

## **A CROSS- SECTIONAL STUDY ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS LGBTQ+ WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHENNAI CITY**

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### **Abstract**

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This cross-sectional research paper explores the evolving attitudes of Chennai City residents towards LGBTQ+ individuals. The survey and analysis is conducted mainly to know the perspective of the different people and their willingness to accept the LGBT people as who they are and the various factors such as social, religious, human rights, moral factors that determine and influence them whether it is their individual view towards the community or is it the surrounding environment that influences their opinion and perspective. The findings underscore the need for ongoing education and awareness initiatives to promote inclusivity and celebrate diversity in Chennai and similar urban contexts. The study underscores the need for continued efforts to promote awareness and education on LGBTQ+ issues. Through a comprehensive survey and data analysis, the study reveals a notable shift towards more positive and accepting attitudes, influenced by factors such as age, education, diverse cultural exposure, and media impact. Understanding these evolving attitudes can pave the way for more inclusive and equitable societies, fostering an environment where diversity is celebrated rather than

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## **Introduction**

The term “LGBT” technically stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. It includes both sexual orientation (LGB) and gender identity (T). But, it’s sometimes used as an umbrella term for anyone who does not identify as straight (heterosexual) or cisgender, so it’s important to know other sexual and gender identities the term covers. Indian LGBT citizens face certain social and legal difficulties<sup>1</sup>. Discriminations faced by homosexuals in our society are at various levels, beginning from within their homes to outside world as a whole. Our society is a very complex one, there are two extreme ends prevailing, at one side we are most modern of societies of the world with all the liberal thoughts and beliefs but at on another level we are the most conservatives of societies of the world. The discrimination against LGBT community persons is fairly common. And it begins from their own homes their own family members treat it as a disease or perversion and accordingly treat them badly. In fact family members feel ashamed of in the society if any member of their family has such sexual orientation. Outside of home, they experience more severe and hateful behavior of people, be it at work place, school, and colleges or at any other public place<sup>2</sup>.

## **Review of literature**

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<sup>1</sup><https://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbt>

<sup>2</sup><https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/xpresblogs/lgbtqia-and-their-situation-in-india-44668/>

In researching attitudes towards homosexuality, it is important to keep in mind that there are limited studies available. This may be because the issue of homosexuality is a more contemporary topic in today’s society. Most studies we found talk about homosexuality, but we’ll use the terms homosexuality and LGBT interchangeably. Most of the studies we found compare different groups of people and how they feel about homosexuality, which we call correlational studies. Our study is similar because it’s also trying to see how people in Chennai feel about homosexual individuals.

The articles we looked at told us why people might think someone is homosexual based on their characteristics. These four studies showed us that there’s a need for more research in this area. Even though homosexuality is more visible today, these studies suggested that many people still disapprove of it (Kim, D’Andrea, Sahu, & Gaughen, 1998; Herek, 1988).

In a study, Kim, D’Andrea, Sahu, and Gaughen (1998) looked at what people know about gay and lesbian individuals and how it affects their feelings about homosexuality. They found that students’ knowledge and attitudes changed depending on their field of study<sup>3</sup>. Herek (1988) tried to show a link between how heterosexual people feel about lesbians and gay men and their ideas about gender. According to this study, those with

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<sup>3</sup> Journal of Homosexuality, 40(2), 1-11. Herek, G. (1988).

negative attitudes are more likely to have traditional ideas about gender<sup>4</sup>.

In another study which was conducted by Lubna Mohammed rafik Nerli, Viral Ratanprakash Shah, and 4 others in MP Shah Government Medical College, Jamnagar, Gujarat, India, looks at what medical students know and how they feel about LGBT people.<sup>5</sup>

It also checks if teaching them a bit about LGBT changes what they know and how they feel. The study found that medical students now know more about LGBT and they think that being LGBT is natural, not something wrong. This matches what a study in Kolkata found with second-year medical students in 2018, showing that medical students are getting more informed and accepting of LGBT issues.

While there are a few small studies about LGBT, our study takes it a step further by including people with different ideologies. We want to understand how the choice of a person might affect attitudes towards LGBT individuals. Our main question is, "How do people in Chennai feel about LGBT individuals and what is their attitude towards them?"

