

Understanding the Roles and Contributions of Transgenders towards an Inclusive Society in Pakistan: Who Is a Misfit—The Transgender Community or the Society Itself?

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Abstract

This research aims to understand the roles and contributions of transgender people toward an inclusive society. A qualitative research design was adopted to understand the deep-rooted problems and issues faced by one of the most vulnerable communities of Pakistan. The data was collected from 8 different participants enrolled in a training institute. The semi-structured interviews were kept as a source of data collection for the existing research. The data was then analysed through a thematic analysis technique that highlighted the three broad themes: factors that create transgender, a burden on society, reasons that make them the most vulnerable part of the society, and ways through which strengths of transgender people can reciprocate towards their contribution to society. The results show that the transgender person, specifically in the context of Pakistan, looks forward to being employed in a good environment. This study recommends researching the weakest link in understanding the roles and contributions of the transgender community for an inclusive society.

Keywords

Challenges, Contributions, Inclusive Society, Roles, Transgender Community

1. Introduction

A range of different international and national mechanisms exists to protect the rights of the transgender community (Ahmed & Umair, 2014; Khan, 2020). Despite various federal laws, policies, and practices targeting transgender people

that include procedures for changing the identification of documents, transgender people still have limited access to their rights and justice. This results in violation of human rights on the social and state level (Abdullah et al., 2012). The transgender community faces extreme social inclusion on a global scale, resulting in increased vulnerability to diseases, including mental health conditions, limited access to education and employment, and fewer social and economic development (Ahmed & Umair, 2014). Moreover, hatred and aggression also increase towards these marginalised groups and result in frequent episodes of extreme violence towards transgender people. This violence often goes unpunished (Khan, 2020).

The transgender community has gained little visibility in our society although they are contributing in various departments. Their services are being neglected from a quite long period of time. They are generally considered a social taboo, making a vast majority of people maintain a distance from them and, at times, humiliate them without understanding their issues. In Pakistan, the most commonly used word for transgender is “Hijra”, an umbrella term covering various gender differences (Abbas, 2021). It includes all those who are different in terms of their biological and physiological order, including cross-dressers, homo and bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, genderqueer youth, and transgender. The primary reasons for the social exclusion of these marginalised groups are injustice, poverty, illiteracy, social and cultural boycott, lack of opportunities, and non-dominant social identities. Such minorities face extra stress in coping with their sexual orientation in our society. Studies show that social exclusion pushes the transgender community into inappropriate conduct/habits (Alam & Rehman, 2019). This includes their involvement in risky, dangerous, and improper ways of earning their livelihood, including sex work, dancing, begging, or substance abuse. Research shows that these vulnerable groups who engaged in one problem will possibly be engaged in one after the other (Nazir & Yasir, 2016). We must rethink our social norms and listen to these forgotten people before they reach a point of no return.

Moreover, they also face harassment, violence, and a lifetime of repeated victimisation after disclosing their sexual orientation. The heartless victimisation does not limit here. The transgender community has been a constant subject of fun, insult, and highly biased attitude at schools, colleges, and even in their own homes by their family members, sometimes even their blood relations. Thus, these stigmatised and vulnerable groups are subjected to never-ending and systematic oppression. Studies show that violent physical victimisation rates range from 43% to 60% (Tabassum & Jamil, 2014). These factors force them to run from their own families and home, increase the number of school dropouts, violate laws and indulge in activities that can badly affect their health.

The study aims to identify the embedded reasons and hurdles that lead to an insignificant societal contribution made by the transgender community in the current Pakistani context. It strives to identify the problems that make trans-

gender a misfit in the society. This research will also help find those factors that put transgender people under massive pressure in a developing country that chooses not to utilise them as valuable human resources and a productive part of society. It also vows to explore the factors responsible for creating this community, a vulnerable part of the society. The following section will discuss the literature for this research to highlight this phenomenon from the global perspective and dissect the issue in the Pakistani context.

2. Literature Review

In a developing country like Pakistan, transgender people are mainly tagged with dancing, whoring, and street walking. The current research finds out the third gender prevalence and the conditions associated with the traditional Pakistani Society (Khan, 2014). In Pakistan, these transgender people are deprived of basic facilities of life like income, education, health, treatment, marriage, social respect, sex abuse, political, religiously, freedom, residence issues, and especially personal safety (Jami, 2011).

