



## **Domestic and Sexual Violence; Claiming Voice, Rights and Dignity**

**A GENDER NON-CONFORMING, TRANSGENDER  
AND SEXUAL MINORITIES LENS ON LOVE, LIFE AND LAWS**



# Domestic and Sexual Violence; Claiming Voice, Rights and Dignity

*A GENDER NON-CONFORMING, TRANSGENDER AND SEXUAL  
MINORITIES LENS ON LOVE, LIFE AND LAWS*

**“THOSE WHO DENY FREEDOM TO OTHERS, DESERVE IT NOT FOR THEMSELVES”**

**-ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

## **PUBLISHING HISTORY**

*Edition:* April, 2018

*Research and compilation by:* Ondede Editorial Team

*Published by:* Ondede

*Cover page by:* Suman

*Printing by:* National Printing Press

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PUBLISHING HISTORY .....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	6
INTRODUCTION .....	7
About Ondede.....	7
Background to the Study .....	7
Purpose .....	8
A Summary and a Note on Structure .....	8
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: A Clarificatory Note.....	9
DIVERSE REALITIES: TELLING THEIR STORIES .....	11
1: Male to Female Transgender Persons.....	11
2: Female to Male Transgender .....	22
3: Religious/ Cultural Transgenders .....	32
4: Gender Non-Conforming .....	44
5: LGBT Community.....	49
BEYOND THE STORIES: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE.....	71
Gender: Breaking the Binary and Plotting the Spectrum.....	71
Internalising the Violence .....	72
Marriage, Adoption and Property Rights.....	76
Sexual Violence.....	77
Domestic Violence .....	81
TOWARDS A MORE GENDER FLUID JURISPRUDENCE .....	83
NALSA Judgement.....	83
Dislodging Section 377 .....	84
The proposed Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 .....	86
The Karnataka State Policy on Transgenders, 2017 .....	87
CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD.....	90

REFERENCES..... 91  
CONTACT DETAILS..... 92



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is only in the recent decade that the sexual minorities and the transgender communities have come to the forefront of the society. Violence faced by these communities is often invisible or under reported in mainstream media. This Report is a community led initiative which documents instances of violence faced by the community. It is from these stories of suppression do we learn and understand their fight for recognition and survival in this world. Reading their stories will guide us in ways to understand the basics that they require for leading a dignified life and the need for recognition and acknowledgment of the specificity of the violence these communities are subject to on daily basis. These testimonies speak volumes by themselves.

We would like to thank Ms. Madhu Bhushan, Mr. Arvind Narrain and Ms. Shakun Mohini for generously providing time from their busy schedule and giving insights on significant portions of the Report.

We have incredible appreciation and gratitude to all the community members who shared their experiences and have courageously spoken against the violence and injustice.

Ondede Team

## INTRODUCTION

### About Ondede

Ondede was founded on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 in Bangalore. The concept arose from a focus group discussion on the need for convergence across three movements in the country- children's rights, women's rights and sexual minorities' rights; and crystallized into reality in 2015.

Ondede means convergence in our local language, Kannada. By recognizing and acknowledging these existing movements, Ondede endeavours to link these different but inter-related groups to various media platforms to foster productive community discourses, to conduct research and to instigate action on Dignity-Voice-Sexuality.

We envision a society that provides access in a non-discriminatory and gender-just way. We have also been working towards establishing linkages between different social movements, to increase evidence based advocacy in policy and practice and provide a platform for people and movements to come together.

The last three years, Ondede has been in the forefront of advocacy on issues impacting sexual minorities such as Section 377 of Indian Penal Code, 36A Police Act, Karnataka State Transgender Policy, Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 and the rising violence that is continuously being unleashed on the sexual minorities and transgender communities.

### Background to the Study

Sexual minorities are usually termed as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender persons etc. their sexual orientation, gender identity, practices and even family/institutional support structure are distinctly different from the majority of the society. It is only in the recent decade that the sexual minority and transgender community have come to the fore front of the society as marginalized and discriminated groups based on their gender, sexuality and identity.

The need of the hour, we believe, is to understand and ensure a just, equitable and a more inclusive society, for these groups have to face and deal with unsympathetic families, patriarchal and prejudiced society, disgruntled spouses or lovers who turn hostile or become extortionists. Violence faced by these communities is often invisible or under reported in mainstream media. Further, an insensitive criminal justice system and the



colonial provision of Section 377 of the India Penal Code make reporting even more difficult.

In this context, Ondede took a small initiative to understand sexual violence, domestic violence, sexuality rights and transgender rights from the perspectives and experiences of these communities by documenting the stories of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, Jogappas, gender non-conforming, intersex and transgender persons from Bangalore, Shimoga and Bijapur districts of Karnataka. Perspectives on these four themes were also gathered from different stakeholders like the police departments, lawyers, social activists, government departments, NGOs etc while reviewing recent judgements and policy initiatives on the rights and realities of sexual minorities including transgenders.

## **Purpose**

As an organization working with grass root communities, these case studies we believed would help us in understanding and voicing the struggles of individuals from the sexual minority and the transgender community. We attempted to place these case studies in the context of the current legal framework while highlighting the stark realities of harassment, abuse and violence that have become a part of their day-to-day existence which need to be integrated into the wider discourse on sexual and domestic violence as also on human rights and dignity. Their case studies we believe can also be used as part of the growing body of knowledge on these marginalized and invisibilized communities that could inform on-going activism and advocacy, even while developing a more informed and sensitive analytical framework for understanding the lives and realities of sexual minorities and transgender communities.

## **A Summary and a Note on Structure**

This Report is structured in a way that we first understand and hear the voices of the community themselves. In this report, the narratives are from the communities who belong to different sexualities and genders and this gives us a broader understanding and the specificity of their violence, support systems, laws and their issues.

After the narratives, we then move on to understanding how being part of the community, they break the binary of male and female; the internal violence faced by the sexual minorities, and how they confront social stigma and State invisibilization based on the interaction and interviews from the civil society organizations and activists.

We then move on to the broader analysis of the context in which they are located ie., the laws on marriage rights, adoption rights, succession rights, Section 377 of Indian Penal

Code, rape laws, domestic laws and finally towards a more gender fluid jurisprudence so as to break the binaries of male and female.

Listening to their stories was not easy. Their stories of abuse, violence, rejection from their own families, disdain from the public, their pain and injustice echoed in the mind for days. Living outside the institution of family and standing on the streets to beg and to selling one's body to make a living is unimaginable; in addition to illiteracy and lack of employment opportunities, it is disheartening to see how we as a society have completely neglected an entire community only because they chose to be themselves and had the courage to choose their sexuality and gender. These are the communities looking for a safer space and acceptance. A lot of the violence and problems they experience are not voiced owing to the existence of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code and most importantly because of the constraint that the need to conform to the heterosexual norms of the society imposes on such a person.

It is the responsibility of the wider civil society and the state to create a more inclusive and diverse environment in which these communities can also feel a sense of belonging, both in personal and public spaces.

Although we wanted to reach out to the communities from at least 10 districts of Karnataka, owing to resources and time constraint, we could cover only Bangalore, Shimoga and Bijapur Districts. Also, apart from getting the community out of their closet, it was quite a task to get the police to speak on the issues of violence faced by the sexual minorities as they openly refused to make any statements on their issues even after persistently probing them. However, meeting communities from diverse class, religion, genders, sexuality and languages helped to project different, yet similar problems they face being part of the community.

Their stories were documented by me being a passive listener and they freely narrating the story with all their emotions. I only interjected to get clarity or a better understanding of their issues. Even with editing done to an extent, their stories are projected as it is and efforts have been to not alter the essence of their narration.

### **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: A Clarificatory Note**

There is a common misunderstanding that sexual orientation, gender and gender identity are one and the same. But they are not!

*Sexual orientation is who you want to be with and gender identity is about who you are.*

Sexual orientation is an inherent attraction to other people. It is about who you are attracted to, or who you want to emotionally, romantically and sexually have relationships

with. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, heterosexual etc come under the umbrella of sexual orientation.

This is very different from gender identity. Gender identity is who YOU identify yourself as an individual- male, female, both or neither and NOT who you are attracted to. This means identifying yourself as a transgender, that is, feeling that your assigned sex is different from the gender you identify yourself with is not the same thing as being gay, lesbian or bisexual.

- People who are attracted to the opposite gender, that is, men who are attracted to women and women who are attracted to men identify themselves as straight or heterosexuals.
- People who are attracted to people of the same gender, that is, men who are sexually attracted to men and have sex with men and not women identify themselves as Gay. Women who are sexually attracted to women and have sex with women and not men identify themselves as lesbian.
- People who are sexually attracted to both men and women identify themselves as Bisexuals.
- A person whose gender identity or expression is different from the gender assigned to them at birth is an umbrella term for Transgender. They include trans-men and trans-women, whether or not they have undergone hormone therapy or surgery. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual etc.
- Jogappas blend in with other transgender communities, but are a separate community altogether, are one of the least known transgender communities in North Karnataka. They are regarded as holy women, who are “possessed” by the Goddess Yellamma.
- Children below the age of 18 years of age who express a desire to identify with a gender not assigned to them at birth or a strong sexual orientation to other people are termed as Gender Non-Conforming.
- Marladi are male to female transgender women mostly found in Bangalore city believe they are blessed with divine powers by the Goddess. They usually dedicate their life in praying to the Goddess.

## **DIVERSE REALITIES: TELLING THEIR STORIES**

### **1: Male to Female Transgender Persons**

**Laya, 30 years, Bangalore**

*We waited for her on platform 4, majestic railway station at 4pm. The background was that of the sounds of the engine; people hustling in a hurry to catch trains and vendors shouting to sell chips, water and samosa. She came after 10 minutes wearing a black t-shirt and blue jeans. Her hair was tied in a ponytail and with nearly 6 piercing on each ear. At first she seemed a little reserved and shy, but once she narrated her story, she left me with nothing but admiration of how one could go through some unimaginable things and yet sit and narrate the story with no fear or hesitation.*

*“My name is Laya and I was born and brought up in Sreerampura, Bangalore. I have three younger brothers, three elder sisters and my parents. All of my siblings are married and I am the only one to be like this that is a transgender. My father's name is Krishnappa and mother's is Sugama. My mother and father are both government retired employees.*

*I think I was about 5 or 7 years old when I realized that I, was attracted to boys as I liked talking with them and looking at them. I also liked doing household chores and such activities that was meant only for a girl or a woman to do. My parents would hit me and ask why I do such kind of work and why I was like this. I had no answer for it. When no one would be at home, I would apply make-up and wear my sisters' clothes. Every time I got dressed like a girl, I would like at myself in front of the mirror and thought to myself that I should have also been born like a girl.*

#### **How my dream of getting a degree was not fulfilled ..**

*My school life has not been easy at all. I was a very bright student and did great in my studies. As I started behaving more feminine, my problems and attitude of the students in my school also changed, not only from the students, but also the teachers. Especially when I came to high school being part of any school activities was a nightmare. I was mentally and physically harassed by my school principal. He would call me to his cubicle when all the students left school. He was so much older to me and I refused to go to his cubicle alone. Ever since I refused him, he kept it mind and blackmailed me throughout my highschool. He even refused to give me my hall ticket. I eventually had to take my parents to talk with him and I get the issue sorted. I finally got to write my exam.*

*The entire school life was emotionally draining. I would wake up in the morning and dread going to school. My parents never understood and I had nobody to share what I felt. The words “khoja” and “ombattu” became a part of my everyday school life. There were times, I*

wanted to quit school and run away. But I told myself to not give up and let these people around me affect my studies! I put a lot of efforts and completed my tenth.

I joined Bhasveshwar Pre- University College for my PUC. It was fine there and I had a few friends as well. I had four friends who were all girls. I would stay with them and they would not tease me. I was comfortable around them. The boys would tease me a lot; they would spank me on my butt and touch me inappropriately. There was nothing much I could do.

My history lecturer tortured me the most. He would often call me telling there was special class and when I go there no one would be there except for the two of us. He forcibly had sex with me. Throughout the two years of my PUC, I was raped by him. If I tried stopping him, he would threaten me by saying he would not let me sit for exams or correct my paper or worse fail me. I could not do anything at all, I felt so helpless. I have had anal sex with him for the sake of my studies. He would have sex with me weekly twice or thrice. At that time, I was in a relationship with the boy from school, and I would share all these incidents with him.

I finished my PUC, and joined a Bashveshwar Degree college in Rajajinagar for Bachelors of commerce. No matter how hard I tried to concentrate on my studies, the environment around me was very hostile! I somehow finished my first year B.Com and went to the second year. I was very persistent on getting this degree, but when four of my classmates coerced me into a hotel room and raped me for hours despite me begging them to let me go! That was the last day I stepped into my college and they took away my dream of finishing my degree.

### ***I was only 10 years old when I was first raped ..***

I was sexually abused by my own aunt's son when I was about 10 years old. I came from school on that day. We lived in a joint family and no one was home on that day. My elder cousin brother called me inside his room and I went thinking he was going to tell me to do some work. But he was standing near the room and his was zip open, showing his penis to me. When I asked him why he was showing me his penis, he told it was nothing for me to be afraid of and called me closer. I was in the age that even I wanted to explore certain things so I went closer, but he had sex with me just like how he would do with a girl. It was so painful! He told me to give him oral sex, forcefully had anal sex and harassed me. Because he forcefully had anal sex with me, I was bleeding the whole day. I could not bear the pain but I was quite as I did not know how my folks would react to it. Then, my mother asked me what happened and I gathered courage and told what my cousin brother did to me and why I was constantly bleeding. My mother supported me and fought with my aunt. She later took me to the hospital where they treated me for a week. It was the most painful treatment I have had. I cried for days, this memory has become a part of my childhood.

After that incident, there has not been a single day where I have not been beaten up or verbally abused by my parents and siblings for being effeminate. Somewhere my parents

*blamed me for what happened to me and nobody said what my cousin did was wrong. They simply said I deserved what happened because I behaved like a girl!*

### ***My step into adulthood***

*After I left college, I could not even sit home as my parents just did not understand why I left college and what I have been through. All they knew was to hit and scold me and blame me for everything that was happening. I just did not know any other way.*

*I kept looking for a job since I did not want to be home. I started working at Intigram Microsystem Pvt Ltd. I joined the accounts department. I knew computers and all, so it was easier for me. It was fine there, the environment, the colleagues, manager everyone were supportive. They would not tease me at all. I would wear jeans and t-shirt, grow my hair. I would put make up and go! I could be myself without any fear and it was a breath of fresh air for me.*

*Eventually, the office shifted from sheshadripuram to jakkur flyover. They called me to come and work there too. But I could not travel so far and I had to leave the job. I worked there for almost five years. I took all my certificates and went to a place called Alfa Financial Services Consultancy Ltd. There also I joined in the accounts department. I used to work well there as well. After about three years, my boss there started harassing me. He would tell me to come with him to pubs and his house. I could not imagine being raped or sexually harassed again. I wanted to just earn and live my life. When I rejected his offer, he put a theft case on me which was done by his car driver and had me arrested by the police. I went to the police station and I talked fearlessly and clearly as I did not commit any crime. The police let me go as they could not find any proof against me. My boss eventually fired me for rebelling against him.*

*After that I was at home and I started meeting the community members who were my friends. I got a job in Samara and I was working there. I was very happy there. We would drink, roam around and lots of have fun. One night almost at 12 am, my friend Supriya and I went from Majestic to Malleswaram. It was the day India was playing for the world cup. Supriya told me she wanted to go home and left. I was waiting for an auto. Out of nowhere, four men came in an auto, took my hand and pulled me inside. They took me near Peenya 2nd stage and they had sex with me. They scratched all over my body, kept knife near my neck and penetrated in me. Out of self-defence, I even hit a man in that bunch at one point, so all the four together hit me black and blue. That is when I lost a tooth of mine.*

*At that point, I even got kicked out of home! My brother hit me and sent me out as they could not handle my changes. I was about 23 then. No one would talk to me, only my younger brother would, but all of my cousins and elder sisters did not speak to me at all. I was sent out of the house one night at 11 pm.*

*After that for almost eight months I slept on the footpaths. I started doing sex work to earn money as that was my only livelihood. I used to do sex work before 23 but I would not always go as I was working at an office. If there was a pick up while I stood in bus stand, then I would do sex work otherwise I would go home. I was about 19 when I started doing sex work.*

*I was scared at first, since I did not have anyone there. But then eventually I found out there were others like me when I used to go to Majestic with them. I got to know about people like me and I befriended some people too. I would go to various functions and meet people like me and I liked that life. I had the courage, that with my community people I can live anywhere. This was during those eight months when I was out of house.*

*I had a boyfriend from the time I was in school and when I was 23, my boyfriend got married. Then I decided not to contact him as he got married and had a family to lead. I went away from him.*

### ***My life back on track***

*After that, I met a man named Prabhu who became my friend near the railway station. He was very understanding and sensitive towards me. He understood the painful life I was leading and helped me come out of it. He and I had very good understanding. He bought me a house in Whitefield and even helped me to set up the house. Prabhu has his own business. After a few months of us being together, he proposed me to marry him and guess what? I said yes! I mean, why not? I also deserve to have a life partner and be happy. His family members know about me and they treat me like one of their daughters. I am invited for all the functions that happen at his place. Even my own family did not give me so much respect as they do. So I am very happy at this point.*

*I work in the Majestic railway station as a supervisor. I am very happy with my job here as everyone is supportive and I have made good friends here.*

*After many years of disowning me, my mother came to my house one day and cried. She told she had no one now and she told me that she wanted me to stay with her. So I have come back home to my parents. Now everyone talks to me well and no one ill-treats me. They in fact protect me if anyone talks against me. I go to my boyfriend's house once a week and stay with him.*

*For the longest time, I have been demanding to get a change of name in my voter ID, as it is still on my old name. I even fought in Bangalore One office as they keep for proof! What proof do I give them? I still have not undergone my surgery and I do not have proof of gender change. I told them to mention me under "others" section, but they told it was not possible. I even went and met with the local MLA, and he told me to meet him in a few days as he was busy. He has given me the trust. I will go there and get it done. It is just that it is so difficult to*

*get any job done in a government office. They ask you to produce hundred documents not realizing that most of us will not have such proofs. I just feel these processes should be made easier for us."*

---

**Supriya, 38 years, Shimoga**

***"A little quaint house in the corner; holding a cigarette in hand, she opened the doors. Everything was well kept in the house. We generally chatted about life before she started telling her story. She seemed so content with everything she had. It did not seem like she regretted not having anything, until I realized how much she misses being caressed and loved by her mother!"***

***Until I left my home town***

*My name is Supriya. I was born and brought up in Shimoga. I lost my father when I was about 2 years old in a road accident. I have my mother, 2 elder brothers and one younger sister. My mother's name is Muktabai. My mother was just 21 years when my father died and she had four children to look after. Actually my father's family lived in Bangalore, but my grandmother did not want us to grow up in a city, so we stayed back in Shimoga with our maternal grandmother. It was a joint family, so my uncles and my grandmother looked after us. My mother did not work as we had our family business there. We are all goldsmiths, so we were quite well to do. We did not face any difficulties. They provided whatever we wanted and even sent us to school. When I was around 10 years old, I had already started behaving like a girl. I used to wear my sister's clothes at home and any function or program in school, my mother used to dress me up like a girl. But that time they did not say anything much as I was still very young.*

*As I aged, say when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> standard, I started getting attracted to the boys from the tenth class. That time I had no idea about homosexuals or anything. I was also very scared to talk to them or even approach them. At that time, we had a karate teacher called Surendra. Both of us were attracted to each other. I used to often go to his office and spend time there. He used to feel me up and we used to have thigh sex a few times. That time I was just about 14 years old, so I did not know anything much or rather I did not think too much about it as I was very curious and whatever we did, I felt good. We started going out after 8<sup>th</sup> standard. He was 28 years old then. He did not do anything out of force. Whatever we did, we did it out of each other's consent. We mostly did thigh sex. But after a year of us being together .. I cannot tell he forced me, but he asked for anal sex. I could not say no as I thought he would feel bad. So I had anal sex with him and it was extremely painful for me and I told him I did not want to have anal sex with him.*



*But when I came to high school, everyone started comparing me with other boys in my neighbourhood. I was going through a lot of stress at that time and I failed my tenth. I even applied for a re-exam, but I could not pass. After my family observed the changes in my behaviour and when I failed my re-exam as well, they decided to send me to Kolhapur to my sister's house as I would have some change in my environment. For two years I got trained to be a goldsmith. So when I came to Kolhapur, my feminine characteristics became even more than what it was in Shimoga. Since I lived with my sister and her husband, they let me be and did not interfere much with my life. I started looking out for my people especially homosexuals. I saw that a lot of them used to sit near the theatres. One day even I went and sat with them and became friends with them. I started spending a lot of time with them and sometimes I even used to stay back at their houses. My sister was worried as I stayed out most of the nights, so she sent me back home to Shimoga. It got even worse when I got back home. I started growing my nails and hair. I started going to parks and theatres in search of the transgender community or homosexuals. I made a few friends there. During the day I used to wear pant and shirt, but in the evenings or at night, I would wear a saree. My brother kept hitting me and cutting my hair and I would keep growing it back. My mother used to feel very bad as I was very dear to her, so whenever I was at home, I cut my hair and nails. I was attached to my mother and could not see her feel bad. Just to keep me busy and away from all these "distractions", they opened a jewellery shop for me. Then I had to keep myself away as I would have customers who came to the shop. But during holidays and Sundays, I would be out the whole day. Just then an Organization called Abhaya for people like us had started, so I would be at the office the whole day. Initially it started in the park, later we moved to an office. I went there every weekend and there I started wearing saree and make-up. My mother kept wondering where I disappeared on the weekends.*

