

The Victims of Identity:

A research study on the Khwaja Sira of Hyderabad



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Executive Summary:

This report “The Victims of Identity: A research study on the Khwaja Sira (KS) of Hyderabad” is a joint undertaking of the CPCS and RARE; it was aimed at examining and understanding various dimensions of the lives of the KS, and learning how they relate themselves to the mainstream society in routine life, and how society treats them in broader scope of citizenship. It was also one of the objectives of the research to learn about the perception of the KS with regards to the peculiar treatment the society offers them, and how they viewed the idea of being mainstreamed in every sphere of conventional society like any other citizen of the country.

Objective of the research

Following were the objectives the research study is based on:

1. Understanding the living style of the KS; learning how they felt about their interaction with their own kind, within their own community.
2. Understanding the modes of their earning and meeting their economic needs.
3. Learning about their socio-political and cultural affiliations, inclinations and participation.
4. Understanding how they view the treatment of the mainstream society with them? Likewise, understanding their point of view about their being mainstreamed in the society.
5. Conveying the findings of the research at local, national and international forums in order to draw support for one of the most marginalized sections of society.

Research Methodology

It is a qualitative research, based on Focused Group Discussion (FGDs), Key Participant Interviews (KPIs), and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs). A number of research reports and articles were also read by the research team that can be accessed through the list of bibliography given at the end of the report.

Targeted Group:

The target group was the transgender of Hyderabad, Indian *Marrhi*, Sindhi *Marrhi* and *Phool Gali*. However, during the research the team came across a number of gays as well who apparently looked transgender, nonetheless during the interviews they shared their identity as gays.

Limitations:

The main limitation of the research was being able to meet a sizeable number of the KS for the research. At several occasions the KS refused to meet, or talk on this subject. The team sensed feeling of skepticism among them regarding such initiatives, which according to them never changed the life of KS.

Target audience:

The target audience of the research includes students, researchers and practitioners belonging to civil society organizations, human rights bodies, government institutions, academic institutes and international campaign organizations working on the marginalized groups of world.

Research Impact

There was a two-pronged purpose of this research study; on the one hand, it will have collected bulk of the information on the KS of Hyderabad Sindh and add it to the national and international research database so far collected on this subject matter. On the other hand this research would function as a position paper and try to invoke support for the KS at national and international levels. The researchers working on the marginalized sections of society would be intrigued to delve deep into the subject and take efforts to make a little difference in the lives of the marginalized ones. Finally, this research would attempt to incubate the KS with an idea and a hope to contribute positive and effective participation in the mainstream society. The study would also add strength to raising a mass cognizance at various levels in the ordinary society for the rights of this marginalized group.

Findings of the research

There is a range of findings of the research; most of those might not be new, especially vis-à-vis the KS' facing harassment and exploitation, however, this study will notify its audience about the trends and kinds of exploitation and abuse the KS face in this part of world; summary of the findings is given below:

- The transgender of Hyderabad are limited to very few professions—dance, beggary and in some cases prostitution. Few of them did skill work as well, which proved with the skill trainings their lives can be changed.
- They are sexually harassed by men and forced for sexual favors.
- The behavior of the female part of the mainstream society was more respectful towards the KS as compared to the male in the society.
- The KS mostly mixed up within their own community, and limited their exposure to very few parts of the society.
- The nutshell of the life of the KS revolved around earning and spending on food and dressing.
- They are deprived of the opportunities for better and secure life; they face economic and security problems.
- The research team learnt that some were normal men who willingly acted as transgender due to the soaring inflation and huge unemployment. They did that usually by relocating to the other cities, away from their native abodes in order to hide their identities and earn money as transsexual.