

# Transwomen Domestic Workers in Jamshedpur City (Jamshedpur, Jharkhand)

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**Abstract-** The continuing marginalization of transgenders manifested in diverse forms including the stigma, limited work opportunities and restricted integration with the community remain a concern in Indian society. This research offers an intersectional analysis of interaction between gender, sexuality and work in a growing industrial city by examining the case of transwomen domestic workers in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. The thesis argues that the interaction between gender and work both shapes and is shaped by community organization and development. In the case of transwomen domestic workers the thesis finds the possibilities of inclusion and social transformation in context of the urban space. The qualitative research examines the nature of this inclusion, its condition and challenges in context of a city through the interpretation that transwomen themselves attach to their work and its impact on their lives.

**Index Terms-** Transgender, Gender, Domestic Work, Jamshedpur, Inclusion, Gender-sexuality-work.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This article joins the emerging scholarship on gender and labour focusing especially on transgender and work in urban context. The term “Transgender” became popular post 1990s and can be considered a relatively new term. It was preceded by the term “transsexual” that referred to people born as neither a woman nor a man (Boswell, 1991 as cited in Weiss, 2009). Now the term “transsexual” is used only to refer to people who have undergone sex change surgery to have a gender identity they relate themselves with. Transgender is an umbrella term that researcher often find difficult to break into subsets. Recently Weiss (2009) argued that transgender and its various subsets illustrate that the transition of a person’s gender occurs at a point of time in their life after which starts their quest for a new gender identity, instead of it being fluid and constantly shifting. He tries to portray that this transition phase is a one-time process as the second gender identity they affiliate to suits their skin and they do not find the need to rigorously change it further. Weiss points out that different terms are used describe transgender according to geographical areas.

In India, the term ‘Hijra’ is often used to denote a transgender person referring either to men who opt for hormonal treatment, or those who undergo sex-change operations, or those who are born as hermaphrodites. They divide themselves into Gharanas or houses and the strength of the hijra community lies in its close knit relationships, their sole source of support against the social ostracism they face in mainstream society (PUCL, K 2003 as cited in Narrain and Bhan, 2012).

The “third gender” has been subjected to exclusion in the society socially, politically, economically as well as culturally. The society has an innate peculiarity of classifying everything as either normal or abnormal. As we have talked before about gender identity, transgender has been excluded by the society for not being born as a boy or a girl or for that matter changing their gender gradually. Discrimination, harassment and exclusion often occur because of some pre-conceived notion of the people of how women and men are expected to appear or behave (ILO, 2012). This breeds ground for growth of stigma in the society. As illustrated by (Khan et al. 2009), the behaviour of the society increases the level of insecurity and confusion that the transgender people are already facing. But often their vulnerabilities, frustrations and insecurities are overlooked by the mainstream society. The notion of the community is key to understand transwomen's life in India, that help them belong to a hierarchical frame and survive as a "parallel society", though they are marginalized and socially excluded communities in the Indian social fabric (Turner, 1977 as cited in Jose and C.V, 2014). (Narrain and Bhan, 2012) decodes society as social structures which define and defend what is known as hetero-normative ideal; rigid notion of what it means to be a man or a woman, how the two should relate and the family unit that should result from such relationships. All those who dare to think outside this perfect ideal are considered threats to morality and society at large. There is a clenching link between exclusion and rights that highlight the gender based discrimination, harassment and loss of dignity.

While talking about exclusion, it becomes imperative to understand the discrimination faced by transgender in matters of work and employment. Workplace is a crucial site both for the reproduction of gender inequality as well as for the “coming out”

of transpeople (Connell, 2010). Till recent years it was common for people belonging to the third gender to hide their identity in order to be employed and sustain their employment. This is a direct violation of their rights. Again, the decision to be “out” must be individually analysed as the transpeople go through complex and contradictory situations ranging from psychological to political as well as personal consideration. That is why their decision to disclose/hide their gender identity should be understood in historical context of violence and repression in the environment. It is not as simple as free choice (Seidman, 2002 as cited in Connell, 2010).

Given the historical marginalization, stigma and abuse, transgenders had to resort to a parallel society and culture of their own. They are invisible in publicly visible and respectable occupations, and are forced to earn from offering ‘badhai’ i.e. blessing the new born or newly-wed which offers limited public acceptance and largely unsustainable life. With limited earning options, many are forced to take up beggary such as in trains, traffic signals which ultimately builds a negative public perception about them. Other alley open to them is being involved in sex work which again raises question about their morality in the society. Prevailing poverty and illiteracy among transgenders reveal a complex scenario: while poverty makes education inaccessible for most, for others discrimination faced at school leads to dropping out of school. As a result of this, in later stages of life opportunities for earning livelihood decreases and a transgender is left only with their traditional identity based work or petty jobs. Social isolation further impacts economic life of transgender women because opportunities for transgender women are highly restricted in both traditional and non-traditional job markets (Jose and C.V, 2014).

