

# Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective

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## Abstract

Concerns about queer acceptability and profiling in India have persisted, reflecting the necessity of scrutinizing changing paths of representation and social reactions from mythological and historical roots to their final foray into contemporary public discourse. Additionally, modern legal rights protection and rights advocacy movements have transformed public attitudes about their work while establishing new channels for advocacy and public discourse, expanding visibility, and creating new forums for discussion; however, their acceptance remains complex and uneven to date, hence demanding an examination of the profiling of queer communities in the presence of social stigma, inherited biases, and persistent hetero-normative structures. Simultaneously, the fields of visual arts and graphic design are acting as powerful tools that are constructing and disseminating inclusive narratives, making the integration of visual analysis, campaign research, and design studies essential to understanding how visual contexts influence public attitudes toward queer communities. Consequently, the study investigates three connected dimensions because they provide valuable information for professionals who work in this field while showing that visual communication methods produce stronger immediate impacts than other interaction forms.

**Keywords:** Queer culture, queer profiling, historical prospective, visual communication and social acceptance.

**How to cite this article:** Sharma E, Singh SK. Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective. *Int J Drug Deliv Technol.* 2026;16(13s): 629-639. DOI: 10.25258/ijddt.16.13s.70

## 1. Introduction

Queer culture includes the complete existence of gender and sexual minorities which includes their personal experiences and their artistic creations along with political expressions (Jagose, 1996; Butler, 1990). In the Indian context, queer culture exists as an ancient tradition which has developed through historical events and constitutional discussions and evolving public representation. The present research addresses how Indian society throughout history has treated queer identities within its cultural purposes, legal systems and visual media.

The reclamation of queer identity has changed public discourse during the past 50 years by transforming how people identify themselves from between two extremes to a period of self-affirmation and group identification (Butler, 1990). Underground contemporary Indian culture shows its deep historical roots which existed before modern identity rights movements emerged because gender diverse expressions and same-sex attraction were already present in Indian mythology and classical literature and temple art (Vanita & Kidwai, 2000). Further the Indian Constitution establishes India

as a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic which provides citizens with equal rights through Article 14 and protects them from discrimination through Article 15 (Government of India, 1950). The judicial system has developed this legal framework through its decisions which recognized transgender individuals as a third gender in *National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India* (2014) while the Supreme Court decriminalized Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018) which marked a turning point for queer rights legal evolution in India. However, the advanced technological developments still need to achieve full social acceptance because different people demonstrate various levels of acceptance which creates a divide between constitutional morality and actual social practices (Narain, 2004).

In addition to that, Indian art together with visual culture from ancient times until now has shown different gender identities and sexual orientations through temple sculptures at Khajuraho Temples and Konark Sun Temple and through miniature paintings which show Hijras in their ceremonial and sacred duties.

## Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective

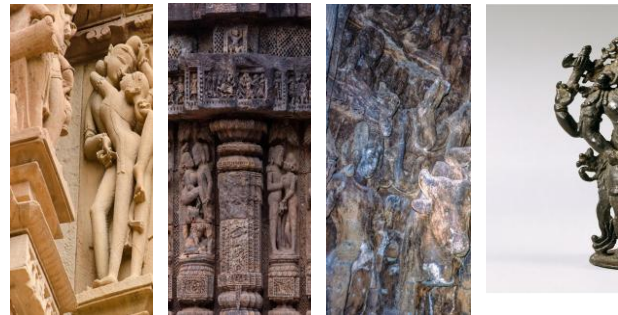
The evidence from these representations shows that pre-colonial Indian society recognized multiple genders beyond the two established gender categories Vanita and Kidwai 2000 (Vanita & Kidwai, 2000). Even visual communication today follows this same path because graphic design together with visual arts functions as a strong means to express queer experiences, still they challenge heterosexual norms. The historical continuity which exists with current struggles for both recognition and social acceptance of queer culture creates an urgent need for extensive research which should investigate how visual depiction and cultural remembrance have transformed public attitudes toward Indian queer communities.

The research connects constitutional changes with historical representation and current visual communication methods to track the development of queer profiling and modern Indian acceptance practices. The research combines socio-legal analysis with visual design studies to assess how visual content and user interaction with visual material create public perception differences and lead to behavior changes. The study thus offers a multidisciplinary perspective valuable to scholars, designers, and professionals engaged in cultural and visual research, emphasizing the persuasive strength of visual context in shaping collective consciousness.

