# Building Inclusive and Supportive Ecosystem for nurturing Trans-Social Entrepreneurship in India

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**Abstract:**

Social Entrepreneurship has increased access to finances, improved social inclusion and empowerment, generated jobs, and encouraged the use of social innovations by lowering societal problems. Addressing the challenge of unemployment due to discrimination, we can see many great examples of Transgender social Entrepreneurs who are redefining the potential of Trans community as when they are being denied employment opportunities, they are becoming self-employed and creating employment for their community members. The present study is an Exploratory Review Paper, based on extensive Review on secondary data, aims to find out what Inclusive and Supportive Ecosystem is present in India, and how it is nurturing the Trans-Social Entrepreneurship within transgender community. Also, the current situation of transgender entrepreneurship, the government policies and programmes available at present in their support and challenges faces with their possible solutions are discussed. The results show that both private and public platforms are available for facilitating the birth and growth of Trans-Social Entrepreneurship in India, but the problem lies in accessing it due to various reasons mentioned in paper. Also, it is derived from the study that the current situation of transgender entrepreneurship in India is promising towards Employment, Empowerment & Social Inclusion of transgender community.

***Keywords:*** Social Entrepreneurship, Trans-Social Entrepreneurship, Transgender Entrepreneurs, Transgender community, Employment.

## 1.Introduction:

As a burgeoning field of research for resolving intricate social demands, social entrepreneurship (SE) is a relatively recent phenomenon, according to Kannampuzha & Hockerts (2019). Social entrepreneurship (SE) is a subset of entrepreneurship that seeks to address societal concerns, according to Lortie and Cox (2018) (Hockerts, 2017). Many believe that entrepreneurship is the primary cause of job creation, economic expansion, and prosperity in any country, including the US (Thurik and Wennekers, 2004; Maksimov et al. 2017; Bates and Dunham, 1993; Kim et al., 2018; Oviatt and McDougall, 1997). Parker (2018) asserts that social entrepreneurship is essential to the creation or generation of jobs. "Not only can social enterprises offer greater work opportunities, but they can also function as advocates and catalysts for employing individuals beyond the conventional suspects." How social entrepreneurship would improve the income of microfinance users and eradicate poverty is, at best, questionable (Kareem, 2015).

A transgender person is defined as someone whose gender identity or gender role differs from the sex assigned to them at birth, according to the American Psychological Association (2018). The term "Trans" is commonly used to refer to both binary and non-binary identities when discussing transgender individuals (American Psychological Association, 2018). Due to the stigma and social exclusion around their gender identity, transgender individuals have fewer social connections than average persons (Wirtz et al., 2020; Jose & Vinod, 2014; Hendricks & Testa, 2012; Rood et al., 2016; Bockting et al., 2013). In India, transgender persons go by several names, such as Hijra, Kinnar, Aravani, Kothi, Jogappas/Jogtas, Shiv-Shakthis, and Jogti-hijras, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2010. The majority of people classified as Hijras were assigned as male at birth, but over time they rejected their given "masculine" identity, choosing instead to identify as women, "not men," "in-between man and woman," or "neither man nor woman." Hijras have a rich cultural history and strong social bonds that are established through the "reet" ceremony, which entails becoming a member of the Hijra society. Hijras might get money by doing traditional tasks like "Badhai," which is clapping hands and requesting alms, blessing newborns, or dancing during celebrations. Because they have few alternative options for employment, some Hijras turn to sex work; others may work for non-governmental organizations or for themselves (Hijras/transgender in India: HIV, Human Rights and Social Exclusion, 2023). Notably, transgender characters have important roles in well-known ancient Hindu epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharat. Transgender people held high positions throughout the Mughal era, working as political counselors to the monarch and as part of the royal administration (Michelraj, 2015). However, their situation drastically worsened when British administration over India began. Because they lacked biological heirs, British law took away everything they owned, including money, land, jobs, and even their human dignity. During the British colonial era in India, transgender people were even called "criminals addicted to committing serious crimes" under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. These events added to their social exclusion and marginalization, even though this statute was overturned after India attained independence in 1949 (Gayathri & Karthikeyan, 2016).

The ecosystem is a connected system and a complex network by definition (van den Heuvel et al, 2013). Tansley introduced this idea in 1935 to describe a fundamental ecological unit made up of the natural world, living things, and their interactions (Tanguay, 2012). Later, in 1993, Moore's research brought it to the management field. Moore compared the biological ecology to the corporate ecosystem. By applying the concept of entrepreneurship to biology, businesses and stakeholders establish a number of connections inside what is referred to as the "ecosystem." "The community of organizations, institutions, and individuals that impact the enterprise and the enterprise's customers and supplies" is Teece's (2007) definition of the business ecosystem. Koenig (2012) makes the assumption that there are other different kinds of ecosystems in addition to the business ecosystem. Four categories of ecosystems are distinguished by Baumol, Litan, and Schramm: oligarchic, state-directed, big-firm, and entrepreneurial. In 2007 Baumol, Litan, and Schramm. "A framework that allows private sector and social actors, often with different traditions and motivations, and of different sizes and areas of influence, to act together and create wealth in a symbiotic relationship," according to Prahalad (2005), is the definition of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In India, there are 4.8 lakh transgender persons, according to the 2011 census. In a 2018 survey on the rights of the transgender population, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India found that, even in cases where they satisfy the necessary requirements, 96% of transgender individuals face job rejection and limited career options. Furthermore, 99% of

transgender people report having been rejected by society on multiple occasions, including from their own families. Between 50 and 60 percent of trans persons have never had the opportunity to attend school. Due to discrimination, a large number of people who are unable to complete their education end up misusing drugs, working as prostitutes, or turning to begging. The majority of transgender persons also struggle to get access to necessities like food, clean water to drink, healthcare facilities, public restrooms, and housing. Indeed, discrimination against transgender people occurs in all areas of society, including the political, social, economic, and educational (Gayatri & Karthikeyan, 2016; Khan et al., 2009; Pandya & Redcay, 2021; Chellammal & Lekshmi, 2020). Transgender people are a profoundly marginalized population. Some claim that because of discrimination and marginalization from society, transgender people have fewer social connections than average people (Jose & Vinod, 2014). B. The National AIDS Control Organization [NACO], 2015; Issues Faced by Transgender Persons in Odisha – Reproductive Rights Initiative (RRI), 2023) state that prostitution or sex work, begging on trains, performing in bars, and receiving blessings from others are the main sources of income for transgender people. Transgender individuals have been subjected to a variety of violent acts in public spaces, including as beatings, intimidation, threats, and in some cases, torture by law enforcement (Ganju & Saggurti, 2017). India's inhabitants are endowed with some rights by virtue of the fundamental rights entrenched in the constitution and the directive idea of state policy; nevertheless, transgender individuals are really unable to exercise these rights. One group within India's enormous unorganized sector whose only sources of income include menial labour such as street begging, paid sex, and street entertainment is the transgender community. Despite many barriers, transgender-social entrepreneurship culture is bringing new hopes in the lives of the transgender population which will guide, motivate and help the budding and aspiring trans entrepreneurs as well. The present study is an Exploratory Review Paper, based on extensive research on secondary data, aims to find out what Inclusive and Supportive Ecosystem is present in India, and how it is nurturing the Trans-Social Entrepreneurship within transgender community. Also, the current situation of transgender entrepreneurship, the government policies and programmes available at present in their support and challenges faces with their possible solutions are discussed.

