EMPOWERING THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY THROUGH MEDIA EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

In today's terms, education is an essential tool to empower our community. When we talk about education, it comes in many ways to individuals in today's world, where there is plenty of informationavailablereadilyaround us, all thanks to social media. However, a significant concern with that kind of information available to the community via social media is how much of it is authentic regardingGender sensitivity. Gender problems include all facets and issues about the lives and circumstances of men, women, and other genders. Their interactions, variations in access to and utilization of resources, activities, and responses to adjustments, interventions, and policies. In this article, we will specify specifically major issues of transgender. The way that transgender persons display their gender identification often causes them to be excluded from society and marginalized. Both outdoor and internet media are increasingly showing transgender persons. These portrayals have a significant influence on how transgender youngpeople establish their identities and conduct their lives while also educating the broader public about transgender cultures.

Nevertheless, there is still a dearth of studies on the viewpoints of transgender people despite growing awareness of this depiction. Transgender people are portrayed in modern media, and the patterns in modern

media depictions of transgender people are discussed in this article, along with the theoretical foundation for doing so.

Keywords: transgender, media education, films and education, gender studies, transgender community

Introduction

"Being transgender today is still unreasonably hard,

But it is far from hopelessness."

Sexual minorities have always suffered in our community, with significant stigma and prejudice. Being a sexually different individual and their challenges in the community and society is something we, so-called normal individuals, can only describe or think about. We could describe their pain, but what they go through could only be felt by them or if we try to put ourselves in their shoes. It is crucial first to comprehend the historical representations of the community to develop a new paradigm of societal acceptability for the transgender group. Transgender individuals will continue to fight for their freedom without understanding the reason for their persecution until the local media is literate. Media images immediately impact an instinct-based region of the brain. The content of films significantly impacts people due to the strong emotional impact of films on the brain. Long after they have left the cinemas, audiences are still affected by this. As a result, the media image reflects society. It impacts how media pictures are related, showing that this link is crucial to how social groupings are seen internally and externally. This essay sheds light on how this connection affects one group,particularlythe transgender community. "Transgender" is a phrase used to describe various distinct groups, from individuals who "cross-dress" to transsexuals who have gender reassignment surgery. However, for this article, a transgender individual identifies with a sexual orientation other than the one assigned at birth. Transsexuals are the only transgender people who elect to change their gender through hormonal and medical procedures. Although the word "cross-dresser" is still a common term,it was used mockingly or disparagingly in the past.

Since the advent of the media image, there has been a steady rise in the favorable depiction of transgender people in history. However, despite this more favorable portrayal, transgender persons do not often have the same rights as other contemporary social groups. This might result from the transgender movement being more recent than movements among other underrepresented groups. Therefore, other communities that have fought for and obtained social rights may serve as models for the transgender community.When other social groups employ media images to encourage social change, the transgender community might leverage their examples. The dominant culture's attitudes towards marginalised, disadvantaged people are mirrored in the history of the media image. There are several instances in history when certain social groups have protested against how the dominant culture portrays their society in moving images. Underrepresented groups have resisted the inaccurate portrayals of their community at various times throughout history by adopting the media image as

their own. The transgender community may strive towards successfully exploiting the media image to affect societal change by drawing lessons from the examples offered by other underrepresented groups throughout history. Those outside the transgender community produced the majority of transgender people's existing cultural portrayals. These photos are based on misconceptions due to the lack of varied representation of the transgender community, which does nothing to promote the need for diversity in the transgender community. As a result, the widely disseminated photos do not accurately reflect how the transgender community views itself, collectively and individually.The transgender community started to mimic the images of transgender individuals reflected in the picture due to the media image's impact on society.Therefore, the transgender community's media representations mirror their oppressed position within the more incredible culture.

