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Emotional Problems, Perceived Social Support, Self-Esteem, And Authenticity Among Transgender

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Abstract

Transgender are the most vulnerable, marginalized, deprived, and isolated community in our society. The inappropriate attitude of family and society has made the life of transgender very difficult.

The present study aimed to assess the level of social support, self-esteem, and authenticity in trans genders, and to understand the Emotional problems of trans genders. A total of 89 trans genders completed a self-report questionnaire that included Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg,1979), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al.,1988), the Authenticity Scale (Wood et al.,2008), and Human figure drawing HFD (Koppitz 1983).

According to this study's findings, they have immature, impulsive personalities, low self-esteem, and poor self-concept and have a feeling of helplessness and anger.

It was also concluded that perceived social support, self-esteem, and authenticity were directly related. Self-esteem is also a positive predictor of an authentic personality. which determined that if the individuals have perceived social support, it has a drastic effect on their personality in general these individuals have high self-esteem, are not easily get influenced by others, and are having more authentic personalities as compared to transgender who have low social support.

Keywords: Transgender, perceived social support, self-esteem, and authenticity

Introduction

Increased awareness and comprehension on the definition of transgender or whom to be call a Trans person in contemporary culture has led to the emergence of a variety of transgender experiences. Many eminent scholars and activists view these shifts as being tied to gender-based transformation as a binary option involving just a man or woman with sexual orientation as a continuance of a potentially fluid experience across time, as well as a growing improvement in social and cultural views about transgender people and their support (Austin et al., 2017).

The word or expression "transgender" is commonly used for those people who do not fit the socially constructed categories of men and women and whose gender identification or expression differs from their biological birth sex. (Karasic and Drescher, 2006) (American Psychological Association, 2006). Some persons change their gender identity by choice or due to health-related issues, while others are born transgender or become transgender because of specific medical conditions.

A transgender individual is defined as follows by the Gender Transformation Act of 2018: (paper, International Commission of Jurists, Geneva, 2020).

- (i) Individual: (aberrant birth or the opposite sex (khusra) combined with male and female genitalia,
- (ii) Born and assigned as male but getting castrated or having surgery to change that,
- (iii) Trans male, Trans female, Kwasjira, and people whose gender features are changed from the social norms and customs expected of him or her based on the gender assigned to them at the time of their birth.

Isolation is one of the numerous difficulties faced by transgender people. Their health and well-being are impacted by these difficulties. Numerous issues have a negative effect on their self-esteem. Transgender suffer from schooling barriers. Academic success, social responsibility, and personal accountability are all influenced by one's level of self-confidence.

A person attitude towards himself is called self-Confidence, which mirrors in what way everyone assesses their mental capacity (Aydm & San, 2011). According to Rosenberg (Westaway et al., 2015), the best indicator of one's personality traits, including intelligence, physical attractiveness, and social skills, is high self-esteem. They hold themselves in high regard and believe they deserve. A person may be lacking a sense of purpose in life if they feel unworthy, inadequate, and uncooperative. Research indicating that not everyone who identifies as certain sex or gender can be negatively obstructed by low degree of self-esteem is particularly concerning (Wolfradt & Neumann, 2001).

Self-confidence is a multifaceted concept, with a variety of meanings (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). A person's overall perception of their own value or worth is referred to as self-esteem in psychology. Alternatively put, how much we value and approve of ourselves. It incorporates many different views about a person, including how others perceive one's appearance, beliefs, feelings, and actions. Self-esteem can be defined as one's opinions about oneself, whether they are favorable or unfavorable (Lam, 2019).

Throughout our lives, self-esteem may have a big impact on our drive and achievement. Because we don't think we are capable of accomplishment, low self-esteem may prevent us from achieving in school or at a job (Leary, 1999). It is commonly known

that transgender have greater mental health issues, behavioral and psychological complications (such as more stress, lower self-esteem, and less life satisfaction) (e.g., depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts) (Meyer et al., 2017). Such negative consequences are a result of social stigma, rejection, and discrimination associated with or manifestation of gender, according to the minority stress model, the gender affirmation framework, as well as empirical evidence. (Van den Brink et al., 2020). Low self-esteem is linked to high levels of stress and anxiety in transgender (Strain & Shuff, 2010) and, for many cisgender people, low self-esteem is a well-known risk factor for mental health problems.

