

Transgender: Identity and Issues – A Sociological Enquiry

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ABSTRACT

Transgender persons are one such group of people who have been marginalized, abused, disdained and callously neglected community in almost every known society. Transgender is often used as an umbrella term to signify individuals who defy rigid, binary gender constructions and who expresses or present a breaking and blurring of culturally prevalent stereotypically gender roles. They experience stigmatization, discrimination, sexual abuse, lack of civil rights and harassment accessing health services due to their transgender identity. Besides the lack of employment and educational opportunities pushed them to live the lives in poverty and indulge in risky trade of sex work. The aim of this paper is to highlight the issues of transgenders living in Kashmir due to ambiguous gender identity. Both primary as well as secondary sources of data were utilized in the present study.

Keywords: *Transgender, Issues, Sociological, Society and Stigmatized.*

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Introduction:

Transgender is a term used to describe whose identity or appearance differs from stereotypical expectations of how men and women should look or act. It also includes a much larger group of people who don't necessarily undergo medical treatment, but who don't conform to the idea men have to be stereotypically "masculine" and women have to be stereotypically "feminine". In other words, a transgender is a person whose gender identity or gender expression differs from that associated with his or her birth sex. Since the beginning of time and the existence of mankind, transgender have been very much a part of the society. It is just that they have been given a name and a status in the society in recent times [1]. Throughout history, these cultures sometimes revered and celebrated these individuals as shamans or oracles, and there is even a recorded instance of a dual-gender god being worshiped in Peru by the Incans. There are different names in different cultures for transgenders like, *hijra* in India, the Polynesian *mahu*, South American *travesti*, Native American "two-spirit", Navajo *nádleehí*, and the native Hawaiian *mahu*, to name a few of the genders identities that move beyond the gender binary of male and female [2]. In earliest civilizations, throughout Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Northern Africa, tribes of different types venerated what they often identified as "The Great Mother". In nearly all of these traditions, male to female (MTF) priestesses (often castrated or with some form of eunuching, which included a number of different body modifications of the time) presided, and the cultures were primarily communal systems which held women (venerated as a source of life) in high esteem. By the end of the seventeenth century in England, gender crossing (or dressing as the other sex) was considered a crime, which created a foundation for similar laws in the United States [23]. Since individuals who cross-dressed were forced to keep their identity a secret, historical data on discrimination and violence toward transgender individuals are scant. However, individual accounts detail many instances of harassment, humiliation, and violence, as well as the fear of being discovered and arrested or killed for their gender variance [3]. In past they have also attempted to appropriate rituals, folklore and legends in order to obtain a sense of self-validation and carve out a niche for themselves in the traditional social structures. In various cultures, transgenders were seen as having special powers due to their assumed 'third sex' dimension, and were allowed to take part in semi-religious ceremonies. Often they were tolerated and allowed to live in the role of the other sex, to pursue their occupations (including that of sex work), cross-dress, and display other forms of transgender behaviour. Nevertheless they were often community practices, and even traded as slaves [4]. Likewise the Hijra communities in India have a recorded history of more than 4,000 years'. These people, who are born as intersex or as male (some undergo castration), currently form a third sex/gender community in India, tracing their origins to the myths in the ancient Hindu scriptures of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Historically, Hijras belonged to the 'Eunuch' culture that was common across the Middle East and India, where Eunuchs worked as guards, advisors, and entertainers [5]. Other forms of sex/gender diversity were also socially accepted in ancient India. Historically, sex/gender variant women took roles as mercenaries, advisors, and religious people, and same sex sexual expression is also documented, often taking place alongside opposite sex relationships; 'traditionally, sexuality has always been more fluid, less rigidly categorized (than in the West). For many Indians Western naming does not correspond to the amorphous nature of sexual experience' [22]. They are seen as having the power to curse or bless people, due to their spiritual heritage, and they are also seen as having a huge potential for embarrassment because they threaten to expose themselves physically if they are not paid for attending events such as weddings. The Hijras utilize these sources of power, retaining a somewhat secure position in society [6]. They also serving as the caretakers of Mughal harems and making significant contributions to art, music, and poetry. Ancient legend has it that khwaja sera's prayers and bad-dua are answered by God, bestowing them with the unique ability to bring good fortune and fertility. Despite their once respectable position in society, their status has significantly deteriorated over the years, forcing many into begging and prostitution. Transgender/Hijra community in South Asia had

been suffering from much of marginalization, stigma and social exclusion after Mughal emperor and Harem culture extinct. But recent history has seen a revival of transgender community status in South Asia where India and Nepal builds on a number of legal and policy reforms. In 2007, Nepal's Supreme Court was the first in the region to recognize the third gender category. Pakistan's Supreme Court followed in 2009. In Bangladesh, the ability to identify as a third gender was achieved in 2013 when the government approved a proposal of the Ministry of Social Welfare. In an April 2014 decision, India's Supreme Court for the first time recognized a third gender category, giving transgender individuals formal recognition, legal status, and protection under the law. Pakistan's transgender community was granted the right to vote in a 2011 Supreme Court decision that was first implemented in 2012, and several transgender candidates ran in Pakistan's 2013 general election. So it is evident that Transgender community has been equally active in ancient history from Middle East to Africa, Asia to Europe and North America to South America. It was believed that transgender or eunuch are dually gifted and dually respected in all eras [7].

