

Socio-Economic Costs of LGBTQIA+ Exclusion

A Primary Data Study in India

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Abstract – The paper studies the multi-dimensional exclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community and its impact on social and economic indicators in India using primary survey data. The paper quantitatively finds that exclusion at school, workplace, and in society, in general, leads to adverse impacts on the physical and mental well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals, erodes their productivity, and creates disparities in wages. The logit regression technique is employed which shows that harassment at school leads to more loss in learning outcomes, depression decreases productivity at work and workplace and associated discrimination prompts LGBTQIA+ individuals to move abroad. Heckman correction test is further used to check for sampling bias which results in no bias in the results.

Keywords – LGBTQIA+; Sexual Orientation; Inclusion; Workplace Exclusion; Career Hurdles; Wage Difference; Learning Outcomes; Gay Brain Drain.

“LGBTIQ+ inclusion is key to promoting equality and diversity, driving innovation, providing decent work for all, and achieving Sustainable Development Goals - ILO, 2022”

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1. Introduction

Minorities in India have been experiencing persistent social and economic disparities leading to multi-faceted imbalances in the country. Many studies have indicated that gender discrepancies in various dimensions exert a negative influence on economic growth and development (Duflo, 2012). In India, the LGBTQIA+ community often faces large and pervasive discrimination as the members of the community constantly experience violence, rejection, and discrimination in spheres such as education, employment, healthcare, and access to social services (Badgett, 2014). This is largely due to the stigma attached to the community. As per the World Values Survey, only 30% of Indian respondents were broadly supportive of homosexuality in 2014 while 70% remained in the range of somewhat opposed to completely opposed (WVS, 2014). Even after the decriminalization of section 377 of IPC, the stigma around the LGBTQIA+ community remains leading to prejudice, mistreatment, and discrimination. This directly infringes the fundamental rights of the community members enshrined in Articles 14 & 15 of the Indian Constitution.

Discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community in India is both a human rights and an economic issue. Exclusionary practices against the community can lead to less learning outcomes, poorer health, an increase in anxiety & depression, less labour force participation, etc. The workplace is not immune to discrimination too as LGBTQIA+ workers face discrimination throughout the employment cycle in many instances. India has one of the largest LGBTQIA+ populations in the world with the IPSOS LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey report stating that 17% of those surveyed do not identify with heterosexual sexual orientation¹ (Fig.A1). The exclusion of the LGBTQIA+ creates many impediments for the members of the community leading to an adverse impact on the growth and development of the nation. The exclusion imposes a cost on India as India loses up to 1.7% of its GDP due to exclusionary practices towards the LGBTQIA+ community (Badgett & World Bank, 2014b). Hence, it becomes very important to study how various factors lead to the exclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in India and what costs that exclusion imposes on the country.

Over the decades, a growing number of economists and policymakers across regions have studied the costs of LGBT+ exclusion and how its inclusion, just like the inclusion of any marginalized community, can promote shared prosperity and economic development. Badgett et al. (2019) postulate that the social inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people positively affects income levels. However, much of the existing literature has focused on estimating the income and social differences between heterosexuals and homosexuals with samples from the U.S., Australia, and European nations. The research related to the LGBTQIA+ community in India has been sparse due to a dearth of reliable and representative data. Badgett (2014a), to my knowledge, is the only study investigating the costs imposed by the exclusion of the LGBT community in India. Hence, it is important to conduct research based in India to study how exclusionary practices against LGBTQIA+ lead to adverse effects on the well-being of the individuals as well as the nation.

¹ The survey was conducted as a 27-market survey conducted by Ipsos on its global advisor platform through interviews with a sample of 500 individuals in India.

This paper aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing new descriptive evidence on the association of multi-dimensional (social, legal, workplace, health, and education) exclusion and wage outcomes using primary data in India. The study in this paper is based on the surveyed data. Using the data, the paper focuses on answering two fundamental questions:

- a) What is the extent of exclusion faced by the LGBTQIA+ community along different dimensions?
- b) How do the exclusionary practices impose a cost on individuals and the economy?

We arrive at the following conclusions: Exclusion at school, workplace, and in society, in general, lead to adverse impacts on the physical and mental well-being of LGBTQIA+ individual, erodes their productivity, and create disparities in wages. The logit regression technique is employed which shows that harassment at school leads to more loss in learning outcomes, depression decreases productivity at work and workplace and associated discrimination prompts LGBTQIA+ individuals to move abroad. The rest of this paper is organized as follows: The next section (Section 2) presents the background study, Section 3 presents the data and methods, Section 4 documents the findings, Section 5 shows the Heckman correction test, Section 6 presents the discussion and Section 7 contains the conclusion.

2. Background Study

Since the seminal work of M.V. Badgett (1995) who published the first econometric study on the effects of sexual orientation on earnings, a growing number of researchers have studied the economic costs of LGBT exclusion by showing earning differences based on sexual orientation, loss in GDP, loss in innovation, etc. Most of the results regarding the earning disparities based on one's sexuality, in all essential, point in the same direction - Gays earn significantly less than heterosexual males, while lesbians earn about the same, or sometimes more, than heterosexual females (Badgett 1995; Carpenter 2008; Ahmed, A. et al. 2013; Klawitter 2015). Badgett (2019) investigates the relationship between discrimination against the LGB community and comparative development across 132 countries and shows that health and labour market exclusion impose costs of about 6% to 22% on the GDP. It is found that not only does LGBT exclusion empirically lead to a loss in GDP, but it also curtails the innovative capacity of a nation (Trung V. Vu 2022).

LGBT people are often stigmatized in many countries, making them face discrimination on several grounds, imposing social and economic costs. Workplace discrimination causes LGBT people to be unemployed or underemployed, which means their full productive capacity is not being used. LGBT people face multiple physical and mental health barriers, which reduce their ability to work and productivity in the workplace. LGBT+ students face discrimination in schools by teachers and other students, which hampers their learning and encourages students to drop out, in turn reducing their skills and knowledge related to the workplace².

² Findings from the micro-level analysis of Badgett et al. 2014

Starting from the General Social Survey (GSS) (Badgett 1995), different data sets like the Global Index on Legal Recognition of Homosexual Orientation (GILRHO) (Badgett 2014, 2019), the United States Transgender Survey (Shannon, M. 2022) and World Values Survey (WVS) (Trung V. Vu 2022) have been used to investigate the cost of exclusion of the members of LGBT community.

However, in India, there has been little research on the costs imposed by LGBT exclusion, be it qualitative or quantitative. This is mainly a consequence of poor data availability with no nationally recognized surveys about the LGBT community. The available data faces the problem of underrepresentation, eg. data on the third gender in the census came out to be 4.9 lakhs which is said to be on the lower side (Nagrajan 2014). The only paper investigating the costs of LGBT exclusion in India used data from WVS for India (Badgett 2014a). The paper finds clear evidence that stigma and exclusion exist for LGBT people in India which leads to lower productivity, lower output, inefficient investment in human capital, and lost output as a result of discrimination in educational, health, and employment settings. Other studies on discrimination against LGBT in India have often relied on a number of relatively small convenience samples of LGBT people (see L Arora et al. 2022).

Hence, as mentioned in the introduction, the present study aims to increase the extent of research and contribute to the existing literature by investigating the costs imposed by exclusionary practices against the LGBTQIA+ community. For this, the author conducted a questionnaire survey on social, legal, educational, workplace, and economic exclusion and covered people from different sexual and gender identities in the sample, thus making the study more diverse.

3. Data & Method

Theoretical Underpinnings

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the multifaceted consequences of excluding members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Here, exclusion is primarily driven by negative attitudes and the stigma associated with LGBTQIA+ individuals, leading to the emergence of homophobia and transphobia. This exclusionary behavior results in restricted access for LGBTQIA+ individuals to participate fully and equally in various social institutions. These institutions encompass educational establishments, workplaces, healthcare facilities, the financial sector, political processes, the criminal justice system, familial structures, government initiatives, and other legal and policy frameworks. The consequences of such exclusionary practices are significant (Badgett, 2014b). They deprive LGBTQIA+ individuals of the freedom to live their lives according to their own choices, a concept famously emphasized by Amartya Sen in his capability approach. Consequently, this exclusion can lead to adverse individual-level outcomes, including compromised health, limited educational opportunities, shorter life expectancies, reduced income, and decreased engagement in the labor force. These individual-level effects, in turn, have ripple effects at the macroeconomic level, such as reduced economic output and increased costs associated with healthcare and social programs.

Data Collection & Study Design

The study deals with primary data (cross-sectional) utilizing non-random and non-probability sampling techniques. The data collection process occurred in August 2023 and involved surveying both heterosexual cis-gendered individuals and members of the LGBTQIA+ community³. The purpose was to conduct a comparative analysis of various parameters to assess the relative well-being or disadvantages faced by the LGBTQIA+ community in comparison to heterosexual individuals. To gather data from heterosexual cis-gendered individuals, a convenience sampling approach was employed. In contrast, data from the LGBTQIA+ community was obtained through a snowball sampling technique. The study sought collaboration with multiple NGOs and Queer Collectives to ensure a broader and more diverse representation within the LGBTQIA+ demographic.

