



An Examination of Pakistan's Transgender Community

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Abstract: *This research highlights the fundamental rights that transgender people are entitled to, such as access to education, the chance to have a loving family, and a respectable existence that encompasses their identities. The advancement of equality and social justice depends on this acknowledgement of fundamental rights. By bringing attention to the problems transgender people encounter, your study gives them the confidence they need to speak up and fight for their own rights. It supports self-determination and self-advocacy, empowering transgender people to affect change in their own life. It acknowledges the enormous talents and abilities that transgender people have. This acknowledgment may have a good impact on Pakistan's national heritage. Society may profit from transgender people's distinctive contributions by fostering an atmosphere where they can make use of their abilities.*

Key Words: Transgender, Marginalization, Discrimination, Socio-economic, Constructivism

Introduction

The transgender network has gained little visibility in Pakistan, because the overarching attitude in the direction of gender. we live in a world encompassing different beliefs and cultures that generates specific attitude and stances towards gender diversity. However, these attitudes define marginalization of a particular community or people, like the transgender community in Pakistan, commonly referred to as the hawaja sira-a group of people that include various forms of gender deviance (Adams, 2023). One of the main objectives of your study is to lessen transgender people's reliance on other people. This is an important step in fostering their self-sufficiency and economic independence. It can end the cycle of

dependency on shady, frequently nefarious sources of revenue. By giving transgender people chances and assistance, your study aims to enhance their capacities. Diva., cortex, Smelyanskaya, & Keatley (2016) this promotion attempts to change their current issues of discrimination, marginalization, and contempt in society and provide them a new path in life. The study's ultimate goal is to enhance the lives of transgender individuals in Pakistan by supporting their independence, sense of self-worth, acknowledgment of their abilities and potential social contributions, and advocacy for the legalization of their rights.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical foundation for this study on

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the sociocultural difficulties experienced by transgender people in Islamabad, Pakistan, will mainly be based on intersectionality theory and social constructivism. Understanding the diverse realities of transgender people in the cultural and socioeconomic setting of Islamabad is made possible by Butler's intersectionality theory. This theory acknowledges that a variety of overlapping elements, including gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, and class, have an impact on people's identities and social situations. We seek to investigate how these many facets of identity cross and interact to provide distinctive issues by using intersectionality theory. (Brill & Kenney, [2016](#))

On the other hand, social constructivism gives important insights into the ways in which societal norms, attitudes, and institutions construct and reinforce transgender people's experiences. It stresses how social constructions of gender may change throughout time rather than being fixed in society. (Mock, [2014](#)) With the use of this framework, we can examine how Islamabad's sociocultural norms and views affect how marginalized or empowered transgender people are, as well as how these constructions may be contested and rethought.

Moreover, depending on the unique emphasis and aims of the study, our theoretical framework may also include certain ideas and frameworks connected to transgender studies, such as the "gender-affirming care model" or "gender minority stress model." We hope to present a thorough and nuanced understanding of the difficulties experienced by transgender people in Islamabad by combining these ideas and taking into account both the structural and cultural aspects of their lives.

Gender Queers Theory

Judith Butler (1956) is a comparative literature and rhetoric professor at the University of California, Berkeley. She is a theorist of power, gender, sexuality, and

identity. Sexuality and gender are inherently strange. Additionally, they are never simple. A school of feminism in the 1970s that maintained that each sex had unique basic traits was partially the source of queer theory. In her seminal book *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler said that feminism made a mistake by attempting to "assert that women" were a collective with common interests. Butler said that by creating a binary understanding of gender relations in which individuals are divided into two separate categories, women and men, this approach unwittingly legitimized gender relations.. (Pearce, [2018](#)).

