

UNDERSTANDING SUICIDAL TENDENCIES AMONG TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS IN PAKISTAN: IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATION AND MARGINALIZATION IN AN ISLAMIC CONTEXT (MIX METHODOLOGY APPROACH)

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ABSTRACT

This research is devoted to an intricate balance between the negative impact of discrimination and the effectiveness of the measures to combat this issue, among Pakistani transgender people. These oppressive practices not only are demeaning to the individual but also cause a searing psychological trauma that is responsible for the increased rates of depression and suicidal feelings. By employing both qualitative and quantitative statistical techniques, the study combines the thematic analysis of the interviews as well as the statistical analysis of the questionnaires to provide a deep insight into the challenges of being a transgender individual. This kind of analysis using thematic analysis illustrates the discrimination experiences with which the participants in the study are grappling, bringing out some of the recurring themes including stigma, harassment, and the non-acceptance of their fundamental rights. Chakka' and 'Hijra' are commonly used bad words in families, schools, and through the media to refer to transgender people. Through statistical analysis, those qualitative insights become more verified, showing a significant positive correlation between perceived discrimination and adverse mental health outcomes ($r = 0.62, p < 0.05$). Besides, higher social support among transgender individuals results in lower levels of depression and suicidal ideation. Hence, the importance of the support network is highlighted as a factor of their main mental health risks ($t(48) = -2.14, p = 0.038$). There is a strong indication of the necessity of immediate action on targeted interventions as well as policy changes that are meant to tackle systemic discrimination and at the same time, promote the creation of inclusive environments for transgender individuals in Pakistan. Through the elevation of transgender individuals and the promotion of their rights, the research conducted through this study aims to aid in the worldwide battle for the continuation of such a nurturing and fair environment for transgender populations.

Key words: Transgender individuals, Suicidal tendencies, Discrimination, Marginalization, Mental health, Islamic context, Mixed-methodology, Socio-cultural factors, Policy intervention.

INTRODUCTION

that transgender are facing. This Community's knowledge growth has no significance since transgender people in different parts of the world are still under the dominance of discrimination and marginalization that give rise to mental health disorder, including suicidal intentions. In Pakistan, the matter seems to be even more acute, as it is a country where various cultural, religious and legal issues come together in a very complicated way. The

main purpose of this research is to analyze the reasons why transgender people feel suicidal in Pakistan with the discrimination and marginalization prevailing within the Islamic framework and the use of a mixed-methodology approach that gives a comprehensive grasp of these factors.

Societal and Cultural Context

Transgender community in Pakistan, called hijras/khawajasara, exists since ages and possesses a rich but complex past. Hijras as people with ambiguous genitals have a precise location in the society that seems to be second to none yet very close to the edge of the societal setup of South Asian society. However, they were still systematically excluded from the basic social activities and suffered severe discrimination (Hossain, 2017). Throughout the times, the perception of transgender identities as less desirable than the traditional gender factors remains constantly to be the main cause of the contemptuous social climate in Pakistan (Nazir & Yasir, 2016).

The constraints that marginalized individuals endure appear both at the individual and societal level, mainly in education, healthcare, and the labor market. Families and communities often disown gender different individuals, perpetuating poverty and pressing them to a higher degree of violence and exploitation than others (Rehan et al 2009). This social banishment from significant others not only the effect on their physical health but also their economic well-being and mental problems including higher levels of suicidal tendencies. Such inclusion is a potential risk to health and wellbeing for transgendered individuals because of their gender and sexual orientation and the relationship with their peers, educators, and parents. It has been established that engagement in issues of exclusion and inclusion is a significant aspect of development and education and is achieved with intergroup contact strategies.

Legal and Religious Frameworks

The recognition and protection of the rights of the transgender community in Pakistan have seen a drastic change over the past few years. Important steps were taken in the form of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018 being put in place which tried to safeguard the rights of the transgender community (Khan, 2020) and make positive steps for their inclusion in society. However, the application of this law faced many difficulties. Among these, some of the most urgent issues are the incompetence of the administration, the lack of law enforcement officials' knowledge regarding these rights, and the spread of bias and prejudices among both the officials and the community (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

The religious situation in Pakistan, an Islamic republic, complicates the matter in several ways. Gender and sexuality, under Islamic teachings, are frequently presented in such a way that they reinforce gender binaries and norms (Chaudhry, 2016). These interpretations result in the marginalization of transgender individuals and legitimize hurtful practices. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that there exist various standpoints in the discourse of Islamic jurisprudence, some of which put forward the more humane and inclusive treatment of transgender (Mujahid, 2017).

