

A STUDY ON STIGMATIZATION AND DISTRESS AMONG THE TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

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Abstract

In India, people with wide range of transgender - related identities, cultures, or experiences exist - including Hijiras, Aravanis, Kothis, Jogtas / jogappas and Shiv Sakthis etc. often these people have been part of the broader culture and treated with great respect, atleast in the past, although some are still accorded particular respect even in the present yet they face innumerable stigma and discrimination in the society which often results in psychological distress. This study attempts to reveal the stigmatization of transgender individuals.

Keywords: Transgender, Discrimination, Stigmatization, Hijira.

Introduction

In India, people with wide range of transgender, related identities, cultures, or experiences exist - including Hijiras, Aravanis, Kothis, Jogtas / Jogappas and Shiv - Sakthis etc. often these people have been part of the broader culture and treatment with great respect, at least in the past, although some are still accorded particular respect even in the present.

Evolution of Transgender Terminology

Psychiatrist John. F. Oliven of Columbia University coined the term transgender in his 1965 reference work Sexual Hygiene and Pathology, writing that the term which had previously been used trans sexualism, is misleading; actually, “transgenderism” is meant because sexuality is not a major factor in primary transvestism. The term transgender was then popularized with varying definitions by various transgender, trans sexual and transvestite people, including virginia prince. Who used it in the December 1969 issue of Transvestia, a national Magazine for cross dresses she founded. Today ‘Transgender’ has evolved to become an umbrella term that covers anyone that is gender non confirming including; pre, post and non - op transsexuals, cross dressers, gender Queer, Gender outlaws and many more.

Definition and Scope

The term ‘transgender’ is generally used to describe those who transgress social gender norms. Transgender is often used as an umbrella term to signify individuals who defy rigid, binary gender constructions, and who express or perse at 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. The transgender community

especially, the male to female population called Aravanis in South India, Hijiras in North India remain largely neglected and also face multiple forms of oppression. This attitude comes from ignorance, misunderstanding and stigma around transgender issues.

In the area of care, support and the treatment there is also neglect of the issues specific to the transgender communities. Besides, this community is disproportionately affected by violence, Transphobia - Prejudice, discrimination, stigma and gender related violence due to negative attitudes toward transgender identity - may pose a risk factor for experiencing distress in transgender individuals.

Stigmatization of Transgender

The stigma and discrimination towards the transgenders starts right from the adolescence when they are in their parental care. The society neglects the community not considering as a human being. Everyday, transgender and general non - conforming people bear the brunt of social and economic marginalization due to discrimination based on their gender identity or expression.

They had faced:

- Loss of job due to bias
- Eviction due to bias
- School bullying / harassment became drop outs.
- Teacher bullying
- Physical assault due to bias
- Sexual assault due to bias
- Homelessness because of gender identity
- Loss of relationship with partner or children due to gender identity
- Denial of medical service due to bias
- Incarceration due to gender identity

Each of these can be devastating and have this data underscores the urgent need for policy makers and community leaders to change their business -as- usual approach and confront the devastating consequences of anti-transgender bias.

Psychological Problems

This transgender face more social stigmatization and psychological problems. In the world, the transgender are estimated to be six hundred crores. There are roughly one million Hijira in India, representing approximately one in every four hundred post pubertal persons born male. The transgender population in Tamil Nadu would be roughly about sixty thousands. Transgender people are likely to experience some form of victimization as a result of his / her identity or gender expression. They face a unique set of emotional health issues. Both with stigmatization and discrimination have a negative impact on the

health of these individuals. The prevalence of mental health problems and other co-occurring health issues in the transgender community reaches near epidemic levels. Due to a complex network of socio - economic and cultural forces, the transgender community is highly vulnerable to a host of psychological problems including depression, bipolar affective disorders, post traumatic stress disorder (PT & D) alienation and sociality in addition to multiple health problems including drug and alcohol abuse, HIV / AIDS & STD. This distress is referred to as a gender dysphoria and may manifest as depression or inability to work and form healthy relationships with others. A psychological condition is considered a mental disorder only if it causes distress and disability caused by severe distress and discomfort due to the conflict between one's gender identity and one's sex at birth. Thus they experienced serial harassment, beginning at home extending and unfolding to all spheres of life. They reported feeling worthless and unfit to family and society.

We bring shame for our family; we cannot do anything good for society; we live in an extremely bad life- condition; we are abused and harassed all the time; and we are treated as strangers in this society. Our life is no better than that of an animal. Whether we survive or die, no one cares and no one bothers, and we also do not care for anyone. We know, in this world we have no relatives or friends. We do not care for our survival. This was reflected in the voice of a middle - aged transgender individuals.

Conclusion

The complexity of issues facing the transgenders can be addressed by broad changes in justice system and extensive education to the society to ensure and protect the rights of the transgenders and also we can honour them by working for a world in which transgender individuals are free to live without fearing the marginalization and stigmatization detailed here in ways that respect every individual's right to self determination and affirm our collective humanity.

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