Therefore, rather than offering chances for an individual to grow and choose their own distinct identity, feminism closed a door. Queer theory challenges this assumption by claiming that sexuality is socially constructed and hence shaped by context. Being "anti-essentialist" is rejecting the idea that a person's gender is a component of their inherent consistency. There isn't even a distinct male-female split in biology because of things like variable X and Y chromosomal combinations and genetic effects on clothes. "Queer is by definition anything at odds with the normal, the legal, and the dominant," according to David HalperIt doesn't have to be related to anything specific. It's an identity without a central figure. It is more than just a perspective on gender or sexuality. It also suggests that an identity's bounds might be upheld by the person who has it. Butler claims that feminists rejected the idea that a person's fate is predetermined by their biology, but they also developed a theory of patriarchal culture that assumed that a person's fate would inevitably be determined by the genders that culture imposed on their male and female bodies. That reasoning does not allow for choice or resistance (Halperin et al., [2015b](#)).

Butler is a supporter of "those historical and anthropological positions" that see gender as a social construction of an individual's identity. Put another way, gender should not be seen as a constant attribute of a person, but rather as a variable that varies and changes

based on the circumstance and the moment. According to Butler, the mere fact that people of both sexes may express sentiments of feeling somewhat "like a woman" or "like a man" shows that "the experience of a gendered culture identity is considered an achievement."

Butler's theory states that gender identity is not limited to a person's thoughts or physical characteristics, but also manifests itself externally. Its performance is continuously impacted by societal demands. According to the theory that gender is performative, persons unconsciously or deliberately represent their gender via daily actions. These actions include speech, body language, and attire selections. Butler argues that gender performances are recurring behaviors rather than one-time occurrences. People must constantly express their gender identification in accordance with societal expectations. By paying or penalizing people depending on how well their behavior adheres to established gender standards, society controls these performances. Those who deviate from these rules frequently experience societal repercussions.

Butler's theory places a strong emphasis on acknowledging the flexibility and variety of gender performances. Gender may change throughout time and in various settings; it is neither fixed nor preset. The rigidity of gender norms may be questioned by transgender people by assuming identities, actions, and expressions that are not consistent with their assigned sex. This calls into question the notion that gender is a set and constant category. When intersectionality is taken into account, Butler's theory may be further enhanced. This is because it acknowledges that people have various intersecting identities (such as race, class, and sexuality) that affect how they express their gender. Like everyone else, transgender persons have complicated identities that are impacted by a wide range of variables. This intricacy may provide many difficulties and experiences.

Butler's contributions have had a profound influence on activism and gender studies. It emphasizes how non-conforming gender performances have the ability to incite subversion and resistance. In order to oppose constrictive gender norms and promote more acceptance and acknowledgement of varied gender identities, transgender activists have leaned on Butler's theories.

In the first chapter of *Gender Trouble*, which presents the idea of performativity, Butler states that "gender proves to be performance that constitutes the identity it is purported to be". Gender, then, is always a doing, but not a doing by a subject who may be predestined to exist before the dead. Then, using Nietzsche from *On the Genealogy of Morals*, she says, "There is no gender identity behind the doing-itself is everything," and "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender, that identity is performativity constituted by the very "expressions" that are said." Butler does not truly claim that gender is a performance; rather, she draws a difference between performativity and performance.

Gender as a Social Construct

It is possible to use Judith Butler's theories, such as her concepts of performativity and the social construction of gender, to comprehend how historical and cultural variance affects the sociocultural difficulties experienced by transgender people in Islamabad. Here is how a Butlerian perspective on historical and cultural variance might be useful for understanding the difficulties facing transgender people in Islamabad:

According to Butler's theory, gender is a result of social, cultural, and historical factors rather than an innate or biologically determined trait. As a result, civilizations' conceptions of gender change through time and within various cultural settings. A significant factor in determining how people live is society's construction and assignment of duties, expectations, and identities based on perceived gender. These normative standards, which cover everything from

actions and appearance to career choices, specify how one should act, show oneself, and carry out social tasks. In Islamabad, these traditions have a significant influence on the lives of transgender people. They frequently traverse a challenging environment where acceptance and acknowledgment can be elusive since their gender identification may not correspond with these established roles and expectations. When their identities threaten the current quo, transgender people may experience prejudice, stigma, and exclusion. This emphasizes the urgent need for social changes that will lead to more tolerance and acceptance (Butler, 1956).

