



Transgender Persons

Revamping Spaces, Reclaiming Voices

Insights from
Garima Greh Shelters and Beyond

National Human Rights Commission, India

September, 2025





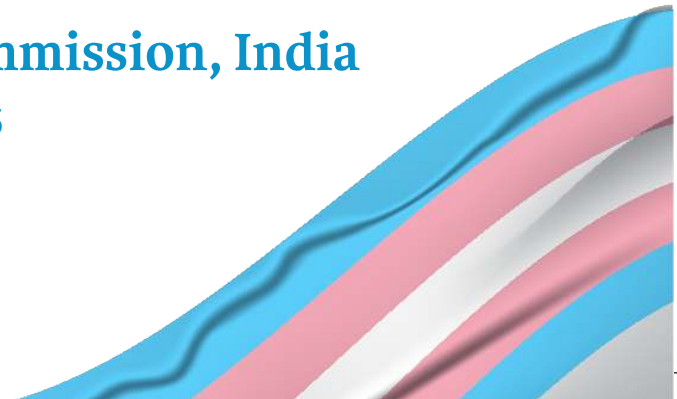
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Editor

Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC

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Disclaimer

The report has been prepared based on the visits to the Garima Greh Shelters undertaken by the National Human Rights Commission, India.

Any errors in the installation or the citation of references in this study are inadvertent and may please be ignored.

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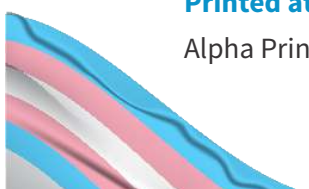
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List of Abbreviations

ATR	Action Taken Report
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCI	Child Care Institution
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DM	District Magistrate
JJ Act	Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015
MoSJE	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
PD	Project Director
PM DAKSH	Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi
PHRA	Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993
PMC	Project Monitoring Committee
SHG	Self-Help Group
SMILE	Support for Marginalized Individual for Livelihood and Enterprise
SRS	Sex Reassignment Surgery
TG	Transgender
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Foreword



Justice V. Ramasubramanian
Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC

In a society founded on the principles of dignity, equality, and justice, the recognition and protection of the rights of transgender persons is not merely an act of social inclusion but a reaffirmation of our constitutional and moral values. Ancient India had respectful place for transgenders in the society. The framers of the Indian Constitution envisaged a nation where no one endures injustice. India remains among a handful of countries wherein every adult was granted the right to vote from the very day the Constitution was adopted. It signifies that our founding fathers and mothers imagined a modern India where every individual is valued and treated with respect and dignity. Although the Constitution did not explicitly mention transgender persons, their rightful place within the phrase 'We the People' was never in doubt. Yet, shaped by colonial laws and prejudice, the community has long been pushed to the margins — denied equal access to education, healthcare, and livelihood. This exclusion was societal, not constitutional, and correcting it is our collective duty.

The establishment of *Garima Greh* shelters by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India marks a significant step towards gender justice. These shelters are perceived not merely as places of refuge, but as sanctuaries of hope, healing, and renewal to many who have been cast out by families and society. It seeks to restore not only physical security but also emotional strength and economic independence. Each shelter is a quiet yet powerful assertion that the Indian State recognises the dignity and rights of all its citizens, regardless of gender identity.

This report by the National Human Rights Commission assesses the implementation and effectiveness of these shelters through field visits and interactions. It highlights what has been achieved but more importantly identifies gaps and offers practical recommendations to strengthen care and empowerment for transgender persons. I hope this publication contributes meaningfully to India's evolving framework of transgender welfare and guides policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders in building a truly inclusive society. May it help translate the promise of *Garima* i.e. dignity — from ideals into practice.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'V' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

[Justice V. Ramasubramanian]





Preface



Bharat Lal

Secretary General &
Chief Executive Officer, NHRC

At the heart of every just and compassionate society lies the ability to listen to the silences, the struggles, and the aspirations of those who are often rendered invisible. This report by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) reflects such an endeavour — walking alongside India's transgender community to bring their voices closer to the governance, policy, reform and implementation.

It presents the findings of a systematic assessment of the *Garima Greh* scheme, launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India to provide safe spaces for transgender persons who face systemic marginalisation. These shelters are not only places of refuge but also of healing, growth, and belonging. While the scheme offers a critical lifeline, its success depends significantly on how effectively it is implemented on the ground, how well it aligns with human rights standards, and how far it evolves to meet the diverse needs of the community it seeks to serve.

To this end, the report draws on multi-state field visits, consultations, and observations of twelve shelters across nine states/ UTs, evaluating administration, infrastructure, service delivery, and rights-based alignment. Importantly, the scope of this report goes beyond the contours of *Garima Greh* to highlight the pressing needs of transgender children and the elderly — groups often overlooked in discourse. Recommendations are thoughtful and actionable, aimed at strengthening the ecosystem of transgender welfare and advancing an inclusive, life-cycle approach to support.

The Commission acknowledges the cooperation and openness of all those who contributed to this initiative, including the residents and staff of these shelters, and officials of NHRC and various state governments. Special thanks are due to Smt. Anita Sinha, Former Joint Secretary, NHRC; Mr Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC; Presenting Officers of the NHRC, Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Vihan and Smt. Yasmin Ahmad; Dr. (Ms.) Rajul Raikwar, Consultant (Research); and Ms. Lakshmi Kumari, JRC, for their dedication in facilitating the team in undertaking field visits and shaping this report. It is hoped that this report will serve as both an assessment and a roadmap, guiding collective efforts toward a more inclusive and dignified future of transgender persons.

[Bharat Lal]







Executive Summary

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment launched the Garima Greh initiative as a pilot programme with 12 shelters across 9 states/UTs to provide safe housing and comprehensive support for destitute adult transgender persons. Now subsumed under the Central Sector Scheme SMILE, the initiative seeks to offer temporary rehabilitation—safe shelter, essential amenities, healthcare, counselling, skill development, and livelihood opportunities—for up to one year, enabling beneficiaries to reintegrate into society with dignity and independence.

Despite its progressive vision, the initiative faces critical funding delays, operational challenges, and systemic gaps. The Annual Report 2023-24 reflected *nil expenditure* under the relevant budget head, threatening the sustainability of shelters. Given the historical marginalisation, economic exclusion, and healthcare needs of the transgender community—including issues around gender dysphoria and affordability of gender-affirmative care—ensuring the effective functioning of Garima Greh is not only a matter of social welfare but also a human rights imperative.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), under its statutory mandate, undertook visits to all Garima Greh shelters, reviewed existing policies, and engaged with stakeholders. Its report, *Transgender Persons: Revamping Spaces, Reclaiming Voices — Insights from Garima Greh Shelters and Beyond*, presents evidence-based findings and recommendations across nine chapters.

Key Findings

- Administration & Management: Overburdened staff, non-functional Project Monitoring Committees (PMCs) in states like West Bengal, lack of police sensitivity, and impractical reporting requirements weaken management.

- Funding & Infrastructure: Irregular fund disbursement, inadequate food and living allowances, limited government-supported premises, eviction threats, and poor living conditions (including lack of privacy) undermine shelter sustainability.
- Staffing: Low salaries, delayed payments, and unrealistic qualification criteria contribute to staff attrition and loss of experienced personnel.
- Documentation & Identity Proof: Transgender persons often lack essential IDs, face cross-state procedural barriers, and fear inheritance losses upon changing legal gender identity.
- Healthcare & Well-being: Mental health needs, HIV/AIDS prevention, and gender-affirmative care remain poorly addressed, with medical expenses excluded from current funding norms.
- Skill Development & Employment: One-year stays may be insufficient for meaningful rehabilitation. Beneficiaries face unfair employment standards and workplace exclusion without adequate institutional support.
- Shelter Gaps: Two shelters have closed operations; inconsistent official updates risk misleading vulnerable persons.
- Exclusion of Children & Elderly: Current policy does not cater to gender non conforming children under the JJ Act or elderly transgender persons, leaving both age groups vulnerable.

Key Recommendations

- Governance: Activate PMCs in all states, delegate responsibilities clearly among district officials, and include police transgender focal points.





- **Funding:** Ensure timely fund releases, revise daily food and per-beneficiary allocations, adopt differentiated financial models for metro vs. rural shelters, and provide non-recurring grants for infrastructure improvements.
- **Staffing:** Align qualifications and salaries with market conditions; rationalise staff roles to prevent overburdening.
- **Documentation:** Empower shelter heads to assist in issuing TG ID cards, explore affidavit-based processes, and address privacy concerns.
- **Healthcare:** Cover medical expenses beyond doctor fees, create hospital-shelter partnerships, expedite *Ayushman Bharat TG Plus*, and strengthen HIV/AIDS and mental health interventions.
- **Skill Development & Employment:** Extend rehabilitation duration for those pursuing formal education or competitive exams, expand vocational training access, integrate shelters with skill and job portals, and ensure workplace protections under the POSH Act.
- **Inclusivity for Minors & Elderly:** Amend JJ Act to recognise gender non-conforming children,

establish Child Care Institutions (CCIs) and old age homes for transgender persons, and revise guidelines to support NGOs in managing these facilities.

- **Transparency & Oversight:** Update publicly available data on functional shelters, institutionalise monitoring frameworks, and establish a dedicated desk in the nodal ministry for swift redressal.

In conclusion, the Garima Greh initiative represents a transformative step in advancing transgender rights and inclusion. However, its intended impact is undermined by administrative lapses, funding bottlenecks, and gaps in healthcare, employment, and social protection. Strengthening this initiative requires flexible and context-sensitive financial frameworks, closer coordination with state agencies, and sustained government accountability.

With proactive reforms, Garima Greh can evolve from a temporary housing measure into a catalyst for empowerment, demonstrating that transgender persons can lead dignified, independent, and inspiring lives—ultimately shaping a more inclusive social fabric.



Chapter 1

Introduction

Gender Diversity in the International Human Rights Framework

Throughout human history, the concept of human rights has been deeply embedded in the rich and ancient civilisations of the world. In India, the roots of human rights are as ancient as time itself, woven into its epics, sculptures, customs, and art forms. However, the formal recognition of human rights came on 10 December 1948, with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), often regarded as the Magna Carta of Human Rights. This historic document laid the foundation for modern human rights principles and is commemorated annually as Human Rights Day. Interestingly, the original draft of Article 1 of the UDHR began with the phrase, 'All men are born free and equal.' It was Smt. Hansa Jivraj Mehta, one of the prominent members of the Constituent Assembly of India, who recognised this exclusion and successfully advocated for a more inclusive revision. As a result of her efforts, the final version was changed to 'All human beings are born free and equal,' ensuring the acknowledgment of women and gender-diverse groups in this foundational human rights document.

Despite the recognition of their rights in this fundamental document, their experience of daily discrimination led to the deprivation of their basic rights. They are often rejected by their own family members that render them homeless. They also encounter significant challenges in securing rental accommodation, as landlords are often reluctant due to low acceptability in many neighbourhoods. While in a few countries, cross-dressing continues to remain a criminal offence. Upon recognising these challenges, many governments and international

organisations have implemented policies and shelter programmes to provide safe housing and essential support. The United Nations Free & Equal Campaign advocates for inclusive policies, urging governments to establish safe shelters for transgender individuals. Organisations such as the Global Equality Fund and Outright Action International collaborate with governments to support shelter programmes in regions where transgender individuals face extreme marginalisation.

Some governments have taken proactive steps by funding shelters through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society initiatives or by implementing affirmative housing schemes. In North America, Canada's Sprott House and federally funded shelters in the United States, supported by HUD grants, provide gender-affirming housing solutions. In Germany, the Trans Wohnen initiative, established under the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG, 2006), addresses transgender housing needs through state funding. Similarly, Brazil's São Paulo municipal government funds Casa Florescer, a shelter offering emergency housing, job training, mental health services, and legal assistance for transgender women. The Government of Malta funds *Dar il-Qawsalla*, a residence managed by the Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM) for LGBTIQ+ individuals facing socio-economic hardships and homelessness. Community-led housing projects with partial government support have also emerged in Thailand and the Philippines to ensure stable accommodations for transgender individuals. Across Europe, several countries have established shelters with government and NGO support. Notable examples include Stonewall Housing (UK), Le Refuge (France), COC Netherlands Safe Housing, and RFSL Safe Spaces (Sweden). While in a few countries, community leader initiative has been pivotal in establishing such shelters.





For example, in Turkey, the first shelter for transgender people was established by Miss Oyku Ay, a transgender woman, who raised donations to fund the initiative. The Government of India has launched Garima Greh Shelters to cater the needs of transgender persons.

Gender Diversity in India's Human Rights Framework

The Indian Constitution firmly upholds gender equality as a core value, and Article 15 explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sex. Traditionally, however, 'sex' has been narrowly interpreted within the binary framework covering only male and female, often leaving non-binary or gender-nonconforming individuals overlooked. India's journey toward fully recognising and embracing the rights of gender diverse people has been long, marked by both struggles and resilience. For decades, individuals from this community have faced marginalisation and exclusion, encountering systemic barriers in education, employment, healthcare, and housing. Yet, these obstacles have not silenced the resilience within the community, whose members have consistently advocated for their rights and recognition.

A major breakthrough for the rights of transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals arrived in 2014 with the landmark Hon'ble Supreme Court judgment in *National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India*. This pivotal case not only recognised transgender individuals as a third gender but also established their right to self-identify. It was a monumental decision, affirming that transgender persons deserve the same rights and protections as any other citizen and compelling the government to take strong steps against discrimination. Building upon this, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2019 was enacted, which aimed to protect the rights of transgender individuals, ensuring their access to healthcare, education, and employment while also prohibiting discrimination based on

gender identity. Section 8 (4) of the said Act mandates that the appropriate Government shall take appropriate measures to promote and protect the right of transgender persons to participate in cultural and recreational activities. Furthermore, Section 12 (3) mentioned that where any parent or a member of his immediate family is unable to take care of a transgender, the competent court shall by an order direct such person to be placed in a rehabilitation centre. Section 10 (9) of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020 mandate the appropriate government to create institutional and infrastructure facilities, including but not limited to, temporary shelters, short-stay homes and accommodation, choice of male, female or separate wards in hospitals and washrooms in the establishment within two years from the date of coming into force of these rules to protect the rights of transgender persons.

In line with the above-mentioned provisions, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had initiated a pilot project to rehabilitate destitute transgender persons in collaboration with CBOs or NGOs working in this area by approving the establishment of 12 Garima Greh shelters in 09 states/UTs in the financial year 2020-21. This aims to establish shelter homes for transgender persons, offering them a secure and supportive environment. The Government of India further launched an umbrella scheme, viz., SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise), in the year 2022, which has a sub-scheme, namely 'Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons'. The Garima Greh initiative was merged under this umbrella scheme and also exited from pilot mode and made to run on a regular basis. It has also been envisioned to issue certificates of transgender identity to all transgender persons, health benefits to all transgender persons, to set up at least one shelter home for transgender persons in each state/UT, to provide skill development training to all willing transgender persons.



Synergy between Garima Greh and Human Rights

Traditionally, transgender persons in India have lived in *hijra gharanas* or similar community settings, sustaining themselves through *badhai* (blessing ceremonies) and, in some cases, sex work. Any rehabilitation effort should be systematic — providing basic skills, building confidence, and ensuring access to dignified employment opportunities. The objective of the shelter is designed in a way to provide this comprehensive exercise. The Garima Greh shelters are established in the manner that can play a crucial role in advancing the objectives of the Transgender Act (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 Act by fostering an environment of dignity, respect, and inclusion. These shelters were designed to serve as safe spaces that not only provide temporary housing but also empower transgender individuals through support services and skill-building programmes. It aims to provide shelter to destitute and abandoned transgender persons with basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and recreational facilities. The broader objectives of the schemes are:

- To provide shelter with basic amenities such as food, clothing, recreation, medical facilities and counseling;
- To safeguard the rights of transgender persons;
- To confirm the prevalence of congenial atmosphere in the Garima Greh by adopting uniform rules and regulations suitable to be followed by all transgender persons;
- To empower a TG person through skill-development and skill up-gradation programmes to lead a decent and dignified life, and protect them from atrocities and social stigma.

This place offers not just accommodation but a holistic environment for well-being, dignity, and growth. Garima Greh is a powerful initiative that

signifies not only a shelter but also a heaven of hope, respect, and empowerment for the transgender community. Each shelter serves as a cornerstone for social and economic integration, helping residents rebuild their lives with confidence and a sense of belonging and hence protecting their human rights.

Purpose of the Report

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has long been committed to protecting the rights of society's most vulnerable groups. It has been supporting the government by identifying gaps in laws, policies or schemes and recommending government to take necessary steps. The Commission has issued an advisory for ensuring the welfare of transgender persons on 15 September 2023 on six important thematic areas concerning human rights, viz., education, healthcare, employment, promoting inclusivity, welfare and grievance redressal. The NHRC recognises the potential of the Garima Greh shelters and applaud the government for taking this initiative which has brought a new hope in the lives of thousands of transgender persons who see it as a beacon of light to wean their lives from begging. The involvement of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) enhances its impact, as CBO members often serve as trusted figures within the community. However, the Commission also acknowledges that the transgender community has faced historical exclusion and discrimination, rooted in the colonial era law and unfortunately continuing post-independence, resulting in low levels of education. Not all of them may have strong network or understanding of technicalities. Hence, the community leaders may require handholding apart from financial assistance to make this initiative a truly meaningful. The guidelines established for the operation of these shelters do not include mechanisms for providing such support. Additionally, it has been previously brought before the Commission's attention that even designated funds were not disbursed on time, which contributed to their





operational challenges and ineffectiveness. The Commission has earlier raised this issue with the concerned authorities, but it continues to persist.

Given the critical role of Garima Greh shelters in protecting the rights of transgender persons and being the only state-backed institutionalised shelters for gender diverse individuals between the

ages of 18 and 60 years, the Commission has decided to designate its officials to undertake visits and prepare a detailed report on the matter. This effort was intended to provide evidence-based recommendations, supporting the government's vision of *Viksit Bharat*, where the rights and dignity of all individuals, including transgender persons, are upheld equally.



