

# The Story of Transgender Community in Hazara Division

Ahsan Ali<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Muhammad Rizwan<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Sardar Muhammad<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Muhammad Adil<sup>4</sup>, Hajra Arzoo Siddiqui<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor Department of Humanities Comsats University Islamabad (Abbottabad Campus).

<sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology, Abbottabad

<sup>5</sup>Lecturer, Department of psychology, Abbottabad University of Science and Technology, Abbottabad.

Corresponding author: Hajra Arzoo Siddique, Email: [hajraarzoo30@gmail.com](mailto:hajraarzoo30@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Contrary to the teaching of Islam and the constitution of Pakistan, which has given equal right to every human-being, transgender community of the country is mainly not being treated properly. Like other parts of the country, here in Hazara the picture is not different from rest of the society. In spite of huge claims, the state machinery is unable to provide the transgender an environment where they could enjoy equal rights in education, economic and social sectors. Along with their social and economic deprivation, their existence is being challenged for the last few years or so. Along with governmental institutions, some NGOs are trying to overcome these issues yet the issues regarding life security, educational prospects, job opportunities and health faculties are needed to be addressed properly. A question that in spite of Supreme Court's verdict in 2013, why the transgender of Pakistan including Hazara are deprived from their rights will be addressed during the course of this study. It will try to pin point hurdles being faced by the transgender and how to remove these in a proper way.

**Key words:** Hazara, transgender, education, health, economic issues, identity

## INTRODUCTION

In every society, there are some people who may look like us, but their soul is not match to their body are called transgender or transsexuals. Medical science says that if any person having different expression which is differs from their sex assigned at birth are placed in this category. Like if any man having feelings like women or any women have

feeling like men, and they behave like that are called transgender. Most people are told they are a boy, or a girl (male or female) based on the genitals they were born with. This is the sex you are assigned at birth. For some people, that male or female label may not feel right. Someone born female may feel that they are really a male, and someone born male may feel that they are really a female. People who feel this way

are called transgender. Others may feel that they belong to neither gender or to both genders. People who feel this way sometimes identify as “gender nonbinary,” “gender fluid,” or “genderqueer.” Some other terms may include androgynous, gender, gender neutral, and gender nonconforming. Furthermore, another study conducted by Cary J. Nederman and Jacqui True “The Third Sex: The Idea of the Hermaphrodite in Twelfth-Century Europe” in which they presented the view that the idea of sexuality and body has been of great concern in the ancient times. Evolutionary biologist Joan Roughgarden suggests a way to blend learned versus innate models of gender identity development. In Pakistan there are 2% of our population is affected by transgenderism.<sup>1</sup> Many of transgender are first born babies who are effect by this; their families want to kill them because they are ashamed that their child is a part of his honorable family.<sup>2</sup> No one have choice at birth that we are boy, girl or transgender. Then why they faced discrimination in family and society? In constitution of Pakistan they have equal rights like other citizen. In 2013 Supreme Court orders federal and provincial governments to give them employments in government departments.<sup>3</sup> (Daniela, B., & Devika, B., 2015).

### **WHO ARE “THEY”?**

Transgender mostly castrated male has a long history date back to 9th Century B.C. They were in accepted demand to guard imperial harems. The practice believe to have started in China, where eunuchs were entrusted with the task of defensive royal harem and similarly, they were preferred over other genders due to their weak characteristics and coward attitude. The

golden era for third gender was during the time of the Mughal monarchs, from 1526 to 1857, when eunuchs and hermaphrodites oversaw the harem, often becoming key advisors. According to the modern generation, “our forefathers served the Mughal in the palaces, and people wanted to learn from them because they were great people”.<sup>4</sup> (Nadeem)

When we read Maha Bharat which is a hindu epic, in this book we read about a character named Arjun, who had observed transgender character to away from his enemies. When we see the north India where some of Hindu transgender were the worshipers of Bahuchar Devi. In subcontinent these transgender have their own typical language which is called as Hijra Farsi. This is consist of 10000 words, and in this language all words were derived from the major Asian languages.<sup>5</sup> (Nadeem kashish)

The case of transgender people in Pakistan got flamed when unknown militants shot a transgender person. The administration got confused about where we should take the patient to the male ward or female. Meanwhile, he was fighting with death, and sadden lost his life. Who left the questions behind "Are we Humans too, are we national of the country, do we have any "Right to live" in this world." It is a natural phenomenon, but transgender people still face difficulties getting their rights or ignored in schools, colleges or universities, and in every daily walk of life. Their families feel shame and want to kill them as recognizing the third gender is not bearable in families.

