



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

India: Sexual orientation and gender identity and/or expression

Version 6.0

December 2025

Executive summary

India is a designated state under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. This means that there is in general in that state or part of it no serious risk of persecution of persons entitled to reside in that state or part of it.

LGBT+ people in India form a particular social group (PSG). However, in general, they are unlikely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from the state and/or non-state actors.

The Indian Constitution provides equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on grounds including sex, interpreted to include gender identity. In 2018, the Supreme Court decriminalised same-sex acts. Same-sex marriage or civil partnership is not legally recognised, though courts have acknowledged same-sex couples constitute family units without marriage.

There are limited reports of police abuse directed at LGBT+ people. Police harassment may be more likely in conservative, rural areas but is not systemic.

India is a diverse, multicultural country where traditional social norms shape views on sexual orientation and gender identity and/or expression (SOGIE) and family life. LGBT+ people may conceal their identities or enter heterosexual marriages. Recent surveys show increasing public support for same-sex marriage and there is strong advocacy within LGBT+ circles for equal rights, although societal acceptance varies widely, often influenced by class and urban-rural divides.

Discrimination and harassment are reportedly common within families. Whether a person's family is supportive of their SOGIE identity will depend on the particular family and community. Reports of more general societal violence are much less common although LGBT+ individuals can experience discrimination, harassment, eviction, and barriers to accessing healthcare due to stigma.

Some police officers side with family interests and try to mediate or return LGBT+ people to their families when they report a crime perpetrated by family members. However, the courts can and do intervene. In general, the state is both willing and able to offer sufficient protection from non-state actors, including 'rogue' state actors. Internal relocation is also likely to be reasonable, particularly to urban areas and large cities.

Decision makers must consider the findings in the Country Guidance (CG) cases [MD \(same-sex oriented males: risk\) India CG \[2014\] UKUT 65 \(IAC\)](#), and [AR and NH \(lesbians\) India CG \[2016\] UKUT 00066 \(IAC\)](#) which continue to apply.

Where a claim based on a person's sexual orientation and gender identity and/or expression is refused, it is likely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

All cases must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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Assessment

Section updated: 10 December 2025

About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of **whether, in general**:

- a person faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm by state and/or non-state actors because of the person's actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression
- the state (or quasi state bodies) can provide effective protection
- internal relocation is possible to avoid persecution/serious harm
- a claim, if refused, is likely or not to be certified as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

This note provides an assessment of the situation of actual and perceived lesbian, gay, bisexual and, trans and people of other minority sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBT+). Sources often refer to LGBT+ people collectively, but the experiences of each group may differ. Where information is available, the note will refer to and consider the treatment of each group discretely.

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

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1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status, Asylum Instruction on Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when one has not already been undertaken (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- 1.1.4 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons to apply one (or more) of the exclusion clauses. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.
- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Actual or imputed particular social group (PSG).
- 2.1.2 LGBT+ people form a PSG in India within the meaning of the Refugee Convention because they share an innate characteristic or a common background that cannot be changed, or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it **and** have a distinct identity in India because the group is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.1.3 Although LGBT+ people form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.
- 2.1.4 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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3. Risk

3.1 Risk from the state: overview

- 3.1.1 LGBT+ people are unlikely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from the state. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 3.1.2 The Indian Constitution provides equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on grounds including sex, interpreted by the Supreme Court of

India to include gender identity. In 2018, the Supreme Court decriminalised same-sex acts and in July 2024 the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was replaced by the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) which includes gender-neutral language and protections (see [Constitution and statutory laws](#)).

- 3.1.3 Same-sex marriage or civil partnership is not legally recognised, though courts have acknowledged same-sex couples constitute family units without marriage. Adoption and surrogacy laws exclude same-sex couples, though single LGBT+ individuals may adopt under certain laws (see [Trans and intersex rights](#) and [Same-sex unions, marriage and adoption rights](#)).
- 3.1.4 A Supreme Court case to allow same-sex marriage was deferred to parliament in 2023 as the court did not have the power to reinterpret existing marriage law. The government argued that the demand for same-sex marriage was not compatible with the concept of the Indian family unit of a husband, a wife, and children and reflected 'urban elitist views.' However, it committed to form a panel to further examine the legal protections and financial rights of LGBT+ people, which was established in April 2024. In August 2024 the government removed restrictions on LGBT+ people opening joint bank accounts, allowed for those in same-sex relationships to nominate their partner as a financial beneficiary and recognised LGBT+ partners of the same household for ration card purposes (see [Same-sex unions, marriage and adoption rights](#) and [State attitudes](#)).
- 3.1.5 Government and public officials' attitudes towards LGBT+ rights are mixed. In 2023 Minister Smriti Irani made public comments questioning the applicability of menstrual leave for LGBT+ people which drew criticism from opposition leaders for being insensitive and misinformed. Political parties have publicly recognised LGBT+ representatives for example within both the Congress party and the Nationalist Congress Party, who appointed an LGBT+ spokesperson in 2024. Local authorities have occasionally restricted free expression, such as when a government cultural centre in Rajasthan cancelled a dance performance about a gay relationship after objections from the Hindu nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh RSS, claimed it violated traditional Indian values. However, cultural events and Pride festivals generally occur without state restriction in multiple locations in India (see [State attitudes](#) and [Pride and LGBT+ inclusive events](#)).
- 3.1.6 The Government of India has issued directives to all States/UTs to take measures to ensure the rights of LGBT+ community with relation to healthcare, and HIV testing and treatment remain government priorities. However, service provision in other areas of healthcare for LGBT+ people can in practice be limited (see [Healthcare](#).)
- 3.1.7 There are some reports of police abuse directed at LGBT+ people, arbitrary arrests, derogatory language, extortion and coercing of victims not to file complaints, although evidence of such treatment is limited. Police harassment may be more likely in conservative, rural areas but is not systemic (see [Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively](#)).
- 3.1.8 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status, Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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3.2 Risk from the state: gay and bisexual men

- 3.2.1 In the Country Guidance (CG) case [MD \(same-sex oriented males: risk\) India CG \[2014\] UKUT 65 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 24 February 2012 and 10 October 2013 and promulgated 12 February 2014, the Upper Tribunal (UT) held that 'Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code 1860 criminalises same-sex sexual activity' (paragraph 174a), although, 'Prosecutions for consensual sexual acts between males under section 377 IPC are, and always have been, extremely rare' (paragraph 174b).
- 3.2.2 In [MD](#) the UT further held that:
'Some persons who are, or are perceived to be, same-sex oriented males suffer ill treatment, extortion, harassment and discrimination from the police...; however, the prevalence of such incidents is not such, even when taken cumulatively, that there can be said in general to be a real risk of an openly same-sex oriented male suffering treatment which is persecutory or which would otherwise reach the threshold required for protection under the Refugee Convention, Article 15(b) of the Qualification Directive, or Article 3 ECHR' (paragraph 174c).
- 3.2.3 Since the promulgation of [MD](#), legal protections for same-sex couples have improved and consensual same-sex sexual acts between adults, conducted in private are no longer an offence. In sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) there are no documented cases after decriminalisation of adults arrested solely for consensual same-sex acts undertaken in private, or any indication police are interested in such relationships. Therefore the country information in this note does not indicate that there are 'very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence' to justify a departure from the findings in [MD](#) that gay men are generally unlikely to be at risk of persecution or serious harm.

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3.3 Risk from the state: lesbians and bisexual women

- 3.3.1 In the CG case [AR and NH \(lesbians\) India CG \[2016\] UKUT 00066 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 23 June 2015 and promulgated 1 February 2016, the UT held that all the country guidance given in [MD](#) applies equally to lesbians (para 78(7)).
- 3.3.2 The UT in [AR and NH](#) found that '... the evidence does not support a finding of endemic police complicity in harassment or other ill-treatment of lesbian couples or individuals' (paragraph 76).
- 3.3.3 There is limited information on the state treatment of lesbians and bisexual women. Although there are isolated incidents of police harassment, this does not indicate such treatment by police is systemic. The country information in this note does therefore not indicate that there are 'very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence' to justify a departure from these findings. Although the UT in [AR and NH](#) did not specifically consider the situation of bisexual women, the information considered in this note would support that the findings of the UT in [AR and NH](#) would likely apply to bisexual women.
- 3.3.4 See the Country Policy and Information Note, [India: Women fearing gender-based violence](#) for information on state attitudes towards women in general.

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3.4 Risk from the state: trans and intersex people

- 3.4.1 The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019 legally recognises a third gender and prohibits discrimination against trans people, including intersex persons. Legal recognition as a trans person only requires an application to a magistrate and no obligation to disclose medical history. However, to be legally recognised as male or female requires proof of gender-affirming surgery or medical intervention such as counselling or hormone therapy. The BNS, effective from 1 July 2024, defines gender to include trans persons (see [Trans and intersex rights](#).)
- 3.4.2 Institutional measures to support trans people exist such as the National Council for Transgender Persons (established in 2020) and the SMILE scheme launched in 2022, which provides rehabilitation, gender-affirming medical care, education, and skill development. Additionally, the National Portal for Transgender Persons facilitates identity certification for accessing welfare benefits. Initiatives such as Garima Greh – a government-supported scheme providing safe housing for trans people – and increasing awareness aim to improve access to safe and secure accommodation. The National Human Rights Commission acknowledges progress in trans rights but notes ongoing discrimination in health, education, and housing (see [Access to services](#)).
- 3.4.3 There are limited reports of police harassment, the arrest of trans people and dismissive attitudes amongst some officers when trans people try to report a crime (see [Hijras and the wider trans community](#) and [Protection](#)).

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3.5 Risk from non-state actors: overview

- 3.5.1 LGBT+ people are unlikely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from non-state actors. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 3.5.2 India is a diverse, multicultural country where traditional social norms shape views on SOGIE and family life. There is growing media representation of LGBT+ people and discussion of their rights, however conservative views persist, making open discussions about sexuality largely taboo. A small survey of 175 participants from the LGBT+ community in mid-2024 found the biggest barriers to maintaining same-sex relationships was the lack of public acceptance (25%) followed by social stigma (20%), legal restrictions (20%), religious beliefs (17%) and lack of political will (17%) (see [Societal norms and views](#)).
- 3.5.3 Marriage is socially and culturally important, particularly for women, and therefore LGBT+ people may conceal their identities or enter heterosexual marriages. Recent surveys show increasing public support for same-sex marriage and there is strong advocacy within LGBT+ circles for equal rights, although societal acceptance varies widely, often influenced by class and urban-rural divides (see [Societal norms and views](#) and [Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively](#)).
- 3.5.4 Discrimination and harassment are reportedly common within families, and some people face pressure to keep their SOGIE identity hidden or to move away from their local area once disclosed. Some LGBT+ people experience coercion or violence from relatives, an issue that has drawn public attention through widely reported court rulings condemning such practices. Whilst

sources indicate that LGBT+ people face verbal, physical, and sexual violence there is limited detail on the overall prevalence, severity, and patterns of such violence, with most evidence drawn from qualitative accounts or small-scale studies which rely primarily on self-reporting rather than comprehensive national data. Whether a person's family is supportive of their SOGIE will depend on the particular family and community. Families who support LGBT+ family members can experience ostracism from the local community. Reports of more general societal violence are much less common though LGBT+ people can experience discrimination, harassment, eviction, and barriers accessing healthcare due to stigma (see [Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively](#), [Access to services](#) and [Protection](#).)

- 3.5.5 There is no law banning conversion therapy, but it is banned by medical authorities and practising it is considered professional misconduct. Some families continue to attempt to change a family member's sexual orientation or gender identity at home, in religious venues or in hospitals, although prevalence is difficult to quantify (see [Conversion therapy](#)).
- 3.5.6 In general, LGBT+ people can access healthcare but may encounter barriers linked to stigma and limited awareness among providers. Specialist services, such as gender-affirming care and tailored mental health support, are mostly available in larger cities and often through private providers. While legal protections exist, implementation is uneven, and many rely on NGOs for support (see [Healthcare](#)).
- 3.5.7 LGBT+ people can encounter discrimination in housing, including refusal to rent, harassment and occasional evictions. Employment opportunities may be affected by bias in recruitment and workplace discrimination but a growing number of corporate diversity policies and inclusion programmes are contributing to more accepting environments (see [Employment](#) and [Access to services](#)).
- 3.5.8 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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3.6 Risk from non-state actors: gay and bisexual men

- 3.6.1 In the CG case of [MD](#) the UT held that:

'Some persons who are, or are perceived to be, same-sex oriented males suffer ill treatment, extortion, harassment and discrimination from ... the general populace; however, the prevalence of such incidents is not such, even when taken cumulatively, that there can be said in general to be a real risk of an openly same-sex oriented male suffering treatment which is persecutory or which would otherwise reach the threshold required for protection under the Refugee Convention, Article 15(b) of the Qualification Directive, or Article 3 ECHR' (paragraph 174c).
- 3.6.2 The UT also held that 'Same-sex orientation is seen socially, and within the close familial context, as being unacceptable in India. Circumstances for same-sex oriented males are improving, but progress is slow' (para 174d).
- 3.6.3 The country information does not indicate that there are 'very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence' to justify a departure from these findings.

- 3.6.4 Many men who have sex with men (MSM) do not identify as gay or bisexual and often do not see themselves as part of the LGBTI community. It is common for these men to marry women and have children, sometimes due to strong cultural expectations and family pressure. A 2024 study which examined violence against MSM in six major Indian cities using data from 300 MSM respondents found over 60% reported experiencing verbal, physical, or sexual violence, with higher prevalence among younger men and those publicly out about their sexuality. Verbal abuse was the most common, and respondents reported this often stems from family disapproval and societal stigma (see Societal treatment - [Gay and bisexual men](#).)
- 3.6.5 Although the study highlights the experiences of some MSM, there are limitations of wider applicability due to its small, urban-focused sample and recruitment of respondents via dating apps. Additionally, there is no analysis of the nature of the verbal, physical or sexual violence (in either the quantitative or qualitative data) making it hard to assess the severity of such treatment. The terms verbal, physical or sexual violence cover a wide spectrum of behaviour, much of which is unlikely to reach the high threshold of persecution or serious harm (see Societal treatment - [Gay and bisexual men](#)).
- 3.6.6 See also [Risk from non-state actors: overview](#)

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3.7 Risk from non-state actors: lesbians and bisexual women

- 3.7.1 The UT held that the country guidance in [MD](#) applies equally to lesbians in terms of treatment by the general populace. In [AR and NH](#) the UT looked more closely at familial treatment of lesbians and held that:
- ‘A risk of persecution or serious harm for a lesbian woman in India, where it exists, arises from her family members, and the extent of such risk, and whether it extends beyond the home area, is a question of fact in each case.
- ‘The risk of persecution or serious harm is higher for uneducated lower-class lesbian women in rural areas, who remain under the control of their family members and may not be permitted to leave the home to continue meeting their lesbian partners.
- ‘Where family members are hostile to a lesbian woman’s sexuality, they may reject her completely and sometimes formally renounce her as a member of that family...’ (paragraphs 78(8) to 78(10)).
- 3.7.2 There is very little recent, detailed information about how lesbians and bisexual women are treated in society. Most available sources discuss LGBT+ people as a broad group, but as this term covers many identities it may not always include all of them equally. However, the country information indicates that where risk to LGBT+ people arises, it is most commonly within the family, which aligns with the findings in [AR and NH](#) on the situation for lesbians (see [Societal norms and views](#) and Societal treatment: [Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively](#) and [Lesbians and bisexual women](#)).
- 3.7.3 Therefore the country evidence since [AR and NH](#) continues to indicate that, in general, lesbians are not subject to treatment by non-state actors that amounts to persecution or serious harm. Although the UT in [AR and NH](#) did not specifically consider the situation of bisexual women, the same findings

are likely to apply.

- 3.7.4 See also [Risk from non-state actors: overview](#) and the Country Policy and Information Note, [India: Women fearing gender-based violence](#) for information on societal treatment and attitudes towards women in general.

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3.8 Risk from non-state actors: trans and intersex people

- 3.8.1 Hijras and trans people face harassment, discrimination in public spaces, healthcare, education, and employment, although workplace inclusion initiatives are increasing. Due to their often-increased visibility in society they can be particularly vulnerable to violence and extortion. There is limited information on the experiences of intersex people. However, in general, trans and intersex people are not subject to treatment by non-state actors that is sufficiently serious, by its nature or repetition, to amount to persecution or serious harm (see Societal treatment – [Hijras and the wider transgender community](#), [Intersex persons](#) and [Access to services](#)).

- 3.8.2 See also [Risk from non-state actors: overview](#)

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4. Protection

- 4.1.1 In general, India takes reasonable steps to prevent persecution by operating an effective legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts constituting persecution and a person is generally able to access the protection. Corruption, sympathy or weakness of some individuals in the system of justice does not mean that the state is unwilling to afford protection and there may be various sound reasons why criminals may not be brought to justice.
- 4.1.2 As such, the state is both willing and able to offer sufficient protection to a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 4.1.3 In [MD](#), the UT found evidence that ‘some Indian state authorities, with the assistance of NGO’s, have offered the police education and sensitivity training in relation to their dealings with LGBT persons and that incidents of police harassment of LGBT persons are, although still occurring, in decline.’ (paragraph 117).
- 4.1.4 Since [MD](#) was heard, there are continuing examples of States/UTs offering education and sensitivity training to police. Additionally, the Supreme Court of India offers sensitivity training for judges including a module on considering disciplinary or criminal consequences for a police officer found to have harassed an LGBT person. Therefore, the country information in this note does not indicate that there are ‘very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence’ to justify a departure from the findings in [MD](#) (see [Police and judicial training and protection policies](#))
- 4.1.5 The BNS effective from 1 July 2024 made various offences gender-neutral, ensuring equal protection for all victims and accountability for all perpetrators regardless of gender. Tamil Nadu, and the city of Chennai, have specific anti-discrimination legislation providing protections for LGBT+ people. Court

rulings have banned sex reassignment surgeries on intersex infants in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Delhi. The government informed all States/UTs in September 2024 to take measures to ensure the rights of LGBT+ people in relation to the prohibition of conversion therapy (see [Constitution and statutory laws](#) [Trans and intersex rights](#), [Conversion therapy](#).)

