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PROBLEMS OF THIRD GENDER IN MAHARASHTRA A STUDY FROM SOCIAL EXCLUSION TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

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ABSTRACT

Third gender community in India is an important part of society. Even, law can't deny their existence. We live in 21st century where human rights are assured and preserved for human beings except the third gender. Despite all constitutional guarantees, the Third gender is even denied to have their basic rights like Right to Dignity, Personal Liberty, Education, Freedom of expression etc. The present research paper deals with the problems, Third gender face in a developing country like India. The study focuses on the continuous denying equality and the continuous social distinction and apathy towards Hijras, who, because of their paradoxical sex identity, are marginalized. These individuals are generally denied their family and other social groups and experience various types of social exclusion. They are most frequently compelled into types of ritualized begging, forced into prostitution because they are refused adequate schooling, health care and job opportunities. The study also covers how the Third gender is excluded from the society and what the law and order is doing to convert that social exclusion into social inclusion.

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INTRODUCTION

Indian third gender community is often referred to as the Hijras who are strategically marginalized, abused, scorned and abominably ignored. The third genders have existed in every culture, race, class and religion since the inception of human life and it has been recorded and analyzed. The third genders are individuals of any age, sex whose personality, appearance, attitude, behavior or personal characteristics differ from stereotypes. However they are also the member of our society and certainly are born with the same equal rights like the other. Due to the different discrimination depending particularly on their gender, the community is one of the most disempowered and stigmatized groups in Indian society. Third genders can be categorized as neither male nor female; Nanda 1999. In India they are better known as Hijra. The term Hijra is derogatorily used in the Indian context, however a decent term Khwaja Sarai is used instead. Hijra used to be translated in English as "eunuch" or "hermaphrodite"; Nanda 1999. It can be said that individuals who are born with sexual deformity

(hermaphrodite or inter sexed) are known as Khusra (a genuine Hijra) and it is this identity, which Hijra strongly portray (Nanda, cited by Sharma, 2000; Ali, 2003; Riaz, 1996; Zafar, 2004). Hijra community claims the custody of child born with sexual deformity (Talwar, 1999; Sharma, 2000). According to Hijras they go for asking Wadhai (alms) on childbirth actually to confirm child's sexual identity. In case of sexual deformity, they claim the custody by declaring that the child belongs to them. However, the possibility of their taking away the child forcibly is remote. A person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or man. 'Gender' and the hierarchical power relations between women and men based on this are socially constructed, and not derived directly from biology. Gender identities and associated expectations of roles and responsibilities are therefore changeable between and within cultures. Gendered power relations permeate social institutions so that gender is never absent (Ostergaard, 1992). The value of the distinction between the terms 'sex' and 'gender' has been challenged more recently as 'sex' has also been seen to be socially constructed (Baden and Goetz, 1998). It means they differ in identity of about how men and women are supposed

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to be. They are also part and parcel of social order and have equal right in everything and in every resource that is available to all over the world. The third genders are different for the stereotype gender roles. Their gender makes them different and compelled to face discrimination in society. Despite of all the constitutional rights, they are denied to have their basic rights like Right to Personal Liberty, Freedom of Expression, and Right to Education, Empowerment, and Right against discrimination, exploitation and violence etc (Athreye Viji (2015). Since the late 20th century, some Hijra activists and Western non-government organizations (NGOs) have been lobbying for official recognition of the Hijras as a kind of "Third Sex" or "Third Gender," as neither man nor woman (Agrawal, 1997: 273–97). Adapting the Social Exclusion Framework to Hijras/TG women, one can understand how Third gender communities have been excluded from effectively participating in social and cultural life; economy; and politics and decision-making processes. This section uses this framework to illustrate the multiple forms of oppression faced by Hijras/TG communities (People's Union for Civil Liberties, Karnataka, 2001). The present paper deals with the third gender community, their problems including social exclusion and how the exclusion is getting changed into inclusion due to law and order.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in purposively selected area of Malad, Mumbai and Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. 221 third genders were selected proportionately from the selected area to know Problems of Third Gender in Maharashtra.

FINDINGS

Problems of Third genders: The Third genders belong to the marginalized group of the society, which faces legal, social, cultural and economic difficulties. The problems faced by the Third genders community in India include: discriminated in terms of psychological, physiological, education, employment, health, entertainment, legal aid and many more. They are disrespected in each and every aspect of life and are treated as a downtrodden community. Due to their paradoxical gender identity they are prone to struggle for social justice they are highly associated with child nabbing. The reason being they are looking for their kind in order to increase the strength of their community and once they are informed about a child with similar anomaly they nab the child from their parents if possible. They are then raised and nurtured in their environment and are trained to enter which ever profession their gurus decide. Never-ending unwanted attention from the public creates extreme levels of social discomfort amongst this community. They are teased and humiliated with belittling remarks. The third gender community is strategically excluded and pushed to the fringes of the society excluding them from participating in social, cultural and economic, political life and Lack of social security. The journey of Third gender community has to face many hardships right from birth till death, especially in a developing country like India where immense patriarchal influence is practiced and more importantly sex and gender together plays an important role in deciding a person identity, social role, lifestyle, occupation and status in the, it is definitely intimidating to make a place for a third sex.

