



Over the last few years, I have had the opportunity to closely engage with and work alongside members of the transgender community. What I have witnessed is not confusion or rebellion. It is a deep and consistent clarity of identity, often held quietly, even in the face of constant resistance.

Transgender persons are individuals whose gender identity does not align with the sex assigned to them at birth. For many, this awareness begins early, often in childhood, and stays with them as they grow. It is not shaped by class, caste, religion or geography. It is not a trend or a phase. Medical and psychological science recognises this as real. It is lived. It is not a choice.



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And yet, from a young age, difference is punished. What begins as a child expressing themselves differently quickly becomes a reason for ridicule. That ridicule often turns into violence. For many, it leads to exclusion from their own families, their schools, and eventually from society itself.

Trans women, trans men and non-binary persons continue to be among the most vulnerable and targeted communities in India. According to statistics shown by an Indian queer community platform Gaysi Family, 31% of trans people have attempted suicide, 50% of them before the age of 20.



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There is also a persistent misunderstanding that needs to be addressed. **Most transgender persons are not intersex** (individuals with variations in hormones, chromosomes or internal/external anatomy).

On the contrary **Trans people have functional male/female bodies. Their identity is not about anatomy. It is about who they are in every other way.**



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The recent amendment to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act does something deeply concerning. It changes the basis of recognition itself.

By limiting recognition to intersex persons or to certain socio-cultural identities such as Kinnar, Hijra, Jogta or Aravani communities – almost all of whom are actually Trans people, **the law excludes a large number of transgender individuals who do not belong to these traditional systems. Not to mention the complete and specific dismissal of Trans men who do not come under these socio cultural structures.**



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These are people who are already trying to build ordinary, dignified, inclusive lives. They are working, supporting families, finding their place in the world, much like you and me.

Instead **the amendment risks pushing the community into structures of segregation and livelihood like 'Hijras' or Jogta that they may never have chosen, but were historically forced into because society left them with no other way to survive.**

This is also at odds with our own cultural memory. **There has always been space, even respect, for gender-diverse communities in India.**



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In my own ancestral home of Wankaner we had a trans woman staff member, the only non family member to have privileged access to both male and female royal chambers. What our traditions have been able to hold with complexity and acceptance, the law now risks narrowing into rigid categories.

What we needed was a **Bill to support the vision of a diverse yet inclusive country, forward thinking yet inspired by our Indian ethos and traditions, sensitive to the spectrum of Trans realities and relevant to our times.**



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While the community and its allies including our own institutions and initiatives such as **Shree Maharani Chimnabai Stree Udyogalaya, Lukshmi Vilas Palace Heritage Garba and Gazra Cafe** have been consciously engaged in bringing diversity, equality and inclusion in Indian society, the Bill disintegrates all such efforts.

Instead this amendment takes away something fundamental. **The right to define and live one's own identity with authenticity.**



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It creates uncertainty around basic aspects of life such as documentation, employment, and access to systems. People who are already working and contributing now fear losing that stability. Not because they have changed, but because the law has.

Removing recognition will not change who transgender persons are. It will only make their lives harder. It will make them more invisible, more vulnerable, and more exposed to harm. We are not dealing with something that needs to be corrected or controlled. We are dealing with something we have not taken the time to understand.



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And when a law refuses to recognise people, it does not make them disappear. It simply abandons them.

–Radhikaraje Gaekwad

Trustee and Vice President,
Maharani Chimnabai Stree Udyogalaya.
& Founder of the Gazra inclusivity cafe



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