Indian queer culture has developed throughout its history by passing through various time periods. The Ancient and Classical period reflects references in texts and traditions where diverse identities appeared without legal restrictions. The Medieval period saw forms of social and institutional recognition for groups outside the mainstream. The Colonial period established legal systems which declared certain identities as criminal while creating social prejudices against them. The postcolonial period before 2018 decriminalization showed constitutional disputes between colonial legal traditions and contemporary rights-based frameworks.

Vedic traditions, Sanskrit literature, early state systems and temple-centered cultural life were the four main elements that shaped the **Ancient and Classical period (1500 BCE–1200 CE)** of the Indian subcontinent because these elements created a social order that followed varna (caste) and dharmic principles which defined duties and morality and sexuality through the four human goals of dharma and artha and kama and moksha. The Kamasutra and mythological narratives acknowledged multiple gender identities which included

the Tiritiya Prakriti and Mahabharata stories about Shikhandi and Ardhanarishvara symbols showed that the culture recognized multiple gender identities. The Khajuraho and Konark temple art together with literary traditions presented different forms of eroticism and same-sex activities as an integral part of their religious and artistic heritage. The public expression of these identities existed in religious and literary and artistic forms which lacked criminal punishment before the introduction of colonial laws but people accepted these identities only in certain situations because patriarchal standards controlled social acceptance. Some visual representation from ancient period has been shown in figure1.



**Figure 1:** Androgynous Representation (Chandela dynasty (c. 950–1050 CE) ) (a) Erotic Sculptures, Khajuraho (13th century CE during the Eastern Ganga dynasty ) (b) Kamasutra carving at konark sun temple (c) Ardhanarishvara Sculpture – Cave 1, Elephanta Caves, India(Pallava dynasty (7th century CE) (d) Shiva Ardhanarishvara (South Indian Chola-period art (9th–13th centuries CE).)

### Source:

(Dehejia, 1997)

<https://www.scribd.com/document/855227881/Vidya-Dehejia-Indian-Art-Phaidon-Press-1997-1-250205-225920>

(Michell, 1988)

<https://www.scribd.com/document/843112685/The-Hindu-Temple-an-Introduction-to-Its-Meaning-and-Forms>

(Harle, 1994)

<https://www.scribd.com/document/514157764/The-Art-and-Architecture-of-the-Indian-Subcontinent>

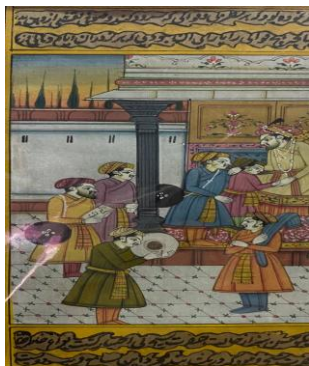
(Pattanaik, 2014)

<https://zubaanbooks.com/shop/shikhandi-and-other-tales-they-dont-tell-you/>

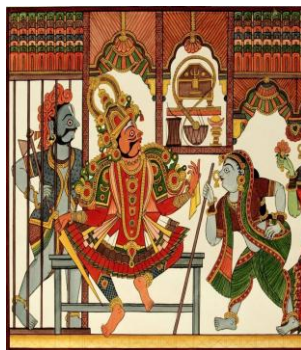
## Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective

The Ardhanarishvara image unites Shiva and Parvati in one body which represents the harmony between male and female powers while it displays the existence of multiple genders in the universal system. The temple sculptures at Khajuraho and Konark show different sexual forms of expression which include homosexual relationships through their religious artworks. The people in these drawings demonstrate that sexuality exists as a philosophical concept which the society does not judge.

