



Queer Horizons: Representation Of Indian Queer Relationship In The Web Series *Made In Heaven*

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Citation: Shiv Priya et al. (2024), Queer Horizons: Representation Of Indian Queer Relationship In The Web Series *Made In Heaven*, Educational Administration: Theory And Practice, 30(4), 4046-4054, Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i4.2164

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Cinema has a great impact on the viewers. They not only watch it for entertainment, but they also try to copy their favorite character's hairstyle to their lifestyle. In recent years, various web shows, and OTT (Over The Top) shows have become quite famous and easily accessible. During the time of the pandemic when the whole world was suffering from COVID-19 and lockdown, OTT shows, and web series worked as survival pills for people. Along with art and entertainment, these shows are useful for creating awareness for sensitive subjects in society. One such subject is gender and sexuality, the LGBTQ+ community, and their various issues. One such show is *Made in Heaven*, directed by Joya Akhtar, and released in two seasons, one in 2019 and the other in 2023 respectively. This paper examines the emerging representation of Indian queers and mending queer relationships in the show. The methodology used for the analysis of the portrayal of queer characters is visual content analysis along with queer theory. Further, it concludes by highlighting the crucial role that these shows play in reshaping narratives surrounding queer identities, nurturing inclusivity, and promoting dialogue about LGBTQ+ issues.

Keywords: Heteronormative, Indian queer, LGBTQ+, *Made in Heaven*, Web series

INTRODUCTION

Queerness has always been present in the discourse of world cinema, so the history of films can be said to have always been queer-inclusive. To demonstrate how much modern world cinema draws from the queer histories that are embedded within the medium, the writers refer to renowned worldwide queer filmmakers, thinkers, and texts from earlier times (Schoonover & Galt 23). The representation of queer in cinema is not only about sexuality but it is more about the wider awakening of queer identities and points of view (Rich 142). Bazin mentions in his book *What is Cinema? Volume I*, that cinema can create an illusion for viewers through its ability to construct a self-contained realm. It also allows them to perceive a world that is liberated from the constraints and boundaries of the natural world. Bazin sees films as a form of art that can go beyond the limits of reality and give the watcher a unique and immersive experience. He thought that films could give people a more profound and freeing experience by using their power to build a separate world within the frame.

Made in Heaven is a web series directed by Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti, streaming on Amazon Prime Video. The show started on March 8, 2019, and quickly became famous because of its unique and interesting stories. It's known for having an interesting story and a lot of different themes, like love, relationships, queer, social rules, and how complicated Indian weddings can be. The second season just came out on August 10, 2023. The show depicts contemporary India as a juxtaposition of traditional and progressive ideologies, where the clash between traditional values and modern ambitions is evident.

Season one of this series can be characterized as a comprehensive exploration of the behind-the-scenes aspects within the enigmatic and unconventional realm inhabited by the upper echelons of our societal hierarchy. Individuals, who, according to certain perspectives, conceal their damaged relationships and broken homes by ostentatiously showcasing their wealth during significant events such as their children's weddings. Enabling the creation of these extravagant appearances are Tara Khanna (Shobhita Dhulipala) and Karan Mehra (Arjun Mathur), who have transitioned from being close friends to becoming business partners (Purkayastha 1-2).

In the second season of the very famous show, the main characters want more acceptance and demand equal rights in society. There are many examples of this, such as the star-Dalit fighter and Ivy League professor who

married into an upper-caste family, the transwoman who made her way into the dating scene in Delhi, and the daughter whose other families just found out about her. Like Season 1, Season 2 of *Made in Heaven* tries to deal with several problems, including racism, sexism, patriarchy, and misogyny, all while taking place at an Indian wedding (Sen 1-2).

