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Transgender Students' Experiences of Bullying: Some Case Study Evidence

* Afira Aslam

† Yaar Muhammad

‡ Laiba Nasir

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Abstract: This phenomenological case study research explored the bullying experiences of transgender students in educational institutes. For this purpose, two participants were selected through snowball sampling who had a minimum of 16 years of education from different educational institutes in Pakistan. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and a within-case analysis was done. Both transgender students identified their gender as contrary to the gender assigned at birth, which affected them adversely, and they had to go through different experiences and issues as compared to cisgender students. Due to gender identity, transgender students faced different types of bullying (verbal, non-verbal, physical; and sexual) in different places (classes or corridors, playgrounds, washrooms, hostels; and social media or cyberspace), which led to serious consequences (depression, hiding gender identity, missing school or classes; and others). Implementation of training to sensitize students and teachers about transgender students to promote inclusivity, equity, diversity, and indiscrimination is recommended.

Introduction

According to American Psychological Association (APA), 'transgender' refers to people whose gender identity or role is nonconforming from the same which was assigned to them at their birth (APA, 2015). Transgender students are highly marginalized in educational institutes. These students experience a hostile environment at educational institutes. (Johns, Poteat, Horn, & Kosciw, 2019; Sullivan & Urraro, 2019). According to data, these students go through excruciating experiences of being physically, verbally, and sexually assaulted, and not only this, but they are also threatened with violence against them at educational institutes (S Rankin, WJ Blumenfeld, GN Weber, & SJ Frazer, 2010). It is also reported that transgender students are more victimized and marginalized than lesbian, gay, and bisexuals and their needs are also different from LGB students (Garvey, Taylor, & Rankin, 2015). Transgender students who are marginalized may go through

adverse academic and mental health effects, facing inappropriate transgender jokes, least inclusion, social rejection, isolation, invisibility perception, and insufficient support services (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Hurtado, Carter, & Kardia, 1998; Meyer, Ouellette, Haile, & McFarlane, 2011; Wolff, Kay, Himes, & Alquijay, 2017). Not only this, but it is also observed that transgender people also suffer due to discrimination while recruiting for jobs and at the workplace too, harassment, hate crimes against them, and getting no proper medical or mental health facilities (Meier & Labuski, 2013). Their mental health is also a matter of concern as these students are more likely inclined to self-harm, such as suicide attempts or thoughts about committing suicide and self-injury (Efrigg, Bieschke, & Locke, 2011).

According to Grossman and D'Augelli (2006), between the ages of 15-21, transgender people go through emotions of unworthiness and shame due to their gender identification, which has a substantial impact on their minds. At birth, they

* MPhil. Scholar, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

†Assistant Professor, Government College Women University, Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: Yaar.muhammad@gcwus.edu.pk (Corresponding Author)

‡ Research Associate, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

are assigned different gender than what they actually identify themselves with. In adolescence, they are already going through a crisis of gender identity, and at that time, instead of being counselled, they suffer bullying and get the least support from family, peers, and teachers at their school or college. Transgender students are more likely (than other sexual and gender minority students) to face bullying, discrimination, and harassment, and their negative experiences are amplified when their gender identity is known or suspected ([James et al., 2016](#)). At such a time and transition period, they need more support at their educational institutes. According to the research, a positive school climate benefits and supports students who identify as sexual or gender minorities ([Bradshaw, 2019](#); [Dessel, Goodman, & Woodford, 2017](#); [Steck & Perry, 2018](#)). But often, this is not the case.

Transgender people are living life as a marginalized community in Pakistan. They have the least access to education, and even if they muster up the courage to go to educational institutes, they face bullying, harassment, discrimination, and look down upon as lowly creatures. Therefore, the focus of the current qualitative research study is to inquire into the lived experiences of transgender students at educational institutes. For this, a question is posed to be consistent with the aims of qualitative research. Moreover, it is advised for qualitative researchers to avoid developing a hypothesis lest it may lead to bias in developing causal conclusions. This qualitative research study seeks to answer the following question: What are transgender students' experiences regarding education at educational institutes.

