

## Empowering the Transgender Community in India: A situation analysis of initiatives of Govt. of India

Monojit Garai

Assistant Professor of Social Work

Netaji Subhas Open University

E-mail: [monojit.garai@gmail.com](mailto:monojit.garai@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*Transgender have always been considered as the isolated, indifferent, excluded gender and are often marginalized in society. They are deprived of dignity, worth as a human being and not given fair treatment by the society because they cannot identify themselves in terms of gender. Gender non-confirmed persons or people who identify their gender role other than male or female have experienced many difficulties from times past and their social acceptance, status in the society and role has varied from one place to another and from one culture to another. The social stigma associated with them leads to a vicious circle of emotional, social and economic stress, as they are rejected by society and are unable to get a decent education or proper job even not able to live a dignified life. Several of these transgender individuals have managed to fight the challenges of society and have made a mark for themselves, inspiring the community as a whole. They had to deal with a lot of difficulties in order to live there, but they eventually learned to be self-sufficient. Such individuals have become the inspiration for others in their like community and have made phenomenal achievements for the community by excelling in their respective careers. This paper try to highlight and analyses the rights and provisions for this community as ensured by the government with contemporary analysis.*

**Keywords:** Transgender, Empowerment, Social Exclusion, Transgender Policy

### Introduction

Transgender can be defined as individuals whose sense of personal identity does not correspond with the sex that was determined at the time of the individual's birth. For instance, a woman identifies herself as a man born in a woman's womb and vice-versa. Hence she would have to undergo medical procedures to obtain a masculine physique. Despite several references to the existence of transgender communities, India in its more modern times has led to relegating these communities to the outskirts of mainstream society. The term LGBTQ+ refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer and is considered as an umbrella term for representing the whole population of the so-called transgender.

The term 'transgender' means a person who has a gender identity and expression totally different from their birth sex and so they try to live like the opposite gender. The transgender community is also known as the gender non-conforming group. Transgender is mainly divided into two types -male to female which means they are born as a male and but they like to live as a female, and vice versa. Some of the other terms are also interconnected and it is universally known as transsexual, cross-dresser, gender queer, femme queen, and Two Spirit (Herman, 2009 as cited in Sevelius et al., 2016: 1060-1075).

A transgender woman or a male to female transgender is defined as an individual born as a male but whose self-identity is as female and who desires to live like a woman. Studies from different countries suggest that a majority of transgenders are engaged in sex work and begging because of social stigma and employment discrimination. This discrimination limits the opportunities for income generation and they face various challenges while surviving in the hetero-normative society, while also being denied of basic needs (Nemoto et al., 2006: 183-201; Sausa, Keatley, & Operario, 2007: 768-777).

For a very long time, the transgender community in India has lived at the fringes of society. It was only after the landmark ruling by the Supreme Court in 2014, popularly known as the NALSA judgement, that transgender persons were legally recognised as the 'third gender'. The Government of India, over the course of years, has made consistent and significant efforts in designing and working towards a trans-inclusive society. Safeguarding the fundamental right - 'to live life with dignity' under Article 21 of the Constitution.

### **Status of Transgender Persons in India**

Transgender is not a word limited to persons whose genitals are combined but it is a comprehensive term of persons whose gender expression, identity or behaviour varies from the standards expected from their birth sex. Several transgender personalities fall under this group including transgender male, transgender female, male to female and female to male. It also includes cross dressers (those who wear dresses of others), gender queer people (they feel they belongs to either both genders or neither gender) and transsexuals.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 defines "Transgender person", as a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, genderqueer and person having such socio-cultural identities as Kinner, Hijra, Aravani and Jogta.