Table 1
Socio-demographic characteristics of transgenders

S. No.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Age	Up to 17 years	02	10
		18-24 years	05	25
		25-34 years	07	35
		35-44 years	04	20
		45 and Above years	02	10
		Total	20	100
2.	Place of residence	Rural	12	45
		Urban	08	35
		Total	20	100
3.	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	09	45
		Literate/ primary education	04	20
		Middle (8 th grade)	05	25
		Matric (10 th grade)	02	10
		Any other	00	00
		Total	20	100
4.	Income	Up to 1000	04	20
		1001 – 3000	08	40
		3001 & above	02	10
		No Regular Income	06	30
		Total	20	100

Theoretical Background:

The traditional societal norms and beliefs are objecting and unscrambling the transgender group by treating them as sex icons rather than humankinds. Hence the transgender have a poor social and familial relations; they are excluded everywhere, due to a reason for which they are not responsible; that is, their gender identity [8]. So, the identity is imperative for individual's status at individual, family and at social level as well. It determines the position of an

individual in social milieu. Even transgender groups are usually formed on the basis of shared identity. Recent Transgender Theory captures lived experiences of transgenders with respect to sex, gender, sexuality, identity, and body politics and this is what differentiates transgender theory with feminist critique on sex, gender and sexuality and Queer Theory [9]. Throughout the 1990s, a number of transgender writers articulated their personal gender trajectories, and engaged with the theoretical debates of feminism, postmodernism and queer theory, as well as providing an explicit critique of medical discourse. The growing area of transgender studies brings different meanings to the term 'transgender' and reflects a diversity of theoretical positions. Transgender studies incorporate a body of work that is autobiographical in its style and content, and includes political commentary aligned with transgender community activism. In common with much feminist work there is no strict demarcation between these areas, leading many writers to move between the theoretical, the autobiographical and the structurally political; thus bringing subjectivity and social and political comment to theoretical engagement. The speedy development of deconstructions of sex, gender and sexuality from postmodernism and queer theory focused the academic gaze on transgender during the second half of the 1990s. Alongside community activism and political organization, transgender studies developed rapidly to become visible in all areas of academia. The growth of home computers also gave increased access to a 'transgender community' for transgender people, which, in turn, gave a new impetus to community activism. Leslie Feinberg envisaged a united movement of all individuals who fell outside gendered social conventions and embodied norms [6]. Mainly there are three main theories of gender in order to explain Transgendering; *Essentialism, Social Constructionism, and Performativity*.

Essentialist theory places emphasis on biological processes and argues that gender is a fixed trait, as opposed to a social construction. This means gender is something that will not vary much over time and space, either on an individual basis or in society in general. In essentialism, transgendered individuals might view themselves as always having felt that they were actually members of the sex category opposite their biological sex at birth. Some argue that they were born transgender; for example, they state that they were born male but have felt for as long as they can remember that they were supposed to be female. In this case, they view their sex as male, but their gender identity is actually female. This is an essentialist notion of transgendering, as it relies on the idea that a person has a gender identity that he or she is born with, as opposed to one that is constructed or developed throughout that person's life. An example of the essentialist theory is seen in the narrative given by some transsexuals. Transsexuals feel the need to change their sex to match their gender identities, seen as an inborn trait. Their narratives often involve the feeling that they were born into the wrong sex and therefore need to change their physiology to more closely approximate the sex that corresponds with their sense of gender identity. What surfaces here are sometimes unacknowledged essentialisms that in this context might be described as mind essentialism and body essentialism.

Body essentialism can be defined as a position that builds an identity on the basis of a pre-given body. It does not matter here so much whether this identity is stable or not, but rather that the body itself remains the starting point, the origin or *arché*, for a self-definition and possible self redefinition. *Mind essentialism*, in contrast, can be defined as a position that builds a body on the basis of an inner self or identity. That is, the mind becomes the basis and starting point for a performance that forms and re-forms 'its' body. These forms of essentialism can be traced consistently in the discussions of trans and intersex communities [10].

