



## PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY TRANSGENDER PEOPLE: A REVIEW OF SOCIOECONOMIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS

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### RESEARCH ARTICLE



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#### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.70096/tssr.260401068>

#### Abstract

Transgender refers to those persons whose gender identity do not match their birth assigned sex and includes transwomen, transmen and intersex. Transgender persons have been given recognition as a different gender identity by NALSA judgment 2014. The Transgender Person (Protection of Right) Act 2019 also reiterate inclusion of transgender in different spheres of life including social, educational, economic. Our constitution also guarantees fundamental rights to transgender persons. Transgender individuals still face brutal treatments everywhere including India. The laws are not sufficient to protect them. To understand the drift between legal and actual condition of transgender, there is a crucial need to review national and international related literature. To fulfill the objectives the researchers have collected various online and offline studies, studied and analyzed them. The studies were categorized in seven categories and then synthesized. The synthesis of the review of related literature under various categories highlights the multifaceted brutal experiences faced by the transgender in daily life. Major findings identify a significant gap between constitutional protections and real-life experiences.

**Keywords:** *Transgender Persons, Problems and challenges, Educational Experiences, Mental Health*

#### Introduction

In the mid-1990, the term 'transgender' gained popularity in the West as a catch-all phrase for a variety of subgroups of individuals whose gender identity or gender expressions deviate from their biological sex (Bettcher, 2009). Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 defines a transgender person in Section 2(k) as: 'A person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone sex reassignment surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, genderqueer and person having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra, aravani and jogta'.

In India, there are around 4.9 lakh transgender people, according to the 2011 Census; however, transgender activists believe that this figure is six to seven times greater. Out of the entire transgender population, 54,854 people are youngsters between the ages of 0 and 6 who have been identified by their parents, according to the 2011 Census. About 28% of transgender people live in Uttar Pradesh. Over 9% come from Andhra Pradesh, and roughly 8% come from Maharashtra and Bihar. West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh each have above 6%. Odisha, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu each provide roughly 4%. Over 3% of people in Rajasthan and over 2% of people in Punjab identify as transgender. Similar to the 69% of the population that lives in villages, more than 66% of the transgender community in India resides in rural areas (Nagarajan, 2014; Raju and Beena, 2015).

However, there were a number of noteworthy restrictions on the 2011 Indian Census when it came to gathering information about transgender people. The substantial gender diversity of the population was not well represented by accurate and current statistics. The prevalent negative social attitudes about transgender and gender non-conforming individuals were one of the primary causes of this disparity. The census framework excludes non-binary and other different gender identities because it primarily recognizes two categories: male and female. In many instances, this has resulted in the potential to hide or misrepresent information out of fear of discrimination and social shame. Consequently, the quantity, trends, and demographics of India's transgender population are not fully reflected in the 2011 data. In the absence of the exact population the meaningful policy decision cannot be taken.

There is not just a lack of credible information regarding the population of the transgender people in India but fragmentation in the knowledge is also existing in the other aspects of transgender life- socio-economic status, health status, experiences in educational spaces etc. Therefore, it is crucial to review the existing literature and synthesize them to identify persistent gaps, structural inequalities, and areas requiring urgent intervention. Understanding these aspects are essential to design meaningful and responsive policies for inclusion of transgenders and ensuring dignity and social justice for them.

### **Research Questions**

1. What socio-economic challenges do transgender individuals face as per the related literature?
2. What psychological challenges do the transgender individuals face as per the related literature?
3. What challenges do transgender students face in school education?
4. What challenges do transgender students face in higher education settings?
5. What challenges do transgender students face in family, society, and institutional structures?
6. What kind of legal protection given to transgender individuals in India?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To review the socio-economic challenges faced by transgender people.
2. To examine the psychological challenges faced by transgender individuals.
3. To study the experiences of transgender students in school education.
4. To study the experiences of transgender students in higher education institution.
5. To study the challenges faced by transgender individuals in the family, society, and institutions.
6. To highlight the legal protection given to transgender individuals by law in India.

### **Methodology**

Keeping the research objectives in the mind several online and offline research data bases was searched. Relevant studies were collected from multiple sources. The collected material included research papers, books, reports, autobiographies, legal documents and policy reports. Care was taken to collect wide range of studies relevant to the objectives and ensured inclusion of significant studies without repetition. After collecting the research papers and articles they were studied, analyzed and categorized in different dimensions. The selected studies were organized into the following seven categories for the structured and well-articulated presentation.

