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Problems and prospects of transgender education in India
Dr. Jagannath K Dange, Prakasha C, Mumthaz Anjum.

Social policies for persons with disabilities: A case study in
Karnataka
Mahesh KS, Prof. M Gurulingaiah.

Self Help Group-Bank Linkage Programme: An overview
Dr. Gangadhara. P. S, Dr. Venkatesh. M. 30

ಗಾಣಿಗ ಸಮುದಾಯದ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರ ಸ್ಥಿತಿಗತಿ: ವಿಜಯನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ
ಮೇಘನ.

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Problems and prospects of transgender education in India

Dr. Jagannath K Dange, Professor and Chairman, Dept. of P.G Studies and Research in Education, Kuvempu University, Shivammoga, India, E-mail: drjkdange@gmail.com

Prakasha C, Research Scholar, Dept. of P.G Studies and Research in Education, Kuvempu University, Shivammoga, India, E-mail: prakasha88birur@gmail.com

Mumthaz Anjum, Research Scholar, Dept. of P.G Studies and Research in Education, Kuvempu University, Shivammoga, India, E-mail: idris911045@gmail.com

***Abstract:** The Indian Constitution's spirit is to ensure that every citizen has an equal opportunity to develop and fulfil their potential, regardless of caste, religion, or gender. Certain groups, communities and individuals have always been on the margins due to orthodox beliefs, a lack of awareness or ineffective planning and policies for the development of society and the global community. The well-known "Hire" community is also on the margins in terms of social, educational, economic, psychosocial, and psychosexual well-being. Additionally, they have fought for centuries for their identity and rights. This article highlights the importance of inclusion of transgender children or adults in the mainstream education system or society and also gives brief information about the various initiatives like SWEEKRUTI, SMILE, PM DAKSHA etc. taken by the state and central government. Finally, this article lists out problems, challenges and suggests the measures for effective implementation of these schemes to educate and empower the marginalised group.*

Key words: Education, Empowerment, Marginalised, SMILE, Transgender

Introduction

People's gender identities might differ from the sex they were assigned at birth, which is referred to as transgender. There are a number of phrases used by transgender persons to define themselves. For example, the term transgender is frequently abbreviated as Trans, trans*, or trans male/trans female. It's always ideal to utilise the person's preferred language and terms. Gender identity is expressed in a variety of ways by transgender persons. Some people dress, act, and behave in ways that reflect the gender they identify with. They have distinctive personalities and characteristics. The term 'transgender' does not refer to sexual orientation or physical sex, but it does refer to gender identity and expression. As a result, transgender persons fall within the group of people whose gender identification is in question.

Transgender education is in a constant state of change. It's a frightening force to consider within the school system, because they're not really engaged in learning. Educated transgender people are making a significant contribution to change in a variety of professions, although they are rare in number. In India, there is no conventional schooling for transgender people. They are the outcasts of their families and school campuses, and transgender people drop out of school, which means they will have less job options in the future. The most ignorant or undereducated category is transgender people. The transgender community has an average educational qualification of primary or upper primary level. The admittance rate is quite low, and the dropout rate is still very high in the elementary and secondary levels. They are almost never educated. They are rarely educated as they are not accepted by society and therefore do not receive proper schooling. Even if they are joined in an educational institute, they face harassment and are forced every day to leave the school or they drop out on their own. Because of this reason they choose begging and sex work. (Ashokraj S, 2019)

The 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) places a significant emphasis on "Leave No One Behind" and ensuring a life of dignity for all people, including lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, and intersex (LGBTQ) people. It will not be able to maintain the progress made on the SDGs without general development. The transgender community in India suffers barriers to healthcare, education, housing, employment, and livelihood. In their daily lives, the majority of the community is subjected to stigma, prejudice,

and violence. They have remained unnoticed, avoiding public debates, social movements, and the mainstream media, which frequently ignore their needs and views. However, substantial improvements in the growth of the transgender community have occurred in recent years, particularly the 2018 election.

Current educational status of transgender community in India

We know that education is the most fundamental or basic human right that every individual has, regardless of caste, creed, region, religion, or gender, but we still allow such elements to determine a person's destiny. We are so intent on fitting everyone around us into these so-called classified categories of gender and stereotypes that we fail to look at a person's true nature. Hijras are a good example of this. The first census to measure the status of transgender education in India occurred in 2011, when the government consented to consider them as a separate category in the population count. Until 2011, there were only two gender groupings in the population census: male and female, with no option for a third gender.