Social constructionism refers to the notion that sex and gender are separate concepts and that both are socially constructed. Sex is thought to be socially constructed by the medical community, as doctors define who is male and who is female. Gender is also socially constructed, as gender changes over time and across cultures. Further, while gender is thought to be based on sex, there is always the possibility that individuals may break the social norms that are dictated. Transgender individuals in this case may view sex and gender as completely distinct and believe that there is no reason for their gender to be based on their sex. This leads some to break conventional gender norms and develop a gender distinct from their sex. Gender identity is still a key concept here, as it is used to describe why a person might change from one gender to another, though it is not necessarily seen as something one is born with. Rather, gender identity is viewed as something the individual develops over time and that has the potential to change in the future. A person who is a transgender that is, someone who lives full time as the opposite sex but feels no need for sex reassignment surgery falls into the category of social constructionism. Their sex and their gender do not match, but they do not see this as a biological issue as they have no desire to change their biological sex through surgery.

Performance is a third way to view Transgendering. Performance theory is very different from essentialist notions, which rely on a gender identity, and social constructionist notions, which rely on a distinction between sex and gender. Attributed to theorists Candace West and Don Zimmerman, as well as Judith Butler, this outlook sees gender as a performance that must be done on a daily basis. This performance does not have to be based on sex or on gender identity. Frequently, it is so routine that one might not pay attention to it or think of it as a performance rather, it is just seen as something 'normal' that one does in daily life. A person's gender performance may change depending on who that person is interacting with. In this case, transgender people might view their gender as more of an expression or performance

rather than as an aspect of identity or an expression of their sex. The example of a drag queen is a good way to think about gender as a performance. Drag queens are male-bodied individuals who perform onstage as females. Though this is a very literal example, if one considers everyday life and interactions to be a broader stage on which to perform, it is easier to picture gender as a performance. Moreover, Butler's concept of performativity might be well-suited to the purpose of reducing the sex/gender divide to gender, as we have seen. Thus, apart from the rejection of any form of a stable identity, performativity and queer theory work well together with transgender studies in this case—albeit on the basis of an essentialist notion of the mind [10].

All of the three above view sex and gender as having differing degrees of importance in the social world. In addition to sex and gender, the concepts of gender identity and gender expression are particularly important for these theories. Gender identity refers to a person's self-identification as a man, a woman, or someone in between or outside of that binary. Above and beyond the term 'Queer', previously an insult, emerged as a self-characterization of gender variant in 1980s. Queer theory argues that sociology is prejudiced towards heterosexuals and that non-heterosexual voices must be brought to the fore. Queer theorists argue that every major sociological topic, as well as other subjects, including literature should bring queer voices to the centre to challenge the heterosexual assumptions that underlie much contemporary thinking [11]. Moreover queer theory sustains poststructuralist and postmodern deconstructions of identity categories, and positions gender and sexual identities as fluid and non-affirmative, thus representing a radical departure from all essentialising tendencies. Queer theory has positively embraced difference and has argued against the representation of identity categories as authentic. In viewing all gendered or sexual identities as socially constructed, queer theory aims to dissolve the naturalization and pathologisation of minority identities. From a queer framework certain transgender cultures are seen to rupture existing gender and sexual identities, and have been regarded as the epitome of identity deconstruction. Trans writers such as Bornstein [21] and Stone [12] reflect a queer subjectivity in positioning themselves not as transsexuals, but as 'gender outlaws' [21] who "speak from outside the boundaries of gender, beyond the constructed oppositional nodes which have been predefined as the only positions from which discourse is possible"[12]. Furthermore, Beemyn and Eliason [13] argued Queer theory allows us to view the world from the perspectives other than those which are generally validated by the dominant society. Queer theory, as the authors suggest, can by 'including the voice of people, whose lived experience involve non normative race, gender and sexual identities/practices, this theory can stretch the limits of current thought and possibly revolutionize it'. Transgender practices are therefore embraced as a deconstructive tool. Queer analyses have, however, been criticized by other transgender theorists for denying the material contours of transgender, and, particularly, transsexual, lives. None the less Queer theory offers valuable insights into the ways in which some transgender cultures radically challenge normative taxonomies of gender and sexuality, and it provides a radical vision of deconstructed genders and sexualities. However, employed in isolation, this theoretical model is limited by a lack of attention to lived experience, which often leaves non-performance-related transgender identities unaccounted for [6]. Historically the queer movement in India also exhibit expression of identity politics and issues related to same-sex orientation. According to Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action [14] the queer movement in India is visible since the 1990s and voices were raised for rights of *hijras* and same-sex desiring people. In the late 1980s gay issues in India came out from the closet and many groups were formed to highlight gay rights issues, there was a rise in LGBT activism since the 1990s and many organizations have contributed in raising issues of sexuality, gender, and rights. Besides earlier Second-wave feminism was one of the first academic fields to respond to the growing public awareness of modern Western transgender practices that began in the 1950s. Transgender raises key questions concerning the epistemological status and the ontology of 'sex' and 'gender'. In addition, transgender problematises the relationships between these categories to evoke complex questions about the construction, deconstruction and ongoing reconstruction of both gender and sexual taxonomies. These issues have long been central to feminist thought. On a theoretical, political and cultural level, however, feminism has been largely hostile to transgender practices [6]. Transgender women have been seen to reinforce a stereotypical model of *über* femininity, while transgender men have been located as renegades seeking to acquire male power and privilege. Although this body of work does not explicitly address transgender, it is significant for developing a nuanced understanding of transgender identities in which erotic desire does not automatically fit preconceived binary identities of either gender (man/woman) or sexuality (homo/hetero). This perspective enables the consideration of a range of transgender sexualities in terms of their commonalities, specificities and differences, both in relation to dominant culture and to each other. Alongside post structuralism, the influence of postmodernism on strands of feminist thinking during the 1990s led to an explicit engagement with transgender. As Wright argues, postmodernist approaches have emphasized difference as a requisite theoretical tool for the development of feminist theory: 'Postmodernist theory provides feminism with an additional framework, enabling it to articulate the diversity and contradictions that spring up not only between various positions but also within various positions' [15]. This model is useful for an analysis of transgender in that it can be utilized to go beyond the prevailing notion of transgender people as a homogeneous group, providing theoretical space for the recognition of distinct transgender identities. Thus a postmodern framework may be employed to depart from the concept of a unitary transgender identity to recognize that difference cuts across and between a diversity of transgender subjectivities. This can be used, for example, to enable the increased visibility of trans men; not only through analyzing the specificities of trans male experiences in relation to trans female, but also by exploring particular subject positions