In India, the last few decades have witnessed growing public awareness on gender issues and opened possibilities of social legislations asserting ‘third gender’ as citizens deserving of equal rights as others. Consequently, a new rising is seen where transgenders, although very few, are able to find respectable employment. Starting from Kalki Subramaniam who is the first transgender entrepreneur in India to Bharathi who is a transgender pastor – transgenders are now seen venturing into professions that do not bind them by their gender identity indicating a new awareness both among them as well as the society. For instance, in 2008 Tamil Nadu’s Governor introduced many measures in the legislative assembly for the welfare of transgender along with the proposition for establishing a welfare board. In this regard, the state introduced newly designed application forms which will include transgender as a separate category thus permitting them to join any college of their choice (EPW, 2008). Thus, the transgender are finding new opportunities that are allowing them to earn livelihood and create an identity as an individual while also propelling further changes within the community.

Another axis of differentiation in paid domestic work is gender. Transgender predominate in paid domestic work. One explanation given for that the work performed by private household employees is the same labour provided by women in other households (Katzman, 1978 as cited in Raghuram, 2001).

Besides, performance within the house and so remains within the 'private' domain, identified with women. The work also resonates with aspects of caring to oppressive notions of femininity and with the ideology of 'woman' (Gaitskell et al. 1984:87 as cited in Raghuram, 2001). (Raghuram 2001) tries to justify the decision behind the transwomen choosing domestic work as their preferred profession because this gives them the space to be comfortable as they can display their feminine side without hesitance in a profession which is female centric thus opening new alley of work with dignity for them.

The above discussion raises important linkages between possibilities for an individual and community development. If historical marginalization of transgender is/was a condition arising from organisation of the community and its continuing underdevelopment, if the incidences of transgender finding jobs that empower them as individuals is a sign of their inclusion within the community and community transformation, then it becomes crucial to investigate the sites of inclusion and nature of inclusion in order to understand whether these are one off, isolated incidences or any real possibilities for sustainable community development. This study responds to this need by studying the case of transgender domestic workers in Jamshedpur city. Having said that, it is merely a fragment of a nationwide picture, life of a transgender cannot be generalized but it can be simplified to some extent to find examples of inclusion of a section that has been stigmatized for a long time.

## II. FIELDWORK, METHODOLOGY AND ETHICS

This research aimed to study the interaction between gender and work by focusing on the case of transwomen domestic workers in the city of Jamshedpur. For this purpose, the study relied on qualitative research methods to interpret the meaning transwomen attach to their work and its impact on their lives. This chapter first explains the field methods and techniques applied in this study; it then discusses the month-long fieldwork conducted in Jamshedpur, and finally concludes with a discussion of challenges including ethics that shaped the scope of this thesis.

### FIELDWORK AND METHODOLOGY:

I used an exploratory research design for the study because the transgender domestic workers remain a less-known and understudied subject, especially in India. An exploratory research design was considered best suited to allow exploration of the subject without any pre-conceived notions or expert filters.

During my field visit I found that the Harijan Basti of Jamshedpur has 560 households. The initial field research itself revealed that the community has 31 transgenders who are involved in various occupations ranging from domestic help to begging. Among the 31 transgenders, 5 transgender women work as domestic help in neighbouring localities within the city where their work entails tasks like housekeeping, cooking, child care etc. It is this group of 5 transgender domestic workers that forms

the core respondent group of my research. Along with them, an employer became my 6th respondent who has employed one of the 5 transgender as domestic help to study the perception of the employers about gender and work. The fieldwork involved conducting original in-depth interviews of these 6 respondents (5 transwomen and 1 employer) over a period of one month from 23th December 2016 to 21th January 2017.

To understand if and how domestic work indicates inclusion of these transgender people, I conducted in-depth interviews to understand their life narratives. Narrative research focuses on exploring the life of an individual needing to tell stories of individual experiences (Creswell, 2013). Interviewing each respondent to understand their life story helped me in understanding the nature, condition and challenges of this inclusion. Giving my respondents scope to narrate their life through in-depth interviews in a progressive order, starting from their childhood experiences to present employment as adults helped me in learning about their life histories which both shaped and shaped by the interaction between gender and labour in context of a city. For the interviews I used a 'purposive sampling' method to identify the six respondents who are domestic workers and an employer thus satisfying the purpose of my study and research questions (Bryman, 2012). The interviews touched upon topics such as their childhood experiences, their educational background, their family relationships, their experiences within the larger society, their friendships, their work place experiences, their self perception and aspirations etc. One-on-one interaction using an open-ended set of interview questions gave scope to my respondents to take time to recall and recount their life experiences (discussed in next chapter).

