

# Transgender Entrepreneurs

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**Abstract:** A transgender is a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman, person with intersex variations, and gender- queer. A trans gender's career path is not simple and straight, they have to make extra efforts to be accepted in the world of 'commoners'. They are subjected to multi-faceted humiliations solely based on their gender identity. Recently empowerment of transgender has been mushrooming in every sphere either be constitutional, parliamentary, political, civil, legal, economic, social or technological facet. This article is based on the collection of Review of Literature with latest notable case studies on the socio-economic empowerment of transgenders. This paper throws light on the positive developments of the transgender to change their societal outlook. The reviews presented reflect a optimistic growth for trans-community in society and is a path breaking efforts to subside their taboo by projecting that transgenders are showing powerful curiosity in entrepreneurial venture.

**Keywords:** transgender, gender dysphoria, socio-economic empowerment, entrepreneurial venture, JEL Classification: Z13, Z19, J23, L26

## I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship movement has gained attention around the globe escalating significance in every aspect as it is a complex phenomenon influenced by the interplay of distinctive factors contributing towards employment generation, capital formation, industrial vivacity, product diversification, raising the standard of living, regional rural growth and economic progression marching with revenue creation. It enhances the holistic empowerment of an individual. More so when the individual is a transgender empowerment is a very crucial for their survival. Considering the lives of transgender research has been undertaken to collect certain reviews to study the empowerment source of transgender. Transgender have invested in a few activities by holding creativity and self-motivation and increased their confidence in the public by fostering themselves to become entrepreneurs. Refining their status in society, they have been trying to develop themselves economically and financially. This study is supportive in terms of socio-economic empowerment of transgender community as a whole.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Ambika Pandit (2009)** reported Pahal Foundation is an NGO located in Faridabad. This is first of Queer Beauty

**Revised Manuscript Received on October 22, 2019.**

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Parlour which is meant for transgenders alone. It was started in April. Simmy who is a transgender herself has got complete set of training from experts and takes care of the entire administration process. This beauty parlour was started with a main aim to change the perspective of the society and break the stereotypes. Simmy conducts training in beautician course with nominal charges. She is a good role model who is self-reliant and creates employment opportunities for other transgender. By this the transgender community can ensure an honorable life. This brushes the misunderstandings of the third gender community.

**The Hindu Staff Reporter (2012)** reported that Indian Bank has initiated self-employment training institute INDSETI which is a trimodel prearrangement system between The Ministry of Rural Development, State Government and Commercial Banks. This organization was inducted by Collector R. Lilly along with the Executive Director of Indian Bank, Lead District Officer of Reserve Bank of India and Zonal Manager and Circle Head of Indian Bank. This office is located inside the Collectorate Complex and is owned by Khadi and Village Industries Board. The Collector explained the process how to avail permission and the concerned officials to approach. The bank is estimated to launch 6 INDSETIs in Tamil Nadu by the end of 2012. This is expected to empower trans-community and also encourage transgender to establish their ventures.

**Shinod Ap The New Indian Express (2012)** reported that Salem District Aravanigal TAI Vizudhugal Arakattalai (Trust) came up with a positive self-employment programme. Such an initiative was Menmai which is the fast food chain menu comprised of the different type of idlis, chutneys, dosas, paniyaram and uthappam. This Menmai was inaugurated by MLA Mr. A. Raja. TAI Programme Officer, Sudha mentioned that food is prepared with a variety to meet the demands of the population and hygienically and it is a chance to prove the transgender can prove their best. Most of the transgender are very good at cooking. Therefore, this cooking cum catering is the preferred business. This has brought a lot of self-esteem, financial independence and autonomy of power to work. It is expected that very soon six idli shops with each shop having 5 transgenders will be in operation at Salem. It is also expected that later fast food counter can also be opened. Tamil Nadu State has formed 16 district level trusts for transgenders called as Tamil Nadu AIDS Initiative funded by Bill Gates Corporation with a sum of Rs 10 lakh.

