

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR TRANSGENDERS: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES



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28.	WHAT DO PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS KNOW ABOUT THE 'THIRD GENDER'? : AN ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT TEACHERS' AWARENESS ON TRANSGENDER PEOPLE Najmudeen P. & Santhosh Areekuzhiyil	111
29.	SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES OF TRANSGENDER J. Renisha	116
30.	ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF TRANSGENDER ADOLESCENT STUDENTS Revati N. & K.P. Meera	118
31.	BASIC ISSUES IN TRANSGENDER MENTAL HEALTH S. T. Sajith Lal Raj	121
32.	CHALLENGES FACED BY TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY IN INDIA Manju M.S. & Jeena E.M.	124
33.	PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS OF TRANSGENDERS A. Joakim	128
34.	AWARENESS ON SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS M.Helan	131
35.	CREATING GENDER INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS S. Sreekala	135
36.	ROLE OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS FOR PROMOTING TRANSGENDERS' EDUCATION C. Mary Celine	138
37.	WELLBEING OF TRANSGENDER AND TEACHER COMMUNITY A. John Lawrence	141
38.	SELF-EFFICACY OF TEACHERS IN PROMOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR TRANSGENDER R.S. Padma Rekha	144
39.	EMPOWERMENT OF TRANSGENDERS Emy Brintha T., Anuba S. & Karthika A.R.	147
40.	GENDER INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS S. Anitha	151
41.	SOCIO ECONOMIC ISSUES OF TRANSGENDER N. Latha Saraswathy	155


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WELLBEING OF TRANSGENDER AND TEACHER COMMUNITY

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INTRODUCTION

National Center of Transgender Equality refers to transgender as "A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. (<http://www.transequality.org>). It is appropriate and correct to use the term 'Transgender' as an adjective, not a noun, thus 'transgender people' is appropriate but 'transgenders' is often viewed as disrespectful. People who identify as transgender or transsexual are usually people who are born with typical male or female anatomies but feel as though they've been born into the "wrong body." (<http://www.isna.org>). This pattern and behaviour of thinking, that is deviant from the normal thinking of other member of the society, just because it is different and against the consonance of society, the transgender behaviour becomes unacceptable leading to many social and psychological issue. At their personal level, it also leads to physiological issues in their process of transgenderization. A human being has to be respected as a human being, irrespective of man-made or nature-caused differences and deformities. It is a social, moral, and human obligation and a need, and at any cost it could never be subverted.

GENDER VS SEX

UNESCO's 'Baseline definitions of key concepts and terms' defines the term 'Gender' and 'Sex' as follows: Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men. Gender roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. On the contrary, sex describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth. (<http://www.unesco.org>).

TRANSGENDER POPULATION AT A GLANCE

The youngest age group, 18 to 24 years old, is likely than older age groups to identify as transgender. The results of the survey conducted on 'How many adults identify as transgender in the United States?' revealed that there are thirteen lakh and ninety thousand transgender in the United States of America. (Flores, Herman, Gates, & Brown, June 2016). The agewise distribution of the transgender population is as given below.

Estimated population of adults who identify themselves as transgender by age in the U.S

Age	Population	%
18-24	2,05,850	0.66
25-64	9,67,100	0.58
65 and older	2,17,050	0.50
Total	13,90,000	1.74

According to the 2011 Census of the Government of India (<http://www.census2011.co.in/transgender.php>) the population of transgender in India is as follows:

In India, at the national level, there are 4,87,803 transgender people.

In Tamil Nadu, there are 22,364 transgender people.

In Kerala, there are 3,902 transgender people.

BEHAVIOURAL IMPLICATIONS OF BEING A TRANSGENDER

"Gender identity is the gender with which you identify; Sexual orientation is the gender to which you're attracted." (Friedman, April 2015). When a child is born, a doctor says, "It's a boy" or "It's a girl." Assigning someone's sex is based on biology - chromosomes, anatomy, and hormones. But a person's gender, the inner sense of being male, female, or both, doesn't always match that sex. Transgender people say they were assigned a sex that isn't true to who they are. This inner feeling is expressed in their behaviour by their way of dressing, speaking, combing the hair, walking and sexual attractions, which are completely disapproved in an orthodox society, and partially accepted in a growing society and fully accepted as they are in a matured society. The feeling of transgender is not a mental illness; rather it is a orientation in tune with their biological hormones.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE TRANSGENDER

The expression and assertion of themselves as transgender as they desire to in congruence with their natural feeling in the society with a positive acceptance by the family, friends, and society is the first and the biggest challenge faced by the transgender.

As a result of this psychological exclusion from the family, friends and society, their education, employment, marital relationship, extra-marital relationship and health becomes a major problem of their everyday life.

The non-availability of jobs in the institutions and the harassment by the members of the society leads them to poverty and illegal practices.

The feeling of being 'used and thrown' considering them as mere sex-workers and transmitters of sexual diseases and treating them as trespassers of the laws of the society.

Above all their inability and hurdles to enter into a married life and giving birth is a life-long perennial handicap that hurts them to their inner core.

ROLE OF TEACHING FRATERNITY

Education is in general defined as the agent of social change, by and large. If this hypothetical definition is true, it implies the hidden fact that the teachers who are the wheels of the system of education alone bring about a positive change in the society, even in these issues of transgender. "People struggle with anxiety or depression or rejection when they feel they can't be who they are", anguishes Friedman. It is in this context, a positive initiations from the side of teaching fraternity, is much awaited.

Curriculum should include a lesson on 'Transgender' so that the stigma and negative thoughts on transgender is wiped off.

Teachers should understand, accept the transgender as they are, with a positive attitude and social responsibility.

Teachers should educate their students and give awareness to their students about transgender.

The students, if identified, as transgender should be guided properly and referred to the proper forum to ensure their safety, help and assistance.

Counselling may be given to the family members to accept the transgender child of their in spite of the social and other problems and not to throw them on the streets.

Rehabilitative measures by way of finding out suitable employment and earnings may be taken up by the teachers and teacher-forums.

Legal protection and awareness may be given to the transgender community guaranteeing a secured, peaceful and happy living.

CONCLUSION

A human being is not an animal. A human being is a human being. Any human being, even if they are transgender, deserves the rights of any other human being. Accepting them as a part of inclusive education, helping them to continue their education, and providing employment opportunities will be helpful for the transgender and the society at large. Instead of accepting them with their strengths and weaknesses, if we continue to reject them, not only their life but also the entire society is going to be at risk, which is unwelcoming. Therefore the teaching community should join hands, with a spirit of positive acceptance, magnanimity and maturity should come forward to include them in the normal stream of the society, for building up the nation.

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