



India Inc Looks at Wider LGBTQ Inclusion

Godrej India Culture Lab to help cos shape up policy for transgender people, to come out with manifesto highlighting their condition

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Kolkata: LGBTQ inclusion in workplaces is gradually gaining traction, but with less than 100 out and proud transgender people employed in India Inc, organisations are waking up to the need of trans-specific policies given the distinct challenges they face at the workplace.

To this end, Godrej India Culture Lab is launching 'A Manifesto for Trans Inclusion in the Indian Workplace' that aims to highlight the circumstances of transgender people in Indian society and how corporate India can take action.

"Trans employees face a distinctly different set of challenges in the workplace. We simply cannot exclude 4.9 lakh people of the country's population from the workforce," said Parmesh Shahani, head of Godrej India Culture Lab. "Our paper builds a case on how including trans people and the LGBTQ community at large is truly a win-win – for the community as well as for the inclusive companies involved," he said.

The manifesto does not just make a strong business case for adopting LGBTQ friendly policies but also showcases the trans inclusive policies of progressive companies, so that they can be implemented by others.

Inclusion Matters

- ▶ **92% of** India's trans people are unable to participate in any economic activity
- ▶ **Less than** half of them have access to education
- ▶ **62% of** those that do, face abuse and discrimination
- ▶ **\$32 b:** India's loss in GDP due to homophobia and transphobia, says a 2016 World Bank report
- ▶ **Less than** 100 out and proud trans people employed by India Inc, claims a UNDP consultant

Godrej, IBM, Accenture, Tata Steel, Kochi Rail Metro have progressive policies in place for trans inclusion



According to the National Human Rights Commission Report on living conditions of transgender people, 92% of India's trans people are unable to participate in any economic activity. Less than half of them have access to education, and 62% of those that do, face abuse and discrimination.

"You can leave your sexuality at home, but how do you leave your gender identity and expression at home?" said Zainab Patel, a transgender woman who works as an HIV, health and human rights consultant at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

She said there are several challenges that prevent private and public sector organisations from opening up their doors to trans employees. Businesses are reluctant as they feel it may disrupt the norm. Other chal-

lenges include creating a safe working environment, keeping a tab on healthcare cost given a lot of people are transitioning, and then, there is a subconscious bias, Patel said.

"The onus is on the private sector to provide employment and to lead change," she said.

According to Shahani, three recommendations in the Godrej manifesto are key to any organisation that wants to be inclusive.

First, it should have an anti-discrimination policy that specifies that sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are prohibited grounds for any discrimination. Second, the health insurance policy provided to employees should specifically cover the gender affirmation procedure and hormone therapy that trans employees who wish to trans-

ition would require. The company can also offer reimbursements to trans individuals in-house. Three, the building infrastructure must include gender inclusive restrooms.

Other proposals include active trans hiring efforts through HR, sensitisation of existing employees, support system for employees transitioning in the workplace, and formation of an employee resource group.

Besides Godrej, where the first trans employee works in corporate human resources, several other progressive companies have been active on this front.

IBM and Accenture both have robust gender affirmation policies and cover costs for individuals that wish to undergo the procedure.

Tata Steel, the first company from the steel manufacturing industry to start an employee resource group for LGBTQ employees, offers financial support for gender affirmation procedures, has built single-cubicle gender-neutral washrooms and hired trans people through their blue-collar workforce training programme.

Kochi Rail Metro too has a trans hiring effort, with nearly 23 trans people in housekeeping and ticketing. In 2018, VLCC trained nearly two dozen trans people to be assistant beauty therapists.

The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group has hired and worked with nearly 35

trans people in their hotels across India.

Experts said there is a strong business case in favour of LGBTQ inclusion. "India is far behind in tapping into Pink/LGBTQIA tourism that has been a major contributor to the US and Brazilian economy," said Keshav Suri, executive director at The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, who was also one of the petitioners who challenged Article 377 of the Indian penal Code (IPC) that criminalised homosexuality.