This paper is primarily intended for policy makers, researchers, data specialists, and members of civil society. In this Review paper, Firstly, transgender individuals themselves are primary stakeholders, as the research directly concerns their entrepreneurial capabilities, employment and social-inclusion. Advocacy organizations, such as LGBTQ+ rights groups and transgender support networks, are also significant stakeholders, as they can use the research to advance their advocacy efforts. Academic institutions, funding agencies, and journal editors have a stake in the paper's quality and validity, as it contributes to academic knowledge and societal understanding. Furthermore, policymakers and governmental bodies may utilize the research findings to inform and improve policies related to transgender community’s growth & development, overall empowerment and social inclusion in the mainstream society. Lastly, the general public can benefit from increased awareness and understanding of transgender potential as well as issues, making them stakeholders in promoting social inclusion and equity. Recognizing and engaging with these stakeholders ensures that the research has a meaningful and far-reaching impact.

### 1.1 Research Question:

- What supportive environment is being present in India for the growth and promotion of transgender entrepreneurship?
- What is the current situation of transgender entrepreneurship in India?
- What government policies and programmes are the in their support in India?
- And, what are the challenges faced by trans-social entrepreneurs, with their possible solutions?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research Design:

-Exploratory Research: Given the limited existing literature on the subject, an exploratory research design is adopted to uncover new insights and understand the evolving landscape of trans-social entrepreneurship in India.
-Longitudinal Study:
The research spans a period from 1990 to 2024, allowing for an in-depth examination of the changes and trends in transgender entrepreneurship and its environment, over time.

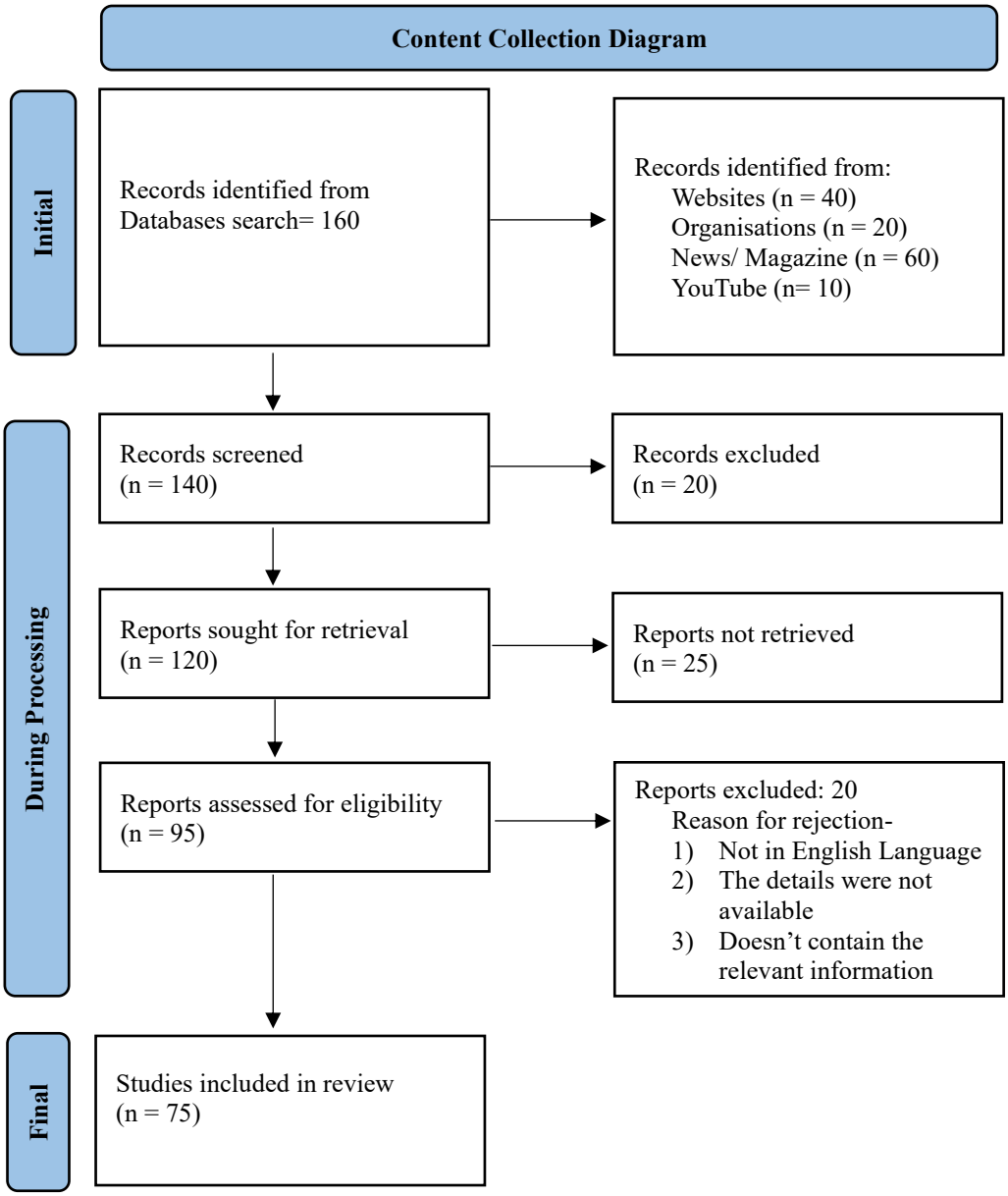
### 2.2. Data Collection:

Secondary Data:
-Literature Review: A thorough review of existing research papers, new articles, and magazines was conducted to understand the historical context, challenges, and opportunities for transgender entrepreneurs in India.
-Online Platforms: YouTube videos, documentaries, and online platforms featuring interviews, discussions, and case studies related to transgender entrepreneurship were analysed to supplement the primary data.

### 2.3. Data Analysis:

Qualitative Analysis: Analysis was done to understand the chronological order evolution of transgender Entrepreneurs and the environment present in its support and promotion in India. The Collected data was filtered, grouped, and presented in the most meaningful form. Fig. 1, reflects the whole process of content collection.