within trans masculinity [6]. In addition, (De)constructivist-postmodern queer theories for their part take such radical notions of transgender as ‘living proof’, as it were, of the constructedness of biological sex. J. Halberstam, for instance, notes that “the transgender body has emerged as futurity itself, a kind of heroic fulfillment of postmodern promises of gender flexibility” (2005, 18). What we see here, moreover, is the considerable overlap between transgender studies, queer studies, and a broader postmodern thrust in academia to weaken or even dissolve all forms of binary oppositions and stable categories [10].

Major findings, Data analysis and Discussion:

Table 2: Occupation of transgenders

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Govt. Employee	00	00	00
Pvt. Employee	02	10	10
Begging	05	25	35
Sex Work	03	15	50
Domestic Worker	02	10	60
Match Maker/ Singing and Dancing	07	35	95
Student	01	05	100
Total	20	100	

It could be observed from the above table 2, that 35 percent respondents worked as middle man/ marriage broker/ Match Maker/ Singing and Dancing followed by 25 percent respondents as beggars. Whereas 15 percent respondents worked as sex workers, the other occupations in which respondents were involved are private employees (10 percent), domestic worker (10 percent), and students (5 percent). In the labour market, transgender people hide their sexual orientation and identity to avoid harassment and losing their work. Particularly susceptible are young transgenders who experience separation from family and friendship networks, bullying in school and invisibility, which can result in some cases to underachievement at school, mental ill-health, school drop-out and homelessness. This prejudice not only denies transgenders equal admission to key social goods, like employment, education, health care and housing, but it also disregards them in society and makes them one of the vulnerable groups at risk of becoming socially omitted. And all the respondents felt that lack of job was due to their lack or less education, transgender identity and sex worker stigma.

Table 3: Present Living arrangements

Arrangement	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Living with family	07	35	35
Living separately	13	65	100
Total	20	100	
Accommodation;			
Accommodation	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Rented	12	60	60
Owned	03	15	75
Homeless	05	25	100
Total	20	100	

It is observed from the data, 35 percent of respondents were living with family and 65 percent respondents were living separately. And while enquiring about the accommodation 60 percent respondents had rented accommodation, while as 15 percent respondents had own accommodation and 25 percent respondents were homeless. It is worth mentioning that significant numbers of respondent were still living with their parents, which in itself is rather surprising given the general tendency elsewhere in other states of India. And during discussion it was also observed that most of the respondents live with their community as the members in the family are not willing to accept them and discriminate them because of their gender identity and in most of the cases this is the reason that they run away from homes and they feel secure and get support from their own community. They find shelter and security with other transgenders because they think only they can give protection as well as live their life freely. They also believe in unity. It was also observed most of the respondents who were living separately live together in groups with other transgenders.

