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Assessing the Quality of Life of Transgender in Chennai City

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Abstract

Transgender people are marginalized; often face discrimination in all societies. According to the Indian census they are coming under the grouping of “Others” under Gender with particulars related to their employment, literacy, and caste. It found regressive Indian society at large has been incapable to approach the deviant and nonconformist gender identity. Transgender face Social Exclusion the discrimination and stigmatization in socio-cultural, economic, and political life. The current research assesses the quality of life of transgender people in Chennai city. Tamil Nadu is noted as one of the most open states with regards to the LGBT community, particularly transgender people. The study was exploratory in nature which aims to identify the social life, subjective wellbeing, environmental and personality factors, Health concerns and satisfaction in their life.

Keywords: Marginalized, social exclusion, nonconformist gender, political life

Introduction

Transgender is the umbrella term used to recognize the people whose gender identity is different from sex that was consigned to them (Bockting, 1999) ^[1]. The literal meaning of the term “transgender” is “beyond gender.” Transgender people are often referred as those who have “agender identity or gender expression” that be different from their assigned sex at birth. Apart, in social terms they are stated as “Gender nonconforming” which means individuals whose exterior appearance of gender identity does not conform to society’s prospect of gender roles. Ever since the story of human life they are lived in every culture, race, and class. Transgender people are marginalized; often face discrimination in all societies. In the Indian context, Tran’s people are considered as of low status according to Hindu mythology. Therefore, they are rejected by their families and society. Furthermore, transgender people are frequently abandoned, stigmatized and criminalized which affects their ability to access health, education, employment and often end up as sex workers and beggars. Most of the public surveys found transgender people are the sufferer of HIV infection, sexual and reproductive health, substance use disorders, mental health, violence, and victimization.

In India, they are referred in different names as the Hijras, Aravanis, Kothis, Jogtas/Jogappas, Shiv Sakthis. In the past, they were treated with great respect. In the ancient greatest Hindu scriptures and epics Ramayana and Mahabharata were mentioned about the transgender. Ubale. (2022) ^[6]. According to the Indian census they are coming under the grouping of “Others” under Gender with particulars related to their employment, literacy, and caste. From ceremonial perspective

transgender have an important role in Indian culture. In certain occasions like marriage ceremonies, birth celebrations, and other similar events they were generally invited to bless the infants or newlyweds. Despite on it, in other end, they are still treated like others and not part of the conventional society. Chatterjee (2018) ^[2] as per the Indian census, the total population of transgender to be around 4.88 lakh. They are many discrepancies in collecting data on transgender people Due to this, it is impracticable to mention on the actual transgender population, though the census has present an approximate estimation.

Human Rights Violations against the Transgender Community recently published a report on the kind of prejudice that are faced by Hijras in India. It found regressive Indian society at large has been incapable to approach the deviant and nonconformist gender identity. This has to lead the Hijra and Kothi community to be in the midst of the most vulnerable and dishonored in our society. Transgender face Social Exclusion the discrimination and stigmatization in socio-cultural, economic, and political life. (Chakrapani 2010) ^[3] As the result of exclusion they have end up in involving in begging, and as sex workers for their living. Loh (2018) ^[5]. Transgender community undergoes many dilemmas in India are as:

- Both family and society are eschewed them because of “Transphobia” that manifest them into extreme harm like transgender become homeless, rejected by their families after revealing their sexual orientation, physical attacks, discrimination in the workplace and negative media representation.

- Education, health services and public spaces admittance are constrained.
- In social and cultural life their effective participation is often expelled
- Excluded from Politics and decision-making processes
- Fundamental rights are denied and defiance of services, reports of harassment, violence

In the recent studies, the knowledge and understanding of Tran's issues are regards as suboptimal. They are not much research and studies on the problems of transgender and particularly on the quality of life of the Trans people in metropolitan cities. The current research assesses the quality of life of transgender people in Chennai city. Quality-of-life research has integrated the study of social, political, economic, and psychological welfare ensuing from varying governmental systems, policies and public programs associated with health.

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are to assess the quality of life of Transgender in Chennai and propose the potential elucidations in order to solve the tribulations of transgender in cities. The present research is exploratory in nature which aims to identify the social life, subjective wellbeing, environmental and personality factors, Health concerns and satisfaction in their life.

Study Area

Tamil Nadu is traditionalist state in southern India, is a break new ground in the reformation for Transgender community. On April 2008 Transgender welfare board was developed, which is the first of its kind in India.