*One day what I did was, I took my second brother and went to Abhaya to show him what I do. He got very scared. He came home and told my mother about everything I do. My mother was very angry. She came to the office and yelled at every body. They even gave my mother counselling about what was happening and who I was, but she did not understand. She took a promise from me that I will never go back to the office. So I started going to the park. There we used to have a lot of fun, we used to sing, dance and talk a lot. Just when I started spending time and getting to know my community, the pressure from my shop increased a lot. The business started getting better and it needed my attention. So for the next two years, I concentrated on work and did not have much time to go anywhere else.*

*I had a boyfriend at that time. He was my brother's friend, so whenever I went out with them, nobody said anything as my family knew him. We even had a physical relationship. I fell in love with him eventually and got very attached to him. Just when I got attached to him, he broke up with me. I was heartbroken; and because I needed to get over the heart break, I started going to the park again and broke the promise I made to my mother. But nothing*

*seemed right to me. I would just go to work, come back home and sleep. I slept most of time and I started taking sleeping tablets as I did not want to be awake at all. I did this for a very long time and I started getting stomach pain, so I stopped taking sleeping pills. After this, I made a few friends with the transgender community. They had a separate home, so I started going there in the evenings for an hour or so to only keep my mind out of doing anything stupid! It was another Sunday for me. I had worn jeans and a tight t-shirt. I was just around 20 years old. I had grown a little hair and my breast had also grown a little. I had plans of going to my friend's house. He stayed in Sharavathi Nagar. While I was walking and going to his house, this local rowdy called Prithvi wooed and teased me from his van. I ignored him and walked away. Because I ignored him and walked away, he got very offended and he got around 7 boys in his van. They pulled me into their van and took me to Vinobnagar. That place was still a layout with empty plots. They tied my hands, pulled my pants half way down, and held a knife on my neck and one by one all of them had anal sex with me. They threatened me that if I shouted, they would chop me off. They took me at 4pm and they left me at 7.45pm. Until then all of them raped me continuously one after the other. I was bleeding profusely, but that did not stop them for having sex with me. They threw 300 rupees at my face and they drove away. I did not know what to do .. a large chunk of my skin had come out and my pant was covered with blood completely. I could not even stand properly, I was so tired and it was very dark. I really did not think I could make it. I somehow managed to walk for one kilometre and then I made a call to my friend Govindi and told her everything that happened to me. She lived close by at her grandmother's house. She called me to her home and gave me her clothes to change. She placed three stones with hot salt and made me sit on it. It was the most painful thing I have ever gone through. For days I could not sit straight and I could only sleep. I could not go to any doctor or police station because it is embarrassing for me in the end of the day. Who would listen to me anyway?*

*This is one of the first incidents that happened to me.*

*After that, for the next two years, I worked very hard and bought my own house, got my younger sister married and tried forgetting about all this. I used to go to the park in the evening for an hour every day and I tried to keep myself away from this. But it was not possible. The urge to become a woman was getting too much. And my elder brother knew A-Z about me from a friend. How you ask me!? When I used to go to the park, unknowingly I made a move for sex on one of his friend as I did not know he was my brother's friend and he came and told my brother everything! My brother started opposing me too much and it became very difficult to stay at home. We kept fighting everyday so I ran away to Hassan for a week. My mother called and begged me to come home. So I came back home. After that, it was quite peaceful for a couple of months, but after 2 months, my brother and I started fighting again. I could not handle it anymore; I wrote a letter to them and just left home.*

### **My life in a City**

*I came to Bangalore when I was 26 years old with no baggage and money. I got in touch with a friend called TT Ranga who worked in the market zone. He helped me out and I came to stay with the transgender community in a Hamam in GD Maraa, JP Nagar. We were 23 people who lived in that Hamam and it was peaceful there. Within a month, I got my sex re-assignment surgery done and I started sex work after a month's rest. Initially for the first six months I had no problem but after a few months, I encountered a lot of rowdy's, and boys who inhaled solution. They troubled us and our customers a lot. They would throw stones and call foul names at us. If we were nice to them, give them money or offer "favours" they would let us go.*

*This one day we decided to go on a trip to Velangini, so my friend Anita and I worked the whole night because we wanted to make some extra money and we stayed out till 4 am in the morning. Then suddenly out of nowhere, two autos with 5 boys came zooming past us. They were rowdy boys with long knives and sticks with them. They pulled me and my friend into the auto with our hair. We kept shouting for help, but nobody was there. We somehow jumped out of the auto, but our clothes were torn. They removed their clothes and were just about to rape me; a car passed by and helped us out. That person called the police and had these rowdies arrested. We got very lucky that day. Obviously, our trip to Velangini was cancelled!*

*I can recall another incident from when I used to work at the hamam. I finished sex work and came back home at around 10pm and a few of us were sitting outside our house and talking. At around 10.30pm a Hoysala car came and stopped in front of our hamam. The constable said a new inspector called Uday Kumar had just joined and he wanted to see us as he wished to be blessed by us. Nobody blesses anybody at 10.30 in the night, so we told the constable that we would come in the morning. They forced the elders to send me and my friend. They took us in the Hoysala and took us to the station. To our dismay, there was no Inspector waiting to be blessed, instead they just filed an FIR against us because there were no cases registered that day. They filed an FIR stating that we were begging on the street and also beat up a man because he refused to give us money. I remember Narayana and Sidappa were the police in charge that day and they forced us to sign the FIR. I still cannot forget them or how they beat us up. We sat in the station the whole night. I kept crying and begging them the whole time to let us go because this was the first time I was taken to a police station with a false case. In the morning inspector Uday Kumar came. I fell at his feet and begged him to let us go. He casually asked us to go and report the same thing to the judge and go home. I didn't understand what I had to tell the judge when I had done nothing but I was threatened by the police that if we did not stick to the FIR, they would bring us back to the police station and beat us up again. We had no option but to agree to whatever the police said. The judge also did not ask us anything and after sometime, they told us to sign on some papers in the court and the next thing I know I was taken to the Central Jail. I was there in the Central Jail for 21 days only because there were no cases against transgender people. Again, there they asked us to remove our clothes*

*and checked our “parts”. Since I had undergone my surgery, I was sent to the ladies ward, but the other friend had not undergone surgery, so she was sent to the gents ward. There she told me that she was raped every single day with a blade kept on her throat. There would be a minimum of 8 men who would rape her every day. They raped her so much that she could not squat or sit anymore. She went through a lot of tough time there. Finally were sent out after 21 days.*

*The worst part is, we did not know on what basis the judge also sent us to the jail. We were not allowed to read the report as well. The judge did not listen to us as well. This happened in 2008 and it is only in 2014 that I finally cleared the case.*

*After this incident, the police trouble became too much, so I shifted my base to Majestic and my house to Vijaynagar. So when I shifted my base to Majestic, I would pick customers there and go to a nearby lodge. This one time, I picked a customer from Majestic bus stop. He worked in KEB in Tumkur and went to a lodge in Cottonpete. Apparently the tradition there is to tip off the police there and I had no idea about it. We finished our work, we came out of the lodge and just when we were leaving the police saw us. They were standing right outside the lodge. They saw us and called us. I fearlessly told them that I was a transgender and I came here with a customer. The minute I used the word “customer”, they got very furious. The police questioned and asked me which law or court allowed me to do sex work!?! And the next thing we knew, the both of us were taken to the Cottonpete police station. They just took 4,000/- from the customer and sent him off. They sent him and held me back. I got very angry and I was a little drunk as well, so I started fighting with the police. Both the customer and I were at fault, but only I was held back as usual, so I got very angry. Because I fought with the police, I was put behind bars for 9 days again. My community people borrowed 50,000/- rupees from a financier and bailed me out.*

*Borrowing 50,000/- means extra sex work to just pay off the debt.*

*It became very hard for me. No matter how much money I made, I had nothing left for myself. I either had to pay the financier or give everything to my guru. I would work all night and make money and give the whole amount to my guru. And in the morning I had to ask 20 rupees for my food. I wondered if I could make any money for just myself.*

*Through all this, I had no contact with my mother or brother. My mother had visited me once after my surgery, but I kept in touch with her only on phone as I used to miss her a lot.*

*My own community troubled and cheated me. I could not take their trouble anymore, so I left the hamam and came to Mudalpalya where my friend Amulya stayed. I stayed with her in her house and we both went to sex work to Majestic together. After a few months, I made my own house and for the last 10 years I have been living in this same house.*

*When I came to my house 10 years back, this place was empty. You can imagine how it would have been 10 years back. There were only around 20 houses here. There were lot of empty fields and nothing was easily accessible. I had to walk around 3-4 kilometres to even catch an auto or buy provisions.*

*Ten years back, I was very thin. Every time I walked, lots of men and boys would stare at me. Sometimes, they would even come to my house late at night and trouble me. I cannot even remember the number of times they have broken my window glass. Through all these times, my owner was very helpful. He told me to throw chilli powder at them if they continued troubling me and even did that twice. One of the men I threw chilli powder and later he caught me in the road and threatened to throw acid on me.*

*Then I realized if I keep moving around like this, people will notice me and it will create more trouble. So I started working in Samara on a project called "Pehechan" for almost 4 years. In the evening after work, I would get ready there and go for sex work.*

*There are times where I have been stopped in the middle of the road, stripped off my clothes and men have had sex with me. It is usually midnight by the time I finish my sex work and get back home. One night as usual after sex work, I was riding back home. It was very dark and I could not see anything. The only light was the light from my vehicle. Suddenly a boy came out of nowhere and stopped my vehicle and started questioning me. I had seen him around, but I could not recognize his face. Suddenly four more boys showed up and they recognized me. They asked him to let me go, but he was hell bent on having sex with me. Shamelessly, all the three of them had sex with me on the road there, paid me and let me go home. This was something I became very used to after so many years of being ripped off my dignity and respect.*

*After sometime, my health got a little bad and such incidents kept happening on, so I stopped going out for sex work that often and I started getting the customers home. It is very peaceful now.*

*My owners here are very supportive and they have all become like my family now. Customers come to my home now, but my owners understand that this is my work and they do not interfere. I work independently. I get my contacts through Facebook and WhatsApp and earn my money. I make around 15,000/- rupees every month and it is sufficient for me. I pay my rent, food and all my other expenses are taken care of.*

*A lot of people have mocked and asked me- "Being a man yourself, you go after other men. Are you not ashamed?" I tell them only one thing; "I have a vagina like any other woman. I have breasts, long hair, a pierced nose and most importantly I have the feelings of a woman. I don't grow moustache or beard, so how am I a man?" Whether anybody agrees or not, I have not changed for anybody else, but for myself. So I honestly don't care what people think of me.*

*I always stand up for my own rights. I am living a life of a woman. I get attracted to heterosexual men and sometimes bisexual men.*

*I am currently not in a relationship with anyone.*

*I have my AADHAR Card, voters ID, ration card, BPL card and it is under "Others" category. All these are very helpful because these days even for a bank account, they ask for AADHAR Card.*

*I have one dream for the longest time .. that is to have my own house in Bangalore. If not a bank loan, then I should be eligible for loan at least under some government scheme. Apart from that, I have nothing to ask from the government.*

Being a transgender woman, you are rejected by your own family, friends, the State and even the laws are against you. From these two case studies, one point that is highlighted is that, in the cases of physical and sexual violence, the assailant was someone known to the transgender woman and another point to be noted is that neither of them approached or sought the help of the police.

And even if they did, what help could be provided to them?

## 2: Female to Male Transgender

### **Manish Raj Singh, 27 years, Female to male Transgender**

***“Being born as a female in this stereotypical patriarchal society is not easy and in that to stand out strong to change one’s gender is unimaginable. Coming from a family with two different backgrounds, to being disliked by his father for being a girl to realizing and identifying his gender at the age of 24, Manish has come a long way.”***

***Belting was his thing ..***

*I am Manisha Sara and my name will soon be changed to Manish Raj Singh.*

*I was born as a female- biologically and I was brought up by both my parents. My mother’s name is Krupa and my father’s name is Putturaj. My father was a financier and my mother worked in St. Johns hospital, before I was born and she had to quit her job after I was born. Later, she started working in a company called General Auto-meter as an accountant. So my parents did not really know the difficulty of not having money.*

*When I was born, my father came to see me at the hospital; he called my mom a “bloody idiot” and just left as she had given birth to a female child. As we were quite well to do, I was brought up well- in terms of getting food on time and all my necessities were also met time-to-time. But ever since I turned three years, there has been a string of events in my life and it has never been the same.*

*When I turned three years old, my father started abusing me, in the form of physical abuse when I spoke to any of my cousin brothers. When I say abusive, I mean he would hit me and belt me. Belting me was his thing! For me, I did not really understand as to why he was going to such an extent and then slowly I stopped talking to my cousin brothers and eventually completely stopped talking with them. When I was about eight years old, my younger brother was born. His name is Roshan Samuel. I hoped for things to change a little when Roshan was born, but things got worse and my father’s business did not go very well and that is when we started to face utmost poverty. My mother was forced to take up a job at Volvo just 6 months after my brother was born.*

*My father is extremely nice to my brother, even to this day. He gives him 50 rupees a day and gets him whatever he wants.*

*When I hit puberty, I became very uncomfortable with the bodily changes I was having. When I was young and had a flat chest, I felt very comfortable with myself. I used to play cricket with the boys and I used to call them "anna." I played cricket with them when my father went out for work. So this way I grew up thinking that I am somebody- not exactly a girl or a boy or an intersex, but just a human being. I was having battles with my own body as I started developing breast and I was feeling very shy and never felt like the body belonged to me. I wanted the flat chest I had before. So I was dealing with a lot of emotional problems and my parents were quite stringent about me wearing loose clothes and make me look like an old hag. I had to wear my mother's salwar kamiz. They did not give me any preference and I always wore second hand loose clothes. I had no choice at all- whether it was my body or my clothes.*

*From nursery to 5<sup>th</sup> standard I studied at Bishop Cottons Girls School. I had a little problem with studies. So my mother started to tutor me at home till I was about 8 years old. She would beat me up and make sure I learnt everything, so that time I was a rank student and I used to get very good marks.*

*So when I was in third standard, one of my teachers, Ms. Vasanthi Gai used to threaten to send me to Bishop Cottons Boys School as a punishment because I was a "tomboy."*

*I had a group of friends, all were obviously girls. It was a little strange as I started having crush on girls and I did not know how to express it. So this one time I remember writing a love letter to a girl when I was in third standard telling her I loved her. I did not mention my name, but I got caught because of my handwriting and the way I had addressed her because I was the only one who called her "Yashi." After that I was sidelined a little and I became very lonely. After a point, I could not be around girls so much, so I used to go to the sports room and play cricket with the hockey sticks. Sometimes I would get my juniors to throw the ball at me or I would just play by myself. Cricket was my passion, but my parents never encouraged or supported me. My dad was very persistent that I play basketball, but I did not like basketball.*

*After sometime, my mother stopped teaching me, and I became poor in my studies again. The problem was, I could answer all the questions verbally, but I could not write them. So my teacher brainwashed my mother saying that if I continued in Cottons I would fail. So she suggested that I'd be put in a State syllabus school which is much easier. That is when my parents took me out of Cottons and put me to Mitralaya. I was not asked what I wanted. They just decided to change my school. From 5<sup>th</sup> standard to 10<sup>th</sup> standard, I studied in Mitralaya.*

*Even in Mitralaya I was very good at sports and kept to myself. But sometimes I would succumb to peer pressure. I remember randomly pointing at one boy saying that I had a crush on him, only because all my friends had "crushes." I could never come out and tell them that I had crush on girls and not on boys. I used to wonder why I love girls and not boys, but I guess I was very immature to understand what I was going through. I once fell in love with my 8<sup>th</sup> standard teacher so much that I had written her name with a blade on my arm- that is how*



*crazy I was about her. I just thought it was my adolescents and it was the hormones that were surging in my body.*

*I remember when I menstruated for the first time. I overheard the conversation when my mom told my dad about it, he just said "oh no!"*

*So from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> I somehow studied and got through. My father always harassed me to study. As I grew older, his abusing and belting continued. I remember he hit me so badly, that my clothes tore!! I was sixteen that time.*

***I tried to kill myself. I could not handle all this.***

*One day my parents, my brother and I were getting back home after Sunday Mass and we were waiting for an auto. We had planned to go Empire Hotel for lunch. I asked my father to give me his mobile as my phone was confiscated. They started teasing me about speaking to boys and I felt very bad after that. It's hard to explain, but it was not a nice feeling. I got very pissed off, so my mother decided to drop me home as a punishment. When they dropped me home, I told my parents that they are pushing me to an edge and that I would drink poison and die. Apparently our family friend had already told my father that if I wanted to kill myself, all he had to do was just give me a knife and she was a counsellor at Family Welfare Centre! They did not care even when I kept telling them that this is the end of me. They dropped me home and they left. I just walked up to my house, I found bagon bottle which was fermented and old. 30ml of it was sufficient to trigger an attack on me as my veins got really hard. I went out and my cousin sister was right there and she figured I had a foul smell coming out of my mouth. I told her that I drank bagon and went straight to my room I locked myself waiting to die. My grandma somehow convinced me to open the door. My grandmother was a gynaecologist, so she made me throw up all the bagon I had downed. My parents were informed and took me to St. Marthas. It was horrible there! They put ryles tube through my mouth to flush out everything. It was so painful.*

*And I lived. I lived through the trauma.*

*It is very traumatic to live through something that you have attempted because the whole process needs to be reversed and when it is being reversed, they give something called atropine to your body and you go through a bad trip. It is like taking drugs. That phase was very traumatic. After that I was referred for a psychiatric intervention and they said I was suffering from depression and they prescribed anti-depressants. My body bloated because of its effect.*

*There was never a peaceful time at home. There were constant fights, beatings and my mother threatened to leave home and go all the time. So finally when I was seventeen and a*

*half years old, my parents left home along with my brother. Overnight I was left alone in an empty house.*

### ***Life challenged me***

*Four years I lived by myself. My parents just left. I absolutely had no idea why they left. All I knew was, I had to survive and go on with my life. I was doing my degree at that time. My grandmother paid my college fees and she used to give me 2,000 rupees monthly as pocket money to run the house! I somehow managed.*

*During my degree, second year, I got into Bangalore University cricket team and I played for a club and captained my college. So by the time I came to my final year, I was well equipped and I knew the game quite well. In my final year, my grandmother and I had a fall out and she stopped giving me that 2,000 rupees. So what I did was I started cricket coaching to young children. It was one thing I knew I was good at. By coaching children, I would make around 3,000 rupees a month.*

*Finally after 4 years, I called my parents back home. The minute my parents came back, my mother again started asking me to leave home. So I left home.*

*I went to Mary Mascheranus's NGO and stayed in a shelter called St. Theresa's room. It was a dirty place with rats falling all over me. I stayed in that shelter for 9 months. And from there I went to YWCA crisis room and then I finally went to my grandmother's home in Koramangala.*

*When I was doing my Master's my parents finally called me back. I came back home and stayed with my grandmother. One day we were all sitting in the hall and my cousin sister passed a nasty comment which really pissed me off. So I took a plastic bowl and threw it at her, I intentionally threw it away from her. Everyone thought I missed and her father raised his hand on me. My father instead of supporting me told him that we will look after me and bashed me so hard that I had a swollen forehead. Things got so bad that the police were called to resolve the matter.*

*This happened when I was 24 and that was the last time my father raised his hand on me.*

### ***I finished my degree in first class***

*My father was a psycho! All that came out of his mouth was for me to study! All the time! So when I was 21 I decided to do a PhD and throw it on his face. I did my degree in psychology, literature and journalism in Bishop Cottons. I actually wanted to do BSc in computer science, psychology and home science, but then I just wanted a basic degree as I did not want to take risk. I had failed in one year in my PUC. I begged my mother to send me for tuitions as I needed extra attention and they knew it. All they would say was we don't have money all the time!*

*It was my mother who decided to marry an illiterate man, get children and expect her children to be geniuses, with no support at all. Who is at fault? I somehow managed to pass my PUC. After that I did my Master's in St. Josephs and I got through on merit. My parents did not support me through this, but wanted me to study. They did not even pay for the college fee, my grandmother paid.*

*Today I have my Master's in Social work, medical and psychiatry and I give no value to that degree. I keep that certificate somewhere and I am the way I am.*

### ***I identified myself at the age of 24***

*Despite not being comfortable with the body I was born with, I did not really act on it. I assumed that one day no matter how I feel I should get married and bear children because that is what the society expected me to do.*

*I recognized and identified my identity at the age of 24. It was when I was doing my Master's in social work; I studied about transgender persons and got the courage to recognize myself. So ever since then, I have been telling my parents about my plan to be like a boy. As usual they threaten to leave home or throw me out. My brother is not so supportive to me about me becoming a boy either, but he is there for me morally and I think that is what is important.*

### ***My passion***

*Cricket has been my passion forever. When I was in school and I just bowled and batted during PT period. My coach liked my game and that is how it started. I wanted to pursue cricket as my career, but back then I did not have the money, neither did I have any support. Cricket is something that I saw and learnt. Later I went on to represent Bangalore University and captain my college cricket team. So it is a self-taught sport.*

*It is something that I love and I know I can get back to it any time, but right now, I don't have the time.*

### ***My life right now***

*For me it is simple. I am not getting married. Why, you ask? Because if I get married, I will have a responsibility to look after my wife and children well. And to do that, I need to be financially sound and financially independent. We cannot have everything. I am living my life. I have a girlfriend and we are happy. All that has happened in my past has happened. I cannot sit and cry about it, it's of no use. I am living for the present now. My plan is to get my hormones and get my surgery done. I want to save enough money, about 4 and a half lakh to get my bottom surgery and penis implant done. I want to lead a proper male life and I know I can because I am educated and I will earn that money on my own. I have made these choices after I have fulfilled all my responsibilities. Just because I wanted to change my gender, I did*