Appearance, style and mannerism of transgenders :

Gender involves not only *gender assignment*—the gender label given to someone at birth based on their perceived sex—but also gender attribution, gender roles, gender identity, and gender expression [21]. *Gender attribution* is how others perceive one's gender. It is based on an individual's appearance and also on the *gender roles*—the behaviors that are culturally coded as masculine or feminine—that someone assumes. Gender attribution and gender roles may or may not coincide with each other and with one's birth gender. For example, Debra, a sixty-two-year-old participant who describes herself as "a cross-dresser with a little drag queen thrown in for good measure," is over six feet tall before she "don[s] a Texas wig and platform heels." So even, when she cross-dresses and takes on traditionally female gender roles, she is still typically perceived as having been assigned male at birth. Debra admits that her-appearance "makes it kind of difficult to skulk about without being noticed," but that is the point: she takes pride in her gender identity and refuses to be invisible [16].

Transgenders in Kashmir define themselves as people who are neither male nor female but an eccentric third gender. However they are more comfortable and satisfied with the feminine identity and like to be called by female names. Whether they cross-dress or not their appearance, mannerism and behavior identifies with the females. There are different categories of transgenders in Kashmir like, Zanaan Laanch, Pant/Mard Laanch and Khunsi Laanch.

Table 4: Appearance, style and mannerism of respondents

	Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Appearance	Very feminine	12	60	60
	Mostly feminine	05	25	85
	Somewhat feminine	03	15	100
	Equally feminine and masculine	00	00	00
	Somewhat masculine	00	00	00
	Mostly masculine	00	00	00
	Very masculine	00	00	00
	Total	20	100	
	Mannerism	Very feminine	11	55
Mostly feminine		06	30	85
Somewhat feminine		03	15	100
Equally feminine and masculine		00	00	00
Somewhat masculine		00	00	00
Mostly masculine		00	00	00
Very masculine		00	00	00
Total		20	100	

When asked about mannerism, style and appearance 100 percent of respondents revealed that people consider their mannerism, style and appearance as feminine rather than masculine. Respondents themselves also feel comfortable in feminine character rather than masculine one. It is noteworthy to mention all respondents were born as males. Most of the respondents want to spend as much time in a female role as possible, but social setup of our society does not allow it.

Mal [17] argues most people experience their gender identity as correlating to, or in line with, their physical sex. For a trans person, however, there is a conflict between one's physical sex and one's gender identity as a man or a woman. Female-to-male transsexual people are born with female bodies but have a predominantly male gender identity. Male-to-female transsexual people are born with male bodies but have a female gender identity. Many, but not all, transsexual people undergo medical treatment to change their physical sex through hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgeries. At least one in every 2000 children is born with a sexual anatomy that mixes male and female characteristics in ways that make it difficult, even for an expert, to label them male or female. Although no one is ever born with two full sets of genitals, male and female, some intersexed infants may have ambiguous genitalia, such as a penis that is judged "too small" or a clitoris that is judged "too large." The "unusual" growth of a feminine boy or masculine girl is not tolerated in schools, family, and society where the informants often encountered a hostile environment for incompatible sex-gender roles and attitudes. They often experienced loneliness and abusive treatment. Unable to adapt within hostile civic environments, most became reluctant to continue schooling. Influenced by predominant norms and values of society and societal "decorum," their human dignity and self-esteem were diminished. They feel themselves worthless and unfit to society searching a place where they live peacefully. Therefore they want to leave their family. This decision of leaving home was finalized when they became closely associated with feminine male friends where they were fit psychologically, sexually, and socially. At the time of their dubious feeling, they cannot accept their gender differentiation properly. Due to mental stress, some of them attempted suicide where others get mental satisfaction. It was observed that respondents are more comfortable with female gender, they have changed their names to feminine names and they also revealed by doing this they feel happy and get a preferred gender identity when they are addressed using their feminine name. They associated their gestures, style, walking, and mannerism with feministic character.

Table 5: Transgenders in family

Ever scolded by your parents for being transgender.	Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
	Never	02	10	10
	Once or twice	04	20	30
	Sometimes	05	25	55
	Often	03	15	70
	Very often	06	30	100
	Total	20	100	
Your family discriminates you related to your health and nutrition.	Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
	Agree	13	65	65
	Disagree	03	15	80
	Or neutral	04	20	100
	Total	20	100	
Who is most supportive to you in your family?	Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
	Mother	05	25	25
	Father	01	05	30
	Sister	03	15	45
	Brother	01	05	50
	Any Other	03	15	65
	No One	07	35	100
	Total	20	100	

Analysis of data, shows that majority of respondents were scolded by parents because of being transgender i.e., 30 percent scolded very often, while 15 percent often scolded by parents and 25 percent scolded sometimes. 20 percent of respondents revealed that they were scolded once or twice where as 10 percent were never scolded by parents. Furthermore when asked about the discrimination related to health and nutrition, vast majority of 65 percent respondents agreed that they are being discriminated, while as 15 percent disagree and 20 percent respondents were neutral in their opinion. Besides 25 percent respondents argued that mothers are most supportive to them within family, where as 15 percent had sisters most supportive, 5 percent had father and 5 percent respondents had brother supportive. Majority of respondents 35 percent revealed that no one supports them and 15 percent respondents find friends, peers, boyfriends etc.