**Fig.1.**
*Content Collection Diagram*

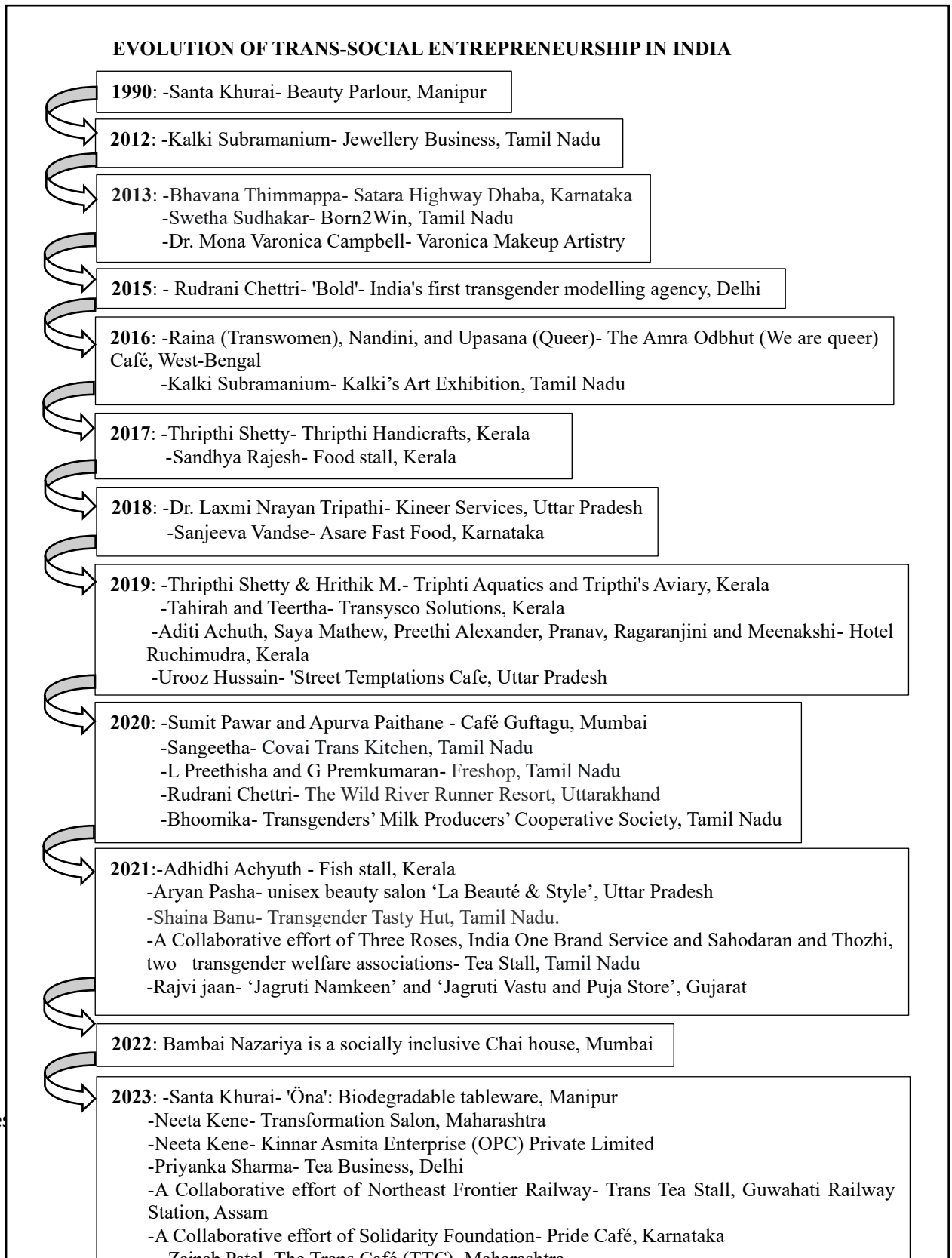



## 3. Literature Review

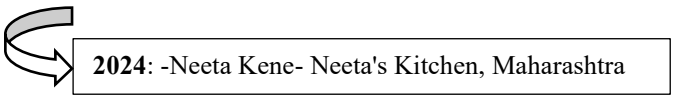
### 3.1. Evolution of Trans-Social Entrepreneurship in India

The new generation of transgender population wants dignified sources of earning. But denial to 96% of transgenders (NHRC, 2018), due to their gender expression and exclusion is much bigger problem than it seems. Due to an increase in awareness of socio-legal aspects of the transgender community, it is expected that more young transgender population will come out of their closets in the near future. So, the need for their support and upliftment is a necessity and responsibility of our society. It is evident from the literature review that social entrepreneurship traps a huge potential for the betterment of marginalized communities all around the world, so its introduction to the transgender community is the need of the hour. Their own income will help them stay on their feet. Depending on the socioeconomic and cultural context, social entrepreneurship can take many different forms (Mair & Marti, 2006), and context is important for understanding social entrepreneurship research (Short et al., 2009). As, research in the field of Transgender community is very limited, and no prior study talks about the evolution of Transgender entrepreneurship, this study traces the evolution of Trans-Social Entrepreneurs and the ecosystem promoting it in India to provide a base study for further research and to clarify the existence of transgender entrepreneurs as well as to recognise the potential of Transgender community. Exploring the comprehensive path of transgender entrepreneurs in India for the first time is important because it can offer insightful information on how transgender people can access entrepreneurial opportunities that are frequently overlooked in mainstream study. Acknowledging their endeavours is crucial in creating focused solutions and support systems that help transgender people thrive in the workplace. It will promote more tolerance and acceptance in society by assisting in breaking myths and preconceptions regarding their abilities and economic contributions. Finally, this study can provide as a foundation for further research and advocacy initiatives that support the empowerment of transgender people in India. Also, the Indian transgenders are struggling for their respect, empowerment and inclusion. Despite many barriers, transgender-social entrepreneurship culture is bringing new hopes in the lives of the transgender population which will guide, motivate and help the budding and aspiring trans entrepreneurs as well. Fig. no. 2, shows the diagrammatic presentation of the details of all the Transgender entrepreneurs and their respective enterprises year wise, obtained through exploratory method via secondary sources. In year 1990, Santa Khurai pioneered trans-entrepreneurship by starting a beauty parlour in 1990 but was remained as an unsung hero of Transgender community, but in the year 2012, Kalki Subramaniam was recognised as India's first Transgender Entrepreneur by starting a Jewellery business in Tamil Nadu. Her journey has become a milestone and since then, world has been able to witness a great zeal of transgender entrepreneurship culture. The year 2023 has unfurled the greatest number of Trans-Social Entrepreneurs as well as their Enterprises emerged with a total count of 10, followed by the year 2020 and 2021, each with the count of 5. Also, the year 2019 stood at the count of total 4 and year 2013 with the count of total 3. These instances, along with others, serve as undeniable exemplifications of triumphant trans social entrepreneurship. As per their testimonies, they express a sense of security and acceptance within their community, as there exists an absence of discrimination and equal treatment prevails among community members (Davis, 2009).

