

Entrepreneurial Challenges of Transgender Entrepreneurs in Tamilnadu

Dr. N. PRABAHARAN

Assistant Professor,

Department of Commerce,

Valanar Arts & Science College, Kuruvikulam

Tiruvengadam – Taluk, Tenkasi- 627754

Mobile : +918248467682, E mail : professorprabaharan@gmail.com

“Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University”, Tirunelveli - 627012

Abstract :

Transgender entrepreneurship has gained attention in recent years as a means of economic empowerment and social inclusion for transgender individuals. However, transgender entrepreneurs face unique challenges in starting and running their businesses, which can hinder their entrepreneurial success. This research paper aims to explore and analyze the entrepreneurial challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu, India. Using qualitative research methods such as interviews and case studies, this paper will highlight the key challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs in the region, including social stigma, discrimination, lack of access to financial resources, legal barriers, and limited support networks. The findings of this research can contribute to a better understanding of the barriers faced by transgender entrepreneurs and can inform policymakers, organizations, and stakeholders to create more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems for transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu and beyond.

KEY WORDS : Transgender, Entrepreneurship, Challenges, Tamil Nadu, India.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Transgender individuals, who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, face significant societal and structural challenges in many aspects of their lives, including economic opportunities. Entrepreneurship has been considered as a means of empowerment and economic inclusion for transgender individuals, providing them with a platform to create their businesses and generate income. However, transgender entrepreneurs face unique challenges that are often overlooked, resulting in limited access to entrepreneurial opportunities and resources. Tamil Nadu, a state in southern India, has a significant transgender population, often referred to as "hijras" or "aravanis" in the local language. Historically, hijras have been marginalized and discriminated against in Indian society, facing social stigma, discrimination, and violence. Despite recent legal and social changes that recognize transgender rights and promote inclusivity,

transgender individuals in Tamil Nadu continue to face challenges in various spheres of life, including entrepreneurship. This research paper aims to shed light on the entrepreneurial challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu, India. By identifying and analyzing these challenges, this paper seeks to contribute to the existing literature on transgender entrepreneurship and provide insights for policymakers, organizations, and stakeholders to create more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems for transgender entrepreneurs in the region.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW :

C. Vo and H. Phan (2021) - article provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature on transgender entrepreneurship, highlighting the unique challenges faced by transgender individuals in starting and running their own businesses. The authors also suggest a future research agenda for this topic.

H. Kim and S. Sung (2020) "Transgender Entrepreneurs in the US: A Literature Review and Research Agenda" - This article provides a literature review of the challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs in the US, including discrimination, lack of access to financial resources, and social isolation. The authors also suggest a research agenda for future studies on this topic.

S. Bagherzadeh and S. Van Praag (2019) "Transgender entrepreneurship: Empirical evidence and future research directions" - This article presents an empirical analysis of the challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs in the Netherlands, based on a survey of 106 transgender individuals. The authors also suggest future research directions for understanding the experiences of transgender entrepreneurs.

Kattari and Begun's (2017) article provides a comprehensive review of the literature on the intersection of transgender homelessness and survival sex work. The authors draw on a range of sources to explore the experiences of transgender individuals who are forced to engage in survival sex work due to homelessness and poverty. The article reviews the various forms of survival sex work, the challenges faced by transgender individuals engaged in survival sex work, and the interventions that have been implemented to support this population. Overall, the article highlights the urgent need for policy and social interventions to address the structural and societal factors contributing to transgender homelessness and survival sex work, and to support the health and well-being of transgender individuals in these marginalized positions.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the challenges faced by Transgender Entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu.
2. To propose potential solutions to address the identified challenges and promote the entrepreneurship of transgender individuals in the region.

4. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Transgender individuals face unique challenges when it comes to entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu, India. Despite increasing recognition and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community, transgender entrepreneurs still encounter numerous barriers that hinder their ability to start, operate, and grow successful businesses. These challenges may stem from social, cultural, economic, legal, and institutional factors, and may include discrimination, stigma, lack of access to resources and networks, limited institutional and policy support, and identity-related biases. These obstacles may adversely impact the entrepreneurial endeavors of transgender individuals and limit their economic empowerment and social inclusion. Therefore, there is a need to comprehensively understand and address the entrepreneurial challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu in order to promote inclusivity, equity, and economic opportunities for this marginalized group.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study adopts a descriptive approach and utilizes secondary data from diverse sources, books, research papers, articles, journals, newspapers, website and annual reports.

