VOICE OF THE UNHEARD: TRAVEL MOTIVATION AND INTENTION OF INDIAN GAYS AND LESBIANS

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Abstract: The decriminalization of consensual gay sex in 2018 (India) gave equal rights to the LGBT minority community parallelly standing with the rights given to heterosexual indiviuals. A dedicated review of literature assumes LGBT community to be good spenders with more loyalty towards brands. LGBT adults globally held a combined buying power of approximately 3.7 trillion dollars (Wolny, 2019). Travel literature shows Gay travellers to be more homogenous. The findings of 86 Gay Men and Lesbian Women of Indian origin showcasing motivation categories impacting travel decision: 'engagement with the destination';' self-introspection'; 'exploring a destination with budget'; 'evolving with sexual orientation'. 45.4% of respondents believe "Opportunities to look for a same-sex partner/Indulging into sex" and 83.7% of the respondents consider "comfort and good food" as the main motivator for selecting a destination along with friendly gay space, safety, and security. The consclusive evidences from the current research showcases that primary motivators for gay men and Lesbian of Indian origin for travel are similar to the travel patterns of heterosexual couples. Secondary factors which contribute for gay men and Lesbian of Indian origin are freedom to travel with better acceptance to showcase love and affection at a travel destination.

Keywords: Gay Men; Lesbian; Gender and Sexuality Studies; Gender Identity; Homosexuality.

VOZ DO INAUDITO: MOTIVAÇÃO E INTENÇÃO DE VIAGEM DE GAYS E LÉSBICAS INDIANAS

Resumo: A descriminalização do sexo gay consensual em 2018 (Índia) deu direitos iguais à comunidade LGBT, ao contrário dos casais heterossexuais. A literatura sobre viagens mostra que os viajantes gays são mais homogêneos. Os resultados de um estudo com 86 homens e mulheres gays de origem indiana mostram categorias de motivação que impactam na decisão de viagem: 'compromisso com o destino'; 'auto-introspecção'; 'exploração de um destino com orçamento'; 'evolução com orientação sexual'. 45,4% dos entrevistados acreditam que "Oportunidades de procurar um parceiro/indulgação sexual para o mesmo sexo" e 83,7% dos entrevistados consideram "conforto e boa alimentação" como o principal motivador para selecionar um destino junto com espaço gay amigável, segurança e proteção.

Palavras-chave: Homens gays; Lésbicas; Estudos de gênero e sexualidade; Identidade de gênero; Homossexualidade.

LA VOZ DE LOS NO ESCUCHADOS: MOTIVACIÓN E INTENCIÓN DE VIAJE DE HOMBRES Y MUJERES GAYS Y LESBIANAS DE LA INDIA

Resumen: La despenalización de las relaciones sexuales consentidas entre homosexuales en 2018 (India) otorgó igualdad de derechos a la comunidad LGBT, a diferencia de las parejas heterosexuales. La literatura de viajes muestra que los viajeros homosexuales son más homogéneos. Los resultados de un estudio sobre 86 hombres y mujeres homosexuales de origen indio muestran categorías de motivación que influyen en la decisión de viajar: "compromiso con el destino"; "autointrospección"; "explorar un destino con un presupuesto"; "evolucionar con la orientación sexual". El 45,4% de los encuestados cree que "las oportunidades de buscar una pareja del mismo sexo/pareja del mismo sexo" y el 83,7% de los encuestados considera la "comodidad y la buena comida" como el principal motivador para seleccionar un destino junto con el espacio gay friendly, la seguridad y la protección.

Palabras clave: Hombres gays; Lesbianas; Estudios de género y sexualidad; Identidad de género; Homosexualidad.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Few studies have explored with the travel patterns of Gay and Lesbian community and mostly from the modern westernized world (Guaracino 2007; Clift & Forrest, 1999; Cox 2001; de Jesus 2020). The research on travel patterns of Gays and Lesbians in India is still at very infancy stage from taboo associated to be identified as gay or lesbian in an Indian environment even after decriminaliastion of consensual gay sex in 2018 by Honourable Supreme Court of India. More moderately elaborating it is at a nascent stage in India and believing from a marketing perspective in travel and tourism, still an unexplored area of research.

Voice of the unheard (gays and lesbians) is on an upsurge from a change in the dynamic patterns, how people look to live with dating and mate selection, cohabiting, gay marriages, premarital relationships, singlehood, unmarried parents but all, in the end, talks how do people choose romantic partners and look to spend life with them (Surra & Boelter, 2013).

The change towards the loud voice has come from large movements taking place worldwide, raising voice against political, social, and religious groups dominating LGBT minorities, placing them in a second and separate compartment. The first commercial written interaction from the Indian perspective on gays came from the book written by Shakuntala Devi,"The world of Homosexuals" (1976).

Change in consumer demand patterns for travel; a greater opportunity exists for marketers. Still, many travel and tourism practionars in India are unaware of the potential emerging from Gay and Lesbian travel. More elaborately, many of them don't know how to deal with this section of society (Guarcaino, 2007) and also lack of economic statistics, otherwise collected by independent marketing firms about few people or few destinations (UNWTO, 2010).

In India, it is at a very infancy stage with voice of Gay and lesbian movement lead to the decriminalization of consensual gay sex/same-sex marriages in 2018, tracing its origin to the enactment of sec 377 of the Indian Penal Code of the country to the year 1861. However, India cannot get leverage from gay and lesbian travellers due to incomplete information about travel patterns and very few travel companies are focusing on the niche segment of travel.

Gay and Lesbian travel has been noted as a 'pink dollar economy' in travel trade (UNWTO, 2010); the key reasons cited to the same is DINK (Double Income no Kids), but that may not be the case for all gay as some might not be having a higher level of high household income (Guarcaino, 2007), some couples may have children also. Cohabiting among heterosexual couples is on the rise and easily acceptable and identifiable (Kashyap, 2020).

On the other hand, limited or lack of information on gay and lesbian about their living styles, patterns of spending, choice behaviour, are not widely available in Indian literature. The purchase patterns of gay have been largely influenced by lifestyle marketing which rests on the pillars of demographic and economic characterstics of the niche community in purchase and consumption of leisure activities (Hughes, 2005). Travel by heterosexual travellers may be on the rise and more alluring from the business perspective with more numbers generated by them but other segment i.e. gay and lesbian travellers a link needs to be established at the government level with clear legal and regulatory framework, socially acceptable norms, and largely the effect on the business (UNWTO, 2010).

