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Acceptance or Discrimination: A Study on Lgbtq+ Community at Workplace

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ABSTRACT:

In 2018, The Supreme court gave a historic judgment by decriminalizing Section 377 of the IPC and ruled that consensual adult gay sex is not a crime saying sexual orientation is natural and people have no control on it. However, still after 5 years there exists a significant gap between the judgment and the extent Indian workplaces have been successful in ensuring a discrimination-free environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) employees. Thus, addressing this gap, the present study explored the acceptance and the discrimination at workplace experiences encountered by Indian LGBT+ employees. The present study was conducted on the basis of extensive literature review. Quantitative data was taken into consideration from the attitude scale questionnaire measuring development of Attitudes Towards Homosexuality for Indians, a 20-item scale will be used to understand the attitude of working professionals from the IT Sector and hospitality sector towards homosexuals. Analysis was made on the basis of the data collected through the questionnaire. The study suggested a significant level of acceptance and support for the LGBT community among the respondents, with the majority advocating for equal rights and opportunities. However, there is still resistance and discomfort, particularly regarding certain social interactions and perceptions about homosexuality. This paper discusses the acceptance of non-LGBT people, discriminatory treatment, issues, problems faced by LGBT community individuals at workplace.

Keywords: Acceptance, Attitude towards homosexuality, Discrimination, LGBT, IT and Hospitality Sector, Workplace.

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1. Introduction

Since 2018, after the Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was decriminalized in India the issue of acceptance and discrimination of LGBT individuals in the workplace has gained a growing attention and interest. The workplace, which predominantly focuses on professional development and productivity, has now evolved into a illustration of societal dynamics, related to equality, diversity and inclusion. Understanding the acceptance by the heterosexuals around and the discriminatory experiences of LGBT individuals within the professional context is crucial for cultivating environments that promote personal, professional well-being of an individual and organizational progress.

Despite the development in recent years, in legislation and cultural attitudes towards LGBT rights in many parts of India; discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice against LGBT individuals still persist, particularly within professional settings. The workplace still remains a consequential combat zone where the conflict between acceptance and discrimination exists; impacting an individual's level of job satisfaction, career trajectory and overall psychological well-being.

This research paper aims to inquire into the nuances of societal changes surrounding acceptance and discrimination faced by the LGBT individuals in the workplace. By analyzing the existing literature, empirical studies, and measurable evidence, this study seeks to project light on the prevalence, manifestations of acceptance and discrimination within organizational contexts.

This research is more than just an academic investigation; it holds implications for organizational policies, practices, and interventions intended at promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. By uncovering the attitude of heterosexuals towards LGBT Community and the challenges faced by LGBT individuals in the workplace, organizations can develop targeted strategies to reduce the discrimination, acquire a culture of acceptance, and encourage diverse workforce.

Furthermore, understanding the attitudes of heterosexuals towards LGBT Individuals and experiences of LGBT individuals in the workplace is for promoting social justice and equality on a wide scale. By understanding and addressing the discriminatory practices and systemic biases within workplace, society can advance in realizing the absolute equality, dignity and respect for all the individuals, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

In the following sections, this paper will explore existing literature on the experiences of LGBT individuals in the workplace, examine the acceptance by the Heterosexuals and discrimination that LGBT Community encounter. Through these attempts, this research aims to contribute to a profound understanding of the complexities girdled in acceptance and discrimination of LGBT individuals in the workplace and to understand the efforts required towards creating more equitable and inclusive workplace.

2. Review of Literature

(SHARMA, 2019) described the problems faced by the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender people at the workplace and how they are being discriminated by their colleagues, their superiors and for the various business policies during their recruitment and internal promotions. The study showed that there is a societal impact on LGBT employees in terms of wages and opportunities at workplace, physical and emotional health, work satisfaction and productivity is improving slowly.

In today's society people have become more assertive towards different communities and

(Suriyasarn, 2016) in a study commissioned by the International Labor Organization (ILO) found persistent stigma, discrimination and marginalization of Thai lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers. They found that genuine acceptance of gender diversity is lacking in most Thai workplaces, especially in the public sector. Hostile work environments, in the forms of gossip, insensitive jokes, slurs, insults, sexual harassment and violence, result in many LGBT workers opting out of gainful employment for more accepting jobs that often offer lower pay, less job security and limited social protection.

