Abstract

Poverty, anywhere, is a threat to prosperity everywhere. On the one hand the affluent sections enjoy comfortable lifestyle; on the other hand the weaker section in the society like Transgender lives in severe deprivation characterized by illiteracy, malnutrition, lack of shelter, vulnerability to diseases, lack of educational and employment opportunities to enhance upward mobility and restriction on access to resources that would allow them to work their way out of poverty. So far there is no universal blueprint for implementing the economic alleviation strategies for weaker sections. The developing countries need to evolve their own mix of policies and strategies for improving economic status based on ‘national priorities and local realities. These strategies will generally need to address three sets of issues, namely opportunity, empowerment and security of the weaker section in the society. The frameworks of action proposed by World Bank for weaker sections are promoting opportunities, empowerment and security for them in the society.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is possible to generate employment opportunities for Transgenders to undertake initiatives to do particularly economic activities and social upgrading. Its aims are enhancement of their skills, capacity building, gaining self-confidence and participating in decision-making activities after joining SHGs. There is necessity to understand and analysis the status of employment for Transgenders. Their employment generation activity through SHGs had added new dimensions and was hoped that they had been contributing positively in the national economy. It is expected that employment generation of Transgenders through SHGs had created desire to succeed and desire for autonomy, self-confidence and self-reliance, risk-taking and hope of success, hard work habits, enhancement of the economic status, knowledge, skills, innovativeness and leadership.
Opportunity: Expanding economic opportunity for the Transgenders in the society by stimulating economic growth, make markets work better for them, allowing them to acquire assets such as land and other income yielding assets. Improvement of economic status of Transgenders is associated with the economic opportunities available for them and they have limited work opportunities which act as ‘push’ factor for migration to illegal business activities such as flesh trade or theft. When the Transgenders have proper employment opportunities they can cross the poverty line.

Empowerment: Empowerment is a process of challenging existing power relations and gaining control over resources. Strengthening the participation of Transgender in the society in local decision making process affecting their lives and removing social barriers that result from distinctions of gender race ethnicity and social status is considered as a pre requisite for poverty reduction and empowerment of Transgenders.

Security: Security measures refer to reducing Transgenders’ vulnerability to sickness, economic shocks, crop failure, natural disasters and violence and promoting ways to cope up with misfortune when it occurs. The importance of opportunity of fostering economic growth that benefits the Transgender is widely accepted. Nearly all developing countries that have significantly reduced their distress in recent decades have embraced some version of this strategy.

Hence confronting socio economic equalities and building sound moral support can be important both for providing a socially sustainable basis for overall growth and for ensuring that Transgender gain substantially from the growth process. Promotion of Transgenders’ overall social support alone can make the growth process sustainable one.

2. SOCIAL CAPITAL AND TRANSGENDERS’ DEVELOPMENT

Capital, natural and human were accorded much emphasis in the development literature. Yet until recently, little attention was given to another dimension of capital i.e. social capital. Social capital refers to the social cohesion, common identification with the focus of governance, cultural expression and social dynamics that make society more cohesive and more than a sum of individuals. In short the term social capital refers to the social order that promotes a conducive environment for weaker section development.

Likewise the unique features of social capital can deserve merit to Transgenders, are

i.) Social capital plays an important role in encouraging solidarity among the Transgenders.

ii.) It helps the Transgenders to overcome market failures through collective action and common pooling of resources.

iii.) It promotes community participation in development process and self-reliant development of Transgenders and

iv.) Social capital manifests itself in a location of specific set of institutions and organizations with both horizontal and vertical mechanisms of interaction, collaboration and networking.

Social capital is important for planning and poverty alleviation programme for weaker section in the society; it is therefore of fundamental importance to assess the
functioning and interaction of institutional and organizational mechanisms existing in each society. Since these mechanisms facilitate and determine collaboration between individuals at the local level, it is essential to have a clear understanding of how they function and how they might contribute to the implementation of locally adopted poverty alleviation efforts.

3. DIMENSION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

The dimensions of social capital are 1. Binding social capital, 2. Bridging social capital and 3. Linking social capital. When the Transgenders make strong ties connecting their family members, neighbours, close friends and business associates it can be called ‘binding capital’. These ties connect people who share similar demographic characteristics. The weak ties connecting the Transgenders from different ethnic and occupational background can be referred to as ‘bridging social capital. Bridging social capital implies horizontal connection among Transgenders with broadly comparable economic status and political power. A theory of social capital that focuses only on relations within and between communities, however, opens itself to the criticism that it ignores power. The third dimension, ‘linking social capital’ consists of the vertical ties between Transgenders and people in position of influence in formal organizations like banks and other financial institutions. This dimension captures a vitally important feature of Transgender communities. The members of the community are usually excluded by overt discrimination from places where major decisions relating to their welfare are made. The creation of linking social capital is essential and external support has often been important in its emergence. External support from NGOs and religious organizations, for example, can create social capital that increases the voice and choice and economic opportunities of Transgender. This support is most effective for sustainability of a project.

