

Psycho-social Determinants and Moral Considerations in Transgenders

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the complex interaction of psychosocial causes and moral issues in the everyday lives of transgender people by shedding light on the multifaceted nature of their experiences. Through a comprehensive literature review, the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the psychological and social factors influencing the lives of transgender people, with a particular focus on the moral dimensions of their experiences. The psycho-social determinants examined in this study encompass a range of factors, including identity formation, societal acceptance, discrimination, political dominance, and mental health. Furthermore, the comprehensive approach of the study tries to explore the various mechanisms that influence transgender people's psychological well-being and social integration. Moral considerations in transgender people's lives are examined via an ethical lens, emphasizing the value of respect, dignity, and human rights. The study examines the moral issues that transgender people confront in numerous areas such as healthcare, education, and employment.

Keywords: Gender identity, Morality, Society, Transgender

Plato refers to the idea of the strength of love put forth by Aristophanes, who established the presence of a "third gender" in antiquity. The passage states: "For one thing, the race was divided into three; that is, in addition to the two sexes that we currently have, male and female, there was a third that shared the characteristics of both and for which we still have a name, but the creature itself is lost. Although the term "hermaphrodite," now more often known as "intersexed," is mainly used disparagingly nowadays, there was once a man-woman, a being that was half male and half female'.

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe 'gender-variant people who have gender identity expressions or behaviour not traditionally associated with their birth sex' (WHO,2022) Transgender people have existed in every culture, race, and socioeconomic class since the beginning of history as it is known. When Jorgensen had sex-reassignment surgery in Denmark in the 1950s, the term "transsexual" became widely used. Transgender and trans persons were used interchangeably in the middle of the 1970s. The term "transgender" and associated medical phrases are the sole new terminologies used to characterize transsexuals. It was coined in the middle of the 1990s by a grassroots group of

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Psycho-social Determinants and Moral Considerations in Transgenders

people who identify as belonging to a different gender. The terms "transgender" can also be used interchangeably with "gender variation," "gender difference," and "gender non-conforming." Some persons might identify as "between" genders, not fully belonging to either, or as neither fully masculine nor fully female.

Most transgender people do not change their natal sex or physical characteristics. But other transgender people would rather use hormones or surgery to change their bodies so that their anatomy matches their gender by modifying their physiological structure, haircut, and clothing choices. People who desired to live a transgender lifestyle without undergoing sex reassignment surgery were referred to as transgender folks. Additionally, it covered individuals whose gender identity, expression, or behavior deviated from social gender norms connected to sex at birth. Also, it covered individuals whose gender identity, expression, or behavior deviated from social gender norms connected to sex at birth.

Identity and identity formation

Identity in society can be viewed as a multifaceted process, where it does not simply refer to how a person or group perceives themselves. However, how they relate to other identities within a social system is also a crucial consideration. Lorber mentions "When considering identities and identity politics, it is important to keep in mind that identities do not create social systems." Instead, interwoven social structures and the people inside them produce distinct identities that are conspicuous (Lorber 1999).

Any social system's shortcomings and flaws allow for individuals to form new groups or identities based on their common experiences in life and their shared perception of injustices committed against them, yet Barbara Katz Rothman asserts, "I have a thousand identities. They act as hooks that protrude from every part of me, luring in strangers and establishing connections" (qt. in Lorber 355). There are multiple forms of identity and people tend to catch the things that they find themselves familiar with (Kang, 2015) And, if so, many identities are there for an individual only it means there is nothing like a 'fixed identity' but at certain time and circumstances, one particular identity finds more suitable space in the society as a recognized identity or an identity to be recognized by the concerned society.

However, the new identity creates its own boundaries and sphere that can create conflicting loyalties in relation to the fixed identity. Multiplicity or multiculturalism leads to consider identity as diverse identity groups such as gay, lesbian, homosexual, trans, dalit, and other subalterns etc., and identity as identity politics. People who live a transgender lifestyle typically or always identify with the opposite gender from the one they were born with. The term "transsexual" may be used if they want to be or identify as the gender they have always or primarily lived in. People who live cross-gendered without undergoing sex reassignment surgery are referred to as "transgender" or "trans genderists."

