

Acceptance of homosexuality among Indian youth

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to know how homosexuality was perceived by Indian youth and in order to understand how it is to be a homosexual in Indian society. Homosexuality is the behavior where individuals of the same sex are attracted to or have sexual relations with each other. Even though homosexuality has been decriminalized in 2018, it still remains controversial topic in India. The basic right to marriage is currently being considered in courts, but the society's tolerance does not seem to have changed. The aim of this research is to determine the attitude of the Indian youth homosexuality. Methods: A mixed exploratory research including a qualitative interview and a survey was conducted. Indians, mainly within the age group of 18-35 participated in the study of which there are 66 females and 17 males. It was found that younger Indians were more accepting of homosexual people. Among the participants, other factors such as religion and community distinguished their level of acceptance and discrimination. Result: The problems faced by homosexuals can be tackled by giving proper education and awareness, which will help to normalize the Indian society's view on homosexuality.

Keywords: *Homosexuals, Homosexuality*

Homosexuality is a type of sexual orientation characterized by sexual desire or romantic love exclusively or almost exclusively for people who identify as being of the same sex. It also refers to a person's sense of identity based,

According to research, it was around 3102 B.C. (during the Vedic Age) that homosexuality or non-normative sexual identity was recognized as "*Tritiya prakriti*", or the third nature in India. It has been extensively explained in Rigveda: The carvings and depictions in the famous temples of Khajuraho, Konark and Puri are proof of the LGBTQ community in ancient India. India is also the birthplace of Vatsanaya's Kamasutra that includes a complete chapter referring to homosexuality. The noble class of the Mughals engaged in both homosexuality and pederasty. The British Raj (crown rule by British) criminalized sexual activities "against the order of nature", including homosexual activities, under Section 377

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of the Indian Penal Code, which entered into force in 1861. It was similarly instituted throughout most of the British Empire.

After independence, on Nov 26, 1949, the right to equality was implemented under Article 14 but homosexuality remained a criminal offence. This law was struck down by the 2009 Delhi High Court decision *Naz Foundation v. Govt. of NCT of Delhi*, which found Section 377 and other legal prohibitions against same-sex conduct to be in direct violation of fundamental rights provided by the Indian Constitution. On 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court of India invalidated part of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code making homosexuality legal in India. Transgender people in India are allowed to change their legal gender post-sex reassignment surgery under legislation passed in 2019, and have a constitutional right to register themselves under a third gender. Additionally, some states protect hijras, a traditional third gender population in South Asia, through housing programs, and offer welfare benefits, pension schemes, free operations in government hospitals, as well as other programs designed to assist them. However, same-sex marriages are not legally recognized in India nor are same-sex couples offered limited rights such as a civil union or a domestic partnership. As of October, 2020, a PIL filed by four members of the LGBTQIA+ community is being heard by Delhi High Court which asserted that the Hindu Marriage Act only specified marriage as a union between two Hindus and not one between a man and a woman.

Today, India has a population of about 2.5 million openly homosexual individuals, but the vast majority of Indian households still reject homosexuals. There is a popular perception that newer generations are more open-minded, and so homophobia is non-existent in young communities. Our survey aims to test how true that is in today's Indian youth population.

Definition of the key words

Homosexuals- A person who is sexually attracted to people of their own sex.

Homosexuality- The quality or characteristic of being sexually attracted solely to people of one's own sex.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The homosexual community in India is becoming increasingly visible and becoming more vocal in their demands. The landmark judgment of Delhi High court, which declared that section 377 of the Indian penal code came into force in British Colonial period(1858-1947) violates fundamental rights of LGBTQIA+ Community Guaranteed by constitution, was in keeping with international, human rights and secular and legal trend. Even though in India, so far no such progressive changes have taken place regarding social and legal recognition and homosexuals remain victim of violence in different forms supported by state and society.

