

COMPARATIVE STUDIES ON LGBTQ+ IN ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL AND MODERN CIVILIZATIONS

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Abstract:

During the recent trial for the adoption of same-sex marriage in India, the government and child safety organisations argued that homosexuality was a Western concept and anti-indigenous cultural trend. The court argued that homosexuality has been present since prehistoric times, and the British colonists introduced the law of "sexual activities against the order of nature" section 377 banning homosexuality and same-sex relations in a sexually diverse country. While there is evidence that homosexuality has been a part of all human societies worldwide, there is no fully proven scientific evidence to support this claim. Well-educated individuals from all over the country condemned the government's statement on homosexuality as an "Urban Elitist Concept". This highlights how knowledge on the topic can make opinions vary which differs from wider societal views. In this research, data was collected with the help of a self-administered survey. This research will focus on finding a correlation between how acceptance of the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) community depends on the understanding of ancient societies and how diverse sexualities have been around since ancient times.

Keywords: Homosexuality, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Urban Elitist Concept, Sexual Diversity

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Introduction:

Since 2008, there have been hundreds of articles written on microaggressions, with dozens focusing specifically on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people. (*Journal of Homosexuality Volume 66, 2019*). LGBTQ tho can be said to be a natural phenomenon in some individuals, which is also seen in some animals lower than humans, especially in non-human primates and occasionally in lions, elephants, etc. However, as social evolution in human beings, the thoughts decided division of labour in human organs which were supposed to perform the so-called specific tasks. Thus, the acceptance of LGBTQ was not appreciated by human society, thereby becoming a taboo to be spoken openly). There are certain groups of people who practise such activities but are hidden in society.

The main aim was to understand the views of people on diverse sexualities and how the same is related to the type of educational background a person has. This research will focus on providing information that acceptance of homosexuality depends on an understanding of ancient societies and how diverse sexualities have been around

since ancient times.

This research dives into different sorts of comparative studies based on LGBTQ+ communities in ancient, medieval and modern civilizations. It explores the rich tapestry of LGBTQ+ across different historical eras. This investigation seeks to trace the evolution of LGBT+ identities through time revealing intricate variations of social attitudes, legal frameworks, and cultural perspectives. Investigating historical content, we aim to uncover patterns, challenges, and societal views which shed light on the journey of an LGBTQ+ individual in the quest for understanding, acceptance, and equality across diverse cultural landscapes.

Background Information:

Ancient civilization -

INDIA:

Gods change sex or manifest as an avatar of the opposite sex to facilitate sexual congress. The famous Sangam period characters of King Kopperun Cholan and Pisiranthaiyar are another example of same-sex love. They are said to have not seen each other at all and yet shared love and regard for each other, so much so that they die at the same time in different places. The friendship between King Pari and poet Kabilar is shown as something more than just friendship. There are lyrical undertones suggestive of the intimate relationship between them. However, since there is no explicit representation, one can only postulate a possibility. (Vanita, Ruth. same-sex love in India: volume 1, 2011)

The Bhagavata Purana (6.18.3-6) lists Varuna and Mitra as having children through a yoni or non-vaginal sex. For example, Varuna fathered the sage Valmiki when his semen fell upon a termite mound, and Agastya and Vasistha were born from water pots after Mitra and Varuna discharged their semen in the presence of Urvasi. This account is arguably similar to gay couples having children through surrogate mothers in modern days.

Some versions of the Bengali mythological text Krittibas Ramayana contain a story of two queens who conceived a child together. When the famous king of the Sun Dynasty, Maharaja Dilipa, died, the demigods became concerned that he did not have an heir. Shiva appeared before the king's two widowed queens and commanded, "You two make love together and by my blessings, you will bear a beautiful son." The two queens execute Shiva's order and one of them conceives a child. In other versions of the story, Kamadeva, the god of love, blesses them with a child after they fall in love. The child was born boneless, but by the blessings of the sage Ashtavakra, the child was restored to full health. Ashtavakra named the child "Bhagiratha" – he who was born from two vulvas (bhaga). Bhagiratha would later become one of the most famous mythic kings of India and is credited with bringing the Ganges River down to earth through his austerities.

