

# Development of the Acceptance towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Scale

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**Abstract:** *This study describes the stepwise development of the Acceptance Towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Scale in the Indian context. Indian society has a strong focus on collectivism, differentiating it from the western culture of individualism. An open-ended survey, followed by focused group discussions were conducted to understand the attitude, behaviour, and opinions towards the LGBT community. The results of the qualitative study helped in the formulation of a close-ended survey. Further, exploratory factor analysis was deployed on the results of the close-ended survey. This yielded a scale with an 18-item distribution among three acceptance measuring parameters: knowledge and awareness; perception of human rights; and inclusion in daily life, which demonstrate multidimensional aspects of acceptance in India. The three parameters were strongly correlated with each other implying strong interdependence of these parameters.*

**Keywords:** LGBT Acceptance, Homophobia, Indian culture, Collectivistic society

## 1. Introduction

The Rig Veda suggests that pre-Vedic time in India was pre-patriarchal and anti-binary focusing on female sexuality. Sexuality was based on pleasure and fertility and not procreative [1]. Different temple structures support this ideology of sexuality. During the Vedic period, the patriarchal system developed with its focus on procreation. With the Arab-Persian-Islamic invasion, homoeroticism was practiced in court and celebrated in Urdu and Sufi poems. With British colonialisation, Sec 377 of the Indian penal code was drafted in the 1860s which reads as "Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine." This Judeo-Christian ideology was imposed and non-procreative sexual activity was called as "unnatural" and "against the order of nature" [1]. According to Reuters on December 2011, India's Supreme Court overturned a judgement by a lower court back in 2009 upholding Section 377 and criminalizing gay sex in the country [2]. However, in a landmark verdict in September 2018, the Supreme Court scrapped Section 377. The Supreme Court reversed its own decision and said Section 377 is irrational and arbitrary. It said, "LGBT Community has the same rights as of any ordinary citizen. Respect for individual choice is the essence of liberty; the LGBT community possesses equal rights under the constitution. Criminalising gay sex is irrational and indefensible,".

Since the late 20th century, homosexuality has started to be a normal form of human sexuality rather than some form of sin or pathology around the world [3][4]. Scientific interest in the assessment of homophobia started more than 30 years ago [5]. Prominent work has been done to measure the attitude towards LGBT people, especially in the United States [6][7][8][9]. India is a "collectivistic" society which makes it principally different from the western society which promotes "individualism" [10]. Family structure is central to this concept. Indian families focus on family loyalty and sacrifice, more than freedom of choice and privacy [11].

Therefore, to understand acceptance towards LGBT people in India and similar cultures, specific cultural traits need to be considered. In the present work, various factors leading to homophobia and lack of acceptance have been identified and a tool to measure acceptance towards LGBT people has been developed.

## 2. Literature Survey

Weinberg defined the term homophobia as the dread of being close to homosexuals and self-aversion in the case of homosexuals themselves [12]. There is a lack of clarity in the concept of homophobia in psychology [13]. Homophobia is a personality trait [14]; a behavior [15] or a cultural phenomenon [16] along with many other existing concepts. To settle these contrasting views, Herek proposed three levels of homophobia [17]. At the first level, homophobic attitudes negatively perceive LGBT people due to their non-heterosexual identity and not due to their individual characteristics. The first level of homophobia is evident from the observation that homosexuality is a taboo in India [18]. Second level homophobia manifests itself in the structure of society. In India, not only is gay sex criminalised, same-sex couples don't have equal rights as opposite-sex couples even in health care and pension schemes [2]. At the third level, individuals internalize their beliefs and reinforce them in an internalized or externalized way. In India, LGBT individuals are ill-treated and abused. Most of them are not accepted by their families [19]. In India, homophobia is exhibited at all three levels described by Herek.

Acceptance is crucial for change along with being a critical component in the change strategies [20][21]. Current homophobic attitudes suggest a strong need for society to accept the apparently new concept of alternative sexuality. [22] define acceptance as tolerance of emotions evoked by aversive stimuli. Though Indian history shows tolerance to alternate sexuality in its past, today a heterosexual culture is being nurtured with little freedom for people engaging in same-sex practices [19]. While religious and linguistic minorities are well acknowledged, sexual minorities are not

given proper recognition [19].

However, recently India has seen people disclosing their homosexuality and fighting for their rights [2]. Social activism has emerged and the LGBT community has gained greater visibility [23]. Hijra is a socio-cultural construct in which a transgender person who is biologically male takes on the gender role of a female [23]. Though Hijras have large visibility in Indian society [24], they have been oppressed and never been accepted [23]. Hence, visibility does not suffice to ensure acceptance, which is central to psychological well-being.

