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UNDERSTANDING GENDER BACKLASH: SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVES

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Disrupting Anxious Masculinity: Fraternity as Resistance[*][†]

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Abstract Within the experience of our work in India, context and positionality determine what we perceive as backlash against gender justice. An important underlying cause of backlash today is the widespread crisis of masculinities, where subaltern masculinities are evolving differently in response to the aggressive nationalist Hindutva masculinity. Gender and development strategies have failed to recognise or address this. This article analyses grounded examples from our action research towards generating new knowledge on how two collectives are negotiating backlash. These include the community-based transgender organisation Kolkata Rista and Humqadam, a platform comprising male activists in Uttar Pradesh working with men on gender equality. Applying the framework of ontological insecurity, this article explores ways for discovering common ground in situations where polarisation destroys the space for debate and discussion. Reflecting on the political practice of fraternity, the article examines how social movements can shift strategies when faced with exclusionary discourses.

Keywords crisis of masculinities, ontological insecurity, transgender rights, Hindutva ethnonationalism, building fraternity, inclusion/belongingness as resistance, action research, gender backlash, feminist interventions.

1 Introduction
Indian politics today is characterised by increasing authoritarianism which draws on the ideology of Hindutva aimed at establishing and promoting political Hinduism while fomenting right-wing ethnonationalism. It entails normalisation of all kinds of violence, especially against minorities, legitimised using a gendered language (Ray 2018: 373–6). While the idea of the Hindu nation has historical roots, its reinvention in the last three decades is partly attributable to the changes in the political

economy. India's embrace of neoliberal policies in these decades has shifted development priorities and led to acute precarity and growing insecurity. These anxieties have created fertile ground for a right-wing ethnonationalism to take root, which feeds off the long-standing and growing resentment of the Hindu right towards what it saw as 'appeasement' of the Muslims and other minorities. The confluence of these anxieties has contributed effectively to the launching of the political Hindu right, and its agenda of the Hindu state (Subramanian 2019; Ray 2018; Palshikar 2017).

Gender backlash, examined here through an intersectional lens, is enmeshed in this historical context, revealing the deeply gendered and patriarchal construction of ethnonationalism today: the core driver being a widespread crisis of masculinities. Reinventing mythic notions of a glorious past, this discourse constructs Hindu masculinity with a promise of control (Srivastava 2019), where the ire over socioeconomic insecurities can be directed towards the other, primarily religious minorities, especially Muslims, but also non-upper-caste Hindus. Performative acts of egregious violence directed at Muslim men are recorded and shared on social media to foment communal tensions (Mukherjee 2020). Groups such as the Dalit-Bahujan[6] or transgender people are tolerated if they acquiesce to Hindutva supremacy. The impact of this onslaught is changing masculinities everywhere, reinforcing men's adherence and linkage to identity-based communities. This is leading to deep conflicts between men from different communities and castes, enacted on the battleground of gender.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the process by which the Centre for Health and Social Justice undertook action research towards generating new knowledge on addressing patriarchal backlash, while section 3 builds a theoretical framing to understand the construction of anxious masculinity. Section 4 illustrates through grounded examples from our action research how the two partner collectives are negotiating backlash. The conclusion (section 5) draws together what we have learned about the politics of resistance.

2 The journey
The Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ), an Indian non-profit organisation working on masculinities, health, and gender justice, has been exploring ways to counter gender backlash to strengthen gender justice. CHSJ has been facilitating a process of participatory action research with two collectives, Kolkata Rista (KR) and Humqadam, each quite different in their background, structure, and aims.

KR in West Bengal is a self-organised community-based organisation of socially and economically marginalised transgender people with outreach among various lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender+ (LGBT+) groups, including the traditional Hijras[7] and men who have sex with men, termed MSM.

KR's main work has been on preventing HIV/AIDS, but it has also been mobilising around incidents of discrimination and violence against the transgender community because of their gender identity. Humqadam is a platform comprising male activists working on gender justice and masculinities in Uttar Pradesh. Initially members of the network Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women (MASVAW),[8] these activists felt they had to respond to the increasingly polarised relationships among men across caste and religious divides.

