

Equitable and Inclusive Education as Envisioned in NEP 2020 Experience of Transgenders in Bihar

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Abstract

Inclusive development has been the focus of the Indian Government. 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayaas' has become the buzzword. Efforts are being made to mainstream the marginalised sections of the society. In this direction, the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has been a revolutionary step. This document speaks of equitable and inclusive education as a significant tool in achieving the Constitutional Values of social justice and equality. For the first time, 'transgenders' are identified as one of the several 'Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups' (SEDGs) who are always subjected to stigmatisation and discrimination based on their gender identity. In this paper, the authors have tried to investigate the educational experience of transgenders in Bihar. Using the Snowball Sampling technique, 141 transgenders from 5 districts of Bihar were approached for study. In-depth interviews were conducted and it was found that out of 141 respondents, 112 have studied up to elementary or secondary level. The study revealed several challenges faced by them in getting education because of which they are compelled to discontinue their studies and ultimately, they are forced to do some undignified work, such as asking for badhais, singing-dancing, or as sex workers.

Keywords: NEP 2020, equitable and inclusive education, transgender

INTRODUCTION

The issues of the 'marginalised sections' of society have caught the attention of policymakers ever since

the term 'inclusive development' came into vogue. The Indian Government is committed to the ideals of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas,

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Sabka Prayaas' to build an inclusive society. As such several efforts have been made to mainstream the disadvantaged sections of the society. Mention the introduction of the NEP 2020 that outlines equitable and inclusive education as a significant tool in achieving the Constitutional values of social justice and equality. For this, the needs and concerns of the SEDGs have to be taken into account. The SEDGs is an umbrella term for all those people who have been historically underrepresented in education including 'transgenders' who face stigmatisation and victimisation by the society. Now, the question arises—who are the 'transgenders', why they remain excluded, and what can be done to make them an integral part of society? In this context, the explanation given by the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 is the most pertinent, which defines a transgender, as “a person whose gender does not match 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 other such therapy), a person with intersex variations, genderqueer and person having socio-cultural identities, such as *kinner*, *hijra*, *aravani* and *jogta*”. Thus, anyone who does not meet the criteria of stereotypical gender norms is transgender. Since ages, they have been the sufferers, not even considered capable as human beings. The plight

of this community has caught the attention of the Supreme Court which recognised them as third gender and provided them with the right to gender identity. The government was directed to treat these people as socially and educationally backward classes and ensure reservation for their admission to educational institutions and in public appointments.

ADDRESSING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF TRANSGENDER STUDENTS: EFFORTS MADE SO FAR

India is making constant efforts to create an inclusive society. According to a legal status to the third gender, making provisions for them followed by The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019, Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules 2020, and the establishment of a National Council to look after their issues, several other initiatives have also been taken to promote educational opportunities among this community. For the first time, 'transgenders' have been identified as one of the several SEDGs in NEP 2020. Hence, attempts have to be made to increase the accessibility of education among them. The proposed 'gender-inclusion fund' is a positive step in this direction. Even the Samagra Shiksha scheme was upgraded on 4 August 2021, to ensure the inclusion of all the sections of society in school education. The NCERT has launched NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement) for sensitising the teachers on the

gender specific needs (<https://itpd.ncert.gov.in>). The Indian Universities have been directed by the UGC vide circulars issued on 29 October 2014 and 2 February 2015 to include a column for the transgender category in all application forms and other relevant documents (<https://www.ugc.gov.in/>).

The Bihar State Transgender Welfare Board was established in 2019 to look after the issues related to the welfare of the third-gender community. Further, it was reported by India Today (2017) that about 250 transgenders have registered for Class 10 and 12 examinations conducted by the Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) in February and March 2017. The Government has announced the reservation for transgenders for recruitment into police and permission has been given for the recruitment of 41 constables and 10 sub-inspectors from this community (The Telegraph Online, March 14, 2022). Recently, a scheme called 'Mukhyamantri Udyami Yojna' has also been launched which aims to provide a financial assistance of ₹10 lakhs to help the youths including transgenders to start their own business (<https://udyami.bihar.gov.in/>). The Bihar State Legal Services Authority (BSLSA) has also launched a "Scheme for Integration of Transgender Persons and their Rehabilitation and Providing Access to Justice, 2023" (SITARA, 2023). (Singh, B., 2023). The need to

