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Impact of Loneliness and Depression on Social Isolation of Third Gender in Multan: An Analysis

Siraj Hussain ^a, Shahzad Farid ^b, Muhammad Zahid ^c, Sajjad Hussain ^d

^a Lecturer, Sociology, Bahuddin Zakriya University Sub Campus Lodhran, Pakistan

^b Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Okara, Pakistan

^c Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Okara, Pakistan

^d PhD Scholar, Department of Sociology, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in the sphere of lonely and socially isolated third gender as their lingering agony is not realized by mainstream society. The major objective of the study is to explore the impact of loneliness and depression on social isolation of third gender. Researcher collected data from randomly selected 100 eunuchs from Multan city, using self-administered questionnaire and face-to-face interview schedule. Researcher explored that loneliness significantly affected social isolation ($p < .05$). The study concluded that loneliness produced social isolation among third genders in Multan. The study further suggested that social inclusion of third gender in main fabric of society through their participation in social institutions.

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Corresponding author's email address: siraj.raza@bzu.edu.pk

1. Introduction

There is distinct differentiation between sex and gender. The division of sex is natural at the time of birth; human beings are divided into the understood categories of masculinity and femininity when they came into existence. Nevertheless, some disorders at the time of birth, lay them in another category known as third gender having tendency towards the masculinity or the femininity. This tendency may be induced in the individuals with the passage of time when social roles are assigned to them, but they are failed to fulfil the expected roles and do not confirm to the norm (Nanda1986)

The roots of third gender can be traced back in the ancient history of the Greece. The word 'Eunuch' has been derived from the Greek language, standing for the "gate keeper of the bed". They were protector of the royal families, especially females in the region. Their services were also embraced as the guards of the courts. Moreover, the eunuchs of Greco-Roman era used to emphasize over their identity of "otherness" than the common people, and they depicted themselves through make up and colourful dressing. Chinese history is also evident of the acceptance of third gender in its society (Kuefler,2001). According to historians, the trend of Castration raised later on in the Chinese

realm, Hijras were provided vacuum in this dynasty. Therefore, there was an increase in the castration during the Ming reign. Since the inception of Mughal regime in the subcontinent, third gender gained prestige in society. They were assigned the duties of advisor of the Queens and the princess. Their entry to the palaces makes them enable to influence the state affairs. Besides this they also served in the courts and were called upon as the 'khawja sara'. With the decline of the Mughal empire in the 1857, reputation, social status, and source of livelihood of Hijras were also declined. They were banished from the mainstream society, strange behaviours, hatred, and violent response from society pulled them towards the beggary and other evil activities including crime. Although with the advent of British colonialism they were assigned the responsibility of the tax collection but with the passage of time British Government introduced Criminal Tribes Act in 1871 which restricted the activities of hijras, and they become susceptible towards kidnapping and other criminal activities. They were prohibited at public places and allowed to be arrested if they were found dancing or wearing female dresses at public places. The CTA 1871 put forwarded great influence over the lives of third gender individuals. Its impact remains abyssal over the lives of hijras of subcontinent. In this way they got detached from the mainstream society and reached at fringes(Sharma,2012).

2. Social Isolation

Social isolation is known as the de-attachments or the lack of companionship with other people(Rook, 1984).). There are two major types of social isolation; Social disconnectedness, it stems from the absences of social networking and the in adequate participation in the social activities. This form of social isolation arises in the individuals due to some situational factors like to Individuals low level of social interaction within groups and society. While the other is perceived social isolation, it stems from the deficiency of social support from the environment and social fabric. Perceived social isolation is due to the several reasons like smallest amount of social means or resources. Hijras fall into the social isolation as they come across weird behaviour of the society (khan et al. 2009). The most observed type of the social isolation among the hijras is known as the perceived social isolation. In daily life experiences third gender individual feel being isolated, because they are discouraged, hatred, battered and restricted to avail the social services. Factors which are influencing the lives of individual often are out of control of them like mental or the physical illness etc. Less usage of the social services also indicates the depth of social isolation in this particular group; social isolation in Hijras can be trapped through the physical, emotional and cognitive ways. Moreover the excessive use of drugs, different visible and invisible ailments, feeling of anxiety, reduced confidence is also the indicator of social isolation in Hijras. This lay them on the fringes of the society, their integration with the society is lowered (Mal, 2015).They could not proceed further in the competitive social process. Nevertheless they are not compatible for the employment, consciously give up to the social services, and create distance from the society.

