

Visibility and Social Acceptability of Kerala's Transgender Population: A Comparative Study of the Periods before and after the Transgender Policy

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The State of Kerala in India is considered to be a progressive one, especially in its approach towards the transgender community in recent years. Following the Supreme Court verdict of 2014 (NALSA Judgement), recognising transgender people as the third gender and granting them the right to self-identification, Kerala was the first to formulate a Transgender policy in 2015. The aim of the policy as recommended by the apex court is to "grant legal recognition of their gender identity" and to end discrimination and stigmatisation. Despite this progressive measure, the community is still socially discriminated against in terms of their gender identity, which becomes a significant hurdle in the effective implementation of the policy. The trans population in Kerala, unlike in the other states, remained invisible for a long time. Most of them either hesitated to come out of their closets or migrated to other states where they could find people of their community. Expressing their gender identity was not an easy task for them in Kerala because of two reasons: the invisibility of the transgender community and the adamant chains of the society, which never let its conformity be questioned. The study examines the changing scenario in the visibility of transgender people as a community in Kerala after the formulation of the Transgender Policy.

Keywords: Kerala Transgender Policy, Visibility, Social Acceptability, Gender Identity

The NALSA judgment of 2014 recognised transgender as a third gender and "declared that TGs cannot be discriminated on the grounds of gender" (Sangama, 2015, p. 3). The apex court recommended the government to implement the policy at the central and state levels. The judgment included "granting legal recognition to a person's self-identified gender, as male/female/third gender; treating transgender persons as socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and extending reservations in public education and employment." (Sangama, 2015, p. 4). The State Transgender Policy was formulated in 2015 based on a survey conducted by the Social Justice Department of Kerala government on the sociological issues faced by transgender persons. Though there were 'hijra' communities in other parts of the country, the visibility of the transgender community in Kerala was negligible before the Supreme Court passed the Transgender Rights Bill. Despite the presence of some Community Based Organisations (CBO) for the welfare of the LGBTQIA community like the Sahayatrika and Queerala, there were no organisations solely meant for the transgender community in Kerala, like the Aravanigal Association or Thirunangai

Association in Tamilnadu. The paper seeks to analyse the changing scenario in the visibility and acceptance of transgender people in the past five years since the implementation of the Transgender Policy. The objective of the study is to evaluate how mainstream branding/castigation affects the self-realisation/actualisation of transgender people. It aims at locating the fissures between the media presentations of the Kerala Transgender policy and real-life experiences based on a few personal interviews conducted with some transgender people in Kerala. Media interviews, reports and life narratives have also been included.

Sociological theories of Transgender Identity and their Invisibility

Though different social theorists have put forward many transgender identity models, most of them are based on male-to-female transgender persons. It is also impossible to find a coherent one that can include the experiences of transgender people who do not want to fit themselves into the already moulded binary system of gender. The developmental process in a transgender person coming out had earlier been modelled upon lesbian and gay coming out process ranging from four to eight stages. Anne Bolin puts forward a four-stage model of a male to female transgender identity development. It moves along the stages of gender confusion, having a transsexual primary identity, identifying oneself as a woman, and finally rejecting that identity to perceiving oneself as a natural woman. A six-stage model proposed by Frank Lewins begins with abiding anxiety, the discovery of transsexuality, purging and delay and acceptance of the new identity, gender reassignment and ends with the invisibility of transgender identity post-transition. The binary conception of gender held by the social structures traditionally is one of the major reasons for transgender invisibility in societies around the world (Grossman & Augelli, 2006). Restyling the earlier development models, Henry Rubin, Richard Ekins and Arlene Istar Lev have brought out their own models. The six-stage development put forward by Vivienne Cass, the clinical psychologist and sex therapist on homosexual identity formation, has also been followed by many in academia. It is a linear development that goes through different stages from identity formation through identity comparison, tolerance, acceptance, pride, and identity synthesis.

