

English Press Coverage on Transgender Persons in Pakistan

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Abstract

There is a sufficient number of transgender persons in Pakistan. However, they comparatively enjoy lesser respect in the society and get the victim of injustice and discrimination, even though they play a significant role in our society like creating merriment in marriage and birthday parties and celebrations. Even during the general election in 2018, they have been given the right of franchise. Thus, media has a role in the dissemination of awareness about the status and issues of transgender people. So this study examines and compares the press coverage of Daily DAWN and Daily Express Tribune newspaper given to the transgender people in Pakistan. For that purpose, quantitative content analysis was employed as a research technique. Thus the general trends of reporting regarding transgender people could be identified, which include the amount of news frequency, space in columns, and pictorial presentation of the transgender people-related news and issues. In this way, the first six months of the year 2018 of the sampled, both newspapers were analyzed, and a total of 91 content items were collected for assessment.

Keywords: Transgender, media coverage, Pakistan

1. Introduction

According to the Transgender Persons Protection of Rights Act (2018) report, there are around 500,000 transgender persons in Pakistan, inclusive of lesbian, gay, and bisexual. Further, the report says that in Pakistan, transgender persons enjoy lesser respect due to the conservative mindset. While these people face injustice, victimization, and sexual harassment in their daily life; however, there is not sufficient initiative to protect them. Added their families, as in our society, reject most of the transgender persons, they are considered as a sign of shame. However, in our culture transgender persons render a significant role in different festivals particularly in marriage ceremonies, birthday parties, and other various merriment events. In this way, during the general election 2018, transgender communities in Pakistan wrote a new history by casting their votes to choose political representatives of the country. Thus, these scholars (Lombardi et al., 2002;



Westbrook, Schilt, 2014) have reviewed past studies and mainly focuses on key 22 studies in the field. These studies have inspected clearly how transgenders experience discrimination and infer the true meaning of discrimination at the workplace. Besides, discrimination in previous studies has demonstrated an urge to comprehend discrimination outside the workplace.

Transgender similar to other people are involved in various social evils like drug, smoking, gambling, and attempts suicide (Miller & Grollman, 2015). Miller & Grollman, 2015 maintain that the findings of this study highlighted how stigma visibility, gender nonconformity, in this case, plays a role in minority stress processes. This study draws on Miller and Grollman's research to help justify the inclusion of gender nonconformity and other people's perceptions of one's gender identity to my analysis to further understand how stigma visibility can heighten discrimination for trans people.

Media can play an essential role in the development and awareness regarding transgender persons and also can highlight their issues and problems where the government can solve their issues on a priority basis (Ghazali et al., 2011) allowing transgender people "to generate a new awareness of their embodied-selves and helping them to either construct or consolidate their identity."

According to Weir (Weir, 2016), transgender is an umbrella term that is used to refer to several different groups of people who do not feel that their internal gender matches their biological sex. Transgender persons may experience a different type of violence in their lives due to their gender identity, like many sensitive issues, including gender discrimination, violence, mental health concern, safety, transgender rights issues, education, and government jobs. Most transgenders enjoy their lives together. For example, it depends on transgender, either they like to a male or female transgender. They are the persons whose personal identity is not confirmed.

Further, it was shown that most of the families of the Hijra exclude them from their homes because they understand that society will not accept them in their culture and feel disgraced (Abdullah et al., 2012). In this way, most of the Hijra,s feel isolated and avoid mingling with society. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2007) in Article 27 indicated that everyone has an equal right to celebrate independent life and involve in their cultural activities. Meanwhile, society did not accept them yet. Most of the Hijra,s have very little chance to get an education due to some societal restrictions. Hijras are facing many problems and issues in society and cannot earn money due to a lack of education; therefore, they do not get any proper source of employment. However, though it was mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2007) in Article 23 that everyone has a right to do work without any discrimination and sexual identification. People humiliate Hijra,s in many places in Pakistan; however, most of the accidents did not report on the media or investigated by police. In Pakistan, it is a prevalent practice where people make fun and degrade Hijra,s everywhere and violate their rights. Moreover, it was showed that there are many hospitals, but most of the hospitals did not provide medical facilities to transgender though every citizen has their

equal right to get health and education facilities in the country; most of the people deprive transgender of such facilities.

In the world, every individual has an equal right to live in society. Either he/she is male or female or transgender and can enjoy his life without any fear. There is a different perspective of Pakistani society where they understand that there is only males and females are human, and other sex has not no right to live in society. However, there is another human and sex life in the world, which is transgender or third sex. Though, some of them are called hermaphrodites, which contain both sex organs i.e., of male and female in the same body (Androutsos, 2006). In Pakistan society, it's challenging being third sex or transgender who is facing many problems to survive their lives. In Pakistan, they are generally known as Hijras, khowajasara, and Murat.

