

Marginalization of Third Gender within Development: An Empirical Study in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh

NILAKANTHA PANIGRAHI[†] & GLADIS S. MATHEW[‡]

*Department of Anthropology and Tribal Development,
Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur 495009, Chhattisgarh
E-mail: nilakantha.panigrahi@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT: Man or a woman is the unique creation of the universe and is indeed an integral part of the nature. It would thus be non-ethical to judge and discriminate people who may be different from either man or woman stereotypes, which again is man-made. Third gender (TG) is a person having both the characteristics of man and woman but suffers from biological identity crises that have been imposed with multiple identities by the society. In India, TGs suffer from bio-social identity crisis which made them marginalized in all fronts of their day to day life and living. In globalization and post-globalization era this has generated social, legal, as well as economical challenges multiplying the marginalization for their survival which needs to be addressed through inclusive development approach. With this premise the present paper is based on empirical study, carried out with the help of anthropological tools which identifies the changing socio-economic characteristics of the TGs in a market driven society. The paper attempts to know the sexual orientation of the TGs, the rights enjoyed by them and the benefits accrued by them from various government development programs meant for them. The paper argues that in the globalised market system where the State withdraws from providing the welfare support, the TGs one of the marginal communities have suffered a lot. They are yet to cope with the progressive support systems available in the market.

INTRODUCTION

For last couple of decades marginalization has become a popular word among different stakeholders of the society. Some say that this concept is a product of globalization (Chatterjee, '89, Pandey, 2002) and has become very popular. However, the concept of marginalization dates back to the culture of colonialism based on exploitation of one's life and living (Cohn, '96; Shaw, '95). The negative consequences of

marginalization on the local by the outsiders are visible throughout the world when one looks at the tribal, the minorities, the women, the have-nots, the underdeveloped nations or people, the natives, the indigenous knowledge system and the third gender (TG). Elwin rightly called it as 'loss of nerve' of the marginalized population.

Third gender is the organic component of Indian society. Man or Woman is the unique creation of the universe and is indeed an integral part of the nature. It would thus be non-ethical to judge and discriminate

[†] Associate Professor, corresponding author

[‡] Doctoral Fellow

people who may be different from either man or woman stereotypes, which again is man-made. Third gender is a person having both the characteristics of man and woman but suffers from biological identity crises who have been imposed with multiple identities by the society. Thus, they encompass those people whose identity and behavior do not adhere to the stereotypical gender norms built over the time and handed over from generation to generation. In India, TG people are named as *Hijras*¹, *Shiv-shaktis*², *Jogappas*³, *Open Kothi*⁴ and *Transgender*⁵. All these sections of the TGs suffer from bio-social identity crisis which made them marginalized in all fronts of their day to day life and living. In globalization and post-globalization era this has generated social, legal, as well as economical challenges for their survival and needs to be addressed through inclusive development approach.

“Sex is what one is born with, gender is what one recognizes, and sexuality is what you discover.” This was a comment made by one of the hijra respondents (Gladish, 2018). It seemingly came straight from the heart full of her conviction and philosophy making no attempts to quote any author or dictionary. The significance in her comment is the ease with which she conceptualized the constructs which theorists and researchers grapple with.

All societies assign specific adult roles based on sex which is emphasized in the process of socialization. For many people, the term sex and gender are used interchangeably. Although sex and gender are closely related, there is a subtle difference between the two. Sex refers to biological status as male or female. It includes biological attributes such as sex chromosomes, genes, sex hormones, internal reproductive structures and external genitals. Gender is a term that is often used to refer to ways that people act, or feel themselves, which is associated with boy/man and girl/woman. While aspects of biological sex are the same across different cultures, aspects of gender may not be. Third gender is the state of one's *“gender identity”* which does not match one's *“assigned gender”*.

In Indian society, the face of third gender is considered as a sign of fortune. They are often seen as dressed in ill-fitting blouses and colorful saris in a grotesque parody of womanhood as they roam in the

busy market places in groups, terrorizing pedestrians, hustling for ten or hundred rupees. Their face is mostly found coloured in cheap *kajal*, powder, and bright colored lipsticks. They are just not the average beggars we come across in an urban pavement. With male voices shouting expletives, palms meeting crossways in a trademark clap, we often meet them in the daily local trains, sometimes in the long distance mail trains or mostly at a crossing or a busy signal. They prey on susceptible passerby, who will part with their cash sooner than be treated to the sight of the group collectively lifting up their saris and flashing castrated genitals areas right in their faces.

Concept of Third Gender People

In the Census of India, 2011, the first major Census TG persons were counted. There are over 4,90,000 TG individuals living in the country. Around 66 per cent of the population identified as TGs live in rural areas of India. The Census data also revealed their low literacy (46%) level in the community when compared with literacy level (74%) in the general population. The accounting of the TG population by the Census of India (2011) tells us that the ratio of TG population to total population is higher in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, while in the State of Manipur, Gujarat and Kerala they are found in low ratio. Chhattisgarh, the present study State, is also having a sizeable number of TG populations (Census of India, 2011).