Objectives: -

• To understand position of India in providing safe heaven to homosexuals for establishing sexual identity.

• To explore motivations of Indian gays and lesbians in choosing different tourist destinations.

• To measure an impact of socio-economic factors in selecting a destination.

• To identify the take of various LGBT groups operating within India and the problems associated with their members travelling.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Identity

Horowitz (2012) believes that establishing the identity of a person within the culture has been a topic of research in multi-variety research thoughts like humanities, cognitive science, psychology, and psychoanalysis. The research elaborates the word identity in three different terminologies, gender identity to be male or female, gender role identity with the activities one performs or the occupation one is into, and the sexual orientation to be either heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual (Patterson, 2013).

A person likes to establish an identity for oneself in search for himself/herself, establishing an identity for family or the community to which the person belongs, and lastly, an effort to establishing identity is performed by playing various roles in the society (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Frable (1997) asserts "identities are established being more fluid in nature, multidimensional in approach, and personalized social constructions". In a nutshell, identity can be defined as the self-construct of oneself in society. In the bigger picture, the identity establishment is the development of one's self-definition, which is more governed by the realities established in the social structures within which one is embedded (Serpe & Stets, 2013). In support of the research work Silva (2017) argues gender and sexuality is socio culturally established.

2.2. Gender Identity

Gender Identity is governed by child's birth as male/female and is more embedded in individuals' identity of oneself in the social structure. Kohlberg (1966); Fagot and Leinbach (1985) define a series of steps followed by a child to focus on the gender identity with decision-oriented towards one type of sex and perform roles and responsibilities similar to the ones gender identity defined.

In the other cases, some individuals like to be in the closet, not want to reveal their sexual orientations and desire in an open public platform, and likely to be more

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mysterious to others (Guarcaino, 2007). Hence, gender identity is one's social and psychological frame of mind irrespective with which gender an individual is born.

In India, the social structures and well-knit families don't allow establishing one's identity to be an individual decision; instead, more governed by family decision making. Identity is a complex structure for individuals not able to create meaning to one's life and always feel struggling while making others understand how establishing identity is important for them. Tough, change in the education levels have allowed more people to accept LGBT communities in the commom work place and spaces.

More significant challenges for those people who are not accepted as normal human beings in real life. Several institutions and individuals have tried to understand people with unique characters that were earlier thought to be a taboo or social evil with uprising of several movements in different parts of the world.

Pink Triangle, now a pride symbol for the gay community, was once a synonym for the men having a similar orientation towards the same sex. Females use to wear black symbols during Second World War II in the Nazi Concentration camps (Guarcaino, 2007).

2.3. Gay identity

Establishing one to be gay or being a part of a more prominent gay domain is self-interest to be get identified or make it easy for others to get recognized, but at last, it is all the choice of an individual life (Hughes, 2006).

Decriminilzation law has led to more open spaces to breathe for gays and lesbians, which otherwise, on the other side may be difficult to be located within the boundaries of India. This has provided safe heaven to gays and lesbians to marry and potray feeling of love and affection towards the partner.

Mason and Palmer (1996) have expressed the viewpoint that mostly Gays and Lesbians have tried not to display affection in the public spaces, not to express sexual orientation or else tried not to look like Gay and in many cases with reasons like hate crime, abuse, and stress, reactions, and attitudes, etc. (Hughes, 2006). The reasons cited above at many homeland destinations provide a clear direction for the future research to look into the reasons for travel to more attractive gay and lesbian welcoming destinations with focus on gay and lesbian motivations, where the voices of the local gay and lesbian for freeness to express feelings of love and affecton remains unheard with more restrictive social practices.

2.4. Holidaying as a means of Expressing Identity

Holiday has been seen as the best means to identify and establish one's identity. In the wake of the statement, the voice of unheard gay identity has been established through gay spaces- a place to be more affectionate and free to showcase ones feeling of love to a partner.

Discrimination and disapproval in society allow gays and lesbians to explore and to escape to new places with more acceptance and safety (Hughes, 2006). The word escape has been repeatedly used in tourism literature in terms of holiday or vacation to identify oneself, rejuvenation, passion, and compassion in search for the unknown to known.

Ballegard and Chor (2009) cited in their work that a lesbian's identity is an outcome of a conversation with other fellow lesbian's tough other factors also portray a part of one's identity ranging from culture, religion, geography, and demographics.

Travel with identity discourse mainly encompasses the topic of Gay and lesbian movement in search of gay spaces out of heteronormative behaviour of heterosexuals and being in gay spaces which are more liberal and allow one to be a foreigner but not a stranger (Hughes, 2006) in a foreign land. By consuming a particular brand (or going to a specific holiday destination), (s) he wants to relate him or herself with other people consuming the same brand (Ballegard & Chor, 2009).

There has been a minor change in the people's attitude at the professional front, leveraging gay and lesbian travel; otherwise, in the Indian context, orientation towards the same sex is taboo. Professional services for travel of gays and lesbians, bisexuals, transgender is not new to the world.

Goals of travel are not only directed/met by travel agent or tour operator where images of gays and lesbians have been used to induce interest among the potential LGBT travellers rather other factors allow/disallow to choose a particular destination with major factors pointed out are discomfort, discrimination and physical attack including assaults, verbal abuse and threatening behaviour (Hughes, 2006).

The destination choice for travel is more appropriate for LGBT minorities with more friendliness towards the sex orientation of the couples. Enjoying sex on holiday is not the prime factor for going on vacation (Prichard et al., 2000; Hughes, 2002) tough, (Clift & Forrest, 1998) in the study highlighted that studies outside United Kingdom do focus, sexual encounters as main and dominant factor for destination selection.

The reasons to travel and choose a destination for gay and lesbian travellers are thought to similar to heterosexual travelers with no conclusive proof, emphasizing elements of risk and tolerance atmosphere at the destination.The professional approach to the myriad gay tourism industry and its beginning goes to EbenHansteen with a first organized trip for gay men in the year 1972 (Guarcaino, 2007) with a formal approach to collaborate efforts of LGBT's all around the world with the creation of IGLTA (International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, 1983).