Shikhandi is a character in the Mahabharata. He was originally born as a girl named 'Shikhandini' to Drupada, the king of Panchala. In a previous lifetime, Shikhandini was a woman named Amba, who was rendered unmarriageable by the hero Bhishma. Humiliated, Amba undertook great austerities, and the gods granted her wish to be the cause of Bhishma's death. Amba was then reborn as Shikhandini. A divine voice told Drupada to raise Shikhandini as a son; so Drupada raised her like a man, trained her in warfare and arranged for her to marry a female. On the wedding night, Shikhandini's wife discovered that her "husband" was female, and insulted her.

Shikhandini fled but met a yaksha who exchanged his sex with her. Shikhandini returned as a man named 'Shikhandi' and led a happy married life with his wife and children. During the Kurukshetra war, Bhishma recognised him as Amba reborn and refused to fight 'a woman'. Accordingly, Arjuna hid behind Shikhandi to defeat the almost invincible Bhishma. (Vanita, Ruth, and Saleem Kadwai. same-sex love in India: volume 2, 2016)

GREECE:

Eros is a part of the trinity of gods that played roles in homoerotic relationships, along with Heracles and Hermes, who bestowed qualities of beauty (and loyalty), strength, and eloquence, respectively, onto male lovers. In the poetry of Sappho, Aphrodite is identified as the patron of lesbians. (Skinner, B. C. same-sex desire and love in Greco-Roman, 2006)

Apollo's male lover was a man Hyacinthus-

As many romances do, this story begins with an obsessive crush. Hyacinthus drove the deity in a chariot pulled by swans to all of Apollo's sanctified territories. Apollo fell in love with Hyacinthus so deeply that he left his sanctuary at Delphi to spend time with Hyacinthus by the river Eurotas. (Antiquity and in the classical tradition of the west: volume 1, 2006)

The astrological sign of Mercury is traditionally the symbol of transgender people. In Greek mythology, Hermes (the Greek version of the Roman god Mercury) and Aphrodite (the goddess of love) had a child named Hermaphroditus. That child possessed

both male and female sexual organs, hence the term hermaphrodite. (Dover, K. J. Greek homosexuality: volume 2, 2006)

Medieval civilization -

MUGHALS:

Babur's unbearable suffering for the love of a boy whom he had to leave behind because of his political endeavours is well-known and popular, only because he wrote about it openly in his memoirs. There was no sense of shame or fear associated with the emotions Babur had for the boy. There seems to be hardly any consciousness of these emotions being unnatural or forbidden in the pre-modern mind. (The Babur-Nama in english: volume 1, 2002)

Guardians and Protectors: Hijras served as attendants and guardians in the harems of the Mughal emperors. They were responsible for maintaining discipline, safeguarding the women's privacy, and ensuring their well-being.

CHINA:

Male homosexuality has been acknowledged in China since ancient times and was mentioned in many famous works of Chinese literature such as *Bian Er Chai* (弁而釵/弁而钗) which portrays homosexual relationships between men as enjoyable relationships. (martin huang - *Qing and Homoerotic Desire in Bian er chai and Lin Lan Xiang* 2001)

Confucianism, being primarily a social and political philosophy, focused little on sexuality, whether homosexual or heterosexual. In contrast, the role of women is given little positive emphasis in Chinese history, with records

of lesbianism being especially rare.

In the late third century, according to writings from the Liu Song dynasty, homosexuality was just as frequent as heterosexuality: It was revered by all the authorities and gentlemen. To the point when spouses were alienated from one another, all males in the realm adopted this style. Envious unmarried ladies felt resentful.

