

Summary of Findings

This study reports on findings from a survey and qualitative analysis of attitudes and perception Jamaicans towards homosexuality. A nationally representative sample of 1007 adults from 231 communities across Jamaica was interviewed between October and November 2010. The margin of error is approximately +/- 4%. The survey was supported by a qualitative study based on five focus groups conducted across the country between October 2010 and January 2011. The results show that Jamaicans become aware of homosexuality at an early stage in their lives as the majority of the respondents (51%) indicated knowing about homosexuality at 14 years old and under. Most Jamaicans (89%) believe that homosexuality is somewhat or very prevalent in Jamaica. Respondents also alluded to an association with this orientation and one's social class, as 66.8% felt that it was more prevalent among some social classes more than others. Most persons (51%) felt that homosexuality was to be found equally among males and females, however, 32% felt that it was more common among males and 11.2% stated that it was slightly more common among females. With respect to the causes of homosexuality, opinions varied. Only 10% felt that persons are born as homosexuals, however 28.6% felt that it was due to environmental factors – social and cultural. The largest proportion felt that it was due to a combination of factors, suggesting the interaction of nature and nurture. Most Jamaicans (56%) believe that it is not possible to be a homosexual and be religious at the same time. However, it should be noted that a significant minority (43%) does not share this view, which perhaps suggest that the public is somewhat conflicted on the issue of homosexuality and religiosity. Most Jamaicans (85.2%) did not think that homosexuality among consenting adults should be made legal in Jamaica as it was morally wrong. Two homophobia scales indicate that Jamaicans have strong negative views of homosexuality, thereby ranking high on these scales for homophobia. Strong negative views and fear of homosexuals tended to be greatest among males, non-university educated persons, those who listened mostly to dancehall and reggae music and those in lower socio-economic groups. In general, the most important finding from this study is that strong negative perceptions and attitudes towards homosexual cut across all social classes, gender and social groups in Jamaica.