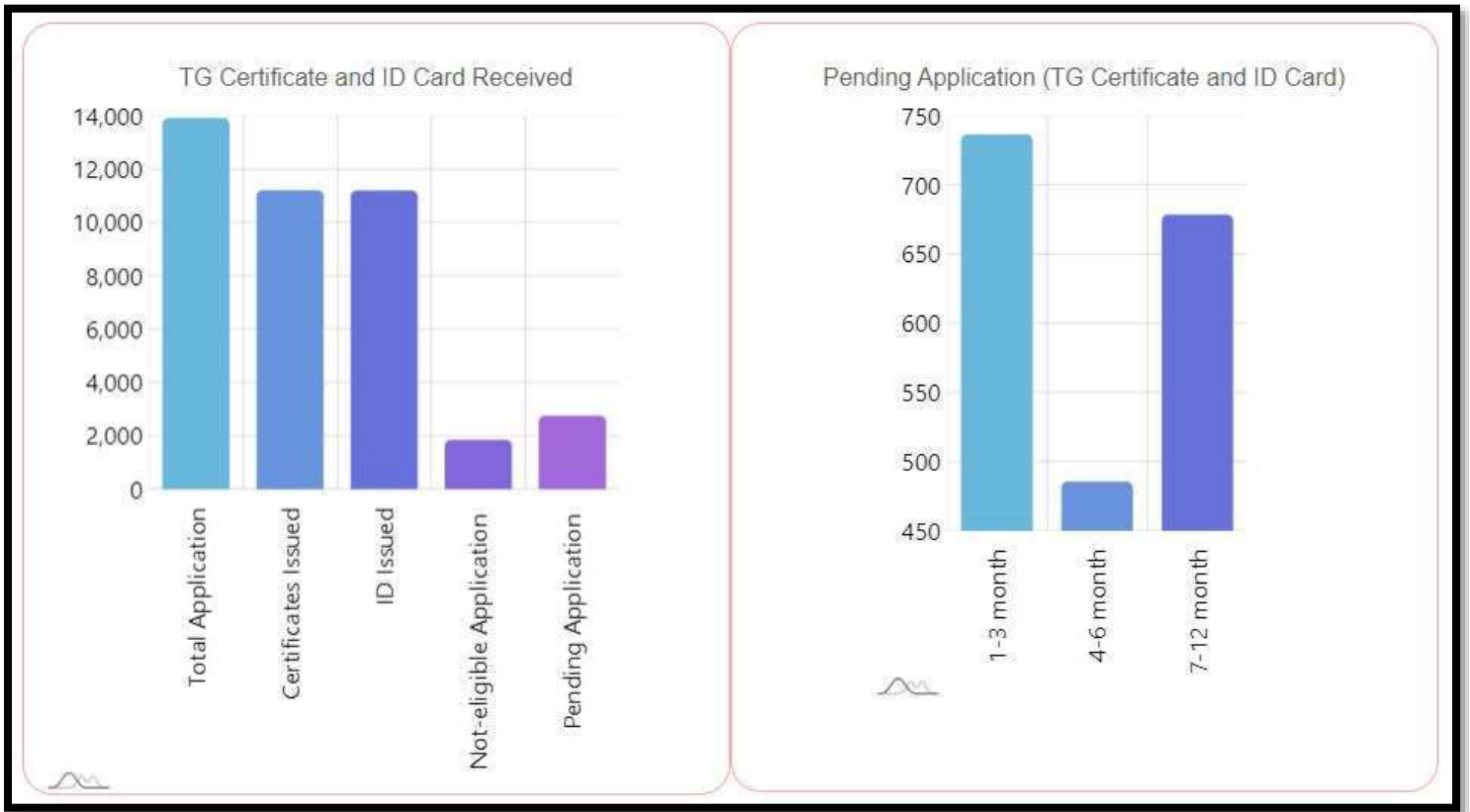
The transgender population had never been enumerated before 2011. The Registrar General of India (RGI), during the Enumeration of Census 2011, for the first time provided three codes i.e. Male-1, Female -2, and Others -3 for enumeration. Although the process had its own limitations, the Census (2011) recorded 4,87,803 individuals who identified themselves as being of a sex/gender 'other' than male or female.

### ***Certificate and Identity Card Issued (Total)***

<b>Total Application Received</b>	<b>Total Certificate Issued</b>	<b>Total Identity Card Issued</b>	<b>Not-Eligible Application</b>	<b>Pending Application</b>	<b>UTs/States Participated</b>
<b>13,888</b>	<b>11,179</b>	<b>11,171</b>	<b>1,823</b>	<b>2,729</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Percentage (100%)</b>	<b>80.49 %</b>	<b>80.43 %</b>	<b>13.13 %</b>	<b>19.65 %</b>	

Source: <https://transgender.dosje.gov.in/> (Retrieved on 08.03.2023 at 09:00 PM).