ensure higher education facilities for the transgender community has been emphasised by the former Governor-cum-chancellor of Bihar Shri Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar (Khursheed, S., 2023). As such, the most recent development is the appointment of Reshma Prasad as a representative in the senate of Patna University, Patna by the Honourable Chancellor vide letter No.-BSU (Nomination)-46/2016-2045/ GS(I) dated 06.12.2023. It is pertinent here to mention that because of the initiatives being taken, trans people are now coming openly and accepting their identity. The recent caste survey in Bihar provides evidence in this regard. The population of transgenders in Bihar was nearly 40,827 (as per Census 2011) and the 2023 Bihar Caste census result shows that 82,836 or 0.063 per cent of the total population of Bihar openly identifies as trans (Sharma, L. 2023). Thus, Bihar although a developing state, has now become one of the leading states in the country which aims at bringing the transgender community in the mainstream.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Few studies have been conducted on the educational status, issues and challenges faced by transgenders. Chavada, V. K., R. P., and Kurushev, J. (2021) have found that educational status was associated with the level of resilience and poor mental health of transgenders in Puducherry, India. Ashokraj, S. 2019 has found

that the educational status of transgenders differs concerning their family acceptance, educational qualification, occupation and living arrangements. The literacy rate among the transgender community is just 46 per cent, while it is 74 per cent in case of overall population of India (Das, 2019). Rajesh, D. and Naved, A. (2013) have discussed that even after the Supreme Court's NALSA judgement in 2014, this marginalised community continues to face hurdles for getting inclusive education in schools, colleges and professional educational institutions. The rate of sexual violence faced by third gender persons is fifty per cent which is nearly double or triple the sexual violence faced by girls and boys, respectively. Abbas, T. et al. 2014; Tabassum, S., and Jamil 2014 in Pakistan have found that the majority of the transgender respondents in Pakistan were interested in getting an education and the highly educated transgenders were high-income and more adjusted respondents. Islam, M. A. (2016) states that the *hijras* have no educational facilities in Bangladesh. Thus, Asian countries present a similar picture of the educational status of the transgender community.

Studies conducted worldwide have pointed out that the discriminating school climate and incidences of harassment, bullying and abuse in educational institutions are the main reasons that transgender people are not interested in being educated and

give up studying (Singh, V., 2019). The zero-acceptance level in family and society along with the lack of an empathetic attitude towards transgenders deprives them of their right to education (Asmy and Nagaraj 2018; Rajkumar 2016). Not only this, but a lack of satisfactory learning atmosphere or non-acceptance in schools and colleges leads to their dropout (Chandra, S. 2017). Similar studies have been done by Ullman, J. 2017; Jones, T. et al. 2016 on the schooling experience of gender-diverse students in Australia. It was found that the school climate was very hostile to gender diversity. Abreu, R. L. et al. (2016) have found out that LGBTQ students in the United States are being bullied, harassed and victimised. The impact of the negative climate on the achievement of LGBT individuals of the secondary school in the United States has also been investigated by Kosciw, J.G. et al. 2013; Aragon et al. 2013; Swanson, K., and Gettinger, M. 2016; Taylor et al. 2016. Dugan et al. (2016) have found that the educational outcome and perceptions of safety and belongingness were meagre among transgender students in comparison to their peers. Greytak et al. (2009) in their report entitled 'Harsh Realities' states that the transgender students show a very high percentage of suicide attempts because of harassment in schools. Thus, it has become clear that the impact of poor school climate negatively affects the mental health of gender non-conforming students.

