

EDUCATION AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE: A SURVEY OF TEACHER ATTITUDES ON TRANSGENDER-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF TAMIL NADU, INDIA

F. Joseph Desouza Kamalesh ¹ and Suganthan C²

^{1,2} School of Social Sciences and Languages, Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore, India.

Email: ¹kamalidb@gmail.com, ²suganthan.c@vit.ac.in

ORCID ID: ¹<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8652-3675>, ²<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8832-5357>

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Abstract

Many societal problems need to be addressed in India, one of which is the identification of the transgender community, which is still unclear despite being acknowledged as the third gender. Despite efforts to teach entrepreneurial skills to transgender people, the majority of transgender people still engage in exploitative employment such as prostitution and begging. Their inability to find employment in the mainstream job market and the discrimination they face at the workplace both contribute to their reliance on sex work and begging as a source of income. To solve this problem, academic intervention is required to establish a secure atmosphere within educational institutions and make educational opportunities and access more widely available to this community. To this end, the researcher has attempted to analyze the attitude and mindset of the teaching fraternity in both schools and colleges in Tamil Nadu, India based on a questionnaire related to the issues of Transgenders. Creating awareness among the students and the teaching fraternity regarding the problems, success stories and achievements of the Transgenders would enable a change in their mindset. This would pave the path for ensuring dignity, social identity, and ultimately acceptance into mainstream society in future.

Keywords: Transgender, Discrimination, Awareness, Social Inclusion, Education.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant social issues in India is the identity of the transgender community, which remains a matter of controversy and uncertainty despite the Supreme Court of India's recognition of these individuals as members of the third gender (Chandra, 2017). Yet there are many challenges that they keep facing even in the present times. Though many interventions have been made by both governmental and non-governmental organizations, their lifestyle has not changed much. Efforts have been made to incorporate entrepreneurial skills among them to ensure economic stability and social identity but still, most of them persist in commercial sex and pleading for alms (Balu, 2020). Since transgender people are excluded and denied any form of inclusion into mainstream occupations and are discriminated against in the workplace, many of them end up working in the sex industry because it is their primary source of money. As a result, there is an immediate need to integrate them into mainstream society, and one of the most important aspects of this is education. In the following study, we want to investigate potential academic intervention strategies. Transgender students would be encouraged to continue their education and be successful in doing so if educational institutions provided a comfortable environment for them to learn. The primary objective of this research is to emphasize how vitally important it is to educate transgender people by offering them opportunities and access to educational settings. A questionnaire about transgender problems served as the basis for the researcher's analysis of the attitudes and mindsets of the teaching fraternity working in schools and colleges in Tamil Nadu. A shift in perspective might be made possible by educating students and members of the

teaching community about the challenges faced by Transgenders and issues related to them. This would prepare the way for them to get dignity and social identity, and eventually, social acceptability and integration into mainstream society, all of which would be accomplished over time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Challenges regarding the Transgender Identity

Davidson clarifies the gender ambiguity by stating that Transgender individuals have a gender identity that differs from their birth sex, while cisgender people possess a gender identification that aligns with their assigned sex at birth (Davidson, 2016). Gender identity is conceptually separate from sexual orientation, as the former pertains to an individual's internal sense of their gender, while the latter relates to their emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction towards others. Babbar reaffirms the same further stating that Gender Identity is the personal and subjective understanding of one's own gender (Babbar, 2016), which might or might not correspond to the sex identified at birth. Sexual orientation refers to the permanent inclination of an individual towards another person, which has implications for their self-determination, dignity, and freedom. Thomas presents the 4000-year connection between the transgender community and India (Thomas, 2015). During the reign of the Mughal empire in the 16th and 17th centuries, hijras or eunuchs who had been castrated were respected and relied upon as esteemed royal servants and bodyguards. Although they were accepted centuries ago, now they exist on the peripheries of Indian society and encounter numerous forms of discrimination.