The sample formed by the data is characterized as urban, formally educated, aged between 18 and 50, with diverse sexual and gender identities. This was done because of the ease of collecting data since reaching out to rural demography would have required more time and resources. Another reason to go with urban demography was to see the relationship between sexual identity and factors like depression, harassment, etc. in isolation as there may be many other variables in rural areas affecting these factors. In this study, a set of questions was administered to the entire sample under investigation. Some of these questions were specifically designed for the LGBTQIA+ community to explore aspects related to exclusion based on their sexual identities. To ensure anonymity and facilitate data analysis, a unique number was assigned to each survey participant. It's important to note that the personal identities of respondents were meticulously concealed using these unique numbers. The survey was concluded once the predetermined target sample size of 200 participants was achieved, with a final sample size of 204 respondents.

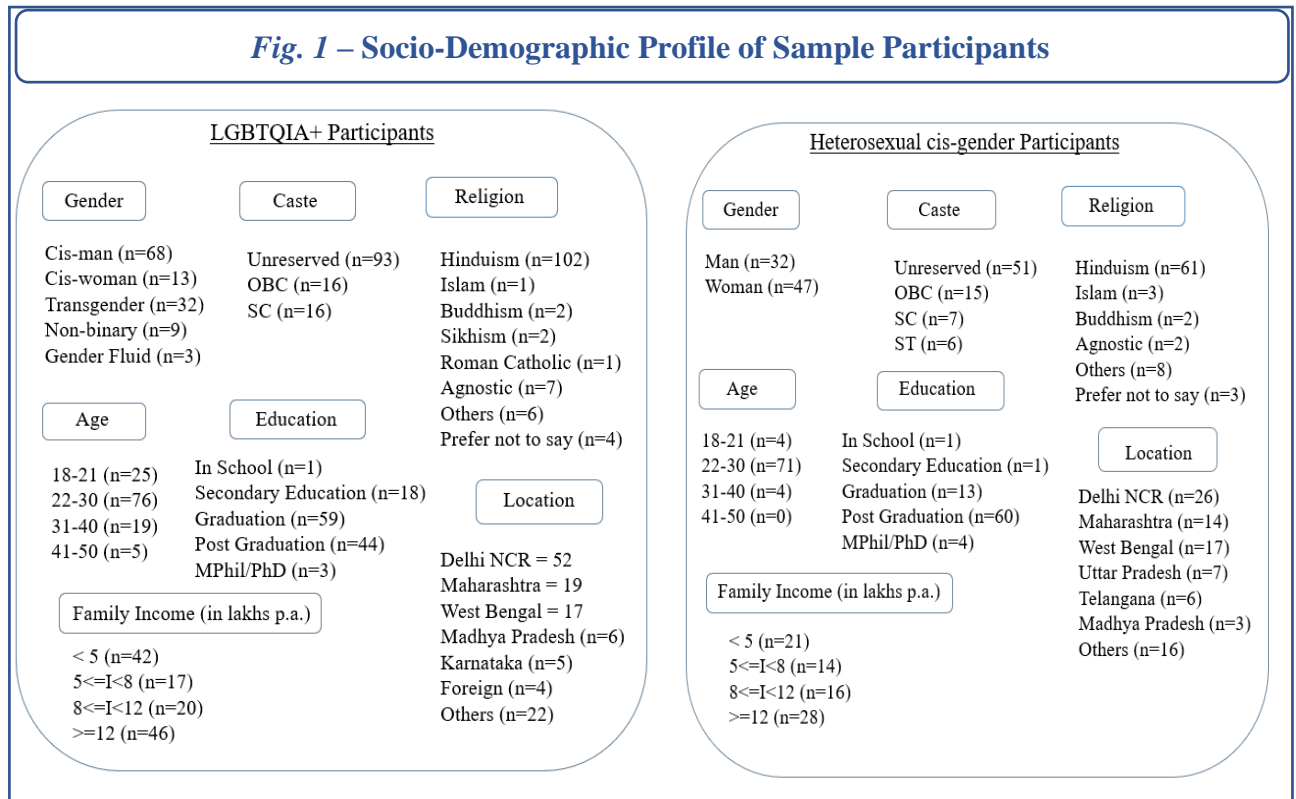
Ethical consideration

All the LGBTQIA+ and heterosexual cis-gender individuals who participated in the research were informed about the purpose of the research. They had the full right to decline participation in the study or to choose not to answer questions that they found uncomfortable. It is worth noting that a significant portion of LGBTQIA+ participants were either closeted or disclosed their sexual identity only to select individuals, barring a few who were completely out. This necessitated a robust effort to safeguard them against potential physical or psychological harm. Thus, participants' privacy and identity were protected by anonymizing them and using a unique number to refer to them. Furthermore, stringent measures were put in place to prevent any possibility of tracing or monitoring individuals based on the information they provided during the survey, which was employed for research purposes.

Socio-Demographic Profile

The socio-demographic profiles of participants are given in Fig. 1. LGBTQIA+ and heterosexual cis-gender participants are 125 and 79 respectively. For the scope of this study, it's important to acknowledge that LGBTQIA+ individuals encompass a broad spectrum of sexual orientations, gender identities, expressions, and variations in sex characteristics. These individuals also encounter varying degrees of exclusion based on these factors. However, for the purpose of this research, they are considered together as a collective cohort. The composition of gender and sexual identity of participants is given in Fig.2.

Fig. 1 – Socio-Demographic Profile of Sample Participants



Data Challenges

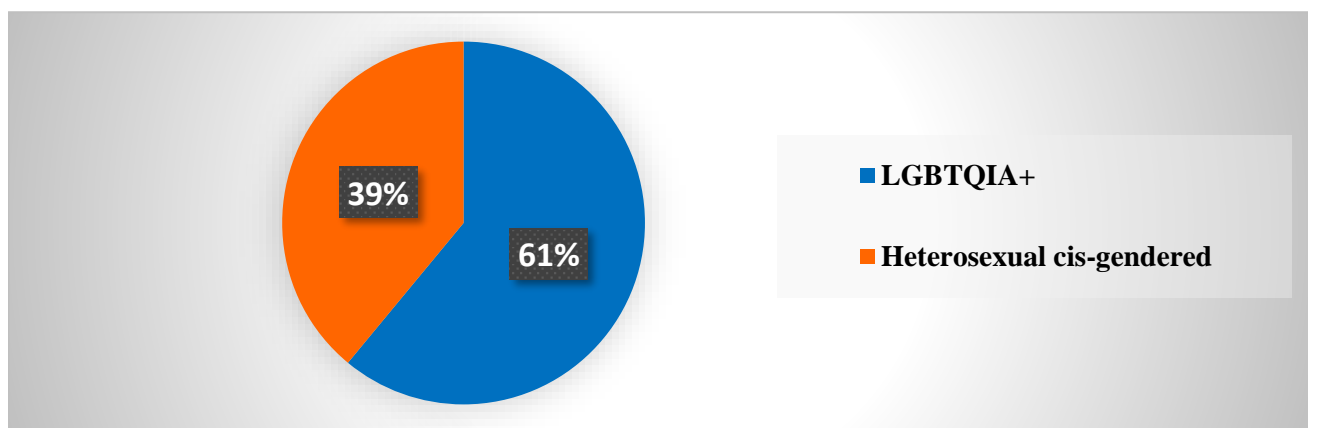
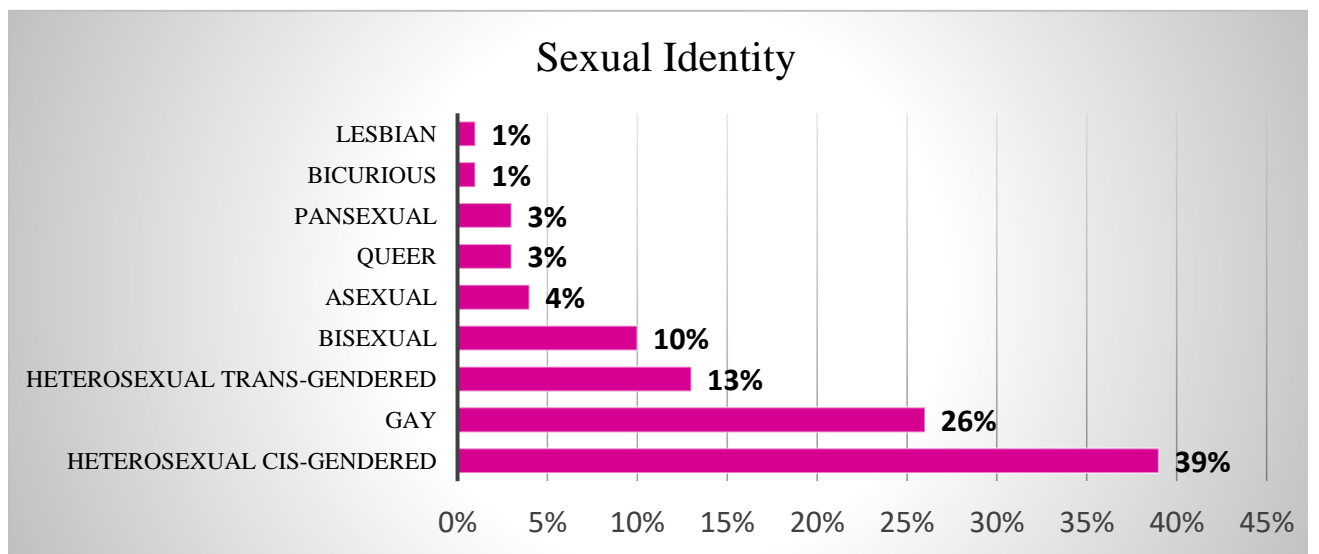
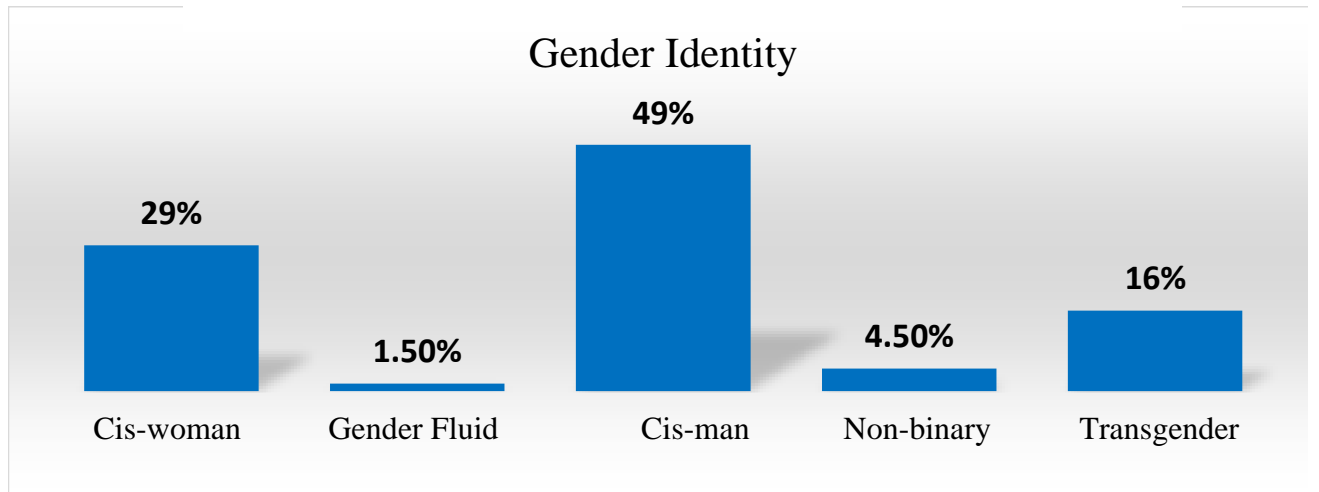
This study encounters significant challenges in acquiring empirical data related to the economic, health, and familial aspects, among others, of LGBTQIA+ individuals. These complexities arise from various factors:

- **Limited Inclusion in General Surveys:** General surveys conducted by India on topics such as the economy or health typically lack questions concerning sexual orientation or gender identity, making it difficult to gather relevant data.
- **Non-representative Sampling:** Surveys targeting LGBTQIA+ individuals are often administered to non-representative samples, including online respondents, members of LGBTQIA+ organizations, or individuals identified through "snowball" sampling, where participants refer others within their social network.
- **Stigma and Reporting Bias:** The fear of stigma and discrimination can deter LGBTQIA+ individuals from accurately disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity in survey responses, potentially leading to reporting bias.

Gathering data on LGBTQIA+ individuals in developing countries like India poses unique challenges. One notable source of information in these contexts is research on Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) in the context of HIV/AIDS. Such studies typically utilize non-random samples drawn from public sex environments, clinical settings, or through snowball sampling. While these methods offer insights into the lives and variations within the LGBTQIA+

community, the drawback is that findings cannot be generalized to the broader population, and estimating the prevalence of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the country remains challenging.

Fig. 2 Sexual & Gender composition



Methodology

The paper performs quantitative analysis using the survey data which leads to findings about the incidence of harassment, depression, disparity, and exclusion in the case of LGBTQIA+ participants. Furthermore, the logit regression technique is used to find statistically significant factors impacting the outcome variables like the probability of shifting abroad, work productivity, and loss in learning outcomes.

4. Findings

4.1 LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Social Perception

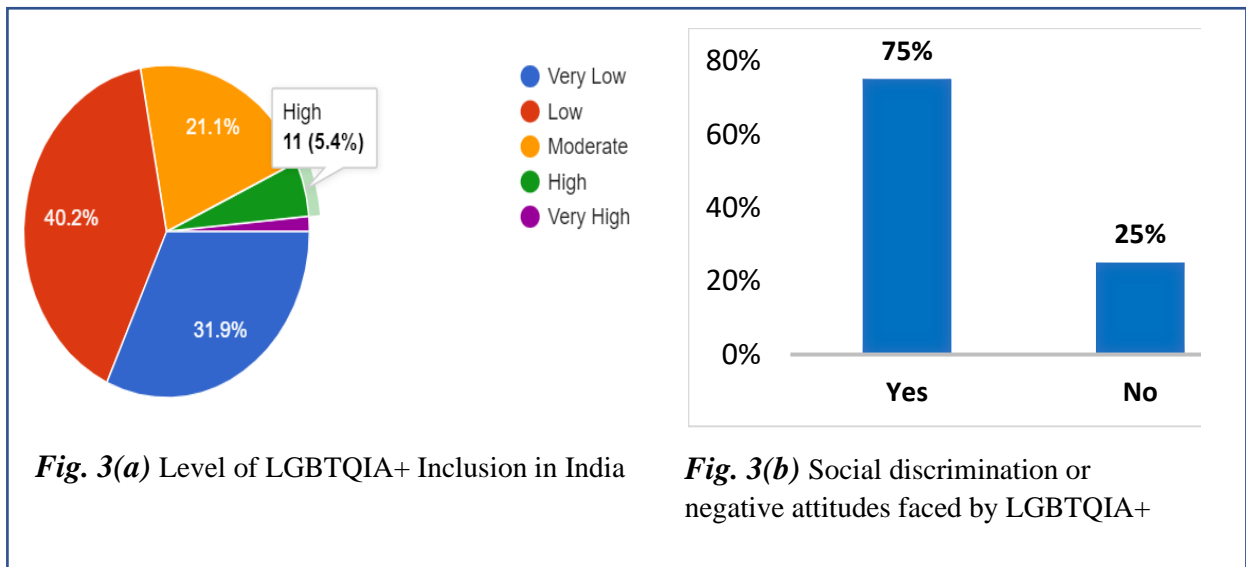
The study finds that, as per the responses of participants, a large 72% of participants perceive that there is either a low or very low level of inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community in India. This is shown in Fig. 3(a). Exclusion in social circles, in turn, is caused by negative attitudes and stereotypes regarding the LGBTQIA+ community leading to discrimination against the members of the community. A 19-year-old cis-woman identifying as asexual said “....*People don't understand my sexuality. I'm often being told that if I haven't had sex how could I identify as asexual. A lot of people also say - you better wait till marriage, things will change..*”. A 23-year-old cis-man graduate identifying as gay said “..*There is no protection against discrimination, plus the assumption of homosexuality made me fear eviction from residences and denial of opportunities if I came out...*”. On diving deep into the responses of the participants, it was found that members of the community find it less comfortable discussing their identity with their family than with friends.

The study also finds the extreme impact of discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people in the form of sexual harassment, violence, etc. This was more prevalent in the case of transgender people because of the rampant transphobia. A 33-year-old transgender person said “..*My family threw me out of house and family property when I was 17 years old. Relatives also did not support me. Police raped me when I was 19 and again when I was 23*”. A 25-year-old transgender said, “..*Many times I have been beaten up by the people of my society just because I like to live like a boy*”.

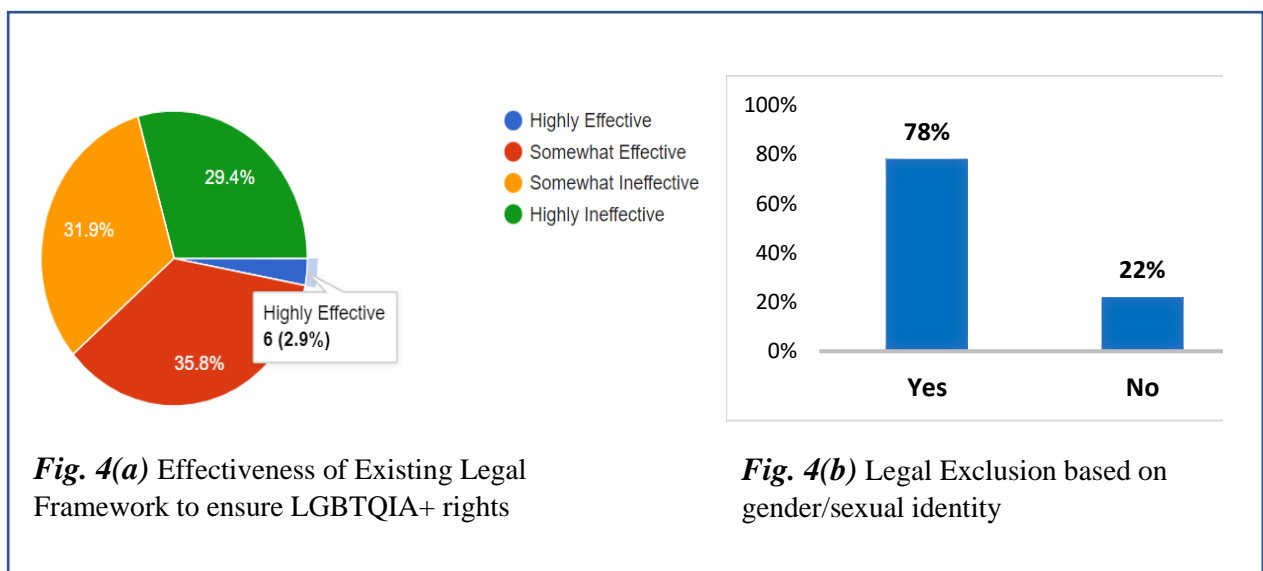
Therefore, the study finds that the LGBTQIA+ community, at large, faces social discrimination and exclusion due to the negative attitudes related to the community. This was further verified by the responses of LGBTQIA+ participants in the study when they were asked whether they faced social exclusion based on their sexual/gender identity. The results are shown in Fig. 3(b).

