

Unravelling the Perception of Workplace Ostracism among Transgender Population: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to analyse current queer-friendly regulations and identify potential avenues to enhance transgender inclusivity in workplaces. This study explores the perception of workplace ostracism by transgender individuals. Transgender individuals have been understudied in the workplace context. Ostracism, or the extent to which an individual perceives that they are ignored or excluded by others (Williams & Zadro, 2001), appears to be a universal phenomenon that occurs across gender, age, and demographic lines (Ferris et al., 2008). For this purpose, a qualitative study has been conducted. Semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted with 10 transgender individuals: 4 transmen, 4 transwomen, and 2 transgender individuals. All participants were employed across diverse private organisations and were aged between 23 and 45 years. The study sought to explore whether workplace ostracism perceived by transgender individuals is intentional or unintentional. Interview transcripts were analysed using qualitative coding procedures, and themes were systematically derived through open, axial, and selective coding. The following are the six major themes that have been identified: 1) Microaggression, 2) Heteronormative Culture, 3) Tokenisation, 4) Self-Doubt, 5) Emotional Neglect and 6) Self-Serving Bias.

Keywords

Transgender, Ostracism, Diversity, Inclusion, Social Exclusion

1. Introduction

The United Nations, in its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, emphasizes Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16), which calls for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensuring access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. "Transgender," the third gender, refers to people who have different biological constructs. They differ with respect to conventional gender roles. Their gender differentiate them and subjects them to societal discrimination. Transgender, sometimes abbreviated as trans, is an inclusive word that encompasses individuals whose gender identification contrasts with their assigned sex (trans men and trans women), as well as those who identify as non-binary or genderqueer (Bilodeau, 2005). Homosexuality in India has sparked debates from ancient times to the present day. Even though homosexuality has been referenced in Hindu scriptures and literature from ancient times, it has still not received widespread acceptance in modern India. Gender diversity challenges the gender binary paradigm through intersex individuals, third or other genders, gender fluidity, non-binary identities, and genderqueer expressions. In India there exist a host

of social – cultural groups of transgender individuals including hijras, and other transgender identities like – Aradhis, Sakhi, jogtas, jogappas, etc. Hijras, Eunuchs, Kothis, Aravanis, Jogappas, Shiv-Shakthis, and others are all part of the transgenders community. The history of the Hijra communities in India spans over 4,000 years. Hijras were part of the 'Eunuch' culture prevalent in the Middle East and India, where Eunuchs served as guards, advisors, and entertainers (Reddy,2005). Hijras have their roots in the narratives found in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, two ancient Hindu texts. The concept of napunsaka has been a vital aspect of Vedic literature. Jain literature provides a comprehensive reference to Transgenders and the notion of 'psychological sex' (Mishra,2023). Hijras also held a significant position in the royal courts of the Islamic world, particularly inside the Ottoman Empire and under Mughal rule in Medieval India (More, 2021). Historically, Hijras and transgender individuals played a vital role; but, with the onset of British rule in the 18th century, their circumstances changed drastically. During British administration, the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 classified the whole Hijra community as inherently 'criminal' and 'prone to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences.' Following Independence, the ban was abrogated in 1949; yet, scepticism towards the transsexual population has persisted. Because of this, transgender people have been given a foothold without any significant attempts to mainstream. In modern India, all members of these subgroups experience extreme discrimination and harassment in all spheres of life. However, in India, Transgender individuals are not only limited to these prevalent socio-cultural groups. Many transgender individuals, especially in urban areas, identify as transman, transwoman, or transgender. Some of them prefer to make certain lifestyle changes to socially transition as transgender (e.g. change their name, attire, and gender expression), while few transgender individuals medically transition as transsexual such as cross-sex hormones and gender affirmation surgery (Counselman-Carpenter & Redcay,2023).

Transgenders are also subjected to unfair treatment, including verbal and physical abuse, sexual violence, false arrests, denial of access to services, educational opportunities, and ancestral property, and they are victimised in a variety of contexts, including the workplace, public spaces, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities.