### ETHICS: CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with standard research protocols, I conducted each interview after securing prior informed consent from each respondent in a language they were familiar with, and with due regard to confidentiality and anonymity for protection of my respondents from any unforeseen consequences. Assuring respondents with the procedure applied to protect their anonymity and use of information only for academic purpose visibly made them more comfortable. Having said this, I only used the real names of respondents where they explicitly allowed

### III. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the life narratives of the transwomen residing and working as domestic workers in the Harijan Basti of the industrial town Jamshedpur of Jharkhand, India. The narratives of transwomen, based on in-depth interviews with six respondents, seek to understand their inclusion in a community and through thematic discussion offer an illustrative account of interaction between gender, sexuality, and work in context of a growing industrial city. This chapter argues that this interaction both shapes and is shaped by community organization and development. The community is a site of contestation as well as opportunities. Paradoxically, the opportunities of community re-configuration arise as a reaction to constrictions one faces in the community and the possibilities that one sees through reacting.

me to do so for considerations of fairness and their right to self-determination. I was sensitive while asking questions and tried not to offend my respondents in the course of the research in any way while maintaining an emotional distance for objectivity.

The fieldwork was challenging. Firstly, the community is mainly Oriya speaking so initially I faced difficulty in explaining my questions. But by spending a lot of time with them, gradually they started to understand what I wanted to know from them. In the later phase of data collection, medium of conversation became Hindi which made the process of data collection and transcription less cumbersome. Secondly, the respondents were initially skeptical towards my research as I am not a resident of Jamshedpur and my questionnaire focused on personal information such as their experiences with their family, community and at workplace. Unsurprisingly, they were initially reluctant to share their experiences with me. I therefore invested the first week of fieldwork in building basic rapport with the identified respondents, and explaining them the objectives of my research. I lost quite a bit of my time in the process but later compensated it when they opened up to me and the interviews gained momentum. Thirdly, getting interview appointments was very difficult because of my limited fieldwork duration and my respondents' schedule and engagements. Moreover, most of them were also busy preparing for their religious festival, Tusu Parv. Thus I had to change my strategy and instead of just waiting for them, I tried to make judicious use of the time I had with them. I, therefore, started walking them to their work places as well as accompanying them for lunch so that our conversations can continue. Yet, due to lack of time, there remained many unexplored questions and themes. This mainly involved questions on their childhood experiences that I could not much delve upon as I had the urgency to learn more about their experiences as transgender domestic worker. Although all my respondents were dalit transgenders residing in Harizan basti in Jamshedpur I could not sufficiently explore the impact of caste and its interaction with gender and work. The rivalry and competition with women domestic workers from the same area also could not be investigated. This study, therefore, while offering an illustrative account of the transgender domestic worker's life and struggle for inclusion, paves way for more comprehensive intersectional research in context of gender, caste and labour.

#### 1. Experiences of life

The in-depth interviews on the basis of my thematic interview guide helped me to open chapters of their life one after another. The experiences they shared about their childhood gave me different dimensions of abuse and support which helped to make the process of owning up to their identity smooth. Though they have faced challenges in the process of gaining independence, their experiences at work place helped in developing a level of interaction with the community. The projection of their feeling of independence enhanced the objectivity of the study by letting me understand the reason behind such freedom. For instance, while Natwar and Rajjya find courage to reclaim their voice and accept their gender identity as a reaction to childhood abuse,

Somiya derived her inspiration and acceptance of self through examples of Natwar and Rajjya who demonstrated that community inclusion is not a dream but a real possibility (elaborated below). Similarly, community largely is a site of institutions that both restrict and expand one's sense of belongingness and inclusion – such as family and gharana.

## 2. Freedom

Freedom is an important indicator to determine the quality of life. It gives the person the power to make their own choices. Freedom is both a process that enables an individual to participate in community development while the freedom one has within the community may itself be a product of the kind of development occurring in the community. The freedom enjoyed by my respondents can be summarized below-

2.1 Financial independence: Being able to meet individual expense and take up the responsibility of family makes my respondents feel secured and financially strong. They feel free to fulfill their wishes and this in turn is raising the quality of their lives. Rajjya says:

*"I earn money and with that I support my family. I cannot have my own kids so I raise my brother's kids like my own. I even save my money so that I can do social work. I buy clothes with my own money and I don't have to ask money from anyone. Even in festivals I take my friends out to eat snacks. Not having to ask money from anyone encourages me to work harder. Every day that I go out in the sun street from street to work is worth it because I can take care of my family."*

Bittoo and Somiya feel financially strong by being employed. They say, *"I like to wear good clothes. So with my income I can stitch beautiful salwars. It makes me really happy"*.

