

The Transgender Person's Entitlement Map — Every Scheme and Right a Transgender Person Can Access in Odisha

This note is for NGOs and community-based organisations working on gender and inclusion, transgender community leaders and CBO office-bearers, DSSO and DSWO staff, Sakhi OSC counsellors, health workers, urban local body officers, and transgender persons and their families in Odis...

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Social Justice & Tribal Welfare

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Because the transgender entitlement stack in India has an unusual architecture: it is simultaneously one of the newest welfare frameworks in the country and one of the most gate-kept. Almost everything in this note flows through one certificate. Get that right, and the stack opens. Miss it, and a person can be visibly, obviously entitled — and receive nothing.

The Population the System Under-Counts

Census 2011 was the first Indian census to record a third gender category, and it counted around 20,000 persons under "other" in Odisha — a figure that community organisations have always regarded as a substantial undercount, for the same reason all stigmatised identities are undercounted: declaring the status to an enumerator, often in front of family, carries a cost. The working reality for programme design is

that every district in Odisha has a transgender population; that a large share live either within birth families that partially or fully conceal their identity, or in community households (dera/guru-chela structures) concentrated in urban centres; and that the modal economic profile is informal — badhai and ritual work, begging, sex work, and increasingly, where doors have opened, salaried and self-employed work.

Odisha's institutional response has been comparatively early and comparatively serious. The state's SSEPD Department launched **Sweekruti** — a dedicated umbrella scheme for transgender equality and justice — years before most states had anything comparable, extended its flagship pension to transgender persons in 2021, and hosts one of the country's pilot Garima Greh shelter homes in Bhubaneswar. The gap in Odisha is less the scheme shelf than the last mile: by the SSEPD's own 2023-24 activity report, **2,326 transgender persons had received transgender ID cards** — against a population that even the conservative census count puts an order of magnitude higher. That ratio — the certified versus the entitled — is the single most important number in this note, because the certificate is the key to everything below.

The Legal Foundation: From NALSA to the 2019 Act

Two legal landmarks structure everything.

NALSA v. Union of India (2014). The Supreme Court recognised transgender persons as a third gender, affirmed the right to self-identification of gender, and directed governments to extend welfare measures — the judgment from which every scheme in this note descends.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, and Rules, 2020.

The Act prohibits discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, and access to goods and services; obligates establishments to designate a complaint officer; criminalises abuse and denial of rights; and — most operationally important — creates the statutory identity architecture:

- A **Certificate of Identity as a transgender person** is issued by the **District Magistrate on the basis of self-declaration alone**. No medical examination, no screening committee, no proof of surgery may be demanded. This is the point field workers most need to internalise, because unlawful demands for medical proof remain a common access barrier.
- A **revised certificate** recording gender as male or female may be obtained after gender-affirming surgery, on a certificate from the medical superintendent of the treating institution.
- The **National Portal for Transgender Persons** (**transgender.dosje.gov.in**), run by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment since 2020, allows the entire application to be made online, without physical interface, with status tracking and grievance escalation for delayed certificates. The TG certificate and ID card issued through the portal are recognised nationally and are the **mandatory gateway document for SMILE scheme benefits**, including Garima Greh admission.

Downstream identity corrections follow the certificate: Aadhaar (which records transgender as a gender option), voter enrolment (the Election Commission has provided an "other" gender option since 2009), PAN, bank KYC, and educational records. The correct sequencing — TG certificate first, Aadhaar second, everything else third — saves months.

Sweekruti: Odisha's Umbrella Scheme

Sweekruti ("acceptance"), run by the SSEPD Department, is the state-level umbrella under which most Odisha-specific benefits sit. It operates through Project Implementing Agencies — NGOs and transgender-led CBOs empanelled at district level, currently across 29 districts — which is worth underlining twice: once for beneficiaries, because the district PIA is the practical front door; and once for NGOs, because **PIA empanelment under Sweekruti is itself an institutional**

opportunity for credible organisations in districts where implementation is thin. The scheme's components, per the SSEPD guidelines:

- **Education support** — pre-matric (Classes V-X) and post-matric (XI-XII) scholarships for transgender students, applied through the SSEPD portal, with provision for hostels for transgender students and working persons at strategic locations (including a one-time furnishing grant of ₹15,000 per inmate at commencement).
- **Skill development** — training for transgender persons in employable trades, delivered in collaboration with empanelled agencies (SSEPD has run cohorts with SIDAC in retail, hospitality, and allied trades).
- **Self-employment kits** — trade-specific kits enabling small-scale or home-based enterprise, identified through the DSSO.
- **SHG formation and one-time assistance** — transgender SHGs with functioning bank accounts and savings discipline can apply to the DSSO for a **one-time assistance of ₹1,25,000** as start-up capital and activity support.
- **Critical healthcare support and group insurance**, counselling and guidance services (including family counselling — a quietly radical component, since family rejection is the root of most downstream destitution), **legal aid**, and community awareness programming.

Placement pathways have also run through urban employment programming: by 2023, community accounts reported several hundred transgender persons placed into work through the state's MUKTA urban wage employment engagement — modest in scale, significant as precedent.

