

# Poll shows 1 in 10 in Japan identify as LGBT or other sexual minorities

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People march through the Shibuya district of Tokyo during the Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2019 parade in April. | KYODO

A recent [online survey](#) has found that 1 in 10 in Japan identify as LGBT or another sexual minority.

The Japan LGBT Research Institute Inc., a Tokyo-based think tank specializing in issues related to sexual minorities, conducted the poll in April and May on 428,000 people aged 20 to 69. It received 348,000 valid responses, and about 10 percent identified as LGBT or another sexual

minority.

By sexual orientation, 2.8 percent described themselves as bisexual while 1.4 percent said they were questioning their sexuality. The proportion that described themselves as asexual and gay was 0.9 percent in both cases.

By gender identity, 2.5 percent identified as nonbinary (not strictly identifying as male or female) followed by transgender at 1.8 percent, while 1.2 percent said they were questioning their gender identity.

The survey defined sexual minorities as those who did not identify themselves as heterosexual cisgender. Cisgender refers to those for whom gender identity corresponds to the sex they were assigned at birth.

Considering the figure of 10 percent, the Japan LGBT Research Institute said in November, "our society needs to face (the reality) in a sincere manner."

A different survey conducted by the same think tank in the same period on 2,578 people indicates that their presence is not necessarily well recognized.

In that survey, 83.9 percent responded that they were not aware of any LGBT people around them.

The finding can be attributed to other data that showed about 78 percent of LGBT people or sexual minorities have not told anyone about their sexual orientation or gender identity, the think tank says. About 25 percent said they wanted to come out if it would not affect their daily life and work, while 40 percent said that they didn't need to do so even if no harm was expected.

About half of LGBT and sexual minority respondents said that central and prefectural governments, local municipalities and companies need to make greater efforts to make a better environment for them.

Asked if their companies or schools had educational programs for employees, to improve understanding of LGBT and sexual minorities, 12 percent responded that they did. Although the figure was up from 4.4 percent in 2016, the think tank noted that it was still very low.

In addition, the survey showed that while most people in Japan seem to be familiar now with the acronym LGBT, their understanding of those to whom it refers is still relatively poor.

The online poll showed that 91.0 percent were familiar with the term, while only 57.1 correctly understood its meaning.

Those figures were up from 54.4 percent and 32.7 percent, respectively, in the previous survey in 2016, but indicate that measures need to be taken for a better understanding of the LGBT community, Japan LGBT Research Institute said.



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