Chapter 2

Methodological Framework

The NHRC has been established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 to function as a watchdog of human rights violations across the country. As discussed in the previous chapter, despite being a unique initiative of the Government of India aimed at the comprehensive rehabilitation of transgender persons, Garima Greh shelters face numerous challenges that require attention. Recognising the community's vulnerability, the NHRC has undertaken this initiative to assess the ground realities in operating Garima Greh shelters. This effort aligns with Section 12 of the Act provides the functions of the Commission and also includes the following provisions:

- Section 12(c): visit, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, any jail or other institution under the control of the State Government, where persons are detained or lodged for purposes of treatment, reformation or protection, for the study of the living conditions of the inmates thereof and make recommendations thereon to the Government;
- Section 12(g): undertake and promote research in the field of human rights;
- Section 12(i): encourage the efforts of non-government.

Research Methodology

Research Rationale: Building upon the findings from these visits, the Commission aims to prepare a comprehensive report that will assist the Government of India in further strengthening policies and frameworks designed to uphold the rights and

dignity of transgender individuals. By identifying gaps in existing guidelines and highlighting effective interventions, the research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations. Additionally, the report intends to support the ongoing efforts of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in operating these shelters and ensuring the continued upliftment and welfare of the transgender community. By documenting their challenges, best practices, and resource needs, the report will serve as a tool to enhance institutional support, encourage collaboration between stakeholders, and ensure the sustained empowerment of the transgender community.

Through this initiative, the Commission aims to bridge policy gaps, reinforce advocacy efforts, and contribute to a more inclusive and rights-based approach to transgender welfare in India.

Objectives: The transgender community in India continues to face significant challenges related to discrimination, social exclusion, and inadequate access to essential services, despite legal and policy advancements aimed at protecting their rights. In view of that, the Commission has decided to undertake research aligning with the statutory responsibilities of the Commission, particularly under Section 12(g) PHRA, 1993:

- To assess the functioning of Garima Greh shelters and their role in supporting the rehabilitation of the vulnerable transgender community
- To understand the ground-level challenges faced by the shelters and gather comprehensive data.





Sampling: The visits have been undertaken by using the Census Method. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment established 12 Garima Greh Shelter homes in 09 states and UTs. Using the authority granted under Section 12(c), the Commission designated its officials to visit all 12 Garima Greh shelters established by the Government of India.

Tools and Techniques

- **Field visits to shelters:** To assess the living conditions of the transgender persons residing in these shelters, the teams visited Garima Greh shelters. The objective of these visits was to identify challenges and gather first-hand data on the current functioning of the shelters. To fulfill this purpose, a preliminary questionnaire

has been prepared. Detailed accounts of these visits are provided in Annex II.

- **Analysis of guidelines:** A thorough analysis was conducted on the guidelines issued for the establishment of Garima Greh shelters. This was done to identify existing challenges and potential areas for improvement in the operation and management of these shelters.
- **Review of government reports and schemes:** Government reports like Annual Reports of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and other relevant schemes were referred to in order to understand the scope of current initiatives supporting transgender persons. These reports provided insights into existing policies and helped identify gaps in implementation.



► Glimpse of NHRC team's visit to Tweet Foundation in Maharashtra, led by Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Acting Chairperson, NHRC



► Glimpse of NHRC team's visit to Aarju Foundation in Panvel, Maharashtra, led by Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Acting Chairperson, NHRC

- **Examination of advisory and action taken reports:** The NHRC issued an Advisory for the Welfare of Transgender Persons on 15 September 2023, which included recommendations on six key themes directed at relevant authorities. Copies of the advisory are enclosed in Annex III. Additionally, the NHRC called for Action Taken Reports (ATRs) from the concerned ministries and departments to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations. The steps taken by both the central and state governments, as detailed in the ATRs, were carefully examined, with particular focus on actions pertaining to the functioning of the shelters and broader welfare measures.

By conducting field visits, analysing existing guidelines, and reviewing governmental initiatives, the NHRC seeks to ensure that these shelters are better equipped to meet the needs of the transgender community. The findings of this research will not only inform the Government of India on strengthening transgender rights protection but also support the efforts of CBOs and NGOs working in this area. The comprehensive approach undertaken by the NHRC is expected to lead to actionable insights that will contribute to more effective and inclusive policies, thereby enhancing the quality of life for transgender individuals in the country.





Chapter 3

Operational Dynamics of Garima Greh Shelters

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the operational framework of Garima Greh shelters, drawing insights from field visits, in-depth examination of the guidelines, and stakeholder interactions during the visits. It assesses key aspects such as management structures, financial sustainability, infrastructure adequacy, and human resource challenges. The findings aim to identify gaps in the current framework and offer actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of these shelters.

Administration and Management

Provisions in the guidelines

As per the existing guidelines, the Garima Greh be managed and executed by the Project Management Committee (PMC), which is headed by the District Magistrate (DM) or equivalent. The composition of the PMC is given below in the table.

While the guidelines provide that the PMC are supposed to meet quarterly, it has not detailed

functions of the PMC. Hence, it has left with discretions with the PMC to take up the issues. Further, the responsibility for conducting meetings is given to PD, subject to approval from the PMC Chairperson. Additionally, the PD must ensure that the shelter is inspected annually by a local authority (not below the rank of DSWO/BDO) and submit the report to the nodal ministry.

Insights from the shelters

As the committee is headed by a district magistrate or equivalent, it provides a platform to the project director to communicate their issues directly to the officials. It helps in bridging the communication gap while promoting sensitivity at the end of officials. However, in the absence of detailed provisions, instead of solely focusing on Garima Greh Shelter, sometimes issues of transgender persons are discussed as part of other issues during the meeting. It has been observed in the case of the State of Maharashtra. In the State of West Bengal, it was found that the PMC was yet to be constituted for both the shelters in the state. Further, it was noted that the Lakshya Trust Garima Greh,

Table 3.1: Composition of Project Monitoring Committee (PMC)

S. No.	Designation	Role
1.	District Magistrate or equivalent	Chairperson
2.	NGO Representative	Member
3.	Doctor	Member
4.	TG Expert	Member
5.	President/ Secretary of Garima Greh (Project Director)	Member Secretary





► Glimpse of the NHRC Team Visit to Mitr Trust Garima Greh, Delhi

Vadodara, had been requesting the district magistrate to organise the meeting but often had been delayed. Till date, only two meetings of the PMC have been organised despite being the first such shelter in the country. In the UT of Delhi, frequent delay in organising such meetings had been observed. No Garima Greh shelter reported that the PMC meeting had been organised regularly as mentioned in the guidelines.

It was observed that continuous communication between community heads and district officials had been a key to the welfare of the community. Despite SMILE being a centre sector scheme, the support of state and local administrations had been an important factor in successful implementation of the scheme. As most of the Garima Greh shelters are run by the community leaders, PMC can act as a channel to gather issues of the community at the local as well as state level.

Another significant challenge faced by some shelters which though explicitly not addressed

through PMC as per guidelines but indirectly concerns management aspect is maintaining law and order within the premises. Low societal acceptance of transgender identities has led to frequent disruptions. Many transgender individuals seek refuge at Garima Greh due to violence or lack of acceptance in their homes. In some instances, families had attempted to intervene and disrupted the shelter environment. While police assistance has been sought to address such conflicts, there have also been cases where family members with strong connections have enlisted police support to forcibly remove individuals from the shelter. Additionally, a lack of awareness and sensitivity among some police officials has further complicated these situations. In one such case in Delhi, the matter escalated to legal proceedings.

A.) Recommendations

- a) The PMC may constitute at the earliest for those shelters where it is yet to be constituted. The Government of West Bengal may constitute the PMC at the earliest.





- b) The onus for indicating the timing of the meeting should be given to the chair of the PMC, while responsibility for providing all the information and making other necessary arrangement may be given to PD.
- c) The responsibility to inspect the shelter may be given to the local authority, while PD may be asked to facilitate such inspections.
- d) An indicative point may be considered that should be mandatorily be taken up during the PMC meeting.
- e) Whenever a new district magistrate takes charge, an early meeting of the PMC, Transgender Cell, or project director may be convened to ensure that district authorities remain aware of transgender-specific challenges, particularly in the documentation process.
- f) The NHRC advisory suggests, '*One officer in every police station be designated as focal point for Transgender Persons*'. It is desirable that the officer should be responsible to deal with the security issues concerning the Garima Greh shelter and be a member of the PMC.
- g) Any instance of police violence against shelter residents or associated members should be dealt with strictly. The Transgender Protection Cell, mandated under the Transgender (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, should be actively involved in monitoring such cases. The cell, operating under the Director General of Police or their nominee in each state, may be asked to submit reports on such incidents to the respective State Human Rights Commission.

Financial Structure and Sustainability

Provisions in the guidelines

The guidelines estimated Rs. 36,46,500/- for running the Garima Greh, out of which Rs. 5,02,500/- has been estimated as non-recurring budget while Rs. 31, 44,000/- as recurring budget. Studying the budget component remains indispensable as every component of this initiative has a direct bearing on the availability of funds at the right time.

As per the provided funding pattern, financial assistance to Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and NGOs for establishing Garima Greh shelter homes is to be released in two equal installments of 50 per cent each. Before releasing the money, a list of documents that include quarterly/annual report, details of residents, utilisation certificates, photos, feedback of participants and inspection report may require to be verified. For skill development training agencies, funds are disbursed in a 30:40:30 ratio as defined under the PM-DAKSH scheme; 30 per cent at the start of training, 40 per cent upon successful certification, and 30 per cent after placement verification.

Budgetary allocation

The guidelines allocate Rs. 9,00,000/- annually as recurring expenses to cover food, including breakfast, lunch, dinner, and two tea servings per day for covering food expenses of 25 beneficiaries in each shelter. The non-recurring budget which is understood as applicable only to new Garima Greh on time costs for new shelters is set at Rs. 5,02,500, divided into specific categories.

Insights from the review of the nodal ministry's annual report

A review of the concerned department's Annual Report reveals significant delays in fund disburse-



ment. As per the report, an amount of Rs. 2.72 Crore approximately has been released to 12 Garima Grehs for their functioning as shelter homes for FY 2021-2022 and 2022-23 in FY 2023-24. This indicates a retrospective reimbursement approach rather than timely allocation. This further indicates that Rs. 2.72 crore was released in the year FY 2023-24 to

cover expenses related to their expenses that occurred in previous two years. Analysing the figure further, it translates to Rs. 11,33,000/- per Garima Greh per year. The ministry's financial performance under the 'Components of Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Transgender Persons' reflects poor fund utilisation, as detailed below:

Table 3.2: Financial Achievements Under the Components of Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Transgender Persons (Rs. in crore)

S. No.	Financial year	Revised estimates (R.E)	Total expenditure by the ministry
1.	2021-2022	25.00	3.5
2.	2022-2023	30.00	NIL
3.	2023-2024	22.00	3.62

Source: Annual Report, 2023-2024, Table 7.1: Financial Achievements, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, p.113.

It is noteworthy that no expenditure was incurred under this component in FY 2022-23, despite Garima Greh shelters reportedly struggling for funds. This reflects a systemic issue where the government fails to utilise its allocated budget while shelters continue to face financial distress.

NHRC's intervention

It was earlier brought into the notice of the NHRC that the ministry has not been releasing the fund on time. While ministry officials cited incomplete or improper documentation as the cause for delays, the NHRC recognised the seriousness of this issue. It is worth mentioning that no specification regarding funds has been enclosed with the guidelines required for seeking funds, which could be done ideally, considering the fact that grantee institutions/NGOs may not be aware of the technicalities of the government financial procedures. Considering this issue as serious which required to be resolved, the NHRC issued an advisory for ensuring the welfare of transgender persons dated 15 September 2023 in which it also included the recommendation given below as one among its various suggestion:

The concerned ministry should ensure the timely release of the funds allocated to Garima Greh. In addition, the queries considering the disbursement of funds may be dealt with by proper mechanisms and handholding support be given to complete the requisite formalities to resolve such grievances.

The concerned ministry has submitted the Action Taken Report dated 15 May 2024 on which it has stated that 'As of now funds for operation of 11 Garima Greh have been released while the documents of 1 CBO operating Garima Greh have been received recently and are under examination'.

Insights from the shelters and analysis of guideline provisions

During the Commission's visits to Garima Greh shelters, significant delays in fund disbursement were observed. On average, shelters reported a delay of 15 months in receiving funds. The current reimbursement-based funding model places a considerable burden on organisations forcing them to self-finance operations while awaiting reimbursement. This challenge is particularly severe for smaller CBOs that lack access to corporate social





responsibility (CSR) contributions or goodwill donations.

Among the 12 shelters visited, only the TWEET Foundation, which operates a shelter in Maharashtra, reported receiving support under the CSR regime. Most shelters rely on loans or sporadic donations, which not only strain their financial sustainability but also compromise their ability to implement effective rehabilitation programmes. For smaller organisations, these financial constraints often lead to operational inefficiencies and, in extreme cases, the suspension of services — jeopardising the long-term sustainability of the Garima Greh initiative.

A closer examination of the existing guidelines highlights critical funding gaps, particularly in food provisions. The annual allocation of Rs. 9,00,000/- for recurring expenses translates to just Rs. 100 per person per day, raising concerns about its adequacy. Shelter staff unanimously expressed that this amount is insufficient to meet even the residents' basic dietary needs, especially given rising food prices and regional cost variations.

Furthermore, the guidelines do not provide a separate budgetary allocation for essential recurring expenses such as medical care, clothing, or community events. This lack of dedicated funding further strains resources. For instance, during a visit to Sakha Garima Greh on 27 January, 2025 the project director noted an expenditure of approximately Rs. 25,000 for Republic Day celebrations — an expense not accounted for within the current funding framework.

B.) Recommendations

- a) It is recommended that the designated funds be transferred in advance, as per the guidelines, and that the current reimbursement-based funding model be shifted to ensure timely financial support.
- b) The guidelines should include detailed documents specifying the format and

documents required to be submitted by grantee institutions/NGOs to seek funds for the operation of Garima Greh shelters.

- c) A help desk should be established at the nodal department to address issues concerning the activities of Garima Greh shelters.
- d) It is recommended that the amount allocated for the recurring budget, along with its expenditure heads, be reviewed to determine if an expansion is necessary to meet the operational needs of the shelters.

Premises

Provisions in the guidelines

According to the guidelines, grantee institutions/NGOs are given one month to arrange infrastructure, manpower, services, resident selection, safety and security measures, medical and convergence services, communication facilities, and internet connectivity. By the second month, the Garima Greh shelters are expected to be fully operational, providing all the prescribed facilities.

Insights from the shelters

The guidelines assume that NGOs will be able to identify suitable buildings in quiet, residential areas, free from unscrupulous elements, at a prescribed rent of Rs. 40,000 per month. However, this assumption often contradicts ground realities due to societal stigma and financial constraints, making it challenging for grantee institutions to establish operational setups. The low acceptability of transgender persons makes it difficult for NGOs to find properties in welcoming residential areas. Additionally, the prescribed rent is often inadequate, especially in metropolitan cities where rental costs are significantly higher. The table in Annex III highlights the shortfall between the prescribed rent and actual shelter costs. Furthermore, delays in fund disbursement exacerbate the



► Mitwa Sankalp Samiti Garima Greh, Raipur, Chhattisgarh

challenges by hindering timely rent payments. The experiences of grantee institutions, detailing their struggles and coping mechanisms, are summarised below.

1. **Mitra Trust, Delhi:** The premises are owned by the grantee institution, eliminating concerns related to rent.
2. **Sakha, Odisha:** The project director initially attempted to rent two different premises, but both landlords withdrew their agreements due to perceived objections from neighbours. Eventually, the shelter was set up in a property owned by the project director.
3. **Transgender Rights Association, Tamil Nadu:** After securing the project, the association sought assistance from the district magistrate, who helped them find a suitable location.
4. **Dostana, Bihar:** With support from the local administration, the institution secured an unoccupied building within a school premises. This not only resolved rent-related concerns but also provided space for livelihood training

programmes, making the shelter more self-sustaining.

5. **Kinnar Asmita, Thane:** Faced a six-month-long struggle to find a suitable location. Ultimately, they secured premises with the support of an MLA and managed rent shortfalls independently.
6. **Mitwa Sankalp Samiti, Chhattisgarh:** Operates rent-free on a government-provided premise.
7. **Tweet Foundation, Panvel:** Established in 2013 and registered as a society in 2017, the NGO secured a prime-location property despite high rent costs. Strong donor networks, CSR contributions, and a supportive landlord helped mitigate rent-related challenges.
8. **Aarju Foundation, Raigarh:** Faced evictions due to delayed rent payments, forcing relocations to less accommodating areas. Eventually, with the district magistrate's support, they secured a safer location. However, delayed reimbursement of funds remains a major





challenge, often requiring reliance on loans and donations from rotary clubs and individuals.

9. **Gokhale Road Bandhan, Kolkata:** Operates in a premises owned by a transgender individual familiar with the organisation, ensuring an affordable rent structure.
10. **Kolkata Rista, Kolkata:** Has been operating at the area for a long time.
11. **Lakshya Trust, Gujarat** – The organization has occupied the same premises for several years, fostering a good relationship with the landlord. Although the rent exceeds the prescribed amount, they manage it through funds from other projects.
12. **Nai Bhor Sansta, Rajasthan** – Claimed that the previous landlord declined to renew their lease due to objections from neighbors.

Based on the above experiences, it can be concluded that in the absence of an institutionalised mechanism, grantee institutions often depend on the goodwill of landowners, personal networks, or

support from government officials and politicians to find suitable operational premises. However, states that have allocated their own land for these facilities demonstrate better performance, as this resolves a fundamental yet critical challenge. For example, the Patna shelter has introduced multiple training programmes, including computer courses, laser therapy (offered at affordable rates in collaboration with AIIMS Patna), beautician courses, and plantation activities. Additionally, the shelter is exploring innovative initiatives such as mushroom cultivation within its premises and facilitating the shelter's transition into a self-sustaining institution, leveraging its adequate space.

