CHAPTER THREE
PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

3.0.0. INTRODUCTION

Profile of the study area dealt with the evolution and the history of transgender persons in India which is followed by the transgender persons in Tamil Nadu and in Thoothukudi district. India

"India is, the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only."

- Mark Twain

Figure 3.1: Showing Map of India
(www.mapsofindia.com)

India is a country in South Asia whose name comes from the Indus River. The name ‘Bharata’ is used as a designation for the country in their constitution referencing the ancient mythological emperor, Bharata, whose story is told, in part, in
the Indian epic *Mahabharata*. According to the writings known as the Puranas (religious/historical texts written down in the 5th century CE) Bharata conquered the whole sub-continent of India and ruled the land in peace and harmony. The land was, therefore, known as Bharatavarsha ('the sub-continent of Bharata'). Homonid activity in the Indian sub-continent stretches back over 250,000 years and it is, therefore, one of the oldest inhabited regions on the planet. (http://www.ancient.eu.com).

Archaeological excavations have discovered artifacts used by early humans, including stone tools, which suggest an extremely early date for human habitation and technology in the area. While the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt have long been recognized for their celebrated contributions to civilization, India has often been overlooked, especially in the West, though her history and culture is just as rich. (Mark, 2012).

### 3.1.0. HIJRAS IN INDIA – HISTORY

Asian countries have centuries-old histories of existence of gender-variant males - who in present times would have been labeled as 'transgender women'. India is no exception. Kama Sutra provides vivid description of sexual life of people with 'third nature' (Tritiya Prakriti). In India, people with a wide range of transgender-related identities, cultures, or experiences exist – including Hijras, Aravanis, Kothis, Jogtas/Jogappas, and Shiv-Shakthis. Often these people have been part of the broader culture and treated with great respect, at least in the past, although some are still accorded particular respect even in the present. (www.newstatesman.com)

The term 'transgender people' is generally used to describe those who transgress social gender norms. Transgender (TG) is often used as an umbrella term to signify individuals who defy rigid, binary gender constructions, and who express or
present a breaking and/or blurring of culturally prevalent stereotypical gender roles. Transgender people may live full- or part-time in the gender role 'opposite' to their biological sex. In contemporary usage, “transgender” has become an umbrella term that is used to describe a wide range of identities and experiences, including but not limited to: pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexual people (who strongly identify with the gender opposite to their biological sex); male and female 'cross-dressers' (sometimes referred to as “transvestites”, “drag queens”, or “drag kings”); and men and women, regardless of sexual orientation, whose appearance or characteristics are perceived to be gender atypical. A male-to-female transgender person is referred to as 'transgender woman' and a female-to-male transgender person, as 'transgender man'. (www.newstatesman.com)

The terms 'transgender' or 'transgender populations/people', used in this brief, while more encompassing than transgender women, are used to refer to transwomen given this brief’s focus. Sometimes, for brevity, the abbreviation 'TG' is used to denote transgender women.

3.1.1. HIJRAS IN INDIA – A MYTH

Transgender (Hijras) have a recorded history of more than 4,000 years. Ancient myths bestow them with special powers to bring luck and fertility. Yet despite this supposedly sanctioned place in Indian culture, hijras face severe harassment and discrimination from every direction. A hijra has a man’s body, but the soul is a woman.”

Something, however, is beginning to alter in the traditional Indian mindset as right now there seems to be both subtle and appreciable changes taking place in terms of how this group are being treated and recognized by mainstream society. Over the last few months India has seen its first transgender person fashion model, a
transgender person television presenter and in the recent Bollywood epic Jodhaa Akbar a hijra, instead of hamming up the usual comic role, was portrayed as a trusted lieutenant of the female lead. (www.undp.org)

Yet these developments come after years of crushing social stigmatization, abuse and general derision from the wider community. They make documentaries about us and say all these interesting things, but when we walk out on the street we still get the calling and the whistles.

The uphill struggle for the hijras first begins with finding acceptance within the family. Once the truth is out, hijras are usually forced to leave the family home. Yet the society they must take refuge in is equally as unwelcoming. Hijras have few rights and are not recognized by Indian law. This denies them the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to marry and the right to claim formal identity through any official documents such as a passport or driving license. Accessing healthcare, employment or education becomes almost impossible. In the face of such odds they are forced to earn money any way they can. Since 2006, hijras in the state of Bihar have been employed by the government as tax collectors, singing loudly about the debt outside the defaulter's premises until they are shamed into paying up — one of the most effective tax recovery methods ever used in India. Yet for many hijras the method of making ends is prostitution. (www.undp.org)

As is the case for all gay, lesbian and bisexual people living in India, simply by being sexually active hijras are breaking the law. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) outlaws any “carnal intercourse against the order of nature” — in other words, any sex that is not between a man and a woman with the aim of reproduction.
Brought in by the British in 1860 to try and curb the “heathen customs” of the local population, it carries with it a potential life sentence.