Similarly the visual traditions during **medieval times between the 13th and 17th centuries** include miniature paintings and mural artworks which show Hijras and gender-variant people performing their ceremonial duties, thus showing that society recognized these gender-diverse individuals to a small degree. The period saw multiple kingdoms from different regions, Islamic Sultanates, and Mughal Empire, all of which controlled the growing urban areas and court traditions while Bhakti and Sufi devotional movements spread their influence. The visual art of this period showing Hijras and gender-variant people for attending royal courts, festivals and religious events only because they had recognized social roles that were not fully accepted by society depicted in figure 2. The Mughal era saw Hijras who possessed ritual authority during childbirth and marriage ceremonies because they performed their duties in courtly and administrative functions (Nanda 1990 Reddy 2005). Bhakti devotional traditions also reflected gender fluidity in poetic expressions, though caste and patriarchal structures remained intact. The institution acknowledged gender-diverse people through specific ritual and occupational roles, but their acceptance did not reach true equality because it maintained a hierarchical system.



(a)



(b)

**Figure 3:** (a) Miniature painting (Mughal Empire, approximately 17<sup>th</sup> century) (b) Transgender portrayals (Rajasthani / Pahari miniature painting of 18<sup>th</sup> century)

**Source:**

(Beach, 1992)

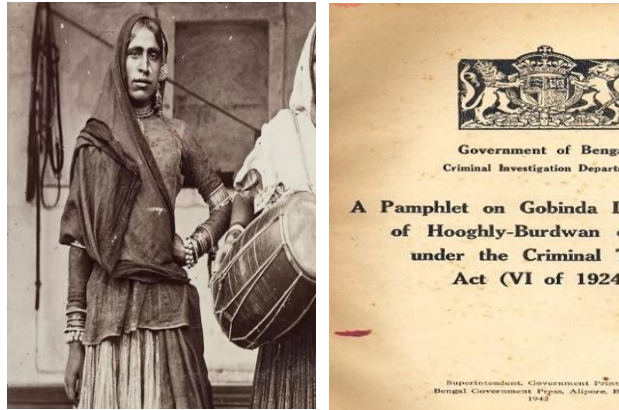
<https://asia.si.edu/research/publications/the-imperial-image-paintings-for-the-mughal-court/>

(Kossak, 1997)

<https://archive.org/details/IndianCourtPainting16th19thCentury/IndianCourtPainting16th19thCentury/>

The **Colonial period**, which lasted from the British Empire's mid-18th century rule establishment until India gained independence in 1947, brought major changes to government systems and legal frameworks and societal standards of moral conduct. The Indian Penal Code (1860) enforced Victorian moral standards while Section 377 labelled same-sex relations as “against the order of nature” (Gupta 2008). The Colonial system began to record and control personal identities through its governance methods and census systems and missionary education and administrative procedures while the Criminal Tribes Act (1871) designated Hijras as a “criminal caste” which resulted in their ongoing surveillance and resulting social stigma (Reddy 2005). Colonial authorities used the legal system to define homosexuality as a moral decline which they used to regulate sexual conduct and public activities (Narain 2004). The establishment of strict heterosexual norms replaced the original indigenous pluralistic traditions because society rejected queer identities while institutions actively criminalized them. Some visual representation of this period is shown in figure 3, which documented sacred art showed Hijras through anthropological and surveillance perspectives. The image described them as “eunuchs” which strengthened the narratives about their deviant behavior. The visual representation moved away from its original purpose of symbolic celebration and became a method for establishing classification systems. The visual arts functioned as a mechanism for both controlling people and creating social stigmas which matched the criminalization laws established by Section 377.

## Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective



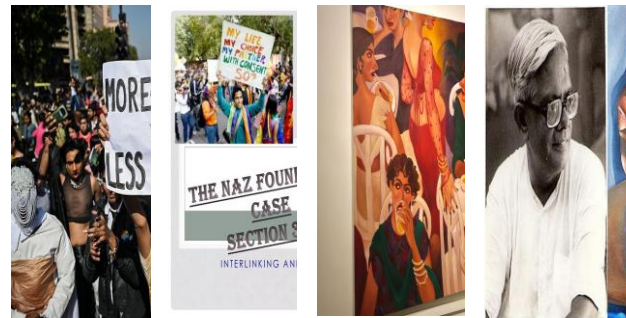
(a) (b)  
**Figure 3:** (a) Colonial ethnographic photographs of Hijras (b) Criminal tribe act