- 4.1.6 There are some allegations that police do not respond appropriately to crimes committed against LGBT+ people, instead arresting victims rather than the perpetrators, although reports are limited. Some police officers may side with family interests and try to mediate or return LGBT+ people to their families when they report a crime perpetrated by family members. However, the courts can and do intervene. In May 2025, the Madras High Court ordered the release of a lesbian woman allegedly abducted by her family, held police accountable for failing to act, and directed protection for the couple. Cases of rape, extortion and assault targeting gay men via dating apps have been reported, with many investigated by police and charges filed (see [State treatment](#) and [Societal treatment](#).)
- 4.1.7 NCRB crime statistics from 2022, the last available data, does not record the sexual orientation of victims or perpetrators although limited information is available with a gender split. The recorded number of trans murder victims was 9 out of over 28,000 murders. For cases under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act at the end of 2022 there were 10 cases between investigation stage and trial and there were no cases discharged, acquitted, or convicted during the period. Numbers of victims recorded in official data as trans are low, indicating a likely combination of factors such as gender not being properly recorded against offences, incidents being under reported and/or cases not registered. Although the absence of LGBT+ specific data means it is difficult to quantitatively ascertain the use of available protective measures, it does not mean protection is generally unavailable (see State treatment -[Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively](#) and [Hijras and the wider trans community](#).)
- 4.1.8 Various NGOs advocate for LGBTI rights and, whilst they cannot provide protection in lieu of the state, they may be able to assist LGBTI individuals in availing themselves of the protection of the state by providing support and advice (see [NGOs and support](#)).
- 4.1.9 For general information on state protection and in respect of women, see the Country Policy and Information Notes on [India: Actors of protection](#) and [India: Women fearing gender-based violence](#) respectively.
- 4.1.10 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a non-state or rogue state actor, they are likely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.2 This is because in general, there are parts of India, particularly urban areas and large cities such as (but not limited to) Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, where it will be reasonable to expect LGBT+ to relocate.

5.1.3 The UT held in [MD](#) that:

‘It would not, in general, be unreasonable or unduly harsh for an open same-sex oriented male (or a person who is perceived to be such), who is able to demonstrate a real risk in his home area because of his particular circumstances, to relocate internally to a major city within India.

‘India has a large, robust and accessible LGBTI activist and support network, mainly to be found in the large cities’ (paragraphs 174e and 174f).

5.1.4 In [AR and NH](#) the UT held that, in cases where a family are hostile to a lesbian’s sexuality, leading them to reject and formally renounce her:

‘... whether relocation to a city is unduly harsh will be a question of fact, depending on the ability of such a lesbian woman to survive economically away from her family and social networks.

‘If a lesbian woman’s family wishes to pursue and harm her in the place of internal relocation, their ability to do so will depend on the reach of the family network, how persistent they are, and how influential. The evidence indicates that there is normally sufficient state protection for women whose families seek to harm them in their place of internal relocation.

‘In general, where there is a risk of persecution or serious harm in a lesbian woman’s home area, for educated, and therefore “middle class” women, an internal relocation option is available. They are likely to be able to relocate to one of the major cities in India and are likely to be able to find employment and support themselves, albeit with difficulty, and to live together openly, should they choose to do so. In general, such relocation will not be unduly harsh’ (paragraphs 78(10) to 78(12)).

5.1.5 The country information in this note does not indicate that there are ‘very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence’ to justify a departure from the findings in [MD](#) and [AR and NH](#).

5.1.6 India is a diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual society with a population of approximately 1.4 billion. The country comprises 28 States and 8 UTs. There are multiple urban centres with populations of over 1 million and many major cities with populations of over 5 million. The law provides for freedom of movement and grants citizens the right to reside and settle in any part of India, which is generally respected (see the Country Information Note: India and Country Policy and Information Note, [India: Internal relocation](#)).

5.1.7 Numerous organisations provide advocacy, support, safe housing, health services, legal aid, and helplines for LGBT+ people across India . State shelter homes like Garima Grehs exist, although mainly for trans people. Online and physical spaces for socialising, art projects, pride events, and cultural festivals exist, though societal acceptance varies, and is more likely in urban areas (see [LGBT+ community](#) and [Internal relocation](#)).

5.1.8 For guidance on internal relocation for women in general, and on geography and demography, socio-economic indicators, freedom of movement and factors which may be relevant to an individual’s particular circumstances, see the Country Policy and Information Notes, [India: Women fearing gender-based violence](#) and [India: Internal relocation](#) respectively.

5.1.9 For guidance on internal relocation and factors to consider, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity](#)

[issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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6. Certification

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it must be considered for certification under section 94(3) of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as India is listed as a designated state. Such a claim must be certified under section 94(3) if you are satisfied it is clearly unfounded.
- 6.1.2 Where a claim based on a person's sexual orientation and gender identity and/or expression is refused, it is likely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as, in general, the state is willing and able to provide effective protection and/or internal relocation is likely to be reasonable.
- 6.1.3 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment which, as stated in the [About the assessment](#), is the guide to the current objective conditions.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **30 September 2025**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

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7. Terminology

7.1 Hijras

7.1.1 The Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade country information report on India published 29 September 2023, based on ‘... DFAT’s on-the-ground knowledge and discussions with a range of sources in India... information from government and non-government sources ...’¹ (The DFAT report 2023) explained ‘*Hijra* is a South Asian male-to-female transgender identity that has been part of the cultural landscape of India and other South Asian countries for centuries. *Hijra* are part of a unique and ancient culture...’²

7.1.2 Hijras in India identify as a community of its own, with their own set of traditions, occupations and languages³. Although most hijras wear women’s clothing and have adopted female mannerisms, they generally do not attempt to pass as women⁴. Becoming a hijra involves a process of initiation into a hijra ‘family’, or small group, under a guru teacher⁵ ⁶. George Arney wrote, in a BBC News article of 30 November 2000, that Hijras have been part of the South Asian landscape for thousands of years⁷.

See also [Trans people](#)

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7.2 Trans people

¹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (paragraph 1.4), 29 September 2023

² DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.160), 29 September 2023

³ Scroll.in [Hijra, kothi, aravani: a quick guide to transgender terminology](#) 17 April 2014

⁴ Nanda. S., [Neither Man nor Woman...](#) (Chapter 2), 1999

⁵ Nanda. S., [Neither Man nor Woman...](#) (Chapter 2), 1999

⁶ BBC News, [Blurring the gender lines in Bangladesh](#), 30 November 2000

⁷ BBC News, [Blurring the gender lines in Bangladesh](#), 30 November 2000

- 7.2.1 Tiritiya Prakriti (third sex or third gender⁸) was used in ‘ancient India’ to refer to people who were characterised by mixed male/female characteristics and considered neither one nor the other, including gay males and lesbians^{9 10}.
- 7.2.2 Hijras, Aravanis and Alis are terms used to refer to trans people¹¹. With specific regard to hijras, they are ‘... biological males who reject their masculine identity and identify either as women, or “not-men”, or “in-between man and woman” or “neither man nor woman”.’¹² Not all trans women identify as hijra. In a survey on conversion therapy by the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (APTAN) published in 2021, of the 15 trans women interviewed, only one identified as hijra¹³.
- 7.2.3 Thirunangai, Kinnar, Shiv-Shakti, Jogappa, Sakhi, Jogta/Jogti, Aradhi hinjida, Telugu, Thiru nangai, khusra, Khadra, pavaiya are regional terms used to refer to trans people, some of which are considered derogatory^{14 15 16}.
- 7.2.4 The DFAT report 2023 noted:
- ‘Words to describe different transgender identities might not exist in Indian languages and the word ‘*hijra*’ might be used when a different word is used in English. Hijra generally does not refer to female-to-male transgender people. Educated transgender people might prefer terms more familiar in the west and expressed in English, such as ‘transman’ or ‘transwoman’, and do not participate in *hijra* culture.
- ‘...but transgender people in the sense familiar to Western readers (including female-to-male transgender people)... exist in India as elsewhere in the world.’¹⁷

See also [Hijras](#)

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8. Legal context

8.1 Constitution and statutory laws

- 8.1.1 The Indian Constitution does not directly refer to sexual orientation or gender identity in articles defining the rights of citizens. The Constitution provides:
- ‘Article 14: The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
- ‘Article 15(1): The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth...
- ‘Article 16(1): There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.’¹⁸

⁸ Galva108, [Tiritiya-Prakriti: People of the Third Sex](#), 23 March 2024

⁹ Law Insider, [LGBTQ Rights in India and Acknowledgment](#), 23 August 2020

¹⁰ Galva108, [Tiritiya-Prakriti: People of the Third Sex](#), 23 March 2024

¹¹ EPW Editorial, [Gender Rights](#), 15 July 2008

¹² Scroll.In [Hijra, kothi, aravani: a quick guide to transgender terminology](#) 17 April 2014

¹³ APTAN, [Conversion therapy practices in India](#) (page 6), 31 March 2021

¹⁴ Development News, [In India, Nothing About Being a Trans Person Is Easy](#) no date

¹⁵ Scroll.In [Hijra, kothi, aravani: a quick guide to transgender terminology](#) 17 April 2014

¹⁶ Galva108, [Tiritiya-Prakriti: People of the Third Sex](#), 23 March 2024

¹⁷ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.160, 3.165), 29 September 2023

¹⁸ [Constitution of India](#), (Part 3: Fundamental Rights), 1950

- 8.1.2 'Sex', as defined in Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution, was interpreted by the Supreme Court in the case of [National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India and others](#) (NALSA), 15 April 2014, to include gender identity¹⁹.
- 8.1.3 In September 2018, the Supreme Court of India (SC) declared, in [Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India](#), that Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), in so far as it criminalised consensual sexual acts between adults of the same sex, was unconstitutional²⁰. The SC held that members of the LGBT+ community were entitled to the same constitutional rights, freedoms and protections as all other citizens²¹. Section 377 was thereafter decriminalised, allowing consensual same-sex sexual acts in private settings²². The IPC was replaced by the [Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita \(2023\)](#) (BNS), which was gazetted on 25 December 2023 and came into force on 1 July 2024²³.
- 8.1.4 Article 14, an Indian media organisation focused on democracy, law and society²⁴ stated in its September 2024 article that the BNS:
- '...has no provision similar to section 377 [of the IPC], which penalised "unnatural offences." section 377 defined these offences as voluntary carnal intercourse "against the order of nature" with any man, woman, or animal, punishable by imprisonment or a fine. This omission means that sexual assault on men and trans men may no longer be adequately addressed, equating such acts to minor physical injuries. This oversight highlights a significant gap in legal protection for men and trans men under the new laws. Even though the government is looking to include a section on sexual crimes against men and transgender persons, which is currently missing from the BNS, no such bill has been tabled yet.'²⁵
- 8.1.5 The US Department of State (USSD), 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: India (USSD report 2023) published 23 April 2024 noted 'The law prohibited discrimination by state and nonstate actors based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics.'²⁶ The USSD published their 2024 India report on 12 August 2025 but provided no coverage of issues affecting LGBT+ people or the treatment of them²⁷.
- 8.1.6 The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) noted in its State-Sponsored Homophobia report for 2020 that 'The Anti-Discrimination and Equality Bill ([Bill No. 289 of 2016](#)) was introduced in the Indian Parliament in March of 2017. The Bill included sexual orientation as a "protected characteristic" of citizens (Article 3(i)) and included sexual orientation within the defined term "disadvantaged group" (Article 5(vi)). However, the Bill lapsed before it could be voted by the houses of the Parliament.'²⁸ ILGA noted on 3 September 2025 'There are no anti-

¹⁹ Supreme Court India, '[Writ Petition \(Civil\) no 400 of 2012](#)', (paragraph 59), 15 April 2014

²⁰ Supreme Court India, '[Writ Petition \(Criminal\) No. 76 of 2016](#)' (paragraph 156), 6 September 2018

²¹ Supreme Court India, '[Writ Petition \(Criminal\) No. 76 of 2016](#)' (paragraph 156), 6 September 2018

²² ILGA, '[State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020](#)' (page 101), December 2020

²³ Gol, [Highlights of New Criminal Laws](#), 30 July 2024

²⁴ Article 14, [About](#), undated

²⁵ Article 14, [India's New Criminal Law Offers Little Protection Against...](#), 2 September 2024

²⁶ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁷ USSD, [USSD report 2024](#), 12 August 2025

²⁸ ILGA, '[State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020](#)' (page 205), December 2020

discrimination laws protecting people with diverse [sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics] SOGIESC identities or explicit prohibition of incitement to violence, hatred, or discrimination against them.’²⁹

See also [Conversion therapy](#)

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8.2 Trans and intersex rights

8.2.1 The Centre for Law and Policy Research (CLPR) summarised the Supreme Court of India’s declaration in the April 2014 case of [NALSA](#)³⁰, in which the Court:

‘... legally recognised “third gender”/transgender persons and recognised that third gender persons were entitled to fundamental rights under the Constitution and under International law. Further, it directed state governments to develop mechanisms to realise the rights of “third gender”/transgender persons. The Court upheld the right of all persons to self-identify their gender. Further, it declared that hijras and eunuchs can legally identify as “third gender”.’³¹

8.2.2 With specific regard to hijras, the SC ruled that they would be recognised on official documents under a ‘third gender’ category³². It also ruled that quotas and reservation in education and employment be put in place to ensure hijras had access to jobs and educational establishments where they had previously faced discrimination based on their appearance³³.

8.2.3 The DFAT report 2023 noted ‘In 2014, the Supreme Court of India ruled the rights and freedoms of transgender people were protected under that provision, including the right for *hijra* to self-determine their gender identity regardless of gender affirmation surgery. This right was reversed in 2019 legislation that requires transgender people to demonstrate that they have had gender affirming surgery to access legal recognition of their gender identity.’³⁴

8.2.4 ILGA in its Intersex Legal Mapping Report, a global survey on legal protections for people born with variations in sex characteristics, published in December 2023 noted:

‘In 2019, India adopted Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act No. 40 (2020), prohibiting discrimination against transgender persons that expressly include a “person with intersex variations”, defined as “a person who at birth shows variation in his or her primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones from the normative standard of the male or female body”. The act was criticised for failing to recognise and protect intersex people from medical interventions and discrimination on the basis of sex characteristics.’³⁵

²⁹ ILGA, [India: Kerala Police apprehends gang...](#), 3 September 2025

³⁰ Supreme Court India, ‘[Writ Petition \(Civil\) no 400 of 2012](#)’, (paragraph 129), 15 April 2014

³¹ CLPR, [National Legal Services Authority \(NALSA\) vs. Union of India](#), 2014

³² The Kootneeti, [Hijras disposition during British Colonization](#) 20 December 2020

³³ The Kootneeti, ‘[Hijras disposition during British Colonization](#)’ 20 December 2020

³⁴ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.160), 29 September 2023

³⁵ ILGA, [Intersex legal mapping report](#) (page 76), 12 December 2023

8.2.5 The USSD report 2023 explained the provisions of the TPRA:

‘The law recognized the right of their citizens to change their gender identity and access government identity documentation, employment opportunities, gender-affirming health care, and other services based on the principle of self-determination. Every instance where someone changed their gender had to be officially presented as a notification in the weekly gazette, published by the government’s Department of Publication, to be legally valid.

