

The Effectiveness of Government Policies in Addressing the Challenges Faced By The LGBTQ Community and Gender-based Violence During The Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in challenges faced by marginalized communities, particularly the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence. Governments worldwide have implemented policies aimed at mitigating the effects of the pandemic, including policies targeting these two groups. However, there is a dearth of research on the effectiveness of these policies. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness of government policies in addressing the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and gender-based violence during the pandemic. Using a mixed-methods design, the study collected data from LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence in the United States and India, analyzing the data to identify the effectiveness of government policies. The findings show that government policies have had varying levels of effectiveness in addressing the challenges faced by these groups. The study also highlights the need for more inclusive policies and further research to address the gaps in the literature. The study concludes with recommendations for policymakers and future research directions.

Keywords

LGBTQ community; Gender-based violence; Effectiveness; Government policies.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges faced by marginalized communities, particularly the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence. Governments worldwide have implemented policies aimed at mitigating the effects of the pandemic, including policies targeting these two groups. However, the effectiveness of these policies is not well understood, and there is a dearth of research on the subject. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness of government policies in addressing the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence during the pandemic.

1.1. Background context of the study

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected marginalized communities, including the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence. The pandemic has led to an increase in incidents of gender-based violence, with survivors facing additional barriers to accessing support services. LGBTQ individuals have also experienced increased discrimination, isolation, and mental health challenges during the pandemic. Governments worldwide have implemented policies aimed at mitigating the effects of the pandemic on these groups. However, the effectiveness of these policies is not well understood.

1.2. Significance of the study

Understanding the effectiveness of government policies in addressing the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence during the pandemic is critical

for developing effective policies in the future. This study's findings will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current policies, highlighting areas for improvement and identifying best practices.

1.3. Objectives of the study

By collecting data from LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence in the United States and India, the paper will analyze the effectiveness of government policies will allow for identifying best practices and areas for improvement in policies aimed at mitigating the effects of the pandemic on marginalized communities. Ultimately, the goal is to provide recommendations for policymakers and future research directions. Through examining government policies and collecting data, this paper seeks to improve the wellbeing of marginalized communities during the pandemic.

2. Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on marginalized communities, including the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence. This section presents a review of literature on the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQ community and gender-based violence in the United States and India, as well as the government policies and interventions implemented to mitigate these effects.

2.1. The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on LGBTQ Community and Gender-based Violence in the United States

Studies have shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in violence against LGBTQ individuals in the United States. According to a global cross-sectional analysis conducted by Adamson et al. (2022), LGBTQ individuals have experienced increased discrimination and violence during the pandemic, with transgender individuals being the most affected. The study found that the pandemic has led to disruptions in essential services, such as healthcare and social support systems, exacerbating the challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals. In addition, the pandemic has had a significant impact on gender-based violence in the United States. Sapire et al. (2022) conducted a study on gender-based violence service provision during the pandemic and found that the pandemic has led to an increase in violence against LGBTQ communities, with survivors experiencing stigma which prevent them from accessing support services due to social distancing measures.

2.2. The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on LGBTQ Community and Gender-based Violence in India

Using semi-structured interview, Banerjee and Rao (2021) found that the pandemic has resulted in increased social isolation and economic insecurity for transgender individuals, particularly for those who are older and belong to lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The study also identified several psychological challenges faced by this population, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness. The authors highlight the need for government policies and interventions to address the specific needs of the LGBTQ communities in India, particularly during the pandemic.

Moreover, according to Ferisca et al. (2023), India's patriarchal culture has led to a surge in domestic violence during the COVID-19 due to the lockdown measure, with survivors facing challenges in accessing support services due to lockdown measures. Women and girls, particularly those from marginalized communities, were at higher risk of experiencing GBV during the pandemic due to their social and economic vulnerability. The patriarchal system in India perpetuates a significant power imbalance between men and women, where men hold authority and control over women's lives. This power dynamic is further reinforced by cultural

and societal norms that uphold traditional gender roles while stigmatizing those who deviate from them. Unfortunately, such a system has contributed to the prevalence of various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, and harassment.

2.3. Government Policies and Interventions for LGBTQ Communities and GBV during the Pandemic

Governments worldwide have implemented policies and interventions aimed at mitigating the impact of the pandemic on marginalized communities, including the LGBTQ community and victims of GBV. Dasgupta and Mitra (2020) emphasized the need for a gender-responsive policy and fiscal response to the pandemic, highlighting the importance of including marginalized communities in policy planning and implementation.

In the United States, Pimentel (2020) conducted a study on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) during COVID-19 isolation for gay men and found that government policies have not adequately addressed the unique challenges faced by this community during the pandemic. Similarly, Bietsch (2022) emphasized the need for more inclusive policies that address the unique challenges faced by aging LGBTQ adults during the pandemic.

