



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT OF THIRD GENDER(KINNARS): A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to explore about the social and emotional adjustment of third gender (kinnars). This study follows qualitative methodology (critical analysis and advocacy approach) because it is most suited to the objectives. A group of third gender was contacted and interviewed. The researchers also observed their day to day routine and life-style. Findings reveal that kinnars are forced to live an unfavorable, disgraced life due to insensitive and discriminatory attitude of the society and their family. They are excluded from mainstream in almost all the sectors- education, health, and service, etc.

Social welfare department, Government of India should come with innovative policies for inclusion of the kinnars in mainstream. At the society level, awareness programmes should be conducted to sensitize people towards equality of the kinnars in social institutions, primarily educational institutions, for their overall development.

KEYWORDS: Third gender, kinnars, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, qualitative study

Introduction & Literature review

Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men (WHO, 2016). Women and men establish the first two gender types. Third gender is mostly known as ‘Kinnars’ in India. Third gender is generally described as a person whose gender identity, gender expression or behavior does not conform to their biological sex. They do not have reproduction capacity as either a man or woman; they are neither man nor woman and claim to be an institutional —third gender.

Transgender or ‘hijra’ in India are called by different names in different region like *Hijras* in north India, *Kinnarin* Delhi, *Aravaniin* Tamil Nadu, *Jogaties* in Maharashtra & Karnataka, and *Shivshakthiset* (Kanta K., 2015).

As with transgender people in most of the world, they face extreme discrimination in health, housing, education, employment, immigration, law, and any bureaucracy that is unable to place them into male or female gender categories (Kanta K., 2015). Transgender also includes persons who intend to undergo *sex Re Assignment surgery* (SRS) or have undergone SRS to align biological sex with their gender identity in order to become male or female. (Kanta K. 2015).

Third Gender – mostly castrated male has a long history and dates back to 9th Century B.C. They were in accepted demand to guard imperial harems. The practice believes to have started in China, where eunuchs were entrusted with the task of defensive royal harem and similarly, they were preferred over other genders due to their weak characteristics and coward attitude. Nothing seems more natural, unchangeable or desirable than those human beings are divided without reminder into two biological sexes, male and female, and into two genders, masculine and feminine.

This division of humans into two sexes takes place at birth, when sex assignment is male or female; such sex assignment is assumed to be permanent. It is difficult for most of us even think about any alternative to this view of sex and gender. But Hijras are not men, and neither they are women, in spite their several aspects of behavior associated with the feminine role.

These behaviors include dressing as women, wearing their hair long, plucking their facial hair, adopting feminine mannerisms, and taking on women’s name and using female kinship terms and a special feminized vocabulary. However, Hijras are not considered as women, because they cannot give birth, and their behavior such as their sexual aggressiveness is

considered outrageous and very much in opposition to the expected demure behavior of ordinary women in their roles of wives, mothers and daughters. Hijra performances are essentially burlesques of women, and the entertainment value comes from difference between themselves, acting as women, and the real women they imitate.

In an interesting initiative beginning in 2006, hijras were engaged to accompany Patna city revenue officials to collect unpaid taxes, receiving a 4-percent commission.

Meaning of Kinnar/Hijra-The original meaning of *hijra* in Urdu (Rehan et al. 2008) and *Kinnar* in Hindi (Nanda 1999) is eunuch or hermaphrodite. The word *hijra* implies impotent and an inability to perform a male sexual role. Rehan et al. (2008) describe the word *hijra* as "...an umbrella term used for those men, who are transgender, eunuch, transvestites, hermaphrodites or intersexed, bisexuals or homosexuals". However, based on observations during the fieldwork bisexuals and homosexuals that did not have visible gender dysphoria are not called *hijra*. Haider and Bano (2006) provide an extensive categorisation of fifteen types of *hijra* based on genital appearance, personal and social identity, sexual preferences and whether or not emasculation has been performed or is desired.

In Asia, people with a wide range of gender-related identities, cultures and experiences exist; for instance the hijra. Historically the presence of this community has been visible in many cultural contexts. They have been known, for example, as bakla in the Philippines, xaniths in Oman and hijra, kothi, jogappas, jogtas or shiv-shaktis in South Asia (Khan et al, 2009).