**Source:**

(Reddy, 2005) [https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-17\\_5c8e1614a8b9c\\_gayatri-reddy-with-respect-to-sex-negotiating-hijra-identity-in-south-india.pdf](https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-17_5c8e1614a8b9c_gayatri-reddy-with-respect-to-sex-negotiating-hijra-identity-in-south-india.pdf)  
 (Hinchy, 2019) [https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021-07-22\\_60f9ac9fadf74\\_GoverningGenderandSexualityinColonialIndiaTheHijrac.18501900byJessicaHinchy-z-lib.org\\_.pdf](https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021-07-22_60f9ac9fadf74_GoverningGenderandSexualityinColonialIndiaTheHijrac.18501900byJessicaHinchy-z-lib.org_.pdf)

Finally the period from 1947 to 2018 called **postcolonial period** which followed India's independence featured three main developments namely constitutional democracy and nation-building and economic growth while the Indian Constitution provided equal rights and human dignity to all people. The social fabric of Indian society during this period underwent transformation because of family systems and heterosexual marriage customs and the restricted public ability to discuss sexual matters although urban areas and global connections brought about queer activism and cultural expression during the 1990s. The Nazis Foundation v. Government of NCT of Delhi 2009 case legally contested Section 377 because it violated Articles 14 15 and 21 Narrain 2009 which resulted in a 2013 decision that reached its final verdict through the Supreme Court ruling in Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India 2018 which recognized LGBTQ+ rights to equality dignity and privacy while declaring that constitutional morality should take precedence over public bias Narrain 2018. The period between 2010 and 2018 demonstrated through ethnographic studies that housing and policing and healthcare systems

discriminated against people (Chakrapani 2010 Reddy 2005) which showed that social acceptance occurred at a slow pace during that time despite legal advancements. The visual aspects of culture progress from being hidden to becoming fully visible through their active demonstration in this period. Protest art reframes queer identity as a rights-based political subject. Rainbow symbolism functions as a visual sign that people use to demonstrate their membership in a group and their shared connection with other members. Contemporary artists use photography, installation, and graphic design to reclaim historical narratives while they challenge existing norms of heterosexual representation. Visuality functions as a platform for resistance which enables people to reclaim their identity while it connects constitutional changes with how the public sees them.



(a) (b) (c) (d)  
**Figure 4:** (a) LGBT pride (b) Protest photography from Naz Foundation activism (c) queer art exhibitions (d) Public murals incorporating rainbow symbolism

**Source :**

(Hoskote, 2015) <https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/bhupen-khakhars-courageous-work-two-men-in-benares-1982>  
<https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/bhupen-khakhars-courageous-work-two-men-in-benares-1982>  
 (Dutta & Roy, 2014) <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1064&context=id-journal>  
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1064&context=id-journal>

The shift from Medieval to colonial produced deep implications. The religious and cultural symbolic practices which existed in their original context now face redefinition through legal and medical descriptions of deviant behavior. The public has developed its understanding of queer identities through the colonial moral values which continue to influence modern social

## Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective

beliefs (Gupta, 2008). The history of queer existence in India shows two patterns which exist together: indigenous people developed multiple ways of representation which later faced colonial forces that created stigma.

Scholars argue that these visual records prove queerness exists as an indigenous concept which existed before Western cultures introduced it to the world (Nanda, 1990; Reddy, 2005). The historians argue that these depictions were not marginal additions but integral components of sacred architecture which displayed fertility and cosmic balance and the celebration of kama (desire) as one of the four purusharthas (Dehejia 1997). The presence of such imagery in sacred spaces shows that people viewed sexuality and its non-heteronormative expressions as a fundamental aspect of their spiritual beliefs. Public audiences who saw these sculptures would understand them through religious and aesthetic frameworks instead of current ethical dualities. The mythological and literary representations hold important meanings that extend beyond their surface value. The findings indicate that different societies viewed gender nonconformity through their cultural practices of cosmology and ritual and storytelling methods. The representations from the past show different ways to understand gender identities which exist outside of modern queer identity politics (Vanita & Kidwai 2000). The time periods show queer cultural presence because it exists through stories and sacred symbols instead of being shown as an activist social movement.

