

what are the lesbian couples missing out on?



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featured op-ed by
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The gender pay disparity is what women have been dealing and struggling with since a long time, often individually. Little do we realise the collective impacts these gaps have when there are two women agglomerating their assets in a relationship.

A recent study conducted at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign revealed that there was a considerable difference in the housing choices of lesbian couples versus gay couples in the city of Des Moines. While male same sex couples tended to live in the posh and expensive areas, female same sex couples resorted to live in more cheaper and affordable places in town.

Yet, this pilot study could have been a fluke, to check which, parallel studies were conducted on some other cities including Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami and Fort Lauderdale, New York and San Francisco.

The study revealed that across all of these cities, both same sex couples organised themselves in a similar fashion: male couples in expensive areas and female couples in the more affordable parts of town.

This further elaborates to the kind of difference in access to facilities observed between these couples, ranging from access to better education, proximity to good healthcare facilities, and other such necessities essential for a conducive familial environment.

Existing policies on wages only entails a minimum wage, but nothing on a wage gap in all states, Iowa included. No capping of the maximum wage also entitles the employers to just

pay men more, while women could be paid minimum wage. The permutations and combinations of playing with the policies are endless. Worse if both of the genders are competing in a highly corporate environment where a lot is at stake including jobs as well as other dependent parameters including loan payments as well as insurances; not to mention entire families and livelihoods. A select few stand up against injustice and either get acknowledged, or have to either suffer or sue, none of which are easy choices to make.

So far, both research and movements have focussed on how individual women have been impacted by wage gaps, not considering how the impacts might gigantify with two women in a partnership; which is clearly visible in something as basic as the housing choice location.

In the case of Des Moines, Ankeny and Bloomfield/Allen have a high concentration of male same sex couples, while female same sex couples are distributed across the low income parts of the city.

How do we have a better tomorrow though? The least that can be done is to take small steps at local levels: creating awareness among focus groups, both LGBTQ and feminist groups and then starting off small with small towns taking the lead within their own boundaries, making equal pays the norm.

Eventually, we can all hope that a larger change shall be propelled to initiate an equalist atmosphere across the gender pay gap.

