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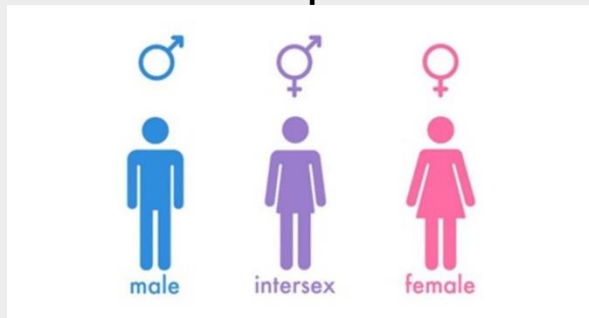
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1. Intersex Awareness Week: Understanding Intersex People and Their Challenges

Introduction

Despite progress within the broader LGBTQ+ movement, there remains limited awareness about intersex people, a vital part of the queer community. Intersex Awareness Day is observed annually on October 26 to highlight their experiences, with many organizations dedicating the week to building awareness and celebrating this community.

Who Are Intersex People?



Intersex individuals are born with sex characteristics—such as reproductive organs, hormone patterns, or anatomy—that do not fit typical definitions of male or female bodies, as defined by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. These differences can include atypical genitalia, hormone levels, or sex chromosomes.

Key Points:

- **Physical Traits:** Intersex status relates to physical attributes, not gender identity or sexual orientation.
- **Intersex vs. Transgender:** Intersex conditions are about physical differences, while being transgender involves gender dysphoria (discomfort with one's assigned sex).

Challenges Faced by Intersex People in India

Intersex individuals in India face systemic challenges, particularly around the binary approach to gender in society and the legal system.

Major Issues:

- **Non-consensual Surgeries:** Many intersex children undergo surgeries to "correct" their genitals, often resulting in trauma, scarring, and sterilization.
- **Legal Recognition:** Intersex people struggle with lack of recognition in official documents, as only male, female, or transgender options are available on identity cards like Aadhaar.
- **Insurance and Legal Protections:** The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019 includes a definition for intersex individuals but lacks specific protections or prohibitions addressing their unique challenges.

Historical Background: Why October 26?

On October 26, 1996, activists Morgan Holmes and Max Beck were forcefully removed from the American Academy of Pediatrics' conference while advocating against non-consensual surgeries on intersex children. This event became the foundation for Intersex Awareness Day, marking the first significant public protest for intersex rights.

The Early Movement:

- Conversations about intersex issues initially took place on forums like The Portland Intersex Initiative and Bodies Like Ours.
- The concept of an "awareness day" emerged in 2003 to increase media coverage and public visibility for the movement.

Intersex Identity in India's Cultural and Legal Context

While historical texts reference "hijras" or "third gender" individuals, these terms are not synonymous with intersex identities. The hijra community often includes transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex people, which can lead to misrepresentation.

Legal Milestones:

- **NALSA Judgment (2014):** Recognized the rights of transgender people, including hijras, but did not explicitly address intersex rights.
- **Madras High Court (2019):** Banned sex-reassignment surgeries on intersex infants in Tamil Nadu without their informed consent.
- **Kerala High Court (2023):** Ordered regulations on intersex surgeries after a petition highlighted the need for protection.

The Role of Intersex Activists and Organizations

Activists have played a critical role in advancing intersex rights. For example, the Tamil Nadu government's 2019 order against intersex surgeries resulted from advocacy by groups like Srishti Madurai and Intersex Asia.

Key Contributions:

- **Srishti Madurai:** India's first organization focused on genderqueer and intersex issues, launched a helpline and engaged with policymakers to raise awareness.
- **Intersex Human Rights India (IHRI):** Works to educate and advocate for intersex rights despite challenges such as social media trolling and internal community differences.

The Ongoing Legal Battle

The fight for intersex rights in India continues, with activists like Gopi Krishna M. filing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court to demand central legislation protecting intersex children from non-consensual surgeries. The petition also calls for inclusive identity documents and recognition in the national Census.

Conclusion

While the intersex rights movement in India is still growing, it is gaining momentum thanks to the dedication of activists and organizations. The road ahead may be challenging, but there are ongoing efforts to secure legal protections, public recognition, and informed consent for intersex individuals.

By raising awareness and advocating for their rights, we can ensure that intersex people are not only recognized but also respected within the broader fight for equality and human rights.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper I and II; Society and Governance

Source: Indian Express

2. Five Reasons Why Donald Trump Won & Democrats Lost the 2024 Presidential Election

Introduction

Donald Trump will be the next President of the United States, after leading the Republican party to a historic election victory. The former president has garnered 51% of the popular vote, compared to the Democrats' 47.5%, and is projected to win upwards of 300 votes in the Electoral College, well above the majority mark of 270.



This will be the first time that the Republicans have won the popular vote since 2004, when incumbent George W Bush won 50.7% of the national vote, and the Democratic challenger John Kerry 48.3%. In fact, this might end up being the party's best performance since 1988, when then Vice President George HW Bush basked in the afterglow of his popular predecessor Ronald Reagan to win more than 53% of the national vote, and 426 Electoral College votes.

1. Anti-Incumbency and Voters' Economic Misery

Economic dissatisfaction played a central role in Trump's victory. Despite improvements in economic indicators under the Biden-Harris administration, many voters were still feeling the impact of inflation, unemployment, and economic downturns linked to the pandemic and global crises like the Ukraine war.

- **Lingering Memories:** Voters seemed to focus more on the hardships they experienced during the pandemic rather than current improvements.

- **Trump's Economic Legacy:** During Trump's presidency, the stock market was robust, unemployment was low, and inflation was under control, making his return appealing to voters dissatisfied with the status quo.

