
GENDER IDENTITY AND HEGEMONIC STRUCTURES IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Gender identity is an expression of one's self, articulated on a spectrum of expressions and behaviours, which gets translated into opinions and expectations that society at large has regarding groups of people. It is a major factor that serves as a basis of perception formed by a group within itself, and by others who try to relate to them through the lens of their own set of values. Gender based violence and discrimination often get overlooked in Pakistan because it is given less priority in the face of other political and economic issues. The purpose of this report is to look into the different reasons that are at play in the perception of gender identity in Pakistan and consider the political structure of Pakistan while trying to observe if the system has the political capacity to implement gender based laws. The approach adopted in this regard is mainly analytical, based on literature review, other research and news articles. Instead of explicitly mentioning the infinitesimal occurrence of gender-based violence, this work tries to conceptually analyze the formation of perception regarding gender performativity and identity. It looks into idealized social norms and their relevance in influencing society and politics.

KEYWORDS

Gender, Identity, Social Movements, Political Structures, Society.

INTRODUCTION

Gender identity can be defined as a division of social roles, behaviours, norms, and relations between segments of people. It impacts the lifestyle and prospects a person will experience in their life and the kind of relationships that they will have

with people around them. Gender identity and gender roles are mainly constructed by society, based on the historical progression of cultural norms, religious beliefs, and economic division of labour, which form concurrent cultural and societal values over an extended period.

Gender is a social categorization that gives sexes sets of roles and assigns them with certain behaviours and performances, of tasks and etiquettes, in which these sexes conduct themselves. Sex differentiates people into two main categories of male and female based on chromosomes and hormones.

Some physical differences constitute an entire identity upon which the society is constructed (functioning), while others get ignored, impacting recognition and grievability. Social constructivism is based on how behaviours are ascribed by societal values rather than genetic makeup. Gender 'essentialism' is based on old scientific categorization that gender is something one is born with and something that naturally cannot be divergent. There is still a debate about whether gender is binary or exists on a spectrum, which will be discussed further in detail.

Further engaging the conversation regarding the elements that the legal justice consists of, which lives are worth preserving and to what extent. Justice, within itself, can also be realized in divergent ways. Legal justice is the rights a state's constitution ensures; justice may be taken in the sense of creating and maintaining order or justice in an inclusive sense, where every person gets equal rights, eliminating any sort of preconceived notions and prejudices regarding a person. In a democratic system where citizens elect political leaders for the realization of their needs and wants. Policy making and legal justice become a domain where the way of life also gets reinforced as a continuation of social structures in a certain direction, realizing who gets under the protection of the legal system fully, partially or not at all. This gives the political system the capacity to alienate some segments of its citizens and not recognize certain identities by engaging the legal justice system as a tool to maintain order.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Historically, in early pagan societies, deities were made in the image of nature (Eck, 2005). With the development from the Bronze Age to that of classical antiquity, each empire and different tribal societies scattered all over the world had no set pattern of paganism that they followed. Deities from these ancient pagan ritual practices did not have a gender, as they existed in nature itself and the form of spirits (Hicks, 2010). Later, mythological beliefs like Hinduism, Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Norse mythologies had both male and female deities. They discussed the supernatural and the spiritual form of being but did not provide any strict moral,

ritual, legal, or theological code of conduct (Bultmann, 2005).

The role of women in these societies, albeit generated from being a domestic one, extended to education, practice of medicine and the female members of the wealthy and politically influential families also acted as their advisers and participated in politics (Milnor, 2009). Women participated in both hunting and gathering (Anderson A, 2023). In ancient Egypt, women, by law, had an equal status to men. They could buy and sell properties, own and run their businesses and help in running family businesses, and even appear as witnesses in court cases. They also served as priestesses to female deities. Egyptians also preferred to be ruled by females of royal blood, who had a divine right to rule, over a man who was not of royal blood (Tyldesley, 2006). In many ancient societies, having both male and female attributes was considered an honour. The domestic life and social practices were of no concern to the political and judicial order, as long as they did not infringe on the rights of others. Ancient religions were based more on rituals and creating a community, rather than dictating a way of life. The development of the society in architecture, science, arts and the expansion of the population introduced overall religious and socio-cultural differentiation. The legal system was based on common sense, which was open to interpretation with the philosophical and metaphysical understanding of concepts.