2. Literature Review

Multiple constructs within the workplace mistreatment literature are studied separately, including abusive supervision, incivility, ostracism, bullying, and other related concepts. Ostracism, commonly known as the silent treatment, is a prominent form of social rejection. Ostracism, or the extent to which an individual perceives that he or she is ignored or excluded by others (Williams & Zadro,2001), is seemingly a universal phenomenon and occurs across gender, age, and demographic lines (Ferris et al., 2008).When someone in an organisation fails to engage with another member when doing so would be socially acceptable and would also be considered respectful (Robinson et al., 2013).

If an individual believes that they are being excluded from a group because of their minority status, they perceive this exclusion as a result of an external, enduring aspect of themselves that is not temporary (Scott & Thau,2013). Research has demonstrated that such perceptions can lead to individuals reacting even more negatively to ostracism (Wei & Liu, 2019;Wirth et al., 2010). Being LGBTQ encompasses all of these aspects; hence, experiencing ostracism based on one's sexual or gender orientation can be especially distressing (Peng & Salter, 2021).While there is less empirical research on this subject among LGBTQ individuals, scholars concur that ostracism and exclusion are prevalent, and in certain instances, occur on a daily basis among LGBTQ individuals (DeSouza et al., 2017).The existence of ostracism towards transgender individuals has been emphasised by many researchers, (Hargie et al., 2017).This group experiences a higher degree of prejudice compared to other sexual minorities, although this group has received limited research attention (Schein et al., 2020)

Research by (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008), found that ostracism in the workplace significantly impacts both the physical and mental well-being of victims.Ostracism in the workplace is positively associated with counterproductive work behaviours (Zhao et al., 2013).When a person feels ostracised, it can have a negative impact on their work behaviour and aim to harm the organisation. An ostracised employee loses interest in maintaining a healthy diet and experiences discontentment (Baumeister et al., 2005).

Ostracism should have a relatively stronger effect on outcomes than other forms of negative attention. Ostracism is a great risk to survival (Robinson et al., 2013).

The absence of job discrimination safeguards is only one of the societal institutions that normalise prejudice and ostracism against the LGBTQ community (Fish et al., 2010). Homosexual individuals in India are prohibited by law

from getting married or joining the military. Some individuals consider LGBTQ individuals as second-class citizens, as indicated by research conducted by (Bell et al., 2011; Hammack & Cohler, 2011). These structures can be viewed as eliminating this community and hence making them susceptible to ostracism.

2.1. Transgender status in India

Lee Badgett's 2014 case study for the World Bank, titled "*The Economic Cost of Homophobia*," estimated that India would lose up to 1.7 percent of its GDP every year due to LGBTQ+ exclusion, which was around \$30 billion at the time.

The Indian Census has consistently failed to acknowledge the third gender, specifically transgender individuals, in its data collection throughout the years. However, information about transgender people was gathered in 2011 along with information about their caste, literacy, and job. According to the 2011 census, the total population of transgender individuals in India is approximately 4.88 lakh.

In a 2014 ruling, the Supreme Court recognised that the transgender population in India, is a segment of Indian citizens who are seen by society as "unnatural" and are often subjected to mockery and fear due to superstition. Furthermore, everyone, including transsexuals, transgender people, and hijras, must have the freedom to choose how they want to express and identify their gender. Individuals should possess the freedom to openly express their gender identification and be recognised as a third gender. Consequently, transgender individuals in India are recognised as the Third Gender. Recently, India has progressed legally in the acceptance and inclusion of the LGBTQ+ population through the decriminalisation of homosexuality (2018), Supreme Court of India invalidated part of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, hence making homosexuality legal in India. Despite these positive changes in the legal rights of LGBTQ in India, homophobia and transphobia are still prevalent in India.

Additionally, the enactment of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (effective from 2020); nevertheless, the reach of these rulings remains limited. Significantly, the legal alteration has not been reflected in societal or attitudinal transformation (Gupta, 2022; Verma et al., 2022).

