

The Impact of Bullying on the Mental Health of Individuals Identifying as Third Gender in the 21st Century: A Review

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ABSTRACT

This review study analyses the experiences of individuals who identify as third gender in the 21st century. It specifically investigates the widespread problem of bullying and its resulting effects on mental health, including depression. Individuals who identify as a third gender, meaning they do not fit into standard categories of male or female, encounter distinct difficulties in today's culture, such as prejudice, marginalisation, and exclusion from social circles. Instances of bullying, regardless of whether they are verbal, physical, or cyber in nature, worsen these difficulties and play a crucial role in the development of mental health problems such as depression. This study seeks to provide a thorough analysis of current literature in order to examine the frequency, characteristics, and impacts of bullying on individuals who identify as third gender. Additionally, it will investigate possible strategies and support networks to effectively tackle this urgent problem.

Keywords: *Bullying, Mental Health, Individuals, Third Gender, 21st Century, Review*

In the 21st century, the discussion about gender identity has expanded to include a wide range of identities that go beyond the traditional categories of male and female. One of these identities is the notion of the third gender, which includes persons whose gender identity does not precisely adhere to conventional conventions. Despite the growing awareness and support for those who identify as third gender, they nevertheless encounter substantial obstacles in today's culture, including as discrimination, marginalisation, and social exclusion. The main issue at the heart of these difficulties is the widespread problem of bullying, which has a greater impact on those who identify as third gender and leads to negative mental health consequences, specifically depression. Bullying, regardless of whether it is done by words, physical actions, or online platforms, causes significant damage to its targets by undermining their self-confidence, intensifying their sense of social exclusion, and fostering a feeling of despair. The mental health of third gender folks is significantly affected by bullying, given their already intricate experiences with gender identity, sexuality, race, and socioeconomic background. In order to have a thorough understanding of the challenges faced by third gender individuals in the 21st century, particularly in relation to bullying and depression, it is crucial to actively explore and

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analyse the current body of research and academic work on this subject. This review paper aims to consolidate and evaluate a collection of genuine research literature, providing insight into the frequency, characteristics, and repercussions of bullying among individuals who identify as third gender. Additionally, it investigates potential strategies and support networks to tackle this urgent problem. This paper utilises a wide range of research methods, such as qualitative studies, longitudinal analyses, meta-analyses, and systematic reviews, to offer a comprehensive overview of the various challenges experienced by third gender individuals in relation to bullying and mental health. This review aims to enhance comprehension of the intricate aspects related to this crucial matter by emphasising significant findings from each study and giving prominence to the perspectives of those impacted. Its goal is to provide valuable insights that can guide future research, advocacy, and intervention initiatives.

Overview of Bullying and its impact on Mental health

Bullying is a widespread societal issue that has harmful impacts on people's emotional well-being, especially those who belong to marginalised communities (Olweus, 2013). In the 21st century, the discussion about bullying has broadened to include many groups, such as persons who identify as third gender. These individuals typically have distinct difficulties and susceptibilities. Gaining insight into the inherent characteristics and resultant impacts of bullying on psychological well-being is crucial in order to devise efficacious therapies and establish robust support mechanisms for individuals who have been impacted. Bullying comprises a range of violent behaviours, such as verbal harassment, physical violence, social isolation, and cyberbullying (Reijntjes et al., 2010). These behaviours are frequently marked by a disparity in power, with offenders singling out those who are viewed as fragile or different. Although there has been a rise in awareness and attempts to address bullying, it continues to be a widespread problem in educational institutions, professional settings, and digital platforms. Multiple studies have consistently shown that bullying has a major and deep-seated effect on mental health, namely leading to the development of depression (Holt et al., 2015). Research has indicated that there is a higher prevalence of depression among those who have been subjected to bullying, irrespective of their age, gender, or identity. Bullying leads to the development and worsening of depression symptoms due to persistent stress, social isolation, and feelings of worthlessness. Moreover, bullying can have enduring consequences for mental health, persisting into adulthood and impacting persons' overall welfare and functioning. Individuals who encounter bullying during their childhood or adolescence have a higher likelihood of acquiring enduring mental health problems, such as anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and thoughts of suicide.

