

A study to assess the level of emotional status among the transgender in Puducherry

¹Dr. R. Gomathy, ²P. Vaidheeswari, ³R. Vallarasi, ⁴M. Vishnupriya, ⁵E. Vivithra

¹Professor, Department of Nursing Foundation, Vinayaka Mission's College of Nursing, VMRF (DU), Puducherry
^{2,3,4,5}B.Sc. Nursing students, Vinayaka Mission's College of Nursing, VMRF (DU), Puducherry

Email – ¹gomathyr2009@gmail.com, ²vaidheesperiyasamy@gmail.com, ³valluramesh610@gmail.com,
⁴vpriyamurgan@gmail.com, ⁵vivithravivithra30@gmail.com

Abstract: Transgender people face several social disadvantages in the Indian cultural context and often live on the fringes of society. They are maltreated and oppressed socially. Most of the time, they are disowned by their own family due to the fact that they are transgender. The presence of adverse life circumstances predisposes them to psychological morbidity. The present study was conducted to assess the level of emotional status among the transgender in Puducherry. A descriptive study included 50 transgender people who were registered in the Sahodaran community-oriented health development (SCOHD) society in Puducherry using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. At the baseline, demographic variables were collected, and transgender people's stress levels were assessed using a perceived stress scale. Among 50 transgender people, 46% were aged between 26 and 35 years, 58% were employees, and about 22%, 22%, and 16% had education up to the primary, middle, and high school levels, respectively. Around 46% and 34% were living in rented houses and their own houses, and they found that 58% of transgender people were accepted by their family members. Regarding their emotional status, two-thirds of the transgender people (66%) had moderate stress, 28% had high perceived stress, and 6% had low stress. The above findings emphasise the importance of improving intuitional and social responses to promote the mental health of transgender people.

Key Words: Assess, Emotional Status, Transgender, Puducherry.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The term "transgender" is commonly used to describe people whose gender identification and/or gender expression do not match the sex to which they were biologically assigned. Some people may interpret this as a desire to transition from one gender to another, while others may interpret it as a rejection of the gender binary's applicability to their identity. These people are discriminated against in terms of education, employment, housing, health, and access to public amenities. ⁽¹⁾

Traditionally, transgender people had special powers that conferred religious authority on transwomen, and their blessings were sought at weddings and births. Now, the transgender community in India is highly vulnerable to mental and physical illness, in large part due to limited economic opportunities, which forces many of them to engage in sex work and beg. Studies show that transgender people have been reported to have higher rates of sexual abuse than people of other gender orientations. These challenging circumstances are probably going to have a negative psychological effect on transgender people. Transgender people are thought to be a minority group with disadvantages. These people are frequently forced to live on the periphery of society and are referred to with disparaging labels like "hires" ⁽²⁾. The societal view and acceptance of transgender people in India are very different from those in western countries.

India's 2011 census estimated that 4.8 million Indians identified as transgender. The survey provides sex-related data in a binary male/female format, tagging the rest as "others" and further assuming them to be "transgender" ⁽³⁾. According to a 2014 United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) survey of transgender people, 65 to 85 percent had experienced verbal harassment. Since transgender people experience significant psychosocial hardship and social marginalization, it is likely that they experience mental pain. About 25 to 45% reported having experienced physical abuse, and nearly 20% reported sexual abuse ⁽⁴⁾.

The stigma and discrimination against transgender people begin as early as adolescence, when they are still in their parents' custody. This transgender community is neglected by society because they are not treated like human

beings. Due to prejudice based on their gender identity or expression, transgender and other non-conforming people suffer the worst social and economic marginalization every day ⁽⁵⁾.

Research evidence suggests that experiences with discrimination have implications for mental health and that these associations may vary by social status. Perceived discrimination is consistently and positively associated with impaired mental health across a vast array of cross-sectional and longitudinal data and has been linked to multiple mental health outcomes, including depressive symptoms, psychological distress, anxiety, and psychiatric disorders ⁽⁶⁾.

A few studies have shown that despite facing many hardships in their day-to-day lives, transgender people have built resilience skills by capitalizing on assets available to them and have been able to use them to overcome the many challenges that they face. In general, the social response to transgender people in India is seen as discriminatory and prejudiced ⁽⁷⁾. These factors prompted the researchers to choose and carry out a study on the emotional status of transgender people in Puducherry.

2. MATERIALS & METHODS:

Design: A descriptive design was adapted for the present study.

Sample Size: Fifty transgender people who were registered in the Sahodaran community-oriented health development (SCOHD) society in Puducherry.