JAPAN:

Records of men who have sex with men in Japan date back to ancient times. However, they became most apparent to scholars during the Edo period. Historical practises of homosexuality is usually referred to in Japan as *wakashudō* (若衆道, lit. 'way of the *wakashu*') and *nanshoku* (男色, lit. 'male colours'). The institution of *wakashudō* in Japan is in many ways similar to pederasty in ancient Greece. Older men usually engage in romantic and sexual relationships with younger men (the *wakashu*), usually in their teens.

In the classic Japanese literature *The Tale of Genji*, written in the Heian Era, men are frequently moved by the beauty of young boys. In one scene the hero is rejected by a lady and instead sleeps with her young brother: "Genji pulled the boy down beside him ... Genji, for his part, or so one is informed, found the boy more attractive than his chilly sister" (Leupp, Gary P. *Male Colors: volume 1*, 1997)

Modern civilization -

GERMANY:

The history of the pink triangle begins before WWII, during Adolf Hitler's rise to power. Paragraph 175, a clause in German law prohibiting homosexual relations, was revised by Hitler in 1935 to include same-sex fantasies, kissing, embracing, and gay sexual acts. They were punished by sterilisation, most often accomplished by castration. Then, in 1942 Hitler's punishment for homosexuality was murder. Each prisoner in the concentration camps wore a coloured inverted triangle to designate their reason for incarceration. This designation also served to establish a sort of social hierarchy among the prisoners. A green triangle marked its wearer as a regular criminal; a red triangle denoted a political prisoner. Two yellow triangles overlapping to form a Star designated a Jewish prisoner. The pink triangle was for homosexuals. Today, for many the pink triangle represents pride, solidarity, and a promise to never allow another occurrence of the Holocaust. (Plant, Richard. *The Pink Triangle: Volume 1*, 2011.)

ENGLAND:

It was illegal for men to do certain acts (anal sex, or other sex acts which might come under the gross indecency act) sex between two women was also criminalised. The gross indecency act was passed in 1885 because, without proof of anal sex, it was not possible to prosecute under the existing laws. The law was used against many homosexuals who were treated with gross indecency, several "treatments for homosexuality" such as conversion therapy were carried out on those who were tried and pleaded guilty to homosexual acts. The section 377 enacted across its colony penalized any sexual acts "against the laws of nature".

One of the most notable incidents of forced treatment was the conversion therapy inflicted upon Alan Turing which in turn deteriorated his physical and mental health to the point of him committing suicide by cyanide poisoning. (Waller, Maureen *London 1945: life in the debris of war*. 2020)

Biological evidence: Sexual behaviour in adult animals is expressed through the activities of the motor, sensory, central, peripheral, and endocrine systems. Activation of such systems is influenced by stimuli from the external environment, including the social environment, and internal signals. Different systems interact with each other in subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle ways. Some aspects of our species' more complex mental abilities are also considered to be studied in the context of the early presence of homosexuality. The utility of studying such syndromes lies in the possibility of studying specific neuroendocrinological mechanisms that are common to the manifestation of homosexual behaviour. In this way, the causes of homosexual behaviour can be better understood in a more general, functional context. This is a simple but very important point. (Poiani A. - Animal Homosexuality: The endocrine and nervous systems2020)

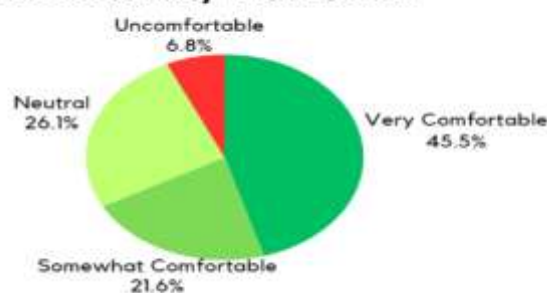
Methodology: The main aim of this studies is to acquire records from a couple of sources to reinforce the findings. By combining survey responses, actual-lifestyles incidents and pre-present research, the take a look at seeks to apprehend the current condition of an LGBTQ person in social in addition to personal contexts.