Opportunities and Challenges

For transgender people, the social construction of gender creates a dual landscape that includes both daunting obstacles and bright prospects. Transgender people frequently struggle with the harsh reality of discrimination, long-term stigma, and a lack of legal safeguards in Islamabad's setting of cultural and societal norms. These difficulties might appear in a variety of areas of life, from seeking out educational and work possibilities to getting access to healthcare. There is a glimmer of optimism hidden among these difficulties, though. Together with supporters and activists, the transgender community actively participates in advocacy and activism campaigns. These initiatives aim to upend the established quo, advance deeper knowledge of transgender issues, and spark changes in society perceptions. An in-depth understanding of these possibilities and problems may be gained via research that focuses on the particulars of these issues, making it easier to develop policies that would increase inclusion and equity for transgender people in Islamabad.

Butler's idea of performativity provides an insightful viewpoint on the fluidity of gender. It claims that gender is a constant performance produced via a person's activities and behaviors rather than a fixed or intrinsic trait. Within this view, transgender people represent the complex nature of

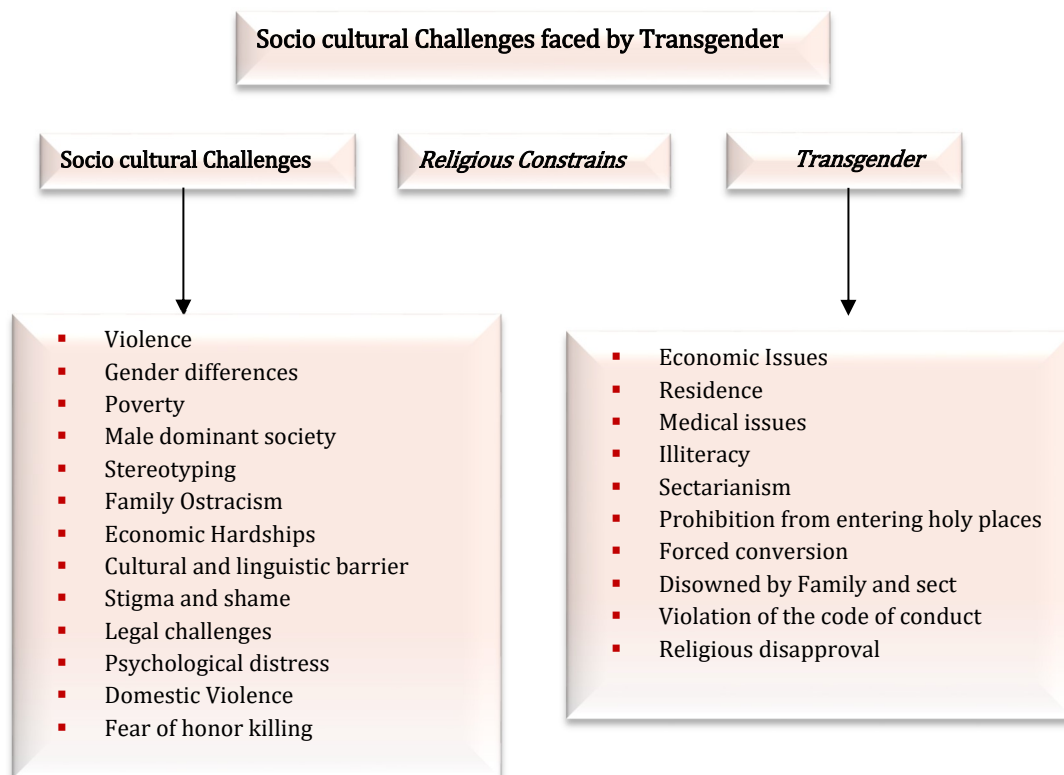
gender performance. They negotiate a challenging environment while actively participating in gender performances that go against cultural norms and expectations. These people engage in a brave and resilient act of self-expression in societies where transgender identities might not be fully acknowledged or accepted, pushing the limits of traditional gender roles and paving the way for a more inclusive understanding of gender in our changing world(