Sampling Technique: A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Data collection Procedure: Formal written permission was obtained from the SCOHD Society (Sahodaran community-oriented health development), Puducherry. Ethics approval was obtained from the Institute Ethical Committee (IEC). The researcher established a good rapport with the study participants through informal talk. The purpose of the study was explained to them to ensure their cooperation. Written and informed consent was obtained before collecting the data. Then, researchers collected the data pertaining to demographic variables and also assessed the emotional status using a perceived stress scale. The collected data was compiled for data analysis.

3. RESULTS:

The present study revealed that 46% were aged between 26 and 35 years, 58% were employed, and about 22%, 22%, and 16% had education up to primary, middle, and high school level, respectively. Around 46% were living in rented houses, and 34% were in their own houses. Half of the transgender people (58% of them) were accepted by their family members. Regarding their emotional status, two-thirds of the transgender people (66%) had moderate stress, 28% had high perceived stress, and 6% had low stress (Table 1). The mean transgender emotional status score was 27.34 4.93 (Table 2). There was no statistically significant association between the levels of emotional status and their demographical variables among transgender people.

Table 1: Distribution of emotional status among transgender people

Level of Emotional Status	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
0-13 (Low stress)	3	6.0
14-26 (Moderate stress)	33	66.0
27-40 (High perceived stress)	14	28.0

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of transgender emotional status

Emotional Status	Score
Minimum Score	18.0
Maximum Score	39.0
Median	26.50
Mean	27.34
Standard Deviation (S.D)	4.93

4. DISCUSSION:

A descriptive design was used to select the sample. A total of 50 transgender people were selected by a non-probability convenience sampling technique. The aim of the study was to assess the level of emotional status among the transgender population in Puducherry.

The first objective of the present study was to assess the level of emotional status among the transgender people:

The majority of them (66%) had moderately good emotional status, 14 (28% of them) had poor emotional status, and 3 (6% of them) had good emotional status. The supported study, conducted by Akhtar M, Bilour N (2020), revealed that 29% of transgender people had a low level of psychological resilience, while 74% displayed a low to moderate level of self-esteem. (9)

The second objective of the present study was to find an association between the level of emotional status and selected demographical variables of transgender people:

The demographic variables did not show a statistically significant association with the level of emotional status among transgender people. In contrast to Cristiano Scandurra C et al (2017) reported that family support and resilience significantly reduced everyday discrimination and mental health. (10).

5. CONCLUSION:

The study concluded that transgender people had a moderate stress level because they face several social disadvantages, which predisposes them to psychological morbidity. This result clearly indicated the need to address their problem on a large scale and also initiate social support and increase public awareness of transgender rights and acceptance on various levels to improve the mental health of transgender people. These activities help the general public understand that they are a part of our society and should not be hated, discriminated against, harassed, or treated differently. They, like us, can contribute to our society or even our nation.

REFERENCES:

1. Maithreyi Poguri, Siddharth Sarkar, Siva Nambi. A Pilot Study to Assess Emotional Distress and Quality of Life among Transgenders in South India. *Neuropsychiatry*. 2016; 6(1): 22-27.
2. Sara B. Oswalt & Alyssa M. Lederer. Beyond Depression and Suicide: The Mental Health of Transgender College Students. *Social Sciences*. 2017, February; 6(1): 1-10.
3. Naskar P, Roy S, Naskar S & Gupta I. An assessment of quality of life of transgender adults in an urban area of Burdwan district, West Bengal. *International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health*. 2018); 5(3):1089.
4. Kelleher C. Minority stress and health: Implications for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*. 2009. 22:4, 373-379.
5. Vimala P and Kumari V. A study on stigmatization and distress among the transgender individuals. *Shanlax international journals of art, science and humanities*. 2016 July; 4 (1): 63-65.
6. Majumder A, Roychaudhuri S, Chakraborty S, BhattacharjeeK. An observational study of the quality of life among gender incongruent individuals from "hijra" Community of India. *Indian J Endocr Metab* 2020;24:301-
7. Pandey M. Assessing the mental health and quality of life of transgender: The role of perceived discrimination and harassment. *Indian journal of mental health*. 2018; 5(3):324.
8. Akhtar M and Bilour N. State of Mental Health among Transgender Individuals in Pakistan: Psychological Resilience and Self-esteem. *Community Mental Health J*. 2020 May; 56 (4):626-634.
9. Scandurra C et al. Minority stress, resilience, and mental health: A study of Italian transgender people. *Journal of Social Issues*. 2017; 73 (3): 563-585.