4. MICRO CREDIT FOR TRANSGENDER : NATIONAL POLICY FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WEAKER SECTION IN INDIA

Micro credit is a powerful anti-poverty tool that has demonstrated its relevance to people on six continents and in nearly every country. It is estimated that micro credit programme reach is something of the order of eight million very poor people in developing countries. The policy of Micro credit through Self Help Groups is not only an anti-poverty reduction tool but also improves the economic condition of weaker section in the society. The economic achievement dimensions are 1. Income perspective 2. Basic needs perspective and 3. Capacity poverty. One is a poor Transgender, if the income is below the defined poverty line. Many countries have adopted income poverty line to monitor the progress in reducing poverty incidence. The cut off line is defined in terms of having enough income for a specified amount of food. The concept of poverty goes beyond the concept of income. It includes the needs for basic health, housing, education and essential services and employment of weaker section in the society. Poverty represents
the absence of some basic capabilities. It may be lack of information due to isolation, deprivations, or being disabled. According to Human Development Report 1996, the Capability Poverty Measure considers the lack of three capabilities, namely capability of healthy reproduction represented by proportion of births unattended by trained health personnel, capability to be educated and knowledgeable to be represented by weaker section illiteracy and capability, to be well nourished and healthy society represented by the proportion of children under five who are underweight. According to National Income Poverty line, 21 percent in developing countries live below the poverty line. The corresponding figure for capability poverty is 37 percent. In other words 900 million people in developing countries are income poor and about 1.6 billion people are capability poor.

Poverty, lack of income and asset, physical weakness (malnutrition, sickness, disability, vulnerability, poverty through sale or mortgage of productive assets, physical weakness, poverty due to natural disasters) Powerlessness (exploitation by the powerful, lack of access to resources, distress sale, lack of organization and political power), Isolation (both spatial and informational). Linking of the above five clusters gives twenty possible casual relations, which in their negative forms interlock like a web to trap people in their deprivation? The strength of these linkages varies but they can be illustrated by starting with each cluster in turn. “What is critical for human progress is poverty of opportunity, not just poverty of income. Poverty of income is often the result; poverty of opportunity is often the cause. Poverty of opportunity is a “multi-dimensional concept embracing lack of education and health, lack of economic asset, social exclusion and political marginalization”. Although poverty has dramatically reduced in many parts of the World, a quarter of the world population remains in severe poverty. Human Development Report 1997 challenged to eradicate poverty from a human development perspective. It focused not just on poverty of income but on poverty from a human development perspective. Human poverty is more than income poverty; it is the denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life.

Human development challenges remain large in the new millennium. Of the 4.6 billion people in developing countries, more than 850 million are illiterate, nearly a billion lack access to improved water resources and 2.4 billion lack access to basic sanitation (World Bank 2001f; UNESCO 2000b). Nearly 325 million boys and girls are out of school (UNESCO 2000b). And 11 million children under the age five die each year from preventable causes - equivalent to more than 3000 a day (1970). Around 1.2 billion people live on less than $ a day (World Bank 2000c) and 2.8 billion on less than $ 2 a day (World Bank 2001b). It has been estimated that there are 500 million economically active poor people in the world operating micro enterprises and small businesses (Women’s World Banking 1995). Micro Finance improves the economic status of Transgender in three ways such as 1.by promoting thrift habits and providing independent sources of economic activity and enhances their autonomy. 2. The same independent sources of income together with their exposure to new sets of ideas, values, outlook, attitude and social support should make Transgenders more assertive of their rights and 3. Micro credit
programmes by providing control over material resources should raise Transgenders’ prestige and status in the eyes of their family members and thereby promote intersperse consultation and also in the society. The National Policy for Empowerment of women enunciated in 2001 during the Ninth Five Year Plan brings out the significance of micro credit thus: In order to enhance women’s access to credit for consumption and production and for the establishment of new and strengthening of existing micro credit mechanism, micro finance institutions will be undertaken so that the outreach of credit is enhanced. Other supportive measures would be taken to ensure adequate flow of credit through financial institutional and bank so that all women below poverty line have easy access to credit (National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001).

Social Empowerment: The Transgender can attain the social empowerment in the aspect of equal status, participation and powers of decision making. Overcome social cultural and religious barriers to achieve equality or status and recognition of Transgenders in their day to day affairs and on matters concerning them.

1. **Economic Empowerment**: The economic achievements may be possible in the aspect of greater access to financial resources outside the household and reducing vulnerability of Transgender to crisis situations like no one ready to support including their family members. Significant increase and control over various resources at the various level and financial self-reliance of Transgenders both in the household and in the external environment.

2. **Capacity Building**: This may be possible to acquire by the Transgenders that better awareness about their health, education, environment, legal rights etc and can improve their functional literacy and numeracy. In addition, when they are directly involved in SHGs activities, they can acquire better commercial skills and better leadership skills and promotion of self-help and mutual help.

5. **MICRO FINANCE PARADIGM FOR TRANSGENDERS**

In this model, the NGO is involved as the promoter of the groups but the line departments of Government like Women Development Corporations, Sericulture, and Department of Rural Development are also involved in identification of activities and beneficiaries. The model is in existence in areas where IFAD projects are implemented in states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. This model is more appropriate for Transgender SHGs in Tamil Nadu.

**Employment and Economic Achievements by Transgenders’ through Self Help Groups in Tamil Nadu**

Tamil Nadu is the only State in India that has given a gender status to transsexuals. In Tamil Nadu one of the most deep rooted forms of inequality built into structure of traditional society is based on gender. Gender equality has become a human right concern. It envisions a new partnership between other gender and Transgenders based on mutual
respect, responsibility sharing, equal distribution of resources and power equation. In many societies around the world, Transgenders are discriminated against by law and custom, rendering them vulnerable and disadvantaged social groups.

**CONCLUSION**

Tamil Nadu Government has taken many development activities as key to long term poverty alleviation in developing states as empowerment, in its broadest sense of bringing about self-reliance of the Transgenders. Hence the concept of “one for all and all for one” is a main weapon to eradicate the weakness of Transgenders in the State. When the Transgenders get the socio economic status they can easily mingle with general public and can share their views and opinions. Once they develop social activities they can easily
educate themselves and ultimately they can enjoy all social rights and privileges in the society.

7. REFERENCES