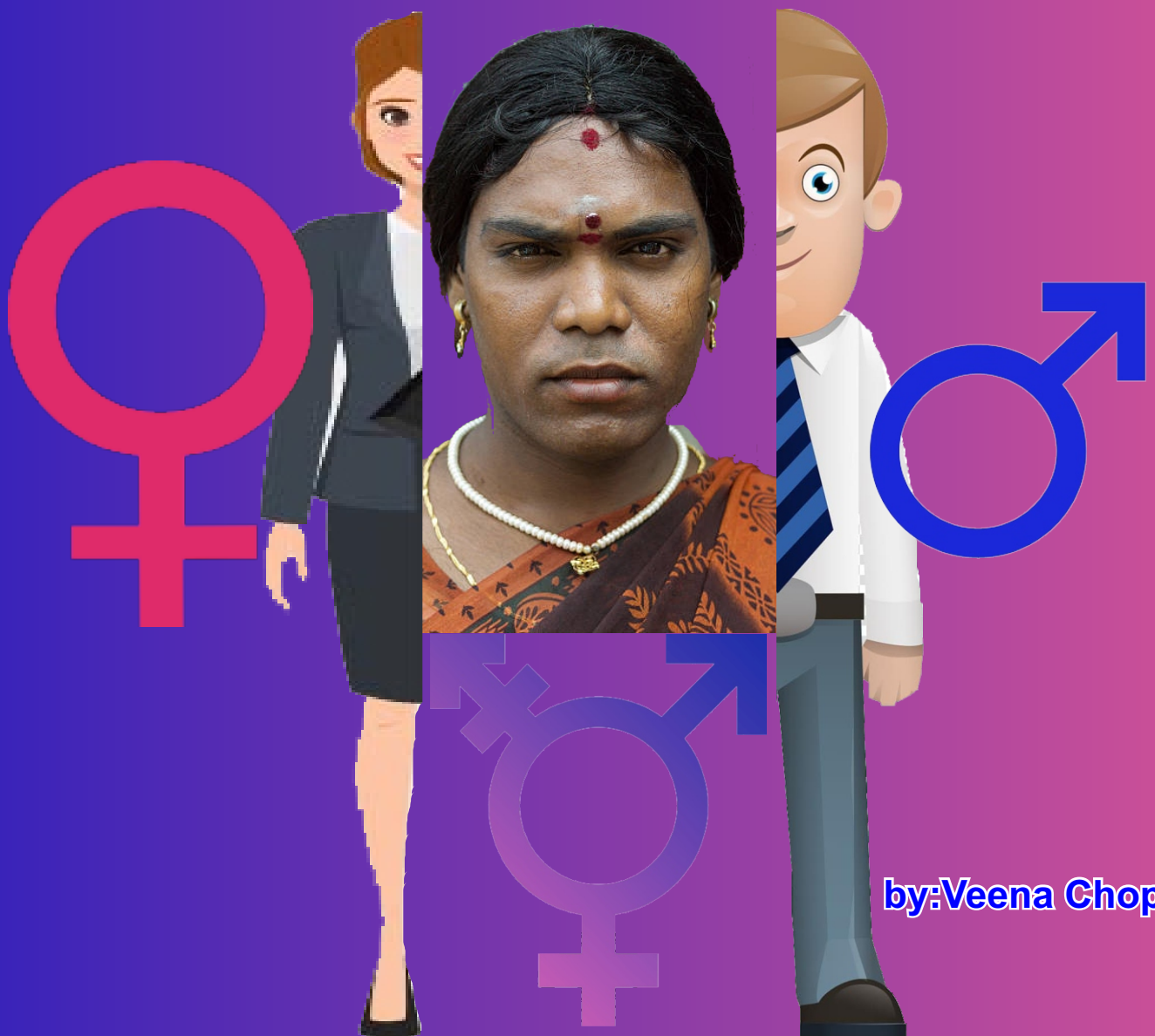


# TRANSGENDER “CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES”

I AM ALSO A HUMAN



by: Veena Chopra

## PREFACE

The book Transgender “CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES” is authors tribute to the transgender community who have suffered immense indignities and discrimination in India. They were criminalized and prevented from following their traditional profession, wearing female attire or performing in public and reduced to penury and ignominy.

We see the condition of transgender people in Indian Society the ignorance of the system as well as that of general public, the culture and traditions of Hijra community and by the end, the slight progress made to include them in the conversation.

Hijra said, “We got stared at a lot. People asked out loudly – and some out of curiosity, other out of malice – weather we were men or women or devadasis. Several men bold to touch us, on our back, on our shoulders. Some attempted to grab our breasts. Original or duplicate? They shouted and hooted”. At such movements Hijra/I felt despair and wondered if there would ever be a way for us to live with dignity.

This situation continued in free India till 2014, when the Supreme Court passed its momentous judgement. The book, while talking about their suffering, also applauds their resilience and their efforts in breaking the barriers and attempting to achieve equality. The book show cases the stories of great transgender achievers of our country. It documents important judgement, initiatives of Government, NGO’s and Corporate Sector. It urges the parents not to abandon their children with different sexual orientation. The book motivates the trans community to keep-up their fight, and emerge ultimately as victors.

**I speak because they need to be heard!** I write because they need to be understood! I dare because they need to survive.

## **TRANSGENER**

### **“CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES”**

How many genders do we know? The instinctive answer of the majority is “two”. How many biological sexes are there? Most again we will say, “Male” and the “female” in Hindi language, Children are taught the male and female categorisation of inanimate objects. History narrates tales of oppressed women and sings heroic praises of male fighters.

It is about time we ask why have the lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender people not given a place in school text-books.

### **Sex is Science, Gender is Culture**

There are more sexes and genders than what our system educates us of. The association of sex with gender is so deep that most cannot even differentiate between the two Sex refers to biological difference’s hormonal profiles and the sex organs whereas gender refer to the characteristic that a society delineates as masculine or feminine.

Transgender people have a gender identity that differs from their assigned biological Sex. At times, they opt for medical assistance to transition from one Sex to another. “When someone says they feel like the opposite gender, it is presumed that they are or want to be a “Hijra”. Many still see it as a physical problem. “Hijra”, “Kinnar” or hermaphrodites have both male and female sexual organs. They challenge the sexual orientations and identify themselves as the new third gender.

### **DEFINING HIJRAS**

To many the world of Hijras is unknow Hijras are the omnipresent group of people roaming in the crowded markets and busy roads of India. They are found in huge numbers in big cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata. Their destiny is determined by their appearances. They put-on cheap make up and wear colourful sari with badly fitting blouses and other dress. They clap their hands loudly pushing around people and begging for money in hoarse male voice. Some of them work as prostitutes and pimps garishly dressed and standing in dark lanes and streets. They walk like women and their behaviour is more feminine rather than the masculine. Their mannerism doesn’t fully indicate either sex in its totality. Their outlandish behaviour makes them prominent sight for common



man on the road. They sing and dance openly and collectively collect money from people by cajoling or forcing. People fear them because of their unnatural way of touching, Stroking, and even threatening to show their genitals.