The shift in the understanding of homosexuality from sin, crime and pathology to a normal variant of human sexuality occurred in late 20th century. The American psychiatric Association, in 1973, and the WHO, in 1992, officially accepted it's nor Variant status.

Human sexuality is complex. The acceptance of distinction between desire and behavior and identity acknowledges the multidimensional nature of sexuality. The fact that these dimensions may not be always congruent in individual suggests complexity of the issues. The prevalence of homosexuality is difficult to estimate for many reasons, including the associated stigma and social repression, the unrepresentative samples surveyed and the

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failure to distinguish desire , behavior and identity .The figured vary between age groups , religions and cultures.

The history of sexual rights advocacy helped increase the activism around section 377 and has allowed LGBT groups to become more visible and outspoken in India in the past eight years. HIV and AIDS have been a further spur to this increased activity. As Kole notes, international funding for HIV prevention and treatment programs soared from US\$ 19m to 608 m between 1999 and 2005. International donors encouraged education on sexual rights and outreach to hitherto marginalized groups, and the funds triggers the formation of numerous NGO's.

The results of this increased activity are evident in India today. Popular Bollywood films for the first time Begum to include gay storylines. Queer film festivals have thrived. Media coverage for LGBT issues have become increasingly favorable and led to growing public demand and discussions. Every year thousands match in gay parades in cities such as New Delhi and Kolkata.

Very little is known about the practice of homosexuality in contemporary India. According to Ashok Row kavi a self-claimed homosexual activist, the number of exclusively or predominantly homosexual men in India may be over 50 million. His estimate is however based on the assumption made by Kinsley in America.

In recent times in the west, there has been a shift seeing alternative sexualities as sinful criminal activity. In some countries for example in UK, homosexual was a crime until 1967 and then came a change in the age of consent and civil partnerships, which have produced a grudging acceptance. Various universities run researches in queer theory. the word of abuse queer has been re-appointed as a symbol of pride and points towards a sexuality which is more fluid.

Satyanarayan Rao and Avasti have outlined a road map for sexual medicine from a psychiatric perspective. All these authors indicate a change in the views of psychiatry. As agents if social change, Indian psychiatrists need to lead the change in persuading social and alternative patterns of sexual desire. (Oct-12-2016).

Rationale

After reviewing the literature, researcher found that there are no studies regarding the acceptance of homosexuality among Indian youth. So that the researcher is trying to research in this topic.

METHODOLOGY

Problem: How acceptable Homosexuality is among Indians?

Objective: To find the attitude towards homosexuality among Indian youth.

Variables

Independent variable: Gender

Dependent variable: Acceptance of homosexuality.

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Research Design

The study used mixed research design. It followed sequential procedure, in which researchers expand the findings with one another. It begins with a qualitative method for exploratory purposes using an interview about opinions on homosexuality.

Research Sample

Purposive Sampling Technique was used for this study. The study comprises of 83 participants at age range from 18 to 38 from different parts of India out of which 17 were males and 66 were females. The sample belongs to different gender, religious family types and area of residence.

Sampling criteria

- **Inclusion criteria:** Those who have given consent for participation.
- **Exclusion criteria:** Those who have a physical disability and those who have mental retardation

Tools

The following method was administered to each participant in order to collect required information.

- Semi-structured questionnaire prepared by researcher.

Procedure

The purpose of this study has explained to participants via online and their willingness to participate in the study ascertained. The first step being that a rapport was established by participants and the researcher through social media, after this each participant were individually educated about the purpose of the study as well as they were informed about the confidentiality of their purpose. Finally, semi structured questionnaire of 15 items were given to sample through online proper instructions one after another. The participants were not asked to disclose any of their personal information.

Ethical issues

- Informed consent of each and every participant was acquired
- Confidentiality of the response was maintained.
- The data collected will be solely used for research purpose.

RESULTS

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The aim of the study is to know how Homosexuality is perceived by Indian youth and in order to be able to understand how it is to be a homosexual in Indian society. The study consisted of 83 teenagers out of which 17 were boys and 66 were girls. The tabular analysis is given below.