The core of concurrent discourse regarding gender identity started to form around the 15th century. One crucial distinction between the political structures of pre- and post-development of monotheistic religions is that the social practices of family life were considered a private matter. The behavioural permissibility was suggestive of the aspects that had a direct effect on public life and how a person interacts with others in society, in general (Parkinson, 1996). Education was mainly based on learning different skills, developing critical thinking and making scientific observations which, even in its own time, went through rigorous discussion from different schools of thought and rapidly changed down to its fundamental level. On the contrary, the system of education that was developed after the 17th century, mainly in different parts of Europe, was centered around revealed religious knowledge, which we can still observe till this era; that philosophical, critical and moral knowledge is traced around. European expansionism and colonialism further spread these ideas all around the world, and through Christian missionaries, over time, Christian ethical and moral values found their way all around the world. European colonialism was religiously justified with the divine right to rule; it was the white man's burden to civilize and introduce decency to the rest of the world. An era of modernity, in how humans lived their lives, with a new, censored moral and linguistic code. It was to show the savage

population the 'right' manners of doing things, to live their lives by a certain universally accepted code of conduct.

In his book 'On the Genealogy of Morality', Friedrich Nietzsche presents the concept of 'good' and 'bad' as the self-affirming values of the people with wealth and power and, to a greater extent, of the people living in a society. So, being good means being physically strong, powerful, wealthy, influential, beautiful, etc. To be bad stood for everything opposite of 'good': weak, poor, sick, common and ugly. Nietzsche supports this hypothesis with etymology in a lot of cultures and languages in which to be 'good' refers to the aristocrats and the wealthy, the lifestyle and attributes that the rich and powerful people have become synonymous with everything good. The 'bad', on the other hand, were the attributes of the peasants, the poor and the common. The 'Master Morality' engages in tasks like combat, athleticism, feasting, fulfilling various ambitions and desires; these are all considered things that are good. Master morality also created an aristocratic, hierarchical and authoritarian political regime, as it legitimized it with personal ability and competence. Whereas 'Slave Morality' is the opposite of 'Master Morality' as it consists of the weak and oppressed. They are more inclined towards a more communal and socialist political structure, which is more concerned with fairness, equality, kindness and justice (Nietzsche, 2013). The form of society that these kinds of attributes shape is inherently an unstable one, based on the sole distinction that good is considered what is strong and bad is considered what is weak. It justifies all sorts of violence based on preconceived notions of the most basic forms of human inclinations, of the survival of the fittest.

GENDER IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND REALITY

Gender identity is based on social constructivism; its most basic idea is that power distribution among different segments of society is distributed, recognized and legitimized by people or groups of people who morally and socially abide by it. The identity of one's self is one that we come to realize through what we are taught, told and expected to do. In this sense, everything a person interacts with is subjective, assigned only by the value that is given to it by individuals and the society as a whole. A person's gender identity is a culmination of their experiences and surroundings, which they interpret and reflect upon while engaging with others. Another aspect of social constructivism applies to nations, money, cultures, laws and borders, which, if not defended by social relations and convictions, simply cannot exist.

Social constructivism does not suggest that if an idea is constructed, it is not real.

Through critical realism, this idea further indicates that if we observe the elements and factors that comprise our society, and then try to apply them to a historical version of our society, it will not elicit the same sociological reaction as it does now. People learn to give meaning and value to something, not only through philosophical discussion surrounding it but also by what value it provides in the given circumstances. Understanding any given perception of comprehension and utility of a particular entity or institution, while being objective for the time being, holds a subjective value. The same idea can be applied to race and gender; the ideals that affect them are formed subjectively, but the implications that it has on the people to whom it is applied form their objective reality.