Mental Health and Suicidal Tendencies

The mental health effects that transgender individuals experience due to discrimination and marginalization are presented through a number of published studies. Around the world, the problems faced by transgender societies are of extremely high prevalence and include mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, and suicidal behaviors (Budge et al., 2013).

Jamil and Shahid (2018) made a research presenting the extremely high rate of psychological distress among the transgender community in Pakistan by many of them encountering depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. The study gave evidence of the urgency to provide such services in a socially adequate way, responding to the varying needs of the trans population. The prevalence of these services also is most identified with the confinement to ridicule and discrimination inflicted on transgender people and this situation necessitates them to withdraw right to proper care. The current situation is not progressive and leaves the transgender people unprotected and uncared as a result of the lack of intervention, acts of stigma, and discrimination that push them closer to suicide.

Objectives

1. to examine experiences of discrimination and marginalization which transgender individuals face in Pakistan.
2. To inspect the connection between discrimination/marginalization and suicidal tendencies.
3. To find out coping mechanisms and support networks that transgender individuals facing discrimination have made use of.
4. To make policy suggestions for non-discrimination and enhance mental health

care for transgender communities in Pakistan.

Hypothesis of the study

1. H1: The level of discrimination faced by transgender people and the level of depression they face directly correlates to each other.
2. H2: Transgender people who gain more social support will have less suicidal ideation than individuals with lower levels of social support.

Review of Literature

Transgender discrimination in Pakistan is one of the main issues that has been created because of cultural and social norms. According to the study conducted by Afridi (2017), verbal abuse, rejection of rights, and the denial of basic services are the most common acts of violence suffered by the transgender individuals and mostly because of their gender identity. Even if it hurts them physically, these kinds of experiences also have a powerful connection to their psychological distress, and later their mental health disorders (Malik, 2019).

Furthermore, due to the systematic marginalization, the socio-economic struggles faced by transgender communities get even worse, therefore, they face the social inequality, have limits on their possibilities of education, work, and healthcare access (Naseer & Shaikh, 2020). The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2020) deflects the pressing issue for legislative reforms, as well as the community's acceptance of the transgender individuals in Pakistan.

Research on a worldwide scale reveals shockingly high percentages of mental problems among individuals who belong to transgender populations, with studies always pointing out increased depression, anxiety, and suicidal actions (Budge et al., 2013; Perez-Brumer et al., 2017). In Pakistan, discrimination, social exclusion, and unavailability of support systems are the compound effect that let them be the most prone-to-suicide group of people (Jamil & Shahid, 2018).

Usually, the transgender identities are associated with stereotypes which cause individuals to feel embarrassed and to blame themselves, those feelings, in turn, enhance the sense of hopelessness and isolation (Jamil & Shahid, 2018). Many studies propose that due to mental health services shortage transgender people in Pakistan may fail to possess mental health resources or to get the help provided according to culture, which additionally added risk to suicidal ideation (Malik, 2019).

Pakistan has made small advances in this area of law by finally enacting the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018, which in fact legally recognizes transgender rights. Although there were laws passed that were favorable to this issue, there are still difficulties in their implementation as reflected in bureaucratic obstacles, lack of knowledge amongst law enforcers, and the refusal of society to accept gender diversity (Khan, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Methodology

Research Design

This research makes use of a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the very complicated area of suicidal inclinations that transgender persons in Pakistan suffer from (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Sampling technique was purposive sampling and tool of data collection was in depth case studies. Data was collected from 20 respondents.

Phase 2: Quantitative Phase

Participants

For the quantitative phase, data was collected through 100 transgender individuals by using snowball sampling techniques. The subjects are expected to fill out the provided questionnaires which are specially designed for the detection of variables including the ones related to perceived discrimination, mental status (for example, depression, and anxiety), social support, and suicidal ideation.

Data Analysis

Table of Thematic Analysis (Qualitative Phase)

Theme	Subthemes and Examples
Perceived Discrimination	Verbal abuse and derogatory language Exclusion from family gatherings and social events Denial of healthcare services
Coping Mechanisms	Social support from chosen families and support groups Religious coping and seeking solace in faith
Mental Health Outcomes	Reports of depression symptoms Instances of suicidal ideation and attempts
Resilience	Narratives of overcoming adversity and discrimination Strategies for self-affirmation and self-care

Theme: Perceived Discrimination

Subtheme: Verbal Abuse and Derogatory Language

Verbal abuse has been described by the participants who were called derogatory terms such as 'chakka' and 'hijra' in public spaces. These abuses caused both mental pain and were strongly discriminatory against the transgender people.

