



Navigating Adversities: A Systematic Literature Review of Challenges Faced by Transgender Individuals

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Our civilization is profoundly influenced by gender and sex differences. In every aspect of our culture, people are classified as only 'male and female'. However, gender is not only limited to males and females. Gender diversity exists in our society in the form of the LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual) community. The Transgender community is the gender variant community that is neglected and criticized just because they are not adequate in the boxes of males and females. Transgender people have been stigmatized and marginalized to a great extent. Despite their long existence throughout the world, they face infinite issues and challenges in every domain of life. Hence, this systematic literature review is an attempt to analyze and review different studies related to the transgender community, their historical evolution, and the studies related to psychosocial, educational, legal, and health issues and challenges that were also discussed and analyzed. Here, a structured approach PRISMA is adopted to search, identify,

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screen, scan, read, and analyze the different published articles and papers. In total, 60 studies were taken primarily, abstracts of 50 studies were screened, and 40 articles were selected for the screening and eligibility of full text for inclusion. From these, 8 articles were excluded as they did not fulfill the criteria for inclusion in the paper. The final number of articles selected for the SLR paper is 32. Further, the paper discusses the strengths and gaps of the review papers, and suggestions are also mentioned for the better inclusion of transgender people in mainstream society. Inadequate research on transgender issues, especially in developing and underdeveloped nations, and inadequate consideration of the intersectional barriers experienced by transgender people are two of the main gaps found. Significant findings show that the transgender population faces extensive stigmatization, and obstacles in schooling, and barely gets access to legal and medical assistance. To incorporate transgender people into mainstream society, the study highlights the necessity of inclusive legislation and societal reforms.

Keywords: LGBTQIA; mainstream; marginalized; psychological; transgender.

1. INTRODUCTION

Transgender is not a new concept rather have been existed for centuries. From Vedas, Puranas, and astrology to Hindu mythology, all show the existence of the transgender community for a long time (Sharma, 2012; Wankhede, 2012; Michelraj, 2015). Yet, this community faces the greatest marginalization and exclusion in all spheres of life. They are denied visibility and recognition in official survey data which limits their access to social security and basic benefits such as banking just because they do lie in the spectrum of male and female (Raman, 2021). Even in the 21st century, the transgender community is facing numerous issues and challenges at every stage of life. They are living a life of marginalization due to which they are in a constant fight to live a life in a dignified manner so that they can access all the rights and can live a life with utmost dignity (Gayathri & Karthikeyan, 2016; Hawke et al., 2021).

This is a comprehensive systematic literature review that aims at identifying well-documented sources from published work and the articles used in the review discuss the following objectives focusing on the transgender-

1. Historical background of the transgender community
2. Issues and challenges faced by transgender
 - i) Psychosocial issues
 - ii) Educational issues and challenges
 - iii) Legal issues and challenges
 - iv) Health issues and challenges

This review paper has been conducted to analyze the various published papers and documents to explore the various issues and

challenges faced by the transgender community. Most of the studies that are reviewed adopted qualitative methodology or are theoretical papers. The respondents of these studies are the transgender themselves who are known by different names in different regions. The review covers the studies at two levels- Global and National levels (Kumar, 2015). The historical background of the transgender and the different issues and challenges faced by the transgender are the focal points of the studies reviewed in this paper. The inclusion of transgender can also be seen in the studies yet there are certain gaps and limitations. This paper concludes with suggestions for the better inclusion of transgender in different areas of life.

2. METHODOLOGY FOR THE SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

The systematic literature review is conducted using the proper methodology and each method has several steps to follow as it helps the researcher to develop a strong background related to his potential area and also gain an insight into the various gaps and limitations which will ask for further future researches.

In this systematic literature review paper, a structured approach PRISMA is adopted to search, identify, screen, scan, read, and analyze the different published articles, papers, and documents related to the historical background of the transgender and the issues faced by them.

3. SEARCH STRATEGY

To have the number of published theoretical papers and articles to write a systematic literature review, the samples were searched

using the electronic databases of Mendeley, Eric, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Google search, and Sage open access to get the pool of papers written and studies done on the transgender people and their community. The relevant keywords have been searched in the papers like- Transgender, historical evolution of transgender, and the combination of keywords like issue and challenges, health issues, educational issues, and social and psychological issues. The number of articles was downloaded and added to the library of the Mendeley reference manager application to access them and scan them later more quickly and effectively.

3.1 Inclusion Criteria

The articles related to the historical evolution of transgender people and the issues and challenges they face transgender-specific psychosocial, educational, legal, and health issues published in the English Language have been included. To be included in this SLR paper, studies need to focus on the issues faced by transgender only.

3.2 Exclusion Criteria

When the transgender term was searched, papers and studies related to the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community were also identified but they were excluded. Studies were also identified on the attitude of the people towards the transgender were also excluded. Studies written before the year 2000 were also

excluded from this systematic literature review paper.

