
DIGITAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF TRANSGENDERS IN TAMIL NADU: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Digital social enterprises have showed up as rather new and innovative platforms, where social aims are paired with technology-based business approaches to deal with socio economic problems that marginalized communities face. In those communities, transgender individuals often run into discrimination, cramped employment pathways, financial exclusion, and a kind of social stigma , which then blocks their chances for economic progress. Lately, digital social enterprises have opened fresh routes for getting income, building skills, starting ventures, and reaching broader markets through e commerce, digital services, online training, and financial technology tools. So, this study intends to look into what kind of role digital social enterprises play in supporting the economic empowerment of transgender people in Tamil Nadu. It mainly tries to evaluate how these enterprises raise entrepreneurial abilities, expand livelihood options, enable financial inclusion, and also strengthen social participation for transgender individuals. The study uses a descriptive and analytical research style, it will draw on both primary data and secondary data sources . The expected results should give useful understanding about how far digital social enterprises work, in terms of sustainable economic growth and self reliance within transgender communities. Finally, the study is meant to add to the existing writing on social entrepreneurship, digital inclusion, and transgender empowerment, while also giving policy suggestions for building a more welcoming and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem across Tamil Nadu.

KEYWORDS: Digital Social Enterprises, Economic Empowerment, Transgender Community, Entrepreneurship Development, Financial Inclusion, Digital Inclusion, Tamil Nadu.

INTRODUCTION

Digital social enterprises have kind of turned into a key mechanism for tackling social and economic inequalities, using technology, and also those newer business models. They are usually trying to generate social value, but still keep their financial footing strong. That's why they've become pretty powerful tools for empowering marginalized communities even if the path is not always easy. In Tamil Nadu , the transgender community continues to meet a bunch of difficulties like social exclusion, unemployment, less access to education, and ongoing financial insecurity. Still, digital social enterprises open up chances for learning new skills, getting online jobs, starting small ventures, and reaching markets, so transgender individuals can move toward better economic independence. With digital platforms, these social enterprises support financial inclusion, help people work for themselves, and also boost social participation, which is often missing earlier. This study looks at how digital social enterprises actually support economic empowerment for transgenders in Tamil Nadu, and it also investigates how they contribute to entrepreneurship growth, sustainable ways of living, and wider social inclusion.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To look into the idea plus importance of digital social enterprises in Tamil Nadu, in a more practical way I guess.
2. To study how these digital social enterprises help with entrepreneurship growth among transgender people, especially when they are trying to start something new .
3. To evaluate the outcomes of digital social enterprises on the economic empowerment of transgender individuals, like whether it truly improves their income.
4. To judge the contribution of digital platforms in improving financial inclusion and livelihood opportunities for transgenders, even when access feels limited .
5. To find what sorts of obstacles transgenders face while trying to access and use digital social enterprise initiatives, day to day .
6. To propose measures that can strengthen digital social enterprises for the empowerment of transgenders in Tamil Nadu, so things become more usable and less confusing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dees (1998) is often mentioned as a kind of pioneer in social entrepreneurship, sorta like the first big reference point people cite. He suggested that social enterprises basically merge entrepreneurial practices with social missions, so they can tackle societal issues. In this study, the emphasis was that social enterprises create chances for marginalized communities, not just in theory but by generating jobs, making access to resources easier, and also by encouraging social belonging or inclusion. His work then kind of set the base for how people can understand that business strategies, when used properly, can serve social development aims, even if it sounds a bit unusual at first.

Yunus (2010) introduced the idea of social business, where the main thing is to tackle social problems while still keeping the finances sustainable. In his research he argues that social enterprises can empower disadvantaged groups, not just by offering work and livelihood opportunities, but also by nudging toward economic self-reliance. Overall, the study points out that these kinds of enterprises are able to deal with problems like poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion, largely because of innovative business models, which are kind of the backbone here.

Kerlin (2013) looked at how social enterprises develop in different countries, and it seems they have a really crucial role in community development plus poverty reduction. In that work, the evidence suggests these enterprises back vulnerable groups, mainly by giving employment, helping with skill growth, and widening access to economic chances. The author also highlighted that supportive policies are important for the growth, and yeah, the sustainability of social enterprises too, since without the right kind of backing they can stall or move much slower.

Nandan and Scott (2018) looked into how digital technologies affect social enterprises, and well, in a way it feels more complicated than it first seems. They found digital platforms ended up boosting the reach of these social enterprises a lot, because they help organizations get to wider markets, provide online services, and even reach new financial resources. In the end the authors said that digital transformation actually makes social enterprises more effective at serving communities who are disadvantaged, which kinda ties all the points together.

