



Fact Finding Report  
on Right to Food  
with the  
Transgender  
Community in the  
District of  
Karimnagar,  
Telangana  
**HRLN, THITS , &  
THTS**

## Table of contents

S.No	Subject	From Page No.	To Page No.
1	Introduction	3	6
2.	Fact Finding team	7	7
3.	Fact Finding Tools	8	9
4.	Transgender community of Warangal District	10	11
5.	Case Study	11	13
6.	List of Transgender people who doesn't have ration cards	14	14
7.	Photo Gallery	15	15

# Right to Food

## **Background**

**International perspective:** The right to food is protected under international human rights and humanitarian law. The correlative state obligations are well-established under international law. The right to food is recognized in article 25 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as a plethora of other instruments. Noteworthy is also the recognition of the right to food in numerous national constitutions.

### **The International instruments include:**

Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (Right to Food Guidelines), 2004.

Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, 2012.

### **Indian perspective:**

The Right to Food is inherent to a life with dignity, and Article 21 of the Constitution of India which guarantees a fundamental right to life and personal liberty should be read with Articles 39(a) and 47 to understand the nature of the obligations of the State in order to ensure the effective realization of this right. Article 39(a) of the Constitution, enunciated as one of the Directive Principles, fundamental in the governance of the country, requires the State to direct its policies towards securing that all its citizens have the right to an adequate means of livelihood, while Article 47 spells out the duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people as a primary responsibility. The Constitution thus makes the Right to Food a guaranteed Fundamental Right which is enforceable by virtue of the constitutional remedy provided under Article 32 of the Constitution.

Persons living in conditions of poverty and hunger have often been found to be suffering from prolonged malnutrition. Even when their deaths could not, in strictly clinical terms, be related to starvation, the tragic reality remained that they often died of prolonged mal-nutrition and the continuum of distress, which had rendered them unable to withstand common diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea.

<sup>1</sup>According to FAO estimates in 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2019' report, 194.4 million people are undernourished in India. By this measure 14.5% of the population is undernourished in India. Also, 51.4% of women in reproductive age between 15 to 49 years are anaemic. NHRC said that the present practice of insisting on mortality as a proof of starvation is wrong and needs to be set aside. It has added that there are obvious policy implications as far as the obligations of the State are concerned. The Right to Food implies the right to food at appropriate nutritional levels and the quantum of relief to those in distress must meet those levels in order to ensure that this right is actually secured and does not remain a theoretical concept.

The right to food is a human right. It protects the right of all human beings to live in dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. The right to food is not about charity, but about ensuring that all people have the capacity to feed themselves in dignity. A human rights approach to food and nutrition would imply that the beneficiaries of relief measures should be recognized as “claim holders”. Viewed from this perspective, the prevalence of distress-conditions threatening starvation constitute an injury requiring the imposition of a penalty on the State. The Commission was of the view that the remedy provided under Article 32 of the Constitution applied to groups no less than to the individuals

First and foremost among the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is the pledge made by all Heads of State and Government to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's poor and of people who suffer from hunger. Given the circumstances of our country, India has a special responsibility in this regard. The prevalence of extreme poverty and hunger is unconscionable in this day and age, for not only does it militate against respect for human rights, but it also undermines the prospects of peace and harmony within a State.

### **Right to food and transgender community of India**

<sup>2</sup>In the mid 1870, the eunuchs of Gazipur district in Uttar Pradesh complained that they were starving due to ban on right to dance and play in public which was the only source of livelihood for the eunuchs then.

Trans people face a variety of social security issues. Since most of them run away or evicted from home, they do not expect support from their biological family in the long run. Subsequently, they face a lot of challenges especially when they are not in a position to earn (or has decreased earning capacity) due to health concerns, lack of employment opportunities, or old age. Lack of specific social welfare schemes and barriers to use existing schemes has consistently push their economic backwardness and ultimately to below poverty lines of the society. The Social welfare departments provide a variety of social welfare schemes for socially and economically disadvantaged groups.

