Indian Journal of **Adult Education** 82 (1) 2021, 52-67
https:/www.iaea-india.in
ISSN 0019-5006
DOI: 10.5958/0019-5006.2021.00005.X

Integration of Transgender in Indian Society: Realities and Possibilities

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Abstract

The transgender community (*trans*) often faces discrimination, atrocities, harassment in the society on the grounds of their sexuality. Society gives recognition to only two binary genders i.e., male and female; other categories such as transsexual persons are considered to be an oddity. By the landmark judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, *trans* people were recognized as the 'third gender' in society, with a view that the judgment will empower the transgender community to live their life with dignity and respect. However, simply providing the identity of being the third gender to the transgender community is not enough to solve their problems. The inclusion and acceptance of *trans* people in society is still a big dream to be achieved. Segregation causes the *trans* community to be vulnerable and severely marginalized in society. This paper will try to understand the gap which acts as a hindrance in the way of development forthe trans community, through life narratives of three transgender persons to help figure out the ways for bridging the gap. The authors suggest several ways through which the *trans* community could be integrated into the main stream society.

Keywords: *Transgender integration, empowerment, inclusion, identity*

Introduction

The transgender community is one of the most disadvantaged groups in Indian society. Mainly because of exclusion from the mainstream of the society,transgender community becomes more vulnerable and subjected to live in darkness of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty. The genesis of all the complications of gender non-

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conforming people may be traced tothe stigma and inequalities they experience in society, resulting in their exclusion from the socio-economic and political gamut. Transgender persons in India are socially underprivileged; they mostly live under the threat of being tormented as they often face discriminatory behavior from people. Our society recognizes only two binary genders i.e. male and female, any another gender is considered to be an oddity. As a result of being stigmatized and sidelined from society transgender community feels rejected, unloved, ignored, lonely which compels them to live in isolation. However, in India transgender community got a separate identity as the third gender in April 2014, as a result of the landmark judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. But it seems that even this identity is not enough to integrate them into the society as the conditions of sexual minorities are still distressing.

Justice K.S Radhakrishnan in the landmark judgment of National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India, said "Seldom, our society realizes or cares to realize the trauma, agony and pain which the members of Transgender community undergo, nor appreciates the innate feelings of the members of the Transgender community, especially of those whose mind and body disown their biological sex."[1]

According to the 2011 Census of India, there are 4.9 lakh transgender people in India[2]. But many transgender activists believe that the actual number is six to seven times higher than this data. The census data also reveals the chilling fact that the literacy rate of the transgender community is only 46% which is very low as compared to the general population i.e. 74%. Gender non-conforming persons are living as outsiders in their own country, people in society consider them as an anomaly due to their sexual orientation, resulting in school dropouts and exclusion from society.

Objectives

Apart from the two socially and culturally accepted genders there is an entire community which struggles for its identity as it doesn't fit in the pre-defined gender category. They are the people who feel trapped in their bodies as they are unable to sync in their inner identity and physical appearance. They are called by different names in a different society and have been marginalized for a very long time. As they continue fighting for acceptance of their existence, in recent years a collective

[1]National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India Judgement April 2014 by Supreme Court of India, Available at - https://indiankanoon.org/doc/193543132/

[2] Times of India newspaper Dated on 30th May 2014, Retrieved on 18th July 2020, Available at - https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/First-count-of-third-gender-in-census-4-9-icle show/35741613.cms

effort has led to their acceptance as normal human beings, They have been accepted as the 'third gender' by the Indian government and are called 'transgender'.

The main objective of this paper is to provide an introduction to the self-narrativization and first-hand experiences of trauma, agony, pain, discrimination, humiliation faced by two transgender individuals. Further, this paper attempts to examine the importance of education, inclusion, acceptance by the society of the transgender community in India. The paper also evaluates the steps taken by the state government, central government and various organizations to empower them. The author also aims at making people aware about the need for integration of transgender community into the society, providing them access to education and treating them as equal.

Who are Transgender?

