

Challenges of Transgenders

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the social evils faced by the transgender community residing in Delhi, India. The research is based on survey data collected from members of the transgender community in Delhi, focusing on various aspects such as religion, type of gender change, source of income, income level, education facilities, social status, awareness of legislation, and access to protection and security. The key findings indicate significant challenges and discrimination experienced by the transgender community, particularly in terms of education, employment, income, social status, and access to basic rights and protections.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Transgender" serves as an inclusive term encompassing individuals whose gender identity or expression diverges from the sex assigned to them at birth. For instance, someone identified as male at birth may identify as a woman despite their biological traits.

According to research conducted in 2011 by the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, nearly 700,000 adults in the United States identify as transgender. However, the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) emphasizes that the experience of being transgender varies among individuals. The organization highlights on its website that there is no singular way to be transgender, and transgender individuals may have diverse appearances and self-perceptions.

The term "third sex" is frequently used to describe individuals who are often viewed with curiosity due to their non-conforming nature, experiencing a sense of disconnect from their assigned physical bodies. In India, particularly in Delhi, the transgender community encompasses various identities, such as transvestites, cross-dressers, hermaphrodites, and hijras (eunuchs). These individuals face challenges related to societal

acceptance and may feel trapped in bodies that do not align with their true identities.

In an area known as Trans Yamuna, which consists of shanties and slums, many transgender individuals reside alongside other marginalized and underprivileged communities. Delhi, being a large metropolis, has a significant population of transgender individuals, with some estimates suggesting their numbers reach into the hundreds of thousands.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A state where an individual's sense of identity doesn't neatly fit into conventional notions of male or female gender is often termed as transgender. To grasp the term "transgender," it's crucial to explore the concept of gender. Gender is distinct from sex, which refers to biological traits determining male or female categorization, usually assigned at birth based on genitalia or chromosomes. Gender encompasses a blend of characteristics, expectations, and roles typically linked with one's biological sex, ranging along a spectrum from masculine to feminine. Gender is intricate because its facets are largely social constructs, varying across cultures and time periods. For instance, expressions of gender such as appearance, attire, mannerisms, and societal roles differ widely across societies and historical epochs.

A pivotal element within gender discourse is gender identity, which denotes one's internal perception of their gender as masculine, feminine, or other. Commonly, there's an assumption that gender identity aligns with biological sex; it's presumed that individuals assigned female at birth will identify as feminine, and those assigned male will identify as masculine. However, this isn't universally accurate, as some individuals biologically male may strongly identify as feminine, and vice versa. Some people perceive their gender as a blend of both traditional genders, while others identify with neither masculinity nor femininity, instead embracing a different gender

identity altogether. It's vital to acknowledge that gender is fluid and subject to variation, resisting rigid categorization.

TRANSGENDER INTRODUCTION:

Throughout history and across cultures, individuals who challenge traditional gender norms have existed, though the term "transgender" emerged relatively recently, in the mid-1990s. This population is often misunderstood by the general public. "Transgender" serves as an umbrella term encompassing various individuals who live significant parts of their lives expressing a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth. This includes transsexuals, cross-dressers, and those who feel their biological sex doesn't align with their true gender.

When it's necessary to specify someone's transgender status, respectful terminology is crucial. For instance, a person transitioning from female to male may be called FTM (female-to-male) transsexual, a trans man, or a transgender man, while someone transitioning from male to female may be termed MTF (male-to-female) transsexual, a trans woman, or a transgender woman. It's vital to acknowledge that MTF individuals are women, just as FTM individuals are men, and respecting their preferred name and pronouns demonstrates respect.

Transgender individuals may identify with various sexual orientations, like lesbian, gay, bisexual, or heterosexual. Recently, more transgender individuals, like Bruce Jenner, have openly identified themselves, sharing commonalities with LGB individuals in facing discrimination and prejudice. Like LGB individuals, transgender people deserve the right to live openly without fear of discrimination, oppression, or shame.

