

Challenges and Opportunities: Exploring Lived Experiences of Transgenders during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted practically every aspect of life around the world, most notably the marginalized transgender population. As a result, the current study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of transgender persons in Dera Ghazi Khan, South Punjab, Pakistan, during the covid-19. The objectives of this study were to explore the challenges, opportunities and coping strategies used by transgender during covid-19 pandemic. In the current qualitative study, 15 transgender were recruited with their consent utilizing snowball sampling. An interview guide was used to conduct in-depth interviews. The interviews were auto-recorded in Siraiki language, translated, and transcribed for analysis. The findings of the study revealed that almost all transgender people believed that covid-19 pandemic is a global rumor spread by unscrupulous politicians in order to make money, as none of them have been impacted by it so far. The participants claimed to be isolated and ignored by the society at large during the pandemic which made them more vulnerable. They faced many socio-economic problems as well as physical and psychological health issue during the pandemic. The studies on transgender population in Pakistan is generally limited particularly literature on the impact of covid-19 on them. The current study explores the lived experiences of transgender community in order to draw the attention of government organizations, NGOs and private sector agencies to the needs of this marginalized community.

1. Introduction

Coronavirus was first discovered in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019 (Arshad et al., 2020). Since then, the global social, political, and financial activities have been interrupted by it (Banerjee et al., 2020). The covid-19 outbreak has further increased social and political disparities across the globe, allowing disease and mortality to circulate freely among socially marginalized groups.

Transgender community has been one of the most vulnerable groups throughout the pandemic. Transgender is a diverse group of people whose internal sense of gender identity and gender expression is different than that which they were assigned at birth. They make up about 0.3-0.5 percent of the world's population (WHO, 2015). It is a highly stigmatized and marginalized group that has been affected more than the general population due to existing structural inequalities. Recent studies show that the sexual minorities experienced a lack of specific support, unemployment, job loss, psychological suffering, and mental health disparities during the epidemic (Kidd et al., 2021; Kaneale & Becares, 2020).

During the pandemic, the transgender people were mostly restricted in south Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh, which share similar social and economic concerns (Coulombe et al., 2020). Although the restrictions were put in place to save human lives, it exposed the transgender community to a slew of additional dangers. Since most transgender people make their income on the streets through begging, street entertainment, and paid sex, the Covid-19 shutdown in India put them at risk of hunger and poverty

(Priyadarshini et al., 2020). Similarly, prolonged shutdowns in Bangladesh resulted in transgender people losing their jobs, borrowing money, and eating less (Ahmed & Sifat, 2021). Just like neighbouring countries, the transgender population in Pakistan endures cultural and legal prejudice on a regular basis, but the coronavirus outbreak has made things even more difficult for them. The cultural and institutional discrimination result in a lack of education and work prospects among them (Bari, 2020). Transgenders people are usually rejected by their family and left alone to live their life. Therefore, they live apart from the rest of the society, overseen by mentors or gurus who provide them with assistance and stand by them in times of need (Khan et al., 2020).

The transgender community is also vulnerable to a variety of health problems due to societal stigma, social inequity, unemployment, and a lack of educational opportunities. Studies in Pakistan have shown that transgender people have a greater risk of mental illnesses than the general population (Khan et al., 2019; Zubair, 2022), and they face major barriers when seeking healthcare (Manzoor et al., 2022). Violation of their fundamental human rights and lack of societal support make them prone to risky behaviours such as suicidal ideation/attempts, prostitution and drug addiction. Amid covid-19 pandemic, the transgender people are facing emotional, physical, and social challenges more than ever before (Wang et al., 2020). There is a growing body of knowledge about the impact of pandemics on transgender communities around the world, but little is known about the subject in Pakistan. The scarcity of literature highlights the need of understanding on the topic. Hence this study aims to explore transgender people's experiences in Pakistan in relation to the covid-19 pandemic. The findings of this study could be beneficial in designing policies and plans catering to the transgenders needs.

2. Limitations of the study

- The study included only 15 participants, which limits the ability to generalize findings to the broader transgender population.
- The study was conducted only in Dera Ghazi Khan, South Punjab, so findings may not represent transgender individuals in other regions of Pakistan.
- As a qualitative study, the findings are based on subjective lived experiences and cannot be statistically generalized.
- Interviews were conducted in Siraiki and later translated and transcribed, which may have led to loss of meaning or interpretation bias.
- The study relied solely on in-depth interviews, without triangulation through other methods (e.g., observations, surveys, or document analysis).