*not stop studying. I knew if I did, I will end up just like my parents, especially my father. I bore all of the harassment, all the difficulties only because I knew if I wanted to be independent and stand on my own feet, I will have to study.*

*But now I have to get my surgery and hormones and live my life.*

*I support my mother financially. I am currently working at concentrix and I have deposited around 15,000 rupees into her account. I plan on starting my hormones in June and then get my surgeries done.*

### ***My sexuality, my rights***

*From the time I have been young, I knew I was very different. Men don't turn me on as much as women do. Also a girl of my age does not turn me on, but women who are mature and who have experienced life turn me on the most. I can feel the electricity down my spine when I meet such women. In my sexuality, I prefer the approach from the girl, rather than me approaching the girl as I would like to be a gentleman.*

*I have a girlfriend she is married, she has two children and she is 63 years. I met her when I was doing my MSW as she wanted my help and advice in her social activity. She is a police officer. I used to go to her house often and I realized that I had fallen in love with her. I knew she was interested in me. We both have a very mature relationship. We keep in touch and meet when we get time. I am not sure if her family knows about it, but I think they are aware. It is complicated, but we have been together for 6 years now. People ask me why I am with a 63 year old woman. So what? Love is blind. I don't love her for her physical aspects. I love her for her intellectual capability and capacity. I do like other women, but they get confused as they don't know if they should take me as a man or as a woman. Lesbians don't approach me because they know I am different from them. But with her we have a potential of staying together eventually and she does not make me feel nauseous as she can handle me.*

*Sexuality is something that is very personal to people and you as a person should respect their boundaries to explore whoever they want to explore or whatever they want to explore. Sexuality is like an ocean and it should be explored and people should be allowed or given the right to do so. Most of the time people get confused between gender and sexuality. Both are two different things. Most of the transgender men are confused. They often keep saying that they are only attracted to women and never get attracted to men. Well I think that is lie. Somewhere they do get attracted to men, but it depends on whether they act on it or not.*

### ***On transgender rights***

*I feel the normal cis man and cis woman can be involved in making the laws, but they do not have the sole right to decide the fate of the transgender people.*

*When it comes to transgender rights, the government must look into education first, skill development and training and help them in English speaking as I believe it is extremely important to learn English to get into the main stream jobs and society. It should be made sure it is a class quality education and not something that is given for the sake of it.*

*Good counsellors should be available to cater to our sexuality rights, bodily rights and equip us to understand ourselves. Pre-testosterone men go through the same discrimination as transgender women go through because they do not know how to address it. But once surgeries and hormones are done, it is easier for us to blend in to the society as compared to transgender women. When it comes to bottom surgery, I feel it is a disadvantage in the medical field as there is a 60% risk in doing it because there has been no research done in this aspect, so the government should fund for the research, so clarity and assurance can be given to people that surgeries will be safe and one can go ahead with it.*

---

**Abhishek, 30 years, Shimoga**

***“Living in a village away, from your mother while growing is not easy. From having to hide your periods for years, to running away from home to convincing his mother and villagers, Madhu has done it all. Riding his bike to places and running his own business, he is definitely happy with the way his life has turned out in the end.”***

*My name is Abhishek. I live with my mother and 2 sisters. My father abandoned us and went away. Two to three years ago we got to know that my father married another woman. My mother used to go to other houses and work there. We stayed at my maternal grandmother's house for 15 years. We were two daughters and since it was difficult to manage both of us, my mother left me in my uncle's place. My mother's name was Pathname and was housemaid and father's name is Shivamurthy.*

*For 15 years we stayed in our aunt's house. I was admitted in a school in our maternal grandparents' village.*

*I was born in Shivni in Chikamangalore. My mother could not take care of us so I came back to shivni and I was admitted in a school there. I was about 5 years then. When I went to school I did not like to sit with girls or play with them. The teacher also punished me for behaving like a rowdy and beating up guys. The teacher used to make me sit in a corner till the school hours ended. When I went to play, girls would tease and harass me which would provoke me to hit them. I was told by teachers that I did a lot of rowdyism and I was made to stand on one foot the whole day. But no matter how much I was punished, I did not like to mingle with girls. From eighth standard I was in a co-education school but till primary I was in all girls' school.*

*There were about 300 girls in that school. I studied till 7th there and my emotions had already changed by then. I left school after 9th as I was harassed by my classmates and teachers. My teachers would make me run the field 20 times or make me stand on one foot the whole day as I would not speak properly or do my homework well.*

*The people in my village did not say anything much with me behaving like a boy as we grew up without a man in our life and with me behaving like a boy; it fulfilled the needs of my family just like a son would do. When they talked like that I also felt somewhere god missed me by 1% to change my gender. I would sit alone and cry.*

*My aunt sent me to school. But she would wake me up early in the morning to cook and do errands for them. My mom would feel awful that she couldn't give us an appropriate home and that I needed to cook for every one of them and after that go to class. But she couldn't take me with her she could not afford to look after 2 children.*

*I passed 8th and during the holidays my worst nightmares came true! I started bleeding. I had seen how other women looked after themselves when they were on their menstruation cycle and I thought to myself to reveal to anyone that I had got my periods. Because if I told anyone that I had my periods, then they would plan for my marriage in the future. My mother would feel bad as all the other girls of my age we matured and I still did not bleed. But this was something I could never tell anyone!*

*My folks could not understand why I did not bleed even at the age of 16 or 18 so they took me to hospitals in Davangere, Shimoga and Bangalore to get me checked. I used to be very scared when they would take me to the hospitals as I feared the truth would be revealed. Every time I gave me a urine test, I would dilute the urine so the correct results would never come. I would also throw away the tablets and never took anything. It was so difficult to do that being in a village as the pressure was too much and I did not know anything much myself.*

*At that point, there were men who came and asked for marriage, even though they knew I was not matured. Because of this, I would fight with I would tell them that I would earn for myself and fend for myself.*

*After I left school in 9<sup>th</sup> standard, I did SSLC from distance education. I often used to be called for for work by people in my village as they thought I was very strong even though I was a woman and I would do all rough and heavy work in filed like digging, breaking stones, lifting heavy things etc. I enjoyed doing it.*

*After a few months of working in the paddy field, I was offered a job at a petrol pump near a highway in Davangere in 2009. The owners asked needed a woman who could work efficiently and promptly. I had work experience in the paddy field, so they hired me. For a day's work,*

*they paid me rupees 1200. For the first 6 months I worked as a helper and eventually became the cashier.*

*They initially gave me a chudidhar to wear as a uniform since I was only girl there. Hated wearing salwar and I wished I could a pant just like how the men did. There is no pocket for the salwar pant and the cash could not be kept only in the shirt pockets, so one day I went and complained to the owners that I could not carry cash and they changed my uniform to pant and shirt as well. I remember being so happy that day. I used to casually talk to all the men there, and no one made fun of me. If there was a girl who passed by I would also enjoy looking at her along with the other men there. I could connect to the feelings but I could not express it. The fact that I liked the girl just like them, I could not express. I worked in the petrol pump for four years and with that money, I built a house in my village for my mother. It's been fourteen years since I got my periods, but even to this day nobody knows that I hide it from them. They think I have become a boy because I never got my periods.*

*After working for four years in the petrol pump, I left the job to start my own shop with my cousin. We had a mobile shop and sticker cutting studio. But then my cousin and I had a fallout and he left the shop. I had no proper education about any computer skills or business, but I had seen my cousin doing it once and I would repeat the same and work that way. Eventually the business clicked. After working hard, I bought a bike for myself. The villagers were shocked, but no one in the village uttered a word. I would wear women's clothes then but not wear a veil. I would wear jeans and sweater to cover my breast when I would ride. I would feel weird that I had breasts. About three years ago, I went to a temple and shaved my hair as an offering to the God. I was a grown woman by then and everyone was very upset that I shaved my hair as I had beautiful long hair. But trust me; it was the happiest day of my life! When the hair grew back after four months, I was kind of afraid to go to a barber as I would be judged and I wore salwar and had breasts which were kind of a hurdle to go to the barber. So I went to an aunty who worked at the parlour and requested her to cut my hair really short so I looked like a guy.*

*I could not do this for a long time, so one day I sat my sister down and told her everything. I told my sister that I wanted to be a boy and not a girl. I was very surprised by her reaction. She actually cried to me thinking how difficult it must have been for me to go through all of this by myself. She gave me the courage to stay in the village and face the consequences. It was such a relief that I could at least tell my sister what I was going through.*

*Around this time a movie called "Naan Avanalla Avalu" had released and my sister gave me an idea to watch this movie with my mother, so she could get some idea about the transgender issues. I was very scared as I did not want to hurt my mother in any way possible. After watching this movie, my sister spoke to my mother about me and tried convincing her. My mother was heartbroken and honestly she was scared. She thought I would be one of those*

*kidnapping little children or I would get in to prostitution. But I patiently spoke to her and convinced her.*

*After that movie, everyone in my family got to know. My brother-in-law hit me a lot that day as I had brought down the family name and the entire village was talking about me. He house arrested me and did not let me go out. At that point, my family even decided to get me married. I could not stay there anymore, so I decided to leave home. I called my friend Meghraj and told him my plan. He told me not to leave home as it would be wrong and my family would definitely blame me.*

*I decided not to leave home and my mother stood up for me. She accepted me as her son. My mother realized that if I leave home and go, I will be another homeless person on the road with no food and clothes. She did not want that to happen to me. Once my mother accepted me, everyone accepted me as well.*

*One and a half years ago, I came to Bangalore to start my hormone therapy. My periods have stopped ever since and I do not need to hide it anymore! On April 5<sup>th</sup> 2017, I got my breasts removed. Through all this, my family has been very supportive of me. They accompany me to all the hospital visits and they are even helping me research good doctors for my penis implantation.*

*Slowly the people in my village are accepting me!*

Transgender men are minorities within the marginalized transgender community. Like the Hijra community, transgender men do not even have an alternative support system. Due to lack of awareness of the issues and patriarchy, transmen find it difficult to place themselves in the public realm. Because of the invisibility and lack of acceptance of female to male transgenders, many of them do not even know female to male transgender exist and being part of the patriarchal society, it is far more difficult for women to be accepted as men than men being accepted as women.

Most importantly, the health care institutions are not equipped to perform surgeries on trans-men due to inadequate research and complications. The invisibilisation of the trans-men community spills over to the legal arena as well.



### 3: Religious/ Cultural Transgenders

#### JOGAPPA COMMUNITY AND MARLADI

**Siddamma, 48 years, Bijapura**

***“Do you know how the Jogappa community started?”***

***“No, I said.” A smile lit her face as she could narrate the story. As the folklore goes, Renuka was the wife of the sage Jamadagni. One day Renuka went to the pond to bring the sage water from the pond for his prayer, but was distracted and aroused by the Gandharva men she saw playing in the water. Because of that sight, the power of her chastity failed to hold the water in the wet clay. Angered by her actions, the sage ordered his sons to behead his mother. Two sons refused to behead their mother, while Parashuram displayed unquestioning loyalty to his father and agreed to behead his mother against a wish that she could be revived.***

***The other two sons who refused to behead their mother, were cursed to lose their masculinity due to their cowardice. That was the day Renuka became Yellamma and her cursed sons became Jogappas.”***

*My name is Siddappa, but all my life people have called me Siddamma or Siddu. My father’s name is Gurupadappa and my mother’s name is Shantha Bai. I have 2 brothers and 2 sisters and I am the youngest. I was born and brought up in Mangodi, Bijapur District. My parents worked in houses and we likewise have a farm, so they were farmers as well. My brothers and sisters worked in the farm with my parents.*

*I studied just till fifth standard. Since I have been having feminine attitude from the beginning, youngsters at my school prodded me a considerable measure. I used to take part in the plays and I was always given the role of a female. The teachers and kids did not give me a chance to play kho kho, kabaddi or any of the recreations the young boys played. They used to influence me to play the diversions young ladies played. What’s more, the teachers never interfered much about me even when other kids prodded me a considerable measure.*

*When I completed my fifth standard, my parents removed me from school as they needed me to begin helping the family as our budgetary condition was terrible. My brother exchanged me for a sum of Rs. 20,000/- and I was given away to a Sethi house in Mumbai. My brothers did not give me any share from that 20,000/- they got after giving me to the Sethi. They came*

*back home and got married with that money. I was a little boy back then, so I did not ask them for any money. I did not even know to speak any language except Kannada. So I was in Mumbai for 3 years.*

### **House number 3**

*I was given away to a Sethi household in Mumbai. They lived in house number 3, Ullasnagar, Mumbai. For as long as I lived there, I was troubled a lot. I worked from morning 5am to 11.30pm in the night. They had a huge house and I needed to compass and swop the house each day. They didn't give me a brush to clean the restroom; I needed to utilize my hands to clean the latrine and washrooms.*

*The Sethi would come back home tired and I had to give him a massage every single day. If I would close my eyes for a minute during the day, they would kick me to wake me up. I dealt with this for three years. I was not even paid for it as they had given my brother 20,000/-. I did everything only for three meals a day.*

*Finally, after 3 years, I was sent back to my village.*

*I came back and worked in a provisional store. I was about 14 years of age by then and my feminine feelings and behaviour increased a lot. Around this time, I had a huge desire to wear saree, put bindi, grow my hair and above all, I wanted to be at the service of Goddess Yellamma. All this was no surprise to my family. One, I have been behaving like a woman ever since I was young and two, the priest had told my family that one day I would wear a saree. The thing is I kept falling sick very often- high fever, shivers and headaches. The doctors could not do much about it, so my parents took me to Yellamma Devi Temple. There the priest told my family that the Goddess resides in me and that she will not leave my body.*

*My parents couldn't manage the greater part of this. After we returned from the sanctuary, everything they did was to beat me since they were terrified that I would wear saree one day. They would secure me up in the space for quite a long time and they even tied a rope around my neck and tied me. They tied the rope so hard, I have the blemish on my neck even today. Indeed, even with this, my conduct did not change and there was no chance they could ever approve of me wearing a saree that they asked me to leave home. I cried a lot that day, yet I don't feel that altered their opinion. So for the following 3 years, I live in the city and in the event that I lucked out, some individual would call me home and let me remain at their home for a night or two. I would do the family tasks for them and they would give me sustenance to eat. I used to take a stab at going home, however my dad and sibling would hit me and I would come up short on home once more. This continued for 3 or 4 years.*

*Finally even though everybody opposed, I went to Soundati and wore a saree and came back. Soundati is the main temple of Goddess Yellamma. After I wore my saree, the first thing I did*

*was to go home. My parents were shocked; they just sent me out and did not open the door. Then the elders in the village convinced my parents to take me into the house. So they took me in. I lived with my parents for 5 years after that and my brothers did not entertain me much or talk to me. And honestly, I did not like my brothers much either. They gave me away when I was little for a sum of 20,000/- while I toiled day in and day out while they got married with that money and enjoyed life.*

*After wearing a saree, I stopped working at the provision stores and I started to beg. I used to go house to house and beg in the name of Goddess Yellamma. Years passed by and my mother died of cancer and my father was paralyzed and he eventually died. I did not feel like staying in my house anymore, so I asked the Panchayat to give me a house. They humiliated me and did not help with anything. After all that, I did not feel like staying in my village anymore because I had no purpose. My parents and my brothers had died and the villagers there had humiliated me. So I left my village.*

*That is the point at which I cleared out and came here to Basavana Bagewadi taluk. I knew a person here who helped me and gave me a house to remain. In those days it was not a house. It only a sheet house 12 years ago. The villagers here took care of me well and regarded me. I begged here and each penny I made, I gave it back to the senior citizens of the town and particularly who needed sustenance and cash. It is on account of I help I offered, the general uie and gave them what they needed, the villagers bailed me out.*

*Now my life here is peaceful. I look after the temple and pray to the Goddess. I am a singer, so I give shows sometimes and still go house to house and beg. But now not many people give alms anymore. I feel the Jogappas are being pushed away from the society. Sometimes they give, other times, they don't give anything.*

*Humiliation that will stay with me forever ..*

*This happened just 3 years ago. One evening, around 7.30-8 a boy just about 18 or 20 years old came to my house and asked me to give him a lemon which was kept in front of the Goddess. I asked him to come the next day because I had closed the temple and I was done for the day. He said okay and went away. I came into my house, washed my hands and feet and I was making chai. I turned around and I saw the boy standing inside my house. He kept begging me to give him the lemon and I kept telling him to come the next morning. The boy did not budge, so I told him to drink chai and go because I would not touch the Goddess without taking a shower. He suddenly held my hand and told me he liked me a lot. I was shocked! I told him I was not a woman and I was much older than him and it is not right for him to come home in the evening and talk to me like this. But that boy would not listen; he hugged me and kept touching me. I tried sending him out. I gave him chai and asked him to leave.*

*Next day morning, his father and brother were in front of my house and they stared scolding me very badly. I did not understand why! I kept thinking it was because I did not give him lemon the previous evening. Later I realized what had happened. The boy had told his family and the entire village that I tried to seduce him and do "bad" things to him. By that time, the entire village had heard this story. The Panchayat was called and some people spoke very badly with me. As a punishment I was asked to pay a sum of Rs. 10,000/-.*

*The boy's family even took him to a doctor to get him checked. I don't understand what they got by doing this. I have worked very hard to earn my respect and that day I lost my hard earned respect. This is not a small deal for me. It's huge and all I live for is respect and that day I lost everything in front of the people who looked up to me. The only reason I held my head high even after all this is because I knew I did nothing wrong. People eventually learnt what happened, but once the respect is lost it is lost.*

### **How does one become a Jogappa?**

*We don't become a Jogappa just like that. There is a tradition that is followed to become a Jogappa. When I was 14 years old, I went to Soundati to become a Jogappa. There, the tradition they follow for a person to become a Jogappa is very similar to that of a marriage. There are a few principles we have to follow like to provide food for the hungry, if anybody dies in the village- we cannot eat food that day, anybody standing in the sun should always be called to the shade, not to drink water touched by the crow and many such principles are to be followed.*

*We Jogappas usually take up celibacy and don't get married. But there are times when one becomes a Jogappa after marriage or there are a few who are married and call themselves Jogappa. But by the rule, we are not supposed to get married, be in any relationship with any man or even undergo nirvana or surgery.*

*It is very alarming and disappointing that we Jogappas are not recognized as transgender. We beg for a living, but we can go only to houses and ask for alms. We cannot ask for alms from anybody on the road or from the shops. We don't have homes and a lot of us live on streets. We all have the same rights as any other person, but for that we need to be recognized first.*

---

### **Sharanamma, 21 years, Bijapura**

***"A shy skinny girl walked into Sidamma's house. We sat on the charpai and drank chai. She said she needed time as nobody had interviewed her before and this was her first. She was nervous and excited at the same time. She did not interact much. She finished***

***her chai, sat straight, covered her head with her saree and said she was ready to speak.”***

*I was born and brought up in Ingeshwara, Bijapur. My father’s name is Sidappa and my mother’s name is Ganga Bai. My parents work as coolies and they have a small farm. I have three siblings- two brothers and one sister. When I was young, about 8 years old, I would forget my body and get into a body of a girl. This is because the Goddess would get into me. It was only 5 or 6 years old that time and I would wear dresses or skirts. As I grew up, my condition worsened and I wanted to grow my hair and wear a saree. During this time, my brother used to beat me up a lot. He thought I was faking about my feelings and my family would get very embarrassed when I behaved like a girl.*

*I studied till 9<sup>th</sup> standard and I could not study after that. I don’t even know how I managed till 9<sup>th</sup> standard as my school life was horrible. All I ever heard my classmates call me was “chakka”, “ombattu” and all the bad names. It’s not like the teachers helped as well. They would also punish me and hit me for behaving like a girl. Throughout my schooling, I did not have friends. Nobody even let me come near to them. After I finished my 9<sup>th</sup> standard exam, I could not get myself to go to school anymore. I had dreams of achieving something big and great, but I think it will remain just a dream.*

*After I left school, I sat at home all day. I would get very bored, so sometimes I would go to the farm. But mostly I stayed indoors. The situation at home was also very bad. They forced me a lot to behave like a boy and get dressed like a boy, but how could I? I felt my calling was different. From the time I was eight years old till I was fifteen years, I was tortured at home. I would get beaten up every day and my brothers used to burn me as well. My brothers kept hurting me a lot and it was not just one or two situations that I can tell. It was my every day’s existence. The only thing I remember being a child is nobody talking to me, my father and brothers hitting me or they would tie me up like an animal the whole day. They would not even give me food to eat! After a point I started hating my life. I got so fed up with all this torture, I tried committing suicide. But unfortunately I was saved by the villagers. Even after all this, my family could not accept me. What choice did I have?*

*One day it got very bad; the goddess had gotten into me and I went around everywhere dressed like a girl. That day was the last when I set my foot in my home. I just walked out of home and never looked back. I was 18 years when I walked out of home. I would walk around aimlessly for days on the streets and go from village to village singing songs about Goddess Yellamma and begging for alms.*

*Even today, my parents or my brothers see me on the street, but my existence is not acknowledged by them. They just walk past me. They live in the same village, but I live in a hut nearby. I make my living by begging; if I don’t beg, no food for me to eat.*

*Recently when I started wearing saree and I was getting back from the market. This was around 4.30 in the evening. Two boys saw me and screamed "look at that item going." They followed me for a long time and after sometime; they pulled me aside into the garden. I kept telling them to let me go, but they felt me up everywhere and they raped me. After that, they told me that if I went home with them they would even pay me money and look after me like their wife. I was very upset and I begged them to let me go and I finally ran away from there.*

***When will we have a place in this world?***

*We cannot live with family, we cannot live peacefully in our village, nobody gives us work and there are men who always harass us. When will our identity be recognized? We Jogappas are very poor. I live in a hut and it is very difficult to survive every single day. If you see my hut, even you will get scared. That is how small it is. I will be very grateful if the government could provide us with homes.*

*But if I have to tell you, my life is relatively better than before. I have taken a loan for Rs. 20,000/- and I have a small provision store. But it is not sufficient to live. I just survive with what I make out of it. Tuesdays and Fridays I go house to house singing songs and carrying the idol of the Goddess for alms, but people don't entertain us anymore. They rarely give us anything.*

*From a very young age, I never had any desire for men, relationships or marriage. The sole reason for my existence and living is for my Goddess. All I ever wanted to do from the time I was 8 years was to sing, dance and beg alms for my Goddess.*

*If I get a chance to study, I would love to study even today. I don't think this is all my life is. If I study, I can get a government job somewhere and I can stand on my own feet. It is my dream to be independent and strong and grow to be a successful person.*

Jogappas are the least known community in the north part of Karnataka. They are regarded as holy women possessed by Goddess Yellamma. Jogappas usually pray at the main temple of Goddess Yellamma in Soundadti and in villages, they go home to home and beg for alms by singing and dancing. To the people, Jogappas are a direct link between society and the divine.

