

Waiting and hoping SC will restore the dignity of LGBTQ community in 2018

At this point of a long journey to rid ourselves from the cudgels of the archaic Section 377 law that criminalises sex between two consenting men and two consenting women, every step towards that reality adds to optimism. Therefore, even a decision to reconsider and revisit the law as per an order today by the Supreme Court is a move forward and a reason to smile.

I would be lying if I deny the fact that I was expecting a change and a forward moving order in the current year. Many of us feel 2018 is the year to look forward to particularly since the 2017 Supreme Court order on the right to privacy had said “sexual orientation is an essential attribute of privacy” and “discrimination against an individual on the basis of sexual orientation is deeply offensive to the dignity and self-worth of the individual.”

At the 10th Delhi Queer Pride in November 2017, we witnessed a large number of youngsters, spirited, vocal, flamboyant, aware and hopeful. It was evident that they too felt it was time Section 377 is read down and hinged hope on the privacy judgement. When lawyer and activist Aditya Bondopadhyay spoke from the podium he reflected that expectation, almost indicating that even a marriage law was possible within a decade! Of course, a joyous gathering of over a thousand individuals from the LGBTQ community that cheered him on was more than hopeful.

Today though as I received the news of the order, I smiled and felt it is best to hold back celebrations and wait for the ‘real’ thing. We live in uncertain times with politics of hurt and hate and a Parliament that has rarely come forth on minority rights. The government has in any case been asked its view.

Yet, even as I exercise this caution, I do believe that all my hope resides and relies on a Supreme Court and it’s constitutional bench that will wish to ‘restore’ our ‘dignity’ and give our ‘privacy’ it’s space to be alone and still together with the existence of others.

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