3. Loneliness

Loneliness is the subjective feeling of an individual and arises in human beings due to the insufficiency of the relationships. Loneliness is the ultimate result of the absence of quality of relations in ones life. Loneliness is not the recent product of the modernization but it has been rooted in the primitive history of Greek drama and the myth. Many theorists have worked over the loneliness, however, (Weiss 1973) postulated two forms of loneliness . Emotional loneliness is characterized due to the loss of close or worthy relationship, intimate relation or from the occurrence of any event in the life of individual. Fear from society, considering alien to everyone and frustration are the symptoms of emotional loneliness. While social loneliness stems from the rejection from the peer group, lack of social contacts and the less belongingness within the society. lethargy, nervousness and sense of exclusion from the society are the symptoms of social loneliness.

Social Loneliness arises into the Hijras due to the deficiency of the quality of relationships. Loneliness is aroused for the several reasons. Different conceptual frame works have been framed by theorist; according to the discrepancy model it arouses when there is incompatibly between the individual needed relationships and the existing relationships. Loneliness and the social isolation are different phenomenon, the presence of these both is not necessary simultaneously. Some individual would be happy with the small number of social networks while the other are satisfied and maintain their privacy. hijras are alone in the crowd, seek no mercy and solace around and their anxiety cannot be realized from the society (Abdullah et al. 2012). Different social relationships play key role and functions in the life of the individuals; owing to the fact that they are disowned by their families this causes loneliness in them. Loneliness arises with the passage of time or in the evolutionary stages. Social withdrawn and the negative feelings are created as a result of severe loneliness. Severe loneliness is chronic and have foundation in the early childhood life of third gender individuals. Due to the lethal socio economic panorama loneliness is getting worsening, and it is enhancing, risk physical, mental health and mortality. Biological and the environmental factors also add to the loneliness of this specific group. An essential element in the loneliness feelings is the peer group; those children who have bit different traits than others are separated from friends. Those gender dysphoric individual who are rejected in the childhood age they have aggressive behavior later on stages of life, but those who maintained friendship in the family or in peer group are buffered from loneliness. Later on this becomes severe or the chronic loneliness in the Eunuchs. Thus when they coup with the diverse circumstances of life they face, have trust less and are afraid of others. They appear to fail to use their social skills in their daily life, if social provisions are not met negative feelings are developed. However social support decreases loneliness in such type of third gender individuals. But they are emotionally lonely not socially, because they are being alone in the mob, having least quality social relationship. Hijras have low quality of life which induces more loneliness into them; if the quality of life of Hijras is improved then the loneliness can be lowered (Kalra, & Shah, 2013).

4. Loneliness and the Social Isolation

it is not vital that the loneliness and the social isolation are always present simultaneously. loneliness and social isolation are the results of the occurrence of the different events in the life span of individual. Those persons who posses the stronger social networking have the maximum chance of the endurance than those who do not have the more relationship (victor et al. 2008). There are some common causes of loneliness but the major is that people are not treated by love that leads them toward more isolated persons. To break up the social isolation, they must attend the friends and relative gatherings and some sort of outings as well. By this their life will not be too much complex. And social isolation may also decrease from the society (Chakrapani, 2010). As age increases the social isolation also increases. There is in depth relationship between the old age, health and isolation. The loss of the valuable relationships is the reason for the social isolation. participation in the leisure activities elevates the social isolation in the old age. Although loneliness and the social isolation are used interchangeably but they are two separate phenomenon. Social isolation and the emotional loneliness are most observed types of these both concepts. Social isolation might occur due to the less number of the contacts while the later appears due to the less cohesiveness or the absence of close social links. loneliness occurs in the males is because of worth of association with the life partner and the women is trapped into loneliness by infrequent links with the society (Kalra, 2012).

5. Conceptualization of the Construct

Third gender is an umbrella term because it possesses several categories like eunuchs, cross dresser, drag queens, transgender, transvestite, hermaphrodite, inter sex, Hijras, gay and lesbians. There is distinction between all these categories of third gender. However, the genuine and the real

category of third gender is Hijra. Hijras are those people who are born with sexual disorders, they are infertile and are not able to take part in the reproduction process. Additionally, they are also intersex, possessing male and female characters. They learn to entertain people; sing songs, dance at the beat of drum in different ceremonies and mostly go to those home where new child is born(Herdt,2012).