Human being is the unique creature of the universe. While few believe on the scientific principles of human being, a larger section of the society believe's that the universe including the human beings has been created by the God. This is a common understanding across the religion, region and modern nation States. However, exceptions are observed to the natural and man-made processes. To this exception TGs are popularly known in different names is a person whose gender identity, gender expressions or behavior does not confirm to their biology (Show, 2015). The Supreme Court of India recognizes the biological fact that the 'Third Gender' do not have reproduction capacity either as man or woman and thus known as 'Third Gender' as an institution (Bristow, '95).

In social context historically people have various notions about the third gender with respect to their biological, social, psychological determinants, dignity and freedom (Dutt, 2012; Babbar, 2016). According to 'The Right to Life and Liberty' under Article 21 of Indian Constitution, a human being has right over his privacy and dignity. Justice V. K. Krishna Iyer observed that human dignity is concerned with physical, psychological and integrity with empowerment. In spite of various Constitutional provisions and protections in India, the social structure of our country many times gives them a different status other than legal interpretations. For their mere survival they have developed various strategies both at micro and macro level. The research study findings of Show (2015); Revathy (2014); Mittal (2014); Sharma (2009) and Reddy (2007) reflect various aspects of the TGs. All these findings establish the fact that the third gender maintains comparatively a secret life and living and are subject to exploitation, deprivation even though they are human beings (Show, 2015) and others as mentioned above. Paucity of research findings on TGs many times restrict new generations of researchers to take up this area for further research.

Most modern discussions on the relationship of biological sex to gender assume that there are two genders male and female, founded on the two biological sexes. But not all cultures share these essentialists' assumptions. Bringing together historical and anthropological studies, 'Third Gender' or 'Third Sex' challenges the usual stress on sexual dimorphism and reproduction, providing unique standpoints on various forms of socialization of people who are neither "male" nor "female" (Human Rights Council, 2009). The existence of a third sex or gender enables us to understand how *eunuchs* and *Hijras* met the criteria of special social roles that necessitated practices such as self-castration and how intimate and forbidden desires are expressed by conceptualizing these practices and by allowing these bodies, meanings and desires to emerge (Human Rights Council, 2009). TG as a community provides a new way to think about sex and gender systems that is crucial to cotemporary debates within the social sciences with respect to human dignity, human rights, identity, personality construction and ethnicity (Das, '65; Jayaswal, 2011; Green, 2010).

Identification of individuals who diverge from the male and female categories can prove to be difficult even in cultures in which a TG's role is present, because the condition may nonetheless be somewhat disparaged or considered deviant. In south asian countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh the TGs are heterosexist and homophobic even then they possess high social prestige due to their social and cultural roles (Green, 2010; Bristow, '95). The words like transsexual, transvestial, eunuchs are marginally different in biological context. TGs are both respected and ridiculed in different parts of the world. In Anthropology normally two genders like masculine and feminine are discussed (Richard, Ibid; Written *et al.*, 1997; Babbar, 2016) and very few anthropologists have started working on the third gender. In the era of globalization, anthropologists also adopted this area of research to identify the social identity and processes of this adaptation (Saikia, 2010; Gladish, 2018). However, till date this section of population is considered as "risky" for the spread of HIV and STDs. Therefore, it is challenging for the young and new anthropologists to work among this section of the world population.

Review of Literature

The study tried to find out the major findings of a couple of related studies carried out earlier so as to have a research understanding on various dimensions of the TGs as a community. On search, very few studies were available to the researchers. A couple of them which are relevant to the study are presented here for our understanding. Zhou, Hofman, Gooren and Swaab ('97) in their study explained that a female brain structure if genetically male transsexuals, then it supports the hypothesis that gender identity develops as a result of an interaction between the developing brain and sex hormones. Sharma ('89) viewed that eunuchs are castrated men who do not necessarily wear women's clothing. The practice of castration in the context of Indian society can be stated to have originated from the tradition of desexualizing the animals. Nanda ('99) carried out her fieldwork among the *Hijras* of India. She marked *Hijras* as "neither male nor female", rather they perform an institutionalized third gender role in India. She talked about the cultural and individual dimensions of *Hijra* role and what