According to the United Nations 2023, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 8 recognises that everyone has the right to productive employment, a fair wage for all workers, workplace security, and improved personal growth and social integration. However, emerging studies indicate that this projection is unmaterialized. Many organisations are hiring individuals from the LGBTQ community merely as a level of formality without truly comprehending experiences or the difficulties they experience. LGBTQ youth suffer from higher levels of mental distress, clinical manifestations, and substance use compared to their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts (Johns et al., 2013). This builds a platform for examining real-life encounters, complex obstacles related to several identities, and the ability to recover and adjust within the diversified and delicate fabric of the Indian LGBTQ community. Furthermore, Transgender individuals encounter limited access to essential necessities as a result of their marginalisation. Discriminatory experiences may arise from the cisnormative culture embedded within organisational systems (Bizzeth and Beagan, 2023; Hennekam and Kollen, 2025). Transgender health outcomes and life experiences differ from those of others, recommending a distinct analysis (Pandya and Redcay, 2021).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Due to the scarcity of academic research on transgenders experiences on workplace harassment, especially covert forms of discrimination i.e. ostracism, a qualitative method was employed. Qualitative analysis involving semi-structured interviews was adopted. Interview questions were majorly open-ended. Engaging respondents in this way helped us acquire information and produce ideas for our exploratory study.

4. Sample and data collection

A total of 10 semi-structured interviews have been conducted for Transgenders employees from India using purposive and snowball sampling. In the first phase of interview process, 5 interviews were conducted. Data collection was stopped when additional interviews contributed no new information to the codes (informational redundancy) and all the research questions had been appropriately answered.

There is no universal approach to achieve data saturation. However, researchers generally agree on some principles and concepts, such as avoiding new data, themes, or coding, and ensuring study replication. Data saturation can be reached with just as few as six interviews, depending on sample size of the population (Guest et al., 2006). Additionally, data saturation refers to the depth of the data rather than the numbers altogether (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012).

The respondents' length of experience varies from 3-4 years in different organisations such as IT sector, consultancy firms, airlines, startups and some serve as activists and doctors. 4 respondents are transwomen, 5 are transmen and 1 as simply transgender and has not undergone any gender affirmation surgery. The respondents' age is between 23 and 45 years. The length of a typical interview is 60 minutes. All the interviews were conducted by telephonic mode or video conferencing and audio recorded. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim.

We have gathered information through interviews of transgender employees to understand workplace mistreatment being faced by transgender employees and how they cope with these challenges. In the first 10-15 minutes, we tried to comfort the participants with general questions like "Tell us about your interests and hobbies", "What is your educational background?". In the later part, we encouraged them to share their perceived sexual orientation or gender- "How do you perceive yourself?" or "What do you like to be called he/him/her, or they/them?" And then we encouraged them to share their work-life experiences in association with any form of workplace mistreatment happening, be it in the form of verbal abuse, abusive supervision, passing nasty stares or calling by derogatory nicknames.

The questions were framed in a way that was non-directive, inconspicuous, and open-ended (Patton, 2014). In order to keep the discussion focused, we made sure that people participated. Then, we analysed it to find patterns and insights that aid in comprehending how people make sense of their lives. It is then subjected to thematic analysis. For this purpose, we have used the questionnaire developed by (Ferris et al., 2008) in context of Workplace Ostracism. Ethical approval has been obtained from Institute's Ethical Committee for this study. Participants were fully informed about the study's purposes, procedures, and potential risks. Participation was voluntary, and consent was obtained before taking interviews (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic details of the participants