Influence of the media's image's antecedents It is crucial to recognize how communication in all its forms has shaped society. Harold Innis developed the thesis that "communication tended to create a dangerous monopoly of knowledge throughout history." I contend that using communication technology by people in positions of authority to exert control over a community—rather than the technology itself—gave rise to a "dangerous monopoly of knowledge."Those in positions of authority who assert this are said to be members of the dominant culture. The resources of society are most heavily influenced and under the power of this group. The dominant culture affects the greater society via dominating communication technology. The media image influences the viewer more profoundly than any other type of communication, confirming its importance in shaping society. Interestingly, watching media images physically affects how people think.

According to the New Mexico Media Literacy Project, "the human brain processes words and visuals in various ways. The so-called "reptilian" region of the brain, where strong emotions and instincts are situated, is where images are processed. Language processing occurs in the cerebral cortex, where reason resides. As a result, movies are more efficient than print. Evaluating the movie's effects on human emotion and mental processes is challenging since it imprints information directly on the area of the brain where primal impulses reside. For many years, the cultural impact of media image has been transforming society. The impact of Western colonization on perception is one relevant illustration of how another can displace the knowledge monopoly of one culture.For many years, the cultural impact of media image has been transforming society. The impact Western colonization had on Native American tribes like the Dinéh, Lakota, Mohave, Zuni, and Cheyenne, to name a few, can be considered as one significant example of how another can overcome the knowledge monopoly of one culture. Some tribes, particularly in Native American traditions, recognized transgender people as a normal aspect of gender variance and referred to them as "two-spirit" individuals.

These two-spirit individuals sometimes had crucial roles as healers among communities. Since television has infiltrated the tribe, "two-spirit people - was being viewed with suspicion by the less traditionalist in their community." This significant effect illustrates how the media image may contribute to forming a robust knowledge monopoly with other communication technologies. One social group can exert an unrestricted

amount of influence on numerous other social groups and the larger social structure by merely using the media image as a tool for communication as long as the dominant culture retains control of the medium. The monopoly of ideas may go on as long as the brain's passive emotional portion can absorb the information without question. There is still a dearth of comprehension and study of the impacts of the media on the social structure and the person more than a century after the media started to have an impact on culture. We can now assess the history of the effects in the context of India with a better grasp of the influence and control of the dominant culture while utilizing the media image.

The identification of transgender people is a significant societal problem India faces due to its growing population.In India, where gender equality continues to hinder society's growth because of the nation's persistent social stratification, visible in every part of life, transgender issues have been contested for more than ten years, both in social and cultural contexts. Similarly, transgender persons are still contentious, and India recognizes them as third-gender individuals.

In India, transgender culture has origins dating back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They held influential roles throughout the Mughal era. They were regarded as essential members of society, but once the British arrived in India, their status changed, and they were seen as "a breach of public decency." This resulted in isolation from a group or society, and following the end of British rule in India, this made one a target of daily abuse and prejudice. Numerous studies have been conducted worldwide focusing on the issues of identity, health, and social stigma. By attempting to give them judicial protection so they are protected by the law, efforts have been undertaken to obtain their rights and freedom. This conflict is still raging today. However, the identity of Hijras remained disputed until 2011, when they were classified as such by the Indian Census and Indian Electoral Commission. Hijras may view depending on the person's preferences, they identify as either obviously male or plainly feminine. But after a protracted battle, the justice-led Indian Supreme Court was established in 2014.A decision to recognize them as the third gender group was approved by the bench of K.S. Radhakrishnan and A.K. Sikri (NALSA V/S U.O.I. Case, 2014). Ancient scriptures and traditions about ambiguous genders, such as Satapatha Brahman, which attests to the presence of people who do not fall into the "male" or "female" categories, are linked to the genesis and history of the Hijras. Additionally, it is known that such people are mentioned in ancient and religious scriptures that allude to Hijras as an identity in antiquity. Thus, even if Satapatha Brahman's exact meaning may not be understood in advance, it is an example of the kind of book to which Hijras allude.