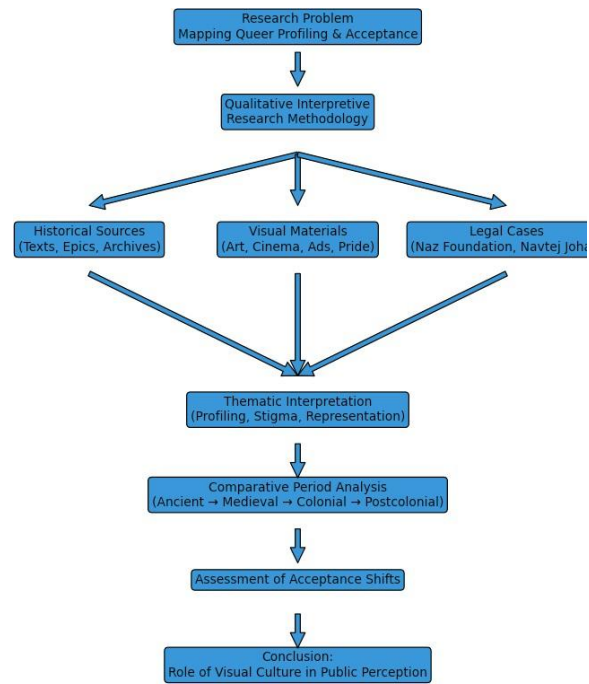
**Table 1:** Gender Diversity in India: Historical and Cultural Overview

Period	Source / Site	Nature of Representation	Scholarly Reference
Ancient	<i>Kamasutra</i>	Tritiya Prakriti	Doniger & Kakar (2002)
Epic Era	<i>Mahabharata</i>	Gender transformation (Shikhandi, Brihannala)	Vanita (2002)
Medieval	Khajuraho Temples	Same-sex erotic imagery	Dehejia (1997)
Medieval	Konark Sun Temple	Erotic carvings	Michell (1988)
Pre-	Hijra	Ritual &	Nanda

modern	communities	ceremonial roles	(1990)
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### 2. Research Methodology

For this study qualitative interpretive research methodology has been used to study how queer identities in India developed through historical changes and legal modifications and visual expressions of their identity. The interpretive method provides a comprehensive study of cultural texts and temple iconography and miniature paintings and colonial legal records and judicial case judgments and modern media content which show how societies have developed their understanding of gender and sexuality through different historical periods. The methodology studies social historical contexts to understand how symbols and narratives and discourse elements and representation patterns function in their original settings. The study uses visual materials and constitutional judgments and academic research to track how public attitudes and profiling practices toward queer communities have evolved over time. The research project requires qualitative interpretive framework because it enables study of power dynamics and stigma development and identity creation and visual culture impact on public understanding within Indian society which has multiple historical periods and changing legal standards.



**Figure 5:** Flow chart of the study

### 3. Diachronic Analysis

Understanding how people historically engaged with visual context is crucial. The temple sculptures of erotic content served two functions through their educational and symbolic representation of philosophical concepts which described life cycles and human desire and cosmic balance (Dehejia, 1997). The absence of explicit historical records of public scandal suggests that such imagery was normalized within its cultural frame. The people of ancient times used epic stories as their main method of transmission which they performed through oral and ritual practices to create shared memory which lasted for many centuries. The representations showed queer identities but created a single continuum which included both human and divine existence (Vanita, 2002). The level of queer culture during pre-colonial periods can therefore be understood as culturally integrated but socially stratified. Gender-variant communities maintained their existence between social ranks yet recognition of their rights remained insufficient to create equal treatment (Nanda, 1990). The organizations confirmed their existence through visible presence which became part of institutional frameworks. The colonial and early postcolonial periods established legal systems which treated people as criminals while social customs made them invisible, which resulted in greater social exclusion of communities (Narain, 2004). The historical genealogies show that queer culture in India developed through two distinct movements which created both modern and ancient cultural elements. The development of this culture has resulted from three changing ways of knowing which encompass mythological knowledge and aesthetic understanding and colonial and constitutional frameworks. The historical record shows that people from different cultural backgrounds once accepted gender plurality as a fundamental aspect of existence, which linked their artistic expressions to their cosmological beliefs. The colonial rupture established punitive legal systems which defined social identities, which led to everlasting social exclusion through their application.

The historical development of queer identity in India demonstrates the requirement for contextual study because it serves as a fundamental historical development. The current fight for recognition operates as an extension of ongoing cultural negotiations that have persisted throughout time. The section demonstrates that Indian queer culture has experienced three distinct stages by examining queer profiling

through mythological symbols, temple iconography, and community customs, which originated from colonial rule. The recognition of this complex historical background provides evidence that queerness existed in native form while offering a base for people to comprehend present-day practices of acceptance and representation.

