of being gaudy and garish. This usage predates the association of the term with homosexuality but has acquired different connotations since the modern usage developed.

Use as a noun: The label *gay* was originally used purely as an adjective ("he is a gay man" or "he is gay"). The term has also been in use as a noun with the meaning "homosexual man" since the 1970s, most commonly in the plural for an unspecified group, as in "gays are opposed to that policy." This usage is somewhat common in the names of organizations such as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and Children of Lesbians And Gays Everywhere (COLAGE). It is sometimes used to refer to individuals, as in "he is a gay" or "two gays were there too," although this may be perceived as derogatory. It was also used for comedic effect by the *Little Britain* character Dafydd Thomas.^[8]

A **lesbian** is a homosexual woman. The word *lesbian* is also used for women in relation to their sexual

identity or sexual behavior, regardless of sexual orientation, or as an adjective to characterize or associate nouns with female homosexuality or same-sex attraction.

The concept of "lesbian" to differentiate women with a shared sexual orientation evolved in the 20th century. Throughout history, women have not had the same freedom or independence as men to pursue homosexual relationships, but neither have they met the same harsh punishment as homosexual men in some societies. Instead, lesbian relationships have often been regarded as harmless, unless a participant attempts to assert privileges traditionally enjoyed by men. As a result, little in history was documented to give an accurate description of how female homosexuality was expressed. When early sexologists in the late 19th century began to categorize and describe homosexual behavior, hampered by a lack of knowledge about homosexuality or women's sexuality, they distinguished lesbians as women who did not adhere to female gender roles. They classified them as mentally ill—a designation which has been reversed since the late 20th century in the global scientific community.^[9]

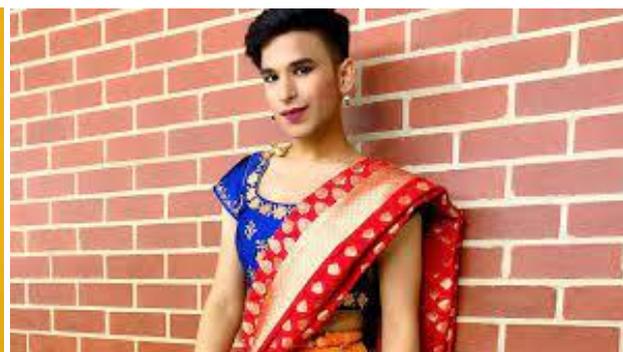


Figure 5: Bisexuality.

Women in homosexual relationships in Europe and the United States responded to the discrimination and repression either by hiding their personal lives, or accepting the label of outcast and creating a subculture and identity. Following World War II, during a period of social repression when governments actively persecuted homosexuals, women developed networks to socialize with and educate each other. Gaining greater economic and social freedom allowed them to determine how they could form relationships and families. With second wave feminism and the growth of scholarship in women's history and sexuality in the late 20th century, the definition of *lesbian* broadened, leading to debate about the term's use. While research by Lisa M. Diamond identified sexual desire as the core component for defining lesbians, some women who engage in same-sex sexual activity may reject not only identifying as lesbians but as bisexual as well. Other women's self-identification as lesbian may not align with their sexual orientation or sexual behavior. Sexual identity is not necessarily the same as one's sexual orientation or sexual behavior, due to various reasons, such as the fear of

identifying their sexual orientation in a homophobic setting.

Portrayals of lesbians in the media suggest that society at large has been simultaneously intrigued and threatened by women who challenge feminine gender roles, as well as fascinated and appalled with women who are romantically involved with other women. Women who adopt a lesbian identity share experiences that form an outlook similar to an ethnic identity: as homosexuals, they are unified by the heterosexist discrimination and potential rejection they face from their families, friends, and others as a result of homophobia. As women, they face concerns separate from men. Lesbians may encounter distinct physical or mental health concerns arising from discrimination, prejudice, and minority stress. Political conditions and social attitudes also affect the formation of lesbian relationships and families in open.^[10]

Lesbian: The notion that sexual activity between women is necessary to define a lesbian or lesbian relationship

continues to be debated. According to feminist writer Naomi McCormick, women's sexuality is constructed by men, whose primary indicator of lesbian sexual orientation is sexual experience with other women. The same indicator is not necessary to identify a woman as heterosexual, however. McCormick states that emotional, mental, and ideological connections between women are as important or more so than the genital. Nonetheless, in the 1980s, a significant

movement rejected the desexualization of lesbianism by cultural feminists, causing a heated controversy called the feminist sex wars. Butch and femme roles returned, although not as strictly followed as they were in the 1950s. They became a mode of chosen sexual self-expression for some women in the 1990s. Once again, women felt safer claiming to be more sexually adventurous, and sexual flexibility became more accepted.^[11]



Figure 6: Lesbian Couple.