Cross dresser or transgender enters the Hijras community sacrificing their identity, they are supposed to internalize the soul of females, and, therefore, dress like females, or change their identity through the critical process of castration. Hence, they gain the equal status in the Hijras community. They are also called as zananas. Transvestite also falls under the category of third gender. They are those individuals who feel pleasure in wearing dresses like women, but they are not involved in the sexual activities (Elifson, 1993). Homosexual and bisexual also try to take up cover under the umbrella of third gender. They are professional sex workers men, rejected and hated in the society hence they claim to be part of the third gender(Abbas,2014).

The genuine and common category under the umbrella of the third gender is known as Hijras or eunuchs. Hijras are intersex individuals with the characteristics of male and females. Hence, they are considered neither male nor females. But there is dominancy of the feminine characteristics, and behaviours like dressing, language, clapping, disgusting jokes and use of female kinship terms. However, they are not considered women because they are not fertile, and they have aggressive behaviour contrary to the typical females(Nanda, 2015).

6. Marginalization of Third Gender

Due to their identity, Hijras have to face various barriers in the society. This unique group has reached on the fringes of the society across the globe, because of societal pressure, odd behaviour, negligence of governments, religious and cultural constraints. As far as the status of Hijras in the Pakistani society is considered they are still begging for their identity(Abdullah et al. 2012). They have been marginalized and are ensnared in the severe social isolation and the loneliness. Roots of such disgusting behaviours can be traced back in the religious and cultural elements in collaboration of the oppressive nature of the government. Those who were guardian of the Mughall herms were snatched their identity, rejected their services, stigmatized as criminal and were taken as inferior and prostitutes. This was a great set back of the lives of eunuchs of subcontinent. After the partition the influence of Colonial policies remain deep over the Pakistani society. However, the role of family, cultural and religious factors are also exerted over pushing the eunuchs in the social isolation and loneliness(Carraro, 2004).

7. Family System of Third Gender

In the childhood they are disowned by their families, stigmatized as evils, considered as curse, oppressed in schools, face verbal harassment, derogatory comments, battered by the peer groups, and have the tendency to act like opposite sex. Thus, they found themselves emancipated by leaving the mainstream fabric of the society because they found satisfaction and calm in the company of people having same identity. Here, they establish new family system(Pamment, 2010).

The entry of new ones into the Hijras community is also a critical process. After entering in the new family system, they have to obey the norms of the new family where centralized role is given to the Grue Maa(Reddy, 2006).Grue Maa is responsible for their Chelas and [s]he provides them protection and household. Grue Maa is the most prestigious figure in the Hijras community, [s]he is obliged, obeyed, and preferred in each aspect of the life. Any order from the Grue Maa is considered sacred, and obeyed. Grue Maa also takes care of the her Chelas, sorts out their problem, runs household, makes

liaison with the clients, and finds some other sources of earning for them. For the successful running of the household their expenditures are shared from the earning of the chelas(Ahmad, 2010).).

In addition to this Hijras are sensitized about their historical affiliation(Rehan et al. 2009). The pure Hijras considered themselves as the followers of the Khawja saras of Mughal era who were guardian of the royal families. Sex work and beggary is restricted in them. Their source of income is the charity. While others follow the zanana pun, born as male but have the feminine characteristics, thus, they become prostitutes, and beggary also adds to their income(Khan,2016).

8. Methodology

The universe for the present study was Multan city. A sample of 100 respondents was selected through simple random sampling. Data was collected using interview schedule as the respondents were not literate to some extent. Interview schedule was based on the UCLA scale of loneliness, third version (1996) which was formulated by Russell (1978) in the university of California Los Angeles. Moreover, to measure the level of the depression, Beck Depression Inventory developed by Dr. Aaron T. Beck, was used. It is a 21 questions multiple-choice self-report inventory and one of the most widely used instruments for measuring the severity of depression fixed scale was used in the interview schedule. the BDI was originally developed to provide a quantitative assessment of the intensity of depression. Moreover, the social isolation was measured by the modified scale of Farid, et al. (2014).

9. Results

Table 1: Percentage distribution of the respondents regarding their demographic profile.

