

Social Mobilization Amongst Transgender Individuals

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Transgender individuals have often come under tough victimization, which is often based on their sexuality. The solution to their unending woes in society today requires the adoption of a participatory approach, in which all of their skills, as well as qualifications, and attributes are considered opposed to their gender preferences when making judgments of any form. It is in this regard that social mobilization comes in handy because of its effectiveness in as far as all manner of participatory techniques is involved. Social mobilization has proved to be an effective tool more so in situations where the development of human, as well as institution-based resources, is to be strengthened. It is through social awareness that individuals are motivated to rise up, and speak for their rights, in as long as the rights, which they demand, are engraved in the prevailing constitution.

Most of the world's constitutions safeguard against discrimination based on the gender of an individual. Therefore, it forms the basis for the transgender people's activities in as far as their rights are concerned. Apart from raising awareness, social mobilization has been proved to induce motivation amongst the concerned individuals, thereby keeping them in the fight for their rights to the time when their demands are met. UNICEF's definition of social mobilization incorporates the attainment of a specific objective, which in this case, is the acceptance of transgender individuals as equal members of the society in all of the community activities such as employment. By facilitating engagement with the relevant stakeholders, social mobilization widens the audience base of transgender sympathizers, as well as other individuals, who adhere to the laws of the country, thus improving the extent to which they win over supporters. Recall the fact that one can champion for a right, which they do not stand any direct benefits from its award by the legal system, which is the constitution in this case.

Several incidences in which transgender individuals have fallen victim of their sexuality in a negative way have been reported, and continue to be reported that some of them remain unpunished. In some instances, the transgender people are unaware of the importance of championing for their rights. Moreover, there are certain actions, which they contend with because of the lack of knowledge that the treatment, which they are accorded, is illegal because it is based on gender discrimination. The most infamous incidence happened in Birmingham Alabama, which was regarded as the most intensely segregated city in the United States during Eugene Bill Connor's reign. Lawlessness had become rampant within the city, in which most crimes went unpunished because of the extent of corruption within the justice system. In this particular incidence, transgender individuals, as well as activists set out on a peaceful demonstration in which they sought to be accorded equal treatment in all areas, including the workplace, as their counterparts who are either male or female. In a bid to counter the non-violent demonstration were unleashed dogs and used high-pressure fire hoses against protesters, most of whom were unarmed.

Almost a thousand young men were arrested, and this caught the attention of the president. John Kennedy and his administration saw the need for legislation, aimed at protecting the rights of transgender individuals, whose lives had been rendered miserable by the rampant discrimination netted on them. He sent thousands of troops to an air base in Alabama and speeded up the drafting of an extensive bill of rights, which incorporated the rights of individuals against discrimination based on gender. In 1960 just before the elections, Martin Luther King had been arrested, but with the help of the Kennedy family, he was set free. The bill's provisions included:

- 1) Protection of African Americans against discrimination in voting.

2) It outlawed discrimination in restaurants, theaters, motels and all places of public admission engaged in interstate commerce.

3) It gave the attorney general's office power to file suits to ensure desegregation in public schools.

4) Authorized the withdrawal of government funding for programs that practiced discrimination.

5) Made it illegal to discriminate against people during employment in business with more than 25 people and created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to handle complaints.

In as much as these actions helped in the enhancement of the rights of transgender individuals, social mobilization techniques should have been adopted to ensure that the exercise aimed at boosting the acceptance of transgender individuals in society were enhanced.

Sensitization is one of the tools through which social mobilization can be undertaken.

Sensitization involves the creation of awareness of the benefits of risks of certain actions. On the part of transgender individuals, sensitization assumes the form of being made aware of their rights as stipulated in the constitution. Moreover, sensitization of the public, as well as employees will take the form of awareness creation of the risks involved in discriminating against transgender individuals. In championing for a particular course, most people are usually motivated by the benefits. Therefore, transgender people should be educated on the likely benefits of fighting for their rights, which include equal opportunities, and treatment in the workplace environment. Social organization is a concept under social mobilization, which necessitates the formation of small groups amongst transgender individuals, who undertake

varied actions in as far as their efforts to attain equality, are concerned. By dividing the roles of each one of the team members, higher effectiveness is attained, as well as the increase of chances of positive results. Conceptualization involves the breaking down of issues into subsections so that efforts are pooled into the section considered the most important, which is the workplace discrimination in the case of transgender individuals.