initiations and rituals performed by the *guruma* who gives a new female name to each *Hijra*, thereby making them to obey the *guruma* who dictates the rules of the community. Teh (2001) viewed that the TGs are labeled as sexual deviants and are generally shunned by society. Bandhopadyay (2002) found in his study that categorizing of all human beings as ‘male’ or ‘female’ is left unquestioned. This does not always fit with local realities. Throughout South Asia, “*Hijras*” are formed by intersex people and by transgender people who are born male, but do not identify as such, many of whom opt for castration. Cameron and Kulick (2003) worked among the *Hijras* in India. In today’s post-colonial world the status of the *mukhannathun* in the societies of India and Pakistan has an ambiguous character that depends on situations, geo-diagrammatical regions or simply on personal likes and dislikes. Bucholtz (2003) in his work titled, *Postmodern Moment and the Resurgence of Interest in the Sexual Minority*, has found that the world we live in is not only endocentric and phallogocentric but also heterosexist and homophobic. Denny (2004) viewed that the authentic model also discusses gender nonconformity as a natural human variability and not a mental disorder. Pisal and Bandewar (2005) found that the *Hijra* community is organized around the “guru-chela” (teacher-follower) relationship, and is based on hierarchy and power. Piyush (2011) explains the life of a typical eunuch in Indian society in medical and mythological context. He observed how Eunuchs have been systematically marginalized in Indian society partly due to cultural stereotypes and expectations and partly due to bureaucratic rules that trap them in cycles of homelessness and joblessness with no access to document identities, bank accounts and health care facilities. Arti (2011) in her article, *Looking beyond our Ghetto- a peep into the lives of Eunuchs*, emphasized how the eunuchs are deprived of both familial and societal love neither because they are criminals nor because they have committed any other folly, but because they are suffering from some genetic disorders, in spite of the fact that a baffling paradox of our society have criminals in the mainstream, enjoying all civil and human rights. The reviews reflect that none of the studies have reflected the socio-economic conditions of the *Hijras* which is one of the most important indicators for their further development in welfare oriented globalised State.

Dilemma in Legal and Social battle of the TGs

Recent changes in the bigoted British-era law have recognized the dignity of the LGBTQ community in India who were living with fear for century’s altogether. LGBTQ includes Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Trans and Queer community. They are a miniscule in Indian population. This outdated law had created a stigma in the society which is reflected in one’s own house, apartment, office and many other public platforms labeling them as criminals. Section 377 of IPC denied India’s homosexual citizens the right to pursue their sexual orientation, applies no more to consensual sexual behavior. The Indian Constitution talked of equality, but Section 377 denies the rights of the LGBTQ towards their sexual orientations branded it as a crime under Section 377. The argument was to safeguard the sanctity of marriage keeping in mind the unique culture and structure of the Indian society. In India marriage is a sacrament for many- a pledge not just to each other but a religious vow. The dire consequences of community disapproval can cramp the possibility of extra-marital affairs.

Article 14, 15, 19 and 21 of Indian Constitution provides equal rights to all transgendered without any legitimate State rationale to uphold such provisions. Supreme Court focuses on individual rights, promises to bridge the gaps between the Constitutional aspirations and ground realities. A study by Humsafar Trust on ‘Human Rights Violation Against Sexual Minorities in India’ shows that more cases against the gays filed in Delhi, Punjab, UP, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujrat, Karnatak and Manipur by using Section 377 where the gays, bi-sexual and lesbians have been victimized (Pandit, 2018).

The Supreme Court of India unanimously struck down a part of the 158 years old law under Section 377 of the IPC which had criminalized unusual and unnatural sex. The Delhi High Court in 2009 and the Supreme Court of India in 2018 have decriminalized gay sex. These two decisions opened the door for many young people to be open about their sexuality. This verdict is a land mark decision of India in a post-global era. This will lead towards a liberal and tolerating society. It is an important judgment towards the expansion of civil liberties and gay rights in India, but also a court to recognize that as an institution it failed to deliver judgment to protect human rights. By

this an age old colonial law that was an anachronism in today's modern times ends restoring the fundamental rights and negating discrimination based on sexual orientation. This decision is a landmark victory for gay rights in the world's largest democracy. It is also a boost for the gay rights around the globe. It is a ground breaking victory for gay rights in India. However, it is still argued that gay marriages (marriage within the same sex) are not compatible with the nature and are not natural. Indian society traditionally does not recognize such relations.

The Right to Privacy verdict and the decriminalizing Section 377 of IPC have conclusively rejected the States rights to police bed rooms or deny Constitutional rights to a minority. The Apex court held that: parts of section 377 of the IPC which criminalized consensual, unnatural sex is irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary. Secondly, it turned sexual orientation a 'biological phenomenon' and held any discrimination on this ground as violative of fundamental rights. By this India became the 26th country of the world where homosexuality is legal. History owes an apology to the members of the LGBTQ community for the delay in ensuing their rights and giving justice to them.

The formulation of 'Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2018' faced a strong criticism from the transgender community due to various inequities like two-tier system within transgender community which recognizes the sex-reassignment surgery persons can only be transgender. Secondly, identification of transgender depends on scrutiny and certification by district screening committee; and thirdly, the traditional *hijra* livelihood as criminalized and institutionalization of transgender and light punishment for violence against the transgender. As a result, the Bill 2018 ignores the real issues faced by the community and does not reflect the NALSA judgment of 2014. Supreme Court does in the realm safeguarding the individual liberties must shine like beacon for lower courts to replicate. The defense of the persons rights even when you disagree with the person will keep democracy descent and diversity alive.

