



Dr. Naeem Toor

## **Active Citizen, ORIC MNS-UAM /Rafique Research & Educational Society Lodhran with Transgender Community during COVID 19.**

Prof. Dr. Asif Ali believes in diversity and welcomes all kinds of challenges. He is propagandist of practicability as a Vice-Chancellor he has special attention towards community support initiatives. Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization under the umbrella of Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali is proud enough to support the students of UAM 302 Active Citizenship and Community Engagement to work with the Transgender community in this time of epidemic where they are in sheer need.

ORIC MNSUAM along with Rafique Research and Educational Society Lodhran is providing Food, life-saving kits, and SHARAN's energy booster and apple vinegar to the vulnerable community of Transgender all over Pakistan. ORIC focused the marginalized groups of "Khawja Sara- Transgender" community to distribute food, medicine, and life-saving kits in the response of COVID 19 Epidemic across Pakistan.



Prof. Dr. Zulafqar Ali  
Director ORIC.



Prof. Dr. Asif Ali  
VC, MNSUAM



Dr. Rafique Ahmad  
President RRES.



Prof. Dr. Irfan Baig  
Dean, Social Science.

ORIC MNSUAM is organizing food distribution among vulnerable communities through Student leaders in different towns and cities of Pakistan. I must mention that Prof. Dr. Irfan Baig Dean Social Science MNSUAM has a keen interest to support this covert community by initiating community support through an unending chain of students. As a representative of Social Science, he says that this time of epidemic was an opportunity that how may we utilize our hidden potential and by helping more than 250 Transgender families across Pakistan.

MNSUAM must be a change agent and share the success story with other leading Higher Education institutions. As an institution we have much, more responsibilities rather than easy come

to teach and go. Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar as head of ORIC and Business Incubation Centre a social Scientist believes that God has created Trans people so we must respect them. He further says that interestingly when you want to do something good for nothing naturally you get a hug back so in the same way once MNSUAM, started Transgender activity with Rafique Research and Educational Society Lodhran as a sole partner we get a snap hug back.

I must appreciate the efforts of Dr. Rafique Aham President RRES for providing philanthropic support to the Transgender community in collaboration with ORIC MNSUAM. Rafique Research and Educational Society Lodhran paved the way to work with the Trans community. By chance, it was just a prelude of MNSUAM to work for the betterment of the Transgender community during COVID 19. Nevertheless, with time, things get change and we get stunning leaders across Pakistan to stand up with the Transgender community.

The role of Active Citizen has been indispensable to support COVID 19 & Transgender Welfare and Empowerment Project. Active Citizen of MNSUAM got training to work as a volunteer from British Council Pakistan and studying a subject UAM 302 Active Citizenship and Community Engagement. The purpose of this subject is to promote volunteerism among students and feel the pain and pangs of others.

In a society where ego and ostentation, me-centered statements and gobble up is a dilemma of a sunny day. Where vulnerable communities stand nowhere. As a mentor of the above-mentioned subject, I feel that in this chaotic and catastrophic time of COVID 19 if someone is going for the help of Transgender community people make fun and call uncertified lunatic as society overall thickly conjure up with the materialistic world and for that lust, there is no limit to chase money. So what I believe in is this that you need to shape the opportunity ahead of you, there is no time like right now to help our Transgender friends. As there is a Chinese saying that the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago and the second-best time is now and “now here mean now”.

MNSUAM is proud to deliver community services through Active Citizens which is a project of British Council Pakistan through innovative Social Action Plans. Prof. Dr. Asif Ali is honored to have a vibrant team of social entrepreneurs across Pakistan. Since the outbreak of COVID 19 students of UAM 303 are cohesively delivering their best by supporting the Transgender community in the shape of food, sanitizers, and medical kits to save precious lives from the epidemic.

I would like to mention the name of groups who conducted social action projects with the Transgender community across Pakistan during the epidemic. So far we have 25 projects on Transgender and name of Groups are as under Jawanz, RRES Lodhran, Aala welfare organization, United, Shaheen, Gladiators, Rashid Minhas, Parvaaz, Iqbalianz, Ghaazi, Shinning Star, Ideal group, Legend, Shaheen, Developing agents, Grow together ,Social Constructor and Salvatore (savior), Champions, Peace lovers, Alpha+, Welfear Group, Warriors of Peace, Villagers and Lion group.

The joint venture between MNS-UAM, ORIC, and Rafique Research and Educational Society Lodhran is appreciable as the country is facing history's worst lockdown due to COVID 19. As per the insiders of the social sector, much of attention is towards those who cry hard and addict of begging. The President of RRES Dr. Rafique Ahmad Gold medalist believes that this vulnerable

population has no proper source of awareness due to lack of medical facilities, as till today, Transgender's acceptance in Pakistani society is beyond the limit and same is the case in respect of having nutrient-rich food.