Natwar, during her conversation with me mentioned an incident which further substantiates the point that I am making. She said,

*"Few months back my neighbour's daughter got married. My neighbour is poor. So I paid for the marriage with my savings. He is so grateful to me. I feel so happy that I could help someone in their times of need and situations like this makes me feel proud that I work so hard and earn money to try to create an identity of a good human being."*

With whatever they are earning, they are taking up little responsibilities of their lives and the lives of the people around them. This is fostering a sense of solidarity and relationship with the community which in turn is similarly reciprocated by the community. The study population is starting to dream and aspire by meeting present targets. This independence is also making them realize their self worth and establishing their position in the society. This growing confidence is also projected in other areas of their lives, even in their ability to choose their occupation.

2.2 Freedom of choice of occupation: What is fascinating here is the fact that they have started to realize their potential and their skills and also using the same as a means to

earn and empower themselves instead of using their identity alone. This has created a sense of self worth within the community and is helping them to assert their individuality as a respectable member of community and not get trapped within the marginalities created by compulsions traditionally carved out by community for third gender. This self assertion helps them to be themselves and gives them the freedom to express their true self without fear and inhibition. In this context Natwar says-

*"When I was at my guru's place I had to do badhai and ask money in train. In train for 10-20 rupees people touch you inappropriately. Again in badhai, you remain just a kinnar who is supposed to ask for money in lieu of blessings. I did not want to follow my guru's orders so I started working as a domestic helper. Now the houses I work in and everyone around know me as Natwar who cooks well and works well. I am not just a Kinnar now. I am so much more than that."*

2.3 Freedom to be oneself: It is very necessary for a person to have the liberty to be in the society as he/ she wishes to be. Hiding identity to be accepted in the community takes away the basic essence of life. On being asked whether they had to hide their identity of being a transwomen at work place or in the society almost all of the responses were indicative of the freedom they attain by not hiding their identity. The cheerfulness of Bittoo is indicative of the relationship and solidarity that she enjoys with the community which is a site of meeting one's core need for affection. This is reflective in her response when she says

*"I have a partner since 5 years and everybody knows. I go everywhere with him. Once there was a puja in my employer's house, many guests were supposed to come that day. So uncle aunty told me to dress up beautifully and come. I said what will your guests think? Then they replied that I should never say something like this. I should never try to be someone else. I am like their daughter. I love to wear beautiful dresses so I should come wearing make-up."*

But Rahul brings in new light to this context by saying

*"I stay like a boy at home because my mother has expectations from me as a boy. But since I am not a boy, when I go to work being a kinnar, wearing jeans top and my employers have no problem with me. I am more comfortable at work space since they have no problem with my identity."*

An important inference can be projected by the fact that the better educated the community is the more is the acceptance level towards the transwomen. This stresses on the angle that the transwomen here own up to their identity because the society is making them feel comfortable in their own skin, more so in their workplace which is paradoxical. This comfort level that they enjoy in the workplace makes them explore different avenues of income and gives them the freedom to do so.

2.4 Multiple avenues of income: These specific transwomen who are my sample, has the opportunity to select a profession that suits them the best. They even have the

opportunity to venture into new jobs and if need arises, they have the liberty to go back to earning money through identity specific work like badhai etc. They admit that blessing people in Badhai and asking for money in trains has been their profession since early times when society outcasted them. But as society is evolving, newer avenues of income are opening up for them like domestic help. Complimenting it are other works like working in petrol pumps as part time, giving dance classes in free time as well as being apprentices in beauty parlours. But one noticeable regret is seen among a few of my respondents that they wish they completed their basic primary education. Being a drop out they are losing out on many opportunities of income that could have completely substituted their need of going for badhai. Somiya displays regret when she says *"I sometimes wish I studied more. I wish I could learn English. Then I could work in offices. But I did not complete my study. So opportunities are less"*.

Since dropping out of school and not completing education is a common regret amongst them, I tried to dwell into the reasons behind it. This took me to the aspect of their 'coming out' which is an assertion of their gender identity at an individual as well as societal level.

### 3. Early influences before 'coming out'

3.1. Having a role model: All my respondents have come out in front of the society as a transwoman at an early stage of their lives. Some of them have given the credit to the other kinnar woman in the community that helped them through the process. Like Somiya mentions,

*"When I was around 6-7 years old, I started feeling completely like a girl. I used to see other Kinnar in our slum like Natwar and Rajiya who used to go out to work, come back home and help family. I wanted to be like them. Natwar and Rajiya helped me a lot to become a woman and they helped me when I had so much confusion in my mind about my identity. Even now, whenever I need help, they and other friends of mine rush in. I could always depend on them."*

This has helped them a lot when they themselves were undergoing a state of physical and mental turbulence and confusion. Seeing people like them in complete harmony with the community made them confident in seeing them in a manner that is beyond the 'normal' prism of society and look at their new found identity with dignity and respect. But things were not so rosy for people like Natwar and Rajiya who are their role models. They had to face a lot of abuse and segregation.