S.No.	Names	Perceived Sexual Orientation	Perceived Gender Identity	Age	Education	Affiliation /Organisation	Work Experience
1.	Sxxxxg	Heterosexual	Transman	25 yrs	Graduation	Activist-NGO	3 years
2.	Dxxxxy	Heterosexual	Transman	23 yrs	Higher Secondary education	Café coffee shop sales representative	1 year
3.	Sxx	Heterosexual	Transwoman	25 yrs	Drop out from Engineering, Graduate	Customer service agent at Service Industry	4 years
4.	Pxxxxxa	Heterosexual	Transwoman	32 yrs	Post graduate	Senior Consultant- Service & Consultancy	9 years
5.	Txxxj	Heterosexual	Transman	24yrs	Graduation	MNCs	2.5 years
6.	Cxxxxda	Heterosexual	Transwoman	26 yrs	Post Graduation	Influencer, Speaker, Activist	4.5 years
7.	Dxxxta	Heterosexual	Transwoman	23 yrs	Higher Secondary	Activist- NGO	1 year
8.	Mxxxi	Heterosexual	Transgender	45 yrs	Post Graduate	Activist	10 years
9.	Bxxxxr	Heterosexual	Transman	30 yrs	Post Graduate	Psychiatrist	3 years
10.	Mxxxxt	Heterosexual	Transman	31 yrs	Graduate	Freelancer- Startup	4 years

4.1 Data analysis and interpretation

In addition to the interviews, various legal documents including surveys conducted by different organisations, podcasts and union bulletin have also been analysed. For generating themes along with 10 interviews, (5 transman, 5

transwoman and 1 transgender ,we have also analysed various podcasts of transgenders including famous personalities Sushant Digvigikar (Singer, actor) ; Ella De Verma (Influencer); Aryan Pasha (India's first Transman bodybuilder). To familiarise with the data, sufficient time has been spent for reading the transcriptions multiple times. Interesting features have been noted. Through reading and re-reading the transcripts and revisiting data, the coding process started to label units with the data, a code (Braun & Clarke,2006). In the next phase, we tried to group the codes to form overall themes. Themes were reviewed, and a relation with other themes was reached. Verbatim quotes from the interview transcripts directly supported themes emerging from open, axial and selective coding (Williams & Moser, 2019).

From the narratives, we tried to contextualise the findings, and we discovered 6 major themes as our findings through selective coding.

5. Results & Discussions

From the qualitative analysis, we identified six major themes: 1) Microaggression ,2) Hetero normative Culture ,3) Tokenisation ,4) Emotional Neglect ,5) Self- doubt and 6) Self- Serving Biasness (Table 2, Figure 1).

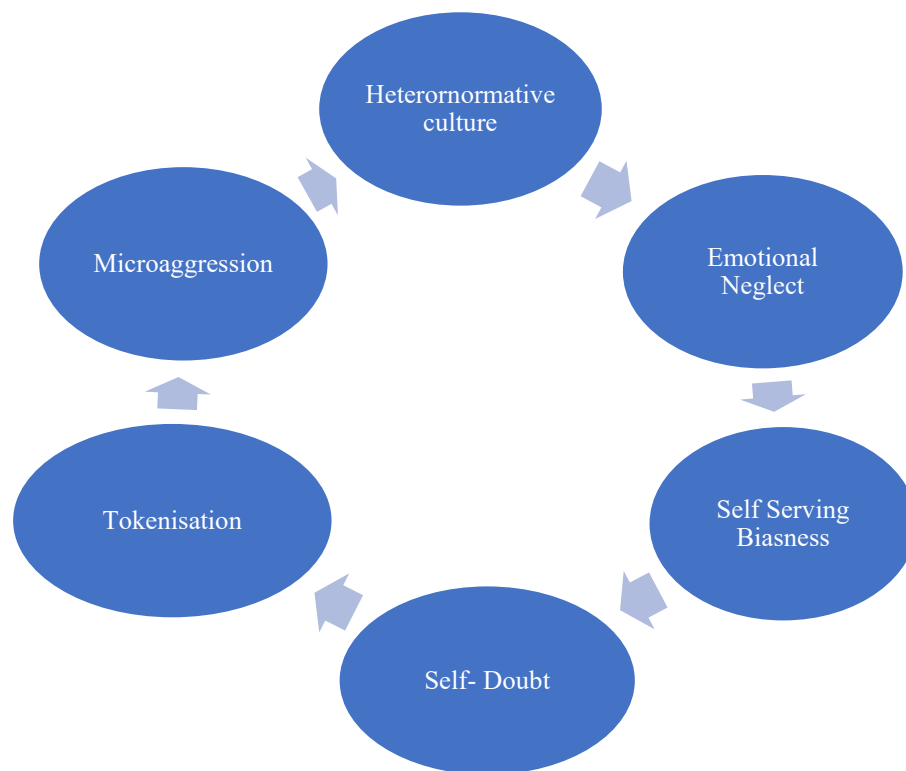


Figure 1. Thematic Representation Derived from selective Coding

Table 2. Representation of Open, Axial and Selective Coding

Verbatim Quotes	Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
<i>Every single time I visit the break room, some individual poses a really personal inquiry. "Have you undergone the surgery yet?" "What is your appearance beneath the surface?" The fact</i>	Over Scrutiny , Invasive and objectifying questions	Verbal hostility	