C.) Recommendations

- a) State may take the responsibility to provide suitable premises to start the project which is under government control.
- b) In any case, if it is not possible for the government to identify a suitable place which it controls, the government may identify a place and directly transfer rent amount to the owner without involving



► Mitwa Sankalp Samiti Garima Greh, Raipur



grantee institution/NGO as non-disbursal of payment on time by government may lead to eviction to the inmates of the shelter.

- c) Increasing the prescribed rent amount to align with market rates, particularly in urban areas, moving away from one size fit all policy.
- d) Enhancing societal awareness and acceptance of transgender persons through targeted campaigns to reduce biases and stigma especially in the area where such shelters are located.

Human resources

Provisions in the guidelines

The guidelines specify the required human resources for shelters, along with their qualifications and remuneration, to ensure they are staffed with skilled professionals. The prescribed staffing structure is detailed in the table below:

Insights from shelters and analysis of guideline provisions

An assessment of the staffing structure — considering qualification requirements, remuneration, and job responsibilities — alongside discussions with shelter staff, revealed several challenges impacting the effectiveness of Garima Greh shelters. The most pressing issues are highlighted below:

Mismatch between remuneration and qualifications

- The prescribed remuneration does not align with market realities, particularly given the required qualifications and responsibilities. This disparity is more pronounced across different states due to varying living costs.
- While Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) aim to employ transgender individuals, the stringent qualification criteria often make it difficult to fill key roles, leading to vacancies or deviations from guidelines.

Table 3.3: Staffing Structure and Remuneration

S. No.	Staff Position	Qualification	Remuneration (per month)
1.	Project director	Not mentioned	Honorary
2.	Project manager	MA in social work with 5 years of experience	Rs. 20,000/-
3.	Account assistant	BCom with 3 years of experience	Rs. 15,000/
4.	Bridge course coordinator	BA in social work with 2 years of experience	Rs. 15,000/
5.	Counselor (part time)	MA with 3 years of experience	Rs. 15,000/
6.	Doctor (part time)	MBBS qualified willing to visit at least twice a week	Rs. 15,000/
7.	Cook	12 th pass with 3 years of cooking experience	Rs. 12,000/
8.	Multi-task worker	BA pass with 1 year experience	Rs. 10,000/
9.	Sweeper	10 th pass with one year experience in office work	Rs. 8,000/
10.	Watchman	10 th pass	Rs. 10,000/





Financial and operational constraints

- Delays in fund disbursement result in salary payment issues, leading to high staff attrition, loss of experienced personnel, increased recruitment costs, and operational disruptions.
- Employee dissatisfaction due to unpaid salaries has, in some instances, led to mismanagement or loss of essential documents, complicating compliance with government regulations.
- Grantee institutions highlighted that although details of hired resource persons were submitted to the nodal ministry, no initial objections were raised regarding their qualifications or experience. However, in the last financial year, such objections emerged during the documentation verification process for fund release, which had not been the case previously. They have strongly advocated for a relaxation of qualification requirements.

Overburdened or impractical roles

- Certain roles, such as the bridge course coordinator, are tasked with multiple responsibilities, including skill-building, legal aid coordination, and institutional partnerships. The requirement to maintain a data bank at this level is difficult.
- The multi-task worker is expected to be available at night along with the watchman, suggesting a 24/7 availability requirement, which is both unrealistic and a potential human rights violation.

Unfair offloading of responsibilities

- Several responsibilities, ideally managed at the state level, are instead delegated to grantee institutions without sufficient support.
- For example, the project director is responsible for organising PMC meetings, but approval from

PMC chair is often delayed, making implementation difficult. Ideally, the chair should be responsible for scheduling meetings, while the PD should focus on coordination.

- Guidelines also mandate that the PD ensures an annual inspection by a local authority (not below the rank of DSWO/BDO), with reports submitted to the nodal ministry. However, if authorities do not respond, this provision becomes impractical.
- The roles and responsibilities of shelter staff need to be revisited and restructured to ensure that state authorities take up their due responsibilities.

D.) Recommendations

- a) The fund disbursement process may be streamlined to ensure timely salary payments, reducing financial stress and improving staff morale.
- b) Educational qualification requirements may be relaxed to facilitate the inclusion of community members, supplemented with in-service training programmes for capacity building.
- c) Remuneration may be adjusted to align with market rates and regional cost-of-living variations, ensuring fair compensation based on qualifications and experience.
- d) State agencies may maintain a centralised database of potential partner organisations and institutions to facilitate collaboration, reducing the burden on individual staff members.
- e) The National Portal for Transgender Persons may be upgraded by including a state-wise list of government schemes and training institutes, providing shelters with a structured resource for partnerships.



- f) Training sessions may be organised for staff to strengthen their skills and understanding of government financial modalities and reporting requirements.
- g) Role assignments in the guidelines may be revisited and focus could be given to making state agencies an equal partner. For instance, responsibilities such as organising PMC meetings or arranging shelter inspections may be shifted to state agencies rather than the project director. Similarly, the role such as those of the multi-task worker may be reviewed to align with human rights standards and be made more practical.

for starting the shelter. The physical standards include a minimum built-up area of 3000 square feet, with dormitories spanning at least 1250 square feet, ensuring 50 square feet per resident along with other specifications. Each resident is to receive a welcome kit containing essentials like soap, a towel, a comb, a toothbrush, toothpaste, and slippers. Adequate storage facilities must be provided for personal belongings, and privacy features such as movable panels or curtains should be in place in dormitories. The kitchen must be fully equipped with gas cylinders, refrigerators, and access to safe drinking water. Safety and security measures include the installation of CCTV cameras and other safety equipment. Additional services include emergency lamps, fans in each room, and a television or radio in the common hall/area. The non-recurring budget which is understood as applicable only to new Garima Greh on-time costs for new shelters is set at Rs. 5,02,500, divided into specific categories which is given below:

Infrastructure Requirements

Provisions in the guidelines

The guidelines provide brief details regarding the physical standards and other basic requirements

Table 3.4: Budgetary Allocation for Non-recurring Expenses

S. No.	Particulars	Amount (in Rs)
1.	Purchasing furniture fixtures, dining table with chairs, 25 beds, mattress, pillow along with cover, boxes and welcome kits to each inmate	Rs. 1,50,000
2.	Computer peripherals for the office	Rs. 50,000
3.	Equipment peripheral for Garima Greh This would be used for the purchase of audio-visual equipment for Garima Greh (e.g. CCTV, TV, inverter, DVD Player), inverter, fan, TV, audio system, wall clock, etc.	Rs. 1,30,000
4.	Kitchen Kitchen items include a stove, gas cylinder, safe drinking water, refrigerator, water cooler, cookware, crockery, etc.	Rs. 1,00,000/-
5.	Safety equipments	Rs. 22,500/-
6.	Skill development-related equipments (Amounts may be used to purchase equipment of locally popular trades)	Rs. 50,000/-
	Total cost under non-recurring budget	Rs. 5,02,500





Insights from the shelters

Rather than debating whether the prescribed physical standards are adequate, this section focuses on observed shortcomings during the visits and assessing whether the guidelines are being adhered to and exploring potential solutions. Key observations include:

- **Inadequate funding for furniture and essential items:** As per the guidelines, Rs. 6,000 per individual is allocated for procuring furniture, fixtures, beds, mattresses, pillows with covers, and a welcome kit. This budget also includes the cost of a dining table with chairs. However, shelters lacking additional financial support or alternative funding mechanisms often struggle to provide proper beds, compromising the quality of living conditions.
- **Recurring nature of welcome kit costs:** The guidelines allocate funds for welcome kits under non-recurring expenditure, covering essential items like soap. However, these kits require periodic replenishment, especially with the arrival of new beneficiaries. The existing budget does not account for these ongoing expenses, making it challenging to maintain adequate supplies.
- **Inadequate storage facilities:** While the guidelines recommend proper storage facilities for personal belongings, many Garima Greh shelters — particularly those in space-constrained settings — lack sufficient storage, leading to clutter and inconvenience for residents.
- **Lack of privacy in sleeping arrangements:** The guidelines suggest using movable panels or curtains to section off beds and ensure privacy. However, none of the visited shelters adhered to this standard. In some cases, multiple beneficiaries shared small rooms, while others accommodated residents in dormitory-style arrangements without partitions. Privacy is essential for personal well-being and plays a



► Aarju Foundation



► Mitwa Sankalp Samiti

crucial role in skill-building and self-development. Additionally, there is a pressing need for separate sections for trans men and trans women to ensure dignity and comfort.

E.) Recommendations

- a) The budget should be updated to reflect realistic costs for procuring and maintaining essential items, ensuring that shelters can meet the prescribed standards.
- b) Since welcome kits require replenishment over time, these expenses may be brought under recurring expenditure to ensure continuity in providing necessary items.
- c) It would be ideal if the state agency provides a minimum space and infrastructure requirement, allowing CBOs to operate within a standardised framework.

Conclusion

The road to achieving employment equity for transgender persons requires a multifaceted approach that combines robust policies, dedicated government support, and societal change. Programmes like Garima Greh have the potential to transform lives, but their success depends on addressing systemic challenges in funding, infrastructure, and capacity building. Providing designated spaces and ensuring timely fund disbursement can ease the burden on implementing agencies, allowing them to focus on creating a truly inclusive and empowering environment. With collaborative efforts and proactive governance, these shelters can evolve into sustainable support systems that uphold dignity and security for the transgender community.





Chapter 4

Strengthening the Documentation Process

The successful implementation of any welfare scheme hinges on effectively reaching the intended beneficiaries while minimising exclusion and inclusion errors. For schemes targeting transgender persons, this becomes especially important due to their compounded vulnerabilities — both horizontal and vertical. Horizontal vulnerabilities stem from intersecting social identities like caste, class, religion, and regional disparities, while vertical vulnerabilities arise from layered marginalisation within the transgender community, such as based on gender expression, economic status, or access to resources. These forms of discrimination often result in transgender persons being excluded from welfare initiatives.

To address these challenges, schemes designed for transgender persons must prioritise minimising exclusion errors over inclusion errors. Simplified eligibility criteria are crucial to reducing barriers, ensuring that transgender individuals can access benefits without facing systemic biases, bureaucratic hurdles, or lack of documentation.

Key Provisions in the Guidelines and Observations

The official guidelines stipulate that transgender persons must obtain a Transgender Certificate via the National Portal for Transgender Persons. While those with certificates from other authorities are encouraged to register on the portal, eligibility for schemes remains dependent on possessing the official certificate. Additional provisions include:

- Project Management Committees (PMC) may certify transgender individuals without IDs and assist them in obtaining Aadhaar, PAN, Ration Card, Passport, etc.

- The project director and the implementation team must ensure convergence of existing programmes to facilitate the rapid rehabilitation of residents.

Despite these provisions, obtaining a Transgender Certificate remains a significant hurdle for many transgender individuals due to systemic and situational challenges, as outlined below:

- Low uptake of Transgender Certificates:** The number of Transgender Certificates issued via the national portal remains disproportionately low compared to the population enumerated under the 'Other' category in the 2011 Census. Experts argue that even the census figures under represent the actual transgender population, exacerbating the disparity.
- Lack of supporting documentation:** Many transgender individuals who flee their native places or families due to discrimination or violence often lack essential identity documents. This makes it difficult to comply with the requirements for obtaining a certificate.
 - a. In some cases, authorities send police officials to verify their address, which not only infringes on their privacy but also delays the process.
 - b. Furthermore, families may disown or deny any association with transgender individuals, further complicating the verification process.
- Cross-State relocation complications:** Transgender individuals often relocate to other states to build a new identity. However, the rules require the district magistrate to verify their residential address.



iv. Sensitivity and training of issuing authorities: Challenges such as the use of dead names (former names no longer used by transgender individuals) in certificates and a lack of understanding of preferred names highlight the need for sensitisation among officials.

Insights from the Shelters

During the visits of the NHRC officials, it was observed that a few beneficiaries of the shelters happen to not possess a Transgender Certificate. Community leaders also highlighted that transgender persons are sometimes reluctant to update their identification documents, such as Aadhaar, to reflect their preferred name. This hesitation stems from concerns that inheritance laws may be interpreted in a way that restricts property rights to children who fall within the gender binary. Additionally, complexities at the official level, coupled with instances of insensitivity, often result in the rejection of TG card applica-

tions. The issue appears more pronounced in regions where issuing authorities lack sensitivity towards transgender-specific challenges. For example:

- In Maharashtra, the district administration has been notably supportive, enabling residents to obtain certificates with fewer obstacles.
- Conversely, in Delhi, residents reported facing significant challenges due to bureaucratic insensitivity and procedural hurdles.
- In the State of Bihar, the authority allows transgender persons to mention the address of Garima Greh shelter and issues transgender certificates.
- While in the State of Gujarat, the Transgender Certificate has to be issued where the address mentioned in the Aadhar Card by the district magistrate. The conditions sometimes create obstacles in the address verification process.



► Glimpse of Sakhya, Odisha





- Further, in some exceptional situations when a transgender person evades their place, sometimes they do not have any documents, and the organisation has to start from scratch to enable the person to obtain requisite documents.

F.) Recommendations

- a) Authorities involved in the issuance process must be sensitised to the unique challenges faced by transgender individuals. This includes understanding issues such as dead names, preferred names, and the need for privacy during verification processes.
- b) Empowering Garima Greh shelters through the following measures:
 - i. A separate login credential should be provided to Garima Greh shelter heads, enabling them to assist transgender residents in applying for certificates via the national portal.
 - ii. In case of issues during the application process, authorities should directly liaise with the shelter to resolve them amicably, rather than rejecting the application outright, which would necessitate a cumbersome reapplication process.
- c) Verification protocols should respect the privacy and dignity of transgender individuals. For instance:
 - i. Avoiding police visits for address verification wherever possible.

- ii. Allowing for alternative methods of verification, such as self-declarations or affidavits.
- d) For transgender individuals without traditional identity documents, alternative methods such as affidavits, shelter-issued identification, or community endorsements should be considered to facilitate the application process.
 - e) Garima Greh shelters may be explored to be utilised as spaces where transgender individuals can access multiple government services in one location, ensuring streamlined service delivery for both residents and non-residents.

Conclusion

The formal recognition of transgender rights is recent, yet low education levels have slowed down awareness and uptake of government schemes. While TG cards aid service delivery and policy-making, bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of incentives hinder registration. The early rollout of the TG Plus Ayushman Bharat Scheme could encourage participation by linking healthcare benefits to TG card registration. Additionally, streamlining documentation, sensitising authorities, and empowering Garima Greh shelters as facilitation centers will enhance access to welfare schemes, strengthening the support system for the transgender community.



Chapter 5

Examining Garima Greh's Role in Nurturing Learning, Well-Being, and Economic Empowerment

Garima Greh: An Introduction to Its Vision and Purpose

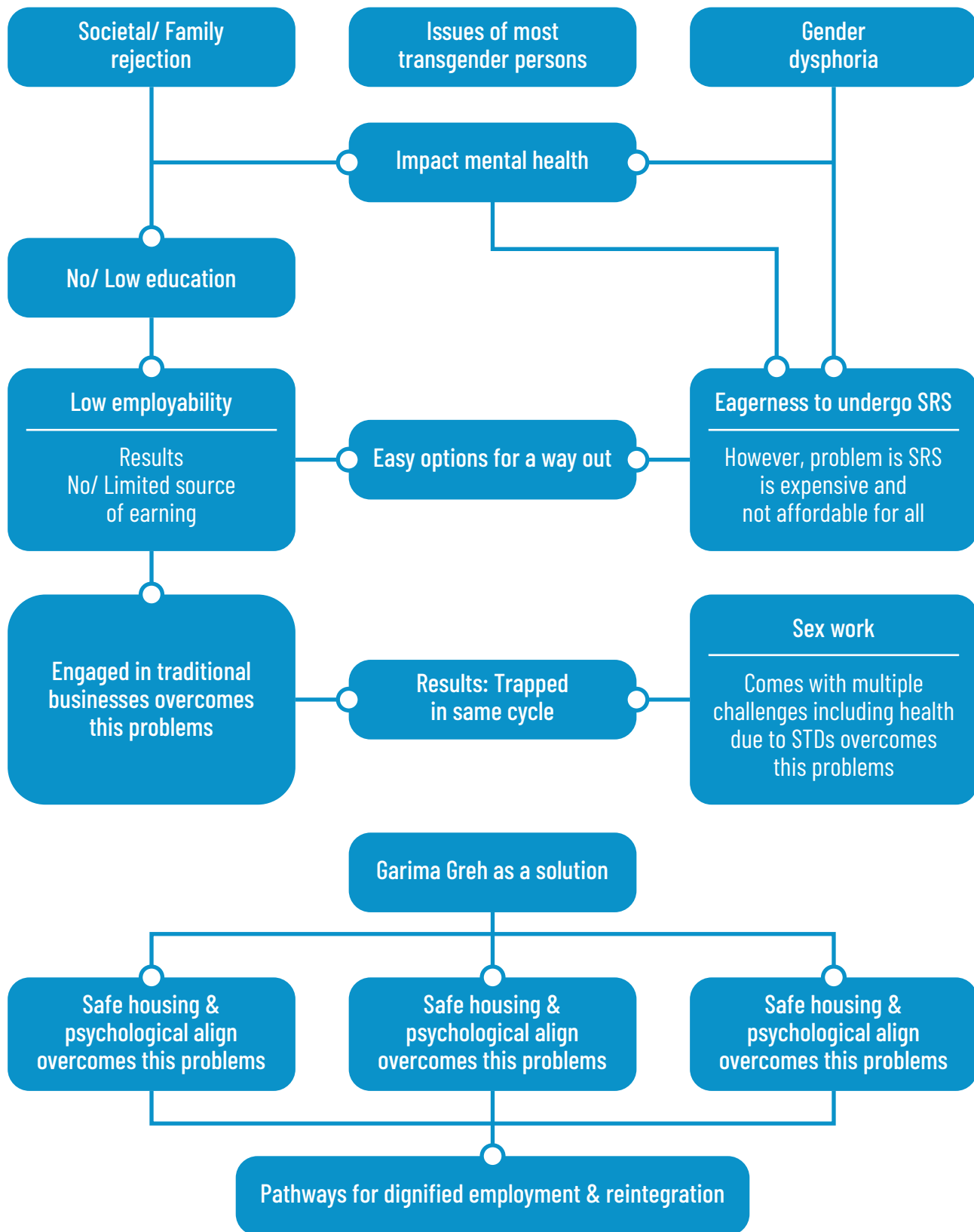
Garima Greh shelters may appear like a temporary arrangement providing accommodation to transgender persons, but they serve a far deeper purpose. They are envisioned as safe spaces where transgender individuals can heal from past trauma, particularly the psychological distress caused by gender dysphoria, while also fostering learning and skill development. Due to societal discrimination, many transgender individuals face rejection from their families at an early age, depriving them of a stable support system and access to formal education. Without family backing, they are often left without a mechanism to continue their schooling, pushing them into precarious livelihoods such as begging, performing in the *badhai* system, or, in some cases, engaging in sex work. The absence of education not only limits their economic opportunities but also affects their access to healthcare, social security, and legal rights, further deepening their marginalisation. Many transgender persons aspire to undergo Sex Re-assignment Surgery (SRS), a costly procedure primarily available in private hospitals, though government support is gradually increasing. To afford the expenses associated with SRS, many individuals from the

community resort to sex work or the traditional *badhai* system, as these livelihoods offer relatively quick earnings without requiring formal professional skills.