B. Challenges faced at Workplaces

Ozturk and Tatli conducted a study in the UK on transgender rights. The study found that over 40% of transgender workers were unable to freely express their preferred gender identity due to concerns about negative consequences at work (Ozturk and Tatli, 2016). Additionally, 25% of transgender workers felt compelled to switch jobs because they experienced discrimination and victimisation. According to Sharma and Mishra, transgender workers face difficulties in confronting the conventional office environment because of established gender stereotypes that restrict the roles they are expected to fulfil. Emotional distress may result from potential taunting or discrimination directed at the transgender employees by coworkers. Occasional withdrawal of employment offers and opportunities by employers due to discrimination against employees diverse gender identities (Sharma et al., 2020). Dietert and Dentice discussed the challenges faced by the Transgenders in the Defense Department in the US (Dietert & Dentice, 2015). The researcher after collecting data from various transgenders working in the Department of defense placed some recommendations that would ensure their safety to them: i) Policies to make the recruitment procedure easier and non-discriminatory ii) To incorporate policies from other countries that treat transgenders with equality and dignity iii) To provide a safe environment where they serve freely without fear.

C. The Legal Framework Upholding the Dignity and the Rights of the Transgenders

Ghoshal and Knight observe that it was Argentina that set the trend in 2012 by affirming that anyone above 18 could choose their gender identity and make the legal provisions necessary. Later, four additional countries – Colombia, Denmark, Ireland

and Malta – eliminated the obstacles that were impeding the process of legally recognising gender. Later in 2015 Ireland, after much international pressure, the government instituted identity-based legal gender recognition. The Supreme Court of Nepal ordered the government to officially recognise the third gender in 2007. The Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered the recognition of the third gender in 2009, and Bangladesh followed the suit in 2013. In India, it was in 2014 when the Supreme Court ordered the recognition of the third gender and included them in the state welfare programmes (Ghoshal & Knight, 2016).

South Africa emerged as a forerunner in the realm of lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) policy protection in its infancy. Discrimination against individuals on the basis of sexual orientation, sex, or gender was prohibited by the Constitution subsequent to the dissolution of apartheid during the multicultural democracy of the Nelson Mandela administration, which permitted same-sex sexual acts (Jones, 2019). Narrain studied the legal framework in India from the perspective of transgender issues and their rights. The researcher has analysed the various laws of the land which have not taken into consideration those issues which are very unique to the transgender community. The researcher points out two crucial areas, namely marriage, and family, where the transgender community is discriminated against and legally kept in exclusion (Narrain, 2007).

E. Educational Status of the Transgenders and the Challenges faced at the Educational Institutions

Ghoshal observes the difficulties faced by transgender children and young adults in various countries. In Japan, the uniform policies had caused extreme anxiety and the legal gender recognition procedure put undue pressure on them. In Malaysia, the Education Department had an explicitly discriminatory policy for homosexuality and gender confusion. It was Malta that pioneered the move towards the recognition of transgender children's right to education (Ghoshal & Knight, 2016). Greytak, Kosciw and Diaz conducted research in the U.S. on the experience of transgender students in schools. The findings revealed that they faced various forms of discrimination and harassment including verbal abuse and ways in which they were denied access to various services. The issues and complaints raised by them were not addressed due to attention and promptness leading to further antagonisation. The researchers recommended the policymakers make necessary interventions to ensure safety and a conducive environment for them in the schools (Greytak et al., 2009).

There are various reasons for them dropping out of school or college. The absence of an inclusive language and attitude in educational institutions makes them feel out of place and unwelcomed. Added to this, incidents of abuse and discrimination from the teachers and the students lead them to isolation from the rest of the crowd. This is especially strongly experienced by those effeminate boys who face accusations from the teachers for violating the decorum of the school. As a result, they quit their education and eventually limit their career opportunities (Balu, 2020).

F. Research Gap

Abdullahi highlights physical disability as one of the barriers to Inclusive education in Somalia and further observes that higher education is being offered as a privilege for those students with normal physical health or ability (Abdullahi, 2023). Khairiah, Mubaraq, Mareta and Musa highlight the discrimination in online education during the Covid-19 in Indonesia as mainly due to social and economic conditions of the families

(Khairiah et al., 2023). In India, among various reasons, one of the major reasons for discrimination in education is due to gender disparity. The community most affected due to this is the Transgender community. Chandra (2017) observes the difficulties faced by Transgender children and young adults in schools and colleges by way of abuse and bullying which have increased their dropout ratio. Das studied the opportunities and challenges in Higher education with regard to the Transgenders in India (Das, 2019). The researcher enumerated the obstacles faced by them in society such as social exclusion, harassment, and various forms of violence meted out to them. As a way forward, the researcher harps on the collective responsibility of the government, NGOs, and the society that will transform the lives of transgenders.