The senior team of KR and some selected MASVAW members came together with CHSJ researchers for an inception workshop in February 2022, where the facilitator team introduced action research methodology, and the groups identified their research objectives and finalised their annual research plans. The MASVAW members named their initiative 'Humqadam', whose objective was to investigate possible pathways and collective processes to challenge the aggressive and toxic masculinities in the current scenario of radical nationalism. Humqadam decided to explore existing local traditions of social solidarity and syncretic practices and find ways to build upon these while periodically sharing their experiences with each other. KR, on the other hand, wanted to find out if the *National Legal Services Authority* v *Union of India* (NALSA) judgment of 2014[9] and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019 (TG Act)[10] had brought about any changes for the transgender community and how these instruments could be more relevant and useful. They conducted an enquiry among transgender groups, as well as key stakeholders, through focus groups, shared their findings with everyone, and started a transgender helpline. Action–reflection and peer-learning were two key elements of the action research process. After a year (February 2023), the groups reconvened once again to share experiences, review their learnings, recalibrate their approaches, and make a fresh set of annual plans.

This article draws from, and analyses, transcriptions, reports, and video recordings made at each of these events, as well as social media posts.

3 The social imaginary of anxious masculinity: constructing ontological security

In recent decades, the rise of populist politics in the heart of liberal democracies, both in the West and in India, has dislodged several rules held sacrosanct by the liberal order. Populist politics worldwide has now made acceptable certain beliefs and emotions such as fear, hatred, and contempt for certain groups, even though representations of the enemy differ across contexts, as, for example, Muslims as the enemy in India and immigrant populations across Europe. In analysing the conditions giving rise to this politics, Kinnvall and Svensson (2022) point to the structural and affective changes that underlie populist mobilisation and the polarisation of everyday insecurities. Political scientists and

political psychologists are increasingly using the concept of 'ontological security' to analyse populist politics, to focus attention on the centrality of emotions in reproducing both structural power and power relations at an individual and collective level.

Ontological security is a conceptual frame that seeks to understand subjectivity. Originating in psychoanalysis (Laing 1990) and sociology (Giddens 1991), it focuses on the management of anxiety in the constitution of the self (Kinnvall and Mitzen 2020). Giddens (1991) describes it as being about a sense of place in a changing world, whereas ontological insecurity is about the lack of such a narrative space. Right-wing populist politics operates in this space by meeting the desire for wholeness or sense of place with the fantasy narrative of a singular identity securely anchored in time and place. Central to this desire and narrative is a collective social imaginary constructed through narratives of gendered and racialised fantasies (Kinnvall 2019).

At the consultation seminar for this action research project in January 2021, a speaker pointed out that while the political economy in India had been changing over three decades, the anxieties unleashed were not apparent until these were woven into an emotive narrative of ethnonationalism that fuelled Hindu right-wing politics. As Srivastava (2019) points out, 'Hindu masculinity seems to be an identity that promises men control over a world that otherwise seems to be passing them by'. The existence of socioeconomic problems in the lives of men – such as unemployment – is interpreted as disruption in this utopia (*ibid.*).

The constituent elements of the narratives that seek to consolidate a singular, stable identity are collective emotions such as love for the nation, or hate, fear, or disgust of the stranger other (Kinnvall 2018). Fantasies of unity are projected to rescue the belief in (imaginary) core identities. The master signifiers in India are national and religious identity where a Hindu identity is projected as the national identity (*ibid.*). This is accompanied by a governing style that challenges the authority, neutrality, and expertise of traditional establishment elites, such as the independent press and politicians who are liberal and secular. The right-wing party has constantly discredited these liberal and secular elites as being out of touch with mass sentiment and therefore un-Indian, while pledging to protect India from 'the "pseudo-secularism" of the Congress Party' (Kinnvall 2017: 96). These sentiments have at their core an ideology of nativism, which argues that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group, which in India has become Hindu (Andrews, Kinnvall and Monroe 2015; Adeney 2015; Agius, Bergman Rosamond and Kinnvall 2020; Kinnvall and Svensson 2022; Khan *et al.* 2017).

