

Sexual and Gender Diversity, Welfare and Precarity in India: Impact, Advocacy & Process

*Gender and Sexual Minorities Economic Inclusion Advocacy Project
August 2016 to March 2018*

**Presentation by
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**Consultation on Mainstreaming of Transgender
Persons in Education**

Delhi University, July 5, 2018

(1) Project partners: AMaNA; ETA; SAATHII; SSSIF, University of Sussex represented by Dr. Paul Boyce, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Sussex and Pawan Dhall, Varta Trust, Consultant).

(2) Project collaborators: CORE Manipur, India HIV/AIDS Alliance, Maruploi Foundation, Varta Trust.

Project Philosophy

- Discourse on economic inclusion is often dominated by the concepts of:
 - **Economic growth** that enlarges the socio-economic pie
 - **Redistribution** that spreads out the socio-economic pie more evenly
- Both are together crucial in a welfare state like India
- But let's not forget the third element of economic inclusion:
 - **Education and skills building** that **enable** people to avail of the greater opportunities offered by economic growth and redistribution

Project Overview - 1

- Follow up of case study titled *Livelihood, Exclusion and Opportunity: Socioeconomic Welfare among Gender and Sexuality Non-normative People in India**
- Study showed despite government social security policies and schemes for marginalized communities, gender and sexual minorities face economic exclusion because of:
 - Generic barriers: Inadequate budgets, corruption
 - Specific barriers: Lack of recognition of gender identity diversity, non-normative intimate relationships, non-normative family structures

* Commissioned by Institute of Development Studies, UK under their Sexuality, Poverty and Law Programme; research conducted by Dr. Paul Boyce and Pawan Dhall in Manipur and Odisha, published 2015.

Project Overview -2

- Study highlighted ambiguity caused by Supreme Court verdicts: Section 377 IPC and NALSA (transgender identities and rights)
- Emphasized need for investment in pathways to enable gender and sexual minorities to advocate for structures that address their socio-economic vulnerabilities
- Study recommended (in line with NALSA verdict):
 - Awareness generation among gender and sexual minorities, their families and larger communities
 - Sensitization/training of government, non-government bodies
 - Policy changes in education, skills building, employment, social security and health spheres; also a range of legal reforms
 - Establishment of transgender welfare boards*

* Manipur Transgender Welfare Board established in August 2016 through the efforts of AMaNA, ETA, SAATHII and the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Manipur

Project Overview - 3

- **Goal:** Implement a process to enable development of policies and programming on employment and social security needs of gender and sexual minorities in India
- **Objectives:**
 - Develop capacity of small scale gender and sexual minority community groups in Manipur to advocate for structures that address their socio-economic vulnerabilities
 - Begin an ongoing process of institutionalizing changes in social security and employment practice in Manipur
 - Disseminate the learning from Manipur nationally to replicate the process in other states as a model for codes of practice by gender and sexual minorities in India

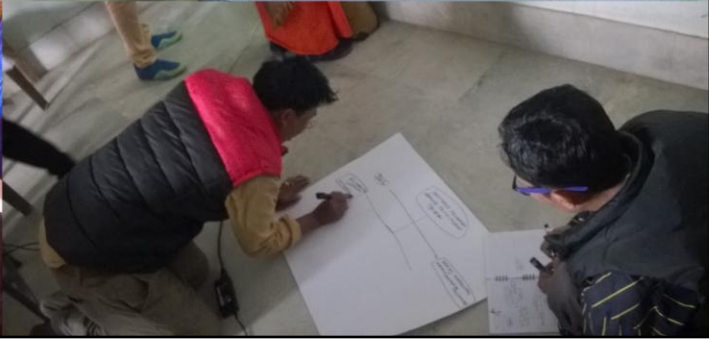
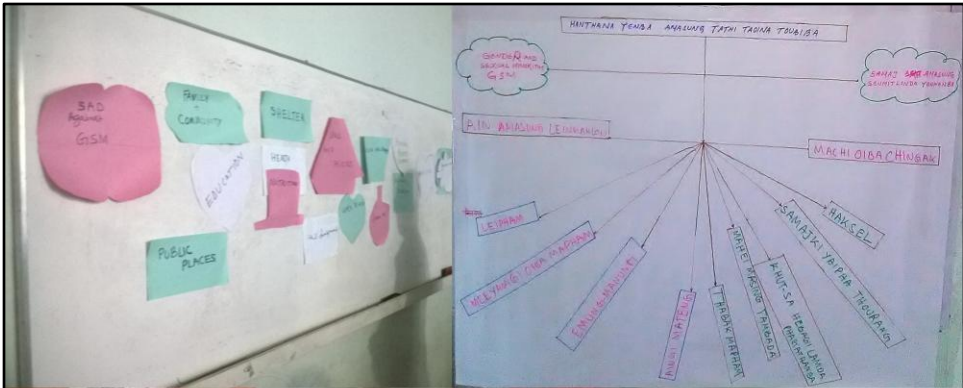
Project Overview - Activities

