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Assessing the Multidimensional Social Exclusion faced by Transgender Community in Pakistan: Policy Challenges & way forward

Zaib un-Nisa Minhas

Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, Islamabad

zaibunnisaminhas@gmail.com

Zeeshan Khan

Lecturer Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, Islamabad

zeeshan.khan@riphah.edu.pk

Kashif Zaheer

Sr. Lecturer Riphah Institute of Public Policy, Riphah International University, Islamabad

kashif.zaheer@riphah.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

In Pakistan, the Multidimensional Social Exclusion Faced by Transgender Community despite the constitutional provisions of equality, as well as the establishment of legislation, including the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018. This study has aimed to explore experiences of multidimensional social exclusion faced by transgender community & has examined the impacts of multidimensional exclusion on the life of transgender community in Islamabad & Rawalpindi. The study used the Social Exclusion Theory, employed the qualitative approach and case study design to identify lived experiences throughout the life of transgender persons. This study has found based on the 4 cases selected from the credible news reports that the findings have shown that the exclusion is not limited to a single area and the unfriendly social context, family rejection, insufficient medical care, school-related prejudices, Inclusive admission policies are absent which block school access. discrimination in working places, and the housing insecurity, there is widespread discrimination in the rental market. Discrimination at work is a phenomenon that continues. The paper has shown that social exclusion is increasing and self-perpetuating and has created negative mental health, poverty, homelessness and susceptibility to violence. The transgender marginalization in Pakistan is not a personal failure but structural and systemic, it is built into social norms and institutions as well as the systems of governance. The study highlights the necessity to have effective application of the policy and laws, inclusive health and education system, equal employment, and security of housing. the current study adds to academic literature and policy discussion and is providing practical proposals to promote effective inclusion of transgender people in Pakistan. This Research has also suggested policy recommendations to reduce multidimensional social exclusion.

Keywords: *Transgender community, Multidimensional Social exclusion, Intersex, Human rights, Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018.*

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have endeavored to ensure the holistic fulfillment of human potential in the domain of human rights, dignity, non-discrimination, and equality irrespective of race, color, sex, language, religion, political inclination, national or social

background, property, birth, and disability. Regardless of the general efforts of the United Nations, the human rights developments of a transgender individual have been lacking particularly by the developing nations. The American Psychological Association has placed great focus on the fact that being Trans is not a mental disorder, and gender identity is a strong internal sense of being male, female, both or neither that does not necessarily correlate with biological sex characteristics. According to American Psychological Association, transgender is defined as individuals who do not identify with the sex assigned at birth and express it differently (APA, 2015). The culture of developing nations consists of the defined historic practices and systems which presuppose certain identities as default. Transgender person or Third Gender belongs to a subculture that is not in line with the typical social image person has a special and peculiar gender representation with various names such as Hijra, khawaja Sira or khunsa. The unfortunate thing about it is that the Trans community still has to exist within very hostile environments. Transgender community in Pakistan is an outcast in the society and least acceptable as a normal human being.

The social defiance, humiliation, and phraseology of the encounter make transgenders in backward societies live their life in humiliation. They are subjected to varied forms of discrimination depending on what they are and how they look. Trans phobia refers to the prejudice against our being transgender or gender- non conforming individuals. This society is discriminated against since an early age. When children are not demonstrating the right behavior as per their biological gender, the parents start to disapprove them. During the process of gender role acquisition, a child may become disoriented because he or she has to learn the gender role played by the parent of same sex and that does not reflect in inner feelings and the child begins to wonder who I am. What should I do? How should I behave? This brings about conflict to the mind of the child. During the age of puberty when the body starts changing, and it is the time when children tend to begin to be disgusted with their bodies when they look different, and their physical identity is not congruent with their feelings. (Olson, Durwood, DeMeules, and McLaughlin, 2016). It is not just one of the factors that distress a transgender, but the entire life of a transgender is a misery. Stigma and a lack of social support that transgender members feel towards their immediate relatives destroy their mental condition, and the desire to work towards their rights can decline. In this sense, a research study has found out that 79 percent of the population surveyed in transgender in Pakistan is uneducated. Transgender children often drop out of schools (Nazir and Yasir, 2016). This is the discrimination they feel in family, in school (when they go) and in all other locations they move or interact with the society. When the people began to identify themselves as khusras, a sizeable number of people now only looked down upon them at the societal and the religious level. This discrimination also makes them vulnerable and without or with minimal employment opportunities in the society. They are, therefore, compelled to resort to methods of earning that are not regarded as respectable in our culture, i.e. begging, dancing and prostitution social exclusion forms the basis of the perception of social identity and membership in the society of the south Asian context. The transgender community is also marginalised in such societies as a result of the socio-cultural norms and beliefs hence restricting the contribution of these groups socially (Akram et al., 2023).