Before looking into the depths of the series' queer characters, the history of queer cinema globally especially in Hollywood and in Bollywood or Hindi Cinema should be broadly discussed. Tracing the history of queer cinema will lead to the path that films have been written and chosen by filmmakers for the purpose to display the originality of these communities. Queer films or portrayals often question traditional ideas and assumptions about gender and sexuality by showing how they are performed. Queer cinema often explores the dynamic and performative nature of gender and sexual identities, drawing inspiration from the theoretical concepts put out by Butler. Identity is not predetermined or innate; rather, it is something that is formed and acted out via patterns of behavior that are both stylized and repetitive (Butler 23). Putting it simply, the notion is not that an individual possesses an inherent identity that is then manifested via their behavior. Instead, one's identity is formed and shaped by the acts one undertakes and how one executes them. This concept demonstrates a significant influence from post-structuralist and postmodern philosophy. A philosopher and linguist J.L. Austin discovered the idea of "speech acts" which is completely based on the theory of Butler. Austin thought that when one talks, one does more than just share knowledge. He thought that when one talks, one does things like make promises, give orders, or state facts. This idea of active language is what Butler's theory is built on. This article analyses the depiction of queer characters and their relationship with their close ones as well as with society. It observes various episodes, dialogues, and scenes. It moves in order with the theoretical framework of the performativity of Judith Butler. The growth of queer characters within the queer horizons is analyzed with the main support of queer lens.

METHODOLOGY

To study the portrayal of queer characters in *Made in Heaven*, visual content analysis along with the theory of 'performativity' is used by the researchers. The study employs a critical approach to analyzing the queer characters of the web series. Through the visual content analysis method, the researcher observes the key episodes, representation of queer individuals, their struggles, and their achievement. Through the theoretical idea of performativity by Butler, the character's social reality, identity, and norms of the society are examined. The study provides a unique lens to examine the dynamics of LGBTQ+ relationships within the context of Indian heteronormative society. As a theoretical framework, the study also utilized Queer studies. Expanding on this theoretical framework, *Made in Heaven* series' seasons 1 and 2 have been closely watched and critically examined to get answers to research questions on the representations of queer characters with negative or positive aesthetics, characters in series and reality, and the aftermaths of the recent judgment of the Supreme Court of India. Significant points/ lines, dialogues, and scenes are extracted from the series, which were carefully selected and aligned with the framework of the theory.

QUEER IN WORLD AND INDIAN CINEMA

When the parts of anyone's gender or sexuality aren't forced to indicate as a whole, a rich web of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances, resonances, lapses, and excesses of meaning emerges (Bennett & Royle 178). In other words, it promotes a broader, flexible, and all-encompassing viewpoint for the comprehension and analysis of gender and sexuality. This perspective challenges the notion that these elements of an individual's identity should be confined to restrictive and uniform interpretations. Instead, it embraces the vast array of diverse and intricate human encounters and manifestations of gender and sexuality.

Rich states about the history of queer cinema, as it is quite a complicated and multidimensional one, marked by invention, inventiveness, and a commitment to opposing dominant cultural narratives and stereotypes. Throughout its history, LGBT filmmakers have challenged dominant cultural narratives and stereotypes.

The word "queer cinema" initially emerged as a means to delineate the representation of LGBTQ+ characters within conventional film productions, predating the advent of web-based series. The term "queer cinema" typically refers to films that explore themes, portray people, and depict experiences related to the LGBTQ+ community. In the 1990s, the "New Queer Cinema" movement maintain its existence and made it well known to the households. This movement was made up of independent and experimental films that questioned heteronormative stories. It offers a comprehensive history of homosexual cinema, especially in the United States.

In the 1960s, explicit and direct depictions increased due to the rise of the LGBTQ+ rights movement. Films such as *"Pink Narcissus"* (1971) and *"Sunday Bloody Sunday"* (1971) began overtly depicting LGBTQ+ characters. The HIV/AIDS pandemic brought attention to LGBTQ+ issues during the 1980s. *"Parting Glances"* (1986) and *"Longtime Companion"* (1989) were the first films to address these issues. Global LGBTQ+ representation increased. Diverse LGBTQ+ experiences were investigated in critically acclaimed films such as *"My Own Private Idaho"* (1991) and *"Priscilla, Queen of the Desert"* (1994). After the 1990s, LGBTQ+ themes became increasingly incorporated into mainstream cinema. Films such as *"Brokeback Mountain"* (2005)

received widespread acclaim and attention from critics. Representing the diversity of LGBTQ identities, films such as *"Moonlight"* (2016) and *"Call Me by Your Name"* (2017) have garnered widespread praise.