- 1) Socio Economic conditions of Transgender Person
- 2) Mental Health, Stigma and Wellbeing
- 3) Education and School Experiences
- 4) Higher Education and Campus Climate
- 5) Family, Identity and Lived Experiences
- 6) Literature, autobiographies and Cultural representation
- 7) Policy, Law and Institutional support

### **Result**

#### **Socio Economic Conditions of Transgender Person**

Mehta & Sharma (2023) conducted study on 'transgender's education in India: status and challenges'. This paper analyzes transgender identity as a long journey of self-discovery, dignity, and social acceptance, rather than limited to medical transformation. At the same time, it illustrates the ongoing discrimination and deprivation towards the transgender community in India. The study reviewed the demographic profiles and socioeconomic status of transgender individuals, notably the fact that they have faced social marginalization, discrimination in the workplace, unemployment and financial instability, despite the constitution's guarantee of equal rights in education and employment. Research findings show that lack of an inclusive education system, family rejection, school bullying and social stigma are the main reasons for high dropout rates and low enrollment rates. Most transgender individuals can no longer pursue academic life after secondary or higher secondary level. Due to limited opportunities for education and formal employment, many have been forced to engage in begging and prostitution. Finally, the research paper emphasizes that strict implementation of legal protections, inclusive education policies, and effective government interventions are essential to ensure social inclusion and equal opportunities for the transgender community.

Lal (2023) – The study was conducted on the topic 'Transgender community in India: Socio Economic, Health and psychological conditions'. The paper focused on the domains on demography, socioeconomic conditions, health, employment, health, psychological conditions and Transgender People's Right to Protection Act. The study concluded that education is a difficult journey for transgender. The employment area is limited for them. They often engage in sex work & other marginal work. Physical & mental healthcare facilities too are not easily accessible for them.

Jabeen et al. (2021) – The study was conducted on the topic 'Challenges and living pattern of Transgender: Qualitative Evidences from Faisalabad.' The purpose of this study was to gain insights about socio economic challenges faced by the Transgender and their living experiences in the Faisalabad, district of Pakistan. The study adopted qualitative research design, where semi structured in-depth interview of 15 Transgender of Faisalabad were taken as the sample. The study concluded that Transgender face social exclusion at every step of life. Their living conditions are poor & unhygienic. The attitude of society towards them is

unpleasant. The results showed that this is happening due to lack of govt. support, lack of educational opportunities & job opportunities and absence of knowledge among the common binary people about Transgender.

Chellammal and Lekshmi (2020) – The study was conducted on the topic ‘Challenges and Problems of Transgender’. The study adopted purposive sampling technique and 50 transgenders were selected and interviewed using interview schedule. The study concluded that transgender suffer from insecurity and discrimination. Majority of transgender were unaware about the rights given to them and about government schemes launched for them. They suffer brutally in terms of family, employment, bathroom issues, denial of civic rights, abuse & bullying. This all is due to their social exclusion.

Nayak (2018) – The study was conducted on the topic ‘Transgender in Orissa: Some reflections of their socio-economic status’. The study was aimed to observe the present socio-economic status of Transgender in Odisha. The study reviewed the secondary data published in articles, journals, websites etc. It included both government and non-government data. The study concluded that transgender face multiple issues hampering their well-being. They face issues in education, employment, housing, healthcare, sexual abuse, denied electoral rights, HIV and depression. There is a lack of awareness in Transgender about the government initiatives for them due to social stigma and hence intended benefit for them do not reach them.

### **Mental Health, Stigma and Well being**

Sarika et al. (2025) – conducted study on ‘Mental Health of Indian Transgender Individuals: A Meta-Ethnography’. The researcher identified ten studies systematically, reviewed and analysed using Noblit and Hare’s method (1988) of meta-ethnography. Based on the reviews the researchers reported healthcare barriers, predisposing factors to psychological distress, mental health issues, and coping strategies adopted by transgender individuals. The researcher reported that the transgender individuals faced stigma and discrimination in the health care system. Based on the reviews the researcher also reported family, community and organisations as a source of stress for transgender individuals. Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, suicidality and substance use were also reported.

