

Rainbow of hope for LGBT community

The Supreme Court's decision to refer to a larger Bench a writ petition to quash Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalises homosexuality, has brought a ray of hope for LGBT community members and activists who have been fighting a long battle for their rights.

Several activists and lawyers felt that the years of dialogue, pride parades and petitions had created public opinion in their favour, and only a few people with a "myopic vision" were opposed to the scrapping of the controversial law.

Dhrubo Jyoti, activist, said he was hopeful that the "draconian law" would go soon. "I am also hopeful that many of us queers will not see this as the end of the fight for dignity, but will fight against the many evils of caste, class, ability, region and politics that continue to shackle us both within and without," he said.

Minna Saran, signatory to a petition by parents of LGBT Indians against Section 377, said the Supreme Court's decision would give confidence to youngsters and the people who felt that they had been deprived of a life similar to that others were leading.

"For all those who were upset with the earlier ruling of the Supreme Court, this shows that acceptance is definitely growing in society. I am positive that the decision will be in favour of the thousands who have been fighting for their rights," Ms. Saran said.

"Section 377 is not only about gay sex but also about all unnatural sex and can be used to harass even people in heterosexual relationships," said Nikhil, a former Delhi University student.

He said that last year, he was desperate to get into a university in a country that did not criminalise homosexuality as he was tired of facing the various prejudices of Indian society.

"I hope that the next generation of Indians will not have to look for opportunities to work and study outside the country because they will be able to lead a more dignified life away from home," he said.

Several senior lawyers felt that it was only a matter of time before Section 377 was repealed.

Expert view

Legal experts like Rajiv Dhawan, Colin Gonsalves, Anand Grover, Dushyant Dave and Kamini Jaiswal welcomed the order.

They said the matter was of utmost social and legal significance and a positive move had been initiated by the court for a re-look into the earlier judgment which, according to them, required reconsideration.

"It's quite refreshing to see a positive stand in the matter. The judgment of the apex court on Section 377 requires a serious reconsideration. This provision itself on the face of it is archaic and it is wholly unconstitutional," Mr. Dave said.

Twenty-six nations — Australia, Malta, Germany, Finland, Colombia, Ireland, the U.S., Greenland, Scotland, Luxembourg, England and Wales, Brazil, France, New Zealand, Uruguay, Denmark, Argentina, Portugal, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Canada, Belgium, and the Netherlands — have decriminalised gay sex.

(With PTI inputs)

This shows that acceptance is definitely growing in society

Minna Saran

activist

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

crackIAS.com