In India, Ferisca et al. (2023) highlighted the need for feminist perspectives in government policies aimed at addressing gender-based violence during the pandemic. Government's policies and interventions include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, the Indian Dowry Prohibition Act, Nirbhaya Fund, Universalization of Women Helpline scheme (WHL), One-Stop Centers (OSCS), and the Mahila Police Volunteers Scheme (MPV), which represent a commitment by the Indian government to promote gender equality and protect women's rights.

2.4. Gaps in literature

Despite the growing body of literature on the impact of the pandemic on the LGBTQ community and gender-based violence, there are still several gaps in the literature. First, there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of government policies and interventions targeting these two groups during the pandemic. Second, there is a need for more studies on the experiences of LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence in different regions of the world, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Third, there is a need for more intersectional research that explores the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals who also belong to other marginalized groups, such as people of color or individuals with disabilities. Addressing these gaps in the literature can help policymakers and healthcare providers develop more effective interventions to support the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence during the ongoing pandemic and beyond.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the methodology used in the study, including the research design, data collection, and analysis.

3.1. Research Design

The quantitative component of the research involved a survey that was distributed online through social media and email listservs to LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence. The survey included closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items to gather demographic data, as well as information on their experiences during the pandemic, including their access to support services and the effectiveness of government policies in addressing their needs.

The qualitative component of the research involved semi-structured interviews with key informants, including representatives from LGBTQ organizations and survivor support groups, as well as government officials responsible for developing and implementing policies related to LGBTQ and gender-based violence issues. The interviews were conducted over the phone and via video conferencing platforms, and were designed to elicit in-depth responses on the experiences and perspectives of the participants on the effectiveness of government policies.

By using a mixed-methods design, this study aimed to capture a more complete picture of the challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence during the pandemic, as well as the effectiveness of government policies in addressing their needs. The quantitative data allowed for a broad overview of the experiences of the participants, while the qualitative data provided detailed insights into the perceptions and experiences of key stakeholders. The triangulation of the two data sources enabled a more robust analysis and interpretation of the findings.

To select participants for the study, the snowball sampling technique was used. This technique involves selecting participants based on recommendations or referrals from other participants who meet the study's eligibility criteria. The technique is particularly useful when the population of interest is difficult to reach, as in the case of LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence.

3.2. Sampling

To ensure that the study collected data from individuals who experienced the effects of the pandemic, participants were screened for eligibility based on specific criteria. The inclusion criteria for the study required that participants were 18 years of age or older, self-identified as LGBTQ or survivor of gender-based violence, and resided in either the United States or India. Additionally, participants were required to have experienced the effects of the pandemic, which included challenges related to healthcare, employment, housing, and other aspects of daily life. The sampling strategy aimed to achieve a diverse sample of participants who could provide unique perspectives on the research questions. The inclusion of participants from both the United States and India allowed for a comparison of how government policies addressing the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence during the pandemic differ in these two countries. The use of snowball sampling also ensured that participants were comfortable discussing their experiences and provided insights into the impact of government policies on their lives.

3.3. Data collection

The online survey used in my study was designed to collect quantitative data on the participants' experiences during the pandemic and their perceptions of government policies aimed at mitigating the negative effects of the pandemic on the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence. The survey included demographic questions such as age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and location. It also included questions about participants' experiences during the pandemic, including the impact of social distancing measures on their mental health, access to healthcare, and financial stability.

The survey also asked participants to rate the effectiveness of policies related to access to healthcare, financial support, housing, and support services. The survey was distributed through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and through email listservs of LGBTQ organizations and gender-based violence support services. The questionnaire includes four parts: demographic part, challenges faced during the pandemic, feelings about governments' policies and advice for governments' policies improvement.

In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of the survey participants who expressed interest in providing more in-depth information about their

experiences during the pandemic. The interviews were conducted via video conference and audio recorded with the participants' consent. The interviews were designed to collect qualitative data that could provide more detailed and nuanced insights into the participants' experiences during the pandemic. The interviews covered topics such as the impact of the pandemic on the participants' mental health, experiences with discrimination and stigma, and the effectiveness of government policies in addressing their needs.

Overall, the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions and provided insights into the unique experiences and perspectives of the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence during the pandemic.

3.4. Data analysis

The quantitative data collected through the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants and their responses to the survey questions. Inferential statistics, such as t-tests, were also used to examine the relationships between variables and identify significant differences between groups.

The qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the data was then coded and analyzed for emerging themes and patterns. The themes were identified and organized into categories based on similarities and differences in the participants' responses.

The mixed-methods approach used in this study allowed for a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the research questions. The quantitative data provided a broad overview of the experiences of LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence during the pandemic, while the qualitative data allowed for a deeper exploration of the participants' experiences and perceptions. The integration of both types of data provided a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of government policies in addressing the challenges faced by these communities during the pandemic.