4.2 Legal Framework and LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

India has witnessed some changes in the legal framework in the past decade. One of the most significant legal changes occurred in September 2018 when the Indian Supreme Court decriminalized consensual same-sex sexual activity by *partially* striking down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. Prior to this ruling, homosexuality was criminalized under this colonial-era law. The Supreme Court also recognized transgender individuals as the third gender in April 2014 and directed the government to provide them with various rights and benefits, including reservations in education and employment.



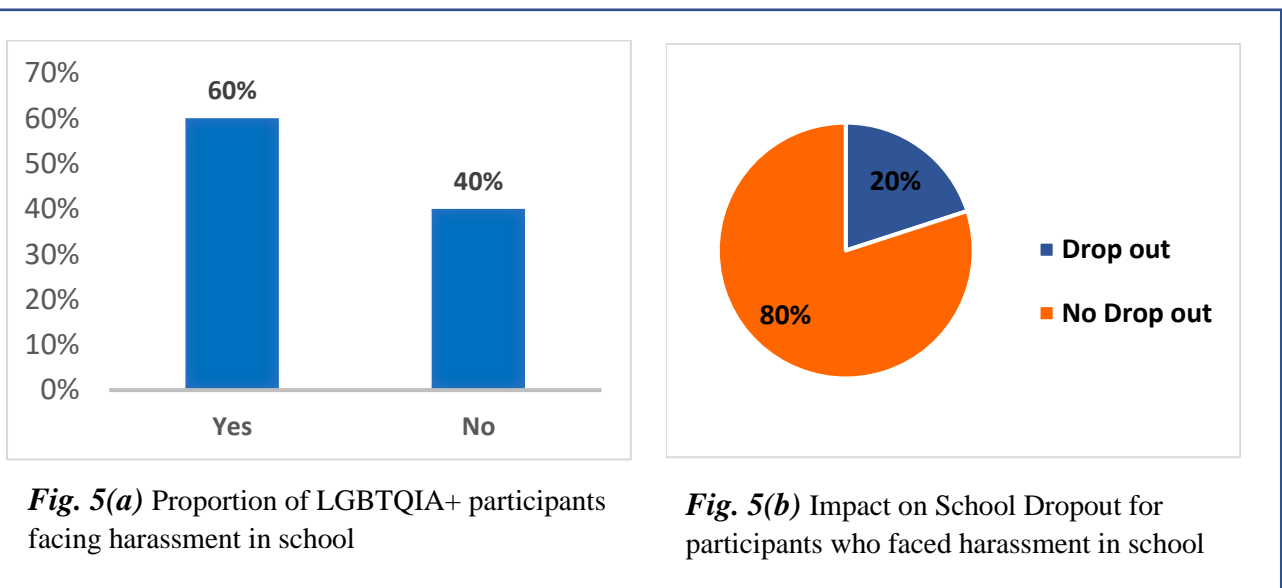
On asking about the level of effectiveness of the existing legal framework to ensure LGBTQIA+ rights, the study finds that the majority of the participants (around 60%) find the existing framework ineffective (see Fig. 4(a)). This is because total equality and freedom are still a long way to go when it comes to the legal framework. As of 2023, India does not recognize same-sex marriage. Activists have been advocating for legal recognition, but there have been no significant legislative changes. LGBTQ+ individuals and couples face challenges in adopting children, as no specific law allows them to do so. India does not have comprehensive anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQ+ individuals in employment. Some private companies have inclusive policies, but legal protections are limited. These gaps in the legal framework can lead to the exclusion of LGBTQIA+ people on legal grounds. Still, the study finds a small section (around 22%) of the LGBTQIA+ community facing legal exclusion (see Fig. 4(b)). This can be attributed to two reasons. First, exclusion on legal grounds is not faced on a daily basis. It happens on significant junctures of an LGBTQIA+ person's life like the adoption of a child or marrying a person of the same sex. Second, many members of the community in the sample might not be well aware of the legal framework which could have affected their opinion on exclusion.



4.3 Education and Health Outcomes

(i) Education

It is important to acknowledge that LGBTQIA individuals can face unique challenges and experiences within the educational system, which can impact their academic and personal development. LGBTQIA+ students can be targets of bullying, harassment, and discrimination in schools, which can lead to lower self-esteem, higher stress levels, and lower academic performance. LGBTQIA students may face barriers in accessing supportive resources such as counseling or peer support groups. A 24-year-old male graduate identifying as gay said “...I faced bullying during my school time, in the form of transgender slurs, addressing the way I used to talk and express myself...”. A 22-year-old transgender person said, “Sometimes I have been harassed and molested by my teacher”. The study finds that 60% of the LGBTQIA+ participants (74 people) have faced harassment and discrimination in school because of their gender and sexual identity (see Fig. 5(a)). In a further study, it was found that out of 74 LGBTQIA+ participants who faced harassment in school, 15 (20%) reported having dropped out of school (see Fig. 5(b)). This was not a permanent dropout but a drop that led to a gap in their studies. Another noticeable thing the study found is that out of 15 LGBTQIA+ people who dropped out of school, only 1 is a post-graduate. Hence, it can be inferred that school harassment and dropout from school can lead to lower learning outcomes and make it difficult to attain higher education.



To see how learning outcomes are affected by various factors, a logit regression is used to study how different factors affect the likelihood of gain or loss in learning outcomes. The regression is done for LGBTQIA+ individuals only since the data for school harassment, dropout, and loss in learning outcomes is collected for LGBTQIA+ individuals only.

The baseline specification is as follows –

$$\log \left(\frac{p^i}{1 - p^i} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{school_dropout} + \beta_2 \text{school_harassment} + \beta_3 \text{family_income} + \beta_4 \text{category} + \beta_5 \text{gender}$$

$i = \text{Learning_Loss}$ (1)

Here, learning_loss is the binary outcome variable implying a loss in learning outcomes (0 = No, 1 = Yes). All the independent variables are categorical variables with school_dropout and school_harassment taking values 0 for no dropout and no harassment and 1 for dropout and harassment respectively, family_income taking values 1 for family income less than 5 lakhs per annum, 2 for family income greater than 5 lakhs per annum and less than 8 lakhs per annum, 3 for family income greater than 8 lakhs per annum and less than 12 lakhs per annum, and 4 for family income greater than 12 lakhs per annum, category taking value 0 for unreserved and 1 for reserved (OBC, SC, ST), and gender taking values 0 for cis-man and 1 for cis-woman, non-binary, transgender and gender fluid individuals.

The results of the logit regression in (1) are given in Table 1. School harassment and School dropout have a highly significant and positive impact on loss in learning outcomes in the baseline specification. School harassment, in particular, has a bigger impact on the loss of learning outcomes. The results show that compared to the base category of no harassment, school harassment increases the likelihood of loss in learning outcomes by 2.8 times. This is very much on the expected lines since harassment in school can lead to stress and anxiety which adversely impact learning outcomes. On the other hand, school dropout has a significant but very small impact on loss of learning outcomes with school dropout increasing the likelihood of loss of learning outcomes by just 0.004 times, compared to the base category of no dropout. Another interesting finding is that compared to the base category of less than 5 lakh per annum income, as family income increases, the likelihood of loss in learning outcomes decreases. In specification (3), the removal of school harassment does not affect the results but the removal of school dropout in specification (4) makes the impact of school harassment insignificant. This can be attributed to the presence of a mild correlation between school harassment and school dropout, which is possible in the LGBTQIA sample of 125 individuals.

(ii) Health

Exclusionary practices against the LGBTQIA+ community have an adverse impact on the health of members of the community. Physical harm can be caused due to violence, rape, and molestation. However, this study is mainly concerned with the impact on mental health. LGBTQIA individuals may experience higher rates of depression and anxiety due to the stress of facing discrimination, stigma, and social exclusion. The fear of rejection or violence can lead to constant anxiety and depressive symptoms. Exclusion and discrimination can contribute to feelings of hopelessness and isolation, which can, in turn, increase the risk of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among LGBTQIA individuals. However, since this study collects data through a survey questionnaire, it could have been triggering to collect data about suicidal tendencies via questions. Hence, the study focuses on the extent of depression and finds that 78% of LGBTQIA+ individuals suffer from depression (see Fig. 6(a)). Some respondents faced depression in the past and some are facing it at present. The study finds that depression has a negative impact on the work productivity of LGBTQIA+ individuals with 42% of individuals reporting a high to very high impact of depression on work productivity (see Fig. 6(b)).

