Research Paper

Transcending labels: The Imperatives of Identity Development and Acceptance for Transgenders

Shubhasmita Bhoi
Research Scholar
Department of Sociology
Utkal University, Odisha, India

ABSTRACT : *The debate over transgender acceptance and rights has gathered substantial societal traction in recent years. As gender identity diversifies and knowledge of it develops, so does the obligation to promote a welcoming atmosphere for transgender and gender diverse people. Similar to how gender identity is broken apart and rebuilt, transgender identity creation includes a complex interaction of ideas. The current study focuses on the development of transgender identity through self-identity realization and acceptance, including both internal and external affirmation. The study is qualitative and involves analyses of transgender people's conceptual, theoretical, historical, and case studies. The analysis of these case studies revealed numerous facets of realizing, exploring, and affirming one's transgender identity. Results demonstrate that the process of different gender identity advances with age and the sociocultural context in which a person is raised. The difficulties they face when they develop a gender non-conforming identity include rejection from family and society, stigmatization, discrimination, and physical and verbal abuse.*
Key words: *transgender identity, identity formation, development, challenges, identity affirmation*

I. INTRODUCTION

Identity is a significant concept that expresses the differences between individuals and play the role of link that connect individual and society. Simply speaking it is the physical and behavioral trait that define human being. Various sets of different characteristics allow important for individual to claim and exercise their rights and also carry out their responsibilities. Unlike the commonly used simple male/female dichotomy, gender is a more nuanced term. Instead, gender is a multidimensional notion that takes into account how people see themselves, how society sees them, and how their body actually looks (Egan & Perry, 2001; Johnson & Repta, 2012). Gender is an important part of identity which defined as a personal conception of self as a male, female, both or neither. Male and female are the traditionally decided gender identity by the society and men and women are taught to perform their respective gender roles through socialization.

But there are people whose gender identity cannot fit into these little boxes created by the society and they branch out to explore what they truly feel. Transgender is an umbrella term for persons whose self-identity is established beyond the social gender binary of male and female. This term includes "transsexuals", "cross-dressers", "drag kings" & "queens", and "genderqueers" (Lind, 2010; Burdge,2007; Lev,2004). Gender identities are expressed in a variety of ways by transgender people. Some of them employ the gender they feel most comfortable with through their attire, behavior, and mannerisms. Some people undergo surgery and hormonal therapy to modify their bodies to better reflect their gender identity (Human Rights Campaign, 2008). Some transgender people choose to identify solely as transgender, genderqueer, genderfluid, or in some other way because they reject the conventional notion of gender as the separation between male and female.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Gender identity is not consistent with a person's sex appearance but mostly internal, self-realized and felt aspect of being male, female or something that does not confined in between in these two. But gender expression is not internal but more social. It is way that that a person presents their gender to others. It is mainly concerned with outward manifestations, such as how someone dresses. It can also include a wide range of other aspects of a person's appearance and behavior, such as haircuts, bodily features, voices, body language,

interests, and mannerism. The society has traditionally defined social behavior for male and female as masculine and feminine traits. Those who deviate from these behaviors usually attracts criticism and ridicule that comes from stigmatization. So, the development of sense of this gender non-conformation happens inside the trans persons mind as well as in the social set up.

Within psychology, identity development has been viewed through the lens of stage models. Many key developmental models exist for transgender individuals in research field. But the society holds major influence in these stages of identity development. Socially constructed gender identity developed through socialization and all human are socialized in to the binary version of gender. As transgender do not confirm the socially constructed binaries, it becomes essential to understand the concept of identity, gender identity development and how they break and remake the new gender identity. It involves how the transgender person explore and realize their gender status in a personal level and how the process evolves is all based on the social and structural acceptance as well as rejection. It is necessary to understand the starting of identity formation to the stage of affirmation. The transgender individual experience several challenges while breaking the societal notion of gender normalcy and stigmatized by the dominant culture. Starting from their childhood, many trans people experience rejection from family and society (Nemoto, Operario & Keatley, 2005) and feel the sense of alienation without anyone standing up for them.

The transgenders mostly suffer from sexual identity crisis as they think themselves to belong to other sex than their biological sex. These people belonging to marginal sexual communities, like transgender, suffered from a serious kind of mental agony as they remain doubtful about their sexual identity. In a life full of social humiliation, alienation and discrimination they barely can have mental stability and confidence. The whole society holds a negative approach towards them. Negative reaction may create trauma when they are in early stage of gender transition and going through an internal struggle of accepting a gender identity that they have never been socialized to. Consequent discrimination and frequent microaggression (Nadal, 2013) happens throughout the life of a transgender person.