### **How do we know whether a person is male or female?**

We usually do not explicitly ask for a demonstration of their sex but in most cases the outer appearance the physique, the clothing, and the way of behaving help us to identify a person's Sex and gender. In our society, knowing ones Sex and gender built the basis for all kind of interactions with each other. The identity as being either "male" or "female" or as a member of an alternative gender makes a difference in who you are, what you have, how you interact and what you can become" But how do we as individuals know which gender we belong to? To answer this question, we first have to differentiate the two basic terms Sex and gender "Sex is the biological identity into which all humans are born (xx= female, xy = male), while gender [-----] is the system of socially constructed ideas, beliefs and associated behaviours of what is feminine or masculine within a given culture. This definition clearly illustrates that if we refer to the term Sex, there are only two categories that people could fit, namely being either male or female. On the basis of the binary system of sex, a firm belief within western society has arisen that accordingly two and only two genders exist namely being either feminine or masculine.

A famous example of such people is the Hijras of India who represent an alternative or mixed sex/gender role since they are culturally conceptualized as neither man or woman, neither male or female. The Hijras the so called third gender in India are usually represented by biological males who take on feminine gender or sexual role. They are people whom we in the North would differentiate as eunuchs, homosexuals, transsexuals, hermaphrodites and transvestites.

Many theories about the origination of Hijars have been brought forward by various researchers. Prominent among them was perhaps the statements made by the Hijras themselves claiming to be biologically and by nature deformed rather than being castrated or emasculated. The word Hijra itself indicates a physical defectiveness and impairment in the male sexual function. It is considered to be a male genitalia irregularity. This definition is the central theory of emasculated and inter-sexed persons. Whose genitals are ambiguous like a male but after discovery would be assigned with linguistic of being a Hijra. They are "normal male and physically hale and hearty"

Although Hijras are born into the category of being male, they are not real males but some kind of inbetweeners: Defining Hijras as not men start with the fact that they are usually impotent or incomplete men. When focusing primarily on

the anatomical characteristics of Hijras, their penis is usually either imperfect or absent. But being impotent and having stunted genitalia. In order to be a real Hijra they need to have genitals cut off. The emasculation ritual "is the dharm of the Hijra and it is the renunciation of male sexuality through the surgical removal of the organ of male sexuality that is at the heart of the definition of the Hijra social identity".

Further more most of them claim not to have the same sexual desires normal men have. Hijras do not feel attracted by women and do not have "the ordinary desires of men to get married and have families". On the contrary, when they choose to live their lives as a Hijra, they are willing to live as ascetics and to renounce all sexual desires because their religion tell them to do so. However, this is not the case with everyone who changes their identity. It has already been said that Hijras are "man minus man" but in a way they are also "man plus woman" because of their outer appearance and their behaviour. "Hijras adopt many aspects of the gender role". (Nanda 211,262).

The most obvious aspect of Hijras being like a woman in their dress. They usually wear female clothing which depends on the region; Hijras in South India wear Saris, whereas Hijras in North India wear Salwar- Kameez or they even wear western women's fashions. Furthermore, their female dress is typically accompanied by traditionally feminine jewellery such as wrist bangles, nose ring, toe rings as well as bindi the coloured dot applied to the forehead of all Hindu women who are not widow. Another must for Hijras is to wear their hair long. Since it is such an important point of their identity. It is even considered a punishment and an insult for Hijras if their hair is cut off by elderly Hijras because the younger ones may have misbehaved. In addition, Hijras are not allowed to shave but they have plucked their facial hair so that their skin remains smooth like a woman's.

According to Nanda self proclaimed who still have their male genitals and do not plan to participate in the emasculation ceremony are seen as "Fake Hijras" and called "Zenana" in the Hijra Community. Their most important role in India's society is the performance of religious ceremonies, song and dances at child's birth or a wedding. Though this the occupation that is most accepted in society and by Hijras, not all Hijras are able to perform because they do not belong to a Hijra community for various possible reasons. Due to social exclusion jobs and living spaces are hard to find for Hijras so that they are forced to earn their living with homosexual prostitution, which is among the most common occupations of Hijra.

Though some Hijras live alone either because of expulsion or because of economic security, most Hijras live in households of 5 to 15 members with a territory, in which ceremonies are performed within these households, money,

food and business is hared and rules and household chores must be followed in exchange for financial and social security.

### **Religious and Mythological Context**

The most important basis why the Hijra Community is so successful in being accepted by Indian society is Hindu religion and Indian mythology. Hinduism, in contrast to many western religions, believes in the existence of multiple Gods many of whom are androgynous [which means that they have] both female and male characteristics. Also, Indian mythology "contains numerous examples of androgynes, impersonators of the opposite sex and individuals who undergo sex changes both deities and humans"



One of the most important Sexually ambivalent figures in Hinduism is Shiva, a deity, which incorporates both male and female aspects. There are two reasons why Hijras identify especially with this deity. First Shiva is represented in many different ways, but the most popular form is that of "Ardhanarishvara", a form that embodies a female as well as male side. Because of this combination of masculinity and femininity Shiva is widely acknowledged as a supper-God that is especially worshiped by Hijras. Second, its "mostpowerful symbol and object of worship is the phallus - but the phallus is always set in the "yoni" the symbol of the female genitals". So again, there is this unification of two sexes. But the phallus even holds another symbolic role. According to an anecdote Shiva's self-emasulation became the major source of its creative power.

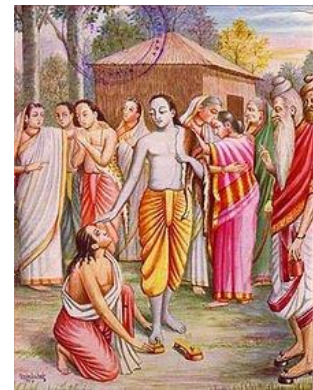
Following the example set by Shiva, Hijras imitate exactly this state of being. They unify their male bodies with female characteristic by dressing and acting like women. Moreover, just like Shiva Hijras undergo an emasculation ritual, an operation which is called nirvana or rebirth, which involves the removal of the panies and the testicles. "Only after the operation do Hijras become vehicles of the power of the Mother Goddess whose blessings of they bestow at weddings and childbirth". "The operation transforms impotent or useless men into Hijra and Confers the procreative power of the Mother Goddess on them. Hence Shiva is the deity that most Hijras identify with very closely. Therefore, they often worship at Shiva temples or "they worship Bahuchara Mata, One of the Avatars of the Hindu Mother Goddess".

Hijras of India make use of this openness in Hinduism and define themselves as being neither male nor female, they are Hijras.

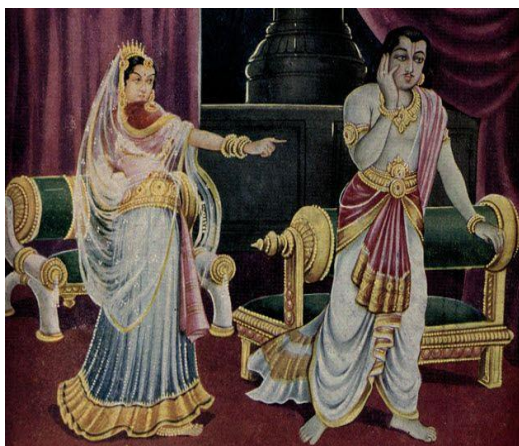
There is often a curiosity in our society about transgenders. On the occasion of auspicious functions like marriage, child birth, etc the question after arises in the mind about the eunuchs who come to ask for "Neg" in the house where do they live? Who are their deities? After all, from where did they get the power to bless the people and by whom. There are such questions which often arise in our mind. Before knowing the answers to all these questions, let us know whether eunuchs were present on this earth even during the time of Lord Rama in Tretayuga?