This calls for a change of attitude and the development of an open mind from Teachers in educational institutions to ensure educational opportunities and a safe environment for Transgender students. This paper aims to discuss this by analysing the data collected from teachers through surveys.

Research Questions

RQ1) Will regular Awareness programmes on the issues of Transgenders positively change the mindset and outlook of the teachers and students?

RQ2) Will reading literature on Transgender issues positively change the mindset and outlook of teachers and students?

RQ3) Will the teaching fraternity play a key role in including Transgenders in schools and colleges?

Research Objectives

1) To comprehensively assess the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in schools and colleges in Tamil Nadu, India, towards transgender-inclusive education.

2) To examine how changes in teacher attitudes and educational practices can contribute to the broader goal of promoting social inclusion and acceptance of transgenders in mainstream society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Description of the Sample

The sample in total included 120 faculty including teachers and professors. It included 67 professors from 29 different colleges (24 Private and 5 Government) and 53 teachers from 30 different schools (21 Private and 9 Government), all situated in the northern part of Tamil Nadu in both urban and semi-urban regions. Their age ranged from 20 to 56 and teaching experience ranged from 6 months to 33 years.

Table 1: Frequencies of Teaching Experience

Levels	Counts	% of Total
Five Years	41	34.2 %
Ten years	24	20.0 %
Fifteen Years	24	20.0 %
Twenty Years	10	8.3 %
Twenty-Five Years and Above	21	17.5 %
Total	120	100%

Table 2: Frequencies of School / College

Levels	Counts	% of Total
College Professors	69	57.5 %
School Teachers	51	42.5 %
Total	120	100%

Table 3: Frequencies of Locality

Levels	Counts	% of Total
Semi-Urban	59	49.2 %
Urban	61	50.8 %
Total	120	100%

This survey contained questions about one's name and contact details, teaching experience, and name of the school/college, and further, it was divided into four themes each containing four questions. The survey was collected through Google Forms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Analysis and Discussion of the Qualitative Results

The survey consisted of 16 questions falling under four themes namely: i) Awareness Programmes related to Transgender issues ii) Status of Transgender Education iii) Availability and Inclusion of Transgender Literature in the Institutions iv) Personal interest in the issues of the Transgenders. These four themes will further be discussed in detail.

Theme 1: Awareness Programmes Related to Transgender Issues

This section discusses the findings from a statistical survey aimed at assessing perceptions regarding Awareness Programmes related to Transgender issues in schools and colleges. The following discussion provides an overview of the survey results, shown in Table 4, and their implications for promoting inclusivity and understanding of Transgender issues in educational institutions.

Table 4: Awareness Programmes Related to Transgender Issues

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
1) There should be regular awareness programmes in all the schools & colleges on the rights and issues of the Transgenders?	67 55.8%	36 30.0%	6 5.0%	5 4.2%	6 5.0%
2) Seminars and Awareness programmes should highlight the necessity of including Transgenders in mainstream society.	70 58.3%	43 35.8%	2 1.7%	0 0%	5 4.2%
3) Regular awareness programmes will help us to understand the challenges faced by the Transgenders.	67 55.8%	44 36.7%	4 3.3%	0 0%	5 4.2%
4) Interactive sessions with the Transgenders at the Schools / Colleges will change the mindset of the Students and the Teachers.	66 55.0%	39 32.5%	9 7.5%	1 0.8%	5 4.2%

The first question focused on the necessity of regular awareness programmes in schools and colleges regarding the rights and issues of Transgenders. The results indicate strong support for such programmes, with 67 respondents (55.8%) strongly agreeing with the statement.

This suggests a significant consensus among the participants regarding the importance of incorporating transgender-related awareness into the educational curriculum. Most respondents recognize that schools and colleges should actively raise awareness about Transgender rights and issues, which could contribute to a more accepting and understanding society.

The second question explored whether seminars and awareness programmes should emphasize the necessity of including Transgenders in mainstream society. Once again, the survey results reflect a strong consensus, with 70 respondents (58.3%) strongly agreeing with the statement. The survey results indicate that participants recognize the significance of these efforts in creating a more inclusive and equitable society. The third question assessed whether regular awareness programmes would help individuals better understand the challenges faced by Transgenders.