3.2. Childhood abuse: Taunting, teasing, physical-emotional-sexual torture has been meted out to some of my respondents because of which they believe they grew to be stronger and strive for independence. The feeling of earning money to take up responsibilities grew in order to be accepted by their near and dear ones. There were instances found that they dropped out of school because they had to wear male uniforms which they were not comfortable in, they were taunted with demeaning names when they wanted to play football or cricket which have tormented them till date. This compelled me to ask

the same question of childhood abuse to each of my respondents. Natwar opened up to me in a complete heart wrenching way when she says,

*"I was born this way. What is my fault in that? My family and the people of the slum used to torture me, curse why I was born. There were times when I got so tired of it that I wanted to die by either hanging myself or drowning in the river. But then I realized that I should not waste my life. I should do something so that the people around and my family will accept me just the way I am. I started working in households as domestic helper and I became financially independent. I started contributing for the expenses in the family. They gradually started changing their attitude because they now realized I am capable of earning by myself. This changed how the society behaved. Now they don't say mean things to us because we earn on the basis of our skills."*

The same sentiments find place in Rajiya's tone when she recounts her days of struggle and how slowly but surely changes in the community with awareness and also with their empowerment. She says

*"People used to say mean things to me. But instead of being afraid, I started telling people who is actually a Kinnar and how god has made us this way. We have no control over how we feel. It took time but gradually people started understanding us and accepted me as I am."*

This change of the community is reflective in Bitto's life experience. She says,

*"People never said mean things to me. Everybody here loves me. My brothers protect me from any kind of abuses. Even my neighbours talk to me very nicely. They say that my cheerful attitude is what they like about me. People are very caring and helpful towards me. However, this is my personal experience. I do not know about others."*

The challenges and constraints that the society poses can be broken with the right kind of attitude and the determination which brings the confidence these transwomen exudes making a perfect amalgamation of them, the society and their family. The realization that financial independence through a skill based profession is pivotal through which people will think before belittling them. However, the large burden of responsibilities inherited from family is actually a boon or bane needs to be analysed in this context.

3.3. Responsibilities: Due to financial constraints, most of the respondents had to take up responsibilities from a very young age. As a result, their coming out process was accelerated and they started earning on the basis of their identity by going in train and asking for money or going for badhai as it ensures a good earning. But when they wanted to create a name of their own and not earn just on the basis of identity they shifted to domestic work where their skills evolved and they could take up their responsibilities in the family. This also helped them own up

to their identity at work as all my respondents said that they never felt the need to hide their identity at work.

#### 4. What constitutes a family?

Family is a social institution which restricts as well as gives a sense of freedom in pursuing one's own individuality. The study population also has similar experience with their families. However, their definition of family is not restricted to their biological family alone as they belong to the transwomen family or 'gharana' equally. It is interesting to analyse how they balance these aspects of their family in social fabric.

4.1. Biological Family: The family we are born in influences our growing up process and shape us. Instances were found where respondents share a very amicable relationship with their family and they believe that family played a major role in helping them lead such a comfortable life they can openly acclaim themselves as transwomen. When I asked what kind of relationship they share with their family members, Bittoo alias Muskaan smiled and replied to me that,

*"Since childhood my parents used to dress me up like a girl. They lost many children before I was born. So I was always accepted by my parents just the way I am. Even now that I wear Salwar Suit at home, they compliment me. They helped me remain a kinnar and not hide myself from being who I am just because society might say something."*

Even Somiya, a pretty young transwoman has something similar to say. She says,

*"My husband loves me just the way I am. He is not ashamed of me. Even if sometimes I make my mother feel uncomfortable with my identity, my husband has been there with me always. He gives me the strength to feel proud of myself. He makes me feel like a woman. He has no problem in domestic work that I do but he did not like when I used to earn money by begging in train because people there did not respect me."*

4.2. Gharana that adopts me: The Guru who adopts the transwoman in the form of transforming them to a female from a male has a huge influence in the life of the kinnar. Through this transformation process a transwoman becomes the 'Chela' of her Guru and the 'Gharana' or the house of the Guru becomes her home. Social stigma and childhood abuses resulted in some of my kinnar respondents to move out of their house and live with their Guru. This becomes evident when Rajiya says that

*"I used to get so abused by my uncles because they felt ashamed of me for being a kinnar that I ran away from home and started living in the gharana. I got food, shelter, respect all together there. I even earned money by going for Badhai and also asking money in trains as per suggested by my Guru. I was happy there unlike my home who did not accept me. I did not feel alone there. There were so many kinnars just like me there. We used to talk. I felt free there after running away from home. I was fed up of being called a 'Chhakka' (eunuch) and other slang words in my slum."*

Just like Rajiya says, we find that under situations of extreme violence and with the hope of an understanding and loving environment, the Guru provides them shelter where they can own up to their identity and live a life free of abuse and ridicule by the society.