4. SCREENING AND STUDIES SELECTION

To select the studies for this paper, first, the titles of the articles were screened according to their relevance based on the aforementioned inclusion criteria. After the title, the abstract of the articles was scanned to validate the inclusion criteria for the paper and if the decision to include the article could not be made by the abstract scanning only, the whole article was scanned and reviewed for inclusion. In total 60 studies were taken and abstracts of 50 studies were screened and 40 articles were selected for the screening and eligibility of full text for inclusion. From these, 8 articles were excluded as they did not fulfill the criteria for inclusion in the paper. The final number of articles selected for the paper is 32. This whole process is summarized with the help of a preferred reporting item for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram of article selection (see Fig. 1).

4.1 Characteristics of the Studies Included

32 studies in all were selected for this systematic literature review paper. Table 2 reports the different journals in which these studies are published. International and National journals both contributed their articles on the transgender

Table 1. Mapping of the reviews selected for the SLR

Author(s)	Year	Focus	Country/Perspective	Methodology
Aziz & Azhar	2019	Social and legal issues	Bangladesh	Qualitative
Balu	2020	Educational issues	India	Conceptual
Biswas & Soora	2021	Educational issues	India	Conceptual
Chatterjee	2018	Historical background and psychosocial, legal, and educational issues	India	Conceptual
Chandra	2017	Psychosocial, legal, and educational issues	India	Conceptual
Das	2019	Educational issues	India	Conceptual
Konduru& Hangsing	2018	Psychosocial issues	India	Conceptual
Haseena	2018	Social, legal, and health issues	India	Conceptual
Hotchandani	2017	Psycho-social, legal & educational issues	India	Conceptual
Kamali, Rajam, et.al	2021	Educational issues	India	Conceptual

Author(s)	Year	Focus	Country/Perspective	Methodology
Michelraj	2015	Historical background	India	Conceptual
Mittra	2017	Historical background, Educational, and legal issues	India	Conceptual
Mishra & Singh	2018	Educational issues	India	Conceptual
Nagrajan& Parthasarathy	2016	Historical background& psychosocial, legal & educational issues	India	Qualitative
Nagaraj & Shinu	2015	Social, educational & Health issues	India	Conceptual
Nishada	2020	Psychosocial issues	India	Qualitative
Parashar	2017	Legal issues	India	Conceptual
Pandya & Redcay	2020	Health issues	India	Conceptual
Pradeep	2021	Psychosocial and health issues	India	Conceptual
Raj	2017	Educational issues	India	Document Analysis
Rajdev	2020	Educational issues	India	Conceptual
Rajkumar	2016	Educational & Legal issues	India	Conceptual
Sharma	2012	Historical background & legal issues	India	Conceptual
Sawant	2017	Historical background & Educational issues	India	Conceptual
Saxena	2021	Legal issues	India	Conceptual
Balabantaray& Singh	2020	Educational issues	India	Document Analysis
Subbiah & Madasamy	2017	Social and legal issues	India	Qualitative
Sukey	2018	Legal issues	India	Conceptual
Tabassum & Jamil	2014	Educational issues	Pakistan	Qualitative
Wankhede	2012	Historical background & Social and legal issues	India	Conceptual
Yashika& Godara	2020	Legal issues	India	Conceptual
Yadav & Patni	2019	Historical background	India	Conceptual

community about their historical background, various issues and challenges, exclusion and inclusion, and other dimensions as well. There is a strong presence of the social sciences, humanities, and Educational research journals which contributed 11 articles, while other articles were selected from the journals of scientific research and development, social work, creative research thoughts, law management, and so on.

Further, Fig. 2 represents the articles reviewed over some time in this paper. Studies published from the year 2011 to 2021 were studied thoroughly, read and analyzed, and then

selected and included in this paper. No articles were derived from the years 2011 and 2013 whereas the maximum number of articles reviewed was from the year 2017 (7). Fig.3 represents the number of articles dealing with each topic according to the requirement of the paper. The majority of the articles focused on the educational issues faced by the transgender (17) followed by the articles on the legal issue (15). 8 studies focused on the historical background of the transgender and the other 8 studies discussed the psychosocial issues. 4 studies highlighted the health issues and challenges faced by the transgender community.