(Maji, 2023) explored discriminatory workplace experiences encountered by Indian lesbian and gay (LG) employees. The study revealed four themes, that is, subtle discrimination, disclosure dilemmas, dressing and appearance norms, and gender-binary filter. LG employees frequently encounter workplace discrimination in subtle forms (distancing, excluding, commenting behind the back, and dignity-attack). Thus; the study shows that in Indian organizations, the workplace experiences of LG employees are far from discrimination-free.

(Eliason, 2011) Studied the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) physicians in the workplace. Although rates of discriminatory behaviours had decreased since earlier reports, 10% reported that they were denied referrals from heterosexual colleagues, 15% had been harassed by a colleague, 22% had been socially ostracized, 65% had heard derogatory comments about LGBT individuals, 34% had witnessed discriminatory care of an LGBT patient, 36% had witnessed disrespect toward an LGBT patient's partner, and 27% had witnessed discriminatory treatment of an LGBT co-worker. It appears that medical schools and health care workplaces continue to ignore LGBT issues and operate in discriminatory fashion far too often.

(Nishul Singh, 2019) Found that Sexual minorities in India are the easy victims of the hate crimes, they are easy target who are exploited physically, sexually, verbally. They are often beaten up by police. However, it has been found that most of the countries in the world have now begun to accept LGBT in their respective societies. LGBT employee in many surveys has asserted that they have always faced one or another kind of discrimination at work place. They are even forced to quit their jobs and are often paid less than their heterosexual co-workers.

(Eros R. DeSouza, 2017) Found that Sexual minorities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals; LGBT) experience workplace discrimination that leads to decreased physical and emotional well-being and negative job outcomes. LGBT individuals may also experience micro-aggressions and ostracism in the workplace. An extensive review of literature on micro-aggressions and ostracism, which have recently been investigated with LGBT populations, suggests future research directions.

(Lewis, 2017) Studied the Variation in Public Attitudes toward Segments of the LGBT Community. The study analyzed Americans' attitudes toward LGBT community, and it evaluated their support for non-discrimination protections. They found that public attitudes are significantly more negative toward transgender people and policies pertaining to them than they are toward gay men and lesbians and related policies. The analyses revealed that differences in these attitudes are associated with social contact effects, variation in cognitive consistency, elite cues, and the varying magnitudes of key political factors, such as religiosity and partisanship.

(Michele J. Eliason, 2011) Studied the Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) nurses experiences in the workplace. The study reported that many workplaces lacked policies and procedures that would make LGBTQ nurses feel safer and more included and that many co-workers, supervisors, and patients had exhibited discriminatory behaviour or verbal harassment, sometimes leading to significant consequences for the LGBTQ worker. LGBTQ nurses expressed a need for a professional

organization that would educate the nursing profession and the general population about LGBTQ issues and address their advocacy and health care policy needs.

Objective of the Study

- To assess the prevalence of acceptance and discrimination towards LGBT Community in the Workplace.
- To contribute empirical insights to advance understanding regarding acceptance and discrimination experienced by the LGBT community in the workplace.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a **quantitative research design** using descriptive research methods to assess the acceptance and discrimination towards the LGBT community in the workplace. The research aims to provide empirical insights into the experiences and attitudes towards LGBT individuals within professional environments.

Sampling Methods

1. Sampling Technique: The total sample size consisted of 102 respondents. Random Sampling was initially used to select a broad range of companies from the IT and Hospitality sectors. Through Convenience Sampling Companies were chosen based on their accessibility and the familiarity of the researcher to ensure the collection of authentic data. And Stratified Random Sampling was used within each selected company, employees were sampled randomly from different organizational levels to ensure representation across various hierarchical strata.

Data Collection Methods

1. Primary Data Collection:

○ **Questionnaires:** Data was collected using online questionnaires distributed to respondents within the IT and Hospitality sectors. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended questions to quantitatively assess attitudes and perceptions regarding LGBT individuals in the workplace.

2.Secondary Data Collection:

○ **Internet Resources:** Accessed online databases and resources for up-to-date information on performance management systems and LGBT rights.