Persons whose gender identity, expression, behaviour does not match with their biological sex are known as transgender. People who do not conform to their sex assigned at birth and adopt another gender identity according to their will are transgender. Transgender people identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and asexual. Transgender are people who do not carry exclusively masculine or feminine features in them. In India, transgenders have different identities such as *hijras, kinnars, jogtas, joggppas, shivshaktis, meetha, chakkaa* (a derogatory term) etc. However, transgender in India prefer to be referred as *kinnar*- one who is well-versed in dancing and singing. In Tamil Nadu, transgender are known as *Aravanis*.

Hijras are a religious community of men who dress and act like woman (S. Nanda). Hijras love to live the life of woman, while they are neither man nor woman. They follow their own culture and are strongly devoted towards it. In India, a *Hijra* is believed to have the power to give blessings on auspicious moments like marriages, childbirth, house warming which is known as *badhaitoli*. In this, *hijras* dance, sing songs and give blessings to the newly wed or newly born.

Customs and Ethos of Transgender

Transgender holds a special place in Hindu mythology and we can see their presence in the texts and mythology through the ages. A *Hijra* in today's context is observed as one who dresses in glittering saris, uses a heavy coat of cosmetics to

[3]Reet is a process of becoming part of Hijra group. Transgender women in India UNDP TG issue Report Dated December 2010 Access date 24 July 2020, for more details see the given link below.

conceal their masculine appearance and look attractive as females. They can usually be noticed on the roads, trains, and traffic signals knocking on the windows of the car and offering blessings in return formoney.. They dance at holy places like temples, attend weddings, birth ceremonies and offer blessings to the individuals in return for money as a means of livelihood. It is widely believed that a *hijra* has the power to bless or curse people.They are often called on occasions by people to seek blessings of the *hijra* community.

Within the *hijra* group, a *guru-parampara* custom exists in which many *hijras* live and follow a Guru. This process is known as 'Reet'[3] and they live together like a family.

The Guru controls the life of these followers *(hijras)*. The Guru is considered to be supreme and his command is followed by everyone. The Guru plays the role of a godfather, den mother, spiritual leader and pimp. Sometimes for their livelihood, *hijras* also engage as sex workers. Some are affiliated with NGOs whereas some earn from their skills which they have learned. There is a group of *hijras* engaged in dancing and blessing during the auspicious moments in the society. They belong to different *Gharanas* (clans) who make their earning through *badhaitoli* (clapping hands for alms). Whatever they earn from it, they give it to their leader. Few other groups are involved in begging ontrains, roads, and at traffic signals. While the third group, due to lack of employment and poverty, become sex workers for earning alivelihood. Some of them hide or ignore their sexual orientation from families as they are frightened of being harassed due to their gender identity, or the family forces them to do so. They remain in the family and work according to the skill they have learned throughout their life. For instance, Ramya Goswami is a trans woman, she lives in Delhi with her family and earns money by doing the job of a *mehendi* artist, makeup artist and also performs Bharat Natyam in cultural programmes such as *Ram Lila*.

A number of transgender persons are well-educated, successful and distinguished personalities in their fields. For instance, *Joyita Mandal* is a first transgender Judgeof West Bengal; *Prithika Yashini* is the first transgender *Sub-Inspector*; India's first transgender *College Principal Manabi Bandopadhyay* is also the first transgender person who has completed her *Doctor of Philosophy* and become a professor in a college before securing the designation of a college Principal. India's

[4]India Today "Transgenders and their lives all you should Know" Dated 14 August2015 Retrieved on 11july 2020, Availableat -https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/transgender-and-their-lives-288249-2015-08-14

https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html

first transgender *MLA Shabnam Mausi*, and Transgender activist Laxmi Narayan Tripathi are also prominent personalities who fought the discrimination and stigma of being part of a sexual minority [4]. Like these *trans*persons, others can also achieve success but for that, it is necessary that other two binary genders i.e., male and females understand the needs of the third gender.They must create a transgender friendly environment. To accept transgender persons as fellow human beings, is the first step in this right direction.