Such students have felt uneasiness in schools because of traditional gender norms which negatively affects their social, cognitive and emotional development (Massey, 2011). Transgenders are subjected to discrimination not only in their school or college lives but are also neglected by the curriculum planners and textbook writers, and hence their issues are not depicted in the textbooks (Raj, 2017). He stated that in India, even the NCERT textbooks have not given due place to the needs and problems of such students. Rands, K. E. (2009) emphasised the inclusion of transgender-related issues in teacher education programmes. There is no doubt that the educational textbooks can be used as a major tool to sensitise the stakeholders regarding the issues and sufferings of this community (Macgillivray et al. 2008).

Thus, the review highlights the ground reality of educational status among the transgender community across the globe. Incidences of bullying, harassment and discrimination not only lead to their dropouts but are also associated with low academic achievements, and several physical and mental health issues, even leading to suicide among transgender students. It is, therefore, crucial that extensive research should be done on this marginalised community. Further, Bihar has the second highest population of third gender after Uttar Pradesh (Nagarajan, 2014) but here the issues

and problems of the transgender community remain unexplored and not a single study has been done in this area. Hence, the present research is a positive intervention in this direction and is a worthwhile problem to study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The statement of the problem is—Equitable and Inclusive Education as Envisioned in NEP 2020: Experience of Transgenders in Bihar.

Operational Definition of the Terms

Transgenders are the people who consider their gender identity different from their biological sex. In this study, transgenders referred to:

- Trans females or M-t-F—someone who is identified as a female but was labelled as a male at birth;
- Trans male or F-t-M—someone who was labelled as a female at birth, but is identified as a man; and
- Intersex—someone who possesses traits of both male and female sex.

Equitable and Inclusive Education—It refers to practices that ensure all students, irrespective of any difference(s), have equal access to learning.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the educational status of transgenders in Bihar?
- Do the transgenders receive any kind of support from their families

or educational institutions while getting an education?

- How was their relationship with their classmates, teachers, and Principals?
- Was the school or college environment trans-friendly or not?
- What are their expectations from the government, NGOs and society for their inclusion in the educational mainstream?

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

- To explore the transgenders' educational status in Bihar;
- To investigate the experience of transgenders in getting an education with special reference to the lack of support, relationship with their classmates, teachers and Principals, incidences of abuse, bullying and discrimination, and school and college environment;
- To study the expectations of transgenders from the government, NGOs and society regarding their education.

METHOD OF STUDY

This is a descriptive study for which exploratory and explanatory research designs were used. Bihar was divided into five zones, that is Bhagalpur district from east Bihar, Muzaffarpur from North Bihar, Gaya from South Bihar, Buxar from West Bihar, and Patna from Central Bihar. These zones were taken for study. The selected district served as the universe for the study. The researcher

visited the office of the Bihar State Transgender Welfare Board, Patna, the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), and the registered Community-based Organisations (CBOs) located in each district of Bihar working for the welfare of the transgender community. On this basis, a survey was done to first identify, locate and approach the transgenders. By using the snowball sampling technique, 141 participants were selected for the study. An interview schedule was developed for the transgender (primary) respondents. Pilot testing was done in June 2022 to improve it. It was followed by actual data collection done from July to January 2023. After the field study was conducted, a verbatim transcription of all tapes recorded was done by the researcher manually and the responses were coded according to the major concepts and themes. The codes were entered into the computer using MS Excel, and the analysis and interpretation of data was done. The findings were supplemented by a few case studies of transgender respondents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The major findings of the study are:

1. Profile of the Transgender Respondents

In this research, transgenders from the age group of 15–55 years were the major respondents. The 78.01 per cent (total frequency reported to be 110 out of 141) of the total respondents were trans females

or M-t-F and 19.86 per cent were Intersex (total frequency reported to be 28). Only 2.13 per cent (frequency was 3 out of the total) of them were found to be trans male or F-t-M. 85.82 per cent of respondents (total frequency being 121 out of 141) were living in their community.

2. Educational Status

The study revealed that the majority of the respondents were at least literate. The educational status among the transgender respondents is evident from Table 1 given below.

Table 1: The educational status of the transgender respondents

Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	65	46.1
Secondary	17	12.06
Senior Secondary	10	7.09
Graduation	09	6.38
Post-Graduation	05	3.55
LLB	01	0.71
B.Ed.	02	1.42
Technical Education as ITI, Engineering	02	1.42
Diploma in Nursing	01	0.71
Illiterate	29	20.57
Total	141	100

(*Multiple responses by the respondents)

Table 1 shows that out of the 141 respondents, 20.57 per cent, i.e., 29 respondents were illiterate.