○ **Published/Unpublished Data:** Referenced national and international research papers and journals to establish a strong theoretical foundation and identify gaps in existing research.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the data. Through graphical representation the data were illustrated using graphs to visually represent responses to various questions related to LGBT acceptance and discrimination. With the help of comparative analysis, examined differences in responses based on industry sector and demographic factor.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

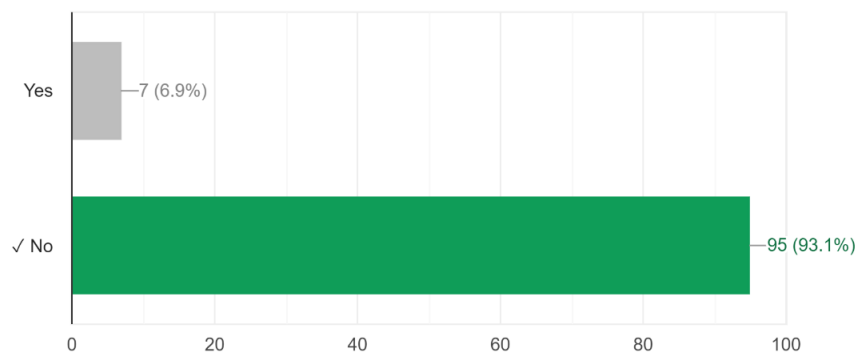
Data Analysis and Interpretation:



The total Sample for the study was 102 in which 49% respondents from IT industry and 51% from Hospitality industry. 35.3% respondents aged between 18-25yrs, 43.1% were between 26-35yrs and 17.6% were in the age group of 36-45yrs. Also, 4% of respondents were above 45yrs.

Do you think homosexuality is abnormal?

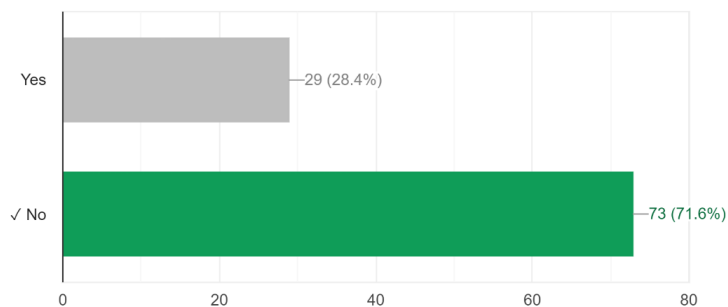
95 / 102 correct responses



From the graph, it shows that 93.1% respondents think that homosexuality is normal. While 6.9% of total respondents think that homosexuality is abnormal.

I try to avoid contact with homosexuals.

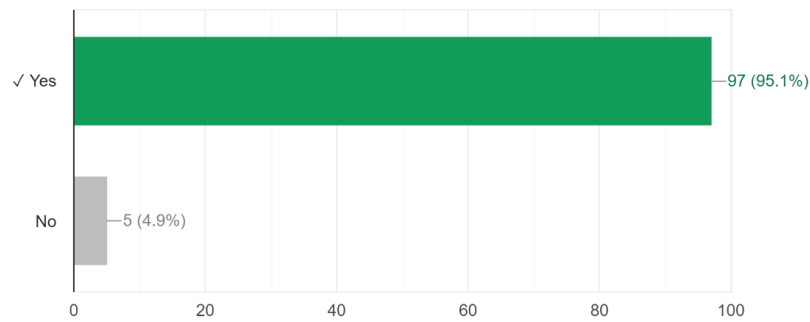
73 / 102 correct responses



The graph shows that 28.4% respondents do not try to avoid contact with homosexuals, whereas 71.6% respondents do try to avoid it whenever they can.

Homosexuals and heterosexuals both are equally normal at workplace.

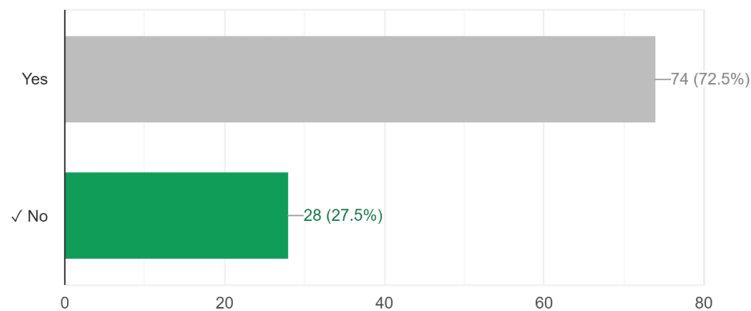
97 / 102 correct responses



The Graph shows that 95.1% respondents believe that homosexuals and heterosexuals both are equally normal. However, only 4.9% respondents believe that both are not equally normal at workplace.

It is difficult for me to understand the attraction to same sex.

