

A study of Attitude of Teachers, Parents, Corporate Community and Transgender Community of Mumbai Towards Transgender Inclusion

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Abstract:

When you meet human being the first distinction you make is, 'male or female?' and you are accustomed to make that distinction with unhesitating certainty.
-Sigmund Freud

In the recent past in India, the Supreme Court created history on the landmark judgment of transgender community by giving them the status of "third gender". The apex court said that trans genders will be allowed admission in educational institutions and employment in offices on the basis that they belonged to the third gender category. It would be the duty of states and the Centre to devise social welfare schemes for third gender community and run a public awareness campaign to erase social stigma. The Supreme Court said the states must construct special public toilets and departments to look into their special medical issues. The apex court also added that if a person surgically changes his/her sex, then he or she is entitled to keep her changed sex and cannot be discriminated. The bench clarified that its verdict pertains only to eunuchs and no other sections of society like gay, lesbian and bisexuals who are also considered under the umbrella term 'transgender'. The bench said they are part and parcel of the society and the government must take steps to bring them in the main stream of society.

The Supreme Court declared that schools have their duty to educate children of third gender in general education classrooms. Inclusion means all types of students in school, regardless of their strengths or weakness in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students, teachers, and supportive staff.

Inclusion now a days has a wide coverage which takes cogence of not only the people with physical and other disabilities but also of people belonging to down trodden class to transgender community. Keeping this in mind the present study focuses not only on the educational aspects but equally on social, health, political aspect of inclusion of transgender community in specific.

Transgender Inclusion is no more a debate now; their inclusion is implemented by Government.

But we need to ask ourselves....

- How much equipped the present existing system is to face transgender inclusion?
- How much do we focus on these issues while educating and Training to our upcoming students and teachers?
- Are we doing enough to create general awareness among the parents, children & citizens?
- Do we develop enough skills in our existing and future teachers to face the challenges of transgender inclusion?
- Are we doing enough to develop positive attitude for the change to be accepted?
- Are we mentally ready to build the bridges between the genders?
- Is the school curriculum fair enough towards all genders?
- What input is expected from teachers training institutions?
- What Strategies are needed to be developed for inclusive class rooms, is truly "A challenge for future Teachers"

Keywords: Transgender, Eunuchs, Hijra, Attitude, Inclusion,

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I. FULL LENGTH PAPER

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The research in 2005, 'Attitudes Toward Homosexuality at Private Colleges By, Christopher L. Medley, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, investigated attitudes towards gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people from the point of view of heterosexual males who attend private institutions. This study was viable due to its ability to provide additional research concerning college males' attitudes from a private college environment. Private colleges were a limited institutional type found in the research. Males with conservative views were found to have a higher level of negativity than their liberal and moderate counterparts.

In 2007 Tessa M. Johnson Greeley and Ashley A. investigated College Students' Attitudes toward LGBT Individuals at University of Wisconsin. The study reported attitudes toward LGBT individuals by surveying 50 university students in five different majors on campus. It was hypothesized that males, in general, would have a more heterosexist attitude toward this community. Results indicated that majors with a higher male population supported the hypothesis and were more heterosexist than other majors overall.

In 2009, 'The Trans research review' by Martin Mitchell and Charlie Howarth Equality and Human Rights Commission Research report 27; examined several key areas of transsexual life. Each of these are summarized as, Attitudes towards trans people, Trans people life style, crime, Harassment and the justice system, Housing, Education, Economic status and employment, Health and social care, Media, leisure and sport, Community and citizenship, Families and relationships.

A peer ethnography study was undertaken in a major city in Pakistan 2009, Understanding the context of male and transgender sex work using peer ethnography by M Collumbien, Centre for Population Studies, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London UK. 15 male and 15 transgender sex workers were trained as peer researchers to interview three peers in their network. Analysis was based on interviews with peer researchers as well as observation of dynamics during training and analysis workshops. The research revealed that, within the epidemiological category of biological males who sell sex, there are three sociologically different sexual identities: khusras(transgender), khotkis (feminized males) and banthas (mainstream male identity). The research concluded, to avoid imposing a "false clarity" on categorization of identity and assumed behavior, it is necessary to go beyond verbal accounts to document the variability of everyday reality.