Whilst attitudes in the UK have matured considerably and such legislation has long since been removed from the British statute books, it still remains very much part of the Indian system. Although convictions are rare, it is in the name of such a law that the police are able to carry out their worst abuses against the hijra community. It seems that every hijra in India has her own story to tell of police brutality. (www.undp.org)

As well as the police aggression, gangs of local thugs known as “goondas” frequently rob and sexually assault hijras on the street. These attacks are rarely prevented or reported by the locals. Until very recently these attitudes were mirrored and strengthened by the Indian media which itself seemed to suffer from a certain amount of gender vertigo. Hijras were routinely portrayed as wily tricksters who led unsuspecting men astray or half-man half-woman freak shows, almost devilish in their customs and practices. In 2003, an HIV/AIDS and human rights research centre in Lucknow was raided and the coordinator jailed under IPC 377 for "conspiracy to promote homosexual activities". But attitudes are gradually beginning to change.

Sangama was set up in 1999 and is funded by the Bill Gates Foundation and the Fund for Global Human Rights among others. As well as organizing protests and rallies, groups like Sangama have been instrumental in establishing community networks with monthly meetings and safe spaces such as drop-in centres for all sexuality minority groups. Two thirds of their spending goes towards fighting against the spread of HIV infection through awareness programmes and condom distribution. According to Sangama, approximately 18-20 per cent of hijras are HIV positive.
“Four years ago, “there were three to four AIDS deaths every month, now there are three to four deaths every year.” (www.undp.org)

Even the Indian government seems to be finally recognizing that hijras exist. In March 2000 Shabnam Mausi, or “Aunt Shabnam, became the first hijra to be elected into Indian parliament and since then many others have taken her lead by successfully entering the political arena.

3.2.0. TAMIL NADU

“The land of Tamils known for its temples and architecture, food, movies and classical Indian dance and Carnatic music”

Figure 3.2: Showing the Map of Tamil Nadu

The State of Tamil Nadu has a hoary antiquity. Though early sangam classics throw historical references, we pass to recorded history only from the Pallavas.

The southern states of India were under the hegemony of the Cholas, the Cheras and the Pandyas for centuries. The Pallavas held supremacy from about the
second quarter of the fourth century A.D. They were the originators of the famous Dravidian style of temple architecture. The last Pallava ruler was Aparajita, in whose reign the later Cholas under Vijayalaya and Aditya asserted themselves by about the 10th century. At the end of the 11th century, Tamil Nadu was ruled by several dynasties like the Chalukyas, Cholas and Pandyas. In the two centuries that followed, the imperial Cholas gained paramountcy over South India. (www.indiaforum.org).

Muslims gradually strengthened their position, which led to the establishment of the Bahamani Sultanate, by the middle of the 14th century. At the same time, the Vijayanagar Kingdom quickly consolidated itself and extended its sway over the whole of South India, and at the close of the century, Vijayanagar became the supreme power in South. However, it crumbled at the battle of Talikota in 1564 to the confederate forces of the Deccan Sultans.

Even during the period of the tumultuous confusion that followed the battle of Talikota, European commercial interest had appeared as rivals in the area of South India. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English came in quick succession and established trading centres known as 'Factories'. East India Company, which had established its factory at Masulipatnam in 1611, gradually annexed territories by encouraging enmity among the native rulers. Tamil Nadu was one of the first of British settlements in India. The State is the successor to the old Madras Presidency, which covered the bulk of the southern peninsula in 1901. The composite Madras State was later reorganized, and the present Tamil Nadu was formed. (www.indiaforum.org).
Tamil Nadu is bounded on north by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, on the west by Kerala, on the east by the Bay of Bengal, and on the south by the Indian Ocean.

3.2.1. TRANSGENDER PERSON IN TAMIL NADU

The 300,000-strong community of transgender person in Tamil Nadu, until recently ghettoized and reduced to begging or doing sex work, has won major battles for inclusion, notable among which is a special 'third gender' category for transgender person on ration cards. Eking out a living from begging and commercial sex work, transgender person remain a largely ghettoized, disempowered group in the country, although their presence has been recorded in Indian culture for over 4,000 years. (www.infochangeindia.org).