Thapa et al. (2025) conducted a mixed-methods study and highlighted the multifaceted obstacles faced by transgender women in India by examining their quality of life, self-esteem, health-seeking behavior, and lived experiences. The SF-12 and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to quantitatively evaluate 73 people selected via snowball sampling, and thematic analysis was used to extract detailed qualitative information from 10 participants. Despite participants’ comparatively high levels of self-esteem, the results showed noticeably poor mental and physical health scores. Many of them said they had been subjected to mistreatment and prejudice in hospital settings, which made them unhappy and reluctant to voice their concerns about the services they received. Identity creation, surviving in the face of violence and discrimination, and continuous challenges with regard to legal, professional, and financial obstacles are all highlighted by qualitative themes. All things considered, the study highlighted how urgently inclusive, stigma-free, and culturally sensitive healthcare systems are needed to enhance transgender women’s access, use, and general well-being.

Rendina et al. (2020) examined minority stress among transgender women by adapting and validating scales measuring internalized and anticipated transgender stigma. Using quantitative methods, data were collected from 213 transgender women, and factor analysis was employed to assess the psychometric properties of the scales. The findings demonstrated that both scales showed good internal consistency and one-dimensionality and were moderately correlated. The study further revealed that anticipated stigma varied across educational and HIV-status groups, while internalized stigma showed no significant sociodemographic differences. The study contributes robust measurement tools for understanding stigma-related mental health disparities among transgender women.

Somasundaram and Sivakumar (2016) – The study focused on the psychological problems among transgender person in India. In the study many respondents told they feel unsafe in public spaces. The study concluded that Transgender usually feel depression and emotional instability. It is traced to social stigma, family rejection and lack of employment opportunities. The study visited that mental health issue is very closely connected to social discrimination. The study suggested and emphasized on the development of awareness programmes and counselling services in improving mental & social wellbeing of Transgender people.

Mizock and Mueser (2014) examined experiences of double stigma, internalized stigma, and coping strategies among transgender individuals. The study was conducted in two parts using a mixed-method approach. In the quantitative phase, data from 55 transgender participants showed that employed participants reported higher levels of both internalized and external stigma. Higher levels of coping were associated with lower levels of stigma. Participants using psychiatric medication reported better coping, while those receiving outpatient mental health services showed lower coping with mental health stigma. In the qualitative phase, grounded theory analysis with 45 participants identified individual, interpersonal, and systemic coping strategies, including disclosure decisions and anticipatory stigma. The study highlighted the need for interventions to strengthen coping and reduce internalized stigma among transgender individuals.

Budge, Adelson, and Howard (2013) – The study titled ‘Anxiety and depression in transgender individuals: The roles of transition status, loss, social support and coping’ was conducted. The study aimed to examine facilitative and avoidant coping as mediators between distress and transition status, social support and loss. It was a quantitative study which used structural equation modelling for data analysis. Total 351 Transgender, where 226 were Trans women and 125 Trans men participated as a sample. Participants were analysed on the domains of identity, family history of mental health issues, perception of loss, coping, depression and anxiety. The results showed the that the rates of depression and anxiety were higher among transgenders than

that of general population. The study suggested the need for practitioners to focus on stress reducing interventions alongside increasing the necessary social support for overall wellbeing of Transgender.

Singh and Jackson (2012) – The study was conducted titled ‘Queer and Transgender Youth: Education and Liberation in our school’. The study was conducted using qualitative research design. The data was gathered using focus group interview and thematic analysis was done. The study concluded that was based on resilience and coping strategies among Transgender. The study concluded that many Transgenders develop strong coping skills, support from peers, self-acceptance and community belonging improved their emotional strength. The study found that mental health programme should focus on building resilience and providing supportive social network as resilience help reduce anxiety and depression.

Grant et al., (2011) – A nationwide survey was conducted in United States based on ‘Injustice at every turn’ faced by Transgender, 6450 transgender and gender non-conforming participants were taken as a sample, all the 50 states of U.S was covered in it. The study uncovered that there was a structural anti transgender attitude, it was deep and persistent. Participants were living in ‘extreme poverty’. Forty one percent of the respondent reported that they attempted suicide once in a while. Participants described alarming rate of harassment (78%), almost 15% of the respondent left their education due to the same issue. Respondent were also abused by teachers. They were facing discrimination in all field including housing, employment and healthcare. The study emphasized that legal protection and inclusive mental health services are paramount to reduce emotional distress.

