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A Study on the Social Acceptance of the LGBT People

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This paper deals with the concept of right to equality with reference to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community. The LGBT communities all around the world have been in a constant battle against the discrimination they face on a daily basis. In the west the LGBT movement, had emerged “with and out of the women’s movements, foregrounded the idea of pleasure, the LGBT movement here really came into existence piggybacking on the AIDS crisis and remedial action. The prevalence of homosexuality is difficult to estimate for many reasons, including the associated stigma and social repression, the unrepresentative samples surveyed and the failure to distinguish desire, behaviour and identity. The researcher has discussed about nature of LGBT People, discrimination in the society, violation of their rights including fundamental rights and human rights. The researcher also tried to give focus on legal definition and its scope, lacunas, issues and challenges before LGBT minority people in India. To find the statistical relationship between acceptance and legal inclusiveness. The paper deals with the legal inclusiveness and social acceptance of the LGBT individuals and the impact of the respondents age group and their social acceptance of the LGBT people. To conclude attitudes of the people in the society has changed in such a manner to accept and support the LGBT individuals, provide them with education, hire them for employment and treat them equally. The sample size is 774. The researcher has used frequency, chi-square and correlation technique to find the results of the survey.

Keywords: LGBT – Social acceptance – employment – Family – NGO.

I. INTRODUCTION

The ‘LGBT’ acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. A lesbian is a woman attracted to another woman. Gay is used to denote men who are attracted to other men. Bisexual means that a person is attracted to more than one gender. A transgender person is someone whose gender identity differs from the one they were assigned at birth.

People in the LGBT community are fighting for equal rights and acceptance. Trans people, especially, face a lot of difficulty in finding acceptance. People in the LGBT community are

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looked down upon all the time. This is a major issue because discrimination against the LGBT community is highly prevalent. People's prejudices lead them to think that LGBT people are odd and very different.

Today, homosexuality and queer identities may be acceptable to more Indian youths than ever before but within the boundaries of families, homes and schools, acceptance still remains a constant struggle for LGBT people. I have heard of people coming out of the closet and declaring to their families that they are not the person their family expected them to be.

Every year, a huge number of LGBT people face huge issues related to violence, unemployment, discrimination, poverty and lack of healthcare. Prejudiced people have issues with the way people from the LGBT community lead their lives. These people, I believe, are being immature. There are still many places in India where people are not aware of what LGBT stands for, because they think those who are gay are not allowed to be a part of the family.

Barring any major upset, India is set for a historic Supreme Court ruling that will overturn the law that criminalizes gay sex. The British Raj ended in 1947, but India has ironically kept this policy, a relic of the rigid Victorian morality imposed on a country that had, at some points in its history, a more tolerant view of homosexuality. Famous erotic images on Khajuraho temple include women embracing other women and men displaying their genitals to each other. There are examples in ancient Indian epic poetry of same-sex depictions and unions by gods and goddesses.

Legally India has been making strides with respect to recognizing the rights of the LGBT community. The century old law, Section 377, was recently repealed to de-criminalize sexual orientation or relationship between two consenting adults of the same gender. The fundamental right to live and work with dignity was upheld. This landmark judgment is believed to have long-term impact, especially with companies which were worried about LGBT inclusion due to regulation issues. Equal opportunity and recognition of the fact that this preference is the right of the individual and within his or her personal space are the principles that the judgment was based on.

Objectives

The primary objective is to understand the legal inclusiveness and social acceptance of the LGBT individuals. The secondary objective is to study the impact of the respondents age group and their social acceptance of the LGBT people and to recommend the measures which can improve the standard of the social treatment of the LGBT individuals.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no association between the age group and hiring for employment and family accepts and supports LGBT individuals.

Ha: There is association between the age group and hiring for employment and family accepts and supports LGBT individuals.