Change, however, appears to be on the horizon if the considerable gains won in Tamil Nadu are indicators of increasing success in the battle for inclusion. In an unprecedented move, the state has accorded official recognition for the community with the issue of ration cards with a separate 'third gender' category. This is, without doubt, a major step forward in the demand for citizenship rights, as only two sexes -- male and female -- are recognized in Indian civil law. Further, government orders have been issued announcing unfettered access to education and counseling services. More recently, the state's social welfare department announced the constitution of a separate welfare board for transgender person. (www.infochangeindia.org)

Even five years ago addressing TG rights was actively discouraged, remembers Dr R Lakshmibai, project director of the Chennai-based Tamil Nadu AIDS Initiative (TAI) whose pioneering campaign has played no small role in
mobilizing a community conspicuous by its absence in the larger human rights movement.

That scenario has, over the last five years, altered dramatically in Tamil Nadu with the result that the cloak of invisibility surrounding TGs is slowly slipping. The emergence of TG icons and role models, regularly feted by the media, is a definite indicator of the nascent public interest in this once-neglected community. (www.infochangeindia.org).

A new high-profile envoy for the community is Rose, billed as 'India's first TG television host'. Her immensely popular half-hour chat show Ippadika, Rose on Star Vijay, a part of Rupert Murdoch's Star network, regularly broaches controversial topics such as pre-marital sex and legalization of prostitution. "This show has definitely altered my perceptions of TGs," admits one regular viewer, Mallika Subramanian. "In my mind, Rose is first a talented and confident media person, then a TG," she adds of the US-educated presenter who holds a master's degree in biomedical engineering and went by the name of Ramesh Venkatesan in her former life.

These new public faces of the community -- a far cry from the negative stereotypes oft-repeated in popular culture -- are indicative of larger, fundamental changes in a group increasingly entering the mainstream in Tamil Nadu. (www.infochangeindia.org).

At the forefront of the campaign for change in the state is TAI, administered by the Voluntary Health Services and funded by Avahan, the India AIDS initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In 2004, the initiative began working on
disease prevention among sex workers -- nearly 9,000 of them transgender person -- through 25 NGO partners in 14 districts of Tamil Nadu.

3.2.2. TRANSGENDER PERSON AND THEIR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN TAMIL NADU

With a few exceptions, state laws and policies often ignore the needs and rights of transgender people. Without law and policies protecting their rights, transgender people face violations of their basic rights to life, security, work, health, equality, non-discrimination, (2) freedom of expression, freedom from torture and founding a family, among others rights. For instance, in many Asian countries, a post-operative transsexual (3) person's change of sex is not legally recognized in identity documents, hindering access to education, employment, health, housing, marriage, parenting and others. Often, marriage laws allow marriage only between a man and a woman, thus leaving out transgender people, or people who want to marry a person of the same sex. Rape laws in most Asian countries do not recognize that transwomen can also be raped, thus leaving them without protection or legal recourse. There have been recent developments in parts of Asia such as Nepal, Tamil Nadu (in India), Thailand, and parts of China that have recognized citizenship of transgender people, affirmed their rights, and enforced policies for their advancement, including access to education, health, housing and family formation. (Sood, 2010).

- Only the state of Tamil Nadu in India provides sex reassignment operations within public sector health care.
- Most of the 12 countries do not legally recognize change of a person’s sex. In Nepal and Tamil Nadu, one can get an identity card with a “third gender” category. After sex reassignment surgery in Indonesia, a transgender person’s
gender can be changed by a judge in a local court having jurisdiction over the person’s place of residence in the same manner as a change of name.

- In Tamil Nadu about human rights violations faced by the transgender community, the accounts shared demonstrated that when changes in gender expression of a child become obvious – and that happens usually with the onset of puberty – parents resort to policing the child’s sexuality and adopt cruel measures to ensure gender conformity. There was a case shared of a young boy whose parents administered electric shock to his genitals in an attempt to “fix” his fondness for girls’ clothes (Right to freedom from torture, Principle 10, YP, 2007). They hoped it would “rouse” the man in him. In another case, a young transwoman’s parents forced her to take male hormone tablets (Protection from medical abuses, Principle 18, YP, 2007). Even “honour killings” of transgender persons are not uncommon but go unreported. Rose, of these popular chat show on Tamil television, *Ippadikku Rose* (Yours, Rose), shares in a 2008 interview to Gloria Elayadathusseril for thestar.com that her mother still beats her, at the age of 29, and despite her being a celebrity.(Sood, 2010).