Nativism in populist discourse is intimately connected to gender, demarcating the nation's women from other alien women (Yuval-Davis 2008). In such contexts, nativism intertwines with

a gender discourse based on the regulation of sexuality and reproduction within the nation. This discourse of protection of 'our women' is constructed by demonising the gender culture of 'the others': as in the characterisation of Muslim men as hypersexualised and a threat to Hindu women (Andrews *et al.* 2015; Dixit 2014). Banerjee refers to Hindutva as 'muscular nationalism', which promotes a more aggressive and disciplined Hindu male needed to firmly deal with the danger posed by a religious other, in the project to make India a true Hindu nation (Banerjee 2012). Kinnvall (2018) describes Hindutva as anxious nationalism, in which narratives of national identity merge with images of religious resurgence, gender, and race to construct the other in response to ontological insecurity as a sense of emasculation.

These fantasy narratives of nation and religion are kept in place through forms of emotional governance which in the Foucauldian sense implies the ways in which society governs emotions through the cultural and institutional processes of everyday life (Kinnvall and Svensson 2022; Crawford 2014; Koschut 2019; Meyer 2020; Kinnvall 2018). This gives individuals a sense of what is regarded as appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and the circumstances in which certain emotions – for instance, fear, hatred, and contempt – become acceptable. Populist agents, such as the Hindutva mass organisations in India, project fantasy narratives that concurrently reinforce reified notions of belonging and alter norms regarding what is deemed to be acceptable behaviour.

The two case studies discussed in this article reveal how at the micro level ontological security is being constructed by Hindutva agents through, on the one hand, fantasies of Hindu unity and Muslim otherness, and on the other, the appropriation of transgenderism as part of the Hindu tradition and therefore Hindu nation. The case studies also show how creative strategies under the parapets are being cultivated by the two collectives to resist and refuse being subsumed in a narrative of the nation not of their making.

4 Partners in action
4.1 'Who will stand with us?': Humqadam
The discursive power of the Hindutva narrative and its translation into the materiality of governance is nowhere more evident than in Uttar Pradesh. This large northern state shares with the rest of India an immense diversity of population belonging to different caste groups, religious affiliations, language, and inter-regional groupings. And yet despite this great diversity, or perhaps because of it, the politics of polarisation and consolidation of Hindutva rhetoric in discourse and policy has resulted in the breakdown of social cohesion; threats to the lives and livelihoods of minority (especially Muslim) communities (Ramaseshan 2017), and a hostile environment for social activists (Ali 2022).

It is here that the Humqadam collective, originally members of the MASVAW network, continue working in the prevailing political climate, living and working among poor, rural, low-caste groups. As geographically dispersed individuals, they were extremely vulnerable to the onslaughts of Hindutva agents, including the local administration. By working together over 18 months on a common objective to build social solidarity between Hindu and Muslim groups, they found ways to renew belief in their own role as social activists and in the power of social solidarity.

Initially fearful of reprisals from an aggressive environment, they were hesitant about a programme of social solidarity. In individual interviews (January 2021) and in the inception workshop (February 2022), members shared many concerns: 'We are very conscious about voicing protest. It's about [fear of] backlash.' Solidarity seemed unlikely: 'Is it possible to develop solidarities in today's environment? Who will stand with us? Can we fight these adversities?' Another added, 'To stand with each other now, trust is very important. I live elsewhere and what if something happens to me? These questions didn't occur to me earlier...' Those members from a Muslim background felt especially insecure:

> Earlier we did not think so much about religion and caste. I never thought of my identity earlier. It had happened once 20 years earlier when the Babri Masjid was demolished by a mob... But now my identity is tagged to everything I write and that has become a major problem.

Given this situation, voicing protest in ways that might jeopardise their safety and that of their community was out of the question; new ways had to be found. One of these was rediscovering existing social events in the Hindu and Muslim calendar which had earlier brought together different communities living side by side. But these social celebrations had gradually acquired primarily religious connotations as community identities hardened into political affiliations. Humqadam members recollected their own early life experiences, when an ambiguous and less divisive meaning was attached to these celebrations. Consequently, Humqadam members demonstrated in small and subtle ways against division and polarisation by celebrating Holi (the festival of colour) as an inter-community festival, reviving a tradition of organising Iftar to break the fast together and collectively celebrating Eid. There were also purely secular events that they made into inter-community and cross-caste celebrations. The understanding and preservation of 'saajhi virasat' (shared heritage) emerged as a core theme for bridge-building between communities.

