

**TO UNDERSTAND THE REPRESENTATION OF LGBTQIA IN THE MINDS OF YOUTH  
WITH RELATION TO INDIAN CULTURE**

**Dr. Nutan Kanegaonkar Kulkarni** Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism & Mass  
Communication, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune.

**Abstract -**

In India the culture is very complex and has many dimensions to it. There so many castes and sub-castes that it is difficult to address gender issues. And if talk about LGBTQIAit is very complex issue. There is social stigma for this issue.This is the scenario from ancient times to the modern times. However the situation and media representation have been improving in recent years, especially in terms of representation of transgender people. LGBTQI stands for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex Asexual. A lot has been said and misunderstood about this issue. This is topic has been considered a taboo for a long time. Though this has existed in India for a long time now it been given due respect and can be openly discussed. This is a revolution in itself. The older generation is still conservative about the issue. But surprisingly the younger generation is open and does not consider this issue as a taboo. In the entire Hindu and Vedic texts there are many descriptions of saints, demigods, and even the Supreme Lord transcending gender norms and manifesting multiple combinations of sex and gender. It is important to understand the mindset of the society as it keeps changing its approach towards the LGBTQIA. Though the roots of culture remain the same the way of looking at it and actually following it has changed. Therefore it is important to study this issue.

**Key Words-** Culture, India, LGBTQIA, Representation, Youth

**1. Introduction and Importance**

**What is LGBTQIA?**

In India the culture is so inclusive that LGBTQIA is no exception for them. There is social stigma for this issue.This is the scenario from ancient times to the modern times. However the situation and media representation have been improving in recent years, especially in terms of representation of transgender people. LGBTQI stands for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex Asexual. A lot has been said and misunderstood about this issue. This is topic has been considered a taboo for a long time. Though this has existed in India for a long time now it been given due respect and can be openly discussed. This is a revolution in itself. The older generation is still conservative about the issue. But surprisingly the younger generation is open and does not consider this issue as a taboo. In the entire Hindu and Vedic texts there are many descriptions of saints, demigods, and even the Supreme Lord transcending gender norms and manifesting multiple combinations of sex and gender. Apart from male and female, there are many types of genders, such as trans-woman, trans men, androgynous, and transgender etc. Transpeople were accepted in ancient India and referred to by terms like Tritiyapanthi and napusaka.Hindu society had a clear idea of all these people in the past. Now that we have put them under one label 'LGBT', there is lot more confusion and other identities have got hidden.

It is said that alternate sexuality was an integral part of ancient India and homosexuality was considered to be a form of the sacred, drawing upon the examples of the hermaphrodite Shikhandi and Arjuna who became eunuch. In the ancient India there was acceptance and rejection both.

Some Hindu texts have mentioned homosexuality and also support them. The Kamasutra states homosexuality as a type of sexual pleasure. There are also legends of Hindu gods who have changed gender or are hermaphrodites and engage in relations that would be considered homoerotic in the other

case. Homosexuality was also practiced in the royal families especially with the servants. Kamasutra also mentions the "svairini" who used to live by her or with another woman. The king Bhagiratha is described as being born of sexual union of two queens of the king Dilip, however there is also a patriarchal background represented as the king left no heir to the throne and his younger wife took on the role of a man.

Today homosexuality and queer identities may be acceptable to more Indian Youngsters than ever before but only within the boundaries of family, house, school, colleges. The acceptance of their sexuality and freedom to openly express their choices of gender still remains a constant struggle for LGBTI.

In the urban India, the social media and corporate initiatives have created a great awareness about LGBTI rights. The scenario looks much better for the gay and transgender community. Though there are many voices raised through various online platforms and lots of activism about the LGBTI issues, they are only able to expose a small part of the diverse challenges faced by the community. Far away from the gay parades, rally's and debates –discussion on social media there are many families in rural India who have their own ways of dealing with issue and LGBTIQA individuals. Many times there is only one option left is running away from house and relocating to some another city and living in poverty.

The previous decade has been crucial for LGBTIQA that is Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual community in India. Since the 2009 following the Delhi High court verdict in 2018 with reference to section 377 of the constitution as well as the national legal services authority (NALSA) judgment and debate with respect to the Trans Rights Bill, the legal discourse is being accompanied by much more societal conversation about the LGBTIQA community. Justice Chandrachud outlined the role of mental health care and advocacy in section 377. There is no systematic data about the number of LGBTIQA in India. Many of them don't have voters card or adhar card. Therefore there is less authentic data available about LGBTIQA.