### 3. Problem Definition

Since homophobia has cultural and linguistic specific components, a plain adaptation of a scale can cause the instrument to differ completely from the original [13]. Strong focus on collectivism, social-cohesion, interdependence and especially inherent family structure, differentiates Indian society from western society [10]. Parents generally bring up their children with relentless pressure to enter the institution of heterosexual marriage because of its significance in Indian culture [23]. Most homophobia scales have been developed in the United States and therefore reflect the notion of homophobia as it is in the US [13]. This aim of this study is to develop a scale to measure the acceptance of the LGBT community in India and countries with a similar culture.

For the development of Acceptance Towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Scale (AT- LGBT Scale), an open-ended survey was conducted to understand the unbiased and complete spectrum of opinions regarding an LGBT individual as well as the LGBT community. This was followed by focused group discussions to identify reasons for the opinions and to deduce the dominating thoughts and feelings so that the reason for the aversive stimuli caused by LGBT community can be understood in an Indian context. Lack of tolerance to emotions caused by these stimuli essentially becomes the reason for lack of acceptance [22]. The group discussions allowed natural interaction and mutual influence among participants, and therefore provided high face validity to the study. A close-ended, 19 item questionnaire was derived from the analysis of this qualitative study. Subsequently, a survey was conducted using this questionnaire. Factor analysis and measures of internal consistency were performed on the results of the survey yielding three parameters to measure the acceptance.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Method- Qualitative Analysis

An open-ended survey was conducted among 50 students from Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT Bombay). The sample was selected using the simple random sampling technique. A comprehensive list of room numbers of all the student hostels was generated and 50 room numbers were randomly selected. Guest et al. (2006) suggested that a sample size greater than 15 is acceptable for all qualitative research. The students of these selected rooms were provided

with a 10-inch × 5-inch blank sheet and were informed about the anonymity of the survey. Personal details apart from gender and academic course were not collected. The chosen participants included 40 males and 10 females. The ages of the participants ranged from 17 to 35 years. They were enrolled in different academic courses including B.Tech. (n=23, 46%), Dual Degree (n=10, 20%), B.Des. (n=3, 6%), M.Tech. (n=9, 18%) and Ph.D. (n=5, 10%) courses, making the sample representative. The participants were asked to respond to the question: "What do you think about LGBT people?" This unbiased question provided them an opportunity to express their comprehensive opinions about the LGBT community. Participants were free to respond in the language they were comfortable with. However, no translation was required since everyone responded in the English language. The participants responded to the question in the privacy of their respective rooms, in absence of individuals related to conduction of the survey. Response sheets were collected back after two hours of distribution. The responses were categorized into two groups. The first group had responses with only positive or neutral statements regarding LGBT people. This group of responses was considered to not to have any explicit signs of lack of acceptance. The second group had responses which included at least one negative statement regarding LGBT people. From the second group of responses, key opinions were identified and were used to frame questions for the focused group discussion.

For conducting focused group discussions, the sample was selected using the same simple random sampling technique among IIT Bombay students. A comprehensive list of room numbers of all the student hostels was generated and 35 numbers were randomly selected. Students corresponding to each room number were contacted and informed about the group discussing. 29 students agreed to participate in the group discussion. Contact details and discussion dates and time preferences were taken from each interested student. Three groups of nine-ten members each were formed depending upon the date-time preferences and final discussion venue and timings were conveyed to the participants. On the day of the discussion, some students didn't show up for personal reasons. Finally, three group discussions were conducted with 24 students in three groups of eight members each. Group discussions were held in a disturbance-free room. Each group discussion lasted for nearly an hour in presence of a moderator. Minutes of each discussion was noted. The discussion happened in a mix of English and Hindi language. The responses of the discussion were categorised into three groups. The first group included responses showing the inherent feelings, knowledge, and awareness about the concept of homosexuality. The second group included responses showing participant's views on the effect of homosexuality on society, viewing homosexuality as an external member in the society which is not directly influencing their personal life. The third group of responses included participants' views in situations where LGBT people started coming in their close contact and becoming a part of their personal life.