These were intersex people who were deserted by their families or given to the gurus of their communities. Out of 112 educated transgenders, 46.1 per cent (total frequency was 65) have received elementary education. 12.06 per cent (17 respondents) received secondary education and 7.09 per cent, i.e., a total of 10 respondents were educated up to the senior secondary level. 6.38 per cent of the respondents (total frequency being 9) were graduates and 3.55 per cent, i.e., a total of 5 respondents have done post-graduation from different government colleges. Despite facing so many hardships, 1.42 per cent of them (their number is 2) have received a technical education and 2 transgenders have also reported doing B.Ed. from Teacher Training Colleges in Haryana. A single respondent had a diploma in nursing and another transgender Ms. Monika Das, an Officer in Canara Bank, Kankarbagh has received an LLB degree from Patna University, Patna (Mani, 2023). The educational status of the respondents can be depicted as follows:

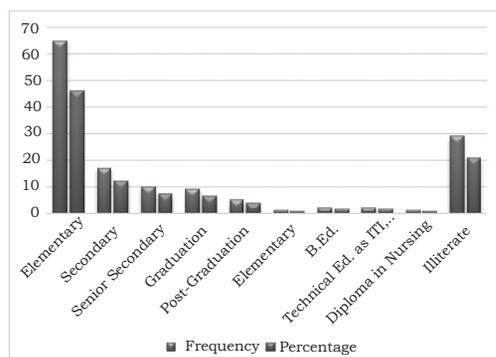


Fig. 1: Educational Status of the Transgender Respondents

3. Types of Educational Institutions where the Transgender Respondents Studied/Study

The study shows that out of the total 112 educated transgenders, 76.6 per cent (frequency was 108) received education in government schools or colleges (See Table 2). Only 2.84 per cent of the respondents, i.e., 4 of the total were found to have studied in private school or college. The finding shows that discrimination against such people starts from their homes, even parents ignore them and do not pay attention to them.

4. Denied Admission Due to Gender Identity

The study revealed that a total of 107 respondents, i.e., 96 per cent said that they were never denied admission but they were given admission based on their sex assigned at birth (Figure 2). It was found that a few schools, especially the private ones, refused to give admission to such students because they thought that they would spoil other students and negatively influence the school’s reputation.

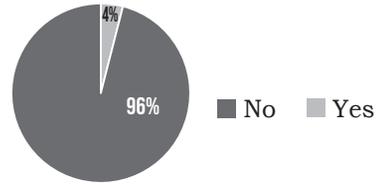


Fig. 2: Transgender Respondents Denied Admission due to Gender Identity

In this context, it is pertinent to understand the situation according to the perspective of a respondent—Nisha (name changed), from Ajmeri Mohalla, Bihta, Patna explains, “I was a bright student and had a keen desire to learn. Seeing my desire to learn, my parent took me to a private school in our vicinity. However, the Principal there refused to give me admission. He said that admitting such students means the closing of our school as they will spoil other students, meaning that no parent would want to send their children to our school. My parents approached a local government school but there also, the teachers ridiculed me. However, with the help of village Mukhiya, I got admission”.

This narrative clearly explains that discrimination is done by educational

Table 2: Types of educational institutions

S. No.	Where Did/Do You Study?	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Government School/College	108	76.6
2.	Private School/College	04	02.84
3.	Not Applicable	29	20.57
	Total	141	100.00

institutions against the transgenders when they are denied admissions.

5. Problems in Getting Education

The researcher delved deeper to enquire about the problems that the transgender respondents have faced or are facing, in getting education. These problems are discussed as follows:

(i) Lack of Support

The majority of the respondents said that the biggest problem that they have faced is the lack of support

of the several problems in receiving education. 57.44 per cent of the total respondents (frequency being 81) cited this problem and it is 32.27 per cent of the total answers given by them. 43.26 per cent of the total respondents (frequency being 61) said that because of a lack of family support, they could not study. The respondents also revealed that their siblings were sent to private schools but they were asked to sit at home and were not allowed to interact with others or go to school. This answer accounted for 24.30 per cent of the total responses given.

