
Futures of Queer Well-Being in India

Neha Saini Strategic Foresight and Innovation

2023, OCAD University, Toronto, Canada

Futures of Queer Well-Being in India

by Neha Saini

Submitted to OCAD University in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design
in Strategic Foresight & Innovation

Toronto, Ontario, Canada
2023

Creative Commons Copyright Notice

YOU ARE FREE TO:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

Share Alike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

Noncommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

With the understanding that — You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation. No warranties are given.

The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material.

Abstract

Being queer in India entails navigating a multifaceted experience shaped by historical stigma, discrimination, and legal hurdles. Yet, the resilient queer community, alongside allies and activists, advocates vocally for their rights.

This research probes future forces impacting queer well-being, employing strategic foresight to examine trends. Scenarios envision potential shifts in well-being, unveiling interventions for stakeholders to optimize the queer community's welfare. The insights obtained from the research guide us toward our envisioned future, harmonizing with the goals of the study.

These insights offer stakeholders a profound grasp of queer individuals' unique needs, facilitating tailored interventions. By reinforcing resilience and comprehending future dynamics, this research aspires to empower us to design a desired future, one in which queer well-being flourishes in all dimensions.

Acknowledgements

I extend heartfelt gratitude to my advisor, Zan Chandler, for her support and expert guidance throughout this project. Collaborating with you has been a privilege.

My heartfelt thanks go to my dear friend and family member, Sugandha, for consistently being my sounding board and unwaveringly believing in me, not only during this project but in every aspect of life.

I want to express my gratitude to my mom and dad for fostering my independence and allowing me to make my own decisions from a very early stage in my life.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge my 13-year-old queer self, who embraced her truth, navigating both loneliness and resilience along the way.

Contents

Creative Commons Copyright Notice	iv
Abstract	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Context: What is The Problem?	2
Defining queer	4
Dimensions of Well-being	5
Actors Map	6
Stakeholders Map	8
Research Question and Methodology	10
Research Question	12
Research Methodology	13
Understanding the past: How Did We Get Here?	16
Pre-colonial India	18
Colonial India	20
Post-colonial India	21
The Present: Emerging Trends	24
1. Societal Prejudice	26
2. No Country for Women	28
3. Crafting My Own Family	30
4. Deepening Caste Divide	32
5. My Pronouns Are	34
6. Telemedicine for All	36
7. Jobs are Getting Greener	38
8. Age of Inclusive Employers	40
9. Housing Insecurity	42
10. Looming Climate Catastrophe	44
11. Religious Polarisation	46
12. 'Happily Ever After' Gains Momentum	48
13. Mainstreaming Queer Media	50
14. The Rising Tide of Digital Mis- and Disinformation	52

The Future: What are the possibilities?	54
Queer Renaissance	58
Monochrome Rainbows	62
Progress and Paralysis	66
Queer x Quantum	70
Insights	74
Insights	76
Recommendations	80
Recommendations	82
Limitations and Conclusion	84
Limitations and Conclusion	86
Bibliography	88
List of Figures	
Figure 1: Actors map for queer well-being	7
Figure 2: Stakeholders map for queer well-being	9

Introduction

Context: What is The Problem?

Being queer in India

The queer population is discriminated against in India's heteronormative social fabric (Saraff et al., 2022). This discrimination manifests in various ways, perpetuating stigma and adversely affecting the physical, mental, and sexual well-being of queer individuals.

Societal norms and regulations wield significant influence over the trajectories of people's lives. The foundational unit of Indian society, the family, shapes individuals' paths and roles within the larger social framework. The Indian Supreme Court's verdict criminalizing homosexuality until 2018, also strongly ingrained heteronormativity in society. From an early age, individuals are steered toward a heteronormative life script, complete with defined milestones like education, employment, marriage, and parenthood, often culminating in retirement and grandparenthood. This trajectory provides a sense of direction, support, and validation, effectively likening life to a conveyor belt of predetermined steps.

The heteronormative sociocultural landscape of India leads to the marginalization of the queer community (Arvind et al., 2021; Chakrapani et al., 2021; Khatun, 2018). Identifying as queer challenges the established narrative and contests societal norms. In a society that may be queerphobic or uninformed about queer identities, growing up with a queer orientation can range from outright antipathy and disregard to conditional acceptance or even loving inclusion.

Families serve as lifelong sources of education, financial support, and emotional well-being (Demo & Cox, 2000). Healthy family relationships significantly impact one's overall quality of life and well-being. However, many queer individuals face strained familial ties due to the stigma attached to their sexual orientation or gender identity from a young age (Bouris et al., 2010; Mondal et al., 2020; Prasad, 2016; Simons et al., 2013).

Despite the landmark decriminalization of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code by the Supreme Court of India in 2018, which was a legacy from British colonial rule considering homosexuality as illegal and unnatural, challenges persist. These challenges highlight the inadequacy of legal measures to fully protect against deep-seated societal biases (Pufahl et al., 2021). Although the decriminalization of homosexuality opened doors to acceptance of queer individuals in India, the law is still insufficient to shield them from the stigma deeply entrenched in the restrictive Indian homonegative society (Pufahl et al., 2021), nor does it protect them against discrimination in employment, housing, and other areas of life (Rai, 2020).

Impacts of COVID-19

The incidence of COVID-19 in the past couple of years caused immense damage to the physical and mental health of people all around the globe. Although the Covid virus affected people in similar ways, the outcomes were felt differently across some sections of the society, especially the sexual and gender minorities population across different cultures and societies, due to the level of discrimination they face (Bhalla & Agarwal, 2021).

The Human Rights Campaign for the queer community released a research brief on April 2020 stating that the community was at heightened risk for experiencing negative socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. In addition, lockdowns and quarantines in low-income countries of Asia and Africa inhibited them from going to their workplace, which for many, served as an escape from discrimination (Banerjee & Nair, 2020; Bhalla & Agarwal, 2021).

The way forward

Given the historical context and the evolving landscape of queer rights and identities in India, combined with the impact of COVID-19, a unique and compelling opportunity arises to envision a spectrum of potential futures for the queer communities in India. By delving into current trends, we can uncover a range of possible futures each carrying its own set of challenges, opportunities, and implications for the wellbeing and empowerment of the queer communities.

Defining Queer

During the early 1990s, the term “gay” began to be more specifically associated with gay men. This shift in language led to the emergence of more inclusive terminology, evolving from “lesbian and gay” to “LGBT,” as a response to the growing need for recognition of bisexual and transgender individuals. By the early 2000s, the term “queer” gained traction as an overarching umbrella term encompassing the diverse spectrum of sexual and gender identities within the LGBTIQ+ acronym (Jones, 2023).

In contemporary discourse, “queer” has been integrated alongside other terms like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex, and asexual, to create a more respectful and inclusive way of addressing individuals with a range of sexualities and genders. This linguistic transformation has enabled “queer” to encapsulate the entirety of the 2SLGBTQIA+ spectrum, incorporating both nonheterosexual orientations and non-cisgender identities (Lashkari, 2018).

In the present day, “queer” is predominantly utilized as an affirming and inclusive term, encompassing all individuals within the rainbow acronym. It serves as a unifying expression that respects the diversity of sexual and gender identities within the LGBTQ+ community and promotes an environment of acceptance and visibility.

Throughout this research, the term “queer” will be used as an inclusive umbrella term encompassing individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, pansexual, non-binary, genderqueer, and other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Demensions of Well-being

Wellness is a holistic integration of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, fuelling the body, engaging the mind, and nurturing the spirit. Although it always includes striving for health, it's more about living life fully (8 Dimensions of Wellness, 2017).

It is a dynamic concept created to ascertain the conditions that allow humans to flourish.

For the purpose this research and its objective, well-being of queer individuals is examined within this framework:

1. **Physical Well-being:** Physical well-being refers to the state of good physical health and encompasses practices that promote physical well-being. It includes regular physical activity, proper nutrition, adequate sleep, and preventive healthcare. Research consistently demonstrates the positive impact of physical wellness on overall well-being (Warburton et al., 2006).

2. **Emotional Well-being:** Emotional wellness involves understanding, accepting, and effectively managing one's emotions. It includes the ability to cope with stress, develop resilience, and cultivate positive emotions. Emotional wellness significantly influences mental health and overall well-being. Research indicates that individuals with higher emotional wellness experience greater life satisfaction, better relationships, and improved overall functioning (Diener et al., 2009).

3. **Social Well-being:** Social wellness refers to the quality of an individual's relationships, social connections, and sense of belonging within a community. It encompasses fostering positive interactions, building supportive networks, and contributing to the well-being of others. Social wellness plays a vital role in overall well-being. Research consistently highlights the positive impact of social connections on mental health, life satisfaction, and resilience (Helliwell et al., 2018).

4. **Financial Well-being:** Financial wellness involves effectively managing one's financial resources and experiencing a sense of security and control over financial matters. It includes budgeting, earning, saving, and making informed financial decisions. Financial wellness has a significant impact on overall well-being. Research indicates that financial stress and instability can negatively affect mental health and reduce life satisfaction (Helliwell et al., 2018).

Actors Map

An Actors Map is a visual depiction of the key organizations and/or individuals that make up a system, including are those affected by the system as well as those who influence the system (FSG, n.d.). The Actors Map (Fig: 1) is a simple 2x2 quadrant overlaid over concentric circles, each representing a level of social system or organisation. It involves organizing various entities and stakeholders based on their roles and relationships within the subject area into the following categories:

Users: Encompasses individuals who identify as part of the queer community, as well as people who impact their well-being as individuals/citizens.

Organisations: Refers to entities such as queer advocacy groups, community centers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and social support networks.

Industries: Involves various sectors of society, including businesses, healthcare providers, education institutions, entertainment, and technology.

Policies: Pertains to governmental and institutional regulations, laws, and guidelines that shape the legal, social, and cultural landscape for queer individuals.

The Actors Mapping exercise served to reveal the actors playing the most significant role in regarding answering the research question:

Users: Understanding perspectives, needs, challenges, and aspirations is essential for tailoring interventions that positively impact queer well-being. By studying queer experiences, family, and peers, researchers can pinpoint areas requiring improvement, ensure inclusivity, and design targeted interventions to enhance the overall well-being of queer individuals.

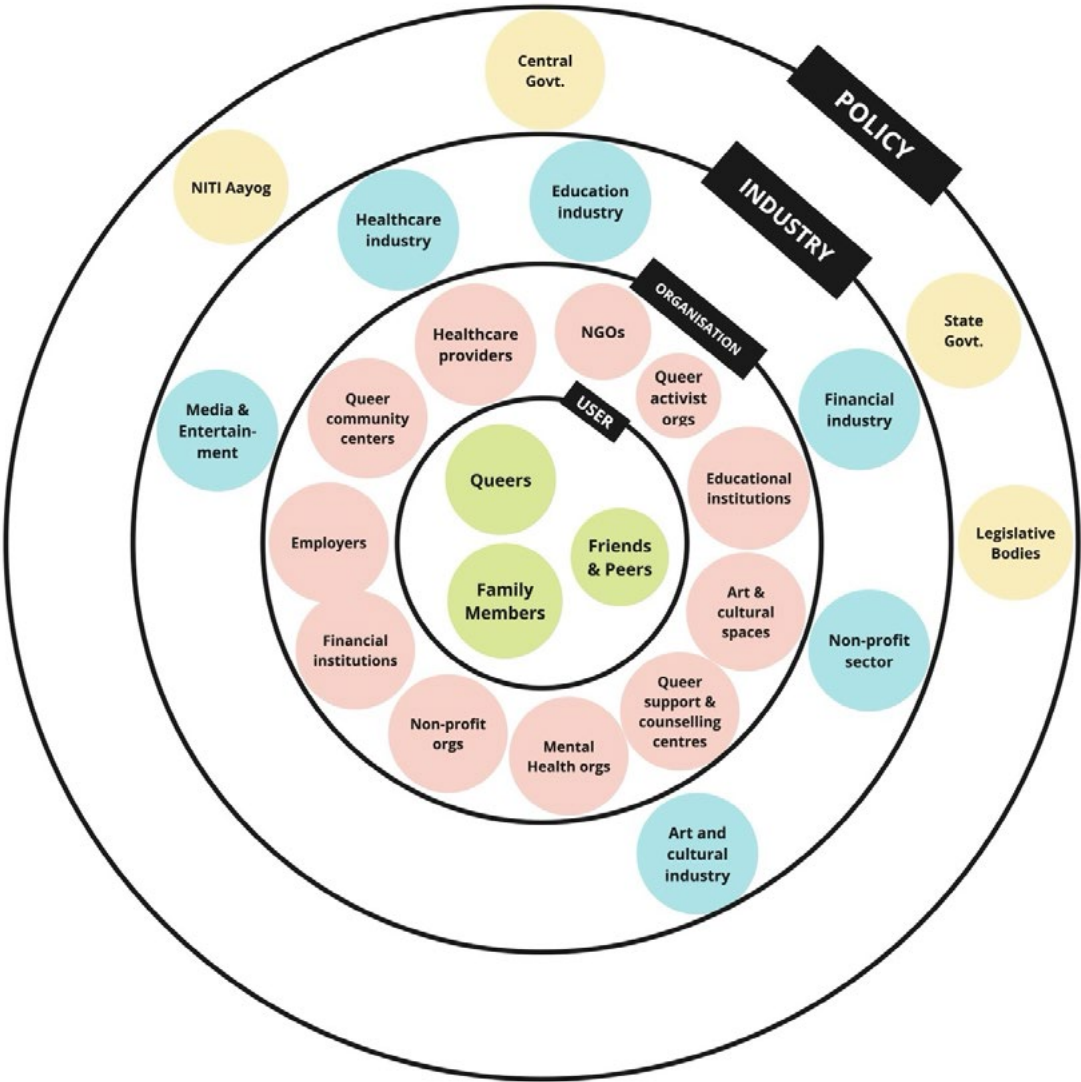
Organisations: Healthcare providers, employers, and queer activist organizations, play a pivotal role in advancing queer well-being through their resource allocation, awareness campaigns, and advocacy for policy changes. The mapping exercise shed light on the existing infrastructure, initiatives, and gaps in support that influence the future well-being of the queer community.