It is crucial to use the intersectionality viewpoint while looking at gender as a social construct in the context of Islamabad. For a thorough understanding of people's gender experiences, it is essential to acknowledge that they have several identities that often overlap, such as those that are tied to class, race, and religion. The particular possibilities and problems that transgender people experience are shaped by these overlapping identities, which do not exist in isolation but rather interact constantly. Research should focus on the complex relationships between the creation of gender and the local cultural and religious background, which have a significant impact on the lives and experiences of transgender people in Islamabad. By doing this, students may develop a comprehensive awareness of the intricate interactions between different facets of identity and how they affect transgender people's daily lives in this particular setting (Jafri et al, 2022).

We can obtain a deeper understanding of how transgender people manage societal ideas and attitudes by applying Butler's methodology for gender analysis to the particular setting of Islamabad. This thorough comprehension enables the identification of the particular difficulties encountered by transgender people in Islamabad, which result from the intricate interaction of cultural, religious, and historical elements. Such information can provide a critical basis for well-informed legislation, community involvement, and awareness raising initiatives. With this information at hand, advocates and decision-makers may craft interventions that cater to

the particular needs of transgender people, promote more inclusion, combat discriminatory behavior, and ultimately advance the cause of transgender rights in the area. This research helps to a more equal and welcoming society where transgender people

may live genuine lives free from prejudice and discrimination by integrating theory with local circumstances (Sharif et al, [2022](#)).



Material and Methods

This focuses on the many parts of research methodology in order to outline the process of doing the study. It consists of the research design, which covers the choice of the study's subject, sample size, equipment, instruments, pretesting, and data processing. This chapter also covers the study's ethical considerations and fieldwork.

Social Science Research

Social science research has a predetermined plan and is conducted by social scientists. Social research methods are frequently

divided into two categories: qualitative and quantitative. Thus, the research methodology used in this study is social science research. In order to understand phenomena, research entails the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. The purpose, data organization, and results presentation steps of the research process are all done in a methodical manner by adhering to predetermined norms and frameworks. Researchers can get guidance on what to include in the study, how to perform it, and what sorts of inferences are likely to be made from the data obtained from the frameworks and guidelines (Divan et al., [2016](#)).

Data Analysis

Socio economic Characteristics of the respondent

Transgender people frequently experience prejudice and marginalization in society, which limits their access to resources such as jobs, education, and other opportunities. Consequently, their chances of facing poverty and social marginalization are higher than those of the overall populace. This paper focuses on data analysis of a survey done on 12 transgender respondents. To be more precise, we look at their age, education, income, and mode of subsistence in order to determine their socioeconomic standing. We can determine the difficulties transgender people encounter and create plans to meet their social and economic requirements by examining this data. The results of this study can also be used to inform interventions and policy suggestions meant to advance the rights and welfare of transgender people. The socio-economic characteristics of transgender individuals often reflect the pervasive discrimination and marginalization they face within society, hindering their access to essential resources and opportunities such as employment and education. This study delves into the analysis of data collected from a survey involving 12 transgender respondents, with the specific aim of gaining insights into the socio-economic landscape of transgender individuals in Pakistan. By examining key factors such as age, education, income, and mode of subsistence, the study seeks to paint a comprehensive picture of their socio-economic status (Shah et al., 2018).