Constitutional Provisions Related to the Third Gender

Part III of the Indian constitution contains fundamental rights to which every citizen of thi country is entitled to enjoy, which includes transgender persons too. The first and foremost is that the transgender community deserves the *Right to Equality* which is given under Article 14 of the Indian constitution. Article15 of the constitution prohibits discrimination on the ground of religion, caste, gender, race, sex or place of birth. Article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity in public employment matters and it prevents the discrimination against anyone in the matter of public employment on the grounds of religion, birthplace, race, caste, sex. Article 19 ensure six kinds of freedom to its citizens i.e., freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembly without arms, freedom of associations, freedom of movement in the territory of our nation. Article 21 ensures the protection of life and personal liberty. Article 21-A provides free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. Article 23 prohibits trafficking of human beings as beggars and other forms of bonded labour.

The Indian Constitution offers fundamental rights to ensure equality to its citizens and to eradicate all kinds of discrimination based on sex, gender, caste, race, creed or religion. The Constitution also guarantees political rights and other assistances to everyone, so that they can participate in the decision-making process of the country. But the transgender community in our nation continues to be ostracized. The Indian constitution guarantees equality to every citizen but here the question arises; whether these rights are being provided to every stratum of the society, specifically in the case of 'third gender'?

Initiatives and Legislations for Third Gender in India

Expert Committee on Issues Related to Transgender Persons

In October 2013, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment passed an order to constitute an expert committee, aiming to tackle the problems and issues of the transgender community and to suggest necessary remedial measures. The

committee met four times to discuss the issues. It invited experts from the society to share their views. Representatives from Ministry of Law and Justice, external affairs, department of AIDS control, few state governments, transgender persons, NGO workers, university professors were invited to analyze the situation of the community. The chairperson of the committee visited Chennai to analyze the situation and policies of the Aravanis Welfare Board established by the State government for the transgender community. The committee submitted its final report on 27-1-2014.

National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India

This judgement addresses the rights of the transgender community. A petition was filed by National Legal Service Authority of India. Other petitioners were Poojya Mata Nasib Kaurji Woman Welfare Society and a transgender activist Laxmi Narayan Tripathi. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India gave a landmark judgement by recognizing gender non-conforming people as 'Third Gender' on 15th April 2014. It was expected that this judgement of the court will open the doors of social acceptance for the transgender community in India. The court referred to international organizations like United Nations, principles like Yogyakarta Principles and highlighted how many countries are following these international bodies to determine the obligations of the state, to respect, defend and establishthe human rights of the people. The court also said that the soul-spirit of the Indian constitution lies in ensuring equality to every person irrespective of their gender caste or creed. Transgender persons in India are being forced to live as outcasts and treated with disdain. This judgment act as a cornerstone in establishing a liberal and a just society to some extent. However, the truth of the situation is that inequality stills exists in our society and this should be resolved in every possible way. This judgement has given the transgender community a hope to get equality, by giving them the status of the third gender in society. This judgement is the foundation of hope for establishing equality and granting gender justice to the transgender community.

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 (*TG Act*)

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (henceforth *TG Act*), 2019 aims to protect the rights of the transgender community and to strengthen them by providing access to education and employment etc. The act was introduced in the lower house of the parliament i.e., Lok Sabha on 19th July 2019 by the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Thawar Chand Gehlot. It was passed by the Lok Sabha on 5th August 2019 and by the Rajya Sabha, on 26th November 2019. The TG Act got the assent of the President of India on 5th December 2019 and came into effect from 10thJanuary 2020. The Act aims to help transgender in their day-to-day

life and integrate them in the society by providing them various welfare schemes which were not accessible to them till date, for instance, inclusive education, employment etc.Transgender persons are entitled to equal rights as guaranteed to all citizens by the constitution of India and any discrimination against them would be considered as an offence under the Act.

TG Act, 2019 provides inclusive education for all the transgender persons as they are also part of the society. The biased treatment in matters of employment prospects or prejudiced behaviour at working places will be considered unlawful. The Government has made it clear through the TG Act, 2019 that transgender persons have equal rights as other people to earn their livelihood with self-esteem. The Act also provides that no one can remove gender variant persons because of their gender identity. They have the right to get equivalent opportunity in matters of employment like other inhabitants of India.

