



Review article

Discrimination and social exclusion of third-gender population (Hijra) in Bangladesh: A brief review

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ABSTRACT

The Hijra community is marginalized in social, political, and economic life and especially stigmatized in society. It is their birthright to make use of society's opportunities and amenities. This overview aimed to summarize the stigma, prejudice, exclusions, and discriminatory attitudes toward third-gender populations (Hijra) in Bangladesh from the mainstream society based on a critical assessment of available data and evidence. The paper also explored the socio-economic situation of the third-gender community in Bangladesh regarding income, education, health, housing, social relations, and outcome through a critical literature review. Here, we have highlighted the magnitudes of social exclusion that the Hijra minority group in Bangladesh experiences. The Hijra in Bangladesh faces severe mistreatment due to socio-cultural norms. This minority group suffers from extreme social, cultural, political, and economic exclusion in Bangladesh. Their livelihood is different than other communities in the society. The primary source of income for hijras in Bangladesh is begging and prostitution. They have no access within civil society, even in times of recreational and marital practices. People are unreasonably afraid of their presence in public places. Apart from that, they are physically and psychologically abused and deprived of appropriate medical and civil support. Hijras are deprived of government facilities and are accustomed to miserable lifestyles in Bangladesh. They are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged minority as they lack access to quality services, health care, and employment opportunities. Social recognition and financial independence may be the first step to alleviating discrimination toward the third-gender population. Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be concerned about ensuring the rights of the Hijra community must be protected.

1. Introduction

The term hijra refers to persons who identify as having the third gender. The centuries-old term 'hijra' is extensively used in the Indian sub-continent to identify transvestites, intersex, eunuchs, and transsexual men (Chakrapani, 2010). The term "hijra" originates in Hindustan (India). It has historically been translated into English as "eunuch" or "hermaphrodite," with "the irregularity of the male genitalia key to the definition" (Reddy, 2005). Hijra pronouns such as "neither men nor women" are commonly used to define themselves (Nanda, 1999). Hijras are categorized into fifteen unique groups based on their genital

appearance, social identity, sexual preferences, and masculine or feminine masculinity or femininity characteristics (Khan et al., 2009). There are significant differences in categorizing third gender categories from region to region in South Asia (Kaniz et al., 2006). In Bangladesh, the Hijra gender expression is often described as 'hermaphrodite' or 'eunuch,' which means 'female mind in a masculine body' (Khan et al., 2009).

The hijra community has been visible in various cultural contexts (Khan et al., 2009). The general public sometimes warmly interprets the historical significance of eunuchs as if eunuchs were the pioneers of today's Hijra (Hahm, 2010). This third gender population (Hijra) has been documented in various religions and historical periods (Kaniz et al.,

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2006; Habib, 2013). However, Hinduism and the Mughal era have played a prominent part in shaping the hijra's current role and perceptions (Habib, 2013). Hindu mythology shows that many historical characters have changed their sex in many historical 'plays' (Hahm, 2010). In Islam, several perspectives on Hijra offer distinctive ways of unique features (Reddy, 2005). Islam recognizes physiologically indistinguishable people and gives them the same rights as men and women (Reddy, 2005; Hahm, 2010; Josim, 2012). Eunuchs in the Mughal Empire were related to hijras, albeit these people could potentially be male or female (Nanda, 1999). Early in the British period, many Indian monarchs provided Hijra with safety and amenities (Nanda, 1999; Reddy, 2005; Hahm, 2010). When Bangladesh was under Pakistani rule, the state used to pay hijra pensions in their later years. This subsidy was extended when Bangladesh gained independence, although they were later deprived of it (Husain, 2005).

Since ancient times, the hijra community has been segregated from mainstream society (Hahm, 2010). Hijras are one of Asia's most vulnerable and impoverished populations. Their obstacles are significantly different from those encountered by other sexual identity communities (Khan et al., 2009; Shuvo, 2018). Third gender persons, often known as hijras (Wallen, 2019), have few rights as human beings or citizens of Bangladesh (Khan et al., 2009; Josim, 2012). The hijra community is marginalized in social, political, and economic life (Hossain, 2017), and they are especially stigmatized in society (Shuvo, 2018). As Bangladeshi government does not have detailed data about this community, no structure has been developed for their accommodation. However, media reports showed that the number of hijras in Bangladesh ranges from 10000 to 50,000 out of 160 million people (Chowdhury, 2020). In mainstream culture, hijra individuals are feared, tabooed, and shunned (Khan et al., 2009), which may be termed gender discrimination (Sarker and Pervin, 2020).

