



LIFE CHALLENGES: THIRD GENDERS

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ABSTRACT

Third Genders living in our society encounters varied noteworthy complications of sexuality & gender myths, ignorance, social exclusion and etc. Extensive and intensive deep rooted discrimination has hindered most of the third genders from reaching out to basic needs of life as human rights, healthcare, housing within the neighborhood, education and etc. in comparison to the remaining society. Getting livelihood are another major worries, third genders experiences as due to mismatch between their IDs, appearance and gender identity. They are treated as untouchables. Most of the third genders in our society have been abandoned by their own families and even ruthlessly forced to become beggar or prostitutes. The way our society mainly conceives the third genders is inherently exclusionary and the consequences are profound endless.

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INTRODUCTION

In a deeply religious and conservative society as India, third gender people face variety of issues. Indian third gender population remains one of the country's most marginalized and vulnerable groups. Their gender makes them different identity and forces them to face discrimination in society. It is anticipated that there are between 2-3 million third gender persons living in India, with some calculations even higher. They are debarred from socio-cultural, economical and political feature of life and hence they are isolated from the rest. We see there is very less participation of third genders in the decision-making processes of society too. As evident every third gender has the right to identification everywhere as a person before the law even. So persons' of dissimilar sexual orientations and gender identities shall also enjoy legal capacity in all aspects of their life too. Each person's self-defined sexual orientation and gender identity is integral to their personality and is one of the most basic aspects of self-determination, dignity and freedom called as democratic standing in society. Third genders are treated different for the stereotype gender roles. The preliminary problems faced in educating the third gender community emphasized that the problems in their life start from home. The major problem in the whole process is that they are excluded from their biological home too. They often feel assault and rejection from their family members including their parents. It is also found that the third gender community faces discrimination and high level of stigma in almost every walk of their life.

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So their exclusion rests from participating in social, cultural and economic life. In brief, they are debarred from financial system, employment and livelihood opportunities, excluded from society and family, lack of safety & security from violence, limited access to education, health care and personal care, inadequate access to public spaces, imperfect access to collectivization, rights of citizenship, expelled from decision-making, lack of social security. These people are considered badly or oppressed by people in power and administration. They are excessively struggling for social justice because of their identity as third genders'. Certain unique characterizing of third genders are-

Lack of Educational Facilities: Like normal people, they are not entitled to take education in schools and colleges. Even in terms of education, they are treated differently.

Obligatory to Abscond Parental Residence: Once their identity is identified, they are compel and pressurize to go away the parental home with the other third genders as they can't be a part and parcel of normal family, community, caste and class.

Refusal of Entrance: They are refused to get enter in caste based or religious places, public places like malls, hotels, restaurants, theaters, parks etc.

Child snitching: The third genders always look for those babies/ infants/ children who are born with the mark of Transgender. As soon as they come to know, they try to rip off the babies from their family members.

Ridiculer attention: Public make mockery to the third genders in gatherings. They try to create the scene by insulting, punishing, abusing or cursing them.

Prostitution: These individuals are enforced to enter the business of prostitutions by their similar gender group of people, friends or relatives. With many of them it is seen that their parents are involved in the process.

Rape/ verbal/ Physical Mistreatment: This is the widespread trouble third genders face. They are prone to face rape followed by physical and verbal cruelty.

Getting sensitized to the social trend of third genders, a pilot study was initiated in Malwa region in the year 2013. Among the other objectives of the study the focus one was to know the social status of respondents and to know the life challenges of third genders. About 60 respondents were contacted through snow ball method of sampling. Thus the following facts gathered are as follows-

Table 1 Type of Family of Third Genders and their Relation

Type of family	Type of Relationship with Family			Total
	Good relation	Conflict	No relation	
Nuclear family	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	6 75.0%	8 100.0%
Joint family	2 25.0%	0 0.0%	6 75.0%	8 100.0%
Don't have family	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 100.0%	4 100.0%
Total	3 5.0%	1 1.6%	56 93.3%	60 100.0%

Table 1 is presenting the family relations of third genders. The study found that majority 73.3 per cent respondents revealed that they don't have any type of family while just 13.3 per cent individuals have nuclear families among them 87.5 per cent have no relations with them or conflicting relationship. This means that out of ten families only one family maintains relations with the third gender family member. In contrast 13.3 per cent families have joint family system among them too majorities (75 per cent) have no relationships but at least 25 percent maintains good relationship. Thus the study confirms that there is dearth of family life experience in third genders.