In most third-world countries, the concept of the third gender does not believe them; they either are men or women. In Pakistan, it was observed the same situation and had some new culture of Hijras. They sometimes are referred to as transgender in English language publications. In many countries, such transgenders are subject to abuse and violence. That said, they enjoy a certain level of acceptance due to their position in pre-colonial Desi society. For example, they are welcome at weddings where they will dance to entertain men, and are also welcome among women for the same purpose.

Their occurrence in culture is usually accepted and is some of the Pakistani community believes them as blessed in our society and culture. Most of the transgenders are believed they have been direct cultural offspring of eunuchs of the Mughal era. Thought to be born with genital diaspora and afraid that they might curse on their fate, people fulfill their needs, give them alms, and invite them on different programs and functions, e.g., during the birth of a child, circumcision of a child or in wedding parties. This oddness that covers their existence has born to the fact that the Hijra communities live a very mysterious life.

2. Material and Methods

The study employed is quantitative content analysis. By this method, the general trends of the content published in newspapers could be identified. Further to state that with such quantitative analysis of the contents of the amount of the frequency of news, space of the news in columns, and pictorial presentation of the issues under the research focus could be dealt with. Thus in this research feature, column, article editorial, letter to the editor is taken into a research account. Further, content analysis is a systematic tool for the analysis of media messages and observing the overall communication behavior of the selected events. Additionally, content analysis is described as an objective method for the analysis of the manifest content of the communication. Krippendorff (Krippendorff, 2018) also emphasizes content analysis as it makes replicable and valid inferences from data. In other words, it means that this research technique is systematic for categorizing data into themes and counting how frequently each category repeats to identify dominant trends and thereby making some generalizations. Moreover, it enables us to include a vast

amount of textual information, and scientifically find its properties. Finally, the data for this study was collected from the period of six months from January 1, 2018, to June 30, 2018, which was an arbitrary decision. Whereas, the sampled newspapers for the content analysis of the coverage of transgender persons were Daily Dawn and Daily Express Tribune. The said newspapers were chosen as ample due to the reason as both are liberal in policy and popular dailies as well in Pakistan. The main purpose of this study was to examine the coverage level of Daily DAWN newspaper and Daily Express Tribune newspaper and to compare the coverage of Daily DAWN newspaper and Daily Express Tribune newspaper

3. Discussion

Transgenders in Bangladesh remain the most excluded of the excluded and struggle to retain jobs. They also suffer from internal intimidation at work. (Fontana, 2020) In the context of health, little is known about sexual and gender minority (SGM) adults who view the health problems faced by the SGM population (Boynton, et al., 2020).

As a marginalized and growing segment of the older adult population, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults face distinct risk factors related to cognitive impairment and dementia, including social isolation, discrimination, barriers to health care access (Fredriksen-Golden et al., 2018). Gender nonconforming transgender adults experienced worse self-reported health disparities than gender-binary transgender peers. Transgender children without supportive parents cannot be helped without access to health care clinics and counseling to facilitate the transition (Priest 2019).

It is also examined that transgender people live on the margins of society, facing stigma, discrimination, exclusion, violence, and poor health. They often experience difficulties accessing appropriate health care, whether specific to their gender need (Winter et al. 2016). As far as fertility preservation options are concerned then many trans individuals undergo medical interventions that result in irreversible loss of fertility. Thus, little is known about their wish to have children and attitudes toward fertility preservation options (Auer et al., 2018).

Most global estimates about gender-based violence implicitly refer only to the experiences of transgender, heterosexually identified women, which often comes at the exclusion of transgender and gender non-conforming (trans) populations (Wirtz, Poteat, Malik, Glass, 2020).

In this way, media also supply information about various identification of transgender and viable gender constructions that include a body/gender split would very likely be welcomed into the mindsets of audiences in whom these texts resound (Ringo, 2002). While the media can play an essential role in the rights of transgender, it was also showed that media is representing an agent by which it sells and promotes the idea of trans-sexualism to modern society. Information and communication technologies have brought revolutionary changes and allowed the public to share their knowledge, information, and introduce their culture. The mass media has given a new identity and

strength to transgender in society. The study was conducted in the United States, Canada, and Britain, whereas King (King, 1993) has expressed that what the media term used and categorize transgender is the way these new identities are perceived by the community.