Rich explains that the New Queer Cinema (NQC) emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s in response to the AIDS crisis and the lack of queer representation in mainstream cinema. Two early examples of queer cinema are *"Parting Glances"* (1986) by Bill Sherwood and *"Poison"* (1991) by Todd Haynes. These films were important because they paved the way for more direct exploration of LGBTQ+ topics in films. In recent years, web shows with LGBTQ characters and themes have become more popular since online streaming services have become more popular. LGBTQ+ stories were first shown on TV in shows like *"The L Word"* (2004–2009) and *"Queer as Folk"* (1999–2000). But it wasn't until the 2010s, when streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu came out, that web series with explicit queer material became more common. Rich (1998) argues that the NQC played a significant role in advancing the visibility and acceptance of queer identities and that it set the way for subsequent generations of queer viewers and filmmakers. He says this in the following way: "The NQC was incredibly important in promoting visibility and acceptance of queer identities."

Filmmakers from all over the world are investigating a diverse array of queer identities and experiences in today's queer cinema, which is continuing to develop and grow as time goes on. The historical trajectory of queer cinema is vast and perpetually evolving, as a multitude of filmmakers and researchers continue to make significant contributions to the examination of LGBTQ+ subjects within the realm of film (Rich 261-262).

There are some films like *Fire* (1996) and *My Brother.....Nikhil* (2005), from India, *Happy Together* (1997) from Hongkong, *The Iron Ladies* (2000) from Thailand, and *Strawberry and Chocolate* (1993) from Cuba; these films are of early queer representation in cinema worldwide. In addition, it is mentioned that audiences at the NQC in the 1990s sought and celebrated the radical nature of queer independent film, which suggests that there may have been a lack of acceptance from the mainstream for these films and the ideas that they present (Juett and Jones 14).

In India, after forty years of Ismat Chughtai's *Lihaaf* (1952), the 1990s was the era when some organizations and people came up and demanded the LGBTQ+ community. Ashok Raw Kavi, a prominent journalist founded a trust 'Humsafar Trust' and started a magazine to pin down stories by gay people to gay people. Meanwhile, Deepa Mehta's film *Fire* (1996) was released and led to huge controversy. *Fire* showcases the lesbian relationship between two women who seek comfort and support from one another within the constraints of a conventional Indian household. The scene depicts the desire and love between women considered as 'abnormal', and it hurts the sentiment of heteronormative people of the society. It began like a wildfire, so harmless that nobody initially noticed it.

On November 25, roughly two dozen members of Mumbai's Jain Samata Vahini petitioned Maharashtra's Minister of State for Cultural Affairs Anil Deshmukh to prohibit the film *Fire* by Deepa Mehta. (Raval & Jain 1-2). Bobby Bedi, the producer of *Fire*, states, "The Delhi Sena chief's letter informing the press about the demonstration said that they would do to-phone¹ and violence was expected ... almost as if tea will be served." Following the assault on Regal, three additional theatres ceased showing the film. Years later in the mainstream cinema in 2005 a film *My Brother.....Nikhil*, released by filmmaker Onir. Onir himself belongs to the queer community and the time when HIV captured the world including India in the 1990s. It's both exciting and tiring to watch films. *My Brother Nikhil* is a movie that mostly shows conversations and flashbacks that happen in real-time. It deals with AIDS and homosexuality, a loving relationship between two men, and a mother and father who initially run away but later accept their dead son's lover as their child (Chopra 2-3).

With the outburst of HIV and rising cases in India, it came as a shock for the heteros² as initially everyone assumed and considered it as a gay disease only. Even the MSM (Men who have sex with Men) community denies the acceptance of their real identity (Rao 21). Although Rao never considers MSM as the part of LGBTQ+ community. But it is these people who were behind the spreading of HIV cases in the country.

There come other mainstream movies like *Dostana* (2008), *I Am* (2011), and *Aligarh* (2015) which represent the community in a normal and non-despising manner. In 2018 when Article 377 of IPC was taken down from the Indian constitution then film representation of queer and rise of LGBTQ+ characters in the form of *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha to Aisa Laga*, (2019), *Shubh Mangal Zayda Saavdhan* (2020), *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* (2021), *Badhaai do* (2022), movies showed up. Not only in the mainstream cinema even on the OTT shows the representations of LGBTQ+ characters have significantly increased.

