



A STUDY OF THE READINESS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN DELHI FOR INCLUSION OF TRANSGENDER IN EDUCATION

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This descriptive study was an attempt to examine the preparedness of higher education institutions in the National Capital Region with respect to inclusion of Transgender in Higher Education .Data was collected using rating scales and questionnaire from two important stakeholders including students and faculty to find the facilities available to support inclusion of transgender as well as gauge their attitudes towards the inclusion of transgender in Education. The study documented the experiences of transgender studying in higher education institutions in order to find the ground reality of nature and extent of their inclusion and the challenges faced by them .This study has thrown light on the facilities that need to be instituted in order to pave the way for inclusion of the transgender in education .It has also created an understanding of the awareness and sensitisation programmes that are needed to sensitise the different stakeholders towards contributing positively towards their inclusion in education .The conclusion drawn from the findings of the study shall help in feeding policy guidelines for higher education institutions in India with respect to supporting the cause of inclusion of transgender in Higher Education.

Keywords: *Inclusion, Transgender Support, Sensitization, Readiness.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

There is enough research literature internationally and nationally to throw light on the marginalization and systemic exclusion of transgender from mainstream education .From homes to neighborhood to community and society at large they are denied basic human rights on account of not conforming to the two gender binaries .There are misconceptions ,prejudices and biases that contribute to apathy towards the transgender as a whole .Most of them drop out of

education after some years owing to the abuse they encounter and the utter disregard of their existence by the institutions. Looking at the research studies it is amply clear that there is hardly any awareness on ground with respect to understanding the concerns and challenges of transgender with respect to their inclusion in the ambit of education.

The main documented challenges which the transgender face on day to day basis include are verbal ,physical and sexual abuse , feeling of

alienation and isolation, lack of awareness in teachers in addressing them in gender neutral or gender appropriate pronouns, absence of counselors catering to the transgender community, absence of representation of transgender in the curricular materials, lack of separate common rooms and washrooms etc. With the passage of the Transgender Bill 2019 the human rights of transgender which includes right to education too have assumed a centre stage. In order to be gainfully employed it is important that the transgender reach and complete higher education. The inclusion of transgender in Higher Education would only be possible by creating an enabling environment that is supportive of them.

Higher Education Institutions need to be prepared for the inclusion of transgender in education by having an inclusion policy in place that includes the transgender to begin with. Awareness and Sensitization programmes need to be instituted such that all cis-gender students, faculty, administrators and non teaching staff develop a positive attitude towards them. Separate common rooms and washrooms need to be there for transgender in order to increase their comfort level and prevent any kind of abuse in shared common facilities as documented in research studies. A grievance redressal cell and a counseling cell need to be created to address the needs, concerns, fears and anxieties and abuse of transgender in institutional spaces. In the light of India passing the Transgender Bill in 2019 for protection of Transgender rights and the NEP 2020 advocating the inclusion of all socially disadvantaged groups in the ambit of education, this study was conceived to look at the status of inclusion of this vulnerable group in higher education. The present study attempted to examine the readiness of higher education institutions in Delhi for inclusion of transgender.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Martino, W. et al. (2022). Explored the inclusion of transgender through the case study method in a school of Ontario. The research points

out that the presence of a trans student is seen as a prerequisite for introduction of interventions that specifically target the education of this group and in turn respect gender diversity.

Conron, J. et al. (2022). Documented the experiences of transgender students in higher education spaces in the United States. The key findings of the study threw light on experiences of bullying, harassment, alienation and the felt need to hide their sexual orientation.

Mary, L. (2022). Investigated and documented the experiences of transgender students in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. The findings pointed out that the trans students feel alienated and discriminated against in the campuses.

Ali, M. (2021). Undertook a descriptive study to find the attitudes of college students towards inclusion of transgender students in their institutions. The results of the study pointed out that the students had positive attitude towards inclusion of transgender students.

Meyer, E. (2021). Conducted a descriptive analysis highlighting the need to situate transgender studies in education as an area of scholarship in order to prioritize research in the area of liberatory teaching - learning environments for transgender to begin with.

Hussain, R. and Bhardwaj, D. (2020). Studied the awareness of transgender about the educational facilities available to them. Most of the transgender were not aware that education is a fundamental right. Higher education Institutions are not prepared to provide them education.