However, so far, no such specific schemes are available for Trans people even for the subsidised groceries or food supplements through the civil supplies department. Many times it has been seen that stringent and cumbersome procedures need for address proof, identity proof, and income certificate all hinder even deserving people from making use of available schemes including in getting these necessities of life. After the historical judgment of NALSA Vs UOI 2014 Odisha has become the first state in India in 2015 to include the transgender community in the category of below poverty line (BPL) beneficiaries which connect them to programmes of the government, like food grains, pension, health, education and housing. Other than this no single state has yet implemented this judgment including the Central Government in any of its welfare schemes.

### **Right to Food and Telangana State**

Telangana state formed in 2014 as 29<sup>th</sup> state of Indian Republic. <sup>3</sup>The Civil Supplies Department of State has started with an objective of Implementation of National Food Security Act 2013 by making food grains accessible at reasonable prices especially to the weaker and vulnerable sections of the society under public distribution system ensuring food security to all the citizens of the state. The Civil Supplies Department of State has over 84.64 lakhs ration cards covering a total of 2.83 crore beneficiaries. The State government with effect from 2015 has taken decision to provide 6 kgs of subsidized rice under NFSA 1 kg per person without any limitation on the number of members in the family which hold the white ration card. The State Government has taken decision to supply superfine quality rice to all the welfare hostels and the mid day meal programme from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2015. As per the central government's Anthyodaya Annayojana guidelines the persons who are dependent on daily earnings, persons of no subsistence or societal support Urban and rural homeless people.

### **Situation of Transgender persons In Telangana in the light of Right to Food**

There is no state census of Transgender people but as per the last year voters list of state election commission there are 2885 transgender voters across the state. The State doesn't have any specific welfare policy or inclusive of its existing policies which provides the subsidized food for the transgender people who live below the poverty line. There are many reasons often why the transgender people are not able to avail the white ration card for the subsidized food supplements distributed by the state at free of cost. E.g no proper/valid identity documents like voter id, Aadhaar card or bank account any such social entitlements which are asked as one or both as the proof for the residence and also for the economic status of such transgender person. This is the starting point of transgender people excluding them in all sorts of social welfare schemes.

. The Telangana state civil supplies department on its online form for applying to the white ration card has included a third column which will help to register transgender people for such ration card. But when the ration card is issued it is issued only to the Transgender woman who has a valid government identity proof as 'third gender'. In that way only trans women are only eligible for such white ration card. This is not only against the self-identity principle which has been established under NALSA Vs UOI, third gender judgment but also social injustice to other people who self-identify themselves under third gender category. There are a lot of Transgender people who identify themselves as either as Trans men, Intersex or Hijra, Kinner or others who are also part of larger Trans umbrella (as defined under NALSA Vs UOI judgment) who have no scope to get registered under the white ration card scheme.

There is a need to find the facts in this regarding the situation of transgender community of Telangana state who are still not part of food security schemes of either Centre or State government as per the guidelines.

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1. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2019-state-food-security-and-nutrition-world-sofi-safeguarding-against-economic#targetText=2019%20%2D%20The%20State%20of%20Food,against%20economic%20slowdowns%20and%20downturns&targetText=SOFI%202019%20confirms%20a%20rise,from%2081%20the%20previous%20year.>
  2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-48442934>
  3. <http://tscscl.telangana.gov.in/Annual%20Report%202019%20New.pdf>

**Fact finding Team:**

**The fact finding team consists of Telangana Hijra Intersex Transgender Samithi (THITS), Telangana Hijra Transgender Samithi (THITS) , and Human Rights law Network (HRLN) experts.**