There is a common misunderstanding that Jogappas are part of the Hijra community. They are not! The Jogappas are forbidden from performing nirvana or castration.

A research conducted by Aneka showed that right from the onset of their lives, Jogappas face deep opposition and discrimination in many crucial aspects. This lack of economic opportunities leaves them with begging and singing as their only means of livelihood.

MARLADI

**Vimala, 30 years, Male to Female Transgender Marladi Woman**

*We ended up in front of Bramhananada Matt after manoeuvring through tiny roads packed with trucks and tempos; school children heading back home in groups talking and laughing. We parked the car in front of the temple and walked down the road looking for the given address. She was waiting out for us from her second floor balcony. It was a compact home with huge photos of the goddess. One bed and a small tv in the corner, just like how she wanted.*

***We sat on the charpai which was the only gift she ever received from her mother. Her story was overwhelming and her tears spoke a thousand words. She said, “There is a lot to say if I have to speak about myself as it is a sinful life I lead. ”***

*I was born in a temple town called Thiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu. My mother’s name is Kalaimani and my father’s name is Krishnan. I have five siblings and we were brought up quite well. I am the last born and my parents always looked out only for my brothers and not for me because of the way I behaved. I was about 3 or 4 years old when I felt very different from other children around me. I loved doing the household chores, putting rangoli, helping my mother cut vegetables. Because I enjoyed doing it, it became a thing at home for me to do everything. My brothers were never asked to do anything. From getting milk, folding clothes to running any small errands, I did everything.*

*Some of us are born with such a life and this we will know after only after a few years because our activities and changes in our behaviour- like how we speak, or move. I always told in my childhood that their lives are ruined and they are ashamed because of me. When I was 5 years old, for the first time my parents asked me to leave home and go.*

*My first discrimination and violence started at home by my own family and second when I was in balwadi. The kids there used to laugh and throw stones at me. When we stood in the line for lunch, I used to be pushed to the last because of my voice and my feminine characteristics. I used to get the remains or the leftover food as the food would get over by the time my turn came. I used to take that food and sit by myself in one corner as nobody wanted to sit with me. The children at my school used to keep telling “ey, he is like a punctured tyre! We will also become like him if we are around him.” That is why I never had any friends at school.*

*The teachers and aayas did not help as well. As I grew a little older, say when I was in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> standard, a few teachers started inappropriately touching me in wrong places, they used to rub my thighs, spank my ass and call me to their homes in private. I was too young and immature to understand why they called only me home. When I went, they would feel me up, touch my private parts, they would ask me to hug them and sleep next to them. All the kids teased me and wondered why only I was called to sir’s home alone and they talked behind my back. It is not like I could not hear what my classmates talked about me. I would go home crying and tell my mother about what happened in school and my mother would tell me to stop behaving like a chakka and act like a boy. My mother would get very embarrassed and she often used to ask me to leave home and go. Because she would not want me to be around her, she would leave me at my uncle’s or aunt’s place, all this when I was just about 13 or 14 years old. My mother kept telling me to leave or even die and during all this, my father never spoke me, not even once! Even today he does not speak to me. Around this time, my brothers were married and they all were working in Bangalore. So I decided to move to Bangalore and stay with them. Now my relationship with my brothers was not very great. They never spoke*



*much to me as they were also embarrassed of me. They kept their distance and never let me come close to them, and even this stopped after some time as my feminine characteristics became more obvious. So at 15 years, I stopped my education and I left my home town and moved a new city- Bangalore.*

*I started working in a handlooms factory called Uma Shankar Factory in Ramachandrapuram, Bangalore. It was my first job and the place where I encountered my first sexual abuse. I worked from 6.00am in the morning to 10.00pm in the night and earned 5000/- rupees every month. The owners of the factory liked me very much as I used to keep the factory clean and do pooja every day. But the workers who worked in the factory would tease me and touch me inappropriately and ask me to give them some “favours” and I would always turn them down.*

*The factory would start at 6.00am in the morning. So everyone would go for breakfast at 9.00am and then for lunch from 2.00pm to 3.00pm. I did not like going out to eat, so the owners would give me twenty rupees or fifty rupees to eat and I would stay back alone in the factory.*

*Since I turned down their “favours”, three or four workers would stay back while everyone left for lunch. They would tie my hands and legs up with wires, ropes and have sex with me. Once I told them – “let me go. I am not a girl or a woman. Why are you having sex with me?” They said- “so what if you are not a woman or a girl your behaviour and feelings are like one and that is enough to turn us on.”*

*I worked in the factory for five years and throughout that time, they kept sexually abusing me on and off. I told my owner a few times about these incidents, but he did not tell the boys to stop it, instead he would tell me all this happened to me because I behave like a girl. After a point, I stopped complaining as I would be embarrassed myself and dealt with everything they did to me.*

*After five years, I left this factory and joined another factory called Lakshmi factory. The owner amma was nice to me. She would often give me food and ask me to sit out her house and eat. She never let me enter the house, unless when she would go out of station, and wanted me to clean her house or wash vessels. The owner amma’s husband sexually abused me when she was not around or when I went to do the household chores for her. Sometimes when I would use the bathroom, he would break open the door with stones, fall on me for no reason and would force me to hold his penis or push it into my mouth.*

*Those years when I worked in the factories were not easy. But as time passed by, I came to realize life as it is and accepted it.*

*After that, I worked in Sangama as a field worker for four years from 2007-2011. It was jolly working there as I worked with my community. Although we would not have food to eat and place to sleep, I enjoyed my time. I used to get a monthly salary of about 10,000 rupees. During this time, I lived in my sister-in-law's house. That woman is not alive now, but she troubled me the most. She was verbally and physically abusive like she would not give me food and throw food if at all she decided to feed me, she would hide the soap so I could not wash my clothes, she would break things at home and complain to my brother about it and tell such bad words to me. She converted a bathroom into a room which had sheet roofing and asked me to stay there. I did not have place to stretch my legs to sleep, my toilet and bathroom was right there. There was a wooden plank that covered the floor. If I removed the wood plank, it became my bathroom and toilet. If I put it back, it became my bedroom. I used to eat right there! And one fine day she held my hair and threw me out of the house. When she threw me out of her home, I had nowhere to go, so I had to borrow 10,000 rupees from a financier. This one time I missed paying the financier money and he had me chased and bitten by a dog, had his son to rape me; all this because I missed paying them 10,000 rupees. That family was very well to do. They had a huge house, so many cars and bikes. Now nobody knows what happened to them. But I see that man who raped me often. He is a drunkard now and he is on the streets. The most I have gone through in my life is because of my sister-in-law. She even cursed me that I would never succeed and that I will always have to bow down before her and now she is dead. I have come a long way ever since.*

*Even to this day, my parents are not very nice to me. They have an agricultural land where they grow wheat, ragi and rice. Every time they come to Bangalore, my parents give my brothers bags of grains and all that grows in the farm and not one grain has been given to me so far. But you know what? I do not need anything from them. From looking after my needs to paying rent, I do it all by myself and never asked anyone for any sort of help. My brothers stays nearby by to where I stay. Not once they come home, nor do they call me to their homes. But all they know is to come and take whatever little I have made for myself. One day I asked my mother why she differentiates between her children when all of us are born from the same stomach. She just said one thing- "your brothers have a family. They have a wife and children to look after and they work very hard to make ends meet. Even if I give you anything, it is of no use as you will never have a family and it will get wasted as you will not eat that much."*

*But you know what? Even today I am the only one who still looks after my parents and their needs if they need anything hoping that one day they will understand and accept me. My parents lived in a rented house. I built them a house which costed me 10, 00,000 rupees. I sold all the jewellery I had. See, I am not wearing anything now. I used to wear a lot of gold rings and chains.*

*From that sheet house, I moved to a little bigger house. I always wanted to stay by myself. I have been living by myself for the last 17 years. Today I stay in a proper house with a hall,*

*kitchen, god's room and a bathroom. I pay a rent of 5,000 rupees, pay water and electricity bill- all this because of my God.*

### ***The last time I wore pant-shirt***

*Back then, I used to wear pant and shirt. I would not wear nail polish, but I liked to put a big kumkum, eye liner, make-up and lip stick.*

*You see, at a very young age I had started praying and doing pooja to God. Anytime anyone would call me for any pooja I would go running even if it fetched me 5 rupees or 10 rupees. It was in the year 2000. This one evening, there was Munishwara pooja close to my house which I attended. The area I stayed was like a jungle with lots of trees and bushes and it was quite isolated. That area is also known for porki boys who go on bikes, carry chains and knives. After the pooja, around 8-8.30pm I was walking back home in style. When I say in style, I mean I had applied make-up, I was wearing a few chains, and I was carrying a bag. A group of boys called me and said one aunty was looking for me as she wanted me to do some pooja in her house. You see that age is called "kattu tenza vaiyassu" it means it is when we are not so mature. So I went to see what that aunty wanted me to do. While I was walking with those 2 boys, two other boys came from behind and pushed me. I fell on the ground and these four boys held my hands and legs and dragged me behind the bushes. They were all ready with ropes. What they did was, they pushed me to a pole, tied my hands and legs and all the 5 boys had anal sex with me one after the other. I was bleeding profusely and I managed to drag myself out of that place. I was very scared to tell them anything and no word came out of my mouth. After I got myself out, I was walking back when few other boys came chasing me with lathis and asked me to have sex with them. I was so shocked, I just ran to Srirampura police station. I told the police exactly what happened. Their answer was so simple- they just said if I had walked and behaved decently, and acted like a man, this would not have happened to me. They just sent me out.*

*That was the last time I ever wore pant and shirt and that day was the birth of the woman that I am today. I wore my first saree that day.*

*Today I recognize myself as a Marladi Kothi. I pray to the Goddess, give people solutions for their problems and do small poojas. And whatever word I give or whatever I say, come true because my Goddess has given me the powers. I live for my God and I don't depend on anybody for anything.*

### ***So what if I pray to God?***

*There is a misconception that people, here I am talking about transgender, who pray to God don't have sex or don't do sex work. It is not true. I have sex and I think it is a basic need. But no man is allowed to come to my house although I stay by myself because he might be unclean*

*or drunk. People here know me and respect me and they have seen me since my childhood, so keep up to that.*

*I feel being in a relationship with a person and getting physical with them is very personal. Both of them should be together because they want to be with each other. I get attracted to men. I feel nothing when I see a woman. Currently I am in a relationship and I have a boyfriend. I have been with him for 7 years now. I have helped him set up a gym in Srirampura and he looks after that. His mother knows about our relationship and she has accepted it.*

*But there is one thing we Marladi's do after any sexual activity, we cleanse ourselves using different oils and take a bath. Every Marladi who has had sex does it. So it is okay for a person who prays to God to have sex.*

***My dream ..***

*For the longest time I have dreamt of having a vegetable shop of my own. I have approached people to give out space for rent to open my vegetable shop, but they shoo me away as they think if I sit to sell vegetables, I will not make any profit. I have also approached banks with the help of a friend from Sangama, but they say without any security, I am not eligible for loan. Right now I beg for a living and I wonder how long I can do that. So if I can start something on my own, I can look after my future. I stay in a rented house and I know it will get difficult to pay rent once I get old, so if the government will help us with housing. This is all I want for now.*

***Her story only gave a sneak -peak of what she has been through. The strength, courage and energy she beholds is contagious. The faith she places before her God has empowered her and the rest is history.***

#### 4: Gender Non-Conforming

**Dipsi, 17 years, 17 years, Bangalore**

***“Are you always smiling like this?”***

***“Yess! The last time I cried was when I lived in the temple. After that I have not cried.”***

***After drinking Fanta, with orange teeth she squealed that she wanted to give her interview in English.***

*My name is Dipsi. I was born and brought up in Bangalore near Cox Town, Shivajinagar. I have 3 elder sisters and one younger brother. My mother died 4 years back. My father’s name is Prem Bahadur and my mother’s name was Jyothi. My sisters’ names are Monika, Poornima and Shanthi. I am the fourth born and my little brother’s name is Kishan.*

*From 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> standard, I studied in BKS Higher Primary English School. From the time I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> standard, if there was any dance in the school, I would always take part in dance and I would get dressed like a girl. This one time for a program in school, my mother dressed me up like a girl and I liked it very much. I even took a photo that day. I kept looking at the photo every day and thought to myself that I should become a girl because I was a very good looking boy. Anyway I behaved like a girl and people also called me one. This one time when I was in 5<sup>th</sup> standard, my classmate kept teasing me calling me a girl. Then I told him, “I am girl! What about you? It is my personal life and I can do whatever I want because only my body is like a boy, otherwise I am a girl.” That is when I decided that I wanted to become a girl. After that incident, my parents were called to school by my principal. They beat me up in school in front of everybody and told me not to behave like a girl. They told me that they were very embarrassed of me because apart from behaving like a girl at home, I started behaving like a girl even outside. They were very upset with me. I remember when I was in 8<sup>th</sup> standard, we had a school fest. I taught girls Bharatanatyam because I loved to dance. I used to dance just like a girl.*

*In my summer vacations, my neighbour taught me how to apply make- up, nail paint and she also taught me cooking. But one day my father was drunk and he had a fight with my neighbour and she told my father about me. Around that time, I used to go the temple near my house every day. I was like a marladi. My father kept telling me not to go to the temple and not to be like “them.” Because I used to not listen to him, he used to beat me every single day! My mother was very nice. All she wanted was my happiness and did not like to see me cry. My mother was more like a friend to me than anything else. I could share anything with her. So I told her that I wanted to be a girl and not a boy. It was only my father who did not want me to become a girl. He would keep telling me that one day I can get married and have children to*

*look after me. He also kept telling me that my life would be ruined if I became a girl. We would fight every day because of that. My father always liked my brother and he would never look at me. He would get him toys from the market and never bought me anything. It was only my mother who used to look after me and supported me. For me, my mother was everything. From buying me clothes, toys and sending me to school she did everything.*

### ***I lost my best friend***

*On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014, I lost my mother to throat cancer. I was in 8<sup>th</sup> standard and I lost the one person who supported me. I was heartbroken and all I did was to cry. For 40 days I did not even go to school. I was also scared to go to school because I had no friends, I would be teased and I did not have my best friend- my mother. She was my backbone support; even my Principal came home to call me. After a few days, I gathered courage and went back to school.*

*During my 8<sup>th</sup> standard to 9<sup>th</sup> standard summer vacation, there was an exhibition in RBMS Grounds. I used to sell clothes in the exhibition. I used to get paid 100 rupees a day. On the tenth day of the exhibition, there was a fair there. My friend Magesh, (he is just like me) introduced me to all the people who were part of Operation Anandi. I became friends with them. That time my neighbours created a lot of scene on the road in front of my house while everyone was looking and my father got very angry. He started beating me with footwear and stick near my genitals. This continued for days after that. Then one day he asked me to leave home if I would not behave like a boy. So I left home.*

*I lived in the temple for a year and I worked in as a maid in a Sethi House. I would get 5,000 rupees every month and I used that for my fees and monthly expenditure. The temple became my home. I cleaned the temple every day and bought flowers from the market to decorate it.*

*After a year, I left the temple because I could not live there longer. That is when my Magesh again helped me. He told me that during such times, no one family or friends will help and only the community will help. He told me to choose with whom I will be comfortable, and I can stay there.*

*For the last on year, I have been living in this house. I stay at home and look after it. I clean the house, cook and pray to God. I have 3 dogs at home, so feel safe at home and look after them. I don't go for collection or any other work. I have named my favourite dog also Dipsi and we both have a lot of fun and we are very happy.*

*I wanted to become a doctor when I was a little child, but I have not thought about it since my tenth standard. I passed my tenth in distinction. When I was 12 years old, I wanted to be a Marladi. But now I want to be a girl. The reason I don't want to be a Marladi is because I asked God for a wish and it did not get fulfilled, so I stopped asking and praying to God.*

*While I was growing up, I never fell in love with anybody. All I know is, when I grow up, I want to marry a man. Right now I don't know who. And even if I have sex with a man, it is going to be after marriage not before that!*

*After I turn 18 years old, I want to undergo my sex reassignment surgery and become a full girl. My aim is to look like a girl and go to office one day.*

*In the end of the day it is my body and nobody can ask me what I want to do with it. In the future when I get married, my husband will know that I cannot have babies and I will tell him the truth. After knowing the truth, he can choose to stay or he can choose to leave.*

---

### **Pooja, 18 years, Bangalore**

***“We were waiting near Krishna Flour Mill in Srirampuram. It was sunny and we saw a girl waving at us from a distance. We went close to her. There was Mani. She was wearing a salwar kameez, tied her hair back in a neat bun with lipstick and kajal. She was very shy to even look up and see us. She just pointed and asked us to follow the road to go to her house. She sat quietly in a corner wondering what we were doing there.”***

*My name is Pooja, I was born in a village called Velu in Tamil Nadu. We are five people in my house- my father, mother, elder sister and a younger brother. My mother's name is Dhanalakshmi, she works in a hotel as a cleaner and my father's name is Gopi and he is a farmer. My sister also works in a hotel as a cleaner and my brother stays in the village with my aunt.*

*I went to a government school called Gandhi school. I had a normal childhood until I was 12 years old, I had sudden urges to get dressed like a girl. I wanted to wear the uniform what the girls wore. I secretly wore my sister's clothes when nobody was home. I had a lot of girlfriends at school. They were nice to me as they let me be with them. We would “chill” after school, go around and have lots of fun. My friends and teachers at school were very nice to me. They used to not tease me though I behaved like a girl and they were very supportive. But my neighbours were very rude to me. They kept calling me “chakka” and “ombattu.”*

*I stopped studying after 7<sup>th</sup> standard. I was good in studies and my parents also asked me not to quit. But I just told them that I was not interested because many big boys in my school used to tease me. They would just stop doing their work and point at me saying, “Look, chakka is walking.” My teachers used to make me sit with the boys and they would inappropriately touch me in wrong places. I would feel very embarrassed and did not know what to do. After all this, I just lost interest and left school.*

*After I left school, I went for work. I was 11 years when I started to work at a factory that packed agarbatti. I worked in that factory for 7 years. My mother had a lot of debts to clear, so I would help her out paying the debts with my salary*

*When nobody would be at home, I would apply make-up and wear my sister's clothes. I was caught one day. My mother saw me applying make-up. She was very angry with me. She told my father and both of them started to beat me. They poured hot water on me and they even chopped my hair. They kept telling me not to behave like this and behave like a boy. When I did not stop behaving like a girl, they tied me up like an animal and even burnt my face. When all of this happened, I was only 12 years old. And it continued for 5 years. I kept telling my parents that I would leave home and run away because they continued to trouble me a lot.*

*My friend called Gopi, introduced me to the community. I left my home when I was 17 years old. So for the last 1 year, I have been staying with the community. I have also started wearing saree and salwar kameez. Now I beg for a living. I thought at least after I change myself as a girl, people will stop teasing me, but I still get teased. The men in my slum touch my breasts and ask me to come with them. Some of them even ask me what I have down there.*

*When I was 8 years old, I liked my classmate a lot. I went and told him that I liked him a lot. But he told me not to become a girl. He told me he would friends with me even I was a boy. But I was very persistent and I knew I wanted to become a girl. At that time I also wondered why I fell in love with a boy and why he did not reciprocate my love. I felt very bad.*

*I also did sex work for a while. I felt very bad at that time. I kept thinking if this is all I have to do to show the society that I am a girl. The men who used to come there were very bad and they would hurt me. After having sex with me, they would abuse me telling that I had a penis just like them! They would pinch and scratch me near my genitals. I used to feel very horrible! They would usually ask me for oral sex and if I said no, they would force me. They even asked me for anal sex. I don't like anal sex, but I had to do it because they force me!*

*I am still very young, and I don't think I want to prolong this. I would like to study further and work in an office because our bread and butter as of now depend on begging and sex work. If the government makes begging and sex work illegal, we have nowhere to go. So the government should do something to help us study or get jobs. I would like to get married to a man who will not leave me, have a family and a home with me. Since I cannot have any children, I would like to adopt a child and look after him/her by sending him/her to school and giving him/her a good education. I would like to know more about this because all these are my dreams and I do not know much about it.*

*The main reason I left school although I liked studying was because of the difficulties I was going through. The boys in my school teased me a lot, and I could not share about it even with my parents. My family was also very poor and we had a lot of debts to pay. That is why I*



*thought it will be helpful if I worked and gave some money at my home because by the time I finished 7<sup>th</sup> standard, I had lost my interest in studies. When my parents caught me getting dressed like a girl, they told me “one, I behaved like a girl, two we are very poor and three we have a lot of debts so the best you can do is help us out by paying the debts” I used to make 1,200 rupees and spoilt my future. I don’t want the same thing to happen to other children, who are going through what I am going through. Even if I want to study now, I am very scared and apprehensive because I look like a boy, but my feelings are that of a girl. I don’t know how the children in the school will behave towards me. I don’t even have proper clothes to wear. Because of all these situations, I beg for a living today. Even that is not very easy. People look at you like you are an animal and pass bad comments and ask you “favours”*

*If parents accept children like us, life is going to be easy. Since my parents only did not support me, I came to live with my community. I understand what my parents are going through. They are trying very hard to accept me, but it is very difficult for them. All this is very new to me and I don’t know what to do. All I know it is going to be very difficult.*

An institution of family is so important, especially for adolescents while growing up to help them grow and become successful adults

When a child is undergoing changes emotionally, physically and mentally, the support of their family is absolutely critical. This lack of family support and understanding leaves these children homeless with no education and jobs to support their future, forcing them to beg or become sex workers.