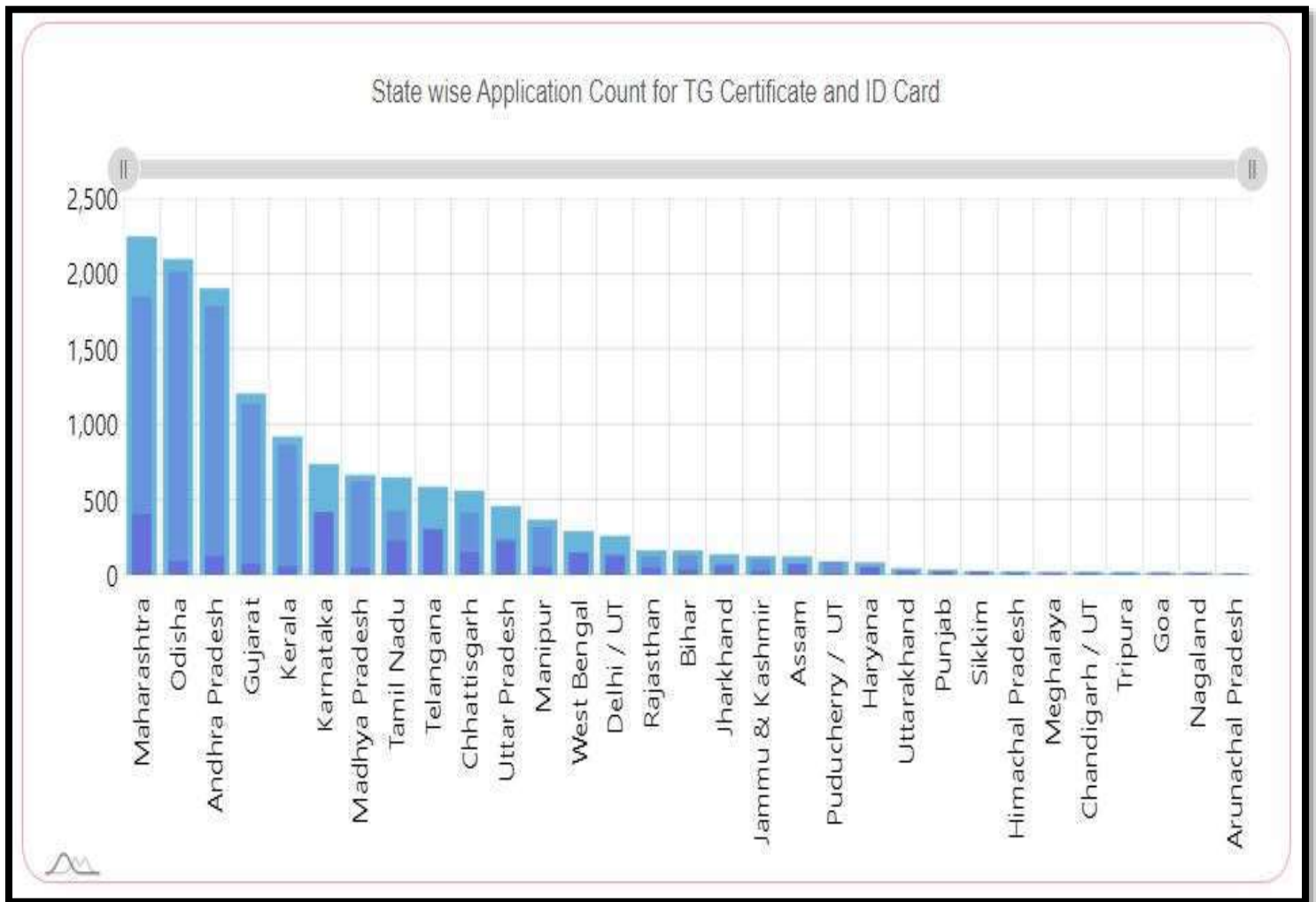
*It is mandatory for the district authorities to issue Transgender Certificates & ID Cards within 30 days of receiving the Application.*



**Certificate and Identity Card Issued by UTs/State wise (Top 10).**

Sl. No.	State / UT	Total Application Received	Total Certificate & ID Issued	Pending Application
1	Maharashtra	2,241	1,842	399
2	Odisha	2,094	2,008	86
3	Andhra Pradesh	1,897	1,779	118
4	Gujarat	1,198	1,131	68
5	Kerala	914	861	53
6	Karnataka	732	411	321
7	Madhya Pradesh	659	615	44
8	Tamil Nadu	644	421	223
9	Telangana	581	300	281
10	Chhattisgarh	555	409	146

Source: <https://transgender.dosje.gov.in/> (Retrieved on 08.03.2023 at 10:05 PM).



### Education of Transgender Persons in India

Understanding the differences and accepting the reality with encouraging everyone will lead the life more awesome. Like the primary and secondary gender men and women looking forward in all the aspects especially in education. On the other side the differentiated transgender community also tries to move with them and grabs to get the basic and advanced knowledge through higher education. Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit". India too having some unbreakable norms and laws for the education of the transgender. But the question is, are they have awareness on these laws? Do they have knowledge on their rights to attain the education? Do the society is ready to serve these kind of humans? And finally are we ready to have a friendly relationship with transgender?