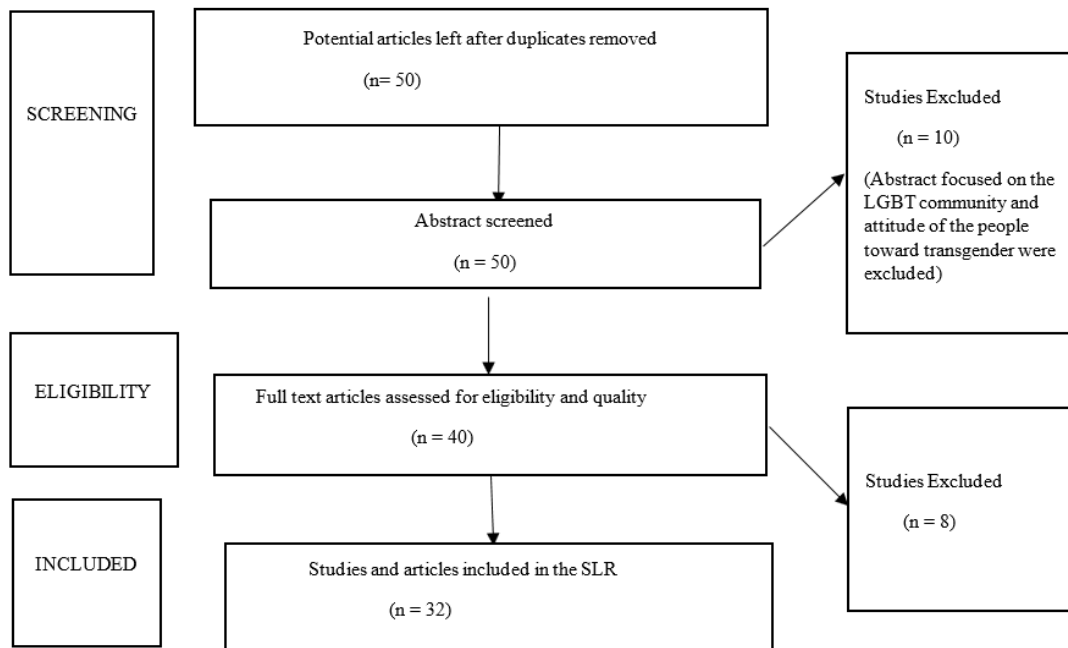


Fig. 1. (PRISMA) flow diagram of article selection

Table 2. Number of Articles included in the SLR per journal

Publication	Number of articles
International Journal of Research in Economics & Social Sciences	2
Global Journal for Research Analysis	1
International Journal of Trends in Scientific Research & Development	1
Journal of Social Work Education and Practice	1
Annals of Indian Psychiatry	1
International Research Journal of Human Resources & Social Sciences	1
Journal of Public Affairs	1
International Journal of Social Sciences and Management	1
American Research Institute for Policy Development	1
Indian Streams Research Journal	1
International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences	1
Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health	1
International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management	1
International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts	1
Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities	1
ILI Law Review	1
International Journal of Law Management & Humanities	2
International Journal of Research Culture Society	1
Journal of Emerging Technologies & Innovative Research	1
Asia Pacific Journal of Research	1
International Journal of Educational Research Studies	1
International Journal of Humanities & Social Science	1
Journal of Engineering Sciences	1
Asian Review of Social Sciences	1
Indian Review of Advanced Legal Research	1
Others	5