Sexuality and lesbian identity



Figure 7: Lesbian feminist flag consisting of a labrys (a double-bladed axe) within the inverted black triangle, set against a violet-hue background. The labrys represents lesbian strength.



Figure 8: Lesbian flag derived from the 2010 Lipstick Lesbian flag design.



Figure 9: Lesbian community flag introduced in social media in 2018, with the dark orange stripe representing gender variance.

The focus of the debate often centers on a phenomenon named by sexologist Pepper Schwartz in 1983. Schwartz

found that long-term lesbian couples report having less sexual contact than heterosexual or homosexual male couples, calling this lesbian bed death. However, lesbians dispute the study's definition of sexual contact, and introduced other factors such as deeper connections existing between women that make frequent sexual relations redundant, greater sexual fluidity in women causing them to move from heterosexual to bisexual to lesbian numerous times through their lives—or reject the labels entirely. Further arguments attested that the study was flawed and misrepresented accurate sexual contact between women, or sexual contact between women has increased since 1983 as many lesbians find themselves freer to sexually express themselves.^[12]

More discussion on gender and sexual orientation identity has affected how many women label or view themselves. Most people in western culture are taught that heterosexuality is an innate quality in all people. When a woman realizes her romantic and sexual attraction to another woman, it may cause an "existential crisis"; many who go through this adopt the identity of a lesbian, challenging what society has offered in stereotypes about homosexuals, to learn how to function within a homosexual subculture. Lesbians in western cultures generally share an identity that parallels those built on ethnicity; they have a shared history and subculture, and similar experiences with discrimination which has caused many lesbians to reject heterosexual principles. This identity is unique from gay men and heterosexual women, and often creates tension with bisexual women. One point of contention are lesbians who have had sex with men, while lesbians who have never had sex with men may be referred to as "gold star lesbians". Those who have had sex with men may face ridicule from other lesbians or identity challenges with regard to defining what it means to be a lesbian.^[13]

Researchers, including social scientists, state that often behavior and identity do not match: women may label themselves heterosexual but have sexual relations with women, self-identified lesbians may have sex with men, or women may find that what they considered an immutable sexual identity has changed over time. Research by Lisa M. Diamond et al. reported that "lesbian and fluid women were more exclusive than bisexual women in their sexual behaviors" and that "lesbian women appeared to lean toward exclusively same-sex attractions and behaviors." It reported that lesbians "appeared to demonstrate a 'core' lesbian orientation."

A 2001 article on differentiating lesbians for medical studies and health research suggested identifying

lesbians using the three characteristics of identity only, sexual behavior only, or both combined. The article declined to include desire or attraction as it rarely has bearing on measurable health or psychosocial issues. Researchers state that there is no standard definition of *lesbian* because "[t]he term has been used to describe women who have sex with women, either exclusively or in addition to sex with men (i.e., *behavior*); women who self-identify as lesbian (i.e., *identity*); and women whose sexual preference is for women (i.e., *desire* or *attraction*)" and that "[t]he lack of a standard definition of lesbian and of standard questions to assess who is lesbian has made it difficult to clearly define a population of lesbian women". How and where study samples were obtained can also affect the definition.^[14]



Figure 10: Transgender.

Transgender: Transgender people have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from the sex that they were assigned at birth. Some transgender people who desire medical assistance to transition from one sex to another identify as transsexual. *Transgender*, often shortened as *trans*, is also an umbrella term; in addition to including people whose gender identity is the opposite of their assigned sex (trans men and trans women), it may also include people who are non-binary or genderqueer. Other definitions of *transgender* also include people who belong to a third gender, or else conceptualize transgender people as a third gender. The term *transgender* may be defined very broadly to include cross-dressers.

