



Inclusion of Transgenders: A Small Step Ahead

G. Maya Salimath

Research Scholar - Bharathiar University
Training Officer – ACS College of Engineering
Bangalore

B Rose Kavitha

Dean –Department of MBA
Jyothi Nivas College Autonomous
Bangalore

ABSTRACT

Unity in diversity is Indian culture. India tolerates, accepts and respects diversities in term of culture, religions and traditions. In Indian society the general climate of acceptance and tolerance in public is lesser towards understanding the same sex or whose gender identity and expression are incongruent with their biological sex. Yes the transgender are those people whose behaviors and characteristics differ from the way men and women are.

The research attempts

- To understand the challenges faced by transgender under separate gender classification.
- To explore new possibilities of matching transgender personality with entrepreneurial programs.
- To identify funding agencies and professional associations that enables them to carry out their livelihood.
- To suggest few entrepreneurial programs for livelihood and improvise overall individual development of transgender.

In short the study is focusing on finding out the present socio economical conditions condition of the transgender community in Tamil Nadu. What are the other problems faced by them in terms of reaching the facilities extended by the government. The objective of the study is to provide them a basis of economic safety and security by identifying the problems in entrepreneurial livelihood projects for the transgender and also to provide training them for entrepreneurial development programs.

1. INTRODUCTION

India's Supreme Court for the first time recognized transgender Indians as third gender by giving their own legal status and better legal protection and privileges. A two-judge bench ruled that transgender people will now have the option to identify themselves as a third gender—instead of just male or female—in government documents, including passports and identification cards. The Supreme Court said discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation violates constitutional guarantees of equality, privacy and dignity.

Irrespective of race, culture, classes, true stories of transgender civilization have existed. In mid 1990s it is the term transgender or transsexual people were new to the society. Transgender has become a common word to describe a range of identities and experiences not only limiting to transsexual people, but people who cross dresses like a male of a female, intersex individuals, men and women, regardless of sexual orientation.

Precisely to identify the meaning **Transgender** is the state of one's gender identity and self-identification as woman, man, neither or both or gender expression not matching one's assigned sex.



Transgender is independent of sexual orientation. The precise definition for transgender is changing but includes:

- “Of, relating to, or designating a person whose identity does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender roles, but combines or moves between these”.
- “People who were assigned a sex, usually at birth and based on their genitals, but who feel that this is a false or incomplete description of themselves”.

The Constitution provides for the fundamental right to equality, and tolerates no discrimination on the grounds of sex, caste, creed or religion. The Constitution also guarantees political rights and other benefits to every citizen. But the third community transgender continues to be ostracized. *The Constitution affirms equality in all spheres but the moot question is whether it is being applied.* The **main problems** that are being faced by the transgender community are of discrimination, unemployment, lack of educational facilities, homelessness, lack of medical facilities like HIV care and hygiene, depression, hormone pill abuse, tobacco and alcohol abuse, penectomy and problems related to marriage and adoption.

2. **LITERATURE REVIEW :**

The entrepreneurial opportunities made Kajol (TG), President of Social Action for Emancipation (SAFE), a welfare society for transgenders, to approach actor Karthi Sivakumar for funding of juicer machines costing Rs 28000/- to six of their transgender members for improving their livelihood which included commercial juicer machine, Milton igloo for ice, 10 tall glasses and four plastic stools so that they can sell juices and earn for their livelihoods. This was considered as one of the positive step towards removing a social stigma associated with the transgender community. It is a binding responsibility of the transgender members to view such non-governmental initiatives as confidence building resources, said Yashoda District welfare officer.

Aruna Iyer, (The Hindu, 10th May 2012, Trichy). Identifying opportunities and creating employment made Simmy at Faridabad turned to be an entrepreneur to overcome a rush during karwachauth (Hindu Festival), started beauty parlor by name “Queer beauty parlor” exclusively for male customers run by transgenders. The new looks of this unique centre gives gays not only beauty solutions but also free space of their own (The Times of India, 1st October, 2009).

Although, many people from this community are not able to strive with the social discrimination after being employed, some corporate and organizations had made attempts to train such people to overcome their societal problems. In a thought to encourage transgenders, a BPO in New Delhi stated that gender is no bender in their company and so they preferred people with skills and creativity only. This gave an open opportunity for transgender with big recruitment options. Ritu Singh, CEO, NIIT smart serve said her company would love to recruit transgender if they are creative and sensitive and therefore it will be more suitable for customer service jobs. (Hindustan Times, New Delhi 14th August, 2011).