‘The TPRA provided two ways to change one’s gender to a third gender. The first was for a person wanting their identification as a “transgender” person (T) to make an application to the district magistrate with an affidavit; it was not necessary to provide a medical history. The magistrate could not insist on a medical or physical examination. The second was for an individual to first get a certificate with (T) and then apply to the magistrate again for a change in gender to (M) or (F). The second type of application required proof of surgery (for (T) to (M/F)) or any “medical intervention,” which could include counseling, hormone therapy, or surgical intervention.’³⁶

8.2.6 In relation to court rulings in particular states, the ILGA report noted:

‘In 2022, the Delhi High Court ordered the Delhi Government to ban medical interventions on intersex infants except in life-threatening situations ... In 2023, the Kerala High Court instructed the Kerala government to release an order within three months to regulate “sex-selective surgeries” on intersex children. In addition, the High Court required that, before issuing this order, the government should ensure that such surgeries could only be performed if approved as life-saving by a state-level multidisciplinary committee ... The High Court passed this judgment after deeming the parents’ request for approval to allow genital surgery on their intersex child as unconstitutional.’³⁷

8.2.7 In relation to a case in Tamil Nadu, ILGA noted:

‘In 2019, the Madras High Court of India considered the case *Arunkumar and Sreeja v. Inspector General of Registration and Others* No. 4125 (2019), ... the Court instructed the Government of Tamil Nadu “to effectively ban sex reassignment surgeries on intersex infants and children”. Following the instruction, the Tamil Nadu Government issued Government Order No. 355 (2019). The order defines “intersex” as people who are “born with physical and biological sex characteristics that are more diverse than stereotypical definitions for male or female bodies”. The order prohibits “sex reassignment surgeries on intersex infants and children except in life-threatening situations” which should be decided by an interdisciplinary team.’³⁸

8.2.8 Also in Tamil Nadu, the USSD report 2023 noted ‘In August [2023], the Madras High Court directed the Tamil Nadu state government to initiate steps to grant spots for transgender persons in local governing bodies. A justice from the court also directed district authorities to remove a local village leader who sought the cancellation of land allotted in his village by that state government to transgender persons.’³⁹

8.2.9 The same USSD report noted ‘On July 7 [2023], Telangana High Court

³⁶ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

³⁷ ILGA, [Intersex legal mapping report](#) (page 76), 12 December 2023

³⁸ ILGA, [Intersex legal mapping report](#) (page 76), 12 December 2023

³⁹ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

struck down the 1919 Telangana Eunuchs Act that gave police arbitrary powers to arrest transgender persons without a warrant and imprison them for up to two years if they were found “in female clothing or ornamented or singing, dancing, or participating in public entertainment in a street.”⁴⁰

- 8.2.10 The [Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita \(2023\)](#) (BNS), which was gazetted on 25 December 2023 and came into force on 1 July 2024⁴¹ states that the use of ‘he’ and its derivatives within the Act ‘... are used of any person, whether male, female or transgender.’⁴² In the Ministry of Home Affairs publication on the highlights of the new criminal law, it noted that ‘Gender Inclusivity: The definition of “gender” now includes transgender individuals, promoting inclusivity and equality ... Various offences against women and children have been made gender-neutral in BNS, covering all victims and perpetrators regardless of gender.’⁴³

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8.3 Same-sex unions, marriage and adoption rights

- 8.3.1 The Supreme Court decriminalised same-sex relationships in 2018⁴⁴. In sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) there were no documented cases after decriminalisation where adults were arrested solely for consensual same-sex acts in private.
- 8.3.2 In August 2022, the Supreme Court widened the definition of ‘family’ to include same-sex couples as well as other unmarried partners and single parents. The Court noted that ‘Such atypical manifestations of the family unit are equally deserving not only of protection under law but also of the benefits available under social welfare legislation ...’⁴⁵.
- 8.3.3 In relation to the concept of ‘family’, ILGA noted in July 2025 ‘...the Madras High Court issued a landmark [decision](#) [on 22 May 2025] that reaffirmed the concept of chosen family and stated that same-sex couples could constitute a small family unit even without marriage. The Court stated that, “Marriage is not the sole mode to found a family. The concept of “chosen family” is now well settled and acknowledged in LGBTQIA+ jurisprudence.”’⁴⁶
- 8.3.4 There is no provision in Indian law for civil partnerships or for the recognition of same-sex marriages^{47 48}. In November 2022, a petition was filed before the SC to allow legal recognition of marriages between same-sex couples under the Special Marriage Act, 1954⁴⁹. The case was heard before a 5-Judge Constitutional Bench at the SC over 10 days, commencing on 18 April 2023 and concluding on 11 May 2023^{50 51}. On 17 October 2023 the SC did not make a ruling on same-sex marriage but deferred the matter to parliament stating that the court did not have the power to reinterpret existing

⁴⁰ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁴¹ GoI, [Highlights of New Criminal Laws](#), 30 July 2024

⁴² GoI, [BNS \(2023\)](#) (Chapter 1, 2.(10)), 25 December 2023

⁴³ MHA, [Highlights of New Criminal Laws](#), 30 July 2024

⁴⁴ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁴⁵ The Tribune, [Supreme Court expands definition of family...](#), 29 August 2022

⁴⁶ ILGA, [India: Madras High Court...](#), 14 July 2025

⁴⁷ ILGA, [India: Madras High Court...](#), 14 July 2025

⁴⁸ ILGA, [‘State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020’](#) (page 327), December 2020

⁴⁹ Supreme Court Observer, [Plea for Marriage Equality](#), last updated October 2023

⁵⁰ Supreme Court Observer, [Plea for Marriage Equality](#), last updated October 2023

⁵¹ Supreme Court Observer, [Plea for Marriage Equality](#), last updated October 2023

marriage law^{52 53 54} (see also [Statements by government and public officials](#)).

- 8.3.5 The UN noted in a news report dated 17 May 2024 that: ‘Even as the Indian legal landscape has inched towards broader inclusion with the repeal of Section 377, the country’s LGBTQIA+ communities are still awaiting recognition – and justice – when dealing with many areas of their everyday lives and interactions, for example: who can be designated ‘next of kin’ if one partner is hospitalized; can a partner be added to a life insurance policy; or whether legal recognition could be given to gay marriage.’⁵⁵ See also [Government initiatives](#).
- 8.3.6 Same-sex couples are generally not permitted to adopt children, with regulation 5(3) of the [Adoption Regulation Act 2017](#) citing that a couple are only eligible to adopt a child following 2 years of a stable, marital relationship⁵⁶. However, according to Tara Narula, advocate and legal fellow at ‘HAQ: Centre for Child Rights’, “... an LGBTQ person can apply to CARA [Central Adoption Review Authority] to adopt as a single parent under the regime of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and can also enter into an adoption deed under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act,”...⁵⁷
- 8.3.7 The Times of India, an English-language digital news source⁵⁸, noted ‘Adoption rights and parenting are another area of concern for the LGBTQ group. As the already existing laws do not explicitly recognize the rights of same-sex couples, this has become a barrier for LGBT individuals seeking to adopt.’⁵⁹
- 8.3.8 Same-sex couples are not permitted to parent children through surrogacy. The [Surrogacy \(Regulation\) Bill 2019](#) outlines that only Indian citizens who have been married for at least 5 years are eligible to parent a child through surrogacy, therefore excluding same-sex couples and single individuals^{60 61}. However, under the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, which regulates assisted reproductive technology (ART) clinics, single women are eligible for ART treatment. Both the Surrogacy and ART bills came into effect in January 2022⁶².
- 8.3.9 Jus Corpus Law Journal in a blog post by Gannavarpu Rajlakshmi (National Law Institute University, Bhopal) from 18 August 2025 outlined the current legislation relating to surrogacy and adoption in India:
- ‘Adoption in India is primarily governed by two legislations, viz., the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956[2] (HAMA) and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015[3] (JJ Act). HAMA serves as the principal legal framework for adoption among Hindus, which includes Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists as per Section 2(1)(b) of the Hindu Marriage Act,

⁵² USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁵³ ILGA, [India: Madras High Court...](#), 14 July 2025

⁵⁴ BAMF, [Briefing Notes Summary](#), 31 December 2023

⁵⁵ UN News, [India’s LGBTQIA+ community notches legal wins...](#), 17 May 2024

⁵⁶ Gol, [Adoption Regulations 2017](#) (chapter 1, page 103) 4 January 2017

⁵⁷ The Economic Times, [LGBTQ: Parliament panel recommendation on adoption...](#), 9 August 2022

⁵⁸ Times of India, [About us](#), undated

⁵⁹ Times of India, [Legal challenges faced by LGBTQ+ couples in India...](#), 15 May 2024

⁶⁰ Gol, [The Surrogacy Regulation Bill](#), 2019

⁶¹ Times of India, [Legal challenges faced by LGBTQ+ couples in India...](#), 15 May 2024

⁶² India Times, [Explained: India's New Reproductive Laws And How They Would...](#), 9 August 2022

1955.[4] The Act recognises adoption only by a single individual or heterosexual couples ...

‘The JJ Act allows adoption by married couples and employs the gender-neutral term spouse, but in a recent judgment by the Supreme Court, same-sex marriage is not validated, and hence, same-sex couples do not fall under the definition of married couples...

‘Surrogacy in India is predominantly regulated under the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021[11]. It allows an intending married couple or an intending woman who is unable to reproduce naturally can opt for altruistic surrogacy. Therefore, the eligibility criteria for an intending couple include a married couple. Thus, homosexual couples are outrightly excluded from this definition because of the non-recognition of same-sex marriages...’⁶³

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9. State attitudes

9.1 Attitudes of government and public officials

- 9.1.1 In November 2021, a Supreme Court panel approved a recommendation made by the Delhi High Court in 2017, that openly gay lawyer, Saurabh Kirpal, become a Delhi High Court judge^{64 65}. In a statement dated 18 January 2023, the Supreme Court reiterated Kirpal’s recommendation and dismissed objections to Kirpal’s appointment based on his sexual orientation, which had been received by the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW – India’s external intelligence agency⁶⁶) in April 2019 and March 2021, and by the Law Minister in April 2021^{67 68}. As of July 2025, the nomination remained stalled⁶⁹.
- 9.1.2 On 12 March 2023, Reuters reported that, according to a filing submitted to the Supreme Court on same-sex marriage, ‘The Ministry of Law believes that while there may be various forms of relationships in society, the legal recognition of marriage is for heterosexual relationships and the state has a legitimate interest in maintaining this ...’⁷⁰ Reuters cited extracts of the filing, which stated “‘Living together as partners and having sexual relationship by same sex individuals ... is not comparable with the Indian family unit concept of a husband, a wife and children,” ... The court cannot be asked “to change the entire legislative policy of the country deeply embedded in religious and societal norms”...’⁷¹
- 9.1.3 Reuters reported on 17 April 2023 that, according to submissions to the Supreme Court on the issue of same-sex marriage, the government argued that legal petitions to legalise same-sex marriage ‘merely reflect urban elitist views.’⁷²

⁶³ Jus Corpus Law Journal, [Parents By Heart, Not Law...](#) 18 August 2025

⁶⁴ Economic Times, [‘Saurabh Kirpal may become first gay judge of constitutional...’](#), 20 January 2023

⁶⁵ BBC News, [‘Saurabh Kirpal: The man who could be India’s first openly gay...’](#), 18 November 2021

⁶⁶ CFR, [RAW: India’s External Intelligence Agency](#), 7 November 2008

⁶⁷ Supreme Court of India, [‘Statement dated 18 January 2023 reg. reiteration...’](#), 18 January 2023

⁶⁸ The Indian Express, [‘Who is Saurabh Kirpal, whose name as HC judge...’](#), 21 January 2023

⁶⁹ Archyde, [India’s Judges: A Clash of Power](#), 17 July 2025

⁷⁰ Reuters, [‘India government opposes recognising same-sex marriage’](#), 12 March 2023

⁷¹ Reuters, [‘India government opposes recognising same-sex marriage’](#), 12 March 2023

⁷² Reuters, [India government calls same-sex marriage appeals “urban elitist views”](#), 17 April 2023

- 9.1.4 In relation to the same Supreme Court case which was finalised on 17 October 2023 and did not legalise same-sex marriage but deferred the matter to parliament, the USSD report 2023 noted:
- ‘According to analysts, the Supreme Court issued four separate opinions and several of the justices made statements urging the central government and state governments to ensure that LGBTQI+ individuals were protected from discrimination ... the government committed to form a panel to examine the rights of LGBTQI+ persons. Media reports asserted the panel would examine financial rights and additional legal protections for LGBTQI+ persons but not the legalization of same-sex marriage.’⁷³ News magazine, India Today reported that in April 2024 a six member committee was formed, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary ensure the LGBT+ community and did not face discrimination, harassment or violence and had equal access to services⁷⁴.
- For information on actions taken since the formation of the committee see [Government initiatives](#).
- 9.1.5 In December 2023, sources reported on comments by Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani during a parliamentary discussion on paid menstrual leave and its applicability to the LGBT+ community. During a response to a question posed by MP Manoj Jha, Irani asked: “Which gay man, without a uterus, has a menstrual cycle?” in reference to whether the proposed Menstrual Hygiene Policy would include provisions for the LGBTQIA+ community. Irani argued that the question was intended to “shock, provoke or attract attention” and dismissed it as inapplicable^{75 76 77}.
- 9.1.6 The Deccan Herald (DH), an Indian online and print newspaper⁷⁸, reported responses to the Minister Smriti Irani’s comments:
- ‘Opposing her remarks, Congress leader Supriya Shrinete and Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi have slammed Irani on social media.
- ‘[Priyanka Chaturvedi said] “Shameful that we have a minister who doesn’t get the ambit of LGBTQIA+ – a commonly used umbrella term that includes transgenders, many of whom do menstruate. Her arrogance towards an issue which is a lived experience of many is shocking & insensitive.”... [and Supriya Shrinete stated]: “Minister @smritiirani your apathy, arrogance & ignorance are appalling. LGBTQIA+ is NOT gay men alone. The community includes men and several menstruating women.’⁷⁹
- 9.1.7 On 6 September 2024 news agency Reuters reported that ‘India’s main opposition Congress party set up a new internal group this week to promote LGBTQ+ rights, while another party [The Nationalist Congress Party] has named a person from the community as its spokesperson, in the first such political recognition after many setbacks.’⁸⁰
- 9.1.8 The Wire, an Indian non-profit news and opinion website⁸¹, in its article dated

⁷³ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁷⁴ India Today, [LGBTQ persons can now open joint bank accounts...](#) 30 August 2025

⁷⁵ Times Now, [Which Gay Man...](#), 22 December 2023

⁷⁶ DH, [Shameful & insensitive...](#), 23 December 2023

⁷⁷ NDTV, [Smriti Irani says she opposed paid period leave because...](#), 22 December 2023

⁷⁸ DH, [About](#), no date

⁷⁹ DH, [Shameful & insensitive...](#), 23 December 2023

⁸⁰ Reuters, [Indian opposition parties name LGBTQ+ activists...](#), 6 September 2024

⁸¹ The Wire, [About us](#), undated

28 April 2025 reported:

‘Jaipur: A government culture centre in BJP-ruled Rajasthan on April 26 cancelled the permission it had earlier granted to stage a dance performance about same-sex relationship [between two men]. The permission was cancelled after objections were raised by Sanskar Bharati, the cultural wing of the [Hindu Nationalist organisation] Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ... The letter ... says that the performance... doesn't match with the general sentiments of the public [and] "A rebellious attitude is encouraged towards Indian traditional beliefs and societal systems ..."'⁸²

- 9.1.9 The Hindustan Times, 'India's leading English news website'⁸³ article dated 4 September 2025 reported comments from the chair of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India at the national conference on trans rights:

‘... India is "far ahead" of several other nations in recognising the rights of transgender persons, and while the country "may not have reached an ideal level", ... it has certainly advanced to a great extent in this area, NHRC Chairperson, Justice V Ramasubramanian said on Thursday ... In his address ... he also said that there could be or that there are human beings who "do not fit into this binary of man or woman" is something that the societies all over, are still grappling to accept. "The consequence of this, is that trans people experience widespread discrimination and stigma in the health sector, schools, employment and housing as well as in accessing bathrooms," ... [he] said.’⁸⁴

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9.2 Government initiatives

- 9.2.1 The DFAT report 2023 noted ‘In August 2020, the Government of India formed a National Council for Transgender Persons to advise on relevant policy and legislation affecting transgender persons. Many states of India also have ‘transgender welfare boards’, which deal with hijra affairs.’⁸⁵

- 9.2.2 The Prajnya Trust, a Chennai-based non-profit NGO⁸⁶, in the Gender Violence in India 2023-24 Report, published 2025 noted:

‘The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched a scheme called SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) on February 12, 2022. This is an umbrella scheme that comprises several initiatives for the welfare of the transgender community, such as rehabilitation, use of medical facilities for gender-reaffirming surgeries, education, skill development, and counselling with the support of state governments, NGOs, voluntary organisations, and other local urban bodies. They are also considering setting up ‘Garima Grehs’ in each state, which will serve as a shelter to protect transgender persons emancipated from their families on account of their gender identity ...

‘The National Portal for Transgender Persons ... was launched in 2020 to facilitate the process of transgender persons obtaining a certificate of identity

⁸² The Wire, '[Against Indian Values'...](#), 28 April 2025

⁸³ The Hindustan Times, [About us](#), undated

⁸⁴ The Hindustan Times, [Society struggling to accept humans...](#), 4 September 2025

⁸⁵ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.160), 29 September 2023

⁸⁶ The Prajnya Trust, [Homepage](#), undated

virtually. The certificate is necessary to obtain any social welfare measure for government initiatives, such as the SMILE scheme.⁸⁷

9.2.3 News magazine, India Today reported on 30 August 2024 that:

‘For people belonging to the LGBTQ community, there are no longer any restrictions on opening a joint bank account or nominating a person in a queer relationship as a beneficiary, the Finance Ministry said.

“This is to clarify that there are no restrictions for persons of the queer community to open a joint bank account and also to nominate a person in a queer relationship as a nominee to receive the balance in the account in the event of [death of] the account holder,” read an advisory that the ministry shared on August 28.

‘The advisory concerning the LGBTQ community was prompted by the Supreme Court order passed on October 17, 2023... The posted advisory also noted that a clarification in this regard had been issued on August 21 to all the commercial banks by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).’⁸⁸

9.2.4 The 6 September 2024 Reuters report noted government initiatives including:

‘... measures to benefit the community include access to food programmes for same-sex couples as families, allowing them to open joint bank accounts and choose each other as nominees, as well as provision of medical and other care without discrimination.

‘In a statement on [Sunday](#), [1 September 2024] the social justice department said it had sought suggestions from the public to ensure policies and initiatives for the community were inclusive and effective ... A government official said on condition of anonymity that authorities were focused on ridding policies and initiatives of discrimination against the community ... without mentioning any law to recognise same-sex marriage.’⁸⁹

9.2.5 The government statement referred to by Reuters posted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 1 September 2024 outlined the meetings and actions of the committee since formation. In addition to confirmation that LGBT+ individuals can open joint bank accounts and nominate partners other initiatives included recognition of LGBT+ partners of the same household for ration card purposes⁹⁰. For information on initiatives by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare see [Conversion therapy](#), [Intersex people](#) and [Healthcare](#).

9.2.6 For information on the Supreme Court ruling in 2023 see [Same-sex unions, marriage and adoption rights](#) and [Attitudes of government and public officials](#)

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9.3 Police and judicial training and protection policies

9.3.1 Similar to information provided in its 2022 report⁹¹, the USSD report 2023 noted ‘With the aid of NGOs, several states offered education and sensitivity

⁸⁷ The Prajnya Trust, [Gender Violence in India 2023-24 Report](#) (page 19), 2025

⁸⁸ India Today, [LGBTQ persons can now open joint bank accounts...](#) 30 August 2025

⁸⁹ Reuters, [Indian opposition parties name LGBTQ+ activists...](#), 6 September 2024

⁹⁰ GoI, [Host of measures taken by Government of India...](#), 1 September 2024

⁹¹ USSD, [USSD report 2022](#) (section 6), 20 March 2023

training to police.’⁹² The USSD report 2024 did not contain information on this point⁹³.