A total of 4,87,803 transgenders were plotted in India in 2011 Census of all states, only Uttar Pradesh having 1,37,465 transgenders in total, more than 28% of the nation's transgender belongs to Uttar Pradesh; followed by Andhra Pradesh holds 43,769 (9%) of transgenders and Maharashtra have 40,891 (8%) standing second and third place respectively; Tamil Nadu limits with 22,364 (5%) and got seventh position in the list; only two transgender people belongs to Lakshadweep caught last line. According to the literacy rate of the transgender, overall performance of the transgender scores only 56.07% and Mizoram tops in the list with highest of 87.14% of the transgender having educational knowledge; followed by Kerala holds 84.61% and Daman & Diu have 75.51% queuing second and third in the list

respectively; TamilNadu recorded only 57.78% of literacy rate and placed 22<sup>nd</sup> position among 35; Bihar scores the least 44.35% of the transgender having literateness.

State	Transgenders	Child(0-6)	SC	ST	Literacy
<i>India</i>	487,803	54,854	78,811	33,293	56.07%
Uttar Pradesh	137,465	18,734	26,404	639	55.80%
Andhra Pradesh	43,769	4,082	6,226	3,225	53.33%
Maharashtra	40,891	4,101	4,691	3,529	67.57%
Bihar	40,827	5,971	6,295	506	44.35%
West Bengal	30,349	2,376	6,474	1,474	58.83%
Madhya Pradesh	29,597	3,409	4,361	5,260	53.01%
Tamil Nadu	22,364	1,289	4,203	180	57.78%
Orissa	20,332	2,125	3,236	4,553	54.35%
Karnataka	20,266	1,771	3,275	1,324	58.82%
Rajasthan	16,517	2,012	2,961	1,805	48.34%
Jharkhand	13,463	1,593	1,499	3,735	47.58%
Gujarat	11,544	1,028	664	1,238	62.82%
Assam	11,374	1,348	774	1,223	53.69%
Punjab	10,243	813	3,055	0	59.75%
Haryana	8,422	1,107	1,456	0	62.11%
Chhattisgarh	6,591	706	742	1,963	51.35%
Uttarakhand	4,555	512	731	95	62.65%
Delhi	4,213	311	490	0	62.99%

State	Transgenders	Child(0-6)	SC	ST	Literacy
<i>India</i>	487,803	54,854	78,811	33,293	56.07%
Jammu and Kashmir	4,137	487	207	385	49.29%
Kerala	3,902	295	337	51	84.61%
Himachal Pradesh	2,051	154	433	118	62.10%
Manipur	1,343	177	40	378	67.50%
Tripura	833	66	172	181	71.19%
Meghalaya	627	134	3	540	57.40%
Arunachal Pradesh	495	64	0	311	52.20%
Goa	398	34	9	33	73.90%
Nagaland	398	63	0	335	70.75%
Puducherry	252	16	40	0	60.59%
Mizoram	166	26	1	146	87.14%
Chandigarh	142	16	22	0	72.22%
Sikkim	126	14	9	37	65.18%
Daman and Diu	59	10	1	2	75.51%
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	47	5	0	3	73.81%
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	43	5	0	22	73.68%
Lakshadweep	2	0	0	2	50.00%

*Source: Census Report, 2011*



In order to address the various issues and problems faced by the Transgender Community in Higher Educational Institutions, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014 issued a circular to all the Vice Chancellors of the Universities requesting them to include a column for Transgender category in all application forms/academic testimonials and all other relevant documents processed by them as well as by their affiliated colleges. The Commission has also requested Universities to take other affirmative actions to get the Transgender students adequately acclimatized without facing fear, stigma or shame. The Commission had on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014 also issued directions to all its Bureaus to ensure that the forms of all the Schemes being operated by UGC carry a column for the Transgender in gender category.

### **Measures for Protection and Welfare of the Transgender Persons in India**

Transgender persons have faced several issues of discrimination, historically, like exclusion from their families, absence of dignified livelihoods, and inadequate access to health, shelter, welfare, and employment.

Odisha is the sole state to build up special resolution for the welfare of the transgender and third gender of the nation. The step was taken to improve their social and economic status. The move has also been taken and keeping the Supreme Court's orders to recognize transgenders as a legal third gender. Odisha has become the first state in the country to provide food grains, pension plans, health schemes, education system and housing loan benefits to the transgender community, thus including them in the Below Poverty Line category. The step has been taken to empower the transgender community.