4.3. Friends: Friends as individuals within the community are a very important part of socialization. Each individual tends to build relationships of friendship to confide about some important matters concerning their life. This becomes necessary when an individual is in a confused state of mind. All respondents have said that since childhood they have a lot of female friends with whom they felt comfortable and shared many happy memories together. Natwar says

*"I have only females and kinnars as my friend. Three female friends in my school days were the once who first educated me about kinnars. They are the ones who helped me get rid of my confusion that I used to have while growing up about my identity. Since childhood we eat together, bath together, sleep together. Even now, if we have to go out, we go out together. Kinnars and women in our community share a very close bond, like sisters. We share our clothes."*

4.4. Utopia: A perfect world without any discrimination is an ideal situation. Even the respondents have a dream of a utopian society where each section of the society can co-exist with each other. This was evident from what Rajiya said,

*"When I was at home being a Kinnar, I was abused and felt humiliated. Then I went to my Guru's place where I got love and respect. But there I was just a Kinnar. I had no identity as a person. I missed the love and attraction there as everyone there were Kinnars. So in search of a normal life, I came back to my slum. Here even though people sometimes might pass a comment, guys can appreciate when I look beautiful. Everybody likes attention. I get to roam around with my female friends when I stay in slum. I hope someday the gharanas can be inside the slum where the male, female and kinnars stay together."*

Even Rahul dreams of a perfect world where he can own up to his identity without his mother feeling shy. He says,

*"My sister who has always supported me, passed away one year back. Since then my mother has become so sad that I cannot tell her I want to completely change myself to a Kinnar. I really wish if the guru gharana could be together with the other houses and anybody could come and go in each other's houses, then my mother will no longer have the fear and will happily let me become a Kinnar. Now she worries what others will say and what if some people do not accept me."*

This brings in a very important angle into my study. What do we actually understand by family? Is it the family we are born in or the relationships we build in time? If Kinnars can dream of a utopian society then can the other members of the society echo their view? Family is an integral part that aids the coming out in the society as a transwomen. Even after going through struggles, these transwomen could own up to their identities because of the

support of families according to their understanding. It is because of these interactions in the community that they have the confidence to take up professions and be financially independent.

### 5. Domestic work as an inclusive space

5.1. Perception of employer: I have interviewed one family who has recruited a transwoman as a domestic helper to analyse the reasons behind such a decision and the consequences for the same. Sharing the same space needs both the employee and employer to be comfortable with each other and while interviewing I found out that the employment was not out of compulsion on part of the employer but because of the skill of the transwoman that landed her this opportunity. Just like the employer said

*"She is extremely efficient. Many households or prior employers have recommended her to me when I newly shifted here. I do not have any prejudice against anyone, especially on the basis of identity. I am very much comfortable with her being my domestic helper because she looks after my house with such care. Her honesty was the main reason that immediately attracted me towards her. I am completely okay sharing the same household space with her. She is efficient, she takes care of the house like her own and that makes me happy. I have developed such a close bond with her that I can depend on her."*

But I also found out that there were certain inhibition within the employer towards a transwoman which were visible when she (employer) said that

*"I would not be comfortable of giving her the responsibility to look after my daughter. Play with her, that is fine but changing my daughter, giving her a bath, I will not allow that. It is not because she is a transgender, but because I am extremely protective of my daughter because of the rise in cases of child sexual abuse. I will also not be comfortable to change my clothes in front of my employed transwomen. I might be able to do that in front of a woman domestic helper."*

A mother's protective nature can be justifiable that she cares about her daughter but through this an important point is projected that the transwoman is recruited on the basis of her skills as an individual who is capable to meet the requirements of her employer.

5.2. Perception of Kinnars: The main motive of my study was to find out the reason behind the few transwomen choosing to work in informal sector as domestic helpers and to analyse their level of satisfaction from this work. Rajiya feels that even though the pay is less and she cannot adjust with the money, she can never quit the work because there are families that depend on her and it makes her happy helping them. Rajiya says,

*"In some houses that we go for badhai, they treat us like animals. So just because of money I am not going to compromise with my dignity. I agree money is less in this work, but when you will see a family depending on you and when they are so loving,*

*you cannot refuse to work for them. So no matter how busy I am, I do the domestic work because it makes me satisfied to keep those people happy. They scold me when I do something wrong, but they never demean me."*

Somiya has a different perspective as she feels that the older generation has slighter problem in sharing space with a transwomen than the new generation. While the younger generation readily made her a family member, the older generation likes to maintain an employer employee relationship where they treat their employees with respect. She says,

*"I work in two houses. In one there is an aged couple and in the other there is a young couple. Both the houses treat me with so much respect. The thing I like the most about both the houses is that they do not see me as a kinnar. They see me as a person who is helping them with their work. I will not say both the houses are same. The aged couple loves me a lot but they do not behave like I am a family member. They take care of all my needs but they maintain a gap. On the other hand, the younger couple just adores me. Once I told the 'Bhaiya' that I like to eat jalebi so he went out and brought jalebi only for me."*

Might be with the evolution of society and the rising need to seek help with domestic work, the new society has fewer prejudices in case of employing a help. This is the reason why the new generations can so easily un-stigmatize a pattern on the basis of their needs. The interdependency between the employer and the employed where both sides value and treat each other with respect is what attracts these transwomen to work as a domestic help.