In Pakistan, they are just 0.005 per cent of the total population, according to the latest population census in 2017 ([Tribune, 2017](#)). Their population is calculated to be just more than 10 thousand. This was the first time the Government of Pakistan bothered to count them in the population census in Pakistan; otherwise, they were ignored to be counted as human beings. There are more than ten thousand transgender people in Pakistan. But unfortunately, their condition is not very good compared to other normal genders, and they are marginalized. Currently, they face so many hurdles and negative attitudes from society, and especially they face difficulties in access to education

([Mehmud & Idris, 2019](#)). They are already living in Pakistan's plight, and it is more difficult to get an education in such circumstances. They are a very rare number of transgender students in Pakistan, and it is very difficult to locate them among the people who are already a minority in Pakistani society.

The public education system does not reflect a consistently equitable experience for an increasingly diverse student population ([Anjum, Muhammad, & Rauf, 2021](#); [Yasmin, Muhammad, & Siddiqui, 2021](#)). [Oldcorn \(2016\)](#) found that although schools profess to create an inclusive and rich environment that supports all students, they implement policies and practices that conflict with this goal. For example, in the US context, [Kosciw, Clark, Truong, and Zongrone \(2020\)](#) reported that 68.5% of National school climate survey (NSCS) participants indicated that their schools engaged in practices and policies that separated students by gender or perceived gender. Over 40% of the respondents indicated that they avoided such spaces because they felt unsafe in those spaces because they felt unsafe there. Individuals who identify themselves as transgender perceive a disconnect between their gender identity and the gender they were assigned at birth. Of all survey participants, transgender students were the most likely to avoid gender-segregated spaces such as locker rooms and restroom facilities ([Kosciw et al., 2020](#)). The NSCS found that 42.1% of transgender and gender nonconforming students were prevented from using their asserted name or pronouns. As a result, many avoided school functions altogether ([Kosciw et al., 2020](#)). These findings suggest that some students and student groups do not perceive the school environment to be inclusive.

Transgender students were particularly at risk when their gender identity was known to others at school. This leaves transgender individuals 52% more likely to attempt suicide ([James et al., 2016](#)). Research has depicted a grave and urgent problem, suggesting that hostile school environments have a strong negative impact on the well-being of transgender youth ([Aragon, Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2014](#); [Kosciw et al., 2020](#); [Michael, Merlo, Basch, Wentzel, & Wechsler, 2015](#)). Researchers have been studying various student groups for decades, seeking to understand the interrelationship of demographic variables such as

educational institute climate, curriculum, and educational outcomes. Pakistan has major inequities at the very core of its public education system. Tillman and Scheurich (2013) suggested an increase in research aiming to correct the apparent discrepancies between demographic groups, recommending that researchers study the policies and procedures that undermine educational equity for historically marginalized individuals.

Included in these policies and procedures are flaws in the research process itself, which has not represented all student demographics equally. [Marshall and Oliva \(2017\)](#), explained that researchers had studied ethnicity, language ability, socioeconomic status, and disability more extensively than gender identity. Neglecting the latter implies that sexual and gender minority students are nonexistent or less worthwhile to study. This disproportionality reflects cisnormativity, defined as the societal assumption that gender identity corresponds with the sex assigned at birth ([Brill & Kenney, 2016](#)). Cisnormativity is evident both in schools and in society at large.

Even though diversity, equality, and inclusivity are goals of educational policy in Pakistan, transgender students appear to struggle in the school environment. Not enough research has explored how to unravel the systemic inequities embedded within the educational system. And how marginalized communities like transgender people face barriers during their educational journey. [Kosciw et al. \(2020\)](#) found how transgender students feel about themselves and about school. Therefore, it is imperative to know what transgender students experiences regarding gender identity, bullying, and support and how educational institutes' policies and practices affect these.

