**He, she or?**

Imagine the plight of a trans\* or inter-sex person going through an application, which asks the question: “What is your gender?” and only has two options: Male or female.

We all have grown up hearing jokes and gags about trans\* people. We have been accustomed to ridicule them as Chaka or Hijra. But have we really thought about the plight of these people? The challenges these people go through?

**Manabi Bandyopadhyay**, India’s first transgender college principal in a recent interview said *she suffered emotional and physical abuse from her family and peers when she was a college student and was even suspended by college authorities due to her refusal to behave as a heterosexual.*

Khushwant Singh in his portrayal of ***Bhagwati***, a female –Hijera prostitute from Lal Kuan, New Delhi talks about the pain and difficulty this community goes through. He points out how they face rejection in every field. Their parents disown them; they have noshelter, no healthcare facilities or job opportunities.

Even today, after the recognition of a third gender by the Supreme Court of India, many are forced to work as sex-workers and other are forced into begging.

The Indian constitution, guarantees equality to all and states “*Equality before law, prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste,* ***gender*** *or place of birth, and equality of opportunity in matters of employment, abolition of untouchability and abolition of titles”*

But are trans\* peoplereally equal? Furthermore, do we ***accept*** them as equal?

Light might disperse into seven colours but we can’t understand anything beyond black or white. There may exist a rainbow country but a rainbow society still needs to be formed.

I want to know: Why do we want to define everything? Why do we want to characterize people with their traits and qualities? Why do we generalize people? Why do we not believe in exclusiveness?

We have defined certain rules for each gender.Traits like gentleness, empathy, sensitivity, and others are associated with femininity while traits like strength, courage, independence are associated with masculinity.

But, what we need to understand is the meaning of the word ***‘femininity’*** and ***‘masculinity’*** itself!

I believe these words don’t have any meaning and should not have any either. How can any human irrespective of gender be caged and forced to be someone or something they are not. It is the very definition of such words that limit our perception. And because of our limited understanding we are not able to associate any trait with trans\* or inter-sexpeople and have been discriminating them ever since.

Gandhi was a sensitive ***‘man’***; Rani Lakshmi Bai was a courageous ***‘woman’.***

So, was Gandhi feminine or LakshmiBai masculine?

We need to shatter our self-formed barriers and accept all as one. One true and pure creation of nature. Beyond that everyone is unique and is entitled to be so.