Relationship between Perceived Discrimination and Depression: Moderating Role of Belief in Just World among Transgender in Punjab

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The present study was conducted to investigate the relationship of perceived discrimination and depression, and the moderating role of belief in just world among transgender (hijras) of Pakistan. Cross sectional research design was used. Data was collected from 21 cities of Punjab between November 2013 to April 2014. To achieve the objectives of this study, the sample comprised of 153 transgender persons (Gurus = 21, Chelas = 132). To measure Depression, perceived discrimination and belief in just world, self report inventories namely DASS, Day to Day Life Perceived Discrimination Measure, The Personal BJW Scale and General BJW were used. The results of Moderation Regression Analysis showed that personal belief in a just world moderates the relationship between perceived discrimination and depression such that the relationship is stronger when the personal BJW is low and weaker when personal BWJ is high. During intervention, the transgender can be helped to solve their problems by reducing depression due to discrimination.

Keywords: Transgender, Perceived Discrimination, Depression, BJW.

Discrimination refers to different components of group opposition when studying inter-group relations (McKenzie, 2003), that is, studying attitudes and behaviors exhibited by members of one group towards members of another group (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2000). Discrimination in the present context is defined as the behavioral component of group opposition when studying inter-group relations, focusing on perceptions by minority group members who believe they are receiving discriminatory treatment from members of the majority group (Lee, Noh, Yoo, & Sim-Doh, 2007). In the present article, relationship of perceived discrimination with depression was studied among transgender persons. Depression is viewed as sensitivity towards dysphoria, worthlessness, self-criticism, devaluation of life, apathy, anhedonia and lack of attention (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). American Psychiatric Association (2001) describes the symptoms that can be consistently observed in depression including feelings of worthlessness, fatigue, diminished ability to think or focus feelings of hopelessness and loss of energy. Depression may be caused by traumatic experiences among the transgender, as they encounter a wide variety of discriminatory behavior in their daily life.

When an individual experiences discrimination it leads to depression. However, belief in the just world may play moderating role to minimize their effect. Belief in just world (BJW) is defined as a belief where human beings have to think that they live in a world where people generally deserve what they get and get what they deserve (Lerner & Miller, 1978). All societies demonstrate inequalities and injustices, the disproportionate distribution of wealth, and inequality of access to health care and education. Individuals respond differently to observed or experienced injustice and some individuals adopt belief systems that serve to justify existing social, economic and political arrangements (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). People have prejudiced observation of fairness for self, world and other world (Lerner, 1980). Dalbert (1999) argued that a difference should be made between the BJW for one’s own self (Personal BJW) and the General BJW. The BJW for self is related with whether an individual believes that on an average events of his/her personal life are fair; while General BJW reveals