Sadly enough, in Pakistan the transgender individuals have been subject to long time neglect, due to their overall rejection, societal stigma and their status as being transgender. These transgenders do not belong to a queue or a learning institution where there is a division between

men and women. The inability to have access to a basic education and decent working prospects makes the people have to acquire covert identity, fake names and bizarre living arrangements. These incomplete entities are often the hardest to assimilate by those who are close to them and compel them to abandon their homes and move with their comrades to start a life in slums (Stryker, 2008). The cultural and historical context of South Asia is very rich and this aspect contributes to acceptance of transgender identity in South Asia. Transgender individuals have been assuming special and unique roles in the society over the millennia. In South Asia, they are occasionally known as harems. The history of the hijras community with its unique nature can be dated back to ancient India and the surrounding regions. One of the particularly important elements of transgender identity in South Asia is the role that hijra used to play in ceremonies and rituals. They played a significant role in cultural festivals and rituals as it was believed they would bring good fortune to the people even though they have been highly marginalized and discriminated against today despite their past contributions and recognition by the South Asian community, specifically in Pakistan and particularly in Islamabad (Ali B. k., 19 June 2021). Such a dramatic gap between what was and what is today shows the indecisiveness of identifying transgender in the region. The number of challenges that transgender persons face today has been brought about by a variety of factors. These involve the impact of Western binary gender ideals and the impact of the colonial era laws, which criminalized non binary and non-heteronormative identities. It is the sociocultural changes and urbanization, which altered the role and attitudes of hijras and transgender people (Divan et al., 2016)). Research in this topic helps to bring out the conflict between the historical acceptance of transgender identities and the challenges posed by the norms of contemporary society, legal requirements, and discrimination. It emphasizes that the issue of transgender identity in South Asia should be approached with a complex understanding that allows considering the historic origin of the communities and their contemporary issues. Also, this historical background is of paramount importance when investigating the sociocultural challenges that transgender individuals in Islamabad and Rawalpindi in general face. It provides a foundation upon which the understanding of transgender identities development is possible and the cultural forces that still affect the experiences of transgender people in the region. It was found that the family members, particularly the mother who favors the tender nature of their boys, like wearing women clothes, applying makeup, spending time with ladies, and interest in household chores. Other family members criticize their activities in place of teasing such people in their adolescence. In cases when these adolescents cannot meet the expectations of the family regarding the responsibilities related to their gender, problems end up. Provided these individuals keep behaving in a feminine fashion into their adulthood, they will need to encounter mistreatment of various forms and rejection and humiliation (Redding, 2019). The issues of transgender people and their protection against discrimination as well as the recognition of human rights have become extremely important global human rights challenges. Pakistan also has taken some steps to acknowledge and appreciate the rights of transgender individuals, e.g., changes in legislation and policy amendments aimed at safeguarding their rights and providing them with equal opportunity. Nevertheless, the actual implementation of these steps is challenging and in a continuous state of flux, and the socio-cultural factors still considerably influences the world perception of the transgender individuals. (Jacques, 2015)

