

Sensitivity of North Indian Adults towards Transgender

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Abstract: Being transgender customarily means someone who has transitioned from the typical gender that person has been associated with because of the incongruous body type they were born with, with respect to the gender that they feel they belong to. Society does not only consist of the majority of the sections of people that are cisgender citizens of the society but minorities just as well, are a necessary part of society. Many provisions are being brought to bring them to the mainstream society by all four estates of democratic India, yet on the ground level, the people who identify themselves outside of the binary frame of gender are still not included without any hesitation or second thoughts. To prepare the people who are what the majority of society comprises of and to build an inclusive approach towards transgender people, it would certainly take a large amount of effort, but to know where do common people lie on a continuum of sensitivity towards the third gender is the real question. The current study represents how the members of the typical North-Indian society, have sensitivity to understanding the people who belong to the most recently legally recognized gender.

Keywords: Transgender, Gender Binary, Gender identity, Sensitivity

1. INTRODUCTION

Transgender is a terminology that denotes the meaning of person that have transitioned from the assigned gender during the time of birth to gender identity of their liking, it refers to many various social identities and related expression of the same (Billard, 2018). The people who place themselves outside the binary vision of society evidently experience many forms of hardships owing to their gender identity, when such should not be the case at all. Salvati et al, 2018 reported that how a person chooses to manifest one's gender could be the factor behind prejudice. Intra-community dissonance also exists among the transgender community if traditional roles are not adhered to. This shows that not only cisgender people but transgender among themselves also encounter exclusion and discrimination. This issue in itself is overriding. Many organizations and sectors are willing to incorporate people outside of the most prevalent contemporary gender binary frame but on ground reality are not ready to consider giving relaxations to bring equity into play considering these members of the society. As a society that has forgotten about these people for over 2 decades, it is not only our duty but also the need of the hour to give these people opportunities to become as much included as cisgender people are. Many major social institutions which play a very important role with regard to conforming to social norms are the ones often who discriminate between cisgender and the transgender members of the society. How often do people get to see, transgender people, sitting among cisgender in social settings such as a library, a cafeteria, or in the workplace, or even as a member of the family in family gatherings, etc? Society still has a long way to understand the prior said but what is crucial is to acknowledge and address that a very small portion of the society is sensitive and accepting toward the people who are transgender. Study executed by Factor and Rothblum in 2008 related to family relations and transphobia showed that children of the third gender were given less support compared to cisgender siblings and also had gone through harassment and discrimination more frequently. It is important to understand that gender given to a child when it is born may not actually be the gender that the child feels associated with, as they start to understand what exactly is the elucidation of gender. Grossman in 2005 described that trans people who demonstrate preferred gender identity from the foundational years are more frequent to be spurned by their families.

What stands in need of equity is an approach to make the current people acknowledge that the people belonging to trans-community just as well have the right to everything that a cisgender person already has and can exercise very easily. In order to accept these people, a true understanding of the third gender is crucial only then will the people would commiserate with and make efforts to uplift the transgender people in every deserved aspect of life.

2. METHODOLOGY

The given study is descriptive in nature. The total sample comprised 300 adults who were ranging in the age group of 18-50 years of which 165 identified themselves as females and 135 associated as males. The Snowball technique was used to collect the sample. The sample belonged to middle-class North-Indian families having an annual income between two to ten lakhs per annum (NCAER, 2022). The necessary background information was procured that entailed basic details

related to the respondents. The questionnaire used for the given study was self-formed by the investigator and was self-administered by the respondents. The data for the present study was collected remotely. After the collection, the data were categorized, coded, analyzed, and reported qualitatively. The percentage method has been adopted to present the data in the respective tables.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1.1 Sensitivity of North Indian Adults towards Transgender (Percentage)

S.No	Sensitivity of North-Indian Adults towards Transgender	Yes	No	Maybe
1.	Have you ever closely observed a person who identity themselves as transgender?	38.5	40	21.5
2.	Do you personally know any person who identifies themselves as a transgender?	19.2	70.8	10
3.	In your opinion, should the people belonging to transgender have the choice to identify their gender on their own?	89.2	9.2	1.6
4.	Do you empathize with their emotions keeping in mind the difficulties they face owing to their gender identity?	91.5	2.3	6.2
5.	Do you acknowledge the fact that they face large amount of social-exclusion?	91.5	1.5	6.9
6.	Do you feel moved by looking at the hurdles that people of third gender face in their life?	74.6	6.2	19.2
7.	Do you acknowledge that the life of individuals belonging to the third gender are not easy to live?	88.5	2.3	9.2
8.	Do you feel that people belonging to the third gender are stronger as they live under much stressful circumstances than most of the people?	78.5	2.3	19.2
9.	Would you agree to the statement that people belonging to the third-gender in general face many more difficulties in comparison to typical male/female individual?	86.2	3.1	10.8
10.	Do you feel the the people of third gender, in majority of cases experience lack of familial as well as social support?	88.5	2.3	9.2
11.	Do you feel discomfort when you notice the prevalence of discrimination and violence that takes place against the people of third gender?	84.6	3.8	11.5
12.	In your opinion, the currently existing Laws in India are at par concerning the social-justice with respect to the third-gender?	32.3	38.5	29.2
13.	Do you think that the people of third-gender get appropriate amount of health-care?	20	50.8	29.2

