

# A study to assess the emotional distress among transgender

Mr.Alfred Solomon<sup>1\*</sup>,Ms.J.Achutha<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Clinical Instructor, Department of Mental Health Nursing, Saveetha College of Nursing, SIMATS, Chennai, India

<sup>2</sup>B.Sc (Nursing) IV Year, Saveetha College of Nursing, SIMATS  
Thandalam, Chennai 602105

## ABSTRACT

*The term transgender typically refers to individuals whose gender identity & or gender expression is not congruent with the sex they were assigned at birth. For some individuals this may mean that they want to transition from one gender to another, while for others it may indicate dissatisfaction with the gender binary as applicable to their identity. These individuals may identify as transgender, gender queer, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, or other related term. The recent estimates suggest that there are at least 490,000 transgender in India. Hence a study aimed to assess the emotional distress among transgender. The objectives of the study are to assess the emotional distress among transgender and to find the association between emotional distresses with selected demographical variable among transgender. Descriptive design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the 100 samples. The demographic variables were assessed by self administered questionnaire and emotional distress was assessed with Robertson emotional distress scale. The data was collected, organized and analyzed in term of descriptive statistics. The study results showed that 49(49%) mild distress, 37(37%) moderate distress & 14(14%) severe emotional distress. The demographic variables such as age, occupation, daily income are found significant. Our results suggest that decreasing gender discrimination/victimization could have a profound impact on emotional distress among transgender individuals. In addition, building social support and increasing awareness of legal protection may promote emotional well-being in this population.*

**KEY WORDS:** Transgender, emotional distress

## INTRODUCTION:

The term transgender typically refers to individuals whose gender identity & or gender expression is not congruent with the sex they were assigned at birth. For some individuals this may mean that they want to transition from one gender to another, while for others it may indicate dissatisfaction with the gender binary as applicable to their identity.<sup>(1)</sup>

They often face discrimination in education, housing, health, employment, and official bureaucratic dealings. They are often required to tend to jobs below their intellectual capacity. many generate income from petty extortion, performing at ceremonies, through begging & sex work violence against transgender, especially towards sex workers, is common and occurs in a variety of settings many transgender have experienced abuse during childhood, and the rates of sexual abuse have been reported to be higher in transgender than those with other transgender than those with other gender orientations these adverse life circumstance are likely to have adverse psychological impact on transgender.<sup>(1)</sup>

They are considered at a disadvantaged minority position. Transgender are quite often made to live on the fringe of the society, and are referred with derogatory labels like 'hires' the societal outlook, as well as acceptance of transgender has been quite different in India than the western cultures. These individuals may identify as transgender, gender queer, gender fluid, gender non-conforming, or other related term. The recent estimate suggests that there are at least 490,000 transgender in India.<sup>(2)</sup>

A report on transgender people published by UNAIDS in 2014 mentioned that 65% to 85% of transgender people experienced verbal abuse 25% to 45% faced physical abuse and almost 20% were sexually abused, since transgender are faced with considerable psycho-social adversity & social exclusion, it is likely that they suffer from emotional distress.<sup>(3)</sup>

Sexuality is related to an individual's sex, gender identity and expression and sexuality orientation. LGBT is an acronym used to denote the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. The plight of the LGBT community has various aspects. Starting with difficulties in identity formation and synthesis (Huebner et. al., 2004) and being rejected by their families (Ryan et. al., 2009) to facing discrimination, being victimized and marginalized in all spheres encompassing education, employment, housing, health care, legal systems.<sup>(4)</sup>

Stigmatization of transgender the stigma and discrimination towards the transgender starts right from the adolescence when they are in their parental care. The society neglects the community not considering as human being. Every day, transgender and general non-conforming people bear the brunt of social and economic marginalization due to discrimination based on their gender identity or expression.

Transgender are mainly faced many problems in their society because people are avoiding them and mostly they face verbal abuse and disappointments. We bring shame for our family; we cannot do anything good for society; we live in extremely bad life condition; we are abused and harassed all the time; and we are treated as strangers in the society. Our life is no better than that of an animal. Whether we survive or die, no one cares and no one bothers, and we also do not care for anyone. This was reflected in the voice of middle aged transgender individuals.<sup>(5)</sup>

Moreover, transgender encounter more extensive prejudice and violence due to problem with gender identity (Xavier, 2000). These instill in them fear of rejection, concealment from the society, minority stress, internalized homo/bi/trans phobia and disturbed pattern of emotions reactions.

People with internal and external locus of control differ in the nature and effectiveness of their appraisal and coping behavior in the face of stressors. As per Parks (1984), people with an internal locus of control show more adaptive coping strategies than those with an external locus.<sup>(6)</sup>