In the year 2014, the transgender were recognized as a legal third gender by the Supreme Court which ordered the government to provide the third gender with quotas in jobs and education. On April 24, 2015, a bill for the transgender was passed in the Rajya Sabha which sought equal rights for the community. The bill was later adopted through a voice note.

### **The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019**

The Act seeks to mitigate the stigma, discrimination, and abuse against this marginalized section and bring them into the mainstream of society. It will lead to greater inclusiveness and will make Transgender persons productive members of society.

The Bill has the following provisions:

- i. Non-discrimination against a Transgender person in educational institutions, employment, healthcare services etc.
- ii. Recognition of identity of Transgender persons and confer upon them the right to self-perceived gender identity.
- iii. Provision of the Right of Residence with parents and immediate family members.
- iv. Provision for the formulation of welfare schemes and programmes for education, social security, and health of Transgender persons.
- v. Provision for National Council for Transgender Persons to advise, monitor, and evaluate measures for the protection of their rights.

### **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020**

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020 were formulated and published in the Gazette of India on September 29, 2020. The rules seek to recognise the identity of transgenders and prohibit discrimination in the fields of education, employment, healthcare, holding or disposing of property, holding public or private office, and access to and use of public services and benefits.

### **National Council for Transgender Persons**

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 16 of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, the Central Government constituted a National Council for Transgender Persons on 21<sup>st</sup> August

2020. The Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment is the Chairperson (ex-officio) and the Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment is the Vice-Chairperson (ex-officio) of the council. The National Council performs the following functions:

- advises the Central Government on the formulation of policies, programmes, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons;
- monitors and evaluates the impact of policies and programmes designed for achieving equality and full participation of transgender persons;
- reviews and coordinates the activities of all the departments of Government and other Governmental and non-Governmental Organisations which are dealing with matters relating to transgender persons;
- redresses the grievances of transgender persons; and
- performs such other functions as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

The other members of the Council include representatives of various Ministries/Departments, five representatives of the transgender community, representatives of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the National Commission for Women (NCW), representatives of State Governments and UTs, and experts representing NGOs.

### **SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched an umbrella scheme “SMILE - Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise” on February 12, 2022. This umbrella scheme would cover several comprehensive measures including welfare measures for the transgender community and for persons who are engaged in the act of begging with a focus extensively on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development, economic linkages etc. with the support of State Governments/UTs/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs)/Institutions and others. The scheme includes various welfare measures for transgender persons such as financial assistance in the form of scholarships to transgender students studying in classes Ninth till post-graduation, skill development training & livelihood, composite medical health for availing gender reaffirmation surgeries, pre and post-operative procedures and other health care facilities, setting up of Garima Grehs in each state for providing shelter facility for abandoned and orphaned transgender persons, setting up of transgender protection cells in the entire country for providing quick redressal of offences & crimes against transgender persons etc. The Ministry has allocated Rs. 365 crores for the scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

### **National Portal for Transgender Persons**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched National Portal for Transgender Persons (<https://transgender.dosje.gov.in/>) on November 25, 2020. Any Transgender applicant can obtain a certificate of identity and identity card without any physical interface with the office of issue. The person who has been issued a certificate of identity is entitled to change the first name on the birth certificate and all other official documents relating to the identity of such person. The Portal provides the facility for transgender persons to apply for a certificate and an identity card from across the country without physical interface through a seamless end-to-end mechanism. The Transgender certificate and identity card are nationally recognised and are provided by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. The certificate is a mandatory document to avail of the welfare measures being provided under the SMILE scheme.

### **Empowerment of Transgender Persons through Education**

The Indian education system and successive government policies have made steady progress towards bridging gender and social category gaps in all levels of school education. Several other measures are being taken to focus on socio-economically disadvantaged groups that have been historically underrepresented in education.

### *National Education Policy 2020*

The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), approved by the Union Cabinet of India on July 29, 2020, outlines the vision of new education system of India. The Policy aims at universalization of education from preschool to secondary a level with 100 % Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.

NEP 2020 identifies transgender children as Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) and provides for equitable quality education, inter-alia, for all such students. This includes provisions for assisting transgender children in gaining access to education, and support for community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to transgender children's access to and participation in education, thereby aiming to eliminate any remaining disparity in access to education (including vocational education) for children from any gender or other SEDGs.