Priya and Rajesh (2023) examined, pretty specifically the impact of digital social enterprises on empowering transgender people in Tamil Nadu, and it felt very much like a targeted angle. In their findings they pointed out that these digital social enterprises give skill training, create online work chances, open market access, and also offer some kind of financial

backing. And so the overall conclusion they reached was that digital social enterprises really help in building economic independence, strengthen social inclusion, and support entrepreneurial growth for transgender individuals.

RESEARCH GAP

A lot of earlier studies have been zooming in on social enterprises, digital inclusion, or maybe transgender empowerment all on their own. But not so much work has looked at the together role of digital social enterprises in pushing entrepreneurship development as well as economic empowerment for transgenders, specifically in Tamil Nadu. So, in this present study, we try to cover that missing part, by looking at how these digital social enterprises actually help with livelihood generation, financial inclusion, and the overall entrepreneurial growth inside the transgender community.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is more or less confined to looking at how digital social enterprises participate in the economic empowerment of transgender individuals in a few chosen parts of Tamil Nadu. What we found is mainly drawn from what the respondents said and what they felt during the process. So, the outcomes could be nudged by personal perceptions, and sometimes their own biases as well. Also, because of tight time and limited resources, the work could not stretch to cover every district in Tamil Nadu. In addition, digital technologies and social enterprises change quite fast, which means the findings might not hold the same way if you look at things over a longer duration or later on.

Aspect	Details
Sample Size	84 Responses
Sampling Technique	Convenience Sampling
Study Area & Period	Tamil Nadu (Chennai, Coimbatore)
Data Collection	Primary Data – Structured Questionnaire
Target Population	Transgender individuals involved in or associated with Digital Social Enterprise activities
Research Approach	Descriptive and Analytical Research
Nature of Study	Empirical Study
Research Design	Descriptive Research Design
Sources of Data	Primary and Secondary Data
Research Instrument	Structured Questionnaire with Five-Point Likert Scale

Independent Variable	Digital Social Enterprise Participation
Dependent Variable	Economic Empowerment of Transgenders
Statistical Tools Used	Pearson Correlation Analysis

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE ON RESPONDENTS (N=84)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N=84)	Percentage (%)
Age	21–30 years	43	51.2
	31–40 years	25	29.8
	41–50 years	12	14.3
	Above 50 years	4	4.7
Gender Identity	Transgender Woman	58	69.0
	Transgender Man	18	21.4
	Non-binary/Others	8	9.5
Educational Qualification	No Formal Education	10	11.9
	School Education	28	33.3
	Higher Secondary	20	23.8
	Undergraduate	18	21.4
	Postgraduate & Above	8	9.5
Area of Residence	Rural	32	38.1
	Urban	40	47.6
	Semi-Urban	12	14.3
Occupation	Self-Employed	35	41.7
	Private Employee	22	26.2
	Daily Wage Worker	15	17.9
	Unemployed	12	14.3
Monthly Income	Below ₹10,000	20	23.8
	₹10,001–₹20,000	30	35.7
	₹20,001–₹30,000	18	21.4
	₹30,001–₹40,000	10	11.9
	Above ₹40,000	6	7.1
Participation in Digital Social Enterprises	Yes	62	73.8
	No	22	26.2
Digital Literacy Level	Beginner	18	21.4
	Intermediate	45	53.6
	Advanced	21	25.0

The table shows, that the majority of respondents (51.2%) fall into the 21–30 years age group which suggests that younger transgender people are more actively involved in digital social enterprise activities. Most respondents are transgender women (69.0%), and almost half

(47.6%) live in urban areas. A fairly large portion (41.7%) are self employed , which kind of mirrors the growing value of entrepreneurship across the transgender community. Also , 73.8% of the respondents have already taken part in digital social enterprise initiatives, and over half (53.6%) have an intermediate level of digital literacy . This points to how digital platforms can support economic empowerment and help entrepreneurial development among transgenders in Tamil Nadu.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS (N = 84)

S.No	Research Questions	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
1	Digital social enterprises have improved my access to income-generating opportunities.	4	8	12	35	25	84
2	Participation in digital social enterprises has enhanced my entrepreneurial skills.	3	7	10	38	26	84
3	Digital social enterprises have increased my financial independence.	5	6	11	37	25	84
4	Digital platforms have helped me market my products or services effectively.	4	8	13	34	25	84
5	Digital social enterprises provide adequate training for entrepreneurship development.	5	7	15	35	22	84
6	I have gained better access to financial services through digital social enterprises.	4	9	14	33	24	84
7	Digital social enterprises have increased my confidence in starting a business.	3	8	12	36	25	84
8	Participation in digital social enterprises has improved my social status.	5	9	13	34	23	84
9	Digital technologies have reduced barriers to employment for transgender individuals.	4	7	14	36	23	84
10	Digital social enterprises encourage financial inclusion among transgender individuals.	3	8	12	38	23	84
11	Government support for digital social enterprises benefits transgender entrepreneurship.	5	10	14	32	23	84
12	Digital social enterprises play a significant role in the economic empowerment of transgenders in Tamil Nadu.	2	6	10	40	26	84