Table 3: Lack of support

S. No.	Lack of Support	Frequency	Percentage based on Respondents	Percentage based on Answers
1.	Lack of family support	61	43.26	24.30
2.	Lack of financial support	81	57.44	32.27
3.	No support from school/college	109	77.30	43.42
	Total	141	178.00	100.00

(*Multiple responses by the respondents)

and acceptance from educational institutions (see Table 3). The school or college personnel as reported by the participants, were never sensitive to the needs and challenges of such students and remained indifferent towards them. This answer was given by 77.3 per cent of the total respondents (frequency being 109 out of 141) and this accounted for 43.42 per cent of the total answers given. This was followed by the lack of financial support as one

This data can be corroborated by the experience of one of the respondents:

Veena Yadav (name changed) from Patna explains, "I was determined that I will not live by doing the chores and activities that the transgenders are usually supposed to do. I decided to study. After schooling, I left my home because I did not want my family to suffer humiliation because of me. However, continuing education

was not easy. I slept at the railway platforms for several months. Finally, one member of my community helped me and sheltered me. I also worked in a thread mill and did graduation and post-graduation from Patna University in Patna. For me, there was no support, not from my family or my batchmates and even from the institution”.

Thus, this narrative is just an example, there are numerous such instances, where trans people have to leave their studies because of the lack of support.

(ii) School/College Environment

Studies conducted across the globe have pointed out that the discriminating school climate and incidences of harassment, bullying and abuse led to higher rates of school absenteeism, dropouts and low academic outcomes among transgender students.

As evident from the above Table 4, 73.21 per cent of the total

respondents (frequency being 82 out of a total of 112) reported a negative and non-accepting school or college environment, and of never being accepted and welcomed by educational institutions. This accounted for 38.86 per cent of the total experiences shared. The 58.03 per cent of the total respondents (frequency being 65) revealed that they had to face transphobic (hatred, dislike of or strong prejudice against transgender) language and verbal harassment based on their sexual orientation and gender identity in the school or college campus. This accounted for 30.80 per cent of the total responses given. Lack of a satisfactory learning environment was also reported by 25 per cent of the total transgender respondents. It is quite obvious that on a campus, where such students are not accepted, and are insulted and discriminated against, how can the learning environment be said satisfactory and conducive for them?

Table 4: School/College environment

S. No.	School/College Environment	Frequency	Percentage Based on Respondents	Percentage Based on Answers
1.	Negative and non-accepting	82	73.21	38.86
2.	Neutral	10	8.92	4.73
3.	Hostile school campus	26	23.21	12.32
4.	Transphobic language	65	58.03	30.80
5.	Lack of satisfactory learning environment	28	25.0	13.27
	Total	112	188.37	100.00

(*Multiple responses by the respondents)

It counted for 13.27 per cent of the total answers given. The 23.21 per cent of respondents (total frequency being 26 out of 112) reported hostile school/college campuses and it was 12.32 per cent of the total answers given. Thus, the study revealed that cisgender students (students whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth, i.e., the students are boys or girls) used transphobic language and the school climate was very hostile to gender diversity. However, 10 respondents, i.e., 8.92 per cent of the total said that the school or college had no interest in them, and were mostly indifferent or neutral towards them. This answer counted for 4.73 per cent of the total answers given.

Experience of studying in such a hostile environment was shared by one of the respondents:

Advika (name changed) from Muzaffarpur, explains, "I was born in an affluent-family, and my transition to a trans female became a nightmare for my family members. I was not allowed to go outside and there was a tutor for me. I was a very bright student and I got admitted to B.Tech in Darbhanga College of Engineering. Somehow, my parent allowed me to attend college classes but the discrimination and stigmatisation that I faced there was extremely painful. A few students sexually assaulted me, raped me and even burnt me with cigarettes. I stopped going to college and somehow did my B.Tech. I only went to take

examinations. Hence, I do not have any knowledge of that field. Recently, I found a shelter at Garima Greh and now I am enrolled in a computer literacy programme".