With all the challenges, transgender individual tries to get social affirmation of their identity. Getting social acceptance and acknowledgement for one's gender identity and expression is an interpersonal and participatory process called gender affirmation (Bockting, Knudson & Goldberg, 2006; Melendez & Pinto, 2007). The affirmation is about coming out and introduce the authentic self to the outside society, choosing a name according to the identity, choose a pronoun, modifying shape of body, wearing new clothes, using their voices etc. The affirmation includes socio-cultural affirmation, medical affirmation and legal affirmation. Transgender people affirm their gender throughout their lives while facing social and institutional challenges.

III.   THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Identity theory, which upholds the belief that social contact shapes and reinforces the individual self and society, serves as the theoretical foundation for this essay (Blumer 1980). It is easier to comprehend how transgender persons deconstruct and reconstruct their identities in connection to the family and society when one takes into account this theory's assertion that identity is established and reinforced through social interchange and interactive performance. Furthermore, Goffman (1959), who was greatly influenced by Mead, Cooley, and Bloomer, stated that the dialectical exchange in the formation of the self and identity is identified by the system.

III.1.Gender identity development

Researchers suggest that gender identity may not necessarily linked to the assigned sex at birth, but it is created through social interaction and influenced by the institutional dynamics and power inequalities (Butler,1990). Transgender theory (Nagoshi Julie & Bruzy Stephanie, 2010) is an emerging important theoretical orientation in the field of gender and gender identity that helps to understand the lived experiences of transgender and transsexual individuals. Transgender theory got its base from Grounded Theory and Ethnographic Sociology. Gender is just the binary system of male and female and negate the idea of gender fluid identities (Bornstein1994).

Theory of essentialism and social constructionism are few of the major theory that helps to explain the development of transgender identity and the concept of transgenderism. Essentialist theory put emphasis on biological traits and consider gender as fixed which will not vary over time and space. As opposed to it social constructionist argues that gender is purely social construction and developed throughout life of an individual. Gender is separate from the biological concept of sex and it is formed in social, historical, religious and cultural context. These theoretical ideas are used by West and Zimmerman (1987) to talk about the act of doing gender. They discovered that comprehending gender requires a sophisticated grasp of socially influenced cognitive, interpersonal, and micropolitical processes.

III.2. Transgender identity Development

The previous researches about transgender identity development have given several models which describe the stages of development throughout life. Bockting and Coleman's (2007) model have 5 stages: pre coming out, coming out, exploration, intimacy, and identity integration. Devor (2004) has adopted Cass's (1979) model of homosexual identity formation to analyze the development of transgender identity. There are 14 different stages of development are given in Devor's model that involves abiding anxiety, identity confusion, identity comparison, discovery of transsexualism, tolerance of transsexual identity, delay before acceptance of identity, acceptance, delay before transition, transition, acceptance of post-transition gender, integration and pride.

Bilodeau and Renn (2005) "Transgender identity development model" was based on D'Augelli's identity development theory. He has given six process of gender identity development.

Exiting the assigned gender identity: individual recognise and comes in term with their non cis gender identity. they don't align their assigned gender identity.

1) Developing personal transgender identity: in this stage individual creates a self-concept of by all those thoughts, feelings and desire (D'Augelli 1994)
2) Developing a social transgender identity: to create a social support network of people who accept the identity.
3) Becoming transgender offspring: coming out to family members
4) Developing transgender intimacy status: to establish personal and emotional relationship
5) Entering a transgender community: to become politically and socially involve with transgender community

Transgenders have a body-mind conflict at early stage of development, they manage and negotiate the identities while being in a process of transition (Morgan, Stevens, 2012).

Affirmation is an important interpersonal and political process by which identities and spaces are created that allows human development (Johnston T. R., 2016). Previous studies have acknowledged the idea of gender affirmation and have used terms like "gender validation," "transgender identity affirmation," and "identification support" (Nuttbrock L, Rosenblum A & Blumenstein R, 2002). In order to feel validated and accepted as their genuine selves, gender affirmation is important and plays a big part in social lives. Gender affirmation entails using the correct pronouns and name for the transgender person as well as accepting their varied manifestations. According to gender affirmation framework (Sevelius, 2013), transgender individual affirmed their gender through social interactions. In social context, the risk of transphobia, sexism and marginalization increase if gender affirmation do not happen. In various religious tradition where families are affiliated with rigid notions of gender, the gender non-conforming children are not accepted (Koken, et al., 2009).