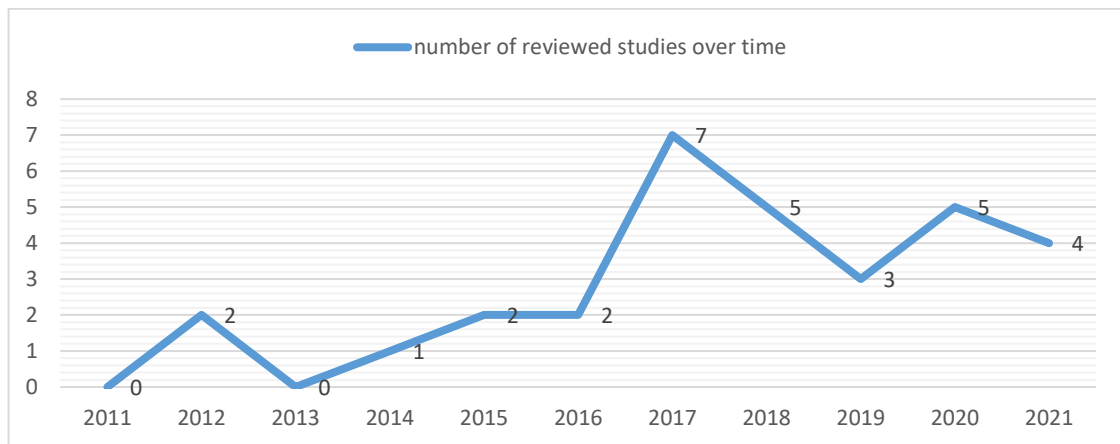


Fig. 2. Reviewed articles over a period of time

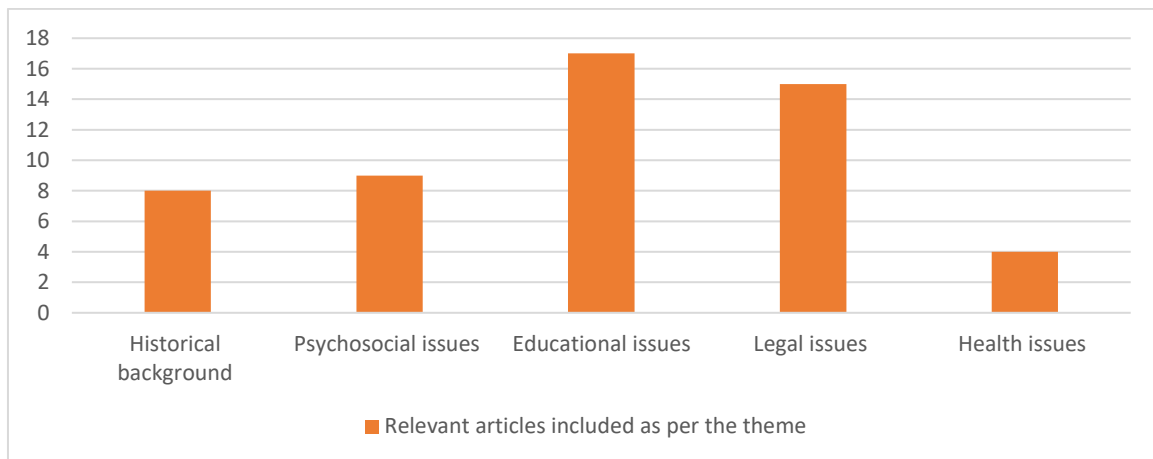


Fig. 3. Articles selected as per the topic

4.2 Data Analysis

Historical background of transgender: The transgender community has a long history and has existed for centuries. The traces of their existence can be found in the Vedas, Puranas, astronomy as well as in Hindu mythology. Transgender persons deviate from the notion of what men and women typically are because their gender identities do not correspond to their biological sex. Their behavior and gender expressions do not adhere to the stereotypical gender norms (Mittra, 2017; Subbiah & Madasamy, 2017). The transgender community is part of the LGBTQIA community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) and comprises Hijras, eunuchs, Kothis, Aravanis, Jogappas, Shiv-Shaktis, etc. (Mittra, 2017; Yadav & Patni 2019). Wankhede (2012) discussed the origin of the terminology, the term 'androgynous' was first used in France in the early 14th century, literally meaning "Male and Female

in one". Around the middle of the 17th century, the word continued to evolve into androgynous, which offered a much more precise description of "Uniting the physical traits of both the sexes at once male and female" (Wankhede, 2012). Hence, Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe the third gender. The texts of India's three ancient religious traditions - Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism—even contain references to the third gender. Vedic culture also depicts the presence of the transgender community as it is perceived as three sexes. According to one's inclination, or Prakriti, persons have a position in one of the three distinct classes, according to the Vedic literature from 1500 BC to 500 BC. These are tritiya-prakriti, pums-prakriti (man nature), and stri-prakriti (female nature) (third nature). The third sexual orientation, attributed to as 'napunsak' and the 'Tritiya Prakriti', was discussed in various Hindu folk tales' inscriptions as well as in Vedic and Puranic literature (Sharma, 2012; Michelraj,

2015; Chatterjee, 2018). In the Puranas, there are likewise references to the three sorts of devas of music and dance: Apsaras (female), Gandharvas (male), and kinnars (neuter) (Michelraj, 2015).

The historical evolution of transgender in India can be mirrored at different times. During the Mughal times, the position of the transgender was superior and crucial. They were placed in high positions like political advisors, counselors, administrators, etc, and they were not considered as other tribes or distinct tribes in the Mughal era rather they played significant roles in the kingly palaces (Sawant, 2017). They were considered intelligent and clever during this period and also king showed full faith in them and considered them trustworthy and loyal they had the right of free access to all the spaces and all the people of the kingdom. Later on, at the beginning of the colonial / British period, Hijras received various perks and incentives like property, food privileges, and monetary payment from agricultural households. However, the position of transgender people radically transformed later in the 19th century. The Hijra population was abruptly made a criminal class by the British colonial government, which also denied them access to fundamental civil rights and treated them like distinct tribes or castes living in a distant region of India. The Criminal Tribes Act of 1875 designated all Hijras as a tribe that participated in the kidnapping, beheading, and dressing as women to entertain in social places. It set a maximum sentence of two years in prison, a penalty, or perhaps both (Michelraj, 2015; Nagarajan & Parthasarathy, 2016).

Yadav and Patni (2019) highlighted the presence of transgender in Hindu mythology and in the holy scriptures like Ramayana and Mahabharata. In the Mahabharata, Pandavas use Shikhandi to take revenge on the Bhishma pita maha. Shikhandi was originally born as a girl whose name was 'Shikhandini' to Drupada who was the Panchal Naresh. In the previous life, Shikhandi was the woman named Amba, who was humiliated and rejected by Bhishma Pitamaha, and then she took rebirth as Shikhandi to take revenge and be the cause of Bhishma's death. During the Kurukshetra war, Bhishma pita maha took the oath that he would not kill any female or eunuch, and then during the war, Shikhandi hid behind the Arjuna and appeared in front of the Bhishma and Bhishma refused to fight with a Eunuch which becomes the reason of his death (Yadav & Patni, 2019). In the Ramayana, when

Lord Rama was about to leave the Ayodhya for the exile of 14 years, all the natives started to follow them, then he asked males and females to go back but Hijras still followed them as they were not bound to follow this instruction. Their commitment astonished Lord Rama, who gave them the authority to bless people during special ceremonies like marriage and childbirth. "Lord Shiva is often known as 'Ardhanarishwar' which means the Lord whose half is a female. Aradhanarishwar's right side is male and the left side is female which shows that there is Shiva and there is Shakti in every individual and both are incomplete without each other" (Sharma, 2012; Michelraj, 2015). Hindu mythology is full of evidence that proves the being of the transgender community for centuries.