The Supreme Court had on September 6 diluted the section to decriminalise gay sex.

Shahani of Godrej said a 2016 World Bank report placed India's loss in GDP due to homophobia and transphobia at up to \$32 billion. "I am sure that most companies in India want a piece of this pie!"

Data also shows that having a diverse workforce makes a company more innovative. According to a 2016 study by Hewlett and Yoshino, 72% of allies say they are more likely to accept a job at a company that's supportive of LGBTQ employees.

"Young India is very attracted to diverse and inclusive organisations," Shahani said. "India's values are rapidly changing and corporate India should understand this because these millennials are their consumers, employees and CEOs of tomorrow."



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Attackers do not need cover of rights: Minister

NEW DELHI

Marking Human Rights Day, Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Monday questioned the moral courage of those advocating for rights of attackers of security forces, the National Human Rights Commission said in a statement. Mr. Naqvi was addressing the NHRC's event here when he said it was not right to seek protection of rights of those who kill, terrorise and violate rights of others. STAFF REPORTER



Terrorists don't deserve 'privilege' of human rights: Naqvi

NEW DELHI, Dec 10:

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi today said terrorists who kill innocent people do not deserve the "cover or privilege" of human rights.

Addressing the Human Rights Day Function organised by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), he said advocating the human rights of those who kill innocent people, terrorise them and violate their rights, was not right.

"It is unfortunate that some organisations and people are more interested in raising their voice for the human rights of these terrorists who challenge the national security and kill innocent people.

"Such terrorist organisations and some anti-social elements consider killing of civilians, attacking security forces, spreading terror and conspiring to disturb peace of the world, as their human rights and do not deserve any cover or privilege of human rights," Naqvi said.

The minister said the "social, economic, religious and other human rights" of every community are more safe and secure in India than any other democratic nation of the world.

He added that except for a few isolated incidents in some states, the total number of cases of human rights violations in the country were comparatively less.

Tolerance, communal and social harmony is in the DNA of India. Social and cultural harmony is the source of unity of the country despite the prevalence of various languages, religions and communities, he said.

"We have to remain alert to ensure that no evil forces can weaken our strength of unity,"

the BJP leader said while lauding the NHRC for its role in the promotion and protection of human rights on the occasion of the Human Rights Day.

Justice H L Dattu, chairperson of NHRC, said the vibrant democracy of India was guided by the principles, rights and obligations enunciated in the Constitution.

Not only has India been unequivocal in its commitment to the preservation and protection of human rights nationally, but also internationally, he said.

Justice Dattu said it was a matter of pride that NHRC, India has been accredited 'A' status NHRI throughout its existence from 1993 onwards by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).

"This indicates that the Commission is fully compliant with the United Nations-mandated Paris Principles. It is also a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Forum of NHRIs (APF), the regional network of GANHRI, thus playing a constructive role in the international sphere," he said.

Giving a brief insight into the various features of the functioning of the NHRC, including handling of a large number of complaints of human rights violations, Justice Dattu said the Commission's constant endeavour over the last 25 years has been to make itself as accessible to the people as possible.

For this, it has developed a wide range of important monitoring mechanisms to oversee the human rights situation in the country, he said.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, in his message on the Human Rights Day, said, "For 70 years, the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been a global beacon – shining a light for dignity, equality and well-being ... and bringing hope to dark places. The rights proclaimed in the Declaration apply to everyone -- no matter our race, belief, location or other distinction of any kind".

Marking the Human Rights Day, Naqvi also released two NHRC publications, including journals in Hindi and English. The books carry articles on crucial aspects of human rights by eminent personalities.

The minister also gave away awards to the winners of the NHRC Mahatma Gandhi Biennial Awards for original works of writing in Hindi on various aspects of human rights.