Being transgender is distinct from sexual orientation. Transgender people may identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, or may decline to label their sexual orientation. The term *transgender* is also distinguished from *intersex*, a term that describes people born with physical sex characteristics "that do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies". The opposite of *transgender* is *cisgender*, which describes persons whose gender identity matches their assigned sex.^[15]

The degree to which individuals feel genuine, authentic, and comfortable within their external appearance and

accept their genuine identity has been called *transgender congruence*. Many transgender people experience gender dysphoria, and some seek medical treatments such as hormone replacement therapy, sex reassignment surgery, or psychotherapy. Not all transgender people desire these treatments, and some cannot undergo them for financial or medical reasons.

Many transgender people face discrimination in the workplace and in accessing public accommodations and healthcare. In many places, they are not legally protected from discrimination.



Figure 11: Transgender pride flag.

Movies on Gay: My Brother... Nikhil (2005), Dostana (2008), Fashion (2008), I Am (2010), Bombay Talkies (2013), Margarita with a Straw (2014), Aligarh (2016),

Kapoor & Sons (Since 1921) (2016), Dear Dad (2016), Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga (2019), The Square Circle (1996), Fire (1996), Bombay Boys (1998), Split Wide Open (1999), Zindagi Zindabad (2000), Mango Souffle (2002), Flying with One Wing (2002), Gulabi Aaina (2003), The Journey (2004), Kyaa Kool Hai Hum (2005), My Brother... Nikhil (2005), Navarasa (2005), Yours Emotionally! (2006), 68 Pages (2007), Life in a Metro (2007), Friendship (2008), Fashion (2008), Dil Bole Hadippa! (2009), Do Paise Ki Dhoop (2009), Chaar Aane Ki Baarish (2009), Aarekti Premer Golpo (2010), Dunno Y Na Jaane Kyun... (2010), I Am (II) (2010), Natarang (2010), Desi Boyz (2011), I Am (2011 Video), Karuvarai Pookkal (2011), Love Breakups Zindagi (2011), Queens! Destiny of Dance (2011), Ardhanaari (2012), Kyaa Super Kool Hain Hum (2012), Bombay Talkies (2013), Papilio Buddha (2013), Waiting in Wilderness (2013), Frangipani (2014), Margarita with a Straw (2014), Unfreedom (2014), Aligarh (2015), Dunno Y 2... Life Is a Moment (2015), Loev (2015), Time Out (2015), All About Section 377 (2016–), Dear Dad (I) (2016), Ka Bodyscapes (2016), Kapoor & Sons (2016), Mastizaade (2016), The 'Other' Love Story (2016–), Avsar (2017), If You Dare Desire ... (2017), Romil and Jugal (2017–), Evening Shadows (2018), Friends In Law (2018), Garbage (I) (2018), Kattumaram (2018), Maaya 2 (2018–), Njan Marykutty (2018), Noblemen (2018), Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie (2018), Still About Section 377 (2018–), Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga (2019), I Am Alone, So Are You... (2019), I Love Us (2019–), The Elder One (2019), My Son is Gay (2019), Super Deluxe (2019), Coffee Café (2020), Dev-Ansh: Son of God (2020), Dwitiyo Purush (2020), Funny Boy (2020), Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan (2020), Velikku Veluppankalam (2020), Vidhan (2020), Vilom (2020), Dostana 2 (2021), Ardhanaari (2016), Daayra (1996), Darmiyaan: in between (1997), Naanu Avanalla Avalu (2015), Laxmii (2020), Super Deluxe (2019), Njan Marykutty (2018), Tamanna (1997), Shabnam Mausi (2005).



Manvendra Singh Gohil (born 23 September 1965) is an Indian prince who is the son and probable heir of the Maharaja of Rajpipla in Gujarat. He is the first openly gay prince in the world. He runs a charity, the Lakshya Trust, which works with the LGBT community.

