



# The Impact Of Education On The Lives Of Transgender Individuals: A Comprehensive Study

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Transgender individuals face a relentless battle for acceptance, often ostracized and ridiculed by society. They encounter severe stigma in nearly every aspect of their lives, including healthcare, education, employment, and access to social services and entitlements. This extreme social exclusion erodes their self-esteem and sense of social responsibility. In India, transgender individuals are recognized as a third gender by the Constitution. Despite this recognition, they face significant social and cultural exclusion, limiting their access to education, healthcare, and public spaces. Reports and discussions with the community and stakeholders indicate that transgender individuals often remain uneducated or undereducated, with most achieving only secondary or senior secondary levels of education. Enrolment rates are low, and dropout rates at primary and secondary levels remain high due to societal non-acceptance and daily harassment in educational institutions. This study emphasizes the multifaceted challenges faced by transsexual individuals in a rural tertiary care setting. While the completion of high school is a positive finding, further education and economic support are crucial for their advancement. Encouraging further education is a strategic intervention to help transsexual individuals overcome societal barriers and achieve greater personal and professional success.

**Key words:** Third gender, school dropouts, Societal non-acceptance, Strategic intervention

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental to personal and professional development, equipping individuals with the skills and opportunities needed to enhance their quality of life. For transgender individuals, education is particularly vital in addressing and overcoming the unique challenges they encounter. The pivotal role of education and skill development in improving employment prospects and economic opportunities is well-documented, as highlighted by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989<sup>1</sup>.

Transgender individuals face a relentless battle for acceptance, often ostracized and ridiculed by society. They encounter severe stigma in nearly every aspect of their lives, including healthcare, education, employment, and access to social services and entitlements. This extreme social exclusion erodes their self-esteem and sense of social responsibility. It is essential to integrate the transgender community into mainstream development programs and safeguard them from all forms of abuse and exploitation<sup>2,3</sup>.

**Understanding Transgender Identity:** Transgender is an umbrella term encompassing individuals whose gender expression, identity, or behaviour diverges from the norms typically associated with their birth sex. This category includes various identities such as transgender male, transgender female, male-to-female (MTF), and female-to-male (FTM). It also covers cross-dressers (those who wear clothes traditionally associated with the other gender), genderqueer individuals (who identify as both genders or neither), and transsexuals.

**Transgender Rights and Challenges in India:** In India, transgender individuals are recognized as a third gender by the Constitution. Despite this recognition, they face significant social and cultural exclusion, limiting their access to education, healthcare, and public spaces. This exclusion denies them the constitutional guarantees of equality before the law and equal protection of the laws. Formal education for transgender individuals is not widely established in India. Many are ostracized from their families and educational environments, leading to high dropout rates and limited future career opportunities. Reports and discussions

with the community and stakeholders indicate that transgender individuals often remain uneducated or undereducated, with most achieving only secondary or senior secondary levels of education. Enrolment rates are low, and dropout rates at primary and secondary levels remain high due to societal non-acceptance and daily harassment in educational institutions<sup>4</sup>.

**Socioeconomic Consequences and Need for Inclusive Education:** As a result, many transgender individuals resort to begging and sex work. It is crucial for the government to provide inclusive education for transgender students and adult education opportunities. Integrating transgender individuals into schools and colleges is challenging due to issues of inclusion with male and female students<sup>5,8</sup>. There is an urgent need for focused, institutionalized research and academic activities to generate data, understand the multifaceted issues facing transgender individuals, and inform policies that will bring about effective, long-term changes.

Thus, the present study aims to understand the comprehensive impact of education on the lives of transgender people and to encourage strategic educational interventions. These interventions could certainly help transgender individuals to overcome societal barriers and achieve greater personal and professional success.

## II. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute (MGMCRI), Pondicherry, India, a rural tertiary care hospital. Annually, the hospital caters the needs of over one lakh patients living in and around the region of Pondicherry.

The study was approved by Institutional Human Ethical Committee, Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute (MGMCRI), Pondicherry, India. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, involving both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews where included Age, Education status, Employment status, Family background, Economic status, Social support and Acceptance were recorded all Participants were recruited from Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute (MGMCRI), Pondicherry, India, who had undergo Sex Reassignment Surgery, which in thus resulted a sample size of 50 'Transsexual' individuals with varying levels of education.

## III. RESULTS

The results of the study involving 50 transsexual individuals undergoing sex reassignment surgery at Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute (MGMCRI), Pondicherry shows that the age group was more prevalent between 18-49.