who provides helping hand and support to them. It was observed that almost all respondents were subjected to discrimination, harassment and torture within the families which is considered safest place otherwise for a person to live. Fearing patriarchal dominance, mothers often persuaded and pressurized sons with effeminate behaviour to change without understanding the underlying causes. Such instances pushed them to the corners and forced them to repress their feelings, fearing rejection from their parents, siblings and relatives. It can be assumed in one way or the other transgenders faced problems of various types.

Table 6: Participation in Decision Making

Response/decisions family	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Frequently	02	10	10
Occasionally	05	25	35
or Never	13	65	100
Total	20	100	

The data in the present paper, highlights that 10 percent of respondents were frequently participating in decision making in all family matters. Respondents who were participating occasionally in decision making comprised 25 percent and 65 percent of respondents were never consulted while taking decisions in family matters. They were always ridiculed and avoided while taking decisions related to the family be it making decisions about the schooling, marriage of their children, purchasing property and other family related matters. They were always recalled that they are other and have no capacity to make decisions.

Table 7: Migration*

Causes	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Livelihood Opportunities	05	17.85	17.85
Disowned by Family	11	39.29	57.14
For Social Support and Acceptance	04	14.29	71.43
Harassment at native Place	05	17.85	89.28
Any other Reason	03	10.72	100
Total		100	

*Multi Responses

During the course of interview transgenders revealed various reasons to migrate from one place to other. It is pertinent to mention here all respondents were asked about migration irrespective of living with their biological families or not because it was found those respondents who were living presently with their biological families migrated earlier. The above table shows that 17.85 percent of the respondents migrated to other towns, cities or even states for livelihood opportunities, where as majority of respondents 39.29 percent migrated because they were disowned by their families. 14.29 percent respondents migrated to find social support and acceptance in other area mostly cities. Harassment at native place forced 17.85 percent respondents to leave their homes and 3 percent had other reasons to migrate. Due to harassment, violence and discrimination within and outside family most of the respondents prefer to leave their homes and places, to find peace of mind, job and social acceptance in other place. It was also observed majority of respondents were forced by their own biological families to leave home because of shame and stigma they are facing having transgender in their family.

Table 8: Sexual exploitation

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Never	02	10	10

once or twice	05	25	35
Sometimes	07	35	70
Often	04	20	90
very often	02	10	100
Total	20	100	
By whom;			
Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Father	00	00	00
Brother	01	05	05
Neighbor	05	25	30
Relatives	04	20	50
Any Other	10	50	100
Total	20	100	

When asked about whether they are being sexually exploited by someone or not, 10 percent were never exploited by anyone, where as 25 percent respondents were sexually exploited once or twice, another 35 percent were sometimes exploited and 20 percent were often exploited by someone besides 10 percent of respondents were sexually exploited very often. To the question by whom they were sexually exploited, 25 percent of the total respondents were sexually exploited by neighbours, 20 percent were sexually exploited by relatives while 50 percent were sexually exploited by other persons like friends, teachers, school mates and so forth besides 5 percent was sexually abused by their own brother. Hence, it is concluded that majority of transgenders experience sexual violence and almost all transgender individuals are sexually abused or assaulted at some point in their lives.

Table 9: Harassment, discrimination and violence at school*

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Did not attend school	09	25.71	25.71
Harassed or bullied by students	08	22.86	48.57
Physically assaulted or attacked by students	06	17.14	65.71
Harassed or bullied by teachers or staff	05	14.29	80
Physically assaulted or attacked by teachers or staff	04	11.42	91.42
Sexually assaulted or attacked by teachers or staff	03	8.58	100
Total		100	

*Multi responses

It was found that 25.71 percent of respondents did not attend school at all, while 22.86 percent were harassed and bullied by students. Physical assaulted or attack by students was reported by 17.14 percent respondents, where as 14.29 percent respondents were harassed or bullied by teachers or staff. 11.42 percent said that they were physically assaulted or attacked by teachers or staff and 8.58 percent respondents were sexually assaulted or attacked by teachers or staff. The researcher during the discussion found that the educational institutes were seen as place for humiliation, rejection, isolation and abuse by both teachers and students. They argued as soon as their identity of being a transgender gets

exposed they are subject to ridicule, bullying and discrimination and after that it becomes unfeasible for them to continue their studies. The school authorities including the teachers as well as parents did not encourage the transgenders studying in the schools only because of their gender identity.