Devor's fourteen stage model on transgender identity development draws from Cass and Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh. It begins with anxiety and confusion and passes through different stages, including understanding one's identity, getting connected to the members of the same community, medical procedures for transformation, disclosing one's identity, and taking pride in being a transgender. The models developed by Anne Bolin and Frank Lewins begins with gender confusion and then towards transsexual identity, an identity as a woman and finally rejecting transsexual identity to be a 'real' woman. In Lewin's identity theory, the last two stages are sex reassignment and 'invisibility'. The transsexuals will seek to disappear and hide their past, moving to different places and breaking their ties from friends and other members of the community. Lewins argues that "MTF individuals will seek to 'disappear' and hide their past, which may involve changing jobs, moving to a new city, severing ties whenever possible with old acquaintances, and/ or avoiding social contact with other transsexual individuals". Gender theorists like Feinberg, Bornstein and Green are against this sweeping generalisation. According to them, "many transsexual women and men openly acknowledge their transgender histories today and take pride in this identity, rather than considering it shameful or stigmatising

and seeking to become invisible" (Beemyn & Rankin 2011: 111). In Aaron Devor's fourteen stage model, the last stage is that of pride which "implies both a personal sense of pride in oneself and a political stance" (Devor, 2004, pp. 65). Even Anne Bolin has revised her later studies since many FTM individuals in recent times choose not to undergo sex reassignment surgery. Aaron Devor also discusses two central themes in the process of transsexual identity formation; witnessing and mirroring. "Each of us has a deep need to be witnessed by others for whom we are. Each of us wants to see ourselves mirrored in others' eyes as we see ourselves" (Devor, 2004, pp. 46). When the expected people do not respond the way we wish them to perceive us, it results in psychological distress and mental trauma. In the case of trans people, mirroring "is also about seeing oneself in the eyes of others like oneself." (pp. 46).

Transsexualism is related to an individual's gender reassignment, which includes pre-operative, transition and post-operative stages. However, transsexual identity development is non-linear and complex. Hence, none of these models is sufficient to include all categories since individuals may elide certain stages. In all of the models mentioned above, there is a stage where transgender people learn about transsexuality and understand that gender transition is possible. Their knowledge about the existence of trans communities/ people similar to them is vital in identity formation. In Bolin's model, there are "personal and social identity transformation, phenotypic transformation, and rite of transformation" (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011, pp. 111). Many transgender people of the present do not seek invisibility as men and women but assert their identity as transgender or transsexual. Many do not prefer undergoing sex reassignment surgery (SRS) to be recognised as the gender opposite.

Identity and Kerala's Trans Population

"We need to be seen by people who have insider knowledge of what it means to be a member of the social groups within which we identify ourselves. Each of us needs to know that people who we think are like us also see us as like them. We need to know that we are recognised and accepted by our peers. We need to know that we are not alone. For these reasons, it is vitally important that transsexed and transgendered people be able to see their own feelings and experiences reflected back to them in the lives of other transsexed and transgendered people." (Devor, 2004, pp. 46-47)

In Kerala, the knowledge about the existence of a transgender community which is central to achieving the developmental milestone in the identity formation of any trans person was negligible before 2014. A result of this invisibility was the migration of transgender people to different states searching for their community. The stage of 'invisibility' as found in Lewins's model is better suited to describe the final stage of a trans person's life in Kerala before 2014. Many of them who wished to live the life of a transgender person migrated to other states for their self-actualisation. Most of them who continued their life in Kerala hid their actual gender identity. The 2015 survey shows that 97 per cent of the participants were married, out of which 54% married without self-approval. It indicates that most transgender people in Kerala did not reveal their gender identity and lost their jobs when they did. VijayarajaMallika's case is an example for gender discrimination in Kerala. Despite being a post-graduate, she lost her job when she revealed her identity as a transgender person. It is found that 78 per cent of the participants in the survey did not reveal their gender identity at the workplace. While this was the case with the male-to-female trans people, the condition of female-to-male transgender was even worse.

From the interviews conducted, it could be deduced that gender identification in most transgender men takes place at a later stage. Participant E disclosed that his attraction towards the opposite gender was mistaken by himself to be lesbianism rather than transgenderism. It took a long time for him to realise it. In a society like Kerala, transgenderism would be more tolerated than homosexuality, and the fear of being persecuted prevented him from disclosing his gender identity or sexual orientation.

While some trans people identify themselves as male or female, many identify themselves as transgender or trans wo/man, which denotes that they take pride in their identity rather than erasing it. In a confidential survey conducted among the trans men of Kerala, it was found that their identities differed considerably. While some identified themselves as men even without undergoing SRS, some others would like to be recognised as trans men or FTM transgender. As against many of the identity models developed earlier, all transsexuals do not wish to wipe out their identities as transgender completely.

