City-based transgenders have joined hands with their counterparts in Mumbai and New Delhi to form the country’s first National Transgender Task Force team.

The body that was registered this month in Delhi has members from Telangana apart from other southern States and would have its southern branch office in Hyderabad.

It aims to tackle stigma-driven atrocities against the members of transgender community. The task force team also plans to interface with legislative bodies, including ministry of health, housing, home and social justice, to provide social and economic support to transgenders. Two transgender women from the city attended the force’s national meet that took place on May 18 in New Delhi. Rachana Mudraboyina, an independent transgender activist who attended the meet, said the network was supported by Voluntary Health Services and Asthitva Trust, two NGOs working in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention. Another consultant who attended the meet was Laila, another transgender woman activist. The task force also includes hijras. Speaking to *The Hindu*, national convener and coordinator of the task force, Adharva, said, “The task force hopes to be a national platform for transgender and hijra people across the country. We have members from all over the country. A good number of our members come from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh,” Adharva said. In a brainstorming session organised by the transgender community in New Delhi, the community representatives from 21 States were present. “Till now, organisations that worked for transgender rights were limited to their respective localities or States. A pan-Indian transgender collective will be able to address the needs of the community in a better way. We will be able to voice our concerns together before the government,” Adharva said.

The task force would advocate the introduction of transgender bill as its first priority, the coordinator explained. However, transgender activists in the city maintained that the task force should become more inclusive over the years. “There is a huge transgender community in northeast India that is not yet part of the collective. Members from States including Goa should also be added to the task force,” said Rachana Mudraboyina. The team has already formed a governing council and is expected to make more recruitments in the coming month.

**NIKHILA HENRY**
**HYDERABAD**

Long way to go: Transgenders who are part of the National Transgender Task Force team in New Delhi. **BY ARRANGEMENT**