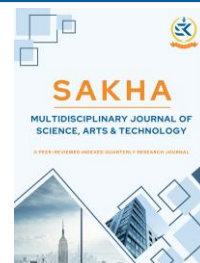




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Navigating Identity and Acceptance: Social Challenges Faced by Bisexual Individuals in Contemporary Society

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Abstract

The research article "Navigating Identity and Acceptance: Social Challenges Faced by Bisexual Individuals in Contemporary Society," addresses the multifaceted problems experienced by bisexuals. Family acceptance, media representation, and social stigma are the key issues of this study. A sample of 600 individuals across India and abroad was studied to discover more about their sexual orientation, religious perspectives, and how the media supports bisexual depiction and societal acceptability. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.878 guaranteed strong data consistency. Twelve percent of respondents identified as bisexual, demonstrating a high degree of sexual orientation variance. Chi-square tests suggested that familial background was highly connected with bisexual-related stress and anxiety ($\chi^2 = 34.203$, $df = 12$, $p < .001$). Despite being credited with helping people understand bisexuality, the media frequently presents bisexuality in a negative and stereotyped way. The findings of the ANOVA demonstrated no noticeable change in how different religious affiliation groups viewed media coverage. The findings highlight to the urgent need for representative and unbiased media as well as familial situations to help bisexuals feel less stressed.

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Above all, the study underscores the significance of concentrated interventions that promote social acceptance and minimise marginalisation.

Keywords: *Gender Justice, LGBT Equality, Ahimsa, Inclusivity, Sarvodaya, Mental Health.*

Introduction

In the evolving tapestry of human identity, bisexuality emerges as a vibrant yet often misunderstood thread. As societies inch toward inclusivity, bisexual individuals remain shadowed by societal prejudices, familial expectations, and stereotypes perpetuated by media. Despite significant studies in LGBTQIA+ advocacy, bisexuality continues to be marginalized, caught between the binaries of heterosexual and homosexual identities. This study delves into the lived experiences of bisexual individuals, navigating the labyrinth of identity, acceptance and representation. It interrogates how media portrayal family, dynamics, and societal attitudes shape their psychological and emotional wellbeing. By juxtaposing global discourses with local realities, the research captures the unique intersectionality faced by bisexual individuals, especially in conservative settings where identity often battles cultural norms (D. Meyer, 2024). Through a lens of empathy and evidence, this exploration aspires to unravel the layers of complexity surrounding bisexuality and spark dialogues that champion inclusivity.

It discusses the complex reality of bisexual people in more conservative settings, such as the impact of the media, family relationships, and public opinion. The research provides fresh perspectives on the lives of bisexuals at the intersection of identity and action. Stereotypes in the media and social and familial expectations are among the many elements that affect psychological health and self-acceptance. This article critically examines the lack of inclusivity and representation in order to raise awareness about bisexuality, debunk prevalent myths, and create a culture that is more marked by empathy and egalitarianism (Sahoo et al., 2023).

1.1 Aim

This study will analyses the issues that bisexuals, in particular, confront in the social, familial, and media realms while also seeking to investigate stress, anxiety, and representation in modern society.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- Examine the percentage of the population sample that identifies as sexually inclined and the barriers associated with self-reporting activities.
- To find out if bisexuals experience tension or anxiety because of their family's background.
- Examine how attitudes regarding how bisexuality is portrayed in the media are influenced by religious affiliation.
- Bisexuality's ascent in the media and prospective applications if made public.
- This relates to examining the media's ubiquity of the stereotype and how it impacts the self-esteem of bisexual persons.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is significant given the status of society today and the increasing acceptance of the gender and sexual diversity discourse. Given that both heterosexual and gay communities misunderstand bisexuals, and that other LGBTQIA+ groups encounter “double discrimination,” this study's focus on bisexuals has filled a major void in scholarly research and social engagement. The findings of this study will be utilised to educate media standards, improve policy formulation, and support efforts to raise public awareness of the different psychosocial barriers that bisexual persons encounter. In order to create a more fair society, the study serves as a catalyst for the advancement of social acceptance, inclusivity, and the dismantling of prejudices.