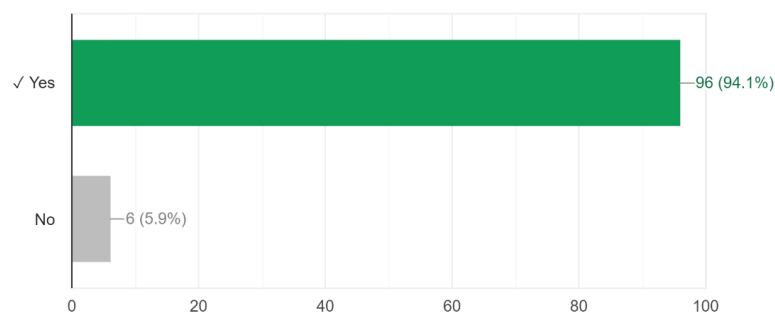
28 / 102 correct responses



From the graph, it shows that 72.5% respondents find it difficult to understand the attraction to same sex. While, 27.5% respondents do not find it difficult to understand.

A colleague's nature is important than his/her sexual orientation.

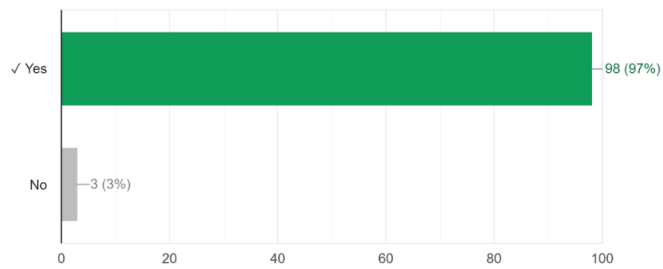
96 / 102 correct responses



The graph shows that 94.1% respondents believe that a colleague's nature is important than his/her sexual orientation. However, only 5.9% respondents do not believe so.

People from LGBT community should be given equal status in the workplace.

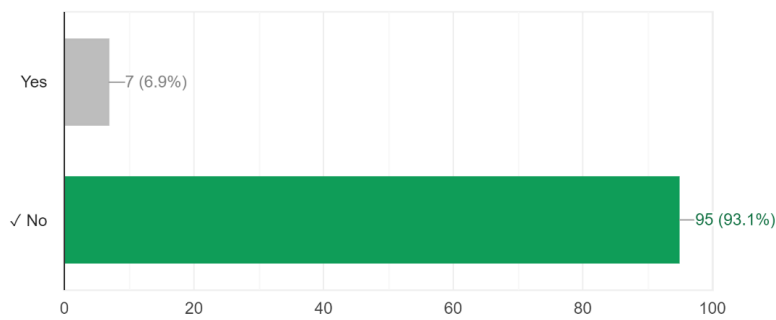
98 / 101 correct responses



The graph suggests that 97% respondents think that people from LGBT community should be given equal status in the workplace. Whereas, 3% respondents think the opposite.

If I was an employer, I will never hire a homosexual.

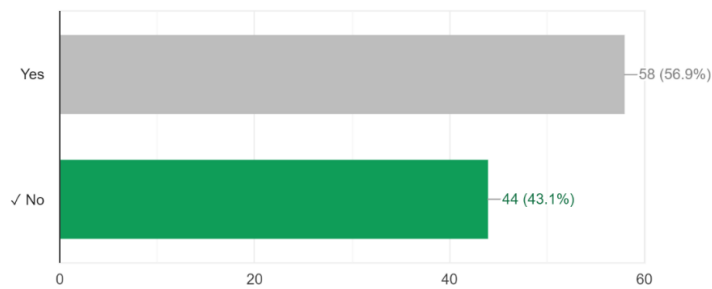
95 / 102 correct responses



The graph shows that 93.1% respondents will hire a homosexual, if they were an employer. Whereas 6.9% will not hire a homosexual, if they were an employer.

I will never prefer my employer/colleague to be a homosexual.

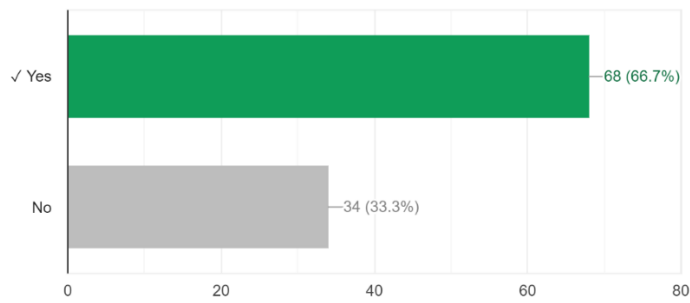
44 / 102 correct responses



The graph shows that 56.9% respondents will never prefer their employer/colleague to be a homosexual. While 43.2% respondents will prefer their employer or colleague to be a homosexual.