9.3.2 The Hindustan Times article published 18 February 2022 noted:

‘Tamil Nadu has amended the legislation that governs its police force and inserted a clause banning any harassment of LGBTQIA +... people, likely becoming the first state in India to enact a specific legal provision against police violence on the marginalized community. The amendment to the Tamil Nadu Subordinate Police Officers’ Conduct Rules was published in the government gazette on Wednesday [16 February]. It came months after the Madras high court asked the state administration to sensitise the police force about LGBTQIA issues.’⁹⁴ See also [Legal context](#).

9.3.3 Article 14, in its June 2022 article noted in respect of the 2018 Supreme Court judgement that directed:

‘... all government officials, especially the police, be given sensitisation and awareness training. “However, this part of the judgement has not been complied with,” said Jayna Kothari, senior advocate and executive director, Centre for Law & Policy Research (CLPR). She said that there were some cases where women’s rights groups and trans rights groups collaborated with the police for training. “That’s just ad hoc. It’s not institutionalised,” she said. “It all depends on whether the police of the states and districts are open and willing to collaborate.”’⁹⁵

9.3.4 The UN General Assembly, Report of the Special Rapporteur dated 17 July 2024 noted:

‘The Supreme Court of India provides a judges’ sensitization module that explains concepts of sex, gender, sexuality and queer relationships; describes discrimination faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals; promotes the use of correct terminology; offers an overview of relevant jurisprudence; and provides recommendations to ensure equal treatment and welfare. The module contains a police protocol for “handling missing person complaints or allegations of kidnapping/ wrongful confinement by family/relatives”. The protocol affirms that courts may consider whether disciplinary or penal consequences should follow police harassment of LGBTQIA+ persons or of others assisting them.’⁹⁶

9.3.5 The Better India, an online organisation which reports on ‘India’s most inspiring individuals and institutions’⁹⁷ in its June 2025 article on LGBTI organisations noted: ‘Nestam is a leading LGBTQIA+ support organisation based in Visakhapatnam [Andhra Pradesh] ... they promote awareness and understanding, especially among police personnel and government officials.’⁹⁸

9.3.6 The Hindu, an Indian English-language newspaper⁹⁹ noted on 24 July 2025:

⁹² USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁹³ USSD, [USSD report 2024](#), 12 August 2025

⁹⁴ Hindustan Times, [Tamil Nadu amends law...](#), 18 February 2022

⁹⁵ Article 14, [4 Years After SC Decriminalised Homosexuality...](#), 2 June 2022

⁹⁶ UN General Assembly, [Report of the Special Rapporteur](#) (paragraph 41), 17 July 2024

⁹⁷ The Better India, [About](#), no date

⁹⁸ The Better India, [What Pride Looks Like After June](#), 15 June 2025

⁹⁹ The Hindu, [About us](#), no date

'In a step towards inclusive policing, the Women Safety Wing (WSW) of Telangana Police entered into a partnership with Yugantar, a Bengaluru-based non-profit organisation, to enhance support services for the LGBTQIA+ community across the State. The two entities signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening the Pride Place – Transgender (LGBTQIA+) Persons Protection Cell. This collaboration is expected to provide services, including - crisis intervention, mental health support, legal aid, and public awareness campaigns. ... The organisation will also assist in training police personnel to handle cases involving LGBTQIA+ persons with greater sensitivity and care'¹⁰⁰

See also [NGOs and support](#).

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10. State treatment

10.1 Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively

- 10.1.1 The NCRB Crime in India 2022 report, the last available crime statistics, does not record the SOGIE of victims or perpetrators for the majority of cases. Crimes are categorised by the relevant legal provision¹⁰¹. Data on offences specifically targeting trans people is limited; it does not encompass all types of offences and is likely to be under-reported (see State treatment - [Hijras and the wider trans community](#)). The absence of reliable, recent LGBT+-specific data means it is difficult to quantitatively assess the scale and extent of violence or ill-treatment against LGBT+ people by either societal or state actors or the use of existing protective measures.
- 10.1.2 The USSD report 2023 noted 'There were reports police officers committed crimes against LGBTQI+ individuals and used the threat of arrest to coerce victims not to report the incidents... Experts acknowledged some law enforcement officials tended to side with family interests against LGBTQI+ individuals.'¹⁰² The USSD did not provide details on the number of reports or incidents, nor did it elaborate on the frequency or scale of such cases.
- 10.1.3 The same USSD report in relation to laws that prohibited discrimination by state and non-state actors, noted that 'The government was inconsistent in enforcing these laws.'¹⁰³ The source did not provide further detail on this point.
- 10.1.4 The DFAT report 2023 noted
'Sources told DFAT....(LGBTI) people lack protection... the repeal of the [penal code which criminalised same-sex sexual acts] law has improved the lives of LGBTI people – police are less likely to extort them for bribes, and morale in the community has improved. However, sources told DFAT that a lot of people, including police, are not aware of the law reforms and will attempt legal action or extortion against people on the basis of the now-repealed law. Sources told DFAT that this kind of blackmail is sometimes applied against men who are victims of sexual assault.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ The Hindu, [Telangana Police signs MOU to support LGBTQIA+ community](#), 24 July 2024

¹⁰¹ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022](#), 1 December 2023

¹⁰² USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹⁰³ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹⁰⁴ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.150, 3.151), 29 September 2023

10.1.5 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) in the query response India: Situation and treatment of family members of individuals with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) by society and authorities published 22 May 2024 (IRB May 2024 response), based on various sources noted: '[The Delhi based lawyer]... noted that they have helped individuals with diverse SOGIESC get orders of police protection from the courts or get the courts to release them from arbitrary detention by their families, and they have also helped individuals with diverse SOGIESC get protection from being forcibly married by their families (Lawyer 2024-03-28).'¹⁰⁵

10.1.6 The same IRB response noted:

'According to the Lawyer..."[m]ost" police in rural areas are "extremely homophobic," and "transphobic" and they "harass" individuals with diverse SOGIESC and are "extremely violent," while in Delhi, the police are a "little supportive" and a "little mindful"... The Lawyer shared that in the "multiple cases" they have been involved with in Delhi, police have "handed over" couples with diverse SOGIESC to the family, which has further caused harm...

'The Public Health Professional shared that they were involved in multiple cases where individuals have left the family home, their parents have filed a missing persons report, and the police attempted to "mediate" and to "negotiate" that person's return to their family ...[and] that the police made statements encouraging the adult children to "go back" to their parents and "listen to their advice and get heterosexually married"... Similarly, the Lawyer noted that they are familiar with multiple cases in which a couple with diverse SOGIESC has been returned to the family...'¹⁰⁶

10.1.7 The Government of India (GoI) announced on 1 September 2024 measures taken to support the LGBT+ community:

'[The] Government of India...constituted a Committee...to examine and submit recommendations on the measures to be taken by Central and State Governments to safeguard the interest of the queer community... The sub-committee met on 31.05.2024 under the chairmanship of the Home Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs. The sub-committee discussed the measures to address discrimination that queer community face especially in relation to their access to social welfare benefits, healthcare and public goods services; police action and violence... Thereafter, Ministry of Home Affairs issued advisory to all states/UTs regarding prison visitation rights of the Queer Community and an advisory, on law & order measures to be taken to ensure that queer community do not face any threat of violence, harassment or coercion.'¹⁰⁷

10.1.8 The advisory on law and order measures referred to by the GoI, published on the 10 July 2024 stated:

'....it is requested to issue suitable instructions to the police personnel in your State/UT on the following:

¹⁰⁵ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

¹⁰⁶ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

¹⁰⁷ GoI, [Host of measures taken by Government of India....](#), 1 September 2024

‘(i) There should be no harassment of queer persons by summoning them to the police station or visiting their places of residence solely to interrogate them about their gender identity or sexual orientation;

‘(ii) The police should not force queer persons to return to their natal families if they do not wish to return to them;

‘(iii) When a police complaint is filed by queer persons alleging that their family is restraining their freedom of movement, the police should, on verifying the genuineness of the complaint ensure that the freedom of queer person is not curtailed;

‘(iv) When a police complaint is filed by queer person(s) apprehending violence from their family, the police should verify the genuineness of the complaint and ensure due protection immediately;

‘(v) Before registering an FIR against queer persons or one of the queer persons (where the FIR is sought to be registered for them being together), the police should conduct a "preliminary investigation ... to ensure that the complaint discloses a cognizable offence. ... If the person is an adult and is in a consensual relationship with another person of the same or different gender or has left their natal home of their own volition, the police should close the complaint after recording a statement to that effect.

‘(vi) Confidentiality, with respect to queer status, may be maintained throughout while dealing’ with a queer person during investigation.

‘It is further requested to review and sensitize police, as also impart regular training for “sensitization in dealing with complaints and grievances of queer person(s).’¹⁰⁸

10.1.9 The UN Human Rights Committee Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of India dated 2 September 2024 (The UNHRC report 2024) noted ‘...the efforts to combat societal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. The Committee is concerned, however, about ongoing discrimination and violence against them by public and private actors, including reports of police abuse, arbitrary arrests, derogatory language and the coercing of victims not to file complaints of discrimination.’¹⁰⁹

10.1.10 ILGA noted on 3 September 2025:

‘In August [2025], Kerala Police apprehended four individuals who used the dating app Grindr to target LGBTIQ individuals and robbed and extorted them... This is not an isolated case. LGBTIQ individuals are increasingly vulnerable to online scams, sexual and financial extortion, and targeting and are reluctant to pursue justice through traditional police mechanisms in such cases. Just in the past month, police have apprehended similar gangs in Kolkata and Bangalore, while the majority of cases still remain unreported... ILGA Asia praises the efforts of Kerala Police to investigate the gang...’¹¹⁰

10.1.11 The Telegraph India, in its 13 August 2025 article provided more detail on the above case reported by ILGA:

¹⁰⁸ GoI, [Advisory on Law and Order measures....](#) 10 July 2024

¹⁰⁹ UNHRC, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report...](#)(para 17), 2 September 2024

¹¹⁰ ILGA, [India: Kerala Police apprehends gang....](#) 3 September 2025

'Kerala police have busted a four-member gang who extorted lakhs of rupees from hundreds of people, mostly from the LGBTQ+ community, after luring them through the dating app Grindr.... According to Venjaramoodu police, the gang had been indulging in fraud, targeting mainly gay, homosexual, and transgender people, but it was the first time that a person came up with a formal complaint against them...

"We examined the mobile phone chats and Google Pay transactions of the first accused and identified several such victims. They admitted that they had lost money, but none of them were ready to lodge a complaint because of their social status," the officer added.¹¹¹

See also [Gay and bisexual men](#).

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10.2 Gay and bisexual men

10.2.1 There is a lack of recent reported instances of police targeting gay or bisexual men in sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)). The information in this section relates primarily to police responses to societal violence against gay or bisexual men.

10.2.2 Pink News, a digital media publisher focused on news affecting the LGBTQ+ community¹¹², in its 20 October 2023 article noted 'Police in India have arrested three people in connection with the rape and assault of two gay men in a public park... New Delhi police assembled a team of 20 officers who went through CCTV footage from more than 50 cameras in the area to track down ...[the victims'] attackers.'¹¹³

10.2.3 The Hindustan Times reported on 10 January 2025:

'...[A] gang of four people was arrested ... for allegedly targeting homosexual men...and extorting money from them, police said, adding that the gang has been active in Noida and Greater Noida [in Uttar Pradesh] for the past six months. The arrests came after a 24-year-old man, who had allegedly fallen into the gang's trap, mustered the courage to file a complaint, said police...

'Police investigation revealed that the...gang has targeted eight homosexual men so far to extort money from them. Officials said fearing being publicly outed, no one approached police. Police are now reaching out to the other victims, who had fallen into their trap.

'A case under sections 352 (intentional insult), 127 (wrongful confinement), and 308 (extortion) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita [was filed]...Further investigation is underway.'¹¹⁴

10.2.4 The Times of India reported on 16 February 2025 'Police on Saturday [15 February] arrested two men from Kotdwar area of Pauri Garhwal district [in Uttarakhand] for allegedly extorting money from LGBTQ community members and making threats after luring victims through a dating app. The arrests came ...following complaints from victims who alleged that the

¹¹¹ The Telegraph India, [Kerala dating app gang busted for targeting LGBTQ+....](#), 13 August 2025

¹¹² Pink News, [Who are we?](#) no date

¹¹³ Pink News, [Three arrested over rape and assault of two gay men....](#), 20 October 2023

¹¹⁴ Hindustan Times, [Gang held for blackmailing....](#), 10 January 2025

accused, posing as police officers, specifically targeted Muslim men....'¹¹⁵

- 10.2.5 The Indian Express noted in its article published 17 July 2025 'Days after a 22-year-old restaurant staffer was attacked and robbed of cash after he was called for a meeting by a man he met on a dating application for LGBTQ persons, police arrested two suspects who had forcibly recorded videos of the victim before robbing him. A First Information Report in the case was registered at Nanded City [Maharashtra] Police station by the 22-year-old man who works at a restaurant.'¹¹⁶

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10.3 Lesbian and bisexual women

- 10.3.1 There is a lack of recent reported instances of police targeting lesbian or bisexual women in sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)). The information in this section relates primarily to police responses to societal violence against lesbian or bisexual women.

- 10.3.2 A blog post by Saurav Sarkar, an associate editor at Globetrotter, published on open forum Counterviews, noted on 18 February 2025:

'...a dispute in...South Kolkata...suddenly assumed a sinister character on 11 February. What started as an argument over a place in line became a mob assault outside the store.

'Members of Sappho for Equality who were initially involved or arrived to assist were verbally, physically, and sexually assaulted. Sappho is a Kolkata-based organisation for lesbians, bisexual women, and trans men that runs a nearby cafe. Neither the store's staff nor nearby police immediately intervened during the incident, during which the Sappho members were grabbed and beaten with helmets. When the police finally did respond, they removed the Sappho members from the scene rather than stopping the mob... The Sappho members were then taken to receive medical attention, and a case was filed.'¹¹⁷

- 10.3.3 The Times of India reported on the same case and noted 'Debalina, a member of Sappho for Equality, told TOI that five members were physically assaulted and verbally abused with transphobic and homophobic slurs by local residents... [Sappho member Ankana said].... A cop nearby refused to help when we approached... Cops dismissed the claims against them as baseless, saying they intervened verbally to stop the arguments and no physical touching was involved.'¹¹⁸

- 10.3.4 ILGA, referring to the Madras High Court case determined on 22 May 2025 which ordered the release of a lesbian woman who had allegedly been abducted by her family from the home she shared with her same-sex partner, due to their disapproval of her sexual orientation noted that 'The Madras High Court [on 22 May 2025]... held police accountable for their inaction following the petitioner's complaint about her partner's detention, ordering them to provide protection to the couple from family members.'¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Times of India, '[2 cops' targeting gay men through dating app arrested](#)', 26 February 2025

¹¹⁶ Indian Express, '[Two held for assault...](#)', 17 July 2025

¹¹⁷ Counterview, '[Mob attack on LGBTQ activists in Kolkata](#)', 18 February 2025

¹¹⁸ The Times of India, '[Cops lodge FIR...](#)', 11 February 2025

¹¹⁹ ILGA, '[India: Madras High Court...](#)', 14 July 2025

- 10.3.5 ILGA further noted ‘The Court expressed its reluctance to use the word ‘queer’ in its ruling, stating that any standard dictionary defines this word as meaning ‘strange or odd’, but that diverse gender and sexual identities are natural and normal, as are the persons who bear them. The Court reiterates that one’s sexual orientation is an integral part of personal autonomy and self-expression.’¹²⁰

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10.4 Hijras and the wider trans community

- 10.4.1 The USSD report 2023 noted ‘On June 29 [2023], media reported Andhra Pradesh police filed cases against four men under the 2019 Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (TPRA) for allegedly molesting a transgender woman in Visakhapatnam.’¹²¹
- 10.4.2 The News Minute, an Indian digital news platform¹²², in its report dated 26 August 2023 stated:
- ‘The ignorance of certain police officers about transgender identities and associated socio-cultural realities has led to the arrest of 19 people in Hyderabad, who have been accused of being ‘fake transgender women’... [Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) for Hyderabad North Zone] said that out of the 19 people, they “suspect” two are trans persons because they have undergone gender affirmation surgeries...adding that the police had also sent them for medical examination to determine whether they are trans persons or not.
- ‘Among the charges slapped against those arrested are Sections 419 (cheating by personation) and 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), on the basis that they are “able-bodied biological males” who are “impersonating women and transgender (persons).”... Speaking to TNM, noted transgender rights activist Rachana Mudraboyina alleged that the police team’s actions against the 19 trans persons were blatantly unconstitutional, and in complete violation of both the 2014 NALSA judgement and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.’¹²³
- 10.4.3 The UNHRC report 2024 noted ‘The Committee is concerned that, although the [2019 Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights)] Act allows individuals to self-identify as transgender, significant barriers to gender transition recognition exist in practice, such as the requirement of proof of sex reassignment surgery or other medical interventions before the granting of certificates authorizing gender recognition.’¹²⁴
- 10.4.4 In relation to crime statistics The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report 2022, the last available crime data at the time of writing, provided the following information:
- A total of 1,10,140 victims (21,278 male, 88,861 female and one trans)

¹²⁰ ILGA, [India: Madras High Court...](#), 14 July 2025

¹²¹ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹²² The News Minute, [About us](#), no date

¹²³ The News Minute, [‘Begging racket crackdown’ sheds light on Hyd...](#), 26 August 2023

¹²⁴ UNHRC, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report...](#)(para 17), 2 September 2024

across India were reported kidnapped or abducted during 2022¹²⁵.