Review of Literature

Hannah J. (2016) highlighted the prevalence of stereotypes that portray bisexuals as promiscuous or confused in their study of bisexual representation in Western media (Johnson, 2016). Their study emphasised the psychological damage these portrayals cause and argued for more intricate plotlines. Similarly, Madeline and Francisco (2024) examined the integration of bisexual employees in European organisations and found that organisational techniques often overlook their unique challenges, resulting in decreased job satisfaction (Donaghy & Perales, 2024).

Prithvi et al. (2019) investigated the acceptance of bisexuals in Indian households, which reflected the twin stigmas that one may experience within a family setting (Gaur et al., 2023). The results suggest that community-level action need to be essential. Lalith's (2022) study focused on the history of bisexuality in Indian cinema. According to the critical review, the under-representation of bisexuality further marginalises it (Kumar, 2022).

Methods

The research employed a cross-sectional survey methodology to acquire data from a sample of 600 persons employing quantitative methods. In order to acquire data on demographic characteristics, sexual orientation, media influence, and family dynamics, a structured questionnaire was used. In this regard, a complete grasp of the attitudes and issues faced by bisexual people is supplied by the research design.

3.1 Inclusion criteria

- That is, persons who are LGBTQIA+ or who identify as bisexual.
- Respondents who were at least age of eighteen.
- Respondents were persons who accurately answered a questionnaire and expressed agreement.

3.2 Exclusion Criteria

- People who did not specify or communicate their sexual orientation.
- Participants' incomplete or erroneous responses.
- Individuals below 18 years of age.

3.3 Universe and Sampling

The universe of the study consisted of individuals from urban and rural settings across diverse religious, cultural and family backgrounds. A purposive sampling technique was employed, ensuring representation of bisexual individuals and their allies, yielding a total sample size of 600.

3.4 Tools of Data Collection

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire divided into sections: demographic details, media influence, familial dynamics, and perceptions of bisexual representation. The questionnaire used a 5 point Likert scale to measure attitudes and experiences, with reliability confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha of 0.878 that affirmed the credibility of the study.

Results

The data collected through the questionnaires were cleaned, analyzed and tabulated using SPSS Version 21.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on Religion Affiliation

Gender	Total Number (N=600)	Percentage (%)
Religious	475	79.2%
Non-Religious	125	20.8%

The data from Table 1 indicates that a significant majority of respondents (79.2%) identify as religious, while 20.8% consider themselves non-religious. This highlights the predominance of religious affiliation among the sample population, suggesting its potential influence on attitudes toward sexuality and identity (Arousell & Carlbom, 2016).

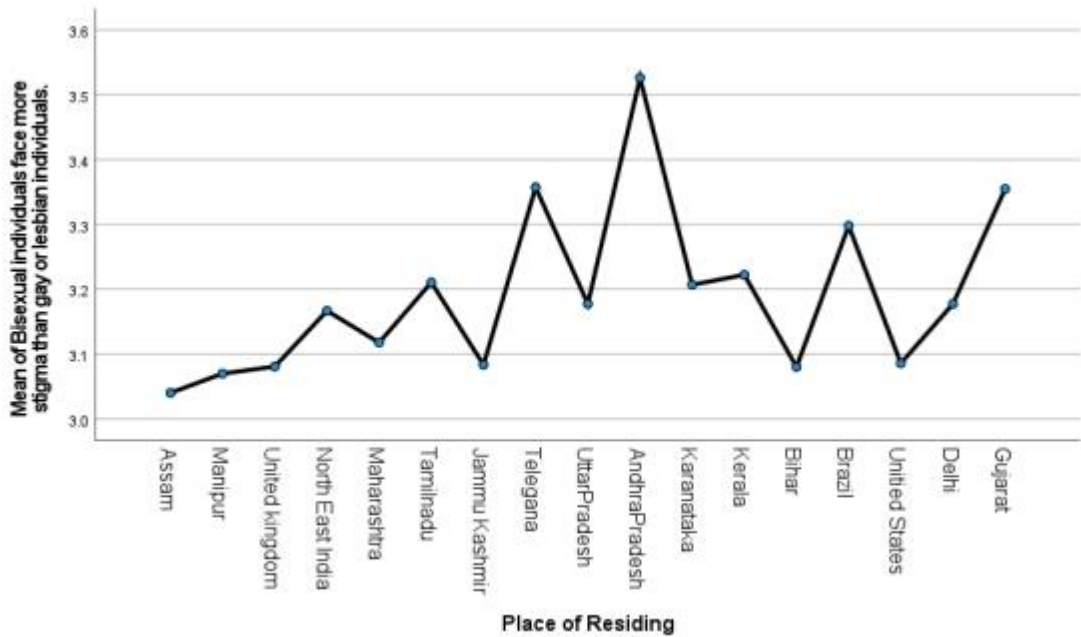
Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on Sexual Orientation

