

Problems and Status of Transgender Community in India with Special Reference to Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Transgender community in India is an important part of society. Even, law can't deny their existence. We live in 21st century where human rights are assured and preserved for human beings except the third gender i.e., Transgender. Despite all constitutional guarantees, the Transgender are even denied to have their basic rights like Right to Dignity, Personal Liberty, Education, Freedom of expression etc. The present research deals with the problems, and status of Transgender community in a developing country like India.

Key Words: *Transgender, Discrimination, Rights and Liberty*

Introduction

The third gender known better as transgender have existed in every culture, race, class and religion since the inception of human life has been recorded and analysed. The transgender are individuals of any age or sex whose personality, appearance, attitude, behaviour or personal characteristics differ from stereotypes. It means they differ in identity of about how men and women are supposed to be. They are also part and parcel of social order and have equal right in everything and in every resource that is available to all over the world. As per the Census of 2011, the total population of Transgender in India is 4.88 lakh. There are various types of transgender communities in India. The most prominent of these communities are known as Kothi (Represent themselves as male), Hijras (Biological males but reject masculine identity), Aravanis (Woman wrapped in male body), Jogappa (Serve as servant of Goddess Renukha Devi), Shiv-shaktis (Males but have feminine gender expressions)

Since time immemorial, the Indian Transgender community finds mention as the marginalized and neglected section of the society and their pitiable experience of life is well depicted. The condition of the Indian transgender community before the year 2014 was despotic and desperate. However, being newly recognized as a gender

category i.e. 'Third Gender,' they are questioning the Government of India as well as the society 'Do we have to live with day-to-day discrimination our whole life?' and 'Is it a sin to be born a hijra?'

The high level of protection and good remuneration in the Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu makes it a city of attractions for many which include transgender too, thus, a large number of transgender migrate to Coimbatore. However, being the world's most populous city has its own barriers and shortcomings in promoting the wellbeing of all its inhabitants especially the vulnerable sections of the society including transgender.

In 2012, in order to ascertain the exact population of transgender population in India, a study under the aegis of NE-ICMR, UNDP and NACO was conducted, however, only seventeen states were bought under the ambit of study. Therefore, it can be said that there is not a single study representing the status of the transgender of the Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu.

Thus, to find out the real position and status of the transgender of the Coimbatore District, their problems i.e. of personal, social, political, legal, religious, educational, economic and professional nature, etc.; causes of those problems as well as their solutions, wishes, expectations and wants, the researcher undertook this study.

Problems of Transgender

The Transgender fall under the category of LGBT group (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender). They belong to the marginalized group of the society which faces legal, social, cultural and economic difficulties.

The problems faced by the Transgender community in India includes

Discrimination: Discrimination is the major problem of Transgender. They are discriminated in terms of education, employment, entertainment, justice etc.

Disrespect: They are disrespected in each and every aspect of life except in few cases like after the birth of a child for their blessings or to bless the newly wedded couple.

Downtrodden: These people are treated badly or oppressed by people in power. They are prone to struggle for social justice because of their identity as Transgender.

Child Nabbing: This community always searches for those babies/ infants/ children who are born with this feature of Transgender. Once they come to know, they try to nab the child from their parents.

Prostitution: They are forced to enter the profession of prostitutions by their community, friends or relatives. Even, in some cases, it is seen that their parents are involved in it.

Forced to leave parental home: Once their identity is identified, they are forced and pressurize to leave the parental home by the society as they can't be a part and parcel of normal community and class.

Unwanted attention: People give unwanted attention to the Transgender in public. They try to create the scene by insulting, punishing, abusing or cursing them.

Rejection of entry: They are rejected to get enter in religious places, public places like hotels, restaurants, theatres, parks etc.

Rape and verbal and physical abuse: This is the most common people Transgender people face. They are prone to face rape followed by physical and verbal abuse.

Lack of educational facilities: Like normal people, they are not entitled to take education in schools and colleges. Even in terms of education, they are treated differently.

STI and HIV/AIDS problems: The term „MSM“ stands for Men who have sex with Men. Because of this, Transgender are likely to have problems like STI and HIV

AIDS. Most of the Transgender belongs to lower socioeconomic status and have low literacy level. It seeks to have improper health care.

Human trafficking: Transgender belongs to the most neglected group. That's why, they are prone to face the problem of human trafficking also.

Social Exclusion: The major problem in the whole process is that they are socially excluded from the society. They are excluded from participating in social, cultural and economic life. In brief, they are excluded from –

- Economy, employment and livelihood opportunities
- Excluded from society and family
- Lack of protection from violence
- Restricted access to education, health care and personal care
- Limited access to public spaces
- Limited access to collectivization
- Rights of Citizenship
- Excluded from decision-making
- Lack of social security

Constitutional Provisions

India is a country where we have well-established framework of Fundamental Rights embedded in the constitution. From the point of view of Transgender, just like other two genders, they are entitled to the four important provisions of Fundamental Rights. Their Fundamental Rights are –

1. Article 14 – Which states that the State shall not deny any person equality before the law or the equal protection of laws within the territories of the State.
2. Article 15 – The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of race, caste, religion, sex, place of birth or any of them.
3. Article 19 – All citizens shall have rights of –
4. Freedom of speech and expression;
5. Freedom of assemble peaceably and without arms;
6. Freedom to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India;
7. Freedom to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business
8. Article 21 – Right to his life or personal liberty.