Mizock and Lewis (2008) – The study focused to study the emotional experiences of Transgender. The study focused on shame, guilt and fear faced during identity disclosure. The study analysed and concluded that socially negative reaction often led to low self-esteem and internalized stigma. Many Transgenders reported that they feel misunderstood and isolated. However, it was positive coping strategies which helped them in managing stress. The findings reaffirmed that counselling and supportive environment are crucial for improving the mental health outcome in Transgender.

### **Education and School Experience**

Ruttledge (2022) – The study was done go explore the challenges of transgender students in school environment. It also aimed to identify the factor which contribute positively or negatively in their academic experiences and to develop a frame work for educational psychologist to promote better support for transgender. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was done and data was collected through semi structured interview through 7 participants. The respondents said that they faced lack of understanding from peers and teachers. They experienced transphobia. There was a widespread inconsistency in administrative policies which created problems in their wellbeing and navigating their social transition. The study suggested the need of revamping the policies to make it more effective for transgender. Educational Psychologist should to move to build better systemic changes in the school system and focus on providing inclusive school culture and needed training.

Hall et al. (2021) – The study was aimed to explore the lived experiences of transgender people in secondary schools compared to the cisgender individuals. It was done using the systematic review of 5 key paper comparing the educational experiences of transgender with that of a non-binary student, using 7 stage review process. Through interpretative phenomenological analysis data was collected from 2 transgender individuals. The comparative analysis showed that the transgender students experience more harassment than the cisgender peer. While there are certain school which are trying to be inclusive, still there is a very deep persistent systematic challenges regarding the infrastructure facilities, usage of names and pronouns. It also attested that good relationship and supportive relationship with peers and other staff was cathartic to bring the protective shield for the transgender and it also focused on the position of educational psychologist to advocate for transgender and help shifting the culture from binary to transgender inclusive.

Snapp et al. (2015) – The study titled ‘Social support networks for LGBT Young Adults: Low-cost strategies for positive adjustment’. The study was aimed to explore the function of three forms of sexuality related social support from family, friends and community on salient measures of positive adolescent development. The data was collected through cross sectional study entitled ‘the Family Acceptance Project’. It included 245 LGBT young adults. The study found that students who were well accepted by teachers and peers showed more better emotional wellbeing and academic confidence. Supportive school climate is must to reduce depression and school dropout rate. The study thereby concluded inclusive school policies are crucial for improving the Transgender experiences.

GLSEN (2013) – The study was conducted in the United States to explore the experiences of LGBT youth in their schools. The sample consisted of 7898 students of United States aged between the ages of 13-21. It was a quantitative study conducted online. The survey report showed that Transgender frequently face verbal abuse, discrimination and usage school conditions. Many students avoided bathrooms and other school activities due to fear. Those schools which had inclusive practices were performing better in terms of Transgender academic excellence. The study hence emphasized on school-based interventions and awareness programme to ensure equal educational opportunity and overall wellbeing of Transgender students.

Russell et al. (2011) – The study titled ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Adolescent School Victimization: Implications for Young Adult Health and Adjustment’ was conducted. Total 245 LGBT young adults of 21-25 years were taken as a sample. A 10-item retrospective scale was administered. Multiple regression was used to test the association between school victimization and young adult depression, suicidal idea. The study found out that those Transgender who experienced harassment showed lower academic achievement and higher absenteeism, their concentration and participation was negatively affected by emotional

stress. The study concluded that by reducing bullying and promoting acceptance, significant improvement can be ensured for both mental health and academic success of Transgender.

Meyer (2010) – The researcher in her book titled ‘Gender and sexual diversity in schools’ explored about the experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming students in school environment. The study was conducted using the analysis of secondary data and discourse analysis. The sample size was over 7000 students of over 50 states of U.S. The paper study showed that Transgender students are often face bullying, name calling and social exclusion from peers. Teachers and administrators also have hostile experience towards these experiences. Students therefore reported that because of this they feel unsafe in school campus. The findings of the study hence suggested that inclusive school culture should be developed where teachers’ support and anti-bullying policies are adapted to reduce discrimination.