that I'm trans makes them act as if my body is public knowledge. One of my male colleagues regularly makes improper remarks, like, 'I bet dating you is crazy.' You surely have some fascinating aspects. When I asked him to stop, he laughed and said, "Calm down, it's just a compliment."		Boundary Violation	Tokenisation
People sometimes give me a look as if they have seen a different creature. Making me feel as if something is different with me." I entered the office, and a bunch of coworkers began to mimic my voice, transforming my manner of speaking. One individual ridiculed, 'Choose a side— male or female!' While others laughed out loud, I experienced humiliation."	Misgendering Mockery and dismissal	Subtle discrimination	Microaggression
"A coworker blocked my path as soon as I entered the women's lavatory, stating, 'You don't belong here.'" I had to restrain myself until my shift concluded since I was too apprehensive to attempt again."	Exclusion from gendered space	Psychological invalidation	Emotional Neglect
"A colleague confronted me in the break room and stated, 'I believe you are merely disoriented.' Perhaps you require therapy to gain clarity rather than inflicting harm onto yourself."	Pathologizing identity	Internalised Stigma	Self-Doubt

<i>"Even while my HR department takes great pride in its diversity, on official papers, gender is still only referred to as 'male' and 'female.' Upon enquiring about an update, they responded, 'We typically do not accommodate individuals like you, hence it is not a priority.'"</i>	Mockery and Dismissal, Assumption of cisnormativity	Normalisation of prejudice	<i>Hetero Normative Culture</i>
<i>"One coworker murmured to himself at a team meeting, 'I don't understand why we have to work with freaks now.' When I brought it up, HR advised me to 'just ignore it' as 'he's old-fashioned. HR dismissing concerns ('ignore it')"</i>	Minimization of harm	Defensive justification of system Internal questioning	<i>Self-Serving Biasness</i>

Tokenisation

Tokenisation denotes the act of incorporating a marginalised individual or group into a workplace, event, or campaign solely for symbolic representation rather than authentic inclusion or equality. It frequently leads to surface diversity without genuine attempts to confront structural identity.

"They recruited me to demonstrate their 'LGBTQ+ friendliness,' but they only communicate with me via work emails. I am consistently excluded from team lunches and overlooked for tasks requiring client engagement. I am affiliated with the company, although I do not genuinely belong to the team" (Interviewee 2, Transman, 23 years).

"It is merely a habit," they assert, chuckling, as though my identity is a source of amusement to them. My manager instructed me to 'stop making a commotion' over pronouns, asserting that 'it is not a significant matter.' It appears to me as a type of erasure—suggesting my existence is contingent upon conforming to their expectations of who I should be" (Interviewee 1, Transman, 25 years).

Microaggression

Microaggressions are nuanced, indirect, or inadvertent remarks, actions, or behaviours that express bias, discrimination, or animosity against marginalised groups. Although they may appear little, they can exert a cumulative detrimental effect on the mental and emotional health of the targeted individual.

"There are no verbal acknowledgment during team meetings or email announcements for my contributions" (Interviewee 6, Transwoman, 26 years).

Emotional Neglect

Emotional neglect in the workplace is closely linked to social exclusion, where individuals are marginalised and denied full participation in organisational life. It occurs when employees are ignored, overlooked, or excluded from interactions and opportunities due to their identity. For transgender individuals, such experiences create a lack of

belonging and emotional support, leading to feelings of isolation and invisibility. Thus, emotional neglect emerges as a consequence of ongoing social exclusion in workplace settings.