Gender	Total Number (N=600)	Percentage (%)
Heterosexual	355	59.2%
Homosexual	45	7.5%
Bisexual	72	12.0%
Asexual	38	6.3%
Pansexual	7	1.2%
Others	83	13.8%

Table 2 reveals the diversity of sexual orientations among respondents. The majority (59.2%) identify as heterosexual, while 12% identify as bisexual,

reflecting a substantial representation. Other groups include homosexual (7.5%), asexual (6.3%), pansexual (1.2%), and others (13.8%), indicating the presence of varied and less conventional identities. This diversity underscores the importance of examining unique experiences, particularly those of bisexual individuals, within a broader societal and cultural context.

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents based on their residence



This study bridges a critical knowledge gap by comparing bisexual stigma across diverse geographical regions. Internationally, it provides valuable insights into cultural and societal nuances influencing bisexual acceptance, serving as a reference for global LGBTQIA+ advocacy campaigns. For instance, understanding why regions like the UK report lower stigma levels could inform policies and awareness strategies elsewhere. Nationally, the study highlights significant disparities in stigma within India, reflecting the interplay of cultural, religious, and familial factors. Such findings are pivotal for localized interventions, enabling targeted efforts to promote acceptance and reduce bias (Banik et al., 2019). By shedding light on the unique challenges faced by bisexual individuals, both abroad and within India, the study underscores the need for nuanced, culturally sensitive approaches to fostering inclusivity and equity.

The graph in Figure 1 illustrates the mean perception that bisexual individuals face more stigma than gay or lesbian individuals across various places of residence, both within India and internationally. Respondents from Andhra Pradesh report the highest levels of perceived stigma (mean score ~3.6), highlighting a strong cultural or societal influence on perceptions of bisexuality in this region. Other states such as Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka also reflect relatively high mean values, indicating notable stigmatization. In contrast, states like Assam, Manipur, and the United Kingdom show the lowest levels of perceived stigma (mean ~3.0–3.2), suggesting either greater acceptance or less recognition of bisexual identities in these regions. Internationally, Brazil and the United States display moderate levels of stigma, which may reflect a mix of progressive attitudes and lingering societal biases.

Table 3: Differences among Religion affiliation of respondents and Media Influence on Bisexual

Variables	df	SS	MS	Mean	Statistical Inference
The media provides accurate and positive representations of the individuals.				G1=2.99	F=.773
Between Groups	3	1.092	.364	G2=2.99	Sig.=.372
Within Groups	596	583.306	.979	G3=2.93	P>0.05
				G4=2.82	Not Significant
Media coverage of LGBTQIA+ issues often overlook				G1=3.27	F=1.394
Between Groups	3	3.902	1.301	G2=3.34	Sig.=.244
Within Groups	596	556.016	.933	G3=3.24	P>0.05
				G4=2.97	Not Significant
Bisexual characters in TV shows and movies are often portrayed as confused or promiscuous				G1=3.23	F=2.153
Between Groups	3	6.502	2.167	G2=3.29	Sig.=.093
Within Groups	596	600.096	1.007	G3=3.13	P>0.05
				G4=2.85	Not Significant
I feel the media has an important role in shaping understanding and acceptance of Bisexuality.				G1=3.41	F=4.087
Between Groups	3	12.389	4.130	G2=3.59	Sig.=.007
Within Groups	596	602.196	1.010	G3=3.25	P>0.05
				G4=3.09	Not Significant

G1 = Traditional, G2 = Moderate, G3 = Liberal, G4 = Non-Conservative

The relationship between media influence on bisexuals and religious affiliation is examined in Table 3. The analysis reveals no discernible difference across religious groups in how bisexuality is portrayed in the media, including positive portrayals and the avoidance of stereotypes ($p > 0.05$). With the highest mean score ($G2 = 3.59$), moderately religious people believe that the media is essential in promoting acceptance; yet, the overall findings show that religious affiliation has little bearing on how people perceive media influence.

