

Transgender: A Discourse on Quest for Identity with Special Reference to *Shakti Astitiv ki*.

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Human society is a complex organization of human relationships. The implications of such a structural conception are that the human being act and interact with each other in accordance with their role they play. Gender Identity refers to the individual's internal feelings and experiences of gender, which may or may not resemble with the sex assigned at birth. 'TRANSGENDER' is an umbrella term used to describe anyone whose gender identity does not match with the assigned birth gender. Transgender is a group whose identity is beyond the notion of conventional gender structures.

The present paper attempts to delve deep into sociological positions of transgender in the society i.e their role definitions with in family and within society. Being belonging to their category is treated as a curse to a family and they are treated at the margins within the society. Their marginalized role looking at their lives in the society.

Keywords: *Transgender, Gender, Gender identity, Subaltern identity.*

All societies assign adult role based on sex which is emphasized in the process of socialization. For many people, the term sex and gender are interchangeably. However, although sex and gender are closely related, there is a subtle difference between the two. Sex refers to biological status as male and female. It includes physical attributes such as sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, internal reproductive structures and external genitalia. Gender is term that is often used to refer to ways that people act, or feel about themselves, which is associated with boys/men and girls/women. While aspects of biological sex are the same across different cultures, aspects of gender may not be. Transgender is the state of one's "gender identity" not matching one's "assigned sex"

The most accepted definition currently for the term transgender seems to be "people who were assigned a gender, usually at birth and based on their genitals, but who feel that this is a false or incomplete description of them" (USI LGBT Campaign Transgender Campaign. 2007) it is often used as an umbrella term to mean those who defy rigid, binary gender constructions, and who express or present a breaking and/ or blurring of culturally prevalent/ stereotypical gender roles. Transgender persons usually live full or part time in the gender role opposite to the one in which they were born. In contemporary usage, "transgender is used to describe a wide

range of identities and experiences including but not limited to: pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexual people: male and female cross-dressers (sometimes referred to as "transvestites", "drag queens" or "drag kings"); intersexes individuals; men and women, regardless of sexual orientations, whose appearance or characteristics are perceived to be gender a typical the term transgender does not imply any specific form of sexual orientation; transgender people may identify as heterosexual, homosexual or as bisexual.

The term Tran's man refers to female-to-male (FtM) transgender people, and Tran's woman refers to male-to-female (MtF) transgender people. Some transgender individuals experience their gender identity as incongruent with their anatomical sex and may seek some degree of sex reassignment surgery, take hormones or undergo other cosmetic procedures. Others may pursue gender expression (masculine or feminine) through external self-presentation and behavior.

There is growing evidence that the transgendered condition is due to a person's nature rather than the nurture received early in life. Scientific evidence has shown that certain brain-structures in the hypothalamus (the BSTCs region) determine each person's core gender feelings and innate gender identity. Early theories were based on the belief that gender is learned behavior. People believed that transgenderism was lifestyle choice and this belief led to the social stigma attached to the term. Some of the psychological factors which have been linked with transgenderism are parental rejection, absence of father during childhood, having emotionally-distant father, peer pressure, perfectionism, media images, self-rejection and poor self-esteem which may be reinforced by hostile reception from society.

Most transsexual men and women suffer from psychological and emotional pain due to the conflict between the gender identity and their original gender role an anatomy. They find their only resources are to change their gender role and undergo gender reassignment therapy. This may include taking hormones or having sex reassignment therapy. Unlike sexual orientation transgenderism- technically "gender identity

disorder” is still deemed a mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association.

Bilodeau (2003) introduced a model of transgender identity development that closely mirrors D’Augelli’s (1994) framework for homosexual individuals. There are six processes that transgender work through on the way to a healthy identity:

1. Existing a traditionally gendered identity-involves recognizing that one is gender variant.
2. Developing a personal transgender identity- focusing on knowing one self in relation to the gender variance.
3. Developing a transgender offspring- coming out to family member and reevaluating this familial relationship.
4. Developing a transgender intimacy status-establishing intimate personal and emotional relationship.
5. Entering the transgender community- becoming involved politically and socially with transgender communities.

These models remove some of the stigma that has come with transgender research and turned the focus back on to the transgender person as an individual. It validates what person is feeling and the many areas they must endure change in order to establish a healthy gender identity. Historically, transgender communities have attempted to appropriate (with verifying degrees of success) rituals, rites, 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, transgender 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, cross-dress, and display other forms of transgender behaviour. Nevertheless they were often segregated and excluded from many occupations and community practices, and even traded as slaves.

The *Hijra*, and alternative gender role in India is culturally conceptualized as neither man nor woman. *Hijras* are viewed with ambivalence in Indian society and are treated with a combination of mockery, fear and respect. Although *Hijras* have an auspicious presence, they also have an inauspicious potential (Nanda, 2002). Their traditional occupation is to collect payment for their performances at weddings and the birth of a male child; today they also perform for the birth of girl children, collect alms from shopkeepers, act as tax collectors, and even run for political office. In terms of their gender identity and role, “Kothis” like

Hijras are transgendered persons who identify themselves with the feminine gender. However, whereas *Hijras* often settle identity alternating between the masculine roles of the husband demanded in the marriage relationship and feminine role in the same-sex relation outside.

There is an interrelation between our thinking, feeling and behaviour or the psychological realm and what happens in the social realm which includes family, society, culture and norms. This interrelation is called psychological. This imbalance can have an impact on individuals thinking, emotions and behaviour and can lead psychological problems like an anxiety, low self-esteem, guilt etc which can affect well being and quality of life. Psychological symptoms are the manifestations of psychological problems. Societies are very harsh on gender- variant people. In the serial *Shakti Astiva ke Ehsas ki*, the main protagonist Somya is a transgender and she time and again has to face various hurdles in her life and have lost family, home and family support. Transgender children may be abused at home, at school or in their community.

A Questionnaire contain 18 question were prepared based on the information collected from an informal interview with a transgender. Being a preliminary study, it was decided to include question which were open ended. Analysis of the data revealed the following information which gave some insights about the living conditions of the transgendered person and their problem. These are the following conclusions.

1. About one fourth of the sample lived with their parents and the rest of them lived with their community.
2. Many of them did not have any relationship with their family. Non acceptance by parents was an important step in alienating them from society.
3. It was interesting to know that 50% of them realize their differences in their childhood and the rest of them realized their gender variant feelings in their adolescence.
4. More than half of the sample experience a kind of loneliness.

The present study investigated the psycho social problems of transgender and the attitudes held by people towards transgender. The present study threw light on the problem faced by the transgender to prostitutions and beggary. The negative attitude held by people can help us to understand the barriers faced by them in gaining social acceptance. Future awareness programmed should focus on removing these barriers. Better understanding of the problems and challenges faced by transgender will help in bringing change in policies and give them their due rights. Thus, study also shows how awareness program can make a shift in attitudes towards transgender. More programs must be planned especially for the students since it will sensitise them to the problems of marginalized group like transgender.

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