From table 1.1 it could be noted that 38.5 % of the respondents said that they have closely observed a transgender person whereas 40 % said that they have never observed any transgender person, about 21% are unsure about their answer. Approximately 19 % said that they know someone personally who is a transgender and 71 % said that they do not. Just about 90% percent of respondents thought that transgender persons should have the choice to choose their gender, sympathize with their emotions, and also acknowledge the fact that they face a large amount of exclusion. In the year 2014, a judgment was passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the favour of transgender people as they were now legally recognized as the third gender in India, yet many people as has been found in the present study, believe that these people should not have the choice to declare their gender on their own, although the number is in minority it certainly is an interesting fact.

The majority of the respondents were astonished when they look at the hurdles that people of the transgender face and that leading the life of such people is in fact not easy. Divan et al (2016) discussed phobia that is prevalent against trans people. It is one of the significant factors that is the culprit after the violence that takes place against the people belonging to transgender. The above is a major reason after many difficulties and hurdles that these people are punished with even though they are innocent.

78% people who participated in the study believed that the people of this gender are stronger as they have had to go through a lot that must have probably made them stronger mentally. 86 % of the respondents also feel that people belonging to the recently legally recognized gender have to face many more difficulties in comparison to cisgender people. 84% also believed that these people experience a lack of familial and social support. The results of the present study are in line with Grant et al. (2011) who outlined that due to a large amount of discrimination that is faced by these people, they are vulnerable to various life-threatening conditions and get a handful of opportunities to get educated as well as employment opportunities and a result of this quite often end up in poverty and homeless.

The majority of people feel discomfort when they acknowledged how much discrimination and violence is prevalent against transgender persons. Only 32 % of people thought that the existing laws in India are enough to serve social justice to the people of the third-gender and 38 percent answered no to the statement. A minority of the people said that the people of the third gender get an appropriate amount of health care, on the other hand, half of the respondents disagreed with, it whereas about 29 % said they are unsure about the answer. Divan (2016) mentioned that in order for trans people to properly and freely access healthcare, it could only be ensured when the services are provided in a manner where no discrimination and no stigma is attached and there's a cultured and educated environment. To carry through this, there should be provisions like the freedom to expression regarding gender and a strict zero-tolerance policy for misbehaving or a code of conduct against trans people. Possibly one of the major reasons that people of transgender are not able to access even adequate health care is because of homophobia even among the members of medical discipline and practitioners.

Table 1.2 Sensitivity of North Indian Adults towards Transgender (Percentage)

S.no	Sensitivity of North Indian Adults towards Transgender (Percentage)	Most	Least
14.	How would you like to describe yourself as trans-friendly person	24.6	2.3
15.	How much do you respect the people of third gender regardless of their demographic details?	63.8	3.1

Looking at the above table 1.2, the responses were collected on a continuum of 1-5 with one being most friendly to 5 being least friendly. It was concluded that the majority, i.e., 33.1 percent of respondents chose 3, meaning they were lying somewhere in between regarding friendliness. 24.6 % reported that they are extremely friendly and only 2.3 % said that they are least friendly towards transgender people. Sixty-three point eight percent of the subjects said that they very much respect the people of the third gender, and only 3 percent said that they respect the people of the third gender the least. When asked about the areas, that need the most improvement, to this, majority of the responses indicated that in the arena of employment opportunities as well as social inclusion the most efforts deserved to be put in followed by educational as well as legal provisions.

CONCLUSION

Although the majority of the subjects of the study responded positively towards many factors that are relatable to general life and well-being. A minority of the people still exist that are not friendly towards the third gender and who also believe that the people of this gender should not have the choice to select their own gender. The respondents also acknowledge the mixed forms of ill-behavior that the people of the third gender had to face, all the difficulties and lack of support from their families and the society, in general, affect the lives of these people. It could be the case that the majority of the society is open with regard to welcoming these people with some more provisions to make people familiarise cisgender people with the people of the third gender. However, still, a lot of sensitization and education are yet to be provided to make the society at large be receptive of the people of transgender. An effective course of action is yet to be determined including trans people in trans-friendly places, but it is crucial to make people be prevalent and a part of the wider society, one such example is to give the status of other background classes (OBC) to these people, the government of many states has had some service positions reserved specifically for the people of gender that are outside of the binary. In the larger picture, not just the government but other organizations which consider themselves an ally must start somewhere to actually include and encourage others as well to give dignified opportunities for these people to one day become just as much accepted without any discrimination and hesitation as cis-gendered people are.

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