Similarly, depending on the place of concentration, the myth may also help identify Hijras. For instance, the yearly celebration in Koovagam in Tamil Nadu gives special significance to the tale of Aravani, who wedded Vishnu as the maiden Mohini. Tirunanka gives herself in marriage to Aravanis at the festival and grieves his passing the next day as a widow. As a result, the myth continues to play a crucial part in shaping Hijra's identity in this context (Hiltebeitel, 1995; Craddock, 2012).

Hijra's origins in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh were mainly influenced by the following myths: The tale of Amba/Sikhandin upon his return from exile is told by Arjuna as the 'eunuch' Bahuchara. The gender ambiguity of two characters noteworthy in mythology is the subject of the first two myths. Arjuna, one of the Mahabharata's Pandava heroes, spends a year in King Virata's court while posing as a "eunuch," according to the Bahuchara tale. Although it is unknown whether he goes through a physiological change or is just cross-dressing, this metamorphosis shows how convincing the hero's disguise is and confirms his masculinity. The narrative never explicitly states what gender he is wearing, however. Hijras can relate to Arjuna because of his change into a "eunuch," nevertheless. Hijras present their identities as some of the most heroic warriors and upright people in epic poetry in Sanskrit by doing this Hijras described his gender. ambiguity by elaborating on the matter and pointing out his character's high nobility and heroic aspect. Since In sacred history, Arjuna is a great hero and a crucial figure. The Hijras benefit from their relationship with him. Thus, the legendary tale mentioned above, which Hijras often cite, may illustrate how they establish their identity in a mythical narrative. Hijras strive to demonstrate the presence a claim to their actual identity that has existed throughout history, regardless of gender variations in ancient times and within the sacred scripture. by making references to people with uncertain gender status, such as Arjuna, Amba, sikhandin, and Rama. Hijras may seek to identify who they are and how they wish to think of themselves as a historical figure and a significant figure mentioned in an old text for their deeds via this narration of the myth narrative (Simon Brodbeck, 2007).

The unique nature of the Hijra identity and their struggle for equality, freedom of speech, and expression concerning their socioeconomic life regarding multiple dimensions of exclusion within the Indian context have been emphasized by numerous research studies on this area study all over the world. The nature of the difficulty in their area has been tried to be defined and explained by several academics. "Neither Man nor Women: The Hijras of India" One of the best pieces of writing about Hijras, by Nanda Serena, underlines the responsibilities of Hijras in their relationship with the mother goddess to embrace feminism in order to become a distinctive and spiritual figure in society. Additionally, it gives us a thorough insight into who they are and how they choose to self-identify, providing a clear comprehension of the distinction between transgender males and transgender women. (Nanda, 1990)

One of the most disadvantaged groups in the nation is often thought to be the Hijras. Given that they derive much of their identity from ancient Hindu texts, the Hijras strongly bonded with the mother goddess. They saw themselves as an ambiguous representation of Lord Shiva. As shown by the Kama Sutra era, On the Indian subcontinent, hijras have a recorded history that dates back to antiquity. Gender luminary, spiritual, and survival responsibilities all play significant parts in subcontinental societies, according to this history. In earlier times, Hijras were adored and welcomed in Indian society. Ancient Hindu writings called the Vedas include characters and eunuchs exhibiting male and female traits. They were thought to have exceptional reproductive qualities and bring good fortune.