Industries: Education and finance, have the potential to impact queer well-being through the practices, services, and products they offer. Recognizing the influence of industries helps researchers anticipate trends, assess opportunities for collaboration, and identify potential areas of concern that could either uplift or hinder the well-being of individuals.

Policies: Policies by legislative bodies, state and central governments can significantly impact queer well-being by addressing discrimination, ensuring equal rights, and promoting inclusion. Mapping policies provides insights into the legal framework, the progress achieved, and areas needing reform to secure a more positive future for queer well-being.

From this mapping exercise, it is clear that queer well-being is a complex and multifaceted construct influenced by a myriad of factors, including social norms, policies, community dynamics, and personal experiences. By employing an Actors Map, inspired by the works of renowned systems thinkers like Donella Meadows and Fritjof Capra, diverse actors are identified and depicted who are involved in the queer ecosystem.

Figures 1: Actors Map for Queer Well-being



Stakeholders Map

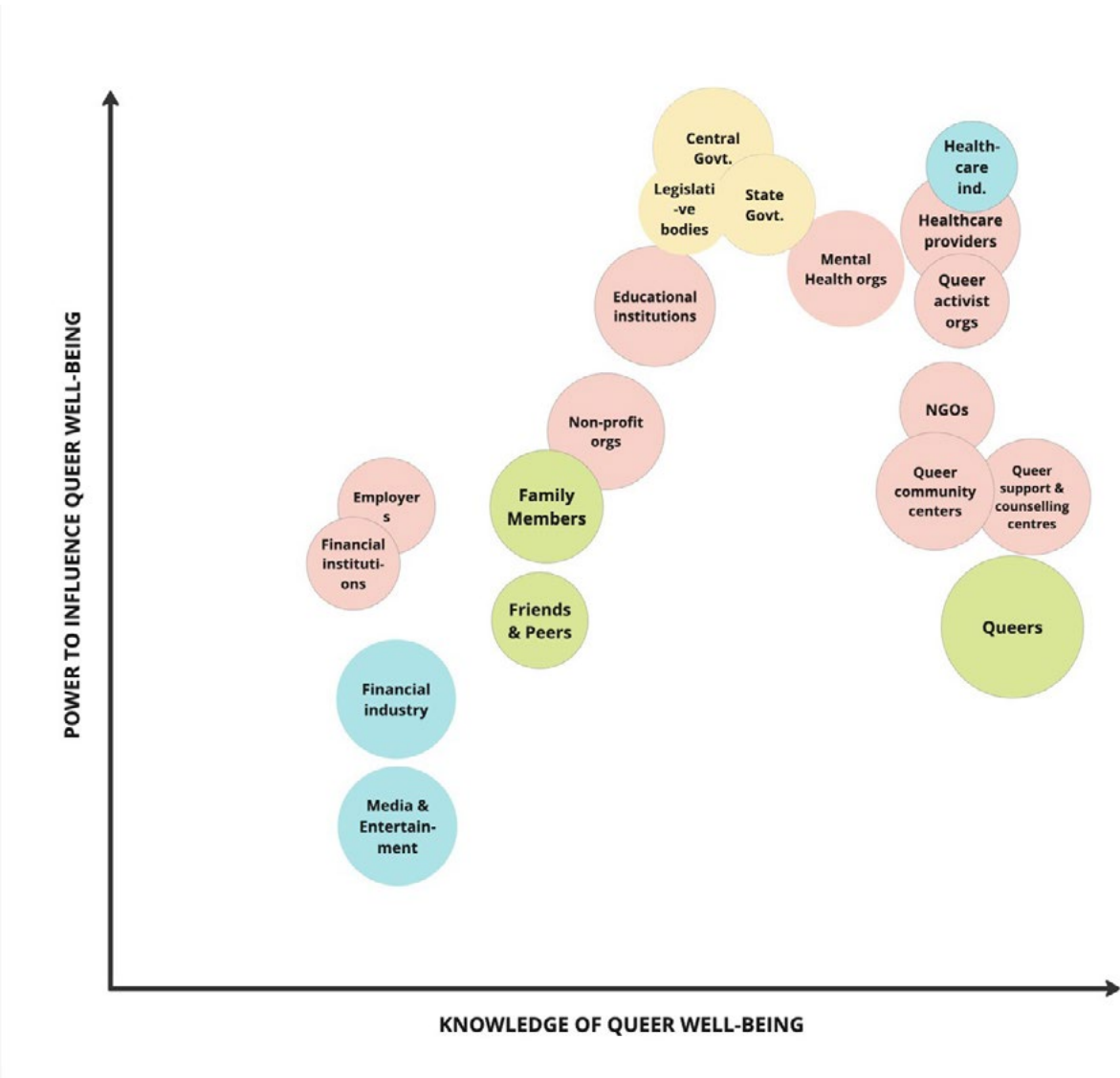
The map emphasises the significance of stakeholders' comprehensive comprehension of queer well-being across various levels of knowledge, encompassing societal dynamics, cultural nuances, psychological aspects, legal intricacies, and policy frameworks as well as their power to effectively address the specific challenges faced by the queer communities in India.

The matrix recognizes that queer individuals possess high knowledge about their own experiences and needs but may have limited power to drive widespread societal change due to societal structures and discrimination. Family members and friends, with moderate knowledge, can play a significant role in providing support and fostering acceptance, thereby positively impacting the social and emotional components of well-being of queer individuals.

Among organizations, healthcare providers, NGOs, and queer activist organizations exhibit high knowledge and power, as they actively work towards promoting queer rights, advocating for inclusive policies, and providing essential services. Industries such as healthcare, education, and non-profit sectors have varying levels of knowledge and power, with the healthcare industry being particularly influential due to its role in delivering inclusive healthcare services.

The Stakeholders Map also acknowledges the significance of policy-making bodies, including the central government, state governments, and legislative bodies, in shaping the legal and policy landscape that directly affects queer well-being in India. Their knowledge and power levels determine the extent to which policies and programs are designed to protect queer rights and promote their well-being

Figures 2: Stakeholders Map for Queer Well-being



Research Question and Methodology

Research Question

What forces might shape the future well-being of the queer communities in India over the next 20 years?

Research Methodology

The research approach adopted for this study is grounded in a robust and widely acknowledged foresight methodology, which leverages the power of secondary research sources. Foresight methodology is a strategic approach used to anticipate and explore potential future developments, trends, and challenges to inform decision-making and planning. By employing secondary research sources, the research benefits from the wealth of existing knowledge and expertise in the field of queer well-being in India, enabling it to draw upon a substantial body of work that has already been conducted, analysed, and disseminated by scholars, experts, and organizations.

1. Literature Review:

To align with the research objective, an extensive preliminary literature review was conducted to gain familiarity with and comprehensively understand the existing research in the field of queer well-being in India. This review encompassed a wide range of sources, including academic papers, journals, books, news articles, and podcasts.

The following key areas were examined; i) the mental health of queers; ii) sexuality in India in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial era and its impact; iii) the representation queer in popular culture and media; iv) how queers grow up in families; and
v) impact of COVID-19 on queer individuals.

2. Horizon Scan:

Horizon scanning is a systematic process used to identify emerging issues and trends, potential risks, opportunities, and disruptors that may have significant impacts on organizations, industries, or society (Amanatidou et al., 2012).

This approach was utilized to recognize upcoming patterns, possible hazards, and factors that could influence the well-being of the queer community in India. This phase involved active data collection, analysis, and interpretation from diverse sources such as articles, blogs, and social media. During this process, weak signals of change were detected, indicating the possibility of significant future developments (Dufva, 2020).

The weak signals were organized using the STEEP-V framework, a strategic foresight method used in horizon scanning (Richardson, 2017). The STEEP-V framework categorizes weak signals by their potential social, technological, environmental, economic, political, and values-based impacts. From there, the interconnections between signals resulted in trends and recommendations

3. Trends Development

A trend represents a general trajectory or direction of change that emerges from the scrutiny of weak signals. The weak signals identified during horizon scan were subjected to systematic analysis, seeking patterns and associations to uncover shared themes, interdependencies, or connections. This process led to the clustering of weak signals, forming emerging trends that held significant potential to shape the well-being landscape of the queer community's well-being in India. In essence, a 'trend' denotes a consistent pattern of change or advancement over a substantial timeframe (Rohrbeck, 2018).

4. Scenario Development:

The identification of trends through Horizon Scanning forms the foundation for scenario development. Based on the signals and trends identified during the horizon scan and the analysis using the STEEP-V framework, future scenarios were developed. These trends serve as essential components, providing the building blocks for constructing multiple alternative futures. They create plausible outlooks for the future that decision-makers and stakeholders can use to determine the best path forward for optimizing the well-being of queer communities and to prepare for alternative futures (Dator, 2017).

Scenarios serve as distinctive and qualitative visions that depict various potential pathways for the future. Within the context of the future well-being of queers, James Dator's Generic Images of the Futures framework outlines distinct archetypes from which unique narratives can be crafted: growth, collapse, discipline, and transformation. Each narrative presents a different perspective on the potential future outcomes for the well-being of queers. Furthermore, each future scenario is supported by backcasting, which illustrates the chain of events that transpired to lead to the described future.

Understanding the Past: How Did We Get Here?

Pre-colonial India

While in pre-colonial India, homosexuality was not only acknowledged, but it also found expression in ancient Indian texts. The following examples serve to illustrate the historical presence of homosexuality and the acceptance of homoeroticism in pre-colonial India.

Ancient Indian Literature

Ancient Indian literature offers valuable insights into the acceptance and existence of homosexuality in pre-colonial India. One such example is the Kama Sutra, a renowned ancient Indian text on human sexuality, which mentions same-sex love and includes descriptions of various sexual acts between men (Vatsyayana, 2002). Additionally, the Mahabharata, an epic Hindu text, refers to the story of King Bhagiratha, who was born from two queens engaging in a sexual act (Buitenen et al., 1973).

Hindu Mythology

Hindu mythology also provides instances of same-sex relationships and queer identities. The story of Mohini, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who captivated both gods and demons with her beauty and charm, reveals a fluidity of gender and sexual identities (Pattanaik, 2014). The tales of Lord Shiva's androgynous form, Ardhanarishvara, symbolize the union of masculine and feminine energies (Zimmer, 1946). These mythological narratives reflect the presence and acceptance of diverse sexual orientations in pre-colonial India.

Historical Accounts and Travelogues

Accounts by foreign travellers and explorers during the pre-colonial era also shed light on the existence of homosexuality in Indian society. The memoirs of Al-Biruni, an Arab scholar who visited India in the 11th century, mention the social acceptance of homosexuality among certain groups, such as the Hijra community (Al-Biruni, 1910). Similarly, the travelogues of Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan explorer who visited India in the 14th century, describe same-sex relationships witnessed during his travels (Battuta, 2012).

Temples and Erotic Sculptures

Temples in pre-colonial India often depicted erotic sculptures that included same-sex acts, indicating the acceptance and celebration of diverse sexual orientations. For instance, the Khajuraho temples in Madhya Pradesh feature intricate carvings that portray homosexual encounters alongside heterosexual ones. These sculptures serve as evidence of the recognition of same-sex relationships within the religious and cultural fabric of ancient India.

Society

Same-sex love and romantic friendship have flourished in India in various forms, without any extended history of overt persecution. These forms include invisible partnerships, highly visible romances, and institutionalized rituals such as exchanging vows to create lifelong fictive kinship that is honored by both partners' families (Vanita & Kidwai, 2001).

Colonial India

The British colonial period in India (from the 18th century onwards) brought significant changes to Indian society, including attitudes towards sexuality. The British enforced Victorian-era morality and introduced laws that criminalized homosexual acts. The Indian Penal Code, introduced in 1860, included Section 377, which criminalized “carnal intercourse against the order of nature,” effectively criminalizing same-sex relationships.

During this period, traditional Indian views on same-sex relationships were suppressed, and the British influence reinforced negative attitudes toward homosexuality. Indian society began to adopt more conservative views on sexuality, in line with Victorian British values.

Post-colonial India

Section 377 and Legal Struggles

According to a report from the Human Rights Watch, “more than half of the world’s remaining ‘sodomy’ laws – criminalising consensual homosexual conduct are relics of British colonial rule.” This is also the case in India – where, up until September 2018, homosexuality was illegal under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, one of the many “relics of British colonial rule”. Under Section 377 –

“Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment... for a term which may be extended to 10 years and shall be liable to a fine.”

However, this law faced increasing scrutiny and opposition over the years. In 2009, the Delhi High Court, in the case of *Naz Foundation v. Government of NCT of Delhi*, decriminalized consensual same-sex acts, deeming Section 377 unconstitutional (Del HC 2009). This landmark judgment marked a significant step forward in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights.

Supreme Court Reversal and Subsequent Victory

Unfortunately, the progress made in 2009 was temporarily reversed in 2013 when the Supreme Court of India upheld the constitutionality of Section 377, reinstating its criminalization (*Suresh Kumar Koushal v. Naz Foundation*, 2013). This decision led to widespread protests and renewed activism for LGBTQ+ rights across the country.