One notable aspect is the age distribution of the respondents, as age can be a crucial factor influencing economic opportunities

and social inclusion. Additionally, the educational background of transgender individuals is a significant determinant of their socio-economic prospects. Limited access to education due to societal prejudices may impact their employability and income-earning potential. This study aims to unravel these patterns and shed light on the challenges transgender individuals face in accessing education. Income, another pivotal component, is examined to discern the economic well-being of transgender respondents. Discrimination in the workplace often translates into lower incomes for transgender individuals, contributing to their vulnerability to poverty. Understanding the income disparities among transgender individuals is crucial for designing targeted interventions aimed at improving their economic conditions. Moreover, the mode of subsistence is explored to understand how transgender individuals sustain themselves economically. Given the systemic discrimination they face, transgender individuals may resort to unconventional means of earning a livelihood. Analyzing their modes of subsistence provides valuable insights into the adaptability and resilience of transgender individuals in the face of socio-economic challenges. The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform evidence-based interventions and policy recommendations. By identifying the socio-economic challenges faced by transgender individuals, policymakers can design programs that address these specific issues, ultimately contributing to the improvement of their rights and well-being. This study serves as a critical step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society by acknowledging and addressing the unique socio-economic circumstances of transgender individuals in Pakistan (USAID, 2016).

S.no	Name	Age	Living with	Education	Income	Source of Income	Origin
1	Shazia	38	Friends	Nil	15,000	Begging in streets	Sialkot
2	Shakila	32	Guru	Primary	10 /15,000	Begging in streets	Gujrat
3	Sanam	28	Guru	Metric	12/14,000	Performing in functions	Lahore

S.no	Name	Age	Living with	Education	Income	Source of Income	Origin
4	Chiryra	33	Guru	Nil	9/10,000	Begging in streets	Multan
5	Shezadi	28	Guru	Nil	10/20,000	Performing in functions	Lahore
6	Paaro	32	Guru	Nil	10/15,000	Begging in markets	Gujrat
7	Tabasum	30	Guru	Nil	16,000	Begging in streets	Zila Jung
8	Nisha	31	Friends	Metric	20,000	Performing in functions	Zila Jung
9	Roshni	28	Guru	Intermediate	17/18000	Performing in functions	Multan
10	Lucky	30	Friends	Metric	17,000	Begging in streets	Gujrat
11	Neelum	28	Guru	Secondary	14,000	Begging in streets	Lahore
12	Chamkeeli	30	Guru	Primary	10,000	Begging in streets	Multan

The presented data offers insights into the socio-economic attributes of twelve participants. The responses range in age from 28 to 38 years old. According to the statistics, a small percentage of the respondents have finished their elementary, secondary, or intermediate education, while the majority lacks any formal education. The respondents' monthly income ranges from 9,000 to 20,000 rupees. Most of the responders get their money from performing at events or from begging in marketplaces and streets. The respondents' income level indicates that they are likely low-income individuals. Furthermore, it is not stated with whom the respondents are residing. Understanding their living situation is essential as it might provide details about their home makeup, social support system, and financial responsibilities. The respondents' living arrangements—whether they are alone or with family—may have an effect on their living costs and capacity to support them. The information also shows the respondents' places of origin, which include Sialkot, Gujrat, Lahore, Multan, and Zila Jung. These cities have unique cultural, social, and economic traits and are spread throughout various parts of Pakistan. The socioeconomic position of the respondents may be influenced by their place of origin as different locations may have different resources, work possibilities, and service accessibility.

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Thematic Analysis

The main goal of this crucial study is to carefully examine the information that the researchers have gathered during their examination. This analysis's main goal is to provide light on the difficulties and conflicts that transgender people face as part of society's intricate web. The results of the transgender interviews provide a moving illustration of the complexity of the challenges

this underprivileged group faces. The chapter's theme analysis provides an organized prism through which the complexities of the transgender experience in Pakistan are illuminated. The research endeavors to extract and express the fundamental concerns that influence the lived reality of transgender persons by exploring the narratives and viewpoints that were revealed throughout the interviews. The difficulties that transgender people confront are made more complex by this variation, as research indicates that socioeconomic level, cultural background, and geographic location have a significant impact on the type of hardships that transgender people encounter. The idea is to emphasize that transgender experiences in Pakistan are not singular; rather, they are a tapestry made from the distinctive threads of each person's circumstances. This focused strategy improves the study's accuracy and provides a more thorough grasp of the difficulties transgender people encounter in particular areas of their lives.