Table 1.1 Participants Response to Question Number 1

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	22
Agree	21
Neutral	19
Disagree	10
Strongly Disagree	10

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Figure 1.1 Participants Response to Question Number 1

1. Homosexuality is not unnatural and immoral.

83 responses

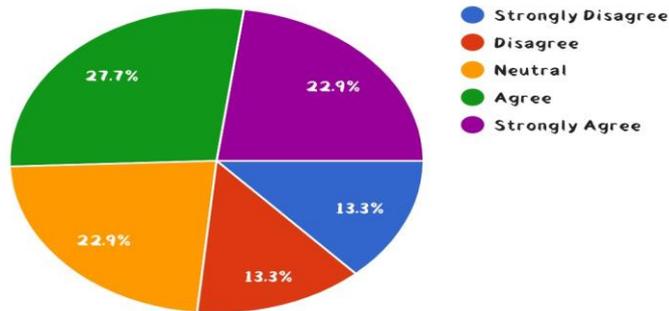


Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1 shows that 22 (22.9%) participants strongly agree that homosexuality is not unnatural and immoral. 21 (27.7%) participants agree that homosexuality is not unnatural and immoral. 19 (22.9%) participants responded neutral to the opinion that homosexuality is not unnatural and immoral. Whereas 10 (13.3%) participants disagree and 10 (13.3%) participants strongly disagree that homosexuality is not unnatural and immoral.

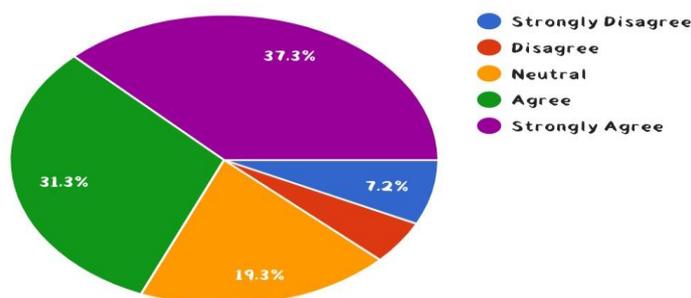
Table 1.2 Participants Response to Question Number 2

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	30
Agree	27
Neutral	16
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	6

Figure 1.2 Participants Response to Question Number 2

2. You have not intentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation.

83 responses



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Table 1.2 and Figure 1.2 shows that 30 (37.3%) participants strongly agree that they have not intentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation. 27 (31.3% participants agree that they have not intentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation. 16 (19.3%) participants have a neutral opinion that neither they have or nor they have not intentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation. Whereas 4 (4.9%) disagree to the above mentioned opinion and 6 (7.2%) participants strongly disagree to the above opinion.

Table 1.3 Participants Response to Question Number 3

Responses	Frequency
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	30
Neutral	24
Disagree	13
Strongly Disagree	11