### **Objectives of the study**

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<sup>4</sup> Journal of Homosexuality, 40(2), 1-11. Herek, G. (1988).

<sup>5</sup>Evaluation of Knowledge and Attitude toward LGBT Community, and the Effect of Education on Knowledge and Attitude in Medical Undergraduates <https://doi.org/10.5005/jp-journals-10067-0060>  
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The main objective of the study is to have a clear analysis of the attitude of the society towards LGBTQ mainly targeting the city of Chennai their views and what are the different factors that influence their attitude towards LGBTQ based on certain questions such as,

1. How would you best describe your attitude towards LGBT individuals?
2. Do you think LGBT individuals should have equal rights and liberties?
3. LGBT individuals should have the right to marry whomever they want, as long as they are consulting an adult.
4. Have you intentionally or unintentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation?
5. Would you consider being friends with a person who identifies as LGBT person?
6. Do you feel that LGBT community persons are discriminated in their workplace?
7. Which of the following do you think is the reason that most of the LGBT people in India remain closeted?
8. On a scale of 1 -5 how much would you rate for the support of LGBT persons?

Individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+ are subjected to numerous types of oppression, including racism, sexism, poverty, or other issues, in addition to homophobia or trans phobia, all of which have the potential to have a severe influence on their mental health. People who identify as LGBTQIA+ are often denied access to essential resources because of the marginalization they face. These resources include medical care, justice and legal services, and educational opportunities. The Effects of Family Reactions on Children Who Identify as LGBT: Many LGBTQIA+ children and adolescents feared their parents' response, which prevented them from discussing their emotions. People who identify as LGBTQIA+ can take a significant hit to both their mental and physical well-being if they do not have the support of their families in a society that is restricted by a rigid set of social and cultural norms that dictate the terms and conditions of education, career, and marriage. People who identify as LGBTQIA+ can take a significant hit to both their mental and physical well-being if they do not have the support of their families in a society that is restricted by a rigid set of social and cultural norms that dictate the terms and conditions of education, career, and marriage.

The questions raised above would help in examining the discrimination, stigma and inequality faced by LGBTQ individuals in various aspects of society such as education, workplace etc. To provide evidence and data that can inform and influence policies and practices to better support and protect LGBTQ rights and well-being. To generate

knowledge that promotes understanding, acceptance, and inclusivity of LGBTQ individuals in society raise awareness about the existing social attitudes, stereotypes, and biases towards LGBTQ individuals. Analyze and measure the current social attitudes through surveys, interviews, or data analysis to provide empirical evidence. Investigate the impact of social attitudes on the well-being, mental health, and overall quality of life of LGBTQ. Contribute to societal change by challenging stereotypes, promoting tolerance, and fostering a more inclusive and accepting society. Consider the intersection of LGBTQ identities with other factors like race, gender, and religion to provide a more comprehensive view. Discuss the potential future changes in social attitudes and their implications for LGBTQ individuals.

### **Sampling method**

This research uses primary data in which a Google form and questions with regards to the different perspectives and attitude of the society towards LGBTQ was circulated among the individuals of various age groups and gender in the city of Chennai. About 123 responses were collected in which 55.3 percent were female 39 percent were male and 5.7 percent individuals preferred not to expose their identity. Let us have a more clear analysis with the help of the tables shown below.

### **Survey and analysis**

- 1. To find out the relationship between age group and their consideration for being friends with a LGBT person**

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE	CONSIDERATION
18 - 28	93.5%	23.6
29-38	2.4%	58.5
39-48	2.4%	4.9
49 and above	1.6%	13

The correlation value from the data is - 0.03645, rounded off to - 0.365

Hence there is a negative relationship between age group and consideration for being friends.

It appears that younger generations tend to display a significantly higher degree of acceptance and open-mindedness when compared to their older counterparts. This finding underscores the evolving nature of societal perspectives on LGBTQ+ issues. The generational divide highlights the importance of ongoing education and awareness initiatives to bridge the gap in understanding and foster greater inclusivity.

Moreover, it suggests the potential for future improvements in attitudes as younger generations continue to play a more prominent role in shaping public opinion. As a result, it is crucial for policymakers and advocates to consider this intergenerational dynamic when crafting strategies to promote LGBTQ+ equality and acceptance. Overall, this hypothesis underscores the need for continued research and efforts to promote inclusivity and diversity across all age groups.