Table 4: Background of family and bisexual experience stress and anxiety

Family Background		Bisexual experience stress or anxiety because of their sexual orientation.					Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Traditional	Count	19	39	93	103	16	270
	Row	7.0%	14.4%	34.4%	38.1%	5.9%	100.0%
	Column	48.7%	48.1%	42.7%	48.4%	32.7%	45.0%
Moderate	Count	6	10	71	54	19	160
	Row	3.8%	6.3%	44.4%	33.8%	11.9%	100.0%
	Column	15.4%	12.3%	32.6%	25.4%	38.8%	26.7%
Liberal	Count	8	26	50	41	11	136
	Row	5.9%	19.1%	36.8%	30.1%	8.1%	100.0%
	Column	20.5%	32.1%	22.9%	19.2%	22.4%	22.7%
Non Conservative	Count	6	6	4	15	3	34
	Row	17.6%	17.6%	11.8%	44.1%	8.8%	100.0%
	Column	15.4%	7.4%	1.8%	7.0%	6.1%	5.7%
Total	Count	39	81	218	213	49	600
	Row	6.5%	13.5%	36.3%	35.5%	8.2%	100.0%
	Column	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson-chi-Square Test , Value:34.203 , df:12 , $P < .001$

Table 4 examines the relationship between a person's family background and the stress or anxiety they endure because of their sexual orientation. In terms of stress and anxiety, traditional families show the highest percentages of agreement and strong agreement (48.4%), highlighting the pressure to uphold conservative ideals. A substantial association ($\chi^2 = 34.203$, $p < 0.001$) is shown by the Chi-square analysis, indicating that family dynamics have a significant impact on the mental health of bisexual people.

Discussion

A complete comprehension of the cultural, familial, and media-related issues that bisexual people confront is presented by the study's conclusions. Important insights include the high influence of family history on stress and anxiety, the limited influence of religion membership on how people perceive media representations, and the frequency of unfavourable stereotypes in media portrayals (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011). These findings underline the vital importance for strong family ties and genuine, inclusive media depictions in order to foster acceptance and eliminate the stigma associated with bisexual people.

6.1 Distribution of Sexual Orientation:

Significant heterogeneity in respondents' sexual orientation was identified in the study. 12% of respondents identified as bisexual, making it the second-largest group after heterosexuality, even though the majority (59.2%) identified as heterosexual. In addition, 13.8% of respondents defined as other sexually, with pansexual (1.2%), asexual (6.3%), and gay (7.5%) coming in second and third, respectively. This shows that non-heteronormative identities are fairly prevalent in the population. Bisexual individuals, who make up a considerable fraction of sexual minorities but are still under-represented and understudied in wider LGBTQIA+ discourses, require more concentrated research and advocacy, as the data makes apparent.

6.2 Stress and Family Background

The study indicated a considerable association between bisexual people's stress or anxiety and their family background ($\chi^2 = 34.203$, $p < 0.001$). With 48.4% of

respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have issues due of their sexual orientation, individuals from conventional homes indicated the highest levels of stress and worry. On the other side, individuals who came from non-conservative households expressed the least degree of stress. These results underscore how vital it is to build supportive familial situations for bisexual persons to boost their mental health and how significant family acceptance is in minimising their emotional distress.

6.3 Media representation and religious affiliation

Regarding perspectives on how bisexual individuals are portrayed in the media, the data showed no obvious variations across religious groups ($p > 0.05$). The respondents who were moderately religious had the highest mean score (3.59), implying that they believed the media had a stronger influence on acceptance, while those who were not conservative had the lowest (3.09). This research shows that although religion impacts overall social norms, it has little effect on how bisexuality is portrayed in the media, underlining the significance of inclusive media narratives to address knowledge gaps.