Gender is a pervasive social construct within Pakistani society. The term “transgender” refers to persons who display their gender in various ways with non-traditional approaches. The term “transgender” is widely used, with different degrees of success (Olson et al., 2011). Workplace discrimination against transgender people includes verbal abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and a lack of proper care and understanding of sexual minorities. The value of freedom of expression is not given to the sexual ideas, experiences, and skills of transgender people. The lack of recognition of women’s stress, sadness, and other mental health issues creates a problem with their physical health. Society frequently stigmatises and discriminates against people with disabilities (Soomro, 2018). Discrimination against transgender because of their gender identity or sexuality is a common trend in society. For their survival, transgender people operate as sex workers because they do not have an option.

Transgender people are shown as a symbol of shame and treated with humiliation, generally in Pakistani society. Their source of income is from dancing, singing, or begging. They are not treated as a part of common societies and are forced to live in their small colonies (Divan et al., 2016). They do not have any social or personal life security in case of any physical attacks. There is minimal support from government or non-government organizations for criminal victimisation or sexual harassment (Olson et al., 2011).

In 2009, according to a decision of the supreme court of Pakistan, former chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhary declared transgender as a third gender with equal rights. They were given the right to have a national identification card with free education, jobs, and health care support. However, the transgender community broadly declines to have adequate access to such fundamental rights, and these announcements remain part of the documentation. According to a corporate executive of transgender people of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

province of Pakistan, Farzana Jan, in a video report of Voice of America, said: “It is a sad reality that we face a lot of problems when we ask for our rights; she further said that only during the year 2015-2016, 40 - 45 Khuwajasara (transgender persons) were harassed, kidnapped, raped, and killed. It is not yet over since we continue to receive life threats to shut our voices in society. Sometimes I firmly believe that we are not human beings and do not belong to this society. We are treated worse than animals. Even pets like dogs or cats are given more love, care, consideration, and security of basic needs for any living being like food or shelter.” There is no official record of third gender documentation in Pakistan, but approximately the registered transgender community comprises 1.5 million people. However, the actual number is considered far more than this. Previous research shows no official record of the total number of transgender people in any province of Pakistan. This community’s exact population is still unknown; however, the independent sources believe the number to be much higher than reported officially.

Transgender (Hijra) has been recognised in old Hindu scriptures. In India, hijras are seen as a standardised “third sex” that has consistently existed. They are mainly connected with the love of Bahuchara Mata, an adaptation of the Mother Goddess. Consequently, the Goddess enables them to favour individuals with richness. Transgender people are found in all aspects of the world; they are acknowledged and part of Muslim social orders. During Mughal times in the subcontinent, transgender watched the women of the harem. While working in the field among the transgender (Hijra) of Hyderabad, during the Mughal time (1526 to 1857), when Hyderabad was a royal state, hijras were utilised to administer the group of concubines as workers in the homes of the respectability, frequently becoming essential consultants.

In modern times, they are ignored and usually avoided by society, leading to where no dominant constructive input by the transgender community is visible. After 1870, British profound quality laws, for example, the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, and the Dramatic Performance Act, 186, confined the exercises of hijra and their legacy and different rights, tarring them as homosexuals. The British rulers in pilgrim India unprotected the hijras of the laws that conceded them the security they got under Mughals and viewed them as a danger to Society (Davis, 2009).

The circumstances have gone further awful because they are left overlooked, segregated without the endurance offices, medical services, training, work openings, character emergency, or even the congruity from the prevailing social class in Pakistan. They live in more cut-off conditions than other minimised networks (Whittle, 2010). The Pakistani urban areas have sizable hijras networks, separated into tribes, living for the most part in ghettos and oversaw by a pioneer or master. These people and groups are, for the most part, known as “Chellas”, the disciples of a formally declared and accepted “guru”, their teacher or mentor. Hijras, in the past, made money by dancing and performing at festivals, wed-

dings, and births. The conventional ways Hijras interact with the rest of the world are performing in the festivals, dancing, sex working, and begging.

The conditions are going more extreme because no public office or dedicated organisation is helping with their predicament. Regardless of the reality, the UN representatives pronounced that they would accomplish the sex correspondence till 2015; however no particular spotlight on the issues of third sexual orientation.