### 3.2.3. TAMIL NADU TRANSGENDER PERSONS WELFARE BOARD (TGWB)

#### 3.2.3.0. FORMATION OF TAMIL NADU TRANSGENDER WELFARE BOARD

A confluence of several factors contributed to the formation for Tamil Nadu Transgender Welfare Board (TGWB). These factors ranged from gain in the political support as a legitimate minority, increase in the acceptance of the general public and mass media, and advocacy efforts of transgender community leaders and activists and civil society.
3.2.3.1. GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

Tamil Nadu TGWB functions under the leadership of – Minister of Social Welfare; Special Commissioner and Secretary of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department; and Director of Social Welfare - who are President, Vice-President and Member Secretary, respectively, of TGWB. The board has official and non-official members. The official members are the representatives from the various government bodies that include: Department of Finance, Department of Law, State Women Commission, Police Department, Human Rights and Social Justice Commission, Women Development Corporation, Department of Higher Education, Department of Medical Education, and Department of Employment and Training. Out of the eight non-official members, 7 are TG community leaders, and one person is a NGO leader.

The strength of this structure is that it allows interaction among various government departments that facilitate inter-departmental coordination allowing access of transgender people into the existing government schemes. This arrangement, in which members from various government bodies and TG communities are present, thus enables board to have different perspectives of the issues and formulate effective schemes – reflecting a true participative democracy in action.

3.2.3.2. SCHEMES

TGWB addresses the social protection needs of TG people - income assistance, housing, education, employment and health care.

TGWB addresses these needs as:

- an agency that *designs and implements schemes exclusively for TG people* focusing on income/employment, housing, education and health care needs of TG people.
- a platform to bring various government departments together to discuss what can be done to address these basic needs by allowing access to government’s pre-existing services, schemes, or institutions for TG people – thus trying to end the social exclusion and marginalization of TG populations.

3.2.3.3. TG-SPECIFIC WELFARE SCHEMES FUNDED AND IMPLEMENTED BY TGWB

These include small grants for self-employment and providing material support (such as sewing machines) for needy TG people. Some eligible TG people have also received support for their higher education. Furthermore, short-stay home was started in Chennai to serve as a temporary shelter for TG people in crisis and as a safe place to for TG people to stay when they visit Chennai for medical care and sex reassignment surgery.

3.2.3.4. ACCESS TO EXISTING GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

The existing state government schemes that are accessed by TGWB members include TG self-help groups (SHGs) supported by accredited agencies. To address housing needs of TG people, the state government offers free land pattas. Besides, the central government’s scheme – Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) – is also used to provide free housing for TG people.

TGWB facilitates access to existing government institution-delivered programmes such as insurance, education, and employment. TGWB facilitates access to employment opportunities for TG people by enabling them to register in the state government ‘employment exchange’. TGWB also facilitates provision of free sex reassignment surgery through select government hospitals in Chennai. Moreover, ration/food cards that are usually provided to a family are now provided to TG people even if they live alone.
3.2.3.5. MODELS FOR STATE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

Depending on the number of TG people in a state, the state government can decide whether a specific state level nodal body (such as TG Welfare Board) is needed or whether a nodal department (e.g., Department of Social Welfare) to implement and coordinate schemes for TG people. One can start with a nodal department and then later decide whether or not a specific state level nodal body is required - based on the work load and resource requirements and availability.

Irrespective of whether it is a specific nodal body or a nodal department that will address the social protection needs of transgender people, all relevant government departments and government bodies (such as State Commission for Women and State AIDS Control Society) need to be involved so that transgender people can access the existing government schemes in relation to – income, employment, housing, education and health care, and use existing resources such as public education and public health care.

Similarly, irrespective of whether or not a specific state level nodal body is established, it is a good practice to involve TG representatives when designing what needs to be done and how to implement the activities or schemes. An advisory committee that involves key stakeholders (including state and national level networks that work with transgender people) can be established to use their suggestions and resources to strengthen the social protection programme for TG people in the state.
3.2.3.6. MODELS FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

A national level consultation is required with key stakeholders to arrive at a suitable model to address social protection needs of transgender people. Decision needs to be taken on whether such a model needs to be expanded to other sexual minorities as well. This is because; the National Planning Commission in its approach paper to Twelfth Five Year Plan has clearly articulated “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) community” as a group that has traditionally been neglected and pointed out the need to meet their health and social protection needs.

3.2.3.7. MODELS FOR STRUCTURE AND ITS FUNCTIONS

Based on national consultations with key stakeholders, the central government can decide whether a specific national level nodal body (such as TG Welfare Board) is needed or whether a nodal ministry (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) will be sufficient. One can start with a nodal ministry and then later decide (based on the work load and resource requirements) whether or not a specific national level body for transgender welfare is required. The nodal ministry or the national level nodal body (once formed) can formulate and implement TG-specific schemes as well as take a coordinating role to bring together relevant ministries and departments (such as Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and National AIDS Control Organization and National Rural Health Mission). This will enable TG people to access existing social protection schemes of various government departments in relation to income assistance, employment, housing, education and health care.