Figure 1.3 Participants Response to Question Number 3

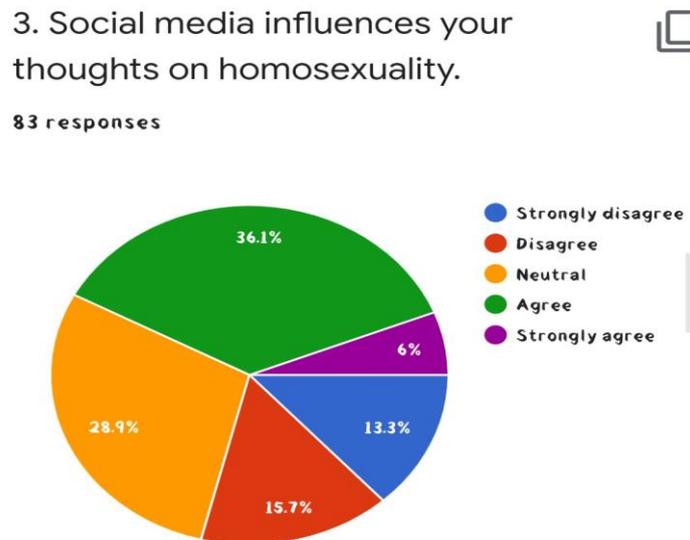


Table 1.3 and Figure 1.3 shows that 5 (6%) participants strongly agree that social media influences their thoughts on homosexuality. 30 (36.1%) participants agree that social media influences their thoughts on homosexuality. 24 (28.9%) participants have a neutral opinion on the influence of social media on homosexuality. Whereas 13 (15.7%) participants disagree and 11 (13.3%) participants strongly disagree on the opinion that social media influences their thoughts on homosexuality.

Table 1.4 Participants Response to Question Number 4

Responses	Frequency
Strongly Agree	17
Agree	24
Neutral	31
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	7

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Figure 1.4 Participants Response to Question Number 4

4. The increasing acceptance of homosexuality in our society is not aiding in the deterioration of morals.



83 responses

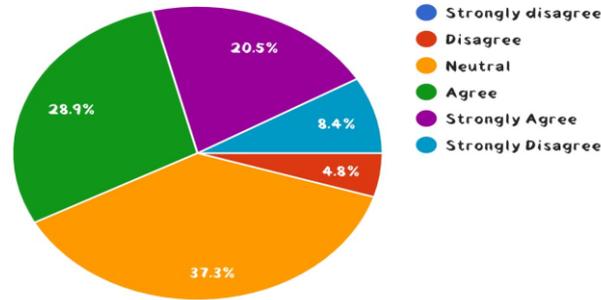


Table 1.4 and Figure 1.4 shows that 17 (20.5) participants strongly agree to the opinion that the deterioration of morals is not aiding the increase in the acceptance of homosexuality in our society. 24 (28.9) participants agree to the above opinion. 31 (37.3%) participants neither agree nor disagree to the above opinion. Whereas 4 (4.8) participants disagree and 7 (8.4%) participants strongly disagree to the opinion that the deterioration of morals is not aiding the increase in the acceptance of homosexuality in our society.

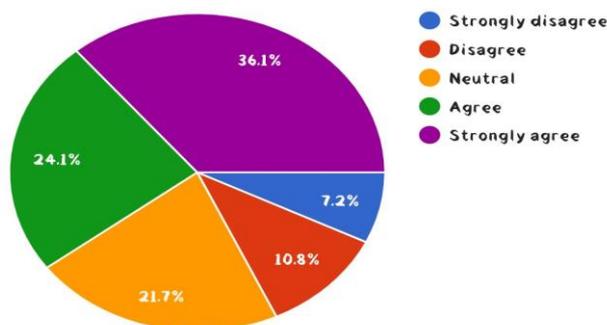
Table 1.5 Participants Response to Question Number 5

Responses	Frequency
Strongly Agree	29
Agree	20
Neutral	18
Disagree	9
Strongly Disagree	7

Figure 1.5 Participants Response to Question Number 5

5. Homosexuality, as far as I'm concerned. Is not sinful.

83 responses



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Table 1.5 and Figure 1.5 shows that 29 (36.1%) of participants strongly agree that homosexuality is not sinful. 20 (24.1%) of participants agree that homosexuality is not sinful. 18 (21.7%) of participants neither agree nor disagree to the opinion that homosexuality is not sinful. Whereas 9 (10.8%) of participants disagree and 7 (7.2%) of participants strongly disagree that homosexuality is not sinful.