I will not be bothered if my sibling was a homosexual.

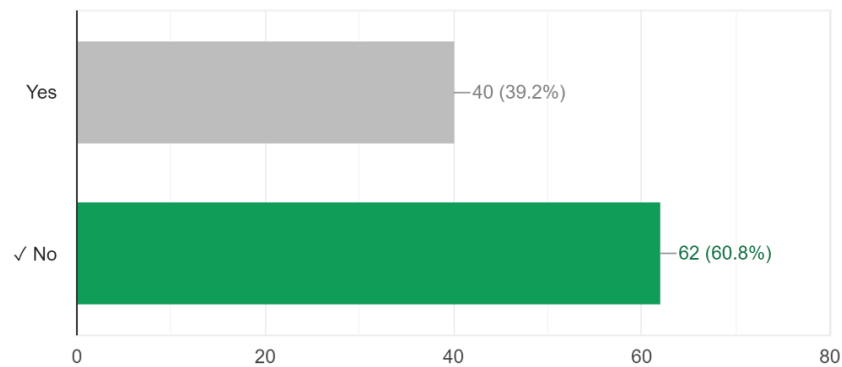
68 / 102 correct responses



The graph suggests that 66.7% respondents will not be bothered if their sibling was a homosexual. Whereas, 33.3% respondents will be bothered.

Events supporting homosexuality should be banned in the workplace.

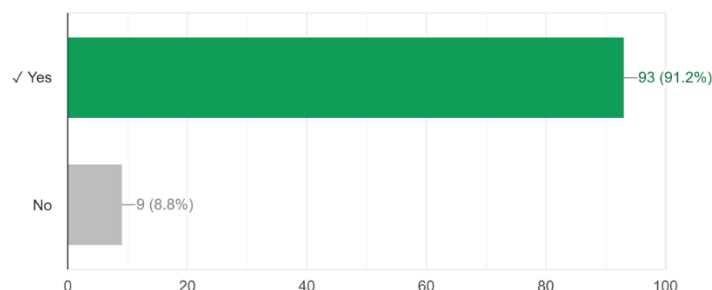
62 / 102 correct responses



The graph shows that 39.2% respondents want the events supporting homosexuality should be banned in the workplace. Whereas, the majority i.e. 60.8% respondents do not want the LGBT community supporting events to be banned.

I would like to support an organisation that supports LGBT community and their rights.

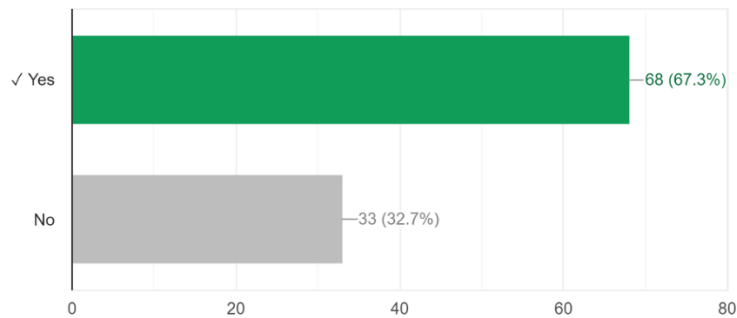
93 / 102 correct responses



The graph shows that 91.2% respondents would like to support an organisation that supports LGBT community and their rights. Whereas 8.8% respondents do not agree to support.

I will happily attend a same sex wedding of a colleague.

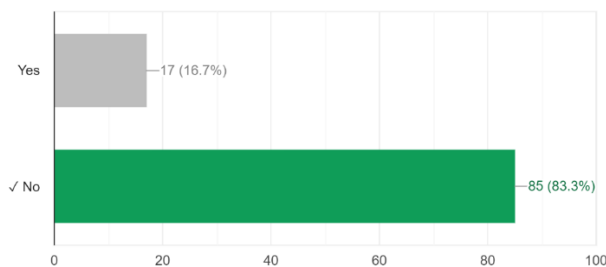
68 / 101 correct responses



The graph shows that 67.3% respondents will happily attend a same sex wedding. However, 32.7% respondents will not be happy to attend.

Acceptance of homosexuality is destroying the morals and values of our Indian society.