Objectives of the study: With this premise the present study has the following objectives to address:

- a) To identify the socio-economic characteristics of Third Gender people.
- b) To find out the social and economical problems of the Third Gender people.
- c) To document about the sexual orientation of the TGs, and
- d) To assess the rights enjoyed by the TGs, and the benefits received by them from various governments development programs.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a 'purposive random sampling'. First the list of registered TGs from one local NGO known as 'Samman Sankalp Samiti' was collected and it is known to be the representative of the total population. The list was cross checked with the list of the Welfare Department of the Government of Chhattisgarh at Bilaspur. The study adopted Snowball Sampling method for the data collection as the community lives in isolated pockets of the society and to find their links is very difficult. So, asking from one respondent the study tried to explore out about others. Primary method of data collection by using interview schedule was adopted in the field. In Bilaspur also they are not available in a particular place, so the researchers had to search them in different localities of the town. The study was carried out during March 2018 which covered a total of 60 TGs belonging to both registered category (45) and unregistered category (15).

Key informants helped us to familiar with the study community, and became the source to get some primary information about the Third Gender and access into their community. The interview schedule included both open-ended and close-ended questions. This provided a greater understanding of the subject's point of view. The study collected 10 case studies based on certain criteria's which helped to understand TG problem in a more in-depth and sequence manner. Every case became important for representing the total population. The data were entered into Excel packages to draw tables. The qualitative data were analyzed manually to draw the patterns, processes and factors relating to various aspects of the TGs. Certain qualitative data were also quantified and represented in the form of average, percentage, range and absolute

number. During the study it was very difficult to build rapport with the study population and it made more difficult to understand their local dialect. So conversation with them was very hard since it was very difficult to understand the dialect TGs use in their day to day life. Finding their locality as the toughest part as they live in the isolated pockets, who don't easily talk with normal people and they were so busy in their day to day activities that they were not willing to cooperate to the researchers.

The authors feel that the study findings may help the government to take into account the problems of the increasing TG population, issues related to their continuous harassment and discrimination which they are facing in their day to day life. Secondly, enough research materials in the form of books and journal articles on this community are not available in Indian States in general and Chhattisgarh in particular. Therefore, the research findings may help the future research community to take up research activities on TGs, and to the State to adopt welfare measures for the socio-economic development of the TGs.

BILASPUR: THE STUDY AREA

Bilaspur a town of Bilaspur district in the Indian State of Chhattisgarh is situated 133 kms (83 miles) on the north of the State capital popularly known as Naya Raipur. It is the second-largest town (after Raipur) in the State. Establishment of Chhattisgarh State High Court at village Bodri of Bilaspur district privileges it to host the name 'Nyayadhani' (Law Capital) of the State. It is the administrative headquarters of Bilaspur district. Bilaspur is the commercial centre and business hub of North East Chhattisgarh region. It is also an important city for the Indian Railways, as it is the headquarters for South East Central Railway Zone and the Bilaspur Railway Division. It is also the headquarters of South Eastern Coalfields Limited.

Bilaspur is known for its aromatic *Doobraj* rice, handloom woven colorful soft *Kosa* silk saris and more for its rich, varied and colorful culture. Bilaspur District is surrounded by Korias district in the north, Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, Mungeli district in the west, Balasuda Bazar, Bhata Para district in the south and Korba and Janjgir-Champa district in the east. Bilaspur district consists

of 8 Tehsils distributed over a total number of 898 villages. Bilaspur Municipal Corporation has a population nearly 4,52,851 (Census of India, 2011). Males constitute 51 per cent of the population and females share 49 per cent. Bilaspur has an average literacy rate of 87.29 per cent, higher than the national average of 74%; with male literacy of 92.94 per cent and female literacy of 81.33 per cent (Census of India, 2011). The proportion of population growth accounts to 10.43 per cent with a sex ratio of 971 females per 1000 male population (Census of India, 2011).

THIRD GENDER: THE STUDY POPULATION

The study attempted to find out an overall profile of the TG population with respect to their migration, age distributions, educational achievements, marital status, religious background, housing status, drinking water and sanitation, sources of livelihood, income distribution and language known.

Classification of TG

There are three types of 'Third Gender' groups are found in Bilaspur. They are viz: *Hijra*, *Open Kothi* or *Koti* and Transgender. The TGs can also be classified as Registered⁶: the TGs, one who is having a Third Gender Identity Card issued under the order of Supreme Court of India. They have registered with Welfare Department of the Government of Chhattisgarh. The Non-Registered⁷: the one who is not having a Third Gender Identity Card under the order of Supreme Court of India. The respondents for the present study are taken 45 (75%) from registered and 15 (25%) from non-registered categories.

Migration of Third Genders

Most of the TGs left their homes at a very young age after realizing that they are not normal like other children of their age. In few cases the parents and the family members kick them out of their houses. So, a large number of migrations of this population can be seen in Bilaspur urban center who have basically drawn from the rural region. They migrate from one place to another in search of employment and other factors too. One can say that by the age of adolescent most of the TGs leave their houses and joined the community to start earning. The study shows that the TGs have migrated mostly during the period from

1991 to 2000 (53.33%), while 30 per cent of them have migrated during 1980-1990 who were of middle aged and 10 per cent people had migrated during 2001-2010.