Omercajic, K. and Martino, W. (2020) Conducted a critical policy analysis of the affirmative policies that are in place for the transgender in Ontario. The main findings revealed that there is an urgent need to move beyond the discourse of accommodation with respect to inclusion of transgender in education.

Wiltz, J. C. (2018). Examined the perceptions of teachers teaching at secondary stage with respect to working with transgender students. Most of the teachers held a positive attitude towards teaching transgender students.

Denino, V. P. (2018). Investigated the beliefs of faculty working as nurse educators with respect to the transgender patients. It was found that the faculty had negligible experience of working with transgender patients.

Weekley,T.(2017).Examined The perceived Conclusion and well-being of transgender students in for college campuses in Nebraska. Students reported that missing classes on account of being uncomfortable to their gender identity was a common practice for them .

Morarka,V. and Lodha,P. (2017). Examined the perceptions and awareness levels of students in higher education institutions in six cities of India towards the third gender.The findings indicated lack of awareness about the rights and provisions present for transgender.

Kurt,J.L and Chenault, K.H.(2017). Documented the experiences of school administrators in the United States with respect to school policy and expression of transgender identity.All the administrators were uncomfortable with the idea of being the sole implementers of policies affecting the transgender students.

Parashar,S.(2017) .Examined the intersection of class, caste ,gender and religion among the socially and educationally backward classes of the transgender community .The paper advocated that it is important to address the ambiguity with respect to the issue of reservation which is only available to the hijra community among the transgender at present.

Rajkumar (2016). Conducted a thorough review of the status and challenges surrounding the transgender community. It was found that the transgender youth feel disrespected on account of their names and pronouns not been taken care of and lack of access to separate restroom facilities.

Pedro,K.T.D.et al.(2016) .Examined the use of activities for increasing the critical consciousness of future educators to create trans inclusive schools .The activities used to create critical consciousness among the educators

included a detailed brainstorming and reflection on the televised interviews between journalists and transgender activists.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find the perception of students towards the inclusion of transgender in education.
- To explore the perception of faculty towards the inclusion of transgender in education
- To examine the preparedness of HEIs for inclusion of transgender.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study lies in the domain of descriptive research and survey method was employed to collect data .Data was collected from two central universities located in Delhi .For the achievement of objective one a rating scale was developed to collect data randomly from 50 students from each university .For the achievement of the second objective, data was collected using a rating scale from a total of 30(15 faculty members were drawn randomly from each of the two universities)faculty members .In order to achieve objective three a structured questionnaire was developed to collect data from 50 students drawn randomly from each university(total sample of 100 students)to find about the awareness programmes held, facilities in place for the inclusion of transgender and the inclusion policy of the institution, in place(if any) in order to examine the preparedness of HEIs for inclusion of transgender in education. The data collected using self-developed tools was analyzed using frequency and percentage analysis.

5. FINDINGS DEDUCED AND ARTICULATED FROM DATA COLLECTED THROUGH RATING SCALE FOR OBJECTIVE I & II AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OBJECTIVE II ARE PRESENTED BELOW OBJECTIVE WISE ALONG-WITH DATA ANALYSIS FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objective I: *To find the perception of students towards the inclusion of transgender in education.*

The data from 100 undergraduate students drawn randomly from two central universities of Delhi, to gauge their perception towards inclusion of transgender was collected using a self-developed four point rating scale and was analyzed using percentage analysis.

The results of data analysis are presented in tabular form:

N=100

S.No.	Statements	Yes	May Be	Neutral	No
1.	Transgender students should be included in Higher Education Institutions	20%	30%	21%	29%
2.	I will be comfortable in studying with transgender students in the same class	15%	28%	25%	32%
3.	Transgender students should be admitted in separate college and universities	30%	33%	20%	17%
4.	Transgender admissions in Colleges and Universities shall disturb the academic environment	27%	33%	25%	15%
5.	The curriculum of transgender students should be different from cis-gender students.	32%	25%	27%	16%
6.	Transgender students will be accepted in colleges and universities.	25%	5%	25%	45%
7.	Transgender students will face discrimination in Colleges and Universities.	40%	35%	15%	10%
8.	I will be supportive to my transgender peers , admitted in my class.	25%	40%	20%	15%
9.	I will maintain a safe distance from transgender students	27%	32%	21%	20%
10.	I am aware of transgender students in my university	08%	-	0	92%