12th Five Year Plan and Transgender

The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) Proposed empowerment of the Third Gender by providing them education, housing, access to healthcare services, employment, skill development and financial assistance. In addition to this, it is also proposed that separate column must be incorporated in all government and non-government records for the third gender. It will enable the number of Transgender in India. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment along with Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation will map their Socio-economic status to create a better environment for them by improving their living standards.

Review of Literature

Heidi M. Levitt & Maria R. Ippolito, August (2014). *'Being a transgender: The experience of transgender identity development'* is based upon a grounded theory analysis of interviews with transgender-identified people from different regions of the United States. This paper presents three clusters of findings related to the common processes of transgender identity development. This process was made possible by accessibility of transgender narratives that injected hope into what was a childhood replete with criticism and scrutiny. The implications of these findings are considered in terms of their contribution to gender theory, research, and clinical support for transgender clients.

Rylan J. Testa, Crystal L. Jimenez & Susan Rankin (2014), *The effects of awareness and engagement with other transgender people* describes the research examining risk and resilience among transgender individuals suggests that connection to a transgender community may be protective. This study further evaluated how awareness and engagement with other transgender people influences risk and resilience during early gender identity development.

Supreme Court seeks State Government's stands on transgenders' rights as given by Press Trust of India on October 2 2012, 1:49 am mentions that the Supreme Court on Monday sought the stands of the Centre and various state Governments on a plea for declaring Transgenders as citizens with a third category of gender and demanding equal protection and rights for them. A bench of justices KS Radhakrishnan and Dipak Misra also issued

notices to four Union ministries - the Social Justice and Empowerment, the Women and Child Development, the Urban and Rural Development and the Health and Family Welfare on a petition complaining that Transgenders have been deprived of many of their fundamental rights and privileges which other persons enjoy as citizens.

The Rights of Transgenders Persons Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha and is headed to the Lok Sabha as mentioned in The Hindu Newspaper on 2.5.2015 reports that On April 24, the Rajya Sabha passed private member's Rights of Transgender Person Bill 2014, which will head to the Lok Sabha for the final debate and vote. The main problems that are being faced by the transgender community are of discrimination, unemployment, lack of educational facilities, homelessness, lack of medical facilities like HIV care and hygiene, depression, hormone pill abuse, tobacco and alcohol abuse, penectomy and problems related to marriage and adoption.

Press Information Bureau Government of India Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 2nd December 2014 says that Knowledge of law and employment policy for transgendered persons is important because disadvantage in the law and laws of employment are the biggest problems of transgendered persons. There is no authentic data regarding number of transgender persons in the Country.

Objective of the Study

- To Study the Demographic Details of the resident and migrant transgender person of Coimbatore District.
- To Analyse the problems and Issues faced by the Transgender Community.
- To find out the Level of Awareness regarding welfare schemes provided to them.

Methodology

Research is a defined scientific method consisting of systematic observation, classification and interpretation of data. To achieve the objectives of the study and to test the hypotheses, the researcher has followed descriptive and analytical study.

Area of the Study

The study area is the Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu.

Sampling Techniques

The study focuses on the transgender community in Tamil Nadu. Selection of the villages is based on stratified random sampling, and the selection of households is based on convenience sampling.

Data Collection and Tools Used

The primary data for the study has been collected through an interview scheduled from the respondents. The secondary data has been collected from various books, magazines and journals.

The collected data has been analyzed by following statistical tools such as average, percentage, t-test, f-test and ANOVA.

Finding and Suggestions

There is an urgent need to reform the third gender community of India. Reforms are required to ensure that the third gender of India is properly justified and is able to live their life freely. The following suggestions would like to suggest for their betterment –

- Inclusive approach for Transgender must be planned and adopted by the Government and Society. Though, policies have been framed but are poorly implemented.
- Focused approach should be there to provide protective shields to their problems.
- Legal and the law enforcement systems need to be empowered and sensitized on the issues of Transgender community.
- Criminal and disciplinary action must be taken against the people who commits violence against Transgender.
- Strict action must be taken against parents who neglect, abuse or leave their child because of their biological difference.
- Provision of free legal aid must be ensured for the Transgender community at ground level.
- School and colleges need to play a supportive and encouraging role in providing education and value-system to Transgender.
- Provision of social entitlement must be ensured.

- Establishment of helpline for career planning and guidance, career opportunities and online placement system must be empowered.
- Liberal credit facilities and financial assistance must be ensured to start up their career as an entrepreneur or businessman.
- Separate policies related to health care must be framed and communicated in all private and public hospitals and clinics.
- Awareness programmes must be organized at mass level to outreach public and this community.
- A comprehensive sex-education program should be incorporated in school curriculum and college syllabus to aware students at ground level.

Conclusion

Transgender in India belongs to LGBT category which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. Transgender is a biological change which make people to behave differently from the stereotypes of males and females. Because of this biological change, they are excluded from society. They face discrimination, different treatment, and undue attention in their each and every phase of life. Law and order are trying very hard to socially include the third gender in society. Tamil Nadu Aravanigal Welfare Board is a landmark initiative by Tamil Nadu government in this field. There is an urgent need to transform and include this community as a part and parcel of society.

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