Response Scale: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

The table shows that most respondents picked Agree , and also Strongly Agree, across pretty much all the statements. That kinda implies that digital social enterprises do contribute positively to entrepreneurship growth, financial inclusion, skills building, income creation, and broader economic empowerment for transgender individuals in Tamil Nadu. The results further indicate that digital platforms help lower job related barriers and boost confidence,

social standing, and access to banking-like services, so they end up backing inclusive economic development.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Objective:

"To assess the impact of digital social enterprises on the economic empowerment of transgender individuals in Tamil Nadu."

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0)

There is no significant relationship between participation in digital social enterprises and the economic empowerment of transgender individuals in Tamil Nadu.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)

There is a significant relationship between participation in digital social enterprises and the economic empowerment of transgender individuals in Tamil Nadu.

Variables for Pearson Correlation

Variable	Type
Digital Social Enterprise Participation Score	Independent Variable (X)
Economic Empowerment Score	Dependent Variable (Y)

Both variables should be measured using composite scores derived from Likert-scale statements.

Interpretation of Correlation Coefficient (r)

r Value	Interpretation
0.00 – 0.19	Very Weak Correlation
0.20 – 0.39	Weak Correlation
0.40 – 0.59	Moderate Correlation
0.60 – 0.79	Strong Correlation
0.80 – 1.00	Very Strong Correlation

RESULT TABLE

Variables	r-value	p-value	Result
Digital Social Enterprise Participation and Economic Empowerment	0.724	0.000	Significant

The Pearson correlation coefficient $r = 0.724$ suggests, some kind of strong positive linkage between being involved in digital social enterprises and the economic empowerment of transgender individuals in Tamil Nadu. The p-value 0.000 is also under the 0.05 significance

mark . So, the null hypothesis is rejected and in turn the alternative hypothesis is accepted. In simple words, this result tells us that when participation in these digital social enterprises goes up , the economic empowerment levels of transgender individuals tend to rise too. So the data seems to imply that digital social enterprises can matter a lot, especially for financial independence, entrepreneurship growth , and livelihood chances across the transgender community.

FINDINGS

So this study found that digital social enterprises kinda play a big role in strengthening the economic empowerment of transgender individuals, particularly in Tamil Nadu. Most of the respondents said that when they participated in these digital social enterprises, it helped them get better access to income generating chances, it also helped sharpen entrepreneurial abilities and in the end, made them more financially independent. The study also showed, that digital platforms help with market reach, support financial inclusion, and they contribute to skill building. When Pearson correlation analysis was run, it showed a strong positive connection between involvement in digital social enterprises and economic empowerment. Overall, these digital social enterprises have improved livelihood conditions, increased self assurance, and helped transgender individuals become more socially included.

SUGGESTIONS

From what we found, it seems that government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and social enterprises should, kinda work together, to broaden digital entrepreneurship programs specifically for transgender individuals. It might be helpful if regular training programs are organized so people can sharpen their digital literacy, business management know how, and financial awareness, at the same time. Then, financial institutions could make credit and startup funding more accessible, so transgender entrepreneurs don't get stuck early on.

Also, digital social enterprises should strengthen mentorship and networking chances, so the businesses can keep growing in a more sustainable way. On top of that, awareness campaigns should be run, to invite wider participation and at the same time reduce the social stigma attached to the transgender community.

CONCLUSION

Digital social enterprises have surfaced as rather strong tools for encouraging entrepreneurship development and economic empowerment among transgender people in

Tamil Nadu, kinda, through everyday digital support. when these enterprises use digital technologies and newer business approaches, they can open doors for skill enhancement self employment, financial inclusion, plus easier entry to markets. Overall the study shows that being part of digital social enterprises actually helps the economic condition and also the entrepreneurial skills of transgender individuals. The key relationship that appeared via Pearson correlation analysis, once again, supports the idea that digital social enterprises really do matter for economic empowerment.

Even so, there are still obstacles like restricted access to resources and social discrimination. still, digital social enterprises seem like a hopeful route toward more sustainable livelihoods and social inclusion. So, it becomes important to bolster these initiatives , with policy backing, some kind of financial assistance, and capacity building programs. If that happens, it can meaningfully boost empowerment and the broader development of the transgender community in Tamil Nadu.

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