In 2012 the research was conducted on 'Sexually Transmitted Infections and Risk Behaviors Among Transgender Persons (Hijras) of Pune' India. The objectives of this cross-sectional study were to determine the prevalence of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI) in Hijras (self-identified transgenders of South Asia), study associated risk factors, and compared the prevalence with that in heterosexual men and men having sex with men (MSM) in Pune, India, between 1993 and 2002. Study suggested considering the high HIV and STI burden, it is important to review current prevention strategies and stress the need to engage Hijra community members through appropriate targeted intervention programs.

A Technical Report - Mapping and Size Estimation of Hijras and other Transgender Populations in 17 States of India, 2012-13 was a study conducted under the aegis of NIE-ICMR, UNDP and NACO National Institute National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE, ICMR), Tamil Nadu. A total of 5821 TG sites were mapped in the 17 states. A total of 1664 (around 28.6%) were located in the rural areas and 4157 (around 71.4%) were located in the urban areas. Top five states which reported the highest number of total Hijras, or TG population were Uttar Pradesh (825), West Bengal (752), Odisha (696), Tamil Nadu (649) and Maharashtra (586). These five states collectively had about 60% of all the sites that were mapped in the 17 states.

II. RELEVANCE OF PRESENT STUDY

In almost all the countries of the world in general and developing countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal etc. in particular the percentage of people belonging to various third gender are constantly increasing.

The Supreme Court declared that schools have their duty to educate children of third gender in general education classrooms. Inclusion means all types of students in school, regardless of their strengths or weakness in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students, teachers, and supportive staff.

"Inclusion involves all kinds of practices that are ultimately practices of good teaching. What good teachers do is to think thoughtfully about children and develop ways to reach children".

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Breasts and long hair- is this a woman?

Beard and moustache- Is this a man?

But what of the soul, which is neither man nor women?

-Devera Dasimayya

III. OBJECTIVES

- To study the awareness and attitude of Parents, Teachers and Corporate Community of Mumbai towards Transgender Inclusion.
- To evaluate and analyze the awareness and attitude of Parents, Teachers and Corporate Community of Mumbai Towards Transgender Inclusion"
- To compare the awareness and attitude of Parents, Teachers and Corporate Community of Mumbai Towards Transgender Inclusion
- To study the awareness and attitude of Transgender community towards their own inclusion in mainstream society.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A Self-prepared questionnaire based on four Parameters for assessment of attitude was used to check the awareness of parents, teachers and corporates about transgender community and their life style. Interview sessions were conducted with parents, teachers and corporates to seek their attitude towards transgender employment. The sample for the study included people from Mumbai and above the age 25 only. The evaluation of attitude, analysis and comparison of data was based on the parameters: Domestic Help attitude, Workplace attitude, and Social interaction attitude, Life style

attitude of parents, teachers and corporates towards transgender Community. The study needed to know personal opinions and experiences regarding government policies and legislations made to favor the transgender community as that would have provided a clearer idea of their attitude as compared to quantitative data obtained through surveys and polar questions. Thus, the researchers decided that qualitative data would work best for this study. The method chosen for data collection was interviewing. The interviews were in-depth and one-on-one. The researchers had a pre-determined questionnaire which included open-ended questions probing personal details, opinions, experiences and their message to the society.

V. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Domestic Help attitude: It was inferred that 92% respondents are not yet ready to keep Eunuchs as Driver, Cook, Sweeper, Gardner, and Watchmen or Security Guard in their homes. 6% respondents had no apprehension and only 2% people said they are comfortable keeping them as domestic help.

Workplace attitude: 85 % respondents replied they would be very uncomfortable with Eunuchs at work place, where as 12% were unbiased to the response and only 3% were comfortable, if they have eunuchs as subordinate.

Social interaction attitude: 88% respondents felt they would be very uncomfortable dealing with a eunuch as coach, baby sitter and Tutor for their child, Grand child or nieces & nephews. Whereas 85% felt they would not want their children to mingle with transgender. 80% felt they would not want eunuchs to live in their neighborhood or the society, 10 % people felt no concern and only 2% people considered no harm in having eunuch as baby sitter, coach or tutor or neighbor.