Ministry of Social Welfare is the functions of the board with the vision of endow with free housing, shelter homes, transit homes, educational scholarship, ration cards, income generation activities, self-help groups, sex reassignment surgeries. Since 2010, Tamil Nadu is the first state in India to afford sex reassignment surgery free of charge at government hospitals namely the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and Kilpauk Medical College. On every year 15th April was celebrated as the "Thirunangai Day", commemorating the introduction of the "Transgender welfare Board". The state was also the first to ban forced sex-selective surgeries on intersex infants [4, 5] and also the first state to include an amendment in its state police guidelines that expects officers to abstain from harassing the LGBTQIA+ community and its members. Chakrapani, 2012^[4] the state also became the first to ban conversion therapy and the first to introduce LGBTQIA+ issues in school curriculum. Same-sex sexual activity has been legal since 2018, following the Supreme Court ruling in Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India.

Tamil Nadu is noted as one of the most open states with regards to the LGBT community, particularly transgender people. According to an estimate from 2015, about 16,380 people in Tamil Nadu identified themselves as LGBT. Chakrapani, 2012^[4] Legality of same-sex sexual activity on 6 September 2018, the Supreme Court of India unanimously

struck down Section 377 as unconstitutional, ruling that it infringed on the fundamental rights of autonomy, intimacy, and identity, thus legalizing homosexuality in India, including in Tamil Nadu. Chakrapani, 2012^[4]. According to the Election Commission of India, Tamil Nadu has approximately 30% of its transgender people on electoral roll which is the highest in the country and topped in the percentage of third gender representation (0.0106%) in 2020 elections. In such circumstances research has been taken up to investigate and recognize the life of Tran's people in Tamil Nadu.

Tools

Socio-demographic Data: The interview schedule that contains details of the nativity, religion, caste, education, employment, marital status, basic identity proofs, bank information, family support, informed consent for participation are included.

World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL-Bref): WHOQOL-Bref is a short version of WHOQOL-100 questionnaires. WHOQOL-Bref encloses 26 questions in four major domains (i.e. physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment) to measure QOL). It assesses individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. the WHOQOL-BREF, an abbreviated 26 item assessment has been develop Quality-of-life research has integrated the study of social, political, economic, and psychological welfare ensuing from varying governmental systems, policies and public programs associated with health. The WHOQOL-BREF produces four domain scores. Domain scores are scaled in a positive direction (i.e. higher scores denote higher quality of life). The mean score of items within each domain is used to calculate the domain scores.

Sampling

The study was conducted in Chennai that includes fifty transgender as a sample and the sample size is confined as a result of an infinite population. The snowball sampling method and interview schedules are adapted to collect the primary data from the sample.

Analysis

Table 1 explores the socio-demographic details of the Trans people in Chennai city. It shows that most (56%) of the people are born and brought up in Chennai, primary education (40%) is the highest educational qualification among the Trans people. The life of transgender people in rural areas is complicating and pity full most of the Trans people reported that they have undergone severe torture by their families which is the main push factor that lead them to migrate to the cities. Education is a basic human right, but in the case of Tran's people, it is denied and not fulfilled because of their sexual orientations. They reported that they are eager towards studying in schools but genders stigmatization by the families and society are often constrained them in getting an education. Some of the educated Trans people feel that they are not given suitable jobs and respect in society.

Table 1: Socio-demographic variables of Transgender in Chennai

Variable	%	Variable	%
Native Place		Education	
Urban	56	Illiterate	3
Rural	44	Primary	20
Age		Secondary	14
Less than 30 years	42	Higher-secondary	7
31-40 years	32	Graduate and Above	6
More than 41 years	26	Employment	
Religion		Begging	47
Hindu	90	Private	3
Christian	10	Marital status	
Caste		Single	78
Forward Caste	8	Married	22
Backward caste	38	Support of Family	
Most backward caste	18	Yes	50
Schedule Caste	36	No	50
Undergone Emasculation		Availability of Health	
Yes	82	Yes	42
No	9	No	58
Type of Emasculation		Availability of Bank passbook	
SRS	46	Yes	80
Just Removal	20	No	20
Daima	16	Availability of ATM card	
Availability of Voters card		Yes	68
Yes	80	No	32
No	20	Availability of Transgender welfare card	
Availability of Ration card		Yes	58
Yes	70	No	42
No	30		

Most (42%) of the transgender who is less than 30 years are living in Chennai and their major (47%) employment is begging activity. It is observed during data collection most of the Trans people in Chennai are very young as a result of this they are undergoing harassments by brokers, policies and other males. It is tough for the transgender population to get employment even in cities as result of disapproval in society. Majority of the transgender are involved in begging activity and earning 100-150 rupees every day. They reported that it is not enough to satisfy their daily needs and they are in poor economic condition. It illustrates that 90% of the Trans people are Hindus, nearly 78% of them are single and half of the transgender are supported by their family members. Some of the Trans people are married but not having legal approval but living a happy life along with their spouse.