### **Higher Education and Campus Climate**

Coron, O’Neil and Vasquez (2022) – The primary objective was to understand the educational experience of transgender adult in United States. It also aimed to know about safety discrimination, impact on mental health and inclusive policies for the transgender individuals. The study was survey based which included 75 transgenders. The study showed that there was high rate of harassment, bullying and unfair treatment. Over 55 percent of the sample responded that they feel that mental health was adversely affected by the exclusion and discrimination they faced being a transgender. There was critical shortage of institutional support to address their grievances. 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of transgender respondents felt that they should hide their gender identity to safely navigate the college. 40 percent felt that they felt secluded at college. The study suggested to implement more dynamic and robust institutional policies to promote safety and belongingness for the transgender.

Regan (2022) – The study was aimed to explore the transphobia, bullying, and harassment in the college premises in United Kingdom. It also focused to evaluate the institutional policies to see if they were able to meet the need of transgenders. It used mixed method approach of survey and open-ended interview. The sample size included 8 higher education institutes and 36 students including both binary and non-binary. The study concluded that students faced structural difficulties due to their identity. The administrative and institutional policies were not well aligned with the needs of transgender. There was lack of transgender representation in the curriculum. The report suggested to promote gender neutral administrative policies to safeguard the transgender and promote their integration.

Clark et al. (2020) – The study was conducted to know about the experiences of transgenders in community colleges. To know whether it was safe or not for their marginalized student group. Various aspects of the college like staff, student organization, registration and records, bathroom facilities were discussed. The semi structured interview was conducted from 15 students who attended the college to gather their narratives. The study concluded that the transgender students faced microaggression in all spheres. They were often subject dehumanizing behaviour throughout their college time.

Lieberth (2020) – The study was focused on the lived experiences of transgender college students in an urban public university where a policy related to the preferred name was adopted. The data was collected from 5 respondents through semi structured interview using narrative inquiry. The study concluded that using a preferred name enhanced the student sense of belonging and safety. However, it was not completely smooth due to technical barriers in campus software but was manageable. The study suggested that better technology integration and professional training should be given to the staff for the smoother experience in using preferred name.

Goldberg (2018) – The study aimed to examine the Institutional structure to know whether it creates bias treatment or supportive treatment for the transgender student. It was focused to study the impact of campus climate and inclusive policies and classroom practice on transgender student wellbeing. It used a mixed method approach by studying not less than 500 students through survey and interview. The study concluded that college campus creates a biased outlook and treatment towards transgender. The environment was hostile towards them and transgender students felt non-existent. It insisted that Institutes should move towards gender inclusive policies.

Heaton (2017) – The study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of transgender students at southern college of America. The key areas of research focused on their academic and social integration within the college, their perspective about the college and the role their gender identity plays in the assimilation in the college. Narrative inquiry was used. The sample consisted of 4 undergraduate Transgender. The study concluded that students felt distress when the pronounces/names didn’t align with their identity. The lack of proper housing and restrooms made them feel unsafe. They emphasized on the need of inclusive practices and acceptance by the peers and teachers to navigate the transition from school to college. Without the support system, it was difficult for them to feel the sense of belongingness and made things complex for them.

Roop (2014) – The study was conducted on the topic ‘Transgender students in higher education: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of experience and access’. The study used the interpretative phenomenological methodology to study the experiences of five self-identified transgender at an Urban University of Northern United States. The study was focused on how does college experience impacts their identity? The study concluded that the mental wellbeing of transgender was lower than that of general binary students. Trans women students had better resilience than trans men. Their institutes lacked the needed administrative and infrastructural support. Their college experiences were hampering their identity development causing severe psychological stress in them.

Seelman (2014) – The study titled ‘Recommendation of transgender students, staff and faculty in the U.S.A for improving college campuses’ was conducted which aimed to explore the relationship between campus climate and wellbeing of Transgender. It included the sample of 30 students from Colorado state of U.S. The data was gathered using qualitative phenomenological approach. The study revealed that those students who faced discrimination showed higher level of stress, anxiety and depression. Campus acceptance plays a major role in students’ academic outcome. The study suggested the need of mental health services to improve the lived experiences of Transgender student.

