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Marginalization of transgender community: A sociological analysis

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Abstract

Transgender people are marginal group in the society. They suffer from the lack of continuity in their identity, lack of self-esteem, overemphasized and unwanted distinctiveness and injustice at every turn. This study intended to expose sufferings, discrimination and marginalization of transgender, to understand social position of transgender, to explain every day issues of transgender and to assess support system of transgender through the sociology of third gender. This study used only secondary data to explore Sociological perspective of Third gender.

Keywords: Third gender, minority groups, gender identities, injustice

1. Introduction

Sociology of gender has very interesting to study about transgender people in various aspects. Transgender people are part of the social group. They are hidden in most society because social structure consents only a binary classification of gender. Individuals are expectable to assume the gender of their biological sex as well as the gender expectations and roles associated with it.

As nearly all people are categorized as male or female, those who express characteristics ordinarily attributed to the other gender are stigmatized and seen often as social deviants. Inconsistency in the performance between biological sex and gender expression is usually not tolerated by others (Gagne & Tewksbury, 1996). Because these individuals violate conformist gender expectations, they become targeted for discrimination and oppression. Therefore they turn out to be members of a marginalized and vulnerable population that experiences more psychosocial and health problems than other social groups (Lombardi, 2001).

Every day, transgender people are facing social and economic marginalization due to their gender identity and expression. They are excluded from effectively participation in all level than the other marginalized sects of civil society. A major reason of the exclusion is the lack of legal recognition of the gender identity.

2. Transgender People: Terminology and Definitions

Transgender is an umbrella term, coined in the US, used to include people whose lifestyles appear to conflict with the gender norms of society. It includes many types of people and lifestyles. In the use of the broad term, a transgender person crosses the conventional boundaries of gender; in clothing; in presenting themselves; even as far as having multiple surgical procedures to be fully bodily reassigned in their preferred gender role (Stephen Whittle *et al.* 2007).

Transgender is a term used to describe individuals who exhibit gender- nonconforming identities and behaviors, or in other words, those who transcend typical gender paradigms (Ryan & Futterman, 1997). This broad category of people includes transsexuals, cross-dressers and gender benders/blenders.

According to World Health Organization Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and expression does not conform to the norms and expectations traditionally associated with the sex assigned to them at birth; it includes people who are transsexual, transgender or otherwise considered gender non-conforming. Transgender people may self-identify as transgender, female, male, trans woman or trans man, trans-sexual, or, by a

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Variety of indigenous terms used in specific cultures, such as hijra (India), kathoey (Thailand), waria (Indonesia), or one of many other transgender identities. They may express their gender in a variety of masculine, feminine and or androgynous ways.

3. Objectives of study

- To understand social position of transgender
- To explain every day issues of transgender
- To assess support system of transgender

4. Historical Perspective of Transgender

The phenomenon of transgender is not new one. Since the beginning of time and the existence of mankind, transgender have been very much a part of the society. It is just that they have been given a name and a status in the society in recent times. They have more than 4,000 years of history. India has a history of people with a wide range of transgender related identities, cultures, and experiences. In Mughal period the transgender were in high position and they were political advisor and administered in empire. In British era the transgender were benefited by the provision of land and rights of food. After the periods, they were facing so many inequalities, marginalization. In contemporary period the government of India implemented new policy and schemes for the social protection and welfare schemes of transgender community.

In India, transgender people include hijras/ kinnars (eunuchs), shiv-shaktis, jogappas, Sakhi, jogtas, Aradhis etc. In fact, there are many who do not belong to any of the groups but are transgender persons individually. Transgender fall under the LGBT group (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender). They constitute the marginalized section of the society in India, and thus face legal, social as well as economic difficulties.

Over the last few years, there have been important developments for eliminating the historic discrimination and exclusion of transgender persons; and for ensuring that they are accepted in society and given equal opportunities and access to resources. In April 2014, the Supreme Court of India gave a major boost to transgender rights India in by its decision in the case of National Legal Services Authority Union of India. It recognized the right of transgender persons to adopt their self-identified gender as male, female or 'third gender.' The case spurred many executive actions and policy changes to further the rights of transgender persons.

5. Contemporary Scenario of Transgender in India

The third gender in India is 4.9 lakh. Among them almost 55,000 is in the 0-6 population. This has come as a big surprise to the community as they did not expect so many parents to identify their children as belonging to the third gender. The highest proportion of the third gender population, about 28%, was identified in Uttar Pradesh followed by 9% in Andhra Pradesh, 8% each in Maharashtra and Bihar, over 6% in both Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal and well over 4% in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Odisha. Rajasthan accounted for over 3% of the total transgender population and Punjab for 2%. (Census 2011) [7]. The Indian Government took bold steps to recognize transgender as a separate gender for the first time in the country and named it as Third Gender. Finally it is recognized the rights of transgender people and treating

them as equal to other Indians. While this has helped in terms of their identity, Indian authorities now need to implement court directives aimed at mainstreaming the transgender community, ending discrimination against them, and addressing their social protection needs which have long been denied basic rights, including the right to vote, own property, marry, and claim a formal identity through a passport or other government identification. They have also been unable to secure government services such as food subsidies, education, employment, and health. Often, it leaves them with no option but to depend on others for their livelihood or engage in sex work, exposing them to further violence at the hands of law enforcement authorities.