The Pension: MBPY's Transgender Category

Odisha added **transgender persons as a beneficiary category under the Madhu Babu Pension Yojana in 2021** — among the first states to do so — with age-graded monthly pensions (₹500-₹900 at introduction). MBPY amounts have been revised in phases since 2024; beneficiaries aged 80+ or with 80%+ disability receive ₹3,500 per

month from June 2025, and category-wise rates should be verified at ssepd.odisha.gov.in before advising applicants. Applications route through the SSEPD portal or the Block/ULB office. Note the convergence tension that recurs across Odisha's stack: receipt of ₹1,500 or more per month from government schemes triggers exclusion from Subhadra-type transfers — pension and transfer eligibility must be assessed together, not scheme by scheme.

SMILE: The Central Stack

SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise), launched by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment in 2022, is the central umbrella scheme whose transgender sub-scheme funds:

- **Garima Greh shelter homes** — residential shelters for destitute and abandoned transgender persons providing lodging, food, medical care, counselling, and skill development, run by transgender-led CBOs and NGOs selected through NISD/e-Anudaan processes. **Bhubaneswar hosts one of the pilot Garima Grehs**, and all homes are geotagged and locatable through the national portal. Admission requires the TG certificate and ID card — again, the gateway document. For NGOs: fresh Garima Greh proposals are invited through the **e-Anudaan** grant portal, an entry point for organisations with residential-care capability.
- **Scholarships** for transgender students and **skill development under PM-DAKSH**, routed through the national portal.
- **Composite medical health support** converged with Ayushman Bharat: the **Ayushman Bharat TG Plus** arrangement (under a 2022 MoU between MoSJE and the National Health Authority) extends a dedicated ₹5 lakh annual hospitalisation cover to transgender persons holding the TG certificate who are not already covered under AB PM-JAY — with a package master that includes gender-affirming procedures at empanelled hospitals. Uptake

depends heavily on hospital-level awareness; in Odisha this converges with the state's post-2025 AB PM-JAY / Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana architecture, and a transgender person should be supported to hold whichever card their status and household situation makes them eligible for.

The General Stack: Everything That Is Not Transgender-Specific

A recurring programme-design error is treating transgender persons as eligible only for transgender-labelled schemes. A transgender person in Odisha is also, variously: an NFSA ration-card holder entitled to foodgrain as an individual household; an MGNREGS job-card holder; a street vendor eligible for PM SVANidhi credit; an aspiring entrepreneur eligible for PM Vishwakarma, PMEGP, or Mudra credit; a patient entitled to free care in the public system; a tenant of ULB night shelters; and — where the person is SC, ST, or from a minority community — eligible for the corresponding development corporation loans and scholarships. Two general-stack items deserve special mention:

- **Ration card and housing as an individual.** Transgender persons living outside birth families routinely lack a ration card because they were struck off, or never separated from, a family card. NFSA permits individual and community-household cards; establishing one is the same documentary spine described in this series' other entitlement maps — and unlocks food, health card, and housing claims. PMAY inclusion for transgender-headed households has precedent and should be pressed at Gram Sabha/ULB verification stages.
- **Legal aid and protection.** Sweekruti's legal aid component operates alongside DLSA free legal services; offences under the 2019 Act (denial of access, abuse, forced removal from household) are cognisable matters the DLSA and Sakhi OSC infrastructure can support. Odisha is represented in the National Council for Transgender Persons, and grievances over certificate

delays escalate through the national portal's built-in mechanism.

One contrast worth naming for the advocacy-minded reader: Karnataka has introduced 1% horizontal reservation for transgender persons in public employment. No such reservation exists in Odisha or nationally — a live policy question the state's community organisations continue to raise.

The Sequenced Playbook: What a Field Worker Does, in Order

1. **TG certificate and ID card first.** Application via transgender.dosje.gov.in or through the DM's office, on self-declaration; escalate unlawful demands for medical proof through the portal grievance mechanism. Everything else in this note keys off this document.
 2. **Aadhaar and bank account second**, aligned to the certificate; then voter ID and, where relevant, corrected educational records.
 3. **Immediate floor third:** ration card (individual or community household), MBPY transgender pension application, MGNREGS job card where relevant, health card enrolment (AB PM-JAY/GJAY or TG Plus as applicable).
 4. **Institutional linkage fourth:** district Sweekruti PIA contact; Garima Greh referral where the person is destitute or unsafe; SHG membership or formation for the ₹1.25 lakh start-up assistance.
 5. **Livelihood build-out fifth:** skill training (Sweekruti/PM-DAKSH) chosen against actual local demand; self-employment kit; credit via SHG or Mudra/PM SVANidhi.
 6. **Legal remedies as needed throughout**, not as a last resort — particularly residence and anti-discrimination matters under the 2019 Act.
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For NGOs: The Programme Architecture That Works

The highest-leverage intervention in this space is embarrassingly unglamorous: **certificate camps**. The gap between 2,326 certified persons and the true population is the master constraint on every other scheme's uptake. A district programme that combines (a) community-trusted outreach through transgender-led CBOs, (b) on-the-spot portal applications with document support, and (c) follow-through on delayed certificates via the grievance mechanism, converts more entitlement value per rupee than any training programme. Around that spine: SHG formation toward the Sweekruti capital assistance, health-card enrolment drives, Garima Greh linkage for crisis cases, and family counselling — the component that addresses cause rather than consequence.