	State	Transgender population	Child(0-6)	SC	ST	Literacy
-	India	4,87,803	54,854	78,811	33,293	56.07%
1	<u>Uttar Pradesh</u>	137,465	18,734	26,404	639	55.80%
2	<u>Andhra Pradesh</u>	43,769	4,082	6,226	3,225	53.33%
3	<u>Maharashtra</u>	40,891	4,101	4,691	3,529	67.57%
4	<u>Bihar</u>	40,827	5,971	6,295	506	44.35%
5	<u>West Bengal</u>	30,349	2,376	6,474	1,474	58.83%
6	<u>Madhya Pradesh</u>	29,597	3,409	4,361	5,260	53.01%

7	<u>Tamil Nadu</u>	22,364	1,289	4,203	180	57.78%
8	<u>Orissa</u>	20,332	2,125	3,236	4,553	54.35%
9	<u>Karnataka</u>	20,266	1,771	3,275	1,324	58.82%
10	<u>Rajasthan</u>	16,517	2,012	2,961	1,805	48.34%
11	<u>Jharkhand</u>	13,463	1,593	1,499	3,735	47.58%
12	<u>Gujarat</u>	11,544	1,028	664	1,238	62.82%
13	<u>Assam</u>	11,374	1,348	774	1,223	53.69%
14	<u>Punjab</u>	10,243	813	3,055	0	59.75%
15	<u>Haryana</u>	8,422	1,107	1,456	0	62.11%
16	<u>Chhattisgarh</u>	6,591	706	742	1,963	51.35%
17	<u>Uttarakhand</u>	4,555	512	731	95	62.65%
18	<u>Delhi</u>	4,213	311	490	0	62.99%
19	<u>Jammu and Kashmir</u>	4,137	487	207	385	49.29%
20	<u>Kerala</u>	3,902	295	337	51	84.61%
21	<u>Himachal Pradesh</u>	2,051	154	433	118	62.10%
22	<u>Manipur</u>	1,343	177	40	378	67.50%
23	<u>Tripura</u>	833	66	172	181	71.19%

24	<u>Meghalaya</u>	627	134	3	540	57.40%
25	<u>Arunachal Pradesh</u>	495	64	0	311	52.20%
26	<u>Goa</u>	398	34	9	33	73.90%
27	<u>Nagaland</u>	398	63	0	335	70.75%
28	<u>Puducherry</u>	252	16	40	0	60.59%
29	<u>Mizoram</u>	166	26	1	146	87.14%
30	<u>Chandigarh</u>	142	16	22	0	72.22%
31	<u>Sikkim</u>	126	14	9	37	65.18%
32	<u>Daman and Diu</u>	59	10	1	2	75.51%
33	<u>Andaman and Nicobar Islands</u>	47	5	0	3	73.81%
34	<u>Dadra and Nagar Haveli</u>	43	5	0	22	73.68%
35	<u>Lakshadweep</u>	2	0	0	2	50.00%

However, the Supreme Court of India recognised transgender individuals as a third gender in 2014. Men and women in today's society strive for advancement in many areas, particularly education, but the transgender community is different. They also try to keep up with them and take use of higher education to get basic and specialised information. "Everyone has the right to education," according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (NK Vats, 2017). Education should be free at the very least during the elementary and secondary school years. Primary education will be required.

Technical and professional education must be open to all, and higher education must be provided to all on a merit-based basis." Out of 35 states and territories, Uttar Pradesh, India, has the most eunuchs, with 13000. Bihar came in second with 9,987 votes, followed by West Bengal with 9,868 votes. They finished basic education at a rate of 27 percent, middle school at a rate of 10%, upper secondary at a rate of 10%, and high school at a rate of 27 percent on average. They also completed UG and PG courses at a 26 percent rate. The survey also indicated that the transgender community had a low literacy rate of 46 percent, compared to 74 percent in the overall population. Eunuchs have a reputation for being persecuted and prosecuted.

For years, the Indian Census has never acknowledged the third gender, i.e., transgender, when collecting statistics. However, in 2011, data on transsexual people was gathered, including information on their job, literacy, and caste. According to the 2011 census, India's total population of transgender people is about 4.88 million. In the primary data given by the Census Department, Transgender was noted under "Males." Separate Transgender data has been drawn out of that for educational purpose.