The application that religious morals had on the sexes was that it patently divided the roles of the male and the female sex. The religiously assigned roles are not to be questioned, and their transgression is, with potency, met with extreme legal and social consequences. Society acting within the confines of a rigid moral code, which is not subject to any reformation or evolution, is bound to create order by eliminating any deviation from it.

GENDER IDENTITY AND KNOWLEDGE

Gender exists on a spectrum; the body is a physical form that performs actions. The physical human form does have intrinsic features that enable and restrict it from performing certain physical tasks. This distinction, even in the 21st century, determines in some and engages in a conversation in many, if a person qualifies for basic human rights which, based on their identity, restricts them from equal social and legal rights. Over lengthy periods of time, certain behaviours might take an instinctive configuration in certain people (Lock, 2010). But that too varies from socio-political and economic factors that form knowledge based on occurring and evolving experiences that correlate with culture, which further extend the perception of morals and justice itself. A set of vocabulary is at play to generate a visceral reaction to the performative aspect of gender. The refinement of morals is what one is supposed to think and behave when interacting with others. This is reflective of the cultural elegance rather than the experiences of living conditions that its subjects undergo so that the feeling of uneasiness comes from being wrong rather than being wronged. The pain and discomfort are self-inflicted rather than generated by the norms that are enforced, which directly impact how individuals engage with the socio-political and economic elements of the state. So the term women's rights imply decadence, queer rights becomes degeneracy, right to choose and consent becomes a direct attack on religion, culture, tradition and all things good that makes up the current society. Another observation is that the discussions

around gender identity use language that is the opposite of what we commonly hear in science as well as education. The discussion around gender and normative behaviours is viewed as a transgression of what it implies personally, socially and politically. Questioning the very definition and implication of law, morality and justice, which determines who gets rights and who doesn't. Whether the only purpose of justice is to create order by any means, or is it a means to achieve prosperity by creating utility?

If these values set the discourse surrounding law, politics and descriptive education, the knowledge that is generated out of it defines what values deem as aggression, which should be put out with force. The idea that any sort of action against legal authority is bad is because of the social contract, where citizens give up some of their rights to the state, which the state does not allow others to infringe. It also suggests two main ways in which people and groups of people interact with the political system that they live in, i.e., through complaints and violence (Ahmed, 2021).

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER HEGEMONY

Imposing binary heteronormativity neatly divides gender's perception, into two categories. The male is dominant and objective, while the female is submissive and subjective. Stagnant in the perception of how the two genders are supposed to behave and the intellectual and emotional capacity that they are supposed to have in social life. Gender hegemony also creates a sense of superiority by defining what masculinity and femininity supposedly looks like, it genderizes the perception of behaviours. The first wave of feminism was the result of the women's suffrage movement in the West in the late 19th and early 20th century, which changed the perception of womanhood for coming generations, from the previous perception of women as dependent, subservient and removed from political life, started to change. The definition of being feminine turned into being educated, independent and having an opinion of one's own; rather than being defined by religious and political structure. Paving the way for old perception that gives any given system legitimacy, to develop and morph itself, from the fragments of its old self, into something new, binding itself through a social contract. Structures that allow the use of power and enforce censorship typically in the form of political capacity that flows from top to bottom, from state to family, from the leader to the father, from the legal system to the small changes that occur in the interpretation of day-to-day laws, creating agencies of social domination that constitute its subjects. So, hegemony of gender is, in a way, derived from essentialism in the political system itself (Kinnvall, 2011). Giving power to the political system to determine what

elements of social life and identities make up common bonds and common identity, as a unifying national force. Subsequently, it also allows the political actors of a state to portray everything that does not help their political agenda, a made-up threat to the common bond. Employing abjection of power to create phantasms. Restrictive discourse is easy to uphold, as it is easy to determine what's in-group and what's out-group based on ontology. The knowledge that generates creative thinking is explicit, going against the existing cultural and religious analysis that divergence is always bad (Budgeon, 2014).