Psychosocial issues and challenges: The transgender community experiences marginalization and discrimination in different ways throughout their life. Konduru and Hangsing (2018) highlighted that the stigma and prejudices associated with the community became the reason for their exclusion from all the spheres of life social, political, economic exclusion, and so on. The primary exclusion and negligence came from their family only. The non-acceptance attitude and behavior of parents, siblings, and other family members create a state of restlessness among them. They face physical and verbal abuse in their family as soon as their identity is revealed in front of them (Konduru & Hangsing, 2018; Chatterjee, 2018). They were considered curses and often seen as a distinct person in the family who brought shame and disgust into the family. Most of the time they were forced to leave their homes or at other times leave their native homes because the torture they faced in their family became unbearable and severely impacted their mental state as such reactions and treatment made them question their self-esteem and self-worth. Subbiah and Madasamy (2017) discussed that not only in the family but at the societal level also, they again experience oppression in the form of racism, physical and sexual abuse, poverty, transphobia, negative comments from people, etc. and all these factors negatively impact their psychological state of mind. Transgender people are severely discriminated against while entering public places like supermarkets, cafes, restaurants, and movie theatres. They also frequently have a severe issue with access to public restrooms. Since there is no availability of washrooms for gender-variant people, they are left with no choice and

they have to use male restrooms, where they risk sexual assault and harassment (Nagarajan & Parthasarathy, 2016). This depicts the social exclusion of the transgender community which ultimately leads to their mental stress and psychological issues. This mental stress results in the form of negative feelings like stress, depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies, (Haseena, 2018). Nishada (2020) discussed the various social and psychological issues which include- socially selecting a new name or nickname to use, and requesting the use of new pronouns; for instance, a trans man can request to be addressed as he rather than she, or a genderqueer or non-binary individual might request to be addressed as they, according to gender, personal relationships have various dynamics, modifying items and attire to better reflect gender identification, utilizing novel grooming or cosmetics methods, changing the way one's hair is fashioned, adopting behaviors that are appropriate for the new gender role, assuming a new sexual role or engaging in new sexual behaviors, particularly if the sex organs of the body have altered, A person's views about gender, in general, may evolve, which may have an impact on their ideological, philosophic, and/or religious convictions (Nishada, 2020). Nishada 2020 conducted a survey study on 10 transgender people and found out that almost all the transgender participants felt excluded and isolated in their family, society, workspace, and schools and were diagnosed with depression and anxiety during the transition phase. "The psychological distress caused by low self-esteem, emotional fatigue, gender dysphoria, bullying, and victimization, as well as concerns regarding physical conditions such as sexually transmitted diseases, are potential causes of suicidal behavior" (Pandya & Redcay, 2020).

Educational issues and challenges: Education is essential and a significant component of the development of any country. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child, 1989 (UNCRC) Article 29 stated that "The education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential". The Constitution of India also declared Education as a fundamental right of every citizen of the country under Article 21A and provides free and compulsory education to every child between the age of 6 years to 14 years (Rajkumar, 2015; Sawant, 2017). Right to Education Act emphasized that no child will be left behind or expelled until the completion of his/her

elementary education. "Now, transgender people will study in schools and colleges with all facilities approving their admission under the category of 'disadvantaged group' defined by the Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE). Transgender persons are eligible for twenty-five percent reservation under the economically weaker section (EWS) and disadvantaged students' category for admission" (Rajkumar, 2015; Balu, 2020 Biswas & Soora, 2021). Even after this provision, transgender people found it extremely difficult to get admission to schools and colleges, and even if they somehow managed to get admission into the schools and colleges, they face tremendous issues in the educational institutions.

- **Bullying in school-** LGBT students are not treated properly in the schools. They get bullied and their peers use disrespectful names and labels to address them (Mittra, 2017; Das, 2019). They face hatred and physical and verbal abuse in the form of name-calling, isolation, getting negative comments, etc. School bullying severely impacts the mental health of LGBTI children and leads to underachievement, low self-esteem, and ultimately their drop out of the school system which greatly impacts their education and hence leaves them with fewer or no job opportunities (Raj, 2017; Hotchandani, 2017).
- **Negligence and Exclusion in School-** Mishra and Singh (2018) stated that "Abandonment leads to the marginalization and exclusion of transgender" (Mishra & Singh, 2018). Transgender feel neglected and excluded in the school as their peers and even the teachers lack sensitive attitudes and training on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender roles. They do not get equal opportunities like other children in the classroom as they get sidelined by their teachers and peers. Gender-variant children feel alienated as they have no availability and access to gender-neutral bathrooms and even many activities in the school are divided by gender. (Sawant, 2017; Biswas & Soora 2021).
- **Lack of visibility and recognition-** The concept of heteronormativity is established through textbooks and curricula. But transgender people lack visibility in the school textbooks and curriculum. Even the NCERT textbooks and curriculum do not contain any chapter or even a single

section that represent the transgender community and this makes the whole curriculum alienate to the transgender children which became the reason for their fewer literacy rate (Raj, 2017). There is a need for content and pedagogic modifications which include gender variant children to make the children aware of different genders and sexualities (Raj, 2017; Balbantaray & Singh 2017; Biswas & Soora; 2021).

- **Lack of sensitive attitude among teachers and peers-** Tabassum and Jamil (2014) highlighted that the most injustice situation in the school is the lack of sensitive attitude among teachers and peers towards transgender children. They just don't bother about their studies and transgender children often get discriminated against in the classroom by their teachers and peers.