## 4.2 Method-Quantitative Analysis

**Participants.** Students of IIT-Bombay were sent an email regarding the survey to measure acceptance toward the LGBT community on the campus. Five hundred and seventy-nine valid responses were recorded to the questionnaire. The respondents included 473 males, 102 females and 4 others, who identified themselves as neither male nor female. The gender ratio among the respondents was consistent with the gender ratio on campus. The sample included students of the age range of 17 to 40 years ( $M=23.03$ ,  $SD=4.012$ ). The respondents came from all the courses offered at IIT Bombay including B.Tech. / B.Des. course ( $n=277$ , 47.8%), M.Tech. / M.Sc. / M.Des. / M.Phil./ MBA course ( $n=167$ , 28.8%) and PostDoctoral course ( $n=135$ , 23.3%). The participants represented the various regions in India and had a mix of people from different types of hometown including people from metropolitan cities ( $n=211$ , 36.4%), cities ( $n=196$ , 33.9%), big towns ( $n=71$ , 12.3%), small towns ( $n=60$ , 10.4%) and villages ( $n=41$ , 7.1%). Four hundred and sixty-nine (81%) respondents identified themselves as a heterosexual (straight) person who have never had same-sex attraction, eighty-six (14.9%) respondents identified themselves as a heterosexual (straight) person who have had same-sex attraction, and twenty-four (4.1%) identified themselves as an LGBT person. 62% ( $n=359$ ) of the participants did not have an LGBT friend or family member while 38% ( $n=220$ ) had an LGBT friend or family member. 88.1% ( $n=510$ ) had never been tagged as an LGBT person while 11.9% ( $n=69$ ) had been tagged as an LGBT person.

**Measures.** Acceptance towards the LGBT community was measured by a set of 19 items. A 5-point Likert scale (1=*strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) was used to collect responses. Some items were reverse scored to reduce acquiescence bias. Acceptance was measured in 3 areas: a) Knowledge and awareness b) Perception of Human rights c) Inclusion in daily life.

**Demographic questionnaire.** In addition to the 19 items, participants were asked six demographic questions about their age, gender, religion, hometown, the course at IIT and three personal questions asking for their sexuality, if they had been tagged as LGBT and if they had any friend or relative who was LGBT. These were potential parameters, which could affect attitude towards LGBT individuals.

**Procedure.** An email was sent to the students of IIT Bombay through an in-house media body-InsIght, via an internal online portal, which was accessible by nearly 10,000 students. The subject of the mail was "A survey of Acceptance of LGBT community", and it had a link to the survey. Within three days, 635 responses were recorded. No data was recorded after the data analysis. No special incentive was provided to the respondents. The survey was anonymous and that the results were analyzed on a cumulative basis and not on an individual basis. Only the demographic questions were compulsory. Surveys which were incompletely filled and those filled by people outside of the campus were excluded. Two respondents had marked a non-acceptable age. Hence, their responses were rejected. Finally, a total of 56 responses were rejected and 579 were

accepted for further analysis. This sample size had a power of 0.9996 for a 95% confidence level indicating an acceptable sample size.

**Initial Screening.** Since some statements in the survey were framed as negative sentences, the responses were adjusted for consistency in results. For instance, if a participant responded as 5-Strongly agree for a negative statement, it was taken 1-Strongly disagree in the analysis. A similar adjustment was done for all responses. Hence, post adjustment, a score of 5 in each statement indicated maximum acceptance and score of 1 indicated minimum acceptance. The total adjusted score of the items was used to find the correlations between the subscales. An initial principal-axis factor analysis was conducted to check if necessary assumptions for EFA were met. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olk in the measure of sampling adequacy for the initial EFA was 0.964. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at the .001 level, indicating that the sample size was large enough to evaluate the factor structure. The data matrix was approximated as an identity matrix as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell, making it suitable for factor analysis [25].

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Results-Qualitative Study

The responses were categorised into two groups. The first group included responses which did not have any explicit signs of lack of acceptance, such as:

*"Love can happen between any two people, as long as people involved are okay with it."*

*"I have been for equality in every aspect and it extends to same-sex orientation."*

The second group included responses indicating incomplete acceptance. In this category, respondents have expressed certain conditions to their acceptance or have simply rejected the concept of homosexuality. Sample responses include:

*"Personal same-sex orientation is acceptable but the institution of marriage (in my opinion) should not be subject to the effect of same-sex orientation."*

*"It is harmless at an individual level but should not become 'a thing' in the society."*

*"I am not comfortable with openly gay culture."*

*"I think it should not be allowed in countries like India. It is not supported by our culture. It may also increase the cases of sexual harassment."*

*"It is unnatural and contradicts the basic existence and natural selection."*

The open-ended survey highlighted parameters such as Indian culture, change in sexual orientation, personal

discomfort etc. From the key points of the open-ended survey, the following questionnaire was designed for the focused group discussions.