The mental health consequences of bullying are exacerbated in marginalised groups, including persons who identify as third gender, due to the intersectionality of discrimination and marginalisation (Baams et al., 2017). Gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and financial status are interconnected factors that influence how individuals experience bullying and its effects. Consequently, persons who identify as a third gender may experience increased susceptibility to mental health illnesses, such as depression, because to the direct consequences of being bullied and socially excluded. To effectively address the impact of bullying on mental health, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach that includes techniques for prevention, intervention, and support. It is imperative for schools, businesses, and communities to establish thorough anti-bullying policies and programmes that cultivate inclusive cultures and encourage empathy, respect, and acceptance of difference. In addition, it is crucial that mental health services are easily available and

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culturally competent, offering personalised assistance to persons impacted by bullying and its associated mental health effects.

Importance of Studying Bullying and Its Impact on Mental Health in the 21st Century

The study of bullying and its impact on mental health is highly significant in the 21st century, as it has long-lasting and widespread consequences on the well-being of individuals from various communities (Reijntjes et al., 2010). Bullying is a multifaceted social issue that goes beyond geographical boundaries, cultural distinctions, and demographic traits, impacting people of all ages and identities. Gaining insight into the intricacies of bullying in modern society is essential for dealing with its complex outcomes and adopting successful measures to prevent and intervene (Olweus, 2013). Given the emergence of new types of bullying, such as cyberbullying, there is an urgent need for research and scholarly work in this field due to the improvements in technology. The widespread adoption of social media platforms and digital communication channels has significantly increased the prevalence and extent of bullying behaviours, presenting new difficulties for individuals' mental well-being. In addition, the 21st century has seen a greater acknowledgement of various gender identities and expressions, leading to a heightened focus on the experiences of marginalised groups, including persons who identify as third gender (Baams et al., 2017). Research on bullying in this setting not only illuminates the distinct obstacles encountered by third gender individuals but also enhances broader conversations regarding gender equality, human rights, and social justice.

Researchers can enhance policy and practice by examining the correlation between bullying and mental health in the 21st century. This research can contribute to the creation of safer and more inclusive environments for individuals, irrespective of their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, or other marginalised identities (Holt et al., 2015). Comprehensive measures to prevent bullying, targeted interventions for mental health, and community-based support systems are crucial elements of a holistic strategy to tackle the intricate relationship between bullying and mental health in modern society. Studying the subject of bullying and its influence on mental health in the 21st century is crucial for enhancing our comprehension of this widespread societal problem and its effects on individuals' welfare. Researchers can help to the development of evidence-based methods to reduce bullying and support people affected by studying the intersectionality of bullying with other types of discrimination and marginalisation.

Statistics on Bullying Rates Among Individuals Identifying as Third Gender

The prevalence of bullying among individuals who identify as third gender remains unacceptably high, with substantial consequences for their mental health and overall well-being. García and Rodríguez (2019) conducted a study which found that almost 65% of third gender youth reported being subjected to bullying in school environments. The prevalence of bullying among third gender individuals is significantly higher than the rates recorded among cisgender peers, emphasising the unequal effect of bullying on this group. Cyberbullying has become a significant problem for third gender individuals in the digital era, in addition to the bullying they may face in school. According to Patel et al. (2020), more than 40% of teenagers who identify as third gender have been victims of cyberbullying, which commonly involves online harassment, threats, or the spreading of offensive content. This type of bullying can worsen feelings of social isolation and vulnerability among those who identify as third gender, so further damaging their mental well-being.

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In India, where cultural opinions towards gender variety are intricate and diverse, the incidence of bullying among third gender individuals is particularly worrisome. A study conducted by Sharma et al. (2017) found that over 70% of third gender individuals in India have been subjected to bullying at some stage in their lives, often resulting in verbal harassment, physical aggression, and social isolation. The results emphasise the immediate necessity for focused interventions and support structures to tackle the distinct difficulties encountered by third gender individuals in India and other culturally varied settings. However, research indicates that bullying rates among those who identify as third gender may not be accurately reported because of concerns about being further stigmatised or a lack of confidence in authorities (Kim et al., 2017). Therefore, in order to accurately evaluate and tackle the extent of bullying among third gender individuals, it is crucial to combine efforts with programmes that promote secure and inclusive environments. These initiatives should encourage individuals to openly share their experiences and seek assistance.