3. Materials and Methods

This study used an interpretive research approach to explore challenges, opportunities and coping strategies used by transgender population in city Dera Gazi Khan, Pakistan during covid-19. Fifteen transgenders were recruited by using snowball sampling. Most appropriate participants were chosen through the inclusion criteria, which included: (a) transgender living in the urban areas of (b) adult (over the age of 18) transgender (c) willingness to participate in the study.

An interview guide was used to conduct in-depth interviews. Prior to the actual interview, the participants' consent to participate in the study was obtained as a requirement. The interviews took place at transgender people's homes/dera. Each interview lasted between 30 and 40 minutes on average. The entire interview began with informal discussions and simple introduction questions, addressing socio-demographic characteristics, to generate and sustain informants' attention. Following the initial talks, participants were able to share a variety of challenging and profound experiences. As a result, participants' interest and confidence grew as the interview proceeded. The audio tape recorder was used in conjunction with the writing notes with their permission in order to capture both verbal and non-verbal communication.

The researcher's largest challenge during the data collection process was locating the potential participants. The nature of their jobs made them unavailable most of the time. Sometimes when the researcher visited their deras, they were not there, so in such case the researcher had to wait, till they could get free and get ready for the interview. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and translated from Siraiki to English for analysis. Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis was used to make sense of the collected data. This analysis followed six phases to derive the themes: (1) Familiarising with the data (2) Generating initial codes, (3) Searching for themes (4) Reviewing themes (5) Defining and naming themes and (6) producing the report. A total of eight major themes emerged from data analysis. The major themes include (1) Transgenders' perception about covid-19 pandemic (2) Life during covid-19 pandemic (3) Socio-cultural challenges (4) Financial challenges (5) Physical and psychological challenges, (6) Opportunities during covid-19 pandemic (7) Strategies to deal with covid-19 pandemic and lastly (8) Suggestion to deal with covid-19 pandemic crisis. The following Table I summaries the codes and the themes.

Table 1 Major Themes and Codes

Major Themes	Codes
1. Transgenders' perception about covid-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global virus • Political propaganda • Serious disease/virus
2. Life during covid-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No support from any Government or NGOs. • Vulnerability • Forced migration
3. Socio-cultural challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social isolation • Constraining to communication • Gender identity as stumbling block • Face prejudice • Bullied by people
4. Financial challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sever financial crisis • Poverty • Loss of earning source • Hunger situation/ Food shortage • Unable to maintain household expenses
5. Physical and Psychological Health challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental disorders • Anxiety-related issues • Stress issue
6. Opportunities during covid-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political scenario • Assistance provided by neighborhood
7. Strategies to deal with covid-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begging • Prostitute • Support from their community
8. Suggestion to deal with covid-19 pandemic crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of monthly food stuff • Respectable earning source • Shelter security • Not closing the economic activities • Free from hose rents or other bills • Equal human rights

The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards set by the British Sociological Association that ensured consent, confidentiality, and anonymity of the research participants. The study was reviewed and approved by the University of Management and Technology (UMT), Lahore, Pakistan (reference no. RE-008-2021). Moreover, informed consent was obtained from all the participants for being included in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by omitting respondents' name and personal identification.

4. Results and Discussion

The following table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the research participants. The current study included fifteen transgender people. A significant majority of them (n=5) was under the age of 20, with around two-thirds of the population belonging to the age groups of 20-29 and above 40 years, respectively. Although more than one quarter's population (n=5) had completed primary school, just one participant (n=1) had completed their intermediate. More than half of the participants (n=11) were local residents of the research site, whereas a small number of themes were had migrated from other cities. Most of the participants (n=11) were making their ends meet by begging, dancing, and sex-work/prostitution whereas the rest (n=4) were working as tailor, electricians. The participant's average monthly income of the participant during the lockdown was about 6000-10,000 PKR (USD 34-57).