While addressing health inequalities, by the year 2030 is one of the United Nations sustainable development goals, the LGBTIQA plus community was identified as one of the twelve groups which were least represented in health equity research in India. A large research gap was found among the important issues related to health equity.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

- To study the issues related to LGBTIQA
- The main objective of the research is to find out the perception of youth about LGBTIQA
- To understand the Stereo types of society
- To find out the methods of analyzing the feedback of youth through feedback forms.
- To analyze the obstacles and limitations faced by the LGBTIQA.
- To analyze the interpretation of LGBTIQA IN Indian culture and cinema.

## **3. Review of Literature**

**3.1 Title of the Paper:** Gender, Sexuality and (Be) longing: The Representation of Queer (LGBT) in Hindi Cinema

**Author:** Pushpinder Kaur, Punjabi University, India

**Published year:** 2017

**ISSN/ISBN:** 2231 – 1033

**Journal:** Amity Journal of Media & Communication Studies

**Gist of the content:**

This paper talks about how Indian cinema portrays the LGBTQIA Communities. The paper discusses the issue of LGBTQIA and acceptance of their orientation. It talks about the homophobia and transphobia, and also prejudice and discrimination. We still live in a world where majority wins and overpower the voices of minority. Sexual minority comprises of all those people who fall under the category of Lesbian gay bisexual and transgender. They all are found at our own houses, families, schools, institution, communities, work place etc. Adding to their woes is section 377 of the Indian penal code which criminalizes Homosexuality. Many of these problems have left many of them lonely, feeling isolated, afraid, depressed and even suicidal. There is a need to look at issues specific to LGBTI from a neutral perspective and not with a pre notion about them. There is more to LGBT which also includes lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, intersex, inter gender and asexual. Films that depict reality are of supreme importance. It was also important to portray the characters belonging to this community to be normal, living a normal life and facing normal issues and not showcasing discriminatory or oppressing characters. Cinema is one medium that reaches so many people, masses and portrays the challenges faced by them and how they suffer or deal with those issues. LGBT people don't need sympathy but understanding acceptance and dignity just as other individual. Society terms anything which is different as something is not normal. Hence a person for being who he is, is completely unjustified and so is society's power to unnecessarily control over individual's gender or sexuality. The study makes an attempt to take this queer movement forward through the medium of films. This study will make an effort to bring the issues and various myths associated with LGBT people in Hindi cinema and also explore how LGBT people, their queer desires and aspirations are made visible through queer films.

**3.2 Title of the Paper:** What Do We Know About LGBTQIA+ Mental Health in India? A Review of Research from 2009 to 2019

**Author:** Jagruti Wandrekar, Advaita Nigudkar

**Published year:** April 24, 2020

**ISSN/ISBN:** 2231 – 1033

**Journal:** Amity Journal of Media & Communication Studies

**Gist of the content:**

The previous decade has been crucial for the LGBTQIA Lesbian, gay bisexual transgender queer intersex asexual and other community in India. After the court's verdict 2018 the legal discourse is being accompanied by many more societal conversations about the LGBTQIA community. The verdict outlined the role of mental health professionals to provide mental health care and advocacy.

**3.3 Title of the Book:** A Friend's Story (Mitrachi Goshta) by

**Author:** Vijay Tendulkar

**Published year:** 2001

**About the book**

In the year 2015 in an article about the play, a journalist from a reputed newspaper stated that the set was in the pre-independence era, in the college campus located in Poona i.e. now Pune. It had a very typical conventional boy meets girl story line. In reality it was a love triangle between Babu, a shy boy battling a strong sense of inadequacy between Babu, a shy boy battling a strong sense of inadequacy, Mitra an independent girl with a secret which eventually resulted in her downfall and Nama Mitra's graceful yet treacherous love interest.

According to another article the story is of a love triangle between three students in pune's college. Though the three main characters Babu, Mitra, Nama are in a triangle but not a regular one! When Babu's wish of getting to know Mitra comes true, he slowly comes to know about her inner struggles with sexuality and eventually gets drawn into a game of sexual politics between her and Nama the girl she desires.

### Use of the Research Method – Survey method and Content Analysis

The reason to select the method is it helps to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context.

- Survey Method is used to level out researcher biases in other methods and to reveal differences between what people say and what they actually do.
- Content analysis will help to analyze the movies and culture data on LGBTQIA

### Application of the method

- This method includes data gathering, information and analyzing the content of movies and books, public handles and visual data created and disseminated to achieve the objectives of the research.
- Survey method is useful in gathering data directly from the samples on which researcher has been doing research.
- Due to survey method the researcher can know the exact opinion of those people or population on which the research is being done.
- Data collected by survey method is very easy to analyze and place and place in the report by using statistical tools such as, tables, pie charts, bar diagram, etc.
- As the objectives of this research can be achieved by using case study Survey method it will be convenient for the researcher to collect and analyze the data to execute the research and attain the desired goals of the research.

