

Foregrounding  
Rights of Queer  
Persons with  
Disabilities in  
Law and Policy

# Pride & Access Booklet

Purple Fest, Goa 2025



**QUEER. DISABLED. VISIBLE. POWERFUL.**

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QAble is a platform committed to building inclusive legal ecosystems for queer persons with disabilities in India.

We work at the intersection of law, policy, and lived experience, driving meaningful change through:

- Strategic Litigation
- Capacity Building
- Knowledge Creation
- Community Engagement

## OUR MISSION

To promote the rights and dignity of queer persons with disabilities by driving structural change in law and policy through advocacy, research, and grassroots engagement.

## OUR VISION

A future where legal systems and institutions recognize and uphold the intersecting identities of queer disabled persons—ensuring dignity, equity, and full participation in public life.



“Queerness and disability are more closely connected than people imagine. The fundamental problem of inequality, where people are judged by societal perception rather than their intrinsic worth, can only be resolved when we all unite and come together. The fight is a basic one for demanding the right to take control of our own selves. In this, we will be stronger together than fighting solo battles.

Saurabh Kirpal  
Senior Advocate; Judicial Reformist

# Voices Guiding QAbLe’s Vision

BOARD OF ADVISORS

“Dignity has no gender, and rights have no ability – every trans person with a disability deserves equal respect, access, and opportunity.”

Kiran Nayak  
Trans and Disability Rights Activist



“When we talk about disability rights, it is very important that we address the concerns of women with disabilities, queer persons with disabilities, Dalit / Adivasi persons with disabilities and other intersectionalities, who are at the margins, even within the disability rights movement.”

Jayna Kothari  
Co-founder,  
Centre for Law and Policy Research

“I truly believe in what Audre Lorde once said " There is no such thing as a single- issue struggle because we do not live single -issue lives." Working on the intersection of disability and gender rights is pivotal for me.”

Shampa Sengupta  
Disability Rights Activist;  
Gender & Mental Health Advocate

“Queer people hold multitudes. We come from a variety of backgrounds, a variety of abilities – and to ignore the intersection of queerness and disability is to do a disservice to two incredibly powerful, incredibly resilient, and truly inclusive movements.”

Anish Gawande  
National spokes person, NCP



# Q-GLOSSARY

## **Sex**

The label (male, female, intersex) given at birth based on body parts or chromosomes.

## **Gender**

How someone feels about themselves – like being a man, woman, both, neither, or something else.

## **Gay**

Someone (often a man) who is mainly attracted to people of the same gender.

## **Bisexual**

Someone who is attracted to more than one gender.

## **Cisgender**

Someone whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

## **Gender Identity**

A person's inner sense of who they are – their gender.

## **Queer**

A broad word for people who are not straight or not cisgender.

It can mean different things to different people.

## **Lesbian**

A woman who is mainly attracted to other women.

## **Transgender**

Someone whose gender is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

## **Intersex**

A person born with body traits that don't fit typical ideas of male or female.

# Q-GLOSSARY

## **Asexual**

Someone who feels little or no sexual attraction to others.

## **Non-Binary**

Someone whose gender is not just male or female. It can be both, neither, or something else.

## **Heterosexual**

Someone who is mainly attracted to people of a different gender than their own.

## **Pansexual**

Someone who is attracted to people of all genders.

## **Coming Out**

When someone tells others about their gender or sexuality.

## **Pronouns**

Words like he, she, or they that refer to someone in place of their name.

## **Romantic Orientation**

Who someone feels romantic (not just sexual) attraction toward.

## **Ally**

Someone who supports queer and trans people, even if they're not queer themselves.

## **Chosen Family**

People you trust and love who may not be your biological family.

## **Pride**

A celebration of LGBTQIA+ identities, rights, and communities – about visibility, resistance, and joy.



# Debunking Myths around Queerness

**MYTH:** Persons with disabilities only have sex with other disabled people.

**TRUTH:** Disabled people's sexual preferences are varied and individual. There are no universal rules about how or with whom persons with disabilities have sex. Reductionist stereotypes about their sexual behaviours erase this diversity and agency.

**MYTH:** People with disabilities need protection and cannot consent to sexual activity.

**TRUTH:** This myth infantilises disabled people, assuming they lack the capacity for consent or decision-making about sex and relationships. Most disabled adults are fully capable of understanding and consenting to relationships. Denying this autonomy is ableist and infringes on their rights to privacy and intimacy.

