



A Comparative Analysis of Transgender Welfare Policies in Kerala and Tamil Nadu A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

This study compares the transgender welfare and its policies in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The article focuses on fund allocation, healthcare services, Education, and policy framework. While both states function under India's Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and the NALSA v. Union of India (2014) Supreme Court directive. Though both states follow the same rights but they differ in their strategies differ in resource allocation, and implementation models. The Kerala government focuses on a rights-based and inclusive governance model, whereas the Tamil Nadu government combines various welfare schemes. The article uses empirical data from Kerala and Tamil Nadu budgets and peer-reviewed research. To analyse policy emphasis, implementation challenges faced, and the fruitful outcomes, concluding with best practices and gaps.

Keywords: Transgender welfare, public policy, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, social inclusion, budget allocations

Introduction

Transgender persons are different, but they need equality and due respect. In India, they face systemic known and hidden issues in many sectors like education, health, employment, and governance. The Supreme Court in NALSA v. Union of India (2014) recognised transgender persons as a third gender after accepting they should be recognised and mandated affirmative welfare actions by governments. Subsequently, India enacted the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, which is a statutory framework introduced by the Central Government of India for protection and welfare. Both the states governments has

developed strategies and policies to align central legal requirements by combining their own state welfare measures. Kerala introduced its State Policy for Transgenders in 2015 and the Tamil Nadu government took historically recognized for pioneering a trans welfare board (2008).

Theoretical Framework

This analysis draws on Rights-Based Approaches and the Social Inclusion Framework. These frameworks make it clear that its only a welfare not as charity but as a constitutional right and a multi-dimensional process ensuring access to education, health, housing, and livelihood. Under these frameworks, effective policies and strategies from Kerala and Tamilnadu government must combine legal protections, budget allocation, and implementation mechanisms of the welfare policies to reduce discrimination and enhance participation in public life. The aim of the rights is to treat them as equal as others.

Policy and Budgetary Commitments

State Budget Allocations (Official): State gender budgets provide a financial measure of commitment. Based on Gender Budget Statements and state budget entries:

Table 1: Allocations for Transgender Welfare (Rs crore)
Compiled from state gender budgets and official data

State	2020–21 (Actual)	2021–22 (Estimates)	2021–22 (Revised)	2022–23 (BE)
Tamil Nadu	59.2	63.1	62.0	5.8
Kerala	21.4	5.0	5.0	5.8

Source: CBGA India

While we observe the budget of Tamil Nadu's the allocation shows reclassification of budget lines, combined budgets that are 62.0 Crores, which include pensions, identity services, and welfare board allocations. Data reflect state reporting differences. Its clear that Tamilnadu government come up with new policies and ensures the policies create wide changes in the lives of transgender.

Key observations:

Tamil Nadu allocates larger amounts when compared to Kerala, reflecting long-standing welfare board expenditures and targeted annual schemes.

Kerala's allocations are modest and do not show much shift in their budget, but they are explicitly integrated within broader gender budgets, emphasising multiple welfare streams.

Comparative Policy Analysis

Institutional Framework

Tamil Nadu:

Transgender Welfare Board was established in 2008, reconstituted with official members and community representation. Mobile application "Thirunangai" was introduced under the Chief Minister M Karunanidhi's government in 2008. The Transgender welfare board for streamlined ID card issuance, benefiting over 10,000 individuals in Tamil Nadu. Annual pension schemes for destitute transgender persons, raised to Rs 1,500 monthly to 1,760 individuals in 2025–26 by M.K Stalin, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Subsidies up to Rs 50,000 for self-employment and business start-ups, with 811 beneficiaries, were approximately; house site pattas and education support included. Tamil Nadu's government became role model for many states by appointing them to various roles, exemplified by N. Jency, the state's first transgender PhD holder appointed as an Assistant Professor at Loyola College, and earlier by the first transgender nurse, Anbu Ruby, in government hospitals.

Kerala:

First state in India to adopt a rights-based transgender policy in 2015 with self-identification provisions. Kerala State Planning Board Social Justice Department's initiatives include 24×7 transgender helpline, self-employment support like providing sewing machine distribution and welfare schemes integrated into district planning. One step further by creating reserved seats in law and nursing courses. Kerala government appointed Padma Lakshmi, India's first transgender lawyer.

Healthcare and Social Services

Both states provide targeted interventions under broader health systems, but gaps persist. Tamil Nadu Government hospitals offer free gender-affirming surgeries and support services but still face more social barriers and felt hard to bring much transformation than expected on the other hand Kerala the Transgender health services include distress counselling and helpline support that is 24/7 however, multidisciplinary healthcare integration and direct government facility provision are limited, with private sector partnerships supplementing care.

Education and Employment

Tamil Nadu's welfare board directly pays tuition and hostel fees for transgender students. In Kerala, support is mainly provided through scholarships and policies that prevent discrimination in educational institutions. For employment, Tamil Nadu offers business subsidies and vocational training programmes. Kerala also provides self-employment schemes, but there is less official information available about their scope and outcomes.

Policy Implementation Challenges

Despite strong frameworks:

Discrimination persists: Research on healthcare utilisation indicates experiences of discrimination and delayed treatment among transgender persons in Chennai, as we know that only one transgender person was appointed and many still face social issues and challenges. underscoring implementation gaps in policy reach.

Institutional delivery: Kerala's integrated rights model lacks the dedicated welfare board continuity that Tamil Nadu enjoys, which affects coordination.

Data limitations: The data itself is not accurate or approximate, has many of them not volunteered to disclose their identity, so the welfare fund is not reaching the appropriate hands

Conclusion

Kerala's rights-based model like being the first state to appoint transgender lawyer and Tamil Nadu's institutional welfare board offer contrasting but introducing more schemes which are suitable for their localized policies. Tamil Nadu demonstrates higher budgetary allocations and its clear in the table and well-established schemes, while Kerala emphasises inclusive governance and rights recognition. Combining targeted financial commitments of Tamil Nadu and Kerala it shows the Tamil Nadu government keep one step further and shows that rights-based inclusion strategies can improve welfare outcomes of transgenders. Continued data transparency, discrimination reduction, and expanded service delivery are needed to fulfil constitutional mandates for transgender equality and dignity.

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