- Training of Community Advocates in Manipur
- Baseline economic exclusion map and community blog
- Advocacy in Manipur: Sensitization sessions, good practices guide on inclusion, employment inclusion pilots*
- Assessment of changes in perceptions, attitudes, actions of employment, social security and other stakeholders
- Scale up of learning to national level:
 - Sharing and application of project learning in national programmes
 - National consultation in Delhi with government representatives, multilateral stakeholders, employer representatives, community groups and activists
 - Compiling next steps at state/national levels and long-term vision for ensuring economic inclusion of gender and sexual minorities

* In collaboration with organizations willing to bring about organizational policy inclusion of gender and sexual minorities.

Training Activities

- Training of four Community Advocates over two workshops in Nov-Dec 2016:
 - Project orientation
 - What economic inclusion means
 - Discussion on how stigma and discrimination around non-normative genders and sexualities in various spheres lead to economic exclusion (*illustration in next slide*)
 - Baseline mapping planning
 - Research ethics
 - Discussion on advocacy strategies to be deployed
- Subsequent training in documentation and story writing for community blog to portray economic exclusion



Baseline Economic Inclusion Mapping

- Key objective: Generation of an economic inclusion social map (snapshot) for gender and sexual minorities in Manipur, 2016-17 (as an advocacy tool)
- Literature review and 21 semi-structured interviews with gender and sexual minority community members and key informants (purposive sampling)
- Focus on key elements of economic inclusion: Education, skills building, employment, social security, health, laws, policies
- Areas of investigation: Community profile, recognition, representation, inclusion, freedom of gender expression, community friendliness of infrastructure and services (availability, accessibility, barriers, challenges), case studies

(1) Graphic depiction of mapping in flex banner.

(2) Baseline findings also reflected in stories on community blog ([Rainbow Manipur / Inclusive Manipur](#)).

Baseline Study Findings

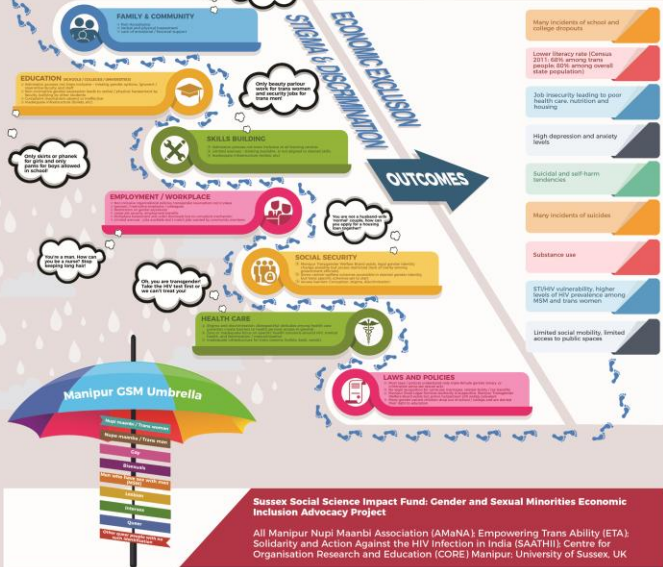
- Few successes and many failures in economic inclusion:
 - **Education:** Other gender option missing in admission process*; gender-sexuality content absent in syllabus; biased attitudes of faculty and students; restrictions on gender expression; absence of suitable toilets; many gender variant students drop-out
 - **Skills building:** Other gender option missing in admission process*; absence of suitable toilets; restriction on gender expression; gaps in skills wanted versus skills available*; poor retention of trainees even in community-specific programmes
 - **Employment:** Recognition missing in organizational policies (even in government institutions and progressive agencies); gaps in jobs wanted versus jobs available; cases of workplace discrimination and harassment; no complaint mechanism; job reservations still awaited in government sector