With the enumeration of the transvestites in Pakistan, the presence and role of the Social Welfare Department increased many folds. It has been shown that around 1500 transgender people enlist in Punjab, about 800 in Sindh, and over 0.4 million all through Pakistan (Ahmed & Umair, 2014). On February 02, 2012, the Pakistani Supreme Court guided the NADRA director to determine the issue concerning enlistment of individuals having a place with the third sexual orientation and requested to ensure that “phoney” drag queens were not enrolled. Considering the macro situation, the perception of transgender people about their plight through education was desired in this study (Khan, 2020).

Queer theory was first taken into the spotlight in the 1990s. Teresa de Lauretis verbally expressed queer theory. She examined the phenomenon first regarding significant contrasts issues in a meeting at the college of California (Brumbaugh-Johnson & Hall, 2019). The strange hypothesis is “fixation on igniter between sex action, sex, and want. All the above investigations referenced that there is a direful need to address the difficulties of the third sexual orientation of joblessness, low pay, wellbeing, prescription, houses, occupations, regard, party rights, sex uniformity, fundamental rights, and life security, in the society, particularly in a developing country like Pakistan. This research will help find the critical issues faced by the transgender community—the factors associated with the perception that make transgender people a burden on society. The study will also reveal how this community can shift from the most vulnerable part to a productive part of society and how their strengths can be utilised to strengthen the balance of utilisation between transgender people and Pakistani society.

3. Research Objectives

This research will help in understanding.

Factors that create transgender a burden on Pakistani society.

Reasons that make transgender the most vulnerable part of society.

Ways through which strengths of transgender people can reciprocate towards their contribution to society.

4. Research Questions

What factors are responsible for making transgender people a burden on Pakistani society?

What are the reasons that make transgender people the most vulnerable part

of society?

In what ways the strengths of transgender people can reciprocate towards their contribution to society?

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Design

Qualitative research design is adopted for the current research. Researchers adopted phenomenological research approach to understand the issues of transgender community. The current research is conducted using a qualitative research design using a phenomenology research design. Lydall, Pretorius, and Stuart express, “a principal precept of hermeneutic phenomenologist that individuals try to make the importance of their experience from the reaction sited from human awareness” (p. 1). By using semi-organised meetings, the researcher analyzed the participants’ lived experiences and insights. Phenomenology is characterised as a phenomenon in which themes appear as the interviews increase.

5.2. Research Context

Data were gathered from eight participants of the transgender community. Among them, six participants work in the social sector and welfare organisations to uplift this highly ignored community.

5.3. Sampling and Participants’ Inclusion Criteria

The researcher selected a purposeful sample, utilising a criterion sampling technique, to complete this study. The following criteria were used to decide the inclusion of participants in this study:

5.4. Data Collection Method

In the current research, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather participants’ lived experiences. The participants shared their life experiences faced by them in their daily routine. The data collection methodology helped collect deep insights of the participants that helped develop a rich understanding of their thoughts.

5.5. Interview Guide

Several possible questions for the interview guide were developed based on the areas identified in the literature. More specifically, this study used open-ended questions to enquire about the participants’ experiences, and the probing technique was frequently used to let them share their examples and experiences.

5.6. Data Analysis Method

Data collected were analysed through the thematic analysis technique as in qu-

alitative research, thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. The patterns generated helped identify the significant and common factors associated with exploring the TVET trainers' understanding of engaging instruction, which later helped develop critical insights.

Computer-Assisted Data Analysis Software Package (CAQSAS) was decided to use by the researcher for the data analysis. Qualitative data is susceptible and could be ambiguous at times, so NVivo was chosen later due to its easy access and knowledge of the researcher. As far as reliability and consistency are concerned, multiple softwares like (e.g. NVivo, Atlas, AnSWR, and MAXQDA) are generally used for qualitative research data. The fact that can be noted here is that CAQDAS provides several advantages (Miles et al. 1994), yet it was risky to use CAQDAS for this study due to the limited knowledge of the researcher. There is a chance that finite software can misguide researchers by its complex coding process and create ambiguity during data reporting.

6. Analysis and Findings

1) Factors that Create Transgenders a Burdon on Society:

a) *Early life problems*

Generally, between the ages of 12 and 16, when transgender people reveal their gender identity, they feel discrimination in their social and family life. In the early aspect of life, transgender people face discrimination and harassment. Sometimes they also face serious violence due to their outward appearance (Burgess, 2009). They look like the male gender, but they are inclined toward more feminist tasks and chores like cooking, stitching, and domestic house chores from a very young age. But as time passes, they are usually left alone, which makes them realise their real identity. Then in most cases, they face non-acceptance from their family. One of the participants explained their early life problems as follows,

Till 10th grade, I was not aware of my real identity. My friends did not make me realise that I am different. But when I was in college, I realised that I am transgender and have a different personality. My mother is aware of it, but she does not know that I am engaging with transgender people. She knows that I am doing a course here, but she is unaware of my real identity. My relatives taunt me a lot on it.