These instances of syncretic practices that were being reinterpreted were based for the most part on religious traditions, Hindu and Muslim. Thus far, activists within MASVAW had been secular in orientation, considering religion as patriarchal

and inimical to the work they did on gender equality. But now, as Humqadam, their responsibility lay in constructing counter-narratives by reinterpreting the social meaning of shared Hindu–Muslim shrines and syncretic systems of beliefs in the Sufi and Bhakti traditions. There are many instances of these in Uttar Pradesh which Humqadam members visited and documented, realising the popularity of these sites among both Muslims and Hindus from across India. These syncretic belief systems are so deeply rooted in the social fabric that they have for the most part survived the polarising Hindutva narrative.

Humqadam members also had to rethink their stance on mobilising communities around the secular tradition of rights-claiming that saw the state as an objective arbiter and responsible duty bearer. They realised that this was inadequate in the present circumstances where the urgent need was to build social solidarity and revive relationships among and between communities at the local level. They had earlier used the Indian Constitution in their work but from an equality and citizens' rights perspective, it was an unlikely fit for the task at hand. They debated the value of using the 'fraternity' principle of the constitution instead.[11]

The term 'fraternity' used in India today is distinct from its meaning in other contexts such as ethnic/familial/brotherhood relations. Its usage in India by public institutions and civil society groups to counter hegemonic and divisive discourses about community and nation refers to the principle in the Indian Constitution which Dr Ambedkar, then first Minister of Law and Justice, had clarified in the constitutional debates in 1949 (Lok Sabha Secretariat [1950] 2014: 979). According to Dr Ambedkar, India was lacking in equality and wanting in the principle of fraternity as a key goal of the constitution. The fraternity principle – that is, Indians being one people – is the basis of social solidarity and needs to be actively pursued, he argues, rather than being taken for granted. In recent years, even though it is not justiciable, the Supreme Court has reiterated the 'golden principle of fraternity' (*Indian Express* 2022, 2023) when dealing with the increased cases of hate speech and religious intolerance.

The promotion of fraternity gave Humqadam the possibility of interpreting all kinds of events at the local level as being within the wider meaning of amity and friendship. It also gave them the opportunity to neutralise the threat of violence from state officials who in recent times have designated themselves as keepers of Hindutva rather than servants of the secular state.[12] Urging state officials to display the constitutional principles on office noticeboards gave the Humqadam members an opportunity to promote the message of fraternity as well as acting as protection. One of the Humqadam members said, 'Earlier we were using the constitution as a sword, but now we are using it as a shield'.

Through their work in the community and their mutual support, Humqadam itself has become a living example of fraternity and collaboration. KR, on the other hand, has taken up the question of why laws and judicial orders do not lead to changes for the stigmatised transgender community.

4.2 *'Amader swapnero daam achhe'* [Our dreams have value too]: Kolkata Rista

The Hindutva narrative is inclusive of societal groups who have a place in Hindu rituals: transgender communities, especially the Hijras, are one such group, despite their syncretic practices within Sufi traditions. Whereas in other contexts the rise of populist right-wing politics has meant a hostile environment for gender-fluid people, the transgender community in India is protected by the right wing, provided they live within the Hindu tradition (Goel 2020). This protection has been translated into laws that, while recognising their special status, also sets boundaries to their identity and imprisons them in a governmental category.

Kolkata Rista (KR), a civil society organisation of working-class transgender people, is based in Kolkata. As an activist organisation, it has for years been involved in the nationwide movement for trans rights to bring major changes to the laws affecting their status, including the TG Act. Despite the law, however, social discrimination persists in families, neighbourhoods, and institutions, including in service provision. Given this specific challenge to gender equality, KR wanted to find out whether the law has led to any changes in the way the community is perceived, and in the enabling environment for the transgender community.

During 2022, KR organised several events and workshops that brought together different stakeholders connected to the law, advisory lawyers, and the transgender community itself to discuss, dialogue, and learn about the law. Key officials in relevant departments heard directly from transgender people about the hardships they faced in their daily lives: being discriminated against and looked down upon at work and in the public institutions they approached for services. In turn, transgender people heard from these officials their difficulties in implementing the new law. The officials also did not know how to use the law as they had not received any orientation about the law itself or the protocols.