Table 1.6 Participants Response to Question Number 6

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	45
Agree	22
Neutral	8
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	6

Figure 1.6 Participants Response to Question Number 6

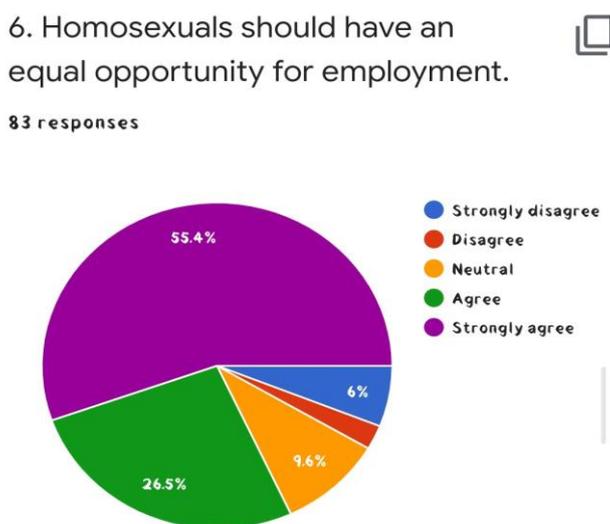


Table 1.6 and Figure 1.6 shows that 45 (55.4%) of participants strongly agree that Homosexuals should have an equal opportunity for employment. 22 (26.5%) of participants agree that Homosexuals should have an equal opportunity for employment. 8 (9.6%) of participants neither agree nor disagree that the homosexuals should have an equal opportunity for employment. Whereas 2 (2.5%) of participants disagree and 6 (6%) of participants strongly disagree to the opinion that Homosexuals should have an equal opportunity for employment.

Table 1.7 Participants Response to Question Number 7

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	32
Agree	20
Neutral	17
Disagree	8
Strongly Disagree	6

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Figure 1.7 Participants Response to Question Number 7

7. Homosexuals should be allowed to work with children. 

83 responses

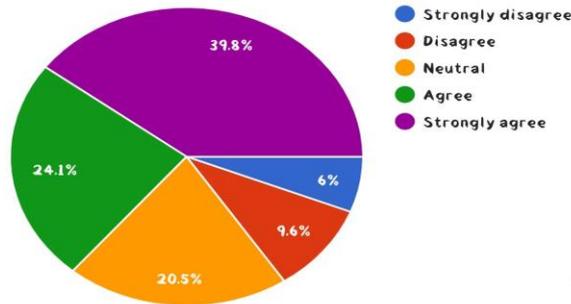


Table 1.7 and Figure 1.7 shows that 32 (39.8%) of Participants strongly agree that the homosexuals should be allowed to work with children. 20 (24.1%) of participants agree that the homosexuals should be allowed to work with children. 17 (20.5%) of Participants neither agree nor disagree to the opinion that homosexuals should be allowed to work with children. Whereas 8 (9.6%) of participants disagree and 6 (6%) of participants strongly disagree to the opinion that the homosexuals should be allowed to work with children.

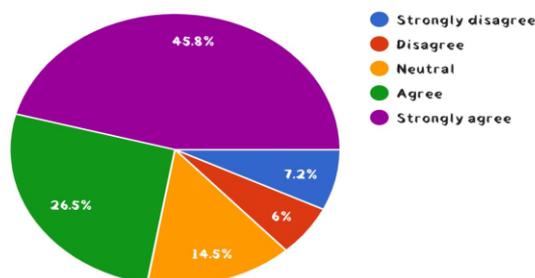
Table 1.8 Participants Response to Question Number 8

Responses	Frequency
Strongly Agree	38
Agree	22
Neutral	12
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	6

Figure 1.8 Participants Response to Question Number 8

8. Schools should have rules against bullying students who identify as homosexuals. 

83 responses



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Table 1.8 and figure 1.8 shows that 38 (45.8%) participants strongly agree towards the rule against bullying students who identify as homosexuals in schools. 22 (26.5%) participants agree towards the rule against bullying students who identify as homosexuals in schools. 12 (14.5%) participants neither agree nor disagree to the rule against bullying students who identify as homosexuals in schools. Whereas 5 (6%) participants disagree and 6 (7.2%) participants strongly disagree towards the rule against bullying students who identify as homosexuals in schools.