The results once again reveal a strong consensus, with 67 respondents (55.8%) strongly agreeing with the statement. This suggests that participants believe awareness programmes have the potential to foster empathy and a deeper understanding of the struggles faced by Transgenders. The fourth question inquired whether interactive sessions with Transgenders in schools and colleges could change the mindset of students and teachers.

The survey results indicate that a significant number of respondents (66, or 55.0%) strongly agree with this statement, reinforcing the belief that direct engagement and interaction can be a powerful tool in altering perceptions and attitudes and can help dispel biases and prejudices, promoting inclusivity and empathy within educational institutions.

This addresses the first Research Question: (RQ1) Will regular Awareness programmes on the issues of Transgenders positively change the mindset and attitude of the teachers and students? These findings highlight the potential of such programmes to raise awareness, promote inclusion, foster understanding, and change mindsets among students and educators.

Theme 2: Status of Transgender Education

This section discusses the findings from a statistical survey focused on the status of Transgender education in schools and colleges. The following discussion provides an analysis of the survey results, shown in Table 5, and their implications for Transgender education.

Table 5: Status of Transgender Education

Questions	Always	Very Often	Seldom	Rarely	Never
1) Rate or Probability of Transgender/s studying in your School / College in the past or at present?	4 3.34%	7 5.83%	42 35.0%	46 38.33%	21 17.5%
2) Have you heard about Transgenders pursuing studies in other schools/colleges?	5 4.2%	8 6.7%	31 25.8%	47 39.2%	29 24.2%
3) Transgenders studying in Schools / Colleges are treated well.	17 14.2%	20 16.7%	39 32.5%	39 32.5%	5 4.2%
4) I think that pursuing education in Schools / Colleges is their basic Right.	82 68.3%	30 25.0%	4 3.3%	0 0.0%	4 3.3%

The first question in the survey assessed the rate or probability of Transgender students studying in respondents' schools or colleges in the past or at present. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (88.33%) reported that Transgender students are either seldom (35.0%), rarely (38.33%), or never (17.5%) present in their educational institutions. Only a small percentage (9.17%) of respondents indicated that transgender students are always (3.34%) or very often (5.83%) present. It was really disturbing to note that the majority of respondents had never heard about transgender children or young adults studying in schools/colleges.

The second question explored whether respondents had heard about Transgenders pursuing studies in other schools or colleges. The results indicate that a substantial portion of respondents (64.2%) reported being aware of Transgender students studying in other educational institutions, with the majority hearing about this occurrence either seldom (25.8%), rarely (39.2%), or very often (4.2%). This finding suggests that while transgender students may not be prevalent in their schools or colleges, respondents are aware of their presence in other institutions.

The third question focused on the perceived treatment of Transgender students in schools and colleges. The results show a mixed perception among respondents. While a minority (14.2%) believed that transgender students are treated well, a slightly larger percentage (16.7%) indicated that they are very often treated well. However, a significant portion of respondents (65.8%) reported that they are either seldom (32.5%) or rarely (32.5%) treated well, with 4.2% indicating that they are never treated well. The majority of respondents believe that transgender students do not receive fair treatment and good experience, emphasizing the necessity of ensuring measures to provide a secure and all-inclusive educational atmosphere for all students, irrespective of their gender identity.

These findings reveal a significant lack of Transgender representation within educational institutions reporting minimal to no transgender student enrolment. This raises concerns about the inclusivity and accessibility of educational opportunities for Transgenders, which may be indicative of systemic barriers to their education. The fourth question examined whether respondents personally believed that pursuing education in schools and colleges is a basic right for Transgenders.

The results indicate strong personal support for this idea, with 93.3% of respondents (68.3% strongly agree, 25% agree) expressing the belief that education is their fundamental right. This openness from the faculty would surely be beneficial to the transgender community in their education. This situation can change only when the management comes forward with an open mind to admit transgender children or young adults into schools/colleges and further, a safe environment can be ensured only when the faculty and the students accept and accompany them during the entire process of education.