IV. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The tolerance of transgender identity was visible in the mythology of great Indian literature. The mythology holds transgender persons in equal status to other genders and Transgender Community of India include Hijras, kinnars, eunuchs, shiv-shaktis, jogappas, Sakhi, jogtas, Aradhis, Aravanis/Thirunangi, Kothis, etc. The hijras through diverse historical periods have been existing not as an excluded marginalized group socially, economically and politically; but as the powerful group. They have existed in Indian society for centuries.

IV.1. Ancient India

Transgenders have always been integral part of history in India and mentioned in Indian mythological scriptures like Mahabharata, Ramayana etc. The text of Mahabharat which can be traced back to 3000 years, tells the story of Shikhandi (Prower T. 2018). It is a very well-known fact that Arjuna had to lose his masculinity for some time in Mahabharata. At the time, he continued to identify as transsexual. The idea of Ardhanarishvara, a Shiva and Shakti hybrid who is half male and half female is depicted in Hindu literature. Many Hijras and transgender Hindus regard it as one of their most revered deities, and it has been referred to as an androgynous and transgender deity (David E, 2017).

IV.2. Mughal India

In medieval time, Hijra used to hold important position in the royal court of the Mughals. They were in the positions of political advisors, administrators, generals and guardians of the Harem. They were called eunuchs or khwaja sira and known as the most trusted servants. They were given respect and had access to all population and resources.

IV.3. British India

Their influence decreased with the fall of Mughal empire. The European rulers had negative reaction towards them. The colonial rulers introduced the Criminal Tribe Act (CTC) which involved the registration and control of eunuchs as they were suspected as criminals for kidnapping and sodomy. The British govt. criminalized Hijra community and they were denied of civil rights. The CTC act started in the north India but slowly covered the entire country by mid-1920s. Hijra were deprived of their major and primary source of income and all other rights (Wikipedia).

IV.4. Contemporary India

In post-independent India, the legal system was still under the influence of colonial rule so hijra stayed marginalized for a long period of time. India's 2011 census was first census in the history to include the number of trans populations in the country. The report estimated that 4.8 million Indians identified as transgender. The survey provides sex related data in binary form of male female and tag other as "others". The countrywide census conducted in 2011 included three options of male, female and others. This was India's first attempt at collecting data about the people with non-binary gender identities.

In today's India, transgenders are struggling for their rights dure to society's failure to accept their gender identity. The National Legal Service Authority vs Union of India (2014) gave the landmark judgement that transgender people are now included in "third gender" and affirmed that fundamental rights granted under the constitution is equally applicable to them. They have the right to self-identify themselves as male, female or third gender.

Transgender are still considered to be one of the most depressed groups in the society who are constantly discriminated, harassed, stigmatized and alienated.

V. STUDY DESIGN AND OBJECTIVE

The present study consists of four types of analysis. First and foremost, this study encompasses conceptual analysis, which examines concepts such as gender and identity, the role of identity in society, transgender concepts, and non-binary genders. It examines the idea of affirming one's gender identification and the necessity of doing the same for transgender people in the social, medical, and legal spheres.

In addition, the theoretical Analysis which is considered to be the knowledge base of transgender identity development and it has been understood by reviewing various literatures. The formation and affirmation of gender identity has been reviewed by analyzing works from theorists and scholars. An analytical framework has been developed on the basis of it to analyze the data collected by the researcher.

Furthermore, historical analysis includes the existence and level of acceptance throughout the history of Indian society. It focused on the place of transgender in ancient India, medieval India, British India and contemporary India. The historical analysis gives a detail picture of how transgenders were being treated in the society and how it is affecting their status in present situation.

Finally, Case analysis phase describes the data collected by the researcher through field work. Data has been collected about the formation and development of identity of the respondents and how they consolidate and affirm the identity. Narratives about transgenders cases has been analyzed in the study for in-depth knowledge and understanding.

V.1 Objective and Methodology

In this study the discussion of transgender identity development is done by analyzing gender identity realization, further exploration and social support, and lastly identity consolidation and affirmation. It is significant to recognize from earlier work that societal roles and cultural preconceptions influence transgender identification and expressions. They frequently face stigma and have to bargain with society over who they are. The debate also covers how people assert their identities and get acceptance or rejection from their families, communities, and society.