However, the LGBTQ+ community, activists, and allies persevered. In 2018, in the landmark case of *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court reversed its previous decision and struck down Section 377, decriminalizing consensual same-sex relations once again (*Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India*, 2018). The judgment recognized the rights and dignity of LGBTQ+ individuals and paved the way for further advancements in LGBTQ+ rights in India.

LGBTQ+ Activism and Visibility

Post-colonial India has witnessed a growing queer rights movement, with individuals and organizations advocating for equal rights and representation. LGBTQ+ pride parades and events have gained momentum in major cities, providing platforms for visibility, celebration, and solidarity. Organizations such as the Naz Foundation, Humsafar Trust, and the queer Resource Centre have played vital roles in providing

support, counseling, and legal aid to LGBTQ+ individuals (Naz Foundation, n.d.)

The Legal Battle

India is believed to be home to the world's largest LGBTQ+ community, according to Indian and international activists who use the globally recognized Kinsey scale to estimate that it numbers around 135 million people — or 10% of India's population of 1.4 billion. Yet the country remains conservative when it comes to matters of love, sex and marriage.

That may soon change in dramatic fashion. In a landmark case, a group of 18 same-sex Indian couples has petitioned the country's Supreme Court to legalize same-sex marriage.

“To realize a world of equality and dignity for all, we will have to change laws and policies; we will also have to change hearts and minds.”

- Rick Parnell

The Present: Emerging Trends

Exploring current trends in foresight research is essential to stay ahead of emerging issues and opportunities. As we delve into the future of queer well-being in India, it's crucial to consider the broader context of societal values, cultural shifts, technological advancements, economic trends, climate commitments, political dynamics, and ethical considerations. These factors can significantly influence the landscape of queer well-being in the country.

1. Societal Prejudice

Societal prejudice in India surrounding live-in relationships, unmarried women, and queer phobia has been observed as rising with far-reaching implications for neighbouring areas of governance. This prejudice stems from traditional norms and cultural biases that stigmatize and discriminate against individuals who choose non-conventional relationship structures or do not conform to societal expectations. The discrimination faced by live-in couples includes difficulties in accessing housing, insurance benefits, and legal protections that are typically afforded to married couples.

For most women in India, marriage is a onetime event in life, which is glorified and sanctified, and is associated with much social approval (Nambi, 2005). It is also the ultimate fulfilment for most women (Sathyanarayana Rao et al., 2009). Unmarried women often face social exclusion and judgment, leading to mental health challenges and reduced quality of life. Despite the decriminalization of homosexuality in India in 2018, non-straight individuals still face significant challenges in terms of social acceptance, employment opportunities, and accessing healthcare and legal protections.

Signals

- Unauthorized love between couples, friends, and long-term live-in partners is scrutinized, suppressed, and frequently smothered in India, where live-in couples battle stigma every day (Priya, 2022)
- From bizarre rituals to hypnosis, gay conversion therapy still takes place in India. queer people are still subjected to various “treatments” intended to change their gender identity or sexual orientation, (Minj, 2022)
- The deliberate use of “brownface” by actors in films eventually came to be associated with the characters’ socioeconomic status, who were typically from underprivileged communities (Homegrown Staff & Homegrown Staff, 2022)
- Senior lawyer and human rights litigant Sandhya Raju says that many women marry just so that they do not have to navigate the social insecurities of being single (Kalia, 2022)

Implications

- Low self-esteem and compromised sense of belonging could lead to increased susceptibility to substance and self-harm among queer individuals
- Rising migration to queer identities accepting countries could trigger a brain drain, stunting national economic growth and progress
- Mental health struggles among queer individuals could heighten reliance and pressure on families for support and care.
- Limited access to housing due to discrimination, can limit queer individuals' professional and personal growth as it can limit individuals' ability to access education, employment opportunities, and community resources, perpetuating cycles of inequality and limiting their potential for upward mobility

2. No Country for Women

The prevalent issues of sexism (belief that one sex is superior to or more valuable than another), rape, misogyny (hatred or mistrust of women), and discrimination against women within families create an environment where gender equality remains a distant goal. Despite progress in various areas, women in India continue to face systemic challenges and prejudices within their own households. Misogyny, deeply embedded in cultural norms and societal attitudes, fosters a climate of hostility and discrimination towards women.

According to a report published by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) in 2015-2016, 31% of married women in India have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husbands. This staggering statistic highlights the extent of the problem of sexism and violence against women within families.

The alarming prevalence of rape and sexual violence in India further exacerbates the challenges faced by women. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports that in 2021 a total of 4,28,278 crimes against women were registered in the country. The report also shows that there was a 13.2% increase in overall crimes against women in 2021 compared to the year before. Crimes against women include cases of rape, molestation, acid attack, cruelty by husband/his relatives and domestic violence, among others. Victims often encounter victim-blaming, social stigma, and a lack of support systems, resulting in underreporting and insufficient access to justice. Rape culture, rooted in misogynistic attitudes, normalizes, and trivializes sexual violence, perpetuating a hostile environment for women. Discrimination between boys and girls within families aggravate gender disparities from an early age and a precursor to the cycle of disadvantage for girls and limiting their potential.

Signals

- According to research on how Indians perceive gender roles in families and society, about nine out of ten believe that a wife should always obey her husband, 94% Indians say that it is important for a family to have at least one son (Pew Research Center, 2022)
- If these 9 laws are still in effect, Indian women will never be treated equally (Madhok, 2022)
- In his address to the nation on India's 75th birthday last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a "change in the mentality" towards women and asked citizens to fight misogyny (Pandey, 2022)
- Mira, a Mumbai-based artist, says, "Using surrealism, humour, intense colors, and evocative character design, I tackle feminist ideas in accessible, engaging, and joyful ways." Mira Is Using AR To Shatter the Veneer Of "Perfect" Indian Families (Bijolia, 2023)

Implications

- Queer individuals face challenges due to discrimination, stigma, and social exclusion, leading to mental health issues and limited healthcare access. Facing heightened violence and harassment, queer women and trans individuals in India become more vulnerable; the trivialization of their struggles could hinder legal protection efforts, and the absence of adequate legal support and recognition may perpetuate a cycle of violence and discrimination, leaving victims without meaningful recourse.
- Discrimination within families, based on gender or sexual orientation might curtail their access to quality education and meaningful careers thereby intensifying economic disparities. This cycle could trap queer individuals and women in low-paying jobs, hindering their economic independence
- India's perception of sexism, misogyny, and gender bias may discourage tourism and investment, potentially resulting in job losses within the vital tourism and hospitality sectors that drive the nation's economic growth, thus leading to an overall economic decline
- Underutilized human potential in the face of discrimination and marginalization could impede the contributions of women and queer individuals, restricting their access to education, employment, and leadership roles, and could limit holistic societal and economic advancement.

3. Crafting My Own Family

For centuries in India, blood relations and kinship have been considered crucial, forming the foundation of familial relationships and shaping social interactions and obligations within the family structure.

Rise of queer citizens living openly in a family unit of 'chosen family' where they find lifeline of love and support. Chosen families provide a vital support system for queer individuals, especially those who may face discrimination, rejection, or social isolation. Within these networks, individuals find solace, encouragement, and a sense of belonging, enabling them to thrive and overcome adversity.

But the power of chosen family lies in its ability to create a sense of belonging and connection that is independent of blood ties. It demonstrates the strength of human relationships and the capacity for unconditional love beyond conventional definitions of family. Chosen family is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the innate desire for meaningful connections.

Signals

- Queer or not, family is a natural right (Raj, 2023)
- For queer people, who “report being put out by their families throughout their lifetime up to almost 30% of them report being unhoused, or underhoused,” family therapist Brown James stresses the importance of having a chosen family (Scott, 2023)
- According to a recent ruling by India’s top court, a family need not always consist of the traditional husband and wife pairing but can also be formed by an unmarried partnership or a queer relationship (Mishra, 2022).
- A study by Clark et al. (2019) examined the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in chosen families and found that these networks were crucial in providing emotional support, reducing social isolation, and promoting mental health and self-esteem. The study emphasized that chosen families played a vital role in the lives of queer individuals, often surpassing the support received from biological families.

Implications

- If chosen families enhance queer individuals' well-being by offering vital support, acceptance, and belonging, mitigating isolation and nurturing self-esteem and resilience, greater empowerment, personal growth, and collective social change could be catalysed.
- Support (financial, housing and other resources) to queer individuals provided by chosen families contributes to the community's overall economic well-being.
- The growing acceptance and visibility of chosen families may contribute to broader societal changes. As more individuals embrace the idea of chosen family, societal norms around family structures are challenged and expanded. This can lead to increased acceptance and understanding of diverse forms of relationships and families, promoting a more inclusive and tolerant society.
- Selected social circles in the queer community might impact the process of moving due to their requirements and inclinations. These groups can facilitate relocation by helping, direction, and networking to help navigate difficulties.
- Governments may need to update existing family laws to include diverse family structures, redefine legal definitions, revisit adoption, and surrogacy laws, and address parenting, guardianship, and visitation rights.

4. Deepening Caste Divide

The caste system in India is a deeply ingrained social hierarchy that categorizes individuals into distinct groups based on hereditary occupations and social status. This system is composed of four primary varnas (a social class within a hierarchical caste system), each with its own set of roles and responsibilities: Brahmins (priests and scholars), Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), Vaishyas (merchants and traders), and Shudras (laborers and service providers) (Gupta, 2007).

Additionally, there is a whole separate caste, who society believes to be so vile that they aren't considered part of the system at all – the Untouchables or Dalits. They are completely shunned from society and forbidden to live amongst those of high castes

The economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic have amplified existing inequalities within the caste system. Lower-caste individuals have suffered greater job losses due to their overrepresentation in precarious daily wage positions and lower educational levels (Deshpande, 2021). Caste-based discrimination permeates even seemingly unrelated sectors such as the tech industry, where subtle actions, intonation, or body language can exude bias against disadvantaged castes (R. Kumar, 2023).

Although untouchability might seem to have waned in urban areas, where maintaining the touchable-untouchable barrier is difficult and caste anonymity is more achievable, Mendelsohn and Vicziany argue that this is primarily due to the pragmatic measures, avoidance tactics, and “compartmentalization” adopted by higher-status Indians. This allows them to continue residing, working, and interacting separately from lower castes at professional, residential, and social levels (Mendelsohn & Vicziany, 2005).

Signals

- He doesn't want to publicize his last name or institution, in part because he fears that doing so would draw attention to his social status among a larger group of Indian scientists. “They'd know that I am from a lower category and will think that I have progressed because of [the] quota,” says Adivasi or indigenous person PhD. Samadhan, a student in Maharashtra state (Talati, 2022)
- The country's Crime Records Bureau noted that crimes against Dalits and Adivasis increased by 1.2% and 6.4%, respectively, compared to 2020 (Newslick, 2022)
- Dalit transgender people experience the highest levels of violence in schools and are especially vulnerable to sexual violence at work, with 33% of them reporting sexual assault and harassment there (CLPR, Bangalore, 2019)

Implications

- Caste-based discrimination undermines the principles of equality and social justice in democratic governance. Marginalized castes might struggle to attain equal representation in political spheres, potentially resulting in a dearth of diverse voices and perspectives in democratic governance
- Caste-based discrimination is seen as a violation of human rights by many international organizations and countries. If India is perceived to be inadequately addressing this issue, it could lead to condemnations and criticisms on the international stage. This could strain diplomatic relations and tarnish the country's image.
- The intersectionality of caste and sexual orientation has the potential to compound the challenges faced by queer individuals from marginalized castes. Additionally, the lack of acceptance and support from both the queer community and their caste community may result in social isolation, making it difficult for individuals to build strong social networks
- Deepening discrimination could lead to increased social unrest and activism. People who are marginalized due to their caste and other identities might become more vocal in demanding their rights, resulting in protests, movements, and calls for policy changes to address these issues.

5. My Pronouns Are

In recent years, India has witnessed a rise in discussions and awareness surrounding gender fluidity, as well as the emergence of non-binary identities. Gender fluidity refers to individuals whose gender identity fluctuates over time, while non-binary individuals do not exclusively identify as male or female. Increased access to information through the internet and social media has allowed people in India to engage with a broader range of gender identities and expressions. This has facilitated conversations about gender diversity and challenged traditional binary notions of gender.

The rise in gender fluidity and the emergence of non-binary identities in India is part of a broader global movement towards recognizing and embracing diverse gender expressions. In the context of India, these shifts are not only influenced by contemporary social and cultural factors but also find resonance in the fluidity depicted in Indian mythology.

Signals

- Across the board, Indian mythology shows that the ideas of the feminine and the masculine transcend our current, constrained understanding of them (Kaur, 2022)
- There is no one way to be a woman or a man or anything in between, says Indian actress Konkana Sen Sharma, “so even when I have to be very feminine in a film, I have to learn how to.” I’ve always felt a little androgynous (Desk, 2022)
- “In our minds, fashion has always been genderless, but it is society that has added labels”, Shivam Bhardwaj “also known as ‘Guy in the Skirt’ and founder of Violet India (Udayavani, n.d.)
- The Supreme Court’s 2014 National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) decision, which recognized transgender people’s rights and affirmed their gender identity, paved the way for further discussions on non-binary identities and helped advance a more inclusive understanding of gender (Legal Vidhiya, 2023)

Implications

- The 2014 NALSA judgment recognized transgender rights, fostering inclusivity and equality in India. It may inspire legal reforms and anti-discrimination policies for diverse gender identities, benefiting the queer community.
- Emergence of gender fluidity and non-binary identities may have a positive impact on the well-being of queer individuals by fostering an inclusive environment for authentic gender expression, reducing stigma, discrimination, and marginalization.
- Poses challenge to rigid binary gender norms. This shift might foster a more tolerant and understanding society where people are free to express themselves without fear of judgment or discrimination.
- India's recognition and acceptance of diverse gender identities could attract queer tourists seeking inclusive destinations. A reputation as a progressive and inclusive nation could boost its appeal, fostering growth in queer tourism.
- Sheds light on the need for healthcare systems to adjust and become more welcoming and inclusive towards a range of diverse identities.