Recognising these interdependencies, Garima Greh shelters adopt a holistic approach that integrates healthcare and well-being, education and skill development, and employment and reintegration. Addressing one aspect in isolation is insufficient — without education, employment options remain limited, and without financial independence, access to healthcare and stability becomes uncertain. By providing a structured environment where transgender individuals can resume learning, acquire vocational skills, and access healthcare services, the initiative seeks to equip them with the tools needed for long-term self-reliance and dignity. The flowchart in the next page explained these interconnections.

With a prescribed stay of six months to one year, the expectation is that residents will heal, gain education or vocational training, and reintegrate into society with enhanced opportunities. This chapter examines whether the shelters are fulfilling their intended purpose, evaluates the adequacy of the prescribed duration of stay, and explores measures to strengthen their impact.







Health and Well-being

Intersection of healthcare and sustainable rehabilitation

Health remains one of the most pressing concerns for transgender individuals in India. It has been a focal point for human rights advocacy, with the Indian government addressing transgender healthcare needs even before the landmark *2014 NALSA Judgment*, which gave legal recognition to the identity of transgender persons. Despite these initiatives, the healthcare landscape for transgender persons remains fraught with complexities tied to mental health, physical well-being, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. Gender-affirmative healthcare encompasses physical health and mental health and is more complicated than it appears, and interconnected with other socio-economic issues. The holistic understanding of transgender healthcare needs must integrate mental and physical health while addressing systemic inequalities through any initiative aiming rehabilitation of transgender persons. The following sections outline some of the key socio-economic challenges that establish the interconnection of healthcare and sustainable rehabilitation for transgender persons.

Mental health issues: From childhood, transgender persons often face gender dysphoria, social rejection, and bullying, which take a severe toll on their mental health. These challenges are further aggravated by societal stigma and the absence of adequate counseling and psychiatric care, leaving transgender individuals to cope without necessary support systems.

A 2020 survey conducted by UNESCO among 400 LGBT+ youth in Tamil Nadu revealed alarming trends:

- Over half of the respondents skipped classes to avoid bullying.
- Nearly a third dropped out of school altogether.

These early experiences disrupt education, hinder skill development, and limit access to employment opportunities, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and mental health challenges. The absence of mental health programmes in schools, coupled with poor access to professional counseling, leaves transgender individuals vulnerable to depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

Gender-affirmative care and sex reassignment surgery (SRS): Many transgender individuals opt for Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) as part of their gender-affirmative care. However, accessing this care remains fraught with financial and systemic barriers:

- SRS is prohibitively expensive, particularly in private hospitals where most surgeries occur. Despite mandates, government hospitals are yet to operationalise these procedures effectively.
- With limited access to education and employment, transgender persons often cannot afford SRS. Many are forced into professions like begging or sex work, which offer quick earnings but perpetuate poverty and stigma.

These economic challenges not only delay gender-affirmative care but also impact the overall health and well-being of transgender individuals, who remain trapped in cycles of marginalisation.

HIV/AIDS and health vulnerabilities: The transgender community is disproportionately affected by Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), particularly HIV/AIDS. The high prevalence of HIV among transgender individuals underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions. The engagement of the community in sex work may be one reason for this persistence problem.

Case Study: Lakshya Trust Garima Greh, Vadodara, which encourages enrolled beneficiaries to undergo HIV/AIDS tests in a confidential manner. Out of 93 transgender beneficiaries who were enrolled at the





shelter till date and underwent confidential testing, 13 individuals were HIV positive.

Government interventions

Ayushman Bharat TG Plus: The *Ayushman Bharat TG Plus* scheme is a significant step in addressing the healthcare needs of transgender individuals. It aims to ensure financial protection and inclusive healthcare access for transgender persons. Key features of the scheme include:

- Insurance Coverage: Each transgender individual is entitled to Rs. 5 lakh annual health insurance under this scheme.
- Comprehensive Care: The scheme covers transition-related healthcare services, including SRS and other essential treatments.

- Access to Hospitals: Benefits can be availed at empanelled private and government healthcare facilities.

While this initiative holds promise, its implementation faces delays as the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare works on finalising the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as per the information submitted to the NHRC by the concerned ministry. For successful implementation and outreach:

- Efficient issuance of Transgender Identity Certificates and TG Cards must be ensured to facilitate enrollment.
- A sufficient number of hospitals must be empanelled to deliver quality gender-affirmative care.



► Glimpse from the Mitr Trust Garima Greh, Delhi



- Awareness campaigns are needed to inform transgender persons of their entitlements under the scheme.

Provisions in the guidelines and brief analysis

The Garima Greh guidelines mandate the following provisions for healthcare;

- Maintenance of residents' medical case histories.
- Part time counselor to undertake counseling and guidance session.
- Weekly doctor visits and health check-ups.
- Provision of medical equipment and stocked first-aid boxes.

Gaps in implementation: While the guidelines outline basic healthcare services, several critical gaps hinder effective implementation. The guidelines do not cover any expenses concerning medical expenditures other than salary of a part time doctor and a Counsellor which is also not being paid on time due to significant delay in reimbursement of funds, which results into following issues:

Funding shortfalls

- No funds are allocated for hospitalisation, emergency medical care, or replenishment of medicines for first-aid kits.
- Shelters struggle to manage medical emergencies, particularly those in peripheral areas with limited transportation access.

Inadequate personnel

- The prescribed budget for part-time doctors and counselors is insufficient. Many shelters rely on personal networks, compromising the consistency and quality of healthcare services.

Insights from the shelters

Due to inadequate funding and institutional support, Garima Greh shelters have developed independent strategies to address health-related challenges. Many shelters allocate their limited resources to procure essential medicines, as there is no dedicated budget for such necessities.

For instance, the Garima Greh in Delhi collaborates with the Humsafar Trust to provide counselling services, ensuring mental health support for its residents. In Maharashtra, the Kinnar Asmita Garima Greh in Thane facilitates access to government hospitals, where dedicated transgender wards have been established, and enabling beneficiaries to receive healthcare services. The Tweet Foundation manages health services internally and has secured one or two hospital beds for emergency hospitalisation. However, they face challenges during the monsoon season, particularly with diseases like malaria and dengue, as the costs for medicines and hospitalisation are not covered under the existing guidelines.

Similarly, the Lakshya Trust Garima Greh runs a targeted HIV/AIDS intervention programme with support from the state government, benefiting from the presence of a qualified doctor on staff. However, much of this support relies on charity and external aid, underscoring the urgent need for formal funding provisions to ensure consistent and sustainable healthcare services.

Shelters located on the outskirts of cities face additional challenges during medical emergencies, particularly at night when public transport is scarce. For example, the Aarju Foundation in Panvel has highlighted that, in the absence of hospital liaisons or support networks, handling medical emergencies can become highly problematic.





G.) Recommendations

- a) Adequate funds must be allocated to cover essential healthcare needs, including hospitalisation costs, emergency medical care, and regular replenishment of first-aid medicines at Garima Greh shelters.
- b) Partnerships between Garima Greh shelters and nearby district hospitals should be encouraged to provide affordable, accessible, and timely healthcare services to transgender individuals, particularly in rural or remote areas.
- c) Ambulance services must be made available for Garima Greh shelters to address health emergencies. In addition, shelters should maintain emergency contact numbers for nearby government hospitals to facilitate swift medical support during critical situations.
- d) The government should expedite the operational guidelines for the Ayushman Bharat TG Plus scheme to ensure its timely and effective rollout.
- e) Improved coordination between shelters and empanelled government or private hospitals is essential to ensure transgender persons can seamlessly access healthcare services under the Ayushman Bharat TG Plus scheme.
- f) Dedicated and sustained programmes for counseling and psychiatric care must be developed to address the unique mental health challenges faced by transgender persons, including gender dysphoria, trauma, and depression.
- g) HIV/AIDS-targeted intervention programmes should be scaled up to focus on prevention, regular testing, and access to Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART). Awareness campaigns and health education must be

prioritised to reduce vulnerability within the transgender community.

Education and Skill Development

Interconnection of education and sustainable rehabilitation

Education is widely recognised as a powerful tool for transformation — both at an individual and societal level. It instills confidence, nurtures hope, and promotes personal growth, regardless of financial background. By narrowing social disparities and fostering holistic development, education plays a crucial role in uplifting marginalised communities and advancing social equity. More importantly, it serves as a means to break the cycle of poverty, unlocking access to other fundamental human rights. The right to quality education is firmly established in international frameworks. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirms that 'Everyone has the right to education,' emphasising that elementary education should be free and accessible. Similarly, Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) further reinforce this universal entitlement, underscoring education's role in human development.

Recognising education as a cornerstone of national progress, India enacted the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, recognising the Right to Education, erstwhile a DPSP, as a Fundamental Right under Article 21A. This mandates that 'The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children aged six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.' To operationalise this vision, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) was enacted, ensuring access to education regardless of socio-economic background.





Unlike child education, adult education does not have statutory backing and is primarily driven by policy measures. In this context, vocational training and skill development take precedence, equipping individuals with marketable skills that enhance employability. Education and skill development are vital in fostering workforce inclusion. On one hand, they enhance employability, and on the other, they instill confidence, enabling individuals to navigate professional spaces with self-assurance. In India, transgender persons have historically faced systemic exclusion from formal employment, often resorting to undignified roles due to limited opportunities. The overarching objective of Garima Greh shelters aligns with the vision of providing structured skill development programmes, enabling residents to acquire competencies essential for sustainable livelihoods, empowering beneficiaries to integrate into the workforce and achieve financial independence.

Government interventions

The Government of India has introduced scholarships under the SMILE scheme, focusing on transgender individuals studying from Grade IX onwards. Further, some states have also initiated specific schemes in the matter under consideration for benefitting transgender persons.

Provisions in the guidelines and brief analysis

The guidelines require the programme manager to assess the skills and capabilities of residents and introduce age-appropriate education, vocational training, recreational activities, and bridge education programmes. The bridge course coordinator is responsible for assessing residents' interests and providing life skills training. Additionally, the coordinator is required to make regular visits to schools and vocational training institutes, keeping concerned officials informed about the specific needs of Garima Greh residents.

Beyond the human resource challenges discussed in Chapter 3, an analysis of the guidelines suggests

that the programme relies heavily on bridge course coordinators as central facilitators for skill development and coordination. Meanwhile, the government's role appears largely limited to financial assistance, with excessive responsibilities placed on the shelter staff. This approach may not adequately meet the needs of the transgender community, which often requires sustained governmental support, including guidance and capacity building, to ensure equal opportunities. While bridge course coordinators, hired at a salary of Rs. 12,000 per month with two years of experience, play a crucial role, their limited exposure to the breadth of government schemes and resources may constrain their effectiveness. Structured and accessible support mechanisms from the government would empower coordinators to navigate opportunities more effectively, benefitting the transgender community. Rather than leaving the entire operational burden on Garima Greh staff, the government could establish centralised desks at both the state and national levels, housed within the concerned ministries, to support Garima Greh staff. These desks could prepare a comprehensive list of available government skill-building schemes tailored for the transgender community would further streamline this process and provide clear, consistent guidance and act as a resource hub for staff members. Further, the NITI Aayog Darpan portal already provides information on NGOs, CSOs, and trusts, which can be filtered by state and district. However, the portal lacks a dedicated category for 'Skill Development and Livelihood'. Adding such a category would allow Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to easily identify and collaborate with NGOs working in relevant areas.

Further, as per the guidelines, Rs. 50,000/- has been allocated as non-recurring expenses for procuring skill development-related equipment, which is supposed to be purchased from locally popular trades. It gives an impression that the existing provisions is based on the assumption that requisite skill development can be given in collaboration with skill providing agencies which is free of cost. Additionally, the programme does not allocate





funds for crucial expenses, such as course fees or travel costs to reach a distant training institute, which significantly limits the accessibility and effectiveness of skill development initiatives. Addressing this gap through dedicated budgetary provisions would enhance the programme's reach and impact.

Also, the prescribed maximum duration of stay, currently set at one year, may not be sufficient to instill confidence and equip individuals with the necessary skills, especially for those who have faced prolonged discrimination throughout their lives.

Insights from Garima Greh shelters visits

Regarding the aspect of education and skill development, some of the shelter specific insights obtained from interactions with the staff are as follows:

Mitr Trust, Delhi: The shelter provides a supportive environment focused on skill development and fostering independence. Residents receive training in language, communication, and entrepreneurship. The Community-Based Organization (CBO) actively engages in producing and branding items such as potpourri and bags under the Mitr Trust label. Creative expression is encouraged through resident-made paintings, though there is a lack of dedicated display space. Basic resources such as sewing machines and computers enable vocational training. Some residents have successfully secured employment in reputed establishments like Lalit Hotel, demonstrating the impact of these initiatives.

Dostana Safar, Bihar: This CBO-managed shelter has created a thriving ecosystem for skill development and economic empowerment. Unlike many other shelters, it benefits from adequate space, enabling the initiation of diverse activities. Key initiatives include:

- A dedicated computer lab established in collaboration with an educational institute for computer literacy training.

- A laser therapy clinic offering affordable services to outsiders as well.
- Plan to start mushroom cultivation.
- A sewing center, where residents produce garments such as petticoats for sale at trade fairs.
- A beautician course training space for vocational development.
- The Satrangi Restaurant, a transgender-led initiative supported by local authorities.

Recognising the residents' aspirations for government employment, the organisation has partnered with coaching institutes and facilitated access to libraries. These efforts have resulted in some transgender individuals securing government positions, including roles as police constables. Despite these achievements, the shelter's head has emphasised the restrictive one-year residency cap, which limits long-term training and rehabilitation. Revisiting this guideline is essential for comprehensive support.

Kinnar Asmita, Maharashtra: The shelter focuses on vocational training, offering sewing machine facilities and a community kitchen for self-sufficiency. However, securing trainers remains a challenge, as many hesitate to work in a transgender-dominated space. To address this, the shelter enrolls residents in external training institutes, though the lack of budgetary support for travel allowances is a concern.

A significant milestone is the establishment of Maharashtra's first transgender-run salon, which provides employment opportunities while enhancing visibility. Additionally, the shelter fosters entrepreneurship through extensive networking efforts.

Mitwa Sankalp Samiti, Chhattisgarh: Beneficiaries from the shelter participate in Sanjh, an annual event in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, that provides a platform for talented transgender individuals to



showcase their skills. Given the strong interest among Garima Greh residents in grooming and fashion, the shelter actively supports their participation in various pageants. As a result, residents have been selected for prestigious titles such as Miss Chhattisgarh Transqueen, Miss India Transqueen, and Miss International Transqueen, representing the community on international stages. In addition to these opportunities, Garima Greh offers skill development classes in areas such as computer education, tailoring and sewing, and driving. Free coaching is also available for inmates preparing for competitive exams, as well as for those seeking to complete their 10th, 12th, or college education.

Tweet Foundation, Maharashtra: This foundation effectively utilises CSR funding and networks to operate the shelter. Trained community members

serve as trainers, ensuring a gender-sensitive approach. However, external trainers often lack gender sensitivity, leading to hesitation in enrolling transgender individuals in training programmes. The foundation has collaborated with transgender-friendly corporate groups to create job opportunities, organising job fairs specifically for transgender individuals. However, employment opportunities remain limited.

Aarju Foundation, Maharashtra: The shelter struggles with funding constraints, relying heavily on government support. Due to financial limitations, they find it difficult to enrol residents in training programmes. However, despite these challenges, some transgender individuals have secured jobs as security guards, demonstrating the potential for economic independence when opportunities are available.



► Glimpse of Mitwa Sankalp Samiti, Raipur, Chhattisgarh





Lakshya Trust, Vadodara, Gujarat: The shelter has documented records of 93 beneficiaries enrolled in the shelter, all of whom have been provided with some form of employment. They offer various training programmes for transgender individuals but also highlighted several challenges. At times, they collaborate with charitable institutions, such as the Deepak Trust Charitable Institution, Azim Premji Philanthropy Initiative in the past. Such collaboration helped them in securing support for self-help groups with interest-free loans of up to Rs.1 lakh. The staff also acknowledged the support they receive from the royal family of Vadodara, including free passes for residents to participate in Garba celebrations. They have also been trying to collaborate with academic and training institutions.

However, financial support for training programmes remains a key challenge. For instance, to sponsor beauty training courses for a few beneficiaries, the organisation's trustee had to personally bear the expenses. Another difficulty is securing partnerships with training institutions, as some insist on exclusive batches for transgender individuals, which is often unfeasible due to limited participation.