Kennedy, (2013) revealed that a type of depression (mild depression) develops in transgender through negative public perception (For example transphobia). They express difficulty in relationships, depressive symptoms, and low self-esteem, your rates vary from male to female for men. It's critical for people to sustain their social connections for maintaining their self-esteem, sense of worth, and social connections, fostering a sense of solidarity within the community (Budd, et al., 2009). In the transgender community, there is a cyclical connection among lack of social support and low self-esteem. Family support from the family is a significant predictor of well-being in trans populations and has been linked to a higher quality of life. (Trujillo et al., 2017) and stress reduction (Bariola et al., 2015). Receiving family support is also linked to a decreased risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder, and those who receive more support do not exhibit depression compared to those who receive less or no assistance (Bockting et al., 2013). This is particularly significant as migrants, compared to siblings who are not their own, have less social support from the family is observed and reported (Bouman et al.,2016) which is linked to more discrimination (Bradford et al., 2013). In a Canadian Trans PULSE Project study of participants over the age of 16, social support, in general, was linked to a lower risk of suicide, and familial support for gender identity was linked to a lower risk of Suicidal thoughts. (Scheim et al., 2017). These results are crucial because they demonstrate the critical role that family support may have in lowering stress levels and mitigating the psychological effects of sexual harassment. Social support can be emotional, practical, financial, or informative (Ikiz and Cakar 2010) and people who participate in supportive social relationships enjoy benefits in terms of their health, behavior, and coping. On the other hand, a lack of social support has been repeatedly linked to physical poverty as well (Cohen 2004).

Social perceptions in support emphasize common indications of thoughtful individual support. According to gender-based research, social support is often defined as perceived support from friends, family, and other important individuals (Başar and Karakaya, 2016). Several studies have shown that transgender people with more social support experience lower psychological health problems and higher quality of life. For transgender people facing a variety of barriers, the support of friends or family is reported to be their primary source of coping (Dowers et al., 2020).

Coherence between one's internal and external acts is the simplest definition of Authenticity. It is related to numerous societal values which situate as a social norm that influences emotional expression. Low levels of authenticity in relations, also known as "low levels of voice" (Gilligan et al., 1990), "silencing of the self," (Jack, 1991), "false self," (Harter et al., 1997), or "inauthentic relations" (Impett et al., 2008), can have detrimental effects, like dissociating from feelings, which can result in depression and low self-esteem (Brown, 1998; Theran, 2010). Researchers have concentrated on the impact of interpersonal authenticity and voice volume on personal developmental outcomes like self-esteem, depressive symptoms, and eating disorders (Theran, 2010).

Due to the interactive character of authenticity in relationships, Harter et al. (1997) pointed out that taking the context of the situation (such as family versus friends) into account is crucial.

"Becoming who you truly are is the privilege of a lifetime."—Carl Jung

Social identities serve as a representation of how we categorize ourselves, in part. In other words, a person's identity can be compared to that of others and distinguished from that of those who are different (Martinez., et al 2017). The quality of authenticity is faithfulness to inner truth, a fundamental foundation that is sometimes referred to as "the actual self" or "essence"

The experiences of transgender persons offer a fresh perspective on long-standing issues with personal identity, add to a body of literature that has been over-explored by philosophers, and advance an honest vision of reality.

The proof of authenticity is found in the link between the action and some additional truth about the person's "real self," not in the action itself. Authenticity is sometimes envisioned as a condition of alignment or integrity in which one's internal and exterior features are congruent with one another. According to Theran et al., (2010) study findings, social support is linked with authenticity and self-esteem. More social support for a person will result in an authentic personality with a high level of self-respect and self-esteem. Particularly, individuals with higher levels of social support from family members had fewer depressive symptoms than those with lower levels of social support at low levels of authenticity.

Human figure drawings (HFDs) can be used as projective or non-projective measurements in the psychology field. HFDs, are utilized to obtain an understanding of the character and impact of the creator of the artwork (Michaelides, 2005). The implementation of standardized administration techniques and quantitative scoring systems is required for the non-projective usage of HFDs in order to determine an estimate of conceptual development, mental maturity, or intellectual ability (Burger, 2011).