To spotlight the multifaceted experiences of LGBTQ individuals throughout one-of-a-kind historical durations, this research will adopt a complete assessment and analysis of present literature approximately historic, medieval, and modern civilisations. This good sized examination will contain synthesising insights from scholarly articles, ancient reviews, and relevant research that explore LGBTQ narratives in awesome ancient epochs. By compiling records from those numerous resources, the take a look at objectives to construct a greater comprehensive and varied knowledge of the challenges, opportunities, and societal dynamics influencing LGBTQ individuals all through one-of-a-kind ancient eras. This method contributes to the studies's common validity and depth, providing a holistic attitude on the evolving experiences of the LGBTQ network throughout numerous cultures. A complete survey changed into also administered to acquire quantitative records, taking pictures a huge spectrum of perspectives and stories inside the LGBTQ community.

Observation: The following observation was made based on the responses provided through the survey questionnaire given to the respondents.

1. **The Youth Show Openness:** Youth today expresses a more accepting viewpoint. This change links to more awareness and education which can be traced to their use of several social media platforms expanding their base of knowledge, and promoting broader comprehension of gender and sexual orientation. It helps show how over time, young people become more open to societal shifts.

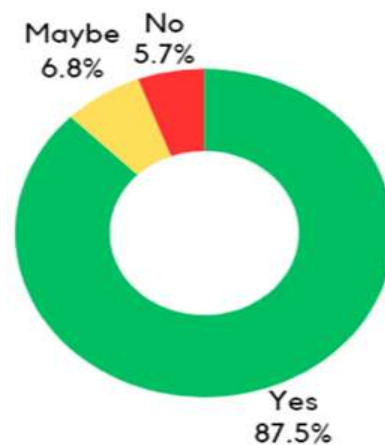
How comfortable are you discussing the topic of homosexuality with others?



2. United Support for Effort:

Opinions on the amount of effort to be put in seem consistently positive. It shows that they support action to include and accept all genders and sexualities. It tells us that fostering a society that's accepting of all is beneficial not only for the queer community but also for the society as a whole.

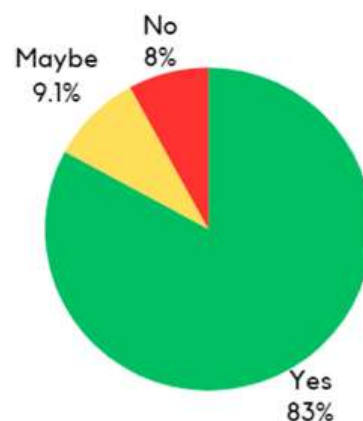
Do you think homosexuals should have equal rights as others?



3. Opinion Diversity on Homosexuality and Rights:

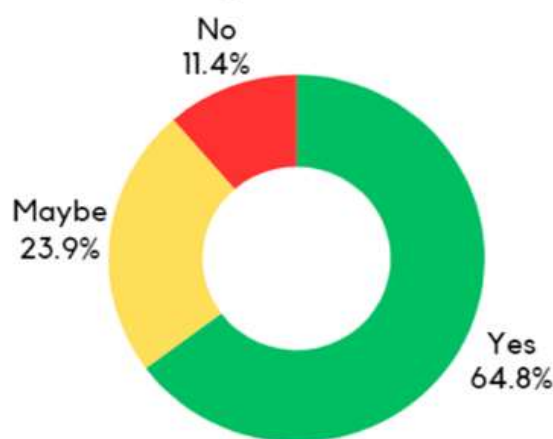
Warm responses are portrayed over the acceptance of various sexualities. However, views differ in making changes and providing rights.

Should LGBTQ+ individuals be protected from discrimination in employment and housing?



It hints at a complex view where people might accept diverse sexualities on a personal level but may not agree to what extent societal changes should be implemented.