### **Blessing received from Rama:**

It is believed that when Lord Rama started leaving Ayodhya to undergo 14 years exile, then his subjects and Kinnar community also started following him. Then Shri Rama asked them to return to Ayodhya. After the victory of Lanka, when Shri Rama returned to Ayodhya after 14 years, he saw that the rest of people had left but the eunuchs were waiting for him there. Pleased with their devotion Lord Shri Rama gave a boom to the eunuchs that their blessing would always bearfruit. Since then, they blessed people in auspicious functions like child birth and marriage.



### **Mahabharata**

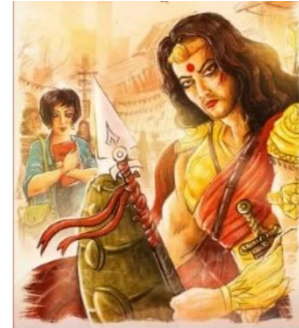


Why Urvashi has given Arjuna the curse of being important? Urvashi cursed Arjuna to lose his manhood. This incident described in "Mahabharata Book 3" Vana Parva: Indralokagamana Parva - SECTION XLVI. When Arjuna was in Indraloka during their exile he gained all the celestial weapons from Indra. After that Indra asked him to learn music & Dance which he learned from Chitrasena a Gandharva. One day Indra asked Chitrasena that Arjuna has learned everything here so let him learn how to get acquainted with a woman. So, Indra asked Chitrasena to send Urvashi to the place of Arjuna. Chitrasena told Urvashi about Indra's wish. So, she approached Arjuna in night but Arjuna didn't accept her as lover instead he compared her as mother. But Urvashi told him that Apsaras is free from all these worldly relations. Arjuna again rejected her argument. After that Urvashi became angry and cursed Arjuna "O Partha thou shall have to pass anytime among females unregarded, and as a dancer and destitute of manhood and scorned as eunuch"

Later Arjuna told all these to Chitrasena and Chitrasena told to Indra. Indra told Arjuna this Curse will be helpful for him during his Agyaatavaas (13 year of exile). After that he will be freed from Urvashi's curse.

### **Paramilitary to Induct transgender officer - Remembering - Shikhandi the Original transgender warrior: –**

Shikhandi played an important role in the Mahabharata. According to mythology, Shikhandi's tale began from her past life as Amba the eldest daughter of the king of Kashi. She had two sisters Ambika and Ambalika. Bhishma who swore to celibacy forcefully abducted the three sisters from a Swayamvar for not inviting Hastinapur's Crown Prince Vichitravirya. While the two agreed to marry, Amba refused stating she was in love with Salwa.



Bhishma sent Amba back, but she was rejected by Salwa because he lost to Bhishma. She went to Bhishma again asking him to marry her, but due to the vow of celibacy he refused. Angry at the humiliation, Amba resorted to penance.

She was rewarded a garland of blue lotuses from Lord Kartikeya and was foretold that whoever wore it would be the cause of Bhishma's death. She tried to persuade many but none agreed fearing the later enraged, she hung the garland on the gates of King Draupada and died in agony.

Amba was reincarnated as King Draupada's daughter and Draupadi's sister Shikhandini.

When Shikhandini was still living as a young woman, she discovered the garland of ever blooming blue lotuses hung on the palace gate. Shikhandini put it around her neck and became Shikhandi - half man and half woman. During this transformation she gained elements of a man to help her become Bhishma's slayer.

### **Battle of Kurukshetra**

On the tenth day of the war between the Kauravas and Pandavas, Bhishma was the biggest hurdle for the latter to. Lord Krishna advised Arjuna to use Shikhandi as a Shield. Bhishma knew it was Amba and lowered his weapons (to not strike a woman) seeing this as an opportunity Arjuna finally killed Bhishma.

The opportunity was used by Arjuna as the perfect disguise during his last year of exile. Arjuna took the name Vrihannala and dressed in women's cloth and went to the city ruled by king Virata, where he taught the Arts of music, singing and dancing to the princess Uttara and her female attendees.



In the Mahabharata, before the Kurukshetra war, Ahiravan offers his lifeblood to goddess Kali to ensure the victory of the Pandavas, and Kali agrees to grant him power. On the night before battle Aravan expresses a desire to get married before he dies. No women were willing to marry a man doomed to die in a few hours, so Krishna assumes the form of a beautiful woman called Mohini and marries him. In South India, Hijras claim Aravan as their progenitor and call themselves "Aravanis"



In Tamilnadu each year in April and May, Hijras celebrate an eighteen days religious festival. The Aravani temple is located in the village Koovagam in the Ulundurpet taluka in Villupuram district and is devoted to the deity Koothandavar who is identified with Aravan. During the festival, the Aravanis reenact a story of Lord Krishna and Lord Aravan followed by Aravan's subsequent sacrifice. They then mourn Aravan's death through ritualistic dances and by breaking their bangles. An annual beauty Pageant is also held, as well as various health and HIV-AIDS seminars. Hijras from all over the country travel to this

festival.

While recognition of gender outside male and female has only recently been discussed in western societies, in Hindu society people of non-binary gender expression have played important roles for over 2000 years.

Called the Third gender evidence for their existence in Hindu Society can be found in Hindu holy texts like the Ramayana and Mahabharata where Hindu hero Arjuna becomes the third gender. Third gender people have often been revered throughout South Asian history: For example, Muslim rulers of the Mughal empire in the 15th to 19th centuries were generous patrons of third gender Indians. Many rose to significant positions of power under both Hindu and Muslim rulers.

**Hijras or X gender in Mughal Harem:** It is most often asked question by the westerner and the Indian tourists as who were the guards in the Royal Harem. It was of course such a place where the entry of any male was strongly banned. The work of Hijras was diverse. They used to guard the palaces, work as messengers. They used to entertain the royal ladies with their music, dances and jokes. Thus, they used to create comic interlude daily routine.



During the Mughal Time, there was a separate department who was headed by top eunuch official. This post was known as Khwajasara. During the time of Shah Jahan and Jahangir Khwajasara hold an important portfolio. In Agra still, you can visit the famous Transgender Tomb. Thus, they hold important post and authority during the Mughal era.

Regardless most Hijras defining characteristic is leaving home to become a part of the Hijra community which removes itself from wider society and teaches its lesson in secret. A young person is initiated by following a guru or teacher who will teach the chela, or disciple, in the Hijras way of life. This includes leaving their home to live in community with other Hijras, to learn the ritual roles that they perform in Hindu household. Hijra are expected to perform dances, Song and blessing at both birth and Weddings of Hindu. To many Hindus believe, a Hijras blessings of a baby will confer fertility, prosperity and long life on the child. One to two days after a marriage ceremony Hijras will perform to bless the couple for fertility. Infact Hijras also can curse a family if they are disrespectful or refuse to pay for the blessing fearful of receiving a curse from Hijras, Hindu families often welcome them and pay them for their services even when uninvited. However, sometimes Hindu families refuse them entry or refuse to pay even going as far as calling the police. Still the cultural authority of the Hijra is so powerful that the police with often do nothing to remove them Hijras are often treated with both respect and fear.

Hijras are not only part of India's immense diversity, but they themselves are also diverse in definition and perception. Though respected for their religion meaning and fertility ceremonies their social acceptance in society is difficult, one reason for this is the fact that they fit neither the category of men nor women, making of the third gender of eunuchs officially accepted by government. This gives them a status of elevated religious importance on the one hand and a status of an incomplete being on the other hand.

