



Social Inclusion in Housing and the LGBT Community

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Abstract—

Social Inclusion is a wide concept that is seen from multi-directional perspectives. For a socially inclusive society, every person must get equal opportunities regardless of their roots, where they have come from, their race, or gender identity. Housing is one of those social resources and useful tools that, if designed after hearing people's voices, can be used to enhance people's quality of life. The United Nations declared that everyone has a right to adequate shelter but still it is inaccessible for various sections of society including the LGBT community. Though there are a number of policies and acts functioning at both National and International levels there is a need to upgrade and improve them at a larger scale pertaining to the LGBT community and to gain a deeper understanding of their needs and strive to meet them to allow their equal participation in all aspects and to successfully fabricate a socially inclusive society.

Keywords— Social Inclusion, Social Equality, Transgender, Housing, LGBT community.

I. INTRODUCTION

Housing is one of the three necessities of Life for human beings and thus it's a primary Unit of Human Habitation. But housing is not just about providing shelter only. Housing planning also ensures that the residents have equal access to adequate services, they are in such an environment where they can work for their livelihood, and they have a sense of ownership and also security against any social evil.

In every country, there are some people or groups who face difficulties in fully participating in various Social, Political, and Economic activities. These groups face exclusion through discriminatory attitudes, views, and beliefs of other people. These disadvantaged groups confront these barriers based on their social identification including age, race, religion and caste, Position and occupation, and Gender identity (Bank). Here come the concepts of social inclusion, social equality, and social equity in terms of planning and housing. The definition of

social Inclusion many times expressed in terms of Social Exclusion which lies on the negative end of the Social Spectrum and where there is an insignificant level of social exclusion exists it can come under a Socially Inclusive Society. (Stone, Reynolds, & Hules, 2013). Hence according to various authors, a socially cohesive society is one where social inclusion exists on a major basis.

There is one community that faces discrimination which is the LGBT (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and Transgender) community. They get affected by discrimination in many ways and are denied various services including home, they are kept away from accessing necessary shelter and services and this results in Social Exclusion. The people of the LGBT community come under the umbrella of the disadvantaged group of society until and unless we try to include them in development-related activities. We can never accomplish the goal of inclusive growth to the fullest. (Expert Committee, 2014).

My research will be focused on understanding a better definition of social inclusion, social equity, and social equality. Social Inclusion also becomes an important goal to achieve in the world in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic as the pandemic has affected each population group socially too (Bank). The research will try to answer the questions such as how social inclusion can be defined in terms of all Genders, how housing is dynamic to various income and social groups, what are housing preferences for the LGBT community, how can we create LGBT inclusive environment, or if they want to live separately from the mainstream society, what provisions in terms of social, cultural and economic needs can be made for them.

II. BACKGROUND

A. General Context of Social as well as LGBT Inclusion

The article 25 in Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Report of 1948 states that,



“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.” (Nations, 1948).

It is clear from the declaration that adequate and safe Housing is one of the fundamental Rights of all Human beings but most of the world’s poorest population including the LGBT (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and Transgender) are still denied access to housing and other facilities.

Neither the necessities of LGBT Senior adults have not been adequately represented in various research related to Gerontology nor their needs have been properly addressed by respective agencies and organizations (Sullivan, 2014).

Imagine a living environment in which you remain unrecognized and neglected, if you go to school or college, or if you go towards your livelihood sources, or if you are in need of social facilities like Housing, Public aid, health and hospitality services, But those opportunities are not easily accessible by you because of discrimination. Moreover, some people get scared of you because of your appearance, or they just don’t accept you. In such an environment, how a disadvantaged person can contribute toward overall social and economic growth? Isn’t it the failing of the Social inclusiveness concept? Hence there is a need to look into a greater depth of Social inclusiveness in Housing and Planning.

B. *Transgender Inclusion In Indian Context*

Indian policies and Planning have majorly focused on weaker sections of society which according to them are, Women, Children, Schedule Castes, and Schedule Tribes Only. There were no policies specifically addressing the issues of the Transgender population before the Enactment of certain laws related to Transgender identity, by the Supreme Court of India in 2014. But still, there is a need for Housing policies and Planning formulated including the requirements of this community.