Transgender Individuals' Acceptance in Society

In recent times, the transgender individuals have experienced a national and worldwide acceptance, and this has led to more enlightenment of the issue across the globe. More and more movies have been produced to show the world how the behavior of the LGBT is not so different from the other people. There are reality shows like "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" and "The New Normal" in the modern family TV program that has incorporated the LGBT to their program. This goes a long way to show that LGBT is just a normal condition that many people in the world are living with, but not as a choice but as an average birth state.

Another program that has driven the awareness of LGBT is "The Empire" which is a TV series that has been widely watched in America in the last couple of months. This show particularly focuses on the struggle that the parents go to accept that the condition of their child being gay. The parents struggle with accepting that a child can be gay and still have the same talent as other children. Once they accepted, they realized that it was just normal. These social black movements emerged without the guidance of national African American organizations, to fight against the transgender stereotyping. Leaders in the social national rights often inspired and gave spiritual direction, but mass movements that were locally based were out of their control (Andrews 2001).

When searching for employment, the LGBT people do not always get a good reception from others. They are not easily hired in white collar jobs because of their difference. They are seen as an abnormality. However, they are employed in entertainment industries and fashion. In those industries, people are open-minded towards change. Anything that is not normal is welcomed as a new trend. We see many homosexuals working in the fashion industries and doing well at their jobs. Some transgender individuals appear on television shows because they are good at acting. Here they can be themselves without being discriminated.

Social mobilization is that people get together even during conflicts within themselves. They were good at combining efforts to instigate some change. The black masses were like a single voice; their needs were similar causing unity in their views and actions. Social mobilization works on the concepts of togetherness to bring about processes of change or development in the society (Andrew 1997). Changes can be regarding residence, social settings, habits and needs, face to face associations, change of institutions and even ways of acting. All this is evident as seen when the African Americans migrated from the Southlands to the north in search of jobs and better education and also to get away from the harsh discrimination and segregation. This perception saw them segregated in schools, in public places like restaurants, motels, hospitals and public transport. They could not own property and were expected to behave in a particular manner in the presence of the whites. All these changes when putting together influence and even bring on political changes and transform political behavior. It takes place where there are large numbers of people and there is a form of change happening like industrialization and modernization.

The Introduction and the Rise of a New Culture and Economic Changes

With the mobilization of the black masses and the evidence of all these changes, the protests and demonstrations led to changes in the human rights to accommodate these people from different races and give them chances for better lives. These movements can also be defined as common challenges by a group of individuals with common interests. People sensibly combine their efforts in a move aimed at achieving a particular goal. These movements did not do so without encountering some forms of setback. They faced the authorities, got beatings, some died in the process, and others got lifelong scars both psychologically and physically. Coming together is what ensured that people got the changes they were looking for.

Social mobilization usually starts from the grass root because most of the people looking for change are commoners in society. Those that have the same experiences socially and economically, who face discrimination together and can relate to one another's problems. Often it takes one of their own to start the mobilization because he/she can be able to communicate with people in a language they can understand. He/she can convince them on the way forward and how to go about protesting to gain the required result. He/she assures them that even though there will be setbacks, they should remain grounded together to ensure they can see the changes taking place (Broad 2002). These grass root leaders also take matters into their hands to help those of their kind who find themselves encountering a problem or setback. It might range from being arrested or being beaten. During the human rights era, these leaders helped anyone who needed assistance because they too could relate to the problem when it came to planning protests and carrying them out.

Some of these leaders got assassinated in the process because of their ideologies and their participation in the human rights movements, but they died for a good cause. They went through

a lot to make sure the voices of the black masses were heard and will forever be part of the history as great pillars in the fight for equal rights. Social mobilization is also evident in today's societies and used to voice opinions of the masses. This happens in any number of situations; it could be because of the wrong presidential ruling, oppression, and violation of human rights. These protests occur locally in schools and institutions where there is some form of abuse or the evidence of violated rights. Nowadays it can also be done through the Internet because the world has become a global village and people communicate and relay information much faster. The use of social media sites has become very popular, and people can learn about things happening on the other side of the globe without being there personally. When it is an occurrence that raises people's concerns they can voice their opinions in unison and most of the time a solution to the problem is reached or reactions are elicited to counter the problem.