2. Overwhelming Support from Rural America

Republicans have traditionally performed well in rural regions, and Trump capitalized on this trend in 2024.

- **Increased Turnout in Rural Areas:** Rural counties, particularly in swing states, saw higher voter turnout, with Trump outperforming his 2020 numbers.

- **Democrats' Disconnect:** Rural voters feel neglected and misunderstood by Democrats, who they view as the party of the coastal elite. Efforts to court rural voters have been undermined by perceptions of elitism, exemplified by past remarks like Hillary Clinton's "basket of deplorables" comment and popular media portraying rural America in a negative light.

3. Expanding Support Among Minorities

Contrary to traditional voting patterns, Trump made significant gains among minority groups, challenging Democrats' assumption that they have a lock on these communities.

- **African American and Hispanic Support:** Trump made inroads in counties with significant minority populations, like Georgia's Baldwin County, and improved his standing among Latino men.

- **Broad Coalition:** Trump's success in building a coalition of rural, low-educated, blue-collar voters with pockets of Hispanic and Black support proved to be a decisive factor. His focus on issues resonated more effectively than Harris' campaign, which critics say became overly fixated on social media trends.

4. Gender Dynamics Did Not Favor Harris

Kamala Harris had hoped to mobilize women voters, especially in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. However, this strategy did not yield the expected results.

- **Gender Gap:** While Harris led among women by 14 percentage points, Trump had a 22-point lead among men, which was too significant for Harris to overcome.

- **Missed Mobilization:** Despite focusing on reproductive rights, which was expected to galvanize female voters, Harris failed to significantly boost turnout among women, particularly in suburban areas where Democrats typically perform well.

5. Democrats' Perceived Hypocrisy vs. Trump's Authenticity

The Democrats have long positioned themselves as defenders of democracy and liberal values. However, actions during Biden's presidency, especially in foreign policy, were perceived as contradictory to these principles.

- **Foreign Policy Criticisms:** The Biden administration's unwavering support for Israel during the Gaza conflict alienated Arab American voters, especially in key swing areas like Michigan's Dearborn. This contributed to lower turnout among traditional Democratic bases.

- **Trump's Authenticity:** In contrast, Trump's unapologetic, straightforward approach appealed to voters tired of what they saw as Democratic doublespeak. While Trump may be seen as dishonest, his lack of pretense about who he is won him respect among voters who valued perceived honesty over policy contradictions.

Conclusion: Trump's victory in 2024 was driven by voter dissatisfaction with the status quo, effective mobilization of rural and minority voters, and a perception of authenticity that contrasted with the Democrats' perceived inconsistency. While Harris and the Democrats campaigned on social justice issues, they struggled to connect with voters facing economic and cultural discontent.

Relevance: GS Prelims; International Issues

Source: Indian Express

3. As Canada tightens permanent residency, how a positive LMIA can help international students seeking to stay on

Introduction

Recent changes in Canada's immigration policies, including a 20% cut in permanent residency (PR) allocations, have complicated the path to PR for international students.



Among the limited options available to remain in Canada legally and to gain more points for PR, is a positive Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), which shows that there is a need for a foreign worker for a certain job. This document is key for students whose work permits, which they got after completing their studies, have either expired or are about to run out.

What is the LMIA?

The LMIA allows Canadian employers to hire foreign workers when they can't fill a position with Canadian citizens or permanent residents. To get a positive LMIA, employers must demonstrate a genuine need for a foreign worker by posting the job on Canada's official website, and going through a rigorous approval process.

The official processing fee for an LMIA application is CAD 1,000, which should be paid by the employer. However, several immigration experts in Punjab said that given the high demand currently, up to five times the official fee is changing hands in order to secure a positive LMIA through agents or employers.

How can the LMIA help?

Experts said that with PR opportunities reduced, international students who want to apply for PR to stay in Canada permanently are being advised by the consultants to try the LMIA route. Obtaining an LMIA-supported job offer can extend a student's stay and provide valuable Canadian work experience, which boosts their PR application profile. Experts advise students to work diligently in their current jobs so that their employers might cover the LMIA fees, as several employers have started charging students for LMIA applications.

What sort of jobs offer better opportunities for Indian students seeking to stay on in Canada? Sectors such as healthcare, construction, and agriculture are experiencing labour shortages in Canada, and creating demand for LMIA-based roles. Positions such as drivers, farm workers, cooks, welders, and caregivers are among those frequently filled by LMIA applicants.

What other alternatives are available to Indian students seeking Canadian PR?

Consultant Tirath Singh of Jalandhar-based Pinnacle Immigration said that LMIA remains the best option right now, even for those who are still studying.

Apart from that, "visitor record" is an option, he said. "Students can apply for a visitor record, which is a document that allows them to stay on in Canada for longer. However, this option does not permit them to work and is generally seen as a temporary solution," he said.

Aspirants can also consider a Study Visa for further education. Some students are considering returning to school to extend their stay in Canada. Experts recommend choosing degree programmes that add points for PR eligibility and offer skills that are valuable in Canada's job market.

Language skills are also important, Tirath Singh said. "Learning French can be beneficial, as it can add points to a PR profile under Canada's Express Entry system, particularly for those applying to provinces with high demand for bilingual applicants," he said.

But does an LMIA guarantee PR?

A positive LMIA is a helpful step toward PR, but doesn't guarantee it.

International students with LMIA-backed work experience are better positioned under Canada's Express Entry system, which prioritises candidates with Canadian work experience. However, they must still meet all Express Entry requirements, including language proficiency, work experience, and education, experts said.

They added that if the employee is dedicated, efficient, and sincere in his LMIA, it can help in getting PR.

Relevance: GS Prelims; International Issues

Source: Indian Express