- Do you think if homosexuality is a disease?
- Do you think if homosexuality was unnatural?
- Do you think homosexuality is a western import and against Indian culture?
- Do you think if someone should "ungay" homosexuals i.e. convert into a heterosexual?
- Do you think it is okay for homosexual people to have sex in their bedroom?
- Do you think that homosexuality is a threat to humans?
- Would you elect a progressive but homosexual leader?
- Do cross-dressing men and women make you uncomfortable?
- Do you think homosexual people can alter peoples' sexuality?
- Would you mind sharing a hostel room with a homosexual roommate?

The highlights of the discussion were categorised into three groups. The first group included responses showing the inherent feelings, knowledge, and awareness about the concept of homosexuality.

- 1) Discussing if homosexuality is a disease or not, most participants did not find it fitting in their definitions of a disease being contagious, harmful, regressive, hurting or infectious. A participant said *"Disease is a state when someone is physically or mentally unwell and unsatisfied. Homosexuals are satisfied in both aspects. It is therefore not a disease."* Some said, *"Homosexuality is a state of mind hence not a disease"; "If two people are in love, what can the world do about it?"* Opposing opinions were noted where a participant said *"Homosexuals have something lacking. I am not sure to term it as a disease. However, it is definitely very unnatural"*.
- 2) Some participants used the aspect of homosexuality being natural or not for deciding whether it was a disease. However, opinions on homosexuality being natural or not were discussed in detail again. While some remained ambiguous by saying *"I don't know how to define natural or unnatural"*, others had conflicting opinions. Many supported homosexuality being natural saying *"It is completely natural as they are born with it; "Procreation is the key in defining if it is natural or unnatural. Since gay men can have kids with lesbian women, it is natural"*. While some participants approved homosexuality to be natural due to the capability of homosexual people to procreate another participant believed homosexuality to be unnatural viewing the procreation aspect differently. He said *"Male and female are made for sexual reproduction. It is therefore unnatural"*.
- 3) In the open-ended survey, some people called homosexuality not to be a part of Indian culture. Participants of the group discussion had similar as well as opposing views. While some said, *"It was always in our culture, e.g. Shikhandi in Mahabharata etc."*; *"It was always in Indian history, though people have become more visible and out due to the western liberalisation"*;

*"We were more open in ancient times. We have been under the Islamic and Christian rule. Culture developed during that time is the western import when homosexuality started being seen as unnatural in India."* Others argued *"I have never heard any of my elders being gay and I see many now. This clearly shows a strong influence of the western world"; "People who are free have the time to explore alternate forms of sexuality. In India, people never had time for this. It is not Indian culture. There has been an initiation by the west followed by the chain reaction here"*.

- 4) Participants discussed if someone should take dedicated efforts to try to "ungay" homosexuals, i.e. to convert them into straight people. A participant who considered homosexuality to be a disease said *"It should be possible by hormonal balancing and spiritualising people. They should be controlled."* While most others didn't support this individual, saying *"It is not possible ethically. It might be possible by spreading fear among people. Being gay is natural, therefore an attempt to ungay them is unnatural."*

The second group included responses showing participants' views on the effect of homosexuality on society, viewing homosexuality as an external member in a society which is not directly influencing their personal life.

- 1) Everyone agreed that homosexual people have the right to have sex in the privacy of their bedroom. Though a participant made his stand clear saying *"It's only fine if they do it in their bedroom, but any sort of public display of affection will not be tolerated for homosexuals, though I would not mind straight couples kissing in public."* When participants have explained the law, Sec 377, which criminalised homosexuals to have sex in their privacy, they maintained their stand, irrespective of their personal level of acceptance towards LGBT people, and opposed such laws.
- 2) Again, participants were united in opinions against believing homosexuality to be a threat to humans. Some said, *"With such a large population it is not possible."; "Survival of the fittest. Dominant species will continue to dominate. Hence, I don't find a threat to humans."; "They always have an option of having babies. They aren't impotent."* No one felt that it could be a threat to humans.
- 3) Right to equality and to freedom of speech and expression were discussed. Though prima facie, everyone supported these rights and most said that these rights should be upheld irrespective of their sexual orientation, some added that *"Rights come with responsibilities and freedom comes with some societal restrictions."* This argument in the context showed that some participants had constraints in providing equal rights to LGBT people at least in certain aspects. It was also clear that some participants weighed societal restrictions and norms over equal rights and opportunities.
- 4) Most participants expressed support in electing a progressive but homosexual leader saying that *"Sexuality was no criterion to judge a person on its capabilities."* However, a participant said *"A leader influences people. A homosexual person should not be a leader."*

The third group of responses included participants' views in situations where LGBT people started coming in their close contact and becoming a part of their personal life.