GENDER IDENTITY AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

A social movement is characterized by an engaging, transformational form of mobilization, which has a clear sense of direction of what goal it is working towards achieving. Social movements engage segments of society in a dynamic of actions to achieve social, economic and political goals. Demands made by the actors involved in the social movements do not serve the personal demands of the actors themselves. Rather, it helps them articulate the altruistic, social, political and economic needs of a group, in association with fundamental human rights (Stammers, 1999).

Social movements require activists, leadership, organization and resources, long long-term effort to shift public's perception of the current social, political and economic issues, raising awareness among people to take practical actions; different from an uprising, which has no longer term agenda or a mode of action for the attainment of its goals. Bringing focus towards institutionalized and systemic discrimination against certain groups of people, to attain rights that the group, themselves, do not have for being considered as an outcast by the majority of society (Frédéric, 1990). Segments of society that suffer from inequality and oppression and are worse off than the rest of the society, due to historically perceived perceptions against them. Small social movements may also merge and show solidarity with other social movements to advance their cause of equality and inclusion. It also enables them to gain momentum and engage with an even wider set of people, whose main motive is to resist oppression and discrimination towards minority groups.

Gender ideology is generally perceived as diabolical, a direct threat to heterosexuality and disturbing the family structure. This gave rise to the idea of resisting the threat of ideological submission to an emerging concept by any sort of social movement. Counter movements also emerge to reassert existing social norms, emerging in all forms to maintain their status and privileges.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

The welfare a state's institution provides is compared with other nation-states and regional and multinational organizations. For local power relations and social movements, this has two main implications:

- 1) Local social movements, gender identity and ideology get labelled as an import from the West, a form of cultural imperialism. The feeling of otherness that is experienced discerns the line that patriarchy draws. National leadership and familial authority reinforce political authority and the culture that comes out of it.
- 2) The factors of socio-political life that the government fails to encompass within its institutions are made available by private organizations. Influencing the conception and construction of organically generated local political and social epistemology. The impact of private or international interference, concerning local cognizance in its value orientation, is itself going to play a factor in further destabilization.

GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION IN PRE-COLONIAL INDIA

In Hindu mythology, cosmological deities are not labelled with gender pronouns, as depicted in the ancient literature and sculptures. About twenty hymns in the Rigveda were composed by women; women also performed the duties of scholars, priestesses, and teachers. Although ancient Indian society was patriarchal, women still had equal rights in education, since only married women and men performed Vedic ceremonies and other religious rites. The property rights described in the Vedas, which later came under the Mitakshara law in the legal system, were available to the joint family, in which only male members of the family could inherit property. Women only had access to the family property through their fathers, husbands, or sons (Kumar, 2011). Women in the agrarian subcontinent helped equally with the plantation and harvesting of crops. Most of the role of women was based on domestic servitude and early childhood education, which throughout history, was not considered an economically consumerist circle of society. So, even though women had equal participation in society and contributed just as much to the economy as men, almost all of their labour was unpaid. Making them, in the realm of acquisition, economically and socially inferior and dependent on men. During the Bhakti movement, originating in the 6th century CE, women led social movements for better rights and social equality for women, lower castes and minorities (Mulchandani, 2019).

Gender expression was considered a part of the appreciation of the creation of

humankind itself. Gender expression was widely accepted and appreciated throughout the diverse cultures and communities in the extensive history of the Indian subcontinent. An example can be taken from a part of the tale, from the Hindu epic Mahabharata, following the events in the Kurukshetra War, estimated around the 10th century BCE. Shikhandi, a great warrior, is mentioned as a Kinnar, which in today's terminology can be translated to a transgender person. Shikhandi was neither assigned as a male nor a female at birth, leading to Shikhandi being able to aid in the killing of Bhishma, the mightiest warrior in the Mahabharata (Ganguli, 2019). The events that led to Shikhandi aiding the killing of a nearly invincible warrior are considered a gift from the deities.