- The number of cases at the end of 2022 under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act were: 6 pending investigation¹²⁶, 1 was charged¹²⁷, and there were 0 convictions, 0 acquittals and 0 cases discharged¹²⁸. There were 3 cases under the Act awaiting trial¹²⁹.
- Victims of murder were identified by gender and out of the total of 28,016 murders across all India in 2022, 20,512 victims were men, 7,495 were women and 9 were trans¹³⁰. The statistics did not give any further details of the cases, including the profile of the perpetrator.

10.4.5 In relation to trans people accused of offences in 2022, the total across India for crimes under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Special and Local Laws (SLL) was (table by CPIT):

2022	Male	Female	Trans	Total
Arrested (IPC)	3,045,808	182,298	216	3,228,322 ¹³¹
Charged (IPC)	4,104,462	262,805	321	4,367,588 ¹³²
Convicted (IPC)	188,377	8,484	0	196,861 ¹³³
Arrested (SLL)	2,012,550	149,350	11	2,161,911 ¹³⁴
Charged (SLL)	2,536,260	168,709	16	2,704,985 ¹³⁵
Convicted (SLL)	1,361,301	55,556	1	1,416,858 ¹³⁶

10.4.6 A November 2023 article published by Behan Box, a media organisation reporting on issues that affect women and gender diverse people¹³⁷, noted the underreporting of deaths of trans people recorded in official statistics: ‘While the transgender portal and the census data are the only official documentation of trans lives, activists and lawyers point out the lack of any clear mechanism to document trans deaths. The lack of identity certificates, systemic inequities and stigma are the main barriers to acknowledging and recording trans deaths, whether natural, suicides or violent crimes’¹³⁸

10.4.7 The July 2025 article by Khuman Bhagirath Jetubhai published in the medical journal Dialogues in Health, stated: ‘While the National Crime Records Bureau now includes “transgender” as a gender category in its reports, it provides no details regarding sexual orientation, leaving a

¹²⁵ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 1](#), page xxi, 1 December 2023

¹²⁶ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1084, 1 December 2023

¹²⁷ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1075, 1 December 2023

¹²⁸ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1159, 1 December 2023

¹²⁹ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1160, 1 December 2023

¹³⁰ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 1](#), Page 171, 1 December 2023

¹³¹ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1235, 1 December 2023

¹³² NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1235, 1 December 2023

¹³³ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1235, 1 December 2023

¹³⁴ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1268, 1 December 2023

¹³⁵ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1269, 1 December 2023

¹³⁶ NCRB, [Crime in India 2022 Volume 3](#), Page 1269, 1 December 2023

¹³⁷ Behan Box, [About us](#), no date

¹³⁸ Behan Box, [Why Lives And Deaths Of Trans Persons Remain...](#), 20 November 2023

significant data gap.’¹³⁹

10.4.8 The IRB May 2024 response, based on various sources noted ‘The [Delhi based] Lawyer shared the example of a couple who was attacked after their neighbours "found out about the gender identity" of one of the members of the couple; the police proceeded to register a complaint on behalf of the female victim but not the transgender man victim despite the existence of legislation to protect transgender people...’¹⁴⁰

10.4.9 The same IRB May 2024 response noted “The Program Head shared the example of a transgender person who was "extorted" and assaulted but did not want to file a police complaint, as his uncle knew the local police and they all lived close to the station; the person felt that being outed as a LGBTQIA+ would affect their safety as well as the family's social standing...’¹⁴¹

10.4.10 Watermark Out News, a media company which communicates and advances LGBT+ interests¹⁴², in an article by Washington Blade (a US LGBT+ news organisation), journalist Ankush Kumar, published on 30 September 2024 noted:

‘Souvik Saha, founder of Jamshedpur Queer Circle, an LGBTQ organization working on a grassroots level to bridge the gap by conducting sensitization workshops with law enforcement agencies and local communities to foster greater understanding and inclusivity, highlighted to the Washington Blade the severe challenges that trans people in Jharkhand state and across India face.

‘He noted trans people often encounter hostility, harassment, and dismissive attitudes from the police when they try to file First Information Reports. Shah said the crux of the problem lays in the lack of sensitization and awareness within the police force regarding trans identities. This systemic issue not only discourages the community from seeking justice but also perpetuates the cycle of abuse and marginalization they endure.

“As the founder of Jamshedpur Queer Circle, we have witnessed firsthand the systemic discrimination faced by transgender individuals, particularly when they attempt to interact with law enforcement,” said Saha.’¹⁴³

10.4.11 The same article noted:

‘Saha added the barriers to reporting crimes, combined with a lack of trust in law enforcement, create an environment where many victims remain unheard of and their cases unrecorded... “Even though the legal framework exists, enforcement agencies and local administrations often lack the willingness or training to implement it effectively,” said Saha...

‘Kalki Subramaniam, a trans activist, queer artist and actor who is a member of the National Transgender Council [under the Ministry of Social Justice]...discussed the mistreatment of trans people in police stations across India. She said law enforcement often do not treat trans people with

¹³⁹ Khuman Bhagirath Jetubhai, [Portrayals of suicide and suicide attempts...](#), 14 July 2025

¹⁴⁰ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

¹⁴¹ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

¹⁴² Watermark Out News, [About](#), No date

¹⁴³ Watermark Out News, [Anti-transgender discrimination, violence in India...](#), 30 September 2025

dignity.

“When a trans woman is raped, her FIR is almost never registered,” added Subramaniam. “That could be because the police are not sensitized enough about transgender people around the country.” “Across the country, the situation is the same,” she told the Blade. “Even though there are lots of changes legally, police personnel need to be sensitized on a wider network. A few states have done some work, but the majority of Indian states have not.”

‘Subramaniam [said] ‘... violence against the trans community is widespread across India...hundreds of crimes — particularly violence and rape — remain unreported and undocumented.’¹⁴⁴

10.4.12 Khapre M., Sahoo K., Saxena V., Sinha S., Luthra G., and Joshi A., in their study ‘Exploring the utilization of targeted intervention services by transgender individuals in Uttarakhand, India: a qualitative study’ published in Frontiers in Public Health, 2024 (the Khapre M., et al. journal article) explained its methodology: ‘This qualitative study focused on non-government organizations (NGOs) that implement [targeted intervention] TI projects in Haridwar and Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India. From September 2023 to January 2024, 5 focus group discussions (FGDs) involving 24 transgender women and 9 in-depth interviews (IDIs) involving NGO staff were conducted.’¹⁴⁵

10.4.13 The December 2024 Khapre M., et al. journal article noted that, amongst the 24 transgender women who participated in the study: ‘Approximately 40–50% of the transgender women reported being discriminated against and bullied by the police/local leaders’¹⁴⁶

See also [Police and judicial training and protection policies](#) and [NGOs and support](#)

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10.5 Intersex people

10.5.1 The ILGA December 2023 report in an interview with Gopi Shankar, the first openly intersex and genderqueer person to act as a statutory authority with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in India, noted:

‘The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has acknowledged that medical operations, including sex reassignment surgeries, are performed in India. The Ministry has provided the rationale that it is only carried out following a careful evaluation of the patient, gaining approval for the procedure with the use of the proper diagnostic test, and only after taking the patient's or guardian's written agreement. In 2019, Madras High Court, Tamil Nadu, passed an order mandating that the Tamil Nadu Government issue a complete ban on non-consensual and non necessary sex-selective surgeries on intersex infants and children...India is still striving to achieve a nationwide ban on unnecessary medical interventions on intersex infants. There is no protocol or guidelines provided to the medical institutions for adequately

¹⁴⁴ Watermark Out News, [Anti-transgender discrimination, violence in India...](#), 30 September 2025

¹⁴⁵ Khapre M., et al [Exploring the utilization of targeted intervention services...](#), 4 December 2024

¹⁴⁶ Khapre M., et al [Exploring the utilization of targeted intervention services...](#), 4 December 2024

attending to the needs of intersex infants or children to date.¹⁴⁷

- 10.5.2 The Government of India announced on 1 September 2024 that: '[The] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has framed guidelines in respect of medical intervention required in infants/ children with disorders of sexual differentiation (intersex) to have medically normal life without complications.'¹⁴⁸

See also [Healthcare](#)

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11. Societal attitudes

11.1 Societal norms and views

- 11.1.1 India is a vast, diverse, multicultural country. Communities vary considerably not only in size, but also in their religious, ethnic, economic and political composition – and in the extent of their adherence to traditional social and family values¹⁴⁹. For more information on the basic country facts of India including demography, geography, political and religious background, see Country Background Note: India (available on request).

- 11.1.2 The DFAT report 2023 noted 'Discussion about sexuality is generally taboo in India, which means that LGBTI people often lead hidden lives.'¹⁵⁰ Reuters similarly noted 'Same-sex relations are mostly taboo in the largely conservative country.'¹⁵¹

- 11.1.3 The same DFAT report noted in relation to attitudes towards marriage and family:

'...heterosexual marriage is a touchstone aspect of life for most Indians. Exclusion from cultural mores that depend on marriage can be challenging or distressing. Sources told DFAT that (heterosexual) marriage is 'essential'. An unmarried person will not be invited to social events. One expert source told DFAT that an unmarried person will 'not be considered a social unit'. Not being in a heterosexual marriage, for most Indians, is 'unthinkable'. Those who do not conform face ostracism from society.

'There is a societal and family expectation that a man and his wife will care for his parents in old age, which may lead men who are attracted to other men to get married to a woman in order to have children who can perform that function...

'The pressure on women (of any sexuality or gender identity) to get married is even stronger. Women do not have the same level of agency as men in traditional Indian society, and parents will expect their daughters to get married (to a man) and become part of his family. This leads to a sense of invisibility for lesbian and bisexual women. Once they have been married, women are sometimes pressured to produce a male child and heir, and might be blamed and considered a failure if they do not do so.'¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ ILGA, [Intersex legal mapping report](#) (page 35), 12 December 2023.

¹⁴⁸ GoI, [Host of measures taken by Government of India...](#), 1 September 2024

¹⁴⁹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (Section 2.), 29 September 2023

¹⁵⁰ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.150), 29 September 2023

¹⁵¹ Reuters, [Indian opposition parties name LGBTQ+ activists...](#), 6 September 2024

¹⁵² DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.153 to 3.155), 29 September 2023

11.1.4 The same DFAT report noted:

'While society is broadly conservative to the exclusion of LGBTI diversity, there are pockets of acceptance, especially in large cities (particularly Delhi and Mumbai) among the upper classes. Even in more tolerant contexts, many LGBTI people may experience tolerance rather than acceptance. A trend toward including LGBTI characters (albeit as minor characters, although on at least two occasions with an LGBTI main plot) in Bollywood cinema or television shows is slowly raising societal acceptance...'¹⁵³

11.1.5 Deutsche Welle (DW), the German state-owned news broadcaster¹⁵⁴, in their article 'How does India perceive homosexuality?' 18 April 2023, in information provided by Kanav Sahgal, a writer on LGBTQ issues who works for the think tank Vidhi Center for Legal Policy, noted: "Homosexuality is not perceived very well in large parts of India," Kanav Sahgal says. "Despite the Navtej ruling in 2018 that struck down the sodomy law and even though streaming platforms have been depicting LGBT characters in positive ways, there is still a lack of awareness about homosexuality, ...conservative attitudes concerning homosexuality persist across India's communities.'" ¹⁵⁵

11.1.6 The USSD report 2023 noted 'Public support for same-sex marriage continued to rise. A July survey found that 42 percent of respondents supported equal marriage rights, opposed to 50 percent disapproval. According to a survey by the [Pew Research Center](#), 53 percent of adults were in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage.'¹⁵⁶ Pew noted their survey took place prior to the Supreme Court rejection of the petition to legalise same-sex marriage¹⁵⁷.

11.1.7 Freedom House in Freedom on the Net 2024 noted '...there is some representation of LGBT+ people in mainstream digital advertisements, television, and media. Nevertheless, [Civil Society Organisations] CSOs noted that LGBT+ people and experiences do not receive proportionate online coverage.'¹⁵⁸

11.1.8 In relation to differences between groups of society, the IRB May 2024 response noted 'The Lawyer stated that individuals with diverse SOGIESC from working class backgrounds do not have adequate family support ...The Public Health Professional indicated that while it is difficult to generalize, parents who openly accept their queer children tend to come from urban upper or middle-class backgrounds ...'¹⁵⁹

11.1.9 In relation to societal treatment of the families of LGBT+ people, the same IRB response noted 'In an interview with Scroll.in, an Indian news website, the co-founder of the LGBTQ+ parent support group Sweekar - The Rainbow Parents notes...Parents who love and accept their [LGBT+] children, ... are often ostracised from their friends and families.... The Program Head similarly indicated that parents can be "shunned altogether" for supporting

¹⁵³ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.157, 3.158, 3.159), 29 September 2023

¹⁵⁴ DW, 'About Deutsche Welle', 19 March 2025

¹⁵⁵ DW, [How does India perceive homosexuality?](#), 18 April 2023

¹⁵⁶ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹⁵⁷ Pew, [Across Asia, views of same-sex marriage vary widely](#), 7 November 2023

¹⁵⁸ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net 2024 - India](#) (section B7), 16 October 2024

¹⁵⁹ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

their LGBTQ child...'¹⁶⁰

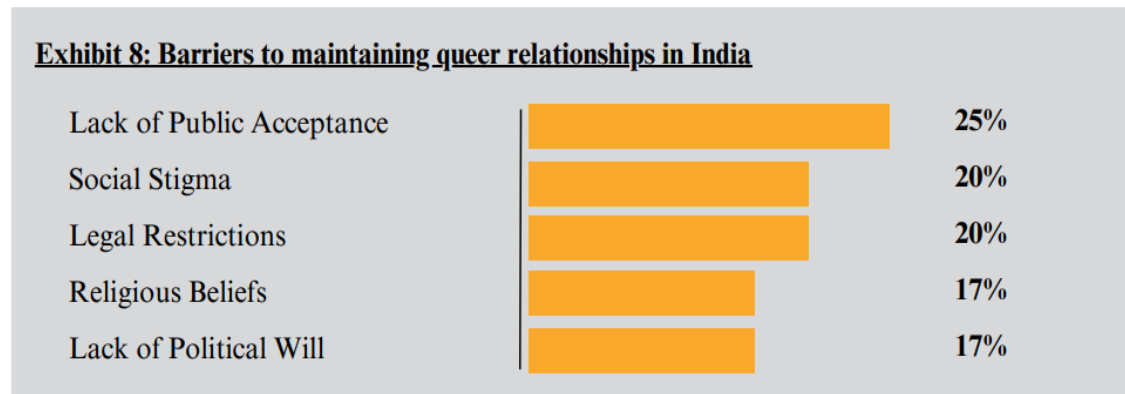
11.1.10 The same IRB report noted regarding societal views on seeking protection that: 'According to the Lawyer, it is rare for family members to seek assistance from the police, as most family members feel their child is being "harassed" because the child is doing "something wrong" and they do not want to invite further attention...'¹⁶¹

11.1.11 Community based organisation the Mist LGBTQ Foundation, in a project funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), published a policy brief titled *Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future of Legal Equality for LGBTQ+ in India* October 2024, on 27 November 2024 (The Mist report). The report used a mixed methodology of 175 user surveys with participants from the LGBTQIA+ community conducted between late-March and mid-June 2024, multi-city stakeholder meetings with lawyers, activists, healthcare professionals and community leaders and secondary research¹⁶². Mist noted:

'Queer relationships (also referred to as same-sex relationships or marriage) in India face social, cultural, and legal hurdles, despite the decriminalization of homosexuality. The [175 response] survey [of members from the LGBT+ community, allies and parents] found overwhelming support (95%) for queer relationships and a strong desire for equal rights compared to the general population.

- 'Societal acceptance varies widely, and same-sex marriage remains unrecognized, impacting legal rights and social acceptance
- 'The community faces challenges related to family acceptance, safety, cultural norms, and religious opposition'¹⁶³

11.1.12 The same Mist report outlined the survey findings in relation to 'Barriers to maintaining queer relationships in India'¹⁶⁴:



Source: Survey on *Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future of Legal Equality for LGBTQ+ in India* (2024) | Exhibit 8: 175 respondents selected multiple choices, for a total of 621 selections

11.1.13 ILGA reported that on the 22 May 2025 the Madras High Court ordered the release of a lesbian woman who had allegedly been abducted by her family

¹⁶⁰ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

¹⁶¹ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

¹⁶² Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 5, 44), 27 November 2024

¹⁶³ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 7), 27 November 2024

¹⁶⁴ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 23), 27 November 2024

from the home she shared with her same-sex partner, due to their disapproval of her sexual orientation. ILGA noted that this case

‘...expands on a similar judgment from the Kerala High Court in July 2024 ... where it was held that families can “become sites of violence for LGBTIQ individuals” as “expressing their gender identity or sexuality, is an act of defiance in a society that continues to set rigid cultural norms for gender identity and expression.” Both these judgments recognize the abuse and harm families can cause in attempts to forcibly detain and “correct” the sexual orientation of LGBTIQ relatives.’¹⁶⁵ See also [Societal treatment](#)

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12. Societal treatment

12.1 Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively

- 12.1.1 The Mist report noted: ‘In India, the LGBTQIA+ community continues to navigate a complex landscape shaped by legal, social, and cultural factors. Despite the decriminalization of same-sex relationships in 2018, stigma and discrimination persist, affecting everyday life and opportunities for many individuals.’¹⁶⁶
- 12.1.2 The USSD report 2023 noted ‘NGO activists reported discrimination and violence, including physical attacks and rape against members of the LGBTQI+ community.’ And ‘LGBTQI+ groups reported pervasive societal discrimination and violence, particularly in rural areas.’¹⁶⁷ The source did not provide further detail.
- 12.1.3 DW, in their article published 18 April 2023, noted:

‘Same-sex couples mainly find acceptance in bigger cities, such as Mumbai, where LGBTQ groups like Gay Bombay and LABIA have been active for decades already. Smaller towns and villages rarely discuss queerness and related issues. “It’s difficult for family members to accept their own children when they come out as queer,” explains Sahgal [a writer on LGBTQ issues].