Recently a home for Transgender was launched in Vadodra, Gujrat, which is one of its kind in India. “*This is very reassuring and it gives me great joy. Members of the transgender community are abandoned since childhood and they have no place to stay. There are times when we feel lonely and scared when we think about the future, as we do not have old age homes also,*” Manabi Bandopadhyay said in an

interview with TOI (Times of India). This shelter facility, which has been named ‘*Garima Greh*’, will be housing 25 transgender inmates, who will be provided with basic living amenities, security, and skill development training, free of cost (Das, 2020)

The government of Karnataka recently gave a proposal for beginning homes for Transgender children. The two transgender homes would have the capacity to house 50 children each. Ms. Akurathi has asked officials of the department to conduct a recce to understand where transgender children in need of care and protection are located and to understand the challenges they face. According to the Chairman of the Karnataka State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, a children’s home for transgender children must be built because they face a lot of stigma and violence. (Kulkarni, 2020)

Another Report from ‘Hindustan Times’ mentions that MP Government plans to give Parental property rights to the Transgender community to help them get employment. The secretary of the Social Justice Department, Prateek Hajela told that in short while they will give employment to Trans in government offices and make other workers more aware of them. The transgender justice welfare board will be established to oversee the policy’s overall implementation in Madhya Pradesh. (Tomar, 2020).

It is visible that there is continuous talk about the matters of the LGBT community since the recent decade and it will get normalized if people talk about them.

III. METHODOLOGY

To provide a look into the vast literature on social inclusion, social exclusion, gender equality, social equality, and justice, I used two techniques. To begin, I combed through the study materials for concepts of social inclusion and related topics. Second, I looked for literature on the subject of social inclusion and the transgender community in major scholarly databases, looking for any papers that defined the idea or meaning of social inclusion, social equality, their meanings, or related terms.

The titles and abstracts and conclusions of all identified papers were then read to know about their relevance to the topic and all potentially relevant papers were read thoroughly and the information from all papers relevant to the terms used in my research topic was taken and reviewed.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Right to adequate Housing was declared an international human right by United Nations. UN-



Habitat Agenda 1996, which aims at creating a positive impact by providing shelter through functioning at all levels since the adequacy varies from place to place in Para-60 from Section-B titled “Adequate Shelter for All” states that:

“Adequate shelter means more than a roof over one’s head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and durability; adequate lighting; heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water supply, sanitation and waste management facilities; suitable environmental and health related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work and basic facilities: all of which should be at an affordable cost.” (Habitat-Agenda, 1996, p. 22).

We need not only policies and programs to give access to all basic services like housing, health and education, and other social advantages but also policies to secure people from other social risks. (Peace, 2001) Explained the definition of Social exclusion from French to European to English policy context that the concept of Social exclusion has evolved long before it related to poverty, deprivation, or hardships.

There is a need to incorporate gender identity and gender expression not only in Housing policies but in all other relevant policies and programs to prevent discrimination and to promote awareness and respect for a diverse range of populations coming for their shelter needs HUD to support the transgender community. (Canavan & Ledger, 2004) This Report by US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department was written to meet the shelter needs of Transgender who were denied access to housing by mainstream society through funding and link-ups with organizations both at a local and national level.

While some research includes the relationship between different aspects of housing and housing conditions and the outcomes related to it such as the Health and well-being of people, the effect on their employment conditions, crime prevention based on locality and density of housing, and Education based on resources accessible from the house, size of the house and proximity of educational facilities and concluded that the relationships are not linear. (Phibbs, 2005)

When people accept trans people as such, they are more likely to face prejudice and injustice. People who want to live within their chosen gender are more likely to experience this (Whittle, Turne, & Al-Alami, 2007) The author has done a comprehensive study about Trans and their lives, their experiences in doing day-to-day activities and

also included questions on housing needs and requirements.