5.1. Findings:

- Around 50% of the students are not comfortable with transgender students being included in the ambit of Higher Education.
- Only 15% of the students felt that they will be comfortable studying with transgender students.
- 30% of the students believed that transgender students should study in separate colleges and universities.
- 60% of the respondents feel that the admission of transgender students in colleges and universities shall cause disruption in the academic environment.
- 32% of the students felt that the curriculum of transgender students should be different than their cis-gender peers.
- 45% of the students believe that transgender students will not be accepted in colleges and universities.
- 40% of the students feel that transgender students will face discrimination in Higher Education Institutions.
- Only 25% of the students reported to be confident of supporting their transgender peers if admitted in their class.
- Around 60% of the students may maintain safe distance from transgender students in Higher Education Institutions.
- Only 8% students were aware of the presence of transgender students in their campus.

Objective II: To explore the perception of faculty towards the inclusion of transgender in education.

The data from 30 faculty ,teaching undergraduate students drawn randomly from two central universities of Delhi, to gauge their perception towards inclusion of transgender was collected using a self developed four point rating scale and was analyzed using frequency and percentage analysis. The results of data analysis are presented in tabular form:

(* In the table below, F denotes Frequency and P denotes Percentage)

N=30

S.No.	Statements	Yes		May Be		Neutral		No	
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
1.	Transgender students should be included in Higher Education Institutions	18	60%	5	16.66%	4	13.33%	3	10%
2.	I will welcome transgender students for study in my class	10	33.33 %	7	23.33%	2	6.66%	11	36.66%
3.	Transgender students should be admitted in separate college and universities	20	66.66 %	2	6.66%	3	10%	5	16.66%
4.	Transgender admissions in Colleges and Universities shall disturb the academic environment	15	50%	4	13.33%	2	6.66%	9	30%
5.	The curriculum of transgender students should be different from cis-gender students.	7	23.33 %	10	33.33%	1	3.33%	12	40%
6.	I am well equipped in teaching transgender students in an inclusive classroom.	9	30%	3	10%	2	6.66%	16	53.33%
7.	Transgender students will face discrimination in Colleges and Universities.	15	50%	8	26.66%	5	16.66%	2	6.66%
8	I will be supportive to transgender students admitted in my class.	10	33.33 %	17	56.66%	3	10%	0	0
9.	I will maintain a safe distance from transgender students	9	30%	10	33.33%	3	10%	8	26.66%
10.	I am aware of transgender students in my university	2	6.66%	0	0%	2	6.66%	26	86.66%

5.2. Findings:

- 60% of the faculty members were positive about the inclusion of transgender students in the ambit of Higher Education.
- Only 33.33% of the faculty members felt committed towards welcoming transgender students for study in their class.
- 66.66% of the faculty members felt that transgender students should have separate colleges and universities for them.
- 50% of the respondents felt that admission of transgender in colleges and universities shall disturb the academic environment.
- 23.33% of the faculty opined that the curriculum of transgender students should be different from cis-gender students and 33.33% were a bit doubtful but open to the idea of a separate curriculum.
- 53.33% of the faculty members felt that they are not equipped in teaching transgender students in an inclusive classroom.
- 50% of the respondents were of the opinion that transgender students will face discrimination in Higher Education Institutions if admitted.
- Only 33.33% of the faculty were confident that they will be supportive to transgender students while 56.66% were doubtful of being supportive.
- 30% of the faculty members reported that they will maintain a safe distance from transgender students.
- Only 6.66% of the faculty members were aware of transgender presence in their campus.

Objective III: To examine the preparedness of HEIs for inclusion of transgender

The data from 100 undergraduate students drawn randomly from two central universities of Delhi, to gauge the preparedness of their university towards inclusion of transgender was collected using a self developed structured questionnaire and was analyzed using percentage analysis. The results of data analysis are presented in tabular form: N=100. P denotes the percentage.