The Invisibility of Transgender Community in Kerala

The trans community in Kerala was reluctant to come out of their closets and remained invisible for a long time. Shine Rahman, a trans man and an activist, opines that the transgender community in Kerala began to come out expressing their gender identity only after the Supreme Court verdict (NALSA Judgement) in 2014. One of the strongest motives for transgender people to migrate from the state to other parts of India was the invisibility of trans people as a community in Kerala. Compared to the past situations, a paradigm shift has happened, paving the way for legal amendments; however, in terms of acceptability, society has to march a long way forward. Participant A, a trans man who lives in Bangalore opines that the environment in Kerala is not conducive for a person like him. He says that they will be mentally and physically harassed and points out the shocking cases of suicides and murders of trans people in Kerala. 32% of the participants in the survey reported that they attempted suicide.

Invisibility of Transmen when Compared to Trans women

In the transgender survey conducted in 2014-15, 99 per cent of the respondents are male-to-female transgender people. The visibility of female-to-male transgender is much lower when compared to the other group. The survey states that "only male born TGs are able to understand and realise their identity and leave family and society to faraway places to live with their identity. The female born transgender people never get such opportunities due to the patriarchal norms of the society" (Sangama, 2015, pp. 13). However, "[t]he problem of visibility---or rather, invisibility--- really is a vexing one for many trans men", says the sociologist and gender theorist Aaron Devor in his study on FTM (Female-to-Male) transgender people. "When we are invisible, no one outside of our intimates truly knows us, and it's difficult to relax in social settings." In the personal interview conducted among the transmen of Kerala, participant A opined, "trans men did not come out like trans women in the earlier times since masculinity in women was not seriously condemned like effeminateness in men and 'passing' becomes comparatively easier. For a female to male transgender, family issues were graver than what they have to face from the

society." According to him, even those who reveal their gender identity do not wish to be known as trans man/transgender. Though the condition is improving and many transsexuals have started coming out of their closets, a majority of transgender people, especially, trans men are still reluctant to come out. Abhijit, a photographer from Kerala organised a photo exhibition of the lives of trans men titled, 'Man, I am'. Abhijit, who has been working among the trans community, says, "This is the first time I am documenting trans men and it was a tough task to get them under the spotlight" (qtd in Ajayan 2017). At the same time, many male-to-female transgender people have started taking pride in their identity. Of late, they have been showcasing a robust political stance too.

Anecdotal Evidences

The first life narrative about a transgender person from Kerala was Jareena, *Oru Malayali Hijadayude Athmakatha*. In her autobiography, Jareena narrates her experience of leading the life of a hijra in Bangalore. When Jareena's family failed to accept her gender expression different from the one assigned at birth, she had to leave her native place to Chennai and Bangalore, to find people of similar identity. Even in her life narrative, Jareena was careful enough not to include her photos, for she did not want to be a perennial source of embarrassment for her family. Most transgender people share similar life experiences, lack of family support and acceptability being the main reasons. Many of them are given psychiatric treatments and forced to take unwanted medicines to 'normalise' their condition. Vijayaraja Mallika, a transwoman, activist and writer, in her interview narrates how her mobility was affected because of the psychiatric treatment she had undergone. The treatment had affected her liver, kidney and other parts, and she became a diabetic patient at a very early stage in her life. Surya, a transsexual woman and female artist from Kerala opines that the state stands number one in harassing and bullying its transgender community despite holding the number one position in literacy rate. She adds that a majority of transgender people she knows migrated to different states after sex reassignment surgery because of discrimination and social stigmatisation. In Karnataka and Tamilnadu, they enjoy ample freedom in dressing and mobility. Harini is another trans woman who migrated to Bangalore to join the hijra community after spending a few years in Kerala as a sex worker. Later, she became Miss Koovagam, a beauty pageant conducted for transwomen, but was marginalised more after that by mainstream society and her own community. Though she resides in Kerala, her parents have not accepted her gender identity even after thirteen years.

Trans Discrimination and Violence

Studies and media reports show that the transgender policy could be implemented effectively only if the police and the public are sensitised on gender identities. The government's initiative of appointing twenty-three transgender people in Kochi Metro Railways received worldwide appreciation. They were hired on a contract basis for three years, and most of them had to leave the job before the stipulated time since the salary was meagre to meet even the basic needs. Accommodation facilities were not provided, and it was difficult for them to get hired apartments since most landlords were unwilling to rent out their houses to a transgender person.