**Fig. 2**
*Evolution Of Trans-Social Entrepreneurship in India*




Cues

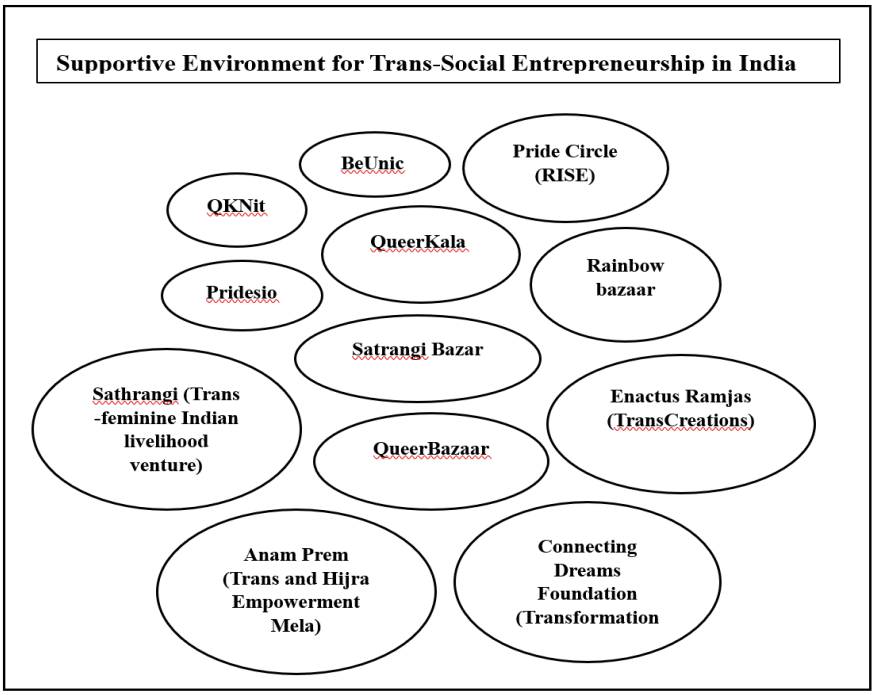



### 3.2. Supportive Environment for Trans-Social Entrepreneurship in India:

Mair and Marti (2006) define social entrepreneurship as an approach that combines the social objective of social entrepreneurs alongside financial gains in order to find methods of addressing societal issues and/or igniting social change. Mason and Brown (2013) have summarized the definitions of entrepreneurial ecosystem found in the literature and defined it as "a set of interconnected entrepreneurial actors (both existing and potential), entrepreneurial organizations (such as banks, venture capitalists, business angels, and firms), institutions (such as universities, public sector agencies, and financial bodies), and entrepreneurial processes (such as the number of high growth firms, the number of "blockbuster" firms, the number of serial entrepreneurs, the degree of sell-out mentality within firms, and levels of entrepreneurial ambition)." These entities formally and unofficially come together to connect, mediate, and regulate the performance within the local entrepreneurial environment." Similarly, a culture that highlights the value of social value creation and fosters entrepreneurial action and innovation, which form the basis of traditional entrepreneurship in ecosystems (Feldman, 2001; Isenberg, 2011), will support and encourage social entrepreneurship activity as it will be in line with the goals of those who participate in it (Zahra et al., 2009). According to Bencheva et al. (2016), the state may support job opportunities and the social inclusion of underprivileged groups by creating an environment that makes it easier for them to integrate in the social economy via the establishment of prosperous social businesses. Social inclusion can be improved by supporting the growth of social enterprises in remote regions and providing for the diverse needs of the local populace. India has prioritized social entrepreneurship in its policies, as demonstrated by the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship established by the Planning Commission in 2013 (Shahid, 2016). In addition, in 2022 the SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) scheme was introduced in India under the PM-DAKSH scheme with the aim of fostering transgender entrepreneurship through the provision of livelihood opportunities and skill development support (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE), 2022). We can see that there are many private organisation and institutions which are creating trans- social entrepreneurship environmently more friendly and accessible to all society members. With these initiatives, we can realise the impact in growth of trans-entrepreneurship to a great extent and hence, can see a more prominent and promising future ahead. Fig.3, shows the diagramatic presentation of supportive environment for the growth of TSE in India which are discussed indetail below.

**Fig. 3**

*Supportive Environment for Trans-Social Entrepreneurship*




- Since 2005, a volunteer group called Anam Prem, situated in Mumbai, has also endeavored to integrate the community into society. It held a Trans and Hijra Empowerment Mela in 2016 and 2017 as part of the Anandi Anand Gade (Joy for All) initiative. In 2016, Borivali's mela drew roughly 1,800 attendees. About 25 stalls providing food, jewelry, salon services, and other products are manned by three to four transgender persons. The transgender population originated in India (*A Kolkata Venture is Challenging Transphobia Through Handicrafts*, 2017).
- Sathrangi is a transfeminine Indian livelihood initiative that employs people primarily via handicrafts. The campaign, spearheaded by transwomen, has garnered support from several sources due to the involvement of women from marginalized populations such as those from red light zones, survivors of human trafficking, and women farmers from the Sunderbans. SathRangi is a transfeminine brand that sells apparel, stationery, and home goods like jute bags, accessories, cotton handkerchiefs, and scarves made of malmal, Bengal silk, and gamchha. (*A Kolkata Venture is Challenging Transphobia Through Handicrafts*, 2017).
- To support the transgender population, Delhi's Ramjas College launched initiative TransCreations in 2011 with the help of its enterprising student body Enactus Ramjas. With just seven members at first, it was able to provide employment opportunities in the jewelry-making industry for approximately fifty transgender people, each of whom makes between Rs. 7,000 and Rs. 8,000 a month. Since then, the group has expanded into more socially conscious businesses, employing ten transgender motor and taxi drivers throughout Delhi NCR in the summer of 2016 and launching VIBGYOR, a transgender-only beauty parlor (*Ramjas College Students Help Transgenders Open Beauty Parlour for All*, 2024)

- The Connecting Dreams Foundation seeks to use youth involvement and entrepreneurial activity to address SDG-based concerns. It has strengthened and produced a variety of rural and urban entrepreneurship models. An agreement was made between the Mitr Trust and the Connecting Dreams Foundation to establish "Transformation," a Career Progression Fellowship funded by HSBC that will assist members of the transgender community in advancing and developing their trans-entrepreneurship. (Home. Connecting Dreams, 2024;).

- Pride Circle is the top diversity and inclusion consultancy in India, dedicated to promoting social equity for the LGBT+ population in India through affirmative action. partners with more than 300 Indian companies to offer job placements, industry roundtables, sensitization, consultation, executive leadership development, comprehensive diversity and inclusion training, publications and research, and professional networking opportunities that foster inclusive, safe, and welcoming workplaces. Pride Circle is spearheading the LGBT+ inclusion movement in India thanks to its experience and expanding network of national and international partner companies, government agencies, and non-profit organizations (LGBT+ Entrepreneurship and Supplier Diversity in India-the Ecosystem and the Way Forward, n.d.).

- The Pride Circle's yearly flagship event, RISE (Reimagining Inclusion for Social Equity), is a groundbreaking program that aims to provide the LGBT+ community with equal opportunities and workplace inclusion (RISE-2021, 2024). About twenty-plus LGBT+ owned micro and small enterprises were on display at Asia's First and Biggest LGBT+ Conference, Job Fair, and Marketplace, which it held in 2019. (Home. Pride Circle |, 2024).

- The RAINBOW BAZAAR, a unique and exclusive online marketplace for micro and small LGBT+ owned and operated enterprises in India, began as a one-day on-site bazaar during the RISE Marketplace in Bangalore in 2019 and Delhi in 2020. Every Indian customer may now access the online marketplace and become a QUEERpreneur thanks to Rainbow Bazaar!Working is one way to support oneself; another is to start your own business. RAINBOW BAZAAR connects Indian consumers with small and micro businesses owned by LGBT+ people. By shopping online at RAINBOW BAZAAR, you're supporting LGBT+ entrepreneurs who are making India proud (LGBT+ Entrepreneurship and Supplier Diversity in India-the Ecosystem and the Way Forward, n.d.).