Thus, the lack of an accepting and inclusive environment in educational institutions is equally responsible for the low educational status among transgender students.

(iii) Relationship with Teacher and Other Staff

It was found that for 66.96 per cent of the total respondents (frequency being 75 out of 112), teachers were neutral and indifferent towards such students. The 17.85 per cent of respondents (total frequency was 20) reported that the teachers had negative attitudes towards them and were usually critical of their presence in the classroom (See Table 5). They were hardly ever positive about gender diversity. The use of transphobic language by the school teachers was also reported by the participants. The m-t-f and intersex students reported that they were less mentored by the teachers. Only 17 respondents revealed that the teachers were positive and supportive towards them. These respondents were the ones who were academically bright students and were well-behaved. This is the reason that the teachers used to appreciate and motivate them. Further, it was found that since such respondents had their teachers' support, they felt accepted and motivated to study.

Thus, the study revealed that lack of support from teachers is also one of the several problems faced by transgender people in getting or continuing their education.

The experience shared by the following respondents discusses the lack of support from the teacher:

Madhu (name changed) from Bhagalpur, narrates, "I remember I was doing graduation from a reputed college of the University of Delhi, Delhi in 2022. I got admitted as a transgender student. I used to think that, since it is one of the premier institutions of our country, there might not be any prejudice or discrimination based on gender. However, I was wrong. What to talk about classmates? I was abused by my professors. Many of them called me at their homes and asked me to dance in the name of helping me in fetching good marks in examinations. They also demanded sexual favours from me. Sometimes, I felt that I should leave all these and rush to my hometown".

(iv) Behaviour of Classmates

The researcher also explored the experiences of transgenders with their classmates.

During the investigation, it was revealed that 107 respondents, i.e., 95.53 per cent of the total were discriminated against, harassed and bullied by their classmates, see Table 6. They further said that boys used to tease them, used slang and derogatory words for transgender students, and always made fun of their appearances, or their girly make up. This sort of treatment by the classmates accounted for 26.61 per cent of the total experiences. 106 respondents, i.e., 94.64 per cent of the total, reported verbal and physical abuse by their classmates. This counted for 26.36 per cent of the total answers given. However, during the investigation, it was found that the girls were usually supportive and compassionate towards their transgender classmates. This answer was given by 45 respondents (40.17 per cent of the total) and it was 11.19 per cent of the total answers. There were at least 14 respondents who accused the girls of making fun of their identity and ignoring them. It was more disheartening to find that 19 respondents reported being a victim of sexual abuse by their

Table 5: Relationship with teacher and other staff

S. No.	Relationship with Teacher and Other Staff	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Positive and warm	17	15.17
2.	Negative and critical	20	17.85
3.	Neutral and indifferent	75	66.96
	Total	112	100.00

(*Multiple responses by the respondents)

Table 6: Behaviour of classmates

S. No.	Behaviour of Classmates	Frequency	Percentage Based on Respondents	Percentage Based on Answers
1.	Girls were supportive and compassionate	45	40.17	11.19
2.	Boys teased, used slang, derogatory words and made fun	107	95.53	26.61
3.	Girls also made fun	14	12.5	3.48
4.	They were neutral	04	3.57	0.99
5.	Discrimination/Harassment/Bullying	107	95.53	26.61
6.	Verbal/Physical abuse	106	94.64	26.36
7.	Sexual abuse	19	16.96	4.72
	Total	112	358.90	100.00

(*Multiple responses by the respondents)

classmates. This was shared by 16.96 per cent of the total respondents, accounting for 4.72 per cent of the total answers.

A similar incident was documented involving a student from Gaya, who experienced bullying and

molestation, ultimately leading her to abandon her studies due to the distressing circumstances.

The behaviour of classmates towards their transgender batchmates can be illustrated through the following Figure 3.