According to the 2011 Census, India's total population of transgender people is roughly 4,87,803, with a literacy rate of 57.06 percent. There were 54,854 transgender children under the age of six in 2011. These kids are between the ages of 12 and 18, Transgender people's socioeconomic status in our nation strongly implies that education is out of reach for them. Their main priority is to stay alive. They still regard education as a premium. People do not understand transgender children as respected members of society, and they face social humiliation outside of school. As a result, making schools and educational institutions "trans friendly" is a critical concern. (Bhumika Rajdev,2020)

RTE-2009 emphasised the need of teaching transgender children in traditional schools. The RTE-2009 enhanced Article 21A, which guarantees universal basic education for all children, especially those from low-income families. Along with all of the negative news concerning the transgender population, there are some positive news that India has launched its first transgender school: Kalki Subrahmaniam, a transgender rights activist, formally launched the school, which started with ten students. In the Indian city of Kochi, a residential school for

transgender individuals has opened to enable adults who have dropped out of school to complete their education. In India, transgender persons experience discrimination and hatred, and over half of them drop out of school as a result. Sahaj International is the country's first school of its sort. It accepts ten students between the ages of 25 and 50. The students are prepared for the Class 10 and 12 board exams in India, which are usually taken when pupils are 15-16 or 17-18 years old.

The school aims at making transgender eligible for taking decent jobs and living a dignified life. Teachers are also transgender. The school is in Kerala, which is the first Indian state to adopt a transgender policy against discrimination. It promotes inclusive education. The teachers also belong to the transgender community - a measure designed to protect and encourage the students. "This is a model centre. Once proved successful, they will expand the facilities and admit more people, from across India". "Kerala has some 25,000 transgender, and 57% of them were forced to drop out of school due to stigma. They all should get a decent accommodation the policy initiatives envisaged." The school was opened by activist Kalki Subramaniam, who is a transgender woman herself.

The only state to effectively pioneer transgender inclusion by enacting a transgender welfare programme is Tamil Nadu. Transgender people are entitled to entrance to government universities, a full scholarship for further education, and alternate sources of income under this policy. The Tamil Nadu government established a telephone helpline called them in March 2009, an effort that led to the establishment of India's first LGBT helpline in Madurai in 2011.

According to the above statistical study of transgender education, the ratio reveals that numerous scholarships and programmes aimed at promoting transgender education are not reaching as many people as society would want. There is a pressing need to identify the many strategies that may be taken to properly execute these transgender student welfare programmes in order to raise the literacy rate of transgender students in all Indian states.

Prospects of transgender communities in India

● **Constitutional rights of transgender people:** Gender-based identification among males and females is an important part of the Indian state's civil identity requirements. The Indian state's stance of recognising just two sexes and refusing to recognise hijras as women or as a third sex, has essentially denied them of privileges that Indians take for granted. These rights include the ability to marry, vote, own property, create a legal identification through the use of a passport, ration card, or driver's licence, as well as the right to education, work, and health care. Transgender people are excluded from the core fabric of Indian civil society as a result of this deprivation (Indian Constitution, 1950).

● **Transgender policy:** Kerala was the first state in India to establish a comprehensive transgender policy. The strategy aims to eliminate transgender people's societal isolation.

● **Free College Education:** In India schools and colleges have begun to offer transgender pupils a free education. For example, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University MSU, located in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, has waived tuition fee for trans pupils at all 10 of its college campuses.

● **Transgender Welfare Board:** Tamil Nadu as an example, has a comprehensive welfare programme that includes free housing for transgender persons as well as gender confirmation procedures at government hospitals. It was

● the first state to create a Transgender Welfare Board, which is made up of transgender people.

Educational challenges

● Learning environment:

While transgender children's education is just as important as other children's education, this remark highlights the question of whether transgender pupils enjoy a comfortable classroom atmosphere within school grounds, as they have suffered stigma since they first declared their sexual orientation. It is the role of the administration and school management to ensure a proper learning atmosphere on school grounds, as there is a larger chance that different stigmas may begin to limit transgender students' inclusion, as they have in the past. Other stigmas may decrease such students' excitement and cause them to focus on academic activities more

crucially, they may feel ignored, mistreated, insulted, or embarrassed in educational environments, resulting in high school or college dropout to provide a suitable learning environment (A.A. Singh, 2017).