According to Chakrapani (2010), hijra are biologically males but refuse their masculine identity in due course of time to identify as 'women' or 'not men'. As hijra usually identify themselves as 'not men' and prefer to have sex with men, thus, they are perceived by the society as homosexual.

Hijras are often encountered on streets, trains, and other public places demanding money from people in India. If refused, the hijras may attempt to embarrass the man into giving money, using obscene gestures, abusive language, and even sexual advances. In India for example, threatening to open their private parts in front of the man if he does not give some money. Hijras perform religious ceremonies at weddings and at the birth of male babies, involving music, singing, and sexually suggestive dancing. These are intended to bring good luck and fertility. The dominant cultural role of the hijras, as we have seen, is that of ritual performers.

In the Indian sub-continent, the centuries old term ‘hijra’ is generally used to describe those men who are transvestites, intersexed, eunuch and hermaphrodite (Chakrapani, 2010; Hahm, 2010).

In addition, according to Husain (2005), mostly Hijra live and work under a *guru* who is a senior hijra, called ‘mother’ of a group of hijra. The hijra who are under this *guru* are called *chela* that mean ‘child’. *Guru* and *chela* relationship always go through some disciplines and rules in their community. Usually *guru* doesn’t earn money but the *chela* hand in their income to the *guru*. In return the *guru* takes care of them (hijra). These days, many hijra also live independently apart from the *guru* but have consistent relationship with their community.

Myth & Science

The main cause of Transgender’s birth is deficiency of chromosomes, but in Indian society there are some myths about their birth. Some people believe that they mostly take birth through Muslim couple. In state of Haryana of India, people believe in a myth spread by Khap Panchayats’ that couple who belong to same gotra give birth to Hijra.

The present study “social adjustment of transgender” has tried to explore the social life of transgender in the city of Patna, Bihar. Hijra is an umbrella term used for those men who are transgender, eunuch, transvestites and hermaphrodites or intersexes, bisexuals or homosexuals (Sharma, 2009). Social adjustment can be defined as a psychological process. It frequently involves coping with new standards and values. In the technical language of psychology, getting along with the members of the society as best as one can be called adjustment.

Emotional adjustment (also referred to as personal adjustment or psychological adjustment) is the maintenance of emotional equilibrium in the face of internal and external stressors.

This is facilitated by cognitive processes of acceptance and adaptation. An example would be maintaining emotional control and coping behavior in the face of an identity crisis. This capacity is an important aspect of mental health and where it is compromised, or not developed, Psychopathology and mental disorder can result.

Transgender & Adjustment

In Indian society Kinnars face a various problems when society compares them with the males and females. They face a lot of discrimination at sociological, psychological, cultural,

educational, political and individual level. They consist of hermaphrodites and women generally unable to lead normal life, not fit for marriage and producing children.

People do not consider them as human beings. They don't like to gobble with them, drink with them; even they are citizens of India like everyone else. But behind the happiness and adjustment of transgender life can be lonely and dangerous in a traditional society such as India. Even in beginning of their life, a Hijra born in a family, most families want to kill the new born child or if they do not kill then the third gender child get insensitive treatment by family, teacher and society due to their inability to cope with social demands. Their feminine attitude gives them much suffering in social and emotional adjustment. The Identity crisis (male or female) becomes emotional trauma for them. The main trauma is leaving parental home and join the kinnars group.

In 1994, they were given the right to vote. In 1999, Shabnam Mausi Bano became India's first hijra MLA of the Madhya Pradesh State Legislative Assembly from 1998 to 2003. In 2003, Hijras in Madhya Pradesh have established their own political party called "Jeeti Jitayi Politics" (JJP). In recent Loksabha elections, Daya Rani Kinnar, a transsexual activist, stood as an independent candidate from Ghaziabad constituency against Rajnath Singh. Tamil Nadu became the first state to give recognition to the transgender. In official forms, there is 'T' along with 'M' and 'F' in the gender identification column. In Chennai, toilets are being built for the transgender. Recently a large no. of NGOs has come up to work for the transgender. Things are changing. But the limits to these changes are in our mindset. There is a need to broaden our mindset, to make our mindsets more human or more rational.