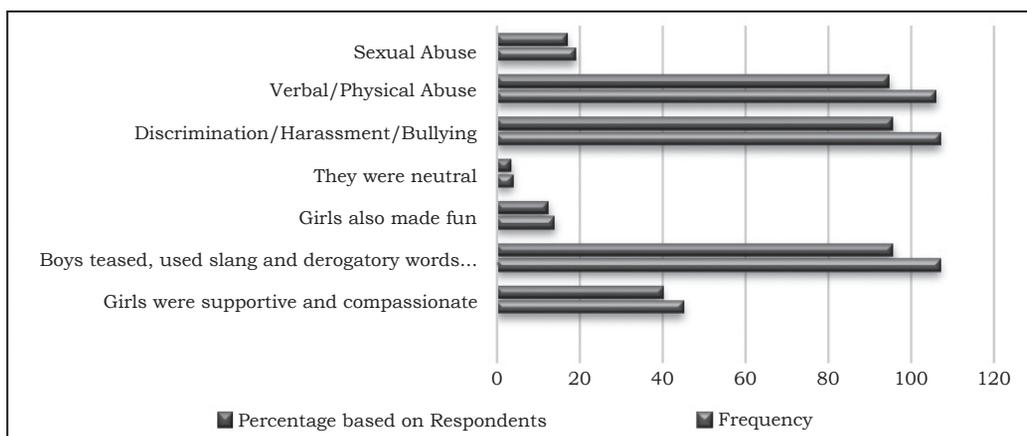


Fig. 3: Behaviour of Classmates towards the Transgender Students

From the above discussion, it is evident that the lack of support coupled with the transphobic school/college climate, the behaviour of teachers, staff and classmates, and the incidences of discrimination, bullying, verbal, physical and sexual abuse in educational institutions are the major problems that the transgenders have experienced while getting education.

6. Reporting Cases of Abuse and Discrimination, and Response of the Principal

The discussion reveals that although transgenders are subjected to injustice and discrimination, they do not have the courage to report such cases to the school or college authority. It was found that out of 112 transgender respondents who went to school, only 31, i.e., 27.67 per cent of the total have reported such incidences (See Fig. 4).

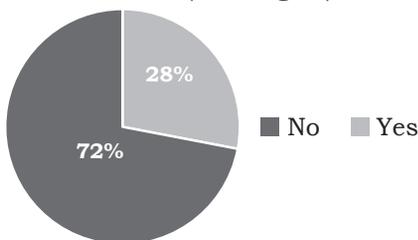


Fig. 4: Reporting Cases of Abuse and Discrimination to the Principal

It is pertinent here to discuss the response of school or college authorities towards the grievances of such students (Table 7 given on the next page).

As evident from Table 7, 16 out of 31 respondents, i.e., 51.61 per cent of the total, who have reported any case of injustice towards them, said that it was mostly ignored by the Principal. They never took any action, rather they asked such students to correct their behaviour. This was reported by 38.70 per cent of the total respondents. They said that the Principal insisted that the transgender students should pay attention to their dress and gestures, and should not provoke the other students. This accounted for 29.26 per cent of the total experiences. 35.48 per cent of the total respondents (frequency being 11 out of 31) said that they were accused of violating social codes. This counts for 26.82 per cent of the total responses given. Only 2 respondents, i.e., 6.45 per cent of the total said that the Principal had taken action against the culprits and also motivated them to work hard and to do better. It was 4.87 per cent of the total experiences shared by the respondents.

Thus, it is apparent that instead of providing trans students with a safe climate, the Principal accuses them of violating the school and societal decorum. How ridiculous this is! Such behaviour on the part of school authorities is equally responsible for the educational exclusion of transgender students.

7. Expectations of the Transgenders Regarding their Education

Till now, a discussion has been made on the educational experience of

Table 7: Response of the principal

S. No.	Response of the Principal	Frequency	Percentage Based on Respondents	Percentage Based on Answers
1.	Taken action and motivated to work hard	02	6.45	4.87
2.	Ignored	16	51.61	39.02
3.	Asked to correct behaviour	12	38.70	29.26
4.	Accusing of violating school and societal decorum	11	35.48	26.82
	Total	31	132.24	100.00

(*Multiple responses by the respondents)

transgender respondents. The Table 8 given on the next page presents a list of expectations from the respondents' perspective to make education accessible for them.