### **ISSUES BEING FACED IN HAZARA**

During interviews with some of the prominent transgender figures of Haripur, Abbottabad and Mansehra, the miserable situation of the community has been revealed. In reply of we asked them what are

the main reasons behind the violations against them. They told us some reasons about violations. First we have to know about the land and people of hazara, about their land and culture. Hazara is the only division of Khyber Pakhtun Khaw province of Pakistan which is away from other division of province. These people have their own identity and culture which is quite different from other parts of KPK. They are known as Hazara or Hindkowan, because in this region majority of people can speak or live in hazara palatu.

### **a) Identity crisis**

The word transgender refers to those people whose sexual characteristics are differ from other people. They live in out societies from very long time. In our culture we see in some functions like birthday or marriage functions. We gave them names like, Khusra, Khadra, Murat, Khawaja Sara etc.<sup>6</sup> (Baloch). They are the people who have lowest degree of honor or human rights. Majority of them are illiterate or have some basic education of religion.

According to the constitution of 1973, Pakistan is an Islamic state. Islam has given equal rights to all human beings but still transgenders are being seen as a different community and not accepted by the local community and face many issues in getting their fundamental rights of identity, education, health, and economic opportunities, and even the security of their life . In 2013, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has given rights to transgenders which still are not implemented in the community. The objective of this research is to find out that, what is the main reason that transgenders are not getting equal rights just like any other pakistani citizen if the government fails to implement the passed law regarding this marginalized community of the society

Introduction Transgender is a term that demonstrates that those who have sexual identities unclear and can't be affirmed as male and female.<sup>7</sup>

### **b) Economic Issues**

According to them these violations were started from very early to any transgender of the world. Human rights violations are challenge of Pakistan in this time. Transgender community faced gender discrimination in Pakistani society. They faced mistreatment of society and harassment by all those people where they employed, hospitals, education institutions or other institutions of the government like police stations and judiciary. They faced abusive language from society and even brutal murder. They are also forced for prostitution and bagging. Trans Protection Act of 2018 is very helpful for them because after this some of the routine things are going to change but slowly. There should be need to focuses on the old age transgender because they have nothing for their old days. However, it is most essential that there should be give them proper support in the shape of monthly fund by the government then they spend their life without the mercy of society. In order to achieve the said objective, there should be roper education facilities for them where they can learn and become respectful citizens. If it is necessary, separate education system may be established so that they can get education without discrimination. They may be given proper platform for earning their livelihood as per their qualification and talent etc. The Government should arrange seminars/workshops in the favour of transgender and to create awareness among the society.

Above all the government should provide them proper jobs including census, survey or even tax collection etc.<sup>8</sup>

### c) Social Isolation

People don't consider them as human beings. They don't like to gobble with them, drink with them or quake their hands, but they are full citizens of Pakistan like everyone else. But behind the happiness, adjustment of transgender life can be lonely and dangerous in a traditional society such as Pakistan. More so they are also deprived of health and Psychological/psychotherapeutic assistance. There should be need to provide them proper health facilities and must be prepare separate ward for this community. It should be provide in government hospitals in every district level. Frantic and jobless youth is involved to transgender community to earn this easy money. Secondly, lack of knowledge toward psychological remedial of evils in most of the low class families led their children to take shelter in the so-called safe haven transgender of community. In most of muslim societies they are not having any respect. They are supposed to be beggars and entertainers. In Mughal era, they were called Khawaja Sara are employed in Haram Sara to supervise them. They have important position in the court. In colonial period, British Government passed a Criminal Tribes Act, in that act transgenders could not dress like women, singing or dancing the public. Thus after this act they were jobless and only earning source was begging.

In Pakistani society, transgender are disowned by their families. Many of transgender live in groups because of protection and survival. This is a taboo that transgender are not human like other people so when transgender are invited in marriage parties, clients misbehaved with them. If any

transgender who is involve in prostitution their clients or sex partners feel that sexual abuse of transgender is permissible so for this they invite their friends and gang raped them. these type of violations cause mental disorder in transgenders and after these type of incidents many of trans people would addicted to drugs or have suicides.