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Age			
	1-15	58	58.0
	16-25	31	31.0
	26-35	7	7.0
	36-45	3	3.0
	46-55	1	1.0
Marital status			
	Married	10	10.0
	No- Married	90	90.0
Education			
	Illiterate	64	64.0
	primary	17	17.0
	Middle	7	7.0
	Matric	11	11.0
	F.A	1	1.0
Locality			
	Rural	13	13.0
	Urban	87	87.0
Occupation		100	100.0
	Signing	3	3.0
	Dancing	21	21.0
Category of third gender			

	Hijras	25	25.0
	Transgender	47	47.0
	Hermaphrodite	21	21.0
	Transvestite	2	2.0
	Other	5	5.0
School of thought			
	Khusra pun	33	33.0
	Zanana pun	57	57.0
	Other	10	10.0
Living with/residence			
	Parents	20	20.0
	Grue	50	50.0
	Own	3	3.0
	Rent	27	27.0

The table also showed that majority of the hijras are unmarried (90%) and illiterate (64%). However, a very least percentage of the respondents were educated as only 7% of the hijras have middle level education and 1% secured higher secondary level education. The table also showed that hijras community is higher in urban areas comparing with the rural area (87% and 13% respectively). The table also showed that percentage distribution of the various categories of the third gender that revealed that a little less than the half of the total respondents (47%) are transgenders and a quarter of the total respondents (25%) are hijras.

However, rest of the categories of the third gender are very little. The major school of thought of most of the respondents is zanana pun (57%), Khusra pun is second in order (33%), and the rest of the respondents comprised transgender, hermaphrodite, etc. school of thought. The most important distribution is the residential distribution of the third gender as the table showed the half of the sample is living with the Guru. Astonishingly, 20% of the third gender are living with their parents and 27% in a rented house.

Table 2: One-Way Analysis of Variance

Variables		Sum of squares	Mean square	F	P
Social Isolation				1.160	.334
	Between groups	64.474	16.119		
	Within group	1320.286	13.898		
	Total	1384.760			
Depression				2.602	.041
	Between groups	447.190	111.797		
	Within group	4082.520	42.974		
	Total	4529.710			
Loneliness				4.461	.002
	Between groups	524.274	131.069		
	Within group	2791.366	29.383		
	Total	3315.640			

Table 2 comprises the results of the One-Way analysis of variance of the major variables of the study. The table showed that level of depression ($F = 2.60$, $p = 0.041$) and loneliness ($F = 4.461$, $p = 0.002$) are significantly different by the type of residence or living with. However, no significant difference of social isolation was found ($p > .05$). In order to explore the meaning difference of these variables across residence, we applied Tukey's T test. The test revealed that the loneliness among the third gender who are living on rent is higher comparing with those who are living with guru ($p < .05$) or with parents ($p < .05$).

Variable	Age	Education	Monthly Income	Loneliness	Depression	β	t	p
Social Isolation	.112 .268	.038 .704	-.127 .207	.361** .000	.006 .956		4.199	.000
Age		-.084 .404	.361** .000	.091 .366	-.102 .313	.134	1.311	.193
Education			-.087 .389	-.184 .067	-.021 .833	.103	1.073	.286
Monthly Income				-.075 .457	-.068 .501	-.142	-1.396	.166
Loneliness					.156 .122	.364	3.708	.000*
Depression						-.045	-.468	.641
						R=.410	adj. R ² = .124	

** correlation is significant at 0.001 level

* $P < 0.05$

Table 3 comprises the results of the correlation and multiple linear regression. The correlation matrix of variables showed that social isolation is significantly correlated with loneliness, $r = 0.361$, $p < .001$. However, rest of the variables are not correlated except age and monthly income. Further, the linear regression analysis showed that the independent variables explained 17% of variance in the outcome variable i.e. social isolation. The analysis showed the loneliness significantly positively predicted the social isolation of third gender ($\beta = .364$, $p < 0.001$). However, depression and other variables did not significantly predict the social isolation.

10. Conclusion

Grief of the rejection from the society, strange behaviours of people in daily life, discrimination in basic rights, physical and verbal violence and the abandonment from family are taking hijras towards the fringes of the society. Though they are present around us, participate in our rituals but their presence has been ignored, and they are conceived as mere puppets of amusement and fun. The study concludes that such factors increase their loneliness which directly increase their social isolation. The study suggests that they should be socially engaged in order to reduce their level of loneliness which may ultimately reduce their level of social isolation.

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