There is little information about above mention phenomenon. This study is designed to explore this phenomenon and fill the gap in the literature. Understanding the perceptions and lived experiences of transgender students regarding transgender bullying, gender identity, support, and educational policies of educational institutes in Pakistan. This may help school administrators and educators to provide support systems for this marginalized community's representation at educational institutes.

The purpose of this research study is to explore lived experiences of transgender students in educational institutes. This purpose was divided into the following objectives:

- 1) To explore the bullying experiences of transgender students
- 2) To explore gender identity experiences of transgender students
- 3) To explore the experiences of transgender students regarding educational institutes' policy
- 4) To explore experiences of support received by transgender students

Methods

The hermeneutic phenomenological case study method proved suitable for investigating lived experiences and views of two transgender students in educational institutes. The qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological design was appropriate for this study because it explored and described personal perceptions and experiences through reflection, which resulted in a description of the phenomenon that led to an understanding of the interpretation of the experience and led to a better understanding of the phenomenon ([Hani, Muhammad, & Mahmood, 2022](#)).

In this research study, the criterion sampling technique was used ([Patton, 2015](#)). Data were obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews with two participants in a one-on-one setting. Each interview was transcribed and recorded directly. The participants were able to select their usernames for this research. To improve validity, participants were able to review both the interview transcription and the research study before publication.

Interviews were semi-structured in format, and participants were individually interviewed at the mutually agreed location. An audio recording device was used to record the interviews with the permission of the participants. In addition, the interview guide was used to take notes whenever it was deemed necessary. Initially, interviews were recorded in the Urdu language, and participants also used Punjabi or Urdu derogatory terms, which are used to tease them. All interview recordings were transcribed and translated into the English language.

The analysis of data proceeded in two steps, employing inductive and deductive methodical procedures of qualitative data analysis: meaning condensation and theoretical interpretation of the interview text. First, ‘meaning condensation’ (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) of meanings and narratives found in interview transcripts was done. Second, a ‘theoretically informed reading’ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) of the interview transcripts was done. The transgender theory helped develop a theoretical interpretation of the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

Results

In this section, findings from the semi-structured interviews of two transgender students have been presented in the form of profiles—a useful method to analyze case study data (Arshad, Muhammad, & Qureshi, 2021; Pirzada, Muhammad & Mahmood, 2022). These were focused on gender identity, bullying, support, and educational institutions’ policy regarding transgender students.

Case 1: Faizi

The first participant is Faizi, whose name on the ID card is Fiazullah. This person prefers the pronoun ‘she’ for herself. Her age is 33, and currently, she is the last semester student of MPhil Urdu at Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. She has also served as a visiting faculty at a college. She is the first transgender who filed and won a case against PPSC (Punjab Public Service Commission) to fight for the right to apply for a government lectureship post (for which only male or female candidates could apply before).

Till Matric, she attended a government school in Toba Tek Singh. She was sent to school at the age of 5 in a private English medium school. In 7th, she was transferred to a government school, from where she did Matric. Then she joined the college and did FA on a regular basis. After that, she was admitted to BA, but due to family and other issues, she couldn't attend college regularly, so she did her BA privately from AIOU. Afterwards, she did MA Urdu from AIOU privately and B. Ed. 1 year, regularly from the University of Education, Lahore's sub-campus in Kamalia, which is also known as GCET college. She also got a scholarship for this. Then, she was

admitted in M. Phil. Urdu from AIOU. She has shared her lived experiences as a transgender student, especially about bullying, gender identity, educational institutes’ policies, and support.