Table 2 Type of Family of Third Genders and Problems Faced in Biological Family

Types of Family	Problem faced in Biological Family				Total
	Deprived from Education	They Rejected with All Means	Can't Say	No Problem	
Nuclear Family	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	5 62.5%	1 12.5%	8 100.0%
Joint Family	3 37.5%	2 25.0%	2 25.0%	1 12.5%	8 100.0%
Don't have Family	0 0.0%	6 13.6%	28 63.6%	10 22.7%	44 100.0%
Total	4 6.6%	9 15.0%	35 58.3%	12 20%	60 100.0%

Table 2 is depicting the types of families of third genders and the problems faced in their biological families. As earlier mentioned that just 26.6 per cent i.e only one fourth of the respondents' have revealed regarding their biological families among them 50 per cent have nuclear family and rest have joint family. In case of third gender's who have nuclear family among them equal per cent i.e. 12.5 per cent disclosed that their biological families have not provided education to them, another same per cent unveiled that they deprived them with all means and majority 62.5 per cent are not in position to say anything but one out of ten told that they had faced no problems in their biological family. Majority 37.5 per cent third genders' having joint family are divulged from basic needs of education, 25 per cent have suffered from all means

and same per cent are not in position to reveal anything, Very few have no problems faced in the biological family.

Table 3 Challenges Faced in Initial Phase of Third Gender's Identity

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Isolation	19	31.7
Problem in Adopting Third Gender Culture	15	25.0
No Problem	26	43.3
Total	60	100.0

Table 3 suggests the life challenges at the initial phase after getting on the identity of third gender. Thus it's clear that majority 56 per cent were in acute problems of living, amongst 31.7 per cent were isolated from the siblings, parents, family members, friends, neighbourhood and relatives. Another 25 per cent of the total respondents faced lots of challenges in adopting the new culture of so called third genders as because they were not socialized regarding the cultural process. Around 43.3 per cent expressed 'No problems' concerning the assimilation in third gender culture. But the observation of researchers reveals that this particular category are in the age of 45 years and above, so they hardly could remembers that what hardships they faced in their initial phase of this gender identity and at the same time they are ignorant and sufficient illiterate to express their life experiences properly.

Table 4 Third Genders' Relation with Society Members

Relationship	Frequency	Percent
Conflicting	46	76.7
Cooperative	01	1.7
Fine, without any emotion	13	21.7
Total	60	100.0

Table 4 presents the social relationship of third gender individuals with the rest of the society member's in their neighborhood. Thus the study manifests that three out of four transgender are in the conflicting state with the community people of male gender and female gender. This is so because most of the time the society members are ridiculing them. Rejection is another aspect of conflict which is normal experience to third genders. They are not allowed to enter in their houses, ceremonies or day to day life. There is lack of social equality with them. Another one out of five transgender gave blunt emotions regarding this aspect. This also again specifies that they too don't have very healthy experience with their neighborhood. Just very surprisingly to disclose that only 1.7 per cent transgender could maintain cooperative relationship with the society. This specifies life challenges are severe in this aspect too for third gender individuals.

Table 5 Age group with respect to Relation with Third Gender Fellows

Age Group	Kind of Relationship with Third Gender Fellows				Total
	Conflict	Cooperative	Professional	No relation	
Less than 20 yrs.	1 25.0%	2 50.0%	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	4 100.0%
20 – 50 yrs.	5 10.2%	24 49.0%	18 36.7%	2 4.1%	49 100.0%
More than 50 yrs.	1 14.3%	6 85.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 100.0%
Total	7 11.7%	32 53.3%	19 31.7%	2 3.3%	60 100.0%

Table 5 is helping us to know the facts of kinds of relationship third gender fellows have among themselves within respect to their age group. Thus it finds that about 81.6 per cent respondents are in the age group of 20 to 50 years among them 50 per cent said there is cooperative relations among them while another 50 per cent admitted that either there is conflicting or highly professional relationship maintained among them. Here specifically we see that in this age group next majority is 36.7 per cent fellow man who keeps professional relationship with peers while only one out of ten individual live in stressful relations with fellow transgender. Another category i.e. approximately 6.6 per cent are very young one and are in their age of youthfulness (Less than 20 yrs.), among them 50 per cent are having healthy cooperating relationship and 25 per cent have conflicting and the same per cent individuals maintains highly professional relationships with the fellow transgender. One more category of transgender is in the age of 50 yrs. and above and are 11.6 per cent among them majority 85.7 per cent have cooperative relation while 14.3 per cent live in conflicting relation. Study draws conclusions that almost half have cooperative support to each other and among rest majority bears and maintains professional relations.