Understanding of Transgender persons

Gender has been viewed more as a cultural construct than a biological one. The conventional idea that there are two sexes, male and female and that everyone belongs to one of them is still widely held today. It must be emphasized, though, that if all people fall into one of two categories—male or female, non-binary, or genderless—overlooks the reality that some people are difficult to classify as either male or female due to their biological makeup. Gender identity and sexual orientations have evolved into a complex mashup of what in some people would be a straightforward and clear identity. However, it is a reality that there are more than simply two sexes; there are also other genders (Raoghdarden, 2004).

Psycho-social Determinants and Moral Considerations in Transgenders

It is critical to recognize that individuals who identify themselves as transgender may display characteristics such as having a masculine physique but identifying as a female, or vice versa, and may even feel as though they were born into the "wrong body." United Nations Development Program (UNDP) provides a more palatable definition of transgender people. According to this, those who reject social gender norms are frequently referred to as "transgender people." Where they dwell permanently or temporarily is the gender role "opposite" to their biological sex. Jorgensen was living proof of the United States' individualism. She refused to conform to masculinity and in doing so represented the growing idea of American liberalism, which was in direct contrast to Communism's ideas of collectivism (Melanie, 2015). "Transgender" has become a term that encompasses many identities and experiences in modern usage, including but not limited to male and female "cross-dressers" (also known as "transvestites," "drag queens," or "drag kings") and men and women who are gender nonconforming regardless of sexual orientation. The terms "transgender woman" and "transgender man" are used to describe transgender people who are male to female and vice versa (UNDP, 2016).

Transgender women

A transgender woman is a person who has transitioned from male to female with or without sex reassignment surgery. Transwomen, people born male but who identify and live as female, represent a special intersection in the gender identity continuum (Gupta et.al.,2016) Their quest for honesty and self-discovery has involved many struggles, victories, and self-empowerments. Although their identification is a pillar, it is crucial to acknowledge that their experiences are complex and go beyond a narrow focus on gender identity.

A trans woman's path to accepting her true self is not one that follows a straight line. Intense self-realization, self-affirmation, and self-examination that begin well before transition are typically its defining characteristics. Our conception of gender identity evolves together with society, and trans women have played a significant role in reducing barriers to social acceptability and individual expression.

Social Determinants

How many times have you stopped at a traffic signal and turned your face away from the transgender who stood outside your car window asking for money? . . . Wasn't it worse than you normally feel when a beggar woman with a child does the same? Why? I'll tell why? You abhorred the eunuch because you couldn't identify with her sex. You thought of her as a strange, detestable creature. A measure of social support looks at the persons in a person's life who can offer emotional and mental resources for coping. This is frequently divided into groups like peer (or friend) support and family support. Because of how families may react to the transition and even reject the transitioning family member, there is frequently less familial social support available for transgender women. More particular, parental and sibling acceptance or rejection matters until middle life, but sexual partner acceptance or rejection matters starting in young adulthood. (Storm et al., 2021)

The transgender community faces stigma and prejudice in society, which restricts their opportunities compared to others. Since they are not accepted by society and are well accepted in schools, they obtain an inadequate education. Even if they are enrolled in school, they frequently become the target of harassment and bullying and are either asked to leave or choose to leave on their own. They begin begging and performing sex acts, as a result. They are most at risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases when they consent to unprotected sexual activity out of fear of being rejected or a desire to use sex to

Psycho-social Determinants and Moral Considerations in Transgenders

affirm their gender. They face challenges in gaining social acceptance in the household. The problems range from verbal and physical abuse to seclusion, rejection, and denial of family property. Due to their sexual orientation or gender identification, transgender people are frequent objects of stigma and rejection by society. Due to the stigmatization and negative/generalized impression of those who are forced to work as sex workers or sex solicitors, social stigma encompasses discrimination (Winter et.al., 2020). Because they lack a clearly defined sexual identity in terms of gender, many of them suffer from various forms of indignities and are unable to access the benefits of various beneficial schemes. As a result, they have not been able to obtain an education, find employment, or even find recognition that they have a distinct sexual identity other than the traditional binary perception of sexual identity (Tilcsik,2011). High rates of workplace discrimination, twice as much poverty as the overall population (29% against 14%), and three times as much unemployment as the general population (15% vs. 5%) all affect transgender people (Cahill et al., 2020)