2.5. Travel Motivations

Motivation has been a widely used and acclaimed pushing factor for travelling to a destination. Dann (1977) conceptualized push and pull elements for travel. Further, research allowed adding experience as a main emphasized component in tourism literature, being tourism as a part of experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

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Greater instinct to travel comes from internal desire to travel and the features attached to the tourist destination. Plog (1974), Crompton (1979), Mannel and Iso-Ahola (1987), Krippendorf (1987), Smith (1990) all enlightened the concept of motivation in travel.

The work of Krippendorf (1987) allowed justifying motivation by dividing the motivation drive into two main parts. Firstly, it sheds light on travel being motivated from "going away from," but it is "going toward" something and secondly, the motives of the individuals are marked as self-motivated.

Typologies and decision-making models for travel cannot be placed in a tight lid compartment. Tourism literature provides multiple approaches to understand and measure reasons to choose a particular destination.

At one end, push factors with an internal drive to escape, relax, rejuvenation, rest, and prestige allow the individual to go for holiday along with external factors, i.e., pull factors, with tangible features of the destination of beaches, recreation facilities, mountains, lakes, etc. attracts tourist close to a destination (Otto & Kim, 2020).

The attraction/destination is not solely based on the attractiveness of tourism products; other factors such as currency exchange benefits, landscape, and the friendliness of the local community all contribute to the selection process. Pimentel and Carvalho (2014) emphaize systematic arrangement of the internal and external factors play a decisive role for the future of the destination.

Travel motivation, travel planning, travel to destination come from the frame of mind for receiving worthy experiences at the destination. In support of the argument LGBT community always look to travel to safe and gay friendly destinations with focus on experiences to meet special requirements with more welcome and acceptance. In concurrence with tourism literature and tourist motivation (individual, shared, multiple) the other main predictor for the choice of destination largely relies on perception (Caber et al., 2020, Khan et al., 2020; Pavlic et al. 2020) expectation (Vroom, 1964; Hsu et al., 2010) and satisfaction (Ross & Iso- Ahola, 1991; Said, 2020).

Sussmann and Unel (1999), in their work on destination image and its modifications after travel: An empirical study on Turkey focussed on perception, perception bias, and stereotyping as the major hindrance in creating an image of destination for a different audience or individual members in the same audience group with pre- and post-travel profiles with gender and age.

A quick assessment of steps taken for travel is an investment and depends on the person's expertise during pre-planning, during, and after the holiday. Tommy (2007) argues that "Value created by consuming tourism experiences depends not only upon the objective experience but also upon the tourist and the tourist's state of mind at that particular moment." The experiences received are episodic in nature. Experiences in travel are based on information from service providers, destination's actual knowledge, and experiences at the destination.

Spears et al. (2012) tried to highlight the motivations and perceptions of Indian tourists travelling to Thailand. The research's objective was divided into various segments to identify the demographic and travel pattern of Indian tourists, motivation to travel, and level of importance of information sources.

The questionnaire was administered to 300 hundred tourists, and 150 respondents answered with all details to the questionnaire. Four dimensions revealed the motivations and perception of Indian tourists about travelling to Thailand, which were quite different from the basic perception for travel to Thailand, sex, and enjoyment. Kerkwijk (1992) asserts,"Many foreigners visit Thailand in search of sex."The first dimension,'Novelty Seeking', talked more about enjoying the beautiful destination, scenery, beaches, seeing and experiencing a new destination, and seeing new destinations in one trip. The second dimension, 'stress-busting reflected,' involves reducing stress or engaging in enjoyable activities with friends. The third, 'Achievement' is with the motto to travel where they believe that their friends/ relatives have not visited or had trips internationally. Lastly, Family oriented/ Education was the prime motto of travelling with the family.

Weeden et al. (2016) believe that unlikely heterosexual community for travel homosexual travellers takes sexuality as asignificant factor in purchase and destination choice. Travel motivations cannot be studied in isolation.

The relationship needs to be more evaluated in terms of destination choice and the reasons and factors associated with the destination selection of homosexuals. The role of each member of a travel value chain becomes more critical underlying the destination choice. The major contributor or motivator for the vacation at a particular place by homosexuals is the consolidation of sexual identity in India with number of restrictions coming from various ideological groups against the view of sexual orientation of Gay and Lesbian population. Not challenged lawfully but forcefully by some ideological groups. Joseph (1996) asserts sexuality has been taken as a very reason with the fixed and unchanged aspect of gay and lesbian identity.

Being on vacation away from home tends to provide perfect opportunity (Cox, 2011). Wong and Tolkach (2017) provide an important fact that the LGBT community needs to be understood, assessed, and provided with unique tourism products rather than serving the same tourism products as heterosexual travellers.

2.6. Destination Choice

Destination choice and selection in tourism is largely governed by information sharing characteristics with the features of tourism product and services. The reasons to say, nature of tourism services ranging from intangibility to perishability. Destination choice by the traveller is based on random utility theory, a combination of systematic and random variables adding to the utility from the economist view of desirability or attraction to the product (Ewing & Haider, 1999).

An individual may work to act rationally in decision-making. Still, his decisions are determined by several factors that may hinder the behaviour and motivate him to act irrationally (Bettman et al., 1998). The internal and external determinants play a pivotal role in destination choice. Environmental factors along with the internal focal

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points of the tourist system emerge as an important factor for tourism promotion at the local level and further developmet.

More elaborately, purchasing and consuming tourism products places them in the shopping goods category to make the decision more elaborate and time-consuming. Brand equity is one of the core strategies of Destination Management Organisations. Developing, creating, and sustaining a "brand" is part of tourist destination management (Aaker, 1991).

Various tourism boards worldwide have tried to establish destinations as a brand and best suited for gays and lesbians like Spanish Tourism Board, Brazil Tourism Board, South African Tourism Board, etc. The traveler's destination choice mainly focuses on safety and security which tourist believes receiving at a destination. However, other factors like the ease of getting a visa, accommodation, and attractions become secondary in destination choice. It is emphasized that greater understanding of the travel value chain is essential criterion for overall intra and intrasectoral growth (Pimentel, Silva & Coelho, 2021).

