

A Study of the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environment and DRR dimensions of the transgender community in India

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Abstract:

This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted status of transgender individuals in India, focusing on political, economic, social, technological, and DRR aspects. By drawing on legal frameworks, economic indicators, societal attitudes, and technological trends, DRR mainstream the paper seeks to shed light on the challenges and opportunities faced by the transgender community. It offers recommendations for a more inclusive and equitable future.

Keywords: *Transgender, Hijra, DRR, DRM, PEST*

INTRODUCTION

The introduction provides an overview of the historical context of transgender rights in India, highlighting key legal developments and social dynamics. It outlines the research objectives, emphasizing the need for a holistic understanding of the transgender experience.

The transgender community in India comprises various identities, including Hijras, Eunuchs, Kothis, Aravanis, Jogappas, Shiv-Shakthis, and more, contributing to the rich tapestry of Indian society over centuries. Vedic and Puranic literature references "tritiyaprakriti," denoting the third gender, and "napunsaka," signifying individuals with a loss of procreative ability. The term "hijra" in Indian languages is believed to stem from the Persian "hiz," implying someone effeminate, ineffective, or incompetent. Additionally, "kinnar" is a commonly used term, while "chhakka" carries derogatory connotations. Despite contemporary

portrayals of eunuchs engaging in begging at traffic signals or participating in weddings, historical records reveal their esteemed status during the Mughal rule in Medieval India. The term "eunuch" finds its roots in the Greek word "Euneukhos," referring to a bed chamber attendant, a role they assumed due to their emasculation. However, the British colonial era marked a drastic shift in perception. Eunuchs were denied civil rights, labeled as a distinct caste or tribe, accused of engaging in child kidnapping and castration, and often depicted as dancers and individuals dressing like women. This characterization endured during British rule, perpetuating stereotypes that had lasting impacts on the social standing of the transgender community (NS, 2017;1).

Renowned for her advocacy work on behalf of transgender individuals and other gender and sexual minorities in India, A. Revathi shares her journey in the book "A Life in Trans Activism." Within its pages, she illuminates the numerous challenges she encountered while navigating India's economic system. The majority of transgender individuals in the country are engaged in informal sectors such as sex work and street begging. However, a fortunate minority secures employment with LGBTQ+ Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or in service-oriented roles, albeit with modest salaries (A.Revathi, 2016). The Indian Supreme Court ruled in 2014 to create a third gender category called "hijra" which would be inclusive of gender nonconforming and transgender individuals. People in this category were legally categorized as an "other backward class" or OBC. Job reservations were made for people of OBCs in an attempt to improve the economic status of transgender people (Price, 2022).

In India, the transgender population stands at approximately 4.88 lakh, according to the 2011 census. In recent years, significant strides have been taken in recognizing and safeguarding the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. A groundbreaking decision occurred on April 15, 2014, when the Supreme Court of India, in the case of National Legal Services Authority vs. Union of India AIR2014SC1863 ("Judgment"), declared transgender individuals as distinct from the traditional binary genders (male/female). They were officially recognized as a third gender under the Indian constitution. On September 6, 2018, the Supreme Court further advanced LGBTQIA+ rights by overturning Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, decriminalizing homosexuality. Additionally, on September 26, 2019, the Parliament passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, although it faced unequivocal rejection from the transgender community and its allies (Arava, 2022).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a thorough framework to tackle worldwide challenges and promote a fair and sustainable future for all. Comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it serves as a blueprint for attaining peace and prosperity for both the planet and its inhabitants and as a rallying call for collaborative efforts among United Nations (UN) member states. Addressing SDG 4, which centers on education, reveals a critical factor hindering economic opportunities. In India, a 2018 National Human Rights Commission Survey indicates a staggering 96 percent of transgender individuals facing employment discrimination. They often find themselves confined to low-paying or exploitative occupations, including sex work and panhandling, with 92 percent denied employment opportunities. This discrimination is rooted in the non-inclusive nature of schools, particularly towards gender-divergent children. The "other" category experiences high dropout rates and low pass percentages, reflecting significant educational disparities, with a literacy rate of 56.1 percent, notably below the national average of 74.04 percent (Thawaney, 2023).