A '**Gender-Inclusion Fund**' will be constituted under the new policy to build the nation's capacity to provide equitable quality education for all girls as well as transgender students. The fund will be available to States to implement priorities determined by the Central government critical for assisting female and transgender children in gaining access to education (such as the provisions of sanitation and toilets, bicycles, conditional cash transfers, etc.); funds will also enable States to support and scale effective community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to female and transgender children's access to and participation in education.

### **Scholarship Schemes under SMILE**

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is providing scholarship studies in India to Transgender students studying in classes IX and above5 thereby reducing incidences of drop-out and aiding the transition from the elementary to the secondary stage for transgender students through an automated online system using a single login credential.

### **Empowerment through Skill Development Training & Livelihood**

#### *Skill India Mission*

Under Skill India Mission, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has been implementing Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Scheme and National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), for providing short term Skill Development training and Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS), for long term training, to the youth belonging to all sections of the society including transgender persons across India.

#### *Skill Training through PM-DAKSH (Pradhan Mantri - Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi)*

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is imparting skill development training to the Transgender beneficiaries of the SMILE Scheme through PM-DAKSH - a skill development scheme of the Ministry. Short-Term Training Programmes; Up-Skilling/Reskilling; Entrepreneurship Development Programmes, and Long-Term Training Programmes are conducted for transgenders under the scheme. The Skill Development training & livelihood programme under SMILE scheme aims to provide training for transgender persons to get market-oriented skills for getting a livelihood. Through the component, transgender persons would be facilitated for wage and self-employment and provided placement through the empaneled training institutes. Follow-ups and sensitization programmes would also be conducted with the employing agency to eliminate discrimination at workplaces.

### **Garima Grehs: Shelter Homes for Transgender persons**

Section 12(3) of the Transgender Act 2019 says that whether any parent or a member of his immediate family is unable to take care of a transgender, the competent court shall by an order direct such person to be placed in the rehabilitation centre. In consonance with the same, the SMILE scheme provides for



setting up of Garima Grehs, to provide shelter to the transgender persons in need with basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care, and recreational facilities. Besides that, it will provide support for the capacity building/skill development of transgender persons at the shelter home.

Ministry has initiated 12 pilot 'Garima Grehs' 10 and provided financial assistance to community-based organizations (CBOs) for setting up of these shelter homes. These pilot shelter homes are located in the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha. An online monitoring system has been created on the National Portal for Transgender Persons for the Garima Grehs to log in, using the username and password provided to them.

### **Healthcare & Medical Support for Transgender persons**

#### *Composite Medical Health under SMILE*

Composite Medical Health is a component under the SMILE scheme. The objective of the scheme is to provide health insurance coverage to all transgender persons living in India to improve their health condition through proper treatment including sex re-assignment surgeries as well as medical support. The scheme covers all transgender persons not receiving such benefits from other centre/state sponsored schemes. The scope of the scheme is as follows:

- Health insurance in the form of Ayushman Bharat TG Plus shall be available for transgender persons inclusive of gender reaffirmation surgery in the health benefit package under Ayushman Bharat Yojana. Each transgender person shall receive an insurance cover of Rs. 5 Lakh per year under the scheme.
- The Comprehensive Package would cover all aspects of transition related healthcare for transgender persons. It shall also (not exhaustive) provide coverage for hormone therapy, sex re-assignment surgery inclusive of post-operation formalities which can be redeemed at all private and government healthcare facilities.

#### **Financial Assistance: During COVID-19**

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment through National Backward Class Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) has given Rs.1,500 to each transgender person, through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). NBCFDC has additionally provided assistance for ration supplies to transgender persons on the recommendation of the respective district administration.

#### **Counselling Services Helpline**

Owing to the distressing pandemic situation, a free helpline number for transgender persons was made functional for the required psychological support and mental health care by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Any transgender person could connect with experts on the Helpline Number 8882133897. About 260 TG callers have been provided psychological counselling through the free Helpline in 21 States/UTs.

#### **Safe Vaccination for Transgenders:**

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment issued directions to all States/UTs for ensuring that existing COVID vaccination centres are transgender friendly and no discrimination is shown towards transgender persons who come for their vaccination. The Centres were also requested to conduct awareness drives especially for reaching out to the transgender community in different vernaculars to ensure that they are informed and aware of the vaccination process. A request had also been made to the states to organize separate mobile vaccination centers or booths for vaccination of Transgender persons such as those taken up in the states of Haryana & Assam.