There should not be any shilly-shally, dilly-dally, and delay-cum-dithering to provide food and medical assistance to the covert community namely Transgender. In this tough and tight situation due to COVID 19 one must not forget to start immediate support to a stereotype creature in Pakistan namely Transgender. In this country of yours and mine out of so many painted faces, this innocent community is mostly unheard and is not considered a gravitas clan.

Transgender in Punjab Pakistan lives in different locations of the city and village in the form of groups. Although they are highly visible with their flamboyant dressing and loud behavior they are amongst the most ignored urban poor. They have no dignified source of income they rely on begging and alms. However, many *transgender* is also engaged in sex work because of the lack of other viable opportunities. The engagement of transgender persons in sex work has direct consequences with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV AIDS.

They are facing social exclusion from their family and on a wider level from society, such as from the right to defend against violence and human rights abuses to access to public services, education, and employment. However, they are entitled to the same rights and opportunities under the constitution of Pakistan as to other citizens. Instead of these entitlements, they are unable to get their civil and basic rights. There is a need to facilitate and guide Trans people through a proper platform to fulfill their needs and requirements to live as dignified citizens.

The main problems that are being faced by the Transgender community are discrimination, unemployment, lack of educational facilities, homelessness lack of medical facilities: liken HIV care and hygiene, depression, hormone pill abuse, tobacco, and alcohol abuse and problems related to marriage and adoption.

In the time of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry on November 14, 2011, transgender persons got the voting right including the task of issuing them voter identity cards got caught up in the male or female question. Several of them were denied cards with the sexual category of their choice.

The other fields where this community feels neglected are the inheritance of property or the adoption of a child. They are often pushed to the periphery as a social outcaste in Pakistan and many may end up begging and dancing. This is, by all means, human trafficking. Sometimes running out of all options to feed themselves, they even engage themselves as sex workers for survival. During this catastrophic calamity COVID 19 when the country is lockdown no one bothers talks about the most vulnerable group.

Transgender has very limited employment opportunities. Transgender has no access to bathrooms/toilets and public spaces. The lack of access to bathrooms and public spaces access is illustrative of discrimination faced by transgender in availing each facility and amenities. They face similar problems in prisons, hospitals, and schools.

In the South of Punjab, Pakistan most families do not accept if their male child starts behaving in ways that are considered feminine or inappropriate to the expected gender role. Consequently, family members may threaten, scold, or even assault their son/sibling from behaving or dressing-up like a girl or woman. Some

Parents may outright disown and evict their child for crossing the prescribed gender norms of the society and for not fulfilling the roles expected from a male child. Parents may provide several reasons for doing so: bringing disgrace and shame to the family; diminished chances of their child getting married to a woman in the future and thus end of their generation (if they have only one male child); and perceived inability on the part of their child to take care of the family.

Thus, later transgender women may find it difficult even to claim their share of the property or inherit. Sometimes, the child or teenager may decide to run away from the family not able to tolerate the discrimination or not wanting to bring shame to one's family. Some of them may eventually find their way to Gruu/Hijra communities. While leading their life with a Gruu as a father and mother there is no chance of education with fellow Hijras and consequently they difficult to get jobs. Moreover, it is hard to find people who employ Hijras/TG people.

Some members of society ridicule gender-variant people for being "different" and they may even be hostile. Even from police, they face physical and verbal abuse, forced sex, extortion of money and materials; and arrests on false allegations. Absence of protection from police means ruffians find Hijras/TG people as easy targets for extorting money and as sexual objects. A 2015 study documented that in the past one year, the percentage of those MSM men who have sex with man and Hijras who reported: forced sex is 46%; physical abuse is 44%; verbal abuses 56%; blackmail for money is 31%, and a threat to life is 24%.

Hijras face discrimination even in healthcare settings. Types of discrimination reported by Hijras/TG communities in the healthcare settings include deliberate use of male pronouns in addressing Hijras; registering them as 'males' and admitting them in male wards; humiliation faced in having to stand in the male queue; verbal harassment by the hospital staff and co-patients; and lack of healthcare providers who are sensitive to and trained on providing treatment/care to transgender people and even denial of medical services. Discrimination could be due to transgender status, sex work status, or HIV status or a combination of these. One must cogitate what would be modus operandi if a Trans will visit for COVID 19 in such kind of bona fide circumstances.

The transgender community is still neglected in the democratic development of the country. Although they have been registered as voters and now have CNIC computerized national identity cards in Pakistan with their true identity for which they longed for, but their status is yet to be changed in society. The provincial governments, of Punjab, has reserved quota for them in public jobs. But the issues of low education in this community are a hurdle in accessing this opportunity.

In the culture where Transgender (Hijra) is usually considered a member of "The Third Sex", neither man nor woman. In a society where Khawaja Saras are left to live a very secret and self-confined life to avoid discrimination and abuse. Khawaja Saras is associated with dancing, begging, and prostitution. They deserve equality, respect, happiness, a better standard of living, education, and employment just like the rest of us. Here we go

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