Cooke and Ricci, two psychologists who first identified the importance of (HFDs) as a part of psychological evaluation in 1885 and 1887 respectively, noted a progressive pattern in children's HFD (Cox, 1993). Since then, numerous studies have thoroughly established this developmental pattern (Burger, 2011).

The continued creation of revised HFD exam formats demonstrates their acceptance in workplace contexts. In fact, for the past 50 years, HFD assessments have continuously been rated among the most widely used diagnostic tools by therapists and psychologists. (Gigi, 2016).

The medical profession is relevant as a tool for choosing between possible diagnoses, the kind of therapy needed, and the prognosis. According to this viewpoint, the goal of the psychological examination is to determine the psychological and neurological effects brought on by the sickness or damage process. One of the key presumptions made throughout this process

is the usage of evaluating personality in an unconscious mind as opposed to using medical techniques as an indirect method, like projective painting, which is a useful tool from a psychoanalytic standpoint for observing the inner world, unconscious barriers, and conscious resistance. Additionally, the projective drawing test is a tool that enables gathering data on the patient's maturity and sensitivity as a component of his overall personality and his interpersonal interactions with the environment (Imuta., et al 2013).

Following this, Koppitz and Casullo (1983) categorized the emotional indications into five behavioral/emotional groups. The following classifications and their corresponding indicators were noted: Impulsivity (slanting figure, tiny head, hands cut off, monster or grotesque figure, and omission of arms, legs, and feet); impulsivity (poor integration of parts, gross asymmetry of limbs, transparencies, big figure, and omission of neck); anxiety (shading of face, shading of body and/or limbs, shading of hands and/or neck, legs pressed together); (crossed eyes, teeth, long arms, big hands, and genitals).

Psychological assessment data of transgender persons is an area of research for a long time as the social, psychological, and physical health issues of transgender's are becoming more complicating. Results from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and other psychological tests served as the foundation and major part of the conclusions in the early literature. According to research, high rates of psychopathology and inequities in mental health are present in the transgender population (Keo & Fitzgerald 2017).

Objective

- 1. To identify the level of social support, self-esteem, and authenticity in trans genders.
- 2. To understand the Emotional problems of trans genders.

Hypotheses

- 1. Trans genders are suffering from different emotional problems.
- 2. There is a positive relationship between, self-esteem, perceived social support, and authenticity among trans genders.
- 3. Trans genders who have high perceived social support have high self-esteem as compared to trans genders who have low social support.

Rational of the study

Human begins are considered social animals living in the social circle of family, society, and state to get social and psychological support from other humans without this support it's not easy for individuals to have a normal life. If we observe the life of transgender many transgender individuals never seek help from others because of physical agony, mental anguish, or societal stigma and isolation. These phenomena may lead to psychological and physical health issues drug addiction, violent attitudes suicide, or violent-led aggression in the transgender. The current study is conducted to find how these negative phenomena are linked with Self-esteem and what is the relation between self-esteem, social support, and authenticity among transgender which in the future may help psychologists, psychiatrists, the community, and lawmakers to find out the ways to counter the problems of trans community.

Methodology

Sample

A total of 89 Trans genders were selected as a sample for the current study. All of them were adults. The participant was selected through snowball sampling from Lahore, Nowshera, and Mardan. Researcher personally visited the transgender community in Mardan, Nowshera, and Lahore, and the researcher got help from Kami Sid a well-known transgender rights activist.

27 participants' age fell between 18 to 25 years, 25 transgender age range was 25-30 years, 20 participants' age range was between 30 to 35 years and 13 participants' age was above 35 years. 27 participants confirmed that they are in a relationship and 63 affirmed that they have no relationship.68 out of 89 samples were street artists (dancers), 2 are teachers, 13 worked as domestic help, and 4 transgender were not working.30 participants were uneducated and 59 were educated (up to 10 years of education).