Childhood Recollections

The early experiences of a transgender kid might vary significantly depending on the person and their surroundings. While some transgender people may have known who they were from a young age, others might not have known until much later in life. The strongest feeling someone may have is their bond with their family and children. No one can shake their infantile sense. When transgender children experience mistreatment at the most formative years of their lives, beginning when family members become aware of them.

One of the respondent said, "Animals have a better childhood than me." "Mujh se acha bachpan to shayd Kisi janwar ka hoga" (Neelum)

Butler challenges the notion that gender is a permanent, binary category in her book "Gender Trouble," arguing instead that gender is a performance that is shaped and

perpetuated by societal norms and behaviors. She argues that gender is not something we are born with, but rather something we acquire and adopt via social interactions. Butler highlights the importance of allowing individuals to express their gender in ways that are authentic to them rather than enforcing strict expectations and customs related to gender. She thinks that in order to create a culture where individuals may express their gender genuinely without fear of prejudice or judgment. A transgender person's family was welcoming and encouraging. But society still doesn't accept him for who he is as a person (Powell et al., 2016) "There are both good and terrible people in society," stated the head of the Shemale Foundation. Bobby (2018) asks, "What respect can the evil people afford?" It is simply a medical condition that is not unduly complicated by hormones and is not deserving of stigma or taboo treatment because no one is at fault, thus this is not a serious issue (Ali B. k., 19 June 2021)

Transgender and Religious Activities

The intersection of transgender identity and religious activities can be complex and varied, as both gender identity and religious beliefs are deeply personal and can be deeply ingrained. Some transgender individuals may feel conflicted or excluded from religious activities due to their gender identity, while others may find comfort and support within their faith communities. Many religious traditions have historically exclusively recognized male and female genders and have a binary concept of gender. Not all religious groups accept transgender people, and some may openly discriminate against them, it is crucial to recognize.

"I have always been respected in the mosques and in sacred places" (Paaro).

Religious practices and transgender identity have a complicated interaction that differs from person to person and from community to community. It is critical that religious leaders and communities provide

environments where people may feel secure and supported and to be hospitable to all people, regardless of gender identification. Abrahamic religions have a variety of interpretations of their creation tales, according to which God creates both males and females. This has occasionally been seen as a heavenly commandment both in favor of and against altering the gender binary. Religious doctrine does not oppose transgender people, who are people who identify as feminine but live in male bodies (or vice versa).

According to Shazia, "Our community engages in missionary and religious preaching."

Although a religious ruling legalizing transsexual marriage has been cautiously welcomed in Pakistan, advocates contend that public perceptions still need to shift. The fatwa was issued by a council of religious leaders. It said that transgender persons who exhibit "visible signs" of being male or female are permitted by Islamic law to wed people of the opposite sex. However, it said that those who exhibit "visible signs of both genders" are not allowed to get married. The 50 religious leaders, who are a member of the obscure Tanzeem Ittehad-i-Ummat organization with headquarters in Lahore, also declared that it is against Islamic law to "humiliate, insult, or tease" transgender people. The fatwa has no legal force behind it.

Attitude of other peoples toward Transgenders

As it is clear transgender are different from all of us they are being specially created by the Almighty. It's actually not their fault but how people treat them seems like they are responsible for their creation. People have different attitude towards them (Stryker & Whittle, 2013). A child's gender has a substantial impact on how the world perceives him or her from the time of birth (perhaps even earlier) (Eliot, 2009). It has been suggested that men and women may actually come from two separate planets

because of how different they are from one another on a physiological and psychological level.