The transgender community consistently faces a multitude of challenges, placing them in a perpetual state of vulnerability within society. These individuals encounter neglect from their own families and communities, endure associated stigma, confront myths and misconceptions, suffer societal rejection, lack acceptance, and endure discrimination. Furthermore, ambiguity in relevant laws and limited recognition exacerbate their vulnerability, particularly during times of disaster.

During disasters, transgender individuals are particularly susceptible to adverse circumstances, often putting their lives at risk. Factors such as unemployment, lack of government-issued identity documents, rejection leading to homelessness, and the need for survival force some to resort to engaging in commercial sex work or begging. Such unsafe means of income generation expose them to brutal violence and sexually transmitted infections.

The Transgender (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, which came into effect in January 2020, addresses discrimination, identity recognition, welfare measures, and access to education, health, and social security for transgender individuals. It also mandates the constitution of the National Council for Transgender. However, there remains a significant lack of awareness about these laws and persistent myths and misconceptions that need to be addressed through various platforms to effectuate meaningful change.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of the PEST environment on Transgender in India.

2. To discuss the status of Transgender in DRR in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory research study that is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is conducted by observation and Expert's opinion method. Secondary data was collected from various research papers, online sites, and news articles. Primary data was collected by discussion with social workers and group leaders of transgender. As these people got legal status recently, therefore very few literatures were available for review on this topic. This study will be become base for further field based descriptive researches and its outcomes will help in formulation of hypothesis.

Findings and Discussion:

The findings of this study are based on both primary data and secondary. Primary data is collected by observation method and experts' opinion which was collected from Social workers and group leaders of transgender. Findings are discussed in the following two sections:

Part A

Political, Economical ,Social ,Technological and Environment for Transgenders in India

Political Status:

While the legal landscape has seen some positive changes, transgender individuals still encounter hurdles in exercising their rights. The landmark Supreme Court judgment in 2014, recognizing transgender as the third gender, was a significant milestone [National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India, 2014]. Subsequently, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 was enacted. However, criticisms persist, particularly concerning the right to self-identification, and there is a need for more inclusive policies.

Exclusion from Citizen Participation (Political Status)

- a. Limited entry to collectivization
- b. Limited rights to citizenship
- c. Limited right to participation in community decision-making process (Agarwal, 2017)

Economic Status:

Transgender individuals often face economic marginalization, with limited access to education and employment opportunities. Discrimination in the workplace is a prevalent issue. Government initiatives, such as skill development programs and reservations in educational institutions, aim to address economic disparities. However, implementation challenges remain, and societal prejudices hinder economic empowerment (Ubale, 2022).

Table No. 1 State-wise Vulnerable Population in India

Sr No.	State	Transgenders	Child (0-6)	SC	ST	Literacy
	India	4,87,803	54,854	78,811	33,293	56.07%
1	Uttar Pradesh	1,37,465	18,734	26,404	639	55.80%
2	Andhra Pradesh	43,769	4,082	6,226	3,225	53.33%
3	Maharashtra	40,891	4,101	4,691	3,529	67.57%
4	Bihar	40,827	5,971	6,295	506	44.35%
5	West Bengal	30,349	2,376	6,474	1,474	58.83%
6	Madhya Pradesh	29,597	3,409	4,361	5,260	53.01%
7	Tamil Nadu	22,364	1,289	4,203	180	57.78%
8	Orissa	20,332	2,125	3,236	4,553	54.35%
9	Karnataka	20,266	1,771	3,275	1,324	58.82%
10	Rajasthan	16,517	2,012	2,961	1,805	48.34%
11	Jharkhand	13,463	1,593	1,499	3,735	47.58%
12	Gujarat	11,544	1,028	664	1,238	62.82%
13	Assam	11,374	1,348	774	1,223	53.69%
14	Punjab	10,243	813	3,055	0	59.75%

Continued ..