6. Telemedicine for All

The convergence of AI, the digital revolution, and investments in health infrastructure have had an important impact on telemedicine aimed at providing accessible and affordable healthcare services to all citizens.

In recent years, India has witnessed substantial investments in health infrastructure, including the establishment of telemedicine centres, deployment of internet connectivity in remote areas, and the implementation of telemedicine initiatives by the government and private sector. Telemedicine has emerged as a transformative solution in the Indian healthcare system, offering accessible and affordable healthcare services to all citizens. The National Telemedicine Service of India, launched in 2019, aims to provide teleconsultation services across the country.

Signals

- Bill Gates, Microsoft co-founder appreciated India's competitive private market, reliable and low-cost connectivity, and went on to say this will be the cheapest 5G market (Economic Times, 2023)
- The Indian government is planning to introduce a credit incentive programme worth Rs. 500 billion (US\$ 6.8 billion) to boost the country's healthcare infrastructure (IBEF, n.d.)
- Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting at Davos spoke about a farmer in rural India who was able to access a government programme with the help of ChatGPT, despite speaking only the local dialect (Pandey, 2023)
- "The goal is to democratize LGBT healthcare knowledge and services via the implementation of (an) LGBT clinic-of-the-future and technology-enabled LGBT home health," Lani Santiago, vice president of the Borderless Healthcare Group's Chairman's Office (Kumar, 2023)

Implications

- The increased visibility of queer healthcare needs through telemedicine can fuel advocacy efforts and activism for improved healthcare access, rights, and inclusivity. As more individuals share their positive experiences with telemedicine, it might inspire change and push for reforms in the healthcare system.
- The adoption of telemedicine may have both direct and indirect implications for the economy. Directly, it could contribute to cost savings in healthcare expenditures by reducing the need for physical infrastructure and travel costs. It could also result in productivity gains by reducing absenteeism due to illness. Indirectly, telemedicine could stimulate economic growth by creating new employment opportunities in the digital healthcare sector, such as telemedicine platforms, IT support, and telehealth services.
- Telemedicine involves the collection, storage, and transmission of personal health information (Telemedicine Guidelines of India, 2020). Telemedicine's growth may lead to the development of regulatory frameworks and policies. Governments may establish standards for data privacy, security, and telemedicine ethics. Regulatory bodies could emerge to ensure quality, safety, and accountability, enhancing governance and strengthening trust in telemedicine.
- As telemedicine data accumulates over time, it may provide insights into the specific healthcare needs and challenges faced by queer populations. This data could drive research initiatives and inform healthcare policies aimed at addressing the specific needs of these communities.

7. Jobs are Getting Greener

The emergence of green jobs in India has gained significant momentum, fuelled by international partnerships, the growing need for climate care, and the availability of labour. As the world grapples with the challenges posed by climate change, India has recognized the importance of transitioning towards a sustainable and environmentally friendly economy.

As per the new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), India is committed to reducing the emissions intensity of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 45% by 2030 from the 2005 level and achieving about 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

This transition has created a surge in green jobs, contributing to both economic growth and environmental preservation. Furthermore, India's commitment to climate care has been a catalyst for the proliferation of green jobs. The country has set ambitious targets to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy capacity, and promote energy efficiency. These targets have necessitated the development and deployment of clean technologies, resulting in the establishment of new industries and job opportunities.

Signals

- Tesla's Elon Musk eyes significant India investments after meeting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (Jin, 2023)
- India's economy is one of the fastest-growing in the world and has recently overtaken the UK as the fifth-largest economy in the world (Forbes, 2023)
- Joe Biden and Narendra Modi highlighted the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership and Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) as reflective of climate action. The leaders welcomed joint efforts to develop and deploy energy storage technologies, including through the establishment of a new task force under SCEP (NRDC, 2023)
- According to a Bloomberg report, there is "Zero-Probability" that India will experience a recession in 2023 (Desk, 2023)

Implications

- Green industries often prioritize sustainability, social justice, and equality. With an increased focus on diversity and inclusion, these sectors may be more likely to foster an environment that may reject discrimination and contribute to a more accepting atmosphere for queer individuals.
- India's focus on green jobs and sustainable development may enhance its global image. It may position itself as a leader in climate action and environmental stewardship, which could boost its reputation and influence in international forums, fostering collaborations on environmental issues. India's green job initiatives may inspire other nations to prioritize sustainability.
- As green jobs grow, people may move from rural to urban areas where these industries thrive. This migration may drive urbanization and foster sustainable cities with eco-friendly infrastructure, efficient transportation, and resilient designs.

8. Age of Inclusive Employers

Employers embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace is gaining significant traction, driven by the understanding that a diverse workforce brings a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and skills to the table, which can lead to enhanced innovation, creativity, and problem-solving capabilities.

A study by McKinsey in 2020, titled “Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters,” found that companies in the top quartile for ethnic and cultural diversity on their executive teams were 36% more likely to have above-average profitability compared to companies in the bottom quartile. The study also revealed a correlation between gender diversity and financial performance. To support this trend, progressive employers actively seek out individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and sexual identities.

Signals

- Amazon India offers a same-sex partner coverage program which helps employees enrol their same-sex partner in their health insurance program (Udayavani, n.d.)
- India Inc is beginning to take baby steps towards LGBTQ+ inclusion. Tata Steel, Godrej Consumer Products among those ushering in change (Bhattacharya, 2022)
- Bombay Times Out and Proud @Work campaign’, in partnership with Pride Circle will bridge the gap between job seekers and available employment opportunities, creating a more inclusive workforce (TNN, 2023)
- Indian Matrimonial Website Shaadi.com Begins Matchmaking For LGBTQIA+ People (Gaysi Family, 2022)

Implications

- Employers promoting DEI enhance inclusivity, boosting well-being for queer individuals. Embracing diversity not only reduces discrimination and stigma, improving mental health and job satisfaction, but may also boost employees' engagement, dedication, and commitment to the organization's goals
- As multinational corporations take a stand for inclusivity and queer rights, their influence could extend beyond borders. This might result in increased pressure on countries with restrictive queer rights policies to reconsider their stances
- Companies that embrace inclusivity often attract a diverse pool of talent, which could lead to increased innovation and creativity. This, in turn, may drive economic growth and prosperity.
- Inclusive workplaces may improve economic outcomes, including increased cash flow per employee, thereby

9. Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity is a complex issue that arises from the interplay of various factors including population growth, increasing buying capacity, and government policies. India has the highest population in the world and population is projected to continue to grow for several decades (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023). As populations expand and economy develops, the demand for housing rises. Simultaneously, individuals with growing buying capacity seek suitable accommodation options, driving up prices. According to the World Bank, India's GDP per capita has been steadily increasing over the years (World Bank, 2021). As an economy grows, the purchasing power of individuals also increases. Rising incomes and access to credit enable more people to enter the housing market. The Report on The Technical Group on Urban Housing Shortage (TG-12) (2012- 2017) states that urban housing shortage across India was at 18.78 million houses for the period 2012-2017; 95 percent of the gap was for low-income households. While this is a positive development for those with higher incomes, it can contribute to housing insecurity for middle and lower-income groups.

Signals

- India's Population Has Already Overtaken China's and among those seen to growth through 2050 (Sundaram, 2023)
- Renewable energy led green jobs boom, China and India provided more than half of hydropower jobs worldwide (IRENA, 2022)
- In India, government policies have historically overlooked rental housing, prioritizing ownership options. However, buying a house may not be financially feasible for many, leading to a preference for renting homes (Naik, 2022)

Implications

- To avoid discrimination when seeking secure housing, queer individuals might choose to hide their identities leading to prolonged periods of concealment. If a substantial number of queer individuals continue to remain hidden, it could hinder the progress towards achieving broader societal acceptance. Housing insecurity may result in homelessness, leaving individuals without stable residences and making them more susceptible to health problems and vulnerability to violence. This situation could drive up healthcare costs and pose challenges in resource allocation, as well as place strains on law enforcement and support services
- Stable housing plays a pivotal role in fostering social connections and community support, critical for the well-being of queer individuals. Its absence might hinder access to queer resources, support groups, community centres, and queer-focused events or organizations. This scarcity might discourage younger queer individuals from seeking guidance and mentorship, thereby impacting the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and support. Moreover, it could lead to the loss of cultural heritage and history, affecting the preservation of queer narratives

10. Looming Climate Catastrophe

India's vulnerability to climate change impacts is influenced by its diverse geographical features and dense population (World Bank, 2015). The nation is currently grappling with a climate catastrophe characterized by extreme weather events, water scarcity, ecosystem degradation, and air pollution. This vulnerability is further exacerbated by a rapidly growing population, making the challenges even more complex.

India has set ambitious renewable energy targets as part of its efforts to achieve a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (UNFCCC, 2022). However, the country's rapid population growth and developmental needs present complex challenges in striking a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability. The need to meet the demands of a growing population while addressing climate change adds to the difficulties. These factors further contribute to the complexities of achieving sustainable development and reducing the country's carbon footprint. Moreover, India faces impediments associated with inadequate infrastructure and limited access to clean energy (International Energy Agency, 2017). These factors further complicate India's pursuit of sustainable development and hamper its ability to combat climate change effectively.

Overall, the combination of diverse geographical features, dense population, rapid population growth, and developmental needs makes India particularly and increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The nation grapples with a climate catastrophe characterized by extreme weather events, water scarcity, ecosystem degradation, and air pollution.

Signals

- India's Population Has Already Overtaken China's and among those seen to growth through 2050 (Sundaram, 2023)
- Renewable energy led green jobs boom, China and India provided more than half of hydropower jobs worldwide (IRENA, 2022)
- In India, government policies have historically overlooked rental housing, prioritizing ownership options. However, buying a house may not be financially feasible for many, leading to a preference for renting homes (Naik, 2022)

Implications

- The challenges posed by climate change could intensify economic disparities, potentially affecting the ability of queer individuals to access employment opportunities and stable income. However, this situation might also drive collaboration between social and environmental justice movements, uniting queer individuals, allies, and environmental activists to jointly address economic and ecological challenges
- The convergence of climate-related hardships, such as severe weather and ecosystem decline, may amplify mental health struggles for all. As the connection between climate stress and mental well-being gains clarity, we can anticipate greater advocacy for psychological effects. This could lead to improved, targeted mental health resources, catering to diverse groups like queer individuals
- Intensifying climate change may spark disasters, forcing migration and worsening housing insecurity, especially impacting queer individuals already facing housing challenges. This could prompt prioritization of inclusive housing policies by urban planners, addressing marginalized communities' needs and fostering housing programs for resilience and social equity.

11. Religious Polarisation

The rising influence of religion on political ideologies in India is leading to increased polarization, particularly as religiously conservative groups align themselves with conservative political parties that strongly oppose queer rights. There is an intricate connection between religion, politics, and queer rights, with profound implications for social acceptance and legal protections that may affect the well-being of the queer community. As a result, the advancement of queer rights is hindered, creating a difficult environment for advocates, and fostering a hostile political climate (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Signals

- Several Muslim religious and political organizations have made derogatory remarks about LGBTQIA+ people. As a result, queer Muslims in those communities bear the brunt of both Islamophobia and queerphobia (TNM, 2023)
- Prime Minister Modi Weighs Replacing Religion-Based Laws Ahead of 2024 Polls (Pradhan, 2023)
- In Hindu culture and thought, marriage is a sanskar and is not meant only for enjoyment. Marriage is for the benefit of the family and society at large, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale (Mishra, 2023)
- The Sengol to be installed in new Parliament building is the latest manifestation of the Sangh Parivar's express intention to inject religion and/or Hindu religious symbols wherever possible (Aprameya, 2023)

Implications

- Sustained religious polarisation would lead to more discrimination, social stigma, and limited access to healthcare, mental health support, and other essential services. The lack of legal protections and social acceptance may lead to higher rates of mental health issues, self-harm, and suicide among queer individuals.
- Political polarization around religious beliefs may aggravate queerphobic attitudes and contribute to an increase in bullying and hate crimes targeting queer individuals. This hostile climate can create fear and distress, impacting the overall well-being and sense of safety for queer individuals.
- The challenging environment for queer rights in India may lead to increased migration of queer individuals seeking more inclusive and accepting societies. This could result in brain drain, with talented and skilled individuals leaving the country, which can have economic and social repercussions.
- The polarization between religiously conservative groups and advocates for queer rights can lead to heightened social tensions and strained community relations. Interactions between different religious and social groups may become more strained, impacting the overall fabric of society by leading to the formation of “echo chambers” where individuals only engage with like-minded people. This could further isolate communities and reduce the potential for cross-cultural understanding and collaboration

12. ‘Happily Ever After’ Gains Momentum

Despite advancements in queer rights, including the decriminalisation of Section 377 of Indian Penal code by Supreme Court of India in 2018, which made private homosexual relations legal, and the queer community’s on-going efforts, the recognition of queer marriages remains a significant challenge. In a landmark case currently under hearing, 18 couples have petitioned the Supreme Court to legalize same-sex marriage. Their tireless efforts and activism have sparked important conversations and garnered increasing support from advocacy groups, organisations and opposition from political groups.