### **GURU CHELA**

Often rejected by their own families the third gender community began to create self-identified families led by a Guru or a leader who was also a third gender. In these self-appointed families, they were treated as brothers and sisters, were protected, provided food and shelter, and taken care of both spiritually and physically still, they faced the health and welfare risks that come inherently from a life of begging and prostitution.

Hijra or third gendered families were also very closed off to the outer society. They lived in home and compounds where no outsiders were allowed, which offered some protection from what they saw as discrimination by outside society. They took on an aggressive attitude especially when asking for money,

that often seared people off. Such aggression was with consciousness that they were playing into people's fear and phobias as a way to scare them into giving them money when begging. Each recruit (Chela) has a guru who takes care of her spiritual education as well as clothes and work. The guru is to the Chela mother (in Law). Sometimes the guru-Chela relationship is as sweet as a mother child relationship, but a majority is considered similar to that of a mother-in-law, daughter in-law relationship which is both sour and sweet at times.

### **“Hijras and their Education”**



Far and beyond the world of Education and global social justice lays the unknown mysterious world of Eunuchs who are better known as Hijras in India. The reality of their existence is still a secret and their omnipresence in the Indian society is unavoidable. They have always remained an integral part of the Indian society from ancient time. But unfortunately, their present state of existence has been reduced to abject poverty, illiteracy, hatred and mockery. Strangely when the whole world is immersed in the rights and laws for gays and other homosexuals, the Hijras are still living in the shadow of rejection from every basic right to equality and education. They have become the topic for exploration and research for their strange appearances. The world at large has forgotten that they are also human beings and have equal rights like everybody. The negative attitude of the people and their segregation from the society has left them with no opportunity.

Education is essential for the development of any democratic country. India is a democratic Country. The spirit of the Indian constitution is to provide equal opportunity to every citizen to grow and attain their potential irrespective of caste religion or gender.

In India there are three genders: Male, female and transgender. In a landmark judgement the Supreme Court of India on April 2014 created the third gender status for Hijras or transgender. As per census 2011 there are around 4.9 Lakh third gender in the country who faces social discrimination and harassment. Transgender were respected earlier in the society but situation has changed they and now face discrimination and harassment. Now transgender will study in school and colleges with all facility approving their admission under the category of "disadvantage group" defined by the Right to education Act 2009 (RTE). Transgenders are eligible for twenty five percent reservation under the economically Weaker Section (EWS) and disadvantaged students' category for admission. They are socially and economically backward. Transgender will be allowed admission in educational institutions and given employment on the

basis that they belonged to the third gender category. The Supreme Court said absence of law recognizing Hijras as third gender could not be continued as a ground to discriminate them in availing equal opportunities in education and employment.

The Supreme Court said they will be given educational and employment reservation as OBC's. Third genders are deprived of social and cultural participation are shunned by family and society. This paper is a step towards enhancing the participation of transgender in mainstream education including higher education, professional education and employment.

**Status of transgender education:** - Third gender i.e. transgender is a new sex in Indian Constitution. This new sex emerges with a major population. They 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.

**Education 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 is most uneducated or undereducated, become reluctant to continue schooling. The average qualifications are secondary (Matric) or Senior 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 everyday 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 mandatory for the Government to provide inclusive education for transgender students and provide adult education to them.

**Challenges of transgender education:** - The nomenclature "Third gender" is a problem in itself it treats sexuality as a ladder-like structure in which the lowest rung is occupied by the queer community. Although it provides them with legal recognition, it does not alleviate them of their adject conditions as they continue to be a part of the marginalized section of society and are not considered equal to the rest of Indian population. India has finally been able to successfully adopt the inclusion principle which was for a long time hoped for but not acted upon, it is also important to bring to attention the various ways in which it has been a failure. The third gender people will be considered as OBC's. The Supreme Court of India said they will be given educational and employment reservation as OBCs. The apex court also said states and the Centre will devise social welfare schemes for third gender community and run a public awareness

campaign to erase social stigma. The Supreme Court said the state must construct special public toilets and departments to look into their special medical issues.

**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 problem of inclusion with male and female gender students.

**Use of disrespectful names and pronouns:** - When a transgender youth identifies as 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 prior name and other pronouns is to deliberately disrespect 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 rest room that does not conform to their gender identity. Transgender people often have no safe access to locker room facilities that conforms to their gender identity.

**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 after feel alone in the world, few programs for youth employee transgender people, few libraries often information about biological sex and gender, gender identity, or being transgender.

### **“Solutions”**

1. **Made effort for inclusion:** - There is a need. for prepare environment where transgender feels secure. Teacher and Community people can play an important role in inclusion.

India is facing acute shortage of skilled manpower indifferent sectors. There is a need to provide vocational education and training to teachers and other school members. At the secondary and other level's vocational training should be provided to the transgender that they prepare for their jobs.

2. **Pronouns or Names:** - Use the name or pronouns appropriate to the young person's chosen gender identity. Remember that it is every one's essential dignity to be called by our chosen name and it is every one right to be

recognized as the person we see ourselves to be. Please apologize if you use the wrong pronoun or the wrong name.

**3 Access to rest room facilities:** - Educate staff and youth about gender identity. If possible designate gender-neutral rest rooms and locker rooms.

1. **Every transgender person is a Hijra**

This is far from the truth while those who are ignorant and insensitive often use Hijra as a derogatory term to mock and abuse effeminate boys and transgender individuals, what most people in India don't realise is that the Hijra community is a socio-cultural community comprising of transgender people who may belong to India and even a few neighbouring countries. They have their own set of rules and customs, and only a transgender person who accepts to become a part of this community can only be called a Hijra. Thus, every transgender person is not a Hijra.

2. **Trans people are incapable of doing significant jobs:** - While many people have been successful in breaking the prejudice surrounding them, in several part of India, people still believe in stereotypes and refuse to give jobs to trans people. Not only is a lot of awareness needed regarding this, but proper education and skills should be imparted to trans people so that they can become a productive work force. Many Trans people drop out of school / College because they suffer bullying and harassment. There is not only ignorance among students, but teachers as well. This can only be solved by awareness and sensitization of educational institutions regarding transgender issues. A well-educated transgender Indian is as capable and deserving to be posted on significant jobs as any other cisgender Indian.

3. **Being the Parent of A transgender child is Shameful:** - This is one of the most common prejudices present in society because of which people disown their own children to suffer alone in this world - it's heartbreaking. Parents who see their children through the eyes of society often don't realise that to be progressive, a society needs to evolve and necessary changes need to be made with time as we learn new things. It is our responsibility to make it better, more inclusive and progressive by ushering in the necessary changes.

The views of society towards an individual, a group or a community starts from us, because we are part of society. If we change our mindsets and become rational and understanding, sooner or later the mindset of society as a whole becomes more rational, progressive and inclusive.

For example, a few decades back due to some prejudices surrounding a girl child, girls were not seen as equal to boys, nor they given higher education and opportunities. They were also forced to marry when they wanted to pursue higher studies and became independent by doing jobs. But as we all know, some parents stood out and supported their girls to pursue higher studies and achieve their dreams.

Girls too proved themselves to be deserving - capable of working at higher posts and achieving every dreams once told to be impossible for them. So, when society stood opposed to them, those parents by their children and set an example, through their children thus helping in creating a better and more equal society. Now, we know that the mindset of people towards a girl child has almost Change in urban areas and is changing gradually in rural areas.