The historical genealogies of queer presence in India demonstrate that gender plurality and sexual diversity existed as cultural elements which existed within mythological artistic and ritual practices. The colonial period established moral laws which disrupted previous systems of understanding because they transformed flexible identity expressions into permanent social stigmas which created a lasting gap between actual cultural practices and historical remembrance (Gupta 2008 Narain 2004). The evidence from history demonstrates that queerness exists as an integral part of Indian culture yet current public opinion remains influenced by traditional heterosexual norms and the worries of postcolonialism. The historical break requires scholars to investigate how Indian society expresses its queer identities through constitutional changes and visual communication methods. Legal decisions create new rights for individuals yet public understanding of rights evolves through visual media and design elements more than through legal judgments (Hall 1997). Visual art together with graphic communication establishes shared spaces which unite past memories with contemporary times while rendering constitutional values into public emotional and social unifying moments. The following section reveals how contemporary visual culture along with media stories and design projects actively shape queer identity through their impact on social behavior and their role in shaping modern Indian acceptance.

#### **4. Legal Transformations, Visual Culture, and Contemporary profiling**

People need to study three elements of Indian society which include constitutional changes and social movements as well as visual cultural expressions to understand current levels of acceptance toward queer individuals. The historical development of gender diversity shows that societies have practiced this form of expression since ancient times, but the postcolonial legal system maintained its initial colonial standards because it used heterosexuality as the basic social structure (Gupta, 2008). The legal system underwent changes when judges began to interpret constitutional

## Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective

rights for equality and dignity and protection against discrimination in new ways (Government of India, 1950). The Naz Foundation v. Government of NCT of Delhi (2009) case marked a significant legal change when the Delhi High Court declared Section 377 unconstitutional because it viewed sexual orientation as essential to constitutional values (Narrain, 2009). The 2013 Supreme Court ruling in Suresh Kumar Koushal v. Naz Foundation reversed the 2009 decision, reinstating Section 377; however, the reasoning established a foundation for judicial development. In National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India (2014), the Supreme Court established transgender people as a "third gender" while stating that gender identity forms the core of personal dignity and individual freedom (Supreme Court of India, 2014). The court reached its most important decision in Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018), when it declared consensual same-sex relationships legal and established constitutional values as superior to majority rule (Narrain, 2018). Through these rulings, the legal system changed its perception of queer identity from criminal behavior to recognized citizenship rights.

The socio-legal field shows that legal changes fail to remove deep-seated biases from society (Dasgupta, 2012). Different groups show different levels of acceptance which varies between different regions and generations and socio-economic backgrounds. The permanent existence of discrimination shows itself through surveys and ethnographic research which studies housing and employment and healthcare and family arrangements (Reddy, 2005; Chakrapani, 2010). The gap between constitutional recognition and social reality shows that legal changes need to happen for cultural transformation to succeed.

The space between law and social acceptance of lived experiences depends on visual culture which serves as its essential component. Representation functions as a dual force because it creates new meanings while it establishes shared social knowledge (Hall 1997). Public narratives about queer lives emerge from media images campaign graphics pride symbols cinema and digital art which together create these visual representations. Dyer 1993 shows that social recognition depends on what people see because repeated exposure to certain things becomes accepted as normal in their cultural perception. The combination of pride parade posters, rainbow-themed marketing campaigns, and digital advocacy graphics creates a complete transformation of queer

identity which now exists as a public celebration. Through their design these visuals create emotional responses which draw viewers in through their use of color and symbols and typography and the way they present their stories. Research on visual semiotics shows that people process images faster than they process written arguments because images create immediate effects which shape both their emotional responses and their memory development (Mitchell, 2005). Graphic design serves as a visual bridge which connects constitutional language with public understanding of constitutional content.

The modern Indian film industry and streaming services and advertising platforms now include queer characters together with queer storylines which disrupt common stereotypes while creating broader opportunities for diverse representation (Gopinath, 2005). The transition from exaggerated character portrayals toward authentic human representation shows how society now possesses greater understanding of cultural practices. According to media studies researchers representational changes function as a mechanism through which marginalized groups obtain social acceptance which Butler (2004) identifies as "recognition."