- 1) A gay man being effeminate is a common stereotype [26]. Some participants shared their reactions when they encountered cross-dressing men and women while others shared their anticipated reactions. Some said they were comfortable: "I have no issues. I have seen boys wearing pink and I am completely fine with it"; "Though homosexuality is unnatural, I am not uncomfortable with this aspect. I have seen many gays and eunuchs. And that does not bother me". Others said: "I am not accustomed to seeing this, so might be paranoid at first but should become comfortable with time."; "I will be uncomfortable for unknown reasons."
- 2) While most people thought gay men cannot be converted into straight men, some of them thought otherwise. Many said "Those who are unsure might explore the option of homosexuality. Their suppressed feeling might come out"; "I don't think that adults can be converted but children might surely get affected."; "This is a trap! And children are most susceptible to fall in it." While there were still some who said "I don't think they can convert straight people. Acceptance will give homosexuals the courage to come out." A strong concern for children was noticed in the discussion.
- 3) An individual shares significant time and experiences with his/her roommate. Some participants said that they had no issues in sharing room with a homosexual person. Many others expressed their discomfort. A few feared of change in their own sexual orientation in contact with a homosexual roommate. A participant said "Others might think that I am gay as well. I would not share a room with homosexuals."

From the responses to the open-ended survey and focused group discussions, 19 statements were identified for the close-ended survey to exhaustively measure acceptance towards LGBT people. They were reviewed by an LGBT rights NGO-Humsafar Trust, to ensure adequate face validity. Some statements were reverse scored to keep respondents from answering carelessly and help correct for agreement bias. The response to the statements could be from 1: Strongly Disagree to 5: Strongly Agree. The statements of the close-ended survey are presented in the 'Item Statement' column of Table 1.

**Table 1:** AT-LGBT Scale

Item Statement	Factor Loading	M	SD
I think the activities of LGBT people are against my religion. *	Factor 1 (0.796)	4.15	1.190
I think the activities of LGBT people are against Indian culture. *	Factor 1 (0.687)	4.04	1.264
LGBT people must take available treatments to correct their sexual orientation. *	Factor 1 (0.579)	4.09	1.290
Gay sex should be criminalized. *	Factor 1 (0.502)	4.38	1.086
I agree with people who say that homosexuality is unnatural or immoral. *	Factor 1 (0.398)	4.15	1.271
I don't mind what LGBT people do in the	Factor 2	4.63	0.845

privacy of their own bedroom.	(0.699)		
LGBT people deserve the same rights as everybody else (for example, adoption, marriage etc.)	Factor 2 (0.560)	4.35	1.135
Love can happen between any two individuals.	Factor 2 (0.551)	4.24	1.143
LGBT people need support to fight the difficulties associated with being LGBT.	Factor 2 (0.511)	4.09	1.112
LGBT people can't be blamed for their sexual orientation.	Factor 2 (0.498)	4.28	1.179
LGBT people can influence a child's sexuality. *	Factor 3 (0.702)	3.17	1.326
I think that these days, LGBT individuals are using their sexuality to become famous. *	Factor 3 (0.625)	3.22	1.194
People wearing clothes made for the opposite sex make me uncomfortable. *	Factor 3 (0.608)	3.20	1.309
Same-sex parents are capable of being good parents.	Factor 3 (0.499)	3.55	1.319
I am comfortable with open LGBT culture.	Factor 3 (0.473)	3.95	1.243
It is important for me to voice against individuals showing anti-LGBT attitudes.	Factor 3 (0.464)	3.62	1.194
I would not want my child to be taught by an LGBT teacher. *	Factor 3 (0.424)	4.06	1.235
Allowing same-sex marriages will disrupt the functioning of societies. *	Factor 3 (0.407)	3.81	1.393

Note. Items with \* are reverse scored. Unique factor loadings >0.398 are shown. The analysis is based on 579 observations. AT-LGBT used the Likert scale with item ratings range from 1 to 5. For the current study, the ratings ranged from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree". AT-LGBT Scale = Acceptance Towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Scale. M=Adjusted-Mean; SD= Standard Deviation. Factor 1= Knowledge and awareness; Factor 2= Perception of Human rights; Factor 3=Inclusion in daily life.