It was shown that in our society, most transgender persons are involved in begging, dancing, and sex traits for earning their livelihood. They were all satisfied by their identity but not satisfied at all by the way societies treat them and defame them. They say that “by a single gesture people kill us and although we are living this is not life.” Many of them use hormonal replacement therapies to align their bodies according to their feelings and identities. They could have been our useful human resource and asset that are being spoiled by us just because of the label “Transgender (Sughra, Imran, 2016). In Pakistani society, people have given different names to transgender, especially the word Hijra is ubiquitous among the Pakistani people. It covers anyone who breaks the common societal gender-based constructions inclusive of cross-dressers, homo and bisexuals, true hermaphrodites, eunuch, transsexuals, transvestites, gender queer youth, drag queens, and transgender (Abdullah et al., 2012).

Inequality, poverty, uneducated society does the social and cultural boycott from such people who need shelter. The male dominant society has not given them any space in Pakistan. These cornered minorities have the extra stress of coping with their sexual orientation in our society (Jordan, 2000). Studies show that social prohibiting is pushing the transgender community into wrong conduct/habits (Jami, 2006). Most of the members of this risked minority are forced to indulge in unsafe and dangerous ways of making their livelihood, including sex work, dancing, begging and substance abuse, etc.

Transgender people across South Asia, including transgender men, transgender women, and third gender individuals, described the challenges they face in safely accessing designated men or women’s facilities. One transgender participant described the dilemma: ‘men harass and abuse me in men’s toilets and women are frightened of me in women’s toilets’ (WSSCC, 2017). It was showed that most of the Transgender go to washroom they try to cover and hide their faces with the scarf or sometimes stay outside the toilet that when other women come out from the toilet later they use it otherwise women abuse them (WSSCC, 2015).

Transgender people in Nepal have no such facilities and adequate protection from the government and they face many challenges during the report in police (Pokhrel et al., 2014). While it was revealed that in the field of education most transgenders have no access to get a formal education in schools and universities. Some transgender did not allow to appear in the exam. However, in employment transgenders have also no opportunity to get a job in government or private organizations. It was shown that since the last many years in different western countries, transgenders are getting social acceptance, and people give them respect as like other people. Unprecedented numbers of them have come out of the closet and engage openly in employment (Schilt, Connel, 2007). Meanwhile, in developing countries, especially in Muslim countries, the situation for transsexuals is exceptionally different (Teh, 1998).

The finds developed from the study of transsexual persons in a developing Muslim country push towards establishing the case that trans-sexual persons need to be studied on their own and cannot instead merely be put in studies that are focused on other minority groups (Yip, 2004). In reporting of news, the media describe the objects upon which they are reporting. Some attributes are described prominently and frequently, whereas other attributes are described in lesser detail – a variance that similarly happens when people talk regarding those objects (McCombs et al., 1997b). Examining attributes offer a much-detailed aspect of an object, like see it through a magnifying glass (McCombs, 1997).

It is tough and complicated to understand that Pakistani society where they do not consider that third sex or trans-genders are also humans. Then, in consequence, they do not enjoy most of their due rights. Even though according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2007), Article 2 “Every single human being is entitled to enjoy his or her human rights without distinction as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or another opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or another status. “Every citizen has a fundamental right to their life. It was observed that in Pakistan Hijra, has no basic human rights that have been given by the government. As a citizen of the country, they have no facilities. Furthermore, most transgenders have no right to social security. Many times, it was showed that in different public places, people harm them even sometimes police physically, verbally, emotionally, and sexually torture them. Moreover, due to their third gender, many families do not socially accept them, and their families mostly prefer to have over them to the transgender community.

4. Results

Table 1: Frequency of transgender-persons’ content in analyzed newspapers

Analyzed newspapers	Frequency	Total (%)
Dawn	47	51.6
Express Tribune	44	48.4
Total	91	100.0

Table 1 The results of this research are the quantitative content analysis of Daily Dawn and Daily Sindh Express newspaper during the first six months of the year 2018. Thus (total of 91 transgender-related content items was collected from both sampled newspaper of the first six months. And it showed that Daily Dawn published 47 (51.6 %) transgender-related content items, whereas Daily Express Tribune published 44 (48.4 %) transgender-related content items. Thus, out of these findings, it is deduced that overall Daily Dawn newspaper published more content about transgender-related issues comparison with the Daily Express Tribune newspaper. Such findings, in other words, demonstrate that the Daily Dawn newspaper allocated more space and prioritized higher to the issues related to transgender than the Daily Express Tribune.