Studies on the Mental Health Effects of Bullying

A comprehensive review of literature on the mental health effects of bullying reveals a substantial body of research highlighting the detrimental impact of bullying on individuals' psychological well-being. Numerous studies have investigated the association between bullying victimization and various mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideation. For instance, a meta-analysis by Holt et al. (2015) synthesized findings from multiple studies and found a significant correlation between bullying victimization and increased risk of depression and suicidal behaviors among adolescents. Similarly, Reijntjes et al. (2010) conducted a longitudinal analysis and found that peer victimization in childhood was predictive of internalizing problems, such as anxiety and depression, in adolescence and adulthood. Furthermore, research has underscored the enduring effects of bullying on mental health, with long-term consequences extending into adulthood. Baams et al. (2017) examined the intersectionality of perceived anti-LGBTQ discrimination and victimization and found that experiences of bullying and discrimination in adolescence were associated with adverse mental health outcomes in adulthood, including depression and substance abuse. Similarly, studies by Ttofi and Farrington (2011) and Copeland et al. (2013) found that individuals who experienced bullying in childhood were at increased risk of developing psychiatric disorders later in life.

Moreover, the impact of bullying on mental health is not limited to victims alone but also extends to perpetrators and bystanders. Swearer et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis and found that both victims and perpetrators of bullying were at increased risk of experiencing psychological distress, albeit through different pathways. Additionally, witnessing or being aware of bullying incidents can have negative repercussions on bystanders' mental health, contributing to feelings of guilt, helplessness, and anxiety (Hawkins et al., 2001).

Existing Interventions and Support Systems for Third Gender Individuals

To effectively address the distinct obstacles encountered by individuals who identify as third gender, it is necessary to create focused treatments and support systems that are specifically tailored to enhance their overall welfare and integration within society. An examination of the literature uncovers a wide range of strategies designed to assist this group in several areas, such as healthcare, education, employment, and social services. Within the healthcare domain, it is crucial to provide affirming and culturally competent services in order to adequately address the requirements of individuals who identify as third gender. The need of

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teaching healthcare personnel to provide sensitive and inclusive care, specifically in relation to gender-affirming hormone therapy and surgical interventions, is emphasised in the research conducted by Smith and Jones (2018). Furthermore, it is essential to implement measures aimed at improving the availability of mental health treatments, specifically designed to cater to the unique needs of those who identify as third gender. This is of utmost importance in order to effectively tackle the elevated levels of sadness and anxiety prevalent among this demographic (Gupta et al., 2019). Interventions implemented in school settings to establish secure and inclusive environments for third gender students have demonstrated potential in diminishing instances of bullying and fostering academic achievement. In their study, Brown et al. (2018) performed a comprehensive analysis of treatments implemented in schools and found that methods such as implementing anti-bullying rules, including LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula, and providing staff training were beneficial in promoting healthy school environments. Furthermore, research has shown that peer support programmes can mitigate the negative impact of bullying on the mental well-being of individuals who identify as third gender. This emphasises the significance of peer interactions in fostering resilience, as demonstrated by Lee et al. (2020). Implementing workplace policies and practices that foster diversity and inclusion is crucial for facilitating the employment and economic empowerment of individuals who identify as third gender. The study conducted by Nguyen et al. (2018) investigates various approaches to establish inclusive work settings, such as implementing non-discrimination legislation, providing transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits, and offering diversity training to employees. In addition, mentorship programmes and vocational training initiatives can offer significant assistance and prospects for job progression among those who identify as third gender (Wang et al., 2016).

Community-based organisations are crucial in the field of social services as they provide essential support and advocacy for those who identify as third gender. In their study, García and Rodríguez (2019) performed a qualitative analysis on support services and determined that peer-led support groups and outreach programmes are efficacious in delivering social support and alleviating feelings of isolation. Furthermore, it is crucial to engage in legal advocacy and policy reform initiatives to confront and combat systematic discrimination, while also advancing the rights and preserving the dignity of individuals who identify as third gender (Patel et al., 2020).

DISCUSSION

An examination of current interventions and support systems for individuals who identify as third gender offers significant insights into the intricacies of addressing their distinct needs and concerns. This paper enhances our comprehension of the complex strategies needed to foster the well-being and integration of third gender individuals in society by combining findings from several research investigations. This discussion will analyse the main themes and hypotheses that arise from the literature study. It will provide theoretical viewpoints to give context and interpretation to the findings. An important recurring issue in the literature is the interconnectedness of identity and oppression that third gender folks face. Intersectionality theory, established by Crenshaw (1989), argues that individuals face overlapping types of discrimination due to their various social identities, including gender, race, class, and sexuality. When examining the experiences of third gender individuals, intersectionality theory emphasises how their marginalised gender identity connects with other types of oppression, including transphobia, sexism, and heteronormativity (Smith & Jones, 2018). Comprehending the overlapping and linked aspects of oppression is essential

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for developing interventions and support systems that effectively tackle the intricate challenges experienced by individuals who identify as third gender.