The nodal ministry or the national level nodal body can consider the possibility of identifying a relevant nodal department of the state governments and fund those nodal departments to implement TG welfare schemes at the state level.
3.2.3.8. MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF TG COMMUNITIES

Irrespective of whether or not a separate national level nodal body is established, it is a good practice to involve TG representatives when designing what needs to be done and how to implement the activities or schemes. Besides, it is suggested to conduct a community needs assessment when formulating TG-specific schemes.

3.2.3.9. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

For allowing TG people to access existing schemes of the various departments of the central government, no additional money is necessary. A central government order is sufficient if it states that transgender people are allowed to use the existing central government schemes in relation to employment, income generation, housing, education and health care. A mechanism for access should, however, needs to be decided. For securing resources in the long-term, a costed TG-specific plan can be submitted to the National Planning Commission and other ways also need to be identified. (http://www.undp.org).
3.3.0. THOOTHUKUDI

Figure 3.3: Showing the Map of Thoothukudi District

(www.mapsofindia.com)

Thoothukudi also known as Thoothukudi, is a city and a Municipal corporation in Thoothukudi district in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is the tenth largest city in Tamil Nadu (after Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy, Salem, Vellore, Tiruppur, Tirunelveli and Erode). Tuticorin is the headquarters of Thoothukudi District. The Tuticorin is also known as "Pearl City". It is a Seaport which serves Southern Tamil Nadu including the inland cities of Coimbatore, Madurai and Tirunelveli. It is one of the major seaports in India with its history dating back to the 6th century.

Thoothukudi is traditionally known for its pearl fishery and shipbuilding. Thoothukudi became the centre of the Indian independence movement in the early 20th century, with such leaders as the Maveeran Sundaralinga Kudumbanar World
First Human Suicide Bomber, poet Subramanya Bharathy, Veerapandia Kattabomman, Vadivu World First Women Suicide Bomber, Venni Kalady, Vellaya Thevan, and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai. In 1906, the freedom fighter V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, with the help of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, launched the first Swadeshi ship "S.S.Gaelia" from this port town in British India. (http://www.thoothukudionline.in)

3.3.1. ORIGIN OF NAME

There are three theories as to the origin of the name:

- Thoorthu (Dig) and Kudi (Drink)- The town had no rivers and the only source of drinking water was from wells.
- "Thoortha" means land "reclaimed" from sea while "Kudi" also stands for "settlement" or "colony". Hence "Thoortha Kudi" or Thoothukudi could mean a settlement built on land reclaimed from sea.
- Finally, the Tuticorin name was used by Dutch people who were here. Today the city is called "Tuticorin" in English and "Thoothukudi" in Tamil.

Figure 3.4: Showing the Map of Taluks in Thoothukudi District

(www.mapsofindia.com)
Thoothukudi taluk is a taluk of Thoothukudi district of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The headquarters of the taluk is the town of Thoothukudi.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

According to the 2011 census, the taluk of Thoothukudi had a population of 476,890 with 238,533 males and 238,357 females. There were 999 women for every 1000 men. The taluk had a literacy rate of 81.9. Child population in the age group below 6 was 25,329 Males and 24,692 Females. (Tamil Nadu Census, 2011).

**Table 3.1: Details of Taluks in Thoothukudi District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Headquarters</th>
<th>Thoothukudi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divisions</strong></td>
<td>Mannargudi, Tiruvarur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taluks</strong></td>
<td>Ettayapuram, Kovilpatti, Ottapidaram, Sathankulam, Srivaikuntam, Thiruchendur, <strong>Thoothukudi</strong>, Vilathikulam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue blocks</strong></td>
<td>Alwarthirunagiri, Karunkulam, Kayathar, Kovilpatti, Ottapidaram, V. Pudur, Sattankulam, Srivaikuntam, Thoothukudi, Thiruchendur, Udangudi, Vilattikulam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipalities</strong></td>
<td>Kayalpattinam, Kovilpatti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town Panchayats</strong></td>
<td>Thiruchendur, Arumuganeri, Athur, Eral, Ettayapuram, Kalugumalai, Nazerath, Sathankulam, Sayapuram, Srivaikuntam, Udangudi, Vilathikulam, Alwarthirunagiri, Kadambur, Kayatharu, V. Pudur, Kanam, Perungulam, Thenthiruperai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Census Tamil Nadu. Retrieved on 4 July 2013)
3.4.0. ACTIVITIES OF TRANSGENDER PERSONS IN THOOTHUKUDI

3.4.1. TRANSGENDER ASKED TO UTILISE ALL ASSISTANCE IN THOOTHUKUDI

Identity cards were issued to 38 transgender persons to enhance their social security. Minister for Social Welfare Geetha Jeevan distributed the ID cards to the transgender persons, all members of the welfare board.

