



SWARNRUDRA: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Academic Research

<https://swarnrudrajournal.com/>

e-ISSN: 3140-0108

Publisher: Swarnrudra Publication

Vol. 1, Issue 2, August-September 2026

DOI:



SWARNRUDRA
An International Multidisciplinary
Journal of Academic Research

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Assessing Public Policy Effectiveness and Social Inclusion Options for Transgender Individuals in Bengaluru

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ABSTRACT

This study has been conducted to understand how social inclusion principles and public policy measures can help improve Tran's lives in Bengaluru. On that account, this study has been conducted with a secondary qualitative study in mind. The methodology has followed an interpretivism philosophy, a deductive approach, and a descriptive design to evaluate the research questions and draw correct inferences. Essentially, with social inclusion and public policy measures, the study has found that with grassroots-level knowledge investment on trans living conditions and the involvement of proper parties in the process, transgender living conditions in Bengaluru can be improved.

KEYWORDS

Public Policy Effectiveness, Social Inclusion, Transgender Individuals.

ARTICLE HISTORY:

Received: 15.08.2026

Revised: 30.08.2026

Accepted: 05.09.2026

Published Online: 15.09.2026

CITATION

Begum, A., (2026). Assessing Public Policy Effectiveness and Social Inclusion Options for Transgender Individuals in Bengaluru. *SWARNRUDRA: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Academic Research*, 1(2), 21-26.

Introduction

This study has been conducted considering the backdrop of social inclusion and its impact on the overall living conditions of the transgender (TG) population in Karnataka, more specifically, in Bengaluru. The Karnataka government issued a landmark policy for transgender lives in 2017 (KHPT, 2020). This policy has aimed to integrate the TG communities in the state into mainstream society and to secure their future. However, even with this policy, the transgender community has faced a lot of discrimination and has sometimes not received access to basic human rights, such as medical care and shelter (United Way Bengaluru, 2026). It is this disparity between policy and action that this study has explored with a focus on understanding how social inclusion can solve this issue for a metropolitan city like Bengaluru.

The 2017 Karnataka State Policy for Transgenders has been a landmark policy for the community in the state. While this policy came up after years of efforts for equal rights for the TG community, social inclusion has continued to be a challenge, as the community still faces discrimination in employment and healthcare. It is this problem that has been addressed in this study.

In 2025-2026, the Karnataka government undertook a survey that identified the transgender population in the state to be 10,365. However, this has come under fire due to a major disparity that came up against the results of the 2011 census. In 2011,

Karnataka recorded 20,266 transgender persons, which is nearly double that of the 2025 survey count (Choradia, 2026). This has led to the question of how the state's transgender population has been halved in a span of 14 years, during a period where worldwide social acceptance of the trans community has increased. Answering this question has been essential for this research study being undertaken.

The 2017 Karnataka State Policy for Transgenders emerged against a systemic exclusion backdrop. In fact, this policy has been undertaken due to the TG community facing discrimination at every turn. They have faced issues such as family rejection, educational barriers, employment discrimination, and violence (Choradia, 2026). Studies have also documented that only 2% have been accepted enough to live with their families. The TG population has also reported approximately 50% suicide attempt rates before age 20 (Kohnepoushiet *al.*, 2023). Thus, the knowledge of social inclusion and how it can enrich trans lives in Bengaluru has been crucial, leading to this study.

Objectives:

1. To explore the ideal social inclusion measures for transgender lives in Bengaluru.
2. To evaluate how public policy can improve living conditions for the Bengaluru TG community.
3. To understand the existing disparities in the present systems and suggest possible remedies.

Background and Theoretical foundation

In this section of the study, to understand the social inclusion and public policy measure implications of transgender lives, existing sources of literature will be evaluated. With the help of scholarly articles and other peer-reviewed sources of data, this section will help create a knowledge base for the subject matter of the study.