Table 1: Regression results of Equation 1

VARIABLES	(1) learning_loss	(2) learning_loss	(3) learning_loss	(4) learning_loss
school_dropout	0.004*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	
school_harassment	2.811*** (0.835)	2.291*** (0.684)		0.934* (0.563)
2.family_income	-0.533 (1.207)	-0.735 (1.111)	-0.824 (1.018)	0.559 (0.957)
3.family_income	-2.333** (1.084)	-1.842* (0.949)	-1.598** (0.763)	-1.367* (0.826)
4.family_income	-0.846 (1.013)	-0.832 (0.973)	-0.388 (0.788)	0.168 (0.848)
category	-0.676** (0.331)		-0.364 (0.247)	-0.262 (0.244)
gender	-0.210 (0.263)		0.0797 (0.204)	0.0536 (0.242)
Constant	2.948* (1.510)	0.145 (0.792)	2.178* (1.171)	1.557 (1.146)
Observations	125	125	125	125

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

To measure the impact of depression on work productivity, the logit regression technique is used where the regression is run for LGBTQIA+ individuals since the data regarding depression due to sexual and gender identity was collected for LGBTQIA+ individuals only. The baseline specification is as follows –

$$\log(p^i / 1 - p^i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{career_hurdle} + \beta_2 \text{depression} + \beta_3 \text{education_qualification} + \beta_4 \text{age}$$

i = work_productivity (2)

Here, work_productivity is the binary outcome variable taking values 0 for no impact and 1 for impact on work productivity. All the independent variables except age (continuous) are categorical variables with career_hurdle and depression taking values 0 for no hurdle and no

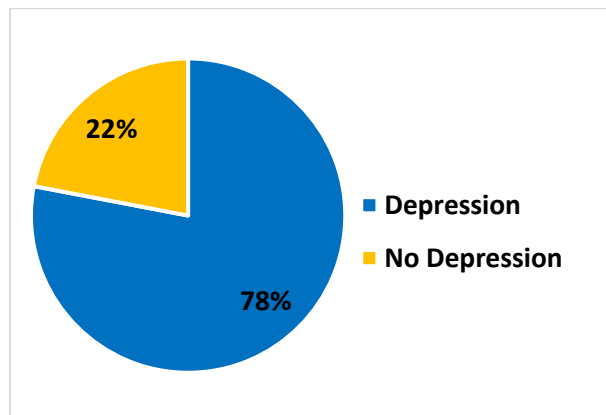


Fig. 6(a) Depression in LGBTQIA+ individuals

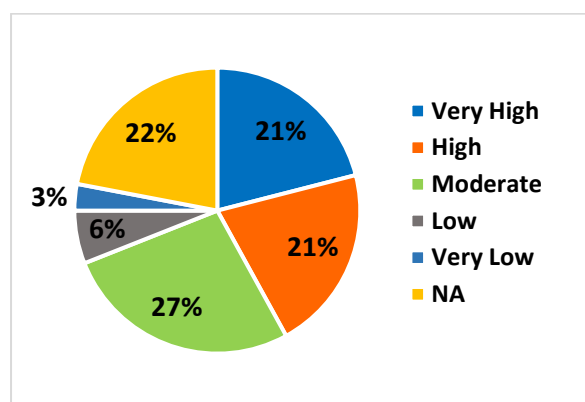


Fig. 6(b) Impact of depression on work productivity

depression and 1 for hurdle and depression respectively, edu_qualification taking values 1 for secondary education, 2 for graduation, 3 for post-graduation, and 4 for MPhil/PhD. Here, career hurdle refers to hurdles faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals compared to their heterosexual cis-gender colleagues. The results of regression equation (2) are shown in Table 2. Baseline specification shows a highly significant and negative impact of depression on work productivity in the case of LGBTQIA+ individuals with an increase in depression decreasing the likelihood of being productive in work by 0.013 times, compared to when there's no depression. An interesting finding is that an increase in the level of education qualification increases the likelihood of being productive in work. This is shown by the highly significant and positive coefficient of education qualification being MPhil/PhD. Another notable finding is the negative significant impact of career hurdles faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals on their work productivity in specification (3). An increase in career hurdles decreases the likelihood of being productive at work by 0.001 times, compared to when there are no hurdles.

4.4 Employment and Economic Participation

In this section, the paper studies whether there are income disparities between LGBTQIA+ and heterosexual cis-gender individuals, whether exclusionary practices affect the career choices of LGBTQIA+ individuals, and whether exclusion leads to the emigration of LGBTQIA+ individuals. The overall composition of income or expected income of the sample is shown in Fig. A2. These income levels are further studied with respect to the sexual identity of individuals and it is found that the proportion of LGBTQIA+ individuals is higher at low levels of income and lower at high levels of income in comparison with heterosexual cis-gender individuals (see Fig.7).

Table 2: Regression results of Equation 2

VARIABLES	(1) Work_productivity	(2) Work_productivity	(3) Work_productivity
career_hurdle	0.002 (0.001)		-0.001** (0.001)
depression	-0.013*** (0.001)	-0.011*** (0.001)	
2.education_qualification	-0.378 (0.785)	-0.204 (0.775)	-1.836 (0.702)
3.education_qualification	-0.377 (1.060)	0.148 (0.962)	-2.168 (0.761)
4.education_qualification	4.323*** (0.877)	4.420*** (0.853)	-0.713 (1.186)
Age	0.081* (0.044)	0.0463 (0.039)	0.0668* (0.0354)
Constant	-0.700 (1.115)	0.293 (0.984)	-0.0770 (0.961)
Observations	125	125	125
Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1			

This disparity in income is also substantiated by LGBTQIA+ individuals. A 25-year-old transgender graduate said, “*..Being a transman, I was unable to find a better job for me. It took me 3 months just to simply get a job and they were not comfortable with my identity and also I was paid less salary in comparison to the heterosexual community*”. A 27-year-old postgraduate male identifying as gay said, “*...Many of my colleagues having same qualifications have at least 30% to 50% higher salaries. One of the reasons can be the type of job- private, trust (social), or public job. Another reason can be the mental health consequences of my sexual orientation & gender identity*”. The discrimination is not limited to income but also extends to the workplace where LGBTQIA+ individuals face stigma leading to hurdles in getting jobs and getting advancements in careers. A 25-year-old transgender graduate said, “*When I left my previous job, I started applying for new jobs and I gave interviews and everything was okay but once I told them that I'm trans, they suddenly started making excuses about not hiring immediately, paying me less, and asked me to hide my identity. In fear of not being able to find a job for 3 months. I settled for less pay and hid my identity at my workplace. The company is okay with my identity but I am afraid my colleagues are not*”.