The same applies to transgender Children as well. If parents start understanding their transgender child, they would realize that there is nothing wrong with their child. The real problem is with the mindset of society which needs to be changed. And for that they should provide their transgender children with as much love, care and education like they would to any cisgender child so that they can become independent and achieve their dreams. If this happened then the prejudices surrounding transgender children today would take no time to leave Indian society.

4. **Transgender Women can Never Become Mothers:** The Vicks advertisement which featured Trans woman Gauri Sawant as a mother and showcased her relationship with her daughter - brought tears to the eyes of many still, most people in India argue that a trans woman can't be considered a mother because they can't give birth to babies. In a country where one who gives love and takes care of a child is respected more than the one who gave birth to child, denying someone the respect to be called mother, just because they can't give birth to a child is totally inhumane.

One of the sacred texts in Hindusim to say that mother-hood has nothing to do with any particular gender. The only thing that matter is a heart filled with love for children.

“Ya devi Sarvabhuteshu matri roopein sansthita  
Namastasyai Namastasyai Namastasyai Namoh Namah”

(To that divine goddess / divine energy, who abides in all living beings as mother, salutations, salutations, salutations to thee again and again):

**Devi Stuti from "Durga Saptashati"**

5. **Being transgender is a choice and a transgender person changes sex of date people of the opposite gender: -**

No it has been proved in significant researches that being transgender is not a choice. It is ignorance or lack of awareness regarding trans people in society that same people still think that being transgender is society that are unaware of the psychological trauma a transgender person goes through every day.

Some people go to the extent of saying trans people change their sex to date people of other gender. In an era when we can know about almost everything through search engines on the internet, people should try to know more about Trans people before commenting on the topic. Thinking that Trans is choice is pure ignorance. Not all trans people undergo surgery but some do to get a better sense of alignment with their gender. Sex reassignment surgery helps them to feel free and be themselves. Also, what most people don't know is that gender and sexuality are independent of each other.

Trans people in India have lived oppressed lives for a long time. It was only after a hard battle that they gained legal recognition. A battle which was mostly fought alone, because many didn't understand them. Many were unaware and some even ignored their pain and problems because of transphobia, only knowledge through awareness can end such mindsets, because of which many suffer discrimination every day.

It is a time we support transgender Indians in their struggle for identity equality and dignity. And one of the ways to do it is by spreading awareness about them and the issue they face.

Together, we can help each other create an equal and just society, where every human is treated humanely.

A famous quote by Mahatma Gandhi is quite apt on the struggles of trans people in India society.

“First, they ignore you, then they laugh at you, they fight you and then you win”



**Health Care** - The health care services for transgender person does only refers to the medical procedure involved in transition but health refers to an overall state of complete physical mental and social well beings. Health Care also refers to a range of primary and other health care services which includes employment, housing and public acceptance of the transgender people. As the Transgender person have suffered from substantial health disparities and barrier to



**Employment** - The transgender persons have suffered work place discrimination and discrimination in the matters of employment. They suffered discrimination mainly in the form of privacy violation, refusal to hire and harassment which leads to unemployment and poverty. To prevent the discrimination suffered by them the transgender person protection act states that no government or even the private entities can discrimination against Transgender person in the matter of employment which includes recruitment and promotions and every establishment should designate a person to be a complaint officer to deal with the complaints in relation to the act.

**Education** - The education of transgender person is equally important like other male and female gender but the social stigma that transgender person faces break their interest and focus towards their learning and they develop a feeling of being avoided, ignored and disgraced and the transgender students are often denied to be admitted in educational institution as the educational institution does not recognize their gender identities. To protect their right. The transgender person (Protection of Right) Act 2019 provides that the educational institution that are funded or recognized by Government shall provide education, recreational facilities and sports for transgender person without discrimination.

2019 includes the prohibition against discrimination which most importantly includes important sectors like employment, education and health care sectors.



Transgender people have suffered from discrimination for ages in the matter of housing, health, education and employment. The discrimination suffered by them emanates from the social stigma and isolation that they suffer from lack of resource which were provided for transgender people. To safeguard the rights of transgender people and to protect them from the discrimination. The transgender person (Protection of Rights) Act

## **Prohibition against discrimination**

appropriate health care Services for ages and had made them to suffer depression attempted suicide, violence and harassment and even the HIV. To provide them protection and help them to lead a happy life. The transgender person Act, 2019 states that government should take proper steps to provide health care facilities to transgender person and it should include separate HIV surveillance centers and sex reassignment surgeries and transgender persons should be provided with a comprehensive medical insurance.

**Welfare Measures** - Transgender persons have been discriminated and neglected by the society for a long time but to bring them back to the mainstream of the society several welfare measures have been taken for the transgender person as in Tamilnadu. There was an instance where land was provided for Aravanis and in Andhra Pradesh, the state government has ordered the Minority Welfare Department to consider “Hijras” as a minority group and to develop welfare Schemes for transgender. The department of social welfare Board in Tamil Nadu established "Aravanigal transgender women welfare Board to address the social Welfare issues of transgender person. The transgender person protection Act 2019 has provided that relevant government should take measure and ensure full participation of transgender person in society and to formulate certain welfare schemes and measures to protect the right of the transgender person.

**Literature Review** - Before you know literature review about topic. We must know the same sad story of them by themselves. A 45 years old Transgender said, “we have been born like this people don't understand why we are like this! we force ourselves to live with no other go.” Another 23 years transgender in Vyasarpadifelt “When I went to a government hospital for my illness, the worker there including doctors looked as an animal” 29 years transgender expressed her worries in the words "I have studied upto 12<sup>th</sup> standard and I am willing to do any work that suits me” Even. N.G.O except very few like that "hesitate to recruit us! See this society looks down upon us as sex-workers. But what mistake did I make in my life. Is having been born as Transgender my fault? Only in sex work and Begging, they don't ask any qualifications” Finally 19 years old transgender blamed "there is no one in the society to care for us really. Many people come here to interview us like you. We cry in front of you, you would say something and go away. We know nothing big is going to happen”.

### **Special Social System of transgender Community:**

Transgender are stigmatized people. So, like all other stigmatized people they are marginalized. For this they cannot share all the social events frequently. So, they have to lead their life in different pattern. Usually, they cannot mix with general people. So, they live in different Community and they have special social system. They have different house where they lived together with another

transgender. They also communicate with all other transgender all over the Country.

Generally transgender did not do any Salary oriented job. Traditionally they don't involve in business. But at present some transgenders are engage in business.

### **“TRANSGENDER RIGHTS IN INDIA”**

Transgender people are individuals who differ from the stereotypes and existence of only two gender that is man and women, they have different appearance, personal, characteristics and behavior. Being different from the other gender, transgender people have been subject to social oppression as society does accept their gender identity and they suffer from the physical violence which is inflicted upon them.



The main problems from which they suffer are lack of education, unemployment, homelessness, lack of health care facilities, depression, alcohol abuse and discrimination throughout their life. To protect their rights and to solve their problems, the constitution of India has provided them with their own rights and the Supreme Court has given them the rights to be recognized as "Third gender" and provided them with some welfare measures, human rights are basic rights and freedoms which are guaranteed to a human by virtue of him being a human which can neither be created nor can be abrogated by any government. It includes the right to life, liberty, equality, dignity and freedom of thought and expression.

The Indian state policy that earlier recognized only two sexes i.e. only male and female has deprived that third gender from their several rights as being an Indian citizen, which includes right to vote, the right to own property, the right to marry, the right to claim a formal identity through a passport etc. and more importantly the right to education, employment, health so on. The basic rights which they were deprived from their fundamental right under Article 14, 15, 16 & 21.