V.2.Methodology

It is an exploratory and descriptive case study conducted in the city of Bhubaneswar in Odisha. 10 cases are selected through purposive sampling. The study is a descriptive qualitative study where both primary and secondary data is collected. In-depth interview schedule was prepared to understand the practical life of transgenders and the social issue face by them while developing, consolidating and affirming their identity as transgenders. Data collection was done through in-depth interview method and the researcher had to go for several sessions of interview to the field. Initially when the researcher went to them to gather information and

they were apprehensive and reluctant to share their views with the researcher. So, it took time to build a rapport and they were assured that their data would be kept confidential. After that they were a little more open to share their story. It majorly aims to describe their experiences in establishing identity, identity development, the support system as well as affirmation.

VI.PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT

Age is a determining factor for individual's status and role socially and culturally. The respondents belong to the age range of 25 to 35. The effect of age can be seen in their narratives of different stages of identity development. As all of them belongs to adult and mature age group they are in a stage where they accepted themselves as they are and consolidate their gender identity. They have passed through the non-surgical transition stage from male to female and expressing their gender behavior freely. From the age of realization to consolidate their gender identity they have to struggle a lot with abuse and humiliation. They suffer through social rejection and denied of various facilities in social and institutional set ups. On the question about their feelings that they experienced changes in their behavior, thinking and character, many of the respondents expressed that they were anxious, angry, sad, depressing, helpless and spending time in isolation.

None of the cases originally belong to Bhubaneswar. All of them belongs to sub urban and rural area of the state. The cases expressed in the interview that they moved to Bhubaneswar as it is the capital city with the hope of finding a livelihood and independence. In the case narratives the respondents said they left home at a period of time when they felt suffocation by the rigid social rules at the place they were staying. The native places make a difference in transgender acceptance as the people are not much aware about it and usually do not accept this non-conforming gender.

Transgender individuals are stigmatized in the educational institution and face institutional discrimination. All the cases except three of them described their drop out from respective schools because of harassment and bullying. In the school they had to face harassments, got called by derogatory term like "ranga", "maichia" etc, had inappropriate toilets facilities which became the reasons for their drop out at different stages of school education.

Due to lack of education, the employment opportunities were also affected. Combined with the social and institutional discrimination, it became difficult for them to search decent jobs. Seven of the cases are making livelihood by collecting money in train, traffic, bus stands and parks. Two cases dance in parties and function to make money. One of the respondents told she does other small jobs like sewing clothes to survive. All the respondents expressed their grief of facing discrimination, physical and verbal abuse in the period of their work. The exclusion from mainstream and decent employment makes them to go for begging and doing small works. It shows the lack of social security and welfare scheme by the government for socially and economically disadvantage section of society.

The respondents were asked about their parent educational status as family background affect the process of identity development and parent education level can affect acceptance of transgender in their families. The education of parent considered as important variable. The case data reveals that most of the respondent's parents are illiterate and engaged in agricultural work. Only two cases shared that both parents are literate. Their parents are working in agriculture, daily wage labor, petty job like maid servant. Educated parents can help children in identity formation and personality development.

Data on religion and caste of the respondents has been collected as religious sentiments deeply affect the process of child development in a family or any social institutions. It has an effect on the process of socialization and non-conforming gender identity goes against socialization done on the basis of religious sentiment in a family. All of the respondents belong to Hindu religion, four cases told to comes under OBC category, two generals, four under schedule caste.

All the cases taken in this study are identified as male to female transformed transgender. They identified their gender as trans-woman and love it when people see and address them as woman. None of the cases had undergone biological surgery to change the gender.

During the stages of identity development, transgender individuals realize their different identity at a certain age. They compare this different kind of feeling to other children around them and get confuse about their own gender identity. Four cases told to realize their identity around the age between 5 to 10. Meanwhile six of them mentioned that they realized their gender in between 11 to 15 years of age. Adolescent age or teenage is different than other age group. This is the peak time for individual to come out and accept their identity. the researcher asked the respondents about the age when they came out to family and society. Three of them came out in their teenage years while seven of the respondents revealed after the teenage years. They expressed that the fear and shame was holding them back from come out and express their identity to everyone.