Destination choice can be within the homeland or outside the country for homosexuals. The coming of the closet by GLBT allows search for more gay-friendly destinations and gay-friendly travel companies to make travel more convenient and memorable (Guarcaino, 2007).

Tourist destination selection is the first step in the holiday, with final efforts made by the Travel agent or Tour operators. The use of tag lines or images attracting gays and lesbians for promotion has been used elaborately in the western world (Clift & Forrest, 1998).

On the contrary, the destination selected by the gays and lesbians becomes more important with the risk associated being at a destination with news articles in major publication houses, non-acceptance among locals, non friendly accommodation,religious sentiments of the heads of religious groups and political groups, anti-gay sentiments of locals and heterosexual tourists, on-board experience in airlines all are well placed in the tourism literature and add on the additional factors in the destination choice (Hughes, 2006).

The additional selection factors make destination selection for gays and lesbians more laborious and tend to benefit only a few destinations worldwide. The destinations which are more elaborative in the thought either (marketing or promotion) being a gay destination or working in the same domain to be next gay destination makes it worthy for the homosexuals to select the destination.

Promotion of a destination as gay-friendly is not to be seen only with gay spaces and activities associated with it rather sexually transmitted diseases is also a major concern for a destination to be promoted as a gay-friendly destination (Clift & Forrest, 1998). One of the major diseases associated with homosexuality, AIDS, was first observed in a U.S. airline steward, GaetanGugas and labeling it to 'Patient Zero' (Hughes, 2006) and initially labeledas Gay related Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (GRIDS) with tracing to America (Joseph, 1996). Clift and Forrest (2019) in a research article found out that unprotected sex during holiday by gay men has a greater chance of getting infected by HIV. Stigmising homosexuality and further threaten men with prison for practicing homosexuality was highlighted as one step backward in fight against HIV/ AIDS (Mishra, 2009) before decriminalizing of homosexuality law in India in the year 2018.

Khan (2013) tried to elaborate the image of India perceived and projected with one of the safe places to travel with positive words like paradise along with the negative comments which act as a hindrance in attracting tourists.

The rise in incidences attacking the foreign nationals and reported in India Today and Economic Times (news coverage agencies in India) is an important observation made by the tourist while selecting India as a tourist destination. Similar incidences are also being reported in other parts of the world. The chances of destination avoidance become more by gays and lesbians when treated or humiliated at a destination by locals. Other tourists, accommodation providers, religious institutions, adding to the stress and abuse of the homosexuals (Hughes, 2006) tough political interventions, law of the state, voice raisers, have worked to provide a safe/heaven place for homosexuals to enjoy the destinations unlike other travellers.

2.7. Motivation, Destination Choice and Homosexuals

Destination Choice options for gays and lesbians are limited with destinations showcasing more attractiveness to gays and lesbians with feel at home type of atmosphere, a better desire among the same community people, looking for being oneself and lastly escape from heterosexism (Pritchard et al., 2010).

Destination choice to travel and spend time together can be attached to homosexuals' commitment of love towards each other which may/ may not be true shortly. A study by D'Augelli (2006/2007) showed great commitment by 82% of the boys and 92% of the girls in a survey replying their hope for a long-term relationship. United Nations Travel Association (2012) reports in one of the aricle, satisfaction of the couples shows a positive sign with regular trips taken by the couples and holidays has been taken as venue of romance by the partners.

Going on a holiday together and expressing feelings can be one step towards long-term commitment. The holiday for homosexuals does not end at gay destinations rather, it is more with acceptance by gay owners, clubs, bars, attractions, and no comment economy to gayness and the behaviour associated.

These reasons provide a few destinations with a tag of gay destinations. The destination's negative image makes it difficult where some destinations make practicing homosexuality with capital punishment, and some make it illegal and may lead to behind the bars (Amnesty International).

The 21st century has seen a significant change to the idea of homosexuality, with 125 countries allowing same-sex marriages. Destination choice is also associated with gay and lesbian events worldwide like The Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, World Pride in Toronto, Pride Rio De Janerio, etc. The event selection

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is not limited to specific gay events. Instead, it includes sports events, conventions, conferences, etc.

The research article by (Clift & Forrest, 1998) has showcased the destination choice behaviour of U.K. Gay men with London as the most attractive destination for gay men after Amsterdam, which has been referred to as the "Gay capital of the world" (Hughes, 2006). In the same article, most of the research showcases the choice of gay men travelling to various destinations globally, and 5.7% of the people have selected India as a preferred destination by gay men from foreign land.

In the Indian context, the lack of quantitative statistics in a similar field disallows the researcher to comment on the total tourism traffic generated by gays and lesbians within India and abroad. The motivations and destination choice of the gays and lesbians do diverge at the same criteria of choice as those of straight inidiviuals with high value and preference has been given to the comfort along with the enjoyment of good food and relaxed atmosphere with a guarantee to good sunshine are top priorities when being on holiday (Clift & Forrest, 1998) another major factor of sex encounter being on holiday has also been a factor for destination selection to an extent.

The destination's choice and motivation to travel for gays and lesbians to a destinaion is evaluated with showcase of affection with a more tolerance level showcased towards gays and lesbians and further activities associated. Clift and Forrest (1998) concluded that gays who have visited the top gay destinations on the gay destination map showcased high scores in the gay social life and sex, and others with low scores are more motivated to travel and choose destinations with interest in local sights and experiencing the local culture.

Ballegaard and Chor (2009) assert that it is not fundamentally right that all gay couple is looking to travel to the gay-friendly destinations all the time. The gay couple may choose a gay destination on one occasion to travel may look forward to a non-gay destination in the next event or vice-versa. Motivation allows the individual to search for information (elaboration on the various online and offline information), the safe place to holiday (search for alternatives), and finally selecting a destination (Decrop & Kozak, 2009).

2.8. Gay Spaces

The alien nature or taboo associated with homosexuals makes a section of the society more derogatory, invisible, and oppressed, and stressed in their homeland. Therefore, some gays and lesbians may look for destinations to establish their identity. The gay destinations may not be part of one's country, and may push more outbound tourism. Gay space has taken multi-variety forms with clubs, bars, events, etc. (Hughes, 2006).