When people come together in their masses to voice an opinion, they are usually heard. It also raises the curiosity of others not involved in the situation and sometimes they too express their views in support or condemning of a certain issue. In the fight for transgender, gay and lesbian rights there was the formation of a movement called the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender social movement. LGBT advocates for the rights of LGBT people in the society. It is a good example of social mobilization for the gays cause (Morgan 2002). A common goal for people in this movement is social equality. LGBT movements, organized today, consist of a wide range of political activism and cultural activities, including street marches, research, social groups, lobbying, the media, art. Cultural goals of the movement include objecting to favorable dispositions of femininity, masculinity, and homophobia. Political objectives include changing of policies and laws to have new benefits and protection from harm. There are conflicts in the strategies for debate and change similar to other social movements. There are debates over the

extent of shared interests among the people in the group. In the past leaders tried to hide the feminine gay men, the masculine lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people from the eye of the public and it created divisions within the group. These movements are aimed at liberating the political goals of equal opportunities and hoping to join other groups in the political mainstream. The LGBT movement categorically protests attempts to change gays, lesbians and bisexuals to heterosexuals.

Other groups were also formed in the past, such as the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) aimed at fighting for lesbian rights. There was the Mattachine Society, which is one of the oldest and was formed in the 1950's to fight for homosexual's rights. As in other situations in history that used social mobilization, transgender individuals also used this technique to foster change seeing as their goals are the same in most aspects. These movements have been seen to help the transgender in the society as they fight for equal rights and to be recognized by others in the society as worthy of respect. They support those who have been hiding to come out and embrace who they are. There are fewer cases of violence against transgender individuals. Use of media has helped them educate people about homosexuals and has reduced stigmatization that comes with being transgender. It has improved their treatment in the society; they can get employment and do not have to face discrimination (Engel 2009).

Although the benefits might not be the same as others in the employment sector, they hope for reforms to allow for better terms in the future. It has also helped in schools where young people often bully one another due to differences in sexual orientation. They have come in to negotiate protection for these children to avoid stigmatization which later reduces absenteeism in school and the tendency to commit suicide because of the judging eye of the public. The Transgender Law Centre formed in 2002, advocates for transgender communities. By way of law

workshops, they have created awareness by providing legal information to members of the society, business owners, attorneys, and social service providers. In return, the community can serve better transgender individuals and avoid instances of discrimination.

These workshops also enlighten that LGBT group are not aware of their rights and what to do when confronted with situations they cannot handle. It gives them guidelines and lets them know where they can go when they want to seek help. Counseling services are also available to those that find themselves stigmatized, and it helps them cope with their situation without resulting to behaviors that can harm them like taking drugs to deal with the high-pressure situations that society accords them due to the difference from other people. Those that do find themselves taking drugs are assisted by way of rehabilitation to stop the harmful habits.

Formation of support groups is also done within the LGBT movements to help people give advice to those that are going through hard times because of their orientation. People give their experiences and ways to handle situations that arise. They are also motivational and help men and women as well accept themselves instead of trying to hide their identities. In these groups, they also develop strategies that they later use when advocating for better rights. Relating to other people these groups also give the reassurance they need to see they are not alone in the struggle for equal rights (Engel 2009). Groups also promote understanding between the different categories and people can figure out what they need to address by knowing what they pose and what they need to work as an organization. When lobbying and doing street marches, these groups get a lot of attention, and they use this to their advantage to make people understand that they too need to be treated equally. Although sometimes it also sparks harsh comments and hostile behavior from some in the community it helps sensitize people on matters like stigmatization and how best to avoid putting people in such situations. Social mobilizations have

come a long way and have changed in the way they are managed and how they run their rallies but they are still considered effective in understanding the essence of the matter.

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