Members of DOJO CHAKRA, a private organization have found placements for 30 transgender as security guards in apartment complexes, hotels and corporate offices in the city. A six day training program was conducted to train them in areas like self defense, yoga and meditation. Reshma Sharma, founder of the organization, stated that they have been working with community of transgenders across the city and trying to have counseling sessions and motivate them in improving their skills, so that they can become employable (The Times of India, 27th October, 2009). Financial Institutions are making their way in creating a dignified life for transgenders when Indian Bank has opened its 7th self employment training institute (INDSETI) to extend its hands for helping over 60 transgender



living in the city to lead a respectful life by providing them training in entrepreneurial skills (The Hindu, February 27, 2012).

3. **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is explorative and experiential adopting and relying purely on primary data as firsthand information. Population selected for study was 1000 but the total number of people respondents was counted to be 787. Study was carried out throughout Tamil Nadu and Convenience random sampling method was used. Observed and expected frequencies will be applied for a clear understanding of expectations of TG.

Objectives of the study

1. To map the existing livelihood programmes initiated by the marginalized sections of the society through the 20 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) spread over 13 districts for the purpose of sustainability.
2. To identify the employable and marketable skills in all the 13 districts of the project area with specific reference to the members of the CBOs
3. The study will identify viable activities in certain districts and will find out whether the activity could be replicated in other districts of Tamil Nadu.
4. To propose appropriate Entrepreneurship Projects to be undertaken by the CBOs for the welfare of the marginalized sections of the society.
5. The study will attempt to group the livelihood activities into sector wise and find out the mentoring support needed from VHS – TAI for sustainability and scalability.
6. To formulate a business model for ensuring sustainable business propositions with opportunities for scaling up.

Methodology

CED (Tamil Nadu) deputed a team of six experts to the 13 districts to study the present status of the livelihood activities of the marginalized sections of the society and local conditions in all the 20 CBOs through Focused Group Discussion (FGD). CED (Tamil Nadu) has drawn district wise reports were for all the 13 districts based on the FGDs conducted by the CED experts. These reports were submitted to VHS-TAI for their observations.

Data collection methods

The CED experts conducted FGD in each CBO of the 13 districts coming under the VHS-TAI project area. An interview schedule was used to identify the issues affecting the sustainability of the present activities of members of the CBOs in each of the 13 districts. Based on the FGD, the district wise reports were drawn highlighting the major livelihood activities of the members of the CBO. The issues challenging the sustainability and scalability of these activities were also discussed.

4. **OBSERVATIONS & DISCUSSIONS:**

It is learnt that the members of the CBOs have not done any rigorous exercise in planning the livelihood activity for self employment. Most of the members have taken up activities as they occurred to them. Accordingly, they have taken up a variety of traditional livelihood activities



confined mostly to trading activities which are normally taken up by the marginalized sections of the society.

- Selling vegetables, fruits, flowers, milk, etc.
- Selling food items such as idly, ground nut, etc. as street hawkers with a mobile cart.
- Engaging in Tailoring
- Selling rice paste for making idly or dosa
- Selling juice made out of maize, ragi, etc.
- Performing street plays

They do not have a permanent shed or place for their livelihood activity. They are under mercy of policemen and thugs. Thus, it is evident that rigorous business planning was grossly absent in the above livelihood activities. Even then, there were several in built problems in the above said livelihood activities.

Some of the major issues / challenges are listed below:

- a. Sourcing of raw materials:
Most of the members of the CBOs sell perishable products such as fruits, vegetables, flowers, milk, etc. after having purchased from the middlemen who would have sourced these items either from the farmers or wholesalers. Therefore, the margin available to the members of the CBOs is very meagre.
- b. Credit Availability:
Most of the members of the CBOs engaged in livelihood activities do not get institutional credit facilities. They are forced to depend on private money lenders who are invariably thugs. They exploit the members with huge interest with unreasonable terms. When, they take small loans from the private money lenders invariably local thugs, the huge interest charged by them eats away most of the margin available to the members of the CBOs.
- c. Technology issues:
The livelihood activities are being undertaken in the traditional way without the use of technology. The technology can add efficiency of business operation and facilitate better returns to the entrepreneurs.
- d. Lack of Cold Storage facility:
The perishable nature of the products adds to the complication. Due to lack of cold storage facilities, many members of the CBOs who are involved in selling perishable products incurred heavy loss at times due to unforeseen and seasonal factors such as rain, local strikes, political issues, etc.
- e. Lack of updated technology:
Many members of the CBOs are engaged in tailoring, beauty care, street plays, selling food items such as idly, ground nut, non-vegetarian snacks on the road side. Technological upgradation is necessary to enhance the business opportunities and also to scale up the activities.