Table 1.9 Participants Response to Question Number 9

Responses	Frequency
Strongly Agree	44
Agree	28
Neutral	5
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	2

Figure 1.9 Participants Response to Question Number 9

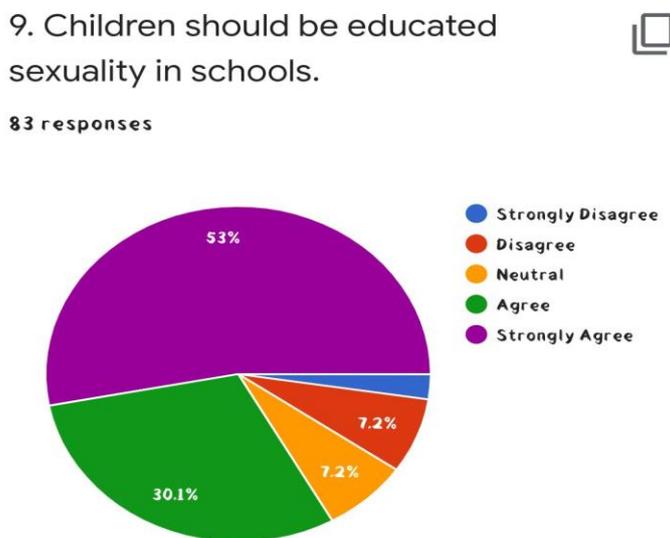


Table 1.9 and Figure 1.9 shows that 44 (53%) participants strongly agree that children should be educated sexuality in schools. 28 (30.1%) participants agree that children should be educated sexuality in schools. 5 (7.2%) participants neither agree nor disagree that children should be educated sexuality in schools. Whereas 4 (7.2%) participants disagree and 2 (2.5%) participants strongly disagree the opinion that children should be educated sexuality in schools.

Table 2 Participants Response to Question Number 10

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	45
Agree	20
Neutral	12
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	3

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Figure 2 Participants Response to Question Number 10

10. Homosexuals should be given social equality. 

83 responses

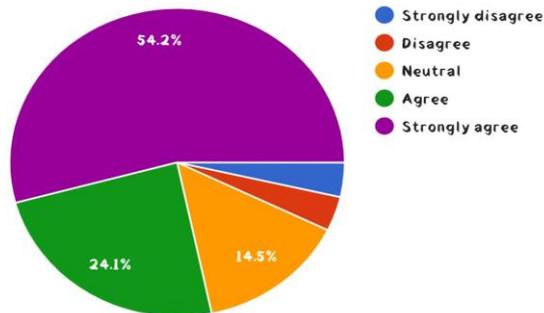


Table 2 and Figure 2 shows that 45 (54.2%) participants strongly agree towards giving social equality to homosexuals. 20 (24.1%) participants agree towards giving social equality to homosexuals. 12 (14.5%) participants neither agree nor disagree in giving social equality to homosexuals. Whereas 3 (3.6%) participants disagree and 3 (3.6%) of participants strongly disagree towards giving social equality to homosexuals.

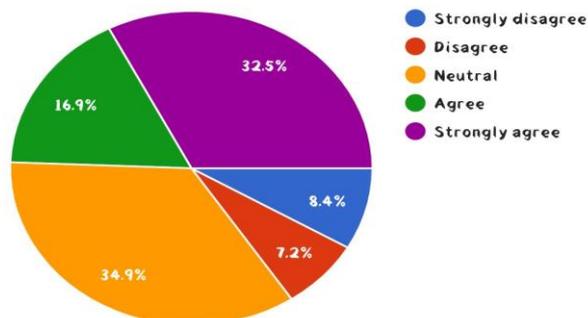
Table 2.1 Participants Response to Question Number 11

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	27
Agree	14
Neutral	29
Disagree	6
Strongly Disagree	7

Figure 2.1 Participants Response to Question Number 11

11. Homosexual people should be allowed to show public displays of affection. 

83 responses



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Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 shows that 27 (32.5%) participants strongly agree to the opinion that homosexual people should be allowed to show public displays of affection. 14 (16.9%) participants agree to the above mentioned opinion. 29 (34.9%) participants neither agree nor disagree to the opinion that homosexual people should be allowed to show public displays of affection. Whereas 6 (7.2%) participants disagree and 7 (8.4%) of participants strongly disagree to the above mentioned opinion.

