

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES OF TRANSGENDER

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INTRODUCTION

“Transgender” is a term used to describe those whose gender, gender identity, or gender expression, is in some sense different from or transgresses social norms for, their assigned birth sex. Some transgender individuals discomfort with social gender role is accompanied by a profound sense of mismatch of the physical body to their internal bodily experience. Transgender are called in different places though they are essentially cross dressers. Sometimes they are referred to as “transvestites”, “drag queens”, or “drag kings”. In Tamil Nadu they are identified as “Aravani”. In Delhi, they are labeled as Kinnars. Transgender are socially disadvantaged, economically deprived and politically disenfranchised.

SOCIAL STATUS OF TRANSGENDER IN TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu is the first state to introduce transgender (hijira/ aravani) welfare policy. According to this policy, transgender people can access free sex reassignment surgery in the government hospital, free housing program, various citizenship documents, admission in government colleges with full scholarship for higher studies, alternative sources of livelihood through formation of self-help groups (for savings) and initiating income generation programs.

SOCIAL ISSUES FACED BY TRANSGENDER

- ❖ Lack of support from family members.

- ❖ Verbal and physical abuse, isolation and rejection, denial of family property.
- ❖ Stigmatization and discrimination of transgender based on their sexuality or gender identity.
- ❖ Social stigma includes being looked down upon, labeling and negative/generalized attitude towards such as sex work or sex solicitors.
- ❖ Restricted access to education, health services and public spaces.
- ❖ Difficulty in exercising their basic civil rights.
- ❖ Reports of harassment, violence, denial of services, and unfair treatment against transgender.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Most of the transgender are school dropouts. Similarly, gays and bisexuals especially after voluntary or involuntary disclosure of their sexuality face a lot of stigma and discrimination in schools. Due to lack of adequate education and lack of employment opportunities, they are forced into sex work and beggar. While some transgender manage to sustain their job in spite of stigma and discrimination in workplace, most of them resign their jobs without tolerating stigma and discrimination. A variety of multiple-level factors such as lack of adequate education, lack of employment opportunities, and lack of familial support put the male-born sexual minorities at risk of contracting HIV.

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Financial insecurity also attribute to a lack of legal protections. In 2011 National Transgender Discrimination survey analyzed, transgender people of color faced greatly elevated negative outcomes in every area of life. NCTE recognizes that racial and economic justice requires an intersectional approach and sensitivity to race and class, understanding historical and present systems of oppression. The racial and economic justice initiative at NCTE, started in 2014, is designed to address these areas and enhance the organizations commitment and output for transgender people of color and those of low or no income.

PROBLEMS FACED BY TRANSGENDER IN WORK PLACE

- ❖ Verbal abuse
- ❖ Physical abuse
- ❖ Sexual abuse
- ❖ Lack of adequate knowledge about sexual minorities
- ❖ Lack of freedom to expression
- ❖ Not providing importance to ideas, experience, and exper-tise of sexual minorities
- ❖ Lack of meaningful involvement of communities
- ❖ Stress, depression, and other mental health issues

SOME OF THE KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY TRANSGENDER

- ❖ Deliberately incorrect and disrespectful use of names and pronouns
- ❖ Lack of access to appropriate restroom facilities
- ❖ Privacy
- ❖ Confidentiality
- ❖ Lack of role models; lack of accurate information

CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION

The Supreme Court in its Judgment directed Centre and the State Governments to take steps to

treat transgender persons as socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and extend all kinds of reservation in cases of admission in educational institutions and for public appointments. Subsequently, this Department has sought clarification in Supreme Court regarding, inter-alia, inclusion of transgender persons belonging to SC/ST category by birth into the OBC category.

In a landmark judgment in 2014, the Supreme Court observed that “The transgender community, generally known as “Hijras”, are a section of Indian citizens who are treated by the society as “unnatural and generally as objects of ridicule and even fear on account of superstition”. “In view of the constitutional guarantee, the transgender community is entitled to basic rights i.e. Right to Personal Liberty, dignity, Freedom of expression, Right to Education and Empowerment, Right against violence, Discrimination and exploitation and Right to work. Moreover, every person must have the right to decide his/her gender expression and identity, including transsexuals, transgender, hijras and should have right to freely express their gender identity and be considered as a third sex.” Thus, today the transgender people in India are considered to be the Third Gender.

WELFARE BOARD FOR TRANSGENDER

- ❖ Sensitizing Police regarding the issues and problems faced by the Transgender Community.
- ❖ Sensitizing doctors and staff at Hospitals to prevent Psycho-social harassment & discrimination.
- ❖ Providing reservations in jobs
- ❖ Transgender should be counted in population census
- ❖ Property rights should be given to them
- ❖ In all application form transgender column should be included along with male and female.
- ❖ Transgender Welfare Board should be made and insurance and medic-claim facilities must be extended

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