A narrative review conducted by Sharek, Huntley-Moore, and McCann (2018) highlights the experiences of families with transgender youth which are greatly impacted by education, and mental health professionals are essential in offering assistance. Five major themes emerged from a narrative evaluation of 31 papers, which were then combined into a five-stage model: (i) learning that a family member is transgender, (ii) family reactions, (iii) obtaining knowledge and education, (iv) personal effects, and (v) moving towards a more comprehensive understanding of society. The results emphasize how crucial education is for building resilience and acceptance in families. To improve family and social understanding, mental health professionals may assist families by offering specialized education, improving resource access, and encouraging inclusive discourse (Sharek et al., 2018).

Legal issues and challenges: The Constitution of India provides several fundamental, legal, and civil rights to each and every individual of the country, yet, transgender lack even the basic rights like the right to equality, prohibits discrimination on any basis, right to freedom, right to education, etc., as they are continuously being ignored and shunned by our policymakers and administrators and society (Sharma, 2012; Parashar, 2017; Hotchandani, 2017). The continues affirms equality but the moot question is whether it is being applied at the ground level to all the people (Sathasivam, 2011). Transgender persons did not even possess the

right to vote before 1994. In 1994, they got voting rights but several transgender didn't get the voting cards because of their sexual orientation as there was no column as the third gender and they got up in the question of male or female. In 2009, for the first time, Indian Election Commission allowed transgender persons to choose their gender as 'others' on ballot forms (Nagarajan & Parthasarthy, 2016; Rajkumar, 2016; Chandra, 2017). The transgender community was not even part of the census of India in the separate column as per their identity. They were either added to the male or the female category. Later in 2011, for the very first time in the 2011 census, they were added to the column named Other along with male and female. (Raj, 2017; Chatterjee, 2018). However the term 'Other' is contradicting in itself and was criticized by many educationists and transgender rights activists. As supported by Rajkumar (2016), this itself shows that transgender persons are not part of society and again face exclusion and marginalization from the so-called mainstream society by being labeled as others. Right to identity is the basic right of every citizen, yet transgender people lack recognition and fought for it for so long as lack of legal recognition has important consequences in accessing basic amenities of life like getting government rations (food subsidy) shop cards, passport, and bank account, etc. (Nagarajan & Parthasarthy, 2016). But later after a lot of struggle and challenges, the Supreme Court of India passed the landmark judgment in April, 2014 and gave recognition to the transgender as 'Third Gender' in the National Legal Service Authority (NALSA) v/s Union of India case stating that one's sexual orientation is the integral part of one's personality, dignity, and freedom (Hotchandani, 2017; Sawant, 2017; Sukey, 2018). Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan who wrote and pronounced the ruling stated that "Recognition of Transgender as a third gender is not a social or medical issue but a human rights issue". This judgment was very important and significant for transgender persons as it provided them the legal recognition and this became the base of their identification in society. Further, the ruling stated and highlighted the various fundamental rights in the favor of the judgment.

- ❖ All people have the right to equal protection under the law under Article 14, which extends to all areas of life, including work, health care, education, and civil rights.
- ❖ Discrimination based on race, caste, color,

or gender identity is forbidden by Article 15 of the Constitution.

- ❖ The state is obliged to take affirmative action to advance “socially and educationally backward classes” and this includes transgender people, who have faced centuries of injustice (Article 15(4)).
- ❖ The Court ruled that, subject to the limitations set outlined in Article 19(2) of the Constitution, “no restriction may be put on one’s personal appearance or choice of clothes”. This protection extends to the gender expression referred to in Article 19(1)(a) (Yashika & Godara, 2020).
- ❖ Article 21 covers the freedom to choose one’s gender identity, which is necessary for living in dignity. The court ruled in favor of transgender people while recognizing them as the third gender, citing all these constitutional provisions. (Parashar, 2017; Sukey, 2018)

The judgment Supreme Court got a lot of praise from many transgender rights activists, yet the term Third Gender was not accepted by all the researchers, educationists, and activists. Rajkumar (2016) reviewed and analyzed this conclusion and claimed that the phrase ‘Third Gender’ is controversial in and of itself. It views sexuality as a spiral staircase framework, with the LGBTQ community on the bottom rung. He stated that “even while the ruling gives transgender people legal rights, they are still viewed as a minority in society and are not treated equally to the community at large” (Rajkumar, 2016).

Health issues and challenges: Transgender people are prone to health issues and diseases. They lack medical facilities and treatment and they do not get admitted to the hospitals on time due to several reasons like financial issues, lack of awareness, lack of accessibility, etc. They are prone to sexual health issues due to the lack of awareness of HIV AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and hence, are severely affected by them. Pradeep (2021) discussed that at reproductive age, transgender people are 13 times more likely to contract HIV. According to research conducted in Mumbai, there is a very high incidence of syphilis among Hijras (57 percent), as well as HIV Serop (68 percent). According to research done in South India, transgender has high a frequency of syphilis (13.6 percent) and HIV (18.1 percent). According to a study done in Chennai, the majority of the Aravanis population have sexually transmitted