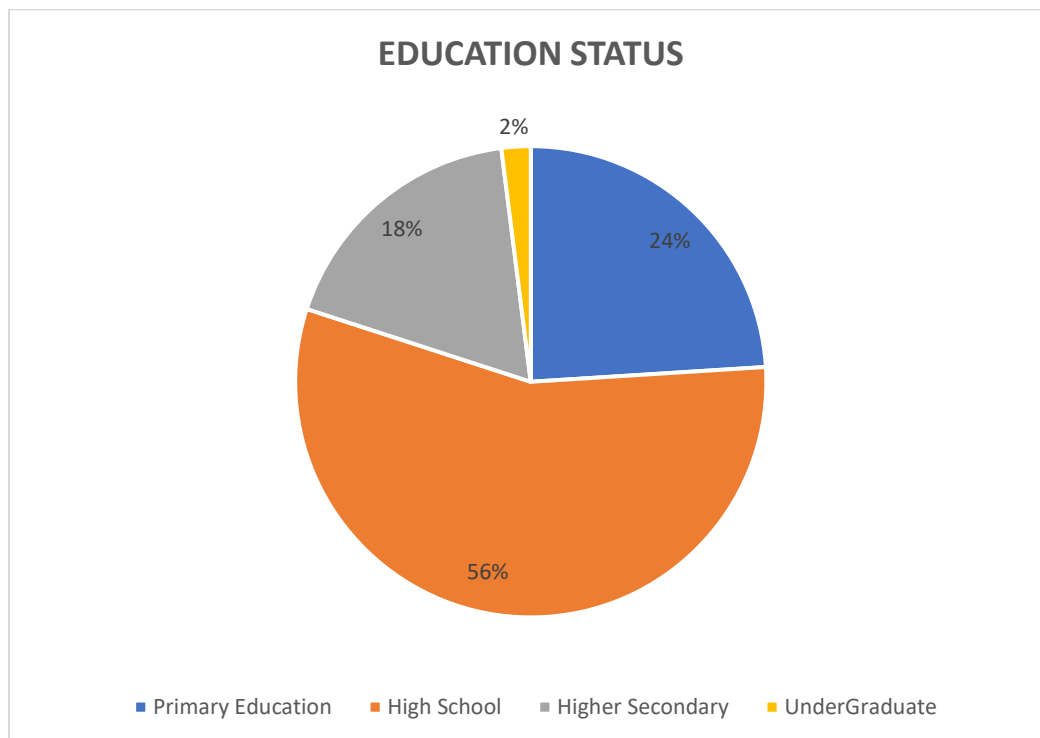


Fig no 1: High School education status accounts for the largest percentage (56%) of participants, followed by Primary education (24%) and Higher Secondary education (20%), (2%) undergraduate

Figure 1 clearly indicates that 24% of the participants have completed only primary education. The majority of the participants, 56%, have completed high school education. 20% of the participants have achieved higher secondary education and 2% have completed undergraduate degree.

#### IV DISCUSSION

The study highlights the multifaceted challenges and experiences of transsexual individuals undergoing sex reassignment surgery at a rural tertiary care hospital. Quantitative data underscores the demographic variability, these findings emphasize the need for comprehensive support systems, including psychological counselling, economic assistance, and good education, to enhance the well-being and societal integration of transsexual individuals<sup>13</sup>. The study clearly indicates that 24% of the participants have completed only primary education. This group represents individuals with the most basic level of formal schooling. Identifying such primary school transgender dropouts and motivating them still further to qualify their high school exams, so that they may get jobs at private or Government organisation seems to definitely be the need of the hour which would enhance them to have a good livelihood. Motivation and counselling are only the key factors to achieve this agenda, thus it requires a clarion call by the government to take up this issue as a serious one for the cause of the third gender community. The study further shows that 56%, of the transferers have completed high school education. This seems to be a good sign for the future of such transgender individuals to find themselves a suitable job to lead a dignified life and to never get into the hands of anti-social elements. Due counselling and tailoring such transgender would pave way for a healthier, well-groomed transgender community and to also foster them to do higher secondary course so that they may further get bachelor degree to upgrade their societal status. The study also shows that 18% of the participants have achieved higher secondary education, while 2% have completed undergraduate degree. Needful counselling was done to see such individuals to do undergraduate and post graduate education respectively for their sustainable future tailoring them to face the society with a pride and develop strategies with comprehensive reforms to eradicate all the stigma and discrimination they are facing in life with full confidence and will power.

Thus, study on transsexual individuals undergoing sex reassignment surgery at Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute (MGMCRI), Pondicherry, reveals important insights into their educational status, and social support systems. Recognizing the importance of further education, we encouraged participants to pursue higher secondary education, and prepare for government exams for job opportunity. Higher educational attainment will, thus significantly enhance their job prospects, economic stability, and overall social integration. Encouraging further education is a strategic intervention to help transsexual individuals overcome societal barriers and achieve greater personal and professional success.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The study emphasizes the multifaceted challenges faced by transsexual individuals in a rural tertiary care setting. While the completion of high school is a positive finding, further education and economic support are crucial for their advancement. At Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth, counselling was given to the subjects who had Sex Reassignment Surgery to continue their education. Those who passed high school were motivated to complete higher secondary school. Those who completed higher secondary school were also motivated them to pursue Higher education. As outcome-based research, we identified various colleges including Govt college, Arts and Sciences, Paramedical who were ready to accept them to provide education for transgenders and due information given about Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth, Pondicherry, India who have been offering 100% scholarship to transexuals for their education since 2019.

Thus, the present Transgender research paved a way to a great understanding, not only personal likes or dislikes but also to make these school dropout transgenders to march forward getting degrees and further moving to higher studies paving an avenue to make them sit on professional upliftment with excellent employability.

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