Age Distribution

The age distribution of the TGs as observed during the survey varied from a minimum of 18 years to maximum of 63 years. The maximum number of respondent falls between the age of 25 to 30 years (31.66%) and 30 to 40 years (11.66%). The respondents who are above 40 years of age constitute 13.33 per cent and the youngest TGs below 20 years represents only 13.33 per cent. The family members of the TGs by and large lie under the age of 50 years includes 55 males and 40 females. Family is the micro unit in the society based on blood ties. There are few TGs who are married and have children of their own. But in *Hijra* family the members are not blood kin. Their Guruma and Gurubhais are their family members after their inclusion in the group.

Educational Status

Education is one of the important indicators of development. With a purpose to know the educational background of the TGs the study attempted to explore the educational achievements and classify them into certain categories. It was observed that the TGs are deprived of both family and school. They quit education from their early childhood and thereby have very limited career opportunities. The study reveals that the TG community people are highly illiterate as they had been disowned by their families' right from the birth. While some who were being brought up as males till the age of 14 or 15 years, got a chance to attend secondary schools. There are few who are categorized as *Open Kothi* but they have a progressive family and hence are fortunate enough to attend college. This shows that the TGs are educationally not advanced to cope with the market needs to get employment or to feed them in a dignified way.

MARITAL STATUS

Marriage is an institution which provides social security to both the partners and their offspring. Few TGs also have undergone through the process of

marriage and live in a family while the *Hijra* people after the surgery is considered to be married to their *Guruma* for which certain rituals are also performed during the celebration. In both the cases we can say that the marriage is an institution which acts as a backbone of any of the relations. Around 95 per cent of the *Hijras* are married to their *Guruma* and only 5 per cent are unmarried as they have not gone under surgery. In case of other TGs like *Open Kothi* and transgender married cases account only 27.5 per cent and rest 72.5 per cent is unmarried showing less interest in institution like marriage.

Religion and Rituals of the TGs

The *Open Kothi* and Transgender people worship the God which belongs to their religion or their "*Kul Devi or Devta*", but in *Hijra* community it is different as researchers have found a mix religion in their culture. TGs create a new religion with the mix up of Hindu religion and Muslim religion. Researchers have found three types of religious practices among *Hijra* community. They are as follows:

Shrine centered religious notion: Normally *Hijras* are unable to do traditional religious practices with common people. So, they normally go to tomb for prayer. "*Pir*" or "*Shufi*" spread the religion of humanity among these group.

Common deities and their related worship: There are some deities belonging to the *Hijras* only who considers them as their own deities. From doing this they show their differences from others in the society. The link between the Hindu theme of creative asceticism and the role and power of the *Hijras* is explicitly articulated in the myths connecting them to their major point of religious identification with "*Bahuchara Mata*" who is locally know as "*Bijra Mata*". *Bahuchara*⁸ has a special connection to the *Hijras* because they are impotent men who undergo emasculation. This connection derives special significance from the story of King *Baria* of Gujarat. *Baria* was a devout follower of *Bahucharaji*, but was unhappy because he had no son. The goddess' favour a son Jetho, who was born to him. The son, however, was impotent. The king, out of respect to the goddess, set him apart for her service. *Bahucharaji* appeared to Jetho in a dream and told him to cut off his genitalia and dress himself as women, which he did. This

practice has been followed by all who join the *Hijra* devotee in a closer identification with the female object of devotion. Identification of the *Hijras* with *Bahucara* gives them a creative powers of the Mother Goddess worshipping in many different forms in India, is clearly related to their major cultural functions, which are performed at homes where a male child born. During these performances the *Hijras*, using sexual innuendos, inspect the genitals of the infant whom they hold in their arms as they dance. The *Hijras* confer fertility, prosperity and health of the infant and the family.

Hindu-Muslim religious views: In every *Hijra* community where Hindu-Muslim both lived together, they obey and practice both Hindu and Muslim religious beliefs, but they did not practice all the religious practices of other non *Hijra* people. They obey some Hindu saints like Arabian of *Khubaghama* and *Kalipuza* as well as Muslim saints. In Muslim religious point of view they practices *Eid-ul Fiter*, *Eid-ul azha*, *Ramada*, while in URSA festival (mela) time they pray for their "*Guruma*". With these practices they showed their differences from others of the society as normal male and female do. Around 81.66 per cent TGs are belonging to the Hindu Community and Islamic believers stands the second constituting 15 per cent of the total respondents. Only few respondents are belonging to other religious groups such as Christianity and Sikhism.

Occupational Distribution of TGs

The study observed that not a single TG belongs to salary oriented job. They don't involve in business. But, at present very few of them have engaged in other businesses. Traditionally the TGs earn their living by performing dance programs at life-cycle ceremonies of other families like the birth of a child formerly only for male children. But now days they give blessings to the female child also and in marriage ceremony of others they serve the Goddess in their temple. It is because the third genders are considered as the vehicle of the goddess to bless the newborn or the married couple with prosperity and fertility. They are also involved in sex work both fully and partially.