Eunuchs served as royal guards during the Mughal era, a crucial part of the court's governance. For years, they carried out a badhai, sometimes known as blessings during births and weddings. Their status evolved throughout colonial rule. Individuals could again fight for their autonomy and rightsby adopting section 377 of the Indian penal code. This allowed individuals to be acknowledged for the first time in a long time. In addition, the electoral commission included a clause that makes it easier to recognize them as a third gender. Due to their small population and lack of gender diversity, Hijras experience discrimination and abuse from various sources, affecting their quality of life. These reasons include low literacy, poor income, and social stigma. Due to their poor literacy rate, they primarily turned to prostitution as a means of subsistence, which poses a severe risk for infections like AIDS or H.I.V. Other jobs might involve taking money for newborn children and collecting donations from the public and temples. People are reluctant to hire them because of their gender variations, giving them little opportunity to exhibit their abilities and ideas (Jennifer Loh, 2011). Additionally, they often experience physical and verbal abuse, which may cause health and disorder issues. Additionally, they are mostly denied privileges, which may breed prejudice and unfairness. The worst-case scenario is that they are expelled from their families and communities, leaving them with little choice except to work as sex workers or beg on the streets. Efforts have been made in the current circumstances to elevate this group of individuals to promote equality and enhance their socioeconomic statuses, such as formally recognizing the April 2014 saw the third gender, which provides access to health and education resources and other areas. Justice Radhakrishna has also made a valid point stated, "Transgender people should be treated consistently with other minorities under the law, enabling them to access jobs, healthcare, and education," one of the most notable accomplishments was the ability to exercise one's right to vote in elections. This signifies societal speech and expression freedom. Additionally, a measure ensuring that transgender individuals get the same benefits as S.C./STs has been approved by the Indian parliament. Consequently, measures have been implemented to guarantee that they are admitted to schools, given government positions, and given defense against sexual harassment. 2014's Nalsa v. U.O.I. Case.

According to Kosciw et al. (2010), transgender pupils felt insecure in school settings. Since the societal notions of ideal masculinity and femininity motivate bullying and harassment, transgender adolescents are more susceptible to it (Meyer, 2009). In order to serve transgender or gender non-conforming students effectively, few institutional supports—including college counseling center staff—have the necessary expertise or education (Scott, 2011; Ivory, 2005; Bolton, 2009). According to Dugan, Kusel, and Simounet (2012), there is a dearth of empirical research on student support programs for transgender students. So in this context, educating the community about the issues could help us make our societies a better place to live for transgender communities. To spread more and more awareness related to transgender people, there is a need to incorporate the inclusion of media images related to transgender as a compulsory awareness program in schools, colleges, and universities as a part of their curriculums as we have now entered advanced domains of development which include utilization and usage of artificial intelligence, social media, mass media in our day-

to-day life's which influences the society and individuals at a greater diversity. Including media in education will help reducethe stigma against transgender individuals among students, which will help build future inclusive societies.

Methodology and Analysed Media Images

In the last few decades, we have seen that media has taken a broader aspect, and it shapes the mind of people in our society and primarily impacts the youth of our society. The world of films and media highly influences this generation. Researchers conducted the research using the qualitative method.Researchers conducted an in-depth survey of various reputed journals, magazines, newspapers, and periodicals. We also watched and reviewed 21 Indian movies in total that lie under mainstream Indian cinema. This could help us understand the problems and status of transgender people and the transgender community in our society and ultimately lead to empowering the transgender community through media images.

Media images will be very effective for bringing a positive shift in the portrayal of transgender where it appears to be more thoughtful and better informed. However, comedy always use as the line of defense as something hateful, and the media response is always, "That is only a joke." (House of Commons, 2015). In Indian films, the transgender community is often 'ridiculed' and made fun of.' There are many preconceptions about them, which is not helping society become more progressive and accepting. Here are several films that dared to do the opposite.

Movies that did justice to the transgender community:

- **The Fire (1996)**

This film contributed to the acceptance of homosexuality in India. It is the first film in Indian cinema to depict a lesbian romance. This might also be seen as a solid response to the patriarchal influence that exists in society.

- **My Brother Nikhil (2005)**

Another example of a film that does not portray homosexuality as deviant or as a nasty joke. This film is about a homosexual couple and attempts to address prejudices about them. This film also attempted to discuss AIDS at a time when there was little awareness in India.

- **While I Am(2011)**

It is a montage of four different people's lives. 'I Am Omar,' for example, recounts the life of a homosexual man in Mumbai and how police officers abuse Article 377 by engaging in sexual harassment and extortion.