The denial or stoppage of fair treatment in any hospital will be punishable as *trans* persons have the right to get proper medical facilities.NACO is continuously working for their good health and protection from diseases like AIDS. All states have its State Aids Control Board Society at the lower level and NACO as its apex body. NACO works by executing a targeted intervention program.Transgender persons can receive treatment in any hospital across the country as they are entitled to fair and good treatment.

TG Act also declares that transgender persons have a right to live in their accommodation and no person can take this right from them. According to this Act, it will be a crime to stop transgender persons from having accommodation of their own. A transgender can have access to all goods, enjoy all the privileges, services, facility and opportunity as offered to the general public in India. If anyone disobeys or provides unfair treatment to transgender persons, then it will be considered as misconduct.

A transgender person should make an application to the District Magistrate for issuing a certificate of identity as a transgender person. However, this decision has been criticized by many transgender activists in the country. In the case of a minor child, such application shall be made by a parent or guardian of such child. The gender of the transgender person shall be recorded in all official documents by such certificate. A certificate issued to a person shall confer rights and be a proof of recognition of the identity as a transgender person. After the issue of a certificate, if a transgender person undergoes surgery to change gender either as a male or female, such person may make an application, along with a certificate issued to that

effect by the Medical Superintendent or Chief Medical Officer of the medical institution in which that person has undergone surgery, to the District Magistrate for a revised certificate.

According to the TG Act, 2019 the appropriate government shall take following steps to secure full and effective participation of transgender persons and their inclusion in the society:

a) *Welfare measures to protect the rights and interests of transgender persons and facilitate their access to welfare schemes framed by that Government;*
b) *Welfare schemes and programs which are transgender sensitive, non-stigmatizing and non-discriminatory;*
c) *Steps for the rescue, protection, and rehabilitation of transgender persons to address the needs of such persons;*
d) *Appropriate measures to promote and protect the right of transgender persons to participate in cultural and recreational activities*.

No establishment shall discriminate against any transgender person in any matter relating to employment including recruitment, promotion and other related issues. Every establishment shall ensure compliance with the provisions of this Act and provide facilities to transgender persons.

Every establishment shall designate a person to be a complaint officer to deal with the complaints relating to a violation of the provisions of this Act.

The transgender person shall have

a) Right to reside in the household where the parent or immediate family members reside;
b) Right not to be excluded from such household or any part thereof;

[5] Sustainable development goals adopted by UN in 2015, It has 17 goals. It aims to develop the nation state and to eradicate the poverty, to protect the planet and to establish an equitable society where people can live with prosperity and peace. **Source**–
https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html

[6] National education policy 2020 is the effort of government to introduce several changes in the education system of India from school education to higher education level.
Source -https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

c) Right to enjoy and use the facilities of such household in a non-discriminatory manner.

The Act provides that the Central Government shall establish a 'National Council for TransgenderPersons'(NCT) to advice, monitor, evaluate and review the policies and programs for transgender persons. The National Council for Transgender Persons will also redress the grievances of the transgender persons.

The NCT will consist of:

(1) Union Minister for Social Justice (Chairperson)
(ii) Minister of State for Social Justice (Vice-Chairperson)
(iii) Secretary of the Ministry of Social Justice
(iv) One representative from ministries including Health, Home Affairs, and Human

Resources Development

Other members include representatives of the NITI Aayog and the National Human Rights Commission. State governments will also be represented. The Council will also consist of five members from the transgender community and five experts from non-governmental organizations. The Act also provides that whoever commits the crime under the Act shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months, but which may extend to two years with a fine.

National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP 2020)

Education is the key to develop human potential, to establish a just society, to develop the nation's human resource and to encourage equality in the community. The National Education Policy aims to facilitate the agenda of Sustainable Development Goals. Among 17, goal number 4 declares to ensure "Inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all" (SDGs).[55] Sustainable development goals adopted by UN in 2015, It has 17 goals. It aims to develop the nation state and to eradicate the poverty, to protect the planet and to establish an equitable society where people can live with prosperity and peace.

In this new era of globalization, continuous up-gradation of skills and competence is required, so it is important to provide an education system to our human resource which will help them to develop their potential. Its objective is to provide a kind of education system through which every stratum of society can connect, and it should

be accessible for all. It plans to curtail the dropout rates and to ensure universal access to education for everyone including the 'third gender'.