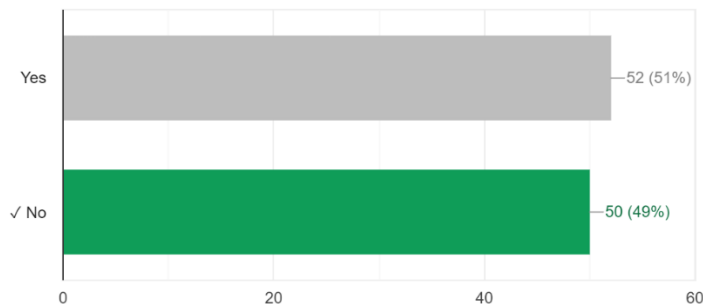
85 / 102 correct responses



The graph suggests that 16.7% respondents believe that acceptance of homosexuality is destroying the morals and values of our Indian society. Whereas, 83.3% do not believe so.

Same sex marriages are not acceptable to me.

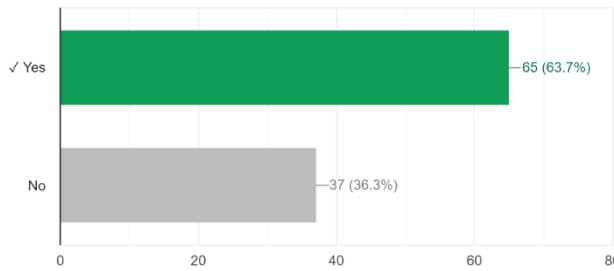
50 / 102 correct responses



The graph shows that there is almost equal distribution in respondents accepting same sex marriages or not. For 51% respondents same sex marriages are not acceptable. And for 49% respondents same sex marriages are acceptable.

I would not hesitate to hug a person of the same sex knowing she/he is a homosexual person.

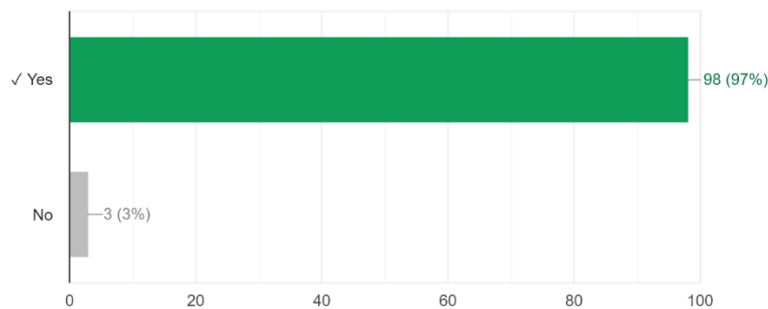
65 / 102 correct responses



The graph suggests that 63.7% respondents are comfortable to hug a person of the same sex knowing she/he is a homosexual person. Whereas, 36.3% respondents are hesitant to hug a homosexual person of same sex.

Hanging out with a homosexual colleague is not a problem for me

98 / 101 correct responses



The graph shows that majority of respondents i.e. 97% of total respondents do not have a problem in hanging out with a homosexual person, whereas 3% respondents do have a problem in hanging out with homosexuals.

Findings:

- 93.1% respondents think that homosexuality is normal.
- 71.6% respondents do try to avoid contact with homosexuals.
- 95.1% respondents believe that homosexuals and heterosexuals are equally normal at workplace.
- 72% respondents find it difficult to understand the attraction to same sex.
- 97% respondents think that equal status should be given to LGBT community at workplace.
- 93.1% will hire homosexuals if they were an employer.
- 56.9% respondents will never prefer their employer or colleague to be a homosexual.
- 16.7% believe that acceptance of homosexuality is destroying the morals and values of our Indian society.

4. Conclusion

The issue of acceptance or discrimination of LGBT individuals in the workplace has captured growing attention. The workplace is seen as a major domain of professional development. Understanding the acceptance by people around of LGBT individuals within the professional context is crucial for making the work environments that promote personal, professional well-being of an individual.

The data suggests a significant level of acceptance and support for the LGBT community among the respondents, with the majority advocating for equal rights and opportunities. However, there is still resistance and discomfort, particularly regarding certain social interactions and perceptions about homosexuality. While majority of people think that homosexuality is normal yet a significant percent of people find it difficult to understand the same sex attraction. Although minimum number of respondents feel that events supporting LGBT community should be banned at workplace, among our respondents maximum of them support LGBT rights. There is a maximum number of people believe that homosexuality is not destroying the morals and values of society yet there are a significant number of people existing that it does. Majority of people agreed that they are comfortable hanging out with homosexuals yet we cannot see people doing so.

This indicates on-going societal shifts and discussions regarding attitudes towards sexual orientation. The society is changing so does people's mentality towards LGBT community is also changing. There are majority of people who are ready to accept LGBT community yet we can see the discrimination persisting in the society.

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