The rights of transgender where for the first time considered under the 2014 NALSA Judgment where Supreme Court laid emphasis on protecting and safeguarding the rights of the transgender person under the principles of Indian constitution laid down in Article 14, 15, 16 & 21.

## **Right of transgender under Indian Legal System**

The article deals with the transgender rights in India as the transgender have the right to be recognized as a third gender and are entitled to legal protection under the law. The rights are equally guaranteed under the Indian Constitution to the transgender person as the constitution guarantee, justice and equality to each and every Indian citizen.

The government has enacted the transgender person Act 2019 to provide prohibition against discrimination in the matter of employment, education and health services to the transgender person and welfare measures have been adopted to protect the rights of the transgender person.

In India there are wide range of transgender related identities which includes the Hijras, Aravanis, Kothis Jogtas / Jogappas, Shiv Sakthis. In the past, they were treated with great respect.

**Hijras** is a Persian word translated as eunuch which is used in common parlance for transgender community in India.

**Aravani is** a term used for male to female transgender who undergo genital modification through SRS (Sex Reassignment Surgery) or perform Nirwaan which is a traditional mode of Castration.

**Kothi is** used for those who adopt a feminine role in same sex relationships but do not live in communes as Aravanis. **Jogtas/ Jogappas** found in Maharashtra and Karnataka are male to female transgender who devote themselves to the service of a particular God.

**Shiv Shakth** is found in Andhra Pradesh are males who are considered married to Gods particularly Lord Shiva. They usually work as spiritual healers or astrologers.

## **Advertisement**

The new advertisement for Vicks does both assiduously keeps the brand out of the advertising film till the very end. It also packs a twist in the tale, appeals to fine human instincts and joins a well-intentioned cause all of this wrapped in a message of caring to signal the brand position.

As the story shows, it's the small moments that matter the most a loving touch on the brow during a fever, the joy of being feel your favourite food, and a shoulder to hide behind while watching a horror movie.

These are memories Gayatri has built with her mother after she was adopted. They run through her mind as she travels to the boarding school where she studies. This is a true story of Gayatri-Sawant, a Mumbai - based transgender rights activist who raised Gayatri after her birth mother succumbed to HIV-AIDS.

The heartwarming ad gently raises questions about discrimination and denial of rights of transgender people in India without actually asking them stridently. Various brand Campaigns have built on themes inclusive of the transgender Community ever since the Supreme Court in its 2014 land mark judgment called for equal treatment, and the third gender Category was created in education and employment.

Among these are **Brooke Bond, Red Label Tea**, which joined hand with 'y' Films to create one of its kind transgender music band, '**Six-PACK BAND**' and Sari-maker Red-Lotus.



In 2014, member of India's transgender Community a public service campaign named **Seatbelt Crew** with music Channel, Channel V and advertising agency Ogilvy Mumbai Dressed as the Cabin crew of a flight, they enacted the messages of road safety in video.

The latest advertisement in Brook Bond Red label's "Swad Apnepan ka" Campaign features a transgender woman and attempts to Champion social inclusivity.



Many brands lead to take up a cause and use it as an axis for their marketing and advertising message. Through its "Swad Apnepan ka" Campaign Brooke Bond Red label has touched upon a plethora of a social issue that comes in the way of making India more inclusive. The latest advertisement attempts to address the prejudice faced by the transgender Community and integrates the brand cause into the new monsoon themed spot.

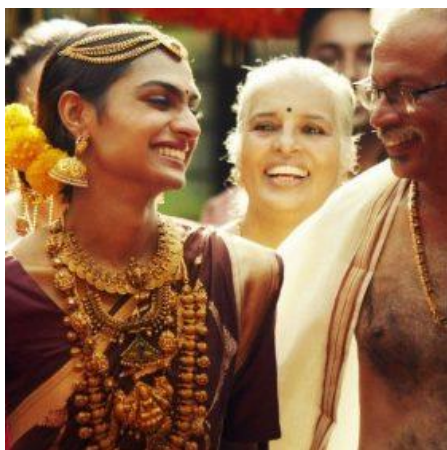
India's transgender community celebrated a win unlike the **Supreme Courts vote** to create a legal category for the third gender in 2014-becoming the seventh country in the world to do so. This time the victory took place far from New Delhi at the Cannes lions International Festival of creativity.

Mind share Mumbai a creative agency won the **Cannes Grand Prix Glass Lion** for collaborating with 'y' films to launch 6 Pack Band, India's first transgender music group, for Hindustan Unilever's Brooke Bond Red label brand.

It's a fantastic sign for a band of this nature to have picked up the most prestigious creative award in the world. The Glass lion honors campaigns in the worlds of advertising and creativity that aim to change the cultural conversation around entrenched gender basis and inequality. Indian campaigns won three Glass lions of six total, with the other two by BBDO India and Ogilvy and mother respectively challenging gender norms in the realm of household chores and the availability of acid used to disfigure women in horrific attacks. The Grand Prix winning 6 Pack Band took India by storm in January with "Hum Hain Happy" it is video cover of Pharrell Williams hit song "Happy" Beyond YouTube, the track quickly spread being streamed on a number of homegrown music apps and turned into a ringtone by some of the country's more progressive mobile operators. The video has two million views on YouTube at the time of writing, and an estimated reach of 28 million people. The group's second track "Sab Rab De Bande" has gained even more attention with nearly 3.8 million views.

While transgender rights have become a hot topic globally in recent years, the Community has ancient roots in India. Today the country is home to estimated 2 million Hijras, who occupy a complex position in society that has shifted dramatically over the centuries.

The One minute - 40 Second video charts the story of transition of a trans woman - an awkward teenager with facial hair and self-doubt who transforms into a beautiful confident bride.



With 22 years old Meera Singhania Rehani in the lead, the video by Kerala - Based jewellery house Bhima depicts the love and acceptance that the protagonist received from her family - each milestone in her life is celebrated through the gold jewellery they gift her. Meera a student of Sociology at Delhi-University and part-time model who came out to her family two years back says when she first heard about the advertisement. "She was very skeptical. I was don't want someone to appropriate my trans identity for commercial use. I was also nervous since the film involved transition and as a pre-transition person. I'm shown as a man with beard. But when I read the story and researched about the director. I said yes. And I am glad I did. Doing this has also helped me become more

comfortable with myself." She told the BBC. Navya Rao, online marketing, head at Bhima. and the brain behind the advertisement, told the BBC that her proposal for the campaign was met with "fears and apprehensions" from her colleagues.

All our previous advertisements had happy heterosexual brides. So, we were worried about how people would perceive it and react to it.

"Most of our store are in rural parts of the state. We were not sure how much exposure people there would have had to these issues".

But the 96 years old jewellery house with dozens of stores in Southern India and a branch in the United Arab Emirates, decided to go ahead with the advertisement to "give a social message" and "start a conversation"

There was some criticism of the advertisement and we were accused of leading a voice to a cause that's unnatural and not supposed to exist in society. Many from the LGBTQI Community reached out to us saying the advertisement had touched their heart she said.

"Advertisement and TV series are much more impactful than movies. They are played repeatedly in homes have the power to change opinions. There can be a bit of resistance to them initially, but they can be a game changer".