**Shobha Warriar (2012)** reported that in an interview with **Kalki Subramaniam who dialogues about the journey of her life and the harassment as a child during young age faced in school and now turned to be an activist, entrepreneur,**

**artist and currently the Founder of Sahodhari Foundation.** Most of the transgender have persuaded themselves in social activities and quite a few of them are into arts like dancing. The idea popped into her mind that could generate income not only for the transgender but also for people who belong to dispossessed communities. That set her to march with entrepreneurial thinking. Initially, Sahodari went with jewellery business which they themselves designed. That went on with a setback. The main problem for the failure of this business was that the transgender was ready to make the jewellery but was not prepared to go out and market it, as they feared that they would be ridiculed and be teased. Having tried with all means this has to be dropped as there was not much public acceptance. With the help of her friend Kesavan, she has now entered in selling metallophones. The preliminary response expected to be good and now she is a small-time entrepreneur.

**The Hindu (2013)** reported that Srinidhi is a transwoman aged 26 years who has launched her own designer boutique in Madurai. This transgender has established her own business venture named after her. She is the first in the state who has started such an initiative of a garment shop. The financial help is provided by Mahalir Thittam. Former Collectors Mr. U. Sahayam and Anshul Mishra provided assistance to secure the loan. The inauguration of the garment outlet was done by Collector L. Subramanian. This textile store has clothing for both women and kids and is moderately priced ranged from Rs. 250 to Rs.1,000. Pertaining to her gender she was constantly denied job opportunities and holds Masters in Business Administration from Madurai Kamaraj University. This prompted her to become an entrepreneur. She further wants to expand her business, look prospects for exporting the garments and employ more transgender into her business. A transgender social activist, Bharathi Kannamma, made a strong point that the Central and the State governments should encourage, uplift by providing financial aid for self-employment opportunities.

**G. Maya Salimath and B. Rose Kavitha (2014)** mentioned that Social Action for Emancipation (SAFE) is a welfare society for transgenders. The President for this association is Kajol who is a transgender by herself. Her entrepreneurial opportunities made her approach Cine artist Mr. Karthi Sivakumar, who helped her in funding juicer machines costing a sum of Rs. 28,000 to six of their transgender members. The apparatus used for this are commercial juicer machine, Milton igloo for ice, 10 tall glasses and 4 plastic stools. From this, they are able to earn for their livelihood and make a decent way of living. This was considered as a positive sign in removing a social stigma associated with the transgender community. The District Welfare Officer Yashoda said that it is the binding response of the transgender members not to depend solely upon government but also to look for non-governmental initiatives to promote confidence-building resources.

**Nikhila Henry (2017)** reported that Rachana Mudraboyina who is Hyderabad-based transwoman activist launched Transvision the first YouTube channel in India. She is a double Post-Graduate degree holder. This idea emerged when very little amount of information is available about the transgender and trans-community in the television. This channel is designed with a purpose to highlight information about the transgender. It could be on the scientific basis, social,

cultural, educational, religious, economic, political and awareness schedules. It is telecasted in 3 languages Telugu, Kannada and Dakhini. This is an amazing platform for the exchange of ideas about the transgender people in the country. This has surely created a viral sensation and has removed all the obstacles of mindset among transgenders and a smooth ambiance is generated reflecting the ideology of transgenders. Today there are 1,000 followers on Facebook.

**Rajasekaran RK (2017)** reported that 22 transgenders was trained in goat rearing for their economically approved independent way of living. There were 115 transgender who attended for this course. It was a 12 day and 80-hours certified training course especially for transgender. Because of this training the transgender sense a feel of being an entrepreneur and have progressed themselves entering into the entrepreneurial venture. The District Social Welfare Department has taken up a very good initiative. Similarly there are about 40 programmes of this kind which was offered. Though many courses were provided goat rearing was very much appreciated among the trans-community as it has future scope of business and requires only less capital investment. At the end of the course District Collector K.S Palanisamy distributed the certificates to all the 22 transgenders.