CONCLUSION

Many people believe that sexual orientation (homosexuality vs. heterosexuality) is determined by

education and social constraints. There are, however, a large number of studies indicating that prenatal factors have an important influence on this critical feature of human sexuality. Sexual orientation is a sexually differentiated trait (over 90% of men are attracted to women and vice versa). In animals and men, many sexually differentiated characteristics are organized during early life by sex steroids, and one can wonder whether the same mechanism also affects human sexual orientation. Two types of evidence support this notion. First, multiple sexually differentiated behavioral, physiological, or even morphological traits are significantly different in homosexual and heterosexual populations. Because some of these traits are known to be organized by prenatal steroids, including testosterone, these differences suggest that homosexual subjects were, on average, exposed to atypical endocrine conditions during development. Second, clinical conditions associated with significant endocrine changes during embryonic life often result in an increased incidence of homosexuality. It seems therefore that the prenatal endocrine environment has a significant influence on human sexual orientation but a large fraction of the variance in this behavioral characteristic remains unexplained to date. Genetic differences affecting behavior either in a direct manner or by changing embryonic hormone secretion or action may also be involved. How these biological prenatal factors interact with postnatal social factors to determine life-long sexual orientation remains to be determined. Male hormone is testosterone and female hormone is oestrogen and both are steroidal in nature secreted in body from endocrine glands. There is thus substantial evidence suggesting that sexual orientation, and homosexuality in particular, is influenced before birth by a set of biological mechanisms. These mechanisms include genes that affect sexual orientation by currently unidentified mechanisms and hormonal actions classically mediating sexual differentiation. Our current understanding of these prenatal factors admittedly suffers many limitations. For example, all embryonic endocrine disorders that have been associated with an increased incidence of homosexuality have a limited effect size and never affect more than 30–40% of subjects. Furthermore, all identified correlates of homosexuality that suggest exposure to an atypical endocrine environment during ontogeny in gays and/or lesbians are only weakly associated with sexual orientation and often are modified in a reliable manner in one sex only (2D:4D ratio, OAE in women) or have been studied only in one sex (INAH3 volume in men). They are statistically correlated with sexual orientation but are unable to predict it accurately due to the large variance in this relationship. The limitations of the results probably relate not only to the complexity of the behavioral trait under consideration but also to methodological difficulties specific to their study, such as the long latency between putative hormone actions and their effects, the absence for ethical reasons of truly experimental studies, and the taboos associated with human sexuality. One should also

consider that gays and lesbians probably do not constitute homogeneous populations. In addition to the obvious gradation between heterosexuality and homosexuality that was already recognized, some lesbians display obvious male characteristics (“butch”), whereas others do not (“femme”), and the same dichotomy exists in gay men. These differences are unfortunately rarely taken into account in experimental studies. Despite these limitations, I believe that biological studies suggest a significant contribution of genetic and hormonal factors in the control of sexual orientation. In contrast, alternative explanations based on features of the postnatal environment, such as relationships with parents, social interactions, or early sexual experiences, although they are widely accepted in the public, are not usually supported by quantitative experimental studies. It is clear, however, that none of the biological factors identified so far is able to explain by itself the incidence of homosexuality in all individuals. Three possibilities can be contemplated to explain this failure. Either there are different types of homosexuality. Some forms could be determined by genetic effects, others by hormones, and yet others by the older brothers effect and the associated immunological modifications. Or the effects of different biological factors interact to varying degrees in each individual, and it is only when several of these predisposing factors are combined that an homosexual orientation is observed. Or finally, all biological factors that have been associated with homosexuality only become effective in conjunction with exposure to a given (as yet unspecified) psychosocial postnatal environment. The postnatal environment would in this scenario play an important permissive role, but it is then surprising that no quantitative study has been able so far to formally identify aspects of this environment that play this limiting role in the control of sexual orientation. It has, however, been suggested that embryonic hormones may directly affect aspects of juvenile behavior (e.g. play behavior) and that this in turn could condition the development of sexual orientation. Current knowledge does not allow discriminating between these interpretations (see Ref. 34 for a more detailed discussion). It is clear, however, that biological factors acting during prenatal life play a significant role in the control of sexual orientation and that homosexuality is not, for most people, the result only of postnatal experiences or a free choice. It is often an awareness that presents itself to the individual during their adolescence or early adult life. The acceptance of a nonheterosexual orientation in a minority of subjects is often the cause of significant psychological distress and social isolation. In contrast, heterosexual orientation emerges with the individual often being unaware of the underlying process. There is no question of choice here. Data presented in this review strongly suggest that most human beings do not choose to be heterosexual or homosexual. What they choose is to assume or not their orientation and eventually reveal it openly. Sexual orientation represents a highly complex behavioral trait

under multifactorial control that includes genetic, hormonal, and presumably immunological determinants potentially acting in concert with the social postnatal environment. More interdisciplinary research is needed to better understand this fascinating aspect of human behavior.

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