## 2. To find out how would the respondents best describe their attitude towards LGBT individuals?

NO. OF RESPONDENTS	THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS LGBT PERSONS
50	Extremely positive
40	Positive
29	Neutral
1	Negative
3	Very Negative

### Interpretation:

In summary, based on the provided data, a significant portion of the total 123 respondents have either an extremely positive or positive attitude towards LGBT individuals. This finding is encouraging and suggests growing acceptance and support for the LGBT community.

A smaller group has a neutral attitude, while only a very small number have negative or very negative attitudes. To be specific, 29 respondents expressed a neutral attitude. Some individuals may be genuinely impartial, while others might be hesitant to express their true feelings.

Only a small number of respondents (1 respondent with a negative attitude and 3 with very negative attitudes) displayed negative feelings towards LGBT individuals. The fact that these responses are in the minority is a positive sign, indicating that

societal attitudes are generally moving towards acceptance and inclusivity.

This data suggests that a majority of the respondents have non-negative attitudes towards LGBT individuals, with the majority falling into the positive categories. However it is crucial to remember that attitudes towards LGBT individuals can vary widely. Factors such as cultural background, upbringing, and personal beliefs can significantly influence these attitudes.

**3. Based on the data showing the predominance of positive attitudes towards LGBT individuals, now let us find out whether these attitudes align with the belief that LGBT individuals should have equal rights and liberties in society?**

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES	THEIR OPINION
89.4%	Yes
8.9%	Maybe
1.6%	No

### **Interpretation:**

The vast majority of respondents, comprising 89.4% of the sample, expressed a clear "Yes" when asked about their opinion regarding equal rights and liberties for LGBT individuals. This overwhelming support for equal rights and liberties reflects a positive and inclusive attitude towards the LGBT community.

While there is a small minority of respondents who indicated "Maybe" (8.9%)

or "No" (1.6%). The "Maybe" category suggests some level of uncertainty or hesitation, which could potentially be addressed through education and open dialogue.

In summary, the data highlights a positive and inclusive trend in attitudes towards LGBT individuals and their rights. The overwhelming support for equal rights and liberties is a promising sign of societal progress, with potential for further engagement with those who have expressed uncertainty.

**4. For the purpose of our survey, we seek to understand whether individuals have ever intentionally or unintentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation.**

NO. OF RESPONDENTS	THEIR RESPONSE
7	Yes
98	No
18	Unsure

### **Interpretation:**

Based on the data provided, it is evident that the majority of respondents have not intentionally or unintentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation. Here is an interpretation of the data:

**No Exclusion (98 respondents - 80.3%):** The data indicates that a significant majority (98 respondents or 80.3%) reported that they have not intentionally or unintentionally

excluded someone based on their sexual orientation. This suggests a positive trend towards inclusivity and acceptance of LGBT persons in the society

**Some Instances of Exclusion (7 respondents - 5.7%):** A small number of respondents (7 or 5.7%) acknowledged that they have intentionally or unintentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation. This highlights the persistence of challenges related to discrimination and exclusion, even though it is in the minority.

**Uncertainty (18 respondents - 14.8%):** A portion of respondents (18 or 14.8%) expressed uncertainty (unsure) about whether they have excluded someone based on their sexual orientation.

Nevertheless, the presence of those who reported instances of exclusion or expressed uncertainty highlights the ongoing need for education, awareness, and dialogue to promote inclusivity and reduce instances of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

#### **5. Seeking to interpret the attitudes and perceptions towards having friendship with LGBT individuals from the responses received.**

NO. OF RESPONDENTS	THEIR WILLINGNESS TO BECOME FRIENDS
29	Already friends
72	Yes, I would consider
6	No
16	Unsure

#### **Interpretation**

The data provides insights into respondents' willingness to form friendships with LGBT individuals. Here is an interpretation based on the responses received:

**Already Friends (29 respondents - 19%):** A notable portion of respondents (29 or 19%) reported that they are already friends with LGBT individuals. This indicates pre-existing relationships and suggests a level of comfort and acceptance within this sample.