Life style attitude: 96% respondents disagreed that eunuchs are born to live in isolated remote and educating them would be a social and universal waste. 98% respondents were not aware about the legal rights of eunuchs.

Comparative analysis of three communities

Parental Attitude	Corporate Community	Teachers Attitude	Indifferent
65%	20%	10%	05%

VI. TRANSGENDER ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSION

The content analysis resulted in identification of seven themes observed throughout the transcripts. The comments under these themes were then noted down using coding and their meaning interpreted. The frequency of appearance of each theme showed their prevalence in the transgender participants' perceptions and opinions.

The resultant observations were 42 comments under the theme change in societal attitude, 38 under need for social acceptance, 11 under knowledge of NGOs working for the transgender community, 8 under the theme lack of job and

educational opportunities, 5 comments each under lack of knowledge of inclusive education policies and that of inclusion in employment, and 4 under lack of knowledge of legal rights for the transgender community.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND INFERENCES

- Researchers analyzed that attitude of Parents, Teachers and Corporate Community of Mumbai towards Transgender Inclusion is evidently negative.
- People are yet not mentally ready for social acceptance of transgender community
- People are not aware about legal implementation of transgender inclusion.
- People do not want even their children to be mingling with eunuchs.
- The study showed that while many members of the transgender community are ready to take a step ahead and work with cisgenders, there are still some of them who prefer continuing with the community's regular line of work – prostitution and begging.
- The study also shows that the condition of transgenders has changed since the post Independence era and they are more welcome in the society than they ever were.
- All the interviewees made it clear that lack of government moves towards their fair treatment did not bother them as much as the lack of acceptance from society did.

This research study was a small attempt to put the thoughts together to find out some reasonable and genuine ways for the successful inclusion of transgender in the Indian schools, colleges and offices.

Researchers concluded that now in spite of governmental support and official declaration of their legal rights, it had been observed in general that transgender community yet had not been accepted by the common man. The positive and encouraging attitude of people towards transgender community and their inclusion still seems to be far from its celebration. It is important for all to recognize their individual biases, prejudices, and opinions and not allow these to interfere in their social set up. Since teachers are the primary educators of children, the need is imperative for teachers to be more educated on the issues regarding transgender people.

Transgenders still do face rejection in employment. Firms turn down transgenders irrespective of their qualifications and potential. Government jobs are still not as easily available to transgenders as they are to the general public. Education may be refused by the family due to their embarrassment of the child's gender identity. The society's attitude also contributes to this refusal.

The transgender community is not properly educated about their legal rights and the provisions made or them to be able to get education and jobs. They are completely unaware of government policies on inclusion. They have very little idea about the Transgender Bill and do not hold the government responsible for their poor socio-economic conditions and marginalization. Transgenders need more equality in terms of social life, and equality in other spheres of life will follow.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

The researchers by throwing light on this issue intended to collect the information from the Parents, teachers and Corporate Community of Mumbai to come-up with some of the general possible strategies which would construct a successful pathway to Inclusion of transgender community.

However, the efforts for remedial measures and the policy frame work to combat this problem yet seems to be insufficient and inadequate. The teachers, society, schools and parents all will have to play their role for the successful implementation of this thoughtful process of inclusion.

As education plays the vital role, it needs to be provided in many forms, such as awareness of the issue in professional development workshops, seminars or conferences and on the job, training could help to educate and sensitize people. If educators have a better understanding of transgender issues, they are better able to teach and relay the needed information to help students achieve acceptance. Acceptance and rejection are observed and learned at an early age. So, it's more important for teachers, parents, helpers, educators and corporates to have unblemished and flawless information on transgender issues.

Inclusion of transgender community would be considered a success if mainstream schools develop a positive attitude towards the educational needs and inclusion of transgender community and increase access through simple adaptations. Apart from a general awareness in society, what needs to be done is parents, peers and teachers' preparation for acceptance. Only thus can the diversity of the human condition be celebrated.

Let us all think what we should do to bring about the change in our own attitude as we are nevertheless far away from the celebration of gender equality.

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