Theme 3: Availability and Inclusion of Transgender Literature in Educational Institutions

This section discusses the findings from a statistical survey aimed at assessing the availability and inclusion of Transgender literature in educational institutions, as well as the awareness and attitudes of students and teachers regarding transgender issues. The following discussion provides an analysis of the survey results, shown in Table 6, and their implications for promoting and including Transgender literature in Educational Institutions.

Table 6: Availability and Inclusion of Transgender Literature in Educational Institutions

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
1) Do you think Literature on Transgenders should be made available in all the Libraries for the students and the teachers?	47 39.2%	60 50.0%	9 7.5%	2 1.7%	2 1.7%
2) Do you think a separate chapter should be included in the School / College Syllabus (Text Books) to help the students to know about the Psyche and the issues of the Transgenders?	54 45.0%	49 40.8%	13 10.8%	3 2.5%	1 0.8%
3) Students and Faculty should be encouraged to take up Research Projects / Dissertation Papers on Transgender Literature to find some solutions.	50 41.7%	63 52.5%	6 5.0%	1 0.8%	0 0.0%
4) There is no sufficient awareness in society, especially among the students and the teachers regarding the issues of the Transgenders.	44 36.7%	63 52.5%	7 5.8%	5 4.2%	1 0.8%

The first question in the survey examined whether participants believed that literature on Transgender issues should be made available in all libraries for students and teachers. The results indicate strong support for this idea, with 89.2% of respondents (39.2% strongly agree, 50% agree) expressing the belief that such literature should be accessible. This overwhelming response suggests that there is an urgent need for Transgender literature in educational settings.

The second question focused on whether respondents believed a separate chapter on Transgender issues should be included in school and college syllabi (textbooks) to educate students about the psyche and challenges faced by Transgenders. The survey results indicate that a significant majority of respondents (85.8%) support this idea, with 45% strongly agreeing and 40.8% agreeing. This finding reflects a recognition of the educational value of integrating Transgender-related content into the curriculum.

The third question inquired whether students and faculty should be encouraged to take up research projects and dissertation papers on Transgender literature to find solutions to their issues. The survey results reveal substantial support for this notion, with 94.2% of respondents (41.7% strongly agree, 52.5% agree) endorsing the idea. Encouraging research projects and dissertations on Transgender literature can contribute to a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges faced by them.

The fourth question explored the level of awareness among society, especially students and teachers, regarding Transgender issues. The results indicate that a significant majority of respondents (89.2%) believe that there is insufficient awareness, with 36.7% agreeing and 52.5% strongly agreeing. This finding underscores the need for increased awareness campaigns and educational initiatives focused on Transgender issues.

The second Research Question is addressed here: (RQ2) Will reading literature on Transgender issues positively change the mindset and attitude of teachers and students? Hence, the Librarian in every school/college should make a conscious effort to purchase books related to transgenders and make them available both to the faculty and to the students. The education department should study the possibility of including the issues of transgenders in the syllabus both at the school and the college level so that the students gain sufficient knowledge about transgenders and understand their issues and rights.

Theme 4: Personal interest in the issues of the Transgenders

This section discusses the findings from a statistical survey focused on personal interest and attitudes toward Transgender education and issues. The survey aimed to assess respondents' views on the basic right to education for Transgenders, their willingness to admit them into educational institutions, their openness to accept and teach them, their interest in reading news about their issues, and their willingness to sponsor the education of Transgender students. The following discussion provides an analysis of the survey results, shown in Table 7, and their implications on the respondents at their personal level.

Table 7: Personal interest in the issues of the Transgenders

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
1) Will you be ready to admit a Transgender student in your School / College?	62 51.7%	41 34.2%	17 14.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
2) Honestly will you be able to accept and teach a Transgender student in your class?	71 59.2%	43 35.8%	6 5.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
3) Do you take an interest to read news about the Transgenders (issues, achievements etc.)?	39 32.5%	58 48.3%	21 17.5%	1 0.8%	1 0.8%
4) Given a chance, will you sponsor the education of transgender students?	83 69.17%	35 29.17%	2 1.66%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%

The first question focused on the respondents' willingness to admit Transgender students into their schools or colleges. The survey results reveal a majority of participants (86.7%) expressing openness and readiness to admit Transgender students, with 51.7% indicating that they would be willing and an additional 34.2% stating that they would be somewhat willing.