Sakha Garima Greh, Odisha: The organisation has introduced various skill development programmes, including computer training, phenyl-making, tailoring, and mushroom cultivation. It has also established a laser therapy clinic on its own initiative.

Additionally, driving classes have been introduced, and one beneficiary has been successfully recruited by the central secretariat. Furthermore, the organisation has provided financial assistance ranging from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 90,000 to support five beneficiaries in completing their formal education.

Transgender Rights Association, Chennai: The association claimed to provide entrepreneurship skills along with other skills. Further, they asserted that they have facilitated the formulation of more than 10 Self Help Groups of Transgender Persons,

comprising 5-7 members each as the state policy provide accommodative stance in case of SHG for transgender persons as for women, the required number is 10-12. A beneficiary after her SRS was able to complete her PhD leveraging the safe space provided by the shelter.

While education and skill development are crucial functions of the shelters, their effectiveness is significantly influenced by systematic support from state agencies. The ability of an organisation to assess the interests of transgender individuals, provide them with necessary skills, and enrol them in suitable programmes largely depends on the availability of adequate funding other than allocated by the government under the scheme and collaboration with other organisations. Additionally, the role of state and local administration remains paramount in ensuring the success of these initiatives.

A recurring challenge observed during the visits to the shelter is the lack of a conducive learning environment within shelters due to inadequate space and infrastructure for studying. While Dostana Safar has attempted to address this by collaborating with libraries, such provisions are not mandated in the existing guidelines. Moreover, none of the Garima Greh shelters provide sufficient privacy in the form of curtains or movable partitions, with many beneficiaries residing in large dormitories.

The prescribed one-year residency limit is another major constraint, as it is insufficient for acquiring concrete skill sets or completing formal education. A more flexible approach is needed, especially for beneficiaries seeking to complete their studies or prepare for entrance examinations. The government already operates scholarship schemes for transgender students from Class IX onwards, and some states also provide stipends. There is a pressing need to integrate these schemes with the initiatives of community-based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs managing these shelters to ensure a streamlined support system.



During interactions with residents, concerns were raised regarding the lack of transgender-friendly procedures at the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). In response, the Commission has urged NIOS to establish a dedicated Transgender Cell and address these issues in line with its advisory. Addressing such institutional challenges is crucial to ensuring inclusive educational opportunities for transgender individuals.

H.) Recommendations

- a) The government may consider providing one-time financial assistance to shelters for setting up necessary infrastructure to ensure privacy. Collaborations with local libraries may also be explored.
- b) The government may reconsider the one-year residency cap, particularly for beneficiaries pursuing formal education or preparing for competitive examinations. Provisions for extended stays based on educational progress may be introduced to ensure continuity in learning and skill development, in case alternative arrangements in the form of hostel stay could not be made.
- c) The government may explore the convergence of various existing schemes for transgender persons to maximize the impact of support initiatives through the shelter. Existing government scholarships and state-provided stipends may be integrated with Garima Greh programmes to provide comprehensive financial assistance. Beneficiaries interested in higher education may be supported through scholarship scheme at the shelter. Further, the government may endeavour to bring details on schemes available at state level at National Portal for Transgender Persons, which has already been providing guidance for centre sector schemes. Further, to enhance the utility of National Portal for Transgender Persons, the government could consider incorporating detailed information on state-level schemes.
- d) The government may consider adding a separate heading for undertaking expenses relating to training that may include fee for trainers for giving in-house trainings.
- e) A mapping exercise of training institutions should be conducted at the appropriate government level to identify institutions where beneficiaries can undertake relevant skill development programmes. In cases where suitable training programmes are not available locally, the government may consider reimbursing travel allowances up to a reasonable limit to facilitate access to quality vocational training.
- f) Ensure that skill development centers and shelters provide a safe and supportive space for transgender individuals to pursue training without fear of discrimination or harassment.
- g) The NITI Aayog Darpan portal may be revised to include a dedicated category for 'Skill Development and Livelihood' so that CBOs may identify prospective partners for collaboration in the domain of livelihood and skill development easily.
- h) Partnerships with colleges and universities may be built to create inclusive educational programmes that offer transgender students an equal opportunity to access higher education and skill development.
- i) Efforts should be made to ensure transgender-friendly policies are implemented in open schooling, higher education institutions, and skill development centers to foster inclusivity.





Employment and Social Integration

Navigating legal safeguards for workplace equality

The right to employment is a cornerstone of dignity and inclusion, deeply rooted in the Indian Constitution. Articles 14, 15, and 21 collectively ensure equality, non-discrimination, and the right to livelihood, forming the basis for the employment rights of transgender persons. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 further strengthens these protections, prohibiting workplace discrimination. Yet, despite these safeguards, transgender individuals face significant barriers in accessing employment. They encounter prejudice, unequal opportunities, and unsafe work environments, necessitating judicial interventions. For instance, in *Shanavi Ponnusamy v. Ministry of Civil Aviation and Anr.* (2022), the Supreme Court directed the government to create a policy for transgender employment in consultation with the National Council for Transgender Persons. Accordingly, the government introduced the 'Equal Opportunities Policy for Transgender Persons' on 14 February 2024, with the objectives to create an atmosphere that ensures the fair treatment of transgender individuals, free from discrimination, harassment, and bias, while establishing a robust grievance redressal mechanism. Additionally, various high courts have pushed for measures such as reservations to ensure better workforce inclusion, marking important progress toward equity. The journey, however, is far from complete. The fight for workplace equity requires not only robust policies but also a shift in societal attitudes and perspective. If the transgender find that they are unable to secure dignified employment, they resort to begging rather than working. The narrative of transgender employment rights is not just a legal battle — it is a call to reimagine workplaces as spaces of dignity, safety, and opportunity for all.

Interconnection of dignified employment and reintegration in society

The engagement of transgender community in begging activity and sex work has been a reason of the isolation of the community from other part of the society. The core function of the Garima Greh shelter may appear to provide skills development in a safe and supportive environment, however, its ultimate aim is to endow them with such skills that help them get some dignified employment and provide a kind of confidence that would help them to integrate them in society. However, as explained in previous section, this aspect is strongly interconnected with education and skill development. Also, as the most affluent community members have pursued their traditional role, hence, convincing this generation who also seek respect to join rehabilitative programme will certainly not a difficult task, but those who are in dire need of financial support may find begging and sex work as a source for making quick money and support their SRS and other such expenses.

Insights from the shelters

While existing guidelines require project directors (PDs) to conduct post-rehabilitation visits for transgender individuals who have moved out of shelters, they offer little provision for facilitating sustainable employment opportunities. Many of the shelters are mainly providing safe spaces and nurturing their talent. Beneficiaries at the shelters were also not registered on the National Career Service portal, highlighting the potential to enhance convergence efforts. A few shelters with strong connection are leveraging their networks to facilitate job opportunities, while a few also engaging beneficiaries in their own programmes. For instance, Lakshya Trust in Gujarat has successfully partnered with transgender-friendly companies, enabling beneficiaries to secure jobs with organisations like Mumbai Godrej, Asian Paints, Tata Steel, Jupiter Hospital, etc. Similarly, Garima



► Ms. Reshma Prasad, Head of Dostana Safar Garima Greh, briefing on the laser therapy facility at the shelter

Greh shelters under Sakha have collaborated with companies through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, offering employment after skill training.

In Bihar, Dostana Safar has taken an entrepreneurial route, launching a restaurant run entirely by

transgender individuals and introducing laser therapy services as an additional income source. Maharashtra's Kinnar Asmita pioneered the state's first transgender-run salon, tailoring unit, and community kitchen, setting an example of economic self-reliance. Some shelters have supported beneficiaries in preparing for competitive exams,





leading to successful placements. Notable success stories have emerged from states like Bihar and Chhattisgarh, during the visits, highlighting the impact of targeted support. Beyond individual efforts, the role of policy and systemic backing is crucial. Transgender Rights Association of Tamil Nadu has leveraged state accommodative policies to establish self-help groups for TGs and entrepreneurship among the community.

Community leaders are advocating for stronger government support. Following interventions by judicial and human rights bodies, along with the notification of laws and policies, many organisations, government bodies, and corporate entities have updated their application forms to include gender categories beyond just male and female. However, certain areas still require further revision to ensure that application procedures are fair and truly transgender-inclusive. For instance, in Chhattisgarh, transgender individuals face challenges competing under the same physical standards as binary genders in recruitment processes for joining the police force. Community leaders also advocate for exclusive platforms that increase visibility and ensure employment opportunities. The Tweet Foundation has recommended proactive measures, such as utilising large-scale infrastructure projects — like the Mumbai Metro — following the model set by Kochi Metro's transgender employment initiative. In 2017, Kochi Metro became the first government-owned company in India to formally appoint transgender individuals, hiring 23 members of the community for various roles, including customer relations, housekeeping, and crowd management.

Beyond shelter-specific concerns, broader challenges impact transgender workforce inclusion. Community leaders point out that transgender individuals, even after securing employment, struggle to find rental housing due to prevalent biases. Additionally, workplace harassment remains a significant impediment to their integration into society. Addressing these issues requires multi-stakeholder collaboration, includ-

ing government policy revisions and corporate inclusivity initiatives. While sexual harassment against women in the workplace has long been recognised, with laws such as the POSH Act enacted to address it, harassment faced by transgender individuals — who are often stigmatised as a community engaged in sex work — remains a less discussed but equally prominent problem. Although awareness and sensitisation campaigns are gaining traction, they could be further strengthened by extending the provisions of the POSH Act to include transgender persons. For instance, the State of Manipur, in its Action Taken Report submitted to the Commission, has already included grievance redress mechanisms for transgender persons under the Internal Complaints Committees established under the POSH Act across all departments and district administrations. This approach can serve as a model for expanding the scope of the POSH Act to protect transgender employees, ensuring a safer and more inclusive work environment for all.

I.) Recommendations

- a) Employment guidelines and policies may be revised to address the unique needs and circumstances of transgender individuals, ensuring inclusivity and fairness. This may include adjusting physical standards to account for biological differences, thereby promoting equitable employment practices.
- b) The beneficiaries residing at the shelters may be encouraged to register on National Career Service portal.
- c) Hostels for working transgender persons may be established, similar to women's working hostels, to provide safe and supportive living environments.
- d) The existing framework of Internal Complaint Committees, established under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH)





Act, may be amended to address complaints concerning harassment against transgender persons. While the POSH Act currently focuses on protecting women, organisations may adopt gender-neutral policies to extend protections to transgender individuals.

- e) The establishment of transgender-led businesses may be encouraged by providing entrepreneurial support through accommodative policies and concessional loans.
- f) Authorities may consider providing exclusive spaces for the transgender community to increase visibility and awareness while ensuring dignified employment opportunities. Such spaces may serve as cultural centers, business hubs, or community support centers, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.

Conclusion

Achieving social integration for transgender persons requires a transformative approach that prioritises skill development, economic empowerment, and well-being beyond traditional roles. While initiatives like Garima Greh provide foundational support, their true impact lies in equipping transgender individuals with market-relevant skills and ensuring access to diverse career pathways. This must be complemented by financial support, inclusive workplace policies, and stronger legal protections against discrimination. A future of genuine workforce equity demands corporate engagement, institutional backing, and targeted reforms, ensuring that transgender individuals are not only included but empowered to thrive in a rapidly evolving economy.





Chapter 6

A Promise Interrupted

Insights from the Visits

The Garima Greh shelters were established under the SMILE scheme to provide a safe and supportive environment for transgender individuals. The Government of India has established 12 such shelters in 09 states/UTs in the first phase of the scheme. These shelters were envisioned not only as places of refuge but also as centers for skill development and empowerment. However, challenges related to funding, infrastructure, and administrative support are pushing the shelter on the verge of closure, raising concerns about the long-term sustainability of the initiative. It is evident from the fact that 02 out of those 12 shelters have suspended their full-fledged operations pertaining to the Garima Greh Shelters. The government website continues to list the addresses of these two shelters as well, despite the fact that no such shelters exist at the stated locations, as they have already been shut down. This discrepancy means that individuals seeking shelter may arrive at the provided addresses, only to find that no operational shelter is available.

To gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced, it is necessary to examine the specific circumstances surrounding the closure of these shelters. This chapter provides detailed information about the two shelters in question, shedding light on the factors that led to their suspension and offering insight into the broader issues at play.

Transgender Rights Association, Chennai

The Transgender Rights Association was awarded the project in March 2021. Subsequently, the organisation sought assistance from the district



► Transgender Rights Association, Chennai

collector to secure a suitable premises, and full-fledged operations commenced in June 2021. The ministry released funds for the financial year 2021-22, but no follow-up funding was provided. The project director reported investing approximately Rs. 6 lakh of personal funds to cover rent and sustain the shelter. Due to financial constraints, the shelter temporarily suspended operations in February 2023, a decision that was formally communicated to the ministry prior to the closure.

It was reported that the shelter accommodated on an average 25 transgender persons, which was the maximum capacity allowed as per guidelines and claimed that all were necessary skills and provided

necessary support to get employment, an effort which continued post closure of the shelter. The association has continued providing skill development programmes, including computing classes, tailoring, beautician training, and driving lessons. The association has established connections with colleges and NGOs for skill training and placements. A recent job fair with Amazon and Flipkart led to four transgender individuals securing employment. They have also facilitated business enterprise training and helped form 40 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) of transgender persons, each comprising 5-7 members, registered with the Women Development Corporation. Notably, the state policy for transgender SHGs has been relaxed compared to other groups, which require 10-12 members. Through these efforts, they have secured loans of up to Rs. 10 lakh for each SHG to start livelihood sources.

Despite the shelter's closure, the ministry's website continues to display the contact details and address, leading to ongoing requests for accommodation. In response, the association attempts to meet these needs on a short-term basis, offering

accommodations for duration of up to 10 days through office arrangements or personal networks in unavoidable circumstances. The project director emphasised the successful placement of the first batch of transgender beneficiaries and expressed eagerness to extend similar opportunities to a new batch. However, the association requires immediate financial support from the ministry, as they are unable to sustain operations through personal investment or donations alone.

During the visit of NHRC officials, a former beneficiary, a transgender woman who was articulate in English language was present to facilitate the communication on behalf of the shelter. She also shared how the shelter had played a crucial role in her life. After her sex reassignment surgery and facing rejection from her family, the shelter provided her with support, allowing her to complete her PhD and helped in getting employment.

Nai Bhor Sanstha, Jaipur

The shelter has not officially declared or communicated to the ministry regarding the suspension of



► Nai Bhor Sanstha, Jaipur





the shelter. However, upon the visit, it was found that the shelter was not operating at the address given on the website as they have vacated the place after the expiry of rent agreement, which was not extended by the owner due to objection from the neighbourhood. The beneficiaries were shifted to a premises under Nagar Nigam that was mainly used as a night shelter. The new premises has no proper full-fledged functional kitchen. Food was mainly purchased from outside. There was no proper office set up or any skill development equipment. At the time of the visit, a few transgender individuals were residing there, but the facility lacked adequate amenities. There were no proper bedding arrangements, with mattresses placed on the floor.

It was informed that the last tranche of funding received was for the financial year 2021-22, which reportedly received in the year of 2023. Due to the absence of further financial support, the shelter now relies on the income generated by transgender residents themselves to meet their pecuniary expense. Based on the visit and observations, the current conditions do not align with the objectives of the Garima Greh scheme, which is designed to provide skill development along with essential services. In the current stage, the shelter has turned into a temporary lodging space with no structured support system in place for beneficiaries.

J.) Recommendations

- a) The concerned ministry should regularly update the details of organisations offering shelters and remove those that have suspended their operations under the initiative.
- b) The government should establish an institutional oversight mechanism to ensure that the functioning of shelters does not deteriorate to the extent that they cease to qualify as shelters.
- c) A dedicated desk at the nodal ministry should be established to address issues that may lead to the suspension of shelter operations.

Conclusion

The closures and transformation of the Garima Greh shelters into informal facilities underscore significant challenges in the programme's implementation. The lack of sustained financial support has led to the suspension of operations or the deterioration of shelter conditions. Immediate intervention from the concerned ministry is necessary to provide consistent funding, infrastructure, and oversight to ensure these shelters fulfill their intended purpose of skill development, and empowerment to transgender individuals. Without urgent action, the long-term viability of the Garima Greh initiative is at risk.

Chapter 7

Reforms Required Beyond Garima Greh Shelters

Issues Concerning Gender Non confirming Children

Nurturing a child's early years is like planting seeds for a lifetime of growth, resilience, and success. These foundational years shape every aspect of a person's development — physical, cognitive, emotional, and social. When children receive quality education, emotional support, and proper guidance, they build essential skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability, traits that are invaluable in the workforce. Investing in childhood, therefore, is an investment in a capable, skilled, and productive future workforce.

Family and educational institutions are instrumental in shaping this growth. Families provide foundational support by nurturing values, ethics, and emotional stability, which foster self-confidence and resilience. Through encouragement and constructive guidance, family members help children recognise their strengths and abilities. Educational institutions, on the other hand, offer structured learning, skills, and exposure to diverse perspectives. Schools and colleges promote intellectual development, critical thinking, and social skills, preparing individuals to navigate and contribute effectively to society. Together, family and education create a robust support system, enabling children to realise their full potential. The Constitution of India has endeavoured to endow every child with all these rights in the form of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State. The state policies and action has been guided with those provisions which manifested in Right to Education Act, 2009, Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and so on.



► AI-generated image of a gender nonconforming child





However, the critical question remains: Are these rights equally accessible to all children? This chapter seeks to answer this in context of gender nonconforming children in India explores the challenges faced by them.

Gender disparity in rights and access

While it is generally assumed that parents prioritise their children's best interests, deeper analysis reveals that not all children enjoy equal access to rights. The past economic survey of India had indicated that the preference for a son is so strong in India that Indian parents continue to have children until they have the desired number of sons. Certainly, this results in marshalling resources for male children while often depriving girls of basic necessities and opportunities. Recognising this inequality, the government has enacted protective laws, affirmative policies, and programmes to support girls and women in a traditionally patriarchal society.