**Deepthi Sanjiv (2018)** reported that Sanjeeva Vandse, who is a HIV + affected transgender turns herself as entrepreneur in Manipal. She runs the joint named 'Asare Fast Food' that offers idlis with chutneys, vadas, buns, pooris and pulav for breakfast. For lunch, it provides ghee rice and kebabs, and bondas or pakodas in the evening along with tea and coffee. This is managed by 4 persons including a trans. A loan of Rs 1 lakh was taken by Vandse to set up this join. She was also provided Rs. 20,000 from the Department of Women and Child Welfare. Sharing her personal experiences she mentioned that it was a real tough time to step as entrepreneur and to open this food joint. For so long trying for job unable to get, she had only 2 options to choose before her, either to work as Group D worker in the Department of Woman and Child Welfare or to work in the hospital. Neither had she preferred both. It was at this time that Udupi Deputy Commissioner Priyanka Mary Francis has been very supportive. She requested the DC to consider this as a special case and allow offering a location for a shop. The joint was positioned at a place where there was not much of people's mobility. Waiting to avail for the power connection permission from the officials, she has plans to expand her business to buy refrigerator to keep cool drinks, introducing noodles in the menu as well. Today with such hardships faced she is able to earn profits and a portion of that will be used for education, food and nutrition needs of HIV+ children. She has also established Asare Trust which is exclusively working for the HIV+ and the physically challenged. A psychologist as well a social worker Jayashree Bhat is the President of this trust. Currently she has built her own home with public support and recently was the honoured with the Rajyotsava Award in the District. She is hoping to establish her business with pride, dignity and stability and is also expected to produce more outlets in future.

**S. Chak (2018)** reported that Nithu R.S is the first transgender tattoo artist who owns three tattoo studios one beauty parlour and a restaurant. She identified her mother's interest in cookery and started a restaurant. Simultaneously she also opened a beauty parlour. Interested in arts and crafts she mastered animation techniques which helped her becoming a permanent tattoo artist. She is also a dancer, and has won the Title of Miss Trans Diamond Bangalore 2017 and in 2018 finalist pageant for the same. She realized that she was completely different from other kids from her own early age. As a born boy she was Nithin and flashed herself as Nithu. She came in touch with few LGBTQ community people and through them an online platform got introduced to an NGO which work for transgenders. Attending few meetings organized by this NGO she was able to avail more information on gender studies and gender identity. Till then living dual life, as years passed by, was attracted to straight men and wanted to be a woman. She decided to first settle herself in life and also her family and then to declare about her identity to her parents. Finally a time came when she revealed about her gender. Initially her mother misunderstood that as a eunuch she would beg in streets and later her brother supported and helped her mother to understand the facts finally was accepted by her family members and also helped her in undergoing many surgeries. Now proudly she is to travel to Netherlands to participate in an International transgender beauty pageant, representing India.

**Think Change India (2018)** reported that Gudiya, a transgender from Varanasi had established a thread manufacturing powerloom at her own home. Born to a poor Muslim family passed a very unpleasant journey from her childhood. She ran out of home at the age of 16, when her neighbours started to bully her. She had to resort to begging, singing at various celebrations to earn money and returned home after 3 years. Her parents and relatives were shocked with the truth she revealed but fortunately accepted and rendered their full support to her. She built her own house with the financial help provided from her brother. Later, she opened a thread loom power factory and saves Rs. 15,000 per month. Today she has employed 4 people to help her to access the raw-materials and supply the prepared products. She has also adopted an abandoned girl child from a private hospital and named her Zainam and her own brother's daughter named Nargis. Her daughters are the truly the biggest motivation for her life and wants to ensure that they receive the best education.

### III. CONCLUSION:

Considering the reviews many transgender have struggled to attain an independent position by embarking their passion into successful career paths to prove themselves. Many of them have chosen their interest and fought hard to settle as an entrepreneur. Reviews suggest that they have proven themselves to social activists, beauticians, psychologists, small scale entrepreneurs and journalists. They strive hard to support and nurture their community and uplift those who are passionate in doing any business for their survival. The paper has still scope for further research into the problems endured by the transgender community on their path of establishing themselves into successful entrepreneurs.

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