Staying in cheaper hotels and travelling late at night would also invite attacks from the police. Jomol, a transgender person, recounts her experience of staying in a lodge, "The moment they saw us, the cops concluded that yes, you people are also part of the prostitution racket. But in reality we had been staying there for quite some time as we do not get any other accommodation after work. Police just wants to get us out of the city. I don't know where this hatred comes from" (Nair, 2018).

Lately, many reports of assaults and fake cases were charged by the police against trans people. "For some trans people, says Shelley, threat and harassment have been in the everyday/night world as a persistent ordeal, ever-present" (pp. 92). A transgender performing artist, Susmi was assaulted by the police while returning at night after a performance. The police intimidated them by passing warnings like not to be seen at night on the streets. When Thara Prasad, a trans woman, was attacked by a local man, police and even the district collector did not conduct any enquiry, notwithstanding her repeated complaints. In most cases, it is the victim who gets punished. According to her, the prejudice in the Circle Inspector's words says it all, "Do you know the intention of trans people wandering in the city at night. They are sex workers. Why do they engage in immoral activities? Who asked them to roam around in the wee hours? The mistake is on their part" (Jayan, 2019). In 2019, Shalu, a transsexual woman, was found murdered soon after her sex reassignment surgery from Mysore. Sisily, her friend, complains that the police did not investigate the case properly though she had handed over CCTV footage to them, which gave certain clues to the crime. Owing to this, she also felt that her own life was in danger. Analysing the series of murders of transgender women in Kerala, the criminologist, Jawahar Lal, concludes that these murders were not mere attacks by the goons but "the attackers were inquisitive to know the physical specialities of trans people. Besides, the derision towards the community leads to such crimes." (Jayan, 2019). In a day-long fasting protest organised by the transgender community in Kerala to stop violence against them, the first trans person entrepreneur of the state, Thripathi Shetty, told the media, "What we need is the right to live in our own land. I used to live in Chennai and Mumbai and returned to Kerala two years ago. Like me, most of us want to live in our land" (2018).

The State Transgender Policy- SRS, Health, Education and Employment

Post-2014, a colossal leap could be found in the coming-out process of male-to-female trans people though there was no marked progress in the visibility of trans men. Vihaan Peethambaran, a transsexual man and an activist, has concerns about the invisibility of trans men even after the Kerala Transgender Policy. He vehemently criticises the government officials for their unwanted adamancy in getting his gender changed in the Gazette of Kerala. The Community Based Organisations like the Queerala expressed their solidarity with his case and could achieve it after two years of going through many ordeals. According to Peethambaran, the gazette officials of the state violated the Supreme Court's verdict by asking him to produce proof of his gender reassignment from a government hospital. Since the surgery was conducted in a private hospital, the demand of getting the certificate from a government hospital was quite disconcerting as the examination would be concluded by the medical professionals, most of whom are insensitive or ignorant about the condition of the transgender community. He also cited the example of the SRS

surgery conducted at Trivandrum Medical College for a trans man, Sagar, who filed a medical negligence complaint in the Kerala State Human Rights Commission. Though the doctors dismissed it as a false allegation, the candidate had to undergo thirteen surgeries instead of five in seven years, which resulted in the wrong positioning of the penis. Finally, he had to move to a hospital in Mumbai to get his gender identity actualised. "It is to be noted that respective gazettes of states like Tamil Nadu and Delhi, follow the NALSA judgement for gender reassignment, and do not subject applicants to such tedious processes" (Peethambar, 2017). This is an indication of the gaps in the policy and its implementation.

Many transgender people in Kerala do not undergo SRS because of financial constraints or fear of medical complications. Though the Transgender Policy of the state has allotted rupees 2 lakhs for an SRS, which could be reimbursed after the surgery, the beneficiaries are very low in number. Most of the centres set up by the government for SRS are more adept in handling Male-to-Female transgender cases than Female-to-Male. In the survey conducted by Queerala, it is stated that since "most of the measures are community-driven, and the community is dominated in visibility by trans women, the needs of trans men are not adequately met." (Menon 2019:13). Nevertheless, "after the set-up of comprehensive gender affirmative services in some hospitals in Kerala, the number of trans men availing gender affirmative care has steadily increased," according to the Medical Health Professionals (Menon, 2019, pp. 13). Participants B, C and D opine that in the past two years, an increase in visibility could be witnessed not only in trans women but trans men and intersex as well. Queerala's report also suggests that there are chances of trans men benefitting more if targeted medical care is provided for them. Hormone therapy is cheaper and more affordable in trans men than women though SRS is complicated. This may also offer better space and better chances of coming out for the trans men.