Pakistan Khawaja siras have been experiencing the exclusion and maltreatment. Their narrative is, or undoubtedly was, agonizing until 2009, writes Rabail Baig in a continuing Foreign Policy article with the ongoing Supreme Court decisions that khawaja siras will be allowed to identify themselves as transgender on the national identity cards as well as to cast a ballot like other Pakistani locals. Anyhow, reality of their life is much more truthful than the state denial of character and citizenship. It is discovered that their ultimate rituals are done very secretly. They are also being buried at night, somewhere in the middle of the night, which means that only few people attend the funeral. People even say that some of the transgender even smile when their fellow dies, as they believe that life on this Earth is so cruel and people have been meaning to them, but God is all loving, and he will be just in the afterlife ((Abdullah et al., 2012)).

Intersex: The term intersex is used for individuals born with sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, (ovaries or testes), internal reproductive organs, external genitalia, or pattern of hormones pattern which are neither male nor female as they do not fit typical male or female binary classifications not a clear gender identity (Umair Mahmood Siddiqui, 2024).

Transgender: A transgender person is a person who is intersex (Khusra) with mixture of male and female genital features or congenital ambiguities or Eunuch assigned at birth, but undergoes genital excision or castration. Transgender man, transgender woman or any person whose gender identity or gender expression differs from the social norms and cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at the time of their birth. Other related terminologies which are used for these people are intersex, Tran's person, or khunsa etc (Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2018).

Khunsa: Khunsa refers to the person who was born with ambiguous or mixed biological sex characteristics. Biologically, it refers to individual born with Differences of Sex Development DSD is a non-hereditary state that is a congested situation where the chromosomal, the gonadal, the hormonal, or the anatomical sex characteristics are not formed in the typical male or female pattern. This may include indistinct external genitalia, absence of chromosome matching and the looks, or a very unusual case of having both ovarian and testicular tissue. It is a biologic difference that is born and does not mean the existence of two whole functioning reproductive systems. (Naseem et al., 2021).

Hijra: In South Asia the term Hijra refers to those people who were castrated or intersex having combination of male and female sex organs, not fall in female or male binary domain (Reddy, 2005).

Literature Review

The idea of transgender identity and its peculiarities have been investigated at length all over the world focusing on the struggle to achieve equality, the freedom of speech and expression in the socioeconomic field and a variety of exclusion dimensions. Different researchers have also tried to give definitions and explain the nature of the issue in their fields. The history of transgender people is extensive and multifaceted, and there are various cultural, social, and historical backgrounds of this population in the world. The transgender identities have a historical foundation tracing back to the ancient civilizations. Gender diversity has been known and accepted by various cultures in the world. Western colonization that took place during the colonial period had a great influence on how gender diversity was perceived in most areas. Colonial governments also forced Western gender ideals and usually made non-conform gender identities criminalized (Shah et al., 2018)). In some states such as India, laws that were enacted