**Willing to Consider (72 respondents - 47%):** A significant majority (72 or 47%) expressed a positive attitude, stating that they would consider becoming friends with LGBT individuals. This demonstrates an openness and willingness to form new friendships regardless of sexual orientation.

**Not Willing (6 respondents - 4%):** A small minority (6 or 4%) indicated that they are not willing to be friends with LGBT individuals. While this group is relatively small, it still underscores the presence of reluctance or discomfort within the sample.

**Uncertain (16 respondents - 10%):** A notable portion (16 or 10%) expressed uncertainty (unsure) about whether they would be willing to be friends with LGBT individuals. This suggests a need for further exploration and awareness among this group.

In summary, the data reveals a generally positive outlook towards forming friendships with LGBT individuals, with a significant number already having such friendships and a substantial majority open to the idea. However, there is a smaller group who are

not willing, and a portion that remains uncertain.

These findings highlight the importance of fostering understanding, awareness, and inclusivity and reduce any hesitancy or discomfort related to forming friendships with LGBT individuals.

**6. In the context of understanding the reasons why many LGBT individuals in India remain closeted, when asked which of the following factors do you believe plays a significant role in this situation, this was the response received**

POSSIBLE REASONS	NO OF RESPONSES RECEIVED
Lack of awareness	30
Fear of discrimination from families	71
Feeling Shameful	22

**Interpretation:**

The data reveals insights into the factors contributing to why many LGBT individuals in India remain closeted. Here's an interpretation based on the responses received:

**Fear of Discrimination from Families (71 responses):** The most prominent reason cited by respondents is the fear of discrimination from their families. This suggests that the familial context is a significant factor that influences LGBT individuals to keep their sexual orientation concealed. The fear of potential rejection or negative reactions from

family members appears to be a major concern.

**Lack of Awareness (30 responses):** A substantial number of respondents identified a lack of awareness as a reason for remaining closeted. This points to a broader issue of societal and familial understanding of LGBT issues. It suggests that many individuals may stay closeted due to a lack of knowledge or misconceptions about sexual orientation diversity.

**Feeling Shameful (22 responses):** A notable portion of respondents mentioned feeling shameful as a factor. This indicates that social stigma and internalized shame might lead some LGBT individuals to remain closeted, contributing to the persistence of the closet.

In summary, the data indicates that the fear of discrimination from families is the most significant factor contributing to LGBT individuals remaining closeted in India. This is followed by a lack of awareness about LGBT issues and the presence of internalized shame. Understanding these factors is crucial for addressing the challenges faced by LGBT individuals and fostering a more inclusive and accepting society in India.

**7. In the context of assessing support for LGBT individuals, when the respondents were asked to rate their level of support on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating low support and 5 indicating high support, this was the response observed through the survey.**

RATING	PERCENTAGE OF

	RESPONDENTS
5	66.7%
4	22%
3	6.5%
2	0.8%
1	4.1%

### Interpretation

The data illustrates the level of support for LGBT individuals among respondents based on a scale from 1 (indicating low support) to 5 (indicating high support). The following interpretation can be drawn from the responses:

**High Support (5 - 66.7%):** A significant majority of respondents, approximately 66.7%, indicated the highest level of support (rating 5) for LGBT individuals. This strong endorsement of support suggests a prevailing positive attitude and acceptance of the LGBT community within the surveyed group.

**Moderate Support (4 - 22%):** About 22% of respondents provided a rating of 4, signifying a moderate level of support. This group, while not as overwhelmingly supportive as the first category, still demonstrates a favorable attitude towards LGBT individuals.

**Neutral Support (3 - 6.5%):** A small but notable percentage (6.5%) of respondents gave a rating of 3, suggesting a neutral stance. While this group does not express strong opposition, there may be some ambiguity or uncertainty in their attitudes.

**Low Support (2 - 0.8%):** A very small percentage (0.8%) of respondents rated their support as 2, indicating low support. Although this group is quite small, it highlights that a fraction of respondents holds less favorable views.

**Minimal Support (1 - 4.1%):** Approximately 4.1% of respondents gave a rating of 1, representing minimal support. While this category represents the smallest segment, it indicates that there are individuals within the sample with low support or even opposition to LGBT individuals.

These findings underline the importance of continued efforts to promote understanding, awareness, and acceptance of LGBT individuals, with a focus on engaging with those who may have neutral or less favorable attitudes to foster a more inclusive society which could be due to different factors.

