



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

HOMELESSNESS OF TRANSGENDER PERSONS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Transgender persons experience homelessness from their childhood, when an individual reveals their gender identity in the family, the problem begins. They are ill-treated and abused by everyone in the family. This homelessness often leads to survival sex and begging. The current study is conducted in Andhra Pradesh, data has been collected from 150 male to female transgender persons by using an interview schedule and snowball sampling method. A major number of transgender persons are not living with their family members due to parental reactions and abuse when revealing their gender identity. These findings call our attention to providing shelter homes or alternative shelters for transgender persons to rescue them and reintegrate them into families.

Keywords: Transgender, homelessness, trans-woman, shelter homes, discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

Transgender people are known as the third gender in India. Transgender persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, defines that transgender person means a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man, trans-woman, person with intersex variations, gender queer and person having such socio-cultural identities as kinnar, hijra, aravani and jogta. In Andhra Pradesh, they are known as kojja, aadangi, maada, etc, which are the derogatory terminologies used in the state. This discrimination begins from womb to tomb. This not only denies TG people equal access to key social goods, such as employment, health care, education, and housing, but it also marginalizes them in society and makes them one of the weaker sections who are at risk of becoming socially excluded (Vasanth, 2021).

Transgender individuals are forced to leave homes for the streets because of their primary caregiver's reaction to their gender expression or sexual-minority identity (Castellanos, 2016). Most homeless individuals have histories of family disruption, abuse, and family substance abuse and victimization at home and at school (Kipke et al, 1997; Ray, 2006 Cochran et al., 2002; Corliss et al., 2011). Most the transgender individuals choose to leave because of conditions they could no longer tolerate (Hyde, 2005). Living temporarily with friends or family, in a shelter or group home, or in a place not intended for housing such as on the street or in a car, park, or abandoned building (Wilson et al., 2020). This population may not

utilize or have access to much-needed services due to systemic barriers and fear of rejection and harassment (Shelton, 2015).

Transgender people face many challenges in society in terms of people's knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of a person's gender identity (McCann, 2021). Homeless individuals often engage in survival sex in exchange for food, housing, and other basic necessities (Kattari, 2017). Transgender persons are often rejected by their families and peers, and marginalized in our society, leading to increased risks of unemployment and homelessness (Spicer, 2010). Homelessness among the trans-population is becoming an increasing societal concern, with alarmists reporting of high rates of homelessness compared to heterosexual people (Mathews, 2019). The current study is undertaken in the state of Andhra Pradesh, review of literature reveals that majority of the transgender persons are leaving home due to parental reaction and abuse by the parents and siblings from the family. The objectives of the study are to highlight the homelessness problems faced by the transgender community in Andhra Pradesh and then suggest measures to integrate them into the family system.

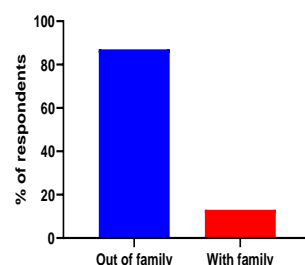
METHODOLOGY

Respondents are 150 transgender persons (Male to Female) from Andhra Pradesh. The researcher has chosen male to female transgender persons because they are the most marginalized group of transgender persons in Andhra Pradesh. The data has been collected through the snowball sampling method by using an interview schedule. The first question asked whether the respondents are staying with the family or not. The second question asked about parents' reactions when revealing their gender identity in the family - whether parents are sad, confused, indifferent, or angry. Third question was asked about their education and fourth question was about their occupation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most respondents were not staying with their families. Figure 1 illustrates that only 13.3% (20 of the 150 respondents) are staying with their family. The rest, 86.6% (130) has run away from their family of birth.

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents staying out of family and with family



PARENTAL AND FAMILY REACTION

Negative reaction of the parents or the family towards the gender identity of the respondents and abuse by them contributed towards many leaving families. The predominant number of respondents faced a negative reaction from their parents when they told them of their gender identity. Table 1 indicates that 36.6% of the respondents faced anger, 23.3% sadness, 9.3% confusion, and 30.6% indifference. The respondents also reported whether there is ongoing conflicts and problems in their families due to their gender identity. Majority of respondents' families experience conflicts and problems due to their gender

identity. Of the 150, 112 (74.6%) of the respondents' families have conflicts and problems, whereas 38 (25.3%) of the respondents' families do not have ongoing conflicts and problems.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by parental reaction towards transgender identity

Emotional reaction	Frequency	Percentage
Angry	55	36.6
Sad	35	23.3
Confusion	14	9.3
Indifferent	46	30.6
Total	150	100

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by their education, abuse and occupation

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Education		
Illiterate	73	48.6
Primary	39	26.0
Secondary	30	22.0
Other*	8	5.3
Type of Abuse		
Physical	110	73.3
verbal	40	26.6
Occupation		
Begging	93	62.0
Sex Work	41	27.3
Badhai	16	10.6
Total	150	100

*Diploma certificate, ITI education

Table 2 indicates that 48.6% are illiterates, 26.0% studied till primary, 22.0% are in secondary education and 5.3% are into ITI and other diploma certificate courses. Despite of their education, transgender persons are abused by their parents after revealing their gender identity, 73.3% are physically (beaten by sticks, bats, other harmful objects) abused by their parents and 26.6% are verbally abused. Due to this abuse transgender persons are forced to leave their homes and ended up in homelessness. For their survival 62.0% force into begging, 27.3% are doing sex work and 10.6% are going for their badhai work.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the majority of transgender persons are not with their families due to parents' reaction when transgender persons revealed their identity openly. This reaction of the parents and physical and verbal abuse by the parents made the transgender persons feel rejected by the parents. Due to this, they leave the family in search of acceptance in society. This leads them to homelessness and forces them into begging and sex work for their survival. Transgender gender persons can be home placed by giving awareness and counselling to the parents. So that the parents can accept their transgender individuals as they are. Alternative shelter homes could be made to accommodate homeless individuals till they are reintegrated with their family members.

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