● **Sensitization of teachers:** Teachers and students are crucial in accomplishing educational life's goals while keeping in mind national goals and their individual responsibilities at every level of education. The teachers and in certain situations, their pupils decide the quality of the entire educational process. Every child has the right to be nurtured to the fullest degree feasible with the complete and appropriate cognitive, psychological, emotional, and moral support of all systems in its environment, according to the human rights concept. Similarly, transgender pupils have the same entitlement to an education as regular students, and they should be valued to the utmost degree feasible from a humane standpoint. Everyone participating in the educational process, at any level, should understand how they can donate to their education inclusively. (JB Messman, 2019). Concerns about transgender children, their lives and cultures, psychological and emotional well-being, and cognitive ability, as well as collaboration among all children and interactions between transgender and other pupils, must be brought to the attention of teachers. Teachers might get training on how to develop and execute transgender-friendly curriculum.

● **Content based and pedagogic modification:** Transgender children are never ordinary. They have the same mental abilities and feelings as a regular youngster. However, it should be assessed whether it is necessary to give specific resources relevant to the transgender community. (NK Vats, 2017). Furthermore, educational changes may be advantageous in incorporating transgender teenagers into the classroom. There is currently no scientific evidence in this area. Changes in content and pedagogy, on the other hand, might encourage more understanding among classmates and instructors, as well as among transgender children. This is the ideal time to modify our society's, academic community's, and corporate sector's attitudes around transgender children's rehabilitation. Society and other areas of life have a far more unfavourable attitude regarding transgender children's rehabilitation, education, personality development, link to other social orders, and sociocultural characteristics. Transgender children face a variety of sociocultural stigmas, and as a result of these negative environments,

transgender children are unable to overcome the challenges they face. (JB Messman, 2017) As a result, the academic community, as well as other sectors of society, must maintain a positive and inspirational approach toward transgender education and rehabilitation.

● **Less Education:** The inclusion of transgender students in schools and universities is a major experiment. Until 2004, no one even considered include transgender people in the mainstream, and they were denied the right to an education. As a result of having no or little education, the transgender population is unable to get government or private work, resulting in unemployment and poor socioeconomic position.

● **Inclusion in School/ College and University:** Inclusion of transgender students in school and college is a significant problem. It is extremely difficult to give equal educational opportunities to transgender students since there is an issue linked with inclusion with male and female gender students.

● **Use of Disrespectful Names and Pronouns:** When a transgender adolescent identifies as a certain gender (regardless of biological sex), it is respectful to the adolescent's human dignity to use the name selected and the pronouns suitable to that gender. To continue using a past name and other pronouns on purpose is to be willfully insulting. Transgender adolescents may accept and sympathise with some misunderstanding as long as there is consistent, major progress in using the correct name and pronouns.

● **Lack of Access to proper Restroom Facilities:** Transgender people frequently do not have secure access to public bathrooms. They may be assaulted if they use a toilet that corresponds to their gender identity, or they may be compelled to use a facility that does not correspond to their gender identity. Transgender people are frequently denied safe access to locker rooms that correspond to their gender identification. Dress regulations may cause issues for transgender adolescents wherever they are enacted.

● **Confidentiality:** Transgender children may have unsupportive families and may fear violence and/or eviction from their home if their gender identity or gender expression is revealed to the family.

● **Lack of Ideal Personality:** Transgender teenagers are frequently isolated in society. Few transgender people work in youth programmes, and few libraries provide information about biological sex and gender, gender identity, or being transgender (Raj Kumar, 2016).

Programmes for the empowerment

Both the central and state governments of India, in collaboration with various non-governmental organisations, launched plenty of short and long-term initiatives to empower transgender people, with the goal of improving their health, economic standing, standard of living, and overall happiness, through programmes such as SMILE, SWEEKRUTI, PMDAKSHA, GARIMA GREH, and others.