Table 2.2 Participants Response to Question Number 12

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	34
Agree	30
Neutral	12
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	4

Figure 2.2 Participants Response to Question Number 12

12. Homosexual people should have the right to marry whomever they want, as long as they consenting adults.

83 responses

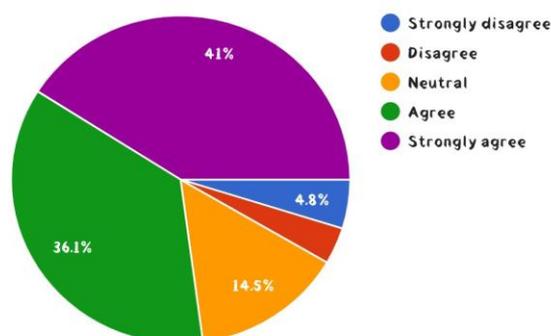


Table 2.2 and Figure 2.2 shows that 34 (41%) participants strongly agree to the right of marriage of homosexual adults. 30 (36.1%) participants agree to the right of marriage of homosexual adults. 12 (14.5%) participants neither agree nor disagree to the right of marriage of homosexual adults. Whereas 3 (3.6%) participants disagree and 4 (4.8%) participants strongly disagree to the right of marriage of homosexual adults.

Table 2.3 Participants Response to Question Number 13

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	29
Agree	28
Neutral	18
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	3

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Figure 2.3 Participants Response to Question Number 13

13. Homosexuals should have the right to have children.

83 responses

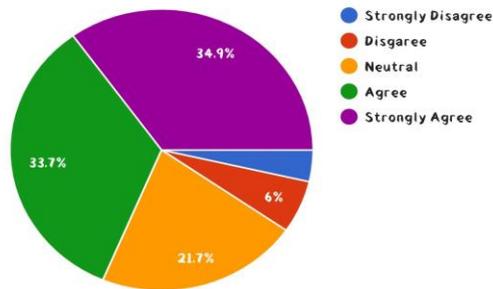


Table 2.3 and Figure 2.3 shows that 29 (34.9%) participants strongly agree to the right of homosexuals to have children. 28 (33.7) participants agree to the right of homosexuals to have children. 18 (21.7%) participants neither agree nor disagree to the right of homosexuals to have children. Whereas 5 (6%) participants disagree and 3 (3.7%) participants strongly disagree to the right of homosexuals to have children.

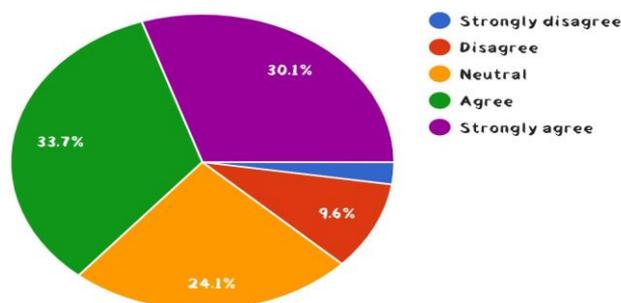
Table 2.4 Participants Response to Question Number 14

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	25
Agree	28
Neutral	20
Disagree	8
Strongly Disagree	2

Figure 2.4 Participants Response to Question Number 14

14. Homosexual people are not bad parents because their children are not exposed to heterosexual gender roles.

83 responses



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Table 2.4 and Figure 2.4 shows that 25 (30.1%) participants strongly agree Homosexual people are not bad parents. 28 (33.7%) participants agree that homosexual people are not bad parents. 20 (24.1%) participants neither agree nor disagree that homosexual people are not bad parents. Whereas 8 (9.6%) participants disagree and 2 (2.5%) participants strongly disagree that homosexual people are not bad parents.