#### **Other major steps towards trans-inclusivity:**

1. In 2016, the Ministry of Railways introduced a third gender column in its reservation form and included transgender as an option in railway ticket forms. Previously, the column had only male and female columns.
2. The Ministry of Rural Development implements the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme that provides financial assistance to the elderly, widows and persons with disabilities in the form of social pensions. Under the same, 3,384 Transgender persons are being provided monthly pension.
3. In April 2020, the Ministry of Personnel asked all the central ministries and departments to modify relevant examination rules and application forms to include 'transgender' as a separate category for all the central government jobs.

### **A Trans-exclusionary Budget**

The Union government has commitment of an expenditure of 2.23 lakh crore rupees in the 2023 Budget Statement with an operational sum of 6 crore Rupees (0.002 per cent of the Gender Budget) allocated to the SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) programme under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Earlier the budget was Rs. 5.00 crore for the year 2020-21 for implementation of Scheme for Transgender Persons.

### **Helpline for Transgender Persons**

There is a helpline number for the Transgender Persons i.e. 8882133897 for provide psychological support and mental health care to Transgender Persons by professional Psychologists during Covid lockdown period. There is also a technical helpline no. 91-7923268299 and email id ([tghelp@mail.inflibnet.ac.in](mailto:tghelp@mail.inflibnet.ac.in)) of helpdesk for assisting in applying for Certificate and Identity card digitally for transgenders.

### **National Award for Transgender Persons in India**

Narthaki Nataraj, a renowned dancer from Tamil Nadu, has become the first Indian transgender to be honoured with Padma Shri, the third highest civilian award of India. National Transgender Awards is a medium to reach out to the people who have been working towards the cause of eradicating discrimination and recognise their efforts. The National Transgender Awards was started in the year 2021.

### **Crowned Indian Trans People**

- ✚ Manabi Bandopadhyay - India's first transwoman college principal
- ✚ Padmini Prakash - India's first transgender television anchor
- ✚ Kamla Jaan - The first woman transgender mayor
- ✚ Shabnam Mausi - India's first eunuch to become an MLA
- ✚ Kalki Subramaniam - India's first transgender entrepreneur
- ✚ Lakshmi - Transgender right activist
- ✚ Revathi - First transgender to write about transgender and Hijra's in Asia
- ✚ Narthaki Nataraj - First transwoman to receive Sangeet Natak Akademi Award
- ✚ Sudha TAI - First transgender to receive Honorary Doctorate in 2014
- ✚ K Prithika Yashini - First transwoman Sub-Inspector of Tamil Nadu Police
- ✚ Rose Venkatesan - First transwoman TV host
- ✚ Karpaga - First transwoman actor
- ✚ Maya Jafer - First transwoman Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine
- ✚ C Devi - the first transwoman in Tamil Nadu to contest in the assembly elections
- ✚ Living Smile Vidya - First transgender auto biographer
- ✚ Transgender Swapna - First transgender I.A.S aspirant
- ✚ Transgender Gunavathi - First transgender Nurse

 Pastor Bharathi - First transgender Pastor

### Extra-ordinary Exemplars

With these legal developments and the society slowly moving towards more trans-inclusivity, there are many stories emerging everyday of transgender persons breaking barriers and becoming experts in their fields. Some of their stories are mentioned below:

**Narthaki Nataraj (Transwoman)** Padma Shri Awardee and a renowned Bharatnatyam Dancer Narthaki Nataraj, a renowned Bharatnatyam dancer from Tamil Nadu, was the first transgender person to be conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri Award in the year 2019. Born in a remote village in Tamil Nadu in 1964, Nataraj ran away from her home at the age of 11 due to the backlash received from her family due to her 'effeminate' nature. Soon, she found her Bharatnatyam Guru, Kittappa Pillai in Thanjavur where her journey into the dance form began. Before receiving the Padma Shri, she had also received a Senior Fellowship from the Department of Culture, Government of India in 2014. She is a recipient of the Kalaimamani award, given by the Tamil Nadu government, and in 2016, she received an honorary doctorate from Periyar Maniammai University. She runs the Velliambalam Trust School of Dance, a Bharatanatyam dance school in Chennai.

**Dr. Aqsa Shaikh (Transwoman)** Doctor of Community Medicine and Associate Professor at Hamdard Institute of Medical Science and Research, Delhi Hailing from Mumbai, Dr. Aqsa is the only transgender specialist in community medicine. She is a senior faculty member at Hamdard Institute of Medical Science and Research, Delhi (HIMSAR) During her childhood, she suffered from severe depression and suicidal tendencies due to the gender identity issues and societal pressure to fit into the gender assigned to her, but her motivation to pursue MBBS helped her to overcome these severe mental health issues. With her medical qualification in the field of Community Medicine, she contributed to the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic as in charge of Covid-19 surveillance at the institute's hospital. She now heads a Covid-19 vaccination centre.