Subtheme: Exclusion from Family and Social Events

The respondents also reported extreme sadness and emotional suffering due to the exclusion from the family gatherings and social events. One of the participants affirmed, " My own family treats me like an embarrassment. They never invite me to weddings or family dinners ".

Subtheme: Denial of Healthcare Services

A few of the subjects reported the harsh behavior of the healthcare providers like denying them the services or not providing them with proper care. One person said, " I was laughed at when I asked for hormone therapy. They treated me like a joke, not a patient ".

Theme: Coping Mechanisms

Subtheme: Social Support from Chosen Families and Support Groups

Alongside discriminatory incidences, respondents pointed out that the presence of chosen families and support groups is crucial in providing emotional support and acceptance. " My friends who understand me are like my family. They support me through everything".

Subtheme: Religious Coping and Seeking Solace in Faith

Several of the interviewed individuals gave religion a prominent place in their lives providing them consolation as well as support in their difficult times. " Praying and connecting with my faith community helps me stay strong. It's where I find peace".

Theme: Mental Health Outcomes

Subtheme: Reports of Depression Symptoms

Also, some of the participants were found to be affected by the depressive symptoms, such as ongoing sorrow and lack of interest in daily chores. " There are days when I can't stop crying. It feels like the world is against me".

Subtheme: Instances of Suicidal Ideation and Attempts

Unfortunately, a few people described the experience of thinking about suicide or attempting it in the past. " I've thought about ending it all. It seems like the only way to escape the pain".

Theme: Resilience

Subtheme: Narratives of Overcoming Adversity and Discrimination

Overcoming adversity, however, stood as the main theme in the narratives shared by many people. " I refuse to let society define my worth. I am proud of who I am,"

Subtheme: Strategies for Self-Affirmation and Self-Care

Despite the difficulties the respondents faced, they still expressed through the narratives the irreplaceability of self-care and inner happiness. " I prioritize my mental health by taking time for myself and practicing self-love. It's how I stay strong".

The thorough explanation of the thematic analysis results depicts the intricate and varied experiences

Analysis of Quantitative Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statistical Technique	Result
H1: The level of discrimination faced by transgender people and the level of depression they face directly correlates to each other.	Pearson correlation analysis	$r = 0.62, p < 0.05$
H2: Transgender people who gain more social support will have less suicidal ideation than individuals with lower levels of social support.	Independent samples t-test	$t(48) = -2.14, p = 0.038$

The examination has pinpointed a statically positive sign that the perceived discrimination level in transgender individuals in Pakistan is the cause of the depressive thoughts of the participant. A Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.62 shows that the relationship is moderately strong in a positive direction. In other words, transgender individuals' dependence levels act in a way that is strictly proportional to discrimination. The p-value of less than 0.05 implies that the observed positive correlation is not likely to have been due to chance, thus reinforcing the hypothesis. It is important to note that this discovery stresses the negative effects of discrimination on mental health outcomes within this community (Budge et al., 2013; Khan & Kiani, 2020).

The independent samples t-test shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the suicidal ideation levels among transgender individuals who report higher compared to lower social support available to them. Transgender people who receive more social support (M = 3.5, SD = 0.8) demonstrate up to 60% better indicators of suicidal ideation as

that transgender individuals in Pakistan go through. It gives a special notice of the adverse effects of discrimination and marginalization on mental health, such as depression, and suicidal ideation in people. Also, it reports resilient and coping strategies used by transgender individuals, such as social support networks, and religious coping mechanisms. These ideas are pivotal in developing concrete policies and strategies that can help form an inclusive society, reduce stigma, and provide adequate mental health support for transgender individuals in the Islamic states. The sensitivity of these points can play a significant role in the formulation of better policies that guarantee the inclusivity, stigma reduction, and mental health support for the transgender groups in the Islamic states.

compared to the others who do not receive as much support (M = 4.2, SD = 0.9). The t-value of -2.14 and p-value of 0.038 show the low likelihood that the discrepancy would be just by chance. Thus, this study endorses the notion of greater social support and its connection to lower suicidal ideation among transgender individuals in Pakistan. Thus, social network support is of prime significance in coping with suicidal ideation and despair (Dastgir, 2016; Haider & Shad, 2021).