Research Methodology:

Empirical approach is adopted for the study. Empirical research is based on observed and measured phenomena and hence provides the scientific framework for research. Review of literature revealed the research problem and the research design adopted for this study was descriptive design. Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group. Specific research objectives were defined and hypotheses were formulated. Data collection included both primary and secondary resources. Sampling technique used was convenience sampling method which is part of non-probability sampling. The data collected was coded and tabulated and was analysed using statistical computations. The sample size is 744. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and published information from journals, reports and newsletters were the secondary sources. The analysis was done by using SPSS 21 version. The analysis was carried out for demographic statistics such as gender, age, educational qualification, employment status, income levels and religion and hypothesis testing were done using cross tabulation.

Review of literature:

1. The author states that Coming out to family members, especially parents, is a major decision and hurdle in LGBT individuals. Once the individuals come out to families, the families may then have to go through the same stages of coming out to others.

2. The strongest relationship between LGBT acceptance and LGB-inclusive policies occurs within country contexts where public opinion impacts public policy (i.e., a free press, a strong tradition of the rule of law, and democratic regimes).

3. In democracies, LGBT social acceptance is strongly associated with legal inclusiveness. In anocracies, the relationship is weaker and the level of legal inclusiveness is not likely to be high even as acceptance increases. Within autocracies, LGB policy inclusion is not associated with LGBT acceptance.

4. The British attitudes Survey shows increasing popular acceptance of same sex partnerships, especially amongst younger people. Despite this mainstreaming of sexual diversity, there is ongoing marginalization of and stigma associated with sexual minorities.

5. In the eyes of LGBT adults, greater social acceptance has come as a result of more Americans knowing someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender as well as the efforts of high-profile public figures. A large majority (70%) says individuals simply knowing someone who is LGBT has helped a lot in terms of making society as a whole more accepting.

6. LGBT adults' perceptions of how society has evolved differ by age and sexual orientation, as do their personal experiences with discrimination. This section will look in depth at how LGBT adults view various Indians, how they perceive and experience discrimination, and how levels of social acceptance differ across groups of LGBT adults.

7. When it comes to social acceptance of gay men, gay men themselves are just as likely as lesbians and bisexuals to say there is a lot of social acceptance for their group. They are somewhat more likely than lesbians or bisexuals to say there is some social acceptance (and less likely to say there is only a little or no acceptance).

8. In this study, the respondents were asked about the various factors that may have contributed to increased acceptance of people who are LGBT. Individual relationships and the role of public figures are viewed as helpful things in terms of fostering acceptance. Fully seven-in-ten LGBT adults say people knowing someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender helps a lot, and 24% say this helps a little.

9. The study concludes that Some of them may feel that they are passing through a phase, and will soon get over it. They cannot share their feelings even with their parents or close friends due to the fear of rejection or disapproval. Some may feel that by revealing their feelings they may make their family members suffer unnecessarily.

10. While the survey of the general public found that, overall, the percentage of Americans who say homosexuality should be accepted by society increased from 47% to 60% over the last decade, opinions vary widely based on religious affiliation and practices. Among those who attend religious services once a week or more, those saying homosexuality should be accepted went from 33% a decade ago to 41% today.

II. ANALYSIS

Table 1.1: Frequency table for Age:

Age Group		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 26	415	53.6	53.6	53.6
	24 - 35	140	18.1	18.1	71.7
	36 - 49	173	22.4	22.4	94.1
	50 - 60	34	4.4	4.4	98.4
	Over 60	12	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	774	100.0	100.0	

Majority (415) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 18-26 years, followed by 173 respondents in the age group 36-49 years.

Table 1.2: Frequency Table for Gender:

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	382	49.4	49.4	49.4
	Male	385	49.7	49.7	99.1
	Others	7	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	774	100.0	100.0	

There was almost equal participation of male (382) and female (385) respondents in the survey while 7 respondents belonged to the LGBT category.

Table 1.3: Frequency table for Educational Qualification:

Educational Qualification		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Higher Secondary School Certificate	108	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Diploma	175	22.6	22.6	36.6
	Bachelor's degree	427	55.2	55.2	91.7
	Master's degree	64	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	774	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the respondents (427) were graduates holding Bachelor's degree while 175 respondents were diploma holders. 108 respondents completed Higher Secondary School Certificate.

Table 1.4: Frequency table for the question: How comfortable would you feel if your children studied with LGBT individuals in school or college?