After being isolated, LGBT people are vulnerable to social and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, as well as other physical health issues. With the possibility to have been accepted and acknowledged by the general public at a greater rate, the chances of occurrence of Transphobia may be reduced (Addis, Davies, Greene, & Stewart, 2009). The study focuses on the problems of older LGBTQ persons and on what factors their social and economic and housing needs depend.

One of the many consequences of prejudice against the LGBT community is homelessness. In contrast to other administrative setups, policies and services related to Shelter with a primary emphasis on the protection and security of the Trans community are more effective. (YU & MD, 2010)

The people of the LGBT community comes under the umbrella of the disadvantaged group of society until and unless we try to include them in development-related activities. We can never accomplish the goal of inclusive growth to the fullest. (Expert Committee, 2014).

Many studies offer valuable clues to the experiences of trans students, despite their small size and scope; however, the majority of the literature discussing this group is non-empirical. (NICOLAZZO & MARINE, 2015, p. 172) The study throws light on Transitional housing for trans youth students and the difficulties faced by them through the experiences of two trans students.

LGBT community still gets marginalized yet there are human rights for them. The requirement is to bring a revival at a larger scale. (Divan, Cortez, Smelyanskaya, & Keatley, 2016).

In India, the “Affordable Housing for all” mission was announced in 2015 which aims at giving pucca houses to each family by 2022. It is currently a major move nationwide working with the target of providing shelter to each citizen. (Zia, Agrawal, Patel, & Meh).

The Supreme Court of India has taken a major step in 2014 by providing recognition to the Transgender as ‘third gender’ to preserve their basic Human Rights and to prevent discrimination (Solanki, 2020). The report mentions the law which gives the right to access various institutional and social services to the Transgender community. They will be able to vote, get employed in government offices, enroll in educational universities, and most importantly they will be able to participate in social and political activities which en-mark their contribution towards the socio-economic development of the country.



V. SUMMARY AND MAIN FINDINGS

Earlier in most studies, the major focus of researchers was on Gender Equality specifically for women and there were no studies mainly referring to LGBT Community. There are various pieces of research concentrated on Trans youths, especially students, designing the campus environment to include them and for the Trans elders to provide services according to their comfort and many of them were focused on the social issues faced by the LGBT community at various aspects of their lives. Most studies were focused on health issues of the LGBT community were very less was found on the issue of Housing.

There was none specifically centered on a particular city and its Trans Population specifically concentrating on the social inclusion concept. Hence I can look at a scenario of a particular city, what are the needs of its Trans Population, and what the government is doing for them like most recent examples of Indian context we see housing is coming up in Vadodra but they are for minute populations say 25 – 50 members. Research can be made on the city level and government policies for creating Trans people inclusive environment, providing essential services to them so that they can also contribute to the overall development of the city.

VI. CONCLUSION

Housing being a basic necessity is still unavailable for all and is not just about providing shelter only. Housing also ensures that tenants have fair access to adequate facilities, are in an area where they can function for a living, have a sense of ownership, and are protected from social evils. Some groups in every country find difficulty in fully participating in the societal framework. Social Inclusion is all about improving these terms of the society based on which people take part so that nobody feels segregated. Segregation occurs when people are discriminated against based on caste, creed, social status, age, race, and gender identity which aids in social exclusion.

LGBT Community faces discrimination in various ways and is denied diverse social services throughout their life which results in physical and mental health issues among these groups. However, the policies and programs by the government can be effective if they focus on LGBT youths as well. By granting LGBT people gender recognition, the Indian government has taken a significant step toward preventing discrimination and ensuring their human rights. The state governments at their level are

hearing the voices of Transgender to resolve the issues faced by them including Shelter issues.

It's not just about physical improvement but there is a need to incorporate gender expression and gender identity to promote awareness and respect them linguistically as we see the HUD working in America through linkups with other stakeholders to provide inclusive shelter for Transgender. Rental and transitional accommodation for LGBT youths can be provided under the umbrella mission for Housing for All in India, with trans-friendly facilities such as single lockable toilets rather than multiple beds incorporated into the design process. Their preferred gender identity should not be questioned thus enabling them to easily access social services and take part in Nation's socioeconomic development to the fullest.

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