

# TRANSGENDER PROBLEM INDEX (TGPI): A SPECIAL FOCUS ON TANSWOMEN IN KERALA

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## Abstract

Marginalized and vulnerable communities are always seriously lagging behind in the human development indices. Social exclusion of transgender community is one of the crucial problems that we witness in and around our society which includes social rejection and violence they face. Due to the staggering levels of discrimination, humiliation and violence trans community faced at multiple levels, many committed suicides. This paper tries to examine the intensity of such discrimination and humiliation faced by transgenders especially trans women through the construction of a Transgender Problem Index (TGPI). It is quite true that these communities are marginalized but the intensity of the problems they faced is varied, and the construction of such an index will help us to know the severity of the problems they faced.

*Key words: Transgender, Trans Women, Transgender Problem index, TGPI*

## **Introduction**

Social Exclusion happens at different levels in the societal space. The process of marginalization or social exclusion systematically keeps individuals and communities away from the resources and opportunities. One such social exclusion is exclusion of the transgender communities across the world as well as in every society. Transgender people are individuals whose gender identities do not pertain to their biological sex, and thus they differ from the stereotype of how men and women normally are. Thus transgender people encompass those people whose identity and behavior do not adhere to the stereotypical gender norms. Since the beginning of time and the existence of mankind, transgenders has been a part of the society and only recently they got an identity of their own. The ways in which marginalization impacts a trans person's life are interconnected; stigma and drive isolation, poverty, violence, lack of social and economic support systems, and compromised health

outcomes. Transgender people who express their gender identity from an early age are often rejected by their families. If not cast out from their homes, they are shunned within households resulting in lack of opportunities for education and with no attempts to ensure attention to their mental and physical health needs. Those who express their gender identities later in life often face rejection by mainstream society and social service institutions, as they go about undoing gender socialization. Workplace-related research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) individuals revealed that trans workers are the most marginalized and are excluded from gainful employment, with discrimination occurring at all phases of the employment process, including recruitment in different employment and training opportunities, employee benefits and job advancement. Unemployment and low-paid jobs or high risk and unstable jobs feed them into the cycle of poverty and homelessness. When homeless transgender people seek shelter, they are housed as per their sex at birth and not on the basis of their experienced gender, and as a result of which they are subject to abuse and humiliation. Adopting the inclusion principle India realized that every individual in this country have equal rights and privileges, and we have to follow a policy of “live and let live”. Even after the path breaking Supreme Court judgment, now too they face so many problems and its intensity varies across societies. According to 2011 census, the population of transgenders in Kerala is only 3,906. The survey of Kerala State Literacy Mission report 2018 on transgender community revealed that the population of different trans community in percentage is given as trans women (81.3%), trans men (18.25%) and inter sex (0.44%). To get an in depth picture of the main problems faced by the transgender community, especially trans women a study is conducted upon 50 trans women selected from different areas of Kerala. A structured interview schedule is administered among them. Birth in the identity of male and transformation to female; made them more courageous while compared to trans men. That is one of the reasons for more visibility of trans women community. To examine the main problems faced by the transgender community especially trans women an index is considered by considering two main dimensions: social and economic and within them a total of six variables are incorporated and Transgender Problem Index is developed on a five point likert scale.

#### ➤ **Economic dimensions**

Economic dimensions which include two main variables like *Employment and Financial involvement*. Social dimensions include variables like *Education, Family, Health and Participatory involvement*. While considering the above a transgender problem index is developed through a Five Point Likert Scale. A detailed explanation of the two main dimensions and the associated variables are examined below: Economic problem estimation based of two main variables:

1. Employment and
2. Financial.

*Employment dimensions* of transwomen are again broken into four variables. Within the four variables 10 statements are constructed using likert scale and the answers are in between the values of 1 to 5 (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). Four variables are selected to examine employment related

problems which include: *Equality of wage, Employment satisfaction, Attitude of colleagues and Meeting basic necessities*. Similarly five variables are selected to examine financial dimensions are: *Usage of banking facilities, luxurious expenses, saving habits, support from the government, hospital expenses*. A total of 8 statements are constructed to examine the above said five variables.

### ➤ Social dimensions

In the construction of the transgender problem index social dimensions are very significant because social exclusion and its after effects are multidimensional. Social problems are estimated under the four major heads like:

1. *Education*
2. *Family*
3. *Health and*
4. *Participatory involvement.*

Again to examine the main problems associated with education a sub division of 4 variables are selected which include desire to study, inequality faced in the education, cooperative attitude of teachers and students, misbehaviour from friends. Family related problems are estimated with the help of 3 variables like pressure from parents, compulsion to do things, freedom to express and three statements are used to examine the above said variable. Trans women are facing severe pressures and struggle within their family itself. Most parents do not accept if their male child starts behaving in a feminine character or inappropriate to their assigned gender role. Consequently, family members may threaten, scold or even assault their son/sibling from behaving or dressing-up like a girl or woman. Some parents may outright disown and evict their own child for crossing the prescribed gender norms of the society and for not fulfilling the roles expected from a male child. Similarly, transgender people face unique barriers while accessing public or private health services. Types of discrimination reported by TG communities in the healthcare settings include: deliberate use of male pronouns in addressing TG; registering them as males and admitting them in male wards, humiliation faced in having to stand in the male queue; verbal harassment by the hospital staff and patients; and lack of healthcare providers who are sensitive to and trained on providing treatment/care to transgender people and even denial of medical services. Under the variable the main theme of health three variables are selected (Doctor's knowledge about transgender community, Govt funding for surgery, Usage of drugs) and three statements are developed to examine the intensity of these variable. The third dimension used to examine social problems of the transgender community is associated with participatory involvement which is examined through three variables like participation in political parties, religious activities and participation in public places like libraries etc and three statements are constructed to examine the intensity of problems associated with participation in social spaces.

Estimating TGPI on the basis of all the above explained variables are made using the formula given below:

$$\frac{[1*n(1)+2*n(2)+3*n(3)+4*n(4)+5*n(5)] *100}{5*N}$$

- ✓ 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are the scale values given by respondents for the statements
- ✓ n(1), n(2), n(3), n(4), n(5) are the number of respondents for each values
- ✓ N is the total number of sample

#### ➤ Economic TGPI

The intensity of the problems faced by transwomen in Kerala from the economic side is estimated.

#### Economic TGPI (TW)

Economic Dimensions	TGPI(TW)%
Employment	70.6
Financial	63.3
<b>Total Economic TGPI(TW)</b>	<b>66.95</b>

Source: Sample Survey

From the above table can see that 70.6 (%) of them are not satisfied in the present employment conditions and 63.3(%) of them are facing problems in the field of financial activities.

#### ➤ Social TGPI

#### Social TGPI (TW)

Social Dimensions	TGPI(TW) %
Education	72.45
Participatory involvement (religious and political)	59
Family	57.3
Health	60
<b>Total social TGPI(TW)</b>	<b>62.18</b>

Source: Sample Survey

Through this estimation of TGPI (TW) it is clearly revealed that highest problem intensity is found in the field of education (72.45%). Transgender community are very much interested to pursue their studies but the unsupportive attitudes from the side of teaching community and fellow students along with the poor financial background of family form a stumbling block in their educational carrier. Then comes the health wise problems (60%) of trans women. The trans women reassignment surgery is very costly, Govt. policies for the free surgery are limited and remain in the papers only. The field survey results revealed that even within the doctor community, some do not understand their gender individuality and treated them in a sarcastic way and all these health related matters put them in a deep humiliating condition and depressed mode.

#### Combined TGPI (TW)

Most transgender people, especially transwomen youth, face great challenges in coming out from their assigned gender to their actual gender and they face shame, fear, and internalized transphobia; disclosure and

coming out; adjusting, adapting, or not adapting to social pressure to conform; fear of relationships or loss of relationships; and self-imposed limitations on expression or aspirations. Considering the economic-socio problems and by combining both a combined TGPI for trans women is constructed.

**Combined TGPI(Transwomen)**

Economic TGPI	66.95%
Social TGPI	62.18 %
TGPI	64.56%

Source: Sample Survey

From the table it can be concluded that the Economic TGPI (TW) is 66.95 per cent and Socio TGPI (TW) is 62.18per cent. Then the Combined Transgender (Transwomen) Problem Index is 64.56per cent. Comparing the two economic and social problems, the severities of economic problems are higher than the socio problems. Therefore a better solution to the economic problems through the inclusion in financial and employment fields can do wonders. Naturally it leads to an improvement in the quality of life of trans women and enhance their standard of living. A better standard of living and financial and income stability will once again help them to tie up their family relationships and will provide them more role in the social space.

## Conclusions

Transgenders have virtually no safe spaces, not even in their families, where they are face prejudice and abuse. Prejudiced attitudes towards them often resulted in violence, most often of a brutal nature, in public spaces, police stations, prisons and even in their homes. The main factor behind the violence is that society now too is not completely accepted the gender forms other than the traditional men-women stereotyped ones. In addition to this most transgender communities are coming from a lower middle-class background, which makes them vulnerable to the attitudes and reactions of the society. The discrimination based on their class and gender makes the transgender community one of the most disempowered groups in every society. The socio economic costs of exclusion estimated and discussed in this study are costs that can be reduced through effective efforts towards a more friendly social, economic, and political inclusion of Transgender people. Inclusion increases productivity of existing workers, leads to greater investment in human capital, and better health care create a creates more productive human capital for the nation. Several positive externalities also will result as part of social and economic inclusion of the Trans community to the society. In particular, inclusion of transgender people will open up a powerful message of tolerance and openness in a society. Tolerance, along with the loosening of restrictive gender roles, can contribute to unleashing additional creative energy and economic growth opportunities will result in more growth and development of every nation.

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