



### A STUDY OF SOCIAL INCLUSION WITH REFERENCE TO LGBT COMMUNITY

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**Abstract:**

*LGBT is the word used for defining people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. This group of people is also named as homosexuals. Across the world gender equality is well-known issue in today's society. Not only in present society this issue prevailed in past also. In days of old, homosexuality is not considered as equal and also denied by civil rights. These people also face molestation, harassment, discrimination, and the threat of violence because of their sexual orientation. This community has several problems that they have to face. In most of the countries, being a member of such community is a mortal sin. These people continue to face discrimination and exclusion against in the labour market, in schools and in hospitals, mistreated and disowned by their own families. . Most of the people who belongs to this community hide their sexuality out of fear of losing their job. This youth experienced disaffection from their family, relatives, society and friends. They also have to face invisibility and harassment at school and workplace which cause mental-ill-health, dropping out of school, and homelessness. This discrimination affects the main social good such as education, employment, health care and housing of such people.*

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*Now a days, homosexuality and queer identities may be acceptable to more Indian youths than ever before, but within the boundaries of family, home and school, acceptance of their sexuality and freedom to honestly express their gender choices still remain a constant struggle for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people. In urban India, where social media and corporate initiatives have created increasing awareness of LGBT rights, the scenario looks more upbeat for gay men than for transgender people or lesbian women. While urban LGBT voices that are heard through several channels like online and real-world platforms form an important part of LGBT activism, these uncover only a small part of the diverse challenges faced by the community. Also LGBT rights in India have been evolving rapidly in recent years. However, Indian LGBT citizens face social and legal difficulties not experienced by non-LGBT persons. Indian LGBTQ can attain rights and benefits equal to married couples as a live-in couple (analogous to cohabitation) as per a supreme court judgement, which offers some sentience of equality in a country where the vast majority of marriages are not registered with government.*

*The Social Justice Department is rolling out a new programme Sakalyam, to equip transgender people with skills in different sectors and earn a livelihood.*

**Key Words:** *LGBT, Exclusion, Inclusion, Homosexuality*



### Objective:

- To explore the programmes started by government for skill development of LGBT community.
- To explore the experience of social inclusion of LGBT community in corporate.

### Skill training programme provided by Government for transgender people:

In Kerala, The Social Justice Department, Government of India is starting a new programme Sakalyam, to fit out transgender people with skills in different sectors and earn a livelihood.

### Ads by:

The Social Justice department is already running various welfare programme for transgender people, including the Sakalyam scheme which help them in pursuing professional courses. The main aim of Sakalyam scheme is to give transgender people skill training in their area of interested. Most of the skilled and qualified trans people are denied jobs in Indian society. This programme helps to solve the issue to some extent.

For skill training transgenders can apply online. The unconfirmed plan of Sakalyam scheme is to give training to approximately 140 people in Kerala. Sakalyam scheme aims to reach out to the most deserving people in the community. The Kerala government is exploring opportunities to collaborate with the industries. Sakalyam scheme is focusing on skill training and asserting the rights of the transgender community to work with dignity.

### Inclusion in corporate:

As per HR professionals across the country most of the companies in India are increasing their recruiting of LGBT employees because they seek to create a more inclusive workplace. It makes eminent business sense for them to have a diverse workforce.

### LGBT inclusion at Mahindra Logistics:

The Mahindra Group had created a spectrum of diversity goals, which was a big driver behind the creation of its new LGBTQ policy.

In June, Mahindra Logistics launched its first policy for hiring and retaining lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning and/or queer (LGBTQ) people. The launch was timed with Pride Month, which is celebrated globally to promote pride among the LGBTQ community.

In India, companies have become more open to LGBTQ employees since 2018, after the country's highest court effectively abolished a colonial-era law that criminalized same-sex relations. Since the change in law, "there are loads of companies that have gone on their inclusion journey. *LGBTQ Inclusion at the Indian Workplace*, to be released this year.

### LGBT inclusion at Godrej:

The diversity policy at Godrej is something which helps LGBT community bring out whole-selves to work. The HR department of Godrej came up with the same sex partner benefits. At Godrej LGBT people don't have to live two lives, the first one personal and other one professional, something which is a great burden off oneself which helps in being productive because one don't have to divert their energies pretending to be someone which he/she is not.

Inside Godrej there is complete equality in terms of opportunities as well as in terms of benefit. Godrej give space to its each and every employee, they never bothered about their sexual orientation, the way they look and the way you present yourself but what really matters in Godrej is the scale and the talent that you have. Working with Godrej one feel more secure.

Now a days companies are taking efforts to make their organization more LGBTQ-friendly. Earlier, the arguments for inclusion was very much to do it as some kind of feel-good activity but now people are recognizing that inclusion is fundamental to a company's



bottom line. According to the experts diversity not only encourages innovation, it also helps attract the best and brightest talent.

Godrej is one of the first companies in India to actively push for greater inclusion, and its efforts have increased in recent years.

Last year, Godrej launched Project Rainbow, a focused hiring platform for LGBTQ candidates who want to apply for internships or full-time employment positions at the company. Godrej participated in two job fairs last year—the first of their kind in India—that catered exclusively to the LGBTQ community.