6. Fundamental Problem of Transgender

Transgender population remains one of the most marginalized groups. They often face denial and violence of basic human right. Sexuality or gender identity often makes transgender a victim of stigmatization and exclusion by the society.

6.1 Education: Education is a fundamental human right. It can expand our prospects, help us learn about ourselves and our world and build foundational skills for our working lives. In many societies, there is a strong connection between one's level of educational attainment and income. Unfortunately, not all students have the opportunity to follow education in a safe environment. Many reports and data show that transgender people are currently unable to access equal educational opportunities because of harassment, discrimination and even violence. Most transgender learners are school dropouts.

6.2 Employment: Employment is fundamental to people's ability to support themselves and their families. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the rights of individuals to work at the job of their choice, receiving equal pay for equal work, without discrimination. Yet far too often, transgender people are denied these basic human rights. There are serious social consequences also associated with unemployment and under-employment. The loss of a job and unemployment are linked to depression and other mental health challenges. Employment issues are of particular concern to transgender and gender non-conforming people. Large numbers have turned to the underground economy for income, such as sex work or drug sales, in order to survive.

6.3 Health: health is wealth of nation. Access to health care is a fundamental human right that is regularly denied to transgender people. They frequently experience discrimination when accessing health care, from disrespect and harassment to violence and outright denial of service. So many barriers to care whether seeking preventive medicine, routine and emergency care, or transgender-related services, including counseling and hormone replacement therapy, lack of knowledge and accessibility of contraception and the lack of provision of separate wards and beds for transgender persons. Openly discriminative cases related to blood giving and HIV testing.

6.4 Living Conditions: Housing is a necessity and a basic human right but it is often denied to transgender people. Direct discrimination as well as the aggregate effects of

mistreatment and denied opportunities across multiple aspects of life. The various forms of direct housing discrimination faced by transgender like denied a home or apartment and became homeless at some point. Finally, for transgender experienced homelessness a correlation to life-threatening, devastating outcomes including incarceration, work in the underground economy, smoking, drinking and drug use, HIV infection and suicide. Inaccessibility of proper housing, lack of inclusion in government housing schemes, inability to purchase land, inability to rent property.

6.5 Toilet Facilities: lack of access to public toilets, lack of provision of gender neutral/separate transgender toilets, discrimination in accessing public toilets

6.6 Family Situation: Notable numbers of transgender people have experienced domestic violence at the hands of a family member because of their transgender identity. Many cause them to begin living a double life. Homophobia and trans phobia in the family can develop into verbal as well as physical violence, and can lead to young people being thrown out of home or deciding to leave home, and thus for some can lead even to homelessness (Gold 2005, McNamee 2006). Many of them feel prejudice or discrimination within their family.

6.7 Civil status: Possessing accurate and consistent identification documents is essential to basic social and economic functioning in our country. Access to employment, housing, health care and travel all can hinge on having appropriate documentation. Yet, for many of the respondents, obtaining identity documents that match their gender is a major hurdle. No provision of ID cards stating transgender status, difficulty officially changing name/gender in documents such as education certificates, lack of awareness of implications of doing so

6.7 Workplace: negative experiences in relation to the workplace spanning a wide spectrum of phenomena including not getting promoted, being dismissed – or not even getting the job in the first place. Workplaces are often characterized by a hetero normative climate, where everyone is assumed to be heterosexual. LGBT employees can suffer from the open homophobia of their colleagues, thus a lot of people prefer not to come out at the workplace.

7. Conclusion

Countless issues are associating with the gender identity of transgender community such as discrimination, Persistence of stigma, lack of educational facilities, unemployment, lack of shelter, lack of medical facilities like HIV care and hygiene, depression, hormone pill abuse, tobacco and alcohol abuse and problems relating to marriage, property, electoral rights, adoption, Alienation from family and society, Absence of sensitivity, Insecure life, Forced sex work and begging. Social stigma includes being disempowered due to the labeling and negative generalized attitude towards such members who are forced to work as sex workers or sex solicitors. Even in cases of inheritance of property or adoption of a child, they are a neglected group. Most members are driven to begging and pushed furthermore towards the margins. This is by all means human trafficking. Some members even engage themselves

as sex workers for survival. Without the adequate legal polices and necessary awareness marginalization of transgender will not be changed. Government has to take all the initiatives with support of the general people.

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