## 5.2 Results-Quantitative Analysis

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

Initially, a principal component analysis was conducted, which showed that all the components were linked to a single factor. Since all questions were used to measure acceptance, they were well correlated. In such a case, a principal component analysis was bound to show all parameters linked to a single factor. Subsequently, principal-axis factor extraction analysis was performed, where non-orthogonal rotation was carried out to differentiate the factors. The conservative factor loading of 0.398 with consideration of the sample size was taken as the cut off criteria to consider an item to be a part of that factor [27]. One of the items did not load greater than 0.398 in any of the factors and was therefore removed. Based on the scree plot and the Eigenvalues greater than 1.00, the initial hypothesis was considered with multiple factor solutions from 1 factor to 4 factors. After considering all four cases, a three-factor solution was finally chosen as it was a more robust structure with more than 4 items in each factor.

### Factor Development

The factor loading of each item and the total adjusted-response of the sample has been presented in Table 1. The

factors yielded by the factor analysis are the parameters to measure acceptance towards LGBT community. Hence, these factors are termed as ‘parameters’ for measuring acceptance.

The first parameter included five items. It accounted for 5.759% of the variance. The questions in this parameter are concerned with the basic understanding, knowledge, and awareness. We named this parameter as "Knowledge and Awareness". The Cronbach’s alpha for this parameter was 0.879. In comparison, the LGB-KASH scale includes a factor “Knowledge of LGB History, Symbols, and Community” which accounts for 7.44% of the variance [28]. The second parameter included five items and it accounted for 4.826% of the variance. The questions in this parameter discussed fundamental rights as well as other important human rights. We named this parameter “Perception of Human Rights”. The Cronbach’s alpha for this parameter was 0.792. LGB-KASH scale includes a factor “LGB Civil Rights” which accounts for 3.72% of the variance [28]. The third parameter included 8 items and it accounted for 48.6% of the total variance. The questions in this parameter deal with the individual role and active support. It has aspects dealing with the inclusion of LGBT in one's daily life. We have named this parameter "Inclusion in Daily life". The Cronbach's alpha for this parameter was 0.872. Subscale inter-correlations for the scale were in the high range (absolute value of  $r = 0.72 - 0.77$ ). The strongest correlation was between the parameter-Perception of Human Rights and the parameter-Inclusion in Daily life ( $r = 0.77$ ). However, there is also a strong correlation between the parameter-Knowledge and Awareness and the parameter-Perception of Human Rights ( $r = 0.75$ ) as well as between the parameter-Knowledge and Awareness and the parameter-Inclusion in Daily life ( $r = 0.72$ ).

**Demographic Results**

An analysis was carried out to find the dependence of demographic differences on the acceptance towards LGBT people. For comparing acceptance, the sum of all the items was considered for different demographic elements. Regression was performed to identify the relationship between different subsets of demographics (independent variables) and acceptance (dependent variable). The regression equation had  $R^2 = 0.1$ . Detailed results have been shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

**Table 2: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	p-value
Regression	3864.02	29	822.89749	3	0.0 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	125370.20	549	228.361028		
Total	149234.23	578	258.190712		

<sup>a</sup>Dependent Variable: Total acceptance score

<sup>b</sup>Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Religion, Hometown, Have LGBT friend, Tagged as LGBT, Your Sexuality.

**Table 3: Coefficients**

Category	B	p-value
Constant	75.859	0.000
Age	-.244	0.156
Gender <sup>a</sup>		
Female	<b>7.140</b>	0.000
Others	-1.543	0.869
Religion <sup>b</sup>		
Jainism	-3.182	0.249
Islam	-12.403	0.004
Christian	-.934	0.783
Sikhism	12.682	0.151
Atheist	<b>10.356</b>	0.000
Agnostic	18.095	0.043
Buddhism	5.483	0.203
Hometown <sup>c</sup>		
City	-.767	0.618
Big Town	-1.960	0.360
Small Town	<b>3.930</b>	0.082
Village	.401	0.879
Your Sexuality <sup>d</sup>		
Straight with some same-sex attraction	<b>4.225</b>	0.026
LGBT	5.626	0.156
Have LGBT friend <sup>e</sup>		
Yes	<b>4.009</b>	0.004
Tagged as LGBT <sup>f</sup>		
Yes	3.498	0.132

Note: Significant outcomes have been marked in bold.

<sup>a</sup>Results show comparison with Males

<sup>b</sup>Results show comparison with Hinduism

<sup>c</sup>Results show comparison with Metropolitan cities

<sup>d</sup>Results show comparison with Straight who never had same-sex attraction

<sup>e</sup>Results show comparison with those who do not have an LGBT friend

<sup>f</sup>Results show comparison with those who have never been tagged as LGBT

The coefficient ‘B’ in Table 3 shows acceptance of different categories (e.g. Jainism, Atheist) with respect to the category with the highest number of responses (e.g. Hinduism) in a demographic element (e.g. religion). The categories: Islam and disbeliever in the demographic element-religion were excluded from final results even though their p-values are statistically significant since they received responses less than the acceptable category size of 30 [29].