Fig : 3.5 Minister for Social Welfare P. Geetha Jeevan distributing identity cards to a transgender persons in Thoothukudi

After distributing the identity cards, Ms. Jeevan said, the government was concerned about the welfare of the people. While speaking at the programme organized by the Department of Social Welfare, she called upon the transgender persons to come forward and avail all benefits without any hesitation. They were enjoying all the benefits in the society on a par with other beneficiaries, now.

Education loans were being extended to them. Financial assistance for setting up business ventures was also being given to the likeminded persons to improve their
livelihood. To provide accommodation, free houses would be given. Besides, special family cards would be provided to them. Medical camps would be conducted at regular intervals with the help of health care professionals and on necessity surgical treatments could be done. (The Hindu, Jul 28, 2010).

3.4.2. TRANSGENDER PERSONS DEMAND HOUSING FACILITIES IN THOOTHUKUDI

“Official apathy has kept scheme from being beneficial to them”

Though more importance is being accorded to enhance the social security of the transgender persons, the basic requirement of housing is still out of reach for them.

Fig: 3.6 Transgender persons staging a demonstration at Thoothukudi Collectorate

Viji, the founder and managing trustee of Anbu Trust, a home for transgender in the district, who led the demonstration in front of Collectorate highlighting their demands said the government had set aside a sum of Rs. 5.50 lakh for construction of
houses for the transgender persons in every district but the beneficiaries could not reap the benefits they were entitled to.

As per the directive, ten houses had to be constructed for the transgender persons in each district in the State but nothing transpired so far due to official apathy. Gross negligence was being shown.

Even though there is no land vacant within the limits of corporation, at least provide housing on the outskirts. We have been asking for accommodation for the past three years and there is no sign of development on the issue. Representations to this effect have been made several times to the authorities but nobody has given due consideration to our grievances. To represent our grievances before the officials concerned, grievances redressal day meetings have to be conducted on a regular basis on a par with other meetings for representing our woes.(The Hindu, May 25, 2010).

3.4.3. INDIA'S FIRST TRANSGENDER PASTOR FINDS FULFILLMENT

Ten years ago, Bharathi, then a teenager, would dance with other transgender friends in the streets of Chennai for money. But now as a Protestant pastor she leads the faithful in worship and plans to minister to her fellow transgender persons. Pastor Bharathi, 28, of the Evangelical Church of India, a Protestant church active in South India, is widely considered the first transgender pastor in the country. “I feel like a special person,” she says. But her life has been full of tears, agony and hardship.
Born as Bharath Raja, she was the third child and first son to a Hindu family near the coastal district of Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu state.

“I realized I was different as I was growing up. Deep down I felt I was a woman while all the while I was being treated like a boy”. Her family was angry at her feminine traits and repeatedly told her to act like a boy. The taunts and pressure were so great she even attempted to kill herself.

It was during her struggle with her sexuality in school that she was introduced to Christianity. “I believed in Jesus from a young age,” she said. Her father would often beat her for attending church, she recalled. But she held firm to her faith.

After finishing her schooling and being unable to take the pressure from her family any more, she ran away to the state capital Chennai and joined a group of transgender people."I learned their ways, culture and how they survived in difficult situations. I felt comfortable with them," Bharathi said.
India has an estimated 500,000 transgender people, who can be generally seen on the streets and at railway stations begging for money. They also do street performances to make a living since they are not accepted in normal social life. "Suicide rates are highest among us, most have psychological problems, and generally their average life expectancy is less than others".

"Everything is difficult for us ... obtaining food, clothing and shelter". Luckily, there has been more political acceptance for transgender people in Tamil Nadu over the last six years. The state has introduced several welfare measures for transgender people like free sex change surgery, housing, separate welfare boards and accepting transgender people as a “third sex.”

