



Sexual Orientation in India

A Docademia Film & Educational Package

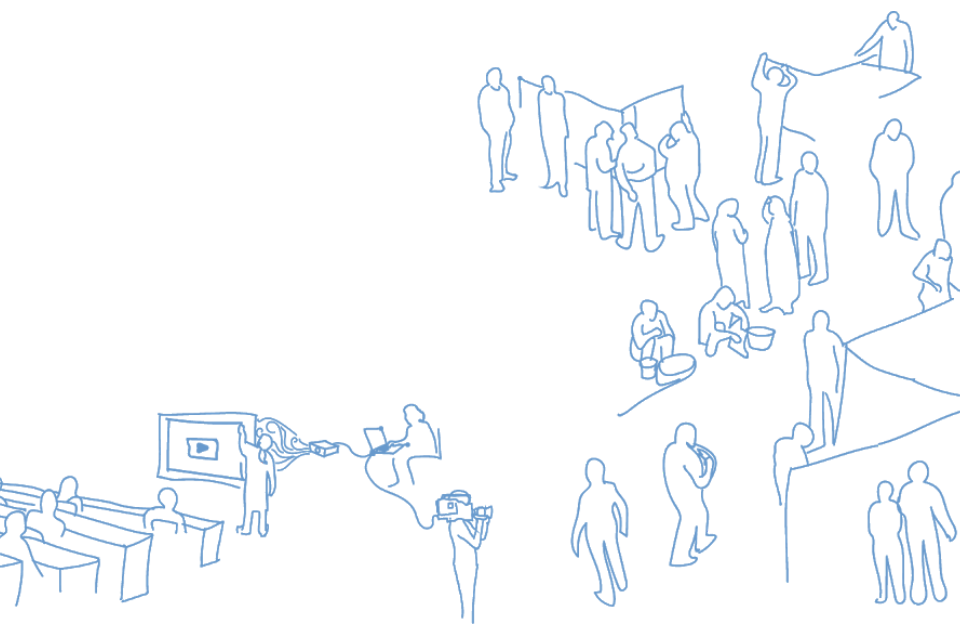




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SATHYAN
FILMS

U Central Board of
Film Certification

That's my boy

BY AKHIL SATHYAN

ORIGINAL SCORE VARUN KRISHNA

CINEMATOGRAPHY RAJIV RAJENDRAN & AKHIL SATHYAN SUBTITLES PRIYANKA VARUN

EDITED & DIRECTED BY AKHIL SATHYAN

DOCUMENTARY | 24 MINS | 2016 | INDIA
LANGUAGE : MALAYALAM | ENGLISH SUBTITLES



Sexual Orientation in India



That's My Boy

Directed by: Akhil Sathyan

Year: 2016

Duration: 24:20

Country: India

Language: Malayalam with English Subtitles



Filmmaker



Akhil Sathyan is a freelance film co-director from Kerala, India. He spent two years as a Project Engineer for Wipro Technologies and later joined the film industry. Akhil has assisted six major feature films in Malayalam and more than 20 national advertisement films with leading celebrities and technicians in India.





Film Synopsis

“That’s my Boy” is a documentary on Gender Identity in India. It focuses on the life story of Sonu, a male transgender.





Lesson Plan

Objectives

- Understand the culture around transgendered or LGBTQ individuals in India.
- Examine the similarities and differences between the LGBTQ communities in the US setting and the Indian setting.



Classroom Activities

Discussion questions

1. In reference to this film, discuss the culture around transgendered or LGBTQ individuals in India.
2. How does the society treat Female to Male transgendered?
3. Compare and contrast Sonia/Sonu's experiences as a transgendered person to those of LGBTQ groups in the United States in relation to the case study.
4. What are some of the challenges/stigma facing transgendered in India?
5. Discuss how the attitudes of family and community affect LGBTQ persons in reference to the case study and the film.



Case Study

Please listen to/read the following 6:20 min NPR report:
[Transgender Rights, The New Front In The Culture Wars](#)

Galbraith, a design engineer in Mobile's shipbuilding industry, was born Robin Galbraith, the daughter of a Southern Baptist minister. He recalls an uncomfortable coming of age.

Case Study Questions

1. How does this case study relate to the documentary?
2. What is the major difference between the experiences of the transgendered person in this case study and those in the film?
3. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages on government intervention on transgender rights?