Table 2 Demographic Information of the Participants

Characteristics	N=15	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
Less than 20	5	33.3
20-29	4	26.7
30-39	2	13.3
Above than 40	4	26.7
Education		
Illiterate	3	20.0
Primary	5	33.3
Middle	3	20.0
Metric	3	20.0
F.A	1	6.7
Residential Area (Dera Ghazi Khan)		
Locals	11	73.3
Non-Locals	4	26.7
Earning Sources		
Electrician	4	26.7
Tailor	1	6.7
Begging, Dancing and Sex-worker	11	73.3
Monthly Income		
Less than 5000	2	13.3
6000-10,000	11	73.3
11,000-15,000	1	6.7
16,000-20,000	1	6.7

Transgenders’ Perception about Covid-19 pandemic

This was an emerging theme from the data that all of the research participants reported that they have never been effected with the coronavirus or not even they need tested for it, because all of the research participants believed that this covid-19 pandemic is not a real virus. They further added that they have not seen in their surroundings, their neighboring and even in their community who died with the covid-19 pandemic. So, they concluded that it is just propaganda by the corrupt politician or is a global rumor.

Sadia (aged 39):

Covid-19 is nothing more than a fear which is created among people by corrupt politicians or it can be a global rumor. During Covid-19, we (transgender persons) never get affected with this virus. Even, no one is effected or dead with this in my surroundings. If it is a virus or disease then why we did not get affect.

Sana (aged 29):

When lockdown started then I come to know that there is a virus which is called covid-19 pandemic. I heard many rumors about the coronavirus that this is fake, just propaganda not a serious disease but I think maybe this would be a serious disease because this pandemic disturbs the entire world and entire the world is affected by this pandemic [...] and this pandemic leads our transgender community in serious crisis.

Shabnam (aged 33):

I do not believe that the covid-19 pandemic is a serious virus. Because in my surroundings I did not see that people take this as a serious virus, even nobody wears a mask or other precautions against corona virus. Just in the starting few days when during this pandemic lockdown was imposed by the government, I feel fear but as days were passing the intensity of sacredness become less.

Life during Covid-19 Pandemic

Under this theme of the present research, the researcher wants to identify the facts about the life of transgender during the covid-19 pandemic, how they spend their life during this crisis, what kind of challenges they face or how they meet their basic needs during this pandemic situation. Have they experienced any change in their routine during this pandemic, their living in the lockdown and either they are satisfied with their living during this pandemic or not?

Rani (aged 45):

This pandemic makes my life very difficult and leads me Hunger situation. Because when this pandemic start day by day my living become very tough, I have to leave my house because I was living in a rented house with my Goro and my Goro is aged so their responsibilities are mine [...] As lockdown start everything become down in my life because my source of income was bagging dancing and singing but due to the close of marriage and function hall life was uneasy.

Saleem Shah (aged 20):

When government-imposed lockdown, everything was closed and I become isolated from everything because there was nothing to do, no happiness just vulnerability, I live in a rented house with other five transgender. When in the morning we get up, I live in the house while my other transgender goes outside the door for bagging and they return after 10 O'clock (pm) when everyone sleep we cooked our food.

Anjum (aged 21):

This covid-19 pandemic has affected my life very badly because I am a single earner of my family my father has died a few months ago during this covid-19 pandemic in an accident and my mother is ill with hepatitis, and I have three siblings and one elder brother who lives separately with his family and the responsibility of my family is just on me, I am working as a tailor on a shop where in normal days I can earn minimum 20,000 per month but during this covid-19 pandemic when lockdown start the market remain closed I become unemployed due to that my family have to face poverty and this hurts me a lot.

Socio-cultural Challenges

The country was put under a nationwide lockdown from 1st April and extended twice until 9 May. Upon its end, the lockdown was eased in phases. After the first wave, the country has battled covid-19 by using "smart lockdowns" and enforcing SOPs. All the participants reported that social and physical distancing is all time problem for our community not just the covid-19 pandemic crisis. They responded that not only we but our whole transgender community is facing similar problems like food shortage, financial crisis, mental disorders, and social distancing etc. Furthermore, they exposed that whenever they go to the people ask for help, people impolitely queried them that do not rush here and go back from our doors. This was not just during this pandemic but in normal days people even children in the streets makes fun of us. Most of the participants (n=13) added that still we are not socially accepted.

Chahat (aged 41):

I lost my source of income and whenever I go with my other transgender asking for help to people, in the street even child tease us, calls us khusra and zanana also with other bad names and gaze us [...] So this was very unbearable for me that why people are socializing their children in this manner. They are hurting us and this makes me cry that I can die with hunger but I cannot bear people's bad behavior. I didn't know why God has created us where we are neglected from everywhere.