### **LOCAL COMMUNITY PLEDGES SAVING TO BUILT FIRST TRANSGENDER SCHOOL IN NORTHERN INDIA**

Mumbai (Thomson Reuters Foundation) After dropping out of school aged 12, transgender woman Guddi Kinnar resorted to dancing at Wedding and other religious ceremonies to earn money, acutely aware that her lack of education was a major obstacle to obtaining a regular job. To ensure other youngsters don't end up in the same predicament, Kinnar 40 has pooled funds with about 140 other trans people living in Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh state to build the first trans education Centre in northern India. "People disown trans children, and we look after them. We don't have the school, no employment option, Kinnar told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Kushinagar."

Kinnar said she was abandoned as a child and had irregular schooling until the age of 12 when she was dropped



out taking up singing and dancing at religious ceremonies that earn her Rs. 100/- to Rs. 500/- a day in alms.

The education center will initially have a primary School for children upto the age of 10 with plans to develop it into a college and a university in the future "Here they will get an education, they can choose any profession they want".

India has about 4.9 lacs trans people and less than half are literate and even fewer have jobs according to country 2011 census. But campaigners estimate the number is far higher and could be around 2 million, with male to female hijras and the most visible group.

The Supreme court granted trans people "third gender" recognition in 2014, given them equal rights under the law, but discrimination continues according to community members and Campaigners. They are often shunned and many survive through begging or Sex work.

Few have access to education and many trans Children who do attend regular schools skip classes or drop out to avoid bulling jeopardizing their employment opportunities, studies have shown. "This community is still deprived of the basic right of education. They are discriminated even at primary education level" said Krishna Mohan Mishra of the Kinnar Shikha Seva Trust, or All India Transgender Education Service Trust that started the project in Kushi Nagar.

The Center in Kushinagar - a Buddhist pilgrimage Center - was described as the first to be funded by the trans community although it has also received state support.

The trans community does not have any big savings yet some have pledged to buy bricks, other cements with whatever resources they have, said Mishra who has donated his land for the project.

Kinnar said she planned to raise funds for the project from the government and from families to whom she performs.

"The generation after us will not live our life of humiliation and may be things will be better for us in our next life" she said.

The remaining article is divided into the following three parts. The first part highlights the challenges facing Hijras in education field. The second part examines the recent legal developments and government measures for the protection of human rights of Hijras, with a particular focus on education. The third part offers recommendations using the inclusive education paradigm based



on the assumption that learning demands a Congenial atmosphere of friendliness and social acceptance. The final part concludes.

Education is a major avenue for connecting hijras with the mainstream society, especially for those among them who aspire for learning or wish to pursue nontraditional professions. Moreover, the right to free and compulsory education which is a legal and constitutional right for children in the age group of 6 to 14 years in India can serve its purpose in a safe learning environment, marked by a regard for human dignity. The challenges that hijras face in the current educational environment mirror the impact of a large society that recognizes "binary gender norms" (Ministry of Social justice and empowerment report, 2014, P44). For instance, the Approach Paper of the National Committee on issues of transgender persons high lights the following major features of the education-based discriminated faced by transgender person.

First transgender students encounter physical sexual emotional violence and neglect and discrimination in educational institutions prompting them to drop out of schools. This is partly a reason why their average qualification is of Secondary or Senior Secondary level, compounded by the significantly low level of enrollment, it may be noted that literacy rate among transgender person is 46% while among the general population it is 74%.

Second, the difficulty in accessing education is constituted by exclusion from Society and family, making them live in rather segregated eunuch colonies (Rajesh and Naved, 2013, P.111). Though the TPR Bill 2016, provides for the transgender person's right to residence with parents or "immediate family members" ground reality will be the touchstone of its effectiveness.

Third, teachers and school staff in general are reportedly insensitive to the transgender person's leading to the letter's discontinuation of formal studies. For example, sharing a personal story with Julie Mccarthy Aher, a hijra who was formerly a male said that her teacher was apathetic to peer bullying and rather told her "Your friends are doing this to you because you are behaving in an extremely feminine way and that's what is an issue. (Mc Carth 2014). Similarly, a study by Navatia, Mahajan and Shah (2012) in the city of Mumbai revealed that gender choices pertaining to uniforms, sports and subjects are a source of stress for trans PAGFBS [Person Assigned Female Births] Since classmates and teachers engage in bullying behavior with gender non-conforming children. As noted by UNESCO 'Access to school is a particular problem for transgender learners, because issues such as school uniform policy and sanitation facilities are binary and do not accommodate transgender learners.

Fourth the low level of education either push Hijras to a sex work making them vulnerable to half-life and sexual transmitted infection, or force them to beg for survival.

### **INDIAN TRANSGENDER PEOPLE (WHO ARE BREAKING ACROSS FIELDS) WHO WERE THE FIRST IN THEIR FIELDS: -**

It's not easy to face the world when you are constantly being looked down upon for your sexuality. Almost every other transgender person has to face the abusive behaviour in the society they live in. To make their lives better and to make a mark with this



identity they have to take the tough path. Unlike all of us, a transgender Career path is not simple and straight, for they have to make extra efforts to be accepted in the world of commoners. To prove themselves efficient enough people like Sathyarni Sharmila, who became India's first transgender lawyer: Manabi Bandopadhyay who became India's first transgender College Principal, have set a record in their respective fields.

Narthaki Nataraj, a renowned Bharatnatyam dancer, from Tamil Nadu has become the first Indian transgender to be honoured with Padam Shri the third highest civilian award in India in 2019.



Transgender folk dancer Matha B Manjamma Jogati was honoured with a Padma Shri award for her contribution to arts by President Ram Nath Kovind in 2021. Manjamma also went on to become the first transgender President of "Karnataka Janapada academy" a government body for performing arts

in Karnataka.

### **"First transgender beauty pageant Trans Elegance of India2022 held in Nagpur"**

To celebrate the month of love with love all the transgender beauty pageant was organized with an aim to motivate gender equality for the first time in Nagpur. The participants confidently show cased their talent in various rounds. All the participants of Fashion Show performed with a lot of grace and poise, Participants showed



elegance in their style as they confidently walked on the ramp while reaching thunderous applause from the emotional audience who were constantly clapping and cheering them.

**Shanaya Pakhle** was Crowned as the winner of the event. Mohini and Sunny become the runner up. Other top finalists include Mahi, Achal, Lisa, Rhea Gauri Sakshi, Honey and Ashu.

85 participants took part in a one day. Trans elegance of India 2022 beauty pageant. "We are very happy that such event was organized in the city. We got a stage to present our talent before the world" said one of the participants. This is an opportunity for other community members who want to change their lives, the group added.

### **First Transgender Beauty Queen**

Change that begins at home drives social change says Indian first transgender international beauty queen **Naaz Joshi**, winner of eight beauty crowns - One National and seven International including The Recent Empress earth 2021-22 held virtually, Naaz has been vocal about skill development for trans people. Her virtual sessions during the Pride month for lovely Professional University in Punjab and the Vellore Institute of Technology focused on sensitising people about the Community.

### **First ever Transgender Ramp walk Bombay Times Fashion Week 2019**

In runway history, it has never ever happened that a member of the transgender community opens a fashion week. Elegant and grand describe **Laxmi Narayan Tripathi's** attire Designed by Archana Kochar for the first show of the Bombay Times Fashion week 2019. As the show stopper he opened the show in a grand Sari.