This is a vicious cycle and it can be broken only with families becoming more sensitive and understanding by cutting through the deep rooted social norms and conduct.

## 5: LGBT Community

### GAY COMMUNITY

Srini, Bangalore

*My name is Srini. I was born and brought up in Hyderabad in a village called Cheggav, in Karimnagar district around 200 kms. I belong from an upper- middle class family. My dad is a retired school government teacher, and my mom is a home maker. I have an elder brother and younger sister. I'm from a village where most of the people do agriculture and there is a high prevalence of casteism. But since I belonged to an upper class background, I did not go through issues because of class and caste.*

*Till my 5<sup>th</sup> standard I had studied in the only school that we had in our village, a government school, where my father was a teacher. After my 5<sup>th</sup> class I was put in boarding school in a nearby town. So ever since, I have been in a boarding school until I completed my engineering from IIT-Madras, Chennai.*

*I think I kind of always knew I was different, especially since 7<sup>th</sup> class because I was attracted to boys. During those years I was in a boy's boarding school and we used to talk about sex with our friends and about girls, and their body parts which I did not connect to. In my eighth class I fell in love with my classmate. We were very close friends; I felt like he was my husband and we used to behave like that. My classmates used to always make fun of it, but I enjoyed that attention.*

*We never had any physical intimacy, but it is more of like hanging out together. I used to always look out for him when he was not around and things like that. Probably there were a few times that I might have mentioned that I love him, but we were at an age that he didn't take anything seriously. Of course, that called for a lot of teasing and bullying, but I did not fight against it. I compensated all the frustration by working very hard and doing well in my studies so that people tell good things about me. I think after a point, I was over compensating by being nice to people so that nobody gets a doubt and nobody tries to quarrel with me.*

*These years were not easy for me as I had a lot of internal confusion. I was not able to understand my attraction to boys as we did not have Google to tell us anything. I remember reading a magazine in Telugu when I was in 8<sup>th</sup> standard. It was a story about somebody who had changed their gender through surgery. So at that point I wondered if I also had to change my gender. I could not share this with my family or friends as nobody spoke about it and I was in all boys' boarding school.*

*While I was growing up, I was bit feminine and so was my voice. The students always picked on that. Once one of my friend started teasing me about my voice, and I went straight and complained to the teacher. Since I was a first ranker in the class, all teachers liked me and I had that privilege. The teacher yelled at him in front of the whole class saying "how dare you to say something to say to Srini?" After that incident, no one messed with me in school.*

*As long as I was in school, I was fine with the way things were. But as I aged, I started to fear about my future- if I will ever have a normal relationship, marriage and children. But it was not very strong at that time until I came to engineering.*

*In was during my engineering days I was introduced to the homophobia. Back in those days, many did not know the words like homosexuality or bisexuality. I remember as part of ragging, the seniors would ask "are you a homosexual or bisexual?" since the students would not know the terms, they would choose one among them. The seniors would laugh at them and they would say "you are neither homo nor bi, but you are heterosexual." For me that was itself a shock as they assumed that all of us were heterosexuals. After a few days, one of my roommates had doubt that I might be gay, so he went and told all my wingmates that "Srini is homo." After that a lot of people started calling me homo... homo... and that was very difficult for me and at that point in time I had no idea how to take that. So as natural tendency to defend myself I would say 'I'm not a homo' and I'm heterosexual'. So at that point my internal homophobia started where I started abusing homosexuals in front of my friends just to fit in.*

*I remember this one incident where a friend and I went out for a movie and we came back really late at night. I said I had lost my room key, so I went to sleep to sleep in his room. I remember he said "I will be sleeping on the cot; you sleep down and don't come near me". I really felt like really ashamed of myself. This is somebody whom I considered a good friend and he thought I would sexually attack him. Because he was one of the few friends who spoke to me, I used to do all this homework and anything he asked me to do.*

*At this point my internal confusion grew so much that I telling myself that I have to be a heterosexual and get married and have regular lifestyle. It is a continuous fight every day.*

*After my engineering, I got placed in a company in Bangalore and ever since I have been living here. It's been 15 years.*

*The real struggle with myself started then.*

*Till I was about 26 or 27 years old, nobody ever asked me about marriage. Once people started talking about my marriage, things became very difficult and I didn't know what to do. Since I could not take it anymore, I gathered courage and I came out to my brother.*

*I thought my brother took it well until he told me that we would have to "find a solution" for this. My brother went to a homeopathy doctor, where he was known to have cured a*

*transgender person. My brother took me to that doctor. The doctor was very much sure that he could cure me and he asked me to take medicines for about 6 months. He also insisted me not to listen to the people who said that homosexuality is natural. Every month I had to give my brother feedback and in turn my brother would update the doctor. It went on till 7-8 months and obviously it was not working. When I told my brother that nothing has changed and I still feel the same way, he took me to NIMHANS where I underwent psychology behaviour therapy. They would show me erotic picture of boys and when I got aroused by it, they would change it to a girl's picture and ask me to get aroused by seeing that. And this was a continuous process and it was called orgasmic reconditioning. They even sent me to the women's section in the malls and make me smell women perfumes and I had to do this twice or thrice a week.*

*It was emotionally draining and I was surprised that being counsellors or psychologists, they made me do this! And the pressure to get married continued.*

*Meanwhile, I got in touch with a support group for gay men called 'Good as You'. I started volunteering there and I slowly came to understand and accept myself.*

*My brother had already told my parents that I was gay. My dad took me to a sexologist. The doctor actually counselled my dad and tried to explain to him that I was completely fine, but my father did not get it! Later I got him introduced to my gay friends and told him that I will be living with them. It took time, but my family eventually accepted it.*

### **How this section 377 effecting us ..**

*The fact that there is section like 377 gives me a lot of pain. We live in a constant fear of being arrested. I have heard a lot of stories from my friends where many gay men have been extorted, raped and even contacted HIV as they have sex with random partners. And with all these problems, they have nowhere to go and seek help or protection. They are so scared to even enter a police station or a hospital. Even if we gather courage to go to a hospital, the doctors have no idea how to deal with homosexuals and they show the apparent fear and phobia.*

*But with the Good as You support group, we are trying to spread awareness to people. We also provide help and support when they are harassed by family or police; when they are in need of doctors or lawyers as we have built some contacts.*

*Currently, nobody at my work knows about my sexuality. But everyone in my family is happy and they are on good terms with me. They don't ask much about my love life but they do acknowledge my gay friends.*

*Our lives will be so much easier if the doctors, police and society in general are sensitized about the LGBT issues and become a little open and inclusive.*

**Chanakya, 40 years, Bangalore**

***“I have no shame in admitting that women are more intelligent than men. My boyfriend and I both agree on that” said Chanakya grinning from ear to ear.***

***We had to visit him at his house as he had fractured his ankle a few days back. He was very excited to show us around the house and all the pictures of his family and boyfriend. He is very friendly by nature and left no efforts to make us feel welcomed within minutes.”***

*I was born and brought up in Hyderabad. I have a doctorate in molecular biology and bio physics and I finished my masters in Bio technology from Hyderabad Central University. I have an old father who is 80 years, two elder brothers and sisters and I’m the youngest, my mom is a homemaker. My father worked as a revenue officer but was he caught while he was trying to accept money from another party due to which my father was suspended and my family suffered a lot because of his act.*

*Since my father had lost his job we were living in a small house and we were six people living in that small house and there was never enough space in that house to accommodate all of us so I used to go and sleep at some of my relatives home. Whenever I used to go to my relatives house, I used to love to sleep with my cousins who were boys. It was around this time I realized I was getting attracted to boys.*

*My cousins used to get porn movies and we used to watch them secretly and they used make me to masturbate and they just enjoyed watching me do it in front of them. One of my cousins even used me for his sexual purposes. Only my cousin knew about my sexuality because he was the one who used me.*

*In those days we were never allowed to talk about our sexuality. There were number of magazines that would talk about these things and I would secretly take those magazines and read them, but one day one of my relatives caught me reading one of those magazines and they instantly sent me out and I lost the only opportunity of sleeping at my relatives place. I still have those books with me!!*

*In school, many times guys used to take me to the restroom and get a blowjob from me and that was kind of a common thing and I used to enjoy that. It was not like any one forced me to do it, it was voluntary. I used to get attracted to women also but not in a sexual way but just the way they carry themselves and how they are smart and intelligent.*

*By the time when I was in 10<sup>th</sup> standard, my sexual urges grew more in me and I wanted to explore a lot of things.*

*However in my school life I did not face any kind of problems like the others faced. I was never feminine in my approach. I used to always be careful when I walked or talked with others. So I never felt any kind of discrimination in my school.*

*I used to like a boy when I was in school, we used to study together and I know he was not attracted to me, but somehow I used to try to seduce him and touch him in some places but he used to resist it. I was jealous of the fact that he had a girlfriend and I used to get every obsessed about it. I used to call him every day when he used to go and meet his girlfriend, I would tell him to come back as we had to study. For this he found a solution and he wanted me to get a girlfriend so that I wouldn't disturb him. So then I had a girlfriend but I was never really interested in her, she used to often call me to meet her but I never really paid any attention towards her and she initially dumped me and I was alright with it.*

*After this I tried to shift my focus on studies, but I was not able to concentrate properly because of this guy. And eventually I did not qualify in my entrance exam which was for a seat in medicine. Then I was forced to join in for a degree as I was a biology student and I did my BSc in Botany and Zoology. As I was doing my bachelors from a government college in Telangana, many students were from the rural areas of Adilabad, Karimnagar, etc. they did not know much about 'these kinds of things'. So I used to go to the hostel and hang around with them. We used to get drunk and sleep with the other boys and they too enjoyed it and that was when I became sure of my sexuality. Some guys used me to give them a blowjob or have sex with me, but they never used to go out with me. I was fine with it. And this continued till my MSc.*

*During this time, I did not reveal it to anyone about my sexuality. Once I did try telling to cousin about it but he was reluctant to listen to me. At that point, I diverted all my attention to my studies.*

*In 2001 I started of my PHD in Indian Institute of Science. Back then Cubbon Park was the 'hub' where all the people from the community would meet. It was like a pick up point. I used to go there sometimes and meet some gay men and hook up with them. One of such days I went to Cubbon park, I got picked by a boy. I thought he was one of the boys I had met on the chat group. I sat in his bike and he rode off. I didn't understand the trouble I was in until I had my wallet and phone stolen by that person. He was not a gay man, but in fact he was a straight man who uses gay people to extort them! He took everything from me and left. I was all alone in a place with no phone and money. I somehow made it to the police station to file a case. The minute the police realized this incident took place from Cubbon park, they understood why I was there. Suddenly they refused to file my case and asked me to go to another police station. They were extremely rude and used such offensive language. In the meanwhile the person who stole my mobile phone called every woman in the contact list and asked them to have sex with him. Obviously they thought that I contacted them for sexual*

*favours as one of my friend told me later! It took days for my number to get blocked. It was horrible to be in that position! I just did not know where to go for help! The situation got so bad, I had to discontinued my PHD after two and a half years and move to Germany.*

*I did not want to disclose why I left for Germany because that incident had left me in a lot of distress. I stayed in Hyderabad for three months before I left for Germany. I was in Europe for nine years. I was doing my PHD in molecular biology. Two people in my lab were also gay. When they discovered that I was a gay too, they started using me for their sexual purposes.*

*I was in a relationship with a German guy. I was with him for two years and we were about to get married and I don't know what happened, but he changed and things were not the same. Things got so bad that I physically abused him when he said he did not want to get married. Even today I cannot believe I got abusive. It ended in a very bad way. Next two years I stalked him and followed him everywhere. I became emotionally weak and depressed. At that time, I got so low, I tried to commit suicide. Some people saw me in a pool of blood and took me to a hospital. I was saved!*

*It almost took me five years to come out of that depression and move on. I started to get a feeling that Europe is not the place for me anymore as the culture was so different. I became very lonely there.*

*So 2011, I came back and started working in India. I felt that India was a safe place to come back. In 2012 I moved to Bangalore.*

*Two years after I came back, my nightmares came true. When I was in Hyderabad, I got in touch with Suraksha Society which works for Transgenders. In 2013, we organized our first pride march in Hyderabad. The pride march was a huge success and my interviews and pictures were all over in the newspaper. And one of my relatives saw this and told my family about this. From that day, hell broke loose at my home. My family members fought with me every single day and used to abusive me verbally.*

*I was 35 then. They started to pressurize me to get married and every time I refused to get married, they would again start abusing me. After a point my family said that I either get married or I leave home .. so I left home!*

### **Queer Sexuality Rights:**

*I work in Bangalore now. I have my own house and it is peaceful. I am in a live-in relationship. He will soon become a Radiologist. His parents do not know that he is gay, although they know that I am a gay. I have a good rapport with them and for the last three years they come and stay with us once a year for a few months. I know the things will change when they come to know that I am his boyfriend.*

*I am not pro for marriage as it is a personal choice. For me freedom is when people recognize my boyfriend as my real partner and give us legal rights. I want to get some health benefits for my boyfriend, but I am unable to do so because in legal terms we are not related to one another.*

*Eventually my boyfriend and I want to raise a girl child. I love children. I don't know when this will change and we may die without seeing the change also.*

*When it comes to technology we are going with the world, but when we come to societal laws we are lagging behind. Even the Supreme Court judges are not able to accept it and this decision is affecting 50 lac people in this country. Why other countries have accepted this and why not India. Here people do not want to change and that really astonishes me a lot.*

---

## BISEXUAL COMMUNITY

### **Nityananda, Bangalore**

***“People often have a wrong notion that male children don't get abused as they are boys and they escape from physical or sexual abuse. But being a male child, he was abused. He was physically abused by his own father and sexually abused by his friends. He tried killing himself twice, but decided to choose life over death! His life is an example of strength and stability.”***

*I was born and brought up in Bangalore. My father, mother, brother and I stay together. My father worked in Oriental Insurance Company as a Senior Divisional Manager and my mother was an advocate, but she is currently not practicing. My elder brother is a professional artist and an animator. I am an artist, myself and I was working in Excel Life Insurance. At present I am unemployed.*

*As a child, I was quite shy and reserved. I would not mingle with a lot of people, especially boys as I used to feel uncomfortable around them. I don't know why, but I always felt very vulnerable around boys and I had a constant fear of being teased. But I was very comfortable to be around girls. I studied in St. Josephs English School till 7<sup>th</sup> grade and then I went to MES School in Jayanagar. School was pretty bad for me and have no good memories of it. I was teased all the time and my friends would call me “ombattu”, “chakka”, “namarda” etc. I went through a lot of emotional turmoil and felt depressed at that point.*

*My home was no haven for me. My father was a drunkard and a womaniser. He had a relationship with another woman and that lady was from his hometown. He would drink every night and beat my mother, brother and me. I remember a few instances where he would throw us out of the house in the middle of the night and shout at us saying it's his house and*



*he could bring any one home and we did not have the rights to question him. He was a very selfish and an arrogant man. Being boys, we used to be very scared to raise our voice or question his acts. And by mistake if we gathered courage to raise our voice at him, that night we would spend out of the house. We even begged our neighbours to help us, but they would shut their doors saying they did not want to get involved in personal family matter. Every night and day we would be verbally abused and beaten. The problem was my mother was not financially stable to look after us. She came from a humble background and there was nothing much she could do. We were all dependent on my father.*

*As usual one day he came home drunk. I was sitting on the dining table and having dinner. He suddenly raised his hand and banged my head to the table that I almost black out. He was very drunk that day and he had absolutely no idea what he was saying or doing. That day I tried stopping him and you can imagine what happened next.*

*I had no friends to share or talk about my feeling especially about the violence that happened to me at home. I just kept everything to myself and honestly I felt it was of no use talking or sharing about it with anybody. You see, in school all of us are childish and immature. Nobody would understand even if I tried telling them and my classmates belonged to good families, so they would never understand anything about domestic violence. With all this I started feeling very insecure about myself. Being a boy, I could not be as active and sportive as other boys were. I could never play any sports as I was extremely shy and I would often wonder if I was really a girl. I did not realize it was affecting me psychologically.*

*I was a very bright student. Until 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I topped my class. But because of my family situation at home, I became poor in my studies as I could not concentrate. My teachers were good and they would often ask me why I would sit quietly and if everything was fine at home. I would be very scared to share my family problems and I feared a third person would misuse the situation. I lived in constant fear and depression and that affected my studies!*

*I vividly remember this one incident very clearly. When I was in LKG, there was an event organized in my school where I danced being dressed as a girl and I was very comfortable being dressed like a girl. By the time I came to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, my characteristics and behaviour became a little feminine. I used to sit like a girl and walk like a girl. I remember we had a chapter on Mahabharata where Shikandi fights in the battlefield. Now we all know who Shikandi was. She was considered neither a man nor a woman and this was referred to me and I would constantly be teased and bullied. I would sit alone in the last bench and spoke to nobody. It is really hard to put it in words, but I had no one to share about my feminine feelings. My family situation was such that I could not share my feelings with anybody, not even my mother and I had no friends in school and I was very lonely, depressed and helpless. Around this time, things got so bad at home and when I was around 18 years old my parents decided to get separated and they headed for a divorce. I could not go stay with my mother*

*because she was not economically stable, so I had to stay with my father. I had no choice, but to stay with him. That phase was very frustrating and chaotic for me as I disliked being with my father and I could not stay with my mother. Even today, I get shivers when I think of that time in my life. And this went on for a way long time.*

*At this point, I longed to have friends with whom I could share my feelings with. When I was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, I finally made friends with 2 of my classmates. Of course, they also used to tease me calling me “chakka”, but I did not take them very seriously. We used to hang out and they used to come home for combined studies. I had a separate room on top with a television, so they used to come home often to watch television or to study. One of my friends used to watch porn and masturbate sometimes. I felt that was natural. One day he came home early for combined studies, and I was a little surprised but I was very happy as I felt like I finally had friends and some support system. He went up, removed his pants and started masturbating. I was very shocked as it happened all of a sudden and I did not see this coming and I did not like it. He asked me to touch myself and feel my genitals. He even asked me to remove my pants and show my genitals. At that point, I was not interested in men. But out of the fear of losing his friendship, I succumbed to his wishes. I did everything he asked me to do. The first few times, I did it out of force and I was not very comfortable.*

*This one time, my other friend and I were sitting in my father’s car and he grabbed hold of my genitals and started masturbating. And at that point, I felt comfortable and I went along with it. After that point I started getting attracted to men. These two boys consider themselves as straight men. Only out of temptation, they made use of me. I did not have any relationship with them, it was just casual. There were a few times earlier I was attracted to men, but I did not act on it.*

*With all the depression, I managed to pass 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Just after that, my mother had a heart attack. She was admitted in the hospital for a few days and she came back home. When none of us were at home, my father had beaten my mother over some issue and he has beaten her so much, that she had thrown up blood. This was right after my mother had suffered from a heart attack and came back home. I was very weak and helpless at that time and I could not even protest or stop my father. He troubled and beat her up so much, yet there was nothing that I could do.*

*I joined SSMRV College for my PUC. After sometime, my brother and I took my mother and went to a small house in BTM Layout. My parents were headed for a divorce. I was pushed and pulled between my parents as I still had to depend on my father for money. I dealt with all his abuse and violence only because I wanted to study further. But I was too depressed to concentrate on my studies, so I left SSMRV College and joined MES College in Jayanagar. It is not a great college, but I knew it would be easier to pass. Even here in College, I kept to myself*

*because I had seen boys seducing me, so I was very scared. I discontinued studies after my PUC.*

*When we left home, my father started getting all “his women” home. This one time I walked into my house and he had brought a lady home. You won’t believe it; he was having sex right in front of me. At that point I felt like killing my father! My mother had just suffered a heart attack, I had discontinued studies, my brother was not doing too well for himself as well, but my father did not care. I had given up all hopes for the future.*

*I took up distance studies at NIIT. There I was approached by an elderly person around 58 years, he introduced himself and he said he wanted to be friends with me. He even planned a trip to Mysore, but I got scared and then backed out as he was a stranger to me. He introduced me to “pick-up” websites like ‘Planet Romeo’ and ‘Grinder.’ I registered myself and met a lot of cute boys. I met an Arabian boy on Planet Romeo and one day he took me to Chin Lung. It is a bar near MG Road. It was a gay bar and I actually felt very comfortable there. I went there almost every day as I wanted to forget my reality and I had a lot of fun there. I was not doing too well in my studies and I started partying more often. It is here that I was introduced to the LGBTQ community.*