Signals

- According to a survey on marriage equality, 37% of respondents believe it should be accepted, up 22% from the 15% who said the same thing when the question was first posed in the nation in 2014 (PEW, 2020)
- As India’s top court takes up same-sex marriage, couples hope, and activists say there’s a long fight ahead (Zargar, 2023)
- According to the Indian government in the Supreme Court, same-sex marriage will “cause havoc.” (Choudhary, 2023)
- LGBTQ Indians abroad watch a looming decision in the Indian Supreme Court with high hopes (Sangal, 2023)

Implications

- The fight for legal recognition provides social validation and acceptance and may lead to increased mental health and overall improved quality of life of the queer community.
- The push for legalizing same-sex marriage may potentially lead to a re-evaluation of existing discriminatory laws and policies related to marriage, inheritance, adoption, and other social factors. This could result in new laws and policies that ensure equality and protect the rights of queer individuals.
- Support for same-sex marriage might grow sufficiently to help to change societal attitudes toward the queer community, challenge stereotypes, dismantle prejudices, and foster acceptance and inclusion in society.
- More queer individuals could be inspired to come out, demand their rights, and advocate for further advancements in queer rights beyond marriage equality.
- If same-sex union were legalised, India would become the second economy in Asia after Taiwan to recognize same-sex marriage, and thus elevate its international reputation as a progressive and inclusive nation. This move could potentially transform India into a preferred hub for queer travellers, conferences, and events, fostering a significant surge in tourism and unlocking a range of lucrative economic prospects

13. Mainstreaming Queer Media

Growing queer representation in mainstream media highlights the increasing visibility and recognition of queer individuals and their stories and encompasses various forms of media, including television shows, movies, advertising, and digital platforms. Over the past few years, there has been a notable increase in the number of TV shows featuring queer characters and storylines. For instance, the popular web series “Made in Heaven (2019)” which premiered on Amazon Prime Video portrayed queer relationships and explored the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in India. Similarly, the Bollywood film “Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan (2020)” depicted a same-sex couple and their struggle for acceptance within their families and society.

Advertising has also witnessed a shift towards more inclusive representation. Procter and Gamble (P&G) released an ad for its product Vicks, where an orphan is adopted by a transwoman mom, who is still battling the custody of her child since the government does not give custody of a child to a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. This campaign goes hand in hand with the product since Vicks is a product that has stood for family care in India.

Furthermore, digital platforms have played a crucial role in increasing queer representation in India, with platforms such as Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar leading the way in showcasing diverse stories and characters.

Signals

- The movie *Badhai Do* (2022) notably depicted everyday struggles queers face and a never seen before sense of community and friendship within the community (Sharma, 2022)
- Facing the same stigmatization and frustration as a trans woman, activist and model, Rudrani Chettri decided to start India’s first Transgender modelling agency in 2015 called Bold (Bijolia, 2023)
- Leading role in a Bollywood film about a transgender activist has been given to the non-trans actress, Sushmita Sen, a former Miss Universe (Mohan, 2022)
- The Vicks campaign is a great example of displaying Corporate social responsibility. It is trying to influence and change the perception of people towards the queer community (Pumba Communication Cell, 2021)

Implications

- Seeing relatable queer characters in the media can have a profound impact on the self-acceptance and validation of queer individuals. This could positively impact queer individuals' relationships with their families, reducing the rate of family rejection and homelessness among queer youth.
- By humanizing queer experiences, media representation can foster empathy and understanding, which may lead to greater acceptance and tolerance within society. Changing societal attitudes towards the queer community members may encourage them to relocate to areas where they feel more accepted and supported, leading to the potential for the development of queer friendly communities
- The increased investment in queer content reflects the growing market demand for inclusive narratives. This could stimulate economic growth by creating new employment opportunities for queer artists, writers, and filmmakers. It could also open new markets and revenue streams for media companies.
- Media portrayal of the challenges faced by queer individuals, such as the custody battle depicted in the Vicks advertisement, may draw attention to existing discriminatory laws and policies. This may prompt discussions and advocacy for legal reforms and policies that protect the rights of queer individuals.

14. The Rising Tide of Digital Mis- and Disinformation

The digital age has indeed facilitated the rapid production and spread of information but is also sparking the spread of misinformation (incorrect or misleading information) and disinformation (deliberately deceptive and propagated information). While the spread of mis- and disinformation has had a global impact, India has been particularly affected.

Signals

- Most Indians believe the news they receive on WhatsApp is reliable (RISJ, 2022)
- Even though, as of 2021, India counts 825.3 million internet users in a population of 1.38 billion people, 90 percent of Indians are not digitally literate. Telling fact from fiction when sharing a story on social media is therefore a big challenge for a lot of consumers of online news (Sinch Engage, 2023)
- A study conducted by the University of Alberta in Canada in 2021 revealed that India was the world's largest source of COVID-19 misinformation. The study examined the spread of misinformation from 138 countries and found that one in six instances of fake information related to the pandemic originated from India (Potor, 2022)
- A significant portion of the false narratives circulating in India's public life were linked to Islamophobia. These narratives were intentionally shared with the aim of spreading demographic anxiety (BOOM Annual Report, 2022).

Implications

- False narratives or misinformation about queer individuals, their rights, and their experiences can contribute to stigmatization, discrimination, and further marginalization. This may hinder progress in achieving equality, acceptance, and access to healthcare and social support systems for the queer community.
- The widespread dissemination of misinformation may erode trust in institutions, including media organizations, government bodies, and healthcare systems. The erosion of trust may lead to scepticism, confusion, and a decline in public confidence. This might hinder effective governance, public health initiatives, and overall societal progress.
- Mis- and dis-information may serve to influence political ideologies and shape public opinion. In India, false narratives, particularly those tied to religion or identity, may influence electoral outcomes, policy decisions, and public discourse.
- False information can fuel social divisions and polarization and deepen existing divides and prejudices, which could hinder social cohesion and trust

**The Future: What
Are the Possibilities**

The Future: What Are the Possibilities

The trends from the previous section inform the creation of four potential futures for Future of queer Well-being in 2043.

These scenarios offer narrative depictions of what may unfold as our world evolves due to the interaction between diverse trends and change drivers. It is crucial to note that these scenarios are not mere science fiction; they are grounded in research and evidence, drawing from current signals of change. Neither are they predictions of what the future will look like. Rather, they show us the ways in which the future may look quite different to today.

My aim with these scenarios is to stimulate fresh thinking and encourage envisioning of multiple alternate futures. By exploring a wide range of possibilities, we can develop improved strategies, policies, and innovations to anticipate and adapt to potential changes.

Scenario Development

Generic Images of the Futures (Generic Images)

Jim Dator's Generic Images are a popular scenario development method employed by governments and foresight practitioners (2009).

In the context of scenario development for the future well-being of queer individuals, this framework describes specific prototypes that lay the groundwork for crafting distinct storylines. These prototypes encompass growth, collapse, discipline, and transformation, each presenting a unique perspective on potential upcoming trajectories concerning the well-being of queer individuals.

Growth: Represents the continuation of the status quo and business-as-usual growth. Often aligned with the "official" projection of the future.

Collapse: Encompasses the degradation of systems or a regression to a lower state of development.

Discipline: Involves adapting behaviors to align with environmental constraints and ensure equitable distribution.

Transformation: Encompasses the impact of new technologies, businesses, or social factors that bring about systemic change.

Furthermore, each of these potential narratives finds validation through a method referred to as "backcasting," which visually illustrates the sequence of events that unfolded to lead to the envisioned future as described.

Queer Renaissance

In 2043, India's thriving economy, technological integration, inclusive policies, empathetic education, and environmental consciousness have converged to create an environment where the queer community's well-being is at the forefront. Diverse family structures are celebrated, marginalized communities empowered, and gender expression embraced fluidly. The tapestry of progress is woven through time, bringing India into an era of inclusivity, acceptance, and understanding for all.

India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has flourished, experiencing consistent expansion and strength. This growth has translated into increased funding for social programs and initiatives, including those aimed at supporting the queer community. The progressive government has actively implemented policies that promote inclusivity, diversity, and equal opportunities for all citizens. Affirmative actions have been taken to address past inequalities, ensuring that the queer community is empowered to participate fully in the economy and society.

Amidst the ongoing climate catastrophe, renewable energy and technology sector have particularly thrived in India, showcasing the nation's commitment to sustainability and environmental resilience.

The dominance of technology in India has ushered in a new era of advancements and innovation, significantly impacting the well-being of the queer community. Virtual reality platforms, enhanced with mind-reading AI, offer an uncanny personal journey for gender identity exploration. Wearing VR headsets, users dive into a realm where AI deciphers inner emotions with eerie precision. Strangely, this mind-tech blend extends beyond virtual confines; real-world surroundings reflect virtual encounters, blurring reality. This fusion weaves an intriguing tapestry of personal expression. Ultimately, this fusion provides an enigmatic avenue for queer individuals to express and explore their identities, contributing to their wellbeing in profoundly unique ways.

Empathy has become a cornerstone of Indian culture. The societal mindset has shifted towards understanding and embracing diversity in all its forms, promoting a more inclusive environment for the queer community. Families of all shapes and sizes blossom like wildflowers, bound not by tradition but by the tapestry of love that intertwines them. Educational curricula have been updated to foster empathy and understanding from a young age, leading to a generation that appreciates the richness of human differences. Unity among citizens has helped build a stronger sense of community, with allies standing alongside the queer community in their pursuit of well-being.

India's commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse emissions has had positive effects on both the environment and society. The shift to sustainable practices has not only preserved natural resources but also brought people together to collaborate on environmental protection initiatives. The population continues to grow, but with increased access to education and family planning, it is growing at a sustainable rate. Employment opportunities are abundant, particularly for a skilled workforce in Energy and Utilities. Companies have recognized the value of diverse perspectives, leading

to inclusive workplace environments where queer individuals can thrive. Regulations and ethical frameworks for AI and automation are established to ensure that their deployment does not lead to job loss without adequate safeguards. In addition, the government has also implemented social safety nets, such as unemployment benefits and healthcare support, to cushion the impact of job displacement, if it happens, during technological transitions. The integration of artificial intelligence and technology in various industries has created jobs that cater to diverse skill sets, ensuring a more equitable distribution of economic opportunities

Healthcare has undergone a remarkable transformation, emphasizing personalized and technology-driven solutions. Dedicated care hubs, tailored for the queer community, have emerged, offering services attuned to their distinct requirements and embracing a comprehensive health approach. This evolution has made mental health support more accessible, with specialized care centers for queer individuals providing tailored comprehensive health services.

India's growing economy has led to an increase in the buying power of higher-income groups, impacting housing affordability for the middle and lower-income sections of society, including queer individuals. The family structure has evolved to accommodate diverse family models, including nuclear, blended, extended, chosen family, and same-sex households. The societal acceptance of these diverse structures has grown significantly, creating a more supportive and nurturing environment for queer individuals and their families.

2043 has seen considerable efforts to mitigate the caste system's adverse effects, breaking down barriers and fostering a more egalitarian society. Social reforms and educational opportunities have enabled individuals from marginalized communities, including queer individuals, to rise above historical inequalities and contribute actively to society.

Gender expression has embraced fluidity, with society recognizing and respecting diverse gender identities. The traditional binary understanding of gender has evolved, giving rise to a more inclusive society where individuals can express themselves freely, without fear of discrimination or prejudice.

Backcasting

2023

- To support the appeal to legalize same-sex marriage, queer organizations and allies launch powerful awareness campaigns, teaming up with mainstream media and progressive employers. These campaigns depict queer narratives to show support for queer folks, challenge societal prejudices and stereotypes, and cultivate empathy and understanding. These efforts lay the foundation for increased acceptance of the queer community

2024

- Feeling the pressure from opposition parties and queer support groups, the government initiates the process of comprehensive legislation to protect the rights of queer individuals, setting the stage for a more accepting and supportive society.
- Technology-driven healthcare services, including telemedicine, are scaled up and integrated into the national healthcare system, making essential healthcare accessible to remote and marginalized communities, including queer individuals.

2027

- By 2027, India celebrates progress towards gender equality and gender fluidity. Legal recognition of diverse family structures, including chosen families, is achieved nationwide, granting equal rights and social acceptance to queer families.
- Inclusive employers lead the way in the job market, promoting diverse and supportive work environments for queer individuals. This trend sparks a cultural shift, inspiring more companies to prioritize diversity and foster a sense of belonging for all employees.

2030

- India experiences revolutionary transformation in its healthcare system. Personalized and technology-driven healthcare services are universally accessible, effectively addressing the physical and mental well-being of queer individuals.
- Marriage rights for the queer community are recognized at the national level, marking a significant milestone in achieving societal acceptance and equality for all citizens.

2033

- The society has undergone a profound cultural shift. Empathy and unity are the pillars of the nation, eroding the remnants of the caste system and fostering a deeply inclusive society.
- The media landscape embraces authentic queer representation, challenging stereotypes and promoting positive narratives about the queer community. This portrayal fosters understanding and empathy among the general population.
- Employers across industries champion inclusivity, leading to a workforce that values

diversity and prioritizes the well-being of queer employees. This collective effort empowers individuals to thrive both personally and professionally.

2037

- India's economy flourishes, driven by abundant green and sustainable jobs. The government invests in eco-friendly industries, creating abundant employment opportunities for skilled labour
- The representation and rights of the queer community are deeply ingrained in India's social fabric, leading to improved physical, mental, emotional, and financial well-being for all queer individuals.