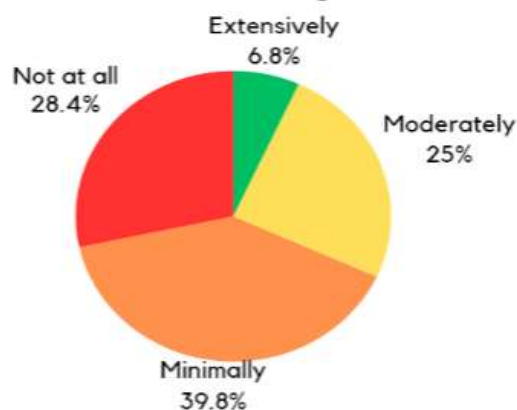
Do you think same sex marriage should be legalized?



4. Collective opinion on the inclusion of LGBTQ history:

Incomplete or even no information being included in history curriculums about lgbtq and other queer communities has somewhat distorted the view on the topic of the community’s presence as a whole. But, with advancing times, more and more people are willing to include this ignored history to nullify this distorted view.

In academic studies of ancient civilizations, to what extent is the existence of homosexuality discussed and acknowledged?



5. Mixed Ideology on Methods of Teaching LGBTQ History:

Acceptance of gender fluidity has a comparatively positive societal view. But, ideas on how to teach LGBTQ+ history vary a great deal. These differences in views are a result of deep-rooted beliefs and learnings. It brings out the need to brainstorm many different careful ways to weave all viewpoints into school lessons.

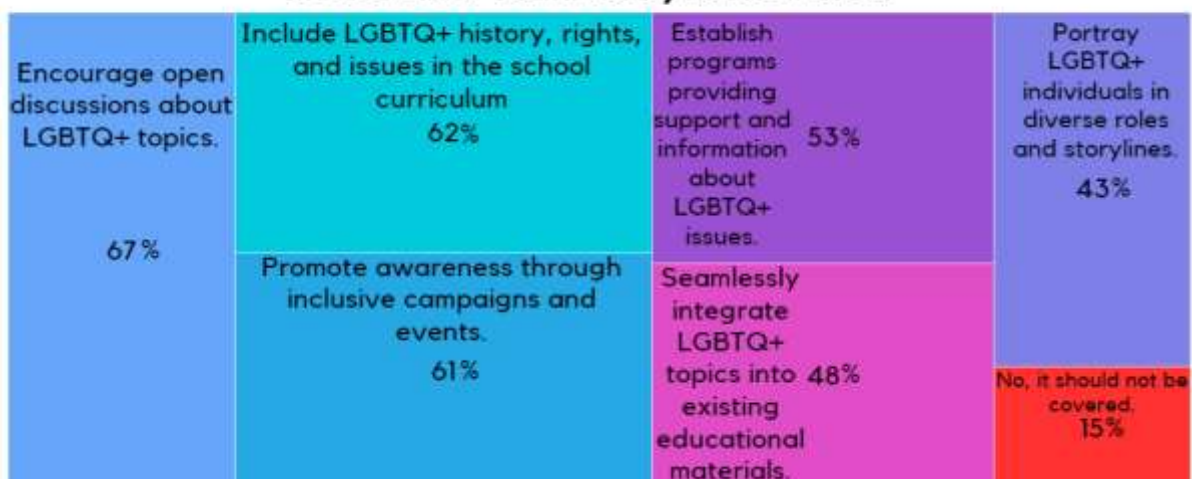
Do you think when studying ancient civilizations, evidence of LGBTQ+ experiences should be sought out, to include in the history curriculum or should it be overlooked?



6. Conflicting Views between Sex and Gender:

Most of the negative responses were positioned towards the binary sex of a biological male and a biological female rather than the wider gender spectrum which does not necessarily have to be on either extreme end and can be somewhere in between male and female, The older population often sticks to this conservative view of male and female labels. Yet, more young folks recognise and respect varied gender identities. This perhaps confirms a larger social shift in the newer generation.