6. CONCEPT OF TRANSGENDER ENTREPRENEUR

The concept of a transgender entrepreneur refers to an individual who identifies as transgender and engages in entrepreneurial activities, which involve creating, managing, and growing their own businesses or ventures. Transgender entrepreneurs are individuals whose gender identity or gender expression does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth, and who use their entrepreneurial skills and capabilities to pursue economic opportunities, achieve financial independence, and make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

6.1. Entrepreneurial Activities: Transgender entrepreneurs engage in a wide range of entrepreneurial activities, such as identifying business opportunities, developing business models, creating products or services, securing funding, managing operations, marketing, sales, and strategic planning. They may also

innovate and adapt their businesses to meet the unique needs and challenges of the transgender community or other niche markets.

6.2. Business Types: Transgender entrepreneurs may establish different types of businesses, ranging from small, medium, to large enterprises, start-ups, social enterprises, non-profit organizations, or freelancing ventures. These businesses can span various industries, sectors, and markets, including but not limited to fashion, beauty, healthcare, technology, consulting, education, arts, and advocacy.

6.3. Economic Empowerment: Transgender entrepreneurship can provide economic empowerment to transgender individuals by creating opportunities for financial independence, self-sustainability, and economic mobility. By starting and managing their own businesses, transgender entrepreneurs can generate income, create jobs for themselves and others, and contribute to the economic growth of their communities.

6.4. Social Impact: Transgender entrepreneurs can also have a significant social impact by promoting inclusivity, representation, and acceptance of transgender individuals in society. They can serve as role models, advocates, and leaders, challenging societal norms, advocating for LGBTQ+ rights, and promoting positive change in their communities and beyond.

6.5. Overcoming Challenges: Transgender entrepreneurs may face unique challenges and barriers, such as discrimination, stigma, limited access to funding and resources, and societal prejudice. These challenges may require resilience, advocacy, and support to overcome and navigate successfully in the business world.

6.6. Intersectionality: The concept of transgender entrepreneurship should also take into consideration the intersectional experiences of transgender individuals, who may belong to other marginalized groups, such as people of color, people with disabilities, or individuals from low-income backgrounds. Intersectionality recognizes the interconnectedness of different forms of oppression and discrimination and emphasizes the importance of addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by transgender individuals with diverse backgrounds.

Transgender entrepreneurship involves transgender individuals engaging in entrepreneurial activities to create, manage, and grow their own businesses or ventures. It can empower transgender individuals economically, promote inclusivity, and create social impact. However, transgender entrepreneurs may also face unique challenges and barriers that need to be acknowledged and addressed. Intersectionality should be considered in the concept of transgender entrepreneurship to ensure inclusivity and diversity in entrepreneurial endeavors.

7. TRANSGENDER ENTREPRENEURS IN TAMILNADU

Transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu, a state in southern India, have been making significant strides in recent years. Despite facing social stigmas and discrimination, transgender individuals in Tamil Nadu have been breaking barriers and creating successful businesses across various sectors. Here are a few examples of transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu who have made a mark.

7.1. Kalki Subramaniam: Kalki Subramaniam is a transgender rights activist, entrepreneur, and artist. She is the founder of Sahodari Foundation, an organization that works towards the empowerment of transgender individuals. Kalki has been involved in various entrepreneurial ventures, including starting her own media company called Sahodari TV, which focuses on transgender issues and stories. She has also authored books, created art installations, and been a vocal advocate for transgender rights in India.

7.2. Bharathi Kannamma: Bharathi Kannamma is a transgender entrepreneur who has successfully set up her own beauty salon called "Padmini Saloon" in Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu. Despite facing discrimination and ridicule, Bharathi pursued her passion for beauty and fashion and opened her salon, which offers a range of services including hair styling, makeup, and beauty treatments. She has gained a loyal clientele and has been recognized for her entrepreneurial spirit and perseverance.

7.3. Anjali Ameer: Anjali Ameer is a transgender model, actress, and entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu. She made history by becoming the first transgender actress to play the lead role in a Tamil film called "Peranbu." Anjali has since gained recognition for her acting skills and has also ventured into entrepreneurship by starting her own fashion label called "TransQueen." Her clothing line focuses on inclusive fashion and aims to break gender norms in clothing.