Monochrome Rainbows

By 2043, the state of queer physical, mental, emotional, and financial well-being of people in India appears grim. The intersectionality of these challenges has pushed the queer community to the periphery of society, exacerbating their vulnerabilities and depriving them of the opportunities and support needed to lead fulfilling lives.

India's once thriving economy has experienced a prolonged period of decay and downturn. Rampant corruption, mismanagement, and lack of long-term planning have led to economic stagnation. As a result, government revenue has plummeted, and essential social services, including those specifically geared towards supporting the queer community, have been severely impacted.

The political landscape has become increasingly polarized, with political parties prioritizing divisive issues over addressing the urgent needs of marginalized communities. There has been little interest in advocating for and enacting policies that promote queer rights and well-being.

Technological advancement has plateaued, stifling innovation and limiting opportunities for economic growth. Investment in green technologies and sustainable practices has been consistently ignored, leading to further environmental degradation and its disproportionate impact on marginalized communities, including queer individuals.

Deep-rooted cultural prejudices against the queer community persist, fuelled by conservative beliefs and religious dogma. Society remains fragmented along ideological lines, making it challenging for progressive voices to influence public opinion or enact change. Discrimination against queer individuals is rampant, leading to isolation, mental health issues, and limited social support systems.

Heat waves and drought have taken a toll on the environment, making resources scarcer and exacerbating vulnerabilities among the most marginalized. Natural disasters have become more frequent and severe, disproportionately affecting queer individuals who struggle to access adequate resources and support during times of crisis.

India's population has exploded, straining already limited resources and job opportunities. The job market is marred by systemic barriers that disproportionately affect the queer community, leading to higher unemployment rates and economic instability.

Healthcare costs have skyrocketed, leaving a sizeable portion of the population, including queer individuals, unable to access essential medical services. Discrimination and stigma persist within the healthcare system. These individuals might delay or avoid seeking medical attention altogether due to concerns about mistreatment, judgment, or invasive questioning about their identities. Such barriers have prevented the timely diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions, resulting in more severe health issues in the long run. The fear of encountering bias or ignorance from healthcare providers has caused heightened anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. The stress of navigating a healthcare system that doesn't understand or support queer needs has contributed to feelings of isolation, helplessness, and self-esteem issues. As a result,

the incidence of substance use and self-harm is the highest on record. Housing prices have surged, particularly affecting middle and lower-income groups, pushing many queer individuals into homelessness. The lack of affordable and inclusive housing options further isolates and marginalizes the queer community.

The economic decay and lack of support systems have led to a fragmentation of the traditional family unit. This disintegration has had a disproportionate impact on queer individuals, who have often found themselves without familial support due to discrimination and lack of acceptance.

The societal and economic tensions have reinforced the deeply ingrained caste system, further marginalizing queer individuals from lower castes. Gender expression remains a major challenge, as conservative norms continue to suppress the diverse and fluid expressions of gender identity.

Facing immense challenges, the queer community has shown impressive resilience, forging tight bonds of support amid economic decay, political division, and bias. They've embraced novel forms of self-expression, creating inclusive havens through digital platforms and underground gatherings. These artistic ventures offer solace, combatting the isolation of discrimination. Moreover, storytelling has become a vital tool for unity, allowing queer individuals to rewrite their narratives despite adversity. Through digital media, podcasts, and virtual reality, they've amplified their voices and formed global alliances, showcasing their determination to thrive.

Backcasting

2023

- Rapid economic expansion in steel, commercial and private vehicles have strained resources and pushed demand beyond supply capabilities, leading to demand-pull inflation, especially when infrastructure and production capacity cannot keep up with the growth in demand.

2024

- Conservative political forces gain strength in the face of demand-pull inflation, where excessive consumer demand outpaces supply. Their promise of curbing government expenditure and promoting a balanced budget resonates with citizens concerned about rising prices and cautious about major policy changes. Conservative parties emphasized gradual, incremental changes rather than sweeping reforms, making it difficult to pass pro-queer legislation.
- Telemedicine services begin to expand, but their implementation in rural areas is limited, where initial infrastructure setup costs is higher.

2027

- Economic stagnation continues, pushing more queer individuals into poverty and limiting their access to essential resources and services.
- Green investments are still neglected, further contributing to environmental vulnerabilities, which disproportionately impact marginalized communities, including queer individuals.
- Employment discrimination remains rampant, hindering the professional advancement and job security of queer individuals.

2030

- The fight for marriage rights gains momentum, but conservative opposition continues to obstruct legal recognition of queer partnerships, leading to increased uncertainty for queer couples.
- The housing crisis worsens, leaving many queer individuals facing homelessness, with limited access to shelter and support services.
- Mental health services remain underfunded and inaccessible, resulting in a mental health crisis among the queer community.

2033

- The reinforcement of the caste system deepens social divides, leading to further discrimination against queer individuals from lower castes, affecting their access to education, employment, and healthcare.
- Gender expression challenges persist, as societal norms and stereotypes continue to stifle the diverse expressions of gender identity within the queer community.
- Healthcare costs continue to rise, making medical services unaffordable for a

sizeable portion of the queer population.

2037

- The impact of climate change intensifies, causing more frequent and severe environmental disasters that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, including queer individuals, exacerbating their struggles.
- Employment opportunities in inclusive and green sectors start to emerge, but systemic barriers still prevent full queer representation and participation in these industries.
- Discrimination against chosen and same-sex families persists, hindering their ability to access social support systems and critical resources.

2040

- Economic decline becomes deeply entrenched, leaving the queer community in a state of chronic financial instability and limited prospects for improvement.
- The government's polarization hinders the implementation of inclusive policies and intensifies discrimination against the queer community.
- Technological advancement remains stagnant, limiting progress in areas such as healthcare, employment, and communication for the queer population.
- Cultural prejudice and societal fragmentation continue to isolate and marginalize queer individuals, hindering their social acceptance and overall well-being.

Progress and Paralysis

By 2043, a nuanced picture of queer well-being has emerged due to the government's previous decision to enforce stricter penalties for those found guilty of participating in or facilitating female infanticide. This included imprisonment and fines, along with the implementation of a fast-track judicial process specifically for cases related to gender-based violence and infanticide. These measures were intended to ensure timely justice and to increase labor force participation, given India's projected economic growth by 2075 in the coming decade and the need for a balanced population growth.

Initially, governmental efforts aimed at maintaining a balanced gender ratio did yield results, but the strategy of imposing stricter penalties encountered opposition from various quarters. Many perceive these penalties as excessively corrective, and the rigid enforcement has raised concerns about bias within the judicial system. This perception has led to escalating tensions between genders, leaving some segments of society feeling unfairly singled out. Such tensions have been fueled further by cases where innocent individuals face penalties due to false accusations, intensifying feelings of injustice.

In 2043, families with historical imbalances in sex ratios or involvement in gender-based violence cases now find themselves subjected to increased discrimination. Ironically, the very penalties meant to rectify gender disparities unintentionally stigmatize these families. Consequently, their reintegration into society post-sentence has become an arduous task. This results in a cycle of social isolation that affects not only the directly implicated individuals but also extends to their families at large. The economic and emotional toll of this discrimination acts as a hindrance to achieving a more inclusive society. Queer individuals within such families encounter additional barriers to securing stable employment, housing, and financial well-being due to the isolation stemming from these penalties. Consequently, some queer individuals now face difficulties in accessing educational opportunities, and social support, given their family backgrounds.

Furthermore, the stigmatization indirectly impacts the social networks of queer individuals, making it challenging for them to find supportive communities. Nonetheless, the advent of technology-driven platforms paves the way for the creation of online communities and spaces that offer understanding and a sense of belonging to queer individuals.

Amidst this complex scenario, technology occupies a dual role. While online social platforms amplify divisive narratives, escalating tensions, they also present innovative solutions for reporting and addressing gender-based violence and divisive gender narratives. Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered tools contribute to identifying and rectifying biases within the legal system, thereby promoting fairness and due process. These advancements alleviate some of the emotional distress stemming from perceived inequalities.

Governmental policies aimed at addressing gender imbalances have led to the establishment of a system that penalizes any form of microaggression, belittling attitudes, and subtle exclusions as defined by law. This contributes to promoting diversity and fostering an equitable environment. Consequently, job opportunities and representation across various industries, including those that cater to queer individuals, have become more balanced. Anti-discrimination laws not only ensure equitable treatment within workplaces but also spur conscious hiring practices. Consequently, queer individuals enjoy improved access to job opportunities and are increasingly successful in finding workplaces that respect their identities.

Backcasting

2023

- The Indian government assesses its labor force and economy, setting the goal of becoming a leader in the global economy over the next decade. Recognizing the importance of a balanced gender ratio for sustained economic growth, the government initiates efforts to address gender-based imbalances and promote inclusive practices

2027

- As progress continues, the Indian government introduces stricter penalties for those involved in gender-based violence and female infanticide. The decision is supported by the belief that strong measures are necessary to deter such actions and achieve a more equitable society. The initial enforcement is generally well-received, and cases of gender-based violence decrease noticeably.

2030

- Over time, concerns begin to emerge regarding the perceived excessiveness of the penalties. Some segments of society express reservations about potential bias in the judicial system and the impact on innocent individuals. Debates arise around finding a balance between corrective measures and ensuring due process, with calls for revisiting the penalty framework

2033

- Tensions between genders escalate as opposition to the strict penalties grows. Public discourse highlights instances of individuals facing penalties due to false accusations or misunderstandings, leading to calls for reform. The government initiates conversations with stakeholders to address concerns and explore modifications to the penalty system.

2037

- Public sentiment becomes more divided as debates intensify. The government acknowledges the unintended consequences of its approach and shifts focus to a more holistic strategy. Reintegration programs are introduced to support families affected by penalties, aiming to break the cycle of discrimination and isolation. The government partners with NGOs and social organizations to provide emotional and economic support

2040

- Recognizing the importance of technology, the government leverages AI-powered tools to identify and rectify biases within the legal system. The introduction of technology-driven platforms helps bridge gaps in reporting gender-based violence

and promoting more objective investigations. Online communities also begin to emerge, offering support to queer individuals facing challenges due to their family backgrounds

Queer x Quantum

In 2043, most Indians find themselves interacting daily with Equa, a groundbreaking social and technological phenomenon, an innovation aimed at addressing India's historically low Happiness Index ranking from previous years. It has transformed into a multidimensional nexus where the boundaries between reality, technology, and consciousness blur that fundamentally reshapes how people interact with each other and the world around them. Its significance lies in its ability to foster profound connections, redefine identities, and revolutionize governance and well-being.

Equa is a symbol of unity and limitless possibilities. It represents a paradigm shift in societal structures, relationships, and self-expression. People of all backgrounds are drawn to Equa, not just for its acceptance of diverse identities but for the promise of transcending conventional limitations.

For many, Equa has become a place to explore the boundaries of love and connection through 'Quantum Bonding', where individuals can form connections that transcend the confines of physical existence. People are no longer limited by time and space, allowing them to experience relationships on multiple planes of reality. Quantum entanglement of emotions and thoughts has given rise to complex, multidimensional unions that challenge our understanding of love and connection.

Moreover, Equa has expanded beyond traditional gender norms, giving rise to 'Digenderism', a fusion of digital and biological identities. This concept allows individuals to create and embody digital personas, enabling them to express facets of their identity freely. It has redefined self-expression, breaking down barriers and fostering a more inclusive society.

The Governance has taken an unprecedented turn with the emergence of 'Conscious Consensus.' Using advanced neural interface technology, citizens can directly link their consciousness to a collective decision-making platform. Policies are debated, modified, and approved through a shared neural network, creating a society where governance is a true reflection of the collective will.

Equa has blurred the lines between physical reality and digital consciousness, creating a vibrant, diverse society. Citizens embrace the fusion of digital and biological identities, and relationships now span the digital-physical divide. Equa has reimagined family structures through 'Fractal Families', which are dynamic networks of connections transcending biological lines. Augmented Intelligence (AI) beings have become integral members of these families, serving as mentors, companions, and even parents. AI guardians provide care, guidance, and education, enriching the concept of parenthood.

However, there are still some citizens who choose not to use it. Some may prefer a more traditional way of life or find Equa's advancements overwhelming. Equa respects individual choices and coexists with diverse lifestyles.

Equa's global appeal has drawn people from across the world, and these individuals' become citizens of Equa. This has fostered a vibrant, diverse society that thrives on the exchange of ideas and perspectives from countless cultures. The influx

of international citizens has deepened India's connection with the global community, creating a unique cultural exchange and promoting diplomacy.

Moreover, Equa's status as a hub for interdimensional tourism has further solidified its place on the global stage. Equa's unique position at the intersection of quantum realities has made it a hub for interdimensional tourism. Travelers from across the multiverse come to experience India's diverse cultures and societies, enriching the country's cultural fabric with insights and perspectives from countless parallel dimensions. This tourism not only boosts the economy but also strengthens India's ties with other multiverse travellers and alternate realities.

Backcasting

2023

- Prominent political figure comes out as queer, sparking varied societal reactions during ongoing legal battle for same-sex marriage.

2024

- Revolutionary Quantum Bonding technology emerges, reshaping human connections to address India's low Happiness Index ranking.