Hijras are classified into two major groups on the basis of their income: The first category known as the *Dahiyaar Hijras* who are living in *Dahiyaar* goes

for begging everyday from place to place. They are involved in sex work and prostitution most of the time. The second category is known as *Badhaibada Hijras* engaged in blessing ceremonies. They go to marriages and baby shower for giving their blessings to other people. They are not involved in any sexual activities or prostitution. At present some Third Genders are engaged themselves in many other activities like dancing in family and community festivals and part time sex work. They are also working as cook or maid in many houses or hotels. Some of the *Hijras* are in prostitution who earns their living. Due to lack of technical and educational skills they are forced for beggary which constitutes 33.3 per cent and sex work which constitutes 28.33 per cent. The other occupations adopted by the *Hijras* include performing dance, attending blessing ceremony, carrying wage labour and running beauty parlors.

Housing Pattern of TGs

The observation method was used by the researcher to find out the status of the houses of the TGs. The houses of all the respondents were well maintained, fully furnished with all the basic amenities. Some people living in the *Badhaibada* area were also having good rooms and common rooms for entertainments. Around 70 per cent are having TV and music systems at homes. Highest number of respondents was living in the rented house in groups (36.66%) and in individual rented houses (33.33%) Sizeable respondents have their own house (20%), while 10 per cent of the respondents are living in other places. To get houses on rent in good localities is not possible for the TGs because of negative social values attached with them. Living in rented house in slum and or in suburbs is equally problematic due to the of inhuman behaviors targeted by the local goons.

Drinking Water Sources and Sanitation Provisions of the TGs

Water is needed by everyone for most of the works. It is used for cooking, cleaning, drinking and washing. There can be many sources of water from where we can get it like water supply, community taps and community dug wells. But the TGs in most of the places are not allowed to use the community sources as they are considered to be socially untouchables

and may pollute the community water sources because of their gender. Most of them get water from water supply (71.66%) and many from open water flow (10%) and only few of them fetch water from community hand pumps (8.33%). Place of defecation is important for all of them for a healthy life but when asked about the place of defecation, it was said to know that new public toilets are made for TGs in Bilaspur and they are not also allowed to use these toilets many times. The data shows that most of the respondents use sanitary toilets (81.66%) within their premises, some of them use public toilets (13.33%) and only few (5.00%) of them go in open space. The people going in the open space are poor and are mostly laborers.

Income of Third Genders

All the TG people when asked about the income and various sources of their income, they hesitate to answer because of some fear, but many of them disclosed that they are involved in sex work or prostitution to support their lives. Some of them are also engaged in social works but out of this they get very little earning, which is not sufficient to support their livelihood. In *Guru-Chela* system the *Hijras* are to give some pre-decided share of their total income to their *Guruma* anyhow. If they fail to do so they are being scolded by the *Guruma* and also within the community. The data with respect to their income classification shows that only 1.6 per cent people earn less than ₹ 3000/- per month. The less earning people who fall under this category are engaged in works like wage labor, cook or maid. The TGs engaged in performing dance earn within ₹ 5000/- to ₹ 10000/- per month. The respondents earning more than ₹ 10,000/- per month are mostly involved in multiple jobs like dancing, begging along with the full time or part time sex work. The income sources of the TGs are fluid and uncertain by nature. This many times forces them to engage in sex work when ever and where ever available to them without any choice even without adopting any preventing measures. This results in sexual diseases like HIV.

Language of Third Gender

Language plays a major role in expressing our emotions and feelings. The language or dialect used

by the TGs of Bilaspur includes Chhattisgarhi and Farsi. They use some code words to communicate within their community. In Bilaspur, Farsi is the common language or dialect of the TGs. Most of the TGs can read, write, and speak Hindi and some of the literate people can also talk in English along with reading and writing. Chhattisgarhi, Farsi and Oriya are known by many TG respondents and they also know some of their local dialects and languages. Local dialect is popularly used within the community, while other languages like Odiya and Hindi, and dialects like Chhattisgarhi and Sambalpuri are used in the context of specific region of their operational area.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THIRD GENDERS

Rights violation of the TGs

Rights are a major part of everybody's life as without this one has to live by sacrificing his/her dignity. There are many rights given to different people but many of them are not aware of their rights, therefore, their rights are violated every time. TG people are also not aware of their rights and reservations given since many of them are illiterates and no one guides them in a proper manner. TG population faces most of the rights violations in their lives with respect to the Right to equality, Right to freedom of expression and Right to freedom of religion. More than 80 per cent of the TG people are only aware of 2 to 3 types of rights which include *right to equality*, *right to freedom of expression* and *right to freedom of religion*. Around 52 per cent TGs said that their rights have been always violated. Around 8 per cent of the TGs have felt or use to feel that their rights are being violated. Inequality starts from their homes and can be seen and experienced in many public places too like in hospitals, toilets, shops, and railway stations, etc. Normal people treat them as a shameless and useless object and treat them badly. Most of the TG people (33.33%) felt that their rights have been violated even in public places; while 16.66 per cent viewed that their civic rights are violated. Around 30 per cent of the TGs have faced the problem or violation while getting a house on rent. Some of the TGs have faced ill treatment by the staffs of the hospitals (11.66%).