Table 10: Various Health Issues*

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Hypertension	05	17.86	17.86
Stress/depression	07	25	42.86
Anxiety	05	17.86	60.72
Any other	06	21.42	82.14
Indifferent	05	17.86	100
Total		100	

*Multi Responses

Good health is very important for any person to carry out various roles effectively in society. In the present study, majority of the respondents as shown in above table complained of health issues. The data in the present study highlights 17.86 percent of respondents reported they were facing hypertension. 25 percent respondents suffer from stress/depression. Anxiety problem were reported by 17.86 percent respondents. Furthermore 21.42 percent respondents faced other health issues like back pain, physical weakness, illness and fatigue etc. And 17.86 percent respondents were indifferent in their opinion. The risk of health problems may increase due to larger social context as transgenders experience a relatively high degree of violence as well as abuse and often they are victims of hatred crimes due to the fear that transgender victims will be mistreated by law enforcement officers these often go unreported. Transgenders also face harassment, discrimination and victimization in health care settings. Kids who are recognized as transgenders were much more likely to have anxiety, depression and behavioural issues.

Table 11: Suicidal ideation or attempts

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Yes	05	25	25
No	09	45	70
No response	06	30	100
Total	20	100	
Attempts and ideation of suicide;			
Attempts/decides	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
1-2 attempts	03	15	15
Decides to commit suicide	06	30	45
Indifferent	11	55	100
Total	20	100	

On being asked about the suicide or ideation of suicide 25 percent of the respondents have attempted or thought of committing suicide because of being transgender, while 45 percent respondents said that they have not taken any suicidal

attempts and 30 percent respondents were non responsive to this question. Furthermore it is evident from the above table that 15 percent of the respondents have attempted suicide one to two times and 30 percent respondents said that they think of committing suicide, besides 55 percent respondents were indifferent in their opinion. It is noteworthy to mention due to socio-religious stigma attached to suicide majority of respondents were hesitant to divulge information with regard to suicide and they also said it is their fate to be a transgender. And it was also observed most of respondents were scared and confused to discuss about suicide. Traditionally committing suicide in our society is considered stigma and sinful act that is why most of the respondents either try to hide the truth or become indifferent about discussing the suicide.

Political participation of transgenders :

The apathy and discrimination of the general public, as well as their so called ‘democratically elected’ governments has reduced them to a life of penury, scratching out an existence by begging, prostitution or even crime on occasion [18]. In the 2009 general election, India's election committee denied three Hijras candidature unless they identified themselves as either male or female [20].

Table 12: Register to vote

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Registered	07	35	35
Not Registered	13	65	100
Total	20	100	

Regarding the political participations 35 percent respondents are registered to vote and 65 percent revealed that they are not registered to vote. It was observed that among respondents where were registered to vote a meager 10 percent respondents had voted so far that too in few elections and as a male member of family not as transgender they cast their votes. Rest majority of respondents are either not registered to vote or not interested in voting. It was also observed that none of the respondents take part in political activities reasons were cited that no political party is ready to accept us as transgenders and conflict nature of our state is also there in the minds of respondents. It can be concluded that majority of respondents are being excluded from political sphere of our society and are at a disadvantage as most of them are without voter cards.

