

Beyond Marginality: Structural and Intersectional Dimensions of Livelihood Transformation and Labour Market Incorporation among Transgender Communities in India

Ankita Pancholi^{*} and Yashoda Kumari^{}**

*Department of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Manipal University Jaipur, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India*

Abstract: India's landmark legal frameworks, including the NALSA v. Union of India ruling and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, have advanced transgender rights, yet significant barriers remain in accessing formal employment. The study adopts a descriptive approach to analyse secondary sources of socio-legal and policy, and secondarily a socio-economic analysis to discuss the interaction between structural reforms and intersectional inequalities in the context of transgender livelihoods. Analysis suggests that formal labour market participation yields segregated inclusion, instead of economic security. Transgender identity is oversimplified, and DEI efforts within the corporate sphere provide few opportunities and inadequate protections from discrimination. Simultaneously, state-led formalisation undermines traditional community-based survival economies, such as Badhaai networks and informal labour, that have historically functioned as social safety nets. These challenges disproportionately affect working-class, Dalit, and Bahujan transgender individuals who face additional barriers to formal employment. The study argues that rights-based inclusion often channels transgender labour into precarious low-wage sectors without transforming the cisnormative and caste-based structures of the labour market.

Keywords: Transgender Livelihoods, Labour Market Inclusion, Intersectionality, Precarity, Structural Reforms, India

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^{*} Email: pancholiankita08@gmail.com; ^{**} Email: yashoda.kumari@jaipur.manipal.edu