**Telangana Hijra Intersex and Transgender Samiti (THITS)** has come together as an unregistered collective to struggle for the dignity and empowerment of the transgender community across Telangana. THITS builds on the many existing networks between hijras, including intersex people and many types of transgender persons that already exist in this state of Telangana and extends to all corners of the subcontinent. THITS is not accessing funding institutions; instead it will gather funds from members and supporting individuals, and handle them collectively and transparently. THITS believes transgender people face economic, political, social, and cultural exclusion from a patriarchal social administrative structure that forces gender-based productive labour for the benefit of an economic feudal and capitalist elite. THITS is working its struggle in solidarity with all the other marginalised communities who have been historically oppressed by these power structures on the lines of sex, diverse sexual orientation, diverse gender orientation , and our members are primarily working class hijras , Transgender and Intersex people from Dalit , backward castes tribes and other minority communities. THITS aims to fight all oppression as well as the transphobia and homophobia the working transgender community faces in the form of the daily violence, ridicule and humiliation every time we walk down the street, board a bus, or try to find a bathroom. Our fight is cultural, legal, political, economic and revolutionary.

**Telangana Hijra and Transgender Samiti (THTS)** is a sister concern of THITS. In 2019 few volunteers of THITS has registered THTS under societies registration Act. It is a community based organisation being all the members on board hails from working class Hijra and Transgender communities. The registration of THTS is a consultative and unanimous decision taken by the volunteers of THITS in a mass group meeting. THTS is now works as net work of all Transgender oriented community based organisations across the districts of Telangana. THTS has already started advocating with the Government of Telangana by presenting representation to various districts collectors on the demands of the transgender community of Telangana community. The funding of THTS is mostly through the donations and they advocate for the inclusive policies and working environment for the transgender community.

HRLN team : There are also team of experts from HRLN Hyderabad branch to record and document the whole process of fact finding.

**Fact finding tools :**

The tools used for the fact finding process are

1. Questionnaire
2. Focused group discussion and
3. Case studies

**Warangal District :**

**Warangal** is a District uses to consist of 6 talukas and 2 revenue divisions which later increased to 15 talukas in 1979. In 1985 when N. T. Rama Rao introduces mandal system in Warangal district was divided in to 50 mandals, but again Warangal mandal was curved out from Hanamkonda mandal consisting only urban area of Warangal which increased to total 51 mandals and revenue divisions increased to 5 in Warangal district. Present Warangal Urban district was curved out from old Warangal district which split in to 5 new districts they are Warangal urban, Warangal rural, Jangaon, Jayashanker and Mahabubabad in October 2016 along with other total new 21 districts. Three mandals from Karimnagar district was merged in Warangal urban district and 4 new mandals were created are Inavole, Kazipet, Khila Warangal and Velair total reaching to 11 mandals and one revenue division

**Right to Food Questionnaire****Questionnaire No:****Location:****Date:****Time:**

Interviewee Name:

Age:

Address:

District:

State:

Pin Code:

Contact Number:

Education:

Occupation:

Monthly Income:

If staying with Family -

Family Income:

Members in the Family:



Physical/psychological ailments:

Any Disability:

Any long chronic ailments

Which Category do you belong to? \_\_\_ SC \_\_\_ ST \_\_\_ OBC \_\_\_ OC \_\_\_

Do you have a Bank Account?

Identity Cards/Documents with gender third gender depicted

Aadhar Card

Passport

PAN Card

If any other Identity Card, please mention \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a Ration Card?

Yes/No

If yes:

Which color Ration Card do you have?

Is your ration card linked to any other State Welfare scheme? (Health, Housing, Pension, etc...)

If No:

Have you applied for a ration card?

What was the response to the application?

Have you applied to the grievance redressal in your district?

What is the kind of accommodation that you stay in?