### Hypothesis

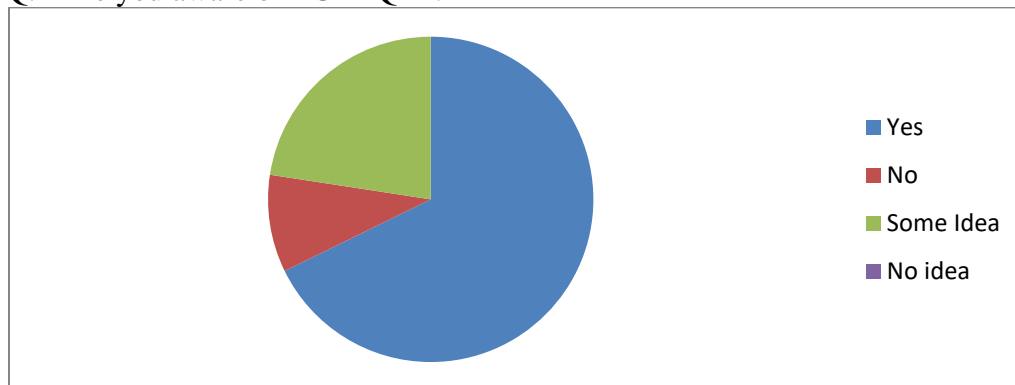
H1. The representation of LGBTQIA in the minds of youth with relation to Indian culture is progressive.

### Null Hypothesis

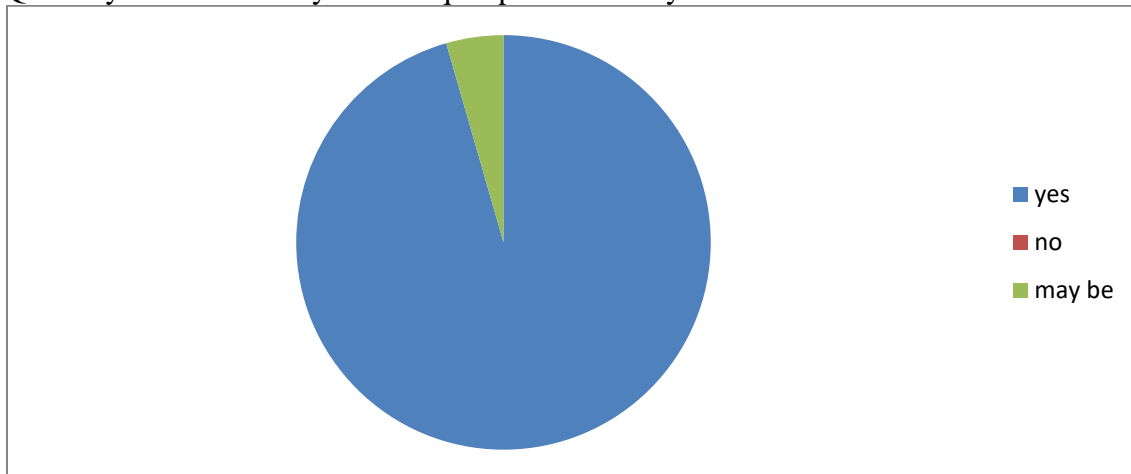
N1. The representation of LGBTQIA in the minds of youth with relation to Indian culture is not progressive.

## 4. Data Analysis and Presentation

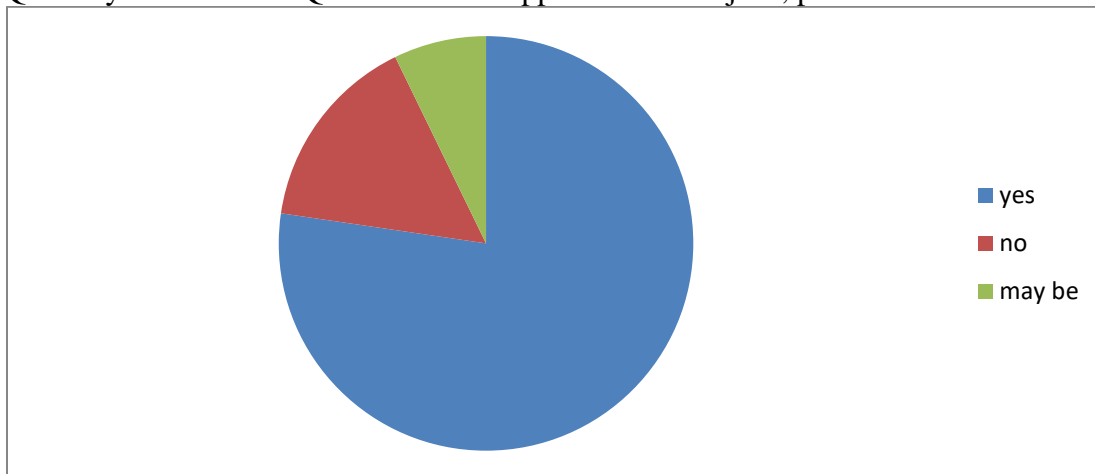
Q.1 Are you aware of LGBTQIA?