QUEER CHARACTERS IN MADE IN HEAVEN

Made in Heaven is a full package of sense with the *tadka*³ of style which can be compared with two different personas with different aesthetics as the heart and mind of the series. Karan Mehra (Arjun Mathur) and Tara Khanna (Sobhita Dhulipala) are two different yet unique people, who have been friends for a long time and started planning weddings. They worked as wedding planners in Delhi. In *Made in Heaven*, Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti show the harsh side of the lives of the rich and powerful, behind the glitz and glamour of Delhi

¹ Smashing up theatres.

² Heterosexuals.

³ for tempering, spices are used to improve the taste of the food, especially in Indian food.

weddings. All the *Taam Jham*⁴ of the wedding is observed and used in the series to make it more realistic in approach (Purkayastha 2) its first season had nine episodes and the second season had seven episodes. Each episode brings the story of a couple who wanted to get married and within the couple's story, each character's story also goes with the flow. In terms of scale, the show has significantly elevated its level of performance.

In *Gender Trouble*, Butler uses this idea of performativity to talk about how gender identity is made. She says that gender is not something we are born with or something that stays the same. Instead, she says, it is something we make by the things we do, say, and how we act. This is one way that gender is theatrical. People act out their gender roles because that's what society expects of them. Filmmakers keep this thought in their mind while presenting these queer characters with these notions.

Like one of the prominent characters, Karan is the major queer character. The story of Karan revolves initially in his mind then moves towards and becomes a social issue. The dilemma of queer characters is often discussed in the cinema.

The 21st century has witnessed significant political, cultural, artistic, and theoretical transformations in the realm of gender perceptions and definitions. These shifts have paved the way for the emergence of queer film, which has transcended traditional binary frameworks and embraced a fresh wave of inclusivity and openness. This observation implies that the mainstream film industry may have historically exhibited a dearth of representation of non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals. In general, the obstacles and intricacies surrounding LGBTQ+ portrayal in popular films are likely rooted in matters about the visibility, acceptability, and comprehension of LGBTQ+ narratives and viewpoints (Juett and Jones 18).

Just like recent queer movies and series *Badhaai Do* (2022), *Geeli Pucchi* (2021), *Made in Heaven* (2023) has its uniqueness in portraying queer characters like Karan and his landlord in season 1, where Karan has accepted himself the way he is but due to family, especially his mother's pressure he didn't utter a word in front of his family members. When his mother finds out about his sexuality, she beats him a lot and very harshly. And from that day she kept an eye on him so that he couldn't do the same thing again. For his mother being 'gay' is 'abnormal' and 'a matter of shame' for their family's reputation. *MIH's* (*Made in Heaven*) story is set in the year before 2018 when his landlord Mr. Gupta has doubts about him, so he puts the camera on his room secretly. When Mrs. Gupta catches her husband watching Karan making out with another guy, in the 5th episode of season 1. She is shattered and confronts him about the same, Mr. Gupta quickly changes his tone and statement by saying he has always doubted Karan being gay (13.43). Later Karan got arrested under section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. The scene where his landlord is silently watching him getting arrested is picturized as he is hiding his emotion (47.01). This scene is an accurate representation of the typical snobby Indian society.

The screenplay exhibits a high level of engagement and follows a linear narrative structure. Nevertheless, the authors play a pivotal role in skillfully interweaving multiple issues throughout the tale, as their parallel storylines unfold. The subject matter is intriguing, captivating, and intricate (Agarwal 13).

The present story of the series was at a time when homosexuality was a criminal offense. Image 1 shows the situation when Karan got bail from jail and just came to his house, media people came to his house asking different questions regarding his sexuality. It was only his father who was supporting him. Belonging to a reputed family in Delhi, Karan's mother despite knowing that her son is gay, tries to change her son's sexuality and puts pressure of marriage on him. It's the opposite when Karan was arrested his father supported him.