While strutting the ramp, Laxmi owned the outfit and the runway. After Laxmi a set of models assayed on the runway. Alongside -trans women, displaying a set of hues - black, greys, Reds, embellished with the colours of the rainbow that are seen as signature colour palette for LGBTQI + Community. Talking about this Laxmi told us, "It is the first time that a transgender has opened a fashion show and it will go down in the history of the fashion industry, not in India but all around the world. We do not want sympathy from society, we need and we

deserve a fair chance. While several groups, brands and high placed individuals have always spoken about supporting our community. It was the times of India Group that set an example for everyone to follow. Prior to this, I have walked the ramp but this is the first time that a designer has included so many of my transgender models on the runway, underlining the spirit of inclusivity." Designer Archana Kochar who put the show together with Anil Murarka and his foundation added, "It's an honour and a pleasure to endorse inclusivity in such a grand style. I made it a point to include that the cuts and patterns in the collection were inclusive. They were specially curated for the members of the community who walk the ramp and made the show extremely special for me." While this is just the beginning of the day, we're told there is more excitement in store as the day progresses.

### **Sathyashi Sharmila**

Sharmila registered as Tamil Nadu's first transgender lawyer in 2018. Despite coming from Tamil Nadu, a state which has been securing highest literacy rank, she became subject to torture abuse on the account of her gender. Shunning the stereotypical mindset behind, she set an example by pursuing law so that she can fight against the injustice.



### **Joyita Mondal**

**India's first transgender Judge:** - At an age of 29 Joyita Mondal became the first Judge as she was appointed at Lok Adalat in North Bengal in October 2017.

She always raises a voice for people of her community and has been appealing to the government for reservation for trans community people in jobs. She dropped out of school and ran away to Siliguri from Kolkata, her hometown. She had to sleep at bus - stands and beg on the road for food. After living on the streets, she landed Islampur where she worked for the upliftment of the transgender Community. She now runs her own Organisation "Dinajpur Nortun Aalo" (Dinajpur New light) that works for the welfare of people from the community.



### **"K. Prithika Yashini"**

She is the first transgender woman to become a Police officer in India. Currently serving as a sub-inspector in a



Tamil Nadu district, the fight for becoming an officer was not easy as her application was rejected because of her gender. However, K. Prithika Yashini Challenged the rejection and fought a legal battle win in the Madras High Court. She, subsequently cleared the required tests and was given the job she was entitled to. Pathika had to run away from her house as she was tired of her parents who had sought medical, astrological and religious help to "Set things right".

### **"Padmini Prakash"**

She has scripted history by becoming the first trans woman news anchor of Lotus News, a local Tamil channel ostracized by her family at the age of 13 because of her identity she was taken in by a family who were friends, with her parents. She later married a gay from this very family who has supported her ever since. The two have an adopted son, Padmini has acted in various soap operas and has won a few beauty pageants as well other than this she is a classically trained dancers and has taught Bharatnatyam too.



### **"Mumtaz"**

First transgender person to contest elections: - Mumtaz a social worker is the first transgender who came out to contest elections in Punjab from Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Mumtaz Contest election from Bhucho Mandi constituency. She has been working with BSP for many years



### **"Laxmi Narayan Tripathi"**

Assigned male at birth Laxmi Narayan Tripathi is one of the most influential transgender people. She is a Bharatnatyam dancer and an activist currently based in Mumbai. Unlike other parents who refuse to accept their children when they came out as a trans person. Tripathi's parents accepted her when she came out as a transgender woman. She is first



transgender person who represented Asia Pacific in the UN in 2008. She worked with several NGO's before starting her own Organisation. Astitva in 2007 which caters to raising a voice for the sexual Organisation, minorities. Laxmi has also featured in reality TV shows as a special guest and has never missed an opportunity to speak for the LGBTQ + Community.

### **“Nitasha Biswas”**

Biswas is the winner of the country's first ever trans beauty pageant. She was abandoned by her family but this did not hamper her from pursuing her dreams. She started a career in modelling. She had no one by her side while she went through the hormone replacement therapy (HRT), which is mentally as well as physically straining. She then went on to work as a Stylish and makeup artist. She won the pageant in 2017 and then represented India in Miss International Queen and Miss Trans Australia - 2019.



### **“Shabnam Bano”**

known as Shabnam Mausi, she is first transgender Indian to be elected to the public office. Despite attending primary School for just two years, she knows twelve languages through her frequent travels around the country. She has inspired her community to challenge the roles they have performing for years by walking into politics. As the first trans MLA of India she has been focusing on eradicating from her constituency.



### **“Dr. Manabi Bandopadhyay”**

Who doesn't know about the charming Manabi Bandopadhyay, who became the first transgender College Principal of Krishnagar women's college on 07<sup>th</sup> June, 2015. Currently she is the Professor and also became the first transgender person in India who has completed Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Earlier She had taught as an Associate Professor in Bengali at Vivekananda Satobarshiki Mahaviadyalaya.



Born as the only son among two sisters, Manabi was oppressed by her conservative father and fought a long battle. She started Oh – Manab in 1995 a

magazine specifically for Hijra community. She never let her education be deterred by the ridicule she faced as she knew knowledge was the weapon to fight against the stereotypes.

## **TRANSGENDER AND EMPLOYMENT**

The first ever study on the right of transgender by the National Human Rights Commission gives a clear picture of the scenario of transgender in the country. According to the study, about 92% of transgender are deprived of the right to participate in any form of economic activity in the country, with even qualified ones refused jobs.

As per 2011 census data India's transgender population consist of 4.9 lacs people out of which handful of them only make it to gainful employment. Though there are number of efforts being made to change this narrative. For example, a Chennai – based start-up is working towards the social inclusion of the transgender community, but it has only been able to place 42 trans people in its 14-month existence. So, focusing on trans employment at the work place is the need of the hour.

In 2017 Kerala's Kochi Metro Rail limited employed 23 transgender persons, while eight out of them quite their job within a month due to refusal by several landlords to give them accommodation. They were left with no remedy but to quit their jobs since their employment had no legal obligation and/or incentive to step in and help them fight against such discrimination.

It is only Tamil Nadu where same steps have been taken to improve the life of these people by providing with education, identity cards, subsidised food etc.

No less than 13 members of the transgender community have been selected recently as constables under the Chhattisgarh police. This is truly historic and thrilling for a community that has no legal recognition till the S.C. in NALSA Vs Union of India (2014) ruled that Transgender person have the right to decide their self-identified gender.

As the society, change has to begin from the family level. Educate children on how trans people are just people, like us with aspirations and dreams. Some time they do not have the means to fulfill them, and we can play a roll in their journey. We should treat them with respect, like every other human being.

And last but not the least we need to more inclusive for them in our society by treating them equally.



**Veena Chopra is a retired teacher who won the International Red Cross and many National Red Cross awards, as well as three national and state awards for her social work.**

**It is her first book on transgender issues. Before this, she helped her colleague with writing books on COVID-19. She feels that transgender women also need to be recognised as women with all the grace and dignity. All the rights enjoyed by the other citizens of the country should be enjoyed equally by them.**

**Transgender "Challenges and Opportunities" is a striking, moving book that touches readers' hearts and takes them on a furious and empathetic journey into the personal lives of India's transgender people.**

**She firmly believes that, given an opportunity, they can also touch great heights in every field of human endeavour. She is the founder of an NGO (Shraddha Seva Sanstha) which is working for the upliftment of the third gender and women's empowerment with her colleagues. When she came across transgender people, she was deeply moved by the difficulty they were facing. A better understanding of the problems and challenges faced by transgender people will help in bringing about the changes in policies that will give them their due rights.**

**She hopes this book will help raise awareness and acceptance of transgender people across India.**