VII.DISCUSSION

Gender identity and expression are something that everyone has, but not everyone's identity matches what society might expect based on their assigned sex. This study highlights the various phases in which the development of transgender identity over the course of many years both at interpersonal and intrapersonal level happens. The discussion contains three major phases through which transgender form the identity in their lives. The discussion is drawn from the life experiences of the taken respondents in this study. In the first one the respondents express how they realized their different gender identity. it further goes on exploration, seeking support and lastly affirming the identity.

VII.1. Self-discovery and realization:

The gender identity formation starts with this stage of self-discovery and realization. This phase involves one being themselves, both internally and externally. The gender identity formation includes realization where the individual discovers "who I really am". This starts in childhood as early as the age of 3. The core gender identity forms at this age and children can make firm statements about their gender identity (Solomon K, 2013). At this age they can choose which activities are good for them. Children express their gender through dressing, behavior, mannerism and so on. But when it differs from the socialized behavior that has been given in their family, the self-realization begins. The consciousness of the transgender individual in early childhood begins with the discovery of subtle and innocent expressions of aspired gender. The feelings slowly strengthen as the child grows and do activities of the gender they want to be. It becomes strong in adolescence. They feel the fulfilment and happiness with it.

"I always used to play girl character in my school drama. Every year in my village there used to be Mahabharata play and I used to play Draupadi as women were not participating in village play that time. I loved it when I had to drape saree, wear makeup, hair extension and fake breast for the play. For others I was just playing a character but for me, it was an opportunity to express myself and show my affection towards men" – respondent

This is catalyzed by various experience of ridicule, harassment, verbal and physical abuse that comes as a reaction of society to gender non-conforming individuals. The rest of life journey is about deconstruct and reconstruct the identity and understand the experience they gained in this stage.

VII.2. Exploring Further and Seeking Support:

One of the major aspects of transgender identity development is "self-concept". In self-concept, transgender individual makes up their mind physical, emotional and social self and who they actually want to be (Neill,2005). According to Cooley, self-conception and self-relation are linked with social identity. viewing one-self is not a solitary phenomenon and society and individual are inseparable and collective and distributive aspect of same thing (Rousseu, 2002). As the identity development includes several dimensions like social, physical, emotional, and religious and so on, the self-realization process affects by so and make them to question themselves.

In this phase they explore further about ways in which they can subtly express their gender which give them little bit of happiness. In this study the cases explained that they used to play as girl, female character, character of mother in school or small play in per group. These kinds of plays never were harm as they were too young but started causing problems and attracted negativity as they grew up. Once they started growing up, their personal sense of gender identity and expression get affected by the society. The fear of stigma and alienation in the family and society develops as the personal gender expression do not match with the desired expression that they have been socialized in to.

VII.3. Family support

All the cases in this study have expressed that they faced rejection from the family due to their special gender identity and it caused them stress, anxiety and helplessness. Family system is deeply connected to individual life in every aspect and is an important factor for growth and development. When the transgender individual is in the process of formation and transition of identity, all the members of the family undergo the transition process simultaneously, so it affects the entire family (Cox & Paley, 1997).

The cases in this study narrated the negative environment in the family, peer group and other places that has negative effect on their identity realization. It creates self-stereotyped stigma, hate, mental stress and anxiety in them.

As one of the cases told, *"when my brain and behavior defied my physical appearance it caused confusion and stress so much that I used to cry and free myself from this type of feelings. As my siblings laughing at me for my feminine attitude and my mother stopped me from wearing anything feminine or walk or talk like that, it caused hatred for myself in men. I hated for being born this way."*

VII.4. Social Support

The concept of looking glass self demonstrates how the viewing of one self is not a solitary phenomenon and the society and individual are collective and distributive aspect of same things. Cooley suggests that self-feelings and social feelings must be harmonized together and two sides of same phenomenon. Personal freedom is tied to the relationships that comprise the society.

Wearing clothes that do not identified with their preferred gender is uncomfortable and the washroom facilities in school for transgender is absent in many places. Bathroom facilities, separate hostels at educational institution are not considered as a concern as transgender individual are almost nonexistence from legal documents. The absent in legal documents and not having a proper identity card become a barrier in finding good employment opportunities. The participants are mostly engaged in informal and unorganized works due to lack of education, legal affirmation and discrimination. They collect money and dance in parties to make a living. The social and workplace security is nonexistence in these sectors and they have to face stigma, harassment, mental, physical and sexual abuse on a daily basis. But being the only way to survive, they continue with these pity works.