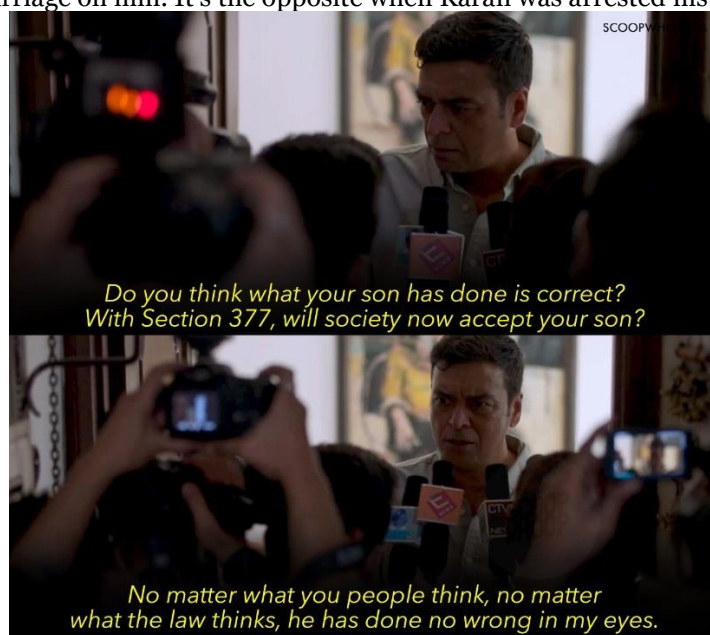


Image. 1 When Karan's father supported him in front of the media. Image via Scoopwhoop.com

⁴ Decoration or production, it is somewhere unnecessary for maximum people.

Season 2 dynamics have changed the life of Karan. As Karan's mother is diagnosed with cancer 4th stage yet when everyone including Karan wants her to see some doctor, she blames Karan by saying 'It's not cancer that's killing me' (01:03:39). Here she is pointing towards his identity. She is not happy with his decision. In Image 2, of season 2's third episode where Karan went to hospital to meet his mother. She asked him to get married as she was dying. She says, 'I didn't raise a boy to be a girl' (35:00). His mother was never ready to accept him with his real sight, this broke him as a person, and he drowns to drugs.

In both the Images. 1 and 2 Karan got support from his father even after not sharing a good bond with his father. His mother broke his hand when she got to know about his sexuality. *MIH* is also about the relationships of queer with their family, friends, and known ones. In season 2, Karan develops a better bond with his father but at the same time, he loses his relationship with his mother. (as shown in Image 2).



Image 2. Karan is accepting his sexuality in front of his family. Image via Scoopwhoop.com

Gayatri Gopinath talks about the desires and identity of gay or lesbian individuals and their importance. Being gay or lesbian can help one make sense of their desire and feelings, it can also help one to connect with other people who have had similar experiences. It can also be a way to fight against gender and sexuality norms and standards that are ingrained in culture. Having a sense of queer identity can also be powerful and reassuring, especially when one is being discriminated against or left out (Gopinath 35)

In the sixth episode of the second season of *MIH* two lesbian couples are shown getting married, Radhika and Aditi. Their parents didn't come to the wedding. When Radhika's mother goes to the wedding, her father says, "People like her, cannot get married" (48:51). He later shouts and asks her to not go. Yet her mother goes for it. This scene portrayed positive aspects of the lives of queer individuals. Family is an important part of human lives.

Family plays as a strength bar to these people. The representation of the LGBTQ+ community in Indian cinema has been a subject of considerable discourse over an extended period. Although there has been a recent emergence of open discussions about homosexuality in mainstream Bollywood cinema, the accurate portrayal of the challenges faced by the LGBT population has not consistently been achieved. The media's emphasis continues to portray homosexuality unfavorably. Nevertheless, there is a steady emergence of the representation of gays in Hindi cinema, with certain directors addressing the concerns and experiences of the LGBT community. This paper examines the portrayal of emotional intricacies within the LGBT population as it pertains to societal contexts. LGBT characters within the realm of Queer Indian cinema have consistently encountered objectification, enduring the unfortunate consequences of being subjected to mockery and satire. (Pooja & Rekha 11).

PARAGIM SHIFT IN WEB AND REALITY

After the Delhi High Court struck down Section 377 on July 2, 2009, the discursive construction of the LGBT subject emerged, with a neo-liberal identitarian cliché providing the primary foundation for this politics of representation. As a result, the LGBT issue has become more mainstream in Bombay's commercial film industry (Bakshi & Sen 7).