during the colonial period classified Hijras and other gender-different groups as criminal tribes, thus marginalizing and stigmatizing them. The contemporary world saw major progress in legalization and social acceptance of transgender people. The concept of legal protection and social recognition has been achieved through the introduction of legal changes (the establishment of a third gender category in the official documents and anti-discrimination legislation). In the Subcontinent, Hijras celebrate cultural heritage of Khawaja Sara in the Mughal period when they used to serve their harems by Mughal rulers. This historical legacy continued many years and Hijras was invited to sing and dance in different functions and occasions. Nevertheless, the conventional role of Hijras in Pakistan has over time experienced a dwindling effect. Such people could widely be found on birth or marriage places and they danced, sang, and collected alms. Their roles have changed with time and most of them are currently in sex work, dancing and begging (Rashid et al., 2022). This challenge is therefore informed by the concept of gender, which imposes on a person the responsibility of being either of the two binary genders, male or female. But the situation of the transgender community in Pakistan is the exact converse of what it is in the Western countries where the activism has been successful in gaining some rights over time. Hijras in Pakistan have not been discriminated against as long as in other countries and therefore, they find it hard to access employment and education hence the need to be responded to by academicians, researchers and policymakers. The transgender population is socially marginalized in different areas such as health, education, employment and other fundamental human rights. They have no access to basic opportunities and resources to use in their daily lives (Grant et al., 2019). This kind of discrimination and social exclusion of transgender results in other problems such as unemployment, homelessness, and poverty (James et al., 2016). Moreover, mental health is also negatively affected by such social conditions as most transgender individuals suffer anxiety, sadness, and suicidal thoughts due to rejection and stigma that they frequently experience in the society (Testa et al., 2022). One of the leading causes of psychological distress, anxiety, and depression in the marginalized communities is social exclusion. Financial instability and rising poverty are brought about by economic inequality and availability of work opportunities. Social exclusion also influences the availability of healthcare services, and it is mostly one of the key elements of the health outcomes disparity between transgender. Their low social status has also been established to expose them to physical, emotional, and voluptuous attacks. Others are transgender and some are vulnerable to different diseases, thus forcing them to deal with attacks by their community. They are even met with violence and obstacles in their bid to defy the stereotype (Kessler et al., 2018). The National Assembly, which comes after the Senate, has enacted a bill to recognize the third gender, which are the transgender people in the country and offer them basic human rights. The first transgender Ayesha Mughal was included in the National Task Force to prepare the Defense Gender Person of Rights Bill 2018 that became a part of the country law. The rights of transgender people are legislated in the Pakistani parliament and the Senate. In Pakistan, transgenders are engaging in elections better than before, and this is confirming their rights. The Pakistani state has started to enact the laws on the rights of the eunuchs as they wish to display their sunny side of the world. Pakistani passport has been provided, and voting rights are granted. They have been also enumerated in the census. Changing the laws is indeed occurring, but the social behavior of the eunuchs did not improve much.

Trans people in Pakistan have a hard time in schools, shelters, hospitals, potential employers or even police stations or medical centers when they want to express their gender identity that does not correspond to the gender designation they gave on the record of birth certificates, health cards, passports, driver's license, school, and medical documents. The younger generation of transgender would like to receive an education, yet school administration, educators, and relatives do not provide support and advice. Trans-individuals are also exposed to partial treatment when they enter into a shelter because they did not feel comfortable sharing houses with men or women. They also lack medical care because doctors refuse to treat them and most trans-individuals prefer to treat their diseases with alternative medicine since they cannot make decisions whether to leave them in the men or to women (Manzoor et al., 2021). Trans-community is victimized by undue treatments such as verbal abuse, physical and voluptuous violence; false arrests; rejection to share in their ancestral property, services and admissions to educational institutes; victimization in various places such as family, educational institutes, workplace, health care institutions, public places. Quitting a job can lead to a loss of future income and career growth because they are a specific gender (Butt et al., 2025). It acknowledged that even the relatives of the trans-community are reluctant to acknowledge that his or her loved ones can be of a different gender. It is an internalized shame into owning up to being transgender and making the risks of such a label. Regarding cases of trans-community molestation, on the one hand, it is identified that a number of trans-adults are victimized, but on the other hand, it is noted that the largest number of forceful rapes occur against trans-highschoolers. It is found that the Pakistani society socially excludes their transgender community, in which individuals physically abuse them with high rates and discriminate against them in their everyday life. They have been proven to be susceptible to dangerous habits because of such attitudes, and have to resort to becoming commercial prostitutes, beggars, drug users, and even suicide bombers (Yasin and Jauhar, 2018).

The Social Exclusion Theory

Social exclusion is a theory that describes how individuals or groups are systematically deprived of full access to social, economic, political, and cultural life. It does not simply look at the state of income inequality or poverty, but structures that involved in production of marginalization.

The concept was first developed in France in the 1970s by sociologist René Lenoir who defined the excluded as individuals who were excluded by mainstream social institutions, including welfare, employment, education, and community networks. The theory was later extended by Amartya Sen (2000) who associated exclusion with the deprivation of capabilities by arguing that social exclusion deprives people of the freedom to attain well-being. The British and European scholars (Howard, e.g., Anthony Giddens, Hilary Silver, and Ruth Levitas) further expanded the concept within the context of welfare and citizenship, pointing to the fact that exclusion is not only multidimensional, relational, and dynamic in that it is not only caused by individual circumstances, but also by the construction of societies.