All gay spaces are not for all gays within the gay community. A marginalized section of the community might emerge at an event like Sydney Mardi Gras; a gay event is more represented and dominated by white, urban, middle-class gays (Markwell, 2002).

More attraction to the gay space (destination) comes from the gay places dominated by the gay community like Castro Street, California USA with infrastructure focussed to gay and lesbian identity and place outperforming in total number of people selecting site to run and operate business and venues (Hughes, 2006).

Gay destination or gay spaces may not look forward to welcome non-gay tourists. The reasons may be the non-offensive behaviour of non-gay tourists, or else it may become more of a tourist gaze (Howe, 2001). As elaborated above, within the gay spaces, being it destinations, clubs, bars, or other places destinations with attractions, it seems safer than closed gay spaces in the form of clubs and bars (Kauhanen, 2015).

2.9. Tourist Motivations, Gay spaces, and Destination Choice

Same as heterosexuals, it is essential to understand and measure the dimensions of gays and lesbians and the motives behind choosing a tourist destination. The destination can establish itself as a different brand with more self-introspection in terms of infrastructure suiting the needs of gays and lesbians, more responsiveness and welcoming attitude of the local community, and protection of rights with more support from the local administration.

Activities to which LGBT can involve at a destination are more governed by images presented, gay books and guides, and further gay and lesbian tourists using various direct and indirect sources (Hughes, 2006) to explore more about the destination. In modern times, the internet plays a great role in selecting and choosing a destination with a number of websites.

The effort of the gay press has put travel experiences into the category of staged experiences, which may or may not be accurate for the gay tourist at a destination with fantasizes established from the online and offline media rather tourism allows the quest for the search of genuine intimate relationship at the destination in contrast to staged experiences (Jesus, 2020).

Tough, gays and lesbians may look forward to justify the search for a destination with other reasons. Still, the destination being more gay-friendly with the existence of the gay tourism industry, developing relationships and bonds are the prime reasons for a gay couple to choose a destination (Monterrubio, 2009; Hattingh & Spencer, 2017).

3 METHODOLOGY

The current study applied a quantitative technique of research design with an administered structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was shared with the potential (inquiry-based) customers of a well-reputed gay specialized travel company. Secondly, the Snowball sampling technique has been used to reach maximum members of the LGBT community through social network groups, and the intake of a few NGOs working for the LGBT community's wellbeing (Varta, Nazaria & Umang) has been well used.

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A small conversation was started through messenger/ mail, and LGBT community members were approached and questionnaire was shared with some community-friendly circles. The present study used social media sites for data collection, mainly used by many researchers through google form links. In the final and third stage, the data has been collected through face-to-face interaction with members of the gay community in a gay club from country's major cosmopolitan towns of Kolkata and Delhi.

Researching gay traveller may not be easy. In most cases, the gay traveller might not come out of the closet. Gay travellers are mostly a part of the hidden population (Hughes, 2004). The Indian community's biggest challenge is lack of acceptance.

In a country like India, a transition is underway, spurred on by major and mass movements within the gay and transgender communities. Invisibility among the population mainly makes it difficult for the researcher to segment the population purely based on sexual orientation as the behaviour of the gay community can be similar to the other people and may be different in some instances.

Online communities are treated best to gather maximum data as most gay community members are very active on social networking sites. In the Indian context, the openness social networking sites provide to gay community, feel safe and relaxed to express their opinions.

The well-structured questionnaire was prepared with different sections. The first section of the questionnaire was more focused on the socio-economic demographic profile of the respondents with different questions ranging from age, education, income, marital status. The second part of the questionnaire dedicated to travel motivations and destination choice with specific focus to push and pull motivations. The motivations to travel were primarily adapted from the work of (Clift & Forrest, 2009; Spears et al., 2012; Khan, 2013; Hattingh, 2017).

The respondents were requested to rate the various reasons to choose a destination and the governing motivation behind their holiday selection. The holiday choice's motivation factors were primarily put on a scale from 'very important' to 'least important' on a 5 point Likert scale with (1=not at all important, 2= unimportant,3= neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important). The survey was made available online and offline to respondents, and different methods were used, as discussed above, to collect the data. Factor analysis and ANOVA, a descriptive statistics technique are used to elaborate on the travel motivations of gay men/lesbians.

As sample characteristics, we can say that large number of gay men and lesbians were contacted to participate in the survey. In total, 86 men and women completed the questionnaire in all aspects, leaving no section unfilled. The sample population constituted of Indian gay men/lesbians and young people has shown an overwhelming response to the questionnaire.

More young generations join the movements for equal rights for the LGBT community in India and come out of the closet. Another reason for the same can be an increase in the voice of the LGBT community in India. However, equal rights for the LGBT community in the western world started much earlier than in India.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. To understand position of India in providing safe heaven to homosexuals for establishing sexual identity

Rights for the Indian LGBT community are not the same as in other parts of the world. The Supreme Court verdict may justify equal rights for all as a fundamental right still greater freedom of choice to live and choose the partner does not belong to the LGBT+ Minorities in India and termed as Sexual and or Gender Minoritized (SGM) (Bowling et al., 2019).

Indian society is mainly divided based on colour, caste, religion, and creed. The country's long-established history allows India to establish a different system for identity creation. The formation and practice of a particular sect play a critical role in acclaiming one's identity. Social Denial has been the term used with acceptance of homosexuality within India and has found place in ancient Indian literature (Wilhelm, 2004).

Otherwise, ancient literature from India in many forms talks about the existence of the LGBT community within the Indian subcontinent.Recent studies in sexual identity have spoken about experiences and incidences faced by gays and lesbians with the usage of the words like stigma, discrimination, rejection, minority groups, stereotyping, etc.Thus (Simmons et al., 2020; Bowling et al., 2020; Chakrapani et al., 2020), in some cases, maybe very true for gays, bisexuals, and lesbians after coming out of the closet.

In the Indian context, a more educated class with a better orientation towards the world does accept LGBT minorities. Still, the situation for rural LGBT+ is quite different and is of concern. At present times within India, the problem for Gays, lesbians, and Bisexuals is more towards converging to a thought that LGBT minorities are accepted as ordinary members of society rather than creating special destinations or gay spaces.