“The families’ love for their children is conditional to the point that you subscribe to cisgender heterosexual norms. The moment you transgress those norms, there is a problem,”...’¹⁶⁸
- 12.1.4 DFAT noted ‘Most LGBTI people are not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity because being open can lead to significant discrimination ...’¹⁶⁹
- 12.1.5 The same DFAT report noted: ‘Violence against LGBTI people perpetrated by families is common, however it depends on the family. Non-family violence is less common, but this may be because few LGBTI people are willing to come out due to the need to avoid discrimination and violence from their families’¹⁷⁰
- 12.1.6 There was little recent information found in relation to societal treatment of LGBTQ+ Muslim people (see [Bibliography](#)) however, the March 2023 article

¹⁶⁵ ILGA, [India: Madras High Court...](#), 14 July 2025

¹⁶⁶ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 7), 27 November 2024

¹⁶⁷ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹⁶⁸ DW, [How does India perceive homosexuality?](#), 18 April 2023

¹⁶⁹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.157, 3.158, 3.159), 29 September 2023

¹⁷⁰ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.157, 3.158, 3.159), 29 September 2023

in The News Minute noted in respect of Kerala:

‘On February 13 [2023], [political party Indian Union Muslim League] IUMML leader MK Muneer said that those who believe that a trans man gave birth to a child were “living in a fool’s paradise” and that the gender identity of the trans man was “hollow”....Within a week after Muneer’s transphobic comment, IUMML state secretary PMA Salam said that being transgender is a “fake mentality”...

‘There has been a rise in such hate speech by members of Islamic groups in recent months, and this has made Muslim queer persons in the state [of Kerala] especially vulnerable...

‘in Kerala Youtube channels, Facebook pages, and other social media handles seem to be running what looks like an organised campaign against queer communities and individuals. The popular Youtube page ‘Unmasking Atheism’ is one of the Islamic platforms that speak about Muslim morality on LGBTQIA+ identities and argues against LGBTQIA+ activism.’¹⁷¹

12.1.7 The IRB May 2024 response, based on various sources noted:

‘...a Delhi-based lawyer with experience working on LGBTQ rights’ cases in India stated that anonymity is possible in large cities while rural areas where neighbours “know each other” can be “very oppressive,” and that individuals who have had their identities “disclosed” can face risks to their safety and security ... a program head at a New Delhi-based NGO that advocates for the rights of LGBTQIA+ individuals and other marginalized groups stated that the treatment of individuals with diverse SOGIESC and their families varies from community to community and depends on how tightly knit the rural community is (Program Head 2024-03-12).’¹⁷²

12.1.8 The same IRB response noted in relation to treatment by family:

‘According to the [Delhi based] Lawyer, the family members of a queer person “overall” do not accept them once they come out and are the ones “causing the violence” ... In Delhi, “most” of the cases the Lawyer deals with involving individuals with diverse SOGIESC are related to the safety and security of those individuals who have left their families due to violence ...

‘Similarly, the Public Health Professional stated that LGBTQIA+ individuals encounter discrimination from family members, including their parents and siblings, and that the “overwhelming majority” of families have not been supportive of their queer and trans children coming out, “forcing” them to stay in the closet; when they do come out, the parents ask their child to not speak of it or to move to another city or country away from their extended family and neighbours...[They] added that “most family members are queerphobic and interested in upholding conservative ideas of family and cultural values,...”

‘The Public Health Professional indicated that there have been “scattered” reports of honour killings of queer and trans children by conservative parents and siblings...[and] that in cases where individuals fear honour killings, leaving the family home may not be sufficient as families will “do anything to track down” their child and partner ... However, the Public Health

¹⁷¹ The News Minute, [Muslim LGBTQIA+ persons in Kerala](#), 9 March 2023

¹⁷² IRB, [Query response](#) (section 2), 22 May 2024

Professional also stated that there is a "significant" minority of parents who have embraced their "queer and trans" children and their identity.¹⁷³

- 12.1.9 UN News noted ‘... societal prejudices and harassment continue to plague lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex communities ... A lack of understanding and intolerance towards the LGBTQIA+ community are similar, whether in larger cities or in rural areas.’¹⁷⁴
- 12.1.10 Freedom House provided limited information on SOGIE in their Freedom in the World report 2025 covering events of 2024 but noted in relation to whether ‘laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population’ that ‘LGBT+ people face discrimination, and sometimes violence’.¹⁷⁵
- 12.1.11 Mumbai newspaper Mid-Day published interviews with members of the LGBT+ community discussing Pride in India in June 2025 which noted:
- ‘Sumit Nath, a queer boy from Kolkata, navigating life with hydro uretero nephrosis in a traditionally conservative family, shares his profound journey...In my childhood, I was bullied simply because I didn’t behave like a so-called ‘alpha male.’ I spent years questioning myself, my orientation, trying to ‘fix’ what didn’t need fixing...The year 2020 marked a turning point for Nath “... when I came out in college, I was fortunate to find acceptance. That acceptance wasn’t just kindness — it was power. It helped me build my voice,”...
- ‘Vivek Mohan, a genderqueer gay parent and author... lives openly. "I stand in my truth: I am a genderqueer gay person, a parent to a wonderful five-year-old son, and a partner to Shahir, the love of my life." He notes the complexity of his identity. "Even writing this sentence — acknowledging both my queerness and my role as a parent — may sound contradictory or confusing to many. Sadly, that confusion exists even within parts of the LGBTQIA+ community, where I’ve faced mocking and bullying for the choices life led me to make," he shares.
- ... The criminalisation of his existence by Section 377 deeply impacted his youth, making it easier to deny his feelings than confront them. This pressure led him to attempt to conform, including a heterosexual marriage and becoming a parent.... At 30, he came out as gay, and later embraced his genderqueer identity...
- ‘Mohan now lives openly with his partner and son, supported by a chosen family, yet he maintains a delicate balance between visibility and safety. “I still navigate a complex web of identities — sometimes performing different versions of myself depending on the space or the people I’m around. It’s not about being discreet or ashamed; it’s about preserving safety and mental peace in a world where LGBTQIA+ rights remain fragile,” he explains.’¹⁷⁶
- 12.1.12 ILGA noted on 3 September 2025 ‘Many people using such dating apps [Grindr] are closeted and fear being outed and social backlash from pressing charges, which leaves them even more vulnerable.’¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

¹⁷⁴ UN News, [India's LGBTQIA+ community notches legal wins...](#), 17 May 2024

¹⁷⁵ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025 - India](#) (Section F4), 2025

¹⁷⁶ Mid-Day, [What does Pride truly mean to India's diverse queer voices?](#), 22 June 2025

¹⁷⁷ ILGA, India: Kerala Police apprehends gang..., 3 September 2025

12.2 Gay and bisexual men

12.2.1 The DFAT report 2023 noted:

‘There is a distinction between men who identify as gay or bisexual, and men who have sex with men but do not consider themselves part of the LGBTI community. The latter are much more common. Many men who have sex with men are married to women and want to remain married to women. Regardless of their identity or preferences, parents will likely arrange such a marriage for their sons anyway and may apply significant pressure to enter into such an arranged marriage. This cultural practice is so entrenched that most men would be unlikely to question it. Those that do, or who wish to live in a relationship with another man, may be ostracised and could face violence.’¹⁷⁸

12.2.2 UN News noted ‘Noyonika [who works with an organisation advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights] says that her organization sees many instances where a man is married to a woman because of societal pressure, without understanding his gender identity. “In villages and towns, you will find many married couples who have children and are forced to live a fake life.”¹⁷⁹

12.2.3 Pal, S., Pathak, P.K., Rahaman, M. et al.’s journal article ‘Men at risk: correlates of verbal, physical and sexual violence against men who have sex with men across selected cities in India’ published in the BMC Public Health journal on 30 October 2024 (Pal,S. et al. journal article 2024) was a cross-sectional mixed-method study which used quantitative data gathered from 300 self-identified Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), with 240 providing only quantitative data, and further qualitative data were collected from a subset of 60 respondents, ranging in age from 18 to 70 years. The study focused on six major Indian cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, and Lucknow¹⁸⁰.

12.2.4 The Pal,S. et al. study found that: ‘More than 60 per cent of the respondents encountered at least one type of violence due to their sexuality. ...Respondents of Muslim religion exhibited a 2.6-fold increase in the likelihood of experiencing sexual violence compared to their Hindu counterparts. Violence against Men who have Sex with Men is a pervasive issue in the six metropolitan cities studied in India, particularly affecting individuals with lower education and low income.’¹⁸¹

12.2.5 In relation to verbal, physical and sexual violence the study noted:

‘Qualitative data revealed that verbal violence against MSM individuals is a distressing reality, often originating from familial disapproval and societal stigma. The narratives offer poignant glimpses into the verbal abuse and intimidation encountered by individuals within their own families and communities, highlighting the pervasive discrimination and lack of acceptance prevalent in Indian society ...

‘Respondents indicated that physical violence against MSM individuals often arises from entrenched homophobia, gender nonconformity, and power

¹⁷⁸ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.152), 29 September 2023

¹⁷⁹ UN News, [India's LGBTQIA+ community notches legal wins...](#), 17 May 2024

¹⁸⁰ Pal, S.,et al, [Men at risk](#)...(Data and Methods), 30 October 2024

¹⁸¹ Pal, S.,et al, [Men at risk](#)...(Results, Conclusion), 30 October 2024

imbalances. These narratives vividly portray the stark realities of physical assault and intimidation endured by individuals within institutional settings and professional environments, perpetuating a culture of fear and oppression ...

‘... sexual violence against MSM individuals often occurs within intimate or familial settings, fuelled by power differentials, coercion, and societal taboos surrounding non-heteronormative identities. These narratives shed light on the experiences of sexual assault and exploitation faced by individuals, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive support and protection.

‘The encounter of a 24-year-old hairdresser from Delhi with a predatory neighbour underscores the vulnerability of MSM individuals to sexual harassment and assault in their immediate surroundings ... [and] in public spaces.’¹⁸²

- 12.2.6 The same journal article provided quantitative data on the prevalence of different types of violence among the 240 MSM respondents. The percentage relates to the number of respondents who reported experiencing those specific types of violence or any type of violence (table compiled by CPIT and figures rounded to the nearest whole %):¹⁸³

Characteristic	(%)	Verbal	Physical	Sexual	Any
Age					
18-24		80	46	37	82
24-34		42	24	29	53
35 and above		41	23	16	44
Sexual orientation					
Gay		75	47	38	79
Bisexual		37	16	20	44
Disclosure of sexuality					
No		44	23	27	51
Yes		88	54	34	89
Residential city					
Ahmedabad		42	30	26	50
Bengaluru		54	22	24	56
Delhi		66	42	44	72
Kolkata		72	46	28	80
Lucknow		46	26	20	52
Mumbai		56	24	32	58

- 12.2.7 The same study noted in relation to the effect of age, education, caste,

¹⁸² Pal, S., et al, [Men at risk...](#) (Results), 30 October 2024

¹⁸³ Pal, S., et al, [Men at risk...](#) (Table 1), 30 October 2024

family support and location on risk of violence:

‘Overall, 61.3 per cent of the respondents reported experiencing at least one form of violence due to their sexual orientation ... respondents of the age group 25–34 were 78 per cent ... less likely to face any violence compared to respondents of the age group 18–24 ... respondents who were out about their sexuality in public were five times more likely to face any violence than respondents who were not out in public ... The odds of facing physical violence were 91 per cent lower among respondents having education level graduation and above compared to respondents having primary education only. ... The odds of facing physical violence were 3.9 times higher among respondents belonging to other backward classes than respondents of the general category ... Respondents whose family was supportive were 51 per cent ... less likely to face sexual violence compared to respondents whose family was not supportive. The odds of facing verbal violence were 4.5 ... higher among respondents residing in Delhi than respondents residing in Ahmedabad ...’¹⁸⁴

- 12.2.8 The journal article acknowledged certain limitations in applying the findings of the study to the broader MSM population in India. These included the use of a small sample size, sampling via dating app Grindr, a focus on urban participants, and those who reported high risks and aggravated experiences of trauma, and the fact that by its nature, the study only included those willing to participate. These limitations may have meant that groups were excluded, or biases introduced¹⁸⁵.

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12.3 Lesbian and bisexual women

12.3.1 UN News noted in May 2024:

‘Noyonika* and Ishita*, residents of a small town in the northeastern Indian state of Assam, are a lesbian couple working with an organization advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights. But despite her advocacy role in the community, Noyonika has been unable to muster the courage to tell her own family that she is gay. “Very few people know this,” she says. “My family is very conservative, and it would be unthinkable for [them] to understand that I am gay.” Noyonika’s partner, Ishita, is Agender (not identifying with any gender, or having a lack of gender). She says that she realized in childhood that she was different from other girls and was attracted to girls rather than boys. But her family is also very conservative, and she has not told her father about her reality.

‘Twenty-three-year-old Minal* and 27-year-old Sangeeta* have a similar story. The couple are residents of a small village in the northwestern state of Punjab. They now live in a big city and work for a well-regarded company. Sangeeta said that although her own parents eventually came to terms with the relationship, Minal’s family was extremely opposed to the point of harassing the couple. “All hell broke loose,” said Minal. “In 2019, we got permission to live together through a court order,” Sangeeta explained, but after this Minal’s family started threatening her over the phone. “They used to say that they would kill me and put my family in jail. Even my family

¹⁸⁴ Pal, S., et al, [Men at risk](#)... (Quantitative result), 30 October 2024

¹⁸⁵ Pal, S., et al, [Men at risk](#)... (Discussion), 30 October 2024

members were scared of these threats. After that [Minal's family] kept stalking and harassing us for two to three years," she said.¹⁸⁶

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12.4 Hijras and the wider trans community

12.4.1 The DFAT report 2023 noted 'While hijra are sometimes called on to bless newborns, marriages and new houses in Indian society, their perceived ability to curse people can engender fear. Sources claim most families do not accept their male child behaving in ways considered feminine, and children who do so risk being subject to violence. Some families disown and evict their *hijra* children, while some *hijra* children run away and seek refuge in *hijra* communes....

'[Hijra]... are also discriminated against in accessing hotels, shopping centres and other public spaces; for example, they may be questioned or refused entry.'¹⁸⁷

12.4.2 DFAT also noted '*Hijra* report an absence of police protection makes them easy targets for extortion and sexual violence. Sources told DFAT that *hijra* may be exposed to significant violence, including child trafficking and castration without consent, in response to demand from sex work clients for sex workers who have been castrated. Sources told DFAT that they are vulnerable to rape outside these contexts, including on public transport.'¹⁸⁸

12.4.3 DFAT also noted: 'While there is some societal acceptance of *hijra*, non-*hijra* transgender people are very likely to be ostracised and misunderstood, and perhaps no distinction would be made from other LGBTI people ... Transmen experience discrimination but may have an easier time 'passing' as men than transwomen do as women. While this can reduce discrimination, that experience is not universal ...'¹⁸⁹

12.4.4 The UNHRC report 2024 noted 'The Committee recognizes that the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, has been a significant step in safeguarding the rights of transgender communities. Reports indicate, however, that harassment and discrimination persist.'¹⁹⁰

12.4.5 UN News, in its May 2024 report, without specific reference to sexual orientation or gender identity, gave an example of treatment encountered by men with female characteristics:

'[in]...the rural areas of Assam where her organization [an NGO advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights] works, Ishita gave the example of a cultural festival Bhavna being celebrated in Naamghars, or places of worship, where dramas based on mythological stories are presented. The female characters in these dramas are played mostly by men with feminine characteristics. During festivals they are widely praised, and their feminine characteristics are applauded, but out of the spotlight, they can become victims of harassment. "They are intimidated, they are sexually exploited, they are molested," Ishita

¹⁸⁶ UN News, [India's LGBTQIA+ community notches legal wins...](#), 17 May 2024

¹⁸⁷ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.161 and 3.163), 29 September 2023

¹⁸⁸ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.164), 29 September 2023

¹⁸⁹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.165), 29 September 2023

¹⁹⁰ UNHRC, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report...](#)(para 17), 2 September 2024

explained.¹⁹¹

- 12.4.6 The IRB May 2024 response, based on various sources noted: 'India's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) stated in a 2023 letter that despite the government passing the *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019*, "transgender persons continue to grapple with discrimination in multiple facets of life" and across different forms, such as "employment disparities, limited access to healthcare, and exclusion from social circles".¹⁹² See also [Access to services](#).
- 12.4.7 The News Minute, an Indian digital news platform¹⁹³, in its report published 2 May 2024 noted:
- 'On February 25, 2024, Hritik Lalan and Tikku, two transgender students from Hyderabad Central University (HCU), woke up to find their clothes burnt outside their hostel rooms ... Ironically, trans and queer visibility has been at the forefront of HCU for the past few years. Hritik became the first trans student representative in the HCU student administration in 2023 ... She is also the current general secretary of the Ambedkarite Student's Association (ASA) at HCU. ASA notably has a significant queer cadre on campus [and]...president Naresh ... says the organisation has a long tradition of active inclusion of queer and trans rights ... HCU has a long history of being a centre for active politics in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana ...'¹⁹⁴
- 12.4.8 The Khapre M., et al. journal article noted 'Some [transgender women] were in denial of any sexual activity as they belonged to the Hijra community, whose main source of income is through badhai (singing, dancing, and conferring blessings) ... Social dynamics [affecting health literacy] included a lack of family support, migration challenges, restrictions in dera settings, and discrimination. To avoid humiliating their families, they work in distant places and continue migrating to remain anonymous. Being in a dera (closed community), they had to strictly follow the norms to ensure the guardianship and protection of the Gurus.'¹⁹⁵ (See also [Access to services](#).)
- 12.4.9 The BBC report published on 31 March 2025 reported on the first trans woman to legally marry in Tamil Nadu in 2019 after the Madras High Court ruling which upheld the couple's right to marry. The couple outlined some of the treatment they had experienced:
- "The day after local news coverage, I was fired from my job," says Arun..."People sent abusive messages criticising me for being married to a transgender woman," he says ...
- 'Even before battling to have her marriage recognised by the state, Srija and her family faced hostility and mistreatment. After Srija came out as a transgender woman at the age of 17, she and her mother and younger brother ... were evicted from their home by their landlord. Several family members stopped speaking to them.'¹⁹⁶ See also [Housing](#).