However, the situation is even direr for gender nonconforming children. While a person's sex is traditionally determined by biological traits like chromosomes and anatomy, some individuals are born with both male and female characteristics, known as intersex. In India, intersex children have traditionally been handed over to *hijra* communities, which uphold a cultural system known as the *guru-chela* tradition. Even more troubling are children who do not conform to traditional gender norms, often facing gender dysphoria — a distressing disconnect between their gender identity and their assigned sex at birth. While comprehensive national data on family rejection of gender nonconforming children is lacking, surveys from states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, and academic studies indicate that rejection by families is common. This rejection leads to many gender nonconforming children being abandoned and forced to join community based organisation like *hijra gharana* where they do not receive any support from for education or skill development and ultimately dragged into the traditional practice

of earning a livelihood either through begging or engaging in sex work when they reach adulthood.

While patriarchal norms have led to the diversion of resources toward sons, at least girls and women benefit from some state support through affirmative policies. Gender nonconforming children, however, face a much harsher reality. Society's understanding of gender has been largely confined to the binary concepts of male and female. Only recently have government documents begun to acknowledge the existence of individuals outside this binary. Transgender individuals, for example, not only endure discrimination from their families but also suffer from institutionalised prejudice, reinforced by policies that unintentionally exclude them. The government has recognised the struggles of women and girls and responded with protective laws and schemes. Yet, when it comes to gender, which is a social and cultural construct, the focus remains narrowly on male and female identities. Until recently, the existence of individuals beyond this binary was scarcely acknowledged in official documents. As a result, transgender persons are not only discriminated against within their families but also by state policies that unwittingly perpetuate their exclusion.

Access to institutional care

Ideally, the abandoned children should be accommodated in Child Care Institutions; however, these institutions are established to accommodate children who adhere to binary gender norms. Although the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 stipulates detailed provisions for rehabilitating abandoned boys and girls, but it is silent on the requirement of gender nonconfirming children. Additionally, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016 allow for children of both sexes under 10 years old to be housed together in children's homes, yet they neither address the needs of gender nonconfirming children nor even mention them. It also provides that separate children's home for boys and girls in the age group of 7-11 years and 12-18 years, while





the Rules is reticent regarding the children who do not adhere to gender binary norms. This institutionalised discrimination renders the transgender children, who are already among the most marginalised within society, with no institutional support from the state. Consequently, they are deprived of various fundamental human rights, including the right to education, resulting in an adulthood where many end up in begging or sex work.

The challenges for transgender individuals begin at birth, as societal pressures often compel parents to hand over intersex children to *hijra gharanas*. Those who do not conform to binary gender identities face various forms of violence within their families. They are frequently either expelled from their homes or choose to leave to escape the violence they endure and end up joining *hijra gharanas*, where they do not receive any educational or skill development support, and ultimately dragged into their traditional community vocation of earning a livelihood through blessings and *badhai* performances.

Access to right to education

Education is regarded as the most powerful weapon to change the world and, more importantly, to transform an individual's life. It breeds confidence and hope, serving as a vital tool in fostering personal growth, irrespective of financial circumstances. Education narrows social gaps, promotes holistic development, and uplifts marginalised groups, playing a key role in achieving social equity. Furthermore, education is instrumental in breaking the cycle of poverty, acting as a gateway to fundamental human rights. The right to quality education is well-established in international frameworks. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) asserts, 'Everyone has the right to education', emphasising that education shall be free, at least at elementary and fundamental stages. Similarly, Articles 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reinforce this universal entitlement to education.

India recognised the significance of education by enacting the 86th Constitutional Amendment, 2002, which introduced the Right to Education as a Fundamental Right under Article 21A. This reads that 'The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children aged six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.' The subsequent Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) operationalised this vision, ensuring that education is accessible to all children, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds.

While the RTE Act has significantly advanced education for marginalised groups, its binary framework overlooks gender-nonconforming children, including transgender individuals. Section 1(d) of the Act defines 'child belonging to disadvantaged groups' as one who faces disadvantages owing to social, cultural, economic, linguistic, gender, or other factors. Transgender children fit within this definition, but explicit recognition would strengthen their inclusion and access to educational benefits. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 identifies transgender persons as a Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Group (SEDG). However, there remains a critical need for the government to formally notify transgender children as part of disadvantaged groups under the RTE Act, 2009, ensuring their entitlement to statutory benefits.

NHRC advisory and SMILE scheme

In its advisory dated 15 September 2023, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) emphasised creating a harassment-free environment for transgender students. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) has introduced scholarships under the SMILE scheme, focusing on transgender individuals studying from Grade IX onwards. However, the exclusion of children below Grade VIII is problematic, as many transgender children, including those with intersex traits, may need support earlier in their educational journey.





Challenges for intersex children

As per the guidelines issued by the MoSJ&E, it is of the opinion that the self-perceived gender identity of the transgender persons up to the age of Grade VIII remains ambiguous to large extent and therefore the transgender identity of the children may not be established. Hence, the ministry under the SMILE guidelines proposed to provide financial assistance to the transgender studying in Grade IX and above to enable them to complete their education. Though, it is a welcome step that would certainly help in completing transgender persons. However, while framing the guidelines, the condition of intersex community persons was not considered. Intersex trait can appear at various stages of development including at birth. Some intersex conditions are apparent at birth, where external genitalia may not fit typical definitions of male or female. For example, a child may have ambiguous genitalia, or they may possess characteristics of both sexes. In other cases, intersex traits may become evident during puberty when secondary sexual characteristics develop. For example, a person may not develop breasts or menstruate as expected for their assigned female sex or may not develop typical male characteristics such as facial hair or deepening voice. Such children are often abandoned or given to traditional *hijra* group. For instance, during NHRC visits to Garima Greh shelters, cases were noted where attempts were made to hand over gender nonconfirming children to shelters. Thus, excluding transgender or intersex students below Grade VIII from state support is inadequate and misaligned with their lived realities.

Insights from shelter visits

Garima Greh shelters, following their guidelines, provide residential support for transgender persons between the ages of 18 and 60 and are not permitted to house minors. However, as the only state-backed institutions for transgender individuals, these shelters frequently receive requests to accommodate minor gender nonconforming

individuals. Discussions with Garima Greh staff indicate that all shelters have received such requests. This request often comes from children from the community, parents and sometimes from state agencies. For instance, the Garima Greh in Delhi was approached by a police station, while Tweet Foundation's Garima Greh received a request from the State Department. Due to policy restrictions, shelters typically have to turn down these requests.

In some cases, shelters have adopted alternative approaches to support minors from organisation capacity. For instance, one Garima Greh allowed a minor transgender girl to use its space to prepare for an exam. Some community-based organisations have attempted to address this gap innovatively. They sometimes provide counseling to parents of gender nonconforming children. Meanwhile, Dostana Safar Garima Greh in Bihar, with support from state officials, has launched the '*Satransi Dostana Restaurant*,' a social enterprise run by transgender persons. Here, abandoned and impoverished gender nonconforming children aged 14 and older are provided employment, offering them stability, an alternative means of survival, and guidance for their future endeavours.

The lack of institutional support for gender nonconforming minors, particularly those rejected by their families, exacerbates their mental health challenges, especially during adolescence. A compelling case was shared by the Project Director of Sakha Garima Greh, Odisha. She recounted receiving a distress call at midnight about a young person exhibiting transgender characteristics who had been rescued while attempting a suicide at a railway station. Upon her arrival, the minor hugged her, seeking solace. With no institutional space available, she temporarily sheltered the 17-year-old. The case was eventually taken to court, which directed that the child be returned to their parents. However, outside the court, the parents, who were well qualified, holding senior positions pleaded with her to continue supporting their child as they were unwilling to take back. Through the organisa-





tion, she facilitated the child's education, ultimately helping the person achieve success.

K.) Recommendations

- a) A comprehensive survey should be undertaken to assess the prevalence of gender nonconforming children being disowned by their families.
- b) Child Care Institutions should be established to accommodate gender nonconforming children. As per the Action Taken Report submitted by the State of Manipur against the NHRC advisory, the state has two Child Care Institutions to support such children. This model should be studied and potentially expanded to meet the needs of gender nonconforming children across India. Modalities for establishing child home for transgender persons may be prepared to avoid any further confusion.
- c) The government should establish a robust institutional framework to support gender nonconforming children. A review of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 should be undertaken to incorporate transgender-inclusive provisions.
- d) Transgender children should be notified as part of the disadvantaged group under Section 1(d) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, ensuring statutory benefits for their education.
- e) Guidelines concerning financial assistance should recognise the unique needs of intersex children, ensuring support from early childhood stages.
- f) Major educational institutions should establish Transgender Cells to prevent harassment, promote inclusion, and address concerns specific to the community.

- g) Educational institutions should establish Transgender Cells to prevent harassment, promote inclusion, and address concerns specific to the community.

Issues Concerning Elderly Transgender Persons

Analysis of the issue

Transgender individuals face lifelong challenges that often intensify with age, as they experience compounded vulnerabilities stemming from social, economic, and healthcare disparities. Aging further isolates them, with shrinking social circles and limited emotional support. Stigma persists into old age, restricting access to community-based elder care services and exacerbating social exclusion. Financial insecurity is another pressing concern, particularly as work opportunities decline, leaving many dependent on charity. Existing elder care facilities and policies largely overlook the needs of transgender persons. Most old-age homes and assisted living facilities are gender-segregated, often forcing transgender individuals into concealment or exclusion. Additionally, there is a lack of dedicated shelter homes and welfare schemes specifically designed for elderly transgender persons. Acknowledging this issue, the NHRC advisory dated 15 September 2023 suggested the concerned ministry 'Old age home facilities be considered for the transgender community'.

In response, the Action Taken Report (ATR) furnished to the Commission stated that the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) currently operates 12 Garima Greh shelters for transgender persons, with plans to establish at least one in each state/UT. These shelters provide residential services, including for elderly transgender individuals.

However, an inconsistency arises in the ministry's guidelines, which mandate that beneficiaries must be below 60 years of age, while the ATR claims that





► AI-generated image of transgender older persons



aged transgender persons are also accommodated. Moreover, Garima Greh shelters offer only temporary housing, whereas elderly transgender individuals may require permanent care solutions. Addressing this gap necessitates dedicated, long-term elder care facilities tailored to the specific needs of transgender persons.

L.) Recommendations

- a) Old age home facilities be considered for the transgender community.
- b) Prepare guidelines for establishing shelters for elderly transgender persons.
- c) Conduct training and sensitisation programmes for concerned officials to enhance their understanding of the challenges faced by elderly transgender individuals.

Conclusion

The issues faced by children and elderly persons from the transgender community, though not directly related to the functioning of Garima Greh shelters — which provide temporary accommodation for adult transgender persons — are nonetheless significant. Visits to these shelters have highlighted the challenges faced by gender nonconforming children, while the Commission has already taken up concerns related to elderly transgender persons. It is important to emphasise that Garima Greh shelters do not cater to the specific needs of these groups. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach, including targeted policy interventions, community-based support systems, and enhanced awareness among caregivers. A comprehensive and inclusive framework is essential to ensure that the diverse needs of transgender individuals across all age groups are met. The recommendations outlined in this chapter seek to advance this objective.





Chapter 8

Closing Reflections

The establishment of the Garima Greh shelters under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is recognition of the vulnerabilities faced by the transgender community and a step towards ensuring their social and economic empowerment. The engagement of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in the initiative significantly enhances its potential for success by fostering community-driven approaches and integrating socio-cultural elements in the scheme as the community of the transgender persons is closely knitted and trust each other. This stands out as a unique government-supported programme aimed at providing institutional care to transgender persons, with the ultimate goal of integrating them into society.

While this initiative has been instrumental in providing safe spaces, it is essential that the initiative function properly to attract more transgender person when the role model among the community members happened to remain engaged in traditional businesses, which are often not perceived as dignified and one of the reasons for the segregation of the community from society. Hence, it is also important to assess its existing conditions and explore areas that require further strengthening to ensure their sustainable rehabilitation and integration into society. This report has been prepared after in-depth analysis of the guidelines and undertaking visits all 12 Garima Greh shelters established in the first phase.

This report reveals a mixed picture of ambition and operational challenges within the SMILE scheme. While the initiative is conceived as a silver lining — providing safe spaces, skill development, and empowerment for transgender individuals — the implementation has been marred by significant

hurdles. The current guidelines give excessive responsibilities to grantee organisation and assign some impractical roles which are difficult to fulfil. This report has made a detailed analysis of all the issues and made some suggestions given in each section for the concerned implementing authority to consider. In the current circumstances, it was observed that the shelters' functioning mainly depend on the goodwill and dedication of the community members to run the shelter and how well they are connected. This imbalance of responsibilities, with CBOs burdened excessively without adequate fund and support, and government officials having limited involvement or accountability, risks undermining the initiative's intended outcomes.

Throughout this exercise, it has been observed that challenges such as delay in the release of funds, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to healthcare services, inconsistencies in documentation processes, and difficulties in facilitating long-term socio-economic reintegration persist. Moreover, financial constraints often limit the scope of services provided, thereby restricting access to essential facilities such as vocational training.

Despite being a centre sector schemes, it was noticed that the support of local authorities has been instrumental in resolving some of their issues and ensuring survival. The vision to transform Garima Greh shelters into centers where all schemes pertaining to transgender persons converge is commendable. Yet, the lack of a facilitative mechanism to address bureaucratic and paperwork challenges faced by CBOs hampers this vision. Without empowering these shelters with the tools, authority, and support to overcome such obstacles, the initiative may fall short of its potential.





► Glimpse of Achievement from Garima Greh, Raipur

While shelters aim to offer temporary relief, a well-defined roadmap for long-term rehabilitation, including education and employment opportunities, is still evolving. Legal and documentation challenges also pose barriers to the smooth functioning of Garima Greh shelters. It is crucial that the government provide necessary support to facilitate the successful evolution of the initiative. To achieve the same, this report strongly recommends revisiting existing guidelines to better reflect the reality of the situation. It is necessary to

establish a dedicated desk at the nodal ministry to provide handholding. This has become essential now as this initiative has already exited pilot mode, and the network of the shelters is expanding with government aspiring to establish at least one such shelter in each state. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms, enhancing financial and infrastructural support, and integrating holistic rehabilitation strategies are essential for the success of the programme. Additionally, greater collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and community-led initiatives will help bridging gaps in service delivery.

The government may also view this place from where the convergence of the scheme for the community can be started. The integration of employment-linked programmes within Garima Greh shelters can significantly improve long-term outcomes. Skill development, entrepreneurship support, and corporate partnerships for job placements can enable economic independence for transgender individuals. Furthermore, government policies must ensure that businesses and institutions create inclusive workplaces that are free from discrimination and bias. It is also crucial to institutionalise periodic assessments and impact evaluations of the Garima Greh initiative. This will help in identifying best practices, addressing persisting challenges, and ensuring that shelters remain responsive to the evolving needs of the transgender community. Regular feedback mechanisms, including engagement with residents, should be incorporated to refine and enhance programme delivery. With sustained commitment and structured interventions, these shelters can evolve into comprehensive support systems that truly empower and integrate transgender individuals into mainstream society. In doing so, the initiative will contribute meaningfully to the vision of Vikshit Bharat 2047 — ensuring dignity, security, and opportunity for all.





Chapter 9

Limitations of the Report

While this report is prepared based on the visits undertaken by the NHRC officials to all 12 Garima Greh Shelters established in the 09 states/UT under the first phase of the scheme, and incorporated feedback from both stakeholders and beneficiaries, certain limitations must be acknowledged to provide a transparent context for the findings:

Assumption of Accuracy in Information Obtained

The findings are primarily based on interactions with project directors, staff members, and beneficiaries at the shelters. It is assumed that the information shared during these discussions was accurate and truthful. However, the absence of a verification process for official records or documents maintained by the shelters introduces a degree of uncertainty for a few findings. To mitigate this limitation, care has been taken to avoid recommendations that might imply the staff statements require further verification, thereby ensuring the focus remains on actionable insights rather than questioning the integrity of the reported information.

Exclusion of views from Key External Stakeholders

The study did not capture the perspectives of dealing officials, such as district magistrates or equivalent authorities who serve as the Chairpersons of the Project Monitoring Committees (PMCs). These officials play a crucial role in overseeing the functioning of the shelters, and their insights could have provided additional dimensions to the analysis.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the functioning and challenges of Garima Greh shelters. It provides a detailed examination of the prescribed guidelines and includes analyses of the Action Taken Reports submitted by the central and state government authorities against its advisory dated 15 September 2023. These elements enhance the overall significance of the study, even while acknowledging the areas where future research could address the identified gaps.



