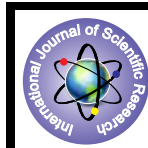


In a Transphobic Society



Psychology

KEYWORDS : Transphobia, transgender, prejudice, Case Study Schedule, Transphobia Inventory

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ABSTRACT

The study on "In a Transphobic Society" was carried out with the objectives of (a) assessing the extent of transphobia in the participants (b) comparing the sexes on transphobia and (c) finding the relationship between transphobia and demographic factors such as sex, age and occupation of the participants. From in and around urban Coimbatore, 150 individuals (87 male and 63 female) in the age range of 19 to 55 were randomly selected. The participants completed the Case Study Schedule and Transphobia Inventory. The results indicated that (a) the participants on the whole were moderately prejudiced against transgender (b) there were no sex differences in transphobia (c) there was a statistically significant positive correlation at 0.01 level between age and transphobia and (d) there was a statistically significant positive correlation at 0.01 level between occupation and transphobia. Extensive research on various psychological and social issues related to transgender was recommended.

Introduction

Gender is a complex social phenomenon. Although it is maintained that gender is a social creation taught to us from birth on the basis of our sex, gender is also about self-expression. Gender, in other words, is also the personal creation of each and every one of us. Transgender people identify in ways that do not correspond to some or that entire bundle of acceptable behaviours encouraged in them since birth. In this way, gender can be seen to be the product of the complex interaction between the individual and society.

Transgender is an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else; gender expression refers to the way a person communicates gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyles and voice or body characteristics (APA, 2013).

Transphobia is a range of antagonistic attitudes and feelings against transsexuality and transsexual or transgender people, based on the expression of their internal gender identity. Researchers describe transphobia as emotional disgust, fear, anger or discomfort felt or expressed towards people who do not conform to society's gender expectations (Chakraborti, Neil and Jon Garland, 2009; Chrisler, McCreary and Joan, 2010).

In a significant step, the Supreme Court in 2014 recognized the transgender community as a third gender along with male and female. The Bench held that recognition of transgender as a third gender is not a social or medical issue but a human rights issue; transgender are also citizens of India; the spirit of the Constitution is to provide equal opportunity to every citizen to grow and attain their potential, irrespective of caste, religion or gender. By virtue of this verdict, all identity documents, including a birth certificate, passport, ration card and driving license would recognize the third gender. Though on paper, things are as stated above, the reality is something different. Discrimination against transgender is still rampant and it will take a while for the common man to undo the same which had been a way of the society.

In the present study, an attempt had been made to understand the extent of transphobia in the public. This could throw light on the situations and factors that can trigger transphobia. Such information could be valuable for taking up further studies in this area and to evolve awareness programmes for the public and also for transgender.

Method

From in and around urban Coimbatore, 150 individuals in the age range of 19 to 55 were approached to randomly select a representative sample. The sample consisted of 87 male and 63 female. The sample represented occupations such as teaching, business, entrepreneurship, shop keeping, driving, software engineering etc.

Tools

- **Informed Consent Form:** It was used to get consent from the individuals to participate in the study.
- **Case Study Schedule:** To obtain personal data from the participants.
- **Transphobia Inventory** (Preetha Menon, 2015): A 23 items Self-report Inventory constructed by the Investigator which the participants were required to respond 'YES' or 'NO'.

Procedure

The student researchers explained the 150 individuals about the intent of the study and the tools used. All the 150 individuals expressed their consent to participate in the study by signing in the Informed Consent Form. Following this, the participants completed the Case Study Schedule and Transphobia Inventory. The method employed for the study was Survey Method.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Showing the Level of Transphobia in the Participants

N=150

| Level of Transphobia | Male (n=87) | | Female (n=63) | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| | n | Percent-age | n | Percent-age |
| Very High Prejudice (20-23) | 5 | 6 | 4 | 6 |
| High Prejudice(15-19) | 25 | 29 | 15 | 24 |
| Moderate Prejudice(10-14) | 25 | 29 | 21 | 33 |
| Low Prejudice(5-9) | 23 | 26 | 18 | 29 |
| Very Low Prejudice(0-4) | 9 | 10 | 5 | 8 |

Percentages are rounded off

Transphobia is an irrational fear of, and/or hostility towards, people who are transgender or who otherwise transgress traditional gender norms. It can be noted from Table 1 that 58% of male and 57 % of female range from moderate to high prejudice towards transgender. It is interesting to note that there are not obvious differences in the level of transphobia in male and female participants.