Patton (2012) -The study was done to examine the lived college experience of transgender students and give suggestions for higher education institutions. The study aimed to identify the challenges which transgender students face in their campus life and to know if what factors contributed in creating a hostile versus welcoming campus environment. Open-ended in-depth interviews were done from 3 transgender students using phenomenological analysis. The conclusion of the study was that many campuses system are failing to create transgender inclusive environment which makes them navigating the college life difficult for transgender. The study recommended that there should be a preferred name policy creation of general neutral housing and do need diversity training which should include the gender identity and expression for making the campuses inclusive for transgender.

Beemyn and Rankin (2011) – The study titled ‘Lives of Transgender People (2011)’ was one of the largest of its time. Was done to explore the gender identity development and life milestones of transgender individuals across their lifespan. The study was conducted through mixed method, where data was collected through online survey and then focus interview as a follow up. Total 3474 individuals from U.S participated in it. The study revealed that lack of institutional support and rigid gender norm creates the barriers in academic life of Transgender students. The study showed that campus which had inclusive policies reported higher student satisfaction and academic performance. The study emphasized on the need of administrative support and policy changes for strengthening and promoting better experiences for Transgender students.

Rankin et al., (2010) — Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld and Frazer (2010) —Rankin et al conducted a project titled ‘State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People’. The study was conducted over 5149 individuals pursuing higher education, where roughly 10% of the sample identified themselves as non-binary. It was a quantitative mixed method survey using 66 item web-based survey instrument and focused group interviews. The survey focused on the comprehensive assessment of campus climate for LGBT students. The survey concluded that many students felt unsafe and avoided participating in socio-academic activities. The negative campus climate affected the wellbeing of Transgender students. The study promoted the need of inclusive policies, gender neutral facilities, and campus specific awareness programme.

Bilodeau (2009) — conducted a study titled ‘Genderism: Transgender students, Binary systems and Higher Education’. The study was aimed to explore how institutional binary system affects transgender students. It used qualitative grounded theory method; the data was collected using 10 transgender students through semi-structured interview. The study concluded that negative campus experiences instilled fear among students. The findings cemented the need for creating safe spaces to develop confidence in students. It reaffirmed the need to have inclusive campus environment support academic achievement directly in Transgender.

### **Family, Identity and Lived Experiences**

Ryan et al. (2010) — The study was conducted to explore the role of family acceptance as a protective factor for LGBT adolescents and young adults. The study was done using qualitative research design having sample size of 245 (N=245). The study concluded that family acceptance promotes greater self-esteem, social support and general health status. It also shields the person against depression, substance abuse and suicidal tendencies. Hence established that family acceptance is positively associated with young adults’ mental and physical wellbeing.

Hines (2007) – The study was conducted to explore the personal narratives of transgender individuals regarding identity and daily life experiences. It employed qualitative sociological methodology. It used purposive sampling, where data was gathered from 30 transgender from United States through semi structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcripts. The study concluded that participants struggled with gender norms and social expectations. The participants faced discrimination in public places. The study concluded that understanding lived experience is crucial for developing inclusive social policies and reducing discrimination effectively.

Grossman & D’ Augelli (2006) — The study titled ‘Transgender Youth: Invisible and Vulnerable’ was conducted to assess the factors affecting the vulnerability of Transgender youth in the multiple areas of life including family and social setting. It employed a qualitative research design using three focus group semi-structured interviews. The researchers used thematic analysis to interpret the focus group conversation. The study found out that many transgender individual face rejections, misunderstanding and emotional neglect from family after their gender identity disclosure. Some respondents even had to run away from their home due to lack of acceptance. The study suggested that accepting family environment are non-negotiable to help develop positive identity in Transgender.

Lev (2004) — The study was conducted to examine the process of gender identity development among transgender individuals. The study was aimed to explore the issues Transgender face in their family. The study was based on longitudinal case study and literature review of multiple related literature. The findings showed the lack of understanding from family members. Those who had family support, however showed better identity growth. In essence, the study deciphered the need of family acceptance and counselling support as essential for the development of healthy identity.