Instruments

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979)

A 10-item scale that assesses both favorable and unfavorable thoughts of one's self in order to gauge overall self-worth. Each question has an answer on a 4-point Likert scale, with the options being strongly agreed to strongly disagree. Scoring includes a method of combined ratings. The reliability of the scale is .92. Alpha reliability of the scale on the current sample is .807.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al.,1988).

A 12-item, 7-point Likert scale, the MSPSS (Zimet et al., 1988) (1 = Very Strongly Disagree, 7 = Very Strongly Agree). Participants rate their perception of social support more highly when given a higher rating. The reliability of the scale on the current sample is .926.

Authenticity scale (Wood et al., 2008)

A person's self-reported feeling of authenticity is measured by the Authenticity Scale. Based on Barrett-tripartite Lennard's concept of authenticity and Rogers' person-centered approach, the Authenticity Scale (Wood et al., 2008) was created (Barrett-Lennard, 1998). Personal authenticity as a feature consists of three elements. Living authentically is staying true to one's feelings, beliefs, and facts. A lack of self-alienation; and not accepting external influence when it conflicts with one's personal

convictions. Living authentically has a good impact on the authenticity scale while accepting external influence and self-alienation have a negative impact.

Participants on the Authenticity Scale indicated their agreement with each of the three qualities on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (does not represent me at all) to 7. (Describes me very well). The Cronbach's alpha of the scale on the current sample is .609.

Human figure drawing HFD (Koppitz 1983)

A projective personality test known as (HFD) asks the subject to sketch a person. A piece of blank paper and a pencil were distributed to each participant. No rubber was utilized. A drawn figure is closely linked to the person's emotions, fears, and conflicts. Cooke and Ricci, two psychologists who first identified the importance of (HFDs) as a part of psychological evaluation in 1885 and 1887 respectively, noted a developmental pattern in children's HFDs (Cox, 1993). This growing progression has since been well-recognized by several studies (Koppitz, 1983). The Draw-a-Man Exam, the first standardized test based on HFDs, was created by Goodenough. (Goodenough, 1926).

The obtained drawings which the researcher got through standard instructions are awarded numbers and points they are attached to the main figure and are dependent on the number of bodily components and their proportions. (Cox,1993).

Procedure

Transgender are a very sensitive, marginalized, socially deprived community. Proper permission was taken from the transgender community in Lahore, Nowshera, and Mardan for the collection of data, In Lahore, the researcher collected data with the help of Kami Sid a well-known transgender activist who has a strong influence in the transgender community, In Nowshera and Mardan the researcher visited those places where transgender lives in a form of community. Data was collected from those adult transgender who willingly expressed an interest in participating. A session of focus group discussion was conducted to build rapport with the participant. Three scales and HFD were administered. i.e. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Morris Rosenberg 1979), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al.,1988), Authenticity Scale (Wood et al.,2008) and Human figure drawing HFD (Koppitz 1983). To make a human figure a pencil and white paper were given to the participants, and it was not time-bound.

Result

The data was collected from 89 transgender. An HFD was conducted on the sample of the study. In the beginning, a few of the participants were reluctant to draw a human figure, but after the researcher convinced them that their information and other material collected from them is used for the research purpose only, they agreed to cooperate.

The Koppitz classification system was used to assess the HFDs of the sample. The Koppitz classification system measured thirty emotional indicators but most of the transgender HFDs showed these indicators i.e., Poor integration, gross asymmetry, transparencies, monster figure, no feet, and no neck.

While the rest of the 24 emotional indicators was indicated in the few individual's HFDs. i.e., shading hands, shading body, shading neck, slanting figure, big figure, tiny figure, tiny head, big figure, tiny head, crossed eyes, teeth, short arms, long arms, arms clinging, big hands, hands cut off, legs together, genital, three or more figure, clouds, no eyes, no nose, no mouth, no body, no arms, and no legs. Which showed that people may suffer from anxiety, poor self-concept, over-aggression, guilt feelings, concern about sexual impulses, withdrawal, instability, depression, a paranoid delusion of grandiosity, intense feeling of intellectual inadequacy, hostility towards others, oral aggression, difficulty in reaching out into the world and towards others, rigidity, fear of castration, guilt feeling on stealing, lack of feelings of identity, etc.