In her interview Gul Ji, told us that in somewhere in Mansehra, one client booked them for dance function of his friend's marriage ceremony. When function was ended they were left for home late night, after some drive their van was enforced stop by the people who were present in that ceremony. That men pulled all the trans people out of the van and looted their money and undressed them in publically. After some time they allow them to go. When they reached at city, they go to police station for filling FIR against them but their FIR was not launched by the police men.<sup>9</sup>

### d) Religious Issues

It is said that Quran is not talking about the transgender openly but it does not mean that It has left them without being discussed. Let we try that why Quran does not tell about transgender. Quran told us that there is no third generation among us on this earth. Allah says in his book that he created humans and other species in pairs. So he clarify that there are only two genders, male and female. There are also some Quranic versed told us about that: "Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge".<sup>10</sup> (Yasin: 36) "And Allah did create you from dust; then from a sperm-drop; then He made you in pairs."<sup>11</sup> (Fatir: 15) "That has created pairs in all things, and has made for you ships and cattle on which

ye ride,”<sup>12</sup>(Zukhruf: 12) “And of everything We have created pairs: That ye may receive instruction.”<sup>13</sup> (Zariyat: 49)

In above verses, Quran declare pairs which are male and female in all living things including humans. Do you think that Quran denies the presence of transgender? Main reason that Quran not told about the transgender is because there is nothing which is called third or transgender. The people assumes that they are transgender are actually suffers from physical abnormality which is also defined by science. This abnormality causes the psychological and physical behaviour. People who suffers with these conditions are actually have Klinefelter syndrome disease and the people who are effected this are called hermaphrodites. In this disease the people suffers with an additional x chromosome in their cells so their cells are (xxy). In this disease they have effeminate way of talking and walking, less hair on body, enlarged breasts, small testicles and genitals. Therefore they are having chromosome disorder. So the people who are having this disorder Quran does not consider them third or transgender.

When we see in the light of Sunnah, there is no aversion towards them. In that era they were employed at homes as khadim and had prestige in Islamic society. Ethical and morals principles of Islam applied to them. In that time they were allowed to work at homes to help Muslim women, these women did not observe veil from them. Transgender have full rights under Islamic inheritance law. In this regard, a local clerical body named Tanzeem Ittehad-e-Ummat Pakistan which is based in Lahore issued a fatwa which is counter signed by 50 clerics. In this fatwa they permits a transgender who have male genitals can marry a transgender who had female genitals on her body. They also

include that normal men and women can marry transgender who have clear indication on their body.<sup>14</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Main objective of the current research is to elucidate the socio-economic conditions of the transgender community of Hazara region. By looking into details of their concealed facts about life and existence of transgender, it reveals that although the Government of Pakistan passed many bills to protect the rights of these peoples and to treat them like other citizens of the country including Act Number XIU of 201 8, the chapter III of this bill about “recognition of identity of transgender person” but its implementation is far from reality. Although they have given rights to make their CNIC but it is far beyond practical application of these rights which have been promised. The situation in Hazara is the same as of the rest of the country.

Current work which is mainly limited to three districts of Hazara; Haripur, Abbottabad and Mansehra denotes the bitter reality of these deprived beings. Their social and economic issues are interrelated mainly causing their alienation in the society which is already reluctant to adopt them as an equal citizen. The Supreme Court of Pakistan also gave judgment to protect the rights of these peoples, however, typical mind of the Pakistani society is not ready to give them their due rights including right to life and existence. Instead of looking those as a human being they are taken as a source of entertainment

Unlike developed countries of the World, where these transgender are free to choose their professions without any fear or hesitation, the “forced entertainment”

remains the only choice with them. Pakistani people use to see them performing in their dance functions and parties where they are in place of women entities but majority of these use to live a very miserable life with down houses without hardly necessities of life. People use to tease and mock them without any reason. Their social behavior is mainly the reflection of this scornful attitude from the rest of the society. People sometimes intend to be supportive but unintentionally hurt transgender people by focusing on their looks or whether they conform to gender stereotypes. Yet the government should collect the data of transgender and those who are not naturally transgender should be punished to overcome other misconducts.

## REFERENCES

1. Akhtar Hussain Baloch, *Teesri Jins* (Lahore: Fictions House, 2015), p.5
2. Rani Khan (interview on 26/07/2020 at Haripur)
3. Daniela, B., & Devika, B. *Regimes of Legality: Ethnography of Criminal Cases in South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University, 2015)
4. Nadeem Kashish (interview on 06/08/2020 at Islamabad)
5. Ibid
6. Baloch, p14
7. Jami, H., & Kamal, A. (in progress). *Attitude towards Hijra community and their reciprocal perceptions*. Unpublished raw data, Doctoral Dissertation, National Institute of Psychology, QAU, Islamabad
8. Gayatri Reddy, *With Respect to sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2005)
9. Gul ji (interview on 28/01/2020, Mansehra)
10. Sura Yasin: 36
11. Sura Fatir: 15
12. (Zukhruf: 12)
13. Sura Zariyat: 49
14. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-transgender-idUSKCN0ZD1IZ> (accessed on 03/04/2020)