Baseline Study Findings

- **Social security:** Successes in legal gender identity change; availability of social welfare schemes in desired gender identities; transgender welfare board exists, but specific schemes for transgender people still awaited; no recognition of same-sex couples because of discriminatory laws
- **Health:** Biased attitudes of health care providers act as barriers to services access; specific health concerns not addressed by government (other than HIV); outcome is poor physical, mental and social health status
- **Laws and policies:** No concrete recognition in any policy other than Supreme Court NALSA ruling, legal aid and some social security schemes; discriminatory laws and police harassment destroy trust

Gender & Sexual Minorities

GENDER & SEXUAL MINORITIES IN MANIPUR: A PICTURE OF ECONOMIC EXCLUSION



Advocacy Action Areas

- Based on mapping data, 3 advocacy action areas were prioritized – education, skills building and employment
- Specific advocacy issues in relation to these action areas were also prioritized:
 - Including transgender option in admission processes in educational institutions
 - Allowing greater freedom of gender expression in terms of dress in educational institutions and workplaces
 - Constructing separate toilets for transgender persons, allocating existing ones, or allocating gender-neutral but single use toilets in educational institutions and workplaces
 - Reflecting gender and sexual minority inclusion in organizational policies of employers (private / government bodies), especially those that serve as 'pillars of governance' – educational, skills building, social welfare, health care, legal aid, policy making and media agencies
 - Running pilot skills building or employment initiatives focussed on specific interests of gender and sexual minority individuals

(1) Not all priority areas could be addressed with equal emphasis in the project period, but dialogue on all issues was generated in different forums, including the community blog.

Project Activities - 1



- **Advocacy with entrepreneurs:** Two sensitization workshops organized with 14 entrepreneurs and social enterprise leaders based in Manipur on gender, sexuality, elements of economic inclusion, model organizational policies and employment good practices; continued community meetings for interface with entrepreneurs
- **IDAHOBIT event, May 17, 2017:** Protested negative community portrayal in a Manipuri digital film and use of derogatory terms in a key newspaper (led to immediate apology by newspaper thanks to strong media advocacy with All Manipur Working Journalists Union)



Project Activities - 2

- **Advocacy with vocational training institutes:** Several meetings held with leading training institutes in Imphal to advocate for transgender inclusion in their courses; ensuring separate toilet access for transgender trainees
- **Advocacy with media bodies:** Two sensitization workshops organized with 17 members of All Manipur Working Journalists Union on gender, sexuality, elements of economic inclusion, improved media coverage, and strategic partnerships
- **Odisha Transgender Policy 2017 inputs:** In areas of organizational policy inclusion, skills building, media advocacy, freedom of gender expression and child protection to prevent school drop-outs

Project Activities - 3

- **Advocacy with child protection officers:** Sensitization meeting in collaboration with Maruploi Foundation with government child protection officers in Bishnupur to advocate for prevention of harassment and bullying of gender variant children in schools (to prevent drop-outs)
- **Development of community blog *Rainbow Manipur / Inclusive Manipur*:** To highlight economic inclusion and exclusion status of gender and sexual minorities in the state through case studies / human interest stories (includes training of community leaders in story writing)
www.rainbowmanipur.wordpress.com
- **Learning dissemination:** National consultation in Delhi (Aug 2017); two day public exhibition of project goals, activities and impact in Imphal (Jan-Feb 2018)