All the participant's HFDs indicated poor integration which depicts instability, immaturity impulsivity, and poorly integrated personality.

72 people in the sample had gross asymmetry in their HFD which also indicates that poorly coordinated personality and integration, impulsivity, and immaturity,

33 among 89 individuals HFDs also have transparencies which indicate immaturity, impulsivity, acting out, and poor judgment. 34 individuals among 89 draw a monster figure which indicates feelings of intense inadequacy and poor self-concept. While 21 among 89 HFDs didn't draw feet in their HFDs which showed helplessness, and feelings of anxiety to having no ground to stand on 31 individuals didn't draw neck in their HFDs which revealed poor impulse control impulsivity, and immaturity These symptoms indicate that transgender mostly have disintegrated personalities, impulsive and immature. That depicts that they have inflexible personalities, do things without any planning, they don't have a balanced and organized attitude. They cannot easily adapt to the changing environment. They try to 'avoid conflicting situations, cannot express their feelings easily, do something without giving it a thought, have feelings of intense inadequacy, have poor self-image poor impulse control, and often expresses anger through their overt behavior.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al.,1988), and the Authenticity Scale (Wood et al.,2008)were also administered.

According to the analysis, there is a positive relationship between perceived social support, self-esteem, and authenticity as authenticity is true to ones feeling and doesn't get influenced by social pressures so the people who have high social support and self-esteem may be more independent, expressive, and have a strong standing. It was also assumed that self-esteem and social support are positive predictors of authenticity, however, only self-esteem is the positive predictor of authenticity. It explains 18.3% of the variance in authenticity. The current study findings also suggest the self-esteem of the transgender who have high perceived social support is also high as compared to the transgender whose perceived social support is low.

It was also concluded that transgender who are in relationships (n=27) scored more on perceived social support as compared to transgender who are single (n=62) (M=47.00, SD=20.59, M=36.24, SD=18.26, t (87)=-2.45,p=.016.

Table 1 Correlation among Self Esteem, Social Support, and Authenticity in Transgender (N=89)

	Social Support	Self Esteem	Authenticity
Social Support	-	.342**	.262**
Self Esteem	-	-	.428**
Authenticity	-	-	-

^{(**} Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels, *correlation is significant at 0.05 levels).

Table 1 results show that there is a positive correlation among Self Esteem, Social Support, and Authenticity in transgender.

Table 2 Mean scores, Standard Deviation, and t-values on Self Esteem with respect to high and low scorers on Social Support (N=89)

Scales	Low Suppor	Social t (n=44)	High Suppo (n=45)				95%CI		Cohen's
	M	SD	M	SD	t(87)	p	LL	UL	d
Self- esteem	25.29	3.65	27.8	4.02	-3.07	0.003	-0.885	-4.12	0.653

Note. CI = Confidence interval; LL = Lower limit; UL = Upper limit,

The result indicates that transgender self-esteem is high, who have more perceived social support.

Table 3 Stepwise Regression Analysis between Self Esteem, Social Support, and Authenticity among transgenders (N=89).

					95% CI
Model	β	R2	ΔR^2	LL	UL
1. Constant Self-esteem	15.9 0.481**	0.183	0.183	10.18 0.265	21.08 0.698

Note. β= Standardized regression weight, R²=Explained variance, Δ R²=change in R² ***p<.001, **p<.05

Stepwise regression analysis is used to identify possible predictors i.e., self-esteem and social support of authenticity. According to the results, self-esteem explains 18.3% of the variance in authenticity and social support was an insignificant predictor.

Discussion

Transgender is one of the most vulnerable, neglected, and marginalized communities in Pakistan. Males predominate in Pakistani society where men are the most privileged gender and all other genders face discrimination from society. Even in the modern era still, women are struggling for their basic human rights which shows the attitude of society towards females. So, if half of the community is facing gender-based discrimination it shows the venerability of the small transgender group of the community. All these social behaviors of society are not only creating social problems but also a lot of psychological and echoviral complications.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Morris Rosenberg 1979), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al.,1988), the Authenticity Scale (Wood et al.,2008), and Human figure drawing HFD (Koppitz 1983) were used to collect data

The HFD scale was used to find out emotional problems in transgender and which results indicated that the six emotional indicators were frequently shown in their HFDs i.e., poor integration, gross asymmetry, transparency, monster figure, no feet, and no neck.