Bittoo thinks that domestic work is helping her become someone she wanted to be since she was a child- 'a woman'. She remembers an incident when she talks to me. She says,

*"One day some guests came over at the house I work in. Now I wear salwars suit when I go to work. When the guests saw me first they laughed and then in my absence told uncle questioned uncle decision to employ a hijra. Uncle loves me so much that he replied back angrily to his guests that she is our daughter and we will not hear anything bad about her. I was in tears. I feel like a woman in my work place. They love me as much as my parents love me. I keep my house clean and cook in my house. In the similar way that is my second house and I keep it clean in the similar way. There is nothing shameful about this work."*

Natwar has 16 years of work experience as a domestic helper. She has developed such an attachment with her work that even the minimal wage does not demotivate her to quit her work. Natwar says,

*"Money is not everything. Getting love and respect and people trusting you with their house and money is a huge achievement. If I would have stuck to badhai I could not have gone places and I would always be in the shadow of the guru. But since I started working as a domestic helper, I told my employer I want to go to Siddhi Vinayak. So they took me to Mumbai once along with them because I wanted to visit the temple. Isn't this a big thing?"*

*That is why I cannot break their trust. They love me like their own and I respect it a lot."*

Thus we see that even though there are different perspectives of work, it is a unanimous opinion that the environment created by their employers make them feel inclusive as a result of which this occupation is rather a preferred choice from them than compulsion.

5.3. Changes in Public space: There has been a drastic shift in their public space since they started working as domestic helper. Their opportunities are increasing. This new found confidence and dignity helps in asserting their position in the community and cementing a trust that is much needed in the functioning of an inclusive society. The community is increasingly becoming more welcoming and comfortable with the participation of transwomen in different spheres as is reflective by my respondents' experiences with their employers. This brings us to a point where we can confidently say that the society is moving towards a direction of inclusiveness, but yet there is a long way to go as these transwomen still faces a lot of challenges as of today. This is evident when Natwar says,

*"At first we could only go for badhai or ask money in train. Now we do so many different works. We 5 work as domestic help in houses where we do not have to be someone else. We can be Kinnars in this work and they accept us just the way we are. This is also helping us to take up social services and raise our voices against any impartiality towards women and Kinnars. Now people are accepting us outside the work of badhai and such work. Our chances are increasing. The houses I work in are really giving me so much love and affection."*

## 6. Challenges

6.1. Financial: Facing the pathos of abuse and discrimination, the transwomen are entering domestic sphere with the hope to never look back, but the financial constraints force them to seek refuge of their identity occasionally. Like Rajiya says

*"Working as domestic helper might give me love and respect but since I have responsibility to support my family I need money and thus I have to go for badhai to earn more money. Pay in domestic work is less compared to the expenses in Jamshedpur."*

Even Somiya has something similar to say

*"At first I was in begging in train for money. But that did not give me any respect. Then I started working as domestic help and I got respect and also dignity. But sometimes my earning from this job is not sufficient. Then I have to go for badhai where we have to give our entire earning to our guru, which she later divides among the group members."*

This challenge in turn is also reducing their scope of public space as they are forced to go back to identity specific work and also work under their gurus who take commission from them for every badhai they visit. As a result of this their profits also get

divided. So in turn this is overall impacting their financial independence as well as constricting their public space in the society.

6.2. Personal: To focus on the challenge they face in their personal life, Rahul says

*"I have to hide that I am in a relationship because the people will not accept it. It is not because I am a Kinnar who is in love with a boy. This problem the society has even in cases where a woman falls in love with a man from different caste. A boy loving a boy, a girl loving a girl, a kinnar loving a boy and even a woman loving a man everything is a crime in their eyes. That is why I have to hide about my relationships as I cannot hurt my mother."*

By enjoying freedom in the before mentioned front, to not being able to project their personal life and intimate relationships curtails them from freedom in true sense. The society's narrow nature of stigmatizing personal relationships does not let them be open about their choices even though they have owned up to their identity.