In 2007, Bharathi underwent sex change surgery to complete her transformation into a woman. All the while she kept her faith in Christ and love for working among transgender people. Bharathi’s break came when a Protestant helped her through a theology course to become a pastor. In 2011 she graduated in theology and became the first transgender graduate of India's Serampore University in West Bengal. (ucanews.com reporter, July 23, 2013)

3.5.0. ORGANIZATIONS FOR TRANSGENDER PERSONS IN THOOTHUKUDI

3.5.1. UDAVUM ULLANGAL

Udavum Ullangal started the concept of providing a welfare centre that advocates for the advancement on the Economic Sustainability and for the human rights of Trans genders. Udavum Ullangal recognizes that this community faces dual oppression of being a woman (either born as a male, raised or living as a female) and as a sexual minority in the patriarchal, homophobic society. It was the intention of the
organization to build support groups of the Transgender persons and make them
decent citizens like ourselves and in addition to break the widespread isolation faced
by the community and to fight collectively for social change.

The Activities that were carried out were:

✔ Residential Care

Shelter and Food was a perpetual need for the functioning of the project. The
organization addressed to the needs of the Transgender persons by providing
wholesome and healthy food and a comfortable and spacey shelter. The residents of
the shelter were not only provided mere space to stay, but they availed all kinds of
educational, medical, psychological, spiritual, legal, skill developmental, and other
financial assistance/support required to meet their basic necessities. This was done so
as to develop job opportunities and hence economic opportunities for the community
who are deprived of their basic rights including right to live an independent life of
their own.

✔ Skill Developmental Training

The Transgender persons coming into the shelter were provided with skill
developmental training to make them Economically Self Reliant and refrain them
selves from Indulging in Sex work and begging. Trainings on Cooking, Sewing and
Embroidery, Computer Education, Basic Education, Beautician Trainings, Classical
Dancing and Basket weaving were an integral part of this activity.

✔ Drop In Center (DIC)

The premises will also functioned as a Drop in Center (DIC) that provided a safe
space for the sexual minorities to gain information, support and resources. Program
sessions and activities will be planned everyday that included trainings, games, cultural events, television programs and competitions such as Rangoli, Dancing, and Cooking etc. A variety of newspapers and magazine were made available through our library. Counselling services were provided for these Transgenders by the Counsellor who functioned in the DIC. Issues relating to Psychological and Psychosocial were addressed during these counseling sessions.

- **Educational Services**

  The Transgender persons who were willing to peruse higher education were joined in appropriate Institutions.

- **Clinical Services**

  The organization also offered clinical services from the home by providing Medical Care for simple Illness and Infections, Counseling and Psychosocial support for the Trans Genders. Appropriate referrals were be made for Specialized Care, STI Treatment and HIV Testing.

- **Crisis Intervention**

  The organization also was very much motivated to directly intervene in crisis situations where violation of rights, Violence and Discrimination of Transgender persons occurred. The organization also addressed crisis by actively intervening in the crisis faced by the community. There were telephone lines that were answered by the crisis team made up largely of community members. The crisis team responded instantaneously to the crisis and if needed the projects lawyers were asked to intervene. The majority of the crises occurred due to confrontations with the police, goondas/thugs or the individual’s families.
Legal and Advocacy Support

The organization also had a lawyer who provided legal advice and counseled for a wide range of issues including property inheritance. (udavumullangaltvl.org).

3.5.2. SOUTH INDIA POSITIVE NETWORK

(a) PROJECT FOR TRANSGENDER PERSONS- BY TIDES FOUNDATION

Among the population vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, a key segment are the Transgender persons and MSM communities while there are several intervention in place for the MSM (men who have sex with men) community, the Transgender persons community, especially, the male to female populations called Aravanis (Transgender persons) in south India. (Hijiras in north India) remain largely neglected. This neglected attitude comes from ignorance, misunderstanding and stigma around transgender persons issues. Data from government surveillance suggested that Zero positivity in the transgender persons and MSM communities is significantly higher than in the general population.

In the area of care, support and the treatment, there is also neglect of the issues specific to the transgender persons communities. So as to initiate provision of services for this stigmatized population such as Aravanis. It is uniquely poised to provide care, support and the treatment for this vulnerable community.

(b) PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project aims to enhance services for HIV positive transgender persons individuals visiting the government hospitals in Chennai, India, through the center maintained by SOUTH INDIA POSITIVE NETWORK.
• To work with the medical establishment to educate them on issues specific to transgender persons, for example stigma and discrimination that may prevent them from seeking treatment at government hospitals.

• To educate transgender persons HIV positive about treatment issues and related topics such as adherence to medication, nutrition etc.

• To advocate for greater attention to treatment related issues such as interaction between hormone therapy and Anti retroviral therapy, sexual reassignment surgery for HIV positive Transgender persons.