For example, the members of the CBO through the use of technology may upgrade:

- Tailoring into fashion garment making,
- Beauty care into full fledged beauty parlours using herbal products,



- Street plays with modern equipments with a focus on topical themes, etc. These topical themes can get them regular contracts with government and bigger industrial organizations for their publicity campaigns.
 - Making delicacies such as non-veg. briyani, egg related food items with modern mass production equipments / technology can make the members of the CBO to reach bigger markets.
- f. Lack of higher quality standards and mass production:
It is revealed in the survey that the poor quality standards provided by the members of the CBOs in their livelihood activities may affect the sustenance of the livelihood activities. They may be taught to use technology to enhance their quality standards of their products / services in their livelihood activities. For example, hygienic environment may enhance the sale of the perishable products, food items, etc. and gain public acceptance.
- g. Lack of value addition:
There is no value addition in the above said traditional activities. There is no out of box thinking approach in such activities. For example, instead of selling fruits and vegetables, the members of the CBOs may be trained to sell vegetable salad or fruit salad. Similarly, instead of selling flowers, they can be trained to sell garlands and bouquets.
- h. Marketing Factors:
The members of the CBOs while undertaking livelihood activities in the different districts of Tamil Nadu, they perceive marketing issues as an important bottle neck in the performance of their business ventures.
- i. Cost effective accommodation of the business venture :
The location of the business venture is a critical issue in deciding the success of the business. The members of the CBOs are unable to get accommodation in the strategic locations for running their business. It is reported that the members of the TG group perceive social stigma against them. They do not have acceptance from the local public to sell a variety of products. Some of them travel to far off places to sell the products. This has raised the selling cost and eats away the profit margin.
- j. Permanent Marketing Outlet:
The members of the CBOs do not have a cost effective marketing outlet to sell their products or market their services. This issue was raised in several districts like Madurai, Coimbatore, Salem, etc. for running the tiffin centre, Briyani Shop, etc. They require an outlet in the busy markets, bus stations, etc. and they are unable to take such outlets paying huge advance and rent. Invariably, they require support from mentoring agencies to get accommodation in the Government buildings at a concessional rent.
- k. Mobile Marketing unit:
Some of the members of the CBOs sell the products such as fruits, vegetables, flowers, idly, groundnut, etc. through rented mobile carts. Some of them encroach the public places and sell the products and they wander everyday in capturing a convenient place to sell the products. These activities cause public inconvenience also. In both the cases, they face hurdles from the police as well as thugs who are collecting “Maamools” for permitting them to do the business. They cannot do business during rainy seasons. Thus, these members of the CBOs experience constant threat from the external forces.



1. Technology:

In this country, technology is available for a price to the business person to make the business cost effective, more productive and to have an edge over the competitors. The micro enterprises and livelihood activities do not use technology in a greater way since they are ignorant of the availability of the relevant technology for their business venture and further they are unable to pay the price for acquiring the technology. In the cases of livelihood activities of the marginalized sections of the society, technology is often perceived as either not available or too costly to acquire the same. The Ministry of MSME is supporting the micro enterprises to avail the benefits of latest technology in the respective sectors through credible government schemes. Similar attempt may be leaded for the livelihood activities.

m. Training facilities:

A trained person is always better than an untrained person. Training ensures capacity building for better performance. Through training, new technologies may be introduced, credit facilities may be channelized of the members of the CBOs and common facilities may be organized to the individual women for enhancing the productivity.

The Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu are providing a number of training facilities on the above lines through a variety of organizations. The members of the CBOs were exposed to training with the support of VHS-TAI on specific issues. The training is a continuous phenomenon and all the members of the CBOs may be regularly trained making use of the various facilities available with Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu.

Recommended Business Model for the livelihood projects to enhance the sustainability and ensure scalability.

CED (Tamil Nadu) recommends that VHS – TAI may serve as an NGO and undertake a number of government schemes to support the members of the CBOs. The cluster development initiatives of the Government of India have demonstrated the success of the cluster in terms of ensuring sustainability of the individual enterprises drawing support from the common facilities of the cluster.

Thus, the government schemes were well formulated keeping in view of the sustainability of the projects. Substantial portion of the investment is provided as grant and the balance money comes through bank with concessional interest. Hence, sustainability is already ensured.

S. No.	Livelihood activities	Role of VHS-TAI	Government of India Scheme
Sector – Garment Industry			
1.	Garment making	A common work-shed for the CBO members engaged in Garment making using power machines, Hoisery/ textiles wastes. VHS-TAI can organize training and local marketing net work. VHS – TAI can arrange technology, training and marketing assistance with support of NIFT-TEA fashion institute, Tiruppur.	1. TREAD scheme of Ministry of MSME, Government of India with VHS-TAI serving as an NGO. 2. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
2.	Embroidery and zardosi work		
3.	Converting hosiery/textiles waste into marketable products such as door mats, children garments, etc.		