### **Literature, Autobiographies and Cultural Representation**

Bandopadhyay, M. (2017). In her book *'A Gift of Goddess Laxmi'*, recounts the life experiences of Manobi, highlighting the challenges faced by transgender individuals in India. Manobi notes, 'I did not remember exactly when I started realizing I was different. It is not clear to me whether it was I who found out first or whether it was the people around me'. Manobi experienced early childhood trauma due to harassment and ridicule from peers, neighbours, and even family members. Her science teacher once took her to a psychiatrist, as she struggled with the mismatch between her body and her gender identity, but the intervention proved ineffective. College life continued to be challenging, as rumours about her identity caused discrimination at Naihati's Rishi Bankim Chandra College, where she studied Bengali Honours. However, at Jadhapur University, where she pursued her master's degree, she encountered a more accepting environment in which sexual identity did not provoke taunting. Later, upon joining Vivekananda Satavarstik College as a lecturer, Manobi faced difficulties in rural India, as colleagues recognized that although she was previously named Somnath Bandyopadhyay, she did not conform to male identity in any aspect. This narrative illustrates the pervasive social stigma, discrimination, and identity struggles faced by transgender individuals, while also showing that inclusive environments can significantly improve personal and professional experiences.

Padmashali, A. (2017) – The autobiography of Akkai Padmashali *'A Life in Trans Activism'* highlights her journey from marginalization to activism. The book incorporates her experiences about facing discrimination, lack of education and social exclusion and legal awareness. The findings show that through awareness, good quality strong leadership can significantly empower the marginalised community of transgender. The book suggests that policy support and social change are necessary to ensure the equality and dignity of the transgender community.

Roy, A. (2017) – The novel *'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness'* focuses on the life of Anjum in Delhi and Tilo in Kashmir. The novel effectively explores the multiple themes of otherness, political violence, capitalism, gender identity. On the positive side, the novel also focused on community bonding and building resilience. The novel significantly helps in building understanding about the lived experiences and realities of transgender community. The novel concludes that empathy and social justice are the foundation stones to build inclusive societies.

Revathi, A. (2010) – In her autobiography *'A truth about me'* A. Revathi showcases the real-life experiences of a transgender woman in India. The book very well-articulated the childhood confusion, family rejection and social discrimination. Revathi explains how lack of education and employment forces the transgender person into begging, sex work and other marginalized work for earning the livelihood. The narrative highlights emotional pain, identity struggle and search of self-respect. The findings from the text exhibits that how social stigma and family rejection strongly affects transgender lives. The work emphasizes that acceptance and dignity are paramount for social inclusion.

Vidya (2007) – In her autobiography *'I am Vidya'*, Vidya explains her journey of gender identity and self-realization. The book encapsulates the experience about discrimination in school, struggle for employment and rejection faced from family. Vidya has shared her transition journey having dealt with emotional trauma and loneliness. The autobiography reveals the severe impact of social exclusion on one's mental health. It also shows that how writing and education helped her in regaining confidence and identity development. The autobiography concludes that awareness, education and acceptance are cathartic for transgender.

### **Policy, Law and Educational Support**

**Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019:** The Act provides statutory recognition to transgender persons and prohibits discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, housing, and public services. It mandates welfare measures and grievance redressal mechanisms to protect transgender rights. However, the Act has been widely criticized for introducing a certification process that requires state verification of gender identity, which contradicts the principle of self-identification upheld in earlier judgments. In education, the Act lacks explicit provisions for reservations, institutional accountability, and structural reforms, limiting its practical impact.

**Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018):** This judgment decriminalized consensual same-sex relationships by reading down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. While primarily addressing sexual orientation, the Court's emphasis on constitutional morality, dignity, and identity significantly advanced the broader rights discourse for transgender persons. The ruling rejected social morality as a basis for restricting fundamental rights and reinforced inclusivity. Indirectly, it contributes to safer educational and social environments by challenging stigma and legitimizing non-normative gender and sexual identities.

**Justice K. S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017):** The Puttaswamy judgment established the right to privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution. Importantly, the Court explicitly recognized gender identity and sexual orientation as intrinsic aspects of privacy, dignity, and individual autonomy. This judgment strengthened constitutional protection for transgender persons by affirming their right to self-identification without state or societal intrusion. In educational contexts, it supports the right of transgender students to confidentiality, protection from forced disclosure, and freedom from invasive institutional practices related to identity verification.

**National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India (2014):** This landmark Supreme Court judgment formally recognized transgender persons as a distinct 'third gender' and affirmed that gender identity is integral to personal autonomy and dignity. The Court held that transgender persons are entitled to all fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution, including equality, non-discrimination, freedom of expression, and the right to life. It directed governments to provide affirmative action

in education and employment and ensure access to healthcare and social welfare. Despite its progressive vision, implementation within educational institutions remains uneven and inconsistent.