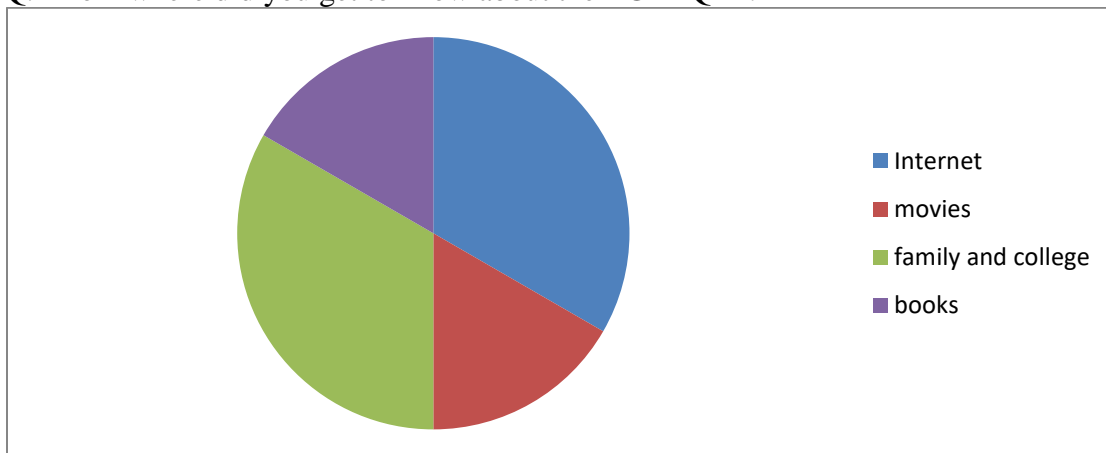
Q.2 Do you feel that they are an equal part of society?



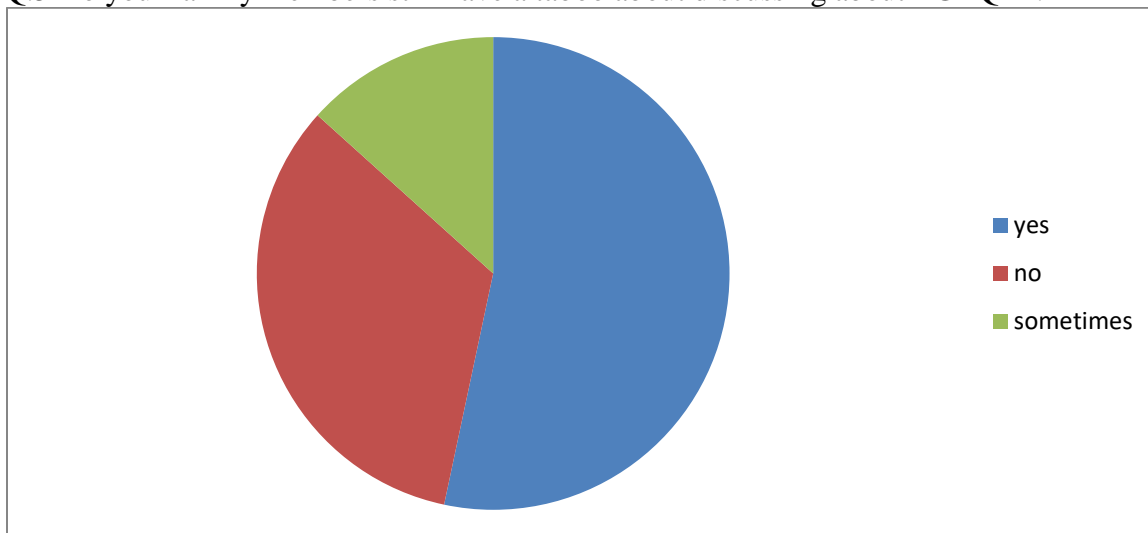
Q.3 Do you feel LGBTQIA are denied opportunities for jobs, promotion etc.