- **Bombay Boys** (1998)

One of the first LGBT films in Indian cinema to address homosexuality in the setting of urban existence. It speaks about three N.R.I.s who come to Bombay to 'discover themselves' or explore homosexuality. It, too, strives to avoid propagating misconceptions about homosexual males.

- **Mitrachi Goshta** (My Friend's Story 1981)

This Marathi film attempted to defy all cultural standards by discussing lesbianism at a period when even thinking about it was frowned upon. Although this film did not get fair recognition owing to its contentious matter, it opened the path for homosexuality in Indian cinema.

- **Arekti Premer Golpo**(Just Another Love Story 2010)

The passion of a transgender filmmaker with his bisexual cinematographer is the subject of this Bengali film. This is one of the first films to be filmed after the repeal of Article 377 of the I.P.C. It focuses on the emotional anguish experienced by a transgender person.

- **Margarita With a Straw** (2014)

This film delves into the subjects of bisexuality and sexuality among disabled individuals. This was a candid and refreshing film, and this film also depicts the Indian attitude toward homosexuality and bisexuality.

- **Randu Penkuttikal** (Two Girls 1978)

Based on author V.T Nandakumar's Malayalam book of the same name, it depicts a love connection between two females and the inescapability of male-female couplings in society.

- **Sancharram** (The Journey 2004)

Another Malayalam film tells the narrative of a childhood love between two girls. It also discusses how society's attitude toward homosexuality disrupts romance.

- **Bomgay** (1996)

This is an Indian short film broken into six sections, each based on R.Raj Rao's poetry. It is regarded as one of the most intense homosexual sagas, and this film is widely recognized as one of the earliest homosexual Indian films.

- **Memories in March** (2010)

Memories in March, starring Rituparno Ghosh, Deepti Naval, and RaimaSen, received the National Award for Best Feature Film. It follows a grieving mother's struggle to accept the revelation of her son's sexuality that she only learned after his untimely death.

- **Aligarh** (2016)

Based on the actual incident of RamchandraSiras, who was fired as a lecturer at Aligarh Muslim University for moral reasons after discovering his sexuality. Hansal Mehta directed the film, which had a soulful performance by ManojBajpayee as Siras.

- **Gulabi Aaina** (The Pink Mirror)

While offering genuine insights into the lives of transgender individuals, the first movie on drag queens in India has all the entertainment appeal of a Bollywood production. Unfortunately, the Board of Film Certification of India outlawed this festival hit because it was "vulgar and disrespectful," like many other films that push cultural boundaries in that nation. Despite this, the image has been widely praised and supported by critics.

- **Darmiyaan** (In Between)

Set in 1940s Bollywood, this moving drama follows the egotistical film queen Zeenat Begum (KirronKher) and her transsexual son, Immi, played by ArifZakaria. The film received critical praise for its compelling depiction of the life of transgender people in India, known as hijras.

- **Meghadhanushya** (The Colours of Life)

K R Devamani, a former ayurvedic doctor, directed this first gay-themed Gujarati movie. Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil, well-known for being the son and likely heir apparent of Gujarat's Maharaja of Rajpipla, tells part of the story. Gohil praised the movie as a brave attempt to show the discrimination and stigma that the LGBT community experiences in an interview with a Gujarati news program.

- **Naanu Avanalla, Avalu**

This Kannada feature film, written and directed by B. S. Lingadevaru, is based on the life of Living Smile Vidya, a transgender woman who was reared as a boy but later came to terms with her gender. Sanchari Vijay, who plays the lead actor, got a National Award for his moving performance at the Melbourne International Film Festival in 2015 when the movie had its world premiere.

- **68 Pages**

A transgender bar dancer, a homosexual couple, and a Mumbai-based sex worker are among the four AIDS patients whose lives are intertwined in this 2007 film by looking at a counselor's journal. 68 Pages is a heartbreakingly honest picture of the familiaranguish of persons excluded inside Indian culture, directed by famous director Sridhar Rangayan.