Employment Good Practices

- **Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities Policy of Centre for Internet and Society, Bangalore**
 - Organization does interdisciplinary research on internet and digital technologies from policy and academic perspectives
 - Has adopted a policy that emphasizes non-discrimination at the workplace and equal opportunities during recruitment
 - Has gone beyond applicable law to include non-discrimination in relation to both gender identity and sexual orientation
- **Diversity and Inclusion Policy of Godrej Group, Mumbai**
 - HR policy includes adoption leave for individuals
 - Medical benefit scheme extended to partners of LGBT employees

Formative Impact Assessment

- **Method:** Semi-structured interviews with 15 of the stakeholders influenced by the sensitization activities; review of project activity reports
- Primary data shows:
 - Stakeholders became better aware about diversity in gender and sexual minority communities and reasons (social drivers) behind their disadvantaged socio-economic profile
 - But nuanced understanding of gender and sexuality as distinct issues will require continued engagement
 - Promise of greater support from government officials / agencies
 - High level of interest in collaborating with community groups to extend training and employment opportunities, particularly among entrepreneurs and training institutes

Impact Assessment

- **Community blog (9 posts so far):**
 - Capacity building in advocacy through documentation and story telling; evidence base of economic exclusion (and inclusion); tool for community mobilization and media advocacy (posts being republished by 'mainstream' media)
- **Entrepreneurs: 13 action areas identified like:**
 - Hiring and training community members based on their interests, skills, qualifications and job requirements
 - Organizational policy changes to reflect inclusion
 - Inclusion of gender and sexual minorities in job advertisements and recruitment calls
 - Online bulletin (hosted on *Rainbow Manipur* blog) on jobs and training available in private sector
 - Facilitating gender and sexuality sensitization in educational institutions; scholarship for young community members

Impact Assessment

- **Media advocacy:**

- Linkage established through AMWJU with Department of Information and Public Relations for inclusion of transgender people in their training courses
- Internship opportunities (long term and short term) in media houses in Manipur
- Greater interest in writing stories on economic inclusion issues
- Visible support to counter inaccurate and negative portrayal of gender and sexual minorities



Impact assessment



- **Advocacy with Accent Allied & Infotech (training institute):**
 - Transgender inclusion in all their courses rather than separate courses for community members
 - All future training course advertisements to mention that transgender individuals are welcome to apply
 - Of three toilets in the institute, one to be allotted for transgender students who want to use it
 - Project mapping flex banner displayed on their premises
- **Sensitization of child protection officers in Bishnupur district:**
 - Helped develop a roadmap for community groups to follow in dealing with instances of gender variant students being bullied in school or dropping out

Impact Assessment

- **Linkages with large corporate bodies:**
 - Linkage developed with Godrej India, Mumbai to provide inputs for development of transgender inclusive organizational policies
- **Transgender inclusive sanitation issues:**
 - Preliminary success with Imphal municipal body for separate public toilets for transgender people; gender neutral toilets allocated by an entrepreneur and vocational training centre in Imphal
 - Experience of advocating for inclusive sanitation included in international paper titled *Transgender-inclusive Sanitation Insights from South Asia* published in Apr 2018 issue of *Waterlines* journal
- **Varta Community Reporters Training & Citizen Journalism Pilot Programme:**
 - To engage Community Advocates in follow-up of preliminary advocacy gains made towards economic inclusion in Manipur

Key Learning Points

- Economic inclusion is not just about employment but also family support, education, skills building, social security, health, laws and policies
- Significance of leveraging child protection laws and systems to prevent denial of educational opportunities for gender variant children
- **Education, interests, skills mapping of gender and sexual minorities to guide creation of learning and job opportunities**
- Looking at private sector employment opportunities along with government policies and schemes
- Importance of story telling through community owned media to highlight economic exclusion
- Extended training for community leaders to give a sustained push to advocacy on economic inclusion

Thank You!

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