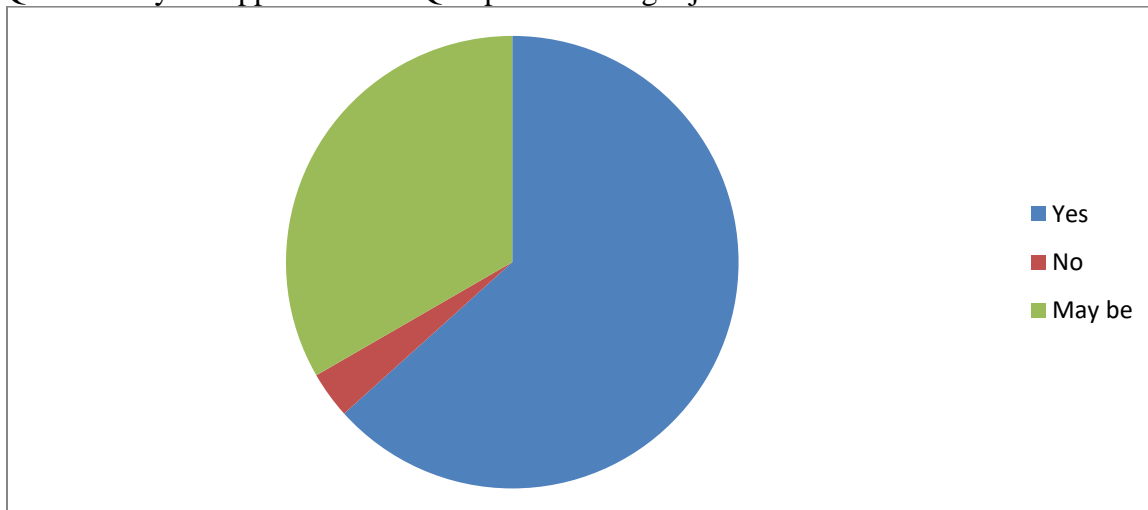
Q.4 from where did you get to know about the LGBTQIA?



Q.5 Do your family members still have a taboo about discussing about LGTQIA?



Q. 6 would you support a LGBTQIA person facing injustice due to his orientation?



#### 4.1 Analysis

- The researcher has selected 30 samples – students from 18years to 22 years
- The students are well aware of the LGBTQIA community or at least they have heard about some of them.
- Most importantly they understood about them through internet and not parents.
- The youngsters seem to be open about discussing the issues and do not seem to have any taboo about the LGBTQIA.
- The Students have clear opinions about the issues and are willing to help the needy in case of injustice.
- They have admitted that the books, plays and movies have helped them to become aware about the issue.

#### 5 Conclusion and Suggestions

The Hypothesis has been proved right that the representation of LGBTQIA in the minds of youth with relation to Indian culture is progressive. The movies and plays have helped to break the stereo type about the LGBTQI Community.

In urban India, where social media and corporate initiatives have created increasing awareness of LGBT rights the scenario looks more upbeat for gay individuals than for transgender people or Lesbians. While the voices of LGBT in urban areas are heard through several online and real world platforms which form an important and integral part of LGBTIQ individuals voices that are heard through various online modes like facebook, twitter, instagram etc. The content or activities which are run on this online mode give limited exposure to many issues or problems faced by the LGBTIQ community. Only some of the common issues are discussed on social platforms and many times the most important and sensitive issues are overlooked or addressed.

Though there are many Gay pride parades, activities , meeting and heated discussions on social media platforms on televisions many debates take place there are many families living in the rural areas of country dealing with these issues and problems in their own possible ways. In some parts of the countries secret honor killing have also taken place. In many cases they have to run away from their house and live like abandoned without money and suffer a lot of abuse and hardship.

The historic decision of India's Supreme Court has passed the rule that gay sex is no longer a criminal offence. The 2013 judgment that was upheld a colonial law known as section 377, which says gay sex is categorized as an unnatural offence. The court has now ruled out the discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is a fundamental violation of rights. Although the public opinion in India's largest cities have been in the favor of scrapping the law there has been strong opposition among religious groups and in rural and conservative communities. India is highly populated country with mixture of public. There is homogeneity in crowd with reference to their education and other factors. There is a very thin line between the rural and urban population with their thoughts about the LGBTQIA. Most of the times their thoughts are influenced in good and bad ways both.

Therefore we can surely say that the representation of LGBTQIA in the minds of youth with relation to Indian culture is getting progressive.

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