"We are threatened by people, sexually and mentally tortured" (Shazia).

Satisfaction with Life

In a nation like Pakistan, where both men and women are denied their rights, the third gender experiences greater discrimination than the other two. In our culture, transgender babies are frequently abandoned by their parents and raised in their own community, where they live in destitution and prostitution, as has been the case for a long time. Make money by selling yourself as a prostitute. Transgender people were asked if they were happy with their life and if not, why not.

"Yes I'm completely satisfied because Allah has created me and I cannot question Allah" (Paaro).

Around the world, there are differences in the social views toward transgender people and other gender minorities. Prejudice and social stigma are prevalent in many societies. As a result, transgender people deal with issues of prejudice and unfavorable public perception. According to a recent poll, a significant proportion of transgender individuals claim that transitioning has increased their level of life satisfaction. Over 40% of adults said they are "much more happier with their lives.

"Doesn't matter if I'm satisfied or not I have to live and no other way" (Nisha).

Summary

The research focuses on the challenges faced by transgender individuals in society, focusing on their social and cultural context. The study uses a qualitative case study methodology, including in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, to understand the perspectives of transgender individuals. The main issue identified is prejudice and self-harassment, which are significant socio-

cultural challenges faced by transgender individuals in Islamabad. These challenges include discrimination, lack of legal protection, limited access to healthcare, economic marginalization, social exclusion, isolation, and lack of representation.

Transgender people face mobility issues, such as uncomfortable seating in public transportation and limited access to public transit. They also face discrimination and harassment in healthcare settings, with over a fourth of them encountering segregation or denied medical coverage due to their gender identity. Transgender inequality is another significant issue, with many facing stigma and discrimination due to their sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions. The stigma is spread through cultural and social atmospheres, and transgender is not openly discussed in Asian culture. Addressing these challenges requires advocacy, policy change, and community engagement to promote greater inclusion and acceptance of gender diversity.

Conclusion

In Pakistani society, the transgender people is socially marginalized and frequently subjected to physical assault and discriminatory treatment. With such views, they open themselves up to dangerous activities like begging, drug usage, commercial sex work, and even suicide thoughts. This dissertation examined the issue of transgender persons dealing with people's negative attitudes toward them. The study has revealed disparities in education, transportation-related prejudice, and the attitudes of those who dance and beg. The current investigation leads to the following conclusion. From the moment of their identification, transgender individuals have

been disregarded and treated with contempt by society. At work, they are turned away to begging, dancing, or even working as prostitutes. It is impossible to dispute this study's importance. Governments must play a crucial role in ensuring that transgender people have equal civil rights; rather than being forced to dance or beg, they need to be encouraged to do so if it is what they choose to do as regular people. (Ali B. k., 19 June 2021) Developing policies pertaining to transgender rights is also crucial. Globally, transgender individuals face severe social marginalization, which can lead to heightened susceptibility to HIV and other illnesses, such as mental health disorders, restricted access to work and school, and missed chances for both social and economic progress. In Pakistani society, the transgender people is socially marginalized and frequently subjected to physical assault and discriminatory treatment. Their vulnerability to dangerous behaviors, such as drug use, begging, commercial sex work, and even suicidal thoughts, is a result of these views. According to the findings of our study, social marginalization is just one of the numerous causes driving the transgender population to engage in improper behaviors. Improving surroundings that are tolerant and reducing discrimination based on gender are essential for improving the adjustment of sexual minorities. It is crucial to accept this population into society in order to eradicate the social exclusionary factor. Our results clearly indicate that, in order to prevent risky behavior in Tran's populations, a comprehensive strategy that includes interventions aimed at promoting social inclusion, decreasing gender-based discrimination, violence and physical abuse, and facilitating access to high-quality medical care should be taken into consideration.

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