2027

- Several other ministers come out of the closet, spurred on by the political figure who set the example in 2023.
- The successful pilot of the Quantum Bonding Technology is followed up by mass education and awareness campaigns to inform citizens about the impact of the technology,

2030

- Creators of Quantum Bonding technology launch Quantum Empathy Networks, a global emotion sharing platform that seeks to promote empathy.
- The UN reports a sharp rise in international collaboration on its Sustainable Development Goals, with significant advancement in SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 5 (Gender Equality) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities)

2033

- Policies promoting digital inclusion and accessibility are strengthened to ensure accessibility of this technology to all citizens, including those with varying socioeconomic statuses and physical abilities.
- India joins forces with Asia and Europe to increase investment in mental health research.
- The Digital Expression Act, safeguarding individuals' rights to express themselves in the digital realm without discrimination or censorship is passed with a majority

2037

- Multiverse Tourism Regulations have emerged as a treaty is signed between India and other countries. This treaty aims to manage tourism effectively and ensure respectful interactions for visitors from alternate realities.

2040

- Governance Framework for Conscious Consensus emerges that defines the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes within the collective neural network to ensure transparency and accountability in governance.

Insights

Insights

Revisiting the research question –

What forces might shape the future well-being of the queer communities in India over the next 20 years?

From the four scenarios provided, several strong insights were gathered regarding the forces that might shape the future of emotional, social, financial, and mental well-being of queer communities. These insights aim to move us closer to our preferred future, where queer individuals achieve their optimum well-being.

Queer Renaissance:

1. **Inclusive Policies and Empathy:** India is powered by not just inclusive policies and empathy, but a resounding commitment to eradicate discrimination. The government's proactive stance, featuring equal opportunities, diverse representation, and celebration of varied family structures, cultivates an undeniable sense of belonging within queer individuals. As a result, this nurturing environment becomes the vessel in which the mental, emotional, and social well-being of the queer community not only thrives but flourishes.
2. **Technology Revolutionizing Identity Exploration:** The convergence of technology and identity exploration is nothing short of revolutionary. Virtual Reality (VR) platforms and Artificial Intelligence (AI) become factual vessels of change allowing queer individuals to traverse their gender identity journey with unparalleled authenticity. This harmonious synergy has a cascading effect on mental health, where the alleviation of internal conflicts and the amplification of emotional fulfilment become the touchstones of this evolution.
3. **Sustainable Citizenship and Empowerment:** India's growing awareness of environmental issues transforms into a fundamental support system for the health and happiness of queer individuals. The relentless pursuit of sustainability and net-zero emissions becomes symbolic of collective responsibility. In turn, this unified dedication fosters a profound sense of purpose and interconnectedness, nurturing the mental and emotional well-being of queer communities by affording them the agency to make lasting positive change.
4. **Economic Empowerment and Inclusivity:** The thriving economy not only boosts the financial well-being of queer individuals but also challenges the perception that economic growth and social progress are mutually exclusive. It reveals that economic prosperity can coexist with inclusivity and diversity, setting a powerful example for other nations.

Monochrome Rainbows:

1. **Economic Uncertainties Magnifying Intersectional Struggles:** Highlights the detrimental ramifications of economic decline and systemic discrimination on queer communities. This narrative underscores how intersectional vulnerabilities – ranging from financial instability to insecure housing – conspire to erect daunting barriers to mental well-being. Discrimination's erosive impact is further magnified, creating a gloomy representation of the severe outcomes that occur when the cohesion of society deteriorates.
2. **Resilience Forged in Digital Fires:** Demonstrates the resilience of the queer community and its members. Through digital fires of community-building, they forge unbreakable bonds that defy geographic confines. These digital communities are not just shelters; they are vessels of empowerment where the shared act of storytelling emerges as a balm, and affirms the importance of interconnectedness.

Progress and Paralysis:

1. **Unintended Consequences of Strict Penalties** The complex interplay of policies and the unforeseen results they give rise to becomes evident and highlight the intricate complexity involved in policy interventions. Stricter measures, intended to rectify gender disparities, inadvertently sow the seeds of discrimination and isolation. It's a reminder that the well-intentioned path can sometimes lead astray, necessitating a vigilant awareness of the potential repercussions on mental and emotional well-being.
2. **Technology's Dichotomy in Shaping Minds:** Emphasizes the dual role of technology. While online platforms can perpetuate divisive narratives, they also emerge as tools of enlightenment – ones that can address biases and propagate fairness. This duality highlights the urgent requirement for responsible utilization of technology, as its impact on mental health, whether detrimental or beneficial, holds immense significance.

Queen x Quantum:

1. **A Quantum Reshaping of Well-being:** The weaving together of quantum bonding and digital identities reconstructs the landscape of emotional and mental well-being. This uncharted exploration transcends established bounds, endowing queer individuals with unique avenues for self-expression and camaraderie. These digital bridges of connectivity become conduits of solace, carving a realm where conventional struggles find new dimensions of understanding and support.
2. **Alternative Family Structures:** The redefinition of family through "Fractal Families" and AI guardians proclaims a new era of empowerment. The landscape shifts to accommodate those who have grappled with conventional structures. These alternative forms of kinship offer unwavering social support and emotional sanctuary, affording queer individuals the stability that was previously elusive.

3. **Conscious Consensus:** The idea of governance through a shared neutral network raises questions about the balance between individual autonomy and collective decision-making. It sparks an investigation into how these governance structures impact well-being, democracy and societal harmony.

In summary, these scenarios offer insights into the intricate interplay between societal, technological, and policy factors that can shape the emotional, social, financial, and mental well-being of queer communities. They underscore the importance of inclusivity, empathy, responsible technology use, and the need for nuanced policy interventions to ensure positive outcomes for the future of queer well-being.

Recommendations

Recommendations

Based on insights derived from the four scenarios, the ensuing recommendations are directed towards three stakeholders outlined in the Stakeholders Map (Fig. X) possessing substantial influence over queer well-being and/or extensive knowledge in its enhancement.

For Queer Individuals

1. **Harness AI for equitable identity exploration:** Establish partnerships with tech companies to combat biases against racialized queer identities, in AI systems. Utilize AI advancements to enhance the depth and fairness of gender identity exploration. Work closely with tech experts to fine-tune AI algorithms, making the journey of gender identity even more precise and personal. Develop AI-driven support groups and chatbots for immediate guidance and emotional support, ensuring that every queer individual finds companionship on their journey of self-discovery.
2. **Become environmental changemakers:** Take a leading role in environmental activism and sustainability initiatives. Establish queer-led eco-activist groups that actively contribute to India's net-zero emissions goal. Advocate for policies that prioritize environmental stewardship while empowering marginalized communities, including queer individuals, as environmental champions.
3. **Financial Resilience:** Given the economic challenges, become financial savvy. Create collective savings and investment groups within the queer community to ensure financial resilience and empowerment.
4. **Chanel Adversity:** Harness adversity to fuel your artistic ventures, transform digital communities into platforms for artistic expression that challenge societal norms and ignite conversations. These outlets foster coping mechanisms, forging connections, and inspire others.

For Queer Individuals' Families:

1. **Champion Acceptance:** Go beyond mere acceptance, champion your queer family members' identities and rights. Engage in public advocacy and speak up against discrimination
2. **Eco-friendly Family Activities:** As a part of your commitment to the environment, organize eco-friendly activities that involve queer communities. Plant trees, clean a park, celebrate your family's diversity while contributing to a sustainable world
3. **Mental Health Support:** Actively educate yourself about the mental health challenges faced by queer individuals and offer unwavering support. Organize family counselling sessions to facilitate open dialogues and ensure the well-being of your queer family member

For the Government:

1. **Revolutionize Education:** Revolutionize education with an unyielding focus on empathy, understanding, and queer inclusivity. Implement mandatory curriculum

components that celebrate diversity, and actively foster acceptance and understanding of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Invest in educational technology that promotes empathy from an early age.

2. **Green Avant- Garde:** Elevate India's environmental commitment further by actively involving the queer community in green movements. Establish eco-friendly programs and projects led by queer activists, showcasing their contributions as key drivers of sustainability.
3. **Inclusive Entrepreneurship Ecosystem:** Create a robust ecosystem to support queer entrepreneurs. Launch specialized venture capital funds, mentorship programs, and business development initiatives tailored to their unique needs, fostering economic empowerment.
4. **Elevate Representation:** Hold space for diverse representation across politics, and governance. This counters stereotypes, dismantles barriers, and fosters inclusivity.
5. **Digital Justice Platforms with Transparency:** Develop AI-powered platforms for addressing gender-based violence with utmost transparency and fairness. Ensure these platforms are accessible to all, and actively promote their use to seek justice for victims. Implement a clear framework for monitoring and addressing bias within these systems.

Limitations and Conclusion

Limitations and Conclusion

Limitations of the Research

This research was conducted in Toronto, Canada. The insights and recommendations, although rooted in thorough secondary research, would undoubtedly have been enhanced by a more extensive inclusion of primary research methods with participants based in India. This would have facilitated the gathering of an even wider array of opinions, worldviews, and stories, ultimately enriching the depth and breadth of my findings.

Further research avenues that could enhance understanding of queer well-being include investigating the impact of intersectionality. Exploring how various identities intersect within the queer community, particularly among those from marginalized backgrounds, can illuminate distinct challenges and strengths that shape their well-being. Another vital aspect is considering regional variations. Given India's rich cultural diversity, queer experiences vary significantly across different regions and communities. Research could delve into regional variations in societal attitudes, legal frameworks, and support systems, and how they impact queer well-being differently.

Conclusion

The exploration of various scenarios concerning the future well-being of queer communities in India over the next two decades has illuminated a multifaceted landscape of possibilities. The insights drawn from these scenarios provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate forces that could shape emotional, social, financial, and mental well-being. The scenarios vividly portray the potential trajectories that the queer community might navigate, influenced by factors such as policies, technology, resilience, family dynamics, and societal attitudes.

From these scenarios, several key recommendations emerge for different stakeholders. For queer individuals and their families, the recommendations focus on fostering support networks, embracing resilience, prioritizing mental health, and encouraging open conversations. For the government, the recommendations encompass enacting inclusive policies, prioritizing holistic education, reinforcing anti-discrimination laws, and supporting accessible mental health services. These recommendations collectively form a roadmap towards a future where the well-being of queer communities is enhanced and safeguarded.

In essence, the exploration of these scenarios and subsequent recommendations underscores the paramount importance of inclusivity, empathy, responsible technology use, and comprehensive policies in shaping a positive future for the well-being of queer communities in India.

As society continues to evolve, it is imperative to remain attentive to these insights and recommendations, fostering a future where every individual can thrive, irrespective of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Bibliography

Abrar, P. (2022, June 9). Amazon India says it stepping up support plan for LGBTQAI+ employees. [www.business-standard.com. https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/amazon-india-says-it-stepping-up-support-plan-for-lgbtqai-employees-122060901135_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/amazon-india-says-it-stepping-up-support-plan-for-lgbtqai-employees-122060901135_1.html)

8 Dimensions of Wellness. (2017, March 7). Live Well @ UMD. <https://umwellness.wordpress.com/8-dimensions-of-wellness/>

Al-Biruni. (1910). *India* (E. C. Sachau, Trans.). Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.
Amanatidou, E., Butter, M., Carabias, V., Konnola, T., & Pohl, C. (2012). On concepts and methods in horizon scanning: Lessons from initiating policy dialogues on emerging issues. *Science and Public Policy*, 39(2), 208-221.

Aprameya. (2023). For 75 years no one missed the Sengol, for the right reasons. *The Federal*. <https://thefederal.com/opinion/for-75-years-no-one-missed-the-sengol-for-the-right-reasons/>

Ayyub, R. (2023, January 27). India just took a dangerous step on disinformation. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/01/26/india-modi-disinformation-press-freedom/>

Banerjee D, Nair VS. “The untold side of COVID-19”: struggle and perspectives of the sexual minorities. *J Psychosexual Health*. (2020) 2(2):113–20. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2631831820939017>

Battuta, I. (2012). *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* (H. A. R. Gibb, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

BBC News. (2018, July 2). India “WhatsApp child abduction rumours”: Five more lynched. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-44678674>

Bhalla, R., & Agarwal, S. (2021). Life in a pandemic: intersectional approach exploring experiences of LGBTQ during COVID-19. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, 4(1), 53–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2021.1880204>

Bhattacharya, S. (2022, September 9). India Inc is beginning to take baby steps towards LGBTQ+ inclusion. [www.business-standard.com. https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/india-inc-is-beginning-to](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/india-inc-is-beginning-to)

Bijolia, D. B. (2023). India's First Transgender Modelling Agency Is Bringing Representation To The Industry. Homegrown. <https://homegrown.co.in/homegrown-voices/indias-first-transgender-modelling-agency-is-bringing-representation-to-the-industry>

Bowen, C., & Guilbeault, S. (2023, June 23). The climate crisis is this century's biggest threat. We need a global finance pact that reflects the task ahead. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/commentisfree/2023/jun/22/the-climate-crisis-is-this-centurys-biggest-threat-we-need-a-global-finance-pact-that-reflects-the-task-ahead>

Buitenen, J. a. B., Van Buitenen, J. a. B., & Fitzgerald, J. L. (1973). The Mahabharata, Volume 1: Book 1: The Book of the Beginning. University of Chicago Press.