Table 2.5 Participants Response to Question Number 15

Response	Frequency
Strongly Agree	26
Agree	17
Neutral	31
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	2

Figure 2.5 Participants Response to Question Number 15

15. Homosexuals should not be compelled to participate in reparative therapy or any other treatment available to them to fix their sexual orientation or gender identify disorder □

83 responses

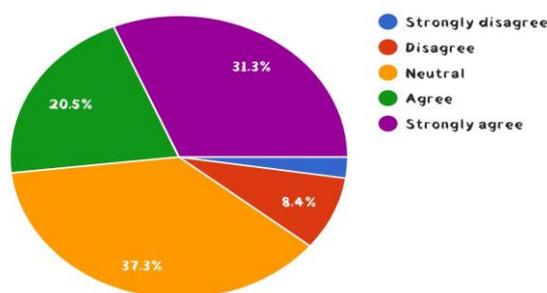


Table 2.5 and Figure 2.5 shows that 26 (31.3%) participants strongly agree to the opinion that homosexuals should not be compelled to participate in reparative therapy or any other treatment available to them to fix their sexual orientation or gender identify disorder. 17 (20.5%) participants agree to the above mentioned opinion. 31 (37.3%) participants neither agree nor disagree to the above mentioned opinion. Whereas 7 (8.4%) participants disagree and 2 (2.5%) participants strongly disagree to the above mentioned opinion.

Major Findings

- Most of the participants strongly agree to the opinion that homosexuality is not unnatural and immoral.
- Most of the participants have not intentionally excluded someone based on their sexual orientation.
- Most of the participants agree that social media influences their thoughts on homosexuality.

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- Most of the participants agree that the increasing acceptance of homosexuality in their society is not aiding in the deterioration of morals.
- Most of the participants agree that homosexuality is not sinful.
- Most of the participants strongly agree that homosexuals should have an equal opportunity for employment.
- Most of the participants strongly agree that homosexuals should be allowed to work with children.
- Most of the participants strongly agree that rules must be implemented against bullying students who identify as homosexuals.
- Most of the participants strongly agree that children should be educated sexuality in schools.
- Most of the participants strongly agree that homosexuals should be given social equality.
- Most of the participants neither agree nor disagree to the opinion that homosexual people should be allowed to public displays of affection.
- Most of the participants strongly agree to the opinion that homosexual people should have the right to marry whomever they want.
- Most of the participants strongly agree that the homosexual people should have the right to have children.
- Most of the people agree that homosexual people are not bad parents.
- Most of the participants neither agree nor disagree to the opinion that homosexuals should not be compelled to participate in reparative therapy or any other treatment available to them to fix their sexual orientation or gender identify disorder.
- Most of the respondents were between the ages of 18-24 and most belonged to the Hindu religion.
- They were evenly distributed among urban, semi-urban and rural communities. 63% of the respondents were female and 37% were male.
- The results of the study showed, when determined according to profiles, that with respect to age, 15-29 had the highest acceptance of homosexuality and 30 and above had the least.
- Although gender did not show any significant difference, males had a lower mean, indicating lower acceptance.
- A higher degree of urbanisation indicated a higher level of acceptance towards homosexuality.
- Atheists or non-religious individuals had the highest acceptance, while Muslims and Christians had the lowest.

Limitations

1. The sample size was small
2. Samples are not equally distributed across gender.
3. Qualitative methods were used.

Implications

As indicated, the age 15-29 had the highest acceptance of homosexuality, although gender did not show any significant difference, males had a lower acceptance compared to females. So, we can develop some psycho-education program for educating them for understanding about homosexuality.

Scope for further study: Further study can be done on a larger sample.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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