Acceptance must be seen in two areas of life: one is the social side, where people find it difficult to accept transgender women as their associates and friends, and the other is the employment field, where they lack the opportunity to support themselves through respectable and legal means due to their ambiguous and unrecognized identities. Transgender women frequently experience violence, exclusion, and discrimination in public places like streets, parks, marketplaces, offices, shopping malls, restrooms, travel, schools, or universities, which frequently designate either male or female space. For transgender women, the government does not offer enough or useful facilities. To overcome these challenges, concerted efforts to integrate them into society and the adoption of an inclusive perspective in all facets of life are required. Even though the government is implementing revolutionary policies, it must take the right actions and establish the structures required in a methodical manner to reach that community.

Transgender and health concerns

Transgender individuals are less likely to have health insurance and access to healthcare due to higher rates of poverty and unemployment. (Cahill et al., 2020). The main obstacles to providing transgender with care are a lack of faith in medical experts and mistreatment in hospital institutions. A recent national poll of transgender people found that 33% of participants had encountered at least one unfavourable situation in a medical environment connected to their gender identity, and 23% avoided receiving necessary medical care out of fear of discrimination. TW complain about unpleasant contacts with medical staff, who occasionally put their transitional care above their HIV care (Cahill et al., 2020)

Public Spaces and Safety Concerns

According to anthropologist (Srivastava, 2012) Spaces have a dual identity. Public spaces such as schools, colleges, shopping mall streets, parks often represent male space. On the contrary, the home as private space is represented by females. While males have the benefit of entering and shaping public areas as realms of activity, women are frequently excluded by caring for the domestic sphere.

The experiences of trans women extend outside of the home and the workplace into the public realm, where they frequently encounter new difficulties. The experiences that many trans women report are distressingly frequent, including street harassment, verbal abuse, and physical violence. Anxiety brought on by a fear of violence might prevent people from engaging in activities in public and increase their sense of vulnerability.

Psycho-social Determinants and Moral Considerations in Transgenders

Deeply rooted transphobia in several societal groups fosters a hostile climate that negatively affects trans women's sense of safety. To combat this, initiatives are required to increase understanding, encourage tolerance, and implement laws that safeguard trans people from prejudice and violence. The well-being and agency of trans women can be enhanced by society's efforts to provide safer and more welcoming public areas.

Recognizing the structural biases and prejudices that shape these dynamics is necessary in order to comprehend the complexities of social interactions and discrimination in the lives of trans women. In addition to destroying discriminatory institutions, the path to transformation includes developing education, creating empathy, and amplifying the voices of trans women. We can contribute to a culture that values variety and welcomes the richness of human lives by establishing venues where trans women are treated with respect and dignity.

Regarding vulnerability, transgender inmates are 13 times more likely to experience sexual assault in jail than their non-transgender counterparts (Jeness and Fenstermaker, 2016). Transgender women prisoners in male prisons are relatively disadvantaged and marginalised when compared to other inmates in terms of prior employment, marital status, mental health, substance abuse, HIV status, homelessness, sex work, and victimization (Sexton et al., 2010).

Psychological Challenges

In addition, reports of physical assault, drug use, and several harmful mental health conditions have been made about this group of people. In terms of most factors, transgender women's psychological well-being is the worst (Chakrapani et al., 2019). Compared to the general population, trans women are more prone to encounter mental health issues and this might occur as a result of transphobia, prejudice, and violence towards their community. Genderqueer/nonbinary-identified people did not significantly differ from their cisgender sexual minority counterparts on outcomes, in contrast to their transgender peers, but they did differ on stressors. In high-income countries, it is consistently observed that transwomen have higher rates of breast cancer, hyperglycemia, and obesity than their heterosexual counterparts, as well as higher rates of alcohol and tobacco use, depression, suicidality, and self-harm (Baral et al., 2013).