- Similar to this, there are other e-commerce sites like QueerBazaar, Pridesio, BeUnic, etc. that were created with the dual goals of helping LGBTQ+ community entrepreneurs sell their products and raise money. LGBTQ artists and designers are able to market their goods and services through these platforms (Beunic Is a Queer-owned, Community-driven Platform for LGBTQ+ Creators and Entrepreneurs, 2024; Pridesio – Wear Your Pride!, 2024; With Fresh Infusion of Funds, E-commerce Platform for LGBTQ Community Set to Grow, 2024). Additionally, The QKNit hosts Satrangi

Bazar, an initiative to support LGBT+ community members' small businesses, with active participation from QueerKala, an initiative to empower women. A number of exceptionally talented artists and business owners set up shop at Cafe Guftagu on Mira Road. An occasion like this would promote equality and genuine awareness in society, treating each person with the utmost respect and affection (Satrangi Bazar, Hosted by Queerkala – Retropoplifestyle, 2024).

### 3.3. Government Initiatives for the Promotion of Transgender Entrepreneurship:

Over the years, the Indian government has worked steadily and significantly to create and advance a trans-inclusive society. To address these issues for the provision of identity, education, shelter, livelihood, skill development, and protection of rights against the community, the Central government has passed and issued several welfare acts and rules, some of which are highlighted here (welfare of transgender persons in India: slew of measures by central government in last three years, 2022). The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is carrying out the Skill India Mission's Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), which has trained 481 transgender people until 2021; Jan Shikshan Sansthan Scheme (JSS), which has trained 518 transgender people between 2018 and 2021; and National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), which has trained 17 transgender people between 2018 and 2021 for short-term skill development training; and Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS), which has trained 7 transgender people between 2014 and 2019 for long-term training. These programs are intended to provide long-term training to youth from all segments of society, including transgender people in India (Transgender Persons in India and Government Welfare Measures, 2023). Through PM-DAKSH, a skill development program of the Ministry, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is providing skill development training to transgender recipients of the SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) Scheme. The program offers transgender people long-term training programs, up-skilling/reskilling programs, entrepreneurship development programs, and short-term training programs. The National Backward Classes Finance and Development (NBCFDC) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has approved skill development training programs for transgender individuals through Sector Skill Councils/Training Partners in six States. These programs cover a range of job roles and have sanctioned over 87 lakh trainees for jobs like beauty therapists, make-up artists, customer service executives, and more (welfare of transgender individuals in India: slew of measures by central government in last three years, 2022). The SMILE program calls for the establishment of Garima Grehs, which offer basic necessities including food, housing, healthcare, and recreational opportunities to transgender people who are in need. In addition, it will help transgender people in the refuge house enhance their skills and build their potential. On November 25, 2020, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment opened the National Portal for Transgender Persons. Without having to physically interact with the office of issue, any transgender candidate can get an identity card and certificate of identity. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment provides the officially recognized transgender identification card and certificate. To take use of the welfare benefits offered by the SMILE program, you must have the certificate. According to data on the National Portal for Transgender Persons, which 32 states and union territories participated in, there were 14656 certificates and 14639 identity cards issued overall as of October 8, 2023 (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment - Government of India, 2023). The UNDP (2017) estimates that there are about

249 federal and state government programs that transgender persons may be able to participate in, with a particular emphasis on skill development. Only the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) lists transgender individuals as beneficiaries, nevertheless, at the federal level (Godrej: Trans inclusion manifesto, 2018). In order to promote gender equality and equal opportunities for women and transgender entrepreneurs in the food business sector, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recently added a new provision called "Special Category" to the online Food Safety Compliance System (FoSCoS) portal (FSSAI Introduces 'special Category' Provision to Promote Gender Equality in Food Biz, 2023). Speaking of inclusion in the workforce, transgender groups are prioritize beneficiaries of the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA). Both the National Rural Livelihood Mission and the National Urban Livelihood Mission discuss how self-help groups (SHGs) might help transgender people become financially included. Under the latter, SHGs for transgender people have been founded in Odisha. In order for transgender people to use these programs, state welfare boards have the authority to establish and maintain a transgender employment database through the District Employment Officer, as well as grant or approve transgender people's employment applications. It is imperative that financial institutions offer loans for self-employment and SHG startup capital, and streamline the associated formalities and procedures to enable transgender individuals to obtain financial services (A Framework for Transgender-inclusive India, 2023).

## 4. Current Status of Transgender Entrepreneurship in India:

The marginalisation of the transgender community has a direct financial cost because more and more of them are being kept out of the workforce due to a lack of equitable employment opportunities. Marginalization and discrimination typically have substantial costs because they restrict markets, shrink the talent pool, and obstruct economic expansion. According to a 2016 World Bank study that looked in 39 countries, marginalization and GDP decrease go hand in hand (LGBTQ Inclusion in Offices Is Good for Indian Economy, 2023). 92% of India's trans community cannot get to work or engage in any other type of economic activity, according to NHRC data from 2018. Only five transgender people registered their businesses with the government between April 2018 and November 2019, according to a report released by the Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) government on December 2, 2019. Six out of the seven transgender directors who registered in FY22 fall within the age range of 31 to 45, while one falls between the 46 to 60 age range. According to Transgender Directors of Indian Companies (2023), there are eight of them; two are from Delhi, while the remaining six are from Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu, respectively. Dr. M.V. Lee Badgett carried out a case study in India in 2014 to look into the connection between homophobia and the country's economics. According to the research, bias affected GDP by roughly 0.1 to 1.7%. Homophobia also shortens people's working years, which decreases their time to accumulate money, whether as a result of workplace harassment or a reduction in professional advancement. Stigma not only directly affects employees' output at work, but it also has a detrimental effect on people's health. According to a 2012 study (How Homophobia Is Costing India 1.7% of Its GDP, 2023), homophobia costs India's health system an incredible $712 million on average—a financial loss that cannot be made up. Sexual minorities in India are more likely to contract HIV/AIDS than the overall population. According to The Cost of LGBT Exclusion to the Economy of India (2018), the frequency estimates for MSM (defined as transgender people who were born male but now identify as female or feminine; men having