6.4 Media Representation and Stereotypes

The way bisexuality is portrayed in the media bothers respondents, who pointed out that bisexual characters are commonly stereotyped as promiscuous or confused. While there were no statistically significant differences between religious groups, the mean ratings (which varied from 2.85 to 3.29) suggest that respondents from all affiliations feel that there is typically a lack of accurate, positive depiction. In order to promote realistic representations of bisexuality and challenge detrimental stereotypes, which are vital for public acceptance and understanding, our findings advocate media reform.

6.5 The Media's Contribution to the Understanding of Bisexuality

The study underlined how the media impacts how individuals regard bisexuality, with respondents who were moderately religious most strongly agreeing (mean = 3.59) that media shapes acceptance and understanding. Despite the low degree

of statistical significance ($p > 0.05$), the results demonstrate how media can be a transforming instrument for bisexual inclusion. In countries where bisexual stigma is persistent, truthful and compassionate depictions in TV series, films, and the news can help dispel preconceptions and build a more inclusive societal narrative (Nolan, 2019).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates how identity, cultural attitudes, and family relationships are all interwoven, providing vital insight into the special issues faced by bisexual persons. The results reveal how family background has a huge influence on bisexual people's mental health, with those from traditional homes feeling more pressured and nervous as they aren't welcomed. Although perceptions of media depictions were not significantly impacted by religious affiliation, the aggregate results indicate how ineffective modern media narratives are at appropriately portraying bisexuality (Van Meer & Pollmann, 2021). Negative stereotypes exist because they restrict public understanding and promote stigma. These findings indicate the urgent need for institutional support networks and social attitudes to change promptly.

Additionally, the study demonstrates how media may be a revolutionary catalyst for societal change. In TV, films, and the news, inclusive, realistic, and compassionate representations of bisexual individuals could encourage wider social acceptance and debunk stereotypes (M. Meyer, 2010). Addressing the underlying causes of stigma also involves community awareness programs and family-based interventions. The execution of regulations that protect bisexual individuals from discrimination and the inclusion of bisexual voices in LGBTQIA+ narratives require cooperation between advocacy organisations and lawmakers.

In the context of larger LGBTQIA+ discourses, this study offers a call to action for scholars, activists, and organisations to give bisexuality more importance. By resolving the “double discrimination” that bisexual persons endure, society can make a great progress in promoting equality and inclusivity. Future research should study the intricacies of bisexual experiences in diverse cultural and geographic circumstances in order to build evidence-based support and

advocacy methods. By doing this, we create a more compassionate and just society in which everyone may live with respect and acceptance, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Suggestions

The findings of the research emphasize the need for targeted interventions to address the stigma and challenges faced by bisexual individuals. Recommendations focus on fostering inclusive media representation, supportive family environments and community awareness. Additionally, religion-sensitive advocacy, policy reforms, and enhanced mental health resources are proposed to promote acceptance and reduce discrimination.

Encourage the Representation of Inclusive Media: In order to prevent detrimental perceptions like perplexity or promiscuity, media creators should concentrate on realistic and positive representations of bisexual people (Giordano, 2021). Social acceptance of bisexuality can be considerably facilitated by information that normalises it.

Family-Centered Support Measures: Programs that teach families on sexual variety are vital, especially those with conventional backgrounds. The stress and worry that bisexual persons face as a result of rejection from their families can be reduced with therapy and seminars.

Campaigns to Raise Community Awareness: Initiatives undertaken by the community should seek to refute the myths surrounding bisexuality. Working collaboratively, educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, and LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups can increase acceptance at the local level.

Religiously Sensitive Lobbying: Faith-based organisations could be involved to develop acceptance and understanding by leveraging their influence among communities, even though religious affiliation was not considerably connected with media perceptions.

Support from Law and Policy: Legislators should make sure that bisexual persons are expressly protected from discrimination in the job, healthcare system, and educational system (Ramos et al., 2023). Mandating LGBTQIA+ sensitivity training in public institutions is one approach to achieve this.

Mental Health Resources: For bisexual persons, it is necessary to provide conveniently available mental health services with competent counsellors who are aware of their special issues in order to ease emotional discomfort and enhance wellbeing.

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