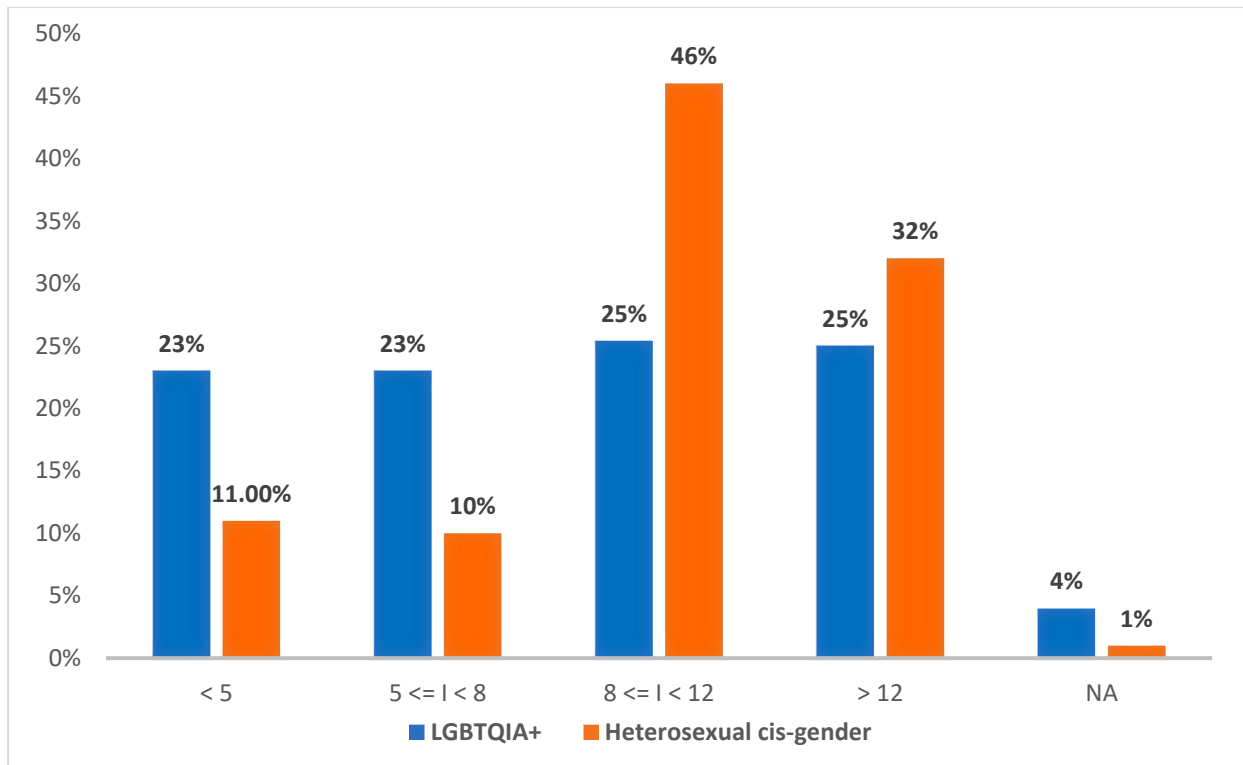
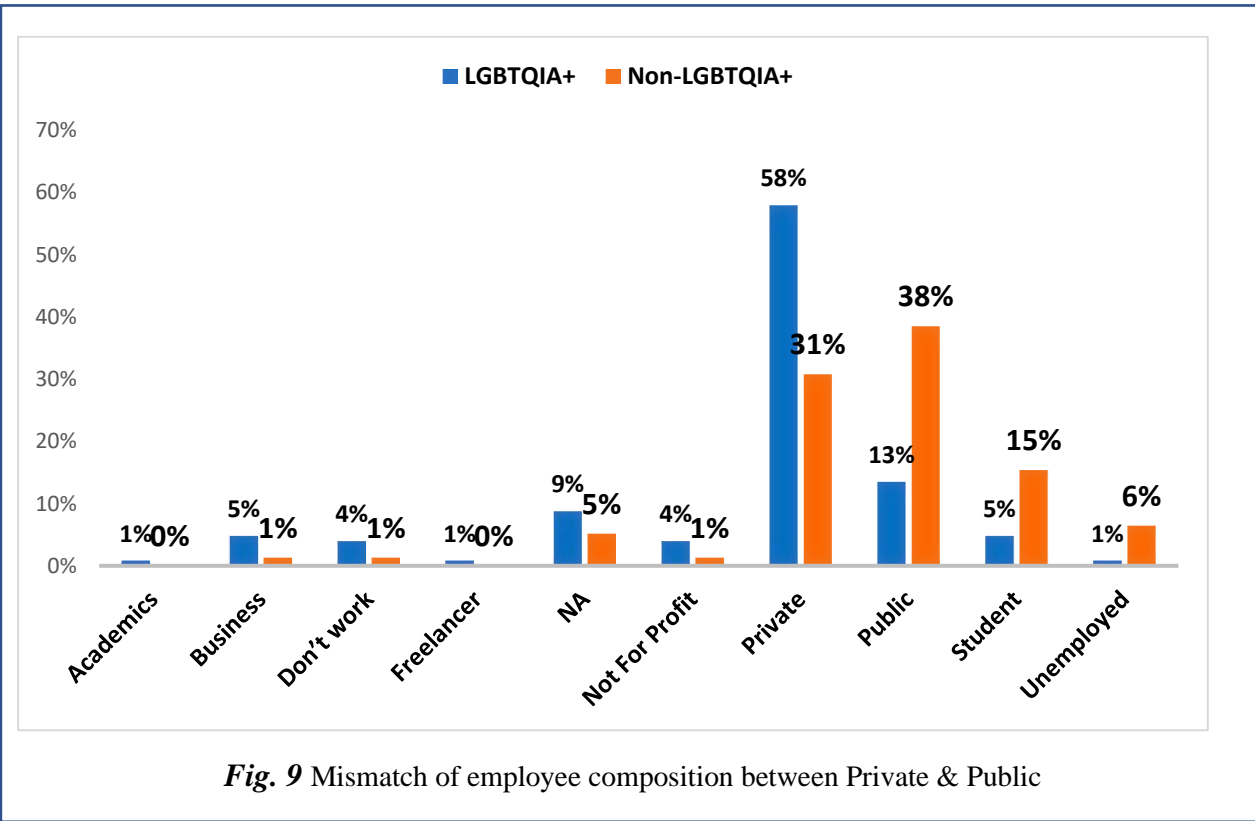
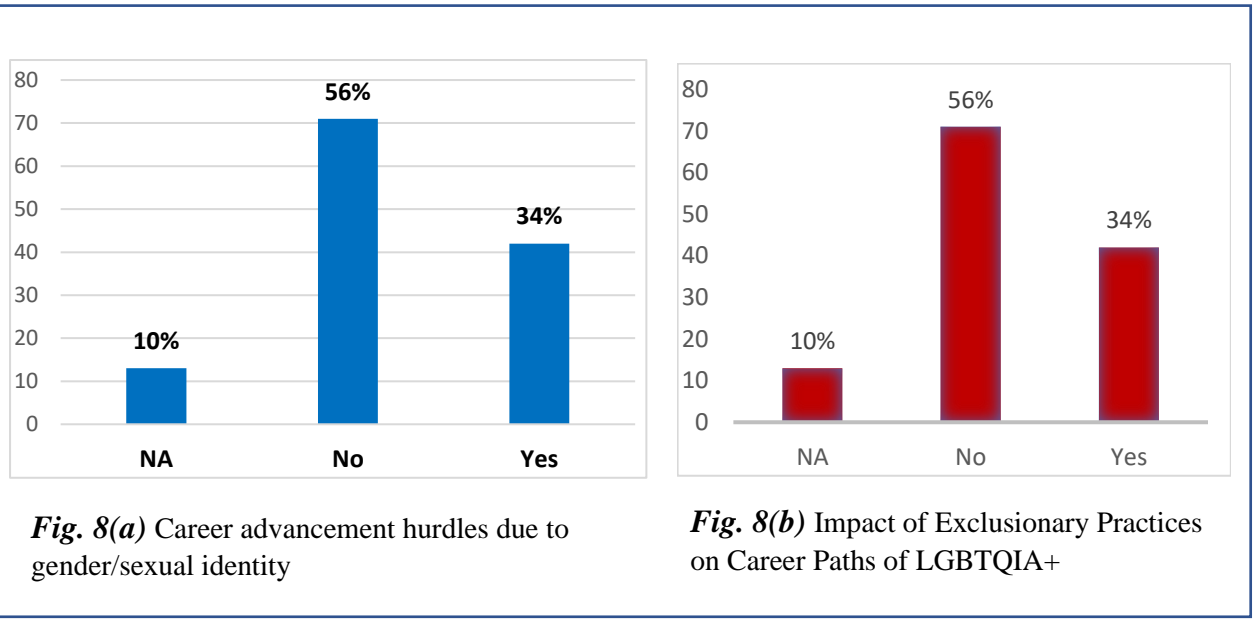


Fig. 7 Income Composition of LGBTQIA+ & Heterosexual Individuals

A 32-year-old Non-binary Ph.D. individual identifying as gay said, “...*The biggest barrier is that I cannot claim to be of transgender identity because there is no provision in office policies to protect against discrimination at the workplace, there is no legal framework that gives us protection other than recognizing us*”. A 33-year-old transgender graduate said, “...*Resume gets rejected if I write gender as transgender. For the same job, if I write male and apply I get an interview call but am rejected during the interview because they find out I am a transgender woman. Difficult to get rent house near the office area. So have to stay far away and travel 2-3 hours daily to work. The office does not give sick leave for transgender health issues. In 2022, I resigned from a private company because there was no leave for gender surgery...*”. The extent of career hurdles faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals is shown in Fig. 8(a) with 34% of LGBTQIA+ individuals reporting that they have faced hurdles in career advancement. The extent of hurdles in career advancement gets underreported because of the closeted nature of many members of the community. A 20-year-old female graduate identifying as bisexual said, “*No I haven’t faced any discrimination at the workplace only because I am not open about my sexuality. Had I been open about it, the hurdles would definitely be there*”.

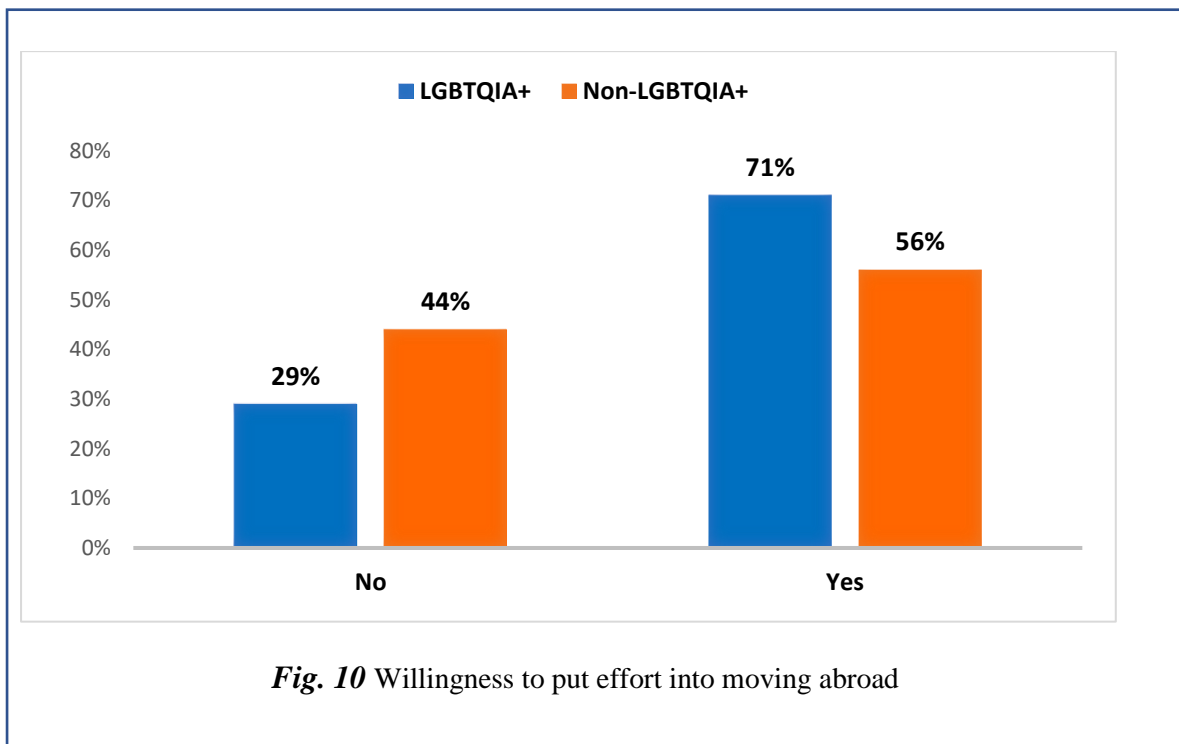
Because of such hurdles, the career choices of LGBTQIA+ individuals get impacted and they often make career decisions that are not in accordance with what they desire. A 33-year-old male graduate identifying as gay said, “...*I got selected for a prestigious government job but I still chose a private job because I was unsure how a life in the public sector would be safe for me in the future*”. A 24-year-old male graduate identifying as gay said, “...*Army- LGBTQ+ individuals are legally discriminated in the army. Even in my own field of healthcare & medicine, which requires direct contact with 100s of patients every day, I fear the consequences of me being out & proud*”. A 27-year-old M.Phil. male identifying as gay said, “...*Careers*

which expect one to relocate to smaller cities and towns were avoided from my end, like social work with rural communities, community medicine, occupations related to tribal communities, etc. The decision was taken as I wasn't sure of the level of acceptance my sexuality would find in rural areas and smaller cities as compared to metropolitans such as Delhi. Moreover, arenas such as defence management which have binary vision and conservative gender mindsets on how a Man should be, were also dropped down..”. This impact of workplace exclusion and stigma on the career choices of LGBTQIA+ individuals is also substantiated by the study with 34% of LGBTQIA+ participants reporting that their career path got impacted due to exclusionary practices (see Fig. 8(b)).