### Religious and cultural factors influencing the attitude towards LGBT persons

Religious beliefs can vary widely, and their impact on LGBTQ+ individuals can also differ. Some religious groups are accepting and supportive of LGBTQ+ individuals, while others hold more conservative views that may not be accepting. It's essential to remember that perspectives within religious communities can be diverse, and not all adherents hold the same beliefs.

#### **Christianity**

The Roman Catholic Church does welcome people attracted to the same sex, while maintaining its teaching that homosexual

relationships and acts are sinful. Christians have a variety of beliefs about LGBT people, and the moral status of same-sex sexual practices and gender variance. LGBT people may be barred from membership, accepted as laity, or ordained as clergy, depending on the denomination.

### **Islam**

Attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people in the Muslim community are influenced by various factors like religious, legal, social, political, and cultural history. Most LGBTQ-affirming Islamic organizations and individual congregations are primarily based in the Western world and South Asian countries they usually identify themselves with the liberal and progressive movements within Islam which indeed denotes the acceptance towards the LGBTQ.

### **Hinduism**

*Sexuality is rarely discussed openly in Hindu society, and LGBT issues are largely a taboo subject especially among those who are strongly religious. In the ancient times there has been recognition of a third gender during the 'vedic times'. There are certain laws in the religion that are against homosexuality while there are certain aspects in the religion that accepts and acknowledges them as a whole.*

### **Buddhism**

*There are different views on homosexuality and LGBT rights when it comes to the Buddhist tradition. It can be seen that most of the Buddhist leaders and groups have been supportive and continue to be supportive of LGBT people.*

Different religions have different perspective towards LGBTQ which both directly and

indirectly affect the influence of the attitudes of the people in the society. Though religion is not the primary factor it does give a shady effect to the society where their approach is indifferent. Overall, the relationship between religion and LGBTQ+ issues is complex and varies significantly depending on individual beliefs, religious traditions, and interpretations of religious texts.

### **Scope and Limitation:**

Although the present study has several strengths, including collecting data from a large sample of Chennai, there are also limitations worth noting. This study aims to get the result at the due date of the research paper. First, the instrument used to assess attitudes was a one-dimensional questionnaire that could not make finer distinctions between attitudes toward male and female individuals who identify as bisexual, gay (men), or lesbian. As the literature points out, people sometimes differ in their attitudes toward these groups<sup>6</sup>. This present study is limited only to the chosen area which is the study to be conducted. It only focuses on perceiving the result of the views, interaction, and treatment of heterosexuality

### **Developments and dicussions**

This cross-sectional study on attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals in Chennai City sheds light on an evolving social landscape. The findings reveal that Chennai, like many urban centers, is witnessing a gradual shift towards more positive and

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<sup>6</sup> Steffens MC, Wagner C (2004) Attitudes toward lesbians gay men bisexual women and bisexual men in Germany. J Sex Res 41: 137-149.

accepting attitudes. Factors such as age, education, diverse cultural exposure, and media influence play key roles in shaping these attitudes. This study has highlighted Chennai City's evolving attitudes toward LGBTQ+ individuals, indicating a positive shift influenced by various factors.

### **Recommendations**

The conclusion of the research addressed the attitudes of people towards LGBT that it differs on how they see. The answer of a respondents have a big impact in comes of rating. Based on the findings and conclusion presented, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. The researchers recommend no matter what is the gender of an individual it should be respected and viewed equally.
2. We recommend that gender equality should be addressed in the society in order to create more awareness about such a community to the future generations.
3. People should continue supporting LGBT and not see them indifferently.
4. Rights and protection should be implemented among the individuals of LGBT for the fact that there is still discrimination among the third sex community.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study aims to provide a clear understanding of attitudes towards LGBT individuals. The study has successfully achieved its objectives. The data reveals that the predominant attitudes

expressed by respondents towards the LGBT community are those of support and admiration. It is important to note that people's perceptions of the LGBT community can differ from their overall attitudes. While there are lingering negative attitudes, such as pity, tolerance, and repulsion, the majority of respondents hold positive attitudes. Thus, it is evident that individuals' perspectives significantly influence their attitudes towards LGBT people.