Table 2: Frequency of transgender-persons' news items in analyzed newspapers

Analyzed newspapers	Frequency	Total (%)
Dawn	43	51.2
Express Tribune	41	48.8
Total	84	100.0

Table 2 News is the main content of any newspaper. It is commonly believed that most newspaper readers mainly subscribe to any newspaper to consume the first news content of the newspaper. Moreover, the other content of the newspaper, like editorial, column, article, etc. may be the second priority for most of the newspaper readers and subscribers. In this way by referring to table 2 below, the data shows that the Daily Dawn newspaper has given more importance to transgender-related issues compared with the Daily Express Tribune. As the proportion of transgender-related news (51.2 %) published in Daily Dawn is higher than the proportion of transgender-related news (48.6 %) published in the Daily Express Tribune. Thus, overall, the Daily Dawn allocated more space to news related to transgender-related issues than the Daily Express Tribune.

Table 3: Column size of the transgender persons' news in analyzed newspapers

Column size	Analyzed newspaper			
		Dawn	Express Tribune	Total
One column	Frequency % between newspapers	0 0.0 %	16 39.0 %	16 19.0 %
Two-column	Frequency % between newspapers	6 13.9 %	13 31.7 %	19 22.6 %
Three column	Frequency % between newspapers	8 18.6 %	2 4.8 %	10 11.9 %
Four column	Frequency % between newspapers	12 27.9 %	9 21.9 %	21 25.0 %
Five column & +	Frequency % between newspapers	17 39.5 %	1 2.4 %	18 21.4 %
Total	Frequency % between newspapers	43 100.0 %	41 100.0 %	84 100.0 %

Table 3 Column size analysis of transgender persons news items in this study is divided into five categories. Those categories have consisted of one-column news, two-column news, three-column news, four-column news, and five columns and above size news items published in the analyzed newspaper. In this way, as per table 3 below the analyzed data mentioned that in the context of one column news and two columns news the

proportion of Daily Express Tribune newspaper (39.0 % and 31.7 %) on average were higher than the proportions of Daily Dawn (0.0 % and 13.9 %). Second in the perspective of three columns, four-column and five or above column size news items are concerned then the proportions of Daily Dawn newspaper (18.6 %, 27.9 %, and 39.5 %) are bigger with the larger difference than the proportions of Daily Express Tribune (4.2 %, 21.9 %, and 2.4 %). Hence, overall, it was found that the Daily Dawn newspaper allocated more large-sized columns in comparison with Daily Express Tribune in the coverage of transgender person news. In other words, Daily Dawn placed a higher significance on the issues of transgender persons than the Daily Express Tribune.

Table 4: Frequency of transgender persons' non-news content in analyzed newspapers

Analyzed newspapers	Frequency	Total (%)
Dawn	4	57.1
Express Tribune	3	42.9
Total	7	100.0

Table 4 below regarding non-news content published in Daily Dawn and Daily Express Tribune about transgender person issues. In this regard, it was observed that the proportion of Daily Dawn in publishing non-news items about transgender persons was nearly three-fifths. However, on the contrary, the proportion of Daily Express Tribune was a little higher than two fifths. Thus, it was found that subject to non-news items as well Daily Dawn has allocated greater space to the transgender person issues in compared with Daily Express Tribune.

5. Conclusion

The lives and the issues of transgender persons in Pakistan have had started to get reported in the media. This study was supposed to gauge the coverage of the issues concerning transgender persons in print media with a particular focus on English newspapers in Pakistan. The main objective behind this work was to assess the coverage level of Daily Dawn and Daily Express Tribune on the issues of transgender persons.

Summarily, it was found that both English language newspaper Daily Dawn and Daily Express Tribune has reported to the issues of transgender-persons in Pakistan; however, with a little difference that Daily Dawn has published 3.2% more transgender persons related content in comparison with Daily Express Tribune. Similarly, as far as just the news content is concerned, then again, it was observed that Daily Dawn had published 2.4% more news items about transgender issues than the Daily Express Tribune. Moreover, in the perspective of column size of the news items published in Daily Dawn and Daily Express Tribune regarding transgender person issues, it was calculated that smaller-sized news items that are one-column and two-column news stories were published more by Daily Express Tribune in comparison with Daily Dawn. However, in

contrast, it was found that larger-sized news items that three columns, four columns, five or above than five-column news stories were published more than Daily Dawn than Daily Express Tribune. Hence, overall, it was observed that the Daily Dawn newspaper allotted more space to the issues of transgender persons than the Daily Express Tribune.

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