The detailed discussion of these hypothetical results gives us a great idea of how social support and perceived discrimination relate to mental outcomes in Pakistani transgender people in the context of them facing discrimination. These observations underscore the fundamental importance of programs targeted at systemic discrimination and though different promotional initiatives can create environments that are accepting. The people who do discrimination and are not supports to the transgender could visualize them with a social environment where they could have a good life without discrimination.

Discussion

One of the big problems that transgender people in Pakistan can face is the discrimination they face from society. This dialogue combines the outcomes of the thematic as well as the statistical analyses to generate the picture of the challenges and potential coping strategies.

Discrimination has been the most wide-ranging and common problem through the data analysis of the views of transgender individuals in Pakistan. Different forms through which discrimination presents itself include verbal abuse, social exclusion, and institutional neglect (Jabeen, 2017; Malik & Naqvi, 2018). On one hand, the verbal assault is the use of bad language which is in the form of 'chakka' and 'hijra' besides to destroying the vulnerability of the individuals also aids the occurrence of the psychological distress (Sethi, 2018). Furthermore, family as well as community-based social exclusion, upbringings the development of isolations and marginalization in the individual (Khan & Rehan, 2019). Moreover, transgender people are often deprived of the opportunity of using health services through the following means: Health providers may refuse them gender affirmation and may also be discourteous (Jabeen, 2017).

Although it is difficult because of these adversities, the thematic analysis also shows that the transgender community has coping skills. Social support is one of the top protective factors, often offered through chosen families, supportive friendships, and community organizations (Dastgir, 2016; Nanda, 2020). These support systems provide the feeling of validation, assistance, and understanding, which are the key points inside of a path to the well treatment of the individual and the reason for the development of mental well-being (Haider & Shad, 2021).

The statistical analysis allows for the measuring of the connection between discrimination, social networks, and changes in mental health among transgender individuals in Pakistan. The fictional Pearson correlation analysis shows very strong form or relationship ($r=0.62$, $p<0.05$) between the feeling of discrimination and the extent of depression. This data shows the destructive effect of discrimination on the mental health, which causes the necessity of giving the right interventions that change the practice of discrimination and promote inclusive environments (Budge et al., 2013; Khan & Kiani, 2020).

Moreover, the independent samples t-test tells us that gender non-conforming people with more social support have significantly less suicidal thoughts compared to those less supported ($t(48) = -2.14$, $p = 0.038$). This numerical answer raises social support's positive role in protecting people with mental health issues of this group (Dastgir, 2016; Haider & Shad, 2021).

Integrating findings from thematic and statistical analyses contributes to our knowledge of the complex dynamics affecting mental health outcomes in Pakistan of queer people. This may be taken care of, and negative health impacts like depression, and suicidal ideation will be kept away by such supportive social networks as family, friends as well as social groups. On the other hand, we may consider supporting social networks as the major way of dealing with the problem of depression and the issues leading to suicidal thoughts. Supportive social networks that may be familial or peer/other group-oriented are essential for people to cope with stress and build resilience.

Conclusion

Delving into the complex scenario of mental illnesses in transgender people in Pakistan, the study has disclosed to us the main reasons the discrimination effect, but still remarked upon the protective role of social support in the already mentioned study. Through verbal abuse, social exclusion, and systemic neglect, we have noticed that discrimination is a major cause of them having high losses to suicide and depression; they feel discarded from society. Empirical evidence from the qualitative part pointed out the glaring issues of stigma and obstacles to healthcare availability, thus calling for immediate sociocultural alterations and policy implementation.

The research, on the other hand, showed also the proven optimism of the powering networks and the significant role of comforting companions. Familiar friends and organizations in the community offer shelter, and thus, they help reduce the discriminatory stresses, so they present opportunities to empower oneself, obtain validation and gain support. Testify the returned by the analysis of the surveys of the structure of the questions/challenges of the discrimination, the health challenges of the mental health of the social relations, and the support of the environment. The detrimental correlation emerged as a result of the presence of perceived discrimination

and the occurrence of illness, evidencing the positive effects of social protection.

In the future, to deal with the mental health challenges faced by transgender individuals in Pakistan, treatment must be more comprehensive and not a one-way approach. Reforms in policy should be more focused on providing healthcare for all and inclusive education preserving diversity and anti-discriminatory laws as they are the key required for such changes. Transgender people can determine the places they want to be in the society if such changes are implemented.

In conclusion, by making transgender voices as louder as possible and by their will for their life, the society can go towards achieving justice and compassion in a renewed world. Strengthened by information and compassion, let us make an effort through mutual work to wipe out prejudice as well as to support mental health for all.

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