TRANSGENDER ISSUES:

Transgender and gender-variant individuals often seek psychological support for a range of concerns beyond typical therapy issues. This includes understanding their gender identities, navigating societal challenges related to gender expression, and addressing the complex social and relational issues influenced by their gender identity. Public awareness of transgender issues has grown significantly due to media representation, leading not only transgender individuals but also their families, employers, schools, and government agencies to seek support from psychologists. Consequently, community mental health professionals are increasingly encountering

individuals with gender identity concerns, emphasizing the need for psychologists to enhance their knowledge and competence in addressing transgender issues.

The concerns of transgender and gender-variant individuals are closely linked to social justice issues, aligning with the American Psychological Association's (APA) historical commitment to social justice. Stigmatization and discrimination impact various aspects of transgender individuals' lives, including safety, well-being, access to services, and human rights. To address these challenges, the APA can promote research, education, and professional development on transgender issues among psychologists, create inclusive environments for transgender professionals and students, and advocate for the human rights of all transgender individuals.

EVOLUTION OF TRANSGENDER TERMINOLOGY:

In discussions surrounding gender identity, the term "transsexualism" was initially used but was found to be misleading, leading to the adoption of "transgenderism" as it better reflected the primary focus on gender rather than sexuality, especially in cases of cross-dressing. The term "transgender" gained popularity through various individuals within the transgender, transsexual, and transvestite communities, including Virginia Prince, who used it in the magazine *Transvestia* in December 1969. By the mid-1970s, both "transgender" and "trans" were being used as umbrella terms, with "transgenderist" describing those who lived across genders without undergoing sex reassignment surgery (SRS), often abbreviated as "TG" by 1976.

By 1984, the notion of a "transgender community" had taken shape, with "transgender" serving as an overarching term. Richard Elkins established the "Trans-Gender Archive" at the University of Ulster in 1985, further solidifying the concept. In 1992, the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy defined "transgender" inclusively, encompassing transsexuals, transgenderists, cross-dressers, and anyone undergoing a gender transition. Leslie Feinberg's pamphlet "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time has Come" in 1992 emphasized "transgender" as a unifying term for gender nonconformity, often synonymous with "queer".

Between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s, terminology under the transgender umbrella shifted from "female to male" (FtM) and "male to female" (MtF) to "trans man" and "trans woman",

respectively. Terms like "trans-masculine" or "trans-feminine" are also gaining traction. This shift reflects a broader understanding of transgender identity, emphasizing gender identity and expression over biological sex.

Health practitioner guidelines, journalistic style guides, and LGBT advocacy groups advocate for using the name and pronouns preferred by transgender individuals, even when referencing their past. It's advised to use "transgender" as an adjective rather than a noun, and to avoid terms like "transgendered". Cisgender refers to individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned at birth, distinct from transgender or non-binary identities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A Research Design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. It is a conceptual structure within which research is conducted. Therefore, a proper Research Design was framed in studying and analyzing transgenders in New Delhi.

NATURE OF STUDY: The type of study is Descriptive in nature. It simply describes the states of facts as it exists. Thus, the Lifestyle, Means of Living, Social status and the other related information of Transgender are just described in this study which is purely conceptual in nature.

SOURCE OF DATA: The Primary data was collected through a survey. A structured questionnaire was administered to transgenders located in Delhi.

The Secondary source includes websites and internet concerning transgender. The information and articles collected is supported by various facts and figures through the genuine source to the best of knowledge of the researcher.

SAMPLE DESIGN: A simple random method was adopted by interacting and administering a questionnaire to the transgenders situated in New Delhi.

Sample Unit: The transgenders dispersed in New Delhi

Sample Size: A sample size of 25 transgenders had been chosen from among the Sample Unit.

Questionnaire Pattern: A well-structured questionnaire was served to the respondents. This includes both Open Ended and Closed Ended Questions. The closed pattern includes both dichotomous and multiple-choice questions. For the

open-ended questions, the respondents were given freedom in expressing their views and opinions.

Statistical Tools and Techniques: For the purpose of Data Analysis, Tabulation of the data, Simple Percentage Analysis, Graphs and Charts would be used. The project work is also supported with pictures and figures wherever necessary for more clarity and precision.

III. FINDINGS

Key Findings on the Socio-Economic Status of the Transgender Community in India

1. Religion Distribution among Transgender Respondents:

The survey data indicates that among transgender respondents, 60% identify as Hindu, while 40% identify as Muslim. This distribution sheds light on the religious demography within the transgender community, underscoring the need for intersectional approaches in policy and advocacy efforts.