She has faced different types of bullying at educational institutes, which include verbal, non-verbal, physical, and sexual. She thinks that being transgender, bullying is a constant phenomenon. She has faced verbal bullying at educational institutes. Other students at school or college used to call her out by derogatory terms like *Khusra* or *Hijra*, etc. They used to clap and run after her saying specific terms *Haye Allah Jee* or *Hijra* to mock her gait and the way she used to speak. Being different from the rest of the people around her, she stared a lot and showed inappropriate gestures. It also happened sometimes that some boys would follow her, try to hug, force her down to the ground and pull her pants down at the time of recess.

She was bullied at different places, the school or the college. Her class fellows used to tease her in the class, in the corridors, and on playgrounds. According to her:

In school, when I used to play with boys, then I was not treated like boys. They did not prefer to include me in the team as I often failed to play like boys as I did not have power like boys.

Specifically, she faced a lot of bullying in washrooms. Sharing her experience of bullying, she shared: *When I visited students’ washrooms, they often tried to harass me verbally. A few times, I also got sexually assaulted there.* In her school and college times, she was bullied frequently by students around her. Not only students but some teachers also used to call out her. She was actually shaken when she faced extremely inappropriate behaviour from a few teachers in the schools and the college. She reported:

Even there was a teacher who wrote I love you to me. I quickly realized there was some problem with him. I had grown up enough, like 16 or 17 years old. I thought to myself that I needed to save myself. So, I left, and it really harmed me that I scored very low marks due to this in exams as he teased me. He did not treat equally with me the way he used to treat his other students.

Bullying suffered by Faizi also led to some consequences. Sometimes, she has to hide her gender identity to protect herself. Whenever she smells fear, she gives attention to her gait and takes

on an artificial gait. She also switches her accent and the way she speaks. While she had to suffer the consequences in the form of scoring low in exams, she could not continue her classes due to sexual harassment done by her teacher.

For her gender identity, Faizi prefers 'she or her' and female verbs for herself. She is of the view that people like her like to get a female identity because they feel inner satisfaction of the soul like this as soul and body want to get close to each other and want to become one. If there is a woman sitting inside, then she wants herself to be completed and expresses herself fully. But it is not necessary as few also hide it and do not reveal it openly, and they dress up like a male for this. It has some psychological and social aspects in the background.

At the time of her birth, she was assigned gender of male, and even on her National ID card, it remained the same till 2010 when she got changed to transgender (*Khmajasira*) in 2018. Before, she did not use to share or reveal her gender identity so much openly. But now, she reveals it openly. About revealing her gender identity, she said:

I tell it openly. But most people keep it a secret. I also used to hide it before. Suppose you looked at my old pictures when I was doing B. Ed. or when I was studying in college or school, I used to dress up like a male. Now, openly and confidently, I dress up like a woman. I have grown long hair and got my ears pierced. Now I say, 'yes, I am a transgender.'

About educational institutes' policy for transgender students, she expresses her dissatisfaction, especially with the situation in schools and colleges as per her experiences, which had not been so pleasant for her. She thinks that no such policy existed at her school or college level. She thinks that there is not even an equal policy for men and women, what to talk about marginal communities like transgenders. While commenting on inclusivity, diversity, and equity policy in schools or colleges, she said:

There is not even a single policy like this. Even if some student is tall then, they would call names like 'bamboo' (a derogatory term for a tall person); if someone is overweight, then he would be called 'mota' (fat) or 'pehlwan' (wrestler). Teachers themselves are calling their students these names 'mota' or 'pehlwan' or 'sanda' (bucks). If a teacher is himself

good-natured, then it is ok. Otherwise, there are no such policies.

While, in contrast to her school or college's policies for transgenders, Faizi shared different helping policies of her university and praised them. In her own words:

I went there for my MA, and then the VC of the university got inspired by me and made my education free and made it a policy that whosoever transgender student would take admission to the university, that person will be exempted from fee. It was a good step. They were all amazed to see that I would even reach there. I witnessed inclusivity there.