Social Stigma

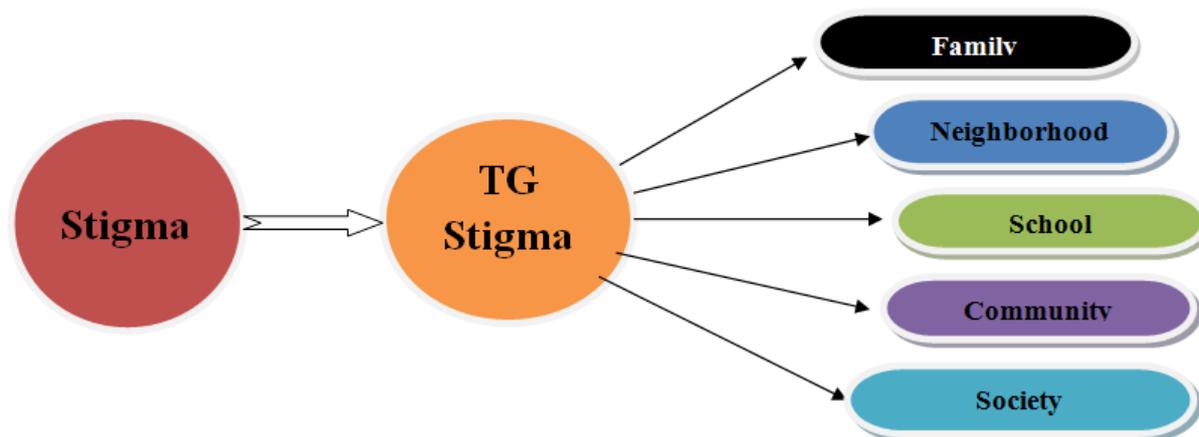


Fig. A; Thematic presentation of TG stigma

During the course of interview 100 percent of respondents, regardless of education, age, profession and income background stated that they had experienced stigma due to their transgender identity. It was observed during the conversation that respondents were stigmatized right from the family to the general society; there is no place in the society where transgenders do not face stigma. Respondents shared experience of stigma that varied from physical abuse (beaten with shoes, brooms, sticks, belts etc) to mental and psychological abuse like rejection and isolation. Similarly in schools and other educational institutes they face humiliation, rejection, Isolation, punishments and abuse by teachers, staff and students. Moreover transgender stigma also leads to unemployment and unequal treatment from the health care providers. They are being considered sex workers irrespective being a sex worker or not which is considered stigmatized in our society. Though there are few people who are well educated, modern people and those who had the knowledge about third gender treated them as good and equal to other members in the society yet acceptance of third gender is not very much approved by our society. Hence it can be inferred that vast majority of respondents, opined that stigma is attached to transgender identity, society looked down upon those who transgress the male-female dichotomy and social stigma in that transgenders are other and of easy morals. Therefore society negatively sanctions the transgenders by branding them as -bad.

Social organization and kinship system within transgender community :

The social life of transgenders is totally different from general human society. Their culture, rule and regulations, behavior is much different and unique. Though they don't live in large groups as in other parts of the country but they had maintained their own relationships. Guru-Chela relations are not much visible among transgenders in Kashmir region. In the studied area the societal picture is little different. They had maintained relationships similar to family system prevalent in general society and lived in small groups, and in each of these groups, there is a kinship hierarchy. They consist of mother-father, brother-sister, husband-wife and so on. But their social organization and kinship model revolves around feminine roles. Once a person joins a transgender family they have to rename with a female name. There are sisters, daughter-in-laws, aunts and grandmothers in the transgender family and every member is abiding by rules and regulations of the family. Transgenders generally elders adopted other transgenders as their kids mostly as their daughters by celebrating functions and invite other members of their own community. In these functions they serve local cuisine (wazwan) to guests besides singing and dancing (natchun ti gawun) is common in these functions. Most of the transgenders wear female attire in these functions. Transgenders said, "aes chi panun tamah yethai kaen kadaan". (We are enjoying our real identity by doing these things). There is acceptance of who they are which is not there in the main stream society. There are certain ceremonies which transgenders follow to welcome new member in the family:

1. Dupteh Travun (putting headgear): is a ceremony where in a transgender is accepted as a sister (benih) in the family. The new member is dressed like a female and a headgear is spread over the transgender. And other members present in the ceremony present gifts and cash to the new member.

2. Sether Thavun (using cotton): is another ceremony wherein transgender is accepted as daughter (koor). The mother uses cotton in place of her breasts to look like a woman. The mother (one who adopts other as her daughter) makes her daughter suck from the magnified cotton breasts which symbolizes the mother-daughter relation through breast feeding.

Conclusion and suggestions:

The findings of the study reveal that the transgenders in Kashmir are subjected to series of social constraints and hazards which have made their lives miserable. The transgenders are also economically marginalized sections of our

society since they are deprived of basic needs, infrastructure, education, properties, self employment opportunities, public employment opportunities and other economic resources. These transgenders are also deprived of basic health care facilities in general and advanced Medicare facilities in particular. They suffer from innumerable health hazards which have cost their lives and prosperity very dearly. They also suffer from several types of violations of human rights since they are excluded from the mainstream of national life. The findings of the study also revealed that transgenders of Kashmir region are subjected to several threats which have impeded their progress. They were denied of civic identities, amenities and facilities; wanted to live a normal life by obtaining financial assistance and moral support from the government and society; transgenders wanted to live with social dignity and economic independence. The study accentuates that transgenders need all round support for meaningful sustenance in the modern society. The government and other stakeholders should develop a sense of conscience and empathy towards the sexual minorities and prepare grounds for making transgender community free from violence, discrimination, exploitation and other oppressive features at all levels of the modern society.

Transgenders need to believe in them, they need to believe that things would change but not as the way they think. Transgenders are having very good physical and mental strength, hence they can think of engaging themselves in socially acceptable business activities. They should not take revenge to punish the society, because the society is not at all responsible for their misfortune in born. When they involve themselves in socially accepted business activities with social consciousness the society will be ready to recognize them. When they come out from doing petty jobs and begging and involve in socially accepted business practices they will get public support, sympathy and co-operation. When they have self confidence and mental courage they will get material prosperity and will get the respect from the society.

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