The majority of the respondents, i.e., 112 out of 141 (79.43 per cent of the total) wanted a trans-inclusive campus so that the trans students may feel safe and accepted. This accounted for 17.94 per cent of the total responses given. The 79 respondents, i.e., 56.02 per cent said that access to educational opportunities must be increased, and 68 respondents said that the government or the educational institutions should provide financial support or scholarships to trans students. These constituted 12.66 per cent and 10.89 per cent of the total suggestions given respectively. The need for acceptance by the family was put forth by 64 respondents, i.e., 45.39 per cent of the total and it accounted for 10.25 per cent of the total responses given.

The need for job-oriented education with special emphasis on the development of skills and competencies was discussed by 60 respondents, i.e., 42.55 per cent of the total and it was 9.61 per cent of the total expectations discussed. It was followed by the need to recruit or prepare sensitive teachers and staff who could understand the needs and challenges of transgender students.

The provision of evening classes was discussed by 30.49 per cent of the total respondents (frequency being 43) but it accounted for 6.89 per cent of their expectations in this regard. 40 respondents, i.e., 28.36 per cent of the total said that there is no need for separate educational institutions for them. They could study well in normal schools or colleges if the campus is inclusive, safe and accepting of them. It was 6.41 per cent of the total responses given. However, demand for separate schools was also raised by 21.27 per cent of participants (frequency being 30)

Table 8: Expectations of transgenders regarding their education

S. No.	Expectations of Transgender Community Regarding their Education	Frequency	Percentage Based on Respondents	Percentage Based on Answers
1.	Motivate parents of transgenders to accept/support/educate their child	64	45.39	10.25
2.	Access to educational opportunities	79	56.02	12.66
3.	Incentives/financial support/scholarships to transgender students	68	48.22	10.89
4.	Special schools	30	21.27	4.80
5.	No need for a separate educational institution	40	28.36	6.41
6.	Safe school climate/trans-inclusive campus	112	79.43	17.94
7.	Sensitive teachers and staff	53	37.58	8.49
8.	Appointment of teachers from the transgender community	16	11.34	2.56
9.	Inclusion of transgender issues in the school/college curriculum/teaching trans issues	29	20.56	4.64
10.	Appointing school counsellors in avoiding bullying	13	9.21	2.08
11.	Evening classes	43	30.49	6.89
12.	Job-oriented education	60	42.55	9.61
13.	Sensitivity and awareness workshops	17	12.05	2.72
	Total	141	426.00	100.00

(*Multiple responses by the respondents)

and it was 4.80 per cent of the total responses.

Inclusion of the issues of the transgender community in the school/college curriculum was suggested by 29 respondents, i.e.,

20.56 per cent of the total but it accounted for 4.64 per cent of all the suggestions discussed. Their other expectations included organising sensitivity and awareness campaigns in educational institutions, and

the appointment of teachers from the transgender community and counsellors to promote mental health among such students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Although transgenders have been an integral part of our society for ages. They are nowhere in the mainstream. The findings reveal the disheartening experience of transgender students in Bihar. The lack of support from their families or the discriminatory practices in educational institutions makes them the most marginalised section of society. Although most of them were found to be literate, few have also received higher education yet they are compelled to earn their livelihood through singing, dancing, asking for badhais, or as sex workers. So, when the country is talking about building

an inclusive society, mainstreaming such people has become imperative.

The NEP 2020 has taken into account the issues and problems of transgender students, and several initiatives are being taken or have been proposed for their inclusion into the educational mainstream. The NCERT is also working on the draft module on 'Integrating Transgender Concerns in Schooling Processes'. Besides these, efforts have to be made at two levels—first, the people's perspective about this community has to be changed and trans-friendly educational institutions have to be developed for their inclusion. So, sensitising the citizens, and providing a trans-friendly learning environment, a trans-friendly curriculum, syllabus and textbook is the need of the hour.

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