It talks about ensuring educational facilities to *trans* children without any discriminations as other human beings. NEP 2020 for the first time in Indian history, addresses the needs of the transgender community which is a big hope for the transgender community for integration into the society by having equal prospects in the education system. National Education Policy, 2020 has focused on all the three genders i.e., male, female, and transgender. The policy declares that there should be a 'Gender Inclusion Fund' to grant financial assistance to the marginalized section of the society including transgender children., This policy aims to abolish any remaining disparity in access to education including vocational education for children from any gender or other socio-economically disadvantaged group. NEP 2020 is a progressive shift towards a more scientific approach to education[6]. It also aims to focus on research and community engagement services. The current gross enrollment ratio (GER) in higher education in India is 26.3% only and the NEP aims to raise the GER to 50% by 2035. This policy gives new hope to the *trans* persons as they are also part of the Indian population. The policy claims to address the problems and needsof transgender persons; but time will tell how much of it get stransformed into reality.

Review of Literature

Some of the important studies on *trans* are as follows:

The book '*Neither Man nor Woman- the Hijras of India*' written by Serena Nanda discusses the problems, life, customs and culture of transgender community. She portrays and interprets the story of religious men who are brave enough to live their life by following their own culture. In the book, her narrative goes around four transwomen Kamla Devi, Meera, Sushila, and Salima. Nanda introduces us to the *hijra* culture and their way of living. She has also written about the process of emasculation rituals of the *hijra* community. The author has also described the miserable social life of the transgender persons, their love and hates. Nanda talks about the relationship between the transgenderpersonss and their partners, about the prostitution business of *hijras,* relationship of a *hijra* guru and young *hijra* (chela). She reveals the life story of *hijras* to make people understand their way of living and how they cope up with the situation.

Rajesh et al**.** in their research titled '*A study of challenges and opportunities of mainstreaming transgender students in higher education institutions in India'*

lay emphasis on the steps taken by educational institutions in Delhi to facilitate the transgender student's admission in the institutions. The author focuses on the ways to mainstream the transgender community in the educational institutions. During the study, it was discovered that college and universities lack facilities for *trans* students. The study also reveals that there was no anti-discrimination cell or gender resource centre to address the problems of gender non-conforming students. Institutions were lacking acommittee to address the grievances of the transgender community.

Venkastesan Chakrapani and Arvind Narrain inthe study titled *'Legal recognition of gender identity of transgender people in India: Current Situation and Potential Options'* suggested three ways aimed at consideration for gender identity of the hijra community in India:

1) Legal recognition of gender identity of *trans* people as women or men;
2) Legal recognition of transgender persons as a separate gender that is 'third gender';
3) Legal recognition of gender identity for transgender persons according to their choice – Women, Men or a separate gender i.e., 'transgender' or 'third gender'.

The authors have given the reference of various countries that have adopted strong legal actions to identify the gender orientation of transgender. The author also recommends that India adopts these steps. Among these countries, Portugal is among the top in recognizing the gender identity of a transgender within a maximum time of eight days. The country has an expeditious and transparent process for changing the identity of a transgender on official documents. Another good thing is that any individual is allowed to change their gender identity on the documents like ID cards etc. multiple times without any fine or issue.

V. Chakrapani also refers the laws of United Kingdom to be adopted by India on discrimination issue. He says that India needs a law like 2010 Equality Act of the United Kingdom, which deals with the problem of discrimination based on gender identity as well as sex reassignment.

In the book, *Life of a Eunuch* the author Piyush Saxena discusses the life of the transgender persons and traditions that are followed by them. He focuses on every aspect of the transgender community like legal provision and transgender recognition at the workplace. The author also tried to describe the *hijra* community's

traditional views and ethos. He also focused on the religious views and story of their god and goddess which is followed by the community. He also tried to reveal the process of sex reassignment from male to female and female to male. Piyush also reveals the economic and social consequences of changing sexual orientation by transgender persons..