infections and HIV (Pradeep, 2021). They even face the issue of homelessness and lack of economic security due to which they often put themselves into risky habits of taking drugs, begging on roads, unprotected sex, etc. which leads to fatal health issues and life-threatening diseases (Chatterjee, 2018; Pradeep, 2021). Pandya and Redacy (2020) highlighted the various problems that affect transgender people, including “internalized transphobia, humiliation, stress, exposure, coming out, adapting to social pressure to conform in, fear of relations or relationship loss, and personality restrictions on performance and goals. These psychological aspects affect how they perceive danger and consequently how they behave while seeking out healthcare facilities” (Pandya & Redcay, 2020). Hence, due to the shame, guilt, and fear of being exposed, transgender people restricted themselves to access healthcare services which leads to their deteriorating health. Other reasons are the stigma and discrimination encountered by transgender people which become the barrier to them accessing healthcare facilities. Transgender people frequently experience discrimination in the medical community, as well as in hospitals across the country. The deliberate use of male pronouns when addressing transgender women and female pronouns when addressing transgender men, admission of patients into wards that do not correspond to their gender identity, verbal abuse by healthcare workers and other patients, rough treatment and callousness by staff, and medical practitioners who are inexperienced in the needs and medical care of transgender people (Konduru & Hangsing, 2018; Pandya & Redcay, 2020). Transgender people are hesitant to seek out health treatments due to a lack of anonymity and security, the hostile and unwelcoming attitudes of health workers, and behavioral ineptitude while engaging with them. Further, a study conducted in 2021 to assess the post covid 19 effect shows that youth who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming were at risk during the COVID-19 epidemic and dealt with significant mental health issues and vulnerabilities, high levels of service interruption, and a lack of family support (Hawkey, et al., 2021).

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the scoping reviews in this paper highlighted the historical background of the transgender community. It views the evolution of the transgender community in the Indian context about how their positions were superior in the

Mughal period and they were considered the confidant of the kings and rulers. Even at the beginning of the colonial era, they were entitled to incentives and other benefits, but later in the 19th century, their positions get affected and they started to be identified as criminals and a distinct tribe. They were suddenly denied basic fundamental and civil rights (Michelraj, 2015; Sawant, 2017). Even in contemporary times, they lack basic facilities and are still fighting and struggling for their inclusion in the different spheres of life. Various articles and even Hindu mythology have shown the presence and existence of transgender from a long time. Hindu epics have several instances of deities, divinities, and avatars transforming their identity or appearing as other genders at various times.

They face incalculable issues which are discussed in this paper with the help of different articles and studies and the gap is identified that the maximum number of studies and articles which are reviewed are conceptual or thematic based in nature. Very fewer research articles were identified. The issues like psychosocial issues, educational issues, legal issues, and health issues have been incorporated into this review paper. The transgender community encountered marginalization, harassment, abuse, and whatnot on daily basis. They are socially excluded and face oppression in multiple forms which make way for psychological distress. Rejections from family and loved ones, childhood experiences of sexual and verbal abuse, homophobic and transphobic comments by peers, friends, and society, harassment and physical abuse by family members, neighbors, and relatives, and bullying and exclusion faced at educational institutions are some of the reasons of their psychosocial issues and challenges which many times leads to negative feelings like depression, anxiety, frustration, suicidal attempts, etc (Chatterjee, 2018).

The transgender community seriously lags in the human development index majorly in the field of education. In India, there are about 4.9 lakh transgender people, according to the 2011 Census. Census data also demonstrates the low literacy rates in this society; just 46% of transgender people are literate, compared to 74% of the entire populace. This shows their absence in schools and educational institutions (Rajkumar, 2016; Sawant, 2017). Transgender people lack family support as the primary denial they face comes from their family only due to which they don't have financial support and have

to leave their education. Even their family members don't support them and ask them to stop going to school and roam around in the neighborhood as they will bring disgrace to the family. In the schools, they face issues like exclusion, harassment, discrimination, violence abuse and negligence from peers, friends, and teachers, the insensitive attitude of teachers and peers, lack of facilities like gender-neutral washrooms, the stigma associated with their community, etc. Due to these issues and challenges, trans children become drop-outs are left with fewer job opportunities, and are also not able to participate in social, cultural, economic, and political activities.

Though transgender people are legally recognized now as the Third Gender after the Supreme Court's historic judgment in 2014, they still lack basic legal and fundamental rights. The Constitution of India provides the fundamental Right of equality, prohibits discrimination on any grounds, and the Right to education and political and civil rights to every member of society, yet, the third gender continues to be shunned by society (Viji, 2015). They lack bathroom rights, the right to equality, the right to freedom, and even the right to education which is the basic right available to all. Education is seen as a luxury to them (Rajdev, 2020). Due to this, they don't get enough financial security and end up earning money as begging and sex workers. They don't have the proper knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS and HIV and the protected sex because of which this section is more prone to STDs and other hazardous diseases. The insensitive attitude of hospital staff, doctors, and other patients, and the discernment, harassment, and banishment they face are the barriers to transgender people accessing healthcare facilities.

6. SUGGESTIONS

The transgender community always lies at the fringes of society and it is the need of an hour to include them in mainstream society. Acceptance, awareness, and change of attitude among the people of the society is the urgent requirement to wipe out the associated stigma and discrimination that is closely rooted within the transgender community. Vijetha, Ravindra, and Yogeesh (2024) conducted an experimental study with 120 transgender participants which shows a way to evaluate how an awareness program affected transgender people's knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP). The

findings of the study reflects that how awareness program have the transformative potential in improving the knowledge and inclusivity of society (Vijetha et al., 2024).