One form of society acceptance in the Indian system is marriage. The act of marriage is something which becomes a very impotance to perform and reason for establishing one's identity from childhood both in urban and rural India for better existence in the Indian culturally dominant atmposhphere. Kashyap (2020), in her work 'Changing couple relationships in India,' shows respect to the institution of marriage within India and tries to establish the relationship among couples with dynamics of power and control, likes and dislikes, respect or disrespect to other person idea's, values and feeling.

Marriage premises have shifted in the 21st century within the Indian environment with more love marriages, same-sex marriages, and transgender marriages. They are making their place in the institution of marriage with a long-term committed relationship, which may not be true in all the later stages due to differences. In the more extensive domain, marriages among gays and lesbians is an important and desired goal for same-sex couple existence of marriage becomes a very reason for

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society to accept (Hughes, 2006) with laws protecting the rights. The choice to be bonded by the institution of marriage further allows searching for a tourist destination to spend time together.

Some countries with more positive news about accepting gays and lesbians like USA, Greece, and the Netherlands may be the first preference, and destination choice among LGBT opposite to the destinations more dominated by the religious and political groups may not be preferred by gays and lesbians to travel. 55.8% of the respondents have preferred to travel within India as their first option to travel with the partner.

Reasons may be India being a cheaper destination as compared to the destinations of the west. The protection of rights by the law to the gay and lesbian provides India safe heaven to travel, tough within India, Gay and Lesbian spaces are not available as in the western world. Indian community accepts the gay and lesbian to behave, which is largely accepted with the moral practices to be performed in open spaces. The restrictive definition of behavoiur allows to change the moral order with common aim and objective to transpose political interventions and economic control (Joesph, 1996) with better social life.

4.2. To explore motivations of Indian gays and lesbians in choosing different tourist destinations.

Ideological underpinnings to the current topic of interest help to create hypotheses in the researcher's mind to evaluate and explore the travel motivations of gay men and women from the Indian context.

The research indicates the choice patterns of all gay men and women as respondents exploring same motivations as straight men and women, with all respondents do consider other factors also while selecting the destination. Like 45.4% of the respondents do believe "Opportunities to look for a same-sex partner/Indulging into sex" as an essential criterion for choosing a destination, along with 83.7% of the respondents does consider "comfort and good food" as the main criterion while selecting a destination.

Ballegaard and Chor (2009) believe that encountering sex during the holiday is an additional factor that Gay men and lesbian women consider while selecting a holiday and more conscious while choosing a holiday destination. The results indicate that comfort and good food are two times more robust for all respondents to choose a destination rather than Opportunities to look for a same-sex partner/Indulging in sex. Still, this factor plays a decisive role in the choice of destination. 69.7% of the respondents have shown "Freely Expressing oneself and showing identity" as a significant factor for choosing a destination. In support of the argument (Hattingh & Spencer, 2020) in a research article do elaborate that all gay men are not homogenous and their activities and motivations are different during their travel.

Tough not statistically verified the reasons for the same could be correlated with "Going away from daily life and Routine"as 76.8% respondents take it as an important to a very important parameter. Hattingh (2017) found out that while selecting Cape Town, South Africa as a gay destination rest and relaxation are the prime factors that allow gay travellers to visit Cape Town.

Herrera (2005) has gathered data from qualitative statistics that all the problems at the home that may act as a barrier to come out of the closet, lack of gay spaces, and open gay community may be the pushing factor to look for more gay welcoming destinations. The results were more dependent on qualitative statistics.

Further, to better understand the problems of the Gay and Lesbian community, qualitative and case-based measures can also be explored within the Indian context. The researcher discovered that respondents are avoiding coming out of the closet due to social pressure, political pressure, and fear of non-acceptance among society members. Collaborative and cooperative work among the various member groups can help in the better and intricate understanding of the problem and give viable solutions.

4.3 To measure an impact of socio-economic factors in selecting a destination.

In the present study, income patterns of the gay men did not show a high level of Income as 57% of the respondents earned an income of Rs.15000- Rs.25000, and corresponding to the same 55.8% of the respondents have selected to travel within India as their first choice to travel with the partner reasons could be lower-income patterns allows them to first travel within India or maybe the safe heaven destinations for the LGBT community may be out of their reach.

The results are self-evident from the descriptive statistics of the sample population as young, lower-income gay men are looking to travel and explore India as the first preference of travel. Further, gay men with high Income with the income bracket of Rs.45000-Rs.55001 with professional degrees have selected India and abroad for their travel.

Along with the same, the data reported from the respondents elaborated on the residence with 73% of the respondents belong to urban areas, 16.3%respondents belong to semi-urban areas, and the rest 10% respondents belong to rural areas. Openness to the questionnaire and the topic has been mostly from South India and West India. 26.7% of the respondent belonged to South India, and the next major contributor to the research topic is 25.6% from West India.

The results indicate the emergence of the LGBT movement in urban centers of India and have showcased more respondents belonging to the country's urban area are coming out of the closet. Table 1 below reports the information on the socio-economic status of the.

Age Group	Percent	Income	Percent	Residence	Percent
Below 20	17.4	15000-25000	57.0	Urban	73.3
20-25	32.6	25001-35000	16.3	Semi-Urban	16.3

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26-30	23.3	35001-45000	8.1	Rural	10.5
31-35	12.8	45001-55000	7.0		
36-40	4.7	55001 and above	11.6		
41 and above	9.3				

Table 1. Socio-economic status of Gay Men and Lesbians.
Source: Primary Survey Results.

Travel Intention of Gay men/Lesbian and their destination choice have been used while selecting the holiday destination either within India or aboard and the reasons thereof. Various motivations for travel from general to gay men/lesbian orientation have been listed in the questionnaire section based on the researcher's literature review and understanding. Table 2 below represents a set of 17 statements ranging from not at all important to very important.

The table above provides a percentage analysis of the data based on each respondent's ranking provided to each question. Going away from daily life and routine emerged as a prominent factor for destination choice, with 76.8% of the respondents marked as either important or very important in destination selection. Same-sex culture and venues (clubs, bars, discotheques, etc.) and Opportunities to look for a same-sex partner/ Indulging in sex have been fairly distributed among the different segments of not important to very important.