Rented House

Owned by self

Government Accommodation

If any other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Any additional Information:

## **Transgender community of Karimnagar District : (Information out of Questionnaires)**

- a. Personal profiling :** Approximately Karimnagar District consists of more than 200 hijras who are visible and many more 1000 around trans people as per the details given by the interviewees . The working class Hijra and Trans women are mostly dependent on only begging in the trains. The average age of all the hijra and trans women who have been interviewed is on an average between 23 to 40. Many of the Trans people are belonged to Banjara, Dalit, Bahujan and other lower casts.
- b. Social profiling :** There are trans women who are living within the hijra system who go for either begging in the train, or regularly in the market or shops. Most of Hijra women for time being migrate from Karimnagar to Mumbai and Delhi if they are into sex work . They frequently shuttle between Mumbai and Karimnagar.
- c. Economic profiling :** Many of them are into begging in the trains. Because they came out of their natal families and started living separately hence they are kept away from all sorts of social entitlements due to lack of bonafied birth and education certificates after gender change etc.,. from long back they are struggling to get their basic essentials of life food clothes and shelter. Almost 80 percent of hijra and Trans women live in the rented houses which are kaccha houses for which they are forced to pay double the normal rent. Many of them are also from tribal regions that is how they are suppose to travel long from their areas to the city and keep low profile of their trans status to the natal families. Very few of them has been provided with Government subsidised housing facilities.
- d. Anthropological profiling :** Karimnagar is a city in the south Indian state of Telangana. The district shares boundaries with Peddapalli, Jagityal, Sircilla, Siddipet, Jangaon, Warangal urban and Jayashankar Bhupalapally districts. and Jayashankar Bhupalapally districts. was originally called *Elagandala*. Later Kannada kingdoms such as Western Chalukyas ruled it. It was part of the great Later Kannada kingdoms. Later, the ruling Later, the ruling Nizams of Hyderabad changed the name to Karimnagar, derived from the name of Shahenshah E Karimnagar Syed Kareemullah Shah Quadri nithinvasi of Hyderabad changed the name to *Karimnagar*. The district has a population of 10,05,711 (2011 census)

## **Ration cards of Transgender people in Karimnagar Group Discussion:**

Many of the hijra and transgender women expressed in the group discussion that due to lack of main social identity cards like Adhaar, Voter id and PAN cards it is so problematic to apply for ration cards. There are no permanent houses almost 80% of the hijra and trans people lives in rented houses. “We have applied for the ration cards but they have been not granted on the grounds that we don’t have proper gender change documents, our gender in previous identity cards like voter id, adhaar is different and now after transition the situation is different” said Bhavani a Hijra guru and founding member of Tris Shakti Welfare society a local Trans community based organisation . “Lack of ration cards few times lead to non allocation of double bed room houses given in free by Telangana government because they are linked with ration cards ” said Sharada another hijra woman. “We have also given a representation regarding the welfare concerns of the transgender community of Karimnagar to the District Collector but still its not moving beyond” said another hijra leader Renuka.

“We are applying for the ration cards they are not rejecting but our old identity cards like voter id, adhaar are in male gender so they are keeping it aside for longer time” said another hijra guru Ranjitha .

The team has interviews nearly 15 trans women and out of which only 2 has ration card remaining doesn't have.

### Case Study

Name of the Interviewee: Bhavani

Category: Hijra & shivashakti

Area: Karimnagar



### Socio – economic and psychological problems from the day of schooling and grown –up

I have younger sister in my home I am the eldest one . I am feminine from my childhood and I am a shivashakti who has been married to goddess Durga . I use to do the shivashakti rituals under my guru who is also a Shivashakti. In the age of 12 I have been identified myself as Shivashakti. As my family is very poor my father use to be a daily labourer and my mother is a house wife I have continued very hardly my education till tenth standard and due to gender dysphoria not able to concentrate on my studies . I know both reading and writing in Telugu and English. I faced lot of discrimination being feminine from my childhood people mainly boys tried to molest me also due that.

**Multiple discrimination and marginalization :** when I reached teenage and being the elder in the family I was forced to get marry with a girl from my family. Socially I was not in a position to deny them. It was a forced marriage against my sexuality and will. I have now two children who are studying. Recently I get done my emasculation. I now live in hijra community though I take care of my family and children. My children and family face lot of stigma and discrimination if any one knows that I am a trans person. This is a very serious concern for me.