Prevention of social stigma, better health care, education and employment are the basic requirements of the trans community. If these rights are protected, they will have a better living atmosphere in their birthplace. Despite the financial exploitation in other states, the trans community choose to go there for an SRS (sex reassignment surgery) because of the lack of expertise of the doctors in Kerala in conducting such surgeries. SRS would cost around five lakhs which is an uncompromising amount for these people since most do not have decent jobs. Even after SRS, they would not be given proper access to medical facilities because of their gender identity as transgender. Darke and Cope's statement about trans discrimination holds in this regard, "perhaps nowhere is the brutality of institutionalised transphobia so apparent as in the treatment of trans-people by the health care system" (2002, pp. 37). Surya's harrowing experience of the denial of treatment by the doctor when she revealed her gender identity as a transgender person speaks volume about the discrimination shown towards them by society. The medical establishment's repudiation of transgender indeterminacy has been reiterated in the studies conducted by transgender theorists like Jason Cromwell, Henry Rubin, Christopher Shelley, Viviane Namaste etc. They all equally agree that trans people experience "systematic sexism in medical centers based on heteronormative expectations and sexist stereotyping" (Shelley, 2008, p. 71).

The Transgender Rights Policy was passed to prevent social discrimination and provide their "constitutional rights and live as equal citizens in the State" (Sangama, 2015, p. 13). This includes the right to equality, right to dignity and a life without

violence, freedom of expression, education, employment, health care, and equal voice to the trans people. A Transgender Justice Board was set up in each district to ensure the effective implementation of the policy. The Transgender survey (2014-15) reveals that 58 per cent of Transgender students were school dropouts. The state has recognised that the absence of reservation or educational quota makes the condition of these students pathetic since they face severe discrimination from mainstream society. In 2018, Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority introduced a continuous education programme, "Samanwaya", under which transgender students could register for grades 4, 7, and 10. Higher secondary equivalent courses would be provided for them. Scholarships and hostels have also been introduced under 'Samanwaya' to facilitate learning. Now, they can continue their education even if both society and their family ostracise them. This is indeed a sweeping change that education could bring to the life of this marginalised society. There will no longer be the necessity to migrate to other states and resort to begging or sex work. In 2018, the Kerala State Higher Education Department allotted two additional seats for transgender students in colleges and universities as a giant leap towards inclusive education. It resulted from a petition filed by three transgender students, Daya Gayathri, Theertha and Praveen Nath, who had to discontinue their studies due to societal discrimination.

Gender Variance and Policy Implementation

Shine Rahman discusses how the heterogeneous identity of the trans population can affect the policy at the level of implementation. From the interviews with participants A, B, D, E and F, it could be understood that most of the trans men identified themselves as men or trans men even without undergoing sex reassignment surgery. In contrast, many transgender women identify themselves as women and not transgender. This would create additional problems since the transgender rights bill is exclusive for the transgender people who are a part of the trans community. Though a transgender person would identify him/her as a complete wo/man, in records, s/he should be declared as a transwo/man/transgender to procure the legal benefits. Apart from this, "when a trans man declares himself to be a male rather than a transgender without undergoing a sex reassignment surgery, it would also bring in unwanted legal issues", says Participant B. 99 per cent of respondents in the Transgender survey expressed their wish to register their identity as transgender but the majority among them are male-to-female transgender people. Most trans men prefer to be invisible and lead their lives as men away from the family. As a result, many transgender people in Kerala are yet to receive their identity cards even after four years. Since the card did not allow them to identify as man/woman but only as transgender, they felt humiliated and dispossessed of their fundamental rights.

Changing Scenario

The decriminalisation of homosexuality in 2018 was a path-breaking verdict in the history of India, which provided a platform for the transgender community to choose their partners. Many transgender marriages had taken place post-2018. The Surya-Ishaan couple was the first transgender couple in Kerala. Likewise, the ritual called 'Jalsa' observed within the hijra community to celebrate the transition from male to female has got much cultural and religious significance among transgender people.