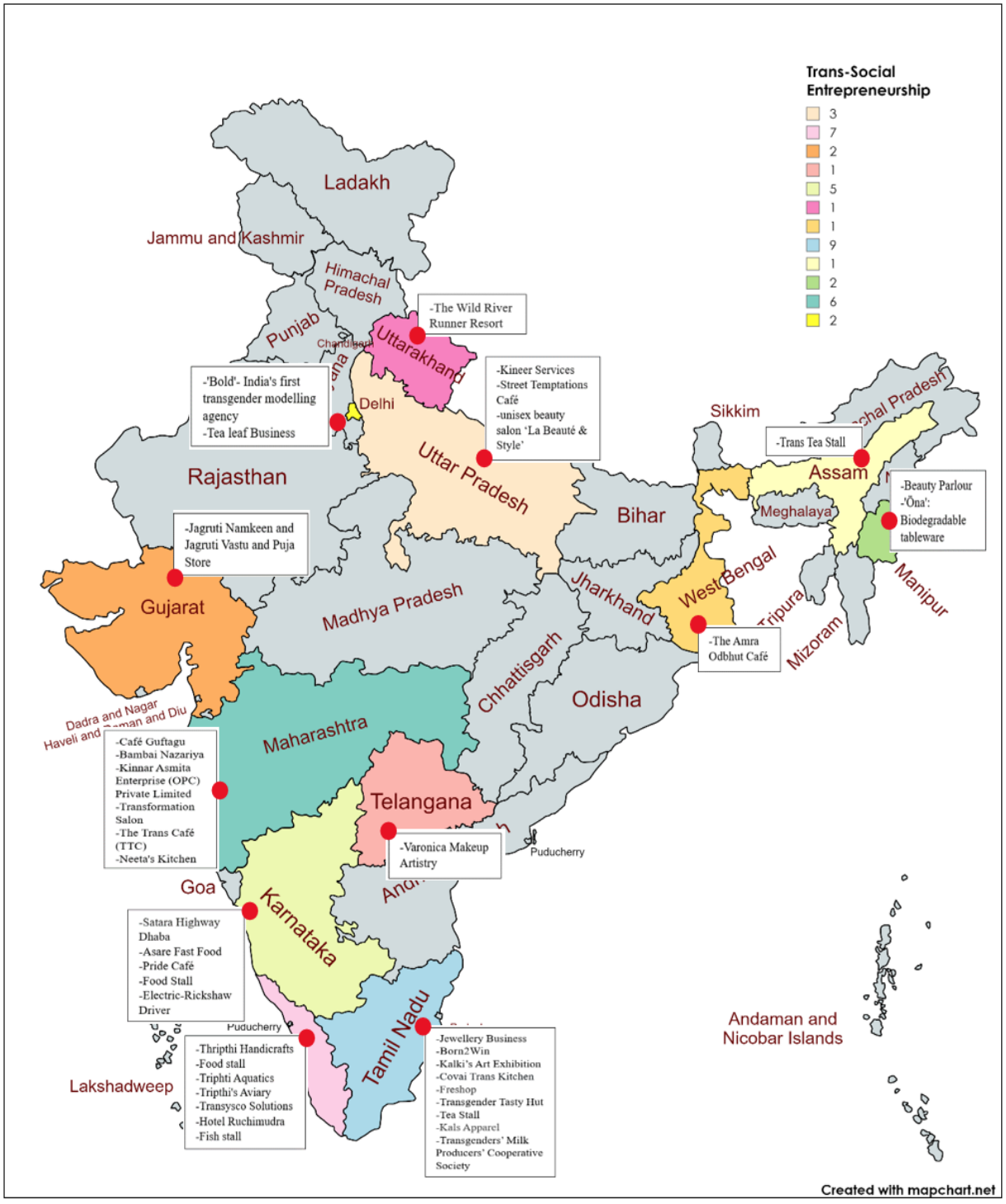
sex with men) range from 7% to 16.5%, while those for transgender individuals suggest a frequency as high as 55%. Data from the National Sample Survey Office publication in India may be used to estimate the loss of income resulting from the stigma surrounding the LGBT community. An average Indian worker working six days a week for 52 weeks would earn Rs. 74,507 in wage/salary, according to NSS statistics from 2011–2012; for self-employed people and own account enterprises, the number is Rs. 48,157. This implies a salary of Rs. 55,532 on average. Multiplying this average by the percentage of wages would yield an estimate of lost wages for an LGBT worker (The Cost of LGBT Exclusion to the Economy of India, 2018).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) India Report (FY 21–22) and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship both state that there was an increase in entrepreneurial activity in India in 2021. The overall rate of entrepreneurial activity in the nation—that is, the proportion of people (aged 18–64) who formed or managed a new business—rose from 5.3% in 2020 to 14.4% in 2021. Additionally, the established company ownership rate—which measures the proportion of adults (18–64) who currently own and operate an established business—went from 5.9% in 2020 to 8.5% in 2020. According to Boom of Entrepreneurship in India (2023), a business is considered established if its proprietors have received salaries, wages, or any other form of income for more than 42 months.
Due to exclusion, those who identify as LGBTQIA+ are forced to labor in the unorganized sector. Insufficient employment opportunities also push people to take jobs in which they have little interest (Why It's Important for the LGBTQIA+ Community to Be Included in India's Economy, 2023). The majority of third gender groups in Northern India make their living through prostitution, sex employment, or wedding dancing. In the community-based sample of MSM in Chennai, two thirds earned less than Rs. 130 per day. The purpose of the 2008 founding of the Tamil Nadu Transgender Welfare Board was to enhance the socioeconomic standing of transgender people, or "aravanis." According to The Cost of LGBT Exclusion to the Economy of India (2018), it provides eligible members with access to health care, financial support, housing aid, self-employment subsidies, and a monthly pension of Rs. 1000. Regarding purchasing power, "pink" money symbolizes the LGBT community's ability to make purchases and its transformation from a specialized or marginalized market to a thriving economic sector. Forbes India, working with Out Now Consulting, a marketing firm that specializes in this area, projected those 30 million adults in India, or 4% of the country's overall population, identify as LGBT. These folks have money, despite the fact that it may not appear like much. According to Ian Johnson of Out Now, the 30 million LGBT people make a total of Rs. 1.5 lakh crore a month. Given that many of these clients are "DINK" (double income, no children), which means they have more discretionary income, being LGBT-friendly makes logical (Lure of the 'pink Rupee': Why Indian Firms Are Investing in LGBT Events-business News, Firstpost, 2023). In summary, because gender inequality hinders economic growth, discrimination against and exclusion of LGBT people from the workforce causes inefficiencies that reduce labor productivity and overall economic production (Berik, Rodgers, & Seguino, 2009).

For the purpose of conducting this study, information and data of 40 Transgender's Enterprises has been gathered through secondary sources, reveals that they have their entrepreneurial venture in 12 different states of India. Fig no. 4. highlights the states in which TSE exists with the total number and name of respective entrepreneurial ventures belonging to each state. These 40 transgender entrepreneurs are evident that it is obvious that there must be various numbers of unheard Trans-Social Entrepreneurs at local levels whose journeys till today are not heard

and covered yet by media, internet and other secondary sources but, still they are gracefully playing the pivotal role in the upliftment of Transgender community.