The top leadership at Godrej, led by Nisaba Godrej, managing director of consumer products, frequently talks about LGBTQ issues in town hall meetings, through internal communications and on other platforms. Backing from senior leadership is critical to the success of any company's inclusion program.

### Strategies for LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace:

#### Policy Changes:

Now a days most of the businesses by changing their policies or creating new ones are moving towards the path of inclusivity to produce a secure surrounding for LGBTQ employees and to extend LGBT employee the same benefits like all other employees. This includes , along with other changes, replacing the word "spouse" with "partner" in benefits policies like life insurance policy , medical insurance etc.

Medical insurance coverage, for example , offered by various firms like Godrej and Mahindra Logistics now cover same-sex partners . Also, LGBTQ employees can cash in adoption leave, compassionate or bereavement leave for their same-sex partner, and counseling services provided by the companies.

Mahindra Logistics had increased the scope of its sexual-harassment-prevention policy to include any sexual harassment reported by an LGBTQ employee. In 2018, Godrej introduced a gender affirmation policy by which the company offers to cover the costs of hormone

replacement therapy or surgery for transgender employees. Similarly, Publicis Sapient, a digital transformation company, covers gender reaffirmation surgery under its medical insurance policy in India.

#### Attitude Changes:

Experts says, policy changes are important but the bigger challenge is to change the attitudes of existing employees towards LGBT employees and managers to help them become more welcoming of LGBTQ workers.

To make leadership ready to welcome LGBT employees at work , is to organize training sessions and to create an emotional connection. For instance, last year Essar invited its staff to watch a dance performance by Dancing Queens, a transgender troupe who use dance to share their life stories and hardships. While they were performing, 60 percent to 70 percent of the staff in the audience were crying.

#### Customization and Support:

Most of the times companies require to put an extra effort to bring in diverse staff. For example, Godrej is taking efforts to shift only transgender employees at one of its factories. For this, Godrej is working with a local nonprofit organization and its corporate-social-responsibility team to find potential employees and train them. To take such steps , it requires experimentation , new kind of thinking who shared that her company created two gender neutral washrooms at its headquarters in Mumbai last year.

To ensure that LGBTQ staff can thrive at the company, it's important to provide support, especially by checking that everyone is on board with the vision of non discrimination.

Most of the companies around the world have created employee resource groups, which act as an informal support system, dedicated to LGBTQ concerns. Amicable employees and allies come together within these groups to organize events, share information, create awareness and make people feel at home.



### **Provide LGBTQ+ training:**

*Offering training to LGBTQ in the workplace as a part of equality and diversity training can be a powerful way to educate everyone about LGBTQ+ issues. Training helps to ensure that companies policies are heard and understood across the organization. In addition to this , having a training management system in workplace helps to keep track of progress.*

### **Set up an LGBTQ+ network:**

*For growing companies , creating an LGBTQ+ network can be a great way to support staff. A network means LGBTQ+ employees can meet in a safe space within their place of work to relate to one another.*

As a focus group, network members can also help you identify and improve upon issues affecting LGBTQ+ staff, so you can continually improve your approach.

### **Appoint LGBTQ+ allies:**

*If there are non-LGBTQ+ people in workplace who are more passionate about or interested in LGBTQ+ rights? They can be appointed as an LGBTQ+ ally, whose main job could be LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace and also can act as a source of support for LGBTQ+ staff.*

### **Create unisex toilet:**

*If it is possible, there should be a gender-neutral bathroom option, particularly if singular toilets are provided. Unisex bathrooms are more inclusive for non-binary people. Beyond this, unisex toilets are also cheaper to build and cut down waiting times for women significantly.*

### **Celebrate LGBTQ+ history and events:**

*Celebrating events like LGBTQ+ History Month, Pride, or Trans Day just like any other important days in the calendar. This will act as a great boost to LGBTQ+ awareness and inclusion throughout the year.*

These dates ,days and milestones as learning opportunities for all staff. Involve LGBTQ+ and non-

LGBTQ+ employees and celebrate important days and events to continuously spread awareness of LGBT inclusion.

The benefits of LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace

The benefits to an LGBTQ+ inclusive workplace extend beyond that of making sure employees of all sexualities and gender expressions feel safe ,secure and valid, though this is the primary reason. LGBTQ+ inclusive workplaces benefit businesses also in terms of productivity and profitability.

If organisations implement more effectively inclusion policies for their LGBTQ+ staff , this will partially attribute to avoid costs from stress and ill-health associated with LGBTQ+ staff who need to hide their identity at work place or experience discrimination.

Increases customer loyalty and buying power of the LGBTQ+ market. In addition to this, customers are likelier to leave businesses who have cases of discrimination made public.

Thus we can say that, having a robust inclusion strategies in place for LGBTQ+ staff make sense from a business perspective as well as an ethical standpoint. This is because every employees will feel less stressed and much more productive as respected members of a cohesive team.

### **Conclusion:**

*LGBTQ+ inclusion is so important for making sure everyone feels safe and comfortable in bringing their whole selves to work. LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace is fast becoming a priority for organisations all over the world. This includes SMEs as well as big businesses, as LGBTQ+ inclusivity offers a distinct competitive advantage for all organisations.*

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