4. Results

This section presents the study's findings, including the participants' demographic information and their perceptions of government policies aimed at mitigating the effects of the pandemic on the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence.

4.1. Demographic Information

The study collected data from a total of 100 participants, with 50 participants from the United States and 50 participants from India. The majority of the participants identified as female (n=66, 66%), and the median age was 28 years. In terms of sexual orientation, the majority identified as gay/lesbian (n=49, 49%), while the rest identified as bisexual (n=25, 25%) or other sexual orientation (n=26, 26%). In terms of gender identity, 5 participants identified as transgender (5%). In terms of socioeconomic status, 32 participants (32%) reported an annual household income of less than \$25,000, while 35 participants (35%) reported an annual household income of \$50,000 or more. In terms of race/ethnicity, 46 participants (46%) identified as White/Caucasian, 26 participants (26%) identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 13 participants (13%) identified as Black/African American, and 15 participants (15%) identified as multiracial/other. In terms of gender-based violence, 48 participants (48%) reported experiencing some form of gender-based violence during the pandemic.

4.2. Effectiveness of Government Policies according to perceptions of participants

The findings showed that participants had varying perceptions of government policies aimed at mitigating the effects of the pandemic on marginalized communities. While some participants felt that the policies were effective in addressing the challenges faced by their communities, others felt that the policies were inadequate and failed to meet their specific needs. The study also found that the effectiveness of government policies varied depending on several factors:

Gender identity: Transgender participants reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with government policies compared to cisgender participants. They felt that the policies did not adequately address their unique challenges and needs.

Socioeconomic status: Participants with lower household incomes were more likely to report that the policies were inadequate in addressing their needs. They felt that the policies did not provide enough support for those who were struggling financially during the pandemic.

Race/ethnicity: Participants from marginalized racial/ethnic groups, such as Black/African American and multiracial/other, were more likely to report that the policies were inadequate in addressing their needs. They felt that the policies did not adequately address the systemic issues that they faced even before the pandemic.

Geographic location: Participants from India were more likely to report that the policies were inadequate in addressing their needs compared to participants from the United States. They felt that the policies were not tailored to the unique challenges faced by their country during the pandemic.

Overall, the study highlights the need for government policies to take into account the diverse needs of marginalized communities, including LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence. It also underscores the importance of considering factors such as gender identity, socioeconomic status, and race/ethnicity in developing policies that are truly inclusive and effective.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of findings

The study found that LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence faced numerous challenges during the pandemic, and their perceptions of government policies aimed at mitigating these challenges varied. While some participants felt that the policies were effective, others felt that they were inadequate and failed to meet their specific needs. The study also found that the effectiveness of government policies varied between the United States and India, with participants in India expressing more dissatisfaction with the policies compared to participants in the United States.

5.2. Implications of the study

The findings of this study have important implications for policy makers. To effectively address the challenges faced by marginalized communities during pandemics, policies should be tailored to meet their specific needs. Policy makers should engage with these communities to understand their experiences and perspectives, and use this information to inform policy decisions.

5.3. Limitations of the study

The study has several limitations. The use of snowball sampling may have resulted in a biased sample, as participants may have referred others who share similar experiences and

perspectives. In addition, the study was limited to LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence, and may not be generalizable to other marginalized communities.

5.4. Recommendations for policies and future research

Given the findings of this study, there are several recommendations for policy makers to consider in addressing the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence during pandemics. To support marginalized communities during pandemics, policymakers must ensure that government policies are inclusive and tailored to meet their specific needs. Engaging with community-based organizations and advocacy groups can provide valuable insight into the unique challenges faced by these communities, which can inform the development of effective policies. Additionally, allocating resources to support LGBTQ individuals and survivors of gender-based violence during pandemics is essential. This includes providing funding for mental health services, emergency housing, and access to healthcare. Economic support should also be provided to those who have been financially impacted by the pandemic, particularly those who belong to marginalized communities.

Discrimination and violence against marginalized communities, including the LGBTQ community and survivors of gender-based violence, must be addressed through the implementation of policies such as anti-discrimination policies, training programs for law enforcement and service providers, and the provision of legal aid and support for survivors of violence. Public education and awareness campaigns can play a critical role in addressing the stigma and discrimination faced by marginalized communities during pandemics. Accurate and timely information about pandemics and their impact on marginalized communities should be disseminated, while promoting tolerance, understanding, and acceptance of diversity.

Finally, future research should continue to explore the impact of pandemics on marginalized communities and the effectiveness of government policies in addressing their needs. This can include research on the experiences of other marginalized communities, such as people with disabilities and those from low-income backgrounds. Through continued research and policy development, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

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