Sadia (aged 39):

During the lockdown, I cannot bear living in the rented house I go back to my home there my neighbors and relatives make me deprived, and starting annoy to my parents that this zanana cannot live between us. At that time of pandemic crisis, I leave the house because it was difficult for me to saw my parents in criticism.

Sana (aged 29):

The change in this pandemic situation was that before covid-19 just our Transgender community faces gender stereotypes, identity issue people make fun of us but in this pandemic, we also become poor more dependent on society because very few from us have any skill or educated but the major source of income of our community is bagging and dancing, our situation is very miserable (participant cries twice while having interview) and people do not like to talk with us.

Few participants like, Anum (aged 23) and Arzoo (aged 27) reported that during this pandemic we experienced that nobody helps support us, even more, other people are (male and females) supported by their families and relatives but we transgender people have no support from everywhere. They added that people felt fear even we transgenders do not involve in criminal activities (drug use, smuggling, robbery, murder etc.) which can be source of threat for them but people hate us never give respect us.

Financial Challenges

Another emerging theme from the data was monetary issues. Some questions were asked to transgenders such as that how much it was challenging for them to full fill their necessities during this pandemic crisis? All the research participant reported that during this covid-19 pandemic they faced a lot of problems like even it was difficult to eat one-time meals, as most of them were living in a rented house and the rents/bill of house, other gas and electricity bills, they were unable to pay these expenses. Even, they have to leave the rented house because the owner of the house forces them to leave the house just because of that they cannot

afford the rents. Because of that mostly they lived in anxiety and depression during this pandemic just because of how they will afford all these expenses.

All the research participants reported that the major problem during this covid-19 was financial issues if we have strong enough financially then it was easy to full fill our basic needs in this covid-19. Even one research participant stated that whenever I go out, I even cannot afford to buy a face mask. Majority of the participants (n=11) having their source of income from bagging, dancing, singing and sometimes as prostitute.

Sana (aged 29):

This covid-19 affected my life very badly. I live with four other transgender of my community, our source of income was bagging, dancing and singing and sometimes we do work as prostitute. When lockdown starts all the functions hall remain closed, where we were performed and got a lot of money and

Some savings and look after of our family were feasible, but during this lockdown, we remain closed in our houses because there was nothing to do, a sudden change in a routine where we remain in isolation.

Anjum (aged 21):

I am a single earner of my family. My father has died a few months ago during this covid-19 period in an accident and my mother is ill with hepatitis. I am working as a tailor on a shop where in normal days I can earn minimum 20,000 per month but during this covid-19 pandemic when lockdown start the market remain closed I become unemployed due to that my family have to face poverty and this hurts me a lot.

Zahra (aged 43):

I am working in a shop as an Electrician and have an earning 200- 300 per day. In this little amount I am unable to full fill my basic needs (food, household rents or bills).

Chahat (aged 41):

Just ten percent out of hundred percent people help us, as people give us 5 or 10 rupees in which how we can full fill our needs in a period of economic instability (inflation), where everything is very expensive.

Majority of the participants (n=13) do not get any kind of social support from their surroundings; just a few transgender individuals get help from their neighborhood.

Saima (aged 25):

Few people facilitated us by flour and money provisions and one week foodstuff can be managed. One Participant responded that "I just learn that this covid-19 pandemic is good for people who are financially strong but poor people similar to us facing a serious crisis in this pandemic crisis".

Physical and Psychological challenges

Under this theme some of the questions were asked to transgenders about had they experience any physical and psychological health issues in this pandemic? The majority of the research participants (n=13) reported that during this pandemic they face serious mental disorders like anxiety, depression, due to financial crisis and social isolation. Furthermore, no one of them gets affected to covid-19 virus and had not faced any physical health issues during covid-19 pandemic. Shabnum (aged 33): During Covid-19 pandemic, I remained isolated, have no work to do. It depressed me a lot.

Sana (aged 29):

This covid-19 affected my life very badly. I live with four other transgender of my community, our source of income was bagging, dancing and singing and sometimes we do work as prostitute. When lockdown starts all the functions hall remain closed, where we were performed and got a lot of money and some savings and look after of our family were feasible, but during this lockdown, we remain closed in our houses because there was nothing to do, a sudden change in a routine where we remain in isolation.