The *India Exclusion Report(2013-2014)* declares that transgender persons are one of the most disadvantaged groups of the society. Due to the existing exclusion, discrimination, inequality, poverty, lack of access to education and employability, the condition of *trans* community is pathetic and it is required to address the issue of the transgender community at the earliest. The report however praised the steps taken by the Indian legislators and courts to save this community from the discrimination like granting the status of 'third gender' to the transgender community by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Further, it also discusses the steps being adopted by the states of India to do justice with this community.

In the book on *The truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*', the author A.Revatinarrates her life story. She describes the pain, agony, harassment and discrimination she faces in the society for being a transgender. This is the first autobiography written by a transgender. Revathi is a *trans*activist and an employee at an NGO. Revathi shares her pain of being a part of the transgender community. She also discusses the painful experience of indifference and discrimination faced by family, relatives, friends, neighbors and other people around her. . Revathi also discusses the scary journey of surgery, the violence and harassment she faced on the roads. The author also explains her pitiful condition due to unemployment and the worsening financial condition which compelled her to join sex work in order to earn a livelihood.

The judgement NALSA v.Union of India gave the status of the third gender to the transgender community of India on 15th April 2014. This was the first step towards the mainstreaming of transgender in Indian society. The decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India empowers the transgender community with all the social welfare schemes which are available to the other citizens of India. It also declared to provide reservations to the hijra community in educational institutions under the OBC quota. As a result, transgender persons have been granted their identity in society.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted on two levels - first through doctrinal research by

reviewing relevant pieces of literature such as articles, journals, constitutional provisions, books, legislations etc. The second method was by recording life experiences of three transgender persons and their views.

Data was collected through telephonic interviews and focused group discussions. The author interviewed a participant to understand thejourney and to evaluate the legislations made by the Government of India for the welfare of the transgender community. The author also interacted with the transgender persons in a panel discussion organized by 'Transgender Resource Centre' under the aegis of Department of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension, University of Delhi.

Self-Narrativization and Truth of Life: Case Study - Ramya Narayanam Giri

Ramya is a *trans*woman who is a well-versed Bharat Natyam dancer, makeup artist and a guard marshal in DTC buses. She is a good actor as well. She used to participate in many cultural programs during Ramlila. Ramya lives with her family. Her father is a contract laborer and mother, a housewife. She has four siblings, her elder brother is quite supportive but rest of the siblings were not very co-operative. Ramya Narayanam Giri Alias (Rahul Giri) was born in a lower-middle-class family of Delhi. By birth, he was a boy but later on identified himself as a transwoman.

Ramya reveals that she felt more like a girl and realized that she has been trapped in a wrong body, when she was in Class 8.

"I felt like a girl since childhood, I liked to dress like a girl and spend time with girls. Initially I thought something was wrong with me but later I figured there were more people like me in my school."

Ramya's family did not support her initially but later on when Ramya insisted, after a long time, her family finally accepted her gender identity. However, Ramya's mother was reluctant in sharing Ramya's new identity as a transwoman with others as she feared that the relatives and neighbors would make fun of Ramya and her family. She also warned Ramya never to do *Badhaitoli* custom of the Hijra Community and therefore Ramya decided to keep distance from this custom and rather earn money from her hard work and skill only. However, she is connected with the community in spite of her mother's apprehension.

Ramya completed her Higher Secondary Exam from the Government Senior Secondary Boys' School of Shahbad Dairy, Delhi. In school, she encountered many difficulties due to her feminine nature. She completed her studies from the school

as a boy, as she feared bullying and discrimination. Ramya's mother never wanted her to reveal her identity in front of the society as she thought it to be a stigma. Ramya faced taunts and bullying from the boys of her class and teachers were also not very helpful, but she remembered her principal who was quite supportive during her school years. After completing school, Ramya went on to take admission in School of Open Learning, University of Delhi in B.A Program. However, due to lack of resources and bad health she was not able to appear in the examination. During her academic years, Ramya used to arrange for her educational expenses by participating in many cultural programs during Ramlila. Since childhood, Ramya was interested in dancing so she also took admission in classical dance at National Bal Bhavan to learn Bharat Natyam. Ramya also did fashion designing course from Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises in Delhi, where she worked as a tailor. Ramya neither participated in community custom like *'BadhaiToli'* nor did she join any Gharana. She remained in her family and decided to live her life with dignity by doing hard work,without being dependent on anyone. Ramya never went through any hormonal therapies and did not go for a sex reassignment surgery. Ramya joined as a home guard marshal in DTC buses, Delhi in 2018. She was selected by the Delhi Government to safeguard the women passengers travelling in buses. She shared that she used to earn INR 700 daily at the job.