	Not at all Important (%)	Not Important (%)	Neither Important/Neither not Important (%)	Important (%)	very Important (%)
Comfort and Good Food	4.7	2.3	9.3	31.4	52.3
Looking For Rest and Relaxation	1.2	9.3	17.4	25.6	46.5
Better Sunshine	4.7	12.8	22.1	33.7	26.7
Opportunities to look for a same-sex partner/Indulging into sex	19.8	8.1	26.7	19.8	25.6
Same-sex culture and venues (clubs, bars, discotheque etc.)	14.0	14.0	26.7	24.4	20.9
Landscape of the place/ beauty	5.8	2.3	11.6	36.0	44.2
Engagement with local culture	5.8	9.3	16.3	23.3	45.3
Budgeted(economical)Holiday Package	3.5	10.5	18.6	18.6	48.8
Going away from daily life and Routine	3.5	5.8	14.0	23.3	53.5
Freely Expressing oneself and showing Identity	2.3	8.1	19.8	26.7	43.0
Seeing the well known tourism sites	4.7	2.3	22.1	17.4	53.5
Opportunities to see wildlife and nature	3.5	2.3	20.9	30.2	43.0
Enjoying sports and similar activities in the region	10.5	23.3	23.3	12.8	30.2
Opportunity to learn something new	4.7	7.0	11.6	23.3	53.5
Travelling for self- introspection	5.8	10.5	22.1	23.3	38.4
Good night Life	8.1	14.0	18.6	20.9	38.4
Opportunity to develop a close and romantic relations	8.1	4.7	26.7	23.3	37.2

Table 2. Travel Intentions and Motivations of Gay men/Lesbian from India.
Source: Primary Survey Results.

To provide the data with an in-depth view, factor analysis was carried out on the data, helping the correlation matrix further explain the different data parameters. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin is used to measure the sampling adequacy with the results of the same are presented in Table 3 above.

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.758
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Sig)	0.000
Cronbach's Alpha (No.of Items =17)	0.875

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha, KMO & Bartlett's test for Motivation dimensions.
Source: Primary Survey Results.

Higher factor loadings became the part of research with factor loadings values more than .40 is retained, due to the reason that factor values more than .40 show close association among the factors and factor values less than .40 shows less association among the factors. Hence, the resulting dimensions are considered suitable for further analysis.

Four components provided much clear and interpretable structure on rotation, and analysis of the same is provided in the results in Table 4 below. The components are named respectively to provide an overview of similar kinds of statements to help the reader understand data better. The various dimension originating from the same are put to 'engagement with the destination'; 'self-introspection; 'exploring a destination with budget'; 'evolving with sexual orientation.'

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		Component			
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
'Engagement with the destination'	Comfortand Good Food	.848			
	Lookingforrestrelaxation	.782			
	Landscape of the place/beauty	.752			
	BetterSunshine	.628			
	Engagement with the local culture	.577			
	Going away from daily life and routine	.536			
'Self-introspection'	Opportunity to learn something new		.817		
	Enjoying sports and similar activities in the region		.672		
	Good nightlife		.642		
	Travelling for self-introspection		.563		
	Freely expressing oneself and showcasing Identity		.544		
'Exploration with the budget'	Opportunities to see wildlife and nature			.868	
	Seeing the well-known tourism sites			.740	
	Budgeted(economical) holiday package			.661	
'Evolving with the sexual orientation'	Same-sex culture and venues (clubs, bars, discotheques etc.)				.825
	Opportunities to look for a same-sex partner/ indulging into sex activity				.809
	Opportunity to develop a close friendship and romantic relations				.572

Table 4: Factor loadings of various factors.
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Source: Primary Survey Results.

The items under each component were also checked for reliability analysis with the first dimension i.e. 'engagement with the destination' showed Cronbach's reliability as .822 and for second dimension, i.e. 'self-introspection as .783 and the third dimension, i.e. 'exploration with the budget' the Cronbach's Reliability as .755. For the last dimension,'evolving with sexual orientation,'the Cronbach's reliability showed the result as .757. Based on the results, the data was further used for analysis.

Engagement with the destination: -Engagement with the destination is the first pull factor of motivation to explore the destination. Gay and lesbians do like to explore the destination same like heterosexual couples. They expect comfort and good food, better sunshine, engagement with the local culture as predominant factors while selecting a destination.

Self-introspection: Self-Introspection is seen as an important factor while selecting a destination that is more explored by enjoying the nightlife of the destination, enjoying sports, and looking for opportunities to learn something new destination.

Exploration with the budget: -Like any other traveller budget holiday is a concern. Unlike heterosexual travellers budget has been placed at the third place while selecting a destination with the main factors to see the wildlife and seeing the world-known tourism sites.

Evolving with the sexual orientation: -Evolving with sexual orientation is the fourth factor for the homosexual travellers as looking for same-sex cultures and venues, indulging into the sex activity or else Opportunity to develop a close friendship and romantic relations is not the prominent factor for gay and lesbian to select a holiday. Same factors are assessed like heterosexual travellers by the homosexual travellers while on holiday or selecting a holiday.

4.4. Socio-Economic Factors Associated with the Holiday Motivations

The major socio-economic factors acting as a motivator and determinant for the choice of the destination/holiday largely depend on the respondent's age and Income. Both the factors play a decisive role in a choice of holiday, holiday products, accommodation, mode of transport etc. A critical analysis of these factors allows the researcher to ponder the role of age and Income on Gay and lesbians' motivation. Govers and Go (2009) in the research article Tourism Destnation Image Formation do assert the perceived destination image along with self congruity is mediated by socio economic characterstics along with other variables like cultural background, personal identity and psychological consumer characterstics.

The association of age and Income with the four dimensions of the factor scales was explored using variance analysis. For the first, second, and fourth dimensions, i.e.,"Engagement with the destination", "Self-Introspection" and lastly "Evolving with the sexual orientation" dimension with age have shown non-significant differences among different age groups with analysis of variance value at 4.127, 3.808, and 3.500 respectively.

On the other end, Motivation Dimensions for Income the second, third, and fourth factors, i.e.,"Self-introspection," Exploration with the budget", "Evolving with the sexual orientation" have shown non-significant differences among the income groups with analysis of variance value to be 3.860, 4.156 and 3.480 respectively.