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¹⁹¹ UN News, [India's LGBTQIA+ community notches legal wins...](#), 17 May 2024

¹⁹² IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

¹⁹³ The News Minute, [About us](#), no date

¹⁹⁴ The News Minute, [Building homes through communities of care...](#), 2 May 2024

¹⁹⁵ Khapre M., et al [Exploring the utilization of targeted intervention services...](#) 4 December 2024

¹⁹⁶ BBC, [My mum in India was willing to lose everything to support my trans identity](#), 31 March 2025

12.5 Intersex people

- 12.5.1 The ILGA December 2023 report in an interview with Gopi Shankar, noted 'The abandonment of intersex children from the family happens in many cases.'¹⁹⁷
- 12.5.2 The UN General Assembly, Report of the Special Rapporteur dated 17 July 2024 noted: '...while it is estimated that 10,000 intersex babies are born each year in India, there is no mechanism to determine accurate numbers. In one Indian community, it was reported that intersex infants are buried alive.'¹⁹⁸
- 12.5.3 In sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) there was no further information on intersex people, particularly the experiences of intersex adults.

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13. Conversion therapy

- 13.1.1 In the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)), there was a lack of recent, nationally representative data on the prevalence of conversion therapy in India.
- 13.1.2 Social Policy Research Foundation India (SPRF India), a public policy think tank based in New Delhi¹⁹⁹, in its November 2023 report entitled *Is a ban on conversion therapy all that needs to be done?* stated:

'On 8 June 2021, the Madras High Court gave a judgement to ban conversion therapy. The judgement defined Conversion Therapy as a chemical, psychological, and physical therapy aimed towards altering the sexuality of the individual subjected to it...

'The provisions laid down by the court in *S. Sushama v. Commissioner of Police, 2021 (HC 7284, 2021)* only banned the medical practice of conversion therapy without criminalising the act of professing or practising the same. There are no punitive measures, and the practitioners of conversion therapy are only heard as professional misconduct cases, which culminate in a maximum punishment of being removed from the list of the National Health Commission. Even today, only roughly 600 courses are recognised by the same.'²⁰⁰
- 13.1.3 The same source stated:

'A is a transman from Delhi who works in the queer rights space.... [He] explains that conversion therapy is an umbrella term that covers a vast way of bringing deviant behaviour into check; this includes verbal abuse by the family, forceful marriages, religious ceremonies, consultations with Tantriks and other spiritual leaders, mental health treatment in terms of excessive medication and shock therapy. He notes that while medication and hospitals are not fully accessible to all, Tantriks and babas are easily available in every corner of the cities and towns in India and go completely unregulated and unchecked when it comes to their "treatment" and "solutions" for queer folks... A further discusses that families often resort to house arrests, physical violence, ceremonies like havans or shell out money to smaller

¹⁹⁷ ILGA, [Intersex legal mapping report](#) (page 34), 12 December 2023.

¹⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, [Report of the Special Rapporteur](#) (paragraph 63), 17 July 2024

¹⁹⁹ SPRF India, [About us](#), no date

²⁰⁰ SPRF India, [Is a ban on conversion therapy all that needs to be done?](#), November 2023

clinics and de-addiction centres in order to “fix” their children.’²⁰¹

13.1.4 The USSD 2023 noted ‘In 2018, the Indian Psychiatric Society stated that homosexuality was not a disease and that all forms of “treatment/therapy” to reverse sexual orientation were based on an erroneous premise that such orientations were diseases. In 2022, the National Medical Commission instructed all state medical councils to ban so-called conversion therapy and called it “professional misconduct.”’²⁰²

13.1.5 The DFAT report 2023 noted:

‘... LGBTI people (children and young adults especially) may be subject to ‘conversion therapy’; attempts to change a person’s sexuality or gender identity that may amount to torture. Methods of ‘conversion’ for boys and men sometimes involve connecting electric currents to the scrotum or anus and, for women and girls, can include ‘corrective rape’ by a man with the intention that a woman who has been raped will ‘discover’ that she is actually heterosexual or cisgender. Hot irons are sometimes applied against the skin.

‘DFAT is aware of media reports of the use of petrol, fire or sharp instruments applied to the hair or skin, or the forced use of herbal or other ‘medical’ concoctions. These ‘therapies’ do not change sexual orientation or gender identity but are highly traumatic and associated with suicide of victims. They can take place in the home, in temples or religious venues, or in hospitals.’²⁰³ DFAT did not provide information upon the scale or extent to which conversion therapy takes place in India.

13.1.6 The DW article published 18 April 2023, in information provided by Kanav Sahgal, a writer on LGBTQ issues who works for the think tank Vidhi Center for Legal Policy, noted: ‘... pressure to be heterosexual has been so high that parents have been known to send children to therapy to “correct” their sexual orientation.’²⁰⁴ It is not clear how many individuals or cases this refers to, nor in what time period these instances occurred.

13.1.7 The IRB May 2024 response noted:

‘In an interview with the Research Directorate, a public health professional in Chennai who has worked as a youth counsellor for LGBTQIA+ youth stigmatized by their families and society, indicated that, in practice, the conversion therapy ban [in Tamil Nadu] applies to medical doctors, including psychiatrists, but does not include psychologists; doctors have been circumventing the ban by referring parents to clinical psychologists instead of conducting conversion therapy themselves ... The same source added that activists have called doctors who were still performing conversion therapies after the ban was in place in Tamil Nadu and informed them that they could lose their licenses ...’²⁰⁵

13.1.8 The Government of India announced on 1 September 2024 that ‘The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued letters to all stakeholders including all States/UTs to take measures to ensure the rights of LGBTQI+

²⁰¹ SPRF India, [Is a ban on conversion therapy all that needs to be done?](#), November 2023

²⁰² USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁰³ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.169 and 3.170), 29 September 2023

²⁰⁴ DW, [How does India perceive homosexuality?](#), 18 April 2023

²⁰⁵ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

community with relation to ... prohibition of conversion therapy.’²⁰⁶

- 13.1.9 An article published by The New Indian Express on 16th September 2025 stated: ‘The Tamil Nadu Medical Council (TNMC) on Monday informed the Madras High Court that circulars have been sent to all registered medical practitioners that performing conversion therapy and unethical treatment of trans persons would attract severe action including suspension of the registration of medical practitioners. It also said the issues would be brought into the framework of continuing medical education (CME) to sensitise the doctors.’²⁰⁷

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14. Access to services

14.1 Healthcare

- 14.1.1 The DFAT report 2023 noted ‘In healthcare settings, *hijra* report discriminatory practices such as deliberate use of male pronouns, admission into male wards, harassment by hospital staff and patients, and, in some cases, denial of medical services. Some doctors will refuse to touch them. Sources told DFAT that *hijra* will often not seek out health care for fear of discrimination.’²⁰⁸
- 14.1.2 The same DFAT report also noted in respect of HIV diagnosis and treatment ‘Early testing and treatment is encouraged by the government, particularly in vulnerable communities such as the LGBTI community, hijra, men who have sex with men, sex workers and people who use drugs.’²⁰⁹
- 14.1.3 Chakrapani V, Newman PA, Shunmugam M, Rawat S, Mohan BR, Baruah D, et al’s paper published on 20 August 2023 titled ‘A scoping review of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people’s health in India’, noted information gaps in lesbian and bisexual women’s experiences of health care and: ‘... that studies reported their underutilization of routine preventive healthcare services ... The stark lack of formal health outreach structures in India for lesbian and bisexual women, and for transmasculine people, makes it challenging to reach these populations through established organizational partners.’²¹⁰
- 14.1.4 The Mist report noted:
- ‘The LGBTQIA+ community faces significant barriers in accessing healthcare due to societal stigma, discrimination, and a lack of understanding from healthcare providers.
- ‘The community has specific healthcare needs, including mental health support (ranked second highest in the survey), sexual and reproductive health services, and substance abuse treatment, which are often not adequately addressed
 - ‘The shortage of healthcare providers trained in LGBTQIA+ healthcare needs further exacerbate these challenges

²⁰⁶ Gol, [Host of measures taken by Government of India...](#), 1 September 2024

²⁰⁷ The New Indian Express, [Doctors doing ‘conversion therapy’ liable to lose...](#), 16 September 2025

²⁰⁸ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.163), 29 September 2023

²⁰⁹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (2.20), 29 September 2023

²¹⁰ Chakrapani V et al., [A scoping review...](#), 20 April 2023

- ‘Access to insurance schemes like Ayushman Bharat [National Health Protection Scheme²¹¹] is hindered by lack of awareness, complex procedures, and discrimination
- ‘Many reported challenges accessing these schemes due to lack of information, documentation issues, and discrimination

‘The survey revealed that while 66% of community members are comfortable discussing their healthcare needs, there is a shortage of trained providers.’²¹²

14.1.5 The Khapre M., et al. journal article noted:

‘The transgender women [the 24 participants in the study] had low health literacy and adhered to traditional beliefs and practices for curing diseases, such as seeking “Jhaad phuk” from faith healers or quacks... There is a fear of reprisal from family members if they contract the [sexually transmitted] disease as they have already witnessed the rejection that occurred when they disclosed their gender identity. They themselves have witnessed the stigma and discrimination faced by [people living with HIV] PLHIV, so they fear getting tested and identifying themselves with the disease...

‘Financial constraints, such as the absence of government IDs, loss of wages, and travel costs, were also reported [in affecting service use]... Barriers related to service provision included a lack of privacy, poor condom quality, and limited availability of lubricants... Services primarily focused on PLHIV, excluding treatment for other ailments... The participants reported inadequate testing facilities for confirmation and timely viral load monitoring. After the HIV screening test, they had to wait for months for confirmation. ...Negative experiences while accessing services at government hospitals, expenditures incurred for STI services, lack of NGO support, inappropriate referrals, and being photographed while receiving services were also identified.’²¹³

14.1.6 The same journal article noted factors that have enabled service provision:

‘The enabling factors included the enforcement of the Transgender Act. NGOs have implemented various strategies, such as hotspot and crisis management committees, in addition to linking beneficiaries to other providers based on their health needs. Some effective strategies include social marketing of condoms, incentivization, liaison with private labs, health education, meetings with transgender women, outreach activities, and reminders for follow-up visits.

‘The state has also contributed by monitoring the supply chain of commodities, establishing dedicated Outpatient departments (OPD) for transgender women, and providing communication skill training for NGO staff.’²¹⁴

14.1.7 The Government of India announced on 1 September 2024 that:

‘[The] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued letters to all stakeholders including all States/UTs to take measures to ensure the rights

²¹¹ Gol, National Portal of India, [Ayushman Bharat](#), no date

²¹² Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 7), 27 November 2024

²¹³ Khapre M., et al [Exploring the utilization of targeted intervention services...](#) 4 December 2024

²¹⁴ Khapre M., et al [Exploring the utilization of targeted intervention services...](#) 4 December 2024

of LGBTQI+ community with relation to healthcare, planning awareness activities...provision of Tele consultation, sensitisation and training various levels of staff and making of provision to claim the body when near relative/next of kin/family is not available...on the subject of ensuring the health care access and reducing discrimination towards LGBTQI+ community.

'....The Ministry is working on guidelines to address the issues pertaining to mental health/well-being of queer community.'²¹⁵

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14.2 Housing

14.2.1 The IRB May 2024 response included an interview with a Delhi-based lawyer with experience working on LGBTQ rights' cases in India who '...indicated that there have been cases of "neighbours [who] have asked queer persons to vacate houses," and they noted "many cases of violence" against "queer" individuals...The Lawyer added that in "many" of such cases, survivors have "not received accountability"; and in "many cases" have faced "evictions" and "violence," and "abuse" is "very" common (Lawyer 2024-03-28).'²¹⁶ See also [Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively](#).

14.2.2 The Mist report noted:

'The LGBTQIA+ community faces significant housing challenges, including discrimination, harassment, and limited access to safe and affordable options. The survey revealed that many respondents faced housing discrimination, with key issues being refusal to rent or sell, verbal harassment, and higher rent demands.

- Social stigma, legal barriers, and economic issues contribute to housing instability and insecurity
- Lack of awareness about housing-related laws further compounds these challenges. The survey indicated that limited awareness of housing laws impacts the community's ability to access and secure safe housing.'²¹⁷

14.2.3 The Mist report user survey indicated mixed responses on whether participants had faced housing discrimination based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity²¹⁸. Forty-five percent reported they had not faced discrimination, 41% had faced discrimination and 14% were not sure. Out of those that had experienced discrimination, the type of discrimination reported by participants in accessing housing was:

²¹⁵ Gol, [Host of measures taken by Government of India....](#), 1 September 2024

²¹⁶ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 2), 22 May 2024

²¹⁷ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 8), 27 November 2024

²¹⁸ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 8), 27 November 2024

Exhibit 16: Types of discrimination experienced by the individuals



Source: Survey on Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future of Legal Equality for LGBTQ+ in India (2024) | Exhibit 16: 173 respondents selected multiple choices, for a total of 269 selections

14.2.4 In relation to the availability of shelters or transitional housing the Mist report noted:

‘Shelter homes are vital for the LGBTQIA+ community in India, providing immediate safety and security from abuse, emotional support and community building, access to essential resources and services, empowerment through skill development, and advocacy for awareness and acceptance. These safe spaces often serve as transitional housing while individuals seek permanent solutions and play a crucial role in addressing the unique challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community, ultimately empowering them to lead fulfilling lives free from discrimination and violence. Garima Greh is one such housing scheme specifically aimed at providing affordable and safe housing for transgender individual. There are 12 Garima Grehs for transgender persons on pilot basis in 9 States. In total, 654 transgender persons have benefited through Garima Greh project. While its vision is to address the unique challenges faced by the transgender community, it is not currently designed to solve the housing challenges faced by the broader LGBTQIA+ community in India.’²¹⁹

14.2.5 The News Minute, in its 2 May 2024 article stated: ‘Garima Greh, the State’s solution to safe trans accommodation and care, disallows trans persons who perform sex work and begging from accessing the scheme. It also places an age restriction of 18-60 years.’²²⁰ See also [State treatment](#)

14.2.6 The report on public consultations conducted by Keshav Suri Foundation and the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy in New Delhi, Bombay and Jaipur, with around 150 participants including the queer community, civil society, lawyers, activists and other stakeholders, published in July 2025, stated: ‘Queer persons and persons in queer relationships face wide-ranging issues in accessing housing and shelter. Where markers of queerness are evident to others, discrimination against queer persons in general manifests in discrimination in leasing or selling of housing. Such discrimination is prominent especially towards transgender persons and those in openly nonnormative relationships or family structures and worsens when they belong to marginalised caste and class sections.’²²¹

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²¹⁹ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 36), 27 November 2024

²²⁰ The News Minute, [Building homes through communities of care...](#), 2 May 2024

²²¹ Keshav Suri Foundation & Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, [Submissions...](#), July 2025

14.3 Employment

- 14.3.1 The DFAT report 2023 DFAT also noted ‘Many hijra have little formal education (often because they have been rejected by their families) and can find it difficult to secure employment. Discrimination limits employment opportunities. They traditionally work in begging, performing religious rituals or the beauty industry. Hijra may face discrimination when seeking access to ...employment...’²²²
- 14.3.2 DFAT also noted ‘...the owner of the first transgender men-run hair salon in India said that during the COVID-19 pandemic he was providing food rations to transgender people who were ‘educated and skilled but jobless due to their gender’. He also noted that some transgender people were forced to ‘return to unsupportive and abusive families in their villages’.’²²³
- 14.3.3 The Inter Press Service (IPS), in its article [World’s Largest Religious Gathering Becomes Trans-Inclusive Despite Controversies](#), published 18 February 2025 reported on the trans men street dancers:
- ‘...on the street, a small crowd of men is seen surrounding a young trans man dancing to the fast beats of music. “This is Launda Naach,” says Ajeet Bahadur—a local theater artist. “It’s a common form of rural entertainment here, performed typically by cross-dressing trans men.” The audience of Launda Naach is typically male... according to Ajeet Bahadur, the dancers are often sexually exploited, and their performance is rarely seen as art.
- “Their lives are unbelievably miserable; there is little respect for their art, all eyes are on their bodies and exploitation and poverty are a constant part of their lives,” says Bahadur, who has studied the lives of Launda Naach performers for some time.’²²⁴
- 14.3.4 The same IPS article reported on other challenges faced by trans people: ‘Aside from Launda Naach performers, thousands of other trans men and women in India struggle to earn a living. They are usually seen begging on the street and inside public transport, while many are also often accused of extorting money from small businesses such as shopkeepers in local markets’²²⁵
- 14.3.5 According to an article in Firstpost a news organisation, in November 2023, trans people are not permitted to join the military however the report noted ‘According to an Indian Express report, the Indian Armed Forces is looking at the possible recruitment of transgenders in the services and has also formed a study group to deliberate the implications of such a move and the way forward for its implementation in the defence forces’²²⁶. In sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) no further information on this could be found.
- 14.3.6 The Mist report noted: ‘...The job search process remains difficult for LGBTQIA+ individuals due to discrimination and bias. The survey highlighted that a quarter of respondents reported that their LGBTQIA+ identity affected their job prospects negatively.’²²⁷

²²² DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.162 and 3.163), 29 September 2023

²²³ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.166), 29 September 2023

²²⁴ IPS, [World’s Largest Religious Gathering Becomes Trans-Inclusive...](#), 18 February 2025

²²⁵ IPS, [World’s Largest Religious Gathering Becomes Trans-Inclusive...](#), 18 February 2025

²²⁶ Firstpost, [Will India become a part of the 19-country club...](#), 14 November 2023

²²⁷ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 8), 27 November 2024

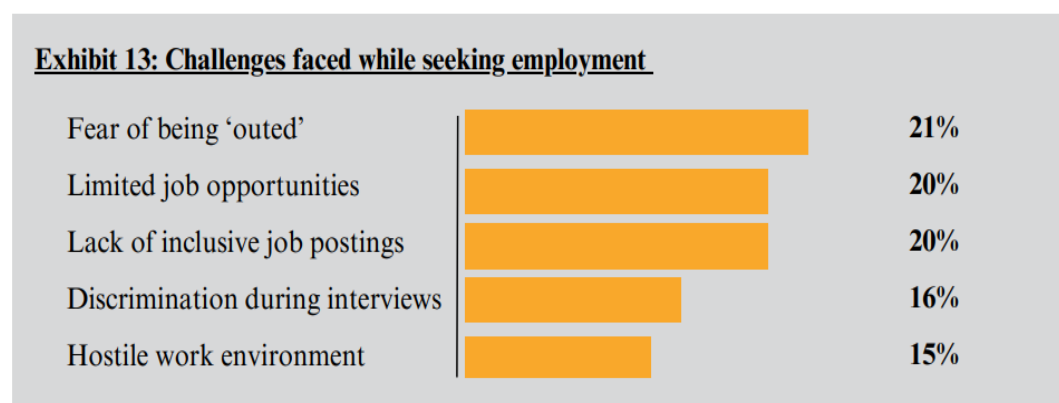
14.3.7 Further detail included in the Mist report noted that 49% of survey participants felt comfortable discussing LGBTQIA+ topics with colleagues and that 75% felt the workplace was inclusive or somewhat inclusive and accepting of LGBTQIA+ individuals²²⁸ :

14.3.8 The same report noted:

‘Workplace inclusion for LGBTQIA+ members in India is a growing area of focus, with progress driven by legal advancements, changing social attitudes, and corporate initiatives. Many companies are now adopting inclusive policies, such as non-discrimination clauses, gender-neutral restrooms, and employee resource groups... Training sessions and workshops are also being conducted to sensitize employees and create a more inclusive workplace culture. While challenges like social stigma, lack of awareness, and implementation gaps persist, the overall trend indicates a positive shift towards greater acceptance and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Indian workplace...