		This scheme can be implemented in major textiles districts such as Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Erode and Madurai.	
Sector – Beauty Care and Artificial Jewellery:			
4.	Beauty Care Centre	Sourcing the herbal based cosmetics. Sourcing latest beauty parlour tools and equipments. Designing the layout and interiors. Common brand name and common promotion of the beauty parlours. Continuous training in hair and beauty care. Helping the members of the CBOs to get financial assistance at concessional terms.	Unemployed Youth Employment Generation Programme (UYEGP) of Government of Tamil Nadu in which the beneficiaries are provided financial assistance upto Rs.3 lakhs for beauty parlours with 15% capital subsidy
5.	Artificial Jewellery making, renting out as well as sale through the beauty parlours	Training to make artificial jewellery. Making the sale of artificial jewellery at beauty parlours. Renting out the artificial jewellery for bridal make up, party functions, etc. Maintenance procedures for keeping the artificial jewellery to appear new and attractive.	
Sector – Tourism and Hospitality Industry:			
6.	Tiffin Centre	Acquiring space in Government building by networking with the respective District Collectors. Mobile vehicles may be arranged as retail outlet for floating crowd. The workforce to observe Catering Dress Code. VHS – TAI may arrange to train the members in food production and F & B services.	All are individual enterprises with mentoring support from VHS – TAI. The individual self employment ventures can be supported under the UYEGP schemes of the Government of Tamil Nadu and as well as schemes available with Women Development Corporation, THADCO, etc.



7.	Biriyani making.	Acquiring space in Government building by networking with the respective District Collectors. Training the existing members as well as new members in briyani making in the hygienic way. Establishing the stalls in all the industrial and tourists districts.	
8.	Making food items based on broken eggs in Namakkal District	VHS – TAI can provide technical and marketing support	
9.	Cultural Team.	VHS – TAI can help them to create a brand throughout the state so that they can provide the stage performance rather than street performance. This will also enhance their returns. Networking with Government Agencies for promoting topical themes such as creating social awareness and campaigns.	
Sector – Food Processing:			
10.	Selling flowers, vegetables and fruits with a difference.	Mini cold storage facilities may be established in all the districts. Food processing with value addition of the agriculture produce. Training for hygienically prepared and supplied fruit salad, vegetable salad, fruit juices, etc. VHS-TAI can organize a common brand name for the stalls selling Fruits, Vegetables and Flowers.	Ministry of Food Processing Industry, Government of India provides substantial capital subsidy for establishing cold storages.

Conclusion:

Transgender being one of the very underprivileged communities in India is struggling to be on among the other citizens. An attempt will be made in the study to analyse the problems and prospects associated with the various factors leading to unacceptability and lack of entrepreneurial initiatives. This study is unique, significant and novel because it addresses one of the critical success factors of the people who are human beings but still not considered as one among us. Transgender challenges are discrimination, lack of educational facilities, unemployment, lack of shelter, lack of medical facilities like HIV care and hygiene, depression, hormone pill abuse, tobacco and alcohol abuse and problems relating to marriage, property, electoral rights and adoption. Transgender have very limited employment opportunities. They have no access to bathrooms/toilets and public spaces. They face similar problems in prisons, hospitals and schools. In spite of the government initiatives and some NGO working for the upliftment of such transgender community there is a wide gap between the life



styles of normal citizen and this community. The other difference which is the need of an hour is the treatment towards such community. Training related to Entrepreneurship development will help the TG community to uplift themselves in a small manner to solve their various problems.

References

- Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 14th August (2011), “BPO firms in NCR open up to transgenders”.
- Indian Community Welfare Organization (2002) Retrieved from <http://www.paklinks.com/gs/life-and-relationships/68555-chennai-sex-workers-make-rs-3-33-crore-a-month.html> | Pallavi (2011),
- “Management students find jobs fortransgenders”, Smart (Agency: DNA, Jul 20, 2011), Retrieved from http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report_management-students-find-jobs-for-transgenders_1567502
- Targeted Interventions under NACP III 2007, Retrieved from <http://nacoonline.org/upload/Policies%20&%20Guidelines/27,%20NACP-III.pdf>
- The Hindu, 10th January (2011), “Training for transgenders”.
- The Hindu, 27th February (2012), “Indian Bank opens training institute in Dharmapuri”.
- The Hindu, Trichy, 10th May (2012), “Transgender take the first step towards entrepreneurship”.
- Times of India, 1st October (2009), “Transgenders get their own beauty parlor”.
- Times of India, 16th October (2010), “LIC set to hire transgenders as agents”.
- Times of India, 27th September (2012), “Livelihood project for transgenders”.
- Training and placement for transgenders, 2009, Oct 27, Retrieved from http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-10-27/chennai/28109454_1_transgender-community-training-programmeindian-community-welfare-organisation