Pradhan mantri dakshta (PM Daksh) Yojana: This effort outlines the action plan for skilling underprivileged groups such as SC, OB, sanitation workers, transgender people, and others. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E) works to empower socially, educationally, and economically marginalised groups in society, such as SCs, OBCs, Senior Citizens, and victims of alcoholism and substance abuse, transgender people, De-notified Tribes (DNTs), EBCs, Safai Karamcharies, Waste Pickers, and Manual Scavengers. Most members of the target group have few economic assets; so, providing training and developing their competences is critical for economic empowerment/upliftment of these marginalised groups.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has advised the Lok Sabha that the funds allocated under the **PM-DAKSH** Yojana for 2020-21 and 2021-22 are Rs.44.79 crore and Rs.79.48 crore, respectively. Previously, the Ministry launched the '**PM-DAKSH**' Portal and '**PM-DAKSH**' Mobile App to make skill development initiatives available to the following target groups: SC (Scheduled Caste), OBC (Other Backward Classes), Economically Backward Classes (EBC), Denotified Tribes, and Sanitation Workers. This system contains the following requirements, which is implemented in 2020-21. This programme provides skill development

training programmes for qualifying target groups in the areas of Short-Term Training Program, Up-Skilling/Reskilling, Entrepreneurship Development Program, and Long-Term Training Program. These training programmes are being regulated by government training institutes, sector skill councils established by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and other competent organisations.

Smile: The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has developed a national-level umbrella scheme called "SMILE - Support For Marginalized Individuals For Livelihood And Enterprise," which includes two sub-schemes: "Comprehensive Rehabilitation for the Welfare of Transgender Persons" and "Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in Begging." With the support of State Governments/UTs/Local Urban Bodies, Voluntary Organizations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and institutions, and others, this umbrella scheme would cover several comprehensive measures, including welfare measures for both transgender and begging individuals, with a focus on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development, economic linkages, and so on.

Sweekruti: The Government of Odisha's Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) recognises transgender people as valuable human resources and strives to create an environment that provides them with equal opportunities, protection of their rights, and full participation in society. As part of an integrated strategy for transgender equality and justice, the department has developed a new umbrella scheme called "SWEKRUTI," which will be run in a mission mode with several objectives.

To ensure equitable justice for transgenders the Sweekruti scheme focuses on the following broad objectives: To create a facilitating environment to ensure equal opportunities, equity, social justice & empowerment of transgenders of the state. To inspire voluntary action and participation of all stake holders for ensuring effective social integration of transgender persons. To expand outreach activities for protection of rights and privileges of transgender in the state. To promote individual and group activities by transgender persons for employment, self-employment and other socio-educational services. To strengthen the current execution machinery and create conveniences for coverage of all transgender persons of the state.

Garima Greh Yojana: The scheme has a fantastic goal in mind, and it provides specific services to transgender individuals in India. The government has created facilities for transgenders who do not have a home or who have been taken from their homes. These transgenders can use these facilities. The Central Government provides the following list of facilities: Shelter, food, clothes, recreational facilities, and chances for skill development are all available. Yoga, meditation/prayer, physical exercise, library services, legal assistance, technical help for gender change and operations, Organizational capacity building for trans-friendly organisations, support with finding work and developing new skills.

Job reservation for transgender: Karnataka has become the first state in the country to grant a 1% reservation for the 'transgender' minority in all government services. The government submitted a report to the high court in this respect, notifying it that a notification had already been issued after the amendment of the Karnataka Civil Service (General Recruitment) Rule, 1977. The final notification, released on July 06, 2021, provides a 1% reservation in all general and reserve categories for the third gender. Whenever a notice requesting applications for government positions is issued, a 'others' column, in addition to male and female columns, must be included. The announcement further emphasises that transgender people should not face prejudice throughout the selection process.

These are some of the measures conducted by the central and state governments, with the help of private groups, to improve the health, economic, educational, and financial circumstances of marginalised people. Even though governments and private organisations are working hard to uplift these marginalised groups, they have yet to achieve their full potential due to a lack of awareness about these programmes among these excluded communities, a lack of education, and the fact that they wander from one area to another, begging and prostitution work.

Suggestions

These are some of the initiatives taken by the federal and state governments, with the assistance of private organisations, to improve the health, economic, educational, and financial conditions of marginalised individuals. Despite the fact that governments and private organisations are working hard to uplift these marginalised groups, they have yet to reach their full potential due

to a lack of awareness about these programmes among excluded communities, a lack of education, and the fact that they wander from one area to another begging and prostitution work.

● **Inclusion through Vocational Education / Training:** Teachers, school administration, and the community all have a role to play in encouraging inclusion. Teachers should give trans students with skills training and job development to assist them become self-sufficient. The transgender community should be made aware of teachers and other school officials. Giving transgender children art lessons can help them achieve in every circumstance. They will be more welcoming in the community and family as they get greater self-confidence.