Several suggestions for the better inclusion of the transgender are-

- ✓ **Equal access to opportunities-** Since the trans community is the most neglected and ignored community in society, hence they lack equal opportunities in every area. Providing equal access to education, housing, and employment opportunities is necessary for the inclusion of transgender people and to ensure that trans individuals are treated as equal human beings.
- ✓ **Awareness about the transgender community-** People are not aware of the transgender community, their issues, and their challenges. Hence, there is a need to organize awareness programs about transgender and gender-variant people so that students, as well as other people, get aware that there are not only male and female when we talk about gender. There are other genders also and develop a sensitive attitude toward them.
- ✓ **Access to healthcare services-** Healthcare services must be provided in a non-stigmatizing, non-discriminatory, and educated setting only then trans people's right to health can be guaranteed. Working to educate the healthcare industry on gender identity and expression is necessary for this, as is having zero tolerance for actions that exclude trans individuals.
- ✓ **Inclusion through vocational/ Skill development training** – Curriculum related to Art and skill-based should be introduced in the schools. “Teachers should equip transgender with skills training and career development to help them become independent and self-reliant” (Biswas & Soora, 2021). Even the NGOs like Sahodari Foundation also organize projects in which they gauge the creativity of transgender people through artwork and then present their artwork in an exhibition and earn money which makes them self-reliant.
- ✓ **Recognition and Visibility-** Transgender people lack recognition and visibility in the policies, textbooks, and curriculum framework. Due to this, they feel alienated in the classroom as they couldn't relate to

the syllabus. Hence, there is a need to include transgender people in the textbooks so they feel connected with the syllabus and even the other students become aware of this community. There is a need for incorporating a comprehensive sex-education program in school as well as in college to educate students at a ground level so that transgender don't face the issues and challenges in educational institutions.

- ✓ **Training of teachers-** The future generation is shaped and made by teachers. It is crucial to educate and sensitize teachers to the needs of transgender students in their classes. They should be knowledgeable on how to spot a transgender student in the classroom, as well as what issues he or she could encounter and how to handle them. All students should be treated equally by teachers, regardless of differences. Gender sensitization should be emphasized in pre-service and in-service teacher education.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings point to important areas for the creation of policies and practical initiatives to enhance the quality of life for transgender people and their families. To promote early understanding and awareness among students and educators, education policy should place a high priority on including gender diversity in school curricula. Families should be educated about transgender identities through comprehensive educational programs that dispel stigma and address common misconceptions. To guarantee wide accessibility, these programs can be carried out via community centers, schools, and online platforms.

To ensure that mental health professionals are prepared to treat transgender people and their families with empathy and cultural competence, healthcare institutions must embrace a family-centered approach. In order to meet the specific requirements of transgender people and their families, this entails developing resources like peer support groups, counseling services, and centralized information hubs. By taking these steps, families will be better equipped to handle the social and emotional challenges that come with gender identification.

Policies that promote accommodations that help families through difficult times, including medical transitions or legal proceedings, should also address workplace inclusion. Programs for community outreach are equally important for establishing safe places for peer support and conversation, enabling families to exchange experiences and gain knowledge from one another.

Lastly, laws need to be reinforced to give clear safeguards against discrimination in the workplace, healthcare system, and educational system. Such legislation need to guarantee fair access to opportunities and resources, allowing transgender people to prosper. Society may foster a more welcoming atmosphere that values and supports transgender people and their families by incorporating these all-encompassing policies.

8. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the literature review it is clear that transgender is not a new concept rather they have existed for centuries. They are known by different names as per the geographical variations like Hijras, Aravanis, Kothis, Shiv-shakti, jogtas, or jogappa, etc. Even in the 21st century, after so many provisions, the life of transgender people is a continuous conflict as there is no acceptance in society and they are being ostracized and face uncountable issues and challenges in almost every realm of life. They experience extreme social exclusion which adversely affects their psychological state and becomes the reason for their serious health and mental issues. Every individual is unique and is an integral part of society. Hence, it is important to include transgender and gender-variant people in mainstream society by providing them equal rights and equal opportunities without any discrimination and biases. There is an immediate need to understand that every individual has the right to be what they want to be and how they want to be dressed up. People need to change their attitudes and be more accepting of transgender people. The required changes need to be reflected in the laws and policies, especially regarding the education of transgender people by including them in the educational policies and implementing them at the ground level. The attitude of teachers, health care providers, administrators, and government servants needs to be sensitized enough towards transgender people.

DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Intersectionality:** To comprehend the variety of experiences within the transgender population, investigate how gender identity intersects with elements including caste, religion, and socioeconomic background.
- **Community-Centered Approaches:** To guarantee that the studies accurately reflect the needs and viewpoints of transgender people, create participatory research with them as partners.
- **Policy Impact Analysis:** Examine how well laws and government regulations may enhance the social, educational, and health outcomes of transgender people.
- **Mental Health Focus:** Delve deeper into mental health challenges specific to transgender individuals, with emphasis on stigma, social isolation, and coping mechanisms.
- **Cultural Understanding:** Study the role of cultural norms and practices in shaping attitudes toward the transgender community across different regions.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

I declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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