Females ( $n=102$ ) were 7.14 times more accepting than males ( $n=473$ ). People who identified themselves as Atheist ( $n=31$ ) were 10.35 times more accepting than those who identified themselves as Hindus ( $n=429$ ). People coming from small towns ( $n=60$ ) were 3.92 times more accepting than people from a metropolitan city ( $n=211$ ). People who had an LGBT family member or friend ( $n=220$ ) were 4.00 times more accepting than those did not have any such connections ( $n=359$ ). Those who identified themselves as straight but had same-sex attraction some time ( $n=86$ ) were 4.22 times more accepting than straight people who never had same-sex attraction ( $n=469$ ).

## 6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify various parameters, which contribute to acceptance in the Indian culture and to provide psychometric robustness to the new tool to measure acceptance towards LGBT individuals. From the factor analysis performed on the responses of the survey, three parameters to measure acceptance were identified: a) Knowledge and Awareness; b) Perception of Human Rights; c) Inclusion in Daily Life.

The first parameter, Knowledge, and Awareness deals with acceptance in aspects relating to Indian culture, religion, homosexuality is natural or not and treatment for correcting sexual orientation. The aspect of criminalization/decriminalization of gay sex is also a part of this parameter as per factor analysis. However, many institutions demand the decriminalization of gay sex on the grounds of human rights [30]. Hence, the aspect of criminalization/decriminalization of gay sex is more apt to be a part of the second parameter: "Perception of Human Rights".

The second parameter, Perception of Human Rights, incorporates acceptance when LGBT people are viewed as an external member in society. These include the right to privacy and equality, aspects of being able to love anyone and not being blamed for one's sexual orientation.

The third parameter, Inclusion in Daily Life, measures acceptance in situations when LGBT people become part of an individual's life such as comfort level while interacting with cross-dressing people. Indian culture has the custom of joint families where the focus remains on the family's integrity over the ideology of individuality, freedom of choice and privacy [11]. Also, India is a "collectivistic" society, unlike western society, which promotes "individualism" [10]. Triandis said, "cognitions that focus on norms, obligations, and duties guide much of social behavior in collectivist cultures" [31]. Hence, at times the community is seen as a family and many aspects of the society are not external to countrymen but are an inherent part of their lives. In Indian society, many times the marriage of children translates to the reputation of the family [32]. Early marriages have been preferred just to ensure marriage in the same caste and community [33]. A society where inter-caste marriage is not approved, same-sex marriage is beyond the scope of discussion. Likewise, aspects such as same-sex marriages, the capability of same-sex parents being good parents and LGBT people are using their sexuality to become famous are also a part of this parameter. Indian and Asian families take great care of their family members. They are more involved in their family and society as compared to western society [11]. Concern for children, which came up in many forms during the focused group discussions, is also incorporated in this parameter. This parameter, therefore, seems to include aspects that are strongly aversive stimuli in Indian society. Tolerance of the emotions evoked by these strongly aversive stimuli will measure strong acceptance [22]. Studies also suggest that acceptance majorly applies to personal events and experiences [20]. Hence, this parameter is very essential while measuring acceptance. It includes

maximum variance in responses and minimum cumulative score on the acceptance scale which indicates a maximum divergence in opinions as well as minimum acceptance in this parameter of acceptance. Once society becomes accepting towards LGBT people in their personal life, they are likely to support LGBT rights. Likewise, this parameter also gauges active support by accessing if an individual will voice out for LGBT rights.

Herek suggested modifications in existing scales or development of modern instruments to accommodate cultural contexts and the impact of public discourse on sexual orientation [34]. Worthington, Savoy, Dillon, and Vernaglia also suggested that existing measures might not be able to completely capture the attitudes towards LGBT people with the evolving public discourse of sexual orientation [35]. The Index of Homophobia scale measures the fear of coming in close contact with homosexuals [6]. The third parameter, Inclusion in Daily Life, emerging in our study includes aspects of close contacts with LGBT people. IHP excludes "judgments concerning the morality of homosexuality" and "responses concerning beliefs, preferences, legality or social desirability" of homosexuality [6]. The current study includes these factors, which Hudson and Ricketts had excluded in their study. Existing research has shown strong correlations between the homophobia measured by IHP and personal reports of negative behavior towards homosexuals [36], suggesting the inclusion of factors more than just personal affective responses to LGBT in the scale.