- **Daayra** (The Square Circle)

Daayra, directed by Amol Palekar, was written by Timeri N. Murari, an award-winning journalist and author. The unusual narrative of this picture, which features the shared journey of a theatrical performer educated to portray female parts and a country girl compelled to wear masculine clothing, is its strength. It employs folk tunes to transport the audience on an emotional journey to debunk gender preconceptions and societal views around cross-dressing.

- **Tamanna**

Tamanna, a 1997 film starring PareshRawal, depicted a detailed depiction of a transwoman who rescues an abandoned female kid and nurtures her as her own. Though at times heavy-handed, it expertly addresses transgender concerns (such as prejudice, misgendering, and violence against the transgender community) and female infanticide.

- **Super Deluxe** (2019)

Four narratives collide in Super Deluxe, a Tamil movie released in 2019. It is a thought-provoking mash-up. It was one of the year's greatest hits, and Vijay Sethupathy's empathetic depiction of the transsexual character Shilpa made it stand out. The director gives Shilpa the natural dignity and nobility the character deserves while highlighting the challenges and stereotypes the transgender community faces without resorting to caricatured ideas.

- **Njan Mary Kutti** (2018)

The Malayalam movie Njan Mary Kutti is another one that promotes gender equality and diversity. Actor Jayasuriya portrays the lead character as a transgender guy who wants to join the police force. However, he finds it difficult to accept who he is and experiences terrible discrimination due to his orientation. The movie received plaudits for creating believable characters and breaking social taboos.

Conclusion

In this country, transgender people are constantly subjected to many sorts of social prejudice and oppression. Discrimination is widespread and pronounced even in necessities like healthcare, employment, and education, making social inclusion daunting. It is the need of the hour that steps be taken to remedy the deplorable situation and advance social inclusion for the members of this community through legal solid as well as social angles.

Educational organizations and institutes have the potential to function as agents of societal change. They function as significant spaces for socialisation. Each child stepping into educational organizations and institutes has different experiences and knowledge. Schools then become the spaces where differences among

individuals are seen as their uniqueness. Individuals' potential can be harnessed collectively while interacting with their peers, teachers, and the more prominent educational community. It, then, becomes essential to provide a conducive learning environment to individuals.

Including media images can be very effective and helpful in communicating the ideology that uniqueness should be accepted and celebrated instead of being seen as hierarchies of deficits or privileges. Among many differences, gender becomes one of the substantial bases for the differing experiences of individuals. However, gender is a social construct. Images in the media offer an exceptional opportunity for independent study. When we see them reflected in the media, preconceived notions and beliefs should not be permissible. The initial step is to combat prejudice with the knowledge to make our world more multicultural and welcoming of all groups.

There are numerous issues associated with the Transgender community, including unfair treatment, the perpetuation of stigma, lack of academic facilities, lack of finance and credit, unemployment, lack of shelter, lack of medical facilities such as hygiene and H.I.V. care, alcohol abuse, hormone pill abuse, tobacco anddepression, and issues relating to a property, marriage, adoption, alienation from family and society,electoral rights, insecure life,lack of sensitivity, and forced sterilization. Due to stigmatization and a pejorative, ubiquitous attitude, those obliged to work as sex workers or sex solicitors experience societal stigma in the form of disempowerment. Even in situations involving the inheritance of property or adoption of a child, they are a neglected group. Video art possesses an unseen capacity for social and personal transformation. This paper has led to investigating the impact of media image on society over the past century. Today, when the media image has permeated every aspect of contemporary culture, it has become evident that media literacy is necessary not only for transgender people but also for society to progress. The media image and films can provide a new direction for the transgender community's social progression. Films play a huge role in educating the masses; with time running out, it has the potential to grant our society newfound freedom in terms of inclusion, gender equality, and stability.

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