Operationalization framework

The operationalization framework offers an organized insight into the way various aspects of social exclusion interplay to determine the experiences of the transgender community in Pakistan. It leads the analysis and connects the theoretical framework and empirical evidence to enable a comprehensive discussion of social, economic, institutional and cultural processes which generate and reproduce transgender marginalization.

Dimension	Indicators	Purpose of study
Economic Exclusion	Income instability Poor access to formal labor. Denial of financial services like banking, credit and other services. Reliance on the informal economy like sex work, begging, robbery and dancing.	To understand the ways in which economic systems deny transgender people a stable livelihood. To explore financial insecurity and economic marginalization.
Social Exclusion	Family rejection Social isolation and community discrimination. Harassment in public spaces Gender identity discrimination.	To examine the degree of rejection and stigmatization. To appreciate the way social norms, lower the community belonging.
Cultural Exclusion	Lack of recognition of transgender. Misrepresentation in media/culture. Ostracism in the cultural rituals. This is due to negative cultural stereotypes.	To examine the delegitimizing of transgender identity through cultural discourse. To find cultural obstacles in recognition of dignity and identity.
Political Exclusion	Poor political (voting, representation) participation. Obstacles to the enjoyment of civic rights. Reduced participation in the processes of policy making	To understand the effects of reduced political participation on rights and entitlements. To analyze the effects of documentation and political awareness on empowerment.
Institutional Exclusion	Barriers to access to healthcare. Discrimination at schools. Unfairness in the justice system. Institutionalized trans phobia	To explore ways in which institutional structures are systematically disadvantageous to transgender people. To determine service delivery lapses in institutions.

Methodology

This paper follows a qualitative research approach in order to analyze the issue of multidimensional social exclusion faced by transgender community in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The qualitative approach allows the research to develop detailed information about the stigma, identity trouble, restricted access to services, and wider structural imbalances within the Pakistani society by concentrating on how and why exclusion happens on social, economic, institutional, and spatial levels. This study has used the case study Design and Case study has

been widely used in qualitative research technique (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The study is based on case studies and transgender communities living in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. This design helps in comprehending their lives experience in terms of social, economic and institutional exclusion in a detailed and contextual manner. The study data is gathered in the form of complete secondary sources, such as academic journal articles, Tribune Express, Dawn News, governmental reports, human rights publications, organizational reports, and policy reports. The data source for the study comprises the Case studies used the credible news reports and different organization reports. The researcher has examined 4 cases reported in Rawalpindi and Islamabad in order to understand the social exclusion, institutional behaviors and the actual realities of trans-genders. Since the study is aimed at a vulnerable and minority group, there are high ethical considerations adhered to during the research. The study follows the basic human rights principles, respecting, dignified, and non-discriminatory in representation and analysis of the transgender population.

Discussion and findings:

Case study 01

Sr. No	Case title	Back Ground of case	Problem faced by transgender Community	Reported Area	Reported News Agency	Time Period
Case 1	Educational Exclusion	Tran's students trying to get admission in formative and vocational educational institution in Islamabad.	Non-inclusive admissions, discrepancy in documents, bullying, staff discrimination, unsafe facilities, high dropout, and lack of skills.	Rawalpindi	Tribune Express	December 22, 2025

Analysis

Schools in Islamabad and Rawalpindi did not have policies of admitting transgender individuals. Issuing identity documents that fail to match, rejecting preferred names and refusal to alter uniforms were a hindrance to enrollment. After admission, students were subjected to extreme harassment by their colleagues and discriminatory actions of their teachers and administrative personnel. Facilities were segregated by gender and posed humiliation and safety threats on the daily basis. Educators were not taught gender diversity and usually reinforced binary norms. Cases of bullying were a normal thing, and there were no institutional ways to mitigate harassment. As a result, the level of dropouts among transgender learners was very high.