Recently, the ritual was observed in different parts of Kerala by transgender people, denoting their increasing visibility as a community. At the same time, the visibility of other groups like trans men, female-to-male transgender, genderqueer, cross-dressers and intersex as a community is almost absent. It was a positive move from the Social Justice Department with the support from Queerhythm, a CBO for the gender and sexual minorities, to open a care home called 'Thanal' for the trans men in Thiruvananthapuram to provide temporary relief for those who undergo sex-change surgery and other emergencies. But the founder of Queerhythm, Prijith, observes that very few trans men have turned up seeking shelter at 'Thanal' despite all the stigmatisation existing in the society. He attributes two reasons for the same; either the transgender policy has made life easier for the community, or very few people know about it. Nevertheless, it is indicative of the social invisibility of the trans men community.

Transgender Bill of 2018

Meanwhile, the Transgender Persons Protection of Rights Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on December 17, 2018. This is considered a phenomenal point in the history of India since it is the first bill to be cleared in Lok Sabha for preserving the rights of the transgender community. Still, it invited nationwide protests. The transgender community views it as a regressive one since the bill demands proof of sex reassignment surgery to declare their gender in the identity cards. According to them, it is a violation of the Supreme Court verdict in 2014, which gives them the right to self-determination of gender without sex reassignment surgery or a certificate from a health professional. Though the bill was amended due to the protests giving the right to the district judge to issue the ID cards, it continues to deny the right of individuals to identify themselves as a man, woman or a transgender. While the cis-gendered people do not need a certificate to prove their gender identity, why are trans people humiliated on this basis? If a trans person is issued a certificate once as a transgender by the screening committee, any further changes in gender identity, probably after SRS, will require undergoing the same procedure of screening. Clause 4 provides the right to be identified as a transgender person and sanctions the right to self-perceived gender identity. Clauses 5,6,7 complicate the procedure for receiving an identity certificate as male or female. Any insistence on gender reassignment surgery to identify oneself as a transgender person or man or woman is a violation of law as per the NALSA Judgment.

The Transgender Persons Act also does not mention reservations for trans people in education and employment. Besides genderqueer, people who are gender non-binary and intersex are not acknowledged in the Bill. This diversity is being ignored, categorising them into a single group. In both literal and metaphorical sense, this is also a kind of invisibility. Since an individual's social identity should be harmonious with one's personal sense of identity, any disparity would suggest the person's non-existence. The primary issue faced by the trans community is bullying, violence and harassment in family, educational institutions and the society at large. The bill tends to ignore all these factors to a great extent. It is reflective of the discriminatory attitude of the government towards the transgender community. While sexual abuses against women carry up to twelve years of imprisonment and even capital punishments, sexual violations against a transgender person are punished only with

imprisonment of six months to two years which, according to the community, makes them inferior to the rest of the citizens. The major drawback of the bill is that it was framed without trying to get feedback from the trans community. Without adequate representations, the political roots of the problem cannot be addressed genuinely.

Conclusion

Though both the government and media create a hype in the transgender policy of Kerala, from the above discussions and shreds of evidence provided, it could be concluded that there are serious flaws at the level of implementation. Despite the government's progressive measures and the formation of a Justice Board comprising members from the trans community, social stigma is rampant. The lack of gender sensitisation among the government officials, law enforcing authorities and health care professionals makes trans lives an everyday ordeal. The government has to ensure that the benefits of the policy percolate to the base. Since 99 per cent of the participants in the transgender survey of 2014-15 were male-to-female transgender people, there could be shortcomings in the study. Moreover, the analysis has not been updated with further surveys. Furthermore, the Transgender Act of 2019, with some of its regressive measures, is sure to have its repercussions in Kerala too.

Despite the shortcomings in the policy, we can see a discernible change in the scenario after the Transgender Policy and Supreme Court judgement. While the community remained almost invisible before 2014, the trajectory is now towards visibility which again proves a drastic reduction in migration to other states and an increase in the return of transgender people to their land. The State Transgender policy is indicative of the progressive attitude of the government. Coupled with gender sensitisation, the policy is sure to empower the community. It is social acceptability and not sympathy that the community is in dire need of.

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