**Vihaan Peethambar (Transman)** Expert Committee Member, National Council for Transgender Persons Born in Kerala in a middle class family, Vihaan faced challenging times growing up trying to adjust in the gender roles of a woman. Realising his identity as a trans-man in his early 20's, his journey of medical transitioning into a man took years of efforts. With a degree in Masters of Science in communication and an advanced diploma in Globalization and Human Rights, Vihaan co-founded the first community-based organization for transmen in Kerala and was appointed as an expert committee member in India's first National Council for Transgender Persons in 2020. He continues to advocate for transgender and queer rights at various forums in India and globally.

### Way Forward:

With the legal recognition, policy support and the transgender community being identified under the SEDGs, the movement for inclusion and acceptance of transgender persons has received a strong backing in India. Further, it is the responsibility of each individual at all micro and macro levels to create a 'gender inclusive' environment around them at their households, workplaces and other institutions. With more awareness, empathy and a welcoming attitude we can pave the way for a country, in rainbow colours, where we respect, support, and celebrate the engagement, expression, and well-being of all members of this community.

Education is the holy thing that transgender should have and it is the best way to attain the unreachable success in their life. Proper education will lead the transgender to face the challenges and groom them to overcome the obstacles which are get back their victory. Whether you are an educator, counsellor, supervisor, parent or anyone else needs to learn how to support the transgenders more efficiently and keep in mind that this process is possible. Together a team, we can beat any difficulty that arises and at the end you will made a memorable difference in not only the transgenders life, but also in the lives of their friends, family, surroundings and those in transgender community. All stakeholders and social actors

should come forward for protecting the rights and interest of the marginalized sections of the society including the transgender. It is the duty of the state to make provisions and necessary arrangements for creating enabling environment for this group. The transgender community should also make themselves educated, empowered by awaring and hence accessing the legal provisions, policies, schemes, programmes and services as provided by the govt. and other social welfare agencies. They should feel themselves included in the society and forced the society to rethink and remember that they are also the contributing and responsible citizen and development actors of the nation.

### References:

- i. [http://164.100.47.193/Refinput/New\\_Reference\\_Notes/English/final%20Problems%20and%20welfare%20of%20transgeneders.pdf](http://164.100.47.193/Refinput/New_Reference_Notes/English/final%20Problems%20and%20welfare%20of%20transgeneders.pdf)
- ii. [https://socialjustice.gov.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/ANNUAL\\_REPORT\\_2021\\_ENG.pdf](https://socialjustice.gov.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/ANNUAL_REPORT_2021_ENG.pdf)
- iii. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1806166>
- iv. [http://ncsl.niepa.ac.in/nishtha/face-to-face/NISHTHA\\_Leadership\\_Package\\_English.pdf](http://ncsl.niepa.ac.in/nishtha/face-to-face/NISHTHA_Leadership_Package_English.pdf)
- v. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1598423>
- vi. <https://sbmurban.org/storage/app/media/pdf/swachh-bharat-2.pdf>
- vii. <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1778854>
- viii. AU1270.pdf (pqars.nic.in)
- ix. [https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)
- x. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1784245>
- xi. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1593871>
- xii. <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/nishtha>
- xiii. <http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/QResult15.aspx?qref=31984&lsno=17>
- xiv. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1648221>
- xv. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1776156>
- xvi. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3067545](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3067545)
- xvii. <https://www.readcube.com/articles/10.2139/ssrn.3067545>
- xviii. [https://loksabhadocs.nic.in/Refinput/New\\_Reference\\_Notes/English/final%20Problems%20and%20welfare%20of%20transgeneders.pdf](https://loksabhadocs.nic.in/Refinput/New_Reference_Notes/English/final%20Problems%20and%20welfare%20of%20transgeneders.pdf)
- xix. <https://transgender.dosje.gov.in/>
- xx. [https://theleaflet.in/union-budget-2023-transgender-persons-remain-an-afterthought-in-india/#:~:text=The%20Union%20government%20presented%20an,Enterprise\)%20programme%20under%20the%20Ministry.](https://theleaflet.in/union-budget-2023-transgender-persons-remain-an-afterthought-in-india/#:~:text=The%20Union%20government%20presented%20an,Enterprise)%20programme%20under%20the%20Ministry.)