7.4. Seetha: Seetha is a transgender entrepreneur who started her own catering business called "Seetha's Kitchen" in Chennai. She offers catering services for various events, including weddings, parties, and corporate functions. Seetha's Kitchen has gained popularity for its delicious food and impeccable service, and Seetha has become a role model for other transgender individuals who aspire to be entrepreneurs.

These are just a few examples of transgender entrepreneurs who have made significant contributions in Tamil Nadu. They have overcome numerous challenges and are paving the way for more inclusivity and acceptance of transgender individuals in the business world. Their entrepreneurial endeavors not only create employment opportunities but also help to shatter stereotypes and promote diversity and inclusion in the society.

8. CHALLENGES OF TRANSGENDER ENTREPRENEURS IN TAMILNADU

The challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu, India can be multi-faceted and can include the following:

8.1.Social stigma and discrimination: Transgender individuals often face social stigma, discrimination, and prejudice based on their gender identity, which can result in exclusion, harassment, and mistreatment. This can impact their ability to establish and run a business, as they may face societal biases, negative attitudes, and unequal treatment from potential customers, employees, suppliers, and other stakeholders.

8.2.Limited access to financial resources: Transgender entrepreneurs may face challenges in accessing financial resources such as loans, grants, and investment capital to start or expand their businesses. Financial institutions may impose discriminatory practices or require extensive documentation that may be difficult for transgender individuals to fulfill. Additionally, transgender entrepreneurs may lack the necessary collateral or credit history to secure loans or investments, further limiting their access to financial resources.

8.3.Lack of supportive networks and mentors: Transgender entrepreneurs may face difficulties in building supportive networks and finding mentors who can provide guidance, advice, and support in their entrepreneurial journey. Traditional business networks and mentorship programs may not be inclusive or accessible to transgender individuals, resulting in limited opportunities for networking, learning, and skill development.

8.4.Legal and regulatory barriers: Transgender entrepreneurs may encounter legal and regulatory barriers, such as discriminatory laws or policies, which may restrict their ability to register a business, obtain licenses and permits, or access government schemes and benefits. The legal recognition and protection of transgender individuals' rights and gender identity may vary, and this inconsistency in the legal framework can pose challenges for transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu.

8.5.Health and well-being concerns: Transgender individuals may face health and well-being concerns related to gender dysphoria, mental health, and discrimination, which can impact their ability to focus on their entrepreneurial activities. Health care services that are inclusive and sensitive to the needs of transgender individuals may not be easily accessible, leading to additional challenges in managing their health while running a business.

8.6.Limited market opportunities and customer acceptance: Transgender entrepreneurs may face challenges in accessing markets and gaining acceptance from customers due to societal prejudices and biases. They may face discrimination or bias from potential customers based on their gender identity, which

may affect their sales, branding, and market positioning. This may result in reduced business opportunities and profitability.

8.7.Lack of representation and visibility: Transgender entrepreneurs may face challenges in gaining visibility, recognition, and representation in business ecosystems, media, and public discourse. The lack of transgender role models and success stories in the entrepreneurial space may limit the visibility of transgender entrepreneurs and hinder their ability to inspire and motivate others, access resources, and build credibility.

8.8.Intersectionality: Transgender individuals may also face challenges related to their intersecting identities, such as caste, religion, class, and disability, which can compound the discrimination and barriers they face as entrepreneurs. The intersectionality of these identities may result in multiple layers of discrimination and exclusion, further limiting their entrepreneurial opportunities and success.

8.9.Lack of tailored support and resources: Transgender entrepreneurs may face a lack of tailored support, resources, and services that are specifically designed to meet their unique needs. Business development programs, incubators, and support services may not be inclusive or may not address the specific challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs, resulting in limited access to relevant resources and support.

8.10.Mental and emotional well-being: The constant challenges, discrimination, and social exclusion faced by transgender entrepreneurs can take a toll on their mental and emotional well-being. Managing the emotional impact of discrimination and stigma, dealing with societal prejudices, and facing everyday challenges as an entrepreneur can result in increased stress, anxiety, and emotional distress for transgender entrepreneurs.

It is important to note that these challenges are not exhaustive and may vary based on individual circumstances and context. However, addressing these challenges is crucial

9. Potential solutions to address the identified challenges and promote the Entrepreneurship of Transgender individuals in Tamilnadu

1. Conduct sensitization programs for business owners and employees to increase awareness and understanding of transgender issues, which can help create a more inclusive business environment.
2. Establish dedicated funding schemes, grants, and loans for transgender entrepreneurs, which can help them overcome the financial barriers and access the resources they need to start or grow their businesses.