**Fig. 4.**
*Transgender Entrepreneurship in India*




## 5. Challenges and problems faced by Trans-social entrepreneurs and their Possible Solutions: A Reality Check

### 5.1. Challenges and problems faced by Trans-social entrepreneurs

1. **Financial crisis:** majority of transgenders lives in deadly poverty, and those who want to do something different, they face financial issues because business wants investments. However, transgender entrepreneurs are seen managing investments from their hard-earned savings, borrowings from family and friends and, loans from banks and private moneylenders.
2. **lack of proper knowledge:** education always remains a barrier in career growth of transgenders. Most of them left their schools very early in their lives, due to discrimination faced. Generally, transgender entrepreneurs face lack of proper knowledge and guidance about business management. No-one is a born businessman or businesswomen, everyone learns with time, but in context to transgender entrepreneurs, they lack proper direction to business education which is a big factor behind every success story.
3. **lack of self-confidence and self-esteemed:** due to rejections faced at every step and forced ill-treatment, the self-confidence and self-esteemed deteriorated immensely within transgenders, which affects their decision-making capacities. Most transgender entrepreneurs are battling within their inner selves regarding their self-worth. They are pushing their limits everyday of taking courageous decision by being an entrepreneur.
4. **Lack of resources:** running an enterprise is all about channelising resources in the right direction. But transgender entrepreneurs find it very difficult to make the ends meet. Due to various reasons, they face the difficulty in arranging resources. Often, the 'jugaad system' can be seen adopted by them for the smooth running of their enterprise.
5. **Lack of access/reach to right platforms:** transgender community is a very tightly knitted community, which may give them a sense of belongingness but results negatively in their growth and social-inclusion. Even after having capabilities, most of the transgenders didn't know how to approach to the right administration. Transgenders entrepreneurs either doesn't have access to the right platforms or they can't reach them due to various personal and social reasons.
6. **Existence of wider gap between introduction and implementation:** though various schemes and policies are introduced by the government but the main problem lies in its implementation. No strict actions are taken for implementation of government schemes among transgenders from the side of administration. Also, in most cases, when transgender entrepreneurs reach to administration for support, either they are not attended properly, or their work is kept on hold for indefinite period of time.
7. **Lack of proper skills and training:** imparting the livelihood-based skills and training is the need of the hour, among transgender community. Transgender entrepreneurs need to have proper guidance and access to skills and training regarding their venture, so that they can run their enterprise effectively and efficiently.
8. **lack of trust:** transgenders lack trust in cisgender people's society because they face ill-treatment throughout their lives. It is reported by transgender entrepreneurs that whenever they go for marketing their products, then they are seen with suspicion and their products are either demanded for much lower price than actual fair prices or rejected, because of their gender, stigma and discrimination associated with them.
9. **Fear for acceptance:** most transgenders are abandoned by their families in their early ages. Also, they are rejected by society at every step. So, these experiences led into them the fear of acceptance. Entrepreneurship involves the participation of all stakeholders and transgender entrepreneurs always shows the fear of acceptance by stakeholders in the market and most importantly- customers. They always fear of

getting unfavourable response from the targeted customer segment which makes them vulnerable before the competition out there. It is reported that most of the willing transgenders never starts their own enterprises due to their non-acceptance in our society. They say peoples never accepted us then, how they will accept our products and services.

10. **Lack of proper documentation:** majority of transgenders faces family abuse due to which they left their homes without any id, documents and basic education. Not having proper documents results in their absence from any further government records, which results in hampering their access to government schemes aimed for their betterment. Also, transgender entrepreneurs faces a lot of problems in getting their enterprise register with MSME, due to lack of proper documentation.

### 5.2. Possible Solutions for promoting trans-social entrepreneurship:

1. **Awareness creation:** the most important thing right now is creation of awareness on three major grounds namely, first within transgender community members about the importance of dignified livelihood sources, self-employment and their scope and opportunities in social-entrepreneurship. Second, within administration about the rights, policies & schemes for the promotion of transgender community members. Proper Sensitization about transgender community is needed. And, third within our society regarding the efforts of transgender entrepreneurs and importance to support them because creating a safe and healthy environment is the shared responsibility of all three.
2. **Implementation:** there are various schemes available for the transgender community members at central as well as state levels, but the main problem lies in their lack of execution. Proper implementation of these schemes at local levels has the potential of creating wonders. If transgender entrepreneurs will be assisted timely in entertaining the available benefits from government's side, then it will support and encourage them with the sense of belongingness.
3. **Support system:** transgender entrepreneurs lack any kind support like, at very first stage, they face resistance from their own community members, then from stakeholders, society, administration etc. but its time to create a positive change in the direction of making our transgender community self-reliant. Proper support system in the form of entrepreneurship mentorship forums & business incubation centres, training, education, and sensitization programs with the help of NGOs and volunteer organisation can be seen as possible solutions.
4. **Microfinancing practices:** the basic problem before every transgender is the lack of finance. As, microfinancing gives a chance to invest as per the demand of the situation in more timely and comparatively easily accessible manner. Hence, it holds enormous potential for the promotion of trans-social entrepreneurship culture in India.
5. **Marketing platforms:** transgender entrepreneur didn't get the opportunities to showcase their products at right platforms. Most transgender entrepreneurs wait for occasional exhibitions, fairs or melas to market their products. They hardly able to market their products at right places. Introducing proper marketing platforms which should include both online and offline avenues to ensure every possible opportunity to them can be seen as viable solution.

6. **Registration & Documentation processes' liberation reforms:** lack of registration due to very strict procedure, in government records hinders transgender enterprises' growth. As, most transgenders lacks basic documents, it should be the responsibility of government to introduce some liberation reforms in the documentation process to ensure easy registration by transgender entrepreneurs so that they will be able to get the access to benefits provided by government like- tax benefits, infrastructure benefits, credit facilities, subsidy benefits etc.
7. **Recognition:** for promoting trans-social entrepreneurship, it is very important to celebrate active trans-social entrepreneurs working in different fields, through facilitating them and their achievements on various events and occasions by government and other institutions. Such practices will encourage other budding transgender entrepreneurs to come forward and contribute to community building and empowerment.

## 6. Trans-Social Entrepreneurship as a catalyst towards Employment, Empowerment & Social Inclusion: A New Ray of Hope

Given the scarcity of conventional professions that are financially sustainable for transgender individuals, entrepreneurship is expected to produce much better results in terms of long-term alternative livelihood alternatives. The Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises currently works to hold, coach, and support transgender entrepreneurs as they grow their role in public procurement through the National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Hub (NSSH), among other efforts. In partnership with transgender CBOs, NGOs, and SHGs, the center hopes to do this through vendor development, information sharing, and capacity building (A Framework for Transgender-inclusive India, 2023). In addition to job prospects, Trans-Social Entrepreneurship offers a safe workplace, which is increasingly necessary. Transgender individuals frequently and severely endure discrimination in employment, invasions of privacy, harassment, and even physical and sexual abuse at work (Godrej: Trans inclusion manifesto, 2018). Many people claim to have changed employment in order to avoid prejudice or the possibility of it. Many transgender people still face regulations and procedures that discriminate against them in the workplace, despite the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019 granting them greater non-discrimination rights. It is essential to raise knowledge of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and Rules, 2020 in both the public and private job sectors. Concerning the promotion of alternative career paths and improving employability. The desk study and community consultations revealed that discrimination on the basis of gender expression or identity at work and a lack of career possibilities due to insufficient education and skills are the primary problems faced by transgender individuals. Transgender people's eligibility for bank loans and other financial aid is restricted by these problems. Furthermore, transsexual people often have no collateral requirements because their families forbid them from being property owners. Additional evidence for this finding comes from the 2015 Transgender Survey, which was conducted in Kerala. In some circumstances, microfinance may be considered a possibility. A 1996 study conducted in Odisha found that microfinance can help reduce gender disparity and assist transgender populations. According to A Framework for Transgender-inclusive India (2023), transgender persons are prohibited from using microfinance institutions for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of identity verification, financial illiteracy, and misunderstanding about programs and application procedures.