While sharing her experiences of getting support, she expressed that for her education, she did not get support from her parents. She also did not get any help or support to cope with bullying, gender identity, and different issues at her schools and college. She thinks life would have been much easy if she had gotten any such support in her early or teenage. However, she said that she got much support at the university level. Her university administration and some professors supported her financially and in her studies, too. She was also supported emotionally by some of her peers at her university. She thinks that even university level, some teachers treat her well, and some do not due to her transgender identity.

At the end of the interview, Faizi gave a message to other transgender students and other cisgender people. She said:

I want to tell them that they need to understand that they are transgender and that they should not feel bad about it. They are what they are. They should be proud of it. One message for others is that instead of raising a voice for us, just stop criticizing us or calling out names like 'hijrah' or 'kebusra.' When we hear such voices behind us, this tears us down inside. Stop it... They do not need to hide this identity. Rather, they should be proud of it. Like if a woman is called a 'woman,' does she mind it? No. Or a man is called 'mard' (man) does he mind it? No. So likewise, if being transgender, people take us or accept us as we are, then why should we hide it. When a man or woman does not hide it, then why should we hide it.

Case 2: Alisha

The second participant's name is Alisha. This person prefers the pronoun of "she" for herself. Her age is 30, and she has done her MPhil recently at the end of 2018 from Bahauddin Zakariya

University (BZU), Multan. After the competition of MPhil, she remained associated with the UN and worked there for almost a year and a half. Right now, she is working as a consultant in an NGO.

She basically hails from the Khanewal district. She attained education throughout from government educational institutes on a regular basis. She did her Matric from there. After that, she also graduated from a college in the same district. After that, she did B. Ed. from the Education University of Multan. Then she did MA from the University of Sargodha. And then did MPhil from Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. She shared her lived experiences being a transgender student, especially about bullying, gender identity, educational institutes' policies, and support.

She faced different types of bullying at educational institutes, which include verbal, non-verbal, physical, and sexual. About her gender identity, she shared that at the time of birth, the 'male' gender was assigned to her, but later she got her gender identity changed, and now she uses the feminine pronoun 'she' for herself. She further revealed that the ID card was also 'male.' At the time of the birth, people said that 'a boy like a girl' was born, but with the passage of time, as she kept on growing, her gender markers got clear. But took her some time to come out or reveal her actual gender identity. At some point in time, when she became confident then, she got her gender identity changed to category X (which is a gender marker for transgender people). She said that she started off her education at a government school like a boy. The school environment was very conservative. She used to go to school in fear. Like a boy (the way her brother was), she used to go to the boy's school with her brother. However, when she was enrolled in college, she started to disclose her identity. Thus, it was that going to college changed her habits and environment a lot. From there, she started off journeying toward her real gender identity (i.e., transgender). Now, she openly reveals her actual gender identity. She did her last degrees of MPhil and MA with her real gender identity. Discussing revealing gender identity or coming out, she said:

Things were there from the beginning, but the atmosphere or circumstances were not favourable. There was some family pressure and some social pressure then there was no friend

circle. I mean, when these are provided, then obviously you become different accordingly.

Being a transgender student, Alisha also had to face different types of bullying at different places by people around her, which caused certain consequences. She shared that she is still bullied both verbally and non-verbally and stared at a lot. When she was asked if she was ever physically bullied or sexually. She responded with these words:

People have tried a lot. It happened to me once or twice, but thankfully, I was safe and sound. I have saved myself. I was aware those people could cause me problems, so I usually avoided them.

Alisha shared that as a transgender student, she had to go through bullying in the classroom by students at the school. She further said that in her college days, she used to get bullied. She had to commute by bus. It often happened that when she got off the bus, she was followed by groups of boys going to the same college on the same path. They used to call out from behind and mocked. She never preferred using the washroom at her childhood school (which was male), and at the university level, she always goes to the ladies' restroom. While sharing her experiences of being at a playground in her childhood, she said:

I remember very well that I was very good at batting. When I used to run on the pitch, all my friends and cousins used to taunt my brother, saying that I walked and ran like a girl; and other things like that.