Saleem (aged 20):

During Covid-19 pandemic, I am unable to fulfill my basic needs due to loss of my employment opportunities such as dancing and singing. I have no choice other than begging. I am unable to support my family and my community. It's a major source of depression and anxiety for me.

Rani (aged 45):

During Covid-19, I have never effected with this so called virus or disease. So, I have to face no physical or psychological issues related to Covid-19 pandemic.

Opportunities during Covid-19 Pandemic

As concerned for political scenario of the Government of Pakistan, on 24 March, then Prime Minister approved Rs 1.2 trillion economic relief packages. Of this, a total of Rs 150 billion was allotted for low-income groups, particularly labourers (The Nation, 2020). Furthermore, under the package the monthly stipend of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) was increased from Rs. 2,000 to Rs 3,000. It was decided that the funds of the government's Ehsaas programme would be distributed among the poor

according to the available data of the BISP and through the under progress National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) of the BISP (The Dawn, 2020). The federal cabinet reviewed and approved the economic relief package on 31 March.

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) finalized the package, including Rs 100-billion supplementary grant for an Emergency Relief Fund to combat the pandemic. It also approved a special package for relief to 12 million poor families through cash assistance under the Ehsaas Programme, where cash grants would be

provided under the Kafalat Programme and emergency cash assistance to the poor on the recommendation of the district administration (Imran et al., 2020). Furthermore, Zakat funds worth Rs. 870 million were also released to help around 170,000 families.

Fourteen participants reported that no one help us except our few neighbors in this covid-19 pandemic. They added further that they take loans from some people for the payments of household expenditures. As the government has announced the economic relief for financial assistance and for house rents compensations but they did not get any kind of relief.

Arzoo (aged 27):

During this pandemic, I experienced that as government give some amount for needy people but we transgender did not get this amount. Even food stuff was given by the government to needy but the concerned authorizes did not register our transgender community. Just few transgender get the amount of money and food stuff but the majority of us did not get this aid.

Rani (aged 45):

Once I was standing in a line where the government allows some amount of money for poor people during this pandemic but everyone in the line makes fun of me [...] They are saying why this khusra is standing in this line with us so I left the line and came back to my home. This kind of behavior hurts me a lot.

Strategies to deal with covid-19 pandemic

This was one of the major themes that were emerged from the data. The research asked some question like what are the strategies which transgender community used to cope with pitiable situation. All the research participants reported that it was very difficult to cope with these challenges as before the covid-19 pandemic, basic needs can easily be full filled. A very few people support them but it was not satisfactory. Few research participants reported that the member of their transgender community helped to each other. Some of the research participants reported that they migrated to different places during this pandemic. Bagging or sometimes prostitution, are their main source of income during this pandemic which is not sufficient but they are compelled to do.

Anum (aged 23):

During covid-19 pandemic, some of our neighbors provide us some food stuff which hardly sufficient to a week. We (transgender community) supported each other in spite of having lack of finance or poverty issues.

Rani (aged 45):

During this period, no one supported us. Even our families' did not support us. Our Government didn't support us. We are certainly bound for begging or working as prostitute.

Suggestion to Deal with Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis

The last major theme of the present research was a suggestion to deal with the pandemic crisis. This theme showed that the transgender communities provide some suggestions to the government so that they can cope with this pandemic crisis, which is like, provide us monthly grocery, providing us respectable earning source, take the responsibility of our shelter (household expenses like /rents and bills), our acceptance in society, some amount of money/stipend and equal rights as other gender having in society.

Hina (aged 37):

If the government takes the obligation of our transgender community as provide us employment or provide us a permanent house so that we can feel free not having the fear of homeless just because of during this pandemic rents or other bills were not affordable for us [...]

Rani (aged 45):

I request to the government to take the responsibility of our employment, gives us equal gender-based rights and gives us monthly stipend [...] so that we can cope in this pandemic situation, because there is no one for our help even our families do not support us, even we support back to our families.

In this study, the transgender community was studied by using theoretical lens stigmatization model introduced by Link and Phelan in 2001(Omer et al., 2021). The relevancy of this model with the present research demonstrated that just because of stigma on the identity of transgender individuals, they have to bump into discrimination, status loss, societal rejection, gender stereotyping, labeling, and prejudice against their social identity. Because of social stigma, the society fashioned partition into "us" and "them" groups to the transgender individuals. As the pervasiveness of cultural dogmas links with those characterized or

labeled to opposing traits. Transgender individuals are labeled and cited in diverse groups that assistance to make a sense of discontinuation among the “us” and “them”. Transgender individuals are labeled or stigmatized persons in society experience as “discrimination and status loss” which indications to unsatisfactory circumstances.