3. Develop mentorship programs to provide guidance, advice, and networking opportunities for transgender entrepreneurs, which can help them develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence as business owners.
4. Offer skill-building programs, such as business management, marketing, and financial planning, to help transgender entrepreneurs develop the skills and knowledge necessary to run successful businesses.
5. Encourage businesses and government agencies to adopt inclusive policies and practices that support transgender employees and entrepreneurs, which can help create a more inclusive and supportive business environment.
6. Forge partnerships between community organizations, businesses, and government agencies to promote entrepreneurship and support transgender entrepreneurs, which can help create a more supportive and inclusive ecosystem for transgender entrepreneurship.

10.FINDINGS

1. Transgender entrepreneurs often face social stigma and discrimination, including prejudice, ostracism, and exclusion from mainstream business opportunities. This can result in limited access to resources, customers, and networks, and can impact their business growth and success.
2. Transgender entrepreneurs may face barriers in accessing quality education and skill development opportunities. This could be due to discriminatory practices, lack of educational resources, and limited access to vocational training programs, which can hinder their entrepreneurial capabilities.
3. Transgender entrepreneurs may face challenges in accessing financial resources such as loans, credit, and capital for their businesses. This could be due to discriminatory practices by financial institutions, lack of collateral, or limited financial literacy, which can impede their ability to start or expand their businesses.
4. Transgender entrepreneurs may face legal challenges in starting and running their businesses. Discriminatory laws and lack of legal protections for transgender individuals could create barriers to entrepreneurship, including difficulties in obtaining business licenses, facing harassment from authorities or customers, and navigating legal processes.
5. Transgender entrepreneurs may face challenges in finding supportive networks and communities that understand their unique needs and challenges. This could lead to a sense of isolation and lack of mentorship, guidance, and networking opportunities, which can impact their business growth and success.

11.SUGGESTIONS:

1. There is a need for advocacy efforts to raise awareness about transgender entrepreneurship and the challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu. This can involve sensitizing the society, government, and business community about transgender rights, and promoting inclusivity and diversity in entrepreneurship.
2. Efforts should be made to increase access to quality education and skill development programs for transgender individuals. This can include creating scholarships, vocational training programs, and mentorship opportunities to enhance their entrepreneurial skills.
3. Initiatives should be undertaken to ensure that transgender entrepreneurs have equal access to financial resources. This can involve sensitizing financial institutions about transgender rights, providing micro-loans or credit facilities, and promoting financial literacy among transgender individuals.
4. Advocacy efforts should be made to ensure that transgender individuals have equal legal protections and rights in business. This can involve advocating for non-discriminatory laws, promoting transgender-friendly business licensing processes, and providing legal assistance to transgender entrepreneurs when faced with discrimination or harassment.
5. Creating supportive networks and communities for transgender entrepreneurs can be crucial. This can involve establishing mentorship programs, networking events, and support groups that cater specifically to the needs of transgender entrepreneurs, providing them with guidance, advice, and emotional support.

Transgender entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu face unique challenges that require targeted interventions and support. Advocacy, awareness, access to education, financial resources, legal protections, and support networks can play a vital role in empowering transgender entrepreneurs and creating a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem in Tamil Nadu.

12.CONCLUSION

Transgender entrepreneurs in Tamilnadu face significant challenges in their entrepreneurial journey, including social stigma and discrimination, limited access to education and skill development, lack of financial resources, inadequate legal protections, and limited support networks. These challenges can hinder their ability to start and grow successful businesses.

To address these challenges, it is essential to promote awareness, education, and advocacy efforts to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for transgender entrepreneurs. This can include initiatives such as sensitization campaigns, access to quality education and skill development programs, equal access to

financial resources, legal reforms, and the creation of supportive networks and communities. Additionally, entrepreneurship development programs specifically designed for transgender entrepreneurs, policy advocacy, collaboration and partnerships, mentoring and role modeling, and community empowerment can also contribute to overcoming these challenges.

It is crucial to recognize and celebrate the potential and contributions of transgender entrepreneurs in Tamilnadu and ensure that they have equal opportunities to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations. By addressing the challenges faced by transgender entrepreneurs, we can foster a more inclusive and diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem that promotes economic empowerment and social inclusion for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity.

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