Transgender people mostly spend their early life like normal children until they start realising their personality's different aspects. Like many of them were not aware of their real identities at the start. But then they realise through various incidents that happen to them and after meeting with other transgender. While telling about the early life problems of transgender people, one of them commented,

When I was two and a half years old, I was more attracted to girl toys. My parents taught me a lot to convince me to play with male toys. But I was not

fond of those. Now, I am questioning how a 2.5-year-old child will be responsible for being attracted to girl toys? How could such a small child be accountable for that? I did not have any male friends when I was in grade five. I was studying with the girls. But after we were separated in grade six, I was very much disturbed that I did not make friends with the boys. I was very much worried at that time, but now I do not take care of any criticism.

b) *Work-Life Challenges*

When asked about the challenges transgender people face at work, almost all participants mentioned the employers' or coworkers' ridiculous behaviour. In contrast, most of the participants reported physical/sexual harassment and intimidation problems with coworkers, and some of them said physical/sexual victimisation at work (Shah & Rahid, 2018). For example, one of the participants narrated his job experience in such a way that,

After trying a lot, I finally got a chance with a designer to learn something, but I was bullied a lot, and many horrible things happened to me. I left it after three months.

The majority of the participants narrated their level and indication of satisfaction at work so that they do not care what others say. In contrast, some of them mainly indicated good behaviour of colleagues, primarily good behaviour of the employer/owner, and a conducive-environment at work as indicators of workplace satisfaction. One of the transgender participants summarised her work experiences in the following way:

No, I did not face any significant problems in my job. People do disturb me a lot, and I have learnt to live with it. Once, my senior coworker tried to harass me, but I gave a shut-up call to him. And after that, he did not misbehave with me at work.

When asked how their workplace challenges differ from those of other genders, all of them mentioned being a laughingstock to others, while the majority of them differentiated hiding/denying their sexuality from others, loneliness/social isolation challenges, and lack of confidence and faced much more challenges as compared to their male colleagues (Shah & Rahid, 2018). One of them starkly distinguished that in some cases, they were helped a lot by other staff members by stating that,

The head of my academy is also transgender. So, I did not have any problems or harassment at my workplace.

Another commented,

I found a cooking job for PKR 15,000. I found motivation when I started earning money as I was not financially stable, and the people I used to work for help me, for which I am grateful.

And,

I started working in a salon when I was 17, and I left it because I wanted to do some design work. Then, I work with my uncle in the cooking business.

c) *Financial Challenges*

One more major problem faced by transgender is financial challenges. They usually face it if they belong to a low-income family or due to unemployment. Despite having skills and knowledge, they still face many monetary problems (Mamun & Yasser, 2016). In most cases, transgender people engage in productive and money-related activities that help them increase their family income. Initially, they face different challenges, but they make themselves somehow financially capable after some hardship. On asking about the financial difficulties, respondents commented,

Yes, My situation is better than before, but still, it is not good enough. I am not interested in dancing or any low esteemed work. I just want to have a decent job that gets me respect in society.

I always spend my own money on my needs. I never asked my parents about the money.

There are times when I am badly stuck financially, yet, it does not stay forever. It is not like my family does not support me, but I just want to do something for myself with my efforts and money.

And,

My financial condition has never been too bad because I am skillful and can earn money by better utilising my skills.

2) Reasons that make Transgenders the most vulnerable part of society:

a) *Social/Psychological Challenges*

It is bitterly ironic that mostly, transgender people are treated as non-humans. People do not like to eat, drink, or even shake their hands with them, yet they are full citizens of Pakistan, just like everyone else. This leads them towards extreme social and psychological challenges (Burgess, 2009). However, in a conservative society like Pakistan, adjusting to accepting transsexual life and its realities can be painful, lonely and hazardous. While explaining this deep phenomenon, one of the participants described the fact,

People do not think of us as humans; they feel that we are aliens or from another world. I usually do not get out of here much. I am terrified of crowds and mobs. I am not at all a social person.