This indicates a personal commitment towards including them in educational institutions and providing equal opportunities to Transgender students. The second question inquired about respondents' honesty in accepting and teaching Transgender students in their classrooms. The survey results indicate that the majority of respondents (94.2%) believe that they would be able to accept and teach Transgender students, with 59.2% stating that they would be honest in doing so and 35.8% indicating that they would be somewhat honest.

This reflects a positive attitude toward inclusivity and an understanding of the importance of creating a safe and welcoming learning environment for them. The third question explored respondents' interest in reading news about Transgender issues, achievements, and related topics. The results show that a significant number of respondents (80.8%) expressed interest in reading such news, with 48.3% indicating a strong interest and 32.5% expressing some interest.

This indicates the importance of staying informed about Transgender issues to understand and support their issues and rights. The fourth question inquired whether respondents would be willing to sponsor the education of Transgender students if given the chance. The survey results demonstrate a strong willingness to support their education, with 98.34% of respondents (69.17% strongly agree, 29.17% agree) indicating that they would be willing to sponsor Transgender students' education. This overwhelming willingness to provide financial support for their education reflects a strong personal commitment to making education more accessible to them. This addresses the third research question (RQ3) Will the teaching fraternity play a key role in including Transgenders in schools and colleges?

B. Correlation Analysis

The Correlation Analysis was conducted using SPSS to examine the relationships between four variables: AWARENESS (Awareness Programmes of Transgender Issues), EDUCATION (Status of Transgender Education), LITERATURE (Need for Literature on Transgenders in Schools / Colleges), and PERSONAL INTEREST (Personal Interest in Transgender Issues). The analysis aimed to determine if there were statistically significant associations between these variables. The correlation analysis revealed the following Pearson correlation coefficients between the variables:

Table 8: Correlations

		Awareness	Education	Literature	Personal Interest
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	0.037	.585**	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.686	0.000	0.000
	N	120	120	120	120
Education	Pearson Correlation		1	0.128	0.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.163	0.691
	N		120	120	120
Literature	Pearson Correlation			1	.539**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000
	N			120	120
Personal Interest	Pearson Correlation				1
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N				120

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 presents a correlation matrix illustrating the relationships between four variables: Awareness, Education, Literature, and Personal Interest. The correlation coefficients vary between -1 to 1, where a value of 1 signifies an ideal positive correlation and -1 signifies an ideal negative correlation. It further reveals that Awareness is moderately positively correlated with both Literature and Personal Interest, but not significantly correlated with Education. The correlation coefficient between Awareness and Education is 0.037, indicating a weak positive correlation. Literature and Awareness are correlated to the degree of 0.585, which indicates a moderately positive correlation. Awareness and Personal Interest are correlated to the extent of 0.394, suggesting a moderate positive correlation. The correlation between Education and itself is 1, indicating a perfect positive correlation. Education, Literature, and Personal Interest are not significantly correlated with each other.

Awareness Programmes and Literature on Transgenders in Schools / Colleges

The correlation between awareness programmes and literature engagement on Transgender topics is significant, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.585**. This suggests a moderate positive relationship among participation in Awareness programmes and engagement with Transgender literature. The low p-value (0.000) emphasizes the statistical significance of this association. Regular awareness programmes on the issues of Transgenders and reading of literature on Transgenders will change the mindset and attitude of the teachers and students towards Transgenders. This addresses two research questions namely (RQ1) and (RQ2). The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between Awareness Programmes and Literature Reading, emphasising their potential to foster a more inclusive and empathetic attitude among teachers and students towards Transgenders.

Literature on Transgender Issues and Personal Interest in Transgender Issues

Literature engagement on Transgender issues and Personal interest in Transgender issues are moderately positively correlated (Pearson correlation coefficient = 0.539**). This indicates that individuals who engage more with Transgender literature tend to have a greater personal interest in Transgender issues. The low p-value (0.000) highlights the statistical significance of this relationship. The respondents feel the need to read more about the issues of Transgenders and this in turn will create an awareness about the challenges faced by them. The third research question (RQ3) is addressed here. Since the teachers are major stakeholders in including Transgenders in educational institutions, this correlation suggests their interest and commitment to including more literature about Transgenders in schools/colleges and eventually creating opportunities and safe environments to include them in mainstream education.