Question		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Highly uncomfortable	153	19.8
	Slightly uncomfortable	263	34.0
	Neutral	194	25.1
	Slightly comfortable	122	15.8
	Very comfortable	42	5.4
	Total	774	100.0

Majority of the responders (53.8%) feel uncomfortable if their children studied with LGBT individuals in school or college, while 25% remained neutral in this aspect.

Table 1.5: Frequency table for the question: How comfortable will you feel renting your house to LGBT individuals?

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Highly uncomfortable	134	17.3
	Slightly uncomfortable	168	21.7
	Neutral	234	30.2
	Slightly comfortable	157	20.3
	Very comfortable	81	10.5
	Total	774	100.0

39% of the respondents felt uncomfortable in renting their house to LGBT individuals while 30.8% felt comfortable in renting the same to LGBT individuals.

Hypothesis

H1: There is significant association between age and attitude towards hiring LGBT individuals at workplace.

H0: There is no significant association between the age and attitude towards hiring LGBT individuals at workplace

Table 2.1: Cross tabulation for “How comfortable will you feel renting your house to LGBT individuals:

	11. How comfortable will you feel renting your house to LGBT individuals?					Total
	Highly uncomfortable	Slightly uncomfortable	Neutra	Slightly comfortable	Very comfortable	

		le	le	l	e	e	
2. You r Age	18 – 26	94	94	112	81	34	415
	24 – 35	8	49	51	26	6	140
	36 – 49	18	19	53	43	40	173
	50 – 60	9	6	12	6	1	34
	Ove r 60	5	0	6	1	0	12
Total		134	168	234	157	81	774

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	69.135 ^a	16	.003
Likelihood Ratio	72.587	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.727	1	.189
N of Valid Cases	774		

The value of the test statistic is 69.135. Because the test statistic is based on a 5x5 cross

tabulation table, the degrees of freedom (df) for the test statistic is $df=(R-1) * (C-1) = (5-1) * (5-1) = 4*4=16$. The corresponding p-value of the test statistic is $p < 0.05$.

Since the p-value is smaller than our chosen significance level ($\alpha < 0.05$), reject the null hypothesis. Rather, we conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest the association between age and agreement towards hiring LGBT individuals at workplace.

It can be inferred from the results that there is association between age and attitude towards hiring LGBT individuals at workplace ($X^2(16) = 69.135, p < 0.05$). Those in the age group 36 - 49 years feel more comfortable in hiring LGBT individuals at workplaces than the other age groups.

Hypothesis

H1: There is significant association between gender and agreement to the statement that their family accepts and supports LGBT individuals.

H0: There is no significant association between gender and agreement to the statement that their family accepts and supports LGBT individuals.

Table 3.1: Cross tabulation for the level of agreement to the statement, “My family accepts and supports LGBT people.”

		13. Indicate your level of agreement to the statement, “My family accepts and supports LGBT people.”					Total
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
3. Your Gender	Female	16	68	134	90	74	382
	Male	51	63	117	88	66	385
	Others	1	2	3	0	1	7
Total		68	133	254	178	141	774

Table 3.2: Chi-Square test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.665 ^a	8	.004
Likelihood Ratio	25.179	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.636	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	774		

The value of the test statistic is 22.655. Because the test statistic is based on a 3x5 cross tabulation table, the degrees of freedom (df) for the test statistic is $df=(R-1) * (C-1) = (3-1) * (5-1) = 2*4=8$. The corresponding p-value of the test statistic is $p < 0.05$.

Since the p-value is smaller than our chosen significance level ($\alpha < 0.05$), reject the null hypothesis. Rather, we conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest the association between gender and agreement to the statement that their family accepts and supports LGBT individuals.

It can be inferred from the results that there is association between gender and agreement to the statement that their family accepts and supports LGBT individuals ($\chi^2(8) = 22.655, p < 0.05$). Female respondents agree more that their families accept and support LGBT individuals than male respondents.