Another participant highlighted,

I had to face multiple pressures, but social pressure was the most horrible. Only due to this pressure I left my home. Once, I tried to commit suicide.

Pakistan's educated English-speaking class is growing. Because of their social and economic status, they are not subjected to this type of retaliation. They work as fashion designers, interior decorators, hairstylists, and many other modern professions. It is undeniable that human psychology is a stumbling block to the heterosexual society concocted by culture and society (Mamun & Yasser, 2016). But it is equally ironic to hold the entire society responsible for its attitude toward the transgender community. Society, at large, contributed to this creation of a general attitude about transgender people. Many of them turn to prostitution due to their acceptance in the community. One of them commented,

I feel I am under massive social and psychological pressure, even at the thought of disclosing my gender. Both of these pressures are interlinked. How can you expect anyone not to get severe psychological issues with such humongous social anxiety? Sometimes, I do behave unusually, and I know at these times, it is not me who is acting, and this is only due to this massive psychological challenge.

And one more participant commented,

The biggest challenge we face is to reveal our gender. I am afraid and worried if I try to tell my parents about my gender. Sometimes, I feel my mother has an idea about the reality but then, I am not 100% sure. How would my parents react? This question keeps hitting my brain all the time. This thought has kept on haunting me since my childhood.

Transgender people are also denied access to psychological/psychotherapeutic treatment. Frantic and unemployed adolescents join the transgender community to make money (Jabeen et al., 2021). Secondly, most low-income families' children sought refuge in the so-called heaven of the transgender community due to a lack of information about psychological remedies for ills.

b) Abuse behaviour

Transgender people experience sexual harassment and discrimination in their jobs and sometimes in their homes. Most of the participants agreed that they were sexually, verbally, and orally abused by their very near relatives. Surprisingly, instead of raising voices for their children, the parents prefer to be quiet (Mamun & Yasser, 2016). Other than harassment, landlessness or homelessness, unemployment, poor hygienic conditions, and a lack of social respect exacerbate their misery. One of the transgender narrated as,

I was physically abused, and I did not know what to do because I knew I did not have my family's support. I was physically abused in my school when I was in class eight. I did not share it with any other person. This is because of personal reasons. Usually, for transgender people, there is no family support, and we have to face such challenges on our own.

Another participant commented,

I was harassed once when I returned from Islamabad to Lahore. It happened at the bus stop. I was harassed by three policemen who initially made fun of me and then touched me wrongly. I was absolutely terrified since they were men in uniform. I can never forget that incident.

There are mixed experiences on this point. Almost half the participants shared their terrible experiences of being abused physically and verbally, while the other half did not have first-hand experience. The victimised ones showed their bitterness and insecurities to live an everyday life free of fear and exploitation. Even without directly facing this challenge, the other half of the participants were also terrified about their high vulnerability on this front. This apparent difference highlights some factors that become the reason for sexual abuse. One of the participants answered this question as,

No, I did not face any incident of physical abuse, but one of my friends had this once and that too in a market. Since then, I am always over conscious whenever I am in public.

Another one commented,

Since I could afford it, I have secretly rented a room where I put my girlish stuff. I would first go to my room to change clothes and do my hairdo before attending any event with my transgender friends. It has been over three years now. Life is challenging to manage the two selves, but it keeps me safe. Some of my friends also use that room in the Firdous market area.

c) Expectations from the society

Transgender people expect respect and acceptance from society. This is the least they want from Pakistani society, and none of the participants expressed any favour or special treatment, unlike most unprivileged segments in any society. "I want to live my remaining life with people who do not laugh at me or make fun of how I speak or walk," said the participant. The overwhelming majority of participants expected to be treated respectfully and just like anyone else regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, while some participants critically marked the need for societal inclusion and acceptance of the third gender (Jabeen et al., 2021). One of the participants viewed the social behaviour toward transgender people as:

I want Pakistani society to accept us as human beings, and human beings could be good or bad. We should not be tagged as evil creatures. We are sensitive people, and we deeply feel about insults that might be too nominal for others, but it leaves a deep print on our minds and souls. She further said AllI want is a decent job for my earnings so that I do not have to beg and dance in the streets, unlike those transgender people who do not want to work and only want to beg at crossroads and dance at weddings to get the money that cost their self-dignity. Because of those, the whole transgender community earns a bad reputation. But on the contrary, I do not entirely blame them either because there are hardly any equally employment opportunities for us here despite our abilities.