"There are no verbal acknowledgment during team meetings or email announcements for my contributions" (Interviewee 6, Transwoman, 26 yrs).

A transgender employee asks their manager to use their correct pronouns, but the manager avoids acknowledging the request. *"Silence, followed by a subject change or a dismissive gesture like a shrug."* (Interviewee 3, Transwoman, 25 years)

A transgender employee asks their manager to use their correct pronouns, but the manager avoids acknowledging the request. *"Silence, followed by a subject change or a dismissive gesture like a shrug"* (Interviewee 4, Transwoman, 32 years).

Self-Doubt

Self-doubt constitutes a deficiency in confidence regarding one's abilities, decisions, or intrinsic value. It frequently entails persistent self-inquiry, apprehension of failure, and sensations of inadequacy, despite the absence of logical justification for such feelings.

"I question whether I really deserve to be in this office every time I enter. Was I hired merely to fulfil a diversity quota, or am I truly qualified? Although unvoiced, I perceive the implicit scepticism reflected in their gazes" (Interviewee 3, Transwoman, 25 years).

Heteronormative Culture

Heteronormative culture refers to an environment in which heterosexuality and cisgender norms are accepted as the default or "normal," hence marginalising LGBTQ+ individuals by turning their identities invisible or undervalued. There are no signs of LGBTQ+ inclusion, such as Pride flags, allyship badges, or diversity materials. (When asked about this, leadership responds:) *"We don't want to make things political in the workplace."* (Interviewee

10, Transman, 31 years)

HR policies use outdated or exclusionary terminology. My manager stated *"We've never had to think about policies for LGBTQ+ employees before"* (Interviewee 8, Transgender, 45 years).

Self-Serving biasness

Participants' revealed a conflict between felt discomfort and interpretive ambiguity, demonstrating how repeated exposure to subtle exclusion might lead to self-questioning rather than instant attribution to discrimination.

I try to give people the benefit of the doubt, but at the same time, my past experiences make me more alert to possible bias. *"It's confusing because sometimes their behavior seems normal, but it still makes me uncomfortable in a way I can't ignore"* (Interviewee 5, Transman, 24 years).

"Management said, 'we can't control how individuals behave', even though it was happening repeatedly" (Interviewee 9, Transman, 30 years)

5.1 Discussion

Participants' reflect a multifaceted experience of workplace marginalisation impacted by daily encounters, institutional frameworks, and internal psychological processes. Microaggressions were usually described as subtle acts such as mockery, misgendering, and implicit othering, which, while often normalised, contributed to feelings of isolation. These findings are consistent with Critical Race Theory (Ladson & Tate, 1995), which emphasises how normalised, everyday encounters reinforce structural inequities. Such interactions occurred within a larger heteronormative culture in which organisational systems, such as binary gender classifications, promoted exclusion, in line with Queer Theory (Jagose, 1996), which criticises the privilege of cisnormative identities within institutional frameworks.

Participants also described instances of tokenisation, in which their identities were turned to objects of curiosity through intrusive questioning and inappropriate statements. This reflects processes of stigma and identity marking, as outlined by Erving Goffman's work on stigma, in which persons with non-normative identities face increased visibility and scrutiny. Along with these exterior experiences, an overarching theme of emotional neglect emerged, as

organisational actions frequently minimised or ignored concerns, failing to promote psychological safety. This is consistent with Organisational Support Theory (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), which states that a perceived lack of support from the organization has a detrimental influence on employee well-being and engagement.

Furthermore, these encounters increased participants' self-doubt, with many doubting whether they were overinterpreting things or being unduly sensitive. This internalisation of ambiguity can be described using Attribution Theory, which states that people struggle to attribute unfavourable experiences to either external discrimination or internal factors, resulting in cognitive and emotional distress. Furthermore, narratives revealed self-serving bias among organisational factors, with discriminatory behaviours excused or reframed to safeguard current norms and the institutional image. This is congruent with Self-Serving Bias, in which people blame poor outcomes to other forces while maintaining a positive self-image. These findings, taken together, are consistent with Social Identity Theory (Stets & Burke,

2000), implying that transgender employees are marginalised due to in-group/out-group dynamics that promote exclusionary behaviours. These themes demonstrate how overt and covert forms of exclusion interact at the interpersonal, organisational, and psychological levels, resulting in not only social marginalisation but also internal conflict, shaping transgender employees' lived experiences in profound and substantial ways.