● **Financial Assistance:** Efforts like scholarships, books and hostel facilities for transgender students should be supported by the government.

● **Anti-discrimination Cell for Transgender Children/Persons:** If transgender persons are harassed or discriminated against in any environment, an anti-discrimination cell at schools, colleges, or other educational institutions should be formed.

● **Training of Teachers and Awareness in Society:** Teachers who are motivated and qualified to teach a class with transgender students must do everything possible to provide educational opportunities and inclusion for transgender students.

● **Interact them using name:** When communicating with transgender people, we should use the appropriate pronoun (she, her, or him) rather than insisting on using their prior names, since this emphasises their dignity and value. As a result of this practise, they will become more acceptable in the community.

● **Aware the concerned people in organization/society:** The rights and dignity of transgender pupils must be understood by all educational institutions, schools, universities, and other organisations. It should be mandated that locations do not discriminate based on gender to ensure that the organization's location doesn't really violate people's dignity or privacy.

● **National Commission for Transgender Children/Persons:** A government commission should be established to supervise children's and transgender people's academic, social, and economic rehabilitation.

● **Comprehensive Census Data of Transgender Persons:** This should be a must-have since an in-depth grasp of the dynamics and children on various levels is vital when it comes to educational status, age, literacy, literacy for different groups, enrolment, and departure between

various educational levels. Collecting this information would include conducting a census, acquiring more information, and so on.

Conclusion

Since transgender persons engage in the educational system at all levels, there is a lack of study on transgender issues in education. Because of the high degree of cultural transphobia, many transgender persons feel uncomfortable openly identifying their status, it is difficult to determine the number of transgender people who engage in the educational system. Furthermore, many young people whose gender differs from that of the prevailing model lack the words to define their experiences and feelings due to a lack of access to information. (Brill and Pepper, 2008) noted that many transgender people realize that they are transgender in childhood. These examples indicate that transgender children participate in the educational system as early as elementary school. Teacher education programs have the responsibility of preparing teachers to support the growth of transgender individuals at all levels of the education system. According to studies, 80 percent of transgender students suffer from at least one mental disease; these percentages are stunning, and many of these students drop out of high schools and colleges. They are often forced to resort to begging and prostitution because to a lack of access to school and career opportunities. The amount of psychological suffering these people are subjected to is unfathomable, and no one deserves to be treated this way. Their schooling is hampered by continual harassment and a lack of knowledge. Despite their exceptional academic and extracurricular achievements, most institutions reject transgender student's entrance. This ignorance and lack of understanding about transgender people in Indian society must be addressed as soon as possible, and this can only be accomplished by increasing public awareness, providing proper education and employment opportunities for transgender people, and enacting laws that protect them from harassment and discrimination.

This necessitates the creation of a suitable learning environment as well as societal acceptability. Aside from material and methodological changes, pre-service and in-service instructors must be prepared to work with transgender students. It is suggested that thorough in-service and pre-service teacher training programmes for transgender children's education be performed in view of the topic. The present teacher education programme should be redesigned

to include transgender-specific curriculum. From one region to another, and from one culture to another, people's social status and roles have changed. Because they are shunned by society and unable to obtain a quality education or a proper profession, they are trapped in a vicious cycle of mental and financial stress. Several of these transgender people have overcome societal obstacles and built a name for themselves, encouraging the community as a whole. Such people have become role models for others in their society and have made incredible contributions to the community by succeeding in their respective fields.

Children who identify as transgender would be considered disadvantaged. This may give transgender children and adults hope that they may be able to study with the same respect as regular pupils in the future. It is necessary to determine if the transgender community's preferred constitutional and legislative reforms would be sufficient to provide a suitable educational and social environment for transgender children's education and rehabilitation, or whether further measures should be considered.

The majority of transgender people's difficulties may be solved simply by integrating them into existing government programmes. However, most of the programmes' benefits do not reach transgender people since implementing officials are unaware of the need to focus on transgender people or even allocate funding for transgender people. To sum up, transgender people are an integral part of our society. Transgender people are entitled to the same freedoms as everyone else. Instead of your pity for them, the transgender community requires like-minded individuals who can comprehend their sentiments.

By efficiently executing all of the plans, the transgender population may appreciate excellent health, a high literacy rate, and a dignified living, while also abolishing harmful habits like as begging and prostitution, and bringing a smile on their faces.

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