When asked about the consequences of different types of bullying, she reported that though, for the time being, it hurt, and she felt bad being bullied in several different ways. However, she was so enthusiastic about her studies that nothing could bar her in the long run, and she finally did her MPhil and served U. N. She shared that:

Not in the long term. There was a moment of embarrassment once when I entered the class; a boy shouted, 'Chamak Chalo.' He said so loudly that the whole class started looking at me. I felt so bad that the one who had not seen me also saw me. There were more than 50 students present in the classroom, so I felt very upset. Then I left that class. I walked out of the class, and I said I don't want to join that class. So, I felt this thing for a while, but when I got home, I was fine. I thought that if I kept taking things like this to heart, I would not have been able to study.

While discussing policies at educational institutes, she mentioned her dissatisfaction, especially with the situation in schools and colleges, which had not been much pleasant for her. She said that there was no such policy in her knowledge about inclusivity, equity, or diversity at her school or college level. She also pointed out the dearth of tarbiyat/training of students, teachers, and other staff till the secondary level. Talking about discrimination, she said: *Discrimination happens everywhere; now, it has become a part of life.*

Sharing about her support system, she said that her grandparents supported her education financially at the beginning as she lost her parents at a young age. After twelfth grade, she had been on her financially. According to her:

After FA, I studied on my own. I have been doing dance functions for more than ten years. I used to do functions and earn money at night and collect this money, then I spent them on my education, and that's how I got my degrees.

At school, there were no peers or friends circle that supported her, and at college, she had the support of one friend only. However, at the university level, she had a four to five friends circle who were there for her. She said that she did not live in the government hostel. Rather, she lived in a private hostel. There, students knew that she was sensitive, so she did not have any such big issues. However, she had to face problems while hanging out with these friends, as people used to look at her friends and me in a strange way that these friends were carrying her around. She said that her experiences at the university level were way better than those of her school or college. She is of the view that teachers, students, and other staff's behaviour at the university level were relatively much better than in her previous experiences at different educational institutes. She expressed her gratitude towards some teachers, who played a major role in supporting her education at the tertiary level and encouraged her to a great extent.

Summing up her experiences being a transgender student, she shared that being a transgender student required her to struggle extra at multiple levels as compared to the rest of other normal students. However, Alisha gave some useful suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of the experiences of transgender students at various educational institutions:

The first thing I would like to say is that to improve the quality of the environment around transgender students at different educational institutions, their surrounding children or teachers should be sensitized. There should be clear policies on harassment, violence, or bullying. In addition, there should be a discount on the transgender student(s) fees. Moreover, I also want to say that transgender education up to matriculation and intermediate level should be provided free of cost.

Discussion

This qualitative study opted to explore lived experiences of two transgender students regarding bullying, gender identity, educational institutes' policy, and support. Participants of the study experienced different types of bullying, verbal, non-verbal, physical, and sexual, at educational institutes. These findings are similar to previous studies, which mentioned somewhat same results that transgender students, like all minorities in Pakistan, go through unbearable experiences of being physically, verbally, and sexually assaulted, and not only this, but they are also threatened with violence against them at educational institutes ([Butt, Muhammad, & Masood, 2021](#); [Muhammad, Akhter, & Lala, 2019](#); [Muhammad, & Brett, 2019](#); [Rauf, Muhammad, & Saleem, 2021](#); [Rauf, Muhammad, & Saeed, 2021](#)). This research study explored additional areas of bullying too. It explored that transgender students were not only bullied or harassed by other cisgender students but some of them were also bullied or harassed by some teachers and administration staff. It was also found out that transgender students were bullied in the classroom, on the playground, or being part of the sports team, in toilets, in a hostel, and on social media.