Impact of Social Inclusion on Transgender Lives

Social inclusion can lead to the transgender community establishing a positive and productive relationship with their cisgender counterparts. According to Chan *et al.* (2022), the main goal of social inclusion is to create more positive and inclusive environments for minority groups such as gays, lesbians, transgender people, and others. Without social inclusion, they may come across proximal minority stressors that can lead to challenges in mental health, social identity, and so on.

On the other hand, as per Smith *et al.* (2022), social inclusion is a complex, multifaceted process that supports people to meaningfully engage in activities and relationships, even between both minority and majority members of society. Thus, from both perspectives, social inclusion is essential for transgender communities to be better integrated into society. Furthermore, the expectation from social inclusion is that it creates an environment of peer support, essentially making diverse communities feel more homogenized. In this context, as deduced by Kia *et al.* (2023), social inclusion through peer support creates empathy that connects people from different walks of life, leading to a thriving society.

The Relevance of Public Policies in Improving Trans Lives

The struggle to find the right public policy for the equitable and just treatment of transgender people has been one of the defining issues of the 21st Century. According to Kinney *et al.* (2022), appropriate policy measures for transgender inclusion are always missing. Thus, the authors have proposed the importance of a policy tool that can help assess human rights, the need for access to resources, and access to amenities for transgender and non-binary individuals.

Alternatively, from the perspective of Gonçalves and Meira (2024), in many countries, public policies have perpetuated the lack of public participation of the transgender communities, leading to a historical process of social exclusion. Thus, the authors have actively encouraged more countries to practice social reintegration to create a more inclusive society. From evaluating the points made by both sets of authors, it can be inferred that the role of effective public policy measures can never be understated when it comes to improving the living conditions of the transgender communities in any region.

Policy vs. Reality: The Ground Level Issues of Transgender Communities in India

In India, transgender people have long struggled to find equality and have sought to safeguard their identities. This was followed by the growing recognition of transgender rights in India, namely through the NALSA Judgement and the 2019 Transgender Persons Act. On that note, as per Tyagi *et al.* (2025), the movement towards inclusion through these government policies has been unsatisfactory. This has been a major issue observed in hospitals and other health institutions. Transgender patients have been subjected to challenges like micro aggressions, misgendering, and harassment from healthcare providers. They have also suffered in terms of housing and employment, as mandatory quotas have not been effectively enforced, leading to the practices being insufficient as well.

Alternatively, public policies have not led to any improvements in the legal identities of transgender people in India. As observed by Waggy and Bashir (2024), 79% of transgender people in India live in leased rooms or live in shared housing arrangements. Moreover, 52.61% of transgender people in India have a monthly income of less than ₹10,000. Thus, even with housing opportunities and the opportunities to participate in jobs, the transgender community has been unable to really thrive.

The Need for Systemic Social Inclusion for Trans Lives in Bengaluru

The transgender community in Bengaluru has been a victim of a lot of discrimination and has not received access to basic human rights such as medical care and shelter. On this subject, non-government organizations such as United Way Bengaluru have advocated for marginalized groups to have the right to lead respectful lives in a more inclusive society (United Way Bengaluru, 2026). This organization has again and again emphasized the relevance of systemic social inclusion in making the voice of every individual be heard, respected, and valued.

Moreover, as per an article by Neog (2025), social inclusion leads to sustainable change. According to the author, social inclusion needs to be considered as more than an issue-based struggle. In these terms, it is important to create an understanding of identity and focus on building an inclusive society where everyone is treated with respect, irrespective of their gender or identity. These social inclusion acts have also led to short-term benefits, with many Tran's individuals in Bengaluru finding jobs and seeing immediate benefits in their living conditions.

How Grassroots Movements Can Impact Policy Decisions for Better Lives for TG Individuals in Bengaluru

Grassroots movements in Bengaluru for the transgender population have been undertaken to not only raise awareness but also to improve how this awareness affects the impact of public policy measures. As per an article by D'souza (2025), the lack of awareness regarding the issues faced by Tran's people has led to a complete misinterpretation of gender identity and inter-sex problems, especially amongst youngsters. Furthermore, with many transgender youngsters facing abuse and backlash from their households, grassroots-level movements become essential to allow public policies to actually work in favour of the TG population.