*I consider myself as a bisexual man- I get attracted to both men and women, but more towards men. It is very difficult for an individual to tell his story behind his identity. We cannot judge anyone because one’s sexual identity is their choice. What one would have faced in life, nobody will know and this I am talking out of my experience. This happens because of lack of awareness. Even today, Shikandi is referred to as “napumsaka linga” that is neither a man nor a woman. Our history spoke about it and being in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, if we cannot speak about sex or sexuality openly, I feel it is a drawback.*

*I have faced a lot of problems at home, I have had no friends, my parents are separated and I was extremely lonely. I did not want to live such a life. When there is no love in one’s life, there is no point of living. Life is not about just eating or sleeping. It is much more than that. I tried hanging myself, it did not work. I drank poison even that did not work. Then I realized that life is bigger than ending one’s life for such reasons. I made myself stronger to deal with anything that life throws at me. I got in touch with Akkai Padmashali and I was exposed to the LGBT Community which helped to cope with my life. I saw the larger spectrum of life. Right now I am learning to be calm and stable. I never get angry at all! I am very happy I have come a long way.*

**Anonymous, 41 years, Bangalore**

***“Listening to his story was not easy for me. The number of times he broke down while narrating his story rang in my head for days. What he is going through right now is unimaginable! From being HIV positive and doing everything to look after his wife and son, he is an example of strength and perseverance.”***

*I am a Tamilian born and brought up in Bangalore. My mother passed away four months after my birth due to stomach cancer. We are nine children. My father was a sub inspector in KSRPC. My father would travel a lot on work and so I would have to stay with my relatives.*

*We were a poor family; all my siblings are daily wage labourers. My father did his studies till 5<sup>th</sup> grade and my uncle made him join the forces after that. He joined as a havaldar by giving money and then became a sub- inspector. When we were young we did not go to school, as my mother had passed away and my father used to be out of town most of the time. I stayed at my sister's place where her husband used all of us to do the house work. We would serve food, clean dishes and run all small errands. Everyone in my family have studied only till 5<sup>th</sup> grade and I am the only one to have studied till B.com.*

*I started going to school very late as my father insisted that my younger sister and I go to school. Even though my father wanted me to study, he did not give us any money, so we had to wear torn clothes and eat dough balls to survive.*

*We used to get a meagre amount of 10 paise and 20 paise with which we would manage somehow. When we were studying 5<sup>th</sup> class, my brother-in-law kicked me and my sister out of the house. My brother-in-law was a very cruel man. He would touch me inappropriately, and would ask me to open my pants show my genitals. So after that I went to stay with my other brothers and sisters who stayed in Koramangala police quarters with my father, so I continued to study in a government school near my house from 6<sup>th</sup> standard. After that our lives were a little better as we would get some good clothes and celebrate some festivals. Things were better there as my father looked after us well.*

*I used to be a lot with the women in the house, so I started getting feminine characters. My neighbours would taunt and ask me if I was a boy or a girl. I even had long hair and I would put a rubber band and tie my hair. This was also to not spend money on haircuts. Because of my feminine characteristics, I was teased and harassed a lot in my school. The aayas (maids) would make me clean the whole school.*

*I was also sexually harassed by one of my friends for the longest time. He would hug me and kiss me but I just ignored it as I was young and did not know what to do. He also had sex with me without my consent and there was nothing I could do.*

*When I studied 10<sup>th</sup> in 1993, I was already 18 years old. I remember when I was in 10<sup>th</sup>, I had some classmates from the quarters who had collected all the leaked question papers and told they could do group studies with me. When I went to get the papers they removed my clothes and told me to have sex with them if I wanted to get the question papers. I needed the papers and I was told that I'll get a job if I passed 10<sup>th</sup>, so I had to do it.*

*After 10<sup>th</sup>, I joined VV puram Government College for PUC and studied arts but I was teased and harassed there as well. I failed my English paper in 2<sup>nd</sup> PUC, but I again wrote it and passed. But during this time I fell in love with a boy who stayed opposite my house.*

*While I stayed in my father's place, a Brahmin family stayed right below our apartment. I would clean the front yard of their house and put rangoli when the boy opposite to our house noticed me and asked me to go to the barracks to watch the TV regularly. Our friendship was very strong and started when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. By 12<sup>th</sup> grade we were in love. He was a homosexual too and he would get physical with me when no one was home. He would make me and his friends watch porn and call me to the room alone to have sex. We were so much in love that we thought of running away. But both of our parents got to know about us. We ran away for a day but we got caught. We both belonged to a different caste, so they told that boy to not mingle with me. All our families had a huge fight and we had to change quarters by then. He wrote an exam and left to some other city. He has 4 kids now and calls me once in a while. But he stays near Hosur road and I had gone to his house warming as well.*

*My ex partner's father told me to pass 10<sup>th</sup> and he would help me become a police officer. I did my SSLC and tried for it, but I couldn't get in as I could not give that much money. Since I did not get through the police examination, I joined PUC. By the time I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> PUC, I had already been to Cubbon park. When you go in Cubbon park especially people from the community, they recognize you; the way we talk and all, and they just link us with customers and other people. For some people life starts there. I met some community members who became my friend and that is how I earned my first earning which was 200rs.*

*I started saving money from the sex work. After that from the money I saved attended JOC (job oriented course) and B.Com. But when I was in my second year B.Com, my father passed away, I discontinued my studies. So when my father passed away, I started staying at my brother's place. I used to get a lot of client calls when I was there. I was in pant shirt and I had long hair. I would have sex with guys in cubbon park. My father retired and then died so he had some money left behind which was distributed among us brothers and sisters. I gave little jewellery to my sisters and I had 20,000 rupees for myself. My brother and sister in law told me to stay at their place. I did not realize it was for the money. Once they took the money, they started telling me to work and told me to discontinue college as well. They tortured me and made me quit. I started working as cashier in a firm on part time basis. And this was a place where people from police reference were only hired. They told that I was dependable and made me*

*get a job. I used to get rupees 1,500 at that time. When customer calls became too much I thought of making another house. But someone told this idea of mine to my sister in law. And this person also told that I keep contacts with transgender people a lot. My sister in law then told my brother to keep a check on me. He followed me to cubbon park one day and caught me in the act. I told my brother that this is this is how I am and I cannot change. Then my brother did an intervention with all my sisters and brothers. After that, they found a solution to all the problems.*

### ***They got me married!***

*I was 28 years old. They lied to the girl, saying that I had a degree and a proper job to live a decent life. Her name is Uma Devi. I told her after engagement that I was very different and not the kind of person she should be marrying. I even told her that I wasn't ready for a marriage. She agreed for the marriage as I did not have any bad habits like smoking, or drinking and that is what she needed. I never told her that I was attracted to men or that I felt like a woman.*

*After marriage I could not do anything sexually. We slept on opposite sides of bed. She made an issue about the fact that I was not getting involved with her. She told her friends and family about the same and asked if I had any problem. Some of my friends gave me tablets to have erection and temptation and because of that I had sex with her a couple of time. Three months after our marriage, she was pregnant. I eventually told her everything. She actually said she would adjust and go with whatever it was. She is not well read so she just adjusted. We have only one child. He is 13 years and studies in 6<sup>th</sup> standard.*

*After my marriage, there was no savings anymore and no money left to run the family. This made my sister-in-law torture my wife a lot. Even though we have sex with men, it is unbearable to watch someone harassing a woman. I supported my wife throughout. I sent my wife to her mother's place with my son and told that after I make some money we could settle together again. So I sent her away for 2 years.*

*After that I started doing a lot of sex work to earn money. My wife did not know about this life of mine, she thought I was a financier since I was well read and she was proud of it too.*

*I got her back after 2 years. At that point I had a lot of health issues and I was suffering from severe cough and I went to a hospital. When I went to the hospital, I was diagnosed with tuberculosis. At that point, I could not eat well at all. All I wanted was to keep my family safe so I was doing a lot of sex work. I took treatment for tuberculosis for 3 months and it was normal after that.*

*After that in 2008 I joined samara as a peer educator. I used to maintain the household expenses with the part time job as a financier.*

*In 2010, TB relapsed again. I was very weak. I was taken to St. John's hospital and all treatments were done. Every kind of scan was done and nothing was found. Last I did was the HIV test and it was positive.*

*I have been taking treatment for HIV since then. The fact that I have HIV is known to my wife, her elder brother and younger brother.*

*After two week of this I tried to commit suicide by hanging myself, but then they saved me. I had also gone to Srirangaptana to jump off in the river and die, but I was saved again.*

*I did not tell anyone about my HIV until 2011. I started feeling very weak so I had to tell my colleagues in Samara. I openly told to my Program Manager Suman. I told her that I was positive. She supported me a lot and even took me to Victoria Hospital. I worked part time in samara and earned rupees 6000 and they had given me 3 months of salary in advance when they got to know about the positive status. I also worked for B.T.Venkatesh sir where I would clean their office*

*I am currently taking treatment for HIV. I get HIV check- up done every month as I had less very less white blood cells.*

*I do sex work even today. It is my body and my rights. But when I take a customer, I make sure we are safe no matter what. We just do body sex. Most of my clients are from Software Companies and pay 2-3 thousand for sex which is very helpful for us.*

*So as of now, I do sex work, work at Samara, and work for B.T. Venkatesh sir. This is how I earn my living. The house we have is on lease but it is a small house. We have no toilet and we use the public toilet.*

*I have a pan identity ..*

*I was a kothi and I used to earn by clapping my hand in cubbon once upon a time. I had feminine characteristics. I would wear a veil over pant shirt and do sex work. After that I would also have sex with gay guys. And since I was married and had sex there as well, I might be bisexual too. Since I need the money I still have sex with men. You can call me anything you want. I call myself a kothi itself.*

*I might be pan sexual. I am pretty much everything. But since I am in the system of hijra, I call myself a kothi.*

## LESBIAN COMMUNITY

### **Archana, 35 years, Bangalore**

*I was born and brought up in Coorg. I'm from Mangalore, from a very RSS kind of a family. My parents were very busy with their own work. They were teachers and they were in Coorg and my mother would travel a lot every day. We didn't belong to a very rich family. We belonged to a very middle class bordering the lower class. My parents were the first working people of their entire family. Their generation started working so they were busy with their lives. I have 2 brother one younger, one older.*

*I think it started when I was in 6th standard. That's when you start getting attracted, you start saying: "I like that person". But in my case, it was a girl, I was okay with it as I was too young to understand it. I was never attracted to a guy and I was very clear about that. I wasn't surprised I thought to myself: "maybe I'm like a boy who likes a girl". Suddenly I could see a change in me. I was very tomboyish, I had a short hair and maybe that was my way of telling people: "oh I'm a guy now so I can be with a girl". Because at that time we didn't have any internet, we didn't have anything books or magazines to read about that.*

*Whomever I liked in those days, I couldn't say I love you, because I was scared. I was scared because it was different and all I knew was that it's not normal. It was best or easiest to be a boy. I used to dress up like a guy, short hair, always wearing pants, shirt and shoes. At that time, it was very much okay, because as a kid, parents are okay with you wearing pants. I never had an issue, during my school days because we were always in uniform. The challenge was in college. I moved to a place in Mangalore where I used to wear most of the time pants and a lot of people had issues with it. They would ask me: "why are you always wearing pant?" The girls were very happy, they would say: I can't wear that, you have so much courage." In those days wearing pants, it was a big deal and people weren't okay with it. I was still thinking that maybe if I looked like a boy then girls would like me. That was an adjustment, a typical adjustment. People hardly bothered with what I wore.*

*When I was in school, I never had very close friends. After school, I would just go back, I would play with the neighbours but I never had this one set of friends. As I didn't have that kind of very close friends, nobody would ask me if I was interested in anyone, or why I wasn't dating anyone. I used to be with everyone, otherwise no one. Maybe that was another way how I didn't want to be close.*

*Then I came to Mysore to study journalism and criminology.*

*Around the time of my graduation, I came across one article in the newspaper about two girls living together. It was the first time I read about lesbians. That is when I got to know the word lesbian. And that is when I realized people like this existed. It was a relief!*



*When I came to Bangalore that's when everything started. That's when I realized there is no way out. I need to accept what I am. I went to the organization I read about in that article. And for my shocker, when I visited them, I saw only transgenders and I thought: "oh my God what is this". It took a little while for me because I was bit scared and that is because I had always seen them taking or stealing money or drinks. I used to run away when I saw transgender coming before. So now, suddenly I'm going to a place where I see everybody is a transgender. I saw there were girls like me also with short hair. Then another shocker, they wanted to change their gender and I felt like I did not belong there. Nevertheless, I approached them. They were very helpful, we spoke a lot, and they told me a lot of things. Still I had to explore, it took a while for me to accept me as myself. Then, I finally met girls like me for the first time. Girls who wanted to be girls, who don't want to change into a transgender. That was more peaceful for me. I found people like me and we made a good group of friends and we would talk about anything and everything. We had a lot of issues in common. We had that family kind of bonding. Even today, I have my close set of friends.*

*I am a bit sceptical about coming out to anybody because we're always scared, there is always a fear. The moment when you say you're gay, suddenly people start judging you. At my old office where I was in publication, I was out and okay. It's very normal. They just said: "we knew it". It didn't bother anyone, my old boss even today, ask me: "how's your life? Who are you with? Are you happy?" So we maintain that relationship. Where I am now, it is not so okay. In my workplace, about two of them know about me. I took time to tell them, but they are okay.*

*People say: "you are educated, for you it is easy to come out. People will accept you because you are surrounded by people who are educated" but that is not true. Acceptance doesn't come with your education and qualification. I remember a friend of mine who moved to U.S, and she was working with an American boss Lady. She came out to her boss and she started being treated very badly. My friend had to resign and move to a different organization. So no matter which country you are in, what is your position, if you are homophobic, you will remain homophobic.*

*My parents aren't forcing me to get married anymore, they do it as a formality, and they ask me: "Get married! Get married!" and I say: "No, no no." I always ask them, what is the rate of successful marriage in this country and then it's over. It's not like how it happens in other families; I never had so much pressure. My parents maybe know that I'm a lesbian but we've never talked about it. I'm sure they have an idea but I think we are in a better place not talking about it.*

*Sometimes I hear a lot of my friends telling that they don't want to hurt their parents and so they will get married. I feel that's a very wrong way of dealing with it. It's a problem and you have to face it. Getting married is not an option. If you feel you will hurt the feelings of your*

*parents, don't come out. But you have to be specific about the fact that you don't want to get married, because you don't want to ruin another person's life.*

*Regarding sexuality rights, if you are vocal about it and you are fighting for it, it is all well and good. If you are not vocal about it, it doesn't mean that you are not supporting. I've seen a lot of people say that if you are not coming out, that means you are a coward. I disagree; some people are hidden because of their own reasons. And as human beings, we all should respect that because at the end of the day, it is their private life and we cannot blame or force them.*

**About section 377:**

*A certain law might be useful, but we live in a place where more than laws, people's mentality has to be educated. There are a lot of amazing judgements that have come up including the right to privacy. But even if there is a change in the law, I don't think it will make a big impact. It might in terms of paper. I still have no idea how it will change our lives. Personally, I don't see that. Except if I marry the other person, maybe I can put this other person in my insurance papers, maybe we can have a house together, maybe we can adopt a baby. These things might become available, but people and the world will be the same.*

*We live in a very controlled society, our life even today are controlled by our parents. In our society, a girl, or a guy cannot be happy as a single people. They always feel you need a companion. You cannot stay alone, and be happy! Tomorrow you find a person, great! Otherwise also, you must know how to spend time with yourself. For them, all the answers for certain problems are marriage.*

*So all I tell people today is even before you make a choice of running away from home or something, get yourself educated. That is the only weapon we can fight with, because today if you are educated, you can find a job and be financially independent. If you are financially independent, no one can stop you. People will accept you as a human being.*

*All that we can do is to change is to teach the forthcoming generation. How do you do it? There is something called sex education. It's not about how to have sex; it is about how to respect identities. Somewhere the identity part has to be there. I think we don't have equality in the society. We are in a society where love itself is not accepted. When we talk about equality, we mean equality in terms of caste, class, religion but gender has to be included too.*

*The biggest challenge that happens for people like us is we don't have a moral support. You want to cry today, you cannot cry, because you cannot anybody why are you crying. Maybe you are crying because you have broken up with a girl, you can't even share that. I don't know when this will become okay. I always think I am very happy being what I am today; I have no regrets because my orientation is different. For the simple reason, because of this, I have*

*learnt a lot. The set of people I am with, none of us have had a violent life but we have our own issues about people accepting us, apart from that, all of us are well educated, all are working in good corporate companies, and we are settled.*

*I've accepted who I am, and I'm happy. I don't want to crib; I choose to make it better.*

---

**Deepthi, 33 years, Bangalore**

*I was born in what is Telangana now and moved to Vijayavada when I was 3 years old. My parents were divorced from the time I was born and I've never met my dad. My mother was a teacher. I learned later on that my dad was abusive to my mum which is probably why they divorced. I grew up living with my mum. I don't think it had a lot of impact that I grew up without a father figure. My grandfather was there, my mom started seeing another man but as my grandfather disapproved their relationship and he wasn't really present, on the other end my uncle was and is my best ally. He is the only one of my family who treats me as an adult. Everybody else looks like at me as I'm still a kid even though I am 33.*

*Growing up I was always tomboyish. So I was more comfortable wearing jeans and t-shirts. Most of my childhood was focused on studies. During 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> when everybody started to have crushes, I've never liked anybody like that, I had a "crush" on a guy at that time but it was simply because I thought he was cute like the other girls did. In 10<sup>th</sup> there was a girl who used to come to my tuition. I really started to like her, that's when I realized it's not just about finding somebody cute or liking them as a friend. It was something else. I was thinking: "okay, she is a girl, she looks nice, and I'm appreciative of that" which was fine. When I started to feel the urge to act on it, then I felt it wasn't right. But I never really had the faith or the guts to act on it. Publically I wasn't out as I never opened up to anybody because nobody was talking about that. I didn't want to talk to anybody about it as I wasn't ready to have anybody tell me it wasn't right. I just shut that part of myself. I don't think even at that point I had completely come out to myself.*

*In 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> I was put in boarding school in the same city. That's when I started to physically act on it. Then I realized that those things happen, there are also people who are like that. The first time was sort of initiated by the other girl and we became physical but I don't know if looking back this qualifies as a relationship but breakup, drama and fights did happen. I wasn't thinking about how sustainable it was at that point. I didn't really want to pay attention. We are having fun, that's it. It was in an all-girls school. So a lot of things happened there. There were a lot of other couples as well. We would just know through other people and whisperings that they were "doing something" but it was never spoken about.*

*After 2 years, I moved to Chennai to study Engineering. I had a boyfriend at that point. I was with him for a year but it was on and off and we were even physical. After a year-ish, I started losing interest. I started looking at other women. We had started to fight so he started blaming himself. It was really unfair, it was killing me so I sat him down one day and told him: "I think I'm a lesbian, I thought it would be just a phase, that I was probably bi, I really like you as a person, as a friend but I think this is what it is. Because of me it's not working out." A couple months after that break up, he moved on. He still on and off talks to me and he's a good friend. That's a phase I really wish I didn't go through, mainly for him because he really thought of me as his first love. So it wasn't fair to him. Even when I was with him, I was attracted to other women. I think it has more to do with the kind of attention he was giving me. I liked the attention. So I just went along with him. Looking back I don't think I was attracted to him in the same way.*

*Finally in college, I knew I had to tell people, I needed that space to talk about it but I wasn't sure to whom. I slowly told one person. I came out to one of my classmates. First of all, she was very shocked and confused. She cared for me and was telling me that I will have to deal with a lot of rejection. I think I really started talking about it to people when I started working. I think having the financial independence and all that gives you confidence. For me, I think I've had 90% of positive answers when I've come out.*

*The first real queer people I met were online. There was this website called AfterEllen. They had articles, forums, article room, where I could have a profile and I could interact with people. That was in 2009-10, it was so exciting for me to see that there are so many gay people out there. My first instinct was to find Indians there. In such a huge international crowd, I found just seven Indians. In 2009-10, nobody was online and there were a lot of people who were Indians but settled abroad, so I started talking to three of them. One lived in the USA; we started talking and we were involved with each other. She had a typical "Indian ma" mentality who thinks she is entitled to say whatever she wants and I have to listen. She was a very difficult person and used to put me through a lot of emotional abuse. It was really difficult because I had friends at that time but if I went to them as a queer person and tell them about the breakup and the drama, as they were straight, they would respond to me: "It's ok, you'll be fine, and this is just a phase in your life". That's why when we broke up, it was really tough on me, for nearly 3 months I shut myself down, I would just go to work and come back, eat probably once a day. One day, I thought; "I can't do this anymore" and I started going out. At this point, I found another site called Gaysi Family which is a big thing in Bombay now. They had posted about a Chennai meeting. When I arrived there, there were 10 people sitting in a circle. I thought: "I am out in the open and there is nothing I can do" and the warm welcome gave me a lot of confidence. Knowing there were other people like me and knowing these people would accept me for who I am was a huge confidence boost. That*

*welcome had a huge impact on what I am doing right now. That's how I became part of a huge group in Chennai.*

*After I finished my studies, my family started to pressurize me to get married. We had the conversation when I was around 23 and I told them I wasn't ready. They said they will give me 2 years to work and they'll see. I worked for 2 years in a call centre. It wasn't really a great job. When the deadline was up and they gave me a choice: either I passed my GRE and went to study in the US or I stay here and get married. I chose to do my GRE and almost took a year break, but my visa got rejected. They agreed to give me more time but they still wanted me to talk to this one guy they liked.*