Findings

- Inclusive admission policies are absent which block school access.
- There is high rate of dropouts as a result of bullying and staff discrimination.
- Weaknesses and lack of teacher training institutionalize exclusion.
- Lack of education restricts the possibilities of livelihood in future

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Discussion

Educational exclusion is a structural process of maintaining long-term economic marginalization. In the absence of an education or vocational training, transgender people are locked out of skilled labor. Schools operate as disciplinary as opposed to inclusion environments, recreating social hierarchies.

Case study 02

Sr. No	Case title	Back Ground of case	Problem faced by transgender Community	Reported Area	Reported News Agency	Time Period
Case 2	Transgender individual seeking employment in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.	Transgender individual seeking employment in formal and informal sectors in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.	Hiring and workplace discrimination, non-enforcement of protection laws, exclusion from formal jobs, reliance on unsafe informal work, economic insecurity.	Islamabad, Rawalpindi	Dawn News	October 27, 2022

Analysis

The discrimination was experienced in every level of employment such as in the recruiting, hiring, retention, and promotion. The employers used cultural uneasiness and customer response as a reason not to include them. Where the laws were provided under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, they were still not enforced. The Trans phobia was internalized and prevented people to apply to jobs.

As they could not get formal jobs, they were directed into the informal jobs including dancing, beauty services, beg-ging jobs and sex works. These professions were not safe, socially secure, and stable.

Findings

- Discrimination at work is a phenomenon that continues.
- Transgender livelihoods are characterized by informal jobs.
- Poverty and homelessness continue to thrive due to economic instability.
- Social vulnerability is strengthened by joblessness.

Discussion

Other forms of marginalization are caused and brought about by economic exclusion. Income deprivation strengthens housing insecurity, inaccessibility to healthcare as well as susceptibility to violence. The law does not interrupt the flow because there are poor enforcement systems.

This has created social vulnerability throughout a lifetime; trans people have limited chances of accessing education, and have increased likelihood of not being employed, consequently leading to disproportionately high rates of homelessness and poverty. In schools, trans students feel resentment, prejudice, and threatening situations, which causes very high drop-out rates, and not many trans individuals are promoted to higher education

Case Study 03

Sr. No	Case title	Back Ground of case	Problem faced by Transgender Community	Reported Area	Report Published by	Time Period
Case 3	Shelter Exclusion and Housing Insecurity faced by transgender community in twin cities	Transgender individuals who are in need of rental homes and shelters in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.	Rental discrimination, religious, cultural exclusion, no guarantors or proper documentation; high rent, unsafe accommodation , insufficient government assistance etc.	Rawalpindi and Islamabad	International Journal of Psychological Rehabilitation	May 2020

Analysis

There was a systematic denial of housing based on gender identity by the society on the basis of cultural and religious reasons. Exclusion was supported by community pressure. Access was further limited by absence of family guarantors and documentation incompatibilities. During the time the housing was available, it was not affordable because of discriminative pricing.

Shelters were also based on binary gender segregation and subjected trans to abuse. A great number preferred to be homeless to unsafe shelters. The governmental housing programs could not meet transgender needs.

Findings

- There is widespread discrimination in the rental market.
- Homelessness systems are hostile and marginal.
- Homelessness exacerbates human health and wellness.
- Lack of transitional housing encourages instability.

Discussion

Being excluded in housing encompasses all other abilities of marginalization. The lack of stable accommodation means that one cannot have access to employment, healthcare and safety. Violence is reproduced in shelter system by institutional neglect. Every person has a right to his or her fundamental human right and as per the international law, the nations are put in place to uphold such rights including the protection against discrimination and the right to be healthy but

trans people are hardly provided with the same protection in accordance with the international law. The economic challenges encountered by Trans people because of the inability to engage in the labor market only. Transgender individuals who feel their identity at a very early age are usually denied by their families. Not being cast out of their residences, they are rejected in families which leave them without chances to get education, and there are no efforts to make sure that their mental and physical health requirements are addressed.