6. Implications of the Research

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The temporal need-threat model postulates that the immediate goal of the ostracised target's behaviour is to regain or restore the needs that have been endangered. In dealing with, a challenge to their sense of belonging, people may find comfort in thinking about those they cherish; in the face of a threat to their sense of control, they may find ways to assert themselves more strongly, either in that particular scenario or in others. Nevertheless, in case of chronic or persistent ostracism, the model anticipates that the targeted individual will undergo severe negative outcomes leading to resigned acceptance of the meaning of these lost needs— isolation, helplessness, despair, and worthlessness (Williams et al., 2002). In light of the detrimental effects of perceived workplace ostracism, participants reported that they sought therapy or counselling to combat gender dysphoria and self-doubt, as well as to demand acceptance from society. Additionally, they reported engaging in behaviours such as anxiety, seclusion, and suicidal tendencies, in order to prevent future rejections and any form of social exclusion. This scenario can be referred to the third stage of Temporal need-threat model of ostracism - Resignation. If ostracism is persistent, coping resources become depleted

This study enriches the current body of literature by providing insights into the challenges faced by Transgenders at the workplace, particularly in relation to ostracism and exclusion in the Indian context. The study is expected to provide empirical evidence on the extent and nature of workplace ostracism faced by LGBTQ individuals and highlights the psychological toll and professional consequences of such exclusion.

6.2. Practical Implications

The current study emphasises on an urgent need for companies to confront this low-intensity, ambiguous natured, potent and pervasive phenomenon i.e. Workplace Ostracism, considering it as detrimental and widespread issue as it has adverse effects on employee health, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. The result of the study tacitly countersigns organizational exertions engrossed on nurturing internal psychological wellness, improving psychosocial health, and fostering sympathetic leadership styles, as these creativities directly alleviate the harmful significances of such exclusion.

It will give a new dimension to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Additionally, the research offers actionable recommendations for organisations to create more inclusive workplaces, ultimately contributing to the well-being and productivity of LGBTQ employees. Organisations can use the findings to detect the perceptions of workplace ostracism and hence, to develop or enhance policies to prevent workplace ostracism.

7. Conclusion

Currently, LGBT employees encounter distinct expressions of workplace harassment, including verbal abuse and social exclusion, leading to a decline in their mental and physical well-being (Lugg & Roscigno, 2021)(Cruz & Paine, 2021). LGBT individuals often choose to remain closeted in the workplace due to the potential for social isolation or exclusion, apprehension regarding termination, and concerns about ridicule, stigmatisation, bullying, and discrimination (Brooks & Edwards, 2009). The transgender individuals experiences a higher degree of prejudice

compared to other sexual minorities. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals may favour the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy to be closeted in the workplace; nevertheless, transgender individuals' outward appearance renders them more susceptible to prejudice, regardless of their desire for concealment. Lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals differ in sexual orientation, whereas transgender individuals differ in gender identity, resulting in physical distinctions and a heightened likelihood of discrimination compared to other sexual minorities.

The participants in this study are not from the same organisation or type of organisation. We have examined organisations of diverse scales, ranging from small startups with around 30- 40 employees to big corporations with approximately 5,000 employees. Nevertheless, they do not encompass all categories of organisations. The challenges encountered by persons in the informal sector may differ from the findings of the current study.

Secondly, social categories in India are multifaceted and include different elements such as caste, religion, language, and socioeconomic status. A person may experience discrimination because of numerous marginalised identities. The current analysis revealed a theme of multiple jeopardy. However, our study questions did not explicitly address intersectional issues and remained concentrated on workplace ostracism related to gender identity and sexual orientation. Future research could investigate how the convergence of various marginalisations generates distinct experiences of ostracism in professional workplace.

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