*They ended up sharing my email with the guy in August 2011, he would write me and I would take a week to reply because I couldn't... well I didn't want to reply. 2 months later, he told me he was coming the following month and that his plan was to get married, take the girl and leave. I said: "Dude, I am not ready". From then we ended things. My mom, my aunt and my uncle would get on a conference call and talk to me and at any given time at least at two parties would be crying on the call. By that time I had developed a decent social circle in the queer space in Chennai. I wasn't seeing anybody but I had a support circle. So I would call people when I get into this nonsense. That's when I thought I should come out to somebody in the family to put a stop to this.*

*I first told one of my younger cousin who was studying in Bangalore. He said he had a friend when he was studying in the US who was gay, he said he think it's cool. After this conversation, I thought I should try to talk to my aunt. In 2012, my aunt was in Chennai at the same time that the gay pride march was on. We were sitting at a café having small talks and that is when the pride march was passing us by, all my friends were close by so I went to say hi and hugged everyone then came back to the table. My aunt really got the point after that. She said: "it's probably just a phase, because you were in girl's hostel all the time. Even growing up me and your mom also stayed in girl's hostel and I also had things like this." She said she will take me to a counsellor. I didn't want to go but she took an appointment for the next day. I was really freaked out. The counselling did not really help. After a few days, my uncle took another appointment with a psychiatrist. Then I broke down. I just could not put myself through it anymore. But for my surprise, the psychiatrist told my uncle: "this is how she is, this is what she is. You can't really do anything. You shouldn't do anything. The only thing she probably needs to work on is coming out to her mom". But till to this day I don't have the guts to do it. My uncle and cousins know but I am unable to come out to my mother.*

*Over time it made me want to help people who are in similar situations whether it is family pressure, bullying in school, breaking up with girlfriend and not having anybody to talk to, because I have been through all these situations. I am running this monthly meeting for queer women in Chennai. Someone asked me what made me start this group. I said: "if I didn't have*

*people from the community to listen to me when I was really down and desperate after my breakup and the pressure from my family on getting me married, I would not have survived that as I was on a certain level suicidal at that time. I know there are people out there who need this kind of support. As a queer person if I come out to my family, my mom would blame herself. I am not able to do justice there. I am not able to keep my mum happy. At least I can reach out to people who need this kind of help.”*

*I have been in a relationship with a woman for a year and a half now. Section 377 doesn't change a lot of things for me. For me I think the defects again with families and in social spaces. I am not able to be open about my partner to my family because of this. Whenever I get a call from her in a family situation, I can't just get up and go talk to her because I will be questioned. Little things like that. At work whenever I talk about her I refer to her as my best friend. “Oh my best friend said this, oh my best friend said this” It's not a big deal. But somewhere I am not giving her the status.*

*Today I am not able to get my head around how to prioritize my girlfriend because I am always scared that people at home will find out. She is not out to her parents either. We have fights predominantly about this. If my Mom is standing right next to me, I can't talk to her. I could probably do it but I'm too afraid my mom will find out. It's not easy.*

*The law doesn't really attack me because I know the right channels to go, I know people and some NGO's which work around this. So, I know how to safeguard myself. It's relatively easy for me, because I know so many people in the community. There are a lot of women whom I talk to and I hear stories where they got locked up or get into forced marriages and they get raped and abused constantly. You can't help them because you can't really send the police to rescue. Police won't do that. I have seen a couple of cases like that and it's devastating to not know where they are at the moment.*

*One 23 year old girl was forced to marry a guy. He would complain to her father saying she doesn't do “anything so, they would lock her up, beat her up by her two brothers and starve her. I was talking to her, texting her, so she would call the police. At some point someone snatch her phone, we could no longer reach her. We tried reaching out to an NGO that shelter women victims of domestic violence. Apparently, the girl called the cops, they came but one of her brother said it was a trivial issue in which the police don't have to be involved. Now, they have moved her to another house. After that, we lost her.*

*I know that not everybody has the confidence that I have. I met some young people who are desperate because, being gay or lesbian they see themselves as criminals. I try to explain to them that yes, as per law we are but you shouldn't look at yourself like that. You shouldn't degrade yourself. The law is there and it will be scrapped. I constantly avoid that language, that's not going to help anybody. I try to bring them away from that language. Because it kills you, it's not helpful. We are not doing anything wrong. Who started the law? Who said what*

*the order of nature is? White people wrote the law and our people just followed it. When I get into conversations like this is when I realize what the queer women are feeling because everything around them: Whatever seen in the news is in that perspective saying it is wrong. Especially the local mainstream videos, like the local Tamil or Kannada newspapers. They never have a neutral talk. These are people whose parents read those papers and tell them that it is wrong.*

*The only focus right now is getting that acceptance because it's at least going to take 15 years to get the social acceptance once the law is out. Considering the legal situation and government right now, I don't think it will happen in the next few years but we need to talk about buying property with your partner and everything else around it. I would want to be able to buy an apartment, live there without people saying: "oh two girls are staying, what they are doing without men in their life?" I haven't thought really beyond that.*

*There is a Bengali documentary about two women who killed themselves. They fell in love and couldn't be together. One of them got married and got abused. So they committed suicide together. Nobody talks about why they did it. How many women died like this? So many deaths are going unaccounted for, not all are necessarily tied to this reason but this reason is being trivialized. People say that there are more important things to be sorted out than our LGBT rights. People are dying, nobody knows that people are dying and it's the worst part, because it's been covered up.*

From the above case studies, we can see that the LGB communities face a lot of social and legal difficulties and remain in the closet because many see homosexuality as shameful. There are a lot of unaccounted cases of honour killing, torture, and arbitrary detention, invasion of privacy and denial of basic rights because of their sexual orientation.

The LGB community has slowly started to raise their voices and we can slowly start to see some tolerance among the youth towards the community.

With the court reconsidering its decision of section 377, there is hope to protect the rights and dignity of the community.

## **BEYOND THE STORIES: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE**

In the earlier section we tried to understand sexual violence, domestic violence, sexuality rights and transgender rights from the perspectives of these communities by documenting some stories of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, Jogappas, transgender persons, gender non-confirming, intersex etc in the State of Karnataka. In this section we will try understand these issues in the context of how gender gets constructed through the more private institutions of the family and society; how this the dominant narrative on sexuality, sexual violence and domestic violence is being challenged both by organisations of sexual minorities and by focussed local, national and global advocacy on putting in place a more gender fluid jurisprudence.

### **Gender: Breaking the Binary and Plotting the Spectrum**

Children are not born knowing what it is to be a “boy” or a “girl.” They learn this from their parents; and from the people and world around. . This continues through puberty and adulthood and the social expectation of masculinity and feminine behaviour gets engrained in the individual, often becoming rigid. But gender many times cannot be reduced to the binary of a male and female; gender is a spectrum with all individuals expressing and identifying with varying degree of both masculinity and femininity. Transgender people identify along this spectrum, from a gender different from what is assigned to them at birth.<sup>1</sup>

For adolescent children while growing up, understanding their gender identity and sexual orientation is a more complex process that lasts into their teens an adulthood. Most of the children when they realize they are different from other children around them, they either try and suppress those feelings or they are scared to come out to their family and friends as it is not considered “normal”.

The family’s lack of acceptance due to societal pressure of maintaining a certain degree of status and respect and the general lack of knowledge on these issues often keeps them from coming out to their family and being confined to a closet and the fear of expressing their gender and sexual orientation gets ingrained at a very young age because of the negative message sent by the society, often leaving them feeling alone, isolated and a feeling of not belonging.

The larger part of the society assumes that being a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is a choice, which can be changed or “cured,” Without realising that gender identity and sexual orientation can be pre- determined through biological mechanisms.

The societal perceptions on social norms, ethical and moral conducts are so deeply rooted that most societies have narrow perspectives and understanding of gender identity and



sexual orientation and this contributes to the rejection of all the other gender identities in between. The reasons behind the rejection are multifactorial, starting from lack of awareness, trans- phobia, homophobia, religious dogma, social stigmatization and the pre conceived notions of gender and patriarchy.

*"I was about 3 or 4 years old when I felt very different from other children around me. I loved doing the household chores, putting rangoli, helping my mother cut vegetables. From getting milk, folding clothes to running any small errands, I did everything."*

*Vimala, Male to Female Transgender Marladi Woman*

## Internalising the Violence

Starting from accepting changes within your own self- mentally and physically at a very tender age to facing violence and rejection from your own family are the very basic struggles at a very personal level as compared to the gross human rights violations they are subjected to against the backdrop of prevalent social discrimination, lack of education, unemployment, police harassment and no acceptance in public spaces.

As Sowmya, a transgender activist says, *"what nobody realizes is the emotional and mental state of these individuals because of the continuous rejection and violence. So many of them are vulnerable that they commit suicide as they are unable to handle the situation."*

*"The only thing I remember being a child is nobody talking to me, my father and brothers hitting me or they would tie me up like an animal the whole day. They would not even give me food to eat! After a point I started hating my life. I got so fed up with all this torture, I tried committing suicide."*

*Sharanamma, Jogappa*

From the above case studies, we can see that when the children start to act out of the pre-conceived notions of masculinity and femininity and not behave as per the society's expectation of heterosexuality; boys acting effeminate and girls not being feminine enough, they face bullying and abuse at home from their families and peers and teachers at school. Due to this lack of insensitivity and hostility they face from family, students and teachers,

most of them either leave home or are sent out of home at a very young age. Because of this, most of the community members are unable to complete their primary and secondary education. Also this sense of rejection and isolation from family and friends drives them into the arms of a guru or a mentor within the community of like-minded souls.

*"When nobody would be at home, I would apply make-up and wear my sister's clothes. I was caught one day. My mother saw me applying make-up. She was very angry with me. She told my father and both of them started to beat me. They poured hot water on me and they even chopped my hair. They kept telling me not to behave like this and behave like a boy. When I did not stop behaving like a girl, they tied me up like an animal and even burnt my face. When all of this happened, I was only 12 years old. And it continued for 5 years. I kept telling my parents that I would leave home and run away because they continued to trouble me a lot."*

*Pooja, Gender Non-conforming*

The transgender community having being forced to evolve their own "support" structures on account of their total marginalisation, is known for its hierarchy, rituals and many of the community members face violence from within their own community. According to the pledge, one has to hand over all the earning to the guru, who in exchange provide them with food and home as most of them are runaways.

*"It became very hard for me. No matter how much money I made, I had nothing left for me. I either had to pay the financier or give everything to my guru. I would work all night and make money and give the whole amount to my guru. And in the morning I had to ask 20 rupees for my food. I wondered if I could make any money for just myself."*

*Supriya, male to female transgender*

The transgender community also have protocols for their physical transformation as their male form should be "cast off" to become a female. This process of body transformation can be psychologically and physically traumatic. Many of the transgender community do not approach hospitals or doctors for the surgery. Instead the traditional "pluckers" from the transgender community castrate them. For those who approach the hospitals for their transformation, they are put under hormone therapy to alter their bodies, followed by a surgery to reassign their sexual organs known as sex re-assignment surgery. These

surgeries are expensive and take a high toll on physical body. Often to help finance this surgery, the community members resort to sex work. Also being sex workers makes this community a high-risk for HIV/AIDS.

Amongst the transgender community, there is a lesser known third gender sect known as Jogappas, who are the children of Goddess Yellamma. The Jogappa community is mostly found in the northern parts of Karnataka state. As the myth goes, Goddess Yellamma herself chooses her devotees; hence becoming a Jogappa is not seen as a matter of choice unlike the other transgender communities. The Jogappas are considered as a source of direct connection between the divine and the society. While being a Jogappa is a privilege, it comes with a price. The practice of castration is forbidden for the Jogappas as it is common among the other transgender communities. The Jogappas also take up celibacy and are imposed heavy fines if found engaging in sex work. They are usually found in the main temple of Goddess Yellamma or begging for alms in the name of the Goddess usually on Tuesdays and Fridays. As per their culture and tradition, Jogappas are barred from begging in shops or public places.

*"It is very alarming and disappointing that we Jogappas are not recognized as transgender. We beg for a living, but we can go only to houses and ask for alms. We cannot ask for alms from anybody on the road or from the shops. We don't have homes and a lot of us live on streets."*

*Siddamma, Jogappa*

A 2015 report titled 'Jogappa- Gender, Identity and the politics of Exclusion' conducted by Aneka, a Bangalore based non- profit organization notes "the belief in the divine powers of Jogappas has begun to gradually erode. Without their connection to the Goddess, Jogappas would no longer be able to earn through puja or joga."

Because the Jogappas cannot earn commercially from begging and sex work and have fewer economic opportunities, their culture can slowly be seen getting transgressed.

*"We Jogappas are very poor. I live in a hut and it is very difficult to survive every single day. If you see my hut, even you will get scared. I have a small provision store. But it is not sufficient to live. I just survive with what I make out of it. Tuesdays and Fridays I go house to house singing songs and carrying the idol of the Goddess for alms, but people don't entertain us anymore. They rarely give us anything."*

*Sharanamma, Jogappa*

The lack of acceptance and sensitivity of the family members and the inability to complete their primary education forces them to stay out of organized workforce, whereas only a few of them are employed for certain low class jobs pushing them into begging and sex as their only means of survival. In the case of female to male transgender, they are doubly discriminated and marginalized as a result of being assigned female at birth and being a transgender person.

This extreme social exclusion, discrimination, stigma and atrocities diminish self-respect and a sense of social responsibility among the sexual minorities. Because of all these reasons the sexual minorities are at a risk of developing mental and physical disorders. A survey by Swasti- a Research Health Centre<sup>2</sup> shows that emotional violence topped the list followed by physical violence and sexual violence. The fear of rejection, homelessness, poverty along with physical, verbal and sexual violence gets manifested as depression, panic attacks, suicidal ideation, psychological distress, body image disturbance and eating disorder. Some of the community members resort to use highly addictive substance like tobacco, gutka and sometimes drugs along with heavy alcohol drinking and have more sexual partners opening door to increased health risks.

Due to the disparity and insensitivity in health care institutions and the lack of knowledge and understanding of specificity and importance of issues of sexual minorities by the doctors themselves results in them not coming forward to seek help.

*My brother took me to NIMHANS where I underwent psychology behaviour therapy. They would show me erotic picture of boys and when I got aroused by it, they would change it to a girl's picture and ask me to get aroused by seeing that. And this was a continuous process and it was called orgasmic reconditioning. They even sent me to the women's section in the malls and make me smell women perfumes and I had to do this twice or thrice a week.*

*Srini, gay*

## Marriage, Adoption and Property Rights

Marriage is a social union or a legal contract between two individuals that establishes certain legal rights and obligations between them. Every society has, therefore, developed a pattern for guiding marriages. So for marriage, the most important step is the choice of mates. Though there are no standards laid down for choosing a partner yet from time to time, rules have been made to regulate the selection of mates.<sup>3</sup>

In India, citizens have a choice to be married under various personal laws or a common law of civil marriage. While none of the acts have explicitly defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman, it has been interpreted and understood to mean that a marriage is always between a man and a woman. Words like 'bride and bridegroom', 'husband and wife', imply that the laws are valid only for couples of the opposite sex.<sup>4</sup>

*"Same sex marriage is a problem and it is going to be extremely difficult so long as sec 377 is still in the picture and so long as the existing laws on marriage, divorce, custody etc. All the laws are all seen in the binary of male and female. So unless there is an amendment of a litigant who approaches the court to recognize this, it's going to be difficult"* says Deeptha Rao, lawyer at Alternative Law Forum.

*Akkai Padmashali, a well-known Transgender activist became the first transgender woman to register her marriage in Karnataka.*

The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of the ministry of women and child development that regulates adoption of children by foreigners and Indian residents through inter-country and in-country adoption regulations, respectively. The current Indian laws do not specifically bar the LGBT Indians from adopting, but does not allow unmarried men and women above the age of 30 to adopt. Although many single LGBT persons in same-sex relations have adopted children are single parents, their partners have no legal rights over the children.

*"We want to raise a girl child. I like children, but I don't know when this will change and we may even die without seeing the change. Why other countries have accepted this and not India. Here people do not want to change and this astonishes me a lot."*

*Chanakya, Gay man*

Even with regards to property rights, the laws do not specifically bar the LGBT individuals from inheriting or transferring self- acquired properties. One way of ensuring that the property goes to the partner is creating a will of the self-acquired property. But law does not mandate that despite ones gender identity and sexual orientation, an individual is entitled to equal share in the property. If the laws are not mentioned covertly, the entitlement of these rights will be quite a task. The important question here is what are the means for these communities to advocate and litigate for these rights?

*“The major issues with the laws in India are that it does not demonstrate distinction between sex and gender and the same is reflected in the laws. So whether it is matrimonial laws, custody, succession laws, personal or contractual laws, they talk only from the perspective of a ‘he’ and the general constrict is that it includes ‘she’. But what about all those who come in between? In India, ‘he’ is everything! Masculinity is everything! Therefore every aspect of laws we have today fall within the framework of patriarchal notions, although nothing is specifically mentioned. Even the judges and courts across India is restricted to masculinity”.*

## Sexual Violence

The struggle and the eventual death of a student from Delhi following her kidnapping, assault and gang rape awakened many sections of the Indian society demanding accountability from the Indian government to check violence against women. This anguish in some quarters also led to call for a retributive justice system including death penalty and demanding modification in Juvenile Justice Act 2000 so as to exclude children committing serious offences from the preview of the Act or to lower the age of the juvenile in the Act.

But does it make the government accountable for the violence? Will the modifications in the laws or the country coming out on the streets demanding justice help?

The real question is, does it just stop at the violence against women?

- Sonia Sheikh 24, sole bread winner of a family of 9 was gang raped and burnt with acid and left on the road side.
- Another transgender woman was raped by 17 policemen at a police station. Naked and profusely bleeding crawled on the road and fainted. A stranger was kind enough to help her the next morning. She died a few days later.

According to a study conducted by Swasti- Health Resource Centre, 4 out of every 10 transgender individuals in India face sexual abuse before turning 18. The study also states that those under the age group of 11-15 were the most susceptible to sexual violence. Topping Swasti’s survey’s record of abuses is emotional violence followed by physical and sexual violence.

*"I was sexually abused by my own aunt's son when I was about 10 years old. I came from school on that day. We lived in a joint family and no one was home on that day. My elder cousin brother called me inside his room and I went thinking he was going to tell me to do some work. But he was standing near the room and his was zip open, showing his penis to me. When I asked him why he was showing me his penis, he told it was nothing for me to be afraid of and called me closer. I was in the age that even I wanted to explore certain things so I went closer, but he had sex with me just like how he would do with a girl. It was so painful! He told me to give him oral sex, forcefully had anal sex and harassed me. Because he forcefully had anal sex with me, I was bleeding the whole day."*

*Laya, transgender woman*

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013 was a breath of fresh air after having out dated colonial laws for centuries. But while the previous laws only spoke penile-vagina penetration, this new law also known as the Anti- Rape Law covered wide ambit of offences like acid attacks, sexual voyeurism, stalking aiming other sexual offences which earlier lacked specific provisions in the court. Earlier the offence of rape i.e., sexual assault was a

Gender neutral offence while now this offence is women centric. Only a man is assumed to be capable of committing such offences that too against women only. But the numbers of the marginalized sex like the transgender are often the victims of this offence and as such they cannot claim any protection because the crime of rape is not gender neutral.<sup>5</sup>

*"I had plans of going to my friend's house. He stayed in Sharavathi Nagar. While I was walking and going to his house, this local rowdy called Prithvi wooed and teased me from his van. I ignored him and walked away. Because I ignored him and walked away, he got very offended and he got around 7 boys in his van. They pulled me into their van and took me to Vinobnagar. That place was still a layout with empty plots. They tied my hands, pulled my pants half way down, and held a knife on my neck and one by one all of them had anal sex with me. They threatened me that if I shouted, they would chop me off. They took me at 4pm and they left me at 7.45pm. Until then all of them raped me continuously one after the other. I was bleeding profusely, but that did not stop them for having sex with me."*

*Supriya, transgender woman*

The sex crimes reported by the trans- people can legally come under the definition of criminal force because under IPC non-consensual, penetrative sex contributes rape only if the victim/ survivor is a woman.

A public interest litigation was filed in the Supreme Court to challenge constitutional validity of Section 354 (assault or criminal force with an intent to outrage her modesty),

Section 354 A (sexual harassment), Section 354 B (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe), Section 354 C (voyeurism), Section 354 D (stalking) and Section 375 (rape) on the grounds that it violates Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 15 (Right against discrimination) under the Constitution of India to make laws sexual violence gender neutral.

The PIL was dismissed by the judges stating that it was not the judiciary's prerogative to change the Indian Penal Code, and the job of amending legislation was of the Parliament. Chief Justice Dipak Mishra also added that "legislations come as a response to social and collective cry. These sections are victim-oriented and the Parliament has acknowledged a woman as the victim".<sup>6</sup>

While all the talks are around the woman being a victim, where does a case of sexual violence against a man fall? The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NASV), a Washington based association working to end sexual violence notes that about 14% of reported cases in the US involve men or boys. In cases of sexual violence against men, the fact that men can also be raped is not even recognized by the society let alone the justice systems. Rapes against men are as real as rapes against women, especially individuals from the gay, bisexual and transgender community. Unfortunately, crimes are not committed based on gender, so the laws should definitely not be confined to heterosexuals or be gender specific. Sadly, the lack of understanding and sensitivity on the issues of sexual violence against the LGBT community, make it extremely difficult for them to come forward. Hence there is no authentic data on such crimes.