Excerpts from the Conversation between Researcher and Ramya:

1. What are your views on the New Education Policy,2020?

She said that it is a good initiative of the Government that now at least they are thinking about the wellbeing of this transgender community. But inclusion is not easy. People should change their behavior towards the community and understand that they are also human beings and deserve good treatment.

2. What other changes do you want in the educational institutions so that the transgender students feel more comfortable?

She felt that in India, even women are not respected so expecting respect as a transgender is even more difficult. "The society and media need to be more responsible, she said." People should not make fun of transgender persons as they also have the right to live a respectful life in society. People should not judge trans people on the basis of their sexuality. Skill and talent should be given more importance than the gender identity.

"Yahan par woman ko hi respect nahi di jati to transwoman ko kahan se respect denge. Wo seedha tag lagate hai ki wo Hijrahai, Chakkahai, Meetha Hai, Halwahai ye galat hai is chij pae rok lagaya jaye kyuki hijre bhi insan hai unhebhi auro ki tarah jeene ki azadi milni chahiye.

Media pae bhi roklagani chiye kyuki wahan bhi hamari community ka majak udate hai jaise movies mae hume logo ke entertaintment ke liye use kiya jatahai ... ek movie haijis mae ek transgender actor se paise mangta hai to wo kahta hai naach krkilaa mai bhi nacha mujhe paise de ye galat hai in chijo pae roklagani chiye".

3. Do you think that the Transgender Act of 2019 will help with the integration of transgender persons in the Indian society?

Ramya also shared that she was not so happy and satisfied with the Transgender Person's (Protection of Rights) Act 2019 especially with respect to the certification of gender identity from a third person. She said that the copy of this Act which she found was available in English and therefore was difficult for her to interpret. She was very unhappy with the provision that someone else was going to certify the gender identity of trans people. She further added that the community doesn't want anyone's approval to determine theirgender.

In the transgender community, there is lack of awareness about the Transgender Act of 2019. Due to language and other barriers, the provisions of the Act are not properly known to them. Ramya added that in the community meeting she heard about the 2019 Act; which is not good for the community. The Government should amend those provisions of the act which are not good for the community.

Ramya said: "We do not want people to certify us for who we are. I do not understand English and most of the people from my community are also unable to understand the Act due to the language i.e., English".

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the transgender persons have faced discrimination at almost every stage in life. But it can't be denied that with passage of time they have realized their potential and now they are more aware than before in demanding rights and required space. Not only they, but those who empathize with them are at

the forefront fighting for them and demanding inclusion in every aspect from- personal to professional front. Although legally their existence has been accepted only in April 2014, it took another five years to pass a law dedicated to their wellbeing and inclusion in the society. The most important challenge in front of us is to make that law a practical reality. It should always be kept in mind that it is not only the Government's role to make every citizen comfortable but it is also the society's role to be more inclusive and considerate. We should be sensitive enough to understand, accept and integrate all its members. There are some names such as Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, Gauri Sawant who are leaving no stone unturned in order to make our society more inclusive, especially for the transgender persons. As we have seen in the discussion with Ramya that there is still a wide gap between the *trans* community and society which needs to be bridged. The TG Act, 2019 is a welcome step by the government in this direction and now it's our turn to make the aims of that bill a reality and give the *trans* community their long-awaited rightful place..

The paper has revealed that Indian government has taken several steps forward to include the transgender community in the society but there are still wide gaps between society and *trans* community which needs to be filled by adopting appropriate measures. First and foremost step required to be taken by the government is to implement the enacted legislations and policies properly and to take follow up on actions. Government should ensure that all responsible institutions and stake holders are sensitized to deal or to help the *trans* community around them.

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