The sixth episode of season one focused on the trauma, problems, and challenges of being gay in the country especially when it was such a criminal offense. The opening scenes of this episode show torture and shaming conversation statements like 'He is such a homo' (03:09), 'homo star', 'sick', 'disgrace', and 'shameless' first by a cop than by his mother herself. This indicates the real-life condition of the person who is gay or lesbian. *MIH* tried to show the 'real' problems, unlike other mainstream movies which fail even to show the real problems. Bollywood Cinema/Web shows create a huge impact on how Indians see themselves as a country. Indian films have done a lot to bring the country together and make people proud as well as show how different the country's languages and cultures are. (Binford 9) Here the question is how this impact is in reality with positive or negative status quo.

Most 'Queer' People in India prefer to live in the closet, due to constantly receiving criticism and shame from hetero-normativism⁵ and heterosexuals in society. Cinema always plays with the emotions of the audience; it creates a sphere that connects the spectator with the message or the moral of the story. It can easily put a negative aesthetic into a positive message. It diverts as well as controls the mind of the audience (Roy 6). Mitali, Karan's landlord's daughter being a young and teen child understood the situation of how her father put a spy camera on the bedroom of Karan. Later she confronts him by saying 'There is nothing wrong with being gay', 'It's normal, nothing is disgusting in being gay' (30:29).

After homosexuality was decriminalized in India in 2018, the portrayal of LGBT characters in popular Bollywood cinema shifted dramatically. '*Ek Ladki ko Dekha to Aisa Laga*' (2019) treats this queer subject with tact and quirkiness. It demonstrates how legal developments influence, how issues are handled in cultural business. It is crucial to highlight, however, that these films are still in the minority in Bollywood, and that more representation and positive portrayal of the LGBTQIA+ community is required in Indian cinema (Warekar). The sixth episode ends with *MIH* with the scene where his landlord apologizes to Karan by sharing the line 'And everyone... isn't like you (49:54). Not the whole truth but a hint towards his sexuality with him. As Rao mentions it quickly draws attention to the MSM people of society, who due to fear, are living their life behind the closet.

It is evident that both Bollywood and Hollywood have recognized the phenomenon of globalization and have effectively capitalized on this opportunity. The growing population of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) has led to a notable trend in Western cinema, wherein numerous films have drawn inspiration from or centered their narratives around Bollywood-based themes, particularly the inclusion of song and dance sequences. Furthermore, there was a growing attraction from international film studios and venture capitalists towards the operations of Bollywood. Simultaneously, Indian entrepreneurs made investments in Western enterprises by acquiring ownership holdings. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the reader to contemplate if the distinction between Bollywood and Hollywood is becoming less distinct due to an increasing exchange of ideas, technology, ideology, and performers. (Barat 11).

⁵ The notion of heterosexuality is preferred or normal

The representation of the LGBTQ community in Bollywood has frequently been characterized by clichés and used to provide comic relief. Frequently, these individuals are depicted as being in unfavorable portrayals and attired in a manner associated with femininity. How they walk and speak is frequently depicted as excessively feminine. The LGBTQ population in Bollywood has been subject to specific misconceptions as a result of these prejudices. Nevertheless, the researcher discovered that in contemporary times, Bollywood films and OTT series have been portraying individuals from the LGBTQ community in a manner that is more authentic and genuine, devoid of dependence on such stereotypes (Arya 17).

Dostana (2008) acknowledges the existence of homosexual inclinations but ultimately demonstrates the inevitability of heterosexuality. The film engages in a queer dialogue through the use of mistaken identity and misunderstanding but ultimately reinforces heteronormative values. It suggests that there are sufficient 'queer signifiers' in the film for both non-South Asian and gay audiences to identify with, but that these signifiers may be projected onto the actor rather than instigated by him. As heterosexuality is placed in jeopardy, the film's engagement with queer aesthetics is somewhat reactionary in its attempt to contend with new sexual identities (Dasgupta 12).