How do you think should the knowledge regarding the LGBTQ+ community be covered?



Discussion:

1. Changing Views on Gender:

There's a remarkable shift from focusing on sexes to learning about genders, indicating societal change. Older generations might stick to binary concepts, but younger people embrace a broader range of genders.

Not only has recent research described change in gender stereotypes over time (*Eagly et al., 2019*), but also this Research Topic includes the reviews that identifies facets underlying these stereotypes' two primary dimensions of agency and communion.

2. Teens Lead A Positive Change:

Today's young people voice more positive views and show more acceptance. This reflects a generational shift, spurred by more exposure and education. The result? A more welcoming society.

A Talk Show Host Ellen DeGeneres made national news in 1997 when she came out publicly as a lesbian— first on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” and soon after on “The Ellen Show.”

3. Wide Support for Inclusivity:

Positive opinions on efforts for inclusivity show a widespread recognition of the LGBTQ+ community's importance. These efforts help build a tolerant society and craft a more inclusive cultural scene.

As evidence of these disparities mounts, local and national stakeholders have taken interest in developing ways to support LGBTQ+ youth (*Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2020; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2020*).

When LGBTQ+ youth experience support in their communities, such as via supportive religious institutions, their mental and behavioural health improves (*Hatzenbuehler, 2009*).

4. Diverse Opinions on LGBTQ History Education:

While agreement exists on LGBTQ history's underrepresentation, ideas on best teaching methods vary. These diverse opinions emphasise the need for flexibility and highlight different beliefs about its place in education. Studies have found that in schools with a LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, individual students (LGBTQ and straight) report feeling safer at school, school climates are safer (reports of bullying and harassment decrease), and student achievement improves (*Burdge, Sinclair, Laub, & Russell, 2012*)

5. The View on Homosexuality And Opinions On Giving Equal Rights:

The view is delicate and weighs acceptance of all sexualities while also deliberating over changes and rights. It shows how tricky it is to navigate the waters of homosexuality and its rights.

6. Opinions on varying levels of Implementation:

The variation of reactions shows a possible gap between personal beliefs and real actions. This highlights the tough task of turning personal thoughts into real society changes.

LGBT-focused policy and inclusive curriculums are associated with better psychological adjustment for LGBT students. LGBT-inclusive curriculums introduce specific historical events, persons, and information about the LGBT community into student learning (*Snapp et al. 2015a,b*) and have been shown to improve

students' sense of safety (*Toomey et al. 2012*) and feelings of acceptance (*GLSEN 2011*) and to reduce victimisation in schools (*Joseph G. Kosciw, et al. 2012*).

Conclusion:

The study findings illustrate the multidimensional relationship between beliefs about gender, sexuality and LGBTQ+ history, and highlight the impact of education and exposure in shaping attitudes. Positive behavior is often associated with a lack of knowledge about queer individuals in older cultures, which emphasizes the importance of education and exposure in shaping attitudes about gender and diversity. Furthermore, younger generations tend to have more positive attitudes towards LGBTQ+ issues, indicating a gradual shift in social attitudes. Differences in discussions around gender suggest a continuing shift in understanding, reflecting the recognition of gender as broader entities. There is a continuing positive attitude towards inclusion in groups again shows a collective recognition of the importance of embracing diversity.

The nuanced method of LGBTQ history in academic studies displays the complex intersections of tradition, schooling, and personal values. While there's consensus on the need to recognize more, the differing views on incorporating these records into the curriculum spotlight the continuing speak had to strike a balance at the same time as respecting exceptional perspectives.

Complex views of homosexuality and social guidelines reflect the complexity of cultural, non-secular and social elements influencing coverage choices. It is vital to address the basic causes of this disparity, emphasizing the role of education in schools, institutions and cultural venues including museums. Well-designed educational programs and cultural interventions can bridge the space and create information.

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