VII.5. Community Support

Social environment has a heavy impact on the life of every human being. It makes transgender to actively seek for community which can be a liberating space for them to express their real self and interact with people who support them. This space can be physical or virtual that gives validation and affirmation. Online space and virtual community also give place for connection. The community allows them to explore gender expression and provide emotional support. Social transition and affirmation by the family, peer group and others necessary to create a safe space for transgender. The respondents expressed how they want parents to accept them and have normal family life. The familial rejection affects educational, financial and housing stability. Failing to get such environment in the family and forced homelessness leads them to explore further support that can understand their confusion and identity. the participants in this study left home and came to the capital city hoping to find an emotional and social support network.

"I was happy and excited to find out more people like me who can sympathize with me and understand my feelings. The seniors in the community were very welcoming and assuring. Community can also have its own problems are conflicts but it is a place where I can talk, walk, dress myself as I wish. Even though I have problems I am still happy to find friends who can understand me."- respondent

VIII. IDENTITY ACCEPTANCE AND AFFIRMATION

The final stage of identity development is to self-establish the gender identity and getting social acceptance and affirmation. The transgender individual wants to perform their desired gender and express their true self. Social identity does not exist in personal sphere, it has to be connected with the external factors in the society (Barreto M & Ellemers N,2003). The identity function as an interplay between external and internal categorization. In this stage, the transgender individual looks forward to acceptance and affirmation in the society.

From the study it can be seen that the respondents want the society to recognize them with their unique gender identity and the identity should be personally and socially affirming. Gender can be affirmed in many ways like socio-cultural affirmation, medical affirmation and legal affirmation. In social affirmation they introduce their identity to the society and express themselves.

The respondents explained how they consolidate their gender identity and try to get affirmation. choose their name and pronoun relating to preferred gender, changed way of clothing pattern, body language and way of talking. They participate in the society as their true self. It can be liberating but terrifying at the same time.

"When I moved to the city for the first time and got in to transgender community, I was so excited to wear saree as I want. It made me so happy that I can be the person I want to be. Though it is liberating, it is not easy. Every time I go outside, I do hear criticism and comments about my appearance. I have not gone through biological surgery yet so the comments affect my confidence about my appearance." – respondent

Biological or medical affirmation involves the surgical transition of transgender individual. In this study none of respondents mentioned undergoing surgical transformation or undergoing any hormonal medication for bodily change. The transgenders legally affirm their identity by getting acknowledged in legal and legislative system. It includes being affirmed in work place, schools and other social and institutional set ups. In 2014, the Indian supreme court ruled that transgender people will be recognized as third gender and enjoy all fundamental rights and get specific benefits in employment and education. Transgender person will have rights to decide their self-identified gender (Supreme Court of India civil original jurisdiction writ petition (Civil) NO.400 OF 2012 judgment, P9). Even after the decision, many transgender individuals have not been affirmed and accepted legally which make it difficult for them to avail any rights. Establishing third gender

identity is no doubt a significant step for the community but there are layers to it. The respondents said they want to be included under women category but they cannot as they have not undergone the surgical or hormonal transformation.

Another major concern can be noticed from this study is that those who want to be in the binary gender category and not in third gender, they face hostile attitude from the transgender community. The authentic gender representation comes with losing support from the community.

IX. CONCLUSION

The process of developing a transgender identity must be assessed because it is viewed as a deviation from the socially accepted gender binary norms. The stages presented in this study can't be strictly categorized as compartments because they include a wide range of transgender people's experiences with gender transition on both a personal and societal level. This study highlights the process of transgender identity creation, the value of social contexts, social support, and the process of identity affirmation. With age and the sociocultural milieu in which a person grows up, the process of various gender identity progresses. The difficulties they face when they develop a gender non-conforming identity include rejection from family and society, stigmatization, discrimination, and physical and verbal abuse. Obtaining social, legal, and medical affirmation is the last stage. individuals who identify as trans continue to struggle for acceptance in society, medicine, and law as the government's process of recognizing trans individuals as humans moves steadily forward. The dynamic interaction between the experiences of transgender persons and important elements of their social surroundings should be the subject of more study. For people of different gender identities, the interlocking systems of oppression result in difficult outcomes. More research is needed in this still-developing field to understand how internal and external factors affect transgender identity development, expression, and the battle for acceptance in social and personal contexts while coping with stigma and prejudice.