The assessment of visual culture shows its fundamental value through three connected results which demonstrate its worth.

The process of Normalization through Repetition demonstrates that people develop greater understanding and empathy towards inclusive imagery through its ongoing presentation (Dyer, 1993).

Residency through Symbols functions when people use pride emblems and public murals to establish their national identity (Chakrapani, 2010).

Visual campaigns create emotional solidarity which enables people to understand human rights through actual personal experiences (Hall, 1997).

The visual communication system shows its power to shape social evolution because it enables organizations to use their visual elements to create social change. The act of showing oneself becomes a form of political resistance when communities still face stigma after legal changes. The display of the rainbow flag in urban environments creates new public spaces while fighting against traditional heterosexual social structures.

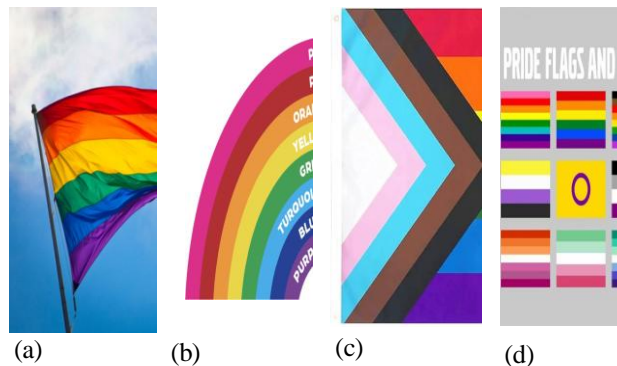
**Table 2:** Visual Culture and Attitudinal Influence

Medium	Mode of Representati	Social Effect	Theoretic al Basis
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## Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective

	on		
Pride Posters	Celebration & symbolism	Increased visibility	Hall (1997)
Social Media Campaigns	Narrative storytelling	Empathy & normalization	Mitchell (2005)
Cinema & OTT Content	Character complexity	Reduced stereotyping	Gopinath (2005)
Public Murals	Spatial assertion	Symbolic citizenship	Chakrapani (2010)

The present acceptance of constitutional morality and social morality exists because people need to understand their theoretical difference from each other (Narain 2018). Courts establish equality standards yet visual culture shows people how to experience these standards in their daily lives. Through graphic design and visual storytelling abstract rights become visible which enables wider audiences to connect with queer stories through emotional and intellectual understanding. Interdisciplinary studies demonstrate that when people see inclusive media their social acceptance grows while their prejudice decreases according to Herek and McLemore 2013. The research begins from Western origins but its findings now apply to urban Indian areas where people consume digital media.



**Figure 6:** (a) Rainbow Pride Flag (b) Rainbow (c) and (d) Progress Pride Flag

**Source:**

(Gross, 2001) [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281562721\\_U\\_p\\_From\\_Invisibility\\_Lesbians\\_Gay\\_Men\\_and\\_the\\_Media\\_in\\_America](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281562721_U_p_From_Invisibility_Lesbians_Gay_Men_and_the_Media_in_America)  
 (Hall et al., 2013) <https://ayomenulisfisip.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/hall-1997-representation.pdf>

(Alexander & Rhodes, 2012)

<https://www.routledge.com/Sexual-Rhetorics-Methods-Identities-Publics/Alexander-Rhodes/p/book/9780815396345>  
<https://www.routledge.com/Sexual-Rhetorics-Methods-Identities-Publics/Alexander-Rhodes/p/book/9780815396345>

The constitutional rights of queer communities in India changed after the country implemented new laws which abolished colonial-era criminalization. The process of social acceptance depends on cultural memory and generational attitudes and media representation as its primary factors. Visual art and graphic communication serve as essential tools for social change because they create spaces where people establish their identities and rights to citizenship and belonging. The analysis of judicial reform together with visual discourse demonstrates that sustainable social inclusion needs legislative progress but also requires changes in how society represents different groups. The process of visual culture establishes a pathway for people to experience emotional content while watching repeated visual symbols which ultimately leads to changes in their beliefs and group identity. The current societal acceptance of queer communities in India develops through an ongoing interaction between legal systems and social norms which utilizes visual media as a fundamental influencing element.