Interestingly, the impact of workplace exclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals on their career choices is also reflected in the proportion of LGBTQIA+ individuals working in public and private sectors. The study finds that the proportion of LGBTQIA+ individuals is higher in the private sector and lower in the public sector when compared to heterosexual cis-gender individuals (see Fig. 9). This is led by the reason that many LGBTQIA+ individuals believe that the private sector is more cognizant and responsive to their rights.

Exclusion at the workplace, negative attitudes of employers, and wage disparities not only make LGBTQIA+ individuals change their career paths but also make them want to move out and shift abroad for a fairer wage and equal life. A 25-year-old male post-graduate identifying as gay said, “..Left India for better life quality of life in Canada for masters and jobs. Two of my classmates at Indian UG College faced difficulty in getting recruited. They revealed their sexuality in application form, whenever asked. The interviewer asked them uncomfortable questions with respect to it. They didn't reveal henceforth and are about to move abroad soon...”. The evidence of LGBTQIA+ individuals willing to put effort into moving abroad is also shown by the study with 71% of LGBTQIA+ individuals willing to move abroad compared to 56% of heterosexual cis-gender individuals (see Fig.10). This possible emigration of LGBTQIA+ individuals is also academically termed as ‘gay brain drain’.



To measure the extent of this gay brain drain, a logit regression is run on the whole sample with willingness to put effort into moving abroad being the outcome variable. The baseline specification is as follows –

$$\log \left(\frac{p^i}{1 - p^i} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{career_hurdle} + \beta_2 \text{LGBTQ} + \beta_3 \text{education_qualification} + \beta_4 \text{age}$$

i = Abroad (3)

Here, Abroad is the binary outcome variable taking values 0 for ‘no effort for abroad’ and 1 for ‘effort for abroad’. All the independent variables except age (continuous) are categorical variables with career_hurdle and LGBTQ taking values 0 for no hurdle and heterosexual cis-gender and 1 for hurdle and LGBTQIA+ respectively, edu_qualification taking values 1 for secondary education, 2 for graduation, 3 for post-graduation, and 4 for MPhil/PhD. The results of a regression equation (3) are shown in Table 3. Baseline specification shows the sexual identity of LGBTQIA+ significantly and positively impacts the effort for moving abroad with LGBTQIA+ individuals having 0.7 times more likelihood of putting effort to move abroad than heterosexual cis-gender individuals. This movement out of the country can also result in adverse economic impacts such as future loss in GDP which would not happen if LGBTQIA+ individuals do not emigrate in substantial numbers. Another interesting finding is the negative impact of age on moving abroad since the higher the age, lesser the individual would be willing to put effort into moving abroad.

Table 3: Regression results of Equation 3

VARIABLES	(1) Abroad	(2) Abroad	(3) Abroad	(4) Abroad
career_hurdle	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	
LGBTQ	0.707* (0.371)	0.707* (0.371)		0.557 (0.345)
Age	-0.080** (0.033)	-0.080** (0.033)	-0.072** (0.032)	-0.090*** (0.032)
2.education_qualification	-0.232 (0.598)	-0.232 (0.598)	-0.282 (0.594)	-0.146 (0.594)
3.education_qualification	-0.084 (0.633)	-0.084 (0.633)	-0.346 (0.613)	0.096 (0.615)
4.education_qualification	-0.090 (0.991)	-0.090 (0.991)	-0.418 (0.962)	0.007 (0.984)
Constant	2.124** (0.967)	2.124** (0.967)	2.673*** (0.915)	2.591*** (0.892)
Observations	204	204	204	204
Standard errors in parentheses				
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1				

5. Testing for Selection Bias

After finding the results, it is essential to check for selection bias in the sample because of the sampling methods like convenience and snowball used to collect the data. The paper employs the Heckman correction test for this purpose. Sample selection bias occurs when the process of selecting a sample from a larger population is not random and is related to the outcome variable being studied. This bias can lead to incorrect parameter estimates and, therefore, incorrect inferences. The Heckman correction aims to account for this bias by modeling the selection process and its impact on the outcome variable. The Heckman test, employed to scrutinize potential selection bias in primary data, is particularly vital in our study due to the possibility of overrepresentation of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the sample. This concern stems from the manner in which the sample was collected, including channels such as referrals from friends, NGOs, Queer collectives (QC), and word of mouth (WOM). One NGO and different Queer Collectives were approached. Additionally, education level plays a role, as more educated individuals may be more comfortable disclosing their sexual identity and actively participate in the survey. The Heckman selection model efficiently addresses these biases by formulating a selection equation that models the probability of being selected into the sample. This equation is constructed using a logit regression model, with LGBTQ identification as the selection variable and sample collection source and education qualification as relevant covariates.

The selection equation is given as follows –

$$\text{Log}(p^i / 1-p^i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Sources} + \beta_2 \text{Education_Qualification}$$

$i = \text{LGBTQ}$ (4)

The estimation results of equation (4) are shown in Table 4. After estimating the selection equation, the inverse mills ratio (IMR) is obtained after predicting LGBTQ from the selection equation. IMR measures how individuals' probability of being in the sample is related to their values of the outcome variable. This is followed by estimating the outcome equation with 'effort for abroad' being the dependent variable, similar to equation (3). The specification remains the same with the addition of IMR as a covariate.

The outcome equation is as follows –

$$\text{Log}(p^i / 1-p^i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Career_Hurdle} + \beta_2 \text{Education_Qualification} + \beta_3 \text{LGBTQ} + \beta_4 \text{Age} + \beta_5 \text{IMR}$$

$i = \text{Abroad}$ (5)

The regression results of equation (5) are shown in Table 5. Upon estimating the two models—the study performs the Heckman test which gives us an insignificant value for the Lambda of IMR. This shows that due to the oversampling of the LGBTQIA+ community in the sample, the Heckman test could not cover any bias arising out of a selection of a certain section of individuals. Hence, the results of this paper are shown as unbiased in Table 6.

Table 4: Regression results of selection equation (4)

VARIABLES	LGBTQ
NGO1.sources	-0.792 (1.301)
QC1.sources	0.097 (0.435)
QC2.sources	-0.538 (0.916)
QC3.sources	-
QC4.sources	-
WOM.sources	0.072 (0.413)
2.education_qualification	-0.682 (0.813)
3.education_qualification	-2.531*** (0.775)
4.education_qualification	-2.524** (1.070)
Constant	2.167*** (0.811)
Observations	201

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5: Regression results of outcome equation (5)

Abroad	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
career_hurdle	.0004503	.0003788	1.19	0.235	-.0002922	.0011928
LGBTQ	.6793776	.3752146	1.81	0.070	-.0560294	1.414785
Age	-.0777134	.0340382	-2.28	0.022	-.144427	-.0109998
education_qualification						
2	-.2766456	.6867187	-0.40	0.687	-1.62259	1.069298
3	-.4586747	2.326405	-0.20	0.844	-5.018345	4.100996
4	-.4477953	2.372523	-0.19	0.850	-5.097854	4.202264
IMR	1.693172	10.01998	0.17	0.866	-17.94564	21.33198
_cons	1.518201	3.32808	0.46	0.648	-5.004716	8.041117

6. Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the detrimental social and economic repercussions of exclusionary practices against the LGBTQIA+ community. Notably, experiences of harassment at school and school dropout stemming from negative attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ individuals have a significant adverse impact on educational outcomes. Such exclusionary practices induce stress and can lead to depression, ultimately impairing workplace productivity significantly.

Furthermore, the research illuminates how workplace discrimination and limited employability opportunities contribute to wage disparities between LGBTQIA+ individuals and their heterosexual counterparts. These disparities create numerous career obstacles and often prompt LGBTQIA+ individuals to consider alternative career paths. Additionally, the study reveals that workplace and associated discrimination significantly increase the likelihood of LGBTQIA+ individuals contemplating relocating abroad.