‘Some respondents reported experiencing direct discrimination, including career direct discrimination, including career sabotage, slurs, misgendering, and even termination due to their sexual orientation. Others described more subtle forms of discrimination, such as jokes and comments that create a hostile environment. Several respondents mentioned feeling uncomfortable or unsafe disclosing their LGBTQIA+ identity at work due to fear of judgment or negative repercussions. Additionally, several respondents highlighted a lack of awareness or understanding regarding LGBTQIA+ issues in their workplace... Many survey respondents highlighted that their workplaces have diversity and inclusion and non-discrimination policies in place.’²²⁹

14.3.9 The Mist report survey provided information on participants’ views on challenges faced while seeking employment²³⁰:



Source: Survey on Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future of Legal Equality for LGBTQ+ in India (2024) | Exhibit 13: 177 respondents selected multiple choices, for a total of 354 selections

14.3.10 The Mist report provided the following analysis of the limitations of its study:

‘The survey responses were primarily from individuals residing in urban areas (tier 1/2 cities). Therefore, the findings might not fully represent the spectrum of issues or challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community across India, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, responses related to workplace

²²⁸ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (pages 28, 29), 27 November 2024

²²⁹ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (pages 28, 29), 27 November 2024

²³⁰ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (pages 28, 29), 27 November 2024

inclusion could also be influenced by this urban bias, as respondents' employers are likely multinational companies or large technology companies located in tier 1 and tier 2 cities, which tend to have better-developed diversity and inclusion policies.'²³¹

- 14.3.11 An article published by the International Bar Association in September 2025 regarding workplace diversity and inclusion in India stated: 'the [Transgender Persons Act 2019] bars discrimination throughout the employment lifecycle and mandates affirmative inclusion through hiring practices, grievance redressal mechanisms and workplace design, including gender-neutral facilities... Despite a robust statutory framework, DEI implementation across Indian workplaces remains uneven....'²³²

See also [Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively](#) and [Hijras and the wider trans community](#).

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14.4 Education

- 14.4.1 In sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) there was limited information on access to education, and information that was available mostly focused on hijras and trans people.
- 14.4.2 The DFAT report 2023 noted that hijras may face discrimination in accessing education²³³.
- 14.4.3 In relation to the availability of legal gender recognition in education, the USSD report 2023 noted: 'On April 27, the Bombay High Court directed the Maharashtra government to ensure all educational institutes applied changes to the names and genders of transgender individuals in their official records.'²³⁴
- 14.4.4 The Hindu noted in June 2025:

'The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 constitutes a "Gender Inclusion Fund"' to make sure that transgender students get equitable education. Though the policy acknowledges and seeks to address structural barriers that transgender children face within the schooling system, other queer identities have been ignored. However, policy does not automatically translate into inclusion in practice: 28% of transgender students reported harassment in school. While a total of 61,214 transgender children are enrolled in schools (Unified District Information System for Education 2019-20), this demographic is also likely to have the highest 'out-of-school' children.'²³⁵

See also [Trans and intersex rights](#) and [Information referring to LGBT+ people collectively](#)

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15. LGBT+ community

15.1 NGOs and support

²³¹ Mist LGBTQ Foundation, [Uniting Diversity: Shaping the Future](#) (page 45), 27 November 2024

²³² International Bar Association, [Workplace diversity and inclusion...](#), 24 September 2025

²³³ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.163), 29 September 2023

²³⁴ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

²³⁵ The Hindu, [The need to normalise queer in the classroom](#), 5 July 2025

15.1.1 The Better India provided details of some of the LGBT+ organisations operating in India:

- Nestam is based in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh and: ‘Beyond advocacy, it offers essential support and resources, such as safe housing for the community, and actively encourages the installation of all-gender restrooms across public spaces... Nestam challenges stereotypes and promotes acceptance, working tirelessly to create a more inclusive environment for all gender identities and sexual orientations in the coastal state.’²³⁶
- The Lakshya Trust, Gujarat ‘this non-profit transformed part of Rajpipla Palace into a shelter for LGBTQIA+ individuals... The organisation addresses the social, economic, legal, psychological, spiritual, and health needs of sexual minorities, chiefly MSM (men having sex with men) and GBT (gay, bisexual, and transgender) communities across Vadodara, Surat, and Rajkot. With 11 drop-in centres, over 179 peer educators, and an 83-member project team, it is Gujarat’s largest community-based MSM organisation.’²³⁷
- The Humsafar Trust, Maharashtra based in Mumbai. It advocates for the community’s rights and delivers comprehensive health services, including free HIV testing and treatment. The community-based organisation also champions mental health, legal advocacy, and workplace inclusion through initiatives like the Saksham job fair, a community-led employment drive... So far, Humsafar has extended support to over 1 lakh [100,000] individuals.’²³⁸
- [The Naz Foundation](#) (India) Trust, Delhi which ‘Alongside legal advocacy,...provides counselling, peer support groups, medical and legal referrals, and home-based care for people living with HIV/AIDS...reaching over 234,000 individuals to date... A nationwide helpline (+91 8800329176 / +91 (011) 47504630) further extends emotional and mental health support.’²³⁹

15.1.2 LGBT+ organisations which support individuals and advocate for LGBT+ rights include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi Collective Delhi • Good asYou • Harmless Hugs • Pride Circle • Queerythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAATHII • Sangama • Sappho for Equality • Tweet Foundation • Varta Trust
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15.1.3 DH noted the launch of a 24/7 confidential ‘Rainbow Helpline’ for Karnataka on 4 March 2024 which ‘aims to offer information and support to gender and sexual minorities, as well as their families and friends.’²⁴⁰

²³⁶ The Better India, [What Pride Looks Like After June](#), 15 June 2025

²³⁷ The Better India, [What Pride Looks Like After June](#), 15 June 2025

²³⁸ The Better India, [What Pride Looks Like After June](#), 15 June 2025

²³⁹ The Better India, [What Pride Looks Like After June](#), 15 June 2025

²⁴⁰ DH, [Bengaluru: 24x7 ‘Rainbow Helpline’ to support sexual minorities](#), 4 March 2024

- 15.1.4 For a directory of NGOs, non-profit organisations and charities working on protecting the rights of the LGBT community see [NGO base - LGBT Rights and Welfare in India](#)
- 15.1.5 See also [NGOs and Groups – LGBTQ India Resource](#) for support groups across India. For information on the legal framework for the operation of NGOs generally see Country Background Note: India (available on request).

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15.2 LGBT+ spaces

- 15.2.1 Freedom House in Freedom on the Net 2024 noted ‘Online spaces for the LGBT+ community are growing ...’²⁴¹
- 15.2.2 The DFAT report 2023 noted ‘Sources claim that, while there are an increasing number of ‘gay nights’ in bars or pride parades, most socialising happens in people’s homes. The use of ‘dating apps’ like Grindr, Scruff and Growlr have allowed LGBTI men more access to interaction. DFAT is not aware of similar opportunities for LGBTI women to socialise.’²⁴²
- 15.2.3 In a June 2025 article published in The New Indian Express, Meghna Mehra, political analyst, author and member of the LGBT community based in Delhi stated:
- ‘The case of queer dating apps is... dubious as many straight boys often match with gay persons and sometimes they turn up only to abuse the gay person in public... there is a problem of class and caste, too. Posh south Delhi queer meets are for the upper class and in upper caste neighbourhoods. If you are not the ‘right’ caste and class, you cannot attend the events. It’s a problem for queer persons hailing from marginalised communities.’²⁴³
- 15.2.4 The Better India provided information on The Aravani Art Project, Karnataka which
- ‘... is dedicated to empowering the transgender and LGBTQIA+ communities through art. By reclaiming public spaces and challenging social stigma, the project promotes visibility and fosters dialogue. It collaborates with trained transgender artists to transform school walls, cafes, metro pillars and other public spaces into vibrant canvases that celebrate diversity. Since its launch in Bengaluru in 2016, the project has expanded to Mumbai, Jaipur, Delhi, Chennai, Goa, and Coimbatore, engaging local artists and communities in its dynamic approach to inclusion and awareness.’²⁴⁴

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15.3 Pride and LGBT+ inclusive events

- 15.3.1 The USSD report 2203 noted ‘There were no reports of restrictions on speaking out regarding LGBTQI+ matters or on the ability to legally register or convene related events.’²⁴⁵
- 15.3.2 The IPS February 2025 article noted:

²⁴¹ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net 2024 - India](#) (section B7), 16 October 2024

²⁴² DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.158), 29 September 2023

²⁴³ The New Indian Express, [Where’s the safe space for queer love?](#), 11 June 2025

²⁴⁴ The Better India, [What Pride Looks Like After June](#), 15 June 2025

²⁴⁵ USSD, [USSD report 2023](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

'The ceremonial bathing [of the 45-day Maha Kumbh on 14 February 2025] is led by the most important of the living Hindu saints ... Fifteen transgender spiritual leaders, ... marched along with the Naga Sadhus and Aghoris—the legendary saints ... Later, ... trans gurus receive visitors while some are seen performing some rituals and meditating along with Aghori ascetics ... The inclusion of the transgender Acharyas in the Kumbh ... however, has not been completely free of controversies. Some have disputed their claim of embracing a minimalistic life and accused them of indulging in a game of power and authority considered unbefitting for true sainthood.'²⁴⁶

15.3.3 On 7 April 2025 the Independent reported the cancellation of a Pride parade due to be held on 27 April in Amritsar city, Punjab '... organisers ... said in a statement ... "We do not intend to harm the sentiments of any religious or political groups. The safety of our members is our first priority and we will take measures to safeguard it." The acting leader of the Akal Takht – the temporal authority in Sikhism – had condemned the march and called it "unnatural"...'²⁴⁷

15.3.4 The Better India reported on Pride events happening across India in June 2025²⁴⁸. Mumbai newspaper Mid-Day noted 'In India, Pride has increasingly become a symbol of visibility — rainbows, parades, and gimmicky slogans that flood our social media feeds and streets.'²⁴⁹ Mist noted 'Pride celebrations in India today dazzle the senses with vibrant parades, rainbow flags and an outpouring of joy.'²⁵⁰

15.3.5 Mid-Day published an interview with Paridhi, a 23-year-old trans woman and drag artist from New Delhi which noted:

'For Paridhi, Pride is an act of reclaiming space. "Pride, to me, is claiming space where none was offered. It's standing tall in my heels even when my legs shake. It's being visibly trans in a world that often wants us erased," she passionately declares. The 23-year-old also finds joy in the thriving queer community, "It's the joy of seeing queer love, queer art, queer resistance all thriving, loud and unapologetic."

'However, Paridhi also views Pride as a reminder of ongoing struggles. "Pride also reminds me of our unfinished work: the trans folks still struggling for access to healthcare, shelter, or safety; the queer kids hiding who they are at home. Pride isn't just a party; it's a promise to them, and myself, that I will continue fighting, performing, and showing up," she explains.

'As she prepares for "Super Queen", India's first drag musical, Paridhi carries this deep sense of Pride onto the stage. "Every twirl, every dip, every line spoken it's all soaked in the spirit of defiance and joy." She reiterates, "Pride is protest. Pride is performance. Pride is power."²⁵¹

15.3.6 The Indian Express reported on the Unmesha International Literature Festival in Bihar held in September 2025, supported by the Ministry of Culture and the Government of Bihar which included sessions for LGBTQ

²⁴⁶ IPS, [World's Largest Religious Gathering Becomes Trans-Inclusive...](#), 18 February 2025

²⁴⁷ The Independent, [Pride parade in India cancelled after protest...](#) 7 April 2025

²⁴⁸ The Better India, [Beyond the Parade: 8 Ways to Celebrate Pride Across India ...](#) 2 June 2025

²⁴⁹ Mid-Day, [What does Pride truly mean to India's diverse queer voices?](#), 22 June 2025

²⁵⁰ Mist, [Drenched in Rainbows, Rooted in Resistance: India's Pride Journey](#), 4 September 2025

²⁵¹ Mid-Day, [What does Pride truly mean to India's diverse queer voices?](#), 22 June 2025

writers and poets²⁵².

- 15.3.7 The Indian Express reported on an event held at the Lukshmi Vilas Palace hosted by a member of Vadodara's royal family for LGBTI people. Since 2021 special registration passes allow access for LGBT+ participants that read "Devotion has no gender", allowing them to celebrate the Hindu festival of Navratri at the grounds without fear of judgment²⁵³.

See also [Attitudes of government and public officials](#)

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16. Internal relocation

- 16.1.1 For information on internal relocation generally the Country Information Note: India - available on request and Country Policy and Information Note, [India: Internal relocation](#).

- 16.1.2 The DFAT report 2023 noted 'Sources told DFAT it is possible for upper class, educated gay men (much less so women) to relocate to a big city and live a relatively uninhibited life.'²⁵⁴ For more information on freedom of movement for women, see [Country Policy and Information Note, India: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).

- 16.1.3 The IRB May 2024 response, based on various sources noted:

'According to the Public Health Professional, children that are seeking safety and escaping from parents who are not accepting of them move to metropolitan cities such as Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Delhi, Bengaluru [Bangalore], and Chennai ... The Lawyer indicated that Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, and Bengaluru have community supports in place for SOGIESC individuals and stated that in Delhi queer people can remind police officials of their rights, an assertion that is not as possible in rural areas (Lawyer 2024-03-28). The Public Health Professional noted that Tamil Nadu, and the city of Chennai in particular, have specific anti-discrimination legislation providing protections for SOGIESC populations ...

'The Program Head indicated that if an LGBTQ individual moves away from their native community, their new community typically "does not care" about that person's family and parents (Program Head 2024-03-12). According to the Program Head, although there are exceptions, the liberty to be openly walking outside with your partner or coming out to your employer in rural or urban India "does not exist" (Program Head 2024-03-12).'²⁵⁵

- 16.1.4 The same IRB response noted that according to the Delhi based lawyer '... small cities, and towns do not have any queer support networks (Lawyer 2024-03-2024).'²⁵⁶ And that 'The Program Head noted that in areas such as Haryana, Punjab, and rural areas, even in southern India, families who support their LGBTQIA+ family member face "systemic isolation" (Program Head 2024-03-12).'²⁵⁷

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²⁵² The Indian Express, [Javed Akhtar to Amol Palekar...](#), 24 September 2025

²⁵³ The Indian Express, [Curated by a Maharani...](#), 29 September 2025

²⁵⁴ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report India](#) (3.158), 29 September 2023

²⁵⁵ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

²⁵⁶ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

²⁵⁷ IRB, [Query response](#) (section 1), 22 May 2024

Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Terminology
- Legal context
 - general anti-discrimination provisions (and inclusion or absence of reference to LGBT+ persons)
 - same-sex sexual behaviour
 - same-sex couples, including civil union and marriage
 - gender reassignment/transition, and recognition of gender identity of trans persons
 - relevant significant court cases and caselaw
- State attitudes and treatment
 - statements made by government figures and public officials
 - government policies/programmes that assist or discriminate against LGBT+ persons
 - restrictions/enforcement of law against LGBT+ organisations
 - other state treatment, such as harassment, blackmail, bribery, corrective therapy
 - access to public services
- Societal attitudes and treatment
 - public opinion/views/surveys, including anti-LGBT+ movements and public demonstrations
 - prevailing cultural and family attitudes to male/female relationships, family and non-conforming behaviour
 - religious group attitudes, statements and actions
 - media representation, language and discourse
 - treatment by the public, including family members
- LGBT+ people and their lives
 - LGBT+ organisations (including possibility to operate openly)
 - Meeting places and events for LGBT+ persons.

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Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **6.0**
- valid from **16 December 2025**

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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Changes from last version of this note

Updated COI and assessment.

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Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

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Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support them in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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