From the number of individuals falling under each level, it could be seen that the group on the whole has a normal distribution. When plotted on a graph, it would be bell-shaped. A normal distribution is a very important statistical data distribution pattern occurring in many natural phenomena, such as height, blood pressure, lengths of objects produced by machines, etc.

Table 2: Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of Transphobia in the Participants

| Mean | | | Standard Deviation | | |
|----------|------|--------|--------------------|------|--------|
| Over All | Male | Female | Over All | Male | Female |
| 12 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 5.35 | 4.46 |

It can be noted from Table 2 that the group on the whole is moderately prejudiced against transgender. There is a wide spread curiosity and fear in the society when it comes to interacting with transgender. This could be eliminated only by changing both ways- the society and the transgender. The society has to be more sensitive and should have an inclusive mentality. The transgender in turn should behave in socially appropriate and in a non intimidating manner.

Table 3: Showing Significance of Difference in Mean Transphobia of Male and Female Participants

| Source of Variance | Sum of squares | df | Mean Square | F | p |
|--------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| between | 36.540 | 1 | 36.540 | 1.464 | 0.228 |
| within | 3,694.814 | 148 | 24.965 | | |
| Total | 3,731.354 | 149 | | | |

The one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to find out if any statistically significant difference exists in transphobia in male and female participants. In Table 3, the P value is > 0.05 indicating that the difference is not statistically significant. As belonging to the urban areas, the male and the female participants of the study might not have much difference in their prejudice towards transgender. Media influences might also be another reason. As the tool used involves self reporting, the veracity of the responses could not be guaranteed.

Table 4: Showing the Correlation between Demographic Factors and Transphobia

| Demographic Variable | Statistical Measure | Transphobia |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Transphobia | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | Sig.(2-Tailed) | - |
| | N | 150 |
| Age | Pearson Correlation | 0.288** |
| | Sig.(2-Tailed) | 0.000352 |
| | N | 150 |
| Sex | Pearson Correlation | 0.026 |
| | Sig.(2-Tailed) | 0.752137 |
| | N | 150 |
| Occupation | Pearson Correlation | 0.47** |
| | Sig.(2-Tailed) | 0.00001 |
| | N | 150 |

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 shows that the p value (sig. (2-tailed)) of 0.000352 < .01 for the correlation value of 0.288. This indicates that the cor-

relation between age and transphobia is statistically significant at 0.01 level. More than 60% of the participants were between the age groups 23 and 37 and on the whole the participants are moderately prejudiced towards transgender. Probably the correlation between age and transphobia could be attributed to that.

Table 4 also shows that the p value (sig. (2-tailed)) of 0.00001 < .01 for the correlation value of 0.47. This indicates that the correlation between occupation and transphobia is statistically significant at 0.01 level. Except for the occupation of drivers' (10%), the participants were almost equally distributed in their occupations between 12% and 14% among teachers, businessmen, software engineers, shopkeepers, receptionists and also students. It should be inferred that transphobia is distributed almost evenly across the occupations of the participants of the present study.

Empirical Findings

- Fifty eight percent of male and 57 % of female range from moderate to high prejudice towards transgender.
- The group on the whole was moderately prejudiced against transgender.
- The difference in mean transphobia of male and female participants is not statistically significant.
- There is a statistically significant positive correlation at 0.01 level between age and transphobia.
- There is a statistically significant positive correlation at 0.01 level between occupation and transphobia.

Limitations of the Study

- A larger population could not be studied as it was a mini project with limited time.
- The evolved tool could not be made more comprehensive and standardized due to paucity of time.

Recommendations

- Transgender communities should be given access to health care services and they should also be given health insurance coverage. Medical curriculum should have instruction for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) patient care.
- Measures should be taken to protect transgender and gender non-conforming students by creating an explicit anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy – and to enforce these policies meaningfully.
- All teachers, administrators, counselors, and students should be trained in transgender sensitivity, in what it means to treat all people respectfully and equally.
- Gender appropriate restroom accessibility should be made available. The rest rooms could be named as ‘for men’, ‘for women’ and ‘for others’.
- Transgender should find inclusion in sports and arts at state, national and international levels.
- Transgender –friendly public transportation system should be made available.
- Awareness programmes and social skills training should be given to transgender to acquire socially accepted behaviours.
- Interpersonal Skills Training should be given to teach transgender non intimidating ways of dealing with individuals.
- Extensive research should be taken up on issues related to transgender and the results of the same should be disseminated.

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