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Appendices

Annex I

Details of Visits undertaken by NHRC Officials at Garima Greh Shelters

S. No.	Name of Transgender	Address	Date of Visits	NHRC Officials Visited
1.	Mitr Trust	Mitr Trust Garima Greh, B-51, B Block, SITA PURI, NEW DELHI-45 Landmark: Dabri Police Station	15/07/2024	Smt Anita Sinha, JS, Dr Rajul Raikwar, Consultant and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
2.	Sakha	Sakha plot no-335/1080 Ebaranga, In front of Champati Petrol Pump Sundarpada, Bhubaneswar, Odisha -751002	27/01/2025	Smt Vijaya Lakshmi Vihan, P.O. and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
3.	Transgender Rights Association	No. C-122/69, Karthikeyan Salai, Periyarnagar, Kolathur, Chennai	24/10/2025	Smt Vijaya Lakshmi Vihan, P.O. and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
4.	Dostana Safar	Gandhi High School Campus, Model School Building, Khagaul, Patna	23/10/2024	Smt Anita Sinha, JS and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
5.	Mitwa Sankalp Samiti	Chhattisgarh Mitwa Sankalp Samiti Garima Greh, Raipur, Near Krishna Public School, Sarona, Raipur	14/10/2024	Ms Yasmin Ahmed and Dr Rajul Raikwar, Consultant
6.	Kinnarasmita	Tamanna Residency 3rd floor, Near Saibaba Mandir, Hajimalang Road, Dwarli Pada, Kalyan East, Thane	23/07/2024	Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Member, Smt. Anita Sinha, JS and Ms. Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
7.	Tweet Foundation	12, Road No-2, Teen Dongari, Yashwant Nagar, Goregoan (West) Mumbai	23/07/2024	Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Member, Smt. Anita Sinha, JS and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
8.	Aarju Foundation	Banglow No. 17, HISSA number 26, Premnagri road, Pali Devad, Panvel	23/07/2024	Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Member, Smt. Anita Sinha, JS and Ms. Lakshmi Kumari, JRC





S. No.	Name of Transgender	Address	Date of Visits	NHRC Officials Visited
9.	Gokhale Road Bandhan	773,Purbalok Kalikapur, Mukundapur, Kolkata	22/10/2024	Smt Anita Sinha, JS and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
10.	Kolkata Rista	95/D77 Basundhara Chingrighata, Canal South Road, Lakshmimina Bhaban, Kolkata, West Bengal	22/10/2024	Smt Anita Sinha, JS and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
11.	Lakshya Trust	302/303/304, Shilalekh Complex, Opp. To Ford Showroom, Munjmahuda, Vadodara, Gujarat – 390020	03/12/2025	Smt Anita Sinha, JS and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC
12.	Nai Bhor Sansta	46, Marudhar Vihar, Khatipura Road, Jhotwara, Jaipur	18/01/2025	Smt Vljaya Lakshmi Vihan, P.O. and Ms Lakshmi Kumari, JRC





Rent Shortfall Across Garima Greh Shelters

S. No.	Garima Greh	State/ UT & District	Owner of the Property	Referred by	Rent (Rs)	Shortfall (%)
1.	Mitr Trust	New Delhi, South West Delhi	Grantee institution	NA as own by grantee NGO	40,000/-	0%
2.	Sakha	Bhubaneswar, Odisha	Project director	NA as owned by project director	40,000/-	0%
3.	Dostana Safar	Bihar, Patna	Government	Supported by government officials	NA	NA
4.	Kinnarasmita	Maharashtra, Thane	Rented	Secured with the help of MLA/ politician	55000/-	37.5%
5.	Mitwa Sankalp Samiti	Chattisgarh, Raipur	Government	Supported by government officials	NA	NA
6.	Tweet Foundation	Maharashtra, Mumbai	Rented	Owner's discretion	1.50,000/-	275%
7.	Aarju Foundation	Maharashtra, Raigarh	Rented	With the help of district magistrate	45000/-	12.5%
8.	Gokhale Road Bandhan	West Bengal, Kolkata	Rented	Owner's discretion	Rs. 40,000/-	0%
9.	Kolkata Rista	West Bengal, Kolkata	Rented	Approached elected heads	Rs. 40,000/-	0%
10.	Lakshya Trust	Gujarat, Vadodara	Rented	Organisation functioning in the building	45000/-	12.5%

P.S: In the first phase of the scheme, 12 Garima Greh shelters were approved to be established in the 09 states, details of which are available on the concerned ministry's website, however, only 10 were found operational as on date of visits given in Annex - I.



Annex III

NHRC Advisory for Ensuring the Welfare of Transgender Persons

Education

- i. Necessary steps may be taken to ensure access to education to transgender persons. Authorities may consider formulating a policy to address the issues of violence, discrimination and their harassment at educational institutions. The Education Department of all States/ UTs as an interim measure to advise educational institutes in their respective jurisdictions to protect gender-nonconforming students from bullying, harassment or other forms of violence.
- ii. The State Governments/ UTs to ensure that in every district, an anti-discrimination cell is set up at the district level for transgenders, and also, to ensure the setting up of a monitoring committee/ cell at educational institutions to address the issues of prejudices, discrimination, sexual abuse and other violence against transgender persons.
- iii. The State Governments to take necessary steps to make all educational institutions "inclusive" for transgender students.
- iv. Transgender students are not to be discriminated against in higher studies, and suitable provision for providing financial assistance to Transgender students pursuing Degree/ Diploma/ PG courses may be ensured.
- v. Provision for scholarship and free education be formulated for transgender students.

Healthcare

- i. Set up medical boards at the district level to assist transgenders.
- ii. In every district civil hospital, necessary provisions to be made for consultation, treatment,

counseling for sex reassignment surgery, and, the following steps may also be considered;

- a. A suitable amount may be provided to the members of the transgender community who want to opt for a sex change operation; or,
- b. Free sex reassignment surgery in government hospitals may be provided.

Employment

- i. "Third Gender" as an identity category may be added for people of transgender community seeking civil service jobs to enable them to apply and appear in entrance examinations.
- ii. All the agencies involved in document verification may be advised to verify and accept the document even if the name or photo of the transgender person vary with the original documents on time bound manner, provided the candidate has obtained the Transgender Certificate.
- iii. Adequate steps may be taken to protect transgender persons from any form of violence or harassment at workplaces, and anti-discrimination policies be implemented at all levels.
- iv. Sensitization programmes for other employees on sexual orientation and gender identity may be organized regularly.
- v. A Grievance Redressal Cell be set up in the organization wherever they are employed to deal with the issues of transgender employees, in which at least one transgender person may be included, wherever possible.
- vi. State to prioritize skill development training and better occupational opportunities to transgender persons.





- vii. Wide publicity to the National Career Service Portal be given amongst transgender community.
- viii. Loan at interest subvention basis may be extended to transgender persons to help them set up their own businesses.
- ix. District administration to extend help to enable transgender persons to form Self Help Groups through which they can get bank loans to start livelihood activities.

Promoting Inclusivity

- i. All forms for whatever purpose, which require candidates to indicate their sex, must provide 'third gender' as a category in the options.
- ii. All public places should have separate wash-rooms for transgenders.
- iii. Provide an exclusive platform for transgender persons to showcase their talent in cultural events.
- iv. Old age home facilities be considered for the transgender community.

Welfare

- i. Single trans child of a deceased government employee or pensioner, may be treated as an unmarried daughter for the family pension and other benefits.
- ii. Transgender persons should be allowed to inherit ancestral agricultural land.
- iii. Transgender welfare board may be established as mandated under the Section 10 (1) of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020, framed for implementing the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- iv. The concerned Ministry should ensure the timely release of the funds allocated to Garima

Greh. In addition, the queries considering the disbursement of funds may be dealt with by proper mechanisms and handholding support be given to complete the requisite formalities to resolve such grievances.

- v. The Insurance Companies may be advised to consider and accept the Transgender Certificate issued by the appropriate authority for document verification purposes.
- vi. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs may consider incorporating welfare activities of transgender persons explicitly in the Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013, which provides the list of activities that can be included for making expenditures for Corporate Social Responsibilities activities.
- vii. Adequate steps may be taken to deal with the complaints of sexual harassment of transgender persons.
- viii. Multi-purpose identity cards may be provided to the transgenders to help them access government schemes and other benefits.
- ix. Reach out to the family member of Transgenders through Anganwadi workers to sensitize them about trans-children.
- x. Public to be sensitized through educational campaigns.

Grievance Redressal

- i. Set up a Transgender Protection Cell under the Director General of Police or his/her nominee in the State to monitor cases of offences against Transgender Persons in accordance with the provision of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020.
- ii. One officer in every police station be designated as focal point for Transgenders.



Guidelines on Garima Greh Shelters

Housing in the form of 'Garima Greh' for Transgender Persons

To provide funds for setting up and running or 'Garima Greh' for Transgender persons. The Garima Greh will provide shelter to transgender persons with basic amenities like food, medical care, and recreational facilities. Besides, it will provide support for the capacity-building/skill development of Transgender Persons.

The need for Garima Greh

- i. As per the Fifteenth Five Year Plan (2019-20 to 2024-25), inclusiveness as group equality is the way forward for the growth and socio-economic development of society. The Fifteenth plan also proposes the empowerment of the transgender community by advocating that Ministries support their education, housing, access to healthcare, skill development, employment opportunities and financial assistance.
- ii. Shelter homes will not only ensure that the community has access to a safe and secure environment, it will also go a long way in the empowerment of Transgender Persons. Presently, there are many welfare schemes for the vulnerable group, but a huge section of the community doesn't have access to above facilities including proper housing facilities. There is an urgent need to start the shelter home facility with inbuilt provision of skill development. This will unburden the Transgender community of the problem and facilitate more success stories from them.

Aims and objectives of Garima Greh

The main aim of Garima Greh's to provide shelter to Transgender persons with basic amenities like

shelter, food medical care and recreational facilities, Besides, it will provide support for the capacity-building/skill development of Transgender persons.

- i. To ensure the shelter home with facilities of lodging and boarding, clothing, recreation, medical and counselling.
- ii. To maintain the uniformity in terms of infrastructure, manpower service in the Grima Greh.
- iii. To safeguard the rights of TG persons and protect them from atrocities.
- iv. To confirm the prevalence of congenial atmosphere in the Garima Greh by adopting uniform rules and regulation suitable to be followed by all TG persons.
- v. To empower a TG person through skill-development and skill upgradation programmes.

Structure fo Garima Greh

The shelter home will be managed and executed by the Project Management Committee (PMC) headed by the Secretary of the organisation running the Garima Greh. The committee consists of four members including two Transgender experts, a retired government employee not below the rank of Group B officer and one inmate. The Secretary of the organization running the Garima Greh must be a person from the Transgenders community who is the Project Director. The Committee shall be expected to meet every month and record the minutes of the meeting.





Project Management Committee (PMC)		
1.	District Magistrate of equivalent	Chairperson
2.	Representative from NGO/CBO*	Member
3.	Doctor*	Member
4.	Expert in Transgender Welfare & Issues*	Member
5.	President/Secretary of Grima Greh (Project Director)	Member Secretary

*to be nominated by District Magistrate/District Collector

Staff positions

The following staff should be appointed for maintaining Garima Greh with 25 residents

S. No.	Staff Position	Nos
1.	Project Director	1
2.	Project Manager	1
3.	Accountant assistant	1
4.	Bridge Course Coordinator	1
5.	Counsellor	1
6.	Cook	1
7.	Assistant Cook	1
8.	Multi task worker	1
9.	Sweeper	1
10.	Watchmen	3
	Total	12

Infrastructure

a. Physical Standards

- i. The Garima Greh should be located in a reasonably quiet and residential locality, so that there are no unscrupulous elements to disturb the residents.
- ii. The centre should be easily accessible and connected through public transport.
- iii. The centre should be properly ventilated, well-lit and maintained in a clean manner.
- iv. Safety of the residents to be ensured.
- v. Name of the home with complete address and supported by which scheme should be displayed prominently.



- vi. Space Requirements: The Garima Greh shall, as far as possible, have a minimum area per resident as per the following norms.
- vii. Computerization of all the records should be made mandatory. Space to be provided to store records of patients to ensure confidentiality and a system of easy retrieval.
- viii. Bio-metric systems should be followed for attendance.
- ix. CCTV should be linked to the website/ Garima Greh Portal.

Built up & Non-built up area for Transgender Shelter Home (approx.)

Rooms or Dormitory for Individual	25 Person Required Area each Person 50 sq Feet	1250 sqft
Medical cum Counselling room		200sq feet
Recreational place		500 sq feet
Stock room		100 sq feet
Bathroom		200 sq feet
Toilets		200 sq feet
Office room		150 sq feet
Staffroom		100 sq feet
Caretaker cum bridge course coordinator		200 sq feet
Social security office		100 sq feet
	Total Built up Space	3000 sq feet

b. Kitchen with attached store Room

- i. Kitchen must have a minimum two Gas cylinders-attached stoves and suitable arrangement for keeping cooked food."
- ii. There must be different sizes of containers for storing food grains and superscripted with respective items' names.
- iii. Store room needs to be located near the Kitchen
- iv. Glasses and plates to be provided separately to each resident.

- v. Stock register for food items needs to be maintained
- vi. Safe Drinking Water and enough water for other purposes to be provided. Hot water may be provided depending on individual needs for drinking and washing purposes. RO water is suggested.

c. Other Facilities: In addition to above facilities, following amenities should also be provided:

- i. Emergency lamps with generator facilities
- ii. Fans in each room





- iii. Television/Radio in common hall/area
 - iv. Telephone facilities, including one for inmates, may be arranged
 - v. Refrigerator
 - vi. Cooking and heating arrangement
 - vii. Washing machine/Make use of Dhobi for washing Bed sheets/ bed covers
 - viii. UPS, geysers for hot water for bathing, storage cupboards
 - ix. Laptop/Computer.
 - x. For specially abled Transgender persons, the institution should have toilet facilities with reference to the Disabilities Act.
- b. **Recreational:** Recreational facilities such as books, magazines and newspapers, (national dailies as well as newspapers in Local languages) indoor games, radio/transistor, television etc. should be available in dormitory.
 - c. Activities should be designed for get-together and interaction between the residents. (Volunteers from schools and colleges from localities can be asked to organise such activities.)
 - d. **Productive Activities:** The residents should be involved in various productive activities.
 - e. **Hobbies:** The inmate should be encouraged to pursue their hobbies like reading, writing, playing indoor/outdoor games, singing etc.
 - f. **Yoga, Meditation/Prayers:** The inmates should be regularly engaged in meditation and prayers in the morning and evening.
 - g. **Physical fitness:** The inmates should be involved in physical exercises, including yoga. Games should be played in the evening. Singing songs and other past-time activities may be designed depending on the age category of the inmates.
 - h. **Library facilities** need to be arranged with sufficient books and Magazines
 - i. **Expertise:** Their knowledge and experience need to be utilised for social development. Hence, they may be encouraged to be part of local staff Govt. advisory committee, expert committee etc.

Eligibility Criteria

The following are selection criteria for residents of Transgender Person:

- i. Transgender persons having a Transgender persons certificate issued by the National Portal for Transgender persons and preferably living below the poverty line.
- ii. Transgender persons who are abandoned and aged above 18 years.
- iii. TGs should not be engaged in sex work and beggary
- iv. Transgender persons who are stigmatized and discriminated

Services

The under mentioned services should be provided at the Garima Greh:

- a. **Food:** Three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and two tea/coffee & snacks should be provided at the home.

Convergence Services

Shelters will be a space for convergence and provisions of various entitlements of social security, food, education and health care systems. All homeless persons in the shelters should be given priority under various schemes, and government programmes. A list where such convergence desirable is given below:



- i. Identity Card & Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC) etc.
- ii. Old age and disability benefits
- iii. BPL cards, ration cards, etc.
- iv. Access to food security schemes
- v. Bank or post office accounts
- vi. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana
- vii. Admissions to public hospitals for healthcare
- viii. Linkage to Atal Awas Yojna
- ix. Free Legal Aid services
- x. Skill development training programs implemented by NSFDC
- xi. Pradhan Mantri Nidhi Yojna & other livelihood development scheme linkages
- xii. Any other facilities deemed fit and beneficial
- xiii. Transgender persons who require special assistance in terms of substance use disorders or elderly care may be referred to the other facilities provided by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment such as Outreach & Drop-centre, Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts, District De-addiction Centres, Addiction treatment facilities, senior citizen homes with the assistance of Garima Greh Staff.

Health and Medical Facility

- A. The following activities are expected to be done by the management of shelter homes.**
- i. Brief medical history of the residents should be maintained. The record should consist of photo, age, height, weight, blood group, allergies and ailments suffered by the TG persons and medicines taken.

- ii. Regular doctor visit to be ensured. Regular medical check-up should be done.
- iii. Haircut and shave at regular interval should also be ensured to the inmates
- iv. The Medical Officer should visit the home at least once a week with adequate medical equipment.
- v. Transgenders who are in need of major medical support/assistance will be helped to get such services.

B. Medical facilities

Certain basic medical facilities need to be maintained at all times positively. They include

- i. First aid box (dressing materials, Betadine Solutions, Cotton, Gauze)
- ii. Thermometer
- iii. BP apparatus
- iv. Weighing Scale

Safety and Security

- i. CCTV Cameras should be installed in all common rooms in the shelter homes.
- ii. Three watchmen needs to be appointed for working three shifts in order to ensure the safety and security of the Home
- iii. Residents 'entry and exit' timings need to be registered at the entry gate in a register with the inmates' signature
- iv. Qualification of watchmen is matriculation.

Skill development

The purpose of the skill-development training is to enhance the livelihood skills of the Transgender community, and to create alternative livelihood





opportunities for Transgenders. The activities are given below:

- i. Education, skills and prior work experience of the resident to be assessed before initiating them into vocational training. Assessment form to be maintained by the bridge course coordinator. The performance of the resident to be assessed every third month.
- ii. Orientation on the importance of skill development required for the improvement of their livelihood.
- iii. Identification of training institutes that provide training for skill development.
- iv. Categorizing the candidates as per their interest and eligibility for suitable work such as catering, tailoring, artificial jewellery-making, beautician work, driving etc.
- v. Facilitating financial planning for improvement of alternative livelihood activities of the trained candidates either through employment or self-employment.
- vi. District Magistrate should monitor that sensitization programmes are being conducted by project director, as well as support Garima Greh in getting employment opportunities by writing letters to organizations.

From the proposed training, following are the expected outcomes.

- a. Enhanced skill development of transgenders in various fields of occupation.
- b. Enhancing the livelihood of transgender persons through vocational skill development.

Registers and Records

- i. Admission Register (A photo of the beneficiary should be pasted in the register)
- ii. A brief history of residents (Admission Form for Garima Greh).

