

Chapter 3

Exclusion of LGBT From Higher Education: Perceptions of Different Stakeholders

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ABSTRACT

When it comes to educational inclusion, there isn't much discourse or arrangement for LGBT students. LGBT students often feel unsafe on campus and in the classrooms. They are the victims of targeted verbal and physical harassment by their teachers and peers in forms such as statements made by teachers and peers or the outright rejection of their existence. The present descriptive study explored how the major stakeholders of higher education, that is, how teachers, parents, and students perceive the LGBT individuals in their classrooms and campus spaces. The findings pertaining to perception of teachers towards LGBT students highlighted that higher education teachers do not have much knowledge about the lives of LGBT individuals. The higher education campuses are ill prepared and poorly equipped towards the facilitation of LGBT individuals. Higher education curriculum in a majority of the institutions included as a part of this study was found to be gender insensitive.

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INTRODUCTION

The first documented usage of the word homosexual in literature is found in a German pamphlet published anonymously by Austrian-born writer Karl-Maria Kertbeny in 1869. Homosexual is a Greek and Latin hybrid term, with the initial element, taken from the Greek where in homos means “same”, not is related to the Latin homo meaning “man” as in Homo sapiens. It denotes acts and attachments of sexual nature, such as lesbianism, between individuals of the same sex.

Throughout history LGBT icons and allies have tried to establish various institutions to educate individuals. There are many horrific incidents regarding the LGBT community throughout history that the general public is unaware of till this day. Looking at the ground realities in India it is beyond doubt that India is far behind on the path to inclusivity of LGBT in education. There have been a few researches in the field of homosexuality but nothing groundbreaking has come of it. In 1977, Shakuntala Devi published India's first study on homosexuality in 1977. She wrote the book *The World of Homosexuals*. In 2015, Dr. Manabi Bandopadhyay, was appointed as the first openly transgender principal of Krishna Nagar Women's College in Nadia, West Bengal. She received a Ph.D, making her the first transgender person in West Bengal to achieve the honour. In the year 1995, Dr. Manabi launched *Ob-Manab*, a magazine, especially made for transgender. Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil is India's first openly gay royal. Before openly coming out in 2006, he underwent years of grueling conversion therapy and suffered in silence. He has been a vocal advocate for homosexuality and AIDS awareness and much of his advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights continues to primarily revolve around eradicating the stigma around homosexuality. Laxmi Narayan Tripathi is a well known transgender rights activist. In 2002, she was appointed as the president of DAI Welfare Society, a Mumbai-based organization that works for the transgender community. In 2007, Laxmi started a non-profit organization, Astitva, for the welfare of sexual minorities in India. Astitva tackles issues related to AIDS awareness and human rights in Thane and Mumbai. She represented Asia Pacific at the United Nations in 2008 wherein she addressed the challenges that sexual minorities face in society. She launched the Indian Super Queen beauty pageant in 2010. She is a leading voice of change for the transgender movement. In 2014, the Supreme Court of India recognized transgender people as the ‘third gender,’ putting an end to their long quest for recognition. India also was witness to the struggle of the LGBT community when homosexuality was classified as a criminal offence. After a long battle in court it was finally de-criminalized by the court in the case contested between Navtej Singh Johar & others Vs the Union of India. After decriminalization of homosexuality in India in 2018, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act was passed in the year 2019 in India. However, India has a long road ahead with respect to inclusion of LGBT in education. It

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