**MYTH:** Queer and disabled identities rarely overlap.

**TRUTH:** Contrary to this, many persons with disabilities live at the intersection of queerness and disability. Queerness as an orientation does not erase disability or vice versa. Instead, these identities often coexist, shaping lived experiences. Recognising this overlap is essential to understanding how structural ableism and heteronormativity intersect and oppress.

**MYTH:** Persons with disabilities cannot have or do not want intimate relationships

**TRUTH:** Persons with disabilities seek connection and romantic relationships as much as their non-disabled counterparts. Their relationships are valid, not exceptional. Any other assumptions only breed social isolation, infantilisation, and undermine their whole human experience.

**MYTH:** Being Queer is a choice or phase.

**TRUTH:** LGBTQ+ identities are inherent, not simply chosen or temporary. This myth invalidates queer identities and experiences, contributing to stigma and discrimination. Queer persons with disabilities live with authentic identities that deserve respect and acceptance.

**MYTH:** Disabled queer people should be pitied or seen as inspirational simply for existing.

**TRUTH:** This myth portrays disabled queer individuals as objects rather than acknowledging them as full subjects with their own agency. The concept of "inspiration porn" and pitying attitudes simplify complex individuals into stereotypes, stripping away their dignity. Disabled queer people deserve to be respected as autonomous individuals, free from condescension.

**MYTH:** Disability or queerness are illnesses that need to be cured.

**TRUTH:** Neither disability nor queerness is a disease. Framing them as conditions requiring a "cure" pathologizes natural variations in human identity and embodiment. Disabled queer people need respect, accessibility, and acceptance, not medicalization or erasure of who they are.

**MYTH:** Queer disabled people are too "different" to belong to either community.

**TRUTH:** Disabled queer people belong fully within both disability and queer movements. Suggesting otherwise perpetuates isolation and invisibility. Their experiences highlight the need for intersectional solidarity and broaden both movements' visions of justice.

**MYTH:** Persons with disabilities cannot be good parents, especially if they are queer.

**TRUTH:** Disabled queer people can and do parent successfully. Parenting ability is not determined by physical ability, sexual orientation, or gender identity, but by care, love, and commitment. Denying them the right to parent reflects societal bias, not reality.

**MYTH:** Persons with disability are not sexual or do not have sexual desires.

**TRUTH:** Historically, persons with disabilities have been desexualised and infantilised. It is assumed that they lack sexual feelings or interest in relationships. However, this is false as they possess diverse sexual orientations and desires. Disability does not diminish one's sexuality, nor does it render one's sexual or romantic desires any less significant.

# PERSONAL NARRATIVES

## Pride, But Not For Us: On Being Queer, Disabled, And Left Out

“We left. Not because we weren’t proud. But because the space wasn’t made for us. Or people like us.”

“Pride without accessibility is performative. It excludes and it sends a clear message: some of us are more welcome than others.”

“Disabled queer people have always existed. We deserve to be seen, heard, and centred – not just tolerated when convenient.”

By Alice, published on Youth Ki Awaaz (QAble series)

## The Stone Remains Here, And So Do I

“I have never been good with even routine noises, which entirely leaves out the option for loud celebrations. I feel entirely unnerved and out of place as I am overstimulated, which for me... takes away from the idea of Pride being about celebrating your most authentic self.”

“QueerAbad... provided some of the most innovative ways to celebrate queerness while having silent and private alternatives to a parade, without even realizing how they were being accommodating of my neurodivergence.”

By Dr. Dhruv, a 23-year-old neuroqueer intern doctor and multidisciplinary artist

## On Queerness, Invisible Disability And Being Left Behind In Pride

“I went, all alone, hoping to feel a sense of belonging... But instead, I had a panic attack in the middle of the march. The noise, the drumming, the crowd... was all too much. And no one noticed.”

“Just because there is no wheelchair, no white cane and no visible marker of neurodivergence, people assume you are fine. But inside, your body and mind might be shutting down.”

“Love is love, and queer love is better, but the celebration of queer love must leave no one behind.”

By Aashna [they/them], queer, non-binary, neurodivergent lawyer and policy researcher





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