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## Navigating Heteronormativity in Higher Education in India

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### Abstract

Transcending heteronormativity in education has become imperative due to the growing awareness about gender and sexual orientation in society. Thereby, to support and uphold Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) rights in the academic climate, it is required to make education more inclusive. Keeping this in view, the present study aims to understand, examine, and analyze students' perspectives regarding awareness, attitudes, experience, and readiness to include LGBTQ matters in higher education in India. The data was collected at the Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani campus via Google Forms and focused group discussions. The data set was further analyzed using a mixed method. The findings indicated that students had positive views about LGBTQ identities and strongly supported queer inclusion; however, they also reported the reluctance of teachers to bring up such issues in the classroom and showed concern about other students' homophobic reactions towards queer topics. The study implies building inroads for further research vis-à-vis queer inclusion in curricula and classrooms to build more encouraging and conducive spaces to promote a trusting culture of queer acceptance and inclusion.

**Keywords:** heteronormativity, LGBTQ, mixed methods, higher education, queer inclusion, queer topics