A bench of justices K.S Radhakrishnan and A.K Sikri directed the Govt. to take steps for granting recognition to transgender as a separate third category of gender after male & female. The bench said they are part and parcel of society and the Govt. must take steps to bring them in the main stream of society. The apex court passed the order on a PIL filed by National Legal Service Authority (NALSA) urging the court to give separate identity to transgender recognizing them as the third category of gender.

Rationale / justification

Significant number of Studies has been reported on this marginalized group; however there have been fewer studies on social & emotional adjustment of kinnars. Among others, it is a

contemporary issue of debate. Society and government is discussing about inclusion of this marginalized group. Therefore it is a contemporary research issue on which research is indeed.

Perspective/ Paradigm of the study

To advocate for the better social and emotional adjustment of the kinnars in social structure. In social work field, usually advocacy approach is used for the people who are disadvantaged and discriminated or having no legal rights. In various theoretical approaches, advocacy has often been used with the concept of empowerment and caring management towards elderly and people with disabilities, though, these days the approach has been extended to diverse needs and situations (Payne, 2005) and criticize the existing Indian social context which exclude them from social structure.

Objectives

- a) To study and explore about social and emotional adjustment of kinnars.
- b) To criticize non-inclusive social structure of society.

Statement of the problem

Transgender or the third gender is a socially marginalized group; they are discriminated by our society. People do not want to accept them as third gender because our society believes that the one who can reproduce child can only be known as a gender. This irrational social believe leads to identity crisis for them. Their feminine attitudes become a matter of joke by others in their school life (if they attend any). Moreover it becomes the source of physical and psychological trauma. Teacher abuse them, shouting for change in their feminine behavior. Consequently many of them leave study or school at early stage. That's why they are not eligible for any kind of jobs and because of it they cannot interact with people as people.

Research questions

This research aims to provide information about kinnar's life style, their adjustment, and their family life; for example, (a) how they earn money for their livelihood, (b) differences between a normal life and their life. Researchers also explored their coping strategies to various social and emotional demands for example, how they cope with when they leave their home and

parents and joins kinnar group, a totally different environment for them. The study is also interested to explore answers of following component such as questions what they want to do (purpose of life) in their life? How they managed living different lifestyles inside and outside the home at childhood and do they feel virtually alone at their home despite having a family?

Method & Procedure

My study area was in the Patna district in the state of Bihar, India. It is situated in the south area of Bihar and is the capital city of Bihar. The Data was collected from Patna's Meethapur area on a sample of 4 kinnar Participants. Proper permission was taken from the Kinnar group members and specially from their head (Guru Maa) for data collection and video recording during interview.

The responses data were collected through Group interviews and careful, Observations. They were also contacted when needed through mobile for further investigation.

Researchers

In qualitative research, it is required to provide information about the researchers to know about their attitude, perspective and possible biasness in the research. In line with this requirement this research provides information about the researchers involved in the study.

Two Researchers Rhicha Raman and Shalini, students of Master psychology, Centre for Psychological Sciences, Central University of South Bihar carried out this research on marginalized group. This research was done under the supervision of Dr. Narsingh Kumar, Assistant professor, Central University of South Bihar.

Ethical guidelines of American Psychological Association (APA) were strictly followed while working with the marginalized group.

Results and Description

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was twofold firstly; the researchers explored the social & emotional adjustments and life style of kinnars. Secondly researchers took critical perspective on contemporary social setting and advocate for better social life for kinnars.

Tools/Questionnaire- A questionnaire was prepared for taking interview in this qualitative project. The researchers kept the nature of items simple so that genuine/ real responses may be taken.

During interview the first question of the questionnaire asked by researchers was “What is your daily routine”? In response to this question, most of them answered that every day early in morning they get ready, put their make ups, drape a colorful attractive saree as a preparation to earn money by various means such as visiting to a marriage ceremony, new baby born functions and markets. They leave their residence as early as eight o’clock in the morning and return back in the evening around five to six.