Another historical example can be taken from the text of the Ramayana, from around 500 BCE to 100 BCE. In the legend, when Rama is exiled from his kingdom into a forest, his disciples try to follow him. Rama then asks all men and women not to follow him into the forest and to go back to Ayodhya. The individuals who neither identified as men nor women stayed back and tried to follow Rama; touched by their loyalty and devotion, Rama grants them the ability to give blessings on events such as marriage, the birth of a child, and inauguration events (Srinivasan SP, 2020). The concept of "Badhaai" is said to be traced back to this particular event in the Ramayana, where gender non-conforming people perform celebratory rituals at festive events.

Gender fluidity and gender expression can also be observed in the pre-colonial literature of the Indian subcontinent. Writers and poets such as Rangin, Insha, Pandey Bechan Sharma, and many others wrote poetry about love and gender expression, which, till the 1800s, were common and widely accepted in the subcontinent. Muslim rulers of the subcontinent, to gain legitimacy among the public, refrained from interfering in centuries-old forms of gender expression practiced by the local cultures and refrained from interfering in the private lives of the people.

GENDER IDENTITY IN THE COLONIAL ERA

British colonialism introduced and tried to enforce Victorian Christian values on the local population of the subcontinent. The British viewed the locals as uncivilized and uneducated in their social and moral practices, trying to impose their own set of ethics on the Indian subcontinent. Local gender norms, which, till the 18th century, were based on inclusivity in India, were vilified based on the concept of non-productivity and were legally prohibited by the West. The inclusive nature of the Indian subcontinent was viewed as intellectual inferiority based on uncivilized social practices that the British were here to correct. This imposition

was based on building an improved sense of nation-building by a rational and coherent community and creating the 'other', an us versus them. They or the other was whoever did not conduct themselves in a manner imposed by the colonial power.

The British legitimized their colonial rule along the lines of the Christian conceptualization of the 'manly man'. The colonizers were cultured, intelligent and strong men who, based on their distinctive capabilities, were able to amass the fortune that they were competent enough to attain. The process included painting the colonized as immoral, effeminate, sluggish and all the opposite attributes of the manly British men (Banerjee, 2005). Thus, creating a character of hegemonic masculinity, who would use force to impose good morals and educate all those who were unruly, in their way of life. The sketched notion was that the political, economic and military failures of the territories being colonized were due to their moral corruption and impotence, thus a form of punishment for their sins. Diverse cultural and traditional practices of the Indian subcontinent were sanitized based on these principles. The focus was actively shifted from a political failure to a moral failure, based on divisions created by highlighting cultural differences in the region.

The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 exploited the differences based on the perception of gender and cultures in the sub-continent. The gender non-conforming were also disparaged under this law; the label hijra and khwajasira was being used negatively, and they were portrayed as beggars, adulterers and child abductors. Creating systematic legal, political and economic criminalization and discrimination against a segment of society.

Women's rights in the colonial era saw an increase in women-led movements for the right to higher education, jobs, and political participation; some successful movements were the Women's Indian Association and Mahila Atma Raksha Samiti. These movements were also used as a tool to justify the colonial notion that the Indian subcontinent was socially degenerating. The Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act of 1937, introduced some reforms to enable women to have a share in joint family inheritance, but it did not sort out the legal execution of the law and women only had access to, 'limited estate', only that inheritance which was not directly passed to an heir in a will (The Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937 (ACT NO. XVIII OF 1937), 1937).

GENDER IDENTITY IN THE POST-COLONIAL ERA

The effects created in the subcontinent during the extensive influence of the British, beginning from the Battle of Plassey in 1757, to the direct British rule from 1857

to 1945; influencing all aspects of life in the region, gender expression and gender identity were also among the elements, whose perception almost took a complete turn from what it was before the colonial era. The perception, which was based on the natural precession of events and was widely accepted and tolerated, having a sense of indifference to difference, was now being marked with a colonial frame of mind. Influencing all aspects of life in the region, gender expression and gender identity were also among the elements, whose perception almost took a complete turn from what it was before the colonial era. Discrimination based on extreme religious and cultural beliefs is competing for moral superiority with one another. Resulting in the creation of factions that are not equal in power and value, based on their religious, cultural, and gender identity, negatively affecting their participation in national politics and opportunities in acquiring economic resources. Gender identity suffered from a relative disadvantage in the face of other national issues, further marginalizing the community from accessing and participating in the political and economic domains. Most of the laws passed against gender non-conforming passed in both the newly independent states of India and Pakistan.