REFERENCES

[1]. Aaron H. Devor PhD (2004) Witnessing and Mirroring: A Fourteen Stage Model of Transsexual Identity Formation, Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy, 8:1-2, 41-67, DOI: 10.1300/J236v08n01_05
[2]. Barreto, M., & Ellemers, N. (2003). The effects of being categorised: The interplay between internal and external social identities. *European review of social psychology*, *14*(1), 139-170.
[3]. Bilodeau, B. L., & Renn, K. A. (2005). Analysis of LGBT identity development models and implications for practice. *New directions for student services*, *2005*(111), 25-39.
[4]. Bockting, W., Knudson, G., & Goldberg, J. M. Counselling and mental health care of transgender adults and loved ones, 2006.
[5]. Bockting, W.O. & Coleman, E.. (2007). Developmental stages of the transgender coming out process: Toward an integrated identity. Handbook of Transgender Medicine and Surgery. 185-208.
[6]. Bornstein, K., & Bornstein, K. (1994). *Gender outlaw*. New York: Vintage Books.
[7]. Burdge, B. J. (2007). Bending gender, ending gender: Theoretical foundations for social work practice with the transgender community. *Social work*, *52*(3), 243-250.
[8]. Cox, M. J., & Paley, B. (1997). Families as systems. *Annual review of psychology*, *48*(1), 243-267.
[9]. Egan, S. K., & Perry, D. G. (2001). Gender identity: a multidimensional analysis with implications for psychosocial adjustment. Developmental psychology, 37(4), 451.
[10]. Johnson, J. L., & Repta, R. (2012). Sex and gender. Designing and conducting gender, sex, and health research, 1737.
[11]. Koken, J. A., Bimbi, D. S., & Parsons, J. T. (2009). Experiences of familial acceptance–rejection among transwomen of color. Journal of Family Psychology, 23(6), 853.
[12]. Lev, A. I. (2004). Transgender emergence: Therapeutic guidelines for working with gender-variant people and their families. Haworth Clinical Practice Press.
[13]. Lind, A. (2010). Development, sexual rights and global governance (p. 240).
[14]. Melendez, R. M., & Pinto, R. (2007). 'It's really a hard life': Love, gender and HIV risk among male- to- female transgender persons. Culture, health & sexuality, 9(3), 233-245.
[15]. Michelraj, M. (2015). Historical evolution of transgender community in India. Asian Review of Social Sciences, 4(1), 17-19.
[16]. Morgan, S. W., & Stevens, P. E. (2012). Transgender identity development as represented by a group of transgendered adults. Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 33(5), 301-308.
[17]. Nadal, K. L. (2013). That's so gay! Microaggressions and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. American Psychological Association.
[18]. Nagoshi, J. L., & Brzuzy, S. I. (2010). Transgender theory: Embodying research and practice. Affilia, 25(4), 431-443.
[19]. Neill, J. (2005). Definitions of Various Self Constructs: Self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-confidence & selfconcept. Accesed http://wilderdom. com/self/on June, 14, 2009.
[20]. Nemoto, T., Operario, D., Keatley, J., Nguyen, H., & Sugano, E. (2005). Promoting health for transgender women: Transgender Resources and Neighborhood Space (TRANS) program in San Francisco. American journal of public health, 95(3), 382-384.
[21]. Nuttbrock, L., Rosenblum, A., & Blumenstein, R. (2002). Transgender identity affirmation and mental health. International Journal of Transgenderism.
[22]. Odisha Transgender policy draft, 2017
[23]. Prower, T. (2018). Queer magic: LGBT+ spirituality and culture from around the world. Llewellyn Worldwide.
[24]. Rousseau, N. (2002). Charles Horton Cooley's concept of the looking glass self and its applications. Self, symbols, and society: Classic readings in social psychology, 85-102.
[25]. Rousseau, N. (Ed.). (2002). Self, symbols, and society: Classic readings in social psychology. Rowman & Littlefield.
[26]. Sevelius, J. M. (2013). Gender affirmation: A framework for conceptualizing risk behavior among transgender women of color. Sex roles, 68(11), 675-689.
[27]. Solomon, K. (Ed.). (2013). Men in transition: Theory and therapy. Springer Science & Business Media.

[28].   West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. Gender & society, 1(2), 125-151.
[29].   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criminal_Tribes_Act
[30].   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Legal_Services_Authority_v._Union_of_India
[31].   https://www.census2011.co.in/transgender.php
[32].   https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/