Of the three subscales obtained in the Homophobia Scale, a completely effective component and a completely behavioral component was not obtained. Parameters of both these components loaded along with each other. Wright, Adams, and Bernat suggested that homophobia might involve behavior which can depend on the nature of the stimuli and not simply personal affective responses to gay and lesbian [19]. However, the aspect of the behavioral component is independently incorporated in the third parameter of AT-LGBT scale and does not load on the other two parameters.

ATLG scale, as the name suggests, measures attitudes towards lesbian and gay individuals. Though there is a connection between attitudes and behaviors, Fishbein and Ajzen argue this relationship to be indirect [37]. Likewise, "Attitude is, at best, a necessary precondition for professional behavior with gay men and lesbian clients but it is not sufficient to ensure such behavior" [38]. Hence, the study of attitudes does not suffice and assessment of behaviours is needed [39].

In Modern Homonegativity scale, a factor of Deviance/Changeability factor emerges as a separate factor from personal discomfort. This includes the conversion of straight people into homosexuals. In our study, this always remained an important point of debate in the focused group discussions. MHS was developed to differentiate attitudes between gays and lesbians. Raja and Stokes suggested that though MHS developed separable factors, they have unidimensional construct and further research on its multidimensionality should be explored, as is done in the current study [40].

The Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality Scale measures attitudes only towards bisexuality among men and women. Parameters regarding religiosity, prior contact with LGBT people are similar as seen in the current study. The current study has similarities in the multi-dimensional attitudes, such as parameters of LGBT civil rights, internalized affirmatives and some aspects of hate, towards LGBT people shown by the LGB-KASH scale. The major difference with the current study is the emergence of the parameter of "inclusion in daily life" which includes behavioral aspects to an India like collectivistic society. Also, the factor of civil rights has been extended to human rights.

Male participants had a low total score in the AT-LGBT scale indicating a lower level of acceptance as compared to the female participants. Wright, Adams, and Berant reported male participants to be more homophobic on the Homophobia Scale [19]. A similar trend has been reported by Seltzer [41]. Participants who had an LGBT friend or family member were more accepting than those who did not. Contact with an LGBT person has been reported to be highly correlated to lower homophobia by O'Hare, Williams, and Ezoviski's [42]. Participants who identified themselves as Atheists were strikingly more accepting than those who associated themselves to religion. Studies suggest that people with stronger religious expression have a correlation with higher homophobia. Greater church attendance has been found to have correlations with discomfort and anti-homosexual attitudes by Seltzer [41]. Our study has shown that among other demographic variables, religiosity has the strongest correlations to acceptance. A similar suggestion about measures of religiosity to be a strong predictor of attitudes towards gays and lesbians was given by Irwin and Thompson [43].

## 7. Conclusion

The study demonstrated the multidimensionality of acceptance towards LGBT people in India. The three acceptance measuring parameters included Knowledge and awareness; Perception of human rights; and Inclusion in daily life. These parameters can be used to develop questionnaires to measure acceptance towards the LGBT community.

## 8. Future Scope

This survey attempts to exhaustively cover all the aspects of acceptance towards LGBT and the results of the survey show acceptance in different aspects concerning LGBT individuals in the study sample. Documentation of attitude and perception will help to evaluate the effectiveness of current programs and design new programs to reduce negative biases towards the LGBT community. While there has been a rise in LGBT rights activism, there is still a large section of Indian society which believes that the mainstreaming of homosexuality poses a threat to Indian social and cultural integrity as well as morality [44]. The high reliability of the survey suggests that the results can be used to guide the intervention programs by many NGOs to reduce this anti-LGBT bias. The precise understanding of multidimensional

attitude of Indian people can have a positive impact on the professional training of counselors and give way to further study in this area. Replication and extension of the current study will give psychometric robustness to the survey and provide acceptance details from different demographics. When the survey has been performed with sufficiently large and varied samples, data can be used to present to the Supreme Court of India, which will help in the understanding of the current stance of the country towards the LGBT community and in turn help in developing nationwide policies. A comprehensive study of homophobia among social workers has been conducted [45] and there has been evidence of homophobia among social workers [46]. Travers writes: "The homophobic counselor cannot effectively meet the needs of gay or lesbian clients" [47]. The utility of this measurement instrument, which is its key issue [48], can be to identify homophobia among Indian social and health workers and develop programs to decrease it which will improve health care and counseling facilities. Finally, this study provides greater insights into the acceptance of Indian people towards LGBT people and a tool to identify parameters that need to be targeted to increase acceptance.

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