Q.1: How far do you think your university is prepared for inclusion of transgender in Education?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Not Prepared at All	57%
2	It will take another 10 years to prepare	26%
3	No attempts to prepare seen	13%
4	University will never be ready for inclusion of transgender	4%

Q.2 What are the different kinds of sensitization programmes organised by your university to sensitise you with respect to the concerns of transgender?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Programmes on Gender Sensitisation	34%
2	Programmes on Gender Equality	54%
3	Understanding LGBTQIA+	2%
4	Workshops on Understanding Sexuality	3%
5	Workshops on Breaking Gender Stereotypes	7%

Q.3 Does the Internal Complaints Committee (That looks into Gender Related Complaints) of your institution include a transgender representative?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Yes	0
2	No	86%
3	Not aware	14%

Q.4.Does your institution have a helpline for transgender students to address their grievances?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Yes	0
2	No	95%
3	Not aware	5%

Q.5. Does your institution have CCTV surveillance to create a safe environment?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Yes	100%
2	No	0

Q.6. Does your institution have a Gender (Champion,Equality,Justice etc) Club for students?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Yes	76%
2	No	10%
3	Not aware	14%

Q.7 Does your institution have separate washrooms earmarked for transgender students?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Yes	0%
2	No	92%
3	Not aware	8%

Q.8.Does your institution promote discontinuance of gender binary practices(Gender specific pronouns discontinued,gender neutral groupings in projects promoted etc) in day to day dealings?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Yes	0%
2	No	89%
3	Not aware	11%

Q.9.Does your institution have support groups for transgender students?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Yes	0%
2	No	92%
3	Not aware	8%

Q.10.Does your institution have an inclusion policy in place?

S.No.	RESPONSE CATEGORIES	P
1	Yes	0%
2	No	97%
3	Not aware	3%

5.3. Findings:

- 57% of the students opined that their university is not prepared for inclusion of transgender .While 26% of the students felt

it will take another 10 years to prepare the ground for inclusion of transgender.

- 34% of the students were aware of gender sensitization programmes, 54% were aware of gender equality programmes, 2% were aware of programmes on understanding LGBTQIA+, 3% were aware of sexuality workshops organised and 7% were aware of gender stereotypes workshops organized at their institution.
- 86% of the students reported that the Internal Complaints Committee (That looks into Gender Related Complaints) of their institution does not include a transgender representative and 14% were not aware of it.
- 95% students reported that their institution does not have a helpline for transgender students to address their grievances while 5% were unaware whether it existed.
- 100% students were aware that their institution has CCTV surveillance to create a safe environment.
- 76% of the students reported your existence of a Gender(Champion, Equality,Justice etc) Club for students, 10% reported non-existence of a Gender Club and 14% were not aware of the existence of a Gender Club in their institution.
- 92% of the students reported that their institution does not have separate washrooms earmarked for transgender students while 8% were not aware of this detail.
- 89% of the students reported that their institution does not promote discontinuance of gender binary practices(Gender specific pronouns discontinued, gender neutral groupings in projects promoted etc) in day to day dealings) while 11% were unaware of these practices.
- 92% students reported that their institution does not have support groups for transgender students ,while 8% were unaware of the existence of support groups.
- 97% of the students reported that their institution does not have an inclusion policy in place and 3% were not aware of the existence of an inclusion policy if any.

6. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The study was delimited to students and faculty teaching at undergraduate level only.

- The sample was drawn from only two central universities in Delhi looking at the time frame of the study.

7. CONCLUSION

Looking at the findings of this study it is amply clear that higher education institutions in Delhi are not ready at all for the inclusion of transgender in Education. No serious attempts have been made on ground zero with respect to changes needed in infrastructural facilities such as separate washrooms for transgender, provisioning psychological help in the form of a designated helpline or support groups or instituting an inclusive policy that includes safeguarding the concerns of transgender. It is also found that gender inclusive practices are seldom practiced in the institutions making inclusion of transgender a farfetched reality. There is an urgent need to institute regular workshops and awareness programmes to sensitize both students and faculty to the concerns of transgender as both the groups seem to be ill prepared with respect to understanding transgender and their concerns. The UGC in near future should make a gender inclusive policy mandatory in all Higher Education Institutions in order to move towards inclusion of all gender minorities in the ambit of Education in particular.

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