



CHALLENGES OF SEXUAL MINORITIES AND SPECIAL GROUPS ISSUES

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1. Abstract

In the present scenario, we have awareness about gender equality. But the bitter truth is that we are really not ready to encourage the concept of gender equality. We are reluctant to accept even the opinions of sexual minorities and special groups in the home. In such a prevailing situation, accepting the sexual minorities and special groups as they are, is really a big challenge to the society as it degrades the living condition of these people. Even their livelihood is affected to a great extent. Sexual minorities refer to the gender minorities considered in a group. Special groups refer to the groups which are discriminated from the other groups and whose rights are refused. There are so many psychological factors like stress, anger, frustration which arises due to this discrimination. Challenges faced by them are domestic violence, poor physical health, poor mental health and lack of social well-being. Let us see in detail about the challenges faced by the sexual minorities and special groups.

Key words: *Gender discrimination, inequality, sexual minorities*



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2. Introduction

Though, we always say that gender discrimination is reduced and gender stereotyping is not prevailing it is observed that it is still prevailing in the society we live in. Hence it is observed that there are so many problems which arise in sexual minorities. This paper focusses on the challenges of sexual minorities and special groups. We will also discuss on steps to overcome it.

3. Sexual Minorities

Sexual minorities are a group whose sexual identity, orientation or practices differ from the majority of the surrounding society. Usually, Sexual minorities comprise of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals¹. Male-female dichotomy in hetero-normative societies has created chaos in the life of sexual minorities thus complicating the fact that they are also human beings.

4. Special Groups: -

Groups of persons who experience a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and violence than the general population, including, but not limited to, ethnic minorities, migrants, people with disabilities, isolated elderly people and children.



5. Challenges Faced By Sexual Minorities: -

5.1 Physical Health: -

Sexual Minorities are ignored by the society most of the times. Hence, they feel insecure all the times. They are at high risk of physical, sexual, economical and emotional violence by the normal people. Hence, they have poor physical health. Many transgenders would like to undergo hormonal therapy and sex reassignment surgery (SRS) but they are refused by many hospitals.

5.2 Mental Health: -

Sexual minorities are at a risk for developing emotional disorders because of the stigma and discrimination. Suicide risk has been seen increasing among gender minorities. Transgenders are generally forced to go out of their homes or they voluntarily chose to leave home because of parental rejection or fear of rejection, increasing their risk of homelessness, poverty. They are physically, verbally, and sexually abused, which gets manifested as depression, panic attacks, suicidal ideation, psychological distress, body image disturbance and eating disorders. Sexual minority adolescents leave home more frequently in search of their identity, and are victimized. Heavy alcohol drinking and use of drugs remain a significant public health problem in this population. High level of discrimination may underlie the observations of greater psychiatric morbidity risk among sexual minorities.

5.3 Social Well-Being: -

Extreme social exclusion, discrimination, stigma and atrocities diminish self-esteem and sense of social responsibility. Sexual minorities recognize that they are different from the ‘majority others’, during their adolescence. These people choose to marry under the compulsion of their parents. But these marriages do not make their life peaceful. Instead, it ends up in disharmony and divorce which leads to the poor quality of life. Legal inheritance is often denied by their family members. They are not allowed inside the premises of the educational institutions. Hence, illiteracy is very common among the sexual minority. They are not considered for government jobs. Even if they have a job, they are suspended from the job once their gender identity/sexual orientation is revealed. They are not allowed inside hotels, hospitals, cinema halls, and government offices as indeed in most public spaces. Discrimination and non-friendly environment at work place force them to take up begging and prostitution for their livelihood.

Sexual minorities find it difficult to get a house on rent, and frequently change their residence. Thus, it is difficult for them to produce proof of residence. Subsequently, many of them do not get social or disability pension, voters ID, ration card, passport and many of them do not even get a caste certificate. There have been multiple instances in which they had to approach the court for getting medical certificates. They also get excluded in the population census. Hence, they are a non-existent or an invisible community, who do not get included in any social and health policy.

5.4 Domestic Violence: -

These sexual minorities are not treated with respect in their home itself. They are often ignored and scolded verbally by their family members. They are also treated like slaves to do all the house chores. They are often beaten by family members. Domestic violence is increased to a great extent nowadays.



6. Challenges Faced By Special Groups: -

6.1 Physical Health: -

Being physically unfit, aging, inability to meet their needs make the people fall under the category of special group. These people are physically very weak as they have a lot of physical illness including Kwashiorkor, Marasmus. They might also be physically challenged. Hence, their physical health is said to be affected.

6.2 Mental Health: -

They experience lot of emotional disorders as they experience isolation and exclusion from the society they live. They also experience loneliness which reduces their thinking capability. Hence, they become emotionally weak.

6.3 Social Well-Being: -

Special groups generally have limited access to their surroundings. They always have the thought of insecurity and increased dependency. They always depend on the people around them for their livelihood. Hence, they are often ill-treated by the people who support for their lively hood. They also do not have privacy as their life is under the control of the one taking care of them.

6.4 Domestic Violence: -

Special groups are often considered as a burden by their family. They are treated like slaves. They are often forced to sacrifice their desires and even basic amenities for the sake of the benefit of the other members of the family. As they depend on their family members, they often don't share about the domestic violence they experience with others outside their family.

7. Suggestions To Develop The Quality Of Living In Sexual Minorities: -

7.1 Creating Awareness: -

There are so many laws which ensures the safety of Sexual minorities. Legal Discrimination against the sexuality minorities takes many forms, the most notorious being Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), a British colonial legislation criminalizing homosexual behaviour, that continues to be in the Indian statute book although it has long since been removed from the British statute book. Sexual minority should be given awareness on such laws which supports them.

7.2 Developing Confidence: -

Developing confidence is very important in sexual minorities because they feel insecure and ignored by the society. They must also be motivated to perform well which in turn will reduce the feeling of loneliness and exclusion.

7.3 Conducting Discussions: -

Live interactions must be conducted along with the public so that they understand the real feeling, problems and challenges of the sexual minorities.

7.4 Interventions: -

- early diagnosis, in order to promote early and optimal management;
- optimizing physical and mental health, functional ability and well-being;
- identifying and treating accompanying physical illness;
- detecting and managing challenging behaviour; and



- providing information and long-term support to carers.

8. Suggestions To Develop The Quality Of Living In Special Groups: -

8.1 Creating Safe Society: -

Providing security and freedom. Providing adequate housing through supportive housing policy. Social support for special group people and their caregivers, health and social programmes targeted at vulnerable groups such as those who live alone and rural populations or who suffer from physical illness must be conducted periodically.

8.2 Promoting Health: -

Giving them proper medication and giving good treatment at time increases their health. They also need to be treated with love and care as they need to be totally free of isolated feeling.

8.3 Encouraging Public Participation: -

NGOs and public must be encouraged to interact with special groups. Public must also be allowed to take care of them as they can learn and feel the challenges of the special groups. This in turn also eliminates the feeling of isolation and loneliness of special groups.

8.4 Counselling And Guidance: -

Most of the special group people are psychologically or mentally affected hence proper counselling must be given to them to eliminate the insecure feeling. They must also be guided to lead a successful life.

9. Conclusion: -

We understand about the challenges faced by the sexual minorities and special groups. We need to create an inclusive system where all the people are treated equally. We should work on developing plans to give priority to the sexual minorities and in future even separate reservation could be made to meet the demands of the sexual minorities and special groups. However, it is in the hands of the citizens to understand that all are human and all of them need to be treated with love and care.

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