Rapport (1987, 1995) has made a significant contribution to empowerment theory by advocating for it to be at the forefront of community psychology theory development. The feeling of taking charge of one's own life that is intrinsically linked to empowerment is encapsulated in his widely quoted description of empowerment as “a mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their affairs” (Rappaport, 1987, p. 122). By giving them a respectable source of income, transgender entrepreneurs have been able to effectively contribute to the betterment of the community and help people take control of their daily lives. Three instances of empowering environments are provided by Maton and Salem (1995), which offer chances for shared leadership, the growth of a group identity, skill development, and involvement in significant organizational activities. Later, Rappaport supported the more constrained definition of empowerment proposed by the Cornell Empowerment Group, which included participating in a community group with consideration, decency, and respect in order to obtain equitable access to and control over resources (Rappaport, 1995). The same is evident when looking at the transgender community members who gain from Trans-Social Entrepreneurship. They are receiving consideration, attention, and a feeling of inclusion. additionally taking an active role in community groups. According to Zimmerman (1990a), empowerment is defined as a person's relationship with "environmental influences; organizational factors; or social, cultural, and political contexts" in addition to being a competency feature that is specific to the individual. In addition to honing their abilities and competencies, transgender entrepreneurs are cultivating connections with the outside world and surroundings. Based on the results of the literature research, Social Entrepreneurship has a significant impact on the economic, social, technological, cultural, political, and environmental aspects of the transgender community's empowerment.

Social entrepreneurship is defined as the capacity to discover solutions for a society's issues in terms of providing social services, promoting social and occupational integration, generating sustainable employment, and enhancing quality of life—including reducing poverty and social exclusion (Canestrino et al. 2020; Terziev and Nichev 2017). The process of improving the circumstances for people and groups to actively engage in society is known as inclusion. As Trans-Social Entrepreneurship has developed, it has been evident that people are accepting of working transgender persons. Any societal stigma that may have existed has begun to gradually disappear. Therefore, we can refer to it as a process that seeks to enhance the capacity, prospects, and dignity of individuals who face discrimination because of their identity, empowering them to participate fully in society (Social Inclusion, 2024). Trans-Social Entrepreneurship offers safe workspaces where transgender people can coexist, facilitating more comfortable and secure social interactions. Social inclusion was defined by Stinson and Antia (1999) as having the ability to interact with others, form friendships, and feel accepted by peers. Trans-Social Entrepreneurship is paving the road for the transgender population to be recognized, acknowledged, and accepted in a more inclusive way.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion:

In India, there are 4.8 lakh transgender persons, according to the 2011 census. In a 2018 survey on the rights of the transgender population, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India found that, even in cases where they satisfy the necessary requirements, 96% of transgender individuals face job rejection and limited career options, due to their gender expression and exclusion is much bigger problem than it seems. The new generation of

transgender population wants dignified sources of earning. Due to an increase in awareness of socio-legal aspects of the transgender community, it is expected that more young transgender population will come out of their closets in the near future. So, the need for their support and upliftment is a necessity and responsibility of our society. The marginalisation of the transgender community has a direct financial cost because more and more of them are being kept out of the workforce due to a lack of equitable employment opportunities. According to a 2016 World Bank study that looked in 39 countries, marginalization and GDP decrease go hand in hand (LGBTQ Inclusion in Offices Is Good for Indian Economy, 2023). Only five transgender people registered their businesses with the government between April 2018 and November 2019, according to a report released by the Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) government on December 2, 2019. Social entrepreneurship can be seen as the potential solution to all the problems of transgender community by engaging transgenders into entrepreneurship practices which bears the positive social consequences for them in return. The present study is an Exploratory Review Paper, based on extensive research on secondary data, aims to find out what Inclusive and Supportive Ecosystem is present in India, and how it is nurturing the Trans-Social Entrepreneurship within transgender community. Results shows that, In year 1990, Santa Khurai pioneered trans-entrepreneurship by starting a beauty parlour in 1990 but was remained as an unsung hero of Transgender community, but in the year 2012, Kalki Subramaniam was recognised as India's first Transgender Entrepreneur by starting a Jewellery business in Tamil Nadu. Her journey has become a milestone and since then, world has been able to witness a great zeal of transgender entrepreneurship culture. As, Isenberg contends that while each entrepreneurial ecosystem is distinct and made up of a multitude of particular components, an ecosystem is made up of general elements ranging from socio-cultural (like institutional support) to economic (like venture-friendly markets; also see Isenberg, 2010). Now, we can see that there are many organisation and institutions which are creating trans- social entrepreneurship environmently more friendly and accessible to all society members like- Anam Prem, a Mumbai-based group of volunteers, Sathrangi, a trans-feminine Indian livelihood venture, Delhi's Ramjas College, Connecting Dreams Foundation, Pride Circle, Rainbow Bazaar, QueerBazaar, Pridesio, BeUnic, Satrangi Bazar, QueerKala and many more. With these initiatives, we can realise the impact in growth of trans-entrepreneurship to a great extent and hence, can see a more prominent and promising future ahead. The Indian government has made considerable and consistent efforts over the years to build and promote a trans-inclusive society. The Central government has passed and released a number of welfare acts and regulations in order to solve these issues about accessibility of identities, education, shelter, livelihood, skill development, and protection of rights against the community (Transgender welfare in India: several initiatives implemented by the national government in the last three years, 2022). The findings of the paper also reveals that the challenges and problems faced by trans-social entrepreneurs includes financial crisis, lack of proper knowledge, lack of self-confidence and self-esteemed, Lack of resources, Lack of access/reach to right platforms, Existence of wider gap between introduction and implementation, Lack of proper skills and training, lack of trust, Fear for acceptance, and Lack of proper documentation. The Possible Solutions for promoting trans-social entrepreneurship can be Awareness creation, Implementation, Support system, Microfinancing practices, Marketing platforms, Registration & Documentation processes' liberation reforms and, Recognition. We can conclude that by creating a respectable source of income, transgender entrepreneurs have been able to effectively contribute to the betterment of the community and help people take control of their daily lives. Based on the results of the literature research, Social Entrepreneurship has a significant impact on the economic, social, technological, cultural, political, and environmental aspects of the transgender community's empowerment.

Also, Trans-Social Entrepreneurship is paving the road for the transgender population to be recognized, acknowledged, and accepted in a more inclusive way.

## 8. Scope and Limitation:

The present study provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of transgender entrepreneurship in India and offer insights for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for transgender entrepreneurs in the entrepreneurial space. Additionally, the study examines the current status of transgender entrepreneurship and government policies & economic factors on the evolution of transgender entrepreneurship in India. The scope of a study can further encompasses various dimensions like highlighting the shifts and progressions that have occurred over time including the motivations, challenges, and strategies employed by transgender individuals in starting and growing businesses. It could also delve into the unique characteristics and contributions of transgender entrepreneurs to the economy and society.

The limitation of a study is the availability and reliability of data. Transgender individuals are underrepresented in official records and surveys, making it challenging to obtain accurate information about their entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, there is lack of longitudinal data tracking the progress of transgender entrepreneurs over time, limiting the ability to assess long-term trends and patterns. Also, the main limitation of this study is that the used information and data only focused on secondary sources. There must be various numbers of unheard Trans-Social Entrepreneurs at local levels whose journeys are not covered yet by media, internet and other secondary sources but, who are playing the pivotal roles in the upliftment of Transgender community.

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