**SRS & health risks:** I get done my nirvana(emasculatation) very recently , my health is now very good as I take care

**Human rights and civic amenities :** After nirvana(emasculatation) I felt that it is very difficult to stay along with my family and children so I have started living with my community people. Being Shiva shakti also there is one type of marginalisation people feel that we have no problems similar to them. We are also in poverty we are not asked weather eligible for subsidised food, shelter and health facilities. There are also people who attack saying that we are fake and people who do black magic.

**Avenue for the empowerment:** My only empowerment is that I am “devudu manishi” (person of God) . Being shivashakti and being a trans person community living sharing the resources and caring for one another, sister hood are positive things. Government any how thought of us.

**Policies and laws regarding the transgender people :** there are no such inclusive policies either for shivashaktis of trans people, they both are in badly need of the same. Most of trans people and shivashaktis are also from the marginalised casts atleast on those lines they might have drawn the policies.

**Welfare measures of transgender people:** there is a ban on Jogini culture in the state of Telangana. So there is also a confusion and conflation of who is Jogini and Shivashakti so on those lines advocacy for the welfare of shivashaktis has hampered a lot . If you are again a shivashakti then the need doubles for welfare because you face double discrimination.

**Expectations from the society :** only expectation is if a person says I am trans or I am shivashakti people should understand the reason behind that if they want us to produce proof for everything that is practically not possible. Our bodies is not proof of what we claim as our identity rather our understanding of gender and its diversity is needed.

**Livelihood issues and interventions:** being a shivashakti and a trans person I am from the beginning used to beg collect alms and live. But what about if my health doesn't cooperate and I am not able to beg. Governments should also intervene and provide us with pension and other welfare schemes .

**Empowerment:** My hijra guru and my Shivashakti guru along with my chelas are all my empowerment.

**Policy aspects of legalisation:** at present I feel no such inclusive policy is there for trans people.

**Suggestion on policies which can be brought in changes in the TG Act: :** the issues of shivashaktis should also be considered in this Act because there are equal number of Shivashakti trans people in this country.

**Welfare measures with reference to health needs:** we need free SRS facilities including surgery, hormones replacement and psychological counseling etc.,. After few years of emasculation we face long term ailments like diabetes, urinary tract infections and cancer who will take care of us so we need health insurance policy also.

**Harassment and unlawful penalties:** Mostly the Transgender people who are shivashakti face unlawful attacks from police in the name of practicing the black magic. There is also harassment similar to women to the transgender women shivashaktis and if they are into begging people sometimes sexually approach us assault us with bad language also.

**Sexual abuse :** though people have respect to shivashakti as they are god people but being trans we face similar sexual violence to women.

**Violation and deprivation of human rights :** we don't have marriage rights, parental rights , property rights and atleast if we die there is no place in the burial ground such a plith of violation of human rights we face

**Inputs for Policy Implementation affecting the Transgender Bill providing capacity building :** Trans welfare policies should be the prima facie agenda of the Government they should also include the Trans shivashakti s.



**During representation given to Karimnagar Collector by Bhavani and trans volunteers**

### List of Transgender people who doesn't have ration cards

S.No	Name	Mobile No.	Gender
1	Sindhu	9963239220	TG
2	Kavya	9121154686	TG
3	Rajee	8106342494	TG
4	Sana	9550487155	TG
5.	Ananadi	7032821307	TG
6.	Likitha	7730841116	TG
7.	Shruthi	9701335099	TG
8.	Renuka	6302530248	TG
9.	Sharada	9618205744	TG
10.	Preethi	-	TG
11.	Nayantara	-	TG
12.	Bujji	-	TG
13.	Sravanthi	-	TG
14	Ankamma	-	TG
15.	N.Uma	-	TG

# Photo gallery