- iii. Visit/Inspection Register
- iv. Doctor visit Register
- v. Register of assets (details of the physical assets, their number, date of procurement, replacement, etc.)
- vi. Medicine stock register (including details of the equipment. Medicines, purchases, number, date of purchases, etc.) date of purchase/date of expiry.
- vii. Ration and vegetable stock register (including details of the stock purchased, quantity issued balance, etc.,
- viii. Residents movement register
- ix. Staff attendance register
- x. Staff honorarium register (indication monthly remuneration paid to the staff with stamped receipt)
- xi. Bank passbook (for the money received from grants-in-aid)
- xii. Cash/ledger book (including details of income, expenditure, daily cash in hand, etc.,)
- xiii. Network directory (including addresses and contact number of project in charge, medical officer, hospital, district headquarters, etc.,)
- xiv. Personal belonging and other valuable items at the time of admission of the TG persons
- xv. Visitors register
- xvi. Disaster/hazard Management plan book with details of responsibility for each staff.

Terms and Conditions

In order to ensure effective rehabilitation of residents of the Garima Greh and achieve the core objective of the project, certain conditions are deemed to be imperative.



- i. The Project Director and team is supposed to work very effectively by the way of implementing the scheme and converging the existing programs for quick rehabilitation of residents
- ii. Residents may be allowed to stay for a maximum of one year in the Garima Greh. It is expected that residents of the Garima Greh will be equipped with the necessary skills and become self-reliant to lead a dignified and decent life.
- iii. Garima Greh should not be used as a transit house.
- iv. The Greh facility cannot be used for any Commercial activities like- sublet for functions, etc.
- v. Garima Greh needs to be in working condition within one month from the date issue of the sanction order
- vi. Garima Greh should be trans-friendly and ambiance must be motivational to residents
- vii. If the Ministry is not satisfied with the progress of the Project or It finds that these rules/ guidelines are being seriously violated by the implementing agencies, it reserves the right to terminate the grant-in-aid and recover the amount of grant-in-aid already sanctioned with penal interest.
- viii. The grantee institution will maintain separate accounts in respect of the grant obtained from the Ministry.
- ix. The Implementing Agency shall provide a package of facilities to the residents which shall be specified in the proposal and which shall not be varied to the disadvantage of the residents without the prior approval of the MSJE
- x. The Grantee organizations shall maintain separate joint/current account in the name of the President / Secretary of the organization, in respect of the grants received under this programme.
- xi. The Grantee institution/NGO should be registered with NGO Darpan Portal of Niti Aayog.
- xii. Selected NGOs may be given one-month of preparatory time for arranging all the infrastructure, manpower, services, selection of residents, safety security, medical, convergence services, communication, internet, etc. The second month onwards, full-pledged Garima Greh has to start functioning with facilities as specified in guidelines.

Selection procedure

A. Pilot Garima Greh

Eol was invited from NGOs/CBOs for setting up Garima Greh. The proposals was scrutinized by NISD on various parameters like Registration of the organization, Annual Report/Audit Report, Darpan Registration, Pan Card, Working Experience with Transgender persons (in years), Working Experience in any other social sector (in years), CBO/NGO, Space required available or to be acquired, Organizational Strength including Transgender staff, Area of Intervention, Running any project for Transgenders or S.H or both. Currently, 12 Garima Greh are operational on pilot basis.

B. Fresh/New Cases

Proposals for fresh/new cases for setting up of Garima Grehs shall be invited on e-Anudaan as per the provisions followed by the portal for selection of agencies to run Grant in Aid. This process will be followed for the pilot Garima Greh projects.

Calls for fresh proposals will be invited from eligible NGOs/CBOs on the e-Anudaan portal. Grant would be disbursed in two installments. As every state/UT has transgender population, It is important to have one Garima Greh in each state/UT for their well being. After setting up Garima Greh in each state/UT, the pattern for need based approach on the basis of population shall be applied for future proposals.





Eligibility conditions for assistance

- A. The following organizations / institutions are eligible for assistance under this scheme:
- A society registered under the Societies' Registration Act (XXI of 1860) or any relevant Act of the State Governments / Union Territory or under any State law relating to registration of literary, Scientific and charitable societies.
 - A registered public Trust
 - A Company established under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956
- B. In addition, the registered organizations to have the following characteristics:
- It should have a properly constituted managing body with its powers, duties and responsibilities clearly defined and laid down in writing.
 - It should have resources and facilities and experience for undertaking the programme.
 - It is not run for profit to any individual or a body of individuals.
 - It should not discriminate against any person or group of persons on the ground of sex, religion, caste or creed.

Quantum of Assistance:

Intervention	Unit Cost	Cost for 5 Years (Rs. In Lakhs)
Garima Greh	36,46,500/-	4,480,70/-

Utilization Certificates (UCs)

Every organization/institution receiving funds under this component shall submit Utilization

Certificates (UCs) in the prescribed format (Performa attached at Annexure-XII), as per provisions of GFR 2017, which will indicate the three items in the heading-

- Project specific ID given by DoSJE,
- Name and location of the project, and
- Name of the NGO/Org. Further, as per provisions of rule 230(8) of GFR, 2017, all interest or other earnings against Grants-in-aid or advances released to any grantee institution should be mandatorily remitted to the Consolidated Fund of India immediately after finalization of accounts.

Mode of Grant

a. Pilot Project

The grants may be released 40% at the initial stage, 40% after the six months of the operation, and 20% at the end of the financial year. Before releasing the money, the following documents may be verified and the release of grants may be considered:

- Quarterly/Annual reports
- List of Residents with Aadhar Card number and Mobile Number
- Utilization Certificates
- Photos
- Feedbacks of participants
- Inspection Reports

b. Fresh/New Proposals

The grants may be released in two installments 50% at the initial stage and 50% at the end of the financial year. Before releasing the money, the following documents may be verified and the release of grants may be considered:

- Quarterly/Annual reports



- ii. List of Residents with Aadhar Card number and Mobile Number
- iii. Utilization Certificates
- iv. Photos
- v. Feedbacks of participants
- vi. Inspection Reports

Budget of the Garima Greh: A shelter Home for Transgender is given below:

S. No.	Particulars	Amount in Rs.
1.	I. Non-Recurring This is a one-time cost for purchasing furniture fixtures, dining table with chairs, 25 beds, mattress, and pillow along with Pillow cover, boxes and welcome kits to each inmate. Applicable only to new Garima Greh as on time cost. The procurement procedure to be followed and the document should be available in the Project Office.	Rs. 1,50,000/-
2.	Computer Peripherals for the Office	Rs. 50,000/-
3.	Equipment's for Garima Greh This would be used for the purchase of audio visual equipments for Garima Greh (e.g. CCTV, T.V., inverter, DVD Player). Inverter. Fan TV Audio System. Wall clock	Rs. 1,30,000/-
4.	Kitchen Items Kitchen items will be gas, cylinder. Safe drinking water, fridge, water cooler, cooking utensils, plates and glasses etc.,	Rs. 1,00,000/-
5.	Safety Equipment's	Rs. 22,500/-
6.	Skill development-related equipment's (Approx) Amount may be used to purchase equipment of locally popular trades.	Rs. 50,000/-
	Total Cost under Non-Recurring Budget	Rs. 5,02,500/-
	II. Recurring	
7.	Rent for Building per month (Rs. 40,000x12)	Rs. 4,80,000/-
8.	Food includes Breakfast, lunch. Dinner, Two times Tea (Rs. 100x25x12)	Rs. 9,00,000/-
9.	Project Manger (Rs.20,000x12)	Rs. 2,40,000/-
10.	Account Assistant (Rs. 15000 x12)	Rs.1,80,000/-
11.	Part Time Doctor (Rs.15,000x12)	Rs,1,80,000/-
12.	Counsellor (Rs.15000x12)	Rs. 1,80,000/-
13.	Multi Task staff (Rs.10,000x12)	Rs.1,20,000/-
14.	Bridge Course Coordinator (15,000x12)	Rs. 1,80,000/-
15.	Cook (Rs.12000x 12)	Rs. 1,44,000/-





S. No.	Particulars	Amount in Rs.
16.	Sweeper (Rs.8,000x12)(Part Time)	Rs.96,000/-
17.	Watchman (Rs.10,000x12x3)	Rs. 3,60,000/-
18.	Administrative expenses (Rs.7000x12)	Rs.84,000/-
	Total Cost under Recurring Budget	Rs.31,44,000/-
	Grand Total I+II (Rs.5,02,500 + Rs.31,44,000)	Rs.36,46,500/-

Note: Expenses related to setting up and running of Garima Greh need to be incurred as per the GOI norm

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

The following roles and responsibilities are expected from the functionaries appointed in the Garima Grehs for transgenders.

a. Project Director (Honorary)

- i. As a member secretary of PMC, PD shall be responsible for conducting all the meetings with the approval of the PMC chairs and providing all the information supported by the PMC
- ii. To coordinate and monitor all the activities of the Garima Greh as per rules and regulations
- iii. To coordinate with the staff and maintaining the database of the enrolled transgenders in the Garima Greh to collect and compile required information on nearby resources/stakeholders
- iv. To encourage transgenders to participate in all matters pertaining to their welfare and rehabilitation
- v. To plan and organize awareness-generation programmes in the catchment area with the help of outreach workers
- vi. To coordinate and liaise with Govt. and NGOs working in the area of health, education, training and transgender protections,

the Project Director shall submit a quarterly report once in three months to the Nodal Ministry

- vii. To ensure that the Participants are selected after a proper Personal interview by the Committee in the light of eligibility criteria
- viii. Stock & inventory shall be examined on regular intervals and acknowledged on relevant files
- ix. Project Director shall get his Garima Greh inspected by the local authority once in a year, but not below the rank of DSWO/ BDO and report need to be submitted to nodal Ministry
- x. To get carried out to ensure post-rehabilitation visits of transgender who have been rehabilitated or moved out from the shelter in order to keep a track of their normal well being,
- xi. To extend possible to support the residents in operating Adhar card, Electors Photo Identity Card etc., and other facilities under various Govt. schemes and programs.

b. Project Manager

- i. To maintain and oversee standards of care & protection in the Garima Greh as per the guidelines day to day basis



- ii. To assist the project director in preparing an individual care plan followed by a quarterly progress report of transgenders
 - iii. To ensure proper screening of residents and filling up of enrolment forms before being admitted
 - iv. To liaise and coordinate with other agencies and individuals for all-round development of the transgender enrolled in the shelter
 - v. To conduct regular feedback meetings with Garima Greh staff, beneficiaries to discuss and sort out important issues pertaining to the smooth functioning of the programme and well being of the residents
 - vi. Maintain a suggestion box in the centre for issues
 - vii. To identify the skill and capabilities of residents, and introduce age-appropriate education, vocational training, recreational activities and bridge education programmes for residents.
 - viii. To plan and organize exposure/ excursion visits for transgender (if, needed)
 - ix. To fulfill the basic nutrition and health requirements of residents Daily menu shall be prepared a week in advance and displayed in the notice board, accordingly provisions to be procured.
 - x. To ensure and maintain congenial environment in the shelter networking with other departments like education, health, police, transports, etc. and with NGOs to avail of necessary services when and where required
 - xi. The Project Manager has to report from the Doctor, and action will be taken accordingly to maintain the daily schedule of the Garima Greh, to the extent possible
- c. **Counselor**
 - i. To build a relationship of trust and respect with the residents
 - ii. Listen and help the transgender to understand themselves and cope with their issues
 - iii. To encourage the transgender to choose the direction they wish to take in resolving issues.
 - iv. To develop IEC material/ success stories and progress reports as and when required.
 - v. Help transgender to define goals, plan action and gain insight
 - vi. Take a holistic (mind and body) approach to health care
 - vii. To undertake counseling and guidance session with transgender (if, needed).
 - d. **Bridge course coordinator**
 - i. To work towards creating and ensuring congenial environment at the shelter.
 - ii. To ensure participation of transgender in productive activities and assist the transgender in their studies
 - iii. To access the interest and provide life skill training to the enrolled residents of the Garima Greh to develop teaching aids & material for transgender for the skill development activities
 - iv. To resolve general issues of transgender by taking a trans-friendly approach.
 - v. To ensure equal access of all the resources of the shelter to all the residents
 - vi. To make regular visits to the school and vocational training institutes and apprise the concerned officials about the needs of Garima Greh





- vii. Networking with the other institutions, Govt. and Non-Govt. organization, those are providing skill development training and facilitates residents to get enrolled in the area of their interest.
- viii. To report the misconduct of any transgender to the project Manager.
- ix. To do career counseling that can help in placements/connect with agencies who can help in placements post.

e. Account Assistant

- i. The Account Assistant is supposed to maintain the accounts of Garima Greh on a daily basis
- ii. To maintain separate bank account in the name of Garima Greh
- iii. To verify and scrutinize the vouchers/bills related to purchasing of all procurement
- iv. To release the money and meet the expenses with approval of the competent authority i.e. Project Director
- v. All the accounts need to be facilitate and audited by the authorized auditors
- vi. The accounts related to expenses shall be examined and certified by the Project Manager in the respective register

f. Multi-task worker

- i. To coordinate with the other staffs and find out the requirements of the Garima Greh
- ii. Multi-task worker is suppose to play multiple roles in the Garima Greh including the purchase of food grains, groceries, furniture etc. as per the requirements after the approval of the competent person.
- iii. The bills/vouchers/receipts of all the purchases along with the approval need to be compiled and handed over to the Accounts Assistant.
- iv. To facilitate for all meetings, programmes, games, activities etc. in due consultation with doctors, counselors and bridge course coordinator
- v. To assist the Project Manager In preparation of the weekly schedule and food menu for the every week.
- vi. The Multi-task worker should look into day-to-day affairs of the Garima Greh and help TGs like a friend and ensures that all welfare and recreational activities are conducted in the right way so that the purpose is achieved desirably.
- vii. This means each effort leads to enrichment of the TG experience and learning. Needs to be available at the Garima Greh at night besides the watchmen.

Eligibility Criteria for Personnel of Garima Greh Project

S. No	Post	Criteria
1.	Project Director	Honorary
2.	Project Manager	1. MA in social Work 2. Minimum 5 years Experience in social Sector. 3. Desirable: Transgender person with Minimum 2 year experience in running home



S. No	Post	Criteria
3.	Accountant assistant	1. B.com 2. Minimum 3 year experience in maintenance of office accounts
4.	Bridge Course Coordinator	1. BA in social science 2. Minimum 2 years Experience in the Social Sector. 3. Desirable: Transgender person with Minimum 1 year experience in skill development programs
5.	Counsellor (Part- Time)	1. MA in social Science 2. Minimum 3 years Experience in Counselling 3. Desirable: Transgender person with Minimum 1 year experience in Counselling
6.	Doctor (Part-Time)	1. MBBS qualified 2. Willing to visit at least twice a week
7.	Cook	1. 12th Pass 2. Minimum 3 years in cooking 3. Maintain Hygienic in kitchen and related work
8.	Multi-Task Worker	1. BA Pass 2. Minimum 1 year Experience in office work
9.	Sweeper	1. 10th Pass 2. Minimum 1 year in office work
10.	Watchmen	1. 10 th Pass

E-services etc. (National Portal, Helpline and Advertisement etc.)

Interventions for the advancements of e-services shall be encouraged from organizations, agencies for the welfare of Transgender persons.

Addition of new services to the National Portal for Transgender Persons such as:

- I. Disbursement of scholarships to the beneficiaries

- ii. Convergence with the National Health authority IT system for health insurance scheme
- iii. Convergence with PM-DAKSH IT system for skill development
- iv. Setting up of Helpline, call centers for Transgender persons
- v. Improving the online monitoring system of Garima Greh





Annex V

Selected Success Stories from Garima Greh Shelters Photographic Glimpses



Dr N. Jency's journey is a powerful testament to resilience, courage, and transformation. A transgender woman from Tamil Nadu, she broke barriers by becoming the first in her community to earn a PhD and was recently appointed as an Assistant Professor at Loyola College, Chennai. During her most vulnerable phase, undergoing gender-affirming surgery with support, she found refuge at the Transgender Rights Association, Chennai. It was this sanctuary that gave her the strength to persevere, complete her doctorate, and step into a meaningful career in the development sector.



Manvi Madhu Kashyap's journey from rejection to recognition was shaped by the support she received at Dostana Safar Garima Greh in Patna. Resolute in her vow never to beg or clap, she turned to the shelter for safety, education, and guidance. With their support, she prepared diligently for the Bihar Police Subordinate Selection Commission examination and went on to become the state's first transgender Sub-Inspector. Her story is a powerful example of how inclusive spaces like Garima Greh can restore dignity and open pathways to opportunity for the transgender community.



**SUCCESS
STORIES**



Priyanka Sharma, a transgender woman from Assam, arrived in Delhi with nothing but grit — sleeping on pavements, eating at gurudwaras, and surviving on daily wage work. Refusing to conform to stereotypes, she found her turning point at Mitr Trust's Garima Greh, where she gained shelter, dignity, and mentorship. With support from the Connecting Dreams Foundation, she launched *Rainbow Brews*, a tea brand inspired by a childhood memory. In her first month, she earned USD 358 through Instagram. Now with over 250 artisanal blends, Priyanka's journey reflects how Garima Greh can turn struggle into strength and survival into success.

***Countless more stories
echo similar resilience and hope,
but remain untold
yet equally profound***





Gokhale Road Bandhan, Kolkata



Tweet Foundation, Mumbai



Kinnar Asmita, Thane, Maharashtra



Transgender Rights Association, Chennai



Sakha, Bhubaneshwar



Dostana Safar, Patna



Nai Bhor Sansta, Jaipur



Kolkata Rista, Kolkata



Mitwa Sankalp Samiti, Raipur, Chattisgarh



Aarju Foundation, Panvel, Maharashtra



Mitr Trust, Delhi



Lakshya Trust, Vadodara, Gujarat

Note: _____

Note: _____

Note: _____



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समानी प्रपा सह वोन्नभागः।
समाने योक्ते सह वो युनज्मि।
अराः नाभिमिवाभितः॥

- अथर्ववेद-संज्ञान सूक्तम्

All have equal rights to articles of food and water.
The yoke of the chariot of life is placed equally on
the shoulders. All should live together in harmony,
supporting one another like the spokes of a chariot
wheel connecting its rim and hub.

- Atharvaveda-Sangyan Suktam



सर्वे
भवन्तु सुखिनः

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