The next question was about their separation from their family, and in response, they revealed that at a younger age they understood that they are different from others because of their different biological characteristics and attitude and belonged to kinnars. They understood that they are not acceptable in the society and even by their family members. Most of them were unable to remember about the incident of their family separation as at the early childhood age they were handed by their family members to the group of kinnars. Researchers observed that one of them was senior among all kinnars, and they treated her like their mother/ guardian and fondly they call her “Guru maa”. As she shared she left her society and family members due to daily humiliation. In her own words “Everybody kept calling me hijra hai, hijra hai, go to the hijra group, why you are here”. Separation from family was one of the most painful phases of her life. It was very difficult for her to accept herself as a kinnar.

The next question was about their social life. We asked directly concern of their social problem and Researchers found them sharing that there are many social problems faced by them. Usually, they are not treated well by the society, they are humiliated easily and called as “chakka” by the insensitive people those hurt them usually.

They revealed that they also would like to feel going market places, watch cinema, and visit public places like other (normal) people, without any insult and humiliation. People keep staring and behaving to them as they are untouchables. They want themselves to be treated like a woman in the society and to receive respect just like others. They dislike being ignored by the society instead they desire for love, unity, and feeling of belongingness from the society.

When we asked them for their sources of income then they replied ‘only from begging’ then we asked instantly, do you suffer any kind of physical harassments then they told after few second and voice was too low and filled with hesitation that “people do watch us in a negative and unwanted manner but till now we have not suffered any kind of physical harassments and even answered bluntly that “how can they can have sex with a person without sex organs.”

As a part of study questions we also inquired about their education process. They provided information about their school life that their teachers used to beat them for their feminine attitude and classmates did not wanted to play and even talk with them. The school time was very emotionally challenging for them.

And at last, the Researchers wanted to know about the purpose of their life, their response was that they just want to spread unity and feelings of togetherness and want to live a happy life. Importantly, they want to get certain funds and help from the government so that they can invest and work to improve their conditions and livelihood ashijras and can establish themselves as a part of the whole community society.

Discussion & Conclusion

This research is based upon a few interviews and observations. The purpose of this study was to explore the social and emotional problems of kinnars and how they adjust in the double standard society, where on one side our society talks too much about morality and humanity and on the other side it believes and practices discrimination and untouchability. This is the reason the society treat the Kinnars as a curse and ignored them rather including them as part of the society.

During interview of kinnars, the Researchers observed and realized that the hijras are living one of the worst life as compared to any other community in our society. They said that sometimes they have to act harsh with the people to avoid humiliation and harassment. Consequently society feels and blames the hijras for being violent and rude. The hijras face various challenges and difficulties in earning money for livelihood as they do not have socially accepted or direct source of income. When asked about any physical abuse/harassment they face during daily routine then they shared it happens rarely. Based on their behaviours and responses during interview researchers speculate that some of them may be involved in prostitution, because of their hesitation on such inquiry and due to their limited sources of income for livelihood.

Researchers visited their facebook pages by their permission and observed many posts and images indicated to their possible involvement in prostitution.

Currently, they did not show any interest towards education. It seems this is because they had bad experiences during their school life. As mentioned earlier, they received humiliation from teachers and classmates during school education. Carrying the memories of humiliation and negative experiences during their childhood when kinnars enter their adulthood, at this stage of life, they choose to earn money for their livelihood by available means to them, for example- begging in running trains, homes, at red signals and at bus stops.

Beginning from their childhood they suffer from many obstacles. A number of traumatic experiences occur in all stages of their life. They are the product of social injustice. So, society should not question their life style or the ways of their earning money for livelihood. To a larger extent, our society and people are responsible for their pathetic life. To be a transgender child is not a fault/choice of that child who is experiencing life without any humanity and love.

Transgender experience may have great relevance to social constructions of gender variance. The research does contribute to the knowledge about the social and emotional adjustment and lifestyle of Kinnars.

Implications of the Study

Social welfare department, Government of India should come with innovative policies for inclusion of the kinnars in mainstream. It is pleasant to note that Govt. Of India very recently is preparing a policy to include third gender under other backward class (OBC) category. This will provide third gender to access all the benefits of OBC category as its members. It may be a great initiative to bring them in mainstream with the help of providing jobs. At the society level, awareness programmes should be conducted to sensitize people towards equality of the kinnars in the society. Education is essential for overall human development. A policy for providing primary education to third gender and its intensive implication is most needed step. It will surely result in Kinnars' overall development.

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