Two institutional notes. First, credibility in this sector belongs to transgender-led organisations; the correct posture for a general-purpose NGO is partnership and back-office support (compliance, documentation, MIS — the things this Knowledge Commons exists to strengthen), not front-line substitution. Second, the funding architecture is genuinely open: Sweekruti PIA empanelment at district level and Garima Greh proposals via e-Anudaan are both live channels for organisations with the governance standing to clear scrutiny.

For CSR: Why This Is a Credible, Investable Space

Transgender inclusion is among the least CSR-funded areas in Odisha, and the usual explanation — "no credible partners, no measurable outcomes" — inverts the truth. The outcomes here are unusually countable: certificates issued, pensions sanctioned, health cards activated, SHGs capitalised, persons placed. The state co-investment is unusually deep: a CSR rupee here buys navigation into an existing publicly funded stack, not standalone service delivery. And the workforce dimension gives corporates a direct lever no other sector offers — inclusive hiring pilots, supplier inclusion for

transgender SHG enterprises, and workplace compliance with the 2019 Act's complaint-officer mandate inside the funder's own operations. The companies that move first in Odisha will find an organised, articulate community leadership ready to co-design — and very little competition for the credibility that follows.

Schemes and Rights at a Glance

Entitlement	What it provides	Where / how	Nodal authority
TG Certificate & ID Card	Statutory identity on self-declaration; gateway to SMILE stack	transgender.dosje.gov.in or DM office	District Magistrate / MoSJE
Transgender Persons Act 2019	Non-discrimination in education, work, health, services; offences	Complaint officers; police; DLSA	MoSJE / State Govt
Sweekruti (umbrella)	Scholarships, skill training, self-employment kits, counselling, legal aid	District PIA / DSSO; SSEPD portal	SSEPD Department
Sweekruti SHG assistance	₹1.25 lakh one-time start-up capital for TG SHGs	Application to DSSO	SSEPD Department
MBPY (TG category)	Monthly pension (age-graded; rates revised — verify)	SSEPD portal; Block/ULB	SSEPD Department
SMILE / Garima Greh	Shelter, food, medical care, skilling for destitute TG persons	Geotagged homes via national portal; Bhubaneswar pilot	MoSJE / NISD
PM-DAKSH & SMILE scholarships	Skill training; student support	National portal	MoSJE

Entitlement	What it provides	Where / how	Nodal authority
Ayushman Bharat TG Plus	₹5 lakh/yr health cover incl. gender-affirming packages	TG certificate + enrolment; empanelled hospitals	NHA / MoSJE
AB PM-JAY / GJAY (Odisha)	Household hospitalisation cover	State health card enrolment	Health & FW Department
NFSA ration card	Foodgrain as individual/community household	Block/ULB food supplies office	FS&CW Department
MGNREGS / PM SVANidhi / Mudra	Wage work; vendor and enterprise credit	GP / ULB / banks	Respective ministries
Free legal aid	DLSA services; Sweekruti legal aid	District court complex; PIA	OSLSA / SSEPD

The Person Behind the Statistic

In a rented room in Berhampur, a 31-year-old trans woman keeps her documents in a biscuit tin: a school certificate in a name she no longer uses, an Aadhaar card with her brother's address, and a hospital slip from the one time she risked a government OPD and was made to regret it. She earns in badhai season and borrows in the months between. Eleven years after the Supreme Court said the state must count her, the state has, on paper, built her a stack: a certificate she can claim from her phone without anyone's permission, a pension category with her name on it, ₹1.25 lakh waiting for a group she and four friends could register, a ₹5 lakh health cover that includes the surgery she has stopped letting herself want, and a shelter in Bhubaneswar if the room ever falls through.

Between her biscuit tin and that stack stands nobody's malice — only an application no one has helped her file. The 2,326 who have filed it are not the measure of Odisha's ambition. They are the measure of the distance left.

Sources: NALSA v. Union of India, (2014) 5 SCC 438; Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019 and Rules 2020; National Portal for Transgender Persons — transgender.dosje.gov.in; SMILE scheme guidelines, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (grants-msje.gov.in); Sweekruti scheme guidelines, SSEPD Department, Government of Odisha (ssep.d.odisha.gov.in); SSEPD Department Activity Report 2023–24; MoSJE–National Health Authority MoU on Ayushman Bharat TG Plus, 2022; SSEPD pension enhancement notification, May 2025 (as reported by PTI); Census of India 2011, gender tables; Election Commission of India, third-gender enrolment provisions.

Scheme parameters current as of August 2026; pension rates, scholarship values, and portal processes are revised periodically — verify at the nodal department portals before advising beneficiaries. This article is part of the JaBaSu Convergence Notes series. For scheme primers, compliance guides, and sector spotlights, visit jabasu.org/knowledge.