Almost half of the participants had never considered their future in terms of professional choices or progressive aspirations in life. The majority of the participants from the other half wanted to be educators (school or college teachers), doctors and dispensers in the medical field, and other white-collar jobs. One of them, for example, stated that she wanted to be a doctor since she was a bright student in school but could not continue her education beyond Intermediate owing to financial problems and identity crises. Another participant deemed this issue as,

I may sound pessimist, but I know things will not change here, at least in my lifetime. No one gives us a decent job. Employers are scared to have us in their organisations. They think it will earn them a bad name. We can do many productive things because we believe in integrity. Whatever we do, we do it with a

whole heart. We can be successful people for our society, but we are continuously deprived of equal opportunities. The transgender community in Pakistan desperately needs career guidance on job opportunities and encouragement.

Another participant replied:

I am a skilled person. I can earn by stitching and sewing clothes at home. I do not ask for posh jobs. I just want respect and dignity, which is the fundamental right of any human being. I left three jobs because people would give me funny names and nasty comments everywhere.

And,

We are already much disturbed psychologically and socially, and the worse always comes from society, which can do nothing to resolve all problems but happily adds more to them. I did not become a transgender by my choice. God has made us the way we are. If you have a problem with it, deal with Him and ask him why he created us in the first place. If you cannot respect us, then leave us alone.

3) Ways through which strengths of Transgender people can reciprocate towards their contribution to society:

a) *Personal growth and development/required skills, education, and competencies*

Transgender people are good at learning new skills and other different works. In terms of learning, they are capable enough to learn new skills and make themselves competent enough to secure a good job. They want to become as successful as others, but they are usually left behind due to a lack of moral and financial support. Besides learning new skills and maturing with required competencies, some successful examples of transgender people excel in professional fields despite social pressure. Sara Gill is recently recognised as the first transgender doctor in Pakistan, while Marvia Malik has also set an example by becoming the first transgender anchor in Pakistan. The respondents highlighted these names and a few others and considered them their role models. While answering the question about personal development, one of the participants commented,

I have always wished to become a doctor since childhood, and my parents also wanted the same, but the reality is bitter and harsh. Later in life, I realized that society does not want to accept me as a doctor or, for that matter, any other profession which involves a direct linkage with people.

Another participant said,

I have been attracted to clothes, fashion, and accessories from an early age. I wish to excel in fashion designing, and I want to have my boutique. I want to have my own business where I can create work opportunities for other people in my community. I strongly feel we (transgender people) can be excellent human resources, and we should be engaged in productive work.

In Pakistan, most transgender people want to work in creative, skilled-oriented careers, including costume designing, stitching, sewing, cook-

ing, baking, modeling, make-up artists, and beauticians. However, there is a strong argument for tagging them to limited career options. It is felt that they are not provided with any other career counselling or orientation and that they are not welcomed to perform other professional options because of stereotyping. Upon asking about the suitable professions for the transgender community, most of the participants highlighted only the above-limited options. In this regard, one of the participants commented,

Our people usually go for stitching, beautician or such work because of two factors. It is relatively easier to be accepted now in these roles, and secondly, we do not know how we avail of any other career option. One of my friends wanted to become a teacher but was rejected all the time, ending up as a dancer. It makes me sad to see how our dreams are shattered because we are unwanted.

b) *Future and family life, life partner*

Despite having different personalities, transgender people have strong emotions and feelings about having a life partner. When asked about their future life, most participants accepted that they wanted to live with a transgender person, but they will be forced to marry a girl and live their lives with her due to societal pressure. Some of them said they would prefer to spend their life alone and will not get married as they do not want to deceive anyone. The idea of future and life partners shows different perceptions in this community. Participants highlighted various opinions, including the following.

I will have to get married to a girl. It is according to our religion; although I get attracted to boys, I will still be married to a girl. There is no other choice.

I certainly want to spend my life with my bestie (partner). He is my soul mate; however, I am not defying the reality of this society. I am convincing him that we go abroad to live a happy, normal life, and if this does not happen, I will live alone instead of involving another person in my messy life.

In the movies, we see how happily transgender people or gays or lesbians live happily, and naturally, we are attracted to such a lifestyle. But I know this is not possible in Pakistani society. All we can do is live a discreet and double life, else live alone.

And,

Despite everything, I definitely want to get married to a girl because getting married is essential in life. I have seen many old-aged transgender people. Their lives are terrible, being alone and having no one beside them. I do not want to spend my old age alone.