*"I finally made friends with 2 of my classmates. Of course, they also used to tease me calling me "chakka", but I did not take them very seriously. We used to hang out and they used to come home for combined studies. I had a separate room on top with a television, so they used to come home often to watch television or to study. One of my friends used to watch porn and masturbate sometimes. I felt that was natural. One day he came home early for combined studies, and I was a little surprised but I was very happy as I felt like I finally had friends and some support system. He went up, removed his pants and started masturbating. I was very shocked as it happened all of a sudden and I did not see this coming and I did not like it. He asked me to touch myself and feel my genitals. He even asked me to remove my pants and show my genitals. At that point, I was not interested in men. But out of the fear of losing his friendship, I succumbed to his wishes. I did everything he asked me to do."*

*Nitvananda, Bisexual man*

This gives the police an upper hand because they have little legal sanction and no protective laws that are gender neutral to act on incidents of rape, sexual harassment,



sexual abuse that the transgender community are subjected to on the daily basis. The transgender individuals who were interviewed for the case studies, 9 out of 10 did not go to the police station or seek their help because they know it was of no use. They felt that the police will either extort them, wont register their case or would say “you are a sex worker, how can you be raped?” of course there are police officers who are sensitive towards the victim, but the victim is subjected to prejudice from others.

*“Even a sex worker is entitles to justice. Nobody can molest her or use her against her will. It is her decision to decide when, where and which customer she wants and that is her right. Anybody who does anything against her will, which is rape.*

*The same thing holds for a transgender person.*

*Bhaskar Rao, Additional Director General of Police*

Sowmya, a transgender activist states, *“In a lot of scenarios, we face a lot of harassment from the police and they even force us for free sex. Rowdies and the gundas are the worst. They simply take us to a dark place, behind the bush or their cars and rape us. Not one person, but at least 5-8 men rape us. This happens on daily basis and it has become so common that to us that we accept it as our karma. Because of the stigma that is attached with sex and sex work, a large part of the society including the police, do not consider what happens to us as rape. They simply laugh and tell “you are the one who stand on the road for sex, how can you be raped?” because of this behaviour from the police, a lot of the community members feel that they have no protection or support. Go to any of the police stations; you will have no record of any cases of sexual violence filed by transgender individuals.”*

Even across 12 police stations that were asked in Bangalore there has not been a single sexual abuse or rape case that has been registered or filed by the transgender individuals or the sexual minorities. Apparently the police officers do not receive any such cases or complaints by the sexual minorities’ community, but the incidents narrated have a different story to tell.

*“A study conducted by independent set of researchers across Karnataka in 2012 revealed that there was 18% prevalence if sexual violence against transgender persons. The most common perpetrators of this violence were clients (61%), police (18%), a regular partner (13%), a pimp (10%) and others (21%).<sup>7</sup>*

The deep rooted trans-phobia, homophobia, open hostility and contempt against transgender and sexual minorities' community in India, not only creates an environment for state authorities like police to protect the LGBT individuals, but also further violate their rights. The law lacks the teeth and a number of cases or instances, everyone from police to rejection and violence from family to education and health care institutions lack of sensitivity to treat this violence as a real problem.

### Domestic Violence

Another important concern which needs to be addressed is domestic violence that most of the transgender and LGBT communities are subject to. The sexual minorities are the transgender communities face domestic violence from their parents, partners, spouses and their own communities. A good lot of it is not voiced and it is one of the major concerns.

*My home was no haven for me. My father was a drunkard and a womaniser. He would drink every night and beat my mother, brother and me. I remember a few instances where he would throw us out of the house in the middle of the night and shout at us saying it's his house and he could bring any one home and we did not have the rights to question him. Being boys, we used to be very scared to raise our voice or question his acts. And by mistake if we gathered courage to raise our voice at him, that night we would spend out of the house. We even begged our neighbours to help us, but they would shut their doors saying they did not want to get involved in personal family matter. Every night and day we would be verbally abused and beaten.*

*Nityananda, Bisexual man*

The Indian Parliament enacted the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 in order to protect the rights of women who are victims of any sort of violence from families.

The Act is primarily meant to protect a 'wife' or a 'live-in partner' from violence at the hands of the husband or male live-in partner and his relatives. The Act under its definition covers actual abuse or the threat of abuse whether physical, sexual, emotional, verbal or economic. Harassment by way of unlawful dowry demands to a woman or her family is also cover under the ambit of this Act.

*"The cases of domestic violence has spiked up, especially since November 2017 up to now. We have come across cases of domestic violence almost every single day. If we look at the case of domestic violence faced by the community, often it starts with family. That is the first sight of violence and it could exhibit itself in any form. We have seem cases of blatant physical abuse, we have seen it in the form of extreme and severe mental and emotional torture like isolation,*

*house arrest and extremely demeaning use of words and language because of their gender and sexual orientation. We have also seen it in the form of economic abuse where all the money you earn becomes the sole property of the family. Your liberty will be curtailed and your identity will be denied, but the money will belong to the family. We also deal with considerable number of cases where a person is put under house arrest and forced to marry, as an immediate solution to any articulation of your sexual orientation or gender identity.*

*If we see specifically at the LGB communities, they face most violence from their partners. Although they have reduced considerably, this violence is prevalent”* says Deeptha Rao, lawyer from Alternative Law Forum.

It is a known fact that when it comes to the LGBT community, our laws are an apology. There are no laws that are gender neutral to protect the sexual minorities against domestic violence from the hands of their family, spouses, partners and from within their own community.

*“The current domestic violence laws support and help a lot of women, but certainly not the sexual minority community. From an adolescent age where we are yet to know ‘right and wrong’, ‘good and bad’ we face violence at home from our own parents. After finally leaving home and joining our community, we again face violence from them.”* says Sowmya, a transgender activist.

Whether it is sexual violence laws, domestic violence laws or any personal laws, they all are applicable only to the ‘majority’ of the society. None of these laws are built in a way that can include the sexual minorities. The violence these communities go through is very different from what a heterosexual person would go through. Hence before revisiting these laws, it is very important that the law makers are aware of the specificity of their problems.

India still follows the 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial laws and has not been able to progress. Although we are signatories for a number of international conventions and declarations, those laws are either watered down or do not have the strength to hold or bring change in the lives of the people. What India needs is for the whole institution of the judiciary, from the magistrate to the Supreme Court to change. The jurisprudence and the practice of law should change. Terminologies and legal concepts should change where vibrant legal concepts are brought in. Protections on a whole new level should be given to every citizen of the country despite their gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.

## TOWARDS A MORE GENDER FLUID JURISPRUDENCE

India has one of the oldest legal systems in the world and not to mention the world's largest Constitution. With hundreds of judgements passed by the Supreme Court that have secured the stature of de facto law, the Indian legal system is struggling to evolve with the rapid changes of the growing society. With the justice system and criminal law belonging to the British era, there is a need to revisit many colonial era laws. We take a critical look at the some of the specific initiatives taken by the Judiciary and Executive to put into place a legal and policy framework for addressing the core issues related to transgenders and sexual minorities.

### NALSA Judgement

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the Supreme Court of India made history by giving legal recognition to the transgender persons as “third gender”. This move by the Supreme Court of India is perhaps a stepping stone to embark a journey of defining gender and transgender in the Indian context.

The National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India<sup>8</sup>, nicknamed NALSA judgement beautiful articulates and recognizes of the third gender (male wanting to be recognized as female and females wanting to be recognized as men) and affirms the fundamental rights of Right to Life (Article 21), Right to Equality (Article 14) and Right against Discrimination (Article 15 and 16) guaranteed under the Constitution of India equally applicable to transgender people as it is applicable to any male or female. The judgement also recognized the rights to self- identification of their gender. The *NALSA* judgement is particularly innovative in its understanding of what freedom of expression means. In the judges' opinion:

Gender identity, therefore, lies at the core of one's personal identity, gender expression and presentation and, therefore, it will have to be protected under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. A transgender's personality could be expressed by the transgender's behaviour and presentation.

This move by the Supreme Court of India was much appreciated by the people especially the transgender community as they were recognized as equals before the law and were given civil rights like marriage adoption, divorce as given to a male or female in India.

The apex court also urged the centre to recognize the transgender community under socially and economically backward classes; and giving OBC reservations for education and employment.

The court directed the centre and the state governments to implement the judgement by recognizing gender identity by developing social welfare schemes and urged them to provide health and sanitation facilities, social economic rights and to take steps to create public awareness so that transgender people will feel that they are also part and parcel of the social life and not be treated as untouchable; take measures to regain their respects and place in society; and seriously address the problem such as fear, shame, gender dysphoria, social pressure, depression, suicidal tendencies and social stigma.

While all this sounds beautiful and just what the community needs, sadly all of it has just remained on paper. With Section 377 of Indian Penal Code that is used as a weapon against sexual minorities and transgender individuals; with gender specific laws in place, India has not gone far.

### **Dislodging Section 377**

Section 377 of Indian Penal Code is a section that criminalizes non-procreative sexual acts between consenting adults of same sex or opposite sex engaging in penile non-vaginal sexual activities. In *Suresh Kumar Kaushal v. NAZ Foundation and Others*<sup>9</sup> the Supreme Court held that the findings of the Delhi High Court to allow consensual homosexual activities between two adults of same as wrong and re-criminalized the section.

The NAZ Foundation Case is an earnest emphasis of the vision of India's founding fathers to build an 'inclusive' and 'tolerant' republic. The decision is a reminder that the Indian Constitution is a vibrant, living document and its wide assurances must be suitably translated to include new circumstances and tests.<sup>10</sup>

Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees us the right to life and protection of personal liberty. While considering the issues of Article 21 the High Court sketched out the broadened extent of right to life and liberty which also incorporates the right to protection of one's dignity, autonomy and privacy. The High Court cited the Yogyakarta principles which are a set of principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. The Principles affirm binding international legal standards with which all States must comply. This broadened the understanding of privacy as it applied to LGBT persons.

The private consensual sexual relations are protected under the right to personal liberty under article 21 under privacy and dignity claim. The Court held that:

“The sphere of privacy allows a person to develop human relations without interference from the outside community or from the state. The exercise of autonomy enables an individual to attain fulfilment, grow in self- esteem, build relationships on his/her own choice and fulfil all legitimate goals that he/she may set. In the Indian constitution the right to live with dignity and the right of privacy<sup>11</sup> are recognised as the dimensions of Article 21.

Section 377 of Indian Penal Code denies a person's dignity and criminalizes his/her core identity solely on the account of his/her sexuality and thus violates art 21 of the constitution. As it stands sec 377 denies a gay person the right to full personhood which is implicit in notion of life under Article 21 of the constitution."<sup>12</sup>

Though the Supreme Court upheld the un-constitutionality of the Section 377 in its 2013 ruling, this section was challenged once again. On August 24<sup>th</sup> 2017, a nine judge bench unanimously affirmed that the right to privacy is a fundamental right under the Constitution of India.

*"The transgender community has come out and has come out and has acquired some space in the society and it has not been easy for them. The biggest challenge right now is the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities as they have little voice and their voices are muted because of the social structure and the already existing homophobia and stigma. They are stuck in a frame work and are unable to wriggle out of it. Even if they come out, they are subject to a lot of rejection and violence."*

*B.T. Venkatesh, Former State Prosecutor*

Justice D.Y. Chandrachud while delivering the judgement has held that privacy is intrinsic to life, liberty, freedom and dignity and there is inalienable natural right. The judgement also rectified the past mistake of the Supreme Court in Suresh Kumar Kaushal v. NAZ Foundation (2014) there by upholding the spirit of LGBT rights. To quote from the judgement:

*"The test of popular acceptance does not furnish a valid basis to disregard the rights which are conferred with the sanctity of constitutional protection. Discrete and insular minorities face grave dangers of discrimination for the simple reason that their views, beliefs or way of life does not accord with the 'mainstream'. Yet in a democratic constitution founded on the rule of law, their rights are as sacred as those conferred on other citizens to protect their freedoms and liberties. Sexual orientation is an essential attribute to privacy. Discrimination of an individual on the basis of sexual orientation is deeply offensive to the dignity and self-worth of the individual. Equality demands that the sexual orientation of each individual in society must be protected on an even platform. The right to privacy and sexual orientation lie at the core of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution .... (LGBT) rights are not so-called rights, but are real rights founded on sound constitutional doctrine. They inhere in the right to life. They swell in privacy and dignity. They constitute the essence of liberty and freedom. Sexual orientation is an essential component of identity. Equal protection demands protection of the identity of every individual without discrimination."<sup>13</sup>*

While the judgment will have far reaching implications on a range of government policies and actions, it will also impact the status of existing laws to the extent to which they violate a citizen's right to privacy- a fundamental right as per the court's landmark ruling. Chief among these laws is section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which hopefully soon will be overruled.<sup>14</sup>

### **The proposed Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016**

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 is tabled in the Lok Sabha by the Government of India. Currently the Bill is being opposed strongly by members across the Transgender community in India.

The Supreme Court's 2014 verdict has recognized "gender identity" and the definition of transgender. But the reality with the unhinging patriarchy and gender-based discrimination tell a completely different story.

For starters, the current Bill completely eliminates the option of self-identification and it wrongly reinforces the stereotypes of transgender persons being partly male and partly female. The Bill provides for a mechanism for a transgender person to apply for a certificate of identity. The Bill also proposes for a screening committee to determine the genuineness of an individual's identity and it undermines the spirit of the NALSA Judgment.

One of the most striking features of the NALSA judgement was the definition of transgender as it included a wide spectrum of gender identity. But according to the current Bill, the definition of a transgender person is one who is:

- Neither wholly female nor wholly male; or
- A combination of female or male; or
- Neither female nor male.

Secondly the Bill falls short on defining the term "discrimination" as it vaguely forbids discrimination in public places, educational institutions, health care centres etc, but there is a lack of law enforcing provisions in the Bill especially on sexual harassment against the community members.

Thirdly, the Bill criminalizes the act of begging while completely neglecting the fact that it is one of the few options of generating income for the transgender persons.

Fourthly, the NALSA judgement provided for reservations under socially and economically backward classes, while the entire provision has disappeared in the current Bill.

Fifthly, the Bill does not mention anything on Property Rights, marriage, divorce, adoption etc as it is clearly affirmed in the NALSA judgement.

The Bill simply ignores the numerous welfare schemes suggested by the Supreme Court in its judgement.

And the reasons for the failures of the Bill go on as this Bill is clearly drafted without trying to find out the needs of the community members and rejecting the recommendations made by the Standing Committee.

The Transgender Bill 2016 is set to be re-introduced in the budget session of the Parliament after incorporating the recommendations made by the parliamentary standing committee. Changes the centre is considering are:

- Dropping the phrase 'neither wholly male nor female' from the definition of transgender.
- Removing the need for medical screening committees to certify the identity of a transgender person.
- To include and address the civil rights such as marriage, adoption and the need to define discrimination against transgender persons and make all forms of violence against them correspond with the punishments under existing laws, and reservation in jobs and educational institutions.

### **The Karnataka State Policy on Transgenders, 2017**

In October 2017, the Karnataka State government approved the 'Karnataka State Policy on Transgenders, 2017'. This move by the state government is much applauded as it is within the framework and spirit of the NALSA judgement. The Policy aims to safeguard the fundamental rights of the community and bring them into the main stream of the society. The Policy also has a mention of different categories of transgender namely- male to female transgender, female to male transgender, jogappa, hijta, inter-sex, shivshakti and aravanis.

- The Policy aims to provide social, legal and economic protection; educational and health facilities; basic amenities such as housing, education, BPL card, ration card, voters' ID and employment among others, water supply, sanitation etc.
- It aims to create awareness about the transgender community in all educational institutions of the State to reach out to families through anganwadi workers to sensitize about trans-children. The Policy also aims to bring in place a monitoring committee or a cell at educational institutions to address the issues of violence and discrimination against transgender persons. The Policy moots the indicators for a child-friendly policy and to include transgender children in the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan', Right to Education to promote literacy.



- A Transgender Cell will also be set-up in the Department of Woman and Child to initiate welfare programmes to address stigma, violence and discrimination. The WCD will act as the nodal department to implement the policy.
- The Policy states that all the private sectors should adopt anti-discrimination policies to address workplace sexual harassment, employee benefits etc.
- The Policy also suggests free sex-reassignment surgery which includes counselling and hormone therapy.
- The Policy also aims to build public opinion to strike down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code and also seeks to amend section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, Juvenile Justice Act etc to make the laws gender-neutral.

*“The government order was issued for the Transgender Policy in December 2017. The Policy is a comprehensive policy which covers all aspects of constitutional safeguards along with implementation schedule. It is overall a good Policy with well-intention.*

*Karnataka State has been very progressive and even before the Policy was adopted, we had several schemes. For example, the Mythri Scheme is a social security program where sexual minorities above the age of 18 years are provided pension of Rs. 600. Under the economic development program for transgender persons Rs. 50,000 is given for entrepreneurship development, wherein Rs. 25,000 is given as incentive and the other 25,000 rupees is given as loan to be repaid. Houses are sanctioned under the housing department; driving licences can be provided to self-declared transgender persons by the RTO; health department has several schemes for HIV and we also have one-stop crisis centres in the district hospitals among others.*

*Policy makes it comprehensive in a way that all the departments should have programs to include transgender persons and letters have already gone to these departments to include them in the budget. A transgender cell has been set-up to implement the policy where the third meeting will be held soon with all the departments” states Uma Mahadevan, Principal Secretary of the Woman and Child Department.*

Although the State Policy lays down measures to provide a conducive environment for transgnders to be integrated into the mainstream, it falls short in identifying few issues.

1. The Policy does not provide the terminology of who may be gender non-conforming from who a trans-child is as it is important to sensitize and counsel the teachers, administrative staff and family members.

2. The Policy does not speak of training and education modules for teachers on issues and rights of gender non-conforming children, trans-children and inter-sex.
3. The provisions on gender certification and identification, issues of identity cards, and rights of marriage, adoption and inheritance needs to be addressed.
4. Although the Policy states the adoption of anti-discriminative policies to address sexual harassment at workplace, it is not in tune with the existing Sexual Harassment of Woman at Workplace Act, 2013.
5. Finally, the Policy fails to address the growing number of crisis cases reported in the State, coercive use of beggars' colony to physically, economically abuse the community, social stigma and increasing police atrocities.<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

***“The Victim who is able to articulate the situation of the victim has ceased to be a victim: he or she has become a threat.”***

- ***James Baldwin***

For the way forward, along with external changes, internal changes are very necessary and important that the issues of sexual minorities are addressed from the bottom -starting from the grass root levels. It needs to start with awareness and sensitization of families, educational institution, health departments, state and government departments, the community members and the community at large. There is also a need to build a large solidarity movement so that we can offer space to the sexual minority communities. It is also very important that we align and identify the sexual minority movement along with the women’s movements, Dalit movements etc because unless there is a larger holistic movement, it is difficult to bring in changes apart as the governments keep changing. Many countries have made an effort to progress and make inclusive laws, so should we!

## REFERENCES

1. The Human Rights Campaign's Transgender children and Youth resources for families, community members and more
2. [www.swasti.org](http://www.swasti.org)
3. An introduction to sociology- Vidya Bhushan and D.R. Sachdeva
4. Same sex marriages in India by Ananya Khanna; [www.lawctopus.com](http://www.lawctopus.com)
5. Upendra Baxi, Human Rights Violations against Transgender Community (PUCL-K, 2003)
6. SC dismisses the plea to make sexual assault gender neutral, [www.firstpost.com](http://www.firstpost.com)
7. Rapes no one speaks about- Nupur Sonar [www.tehelka.com](http://www.tehelka.com)
8. WP (Civil) No. 604 of 2013
9. 2010 CriLJ 94)
10. Vikram Raghavan, Navigating the noteworthy and nebulous in NAZ Foundation 2 NUJS Law Review 399 (2009)
11. AIR 1963 SC 1295 AND (1975) 2 SCC 148
12. 2010 CriJ 94
13. Key highlights of Justice Chandrachud's Judgement in the Right to Privacy case
14. Right to Privacy Judgement- extracts from the judgement that impact section 377 of the IPC which criminalized homosexuality.
15. Karnataka Trans Policy may be a step in the right direction, but needs work, by- Bindu. N. Doddahatti and Deeptha Rao

### Other references:

1. The Supreme Court's Right to Privacy Judgement 1 by Gautham Bhatia
2. Suresh Kumar Kaushal v NAZ Foundation: A Critical Analysis by Oindrilla Mukherjee
3. Section 377 and new dilemmas of transgender communities by Debjyoti Ghosh
4. Human Rights Violations against Transgender Community (PUCL-K, 2003)
5. Living an extreme margin- Social Exclusion of Transgender Population in Bangladesh. 2009; 27: 441-51
6. Makadon HJ- Ending LGBT invisibility in health care: 2011; 78: 220-4

## CONTACT DETAILS

Ondede,

C/o Ashoka Innovators for the Public

54, 1st Cross, Domlur Layout,

Bengaluru, Karnataka 560071

T: 080 4274 5777

Email: [ondededvs@gmail.com](mailto:ondededvs@gmail.com)

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ondede-Dignity-Voice-Sexuality>

Blog: <https://ondede.wordpress.com/>

Publications:

1. Human Rights Violations against Transgenders in Karnataka, 2014

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/277108005/Final-Report-on-Human-Rights-Violations-of-Transgender-Persons>

2. Socio- Medical Status of Transgender Persons in India, 2017

<https://ondede.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/socio-medical-status-of-transgender.pdf>



**ONDEDE**

C/o. Mahabodhi Arogya Seva Kendra,  
Siddapura Main Road, Jayanagar 1st Block,  
Opp. Lalbaugh, Bangalore - 560 011.

E-mail: [ondededvs@gmail.com](mailto:ondededvs@gmail.com)

Web Blog : [www.ondedewordpress.org](http://www.ondedewordpress.org)