GENDER IDENTITY AS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN PAKISTAN

Gender identity in Pakistan has been expressed and advocated for through civil societies, protests and social movements. The main focus would be on three social movements: Aurat March, Haya March, and Moorat March, in the observation of their impact on contemporary debate regarding gender identity in Pakistan.

Aurat March

Aurat March first took place in 2019 and has been taking place every year. The march is held every year on International Women's Day. Up until this year, 2024, Aurat March takes place in multiple cities across Pakistan on the 8th of March. Aurat March is an organized social movement that covers a spectrum of social, cultural, political and economic issues under its organization. The movement, up until this year, has issued two manifestos in 2021 and 2022, respectively, and a charter of demands, which are issued every year (Aurat March Lahore, n.d.). The manifestos of the moment cover a plethora of issues, ranging from but not limited to economic justice, environmental justice, criminal justice, accountability, police brutality, enforced disappearances, inclusion of gender minorities, health care, reproductive justice, access to public spaces, minority rights, and anti-war. Its first manifesto, issued in 2021, revolves around the theme of health care, and encompasses its socio-economic and political aspects, while highlighting its impact

on women, minorities and all gendered bodies. This manifesto also makes specific and concise demands from the government, in light of Article 38 of the Constitution of Pakistan. It also highlights the impact of inequality, injustice and crime, in light of its severe consequences on women due to patriarchy and other minorities in Pakistan. The movement also highlights the issues with the legal system and police apparatus, their handling of death penalties, legal discrimination against gender minorities and other economic and environmental issues. It also gives its stance on feminist justice in Pakistan and its implications on their share of economic and environmental justice. In the light of these legal, political and societal issues, the manifesto of 2022 makes demands for change from the state and society. Aurat March of 2023 clashed with the authorities in Lahore, when the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Lahore refused to issue a No-objection Certificate (NOC) for conducting Aurat March (Mehmood, 2023). The issue was resolved by the Lahore High Court, with the changing of venue of the march by the discussion between the march organizers and the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore; this exchange highlights the misuse of power and mismanagement of the police department (Yasif, 2023). The march of 2024 also included, along with its previous themes, issues like state-sponsored poverty, land grabbing, and fascist capture of politics in its resistance movement.

Aurat March is a sophisticated social movement, in the context that it encompasses numerous aspects of national issues. It takes up a multidimensional approach that calls attention to national socio-economic and political issues. While also specifically highlighting its impact on marginalized groups of society. The purpose of categorically mentioning the range of issues which the movement encompasses in its charters and manifestos was to highlight that it is not just a two-dimensional movement, which only focuses on women's rights and equality. But it is, as a whole, a social justice movement, contrary to its public's perception.

Haya March

Haya March is another social movement that has been taking place since 2019. This movement is organized by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), a religion-based political party. Much of the information regarding this social movement comes from the coverage by cable news networks and the television appearances by its movement leaders and organizers on local news and talk shows. The main march of this movement also takes place on International Women's Day, on the 8th of March. This movement also advocates for women's rights, their social and economic inequality, and other issues that they have to face due to the weak political system of Pakistan. This movement advocates for the rights of women in light of Islamic

laws and teachings. Resultantly, the sphere of its conception of fundamental human rights is limited than that of the Aurat March. This social movement does not have a manifesto or a charter of demands as of 2024. This movement is considered a counter movement to Aurat March, because of its agendas not being explicit enough, in its demands to the political system. It also does not yet include or give its stance regarding the rights of minorities, nor on the gender non-conforming segments of Pakistan. This movement does not have any official social media presence, which may even further misinterpret its views and notions regarding different minority communities of Pakistan.