4) *Role of Families, Friends, Employers, Society, Welfare/Social organisations, and the Government:*

The majority of the transgender stated that they did not feel comfortable in their own homes. They were compelled to drop out of school due to rejection at home and prejudice at school and in society. In Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan, almost every district has a transgender community center where transgender people can seek refuge after fleeing their homes. According to

their responses, they feel comfortable in their communities since no one discriminates against them and everyone is treated equally. Some admitted that they had attempted suicide before arriving at the group (Ali, 2022). As a result, their community gave them a new lease on life, and they intend to remain in it for the rest of their lives. While explaining this fact, one of the participants stated,

I did my bachelor's privately without attending any educational institute and wanted to have a decent job. The government must support us if we want to live respectfully, but the fact is that no one wants us to break the image that the transgender community has been carrying for centuries. The world has changed, yet we in Pakistan are still standing on the same point, and transgender people here are still struggling for survival in the 21st century. Name me any sector or profession where we cannot perform. It is only a matter of giving access and opportunities to us. We do not want undeserved favours but only the chance for us to show our talents.

Instead of being supported, the societal restrictions in Pakistan create lots of hurdles for the transgender community in almost every aspect, socially and economically. In most cases, they are deprived of their legally inherited land or property due to acute rejection by their immediate family and siblings. In some instances, nominal cash is given as a substitute for their inheritance rights. It becomes extremely difficult for them to claim their part of family property once they have fled away from their family (O'Neil & McWhirter, 2008). While discussing the role of families, one of the participants emotionally shared,

Lawmakers and policymakers should consider an inclusive social policy for everyone, including the trans community. We desperately need government support. We are not even getting help from our parents and family members. What else do you expect from anyone in such a miserable condition? Before judging and commenting on transgenders involved in dancing or begging on roads, you must answer this question.

7. Suggestions

Gender equality has been critical in the struggle for progress. Researchers, academicians, policymakers, social activists, and politicians in developing and developed countries are working to narrow the gender gap in all areas of life. We discussed the responsibilities and contributions of the transgender community to inclusive education and society in this study. Transgender people have been forced to be eliminated from mainstream society due to societal stigma and prejudices, resulting in low literacy, social marginalisation, no formal job, landlessness, homelessness, and financial exclusion for them. On top of it, multiple issues have made it more difficult for transgender to participate in the progressive social development interventions in Pakistan.

Given the previous concerns and obstacles that the transgender community has had in gaining access to basic resources, regulatory authorities and policymakers must be reminded that it is their primary obligation to provide them with essential human services at a reasonable rate. Furthermore, based on the

findings of the previous research, the following recommendations might be made: 1). The government should offer basic health, education, and other services to transgender people. 2). The government should establish special vocational schools for transgender people. 3). The female transgenders can be recruited by law enforcement agencies, including the police department. 4). Private organisations, such as banks can utilise transgender people for payment recovery jobs. At the least, in the private sector, a 1% quota for transgender people can be observed. Jobs are required to meet their financial requirements. 5). A microcredit facility should be made available to encourage economic growth and poverty reduction in the transgender community. Governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should provide economic opportunities and financial possibilities to transgender people. 6). It is suggested that the government establish vocational, training, and technical institutes to help transgender people enhance their potential, not only in the stereotyped limited options but a range of career options can be offered to them. 7). Our religious preachers should represent them positively in their religious sermons and provide religious instruction to followers to consider the transgender community with empathy and kind behaviour. 8). Parents and families of transgender must be given awareness at national to better understand the changing nature of their children.

8. Conclusion

Our findings show that social isolation is one of several reasons driving transgender people to engage in undesirable behaviours and routines. Tolerant settings must be promoted, and gender-based bias must be reduced to assist the adjustment of sexually-oriented minorities. It is critical to integrate this minority into mainstream society to eliminate the aspect of social isolation. Our findings strongly suggest that interventions aimed at increasing social inclusion, reducing gender-based discrimination, violence, physical abuse, and facilitating access to high-quality services should all be considered part of a comprehensive strategy for preventing risky behavior in trans people.

It is significantly noted that the transgender community, on the whole, wants to perform and contribute to a progressive society. Despite a fraction of transgender people who work as sex workers and beggars, the majority do not want any favours but support to become productive citizens. The Pakistani society needs to reduce their prejudices and give them a chance by promoting equal opportunities regardless of sexual orientation.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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