When one sees the series of lesbians getting married with great pomp and show, the audience has a great impact on their mind as well. But still, the question remains the same as same-sex marriage is not yet legal in India. And when the constitution has not given you these rights, how society will accept them? (*Made In Heaven*, 6th Episode)

In 2009 when Article 377 was struck down, scholars wrote and analyzed the aftermaths of the situation in the country. The same when it was again struck by the Supreme Court in 2018, the same situation. This results in the demonstration that the reading down of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code appears to have necessitated a discursive construction of the queer subject. This has led to the appropriation of the discursive category of 'queer,' which is susceptible to many interpretations and has consequences for the inclusion of the 'gay' citizen subject in a neo-liberal setting. This has resulted in the appropriation of 'queer' as a discursive category. (Bakshi & Sen 4-5). *Made in Heaven* is just a way to get a sneak peek into the lives of queer individuals. The portrayal in the cinema or on the web is always different in reality. The fourth episode of season 2 of *MIH* includes the topics of intersection and intersectionality as well. Another issue raised by this web series is queer getting drugged and looted, which is a big concern for them. Prominent figures in the film and TV industry belong to the queer community. But they do not accept openly about their identity and this scene of looting and leaving Karan naked on the beach is inclusive to the elite people of the urban cities.

Recently On October 17, 2023, The Supreme Court of India declared by a 3-2 majority that same-sex marriages cannot be legally recognized. The Chief Justice of India, while rejecting recognition of 'same-sex marriage' has acknowledged the diverse manifestations of prejudice experienced by the Queer community. He has issued directives to multiple authorities, urging them to safeguard the rights and well-being of this community. In his dissenting opinion as a member of the minority on a five-judge bench, Chief Justice DY Chandrachud has refuted the assertion made by the Centre that LGBTQIA+ issues are rooted in an "urban elitist concept". He also highlights the point that "Queerness is neither urban nor elite," emphasizing that people from various diverse origins, including those from rural areas, urban centers, and small towns, can identify as queer. He stressed that it's not just English-speaking professionals with white-collar jobs in big towns, but also people from all backgrounds of life (Mathur 13).

In the meantime, the Centre had opposed the petitions, arguing that India's legislative policy has deliberately sanctioned a union between only a biological man and a biological woman. The question of their civil rights, adoption rights as well as marriage rights is still under certainty.

CONCLUSION

Made in Heaven from both seasons is one of the unique and adorable works to break the stereotypical norms of hetero-sexist⁶ society. It sets the parameter for portraying the characters, especially queer characters, and how it should be executed. It tightly holds the grip with the development of characters mainly Karan's character. Filmmakers have tried and succeeded in what they wanted to show. Through the series they not only represented the LGBTQ+ community but their struggles as well as their solutions too. From criminalized to fighting for the decriminalization of Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code of the Indian Constitution is well shown. Although the recent judgment of the Supreme Court of not giving consent to the community for same-sex marriage is there, one can expect the filmmakers will bring this segment in upcoming seasons, as they are having the main character a queer character. Being gay or lesbian or even trans is not easy in a country like India. Despite being rich in traditions and culture, India is deeply rooted in the fragrance of heterosexism. These communities suffered for ages and are still suffering, they are fighting for their fundamental rights. The level of progressiveness in the situation of the LGBTQ+ community is comparatively lower than that of heterosexual individuals. During the time of Pride month, numerous companies engage in initiatives such as recruiting individuals from the LGBTQ+ community, modifying their logos, and offering specials and promotions in commemoration of this occasion. However, it can be argued that the actions undertaken by these

⁶ Sexual Prejudice, homophobia

individuals are primarily driven for monetary benefits. Even Bollywood films often fail to accurately depict queer individuals and their authentic struggles. Recently, the Supreme Court said people should be sensitized but the question remains the same, are the people of India ready to be sensitized enough, are they ready to feel and know about their actual problem? Cases of harassment and suicides increase year by year but is there anyone to take care of these suicides and harassment? Why go to society, they are not even the same in their own homes? It is disheartening yet series like this give a ray of hope for the LGBTQ+ community. Some representations are better than absent or silent representations. Cinema, Web shows, or OTT shows have the power to capture and cultivate the mind of the spectators. If filmmakers keep this in mind, they will give the sensitive issues an immortal representation. This will not only benefit the marginalized community but also help in developing a better society.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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