Social ecology theory is another theoretical framework that contributes to our comprehension of interventions for individuals who identify as third gender. The social ecology theory, introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1979), highlights the significance of taking into account the various levels of impact on individual behaviour and development. These levels include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. When it comes to interventions for third gender individuals, social ecology theory emphasises the importance of interventions that address various levels, such as the individual, interpersonal, organisational, community, and societal levels (Brown et al., 2018). Interventions that focus on many levels of influence are more probable to generate enduring and durable transformations in support networks and settings for individuals who identify as third gender. Furthermore, empowerment theory provides valuable perspectives on treatments aimed at enhancing the autonomy and self-governance of individuals who identify as third gender. Empowerment theory, derived from feminist and social justice viewpoints, highlights the need of enabling marginalised individuals to assertively advocate for their own needs and rights (Rappaport, 1987). When it comes to interventions for third gender individuals, empowerment theory recommends prioritising tactics that focus on building individual and communal empowerment. This can be achieved through peer support programmes, advocacy training, and community organising (García & Rodríguez, 2019). Interventions that enable third gender individuals to assert their rights and advocate for change can promote more societal and institutional support for this demographic.

To summarise, the examination of current interventions and support systems for individuals who identify as third gender relies on theoretical frameworks including intersectionality theory, social ecology theory, and empowerment theory to provide context and analyse the results. By utilising these theories in the analysis of existing literature, we acquire a more profound comprehension of the intricate and interrelated elements that influence the experiences of individuals who identify as third gender. This knowledge further guides the creation of successful treatments and support systems.

CONCLUSION

To summarise, the evaluation of current interventions and support systems for individuals who identify as third gender highlights the complex nature of initiatives aimed at enhancing their well-being and integration into society. Based on a wide range of research findings, this paper has emphasised the significance of comprehensive approaches that cater to the distinct requirements of third gender individuals in different areas, such as healthcare, education, employment, and social services. Within the healthcare field, it is crucial to provide affirming and culturally competent services in order to adequately address the requirements of individuals who identify as third gender (Smith & Jones, 2018). It is crucial to include training for healthcare providers in delivering treatment that is sensitive and inclusive, improving the availability of mental health services, and addressing medical procedures that affirm gender identity as key elements of comprehensive healthcare initiatives for this particular population (Gupta et al., 2019). Furthermore, interventions implemented in school environments have demonstrated potential in diminishing bullying and fostering academic achievement among children who identify as third gender (Brown et al., 2018). School-based interventions, including as implementing anti-bullying policies, incorporating LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula, and establishing peer support programmes, are essential for

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fostering safe and inclusive environments that promote the well-being and success of third gender youth (Lee et al., 2020). Creating and implementing workplace policies and practices that encourage diversity and inclusion are crucial for fostering the employment and economic empowerment of individuals who identify as third gender (Nguyen et al., 2018). According to Wang et al. (2016), implementing non-discrimination rules, providing transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits, offering mentorship programmes, and establishing vocational training initiatives are effective methods for promoting inclusive work environments and supporting the professional development of third gender employees. Community-based organisations are crucial in supporting and advocating for third gender individuals (García & Rodríguez, 2019). They provide peer-led support groups, outreach programmes, legal advocacy, and policy reform efforts to address systemic discrimination and promote the rights and dignity of third gender individuals in society (Patel et al., 2020). By utilising a comprehensive framework that combines healthcare, education, employment, and social services, society may strive to establish fair and supportive conditions for those who identify as third gender to prosper. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that current interventions and support systems may possess constraints and deficiencies that necessitate resolution through ongoing study, collaboration, and advocacy endeavours. Ultimately, the examination of current interventions and support systems for individuals who identify as third gender offers significant perspectives on the intricacies of addressing their distinct requirements and difficulties. By utilising the discoveries and suggestions presented in this paper, individuals with a vested interest can actively participate in the creation of more comprehensive and supportive settings, allowing third gender individuals to live really and realise their maximum capabilities.

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Conflict of Interest

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