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Title : City still doesn't accept homosexuals: Study

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City still doesn't accept homosexuals: Study

FINDINGS Covering 1,227 people, survey says 18.9% of Mumbaiites not critical of homosexuals, 91% of Indians consider homosexuality a western concept

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MUMBAI: Pride marches and the Delhi High Court's decriminalisation of homosexuality in private notwithstanding, a majority of urban Indians still look upon homosexuality as a taboo.

According to results of a survey conducted by market research organisation, Market Xcel, 91% of Indians from Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai consider homosexuality as western and unacceptable. A majority of these also tend to associate it with abnormality, crime and sexual abuse.

The perception survey was conducted last month on 1,227 men and women, from the upper and upper middle-classes, through face-to-face interviews.

"We wanted to see how people today react to an issue that has been visible and talked about for a long time now," said Vishal Oberoi, chief executive officer of Market Xcel.

Mumbai emerged as the most receptive city in the survey, with 18.9% not critical of homosexuality, followed by Delhi.

Reacting to the survey, city-based psychologist and gay rights activist, Deepak Kashyap said it is Mumbai's culture of respecting the rights and privacy of individuals that makes it more receptive to homosexuality than others. "But despite



this, awareness of homosexuals is low and not in the right light. We are still used as comic relief in movies," he said.

In Mumbai and Delhi, a majority of respondents admitted that homosexuals are discriminated against and are at

WHAT THE SURVEY SAYS

1,227 men and women, from the upper and upper middle-classes were interviewed for the survey through face-to-face interviews.

91% of Indians from Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai consider homosexuality as western and unacceptable.

18.9% of Mumbai's population is not critical of homosexuality, followed by Delhi.

60% of Mumbai and Delhi respondents also claimed to personally know homosexuals.

99.7% of Chennai respondents are opposed to same-sex relationships and have absolutely no awareness of government laws related to homosexuals

25% considered transgender actor Bobby Darling as the icon of homosexuality in India.

a disadvantage when it comes to social welfare. The survey also found 60% of Mumbai and Delhi respondents also claimed

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DEEPAK KASHYAP,
psychologist, gay rights activist

to personally know homosexuals.

Chennai fared poorly in the survey, with 99.7% respondents opposed to same-sex relationships and absolutely no awareness of government laws related to homosexuals. Nearly two-thirds of respondents in Delhi and Mumbai, on the other hand, reflected an awareness of these laws.

A high number of respondents - 25% - considered transgender actor Bobby Darling as the icon of homosexuality in India. "We were disappointed because given their rising visibility, acceptance of homosexuals should have been higher," said Oberoi.

"Indian society is conservative and a wide acceptance of homosexuality is not going to be possible in the near future," said Arwa Topiwala, 25, an IT professional from Bandra. "I believe homosexuality is a matter of personal preference and is fine as long as one does not affect other people's lives by lying about it."