Additional Resources

Books

- Girshick, L. B. (2008). Transgender voices: Beyond women and men. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England.
- Jones, T. (2015). Policy and gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex students. Cham: Springer.
- Cosier, K. (2016). Rethinking sexism, gender, and sexuality. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Articles

Agoramoorthy, G., & Hsu, M, J. (2015)

Living on the societal edge: India's transgender realities.

Journal of Religion and Health, 54(4), 1451-1459.

The transgendered people have played an important role in ancient Indian culture over millennia. They were portrayed in famous Hindu religious scriptures such as Ramayana and Mahabharata. They were given imperative roles in the royal courtyards of Mughal emperors. Their downfall came only at the onset of British rule during the eighteenth century when they were blacklisted and treated as criminal elements in society. Only in 2014, India's Supreme Court has made a landmark ruling by declaring that the transgendered people must have



access to equal opportunity in society. In spite of this legal recognition, transgenders at large have been forced to live on the fringes of the contemporary Indian society. This article explores their past glories, present struggles and future ambitions in the world's largest democracy.

Boyce, B. (2015).

Sexuality and gender identity under the constitution of India.

Journal of Gender, Race, & Justice, 18(1), 1-64.

This article focuses on a pair of recent inconsistent decisions from the Supreme Court of India. In *Koushal v. Naz Foundation* (2013), the Court overturned a lower court decision striking down India's colonial-era sodomy law, while in *National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India* (2014), the Court ordered sweeping protections to be extended to the transgender community. *Koushal* suggested that homosexuality is inconsistent with Indian values, gave short shrift to the constitutional rights claims raised by the plaintiffs and rejected reliance on comparative and international law, while *NALSA* pointed to the long role transgender persons have played in Indian society, construed constitutional rights broadly and made wide-ranging use of comparative and international materials. This article provides context for these competing positions by exploring the evolution of social and legal attitudes toward minority sexualities and gender identities in India and examining the doctrinal and philosophical similarities and divergences between the Indian constitutional system and those of other jurisdictions (particularly the United States). It argues



that the tension between the two recent decisions is untenable in the long run and that the approach of Koushal must eventually be discarded. It also seeks to highlight the issues raised by the unique historical role of “third gender” communities in India, the legacy of colonialism, the use and abuse of anticolonial and nationalist rhetoric, and the role of comparative and international law in a system that has historically been quite open to foreign legal authority but that also lays claim to a distinctive identity.

Kalra, G., & Shah, N. (2013).

The cultural, psychiatric, and sexuality aspects of Hijras in India.

International Journal of Transgenderism, 14(4), 171-181.

The Indian hijra community encompasses persons with a variety of gender identities and sexual orientations, forming a culturally unique gender group. Although these communities have existed for ages within Indian society, hijras have been stigmatized and marginalized to a large extent. Such stigmatization may compromise the mental health of hijras possibly giving rise to various mental health issues. The sociocultural aspects of hijras have frequently been the subjects of research by anthropologists and sociologists, but there is a dearth of data regarding mental health problems in them. This study aims to understand the cultural, psychiatric, and sexuality aspects of hijras in the city of Mumbai, focusing on the prevalence of gender identity disorder and psychiatric disorders (if any) in them, their self-esteem, and their sexual practices.



Patel, A. R. (2010).

India's Hijras: The case for transgender rights.

George Washington International Law Review, 42(4), 835-863.

The article focuses on the hijras in India, which are referred in the Indian society as a so-called third gender and occupy the traditional realm of eunuch or transgender in the construct of gender identity in Western countries. It states that hijras struggle as a traditionally marginalized social class due to sex work, and are subject to various human rights violations such as gender violence. It mentions that India should repeal its Penal Code Section 377, which prohibitively criminalizes the hijra lifestyle, to serve as a pioneer in the recognition of transgender rights and contribute to the international dialogue on the recognition of gender-based rights. Furthermore, the importance of the creation of remedies and adequate venues for sexual minorities in India is discussed.

Singh, P. (2016).

Between legal recognition and moral policing: Mapping the queer subject in India.

Journal of Homosexuality, 63(3), 416-425.

With the decriminalization of homosexuality in India in 2009, Indian queer subjects have become visible in various ways.



Where Indian queer identities have asserted their public presence through Pride marches and protests, incidents of moral policing and surveillance, especially after decriminalization, have highlighted the broader social and religious attitudes that continue to pathologize homosexuality with grave outcomes. This article argues that debates around access to health care of Indian queer subjects must be framed against the social and religious pathologization of homosexuality in various contexts, which remains a primary bioethical dilemma, particularly in relation to legal change.