This has come in strict contrast to the state-proposed initiatives in Karnataka. As per a KHPT (2020) article, some of the initiatives of the policy have also focused on grassroots institutions helping sensitise families about how to treat trans children. Institutions such as the Angawadi workers have been employed by the Karnataka government to set up a monitoring committee at educational institutions to address issues of discrimination, sexual abuse, and violence against transgender individuals. Thus, it further establishes that actual groundwork is needed to ensure that the public policies are effectively implemented.

It is important to discuss how the inferences drawn in the findings section work by addressing the sources of literature discussed in the literature review section. On that note, as stated by Kinney *et al.* (2022), the policy measures in place for the TG communities are not sufficient. However, the opposite has been discovered in the case of Bengaluru by KHPT (2020). As per the KHPT article, not only has the Karnataka government implemented policy measures for the communities, but the policies have also sought the support of grassroots organizations to help raise public awareness of the transgender groups to help them live a more respectful life in an inclusive society. In essence, both articles agree on one point. Awareness is essential for policy measures to actually be effective.

This is further in line with what was stated by Gonçalves and Meira (2024). As per these authors, for public policies to work effectively, public participation is necessary, which draws in the need for public awareness on TG problems. The answer to this has been provided by D'souza (2025), in the statement that a lack of public awareness is what has led to the misrepresentation of trans problems among the people of Bengaluru. Moreover, this can be traced back to the issue of social inclusion. Where, as noted by Neog (2025), social inclusion is necessary to bring about changes in a sustainable manner. Through social inclusion activities, creating an understanding of the trans identity, and building a society maintained with respect are actually possible. This has been agreed upon by Kia *et al.* (2023), who have stated that social inclusion with peer support is extremely crucial to create empathy that connects different people.

Alternatively, as per Smith *et al.* (2022), social inclusion is a complex and multifaceted process, and it supports people to engage in activities and relationships meaningfully. Taking the complex and multifaceted aspects as they are, social inclusion helps create a positive and inclusive environment for every citizen in Bengaluru, irrespective of being a social majority or minority. That is why, as stated by United Way Bengaluru (2026), social inclusion needs to be considered essential, considering a multifaceted perspective, social inclusion should be made a more systemic approach to make the voices of every individual more respected and valued.

Finally, to summarize the results, the first possible inference drawn from this study can be that social inclusion is essential to raise awareness that can help the integration of transgender individuals into society. The second inference is that public policies are not sufficient on their own to bring about real changes without the support of actual groundwork to elevate trans living conditions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The improvement of trans lives in Bengaluru cannot be achieved without the support of socially inclusive practices and public policy measures. Social inclusion is extremely crucial in developing a meaningful relationship between transgender people and their cisgender counterparts. It will enable them to engage in activities together and create an environment with more sharing and a better understanding of what TG people would need. This would further include grassroots-level activities with different NGOs and public participation to effectively apply the established public policy measures. Both facets together can lead to an improved approach to transgender lives in Bengaluru and Karnataka as a whole.

Recommendations

As per the results and the discussion, here are some possible recommendations that can be established as steps to improve transgender living conditions in Bengaluru:

- Social inclusion should be implemented with the support of peer support and public participation to create comfort within diverse communities.
- Government bodies should be working with non-government organizations at the ground level to understand the implications of policy decisions.
- Social inclusion should be incorporated systemically through integration and interaction to facilitate meaningful relationships between transgender and cisgender people.
- The interaction between ground-level research, social inclusion, and policy measures should be considered with real and sustainable change in mind.

Future Scope

Studies on transgender communities and their living conditions in Bengaluru have a significant level of scope to consider. In the future, the studies can dive deep into specific subjects of study, such as access to education for transgender people, access to better healthcare, and overall social welfare. Thus, it can be confidently stated that the future scope for studies in the existing and

related topics is significant.

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