### 5. Role of Visual Context in Queer Profiling

Visual content from temple sculptures and miniature paintings to cinema and advertising and public murals and social media graphics has functioned as a major force in both displaying the identity of queer individuals and developing social acceptance of them in India because it operates as two opposing forces that create human connections with others while establishing stereotypes that alienate people from society. Theoretical research shows that visual studies demonstrate images operate as active forces which create and distribute social meanings because images require viewers to recognize them which leads to their internalization of social concepts (Mitchell, 2005). Psychologists who study sexual prejudice demonstrate that social attitudes develop through social processes which people can change by experiencing new things and developing empathy and understanding through storytelling techniques which visual media uses for its content (Herek & McLemore, 2013) and (Centre for Law and Policy Research)

## Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective

The research documents how increased visual visibility after major legal shifts through their empirical work conducted in India. Research on advertising and audiovisual content demonstrates that LGBTQ+ representation increased after Section 377 decriminalization which occurred in 2018. The research shows that brands and campaigns use inclusive imagery to present queer identities as common and relatable. Digital and streaming platforms have created a new trend which researchers found (Dasgupta, 2020). The research found that Indian streaming content and online queer cultures show better representation through multiple character traits than through stereotypical character portrayals. Young urban viewers who watch such content frequently show a preference for identity-based storytelling that uses authentic character development. The research shows that people who watch Thai media develop new attitudes about things. The research shows that youth representation through queer media creates self-acceptance among queer youth. The research shows that youth representation through queer media increases empathy among non-queer peers. The research shows that youth representation through queer media creates measurable social norm changes at both neighborhood and institutional settings. The research shows that Indian queer communities use digital ethnographies to show how visual campaigns and memes and user-generated content create counterpublics that challenge dominant narratives while showing queer life as an essential part of society. Public spaces use visual campaigns and memes and user-generated content to create counterpublics which challenge mainstream narratives while displaying queer life as a valid social experience (Herek & McLemore, 2013). The effects of visual elements on content create outcomes that range from positive results to unpredictable effects. Content analyses and critical studies warn that tokenistic or stereotyped portrayals—comic relief characters, fetishized depictions, or one-dimensional trans narratives—can entrench prejudice rather than dismantle it. The commercial logic of brand campaigns creates a danger because it uses queer symbols which include rainbow motifs and Pride imagery without solving actual structural problems (Mitchell, 2005). Critics describe this process as "surface inclusion" which makes people more visible but does not create actual social equality. Advertisers increased their activities after India established better legal protection for safety according to evidence from

media studies which shows that visibility occurs when legal and market forces operate instead of creating independent social change. (Sharma & Singh, 2023)

The visual content of India has achieved twin outcomes of profiling and acceptance through three interconnected pathways which include (1) visibility leading to legibility through images which reveal queer existence to society (2) visual storytelling which enables viewers to develop empathy for characters who experience emotional distress together with that method of storytelling and (3) public ritualization through murals and Pride visuals and advertising which establish queer existence in public areas. Research studies from India which compare with international research demonstrate that these processes can modify people's opinions of particular groups which mirrors current trends among urban people who use digital technology. The researchers and practitioners need to conduct visual work which maintains local identity through continuous development and partnership with legal policy reforms to achieve their goal of transforming profiling into acceptable identification.

### Conclusion

The research study investigates queer profiling and acceptance in India through historical legal and visual analysis which shows that gender diversity and sexual orientation diversity have existed in India from ancient times through mythological stories temple art and community cultural practices. Contemporary constitutional reforms have restored legal recognition of rights which were disrupted by colonial legal systems that created permanent social bias against these rights. The research demonstrates that legal changes fail to create social acceptance because existing biases and dominant social norms continue to determine how people experience their daily lives. The research demonstrates how visual culture and graphic communication analysis connect with constitutional changes through their examination of image-based elements which function as social mediators. Visual art and media design create visual stories which help people understand their rights because they make legal concepts more accessible through common experiences that create mutual understanding and inspire people to change their views. The process of queerness gaining acceptance in India represents an ongoing cultural battle which requires India to achieve both legal advancements and persistent changes in representation through

## Mapping Queer Profiling and Acceptance in India: A Historical and Current Perspective

effective visual communication that includes diverse perspectives

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