Stigma may also affect the behaviors of those individuals who are stigmatized by society. Those individuals, who are labeled, frequently start to behave in expected ways as stigmatized in certain ways by people who made them stigmatized. This not simply changes their actions but also figures their emotion or feelings and beliefs. Adherents of stigmatized groups frequently experience prejudice that roots depression such as discrimination or prejudice. This stigma leads an individual's social identity in bullying circumstances, for instance, low self-esteem. Just because of this the identity models and theories have become exceedingly investigated. Individuals of stigmatized or labeled groups become aware, that they are not actually treated in the same way and they are probably discriminated against or prejudice against.

As previously explains according to the model that sigma on transgender identities, such as differentiation and labeling, linking to stereotypes, us and them and Status loss and discrimination. These are the factors that are interrelated one factor leads to the other factor, however, the transgender individual remains vulnerable during the covid-19 pandemic. They face discrimination during this pandemic and live in severe conditions, just because of societal stigma on their gender identity they were prejudiced and devalued. In a global scenario, their situation is not deviating to Pakistan during this period of covid-19 pandemic. The findings of the study corresponding to previous studies which are conducted in different countries for instance, Kantamneni (2020) in US, Priyadarshini et al. (2020) in India, Akhter (2020) in Banglades, and Coulombe et al. (2020) in Canada. These studies described that transgender community have faced mental, physical and social problems during Covid-19 period Particularly, in the case to Pakistan, they have been the victims of social, political, economic, cultural, and religious marginalization. They have been the victims of physical, emotional, and psychological violence across the country. Families disown them; public harass them, and state fails to protect them. Every now and then one learns about the brutal murder of the transgender persons. Some are killed at private dance parties; some are beaten to death by intolerant fanatics at public place and a few even die in their house by their own families. They have been struggling to merely survive.

This is the state of transgenders in the land of the pure (Khan & Alam, 2021). In the meanwhile, Pakistan has tried to ensure the protection of its transgender community through legislation acts. The Supreme Court of Pakistan agreed to give transgender equal rights like other citizens of this country with protection under the article 4 and 9 of the Pakistani constitution 1973. In 2013, they got as same rights as all citizens of Pakistan. The federal and provincial governments give them basic equal rights of national ID card, employment, education, health, work in governments' different departments during the comparable period of time (Saddique & Ahmad, 2009). This change is a result of the continuous struggle and activism of the transgender community augmented by the role of the state, judiciary, media, civil society and national/international organizations (Khan, 2020).

Literature review and findings of the study clearly mentioned that, the government of Pakistan has passed bills and made laws in order to protect the rights of transgenders, but it has failed in implementing those laws in practice as there is a huge gap between theory and practice at governmental level. A large number of transgenders are still clinging to their old profession of begging, dancing, singing and prostitution.

5. Future implication

- Future emergency planning should explicitly include transgender needs, especially access to gender-affirming care, hormone therapy, and mental health services during crises.
- Health systems must develop contingency plans to prevent disruption of essential trans-specific medical services in future pandemics or disasters.
- There is a need for long-term, trans-affirming psychological support systems to address anxiety, depression, and trauma experienced during emergencies.
- Telemedicine and online counseling should be strengthened and made more accessible to ensure continuous healthcare access for transgender individuals.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the challenges, opportunities and strategies used by transgender community during covid-19 pandemic. Earlier in Pakistan, transgender community had to suffer socio-cultural, monetary and legal discernment on the daily basis. As for concerned the findings of the currents study, things have changed even more insecure for them during this coronavirus pandemic. During the lockdown and social distance making period all the transgender urgently need food, cleaning supplies, medicine, safe housing, and general economic support. It is clear that these days they have very miniature coinage to live on, little foodstuff to feed themselves, and even a benign space to stay secure and healthy. Most of them are compelled by begging, street entertainment, and paid sex. It can be concluded that the covid-19 pandemic

and the prolonged lockdown have had negative impact on the transgender community. During this pandemic, government with the support of other community members/stock holders such as family, media, religious leaders, teachers, and health specialists should facilitate them by providing health care facilities and by creating employment opportunities for them as well.

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