**UGC Guidelines and Educational Policies (2014):** The University Grants Commission issued advisories encouraging higher education institutions to adopt transgender-inclusive practices, including non-discriminatory admissions, gender-neutral facilities, and sensitization programmed. These guidelines acknowledge the need for inclusive campus climates and institutional support. However, they remain advisory rather than mandatory, resulting in inconsistent implementation across universities. The absence of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms limits their effectiveness, highlighting the gap between policy intent and lived educational experiences of transgender students in India.

### **Synthesis**

The peer-reviewed literature in socio-economic, psychological, educational, family, cultural and institutional fields consistently shows that transgender individuals have experienced multidimensional marginalization throughout their lives. Although the context of several studies are different from Indian, the recurring perceptions and experiences of discrimination, exclusion, stigma and institutional neglect are very similar.

Studies focusing on socio-economic condition of transgender community show that limited access to education and employment has forced many transgender individuals to engage in marginal occupations, further reinforcing the cycle of poverty and social exclusion. Studies covering the aspect of mental health have found high levels of depression, suicidal thoughts, and emotional trauma, mainly caused by social stigma, family rejection, and structural discrimination at every level. Studies focusing on the experiences of transgender students in school and higher education institutions have highlighted bullying, harassment, lack of institutional support, and hostile campus environments, which negatively impact academic success, self-esteem, and overall well-being of transgender students.

Autobiographical and biographical descriptions of transgender people deepen the understanding of problems and challenges faced by them. These literature show that the process of exclusion begins in early childhood and continues throughout the family, school, workplace, and sex work. It is not individual rather an institutional and structural issue. Although the identity and denial of transgender identity have been recognized through historical judgments and legal provisions, a review of the literature clearly indicates that there remains a significant gap between policy intent and real-life experience.

A comprehensive analysis of the studies reviewed as a whole reveal that transgender marginalization is not confined to any single field, but rather it is a multidimensional reality deeply rooted in society, economic, educational, family and institutional structures.

### **Implication**

The results of this review carry important significance for the field of future research and educational policy making.

First of all, it is very important to ensure the effective implementation of the existing legal provisions. These include affirmative action, welfare measures, and institutional accountability frameworks. Legal recognition alone is not enough; it is not possible to achieve the practical benefits of these policies unless proper monitoring and implementation is ensured at the field level.

Secondly, educational institutions need to adopt inclusive practices such as gender-sensitive curricula, anti-bullying policies, gender-neutral facilities, and sensitization programs for teachers, administrators and students. Creating a safe and accepting educational environment is helpful in preventing early dropouts, increasing educational involvement, and developing identity.

Third, considering the special needs of transgender individuals, mental health services need to be strengthened through community-based counseling awareness programs and resilience enhancement interventions, reducing stress and improving overall well-being.

Fourth, it is extremely necessary to raise awareness of government projects, and legal rights. So that transgender people can actually avail the benefits earmarked for them. In this regard, coordinated institutional cooperation between state agencies, educational institutions and civil society organizations is crucial.

Finally, there is an urgent need for relevant and contextual research in the Indian context. Especially research that prioritizes transgender individuals in education. Including the voices of participants in academic discussions and policy-making processes will help bridge the gap between theoretical recognition and practical inclusion.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the literature review clearly indicates that despite progressive legal recognition, transgender individuals still face persistent socio-economic deprivation, stress, educational exclusion, and institutional discrimination. The challenges identified in various studies are interconnected and are characterized by inherent inequalities in family, society, and institutional structures. Although constitutional protections and legal measures have recognized transgender identity yet significant gap remain in implementation. The peer-reviewed literature emphasizes the urgent need for real transformative change beyond the limits of symbolic inclusion. Effective implementation of policies, reform of the education system, institutional accountability and consistent academic engagement are essential to ensure the dignity and social justice of transgender persons.

This literature review not only consolidates existing knowledge, but also highlights the need to build a more inclusive and just society by bridging the gap between the legal framework and real-life experience.

**Acknowledgment:** No

**Author's Contribution:** *Moumita Samanta:* Data Collection, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis, Drafting, Referencing; *Dr. Kavita Singh:* Data Collection, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis, Drafting, Referencing

**Funding:** No

**Declaration:** All the authors have given consent for the publication.

**Competing Interest:** No

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