Sr No.	State	Transgenders	Child (0-6)	SC	ST	Literacy
15	Haryana	8,422	1,107	1,456	0	62.11%
16	Chhattisgarh	6,591	706	742	1,963	51.35%
17	Uttarakhand	4,555	512	731	95	62.65%
18	Delhi	4,213	311	490	0	62.99%
19	Jammu and Kashmir	4,137	487	207	385	49.29%
20	Kerala	3,902	295	337	51	84.61%
21	Himachal Pradesh	2,051	154	433	118	62.10%
22	Manipur	1,343	177	40	378	67.50%
23	Tripura	833	66	172	181	71.19%
24	Meghalaya	627	134	3	540	57.40%
25	Arunachal Pradesh	495	64	0	311	52.20%
26	Goa	398	34	9	33	73.90%
27	Nagaland	398	63	0	335	70.75%
28	Puducherry	252	16	40	0	60.59%
29	Mizoram	166	26	1	146	87.14%
30	Chandigarh	142	16	22	0	72.22%
31	Sikkim	126	14	9	37	65.18%
32	Daman and Diu	59	10	1	2	75.51%
33	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	47	5	0	3	73.81%

Continued ..

34	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	43	5	0	22	73.68%
35	Lakshadweep	2	0	0	2	50.00%

(Source: Transgender in India. <https://www.census2011.co.in/transgender.php>)

Social Status:

Social acceptance of transgender individuals remains a significant challenge. Stigma and discrimination persist, impacting their mental health and well-being. Non-governmental organizations and community-based initiatives are crucial in fostering awareness and inclusivity.

Technological Status:

Technological advancements can potentially empower transgender individuals through increased access to information and resources. Social media platforms have become important tools for advocacy and community building. However, the digital divide and the potential for online harassment pose challenges. Ensuring digital inclusion and addressing online discrimination are essential for harnessing the positive aspects of technology.

Part – B Status of transgenders in Disaster Risk Reduction in India:

Vulnerability Profile

Transgender individuals are often more vulnerable during disasters due to societal discrimination, lack of acceptance, and inadequate access to resources. They may face difficulties in accessing relief shelters, healthcare, and other essential services.

Discrimination and Stigmatization

Discrimination and stigma against transgender individuals persist in many aspects of Indian society, including disaster response and recovery efforts. This can lead to exclusion from assistance programs and increased vulnerability to harm during disasters.

Lack of Inclusive Policies

Existing disaster management policies and frameworks in India often do not adequately address the specific needs of transgender individuals. There is a lack of inclusive measures and guidelines for ensuring their protection, participation, and support in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Capacity Building and Awareness

There is a need for capacity building among disaster management authorities, humanitarian organizations, and frontline responders to understand and address the unique needs of transgender individuals during disasters.

Data Collection and Research

Limited data and research are available on the experiences of transgender individuals in disasters in India. More comprehensive data collection efforts and studies are needed to understand their vulnerabilities, challenges, and resilience strategies in the face of disasters.

Advocacy and Empowerment

Civil society organizations, LGBTQ+ activists, and human rights advocates play a crucial role in advocating for the rights and inclusion of transgender individuals in disaster risk reduction efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Empowering transgender communities to participate in decision-making processes and access support services is essential step for building resilience.
2. This should be including training on gender sensitivity, LGBTQ+ rights, and inclusive approaches to DRR.
3. Policy formulation and implementation for transgender in accessing relief shelters, healthcare, and other essential services.
4. More comprehensive data collection efforts and studies are needed to understand their vulnerabilities, challenges, and resilience strategies in the face of disasters.
5. General community should encourage transgenders personals for taking job offers.
6. Election Commission of India should prepare a policy for Transgenders seat reservation in Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha.
7. However, societal attitudes need to evolve to create a more supportive environment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, addressing the status of transgenders in PEST & Disaster Risk Reduction in India requires concerted efforts from government agencies, civil society organizations, and humanitarian actors to ensure their rights, protection, and inclusion in all phases of disaster management cycle. This involves policy reforms, capacity building, awareness raising, data collection, and meaningful engagement with transgender communities.

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