Social and Economic Problems of TGs

The TG faces various forms of oppressions, which many time, frightened them resulting in different forms of social exclusions. This shows that there is no safe socio-political space where a TG can lead a dignified life of a human being in Bilaspur. They are unable to get services from conservative social structures and institutions. Socio-cultural, legal, educational and health services are extremely constrained as observed for a person with TG identity. Most of the deprivations in the lives of TGs are grounded in the social and cultural dilemmas even though the legal recognitions have been made which is beyond the male-female dichotomy. This has prevented them from positioning themselves in the greater society with human potential and dignity. Thus, the TGs are extremely excluded, particularly on the ground of moral regarding gender and sexualities from the mainstream society with deviations and deprivations.

The study when quantified shows that around 36.66 per cent TGs face the inequality in various forms of deprivations in the society, while 25 per cent of people think that they have been considered as a sex object, 25 per cent tells that they are forced for prostitution, 61.66 per cent people faces social insecurity, 43.33 per cent TGs feels economic insecurity and 78.33 per cent of them feels that there should be reservation for them in every sector of job in the market.

Addressing the health issues of TGs seek immediate attention to the implementation of a medical curriculum that successfully incorporates third gender health. Anti-trans attitudes of health care systems can be corrected from within the health care profession through education and advocacy commonly advocacy for third gender rights, and formulating various trans-inclusive and anti-discrimination law. Most of them are highly affected by the HIV and other STDs as they are involved in sex with multiple partners for their livelihood.

On review of the medical prescriptions of the TGs it was known that only 5 per cent of the TGs have the problem of sickle cell and 78.33 per cent people said that they have some other diseases. Around 46.66 per cent of the TGs are suffering from HIV and 53.33 per

cent are free from HIV. Similarly 21.66 per cent are suffering from other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) as they are mostly involved in sex works without the use of any preventives (21.66%) and 78.33 per cent are free from STDs. It was informed by the TGs that HIV and STDs affected TGs are provided with free medicines from the Government hospitals. Quite sizeable TGs are accessing to the medical facilities available in the government. However, many time TGs hesitate to go to government health centers to avail free medicines because of their identity disclosure.

Possession of ID Proofs

Id proof is very important for every human being because of its multifarious use and importance. But, as we know that in all ID cards issued by the government the gender option is given in terms of *male or female*. Many TGs do not have ID proofs; and thereby they face identity crisis everywhere. As a result, they are also unable to avail many benefits given by the government. All the IDs are important for the TGs, but due to their gender biasness they are not able to make their id cards. The data in this respect shows that Aadhar card is possessed by all the TGs people. Other cards like Voter Id card, Health card, BPL card, Smart card, Antodaya card, Post Office Pass Book and Gas card are not available with a single TG. The ID card as a recognition to their gender background registered in the government is only made by 45 people. However, 96.66% TGs have account in banks. The few government programs like Prime Minister Skill Development Program and Atal Awas Yojna meant for the development of the TGs are also accessible to them. Due to their lack of education and information the TGs are unable to avail the benefits of these programs. The data in this respect shows that only 65 per cent TGs got the benefit of Prime Minister Skill Development program many of whom have been trained to run beauty parlor as self employment for them. Government scheme like Atal Awas Yojna is availed only by 3 per cent of the TGs. Around 78 per cent TGs said that they have no information about any of the governmental schemes and they have not received till date any development programs support provided by the government till now.

INITIATIVES BY THE NGO

Samaan Sankalp Samitti, Bilaspur

In Bilaspur Samaan Sankalp Samiti is a local NGO working for the welfare and development of the TG communities. The organisation in collaboration with the support from funding agencies and the Social Welfare Building is working effortlessly for the overall development of the TG community in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh. The organization implements various welfare programs for TGs, fights for the protection of rights of TGs, and tries to provide employment to them. All the registered TGs work together in this NGO. The NGO has initiated various training programs like beauty parlor course and tailoring training for making TGs self employment.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The objectives of this paper were to find out the socio-economic characteristics and socio-economic plights of the LGBTQ. It also tried to find out their sexual orientation, assess the rights the TGs enjoy. The study covered a total of 45 registered and 15 un-registered TGs living in Bilaspur city of Chhattisgarh. The data were collected with the help of an interview schedule and also adopted other anthropological methods like case study, observation and personal rapport.

The recent judgment of the Apex court in 2018 allowed consensual and unnatural sex within the same sex. The LGBTQ community in India is happy to avail this civil liberty and to enjoy individual liberty in their sexual orientation which was a criminal act for last 158 years in India. Many celebrities of LGBTQ working in different platforms celebrated this lifting of historical injustice imposed on them. Keeping this in mind, the study tried to find out the socio-economic background and challenges faced by LGBTQ community in Bilaspur a city located in Central India. The study provides certain major findings and concrete suggestions which will bring qualitative changes in the life and living of the TGs.