Regarding consequences of bullying, other previous research studies also resemble some findings of the current study, like marginalized transgender students go through adverse academic and mental health effects, facing inappropriate transgender jokes, least inclusion, social rejection, isolation, invisibility perception, and insufficient support services ([Beemyn & Rankin, 2011](#); [Rajpoot, Muhammad, & Anis, 2021](#); [Meyer et al., 2011](#); [Wolff et al., 2017](#)). Moreover, [Effrig et al. \(2011\)](#) also reported that such students' mental health is also a matter of concern as these students often try suicide attempts or have thoughts about committing suicide and self-injury. In this current

study, other consequences also came to knowledge that bullying made some transgender students miss their classes, bunk their school, leave the educational institute, hide their gender identity and have low self-confidence.

The current research study explored different lived experiences of transgender students regarding their gender identity. It was observed that both transgender students had different gender assigned to them at their time of birth. All of them were assigned a gender of a male when they were born. However, later on, during their adolescence, they started realizing their actual gender identity. The male gender was wrongly assigned to them by their parents. Due to technical issues like inheritance law, international travel, and unchangeable gender mentioned in educational certificates, they did not change their CNIC. This could be attributed to weak government laws and policies for transgender people and their enforcement in Pakistan. They have to face issues due to their gender identity. This resembles previous research studies according to which transgender students are more likely (than other sexual and gender minority students) to face discrimination and harassment, but their negative experiences are amplified when their gender identity is known or suspected ([James et al., 2016](#)). In this study, it was also found that gender identity causes some problems, and one of them is that being forced to hide gender identity for their safety and protection.

According to some previous research on other non-binary identities, transgender students reported experiencing more hostile school environments ([Johns et al., 2019](#); [Sullivan & Urraro, 2019](#)). In this study, participant transgender students reported their experiences of witnessing no educational policy in their respective educational institutes about inclusivity, equity, diversity, or discrimination, specifically in their schools and colleges. But most of them shared relatively better experiences at their universities, as some of the universities have a policy of free education for transgender students. However, they are of the view that, first of all, they need safety and protection at educational institutes to continue their education, even if it is free.

A positive school climate is beneficial to and supportive of students who identify themselves as minorities, whether on the basis of sexual

orientation or gender or other ([Bradshaw, 2019](#); [Dessel et al., 2017](#); [Khokhar, & Muhammad, 2020](#); [Siddiqui, Muhammad, & Naseer, 2021](#); [Steck & Perry, 2018](#)). However, in the current research study, it was observed that there is no facility for campus guidance or counselling for transgender students in schools and colleges. At their schools and colleges, most of the teachers were least supportive. Even at home, parents also became hostile or disowned the transgender student when they came out and expressed their feminine side openly. Some transgender students' parents even stopped supporting their children's education financially.

Conclusion

Transgender students experience bullying in different forms during the educational process. They had to go through different types of bullying, be it verbal, non-verbal, physical, or sexual. Both faced on-campus bullying, be it in classes, corridors, playgrounds, washrooms or hostels, and cyber spaces. Both students were bullied by fellow students or other on-campus students, teachers, administrative staff, and people on their way to the institute. They had to experience severe consequences like depression, missing classes or leaving tuition, and demotivation.

Experiences regarding gender identity and coming out were also not proved to be so pleasant for transgender students. Both were assigned male at their birth, while when they went through adolescence, they realized their actual gender identity and changed and openly revealed themselves as being transgender. They chose feminine pronouns for themselves. But this gender identity also caused problems for them. Like they were bullied, harassed, and faced hostility from family, friends, students, and teachers. As far as their experiences regarding educational institutes policy are concerned, they shared that there was no policy of inclusivity, equity, diversity, and indiscrimination. However, free education for transgender students at universities was mentioned. They were also least supported by parents or family, peers, and teachers, particularly at the school and college levels. Comparing their experiences at tertiary and secondary level education, the study found that their experiences at their universities were better than that at their colleges and schools.

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