Status of Transgender Education and Literature on Transgenders in Schools / Colleges

The Status of Transgender Education and Literature on Transgenders in Schools and Colleges have a weak positive correlation (Pearson correlation coefficient = 0.128) with a non-significant p-value of 0.163. This suggests that both the Status of Transgender Education and the availability of Literature on Transgenders in Schools / Colleges is considerably very low. This calls for an urgent need to assess the status of Transgenders in schools/colleges and to ensure opportunities and avenues to include them in mainstream education. Libraries and curricula should include more literature about Transgenders and conscientize the teachers and students about the challenges faced by them in society.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study demonstrates a prevalent consensus among respondents regarding the necessity for educational institutions to initiate awareness campaigns and inclusive policies for transgender students. The vast majority of respondents highlight the significance of including transgender individuals in mainstream society and support the integration of transgender-related education in the curriculum. Incorporating transgender-related content into instructional materials, and libraries, and promoting research projects can deepen awareness and understanding among students. Educators have a crucial responsibility in establishing secure and inclusive environments for transgender students, which requires an unrelenting willingness from their side to educate and provide assistance to them.

The perceptions about the treatment of transgender pupils were varied, with a majority indicating that they are infrequently or rarely treated well. This highlights the importance of implementing strategies to provide a safe and inclusive educational setting for every student, regardless of gender identity. Educational institutions should prioritise inclusivity by integrating transgender-related information into curricula and cultivating inclusive settings. Additionally, efforts should be made to enhance transgender representation to ensure equal access to education. There was a consensus that engaging in interactive sessions with transgender individuals could have a good influence on the mindset and attitudes of both students and teachers. Furthermore, educational institutions need to play a pivotal role in cultivating comprehension and compassion using focused initiatives that promote acceptance

and awareness regarding transgender issues in society. However, the study also reveals that there is a lack of representation of transgender students in academic environments, giving rise to concerns regarding the inclusivity and accessibility of this student population. In general, the results emphasise the substantial impact that the teaching fraternity can have on promoting transgender inclusion and receiving support in educational settings.

CONCLUSION

We do not deny the measures taken by the government to include them into mainstream education but the fact is that they are continuing to struggle to claim the benefits of the provisions made by the government. The purpose of this study was to highlight the importance of including transgender children and young adults in our schools/colleges and giving them opportunities to build dignified careers. To this end, the faculty at the schools and colleges were identified as major stakeholders in including them and creating a safe environment in the educational institutions. And so, this study primarily focussed on knowing the mindset and attitude of the faculty about the issues of the transgender community and analysing their openness in including them in the mainstream education system. While some researchers Rajkumar observed that the generation of more data/information related to the transgender community should be undertaken by academic institutions and academicians to understand the problems faced by them and this would in turn also facilitate the process of policy framing that will transform the lives of the transgenders (Rajkumar, 2016).

Under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2014, the Indian Government reaffirmed the various rights and privileges of the Transgenders and an important component was their right to education. Under section 13 of this Act the following provisions have been made: i) Enroll transgender students without prejudice and offer them education, as well as equal chances for sports, recreation, and leisure activities, without any kind of discrimination. ii) Ensure appropriate modifications are made to meet the individual's needs iii) Offer essential assistance in settings that optimise both academic and social growth, in line with the objective of complete integration. iv) Track the participation, and progress in terms of achievement levels, and completion of education, for each transgender student. (Chandra, 2017).

LIMITATIONS

Several key limitations have been identified by the researcher in this present study. First of all, the survey has been conducted only among 120 school teachers and professors from the northern parts of Tamil Nadu. The survey does not include students and government officials who are other major stakeholders in this issue of Transgender Education. Opinion has been obtained only from two transgenders. Future researchers are encouraged to include more transgenders in the survey to make the study more comprehensive and holistic.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

Researchers who wish to study further Transgender Education may include other stakeholders like students and government officials who would play a very important role in creating opportunities and facilitating the acceptance of the transgender

community into educational institutions. An additional enquiry may also be made about the changes to be made in the educational institutions to include transgender children and young adults. To do the same the recommendations may be derived from the management, government officials, faculty, students, and the transgenders as well. This would be a very extensive and exhaustive research but certainly a comprehensive one.

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