Haya March has also been taking place for the last five years, alongside Aurat March. These movements may seem in opposition to each other due to their yearly face-off, and different outlook and approach to the perception of women's rights and the concept of equality, but some similarities can also be observed between these two movements. Mainly in the recognition of the fact that women face undue discrimination due to negative social and cultural perceptions, which need to be changed. Another similarity is the recognition that existing laws regarding the legal protection of women are not implemented in actuality, and that there is also a need for the enactment of more laws on women's social and economic protection. It also engages a debate among those who oppose both of these movements, whether women have coherent political demands on the system. But like any other social and political movement, demands from the political movement do not come from a single stream of school of thought. So there are bound to be contrasting opinions, and how different factions approach relatively similar concepts of public grievances.

Moorat March

Sindh Moorat March is the first movement specifically for the gender-fluid and transgender community of Pakistan. The first march was held in Karachi, Sindh, on November 20th, 2022. The movement makes demands, including but not limited to, the right to self-preservation, criminalizing transphobic and hate speech, the Law of Diyat and Qisas is to be kept out of murder cases, discriminating against and overcharging in housing, criminalizing disowning and abandoning transgender children, and quotas in employment and education. It also calls for the protection of Transgender Persons' Protection of Rights Act 2018 & Rules 2020, in its original form. Calling PEMRA to take action against hate speech against transgender persons and demanding state-run safe houses for the khawajasira communities, and one reserved seat for a khawajasira in the national and provincial assembly, respectively. In 2023, three more demands were added, one regarding

property inheritance, a ban on surgeries on intersex children without consent, and recognition of khawajasira as a protected indigenous population.

These demands were circulated through social media, on the Sindh Morch's official Instagram page (Moorat March, n.d.).

The speakers at the march cleared the misconception that the khawajasira community does not fully ascribe to the gender ideology of the West. Rather, they have their own distinct identity and history in the subcontinent, which is 4000 years old. They also made a point that in Pakistan, the khawajasira community has long been subjected to the colonial perceptions, stereotypes and legal rulings that were made up against them; marginalizing and alienating the whole community from the public, political and economic sphere. Their current identities were formed based on postmodernism, while they are subject to discrimination, which finds its roots in classic modernism and interactionism. They also spoke in favour of the Transgender Persons' Protection of Rights Act 2018, which granted them their basic rights and was the first step in the right direction. It made it possible for the gender non-conforming to get a national identification card (CNIC), which gave them legal recognition. Making it possible to cast their votes and access COVID-19 vaccines (Noon, 2022).

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

These movements mark a new era for Pakistan's social movements, which try to engage the society in social issues from all aspects and perspectives. By taking part in the political structure of Pakistan, by engaging in dialogue while introducing people to new ideas and by building up public support. Giving a new meaning and identity to old social and political structures which have imposed their dominance on the realization of equality and justice and setting a new foreground for making creative inquiries about the intersubjective identities, which concerns the people equally.

CONCLUSION

Multiple and divergent identities have always been a part of humankind, and they have played a substantial part in the evolution of humans. Gender identity and expression have different meanings and roles across different cultures and nationalities throughout history. Rather than having static roles and responsibilities, in social and political life, gender has been a prominent determinant in power relations. Responsibilities, duties, religious and social premises create an expectation to behave within restrained constructs, and spill into the consequential realm of social and political capacity. Through which the

negation of certain identities and behaviours is politically and socially validated. Creating negative labelling to influence perception, which also marginalizes certain segments of people from political participation and general inclusion in society, negatively impacting their social and political development. Gender expression has historically played the part of a determinant in power relations between the ruling elite and their subjects. It also had an influence on the economy based on how people had access to different kinds of goods and services. So gender has played a more significant part than credited in the evolution of human societies, in the subcontinent, as well as across the globe.

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