KR helped produce a documentary film featuring the lives of three transgender women and screened it in July 2022 at a stakeholder dialogue in Kolkata. Whereas for the state officials it was instructive, community members experienced it differently. At the first viewing with the officials present, the community members' response was of recognition. But as they watched the film again on their own after the officials left, many wept, expressing their embodied experience of living with grief and

rejection that laws could not mitigate. Sharing these experiences with different audiences, the film gained a life of its own. At a screening in a health facility attended by scientists and doctors to commemorate World AIDS Day, a surgeon offered his services free of cost to one of the people profiled in the film who required a major operation. Whereas doctors in hospitals generally treat a patient who is transgender with scant respect, their embodied grief demonstrated here evoked solidarity, as notably happened with this surgeon.

The difficulties of implementing the TG Act became increasingly apparent, not least because of the hesitation expressed by community members themselves. KR had envisaged that when community members were facing a crisis, the new law could be used to help them. However, the working-class transgender community were hesitant about lodging formal complaints even during a crisis; what they requested instead was mediation, shelter, and support. They were haunted by the sense that 'Society will never accept us, no matter what laws are passed'. They didn't really want a special law for their community:

> Whatever laws or rules are framed, they should apply equally for those who are human, not separate laws for men or women or transgenders. We are human so we just need to be treated as human beings, that is all we expect.

They were glad at least there was a law, but it could not give them the respect and empathy they desired.

Simultaneously, the service providers or duty bearers were unsure about their roles in implementation. The Covid years (2020–21), intervening since the enactment of the law, had delayed preparation of the protocols needed for the ministries to act. Certification is a recognition of the person as transgender by the government and is a conduit to entitlements; for instance, benefit from government schemes, training, social services, and other amenities. Yet despite KR's efforts to register hundreds of applicants for transgender identity cards or to organise workshops explaining the law, there was little progress in implementation. The only way to make duty bearers conscious of their responsibility towards transgender people was a direct appeal to their sense of social solidarity, encouraging them to act with empathy.

Through their efforts, KR learned how the law on its own was not going to change everything: the law only governs the relations of the community with the state and its duty bearers, it cannot change relations within the society of which duty bearers are a part. Inclusive and affinitive practices that appeal to people's sense of humanity may be the only way to build social solidarity and transform social relations. For their embodied grief to be recognised, the transgender community needs the fraternity,

friendship, and acceptance of the wider community. As a senior police official commented,

> *The question is: can a law actually give freedom to any group, is that how women were able to progress or Dalits gain status? The law can only support. This needs a social revolution. We have to bring about transformation from within society.*

5 Conclusion

Gender backlash in India, examined here through an intersectional lens, is enmeshed in the contemporary political context of strident ethnonationalism. It is deeply gendered and patriarchal in that it hegemonises Hindu masculinity at the expense of Muslim and other minority men, resulting in men's growing adherence to identity-based communities to seek support and protection in an increasingly hostile environment. The consequence is a rise in conflicts between men from different communities and castes, enacted on the battleground of gender. It is in this context that both collectives, Humqadam and KR, live, work on, and counter gender backlash so that the communities they serve can live in amity and security.

Given their unique and differing locations, their ways of countering gender backlash differ but also share commonalities. Humqadam learned that protesting the victimisation of Muslim men puts them and their communities in danger and therefore new ways had to be found. In the face of dangerous division, in which lives were at stake, their way of countering backlash was to promote the understanding and preservation of '*saajhi virasat*' (shared heritage) in order to build bridges between communities. As transgender people, KR enjoy a distinctive position in that they are recognised as being part of the Hindu nation; the TG Act confirms state recognition. They learned, however, that the law, while it gave them rights and recognition, also imprisons them in a governmental category so that the sole power to define who they are lies with the state.

This legal definition cannot comprehend, nor can it make provision for the diversity of transgender people's lives or their daily experience of grief because of rejection, hostility, and fear, experiences that are uniquely theirs because they live outside of and beyond the accepted societal understanding of gender. Thus, while KR struggled to learn more about the law and make it work for the community, they had, at the same time, to do it in ways that not only followed the wording of the law but also appealed for empathy, amity, and social solidarity from the different constituencies responsible for implementing the law: the state administration, including the police, service providers in health and education, as well as civil society.