2. Types of Gender Change:

The data reveals that 44% of respondents are transgender by birth, 36% are transgender by force, and 25% are transgender due to biological changes. These statistics underscore the diverse pathways through which individuals in the transgender community come to identify with their gender, pointing to the nuanced experiences and challenges faced by this demographic.

3. Primary Sources of Income:

Begging is reported as the primary source of income for 40% of the transgender community, followed by wedding offerings (24%), singing and dancing (16%), sale of art and craft (12%), and sex work (8%). These findings illustrate the lack of economic opportunities and the prevalence of traditional and informal means of income generation within the transgender community.

4. Income Levels:

Nearly half of the respondents (48%) earn less than Rs. 500 per day, 40% earn between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 per day, and only 12% earn above Rs. 1,000 per day. This income distribution highlights the economic vulnerability and marginalization experienced by a significant portion of the transgender community, indicating a pressing need for economic empowerment initiatives.

5. Availability of Education Facilities:

A staggering 96% of respondents reported that education facilities are not available for the transgender community, while only 4% stated that they are available. This highlights a significant disparity in access to education, revealing a critical area for intervention and policy reform to ensure educational inclusion and opportunity for the transgender population.

6. Social Status:

The majority (96%) of the respondents stated that they do not have social status in Indian society, with only 4% reporting having social status. This finding underscores the prevalent social stigma and discrimination faced by the transgender community, indicating the urgent need for social reform and awareness campaigns to promote inclusivity and acceptance.

7. Awareness of Legislation:

While 76% of the respondents are aware of legislation for transgenders in India, 24% are not aware of such legislation. This underscores the importance of disseminating information about existing legislation and advocating for legal protections to ensure the rights and well-being of the transgender community.

8. Access to Protection and Security:

A significant 92% of the respondents reported that they do not have access to protection and security, with only 8% stating that protection and security are available for them. This highlights the vulnerability of the transgender community to various forms of discrimination and violence, emphasizing the urgent need for legal and social protections to safeguard their rights and well-being.

The survey findings highlight the significant challenges and discrimination faced by the transgender community in India, particularly in terms of education, employment, income, social status, and access to basic rights and protections. The data underscores the need for comprehensive policies and initiatives to address these issues and ensure the inclusion and empowerment of the transgender community. Efforts in policy reform, economic empowerment, education, and social awareness are critical to advancing the rights and well-being of the transgender population in India.

IV. DISCUSSION

The survey results provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by the transgender community in India. The

data reveals the stark reality of discrimination, marginalization, and lack of access to basic rights and opportunities for this community.

One of the most concerning findings is the lack of education facilities for transgenders. With an overwhelming 96% of respondents reporting that education facilities are not available, it is clear that the transgender community faces significant barriers to accessing education. This lack of access to education perpetuates the cycle of poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion, as education is a fundamental determinant of socioeconomic mobility and empowerment.

The survey also highlights the economic vulnerability of the transgender community. A substantial portion of the respondents (48%) earn less than Rs. 500 per day, and a significant number (40%) rely on begging as their primary source of income. This economic insecurity not only perpetuates poverty but also exposes the community to exploitation and discrimination. The lack of access to formal employment opportunities and the need to resort to informal and often stigmatized sources of income, such as sex work, further marginalizes the transgender community.

The findings related to social status and protection and security paint a grim picture. With 96% of respondents reporting a lack of social status and 92% stating that protection and security are not available, it is evident that the transgender community faces systemic discrimination and a lack of legal and societal safeguards. This not only violates their fundamental human rights but also perpetuates a cycle of vulnerability, exclusion, and violence.

While the survey shows that 76% of respondents are aware of legislation for transgenders in India, the reality on the ground suggests that the implementation and enforcement of these laws are inadequate. The disconnect between legal provisions and the lived experiences of the transgender community highlights the need for comprehensive policy interventions, effective enforcement mechanisms, and a concerted effort to address deep-rooted societal stigma and discrimination.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the challenges faced by the transgender community are multifaceted and intersectional. Factors such as religion, type of gender change, and sources of income further compound the issues of marginalization and exclusion. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic and intersectional approach that considers the diverse experiences and needs within the transgender community.