Table 6 Education and Satisfaction with Social Status

Educational Qualification	Satisfaction with Social Status			Total
	Fully satisfied	Partially satisfied	Not satisfied	
Elementary	10 45.5%	8 36.4%	4 18.2%	22 100.0%
Secondary Education	2 20.0%	2 20.0%	6 60.0%	10 100.0%
Senior Secondary	1 11.1%	3 33.3%	5 55.5%	9 100.0%
Education and Above	11 57.9%	6 31.6%	2 10.5%	19 100.0%
Uneducated	24 40.0%	19 31.7%	17 28.3%	60 100.0%

Table 6 is disclosing the satisfaction level of respondents as per their educational qualification from the Social Status they presently hold in their third gender community or in general society. Thus it finds that 36.6 per cent respondents' have education up to elementary level among them around 45.5 per cent are fully satisfied from the position they bear. Around 16.6 per cent are educated up to secondary level among them majority 60 per cent are not satisfied from the place provided to them in the society. The educational level of respondents higher to the above said one i.e. senior secondary or above are found 15 per cent of the overall one among them 55.5 per cent are not satisfied from the status. Approximately 31.6 per cent respondents are illiterate amongst majority 57.9 per cent are fully satisfied from their current social status in the society. Therefore facts reveals that low educated third genders are more happy from whatever present status they hold in the society but as the educational status they succeed to increase they found themselves in discomfort state of position they currently hold on.

Table 7 Educational Qualification of Third Genders and Cope up with Challenges

Education Qualification	Coping Mechanism with Problems				Total
	Third Gender Community Assisted	Problems were Solved by the Time	Still Face Challenge	No Problem	
Uneducated	6 31.6%	4 21.1%	0 0.0%	9 47.4%	19 100.0%
Elementary	5 22.7%	4 18.2%	5 22.7%	8 36.4%	22 100.0%
Secondary	2 20.0%	5 50.0%	1 10.0%	2 20.0%	10 100.0%
Education and Above	0 0.0%	2 22.2%	3 33.3%	4 44.4%	9 100.0%
Total	13 21.7%	15 25.0%	9 15.0%	23 38.3%	60 100.0%

Table 7 is presenting the educational qualification of respondents' and the coping mechanism they used in getting rid from their day to day problems faced because of being third gender. Thus it shows that around 21.7 per cent are assisted by their third gender community among them uneducated or less educated i.e. up to elementary level community assistance is sought more by the respondents in comparison of higher educated respondents. At the middle level of education i.e. up to secondary level most respondents i.e. 50 per cent of them use the technique of patience and with the passage of time problems get diluted. About 15 per cent of the respondents' still are in problems with their life among them either initially educated (elementary) or the person with high education within the strata still in challenge of life. Approximately two out of five respondents revealed there were no problems in their life across any educational strata of respondents. At this instance thus, study strongly recommend the development & implementation of life skill education for the particular category of members of the society.

Social Work Interventions

- Social workers should take up Community organization method to spread out choices, prospect and challenges of third gendered people with special regard for their vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed and exploitation as individual and groups.
- Social workers should not promote, perform, overlook, facilitate or collaborate with any type of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientations, social status, caste, ethnicity, regional origin, sex, age, nuptial status, religion, or mental or physical differences of third gendered people.
- Social workers in their social work profession support and empower the persons through all phases of the healing process. So social workers encourage the development of supportive practice environments for those third gendered people who are struggling with gender expression and identity issues.
- Social workers need to generate social action movements where the voices of third gendered people to be strongly projected and those not are in the social structural constrains must be developed to admit their own role for supporting them, and be willing to change the system of society.
- Awareness and sensitization programmes must be organized at mass level to outreach public and the third gender community to built social inclusion and social justice.

CONCLUSION

Third gendered communities are as diverse as any other ethnic group that includes people of various socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, with life experiences of varied personal, group and community challenges. Although third gender people face unique societal pressures and forms of discrimination, how they handle and respond to these issues varies from person to person. But it is the need of the hour to advocate for the equality of third gender community.

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