Table 1. Social Problems faced by the respondents

S.N	Social Problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Lack of Social and cultural participation	98	44	VII
2.	Faced sexual harassment and exploitation	136	61	VI
3.	Deprived of social security	198	89	III
4.	Lack of Religious participation	76	34	IX
5.	Lack of legal Aid and protection	157	71	V
6.	There is denial of health services	193	87	IV
7.	There is stigmatization towards us	212	96	I
8.	Lack of acceptance from family members	209	95	II
9.	Lack of Political participation	87	39	VIII
S.N	Economic problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	People don't hire us for work	198	89.5	IV
2.	No sufficient bank balance	211	95.4	II
3.	No proper livelihood schemes	214	96.8	I
4.	High level of private debts	204	92.3	III
5.	No minimum wages received if hired for work	168	76.0	VI
6.	Lack of job opportunities	188	85.0	V
S.N	Psychological Problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Suffer depression	197	89.1	V
2.	Suffer Anxiety	218	98.6	II
3.	Prone to Hostility	192	86.8	VI
4.	Experience Social discomfort	209	94.5	III
5.	Alcohol abuse	218	98.6	I
6.	Chew Tobacco	156	70.5	VIII
7.	Have Suicidal tendency	206	93.2	IV
8.	Experience Family pressure	177	80.0	VII
S.N	Other problems	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Association with child nabbing	199	90.0	IV
2.	Associating with prostitution	217	98.1	II
3.	Experience Verbal and physical abuse	182	82.3	VI
4.	Calling names loudly in public	202	91.4	III
5.	Raped	79	35.7	IX
6.	Seen as downtrodden community	193	87.3	V
7.	People do act customary around them- stigmatized	213	96.3	III
8.	Rejection of entry in hotels, malls, theatres, shopping complexes	149	67.4	VIII
9.	Disrespected by people	219	99.0	I

Even though, apart from facing all problems, they are creating their own way and law and order are helping them in developing their community. The following points highlights the struggling journey of Third genders to become an inclusion part of India –

Socio-psychological problems faced by the respondents in Maharashtra

Social Problems: The above table expresses various problems faced by the third gender in their life. Even though the above-mentioned table is self-explanatory it is important to mention the major problems that have topped the chart like; stigmatization, lack of acceptance from family and deprivation of social security all these has negated the growth and development of this community. Stigma attached towards the third gender ultimately leads to social exclusion and they are pushed to the fringes of society. Knowing that hijras are carrying a stigma, being sexually deformed, this biological condition causes identity crisis for them. This condition of theirs, according to hijras themselves, makes their inclusion in culture very hard. The fear of stigma among the general population is so powerful that it not only pushes hijras out of their homes but also endangers the interactions of their relatives within the kinship ties and also hinders the development of fresh connections with others Sharma (2009). The stigma of third sex is perceived as an alien in the Indian society. The stigma does not make him an outsider for members of the society as such, but isolates him from his kinship and society as a whole. Therefore, he finds no room in the household and is therefore forced to seek a marginal agreement for his life. Hence this stigma is deeply attached with their family and they have no option but to leave home and stay with others of their kind (Sharma, 2009). This inability of acceptance from family members has left the third gender filled with anxiety, social discomfort and are prone to alcohol abuse are some of the highest ranking problems reported by the third gender.

Due to low socioeconomic status and continues harassment they are deprived of job opportunities, they lack social security schemes, they are highly in debt leaving them with no bank balance. With such poverty and distress they are forced to live in slums, forced into occupations like begging and prostitution. They are highly prone to rape and sexual harassment with lack of legal support. In other word they are living all by themselves and facing life as it comes. The community claims that the mainstream society has failed to understand their dilemma of sex and gender, culture, lifestyle, social structure, instead they have given this community numerous social labels like; criminal community, associating with child nabbing and prostitution. The Third gender community however, remains an overlooked component of our society. Despite having apparent endocrine dysfunction, there has been no systematic effort to evaluate, and enhance their endocrine health.

Suggestions

There is an urgent need to reform the third gender community of India. Reforms are required to ensure that the third gender of India is properly justified and are able to live their life freely.

The following suggestions can be considered for the betterment of the community –

The Government and Society must plan and adopt integrated strategies. Although strategies were formulated, they are poorly enforced. There should be a focused strategy to providing protective shields for their issues. Legal and law enforcement schemes need to be empowered and sensitized on problems relating to the Third Gender group. It is necessary to take criminal and disciplinary intervention against the individuals who perform violence against them. A scheme should be created where advice centres and cause and intervention centres for the relatives of the Third Gender Individual who end up neglecting, abandoning and abusing their children because of their biological distinction. Increasing and adequate application of free legal aid must be assured. Schools and universities should set up unique methods of learning gender binary codes and formulating research materials that will assist raise different gender consciousness and play a helpful and promoting part in providing the third gender with good education and value system. It is necessary to ensure the provision of social rights. There is an immediate need to create (skilled and unskilled) professional training centres where multiple work possibilities can be accessed. There is a need to improve the economic stability of the community by setting up Liberal loan services, and economic support must be guaranteed to begin their profession as an entrepreneur or businessperson. There is an immediate need for dedicated physicians to research and examine and treat the Third Gender Community, also unique and distinct health care strategies in all personal and government hospitals and clinics need to be formulated and conveyed and communicated in all private and public hospitals and clinics. Nevertheless a comprehensive sex-education program should be incorporated in school curriculum and college syllabus to aware students at ground level.

Conclusion

Third gender individual is born with a severe biological alteration, which makes them speak and look differently from the traditional sex of males and females. Having considered this due to this biological alteration and society's inability to accept and learn about gender binary spectrum they are excluded from society. They face discrimination, experience different treatment, and receive undue attention in their each and every phase of life. Law and order are trying very hard to socially include the third gender in society. There is an urgent need to transform and include this community as a part and parcel of society.

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