**On 15 April 2014 Justice KS Radhakrishnan**, who headed the two-judge Supreme Court bench, said in his ruling that recognition of transgender as a third gender is not social or medical issues but human rights issues." Transgender also citizens of India "and they must be "provided equal opportunity to grow", the court said." The spirit of the constitution is to provide equal opportunity to every citizen to grow and attain their potential, irrespective of caste, religion or gender." This verdict has no doubt raised a voice against the violation of human rights of a minority group of citizen of a country who were economically marginalized, socially stigmatized and politically deprived. The objectives of the study are to assess the emotional distress among transgender and to find the association between emotional distresses with selected demographical variable among transgender.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The present study has adopted quantitative approach with Descriptive research design with 100 samples who matched the inclusion criteria were selected by purposive sampling technique. The demographic variables consist of age, religion, mother tongue, educational status, occupation, daily income. Robertson emotional distress scale was used to assess the emotional distress among transgender. The study investigator explained to the transgender about the study's objectives; consent to participate in the study. The investigator then provided instruction for first filling the Robertson emotional distress scale and then guided the transgender understanding of each question was checked. During the filling of questionnaires, the investigator clarify the doubts and checking for completeness of filling up the questionnaire, after the questionnaire were collected. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

Out of 100 samples 49(49%) belongs to the age group of 30-49 years, 60(60%) were Hindus, 42(42%) were illiterates, 40(40%) were employed by daily wages, 40(40%) had earning Rs.500-1000.

**TABLE-I LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS AMONG TRANSGENDER**

LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Mild	49	49%
Moderate	37	37%
Severe	14	14%
Total	100	100%

Table-1 shows that transgender mild distress 49(49%); moderate distress 37(37%) & severe emotional distress 14(14%).

The present study also supported to the study finding of **AliyaButtar et al** a study to assess psychological distress among transgender. After controlling for age, gender, race and education, increasing levels of discrimination/victimization were associated with increasing odds of psychological distress: 1-2 types [AOR=3.51 (95% CI=1.21, 10.25); p=.02], 3-4 types [AOR=4.61 (95% CI=1.53, 13.92); p=.007], and 5-6 types [AOR=23.03 (95% CI=5.80, 91.36); p<.001]. Our results suggest that decreasing gender discrimination/victimization could have a profound impact on psychological distress among transgender individuals.

**TABLE II: MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS AMONG TRANSGENDER**

ROBERTSON EMOTIONAL DISTRESS SCALE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Mild	12.48	12.9
Moderate	12.53	16.4
Severe	5.92	14.7

The statistical values Mean 12.48 and Standard deviation of 12.9 of people mild level, moderate level of Mean 12.53 and Standard deviation of 16.4, Mean 5.92 and Standard deviation 14.7 Severe.

**TABLE III: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE EMOTIONAL DISTRESS WITH SELECTIVE DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AMONG TRANSGENDER**

S.NO	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	MILD DISTRESS		MODERATE DISTRESS		SEVERE DISTRESS		CHI SQUARE VALUE
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
1.	<b>AGE</b>							X <sup>2</sup> =41.608 Df=4 P=0.0000 S
	a) 18-29 years	4	4%	6	6%	11	11%	
	b) 30-49 years	15	15%	33	33%	1	1%	
	c) 50-69 years	8	8%	22	22%	0	0	
2.	<b>OCCUPATION</b>							X <sup>2</sup> =9.730 Df=4 P=0.0452 S
	a)Unemployment	19	19%	10	10%	2	2%	
	b)Daily wages	15	15%	25	25%	0	0%	
	c)Others	14	14%	15	15%	0	0%	
3.	<b>DAILY INCOME</b>							X <sup>2</sup> =20.092 Df=4 P=0.0005 S
	a)500-1000rs	25	25%	13	13%	2	2%	
	b)2000rs	10	10%	6	6%	15	15%	
	c)5000rs	14	14%	10	10%	5	5%	

**TABLE III:** the above the table shows that there are significant variables between the demographic variables such as age, occupation, daily income and non significant variables between the demographic variables such as religion, mother tongue, education.

This was accordance with studies conducted by **Youth J, adolesc, et al** a study to assess emotional distress among transgender. They were also more likely than heterosexual, non-transgendered youth to report suicidal ideation (30% vs. 6%,  $p < 0.0001$ ) and self-harm (21% vs. 6%,  $p < 0.0001$ ). Increased depressive symptomatology Perceived discrimination is a likely contributor to emotional distress among LGBT youth.

This was accordance with studies conducted by **Beth Hoffman et al** study to assess the Rates of depression are higher in transgender women than in the general population, warranting an understanding of the variables Future studies should explore a model of depression and high-risk behaviours in transgender women.

**Chodzen G et al** had conducted a study minority stress factors associated with depression and anxiety among Transgender and gender nonconforming youth adolescent and young adults experience mental health problems, including anxiety and depression, The methods of sample consist of adolescent of TGNS patients (N=109) who completed behavior health screening questionnaires was used.

**HasiruvalliGangappa et al** Had conducted a study to assess the Resilience among Transgender persons, They study through consecutive sampling method. Davidson resilience scale was administered. The result revealed that have scored on low (56.30) in the resilience scale, this suggest poor resilience status of the respondents.

**Witcomb GL et al** Had a study to assess the level of depression in transgender people is a serious disorder which significantly impacts wellbeing and quality of life. The result revealed that transgender increased risk of probable depressive disorder, the lower self-esteem, poor interpersonal function and predicted depressive disorder. This study confirms that transgender individual have an increased risk of a depressive disorder.

## CONCLUSION

Our results suggest that decreasing gender discrimination/victimization could have a profound impact on emotional distress among transgender individuals. In addition, building social support and increasing awareness of legal protection may promote emotional well-being in this population.

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