6.3. Access to services: This challenge stops them from leading a normal life as they have to struggle everyday to demand their basic rights and access to public services. They feel unsafe to go out on the streets because they usually get harassed and teased. Due to this, all my respondents said that they do not go out anywhere alone. They are always accompanied by their friends who make them feel safer. Rajiya says

*"Just to make an identity card we have to struggle so much. The government offices harass us saying the process will take time come later. A bigger problem than this is the attitude of law towards us. One such instance has happened with me. I was being eve teased in front of some policemen. When some other people protested against it and asked the policemen to take some action they replied that only a hijra is being teased she is not a woman. Law and justice is everyone's right. If employers don't discriminate us, I fail to understand why the larger society cannot do the same. Then later they say that Kinnars have a foul mouth. Now if you openly discriminate us and not regard us to be human being, we will fight back."*

But all the respondents agreed on one point that they did not face any discrimination to avail medical services when they are sick. Though some of them practice home remedy to ailments, most of them visits any doctor nearby and they are diagnosed with proper care irrespective of their identity.

After analyzing all the variables that stood out during the interview, it has made me to sit up and view the community – transwomen interaction in a completely new light.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The study is aimed to build an intersectional analysis of gender, work and inclusiveness among different tiers of the community in aplomb. The exploratory design used in this research illustrates the different dynamics of development process where stigma manages to loosen its grip such that new avenues are opening up and helping the process of inclusion take its course.

This study presents the case of 5 transwomen of Jamshedpur industrial area who are breaking the confines of their identity and are taking up jobs as domestic helper in the urban households of the area. Though these transwomen have been initially involved in occupation that was specified by their identity as a transgender, they are gaining the confidence of venturing into jobs that are assuring them financial independence on the basis of their skills and individuality with dignity. This aspect of the community development is perpetuating them to aspire for a better living condition within the comfort of their skin, which was a distant dream before (see Chapter 1). But development is not a one way process. Therefore the need arose to see the other side of the story where I tried to find out what is bringing the inclusive behavioral change in the community towards the transwomen for a peaceful co-existence among the two.

This need propelled to analyse inclusive behaviour in the form of freedom, financial independence, and their idea of family in the sense of acceptance within the community. The perspective of the employers was regarded in the study to analyse the dimension of inclusion by understanding the linkage between gender and work. Comfort in workplace is a two way process where both the employer and the employee seemed to enhance their level of interaction by being dependent on each other. This interaction has enabled enlarging the public space of transgender where they gained confidence to venture into new avenues of development. Their involvement in social work for the entire community also throws light on the feeling of belongingness to the community where even the community seeks their help. This development is projected in their freedom to access public services overcoming challenges of financial burden and discrimination. The social transformation in urban space is visible within the community in the form of harmony and co-existence.

The peculiarity of this community comes from the nature of the process of inclusiveness and the cause and effect relationship of the same. Where in the global scenario, there is still struggle and atrocity existing in the society, this particular industrial area is evolving with a developmental framework. What is bringing the change in the attitude of these transwomen is the presence of role models within them. A few transwomen became activist through resilience without even being aware of it. They started giving priority to their passion and individuality by honing their skills and thus leading a life of dignity. This individual growth is having a positive impact on the other transwomen who are following the same path by identifying and refining their potential. This attitudinal change is also being reciprocated by the society. The cosmopolitan characteristic of the society is attention grabbing. The perspective of the employer shows that they do not carry the baggage of their own birth identity and

instead values individuality and skills. Education and awareness at an individual level is causing this tectonic shift in community organisation and restructuring.

This study is limited to a small population and restricted to a particular location only, thus reducing its scope to become a general opinion. This study is focused mostly on the perspective of the transwomen working in a domestic workspace and their interaction with the community rather than the other way round. The equation of caste and gender is also overlooked leaving scope for future research.

This study stands out as to how a community functions for an inclusive growth. The striking feature here showcases individuals as agents of change. This model can be replicated by other communities by identifying individuals who has the potential to be the 'agents of change' and inducing awareness through them as to how to rise above identity and focus on skill and individuality. This will bring in growth of an inclusive characteristic in the community.

#### Original Contribution

This study presents a case of 'inclusion' of transgenders in current scenario where studies focusing on their 'exclusion' thrive. The study highlights that their 'inclusion' is multi-scalar: in domestic work, which was previously inaccessible to them, as well as into the society through the domestic work. Thus, the study contributes to the emerging studies on transgenders especially in context of intersectional analysis of gender and labour. The study also contributes to the gender and social work literature given the paucity of relevant literature in general about transgenders. In context of community development and empowerment of transgenders the study highlights the potential of focusing on strategic interventions.

#### Recommendation for Future Research

The study understood interaction in the process of constraints and opportunities. Further research can focus on understanding rivalry and competition between the transgender and women domestic workers from the area.

Gender has been isolated in this study from the perspective of life experiences and induction in domestic work sphere without indulging in understanding the caste dynamics. As mentioned above, the transgender belong to a Harijan Basti in Jamshedpur, future study can also be focused in analyzing the dynamics between caste and gender in this community.

A handful of 5 transwomen are involved in domestic work who interpret this profession as a process of inclusion. This can aid further analysis as to why the other transwomen of the community are not integrating themselves in domestic work in details.

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