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Tokyo Film Festival: A Place of Our Own Highlights the Problems of LGBTQ

By: [Gautaman Bhaskaran](#)[News18.com](#)

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Tokyo



A still from Ektara Collective's 'A Place of Our Own'

Ektara Collective's *A Place of Our Own*, which screened at the ongoing Tokyo International Film Festival, focusses on the sad and humiliating plight of LGBTQ community.

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Homosexuality is no longer a crime in India. It has been decriminalised, and Supreme Court while passing this landmark judgement had a prayer to the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community) to forgive history for the way they had been suppressed for over 150 years.

Section 377 was described by the highest court in [India](#) as “irrational, indefensible and arbitrary”.

But who is to question the ways of our society; some think, in this day and age, that homosexuality is a disease!

And Ektara Collective's A Place of Our Own, which screened at the ongoing Tokyo International Film Festival, focusses on the sad and humiliating plight of this community.

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Scripted and directed by the Collective – Rinchin and Maheen Mirza (who also doubled up as cinematographer) among others – the movie may not be extraordinary but hits the nail on the head with two transgender people as the protagonists. Manisha Soni, playing Laila, and Muskan as Roshni are not professional actors but were trained at a month-long workshop that Ektara conducted at Bhopal, which is also where the story unfolds.

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As the film opens, we see the two struggling to rent a flat. They have just been kicked out, and nobody wants them in. There are hostile scenes; in one they are shooed away from a flat by neighbours, and they are humiliated and harassed.

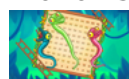


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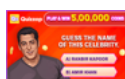
Laila is educated with a graduation degree and works as a counsellor with a Non-Government Organisation. Muskan works as a cook/maid but under an assumed male name. When her employer discovers this, he beats her and throws her out. It is the same man who had just days ago asked her to make his favourite “aloo parathas”.

A newspaper reporter pretends to take the two women to a prospective landlord, but instead “interviews” them and publishes their story, much to their chagrin. Their woes seem to be multiplying and the only one who tries to understand them is the autorickshaw driver, Shahrukh (Akash Jamra, who is a professional actor)

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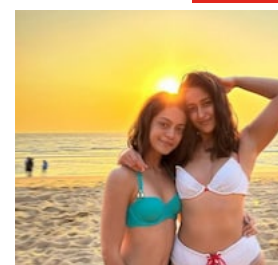
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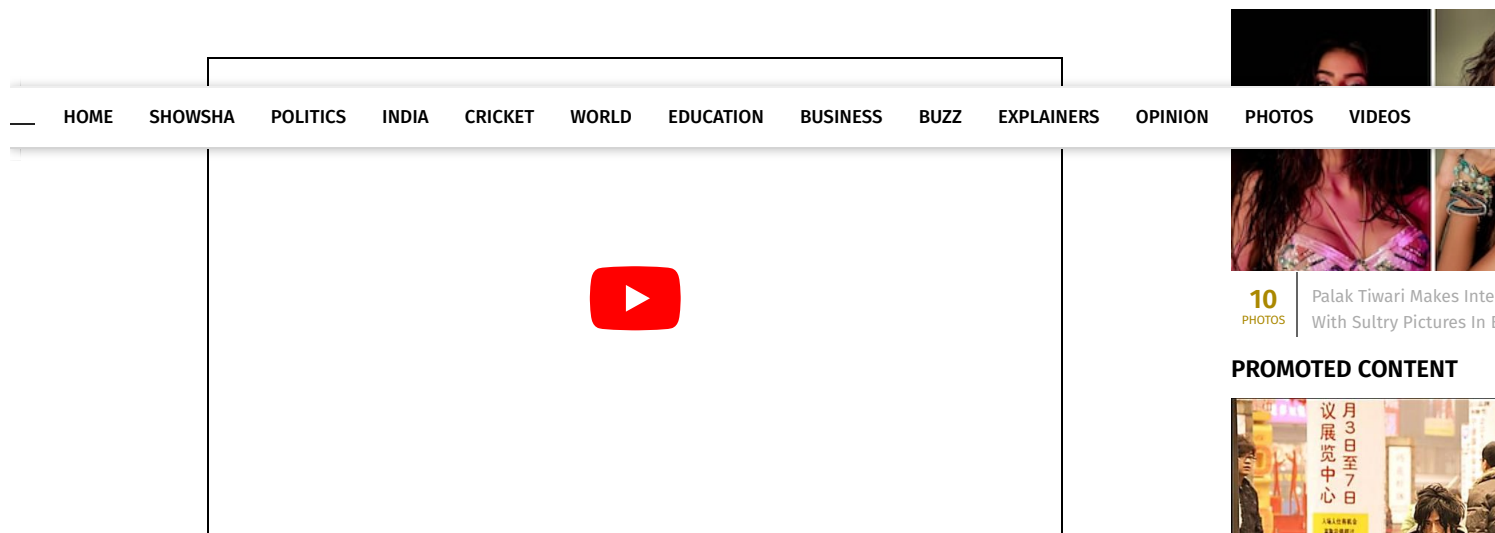
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Ektara had made one feature earlier, Turup, in 2017, and it had had a good run at festivals. It strives for equality in society. Quite a task, one should think. Watching A Place Of Our Own, I felt that however favourable the political and judicial decisions may be, societal acceptance is far more important, and it does not appear to be coming anytime soon.

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About the Author

GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN Gautaman Bhaskaran is a movie critic, commentator and an author, who penned the first ever biography of Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and has been covering ma...[Read More](#)

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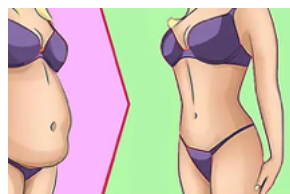
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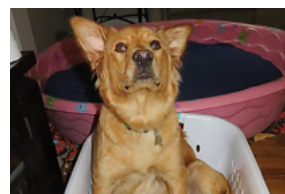
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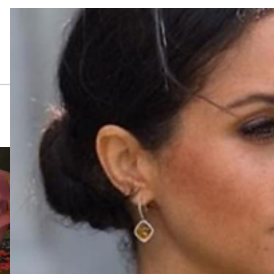
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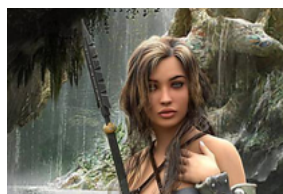


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