Choudhary, A. (2023, March 13). Same-sex marriage will 'cause havoc': Government in Supreme Court. The Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/same-sex-marriage-will-cause-havoc-government-in-supreme-court/articleshow/98588691.cms?from=mdr>

Chowdhury, A., Sarkar, D., & Boom. (2023, January 10). BOOM. BOOM. <https://www.boomlive.in/boom-research/boom-annual-report-muslims-bjp-congress-islamophobia-scripted-videos-up-gujarat-elections-20694>

Climate Risk Profile India. (2021). World Bank Group. https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/country-profiles/15503-WB_India%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf

Cue. (2023, June 22). Will India lightning strike deaths rise as climate change worsen? The Straits Times. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/south-asia/will-india-lightning-strike-deaths-rise-as-climate-change-worsens>

Dator, J. (2017, July). Manoa's four generic images of the futures. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc578bdfb22a52798f8a038/t/5d1844fe53fad10001fbf127/1561871656439/4.+Dator-4+Futures+Museum.pdf>

Deshpande, A. (2021). How India's caste inequality has persisted—and deepened in the pandemic. *Current History*, 120(825), 127–132. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2021.120.825.127>

Desk, L. (2022, March 25). 'I've always felt a bit androgynous': Konkona Sensharma on why she doesn't conform to societal gender norms. The Indian Express. <https://>

indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/life-style/never-related-to-being-labelled-a-woman-konkona-sensharma-opens-up-about-the-concept-of-gender-7835644/

Desk, W. (2023, April 18). India Has 'Zero-Probability' of falling into Recession in 2023 — Report. Organiser. <https://organiser.org/2023/04/18/169811/bharat/india-has-zero-probability-of-falling-into-recession-in-2023-report/>

Diener, E., et al. (2009). The science of well-being: The collected works of Ed Diener. Springer Science & Business Media.

Disha Bijolia, & Disha Bijolia. (2023). A Mumbai-Based Artist Is Using AR To Shatter The Veneer Of 'Perfect' Indian Families. Homegrown. <https://homegrown.co.in/homegrown-creators/a-mumbai-based-artist-is-using-ar-to-shatter-the-veneer-of-perfect-indian-families>

Economic Times. (2023, March 1). Bill Gates praises India's connectivity infrastructure, digital networks. The Economic Times. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/bill-gates-praises-indias-connectivity-infrastructure-digital-networks/articleshow/98337302.cms>

Gaysi Family. (2022, January 20). Indian Matrimonial Website Shaadi.com Begins Matchmaking For LGBTQIA+ People - Gaysi. Gaysi. <https://gaysifamily.com/lifestyle/indian-matrimonial-website-shaadi-com-begins-matchmaking-for-lgbtqia-people/>

GDP of India: Current and historical growth rate, India's rank in the world. (2023). Forbes India. <https://www.forbesindia.com/article/explainers/gdp-india/85337/1>

Georghiou, L., Harper, J. C., Keenan, M., Miles, I., & Popper, R. (2013). The handbook of technology foresight: Concepts and practice. Edward Elgar Publishing

Gulbahaar Kaur. (2022). Beyond The Binary: How Indian Mythology Inspired Fluid Femininity. Homegrown. <https://homegrown.co.in/homegrown-explore/beyond-the-binary-how-indian-mythology-inspired-fluid->

Healthcare System in India, Healthcare India - IBEF. (n.d.). India Brand Equity Foundation. <https://www.ibef.org/industry/healthcare-india>

Helliwell, J. F., et al. (2018). The world happiness report 2018. Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Homegrown Staff, & Homegrown Staff. (2022). Dark-Skinned Indians Talk About Prejudice & Discrimination In India. Homegrown. <https://homegrown.co.in/homegrown->

creators/dark-skinned-indians-talk-about-prejudice-discrimination-in-india

IEA (2017), Energy Access Outlook 2017: From Poverty to Prosperity, IEA, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264285569-en>

IRENA and ILO (2022), Renewable energy and jobs: Annual review 2022, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi and International Labour Organization, Geneva.

Ishisaka, N. (2023, February 21). How some are fighting an old form of discrimination in Seattle workplaces. The Seattle Times. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/how-indias-caste-system-manifests-in-seattle-area-workplaces-and-beyond/>

Jin, H. (2023, June 21). Tesla's Musk eyes significant India investments after meeting Modi. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/musk-brief-modi-teslas-india-investment-plans-us-meeting-source-2023-06-20/>

Jones, T. (2023b, January 31). The history of the word "queer." La Trobe University. <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2023/opinion/the-history-of-the-word-queer>

Kalia, S. (2022). How the Indian System Keeps 'Single' Women Dependent on Others. The Swaddle. <https://theswaddle.com/how-the-indian-system-keeps-single-women-dependent-on-others/>

Khadka, B. N. S. (2022, November 9). COP27: Can India really adopt a climate-friendly lifestyle? BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-63539270>

Kothari, J., & Ganesan, D. (2019). Intersectionality. Centre for Law and Policy Research.

Kumar, A. (2023). Cloud-based platform seeks to improve health care for LGBTQ, intersex Indians. Washington Blade: LGBTQ News, Politics, LGBTQ Rights, Gay News. https://www.washingtonblade.com/2023/01/12/cloud-based-platform-seeks-to-improve-health-care-for-lgbtq-intersex-indians/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=cloud-based-platform-seeks-to-improve-health-care-for-lgbtq-intersex-indians

Kumar, R. (2023, May 23). India's tech sector has a caste problem. Rest of World. <https://restofworld.org/2022/tech-india-caste-divides/>

Madhok, D. (2022, July 21). Indian women will never be equal as long as these 9 laws remain on the books. Quartz. <https://qz.com/india/224632/indian-women-will-never-be-equal-as-long-as-these-9-laws-remain-on-the-books>

Mendelsohn, O., & Vicziany, M. (2005). *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India*

Minj, N. (2022, September 14). The horrors of queer conversion therapy in India. Scroll. in. <https://scroll.in/article/1032115/the-horrors-of-queer-conversion-therapy-in-india>

Mishra, I. (2023, March 14). RSS supports Centre's stand on same-sex marriage. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rss-supports-centres-stand-on-same-sex-marriage/article66618528.ece>

Mishra, S. (2022, August 31). 'Atypical' and queer relationships are same as traditional families, India's Supreme Court rules. *The Independent*. <https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/india-lgbt-family-supreme-court-b2155877.html>

Mitchell, T. (2022, October 27). Son preference and abortion in India | Pew Research Center. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/03/02/son-preference-and-abortion/>

Mohan, B. M. (2022, November 1). Sushmita Sen: The non-trans star playing a trans icon. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-63415626>

Naik, A. (2022). Is rental housing the answer to India's housing shortage crisis? *Moneylife NEWS & VIEWS*. <https://www.moneylife.in/article/is-rental-housing-the-answer-to-indias-housing-shortage-crisis/69126.html#:~:text=The%20estimated%20housing%20shortage%20in,of%20vacant%20homes%20so%20high%3F>

NALSA v. Union of India, (2014) SCC 438 - Legal Vidhiya. (2023, April 16). *Legal Vidhiya - Legal Vidhiya*. <https://legalvidhiya.com/nalsa-v-union-of-india-2014-scc-438/>

Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, (2018). 10 SCC 1.

Naz Foundation v. Government of NCT of Delhi, 160 Delhi Law Times 277 (Del HC 2009).

Naz Foundation. (n.d.). <https://www.nazindia.org/>

NewsClick. (2022, August 31). NCRB report shows rise in atrocities towards dalits and adivasis. *NewsClick*. <https://www.newsclick.in/NCRB-Report-Shows-Rise-Atrocities-Towards-Dalits-Adivasis>

Pandey, B. G. (2022, September 12). Rising crimes against Indian women in five charts. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-62830634>

Pandey, N. (2023). World Economic Forum: Satya Nadella Explains How ChatGPT Is Helping Villagers In India. NDTV.com. <https://www.ndtv.com/feature/world-economic-forum-satya-nadella-explains-how-chatgpt-is-helping-villagers-in-india-370917>

Pattanaik, D. (2014). *The Man Who Was a Woman and Other queer Tales from Hindu Lore*. Routledge.

Potor, M. (2022). These organizations are fighting misinformation in India — with WhatsApp. MessengerPeople by Sinch. <https://www.messengerpeople.com/misinformation-in-india-whatsapp/>

Pradhan, B. (2023, June 15). Modi Weighs Replacing Religion-Based Laws Ahead of 2024 Polls. Bloomberg.com. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-06-15/modi-weighs-replacing-religion-based-laws-ahead-of-2024-polls#xj4y7vzkg>

Priya, R. (2022, November 20). India's live-in couples battle stigma daily. Shraddha Walker murder makes it worse. ThePrint. <https://theprint.in/feature/indias-live-in-couples-battle-stigma-daily-shraddha-walker-murder-makes-it-worse/1224133/>

Pufahl, J., Rawat, S., Chaudary, J., & Shiff, N. J. (2021). Even mists have silver linings: Promoting LGBTQ+ acceptance and solidarity through community-based theatre in India. *Public Health*, 194, 252–259. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2021.02.027>

Pumba Communication Cell. (2021, December 14). Vicks — Generation of Care — Ad Analysis - Pumba Communication Cell - Medium. Medium. <https://medium.com/@pumba.communicationcell/vicks-generation-of-care-ad-analysis-61222ff388ab>

Rai, D. (2020, June 21). Evolution of LGBT Rights in India and taking the narrative forward. iPleaders. <https://blog.ipleaders.in/evolution-of-lgbt-rights-in-india-and-taking-the-narrative-forward-living-free-and-equal/>

Raj, P. (2023, April 13). queer or not, family is a natural right. Deccan Herald. <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/panorama/queer-or-not-family-is-a-natural-right-1209067.html>

RISJ. (2023). Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news-powerful-and-privileged-how-misrepresentation-and-underrepresentation-disadvantaged>

Saaliq, S. (2023, February 3). Indian gay couples begin legal battle for same-sex marriage | AP News. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/lgbtq-people-india-marriage-688b7f42b6863d0be8e03399539c9911>

Sangal, A. (2023, June 4). LGBTQ Indians abroad watch a looming decision in the Indian Supreme Court with high hopes. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/06/04/world/lgbtq-indians-abroad-supreme-court-marriage-cec/index.html>

Sara Schonhardt, E&E News. (2023, February 10). Why the Climate Fight Will Fail without India. Scientific American. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-the-climate-fight-will-fail-without-india/>

Saraff, S., Singh, T., Kaur, H., & Biswal, R. (2022). Stigma and health of Indian LGBT population: A systematic review. *Stigma and Health*, 7(2), 178–195. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sah0000361>

Sasikumar, M., & Sasikumar, M. (2023, June 15). Explained: Why Trans People Are Demanding Horizontal Reservation Across Castes. The Quint. <https://www.thequint.com/explainers/trans-people-fight-for-horizontal-reservations-across-castes#read-more#read-more>

Scott, B. (2023, January 14). For many, family bonds can run deeper than shared DNA. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2023/01/14/1147367710/for-many-family-bonds-can-run-deeper-than-shared-dna>

Shah, P. (2022, September 20). Indian wear labels are going genderless: Style icons like Lilly Singh are opting for Sherwanis over lehengas, here's why. Vogue India. <https://www.vogue.in/fashion/content/genderless-fashion-is-the-fashion-statement-society-needs>

Sharma, M. (2022). Navigating queer representation in Indian cinema. Film Companion. <https://www.filmcompanion.in/readers-articles/badhaai-do-gangubai-kathiawadi-geeli-pucchi-navigating-queer-representation-in-indian-cinema>

Sundaram, K. (2023, January 18). India's Population Has Already Overtaken China's, Analysts Estimate. Bloomberg.com. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-01-18/india-s-population-overtakes-china-to-become-world-s-biggest-analysts-estimate#xj4y7vzkg>

Suresh Kumar Koushal v. Naz Foundation, (2013). 4 SCC 1.

Talati, S. (2022, May 16). How prejudice rooted in an ancient social system has migrated from India to Canada. CBC. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/caste-india-canada-students-1.6450484>

Thakur, J., & Zaffar, H. (2023). The Need to Make Space for Dalit queer Voices in India.

New Lines Magazine. <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/the-need-to-make-space-for-dalit-queer-voices-in-india/>

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). Cultures That Recognize More than Two Genders. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/list/6-cultures-that-recognize-more-than-two-genders>

TNM. (2023, March 19). The News Minute | Kerala. The News Minute. <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/secular-muslim-forum-condemns-kerala-muslim-right-demonisation-lgbtqia-community-174760>

Tnn. (2023, March 27). Bombay Times launches “Out & Proud @Work” campaign. The Times of India. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/bombay-times-launches-out-proud-work-campaign/articleshow/99045939.cms>

Udayavani. (n.d.). Man in skirt breaks gender stereotypes with Insta reel of ramp walk in Mumbai local train. Udayavani. <https://www.udayavani.com/english-news/man-in-skirt-breaks-gender-stereotypes-with-insta-reel-of-ramp-walk-in-mumbai-local-train>

United Nations of Human Rights. COVID-19 and the Human Rights of LGBTI People. UNHR; April 17, 2020. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/LGBT/LGBTIpeople.pdf>. Accessed June 6, 2020

US-India Climate Partnership: A World of Opportunities. (2023, June 20). <https://www.nrdc.org/bio/vyoma-jha/us-india-climate-partnership-world-opportunities>

Vanita, R., & Kidwai, S. (2001). Same-Sex Love in India: Readings in Indian Literature.

Vātsyāyana. (2002). Kamasutra: A New, Complete English Translation of the Sanskrit Text with Excerpts from the Sanskrit Jayamangala Commentary of Yashodhara Indrapada, the Hindi Jaya Commentary of Devadatta Shastri, and Explanatory Notes . . . Oxford University Press, USA.

Warburton, D. E., et al. (2006). Health benefits of physical activity: the evidence. CMAJ, 174(6), 801-809.

Zargar, A. R. (2023, January 6). As India’s top court takes up same-sex marriage, couples hope, and activists say there’s a long fight ahead. CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/india-same-sex-marriage-supreme-court-lgbtq-rights-narendra-modi/>

Zimmer, H. R. (1946). Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization. Princeton University Press.