Transgender veterans are at greater risk for suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviour, which minority stress model may help to explain. According to the minority stress model, people of marginalised groups experience social stress over time in the form of prejudice, discrimination, and internalised stigma, which has a negative impact on their mental and physical health. (Liu et al., 2022)

In terms of risk factors and outcomes, transgender men appeared to lie between transgender women and genderqueer/nonbinary people. The current research emphasizes how crucial it is to consider the psychological experiences of the various gender minority groupings, apart from both their cisgender sexual minority counterparts and from one another (Jacob, 2016). Discrimination, victimisation, exposure to transphobia, and internalised stigma are all gender-related stressors that have been found to be powerful predictors of psychopathology in transgender people, particularly in transgender youth (Sun et al., 2022). Demographic and psychosocial factors associated with psychological distress and resilience among transgender individuals. (Bariola et al., 2015).

Transgender people have a low social quality of life and incur a great deal of emotional distress. Professionals in every field should exercise extreme tact when addressing the

Psycho-social Determinants and Moral Considerations in Transgenders

requirements of transgender people, as doing so will enhance their psychological well-being. Additionally, research shows that the majority of them endured some form of sexual assault as children. They all experienced trauma that is essentially identical. Transgender persons come from many different backgrounds. They are many people's parents, siblings, and kids as well. These individuals may be our coworkers, friends, neighbours, or classmates. They represent various social classes, as well as all racial and religious backgrounds (Krishna, G. 2018 and Aneesh 2017). Psychologists are in a unique position to assist transgender people in better understanding and integrating the multiple systems because of their responsibilities in assessment, treatment, and prevention. They can help transgender people by introducing and normalising gender identity and expression discrepancies. (APA TFGIGV, 2009).

Social and political exclusion

Being human, transgender people are a part of society and have the same rights as everyone else in the world. Transgender people have existed from the beginning of time, as evidenced by numerous scripts. Prejudice and exclusion are the most crucial factors that need to be considered. The transgender community is among the most marginalized due to prejudice against them based on both gender and class. Both financial and social exclusion are relatively new political ideas. Deprivations of citizens' rights, such as limited access to organisations, voting rights, laws, constitutions, and policy decision-making, are referred to as political aspects of exclusion. There is a connection between social exclusion and politics and governance. 'Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack of denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to many people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole'(Levitas,2007).

The notion of social exclusion encompasses the political aspect as well, as it pertains to the deprivation of specific human and political rights to demographic groups. Deprivations of citizens' rights, such as limited access to organisations, voting rights, laws, constitutions, and policy decision-making, are referred to as a political element of exclusion. Second, a range of social security concerns affect transgender groups. When faced with bigotry or not wanting to bring shame to their family, a youngster or teenager may choose to flee their home. They turned to transgender communities as a result. Since most transgender people flee their homes, they cannot expect the support of their biological family. As a result of their estranged lifestyle, transgender people face numerous difficulties, including health issues, a lack of job opportunities, and access to financial resources and opportunities for a living, such as housing, land, and favorable working conditions.

When we talk about legal matters, they can be complicated for gender-nonconforming individuals as well as those who alter their sexual orientation. Legal recognition of their gender identity is challenging, as is getting legal reorganization of their gender identity. Other challenges include same-sex marriage, adoption of children, inheritance, wills and trusts, immigration, status, and employer discrimination. The inability to reorganise legally might have serious repercussions when applying for a bank account, passport, and government ration card.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of psycho-social determinants and moral considerations in the lives of transgender individuals underscores the complexity and multifaceted nature of their experiences. This analysis reveals the profound impact that societal attitudes, cultural norms,

Psycho-social Determinants and Moral Considerations in Transgenders

and personal beliefs can have on the well-being and identity development of transgender individuals. To sum up, research on moral issues and psycho-social factors influencing the life of transgender emphasizes the need for an all-encompassing, multidisciplinary approach. For in-depth investigation of the complex interactions between psychological and social elements is required, it is a thorough analysis of the changing moral paradigms that may help create settings that are more accepting and encouraging for trans women. The groundwork for future scholarly investigation and support of trans women's rights and welfare is laid by this review.

In conclusion, understanding the psycho-social determinants and moral considerations of transgender individuals is essential for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Advocacy for policy changes, educational initiatives, and increased awareness can contribute to dismantling barriers and creating a society of acceptance.

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Psycho-social Determinants and Moral Considerations in Transgenders

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Conflict of Interest

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