Case study 04

Sr. No	Case title	Back Ground of case	Problem faced by transgender Community	Reported Area	Reported by International News Agency	Time Period
Case 4	Health Exclusion and Compromised Well-being of transgender community	Transgender people accessing healthcare in Rawalpindi	Medical staff discrimination, transgender care incompetence, inadequate access to gender-affirming, mental health, and HIV care, informal self-treatment or unsafe self-treatment.	Rawalpindi	The Guardian	2024

Analysis

Medical professionals did not have the training to address the transgender health requirements. Routine and emergency care was not accessed because of discriminative attitudes. There were few gender-affirming services, mental health care TB treatment and HIV care. Most of them used informal or unsafe self-treatment.

Findings

- Health systems are not transgender competent.
- Discrimination does not encourage access to medicine.
- Informal treatment poses a health risk

Discussion

The state of social and legal marginalization leads to health exclusion. The fear of being discriminated makes it hard to seek care and poor health outcomes are exacerbated. The needs of transgender people are ignored in the public and private health systems. Furthermore, to the problem of access to HIV, mental health, and gender affirming health services. Concisely, the anti-transgender social and legal conditions provide health disparities, and the service systems

in the public health responds to the requirements of trans people. Moreover, because gender identity issues are inseparable in trans people, the awareness of their trans concerns regarding stigma, discrimination, and violence is usually low. Nevertheless, the human rights issues related to Trans people, which are based on their gender identity, have their own peculiarities and require their own approaches.

Study Limitation

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. The cases reported in Rawalpindi and Islamabad were sourced from various national and international news outlets. In those reports, the term “transgender” was used to describe members of a marginalized community experiencing social exclusion. These published reports were utilized as primary data sources for this study. However, the focus of this research is specifically on individuals born with biological variations in sex characteristics commonly referred to as intersex conditions. These include variations in chromosomes, gonads (ovaries or testes), internal reproductive organs, external genitalia, or hormone patterns that do not conform to typical male or female binary classifications. A clear limitation of this study arises from the reliance on media reports that used the term “transgender,” whereas the conceptual and analytical focus of this research concerns biological intersex variations rather than gender identity. The terminology used in the original reports may therefore create conceptual ambiguity within the study.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to explore the multidimensional social exclusion of the transgender community in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, and the legal, social, economic, and institutional frameworks of marginalization of the group. The results show that the exclusion is not limited to a single area; on the contrary, it is a compound and cumulative process predetermined by the discriminatory legislation, the unfriendly social context, family rejection, insufficient medical care, school-related prejudices, discrimination in working places, and the housing insecurity. These intersecting levels of marginalization support each other, forming a cycle of vulnerability that starts at an early age in life and continues through to the lifespan. The study indicates that even with the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018 there is no evidence that the lived reality of transgender people can be described as a system of neglect and daily violence. Legal protections do not always find their way into practice due to the very poor enforcement mechanisms, discriminative attitudes of the service providers, and the very strong cultural norms. Transgender students are still not safe in schools, which expels many of them out of the education system and restricts their possible access to formal jobs. The workplace is also inaccessible because of the biased approach in hiring and the absence of institutional protection, and a large percentage of transgender people are left to work in informal or risky businesses.

With this multidimensional approach, the paper brings out the fact that exclusion is not merely a personal or individual challenge but a structural challenge that is entrenched in the social, legal, and institutional system of Pakistan. Isolated interventions are therefore not enough to be significantly included. It requires the combined efforts of the state, civil society, schools, healthcare systems, religious leaders, and the community organizations. The results support the idea that social acceptance, legal protection, economic participation, and institutional reform should go hand in hand in case long-term change would be attained. After all, this paper highlights why the rules and practices that recognize the dignity of transgender people, their humanity, and their rights are badly needed. When the interrelated barriers that have been

outlined in this study are addressed and inclusive and rights-focused solutions applied, Pakistan will become closer to establishing the society where transgender people will not be tolerated but be treated as equal citizens

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