• To provide psychosocial support for HIV transgender persons, to built their self esteem, live healthy positive lives, and reduce risk of further transmission.

(c) METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

Meetings with medical professional involved in HIV treatment to sensitize transgender persons issues and they need for overcoming stigma towards positive transgender persons. Monthly sessions one to one interactions or treatment will be carried out. Networking with agencies in India and abroad working with Transgender persons PLWHA'. Through this network the latest information and updates on Drug interactions between ARV and hormones, and surgical guidelines for transgender persons. PLWHA who are considering sex reassignment surgery. Dissemination of information at treatment ADVOCACY meetings and sessions with the medical community. Psychosocial support by trained counselors to with transgender persons to build their self esteem, overcome internalized prejudice/Tran phobia.
(d) DESCRIPTION OF TRANSGENDER PERSONS COMMUNITY

The estimated population of transgender persons in chennai city is around 1500 (One Thousand Five Hundred) approximately in which the PLWHA transgender persons (Aravanis) are registered up to one hundred and twenty eight. The number of infections increasing everyday due to the vulnerability of the community as well as the discrimination upon the community.

(e) Problems Faced by Transgender persons

The stigma and discrimination towards Aravanis (Transgender persons) starts right from the adolescence when they are in their parental care. The society neglects the community not considering as a human being.

(f) Discrimination at public places by the general public:

- Denial of treatment at hospitals.
- Loss of income at termination of employment.
- Violation of human rights by anti social elements.
- Third degree approach by the police personnel.
- Discrimination within the community by separating their identity based on sexual reassignment surgery.

(g) ACTIVITIES IN TIDES

- Identification and enrollment of transgender PLWHA's
- Sensitization of doctors treating HIV infected persons.
- Counseling, follow up, treatment preparedness, ART adherence, employment opportunities and nutrition. (http://sipnetwork.in).
3.5.3. Thoothukudi - Nazareth Diocese Social Welfare Department for Transgender persons

The Church of South India is the result of the union of churches of varying traditions Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Reformed. It was inaugurated in September 1947, after protracted negotiation among the churches concerned. Organized into 22 dioceses in Church of South India in four states including; Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, each under the spiritual supervision of a bishop, the church as a whole is governed by a synod, which elects a moderator (presiding bishop) every 2 years.

The Thoothukudi - Nazareth Diocese is one of the twenty-two dioceses of the Church of South India. Church of South India has 8 dioceses in Tamilnadu state. The dioceses are Anglican Diocese of Madras Diocese of Kanyakumari of the Church of South India Madurai-Ramnad Diocese of the Church of South India Thoothukudi - Nazareth Diocese, Tirunelveli Diocese of the Church of South India Trichy-Tanjore Diocese of the Church of South India and Anglican Diocese of Vellore. The cathedral of diocese is St. Johns Cathedral church at Nazareth.

History

Thoothukudi - Nazareth Diocese was formed on 2003 bifurcating areas from Tirunelveli Diocese of the Church of South India. Under this Thoothukudi Diocese, many departments were formed and one among this is Social welfare Department for Transgender persons which is mainly functioned for the Transgender persons, otherwise able people and marginalized.
Functions:

Responding to human need through institutional and emergency relief work; through community development projects and skill training programmes for the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the people and programmes for the integrity of creation. Around 250 members were Permanent Resident Transgender persons who belong to Tiruchendur, Vlathikulam, Annanagar and from the surroundings of Tuticorin. Migrant Transgender persons were from Kovilpatti, Vizhupuram, Arruppukottai and from Madurai. Once in Six Month a meeting will be organized by the department for the transgender persons where they will be given opportunity to share their views, needs, requirements and grievances.

3.6.0. Conclusion

There has been considerable debate about whether issues affecting trans people should be considered alongside those affecting (LGB people or Ntcen conducted the sexual orientation review (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009) for the Commission and it was agreed that trans issues should be considered in a separate review for two reasons. Firstly, because the issues faced by trans people were considered to be different from those affecting LGB people, and, secondly, because it was felt that the knowledge gaps in relation to trans issues were sufficiently large and important to command a separate review. The key aim of this review was to obtain a clear picture of trans issues relating to equality and discrimination and where gaps exist in the data and information available. However, given that much of the legacy work from the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was confined to work on employment or taking direct legal action in the context of the law on gender identity at the time, there was also a need to expand the knowledge of the Commission on the life experiences and opportunities of trans people beyond the
context of employment. In particular, there was a need to gain experience and knowledge in the area of discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services and to examine whether there was sufficient data and information that could be used to develop evidence-based policy on trans issues.

The following chapter deals with the Methodology of the Study.