Hitherto, social activist collectives such as Humqadam and KR had pursued a liberal politics of rights advocacy, but that is no longer feasible in the current context. For Humqadam, the main task shifted to building bridges between communities, while KR opted to build empathy for and understanding of the everyday grief they face among different constituencies. In so doing, both groups have had to shift away from rights-claiming. The rights framework confers entitlements on a citizen/subject envisaged as an undifferentiated individual without the marking of social relations of gender, caste, and community, a prototype that nevertheless bears the imprint of an upper caste, propertied, male who is Hindu. This of course was always the case, but in recent years Hindutva has intensified attempts to homogenise the subject/citizen who can be considered as belonging to the nation. Both Humqadam and KR serve communities which are diverse and different.

Given this, both collectives have shifted from rights-claiming towards building a new politics of resistance, namely resistance to being subsumed by the homogenising tendencies of Hindutva politics. Humqadam has focused on finding and promoting the common traditions among the different groups and communities that make up the social fabric. Since many of these traditions are distinctive to the Hindu and Muslim religions, they have had to rethink their own understanding of secularism. KR, while promoting the understanding of the law, nevertheless resist being defined only in legal terms by calling for recognition and empathy for who they are and their suffering. Both Humqadam and KR have resisted being subsumed in governmental categories not of their making in different ways with those actions that in discursive and representational terms refuse to go along with the hegemonic narratives (de Alwis 2009; Mukhopadhyay 2017).

In concluding this article, we return to the social imaginary of anxious masculinity and how Hindutva, India's current populist politics, constructs ontological security through the fantasy narrative of a singular identity, the Hindu male, securely anchored in time and place, and his other, the Muslim man and men from other minority communities. India's severe structural and political economy crisis, joblessness, and increasing inequality have given rise to anxieties that have been successfully woven into an emotive narrative of ethnonationalism by Hindutva agents and a populist right-wing parliamentary politics. In this socio-political environment, the politics of resistance pursued by Humqadam and KR at the micro level in their localised environment may seem a veritable David versus Goliath struggle.

Nevertheless, these struggles are disruptive of the ontological security built around the fiction of the singular Hindu identity that Hindutva erects. This is because both Humqadam and KR have recognised that there is no interlocutor to address appeals for rights and fairness, since neighbours have become enemies and

state institutions are implicated in the denial of rights. Instead, in different ways they have chosen to use the language of emotion: that of fraternity, friendship, and common heritage (Humqadam), and to expose their vulnerability to grief and suffering (KR); and in so doing, they both appeal for friendship and solidarity. Fraternity is not just a constitutional principle, a guarantee forever, as Dr Ambedkar warned us (Lok Sabha Secretariat [1950] 2014). It is a resource that is relational and can only be forged in the everyday practice of neighbourliness and solidarity, and both Humqadam and KR counter exclusionary discourses through the political practice of fraternity, by building belongingness as resistance.

Notes

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6 Dalit–Bahujan refers to the hitherto 'lower caste' and ethnic tribes who have faced generations of historical disadvantage but constitute most of the Indian population. The identity is a political reframing of the 'scheduled castes/tribes/OBC' listed as government categories for affirmative action and special welfare benefits.
7 The Hijra tradition is one of the long-standing ways of identifying gender fluidity in South Asia and is linked to spiritual powers in the Hindu and Sufi traditions.
8 Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women started in 2001 to work among men and boys to promote gender equality. However, in the current polarised climate, MASVAW was unable to take a public position in cases of men

perpetuating egregious violence against men of other communities (Muslim or Dalit).

9 See **NALSA v Union of India** judgment.

10 See **TG Act**. The transgender community, labelled as a 'criminal tribe' through a colonial-era law, was termed after independence as being habitual offenders. After decades of struggle, a judgment by the Supreme Court ('NALSA' judgment, 2014) affirmed that transgender persons had the right to self-identify and the constitutional rights to life, dignity, and autonomy. This led to the enactment of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (December 2019).

11 As a cautionary note, it was pointed out at the joint project workshop in February 2023 that the use of fraternity in many Indian languages is gendered, referring to friendship relations between different groups of men, and not necessarily women.

12 A Humqadam member was threatened by a police officer because despite being an upper-caste Hindu, he was 'supporting Muslim organisations' by including his name in a funding application by a Muslim organisation, which for the officer was equivalent to 'anti-national' activities.

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