The concern behavioral issues such as immature personality mean improper, maladaptive, or generally juvenile acts or childish attitudes. This study indicates that transgender with emotionally immature behaviors are emotionally immature, lack specific communication skills such as it is difficult for them to express their self, emotional and social abilities, and they also struggle to interact with others.

One other emotional problem which is shown in their HFDs is Impulse behavior which means acting on small issues, emotional reactions, and irrational thinking. Impulsivity may cause a lot of behavioral problems such as aggression, poor concentration, helplessness, shyness, insecurity, inadequate feelings, and guilt feelings.

This study also shows that transgender also has behavioral problems of dual personality and transparency which indicates the notion that one expects others to be able to discern their interior states another aspect of dual personality and transparency is these individuals often lose self-control and sometimes they over-express their self because they feel that they have no self-respect.

Analyzed and mentioned signs also show that transgender tend to be impulsive and immature, with disintegrating personalities. That suggests that they lack a balanced and ordered attitude, are rigid in their behavior, and lack preparation. They struggle to quickly change with their surroundings. They strive to "avoid challenging situations, cannot articulate their thoughts readily, act without thinking first, and experience acute feelings of inadequacy, low self-image, and poor impulse control." They also frequently display rage through their overt conduct.

The previous literature shows that self-esteem, social support, and authenticity are interrelated. Theran (2010), in his study, reported this behavioral phenomenon. The current study results also showed the same pattern of behavior in the transgender that there is a positive coherence among self-esteem, social support, and authenticity. The data analysis also clearly shows that social support (table 2) increases the Self-Esteem.

It was also found that self-esteem is a positive predictor of authentic personality (table 3). High self-esteem indicates how much a person is mature and has a strong, confident, and authentic personality. Koole & Kuhl(2003) study on the relationship between self-esteem and authenticity has also proved that self-esteem and authenticity are interdependent high self-esteem will result in a more authentic personality.

Another definite finding was that transgender in relationships are more confident and have high self-esteem as compared to those who were not in a relationship. Coppola et al.,2021 study on transgender relationships and couples show that a transgender in a relationship can easily overcome transphobia and have strong resistance against transphobia.

Conclusion

The study's findings have shown that mistreatment and negligence of transgender by family and society has made their lives exceedingly difficult, and miserable challenging which results in immaturity, impulsive personality, low self-esteem, and poor self-concept, sense of powerlessness, aggression, and rage. This study's finding shows that there is a positive relationship between perceived social support, self-esteem, and authenticity. The current study also indicates that perceived social support has a significant impact on authenticity and it is a positive predictor of authenticity.

Limitation

Transgender is a complex biological and social behavioral community living in almost the same social environment in society. The majority of transgender hesitate to share their personal life that is why random sample data collection cannot be applied to the transgender community which is why the snowball sampling technique was used. Data was collected from Punjab and KP it was difficult to analyze the racial, religious, and ethnic cultural differences of the sample. In most cases, transgender is reluctant to share data which is why small sample was selected for the study. Religion is one of the prominent things in our society and the transgender community is not only socially deprived but they are also deprived and marginalized religiously this study has not discussed the religious and socio-religious problems of the transgender community. This data was collected from those places where transgender lives collectively transgender living with their families was difficult to find and to collect data.

Suggestions

Behavioral and psychological problems and disorders are still not considered mental health problems in third-world countries. Most of the time socially deprived communities and genders face these problems faces these problems and lake social support from family and society makes these problems worsts.

Transgender or third gender is considered a stigma in society and the attitude of society a very harsh towards them especially when it comes to transgender rights.

We suggest that:

- Basic civil rights, includes third-gender rights should be incorporated in the national curriculum
- Govt should start an awareness campaign for the social rights of transgender.
- Religion is a strong element in our society religion and transgender are also vast fields of study which need proper attention.
- Mostly the researchers are raising social and psychological problems of transgender however very insignificant work has been done for the welfare of the transgender that is why further research required to be done in this area.

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