III. DISCUSSION

From the above tables it is seen that there is association between the age and social acceptance of LGBT individuals in hiring them for employment and there are many positive responses to the statement, "My family accepts and supports LGBT". One of the examples to prove that people are hiring LGBT people to employment is in Mumbai LGBT citizens are driving taxies, is a sign of the increasing acceptance of the marginalised community in India's commercial capital. A project launched by Wings Travels and community organisation Humsafar Trust will train up to 300 members of the LGBT community to drive cabs in the city. The service, to be called Wings Rainbow, may then be expanded nationwide. "The LGBT community, especially transgenders, have very few economic opportunities because of the huge stigma that they still face," said Director of programmes at Humsafar

Trust in Mumbai. “We hope that this will set the ball rolling and that it will open up other such opportunities for them.”

From marketing campaigns, core company values and public support of Equality, to hiring and health care benefits—corporate America can be a champion for LGBTQ equality when they demonstrate their true commitment. Whether that’s through public support, partnerships with LGBTQ organizations, policy support or a commitment to a safe and accepting workplace, it’s important to recognize what companies are truly advocating for LGBTQ rights, especially if they identify as LGBTQ and want to work for a company that is going to welcome and support LGBT. The following companies show equality in hiring LGBT individuals to the employment are Uber, Baker McKenzie, Google, Apple, Infosys, Accenture, IKEA Group, IBM, Microsoft, Simmons & Simmons LLP, Paypal, Gap Inc., Coca Cola, HP, Salesforce, EY, Hyatt, Johnson & Johnson, AT & T, Slack, and Target.

The right to life and personal liberty includes right to privacy. The Constitution of India does not directly provide the right to privacy as a part of the fundamental right but it has been emphasised time to time by the Supreme Court in in some cases therefore it is considered as a part of fundamentals rights. Hence right to privacy should not be violated by the state under any circumstances.

Lack of communication and misunderstanding between parents and their LGBT children increases family conflict. These problems with communication and lack of understanding about sexual orientation and gender identity can lead to fighting and family disruption that can result in an LGBT adolescent being removed from or forced out of the home. No matter how painful your coming out is, you can't force people to change their minds about who LGBT individuals are. For parents of a certain generation, we can see that – given time and access to educational resources – people do adjust to and accept diverse sexualities.

The most prevalent limitation of this study included sample size, lack of diversity, and centralized location of participants. Some respondents did not open up and talk freely about the LGBT and their opinion about them.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

1. Regular and focused sensitization programs to enable individuals to overcome their inherent biases and homophobic ideas. Development of policies that are gender-neutral and focused on zero-tolerance towards discrimination.

2. Company leaders need to demonstrate how they value the individuals for their performance and not due to their gender identity or sexual orientation.

3. The legislation should enact laws to provide equal treatment of LGBT individuals in all fields of social life like place to live, health care, education, employment opportunities, security and other aspects.

4. The people of all age group should be provided education in such a way that they accept and support LGBT people in their family.

5. People who are more religious should be remembered of the fact that during earlier days the famous erotic images on Khajuraho temple include women embracing other women and men displaying their genitals to each other. Which makes it clearer that LGBT individuals are not against the religionalism.

V. CONCLUSION

Although homosexuality has a long history in India, the gay movement is relatively nascent. Until recently, most homosexuals in India did not have many social and cultural avenues to express their sexuality. This is changing now, thanks to greater awareness and education.

The social workers and other professionals have to better support members of the LGBT community and their families, it is important that we bridge the gap on how we as a society view family structure. We need to provide more diverse literature on family structure for both children and adults. By providing more information, there is a higher rate of breaking down the hetero-normative perspective on what a family should look like, providing recognition to identities, and eliminating unconscious biases from people who are unaware of various lifestyles.

To conclude, it may be said that the research focused on the study of gays and lesbians in Indian context. It tried to find out their social and cultural profile with special emphasis on their economic status and their interactions with other segments of society. The research endeavoured to peep into their personality traits to find out any angularities or variations from other segments of society. It studied their life style and leisure patterns to have a better understanding of the homosexuals as well as to bring out any deviations. The research encompassed the human rights perspective as well as the legal status of homosexuals. At present, the whole situation is in a flux moving towards dwindling opposition, more acceptance and assertive nature of gay initiatives.