Moving forward, it is imperative to prioritize the inclusion and empowerment of the transgender community through targeted policies and programs. This includes ensuring access to education, creating formal employment opportunities, providing comprehensive social and legal protection, and challenging societal attitudes and biases. Collaboration between government, civil society organizations, and the transgender community itself is crucial to develop and implement effective solutions.

Furthermore, research and data collection efforts should be strengthened to capture the nuances and intersectionalities within the transgender community. This will enable the development of tailored interventions and policies that address the specific needs and challenges faced by different subgroups within the community.

In conclusion, the survey findings serve as a clarion call for urgent action to address the systemic discrimination and marginalization faced by the transgender community in India. It is a moral and ethical imperative to ensure that every individual, regardless of gender identity or expression, has access to basic rights, opportunities, and a dignified life free from violence and exclusion.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings from the survey on the socio-economic status of the transgender community in India, the following recommendations are proposed to address the significant challenges and discrimination faced by this marginalized group:

1. Policy and Legislative Reform:

Advocate for comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that specifically protect the rights of transgender individuals in all aspects of life, including employment, education, housing, and healthcare.

Ensure effective implementation and enforcement of existing legislation, such as the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, through increased awareness and training programs.

Establish policies that guarantee equal access to education, employment, and healthcare for transgender individuals, with a focus on eliminating discrimination and promoting inclusivity.

2. Economic Empowerment:

Develop and implement economic empowerment programs tailored to the specific needs of the transgender community, including

skills training, access to formal employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Provide financial literacy programs and microfinance initiatives to empower transgender individuals to start their businesses and achieve economic independence.

Encourage private sector involvement in creating inclusive workplaces that promote diversity and provide equal opportunities for transgender individuals.

3. Education and Awareness:

Implement policies to ensure inclusive and accessible education for transgender students, including the provision of scholarships, financial assistance, and the creation of safe and supportive learning environments.

Conduct awareness campaigns to promote acceptance, understanding, and respect for transgender individuals, both within educational institutions and society at large.

Integrate transgender rights and issues into school curricula to foster a culture of acceptance and inclusivity from an early age.

4. Social Reform:

Develop and implement programs to combat social stigma and discrimination against transgender individuals, including public education campaigns, sensitivity training, and the promotion of positive portrayals in the media.

Strengthen community support systems and networks to provide social, emotional, and psychological support to transgender individuals and their families.

Encourage the active participation of transgender individuals in decision-making processes at all levels of society to ensure their voices are heard and their rights are respected.

5. Access to Protection and Security:

Establish support services, hotlines, and shelters specifically for transgender individuals who are victims of discrimination, violence, or abuse.

Provide training for law enforcement and judiciary personnel on transgender rights and issues to ensure fair and respectful treatment within the legal system.

Strengthen legal reforms to ensure that transgender individuals have access to justice and receive adequate protection under the law.

6. Research and Data Collection:

Conduct further research and data collection to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by the transgender community in India and to monitor progress over time.

Prioritize the collection of disaggregated data on gender identity, religion, caste, class, and other intersecting identities to inform evidence-based policy and program development.

Engage with the transgender community as partners in the research process to ensure that their voices and experiences are accurately represented and that research findings are used to advocate for their rights and well-being.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers, activists, and community leaders can work together to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity. It is imperative to address the challenges faced by the transgender community in India to ensure their full and equal participation in all aspects of society. Efforts in policy reform, economic empowerment, education, social awareness, and access to protection and security are critical to advancing the rights and well-being of the transgender population in India.

VI. CONCLUSION

The transgenders are leading a very miserable in Delhi. Their living condition is so bad. They also struggle to earn a living as they are not accepted in work places thus find difficult in getting jobs. They cannot afford education as they are denied in Educational Institutions. In social gatherings, temples and churches they cannot show their presence in a dignified way. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Indian government to take vigorous steps in uplifting the life of transgenders. Even the Social Organizations and NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations] should come forward in rendering helping hand to lift this transgender community

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