Table 6: Regression results of the Heckman Correction Test

	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Abroad						
career_hurdle	.0000808	.0010922	0.07	0.941	-.0020598	.0022214
LGBTQ	0	(omitted)				
Age	-.0163497	.0960499	-0.17	0.865	-.204604	.1719046
education_qualification						
2	-.3070712	3.106209	-0.10	0.921	-6.395129	5.780987
3	-1.317391	10.05564	-0.13	0.896	-21.02609	18.3913
4	-.9234985	10.32476	-0.09	0.929	-21.15966	19.31266
IMR	-19.48565	401.4012	-0.05	0.961	-806.2176	767.2463
_cons	5.886329	107.0345	0.05	0.956	-203.8974	215.6701
LGBTQ						
sources						
NGO 1	-.4802908	.7923863	-0.61	0.544	-2.033339	1.072758
QC 1	.0391463	.2643736	0.15	0.882	-.4790164	.5573091
QC 2	-.3306468	.5317254	-0.62	0.534	-1.372809	.7115158
WOM	.0279992	.2516752	0.11	0.911	-.4652752	.5212736
education_qualification						
2	-.3600788	.4217537	-0.85	0.393	-1.186701	.4665433
3	-1.48573	.4031394	-3.69	0.000	-2.275869	-.6955914
4	-1.478557	.6114633	-2.42	0.016	-2.677003	-.2801108
_cons	1.271097	.4307251	2.95	0.003	.4268913	2.115303
/mills						
lambda	7.763991	121.8283	0.06	0.949	-231.0151	246.5431
rho	1.00000					
sigma	7.7639912					

These findings align with prior research in this field. Wage disparities have been a recurring theme, with evidence suggesting that homosexual and transgender individuals tend to earn lower wages than heterosexual cis-gender individuals (Badgett 2019; Matthew Shannon 2022). Although some studies have found that lesbians receive equal or even higher pay compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Badgett 1995; Carpenter 2008; Ahmed, A. et al. 2013; Klawitter 2015), the study's focus on LGBTQIA+ as a collective group, coupled with the limited sample size of lesbians (13), precludes a specific examination of wage discrimination against lesbians.

In a broader context, existing research has consistently demonstrated that LGBTQIA+ individuals contend with stigma and, consequently, experience discrimination across various domains, incurring social and economic costs. LGBT individuals grapple with numerous physical and mental health challenges, and LGBT+ students frequently encounter discrimination in educational settings, originating from both teachers and peers (Badgett 2014(a)). This paper reinforces these insights by delving into various dimensions of exclusion, shedding light on their adverse impact on various social and economic indicators.

7. Conclusion

The study has conducted a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted exclusion experienced by LGBTQIA+ individuals and its adverse effects on various social and economic indicators. It is important to note that due to the utilization of non-random and non-probability sampling methods, the findings of this research cannot be extrapolated to the broader LGBTQIA+ population in our country. However, it is noteworthy that all the findings presented in this paper are consistent with existing research and align with fundamental logical reasoning.

It is evident that further investigations are warranted in this field, but this necessitates the availability of robust and comprehensive data. The acquisition of such data can only be facilitated by incorporating LGBTQIA+ identities and experiences into national surveys. Achieving this objective requires a concerted effort to enhance awareness regarding the LGBTQIA+ community, acknowledging their historical and cultural presence in Indian society, and thereby dispelling the stigma associated with this community.

Therefore, this paper offers recommendations for actions that can be undertaken to raise awareness about the LGBTQIA+ community and promote their inclusion in broader surveys.

- Develop and implement mandatory gender sensitization workshops in educational institutions, workplaces, and community organizations. These workshops should cover a wide range of topics related to gender diversity and the experiences of the LGBT community.
- Enforce inclusive recruitment policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Ensure that all job sectors are open to LGBT individuals, and actively promote diversity and pay parity in hiring.
- Create and promote inclusive workplace environments where all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, are treated with respect and dignity. A position of social outreach officer should be created to address any type of discrimination at the workplace. Implement policies that address issues such as pronoun usage, restroom facilities, and access to support groups and counseling.

- Establish skill development programs specifically designed for transgender individuals and other marginalized groups within the LGBT community. Provide training and opportunities in various fields, including the arts, to empower LGBT individuals to pursue their interests and careers without fear of discrimination.
- Advocate for and enact legislation that protects the rights and interests of the LGBT community, ensuring equal access to opportunities and a safe environment. This should encompass marriage equality, healthcare access, and anti-discrimination laws.
- Launch public awareness campaigns that showcase the stories and achievements of LGBT individuals in various fields through advertisements, movies, social media, and events. These campaigns should aim to challenge stereotypes and promote understanding and acceptance.
- Promote the participation of members of the LGBTQIA+ community in politics to create representation in positions that can bring change.

These measures, when implemented collectively, can help create a more inclusive society and workforce, thereby enhancing career opportunities and choices for LGBT individuals while promoting understanding and acceptance among the general population.

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Glossary

Gender Identity: Refers to an individual's internal, deeply felt sense of self as a man, woman, transgender or other gender categories. Gender identity does not always match biological sex; for example, a person may be born biologically male yet identify as a woman. Because gender identity is internal and personally defined, it is not visible to others. In contrast, a person's "gender expression" is external and socially perceived. Gender identity may change over time and may not accord to dichotomous gender categories.

LGBTQIA+: acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer. The plus sign represents people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics who identify using other terms. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender; an inclusive term for groups and identities sometimes also grouped as "sexual minorities."

Gay: men whose enduring romantic, emotional, and/or physical attraction is to men; also, women who are attracted to other women.

Lesbian: A person who identifies as a woman and has significant (to oneself) sexual or romantic attractions towards another woman, or who identifies as a member of the lesbian community. In India, this term is used to indicate bisexual women.

Bisexual: a person who has the capacity for romantic, emotional, and/or physical attraction to people of more than one gender.

Sexuality: Human sexuality encompasses the sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors of individuals. Its dimensions include the anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of the sexual response system; identity, orientation, roles, and personality; thoughts, feelings, and relationships. The expression of sexuality is influenced by ethical, spiritual, cultural, and moral concerns.

Sexual minorities or Sexual minority community: Refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered/ transsexual persons as well as persons with other identities (such as Kothis and Hijras) as a minority group in a predominantly heterosexual total population.

Sexual Orientation: One's erotic, romantic, emotional, and physical attraction. It could be to people of the same sex (homosexuality), to the opposite sex (heterosexuality), to either sex (bisexuality), or none (asexuality). Trans and gender-variant people may identify with any sexual orientation, and their sexual orientation may or may not change before, during or after gender transition.

Transgender (TG): terms used by some people whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans, transgender and non-binary are umbrella terms representing a variety of words that describe an internal sense of gender that differs from the sex assigned at birth and/or the gender attributed to the individual by society, whether that individual identifies as a man, a woman, or in transition, simply "trans" or "transgender", with another gender or with no gender.

Queer: traditionally a negative term, it has been reclaimed by some people and is considered inclusive of a wide range of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. It may be used as an umbrella term for people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), or as an alternative to the phrase "people

with diverse SOGIESC” or the acronym LGBT. Queer is used by many people who feel they do not conform to a given society’s economic, social and political norms based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Intersex: people born with sex characteristics that do not fit typical definitions of male and female bodies. Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. There are more than 40 intersex variations; experts estimate between 0.5 percent and 1.7 percent of the population is born with intersex traits.

Appendix

Fig. A1 IPSOS survey results

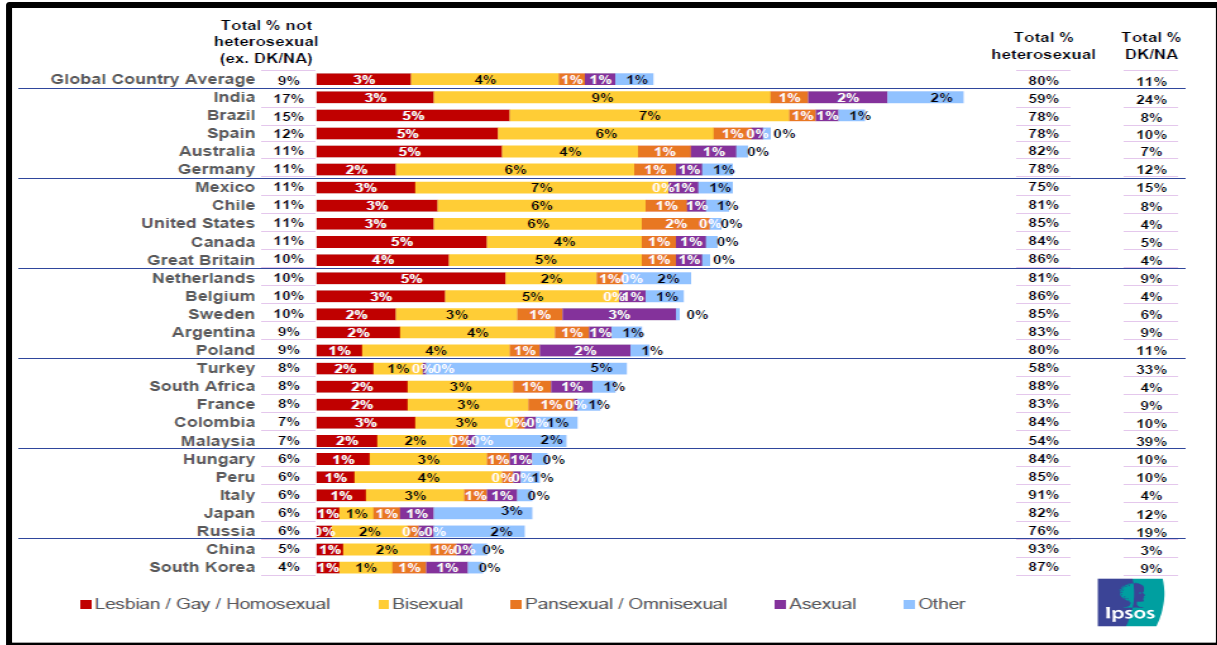


Fig. A2 Income composition of the sample