- ◆ Most of the TGs have been drawn from rural region. In their adolescent stage since they were unable to cope with their biological defects and the psycho-social requirements

of their kith and kins and peer mates in schools. Being alienated they had migrate to a place where they get socio-psychological support from similar groups.

- ◆ Quite a sizeable population (43.32%) of the LGBTQ is in the youth stage. Due to their low educational achievements and poor accessibility to the skill development programs available in the market, they are not in a position to acquire any special skills which can be saleable in the market for livelihood purposes. This forced them to take easy sources of livelihood like begging, sex work and dance in public places.
- ◆ Lack of possession of individual houses and non-accessibility to houses in socially approved localities forced LGBTQ to become more mobile and reside in socially rejected locations which instigates them to be involved in various forms of criminal activities.
- ◆ LGBTQ are low earning categories of households. Since they are adhered to certain occupations which are irregular, risky and address the needs of a small section of population and are not based on any skill, so their income is also uncertain and very low. The expenditure pattern of the LGBTQ engaged in sex work is quite high who mostly spend in dress, cosmetic and other bodily make-up to attract customers for a sexual appeal, therefore, a large portion of their income (45%) are spend for these purposes. This also pushed many LGBTQ to go for commercial sex which many time beyond their bodily pleasure and biological capacity. As a result of which, many of them suffer from various STDs.
- ◆ Most of the TGs do not possess different types of Id proofs like voter ID, health card, BPL card, smart card, etc. Non-possession of these Id proofs creates identity crises for the TGs. As a result, they are deprived of accessing into certain basic services provided by the government.

Suggestions

- ◆ The problem of biological defects in the sex organs of the newly born child may be identified and should be addressed at early stage at the expenses of the government. Parents of children who have defective sex organ should be strongly motivated for anatomical changes. Till TGs get medical/clinical modifications, they should be treated as physically challenged populations like others.
- ◆ The educational development of such LGBTQ children should be specially addressed by the government so that they will not be dropped out from their education at school and college level.
- ◆ The LGBTQ share a small percentage in the population structure. Quite sizeable of them are within the youth and adolescent stage. They should be provided with special skill development trainings in areas of both formal and informal sector according to their need. This will not only build confidence in their mind but also make them confident to earn their livelihood with dignity.
- ◆ Low cost housing support should be provided to LGBTQ under various housing schemes. Separate housing colonies for the TGs should be provided with all basic necessities like drinking water, sanitation, electricity etc. in a private-public partnership mode. This will create belongingness with the life and living of the LGBTQ. This will help them to be away from adopting popular sources of livelihood through undignified manner. Special support by the government should be provided to the LGBTQ in the form of bank loans for small shops in vending zones etc. which will make them economically self sufficient.
- ◆ A general awareness may be build among different stakeholders linked to LGBTQ like parents, kith and kins, villagers and larger society regarding the civil rights and a life and living with dignity for this section of the

population. This will reduce the negative attitude of the people and will create a positive attitude towards TGs.

- ◆ The TGs should be issued with all forms of ID proofs like Voter ID, Health card, BPL card, Smart card, etc on priority. Possession of these Id proofs will create identity for the TGs. As a result, they will be more accessible to certain basic services provided by the government.
- ◆ The cooperation among the TGs should be considered as strength of the community and that should be taken in a positive manner to make use for the development purposes.

NOTES

- 1 *Hijra*: The term *Hijra*, which, is of Urdu origin and the masculine gender, has the primary meaning of hermaphrodite. It is usually translated as *eunuch*. In our country *Hijra* means those who are anatomically true hermaphrodite and a special distinguished group of individuals from both men and women and attributed them with a constellation of traits comparable to those traits used to define other gender
- 2 *Shiv Shakti*: The *Shiv Shakti* is one of the transgender categories who only worship God Shiva. They are directly linked between society and the divine. However, owing to their identity and gender expression, they also transgress the binary norms of gender and sexuality held sacrosanct by societies everywhere.
- 3 *Jogappa*: The *Jogappas* are one of the least known transgender communities in South India. They are “caught”, possessed, by the goddess *Yellamma*. They are regarded as holy women, and their gender identity and expression reflects this.
- 4 *Open Kothi*: A *Kothi* or *Koti*, in the culture of the Indian subcontinent, is an effeminate man or boy who takes on a female gender role in same sex relationships, often with a desire to be the penetrated member in sexual

intercourse. The word *Kothi (or Koti)* is common across India.

- 5 *Transgender*: Person appearing and identifying as neither man nor woman, presenting a gender either mixed or neutral.
- 6 TGs who have enlisted their name in the local office of the Welfare Department of the State government and poses a registered card.
- 7 TGs who have not enlisted their name in the local office of the Welfare Department of the State government and do not poses a registered card.
- 8 *Bahuchara* was a pretty, young maiden in a party of traveler's passing through the forest in Gujarat. The party was attacked by thieves and fearing they would outrage her modesty, *Bahuchara* drew her dagger and cut off her breast, offering it to the outlaws in place of her bossy. The death, led to *Bahuchara's* deitification and the practice of self-mutilation and sexual abstinence by her devotees to secure her favor.

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