

Educational Challenges Of Transgender

M. Gnana Kamali^a, Dr.J.Antony Rajam^b, Dr.K.C.Bindhu^c Dr.J.Maria Prema^d

^aResearch Scholar , Mother Teresa women's University ,Kodaikanal

^b Assistant Professor in Chemistry, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

^cAssociate Professor of Education, Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal

^dAssistant Professor of Education, St. Ignatius College of Education (Autonomous), Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli

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Abstract: The right to choose one's gender identity is an essential part to lead a life with dignity which again falls under the ambit of Article 21. Transgender persons are deprived of social and cultural participation and hence they have restricted access to education, health care and public places which further deprives them of the Constitutional guarantee of equality before law and equal protection of laws. It has also been noticed that the community also faces discrimination as they are not given the right to contest election, right to vote (Article 326), employment, to get licenses, etc. and in effect, they are treated as outcast and untouchable. Section-21 makes provision that all Government institutions of primary, secondary and higher education and all primary, secondary and higher education institutions receiving aid from the Government shall reserve two percent of the total seats in each class or course for transgender persons

Keywords: Transgender, Educational Challenges, Social Status, Educational Status, etc.

1. Introduction

Education & skills opportunity plays pivotal role in enhancing jobs and economic opportunities for an individual. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child, 1989 (UNCRC) article 29. 'The education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential'; and the Constitution of India consider 'education' as a fundamental right for children for six to fourteen years. Every child of the Age of six to fourteen years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in neighborhood school till completion of elementary education. Promulgation of a separate Act further provided impetus to the government efforts in providing free compulsory education to children, as it has now become constitutional obligation for the state to provide free education. India has achieved significant growth and development. It has improved on crucial human development indices such as levels of literacy, education and health. There are indications, however, that not all disadvantaged groups have shared equally the benefits of the growth process. Among these, the transgender community, one of the marginalized and vulnerable communities in the country is seriously lagging behind on human development indices including education.

2. Historical Background of Transgender

Members of the third gender have played a prominent role in Indian culture and were once treated with great respect. They find mention in the ancient Hindu scriptures and were written about in the greatest epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. In the great epic Mahabharat 'Shikhandi', was a transgender. In medieval India too, they played a prominent role in the royal courts of the Mughal emperors and some Hindu rulers. Many of them rose to powerful positions. Their fall from grace started in the 18th Century during the British colonial rule when the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 categorized the entire transgender community as "criminals" who were "addicted" to committing serious crimes. 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.

3. Current Status of Transgender

Social Status

The transgender community faces stigma and discrimination and therefore has fewer opportunities as compared to others. They are hardly educated as they are not accepted by the society and therefore do not receive proper schooling. Even if they are enrolled in an educational institute, they face harassment and are bullied every day and are asked to leave the school or they drop out on their own. It is because of this that they take up begging and sex work. They are forced into sex work which puts them at the highest risk of contracting HIV as they agree to unprotected sexual intercourse because they fear rejection or they want to affirm their gender through sex. They are viewed as 'vectors' of HIV in the society.

Educational Status

No formal education for transgender is popular in Indian context. They are deprived from family and school environment, transgender discontinue their education and risk their future career opportunities. A close analysis of various reports and discussion with community and stakeholders suggest that transgender are most uneducated or undereducated, become reluctant to continue schooling. The average qualification is secondary or senior secondary level. The enrolment is significantly low and dropout rate at the primary and secondary level is still very high. They are hardly educated as they are nor accepted by the society and therefore do not receive proper schooling. Even if they are enrolled in an educational institute, they face harassment and are bullied every day and are asked to leave the school or they drop out on their own. It is because of this that they take up begging and sex work. It is mandatory for the Government to provide inclusive education for transgender students and provide adult education to them.

Educational Challenges

Less Education - Inclusion of transgender in schools and colleges is a big challenge. Till 2004 nobody even thought to include transgender in the mainstream and were denied right towards education. Thus because of no education or less education, government or private jobs remain inaccessible for the transgender community leading to many factors associated with inequality in employment and socioeconomic status.

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Inclusion in School/ College and University

Inclusion of transgender with school and college is a big challenge. It is so challenging to provide equal opportunity of education to transgender because there is a problem of inclusion with male and female gender students.

Use of Disrespectful Names and Pronouns

When a transgender youth identifies as a particular gender (irrespective of biological sex), it is respectful to the youth's human dignity to use the name chosen and the pronouns appropriate to that particular gender. To persevere intentionally in the use of a prior name and other pronouns is to be deliberately disrespectful. Transgender youth can understand and sympathize with some confusion, so long as there is continuous, good faith progress in using the proper name and pronouns.

Lack of Access to Appropriate Restroom Facilities

Transgender people often lack safe access to public restrooms. They may be assaulted if they use the restroom that conforms to their gender identity or forced to use a restroom that does not conform to their gender identity. Transgender people often have no safe access to locker room facilities that conform to their gender identity. Wherever dress codes are enforced, they may create problems for transgender youth.

Confidentiality

Transgender youth may have unsupportive families and may even face violence and/or ejection from their home if their gender identity or gender expression is disclosed to the family.

Lack of Ideal Personality

Transgender youth often feel alone in the world. Few programs for youth employ transgender people; few libraries offer information about biological sex and gender, gender identity, or being transgender

3. Ways to Develop Educational Status

Made Effort for Inclusion

There is a need for prepare an environment where transgender feels secure. Teacher and community people can play an important role in inclusion. India is facing acute shortage of skilled manpower in different sectors. There is a need to provide vocational education and training to teachers and other school members. At the secondary and higher secondary levels vocational training should be provided to the transgender that they prepare for their job.

Names and/or Pronouns

Use the name and/or pronouns appropriate to the young person's chosen gender identity. Remember that it is everyone's essential dignity to be called by our chosen name, and it is everyone's right to be recognized as the person we see ourselves to be. Please apologize if you use the wrong pronoun or the wrong name.

Access to Restroom Facilities

Educate staff and youth about gender identity. Make sure that everyone understands that transgender youth. If possible, designate gender-neutral restrooms and locker rooms (toilet facilities that anyone may use, irrespective of gender identity or gender expression). Educate staff and youth about gender identity.

Confidentiality

Make sure that the program maintains confidentiality with regard to the gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and sexual behavior of all the youth in the program.

Ideal Personality

Search out transgender support groups and GLBTQ youth-serving organizations in your area. Make sure that these groups and organizations are included on your resource lists.

Provide Financial Assistance

Government should provide fee-waiver, fee-reimbursements, scholarships, free textbooks, free hostel accommodation and other facilities at subsidized rates for students belonging to the transgender in order to make higher education and professional education accessible by the community. Special coaching should be provided to the candidates for competitive examinations.

Establishment of Anti-discrimination Cell

All the educational institutions/universities should establish an anti-discrimination cell to monitor any form of discrimination against the transgender. There is need for a focused institutionalized mechanism of research and academic activities to generate more data/information to identify and understand the problems related to various aspects of their life.

4. Conclusion

Transgender people are becoming increasingly visible at secondary and post-secondary schools across the country and expecting institutions to meet their needs. School officials thus can no longer ignore this population; they must quickly learn the appropriate language to describe trans-people, educate themselves on transgender histories, and seek to understand their lives and experiences. All the institutions are the pillars of any society and family is one of the important one and in the same manner education, employment and politics. There is a need of wider space within the institutions for all the human beings without any kind of discrimination. It will harness the society with progress and leads towards the prosperity.

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