It elucidates the majority (82%) of the transgender undergone emasculation and 46% of them are emasculation is done through SRS method. Emasculation is the process of removing both the penis and the testicles, the external male sex organs. It is seen free surgeries called sex reassignment surgery (SRS) are taken by Tamil Nadu government for Trans people but most of the time the operations are not done in proper manner and trans people who are not having essential transgender identify documents are unable to take up the surgeries. It shows that majority of the people are having voters card (80%), ration card (70%), bank passbook (80%), ATM card (68%), Transgender welfare board (58%) card and 58% of the Trans people are not having a health care. An

identity document is basic distinctiveness of citizens in a country. Ration and voters cards are basic identity and address proofs of the people to attain basic government services. It is reported most of the transgender are having voters, rations cards, bank passbook, ATMs. Tamil Nadu government created a welfare board to develop and provide services to the Trans people in the state. Most of the Trans people reported the process of getting a welfare card from the board is very difficult.

Table 2 illustrates that the mean score of quality of life. It explores psychological health (25±9.4) of the transgender is very high as compared to other aspects of health. It is observed transgender are developed with high self-esteem, confidence and they go through serve hurdles in their life from adolescence to adults. Therefore, that experiences and pains mold them as a mentally strong person.

Table 2: Quality of life of Transgender in different Domains

Domains	Mean	Standard Deviation
Psychological Health	25.92	9.4
Social Relationships	9.76	2.47
Environmental Health	15.9	4.39
Physical Health	18.5	5.38

The mean score of environmental health was 15.9±4.39 of the transgender. The environmental health of the people depends on their safety, access to health services and spending leisure

time effectively. In Chennai the transgender are living in safe, healthy and they are able to access health services easily. They also said they are having much leisure time because of their joblessness. These reasons play a role that makes high environmental health among Trans people. The mean score of physical health was 18.5 ± 5.38 in those respondents who were living in Chennai. It reveals that Transgender in Chennai is having moderate physical health they reported pollution, congested houses are common reasons for poor physical health. Other reasons like knee pain, thyroid and sinus are also highly seen among Trans people.

The lowest mean score is observed among social support 9.76 ± 2.47 . Chennai is seen as one of the cosmopolitan city and people from different states are living together yet adjustment and mindset of accepting the other culture and people is not happened. Most of transgender reported, people are not ready to accept and recognize. They are not treated well and given proper respect in public places. Most people are involving in teasing, verbally abuse towards the Trans people. In the WHOQOL scale, higher scores indicate satisfactory QOL and a low score indicates poor QOL. The overall quality of life (70 ± 21.6) of transgender in Chennai is satisfactory as we have seen all aspects of the quality of life are neither good nor bad apart from social support domain. These findings indicate the fact that most of the Trans people are leading a healthy and safe life in Chennai. They informed apart from the economic burden they are able to attain all essential facilities in Chennai. Sahodaran, Trans rights are some of the NGOs involved in fighting for Trans people in the city this also act as a reason for transgender to fulfill their essentials in life. It is observed transgender in Chennai are living in collective that acts as strength to lead a secured life and they are contempt with their present condition

Suggestions

- Genders sensitize national curriculum which includes physiological and mental problems of the transgender community should be included in elementary education
- Improved admittance to psychological, legal, and social protection by providing advocacy training
- It is must to government address the multiple issues among transgender populations such as Sexually Transmitted Infections, alcohol use, HIV and gender violence, appropriate health interventions should be the main concern for health systems and services.
- Permissible and lawmaking framework to legalize sexual practices among transgender populations would contribute to reducing their exposure to violence and harassment.
- It is important to government and other organizations society initiate the employment opportunities through entrepreneur training based on the interest of the Trans community

Conclusion

Transgender include those people whose individuality and behavior do not remain to the stereotypical gender customs. Transgender of India is perhaps the most separate, susceptible third sex category in the contemporary world. The Indian Government renowned the privileges of transgender people and treating them as equal to other Indians by intriguing bold steps to distinguish transgender as a Third Gender. Although they are given equal treatment their respect and social acceptance is remaining an ostracized and discriminate social class. As a whole, Transgender struggle to resolve their invisibility of their community is continuing the same. In the

end, however, invisibility creates transgender vulnerable to gender aggression and other human rights exploitation. It is additionally probable that not only the government but also the social advocates and general civic must come frontward to tribute and support the third genders for their decent and peaceful living.

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