



AIPS TRAVEL GRANT FINAL REPORT

Significance of this presentation on Pakistan studies

The objective of the conference paper titled "*The cost of Transgender recognition and sexual citizenship in Pakistan*" presented at AAS-in-Asia 2019 was to analyze the socio-political context within which legal recognition of third gender became possible in Pakistan. The paper links this emerging state led recognition with three decades of surveillance of transgender sex worker through HIV prevention efforts in the region. In doing so it provides a multi-sectoral research analysis of the implications of this state led recognition for the most marginalized transgender communities in Pakistani cities i.e. the khwaja sira community.

Identity related needs of khwaja siras, a diverse community of gender variant individuals have been overlooked by the state and larger society despite a long history of their presence in the south Asian region. Driven into destitution, social isolation and precarious employments including prostitution as a result of their gender variant identities, there has been a sheer lack of systematic societal response to their predicament. In this regard, the recognition of third gender by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2011 was widely applauded locally and internationally. While an important step in recognition of citizenship rights of gender variant populations in the region, the social and communal dimension of this inclusion requires systemic examination to ascertain the wide ranging implications for a community of people that is diverse and multifaceted. As the states response towards GVP evolves at an ever faster pace and in an increasingly ubiquitous manner since 2011, local research has not kept pace. In this context, the paper is important as it provides critical insights into the changing nature of state regulation of gender variance in Pakistan based on in-depth qualitative findings from two years of conversations with local khwaja sira leadership, khwaja sira sex workers, and state bureaucrats in Lahore. In doing so the papers not only opens up an exploration of the present conditions of gender variance in Pakistan but also seeks to ask important questions about what might their future look.