Several dignitaries, including present and former judges of Supreme Court, high courts, UN representatives, diplomats, senior government functionaries, civil society representatives, members of para military forces and NHRC officers attended the function.(PTI)



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NO RIGHTS FOR TERRORISTS, SAYS NAQVI

New Delhi: Union minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi Monday said terrorists who kill innocent people do not deserve the "cover or privilege" of human rights. Addressing the Human Rights Day Function organised by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), he said advocating the human rights of those who kill innocent people, terrorise them and violate their rights, was not right. "It is unfortunate that some organisations and people are more interested in raising their voice for the human rights of these terrorists who challenge the national security and kill innocent people. "Such terrorist organisations and some anti-social elements consider killing of civilians, attacking security forces and spreading terror as their human rights and do not deserve any cover or privilege of human rights," Naqvi said. The minister said the "social, economic, religious and other human rights" of every community are more safe and secure in India than any other democratic nation. He added that except for a few isolated incidents, the total number of cases of human rights violations in the country were comparatively less. — PTI



SC notice on PIL for leader of single largest opposition party in key panels

HT Correspondent

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NEWDELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice on a Public Interest litigation (PIL) seeking to declare that a leader of opposition in any high-powered appointment committee should be read as leader of the single largest opposition party in the House.

A bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul agreed to examine this point raised in the PIL filed by NGO Youth For Equality.

Although Parliament has approved a law to create an independent anti-corruption agency, the hiring of a Lokpal to run it has been stuck on the question of who should be on the appointment panel.

However, the bench refused to issue notice on another prayer, seeking a declaration that all appointments of CVC, CBI director and CIC chief should be made unanimously.

The CJI said: "It's not possible to have a unanimous choice. If we accept this prayer then nobody can be appointed." At present such appointments are cleared by a majority.

It is stated in the petition that in all cases where no Leader of the Opposition has been recognised, "the Leader of the Opposition in the House of the People" must be deemed to be the Leader of the single largest group in opposition in the House. "Lack of notification or invitation to such person must not be allowed to delay key institutional appointments," the petition submitted.

Advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan later told HT that though the government has carried out changes in the laws to appoint CVC, CBI and CIC, the same is yet to be done for the appointment of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) chairperson and Lokpal- the anti-corruption ombudsman.



Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi lauds NHRC for its role in promotion and protection of human rights

December 10, 2018

Mr. Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Union Minister for Minority Affairs lauds NHRC for its role in promotion and protection of human rights on the occasion of Human Rights Day (10.12.2018)

Mr. Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Union Minister for Minority Affairs today said that advocating for the human rights of those who kill people, terrorise them and violate their rights is not appropriate. He was addressing as the Chief Guest of the Human Rights Day Function of the National Human Rights Commission, India in New Delhi. He said that those who talk of the human rights of those who attack the security forces and create unrest in the country, how will they have the moral courage to talk of the human rights of the common man.

He said that India is the largest democracy in the world and a unique example of unity in diversity. Despite different languages and culture, the people across India, live with tolerance and harmony. The Constitution of the country is a great unifying factor, which guarantees protection of human rights.

The first prize of Rs. 75,000/- for the year 2014-15 was given to Prof. Usha Yadav for her Novel 'Uske Hissey ki Dhoop'. This Novel focuses on ill effects of child exploitation and throws light on how it can possibly be stopped.

The second prize of Rs. 50,000/- for the year 2014-15 was given to Dr. Virendra Bhati Mangal for his book 'Gharailu Hinsa'. The book gives presence in depth analysis of domestic violence and its impact in the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan.

Another second prize of Rs. 50,000/- for the year 2012-13 was given to Mrs. Rajni Gosain for her book 'Chote Chote Haath, Nanhi Nanhi ungaliyan'. The book is a detailed research analysis of the basic needs of children and their rights.

Earlier, the Union Minister for Minority Affairs opened NHRC's photo and children's paintings exhibition showcasing the photographic depiction of the Commission's activities during the last year.

Several prominent dignitaries, including, among others, Judges of Supreme Court, High Courts, former Judges of Supreme Court, High Courts, UN representatives, diplomats, senior Government functionaries, civil society representatives, members of Para Military Forces, NHRC officers and staff attended the function.