The variance analysis indicates that age has a more significant effect on destination choice among gay men and women. The lower age group, i.e., below 20, 31-35 and 41 and above the Exploration with the budget is neither important/neither not important among different age categories on the other hand for other age categories i.e.,20-25, 26-30 and 36-40 do believe Exploration with the budget is

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an important parameter while selecting any destination for a holiday.

On the other hand, the income category for dimension, "Engagement with the destination," the income categories, i.e., 15000-25000 and 35001-45000 have shown Income to be neither important/neither not important, and for the other income categories, i.e.,25001-35000, 45001-55000 and 55001 above have shown to be important for the first dimension, i.e.,"Engagement with the destination."

4.5. What is the take of various LGBT groups operating within India and the problems associated with their members travelling?

A large number of LGBT groups have been formed in the recent past and few to mention here like Labia, Sappho for equality, Fifty shades of Gay etc. All thanks to the decriminalization of consensual gay sex with a verdict coming from the Supreme Court. Understanding the dimension of the LGBT community, larger numbers of voluntary organizations have come up in protecting the rights of the LGBT community.

Most of the community members are represented by the voice of LGBT community NGOs. The amount of work carried out by various community organisations to help minority groups of LGBT to raise the voice and bring to the same parallel social status as of heterosexual population is appreciated.

The biggest problem within the Indian context is acceptance and understanding the niche segment of the society from the marketing objective. Few travel agencies have separate divisions for the gay community starting travel-oriented programs for the LGBT community.

The biggest challenge in India is the availability of special gay spaces/ gay attractions for the gay community. One of the most formalized methods of gay community 'being together is gay parades happening in major towns of the country, Kolkata Rainbow Pride Walk (1999) to Queerythm Pride Walk at Thiruvananthapuram (2020). Similar kinds of Pride Walks are also happening in other parts of the country with the motto of equal rights for the LGBT+ community.

Mister and Arthouse have done the biggest innovative practices in travel for the Gay community – India's first Luxury Boutique hotel only for Gay Men, Kitty Su – Lalit Hotel chains night club, or by travel houses Pink Vibgyor. Still, a lot to be done for the LGBT+ community from providing more spaces and places for travelling and enjoyment.

4.6. Discussion

Within the Indian background, the study on the under-researched subject helps the researcher and marketer explore and reach the under-marketed segment of gay men/lesbians for travel. In India, research on LGBT has been largely explored from the equal rights and law perspective, with the least attention given to marketing a destination among the gay and lesbian community.

Among Gay men from Europe, South East has been a choice by 10.5% of respondents (Clift & Forrest, 1999). In the present study,18.6% of the respondents have chosen Far East and Thailand as their first choice of travel.

Thailand has been brand positioned among the Indian population to be a cheap holiday destination and easy availability of sex. Informally Thailand has been tagged as the "gay capital of Far East" (Kerkwijk, 1992). On the same lines, present study data revealed that respondents in the lower-income categories with the percentage scores of 37% had been to the Far East, Southeast Asia, and Africa or the other close by destinations withinthe Indian subcontinent.

Contrary to the same higher revenue groups, almost all of them have been to Far East, and few preferred Europe and the U.S. as an option for holiday destination selection. With no research available as on date from the Indian Gay men and Lesbians travel intentions and motivations, this study fills one of the most important gaps in the literature of Gay and lesbian travel from India.

The present-day requires understanding the travel needs of the LGBT community from India and providing more practical solutions. Most of the pioneering works Clift and Forrest (1999); Cox (2001); Hughes (2006); Pirchard et al. (2007); Guaracino (2007); Monterrubio (2009); Jesus (2020) are more western-oriented leaving less scope to understand the LGBT travel community from India. More individual and marketed-oriented data is required to explore the problems of the LGBT community rather than the aggregate data dimension approach.

The few reasons to cite from travel perspective is to understand LGBT community spending at the destination, socialization with the same-sex partners at a destination, or else exploring an opportunity to develop further relations with the same-sex tourists visiting the destination. More thorough studies can help to explore the untapped market from a marketing perspective by being the most inflammatory subject in Indian literary speech.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The present study tries to showcase the reasons for destination choice by the Indian Gay men and women. As demonstrated by the results, most of the Gay men and women like to have an experience of comfort and good food and have an opportunity to have sex and other factors common to straight men and women while selecting a holiday.

Sexual encounters with partners are one of the reasons to be on holiday. Still, safety and security and society acceptance in the destination related to their sexual orientation has proved to be a major setback. The present study will encourage the service marketer and researcher to explore and identify the Indian gay

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men and women as a promising segment for tourism product promotion.

The researcher study fills one of the most significant limitations with limited research is available on Indian Gay men and Lesbians travel motivations and intentions to travel.

5.1. Limitation and Further research

Delimiting the limitations is the reason to explore the future opportunities with the research. The limitations of this study cause future recommendations.

Present study findings focus on the marketing perspective to provide a viable solution and understanding of LGBT minorities within India. Tough, the research is dedicated to LGBT minorities of Indian origin. In the near future can be seen with the more dedicated research work can be looked from inbound perspective with foreign nationals travelling to India.

Lesser number of lesbian participants is one of the limitations of the present study, and future studies will recommend minimizing the above limitation. The future research looks to have more dedicated research work happening in individual segments with more focussed work in the various areas of tourism like gastronomy, accommodation and activities for LGBT Minorities.

5.2. Implications

The unavailability of the research in the Indian context allowed working on the topic to explore the unexplored in the same context. To understand the unheard voice from the tourism marketing perspective, few travel companies have identified themselves with the focus on measuring the demand and providing services to both foreign and Indian gay men and women.

Some accommodation providers have also selected gay men and women as their target market to provide services at their accommodation units though the number is minimal. The accommodation units like to brand position themselves as the safe stay units meeting all the needs of the niche target audience from expressing one's identity freely to an opportunity to spend quality time with partner.

The various travel companies and accommodation providers need to join hands with various equal rights organizations for Gay men and lesbians to help them in making the community more aware and sensitive towards the issue.

Being largely unexplored from the marketing perspective with less or lack of knowledge about choice patterns of LGBT community travel agent's/ tours operators within India are not able to reap the benefits from the niche target market. With less knowledge and lack of understanding, it is difficult for gay and lesbian travelers to choose a destination of their choice or else make a wrong selection.

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