For an extended period, the hijra was also denied access to social institutions and services, including education, housing, and primary health care (Khan et al., 2009). Since prehistoric times, they have been a part of Bangladeshi society (Husain, 2005; Khan et al., 2009; Josim, 2012; Jebin and Farhana, 2015). Sifat and Shafi (2021) have recently indicated that most Bangladeshi society has shunned interactions with the hijra community. Their current situation has reduced them to abject poverty, illiteracy, hostility, and humiliation (Islam, 2019; Aziz and Azhar, 2020). The Hijras continue to experience inequality in their fundamental human rights to justice and development (Khan et al., 2009; Chakrapani, 2010). Aside from societal prejudice, members of the hijra group face regular reports of oppression, violence, and abuse (Khan et al., 2009) from other Bangladeshi residents who refuse to accept their presence (Husain, 2005). Their inception is still a puzzle, but their artificiality in Bangladeshi society is indisputable (Khan et al., 2009; Islam, 2019). Their fundamental human rights and opportunities are being thwarted by citizens and the government (Shuvo, 2018). As a result, hijra (third-sex individuals) in Bangladesh are typically denied the fundamental rights of citizenship, including property ownership, inheritance, employment, and medical treatment (Khan et al., 2009). The hijra community is excluded, and civil society fails to pay sufficient attention to the issue (Jebin and Farhana, 2015). As a result, a hijra is severely marginalized, particularly dominated in society's moralistic views on gender and sexuality, equating diversity with deviance and deprivation (Khan et al., 2009). Article 28-1 of the Constitution protects individual rights in Bangladesh "Every person is equal under the law, by itself, it only looks at the basis of someone's religion, ethnicity, caste, sex, or nationality" (Kelly, 2009).

Hijras in Bangladesh face numerous social, cultural, economic, and political hurdles. While many third-gender people (individuals who identify as hijra) contribute to their communities and help society grow, many have faced severe prejudice and discrimination due to their sexual orientation. None of Bangladesh's anti-discrimination laws focuses on protecting the rights of sexual minorities or the recognition of gender diversity (Nag, 1995). There are not many research papers available on

the life and work of the Hijra community. Although there are some ethnographic studies on Hijras, there is little research on their lifestyles (Khan et al., 2009). Social exclusion is a state in which precluded individuals and groups can still participate actively in their society. Therefore, considering this backdrop, we intended to abridge the hardships of hijra life and the difficulties they face in mainstream society. We also aimed to highlight the hijra community's societal stigma and discrimination in mainstream society. The paper also summarized how social, cultural, economic, and political factors contribute to the marginalization of third-gender people.

2. Methods

This piece focused on exploring the process of interpretation from subjective imagery and the imagery of the third gender individuals. This review utilized secondary data to triangulate verification and interpretive techniques for comparable outcomes across the broadest range of possible contexts. Existing analyses on the third gender population were sought out from the searching Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science by utilizing the keywords: "hijras", "third gender", "trans-gender", "social exclusion", "discrimination" "Bangladesh". The data collection timeframe was from June 2021 to May 2022. More than 90 documents have been collected. Each paper was opened, read briefly, and tried to understand the adaptability to the research objectives. After the initial screening, a total of 36 research articles and news reports (local and international) were selected for data analysis.

3. Results

The most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations in Asian-Pacific countries are Hijras, who confront unique obstacles compared to other sexual identity communities. Even though many Asian and Pacific Island cultures consider sexuality more fluid than Western cultures, some Asian leaders have said that a straightforward approach to homosexuality is an erroneous imposition of western concepts that contradicts Asian values. According to Hahm (2010), the hijra group has been marginalized since ancient times (Khan et al., 2009). The hijra community is marginalized in social, political, and economic life, especially stigmatized in society. In the legal sense, everyone has the right to benefit from society's resources and services. Again, society must serve this group to carry out its duties and responsibilities. Therefore, it is imperative to thoroughly investigate the hijra community's issues and challenges (Shuvo, 2018). Hijras are abandoned their healing role over time, and they began to engage in sex work, which is incompatible with India's ethical systems (Nanda, 1999).

Even though the Hijra people make only a tiny percentage of Bangladesh's total population, it has long been seen as a marginalized and backward community. Hijras are members of a high-risk category of people (Khan et al., 2009). Throughout Bangladesh's history, the hijra community has been the country's most marginalized and oppressed sexual group. According to research, they have refused to form any social ties with people from the mainstream community in Bangladesh (Tri-marchi, 2022). Neither the government nor the public acknowledges their unique cultural, traditional, recreational, and matrimonial practices.

3.1. Exclusion from family and social amenities

Since their birth, hijra people have been subjected to discrimination due to the imprecise way in which the concept of gender is understood. When hijra grew up, they realized that they were different from other males in several ways, such as that they used to play with girls and have feelings for boys. Hijra's sex-gender norms and behaviors are often viewed as unorthodox because they were not accepted by society during her childhood. Even though India is tolerant of a wide range of cultures, a family in that situation cannot accept when their male child begins to act in a feminine manner. It is common for parents to explain their child's

reaction to various factors (Chakrapani, 2010). Furthermore, the hijra is finally expelled from their families because of their cross-dressing. Their female attitudes become roadblocks to their academic and professional success. They are frequently abused, forced, and exploited outside of their families and social lives (Chowdhury, 2020).

In many cases, social exclusion begins at home. It is common for Hijra children to be shunned by their teachers and classmates because of their religion. Hijra students are more likely to be bullied and ostracized in school. Many hijras drop out of primary school because of their experiences of discrimination (Aziz and Azhar, 2020). Bangladesh's hijra minority lives on the periphery of society, with no sociopolitical space to live a dignified life. Their plight stems from their lack of acknowledgment as separate gender human beings outside of the male-female gender binary. They are less likely to find a job in the formal labor market and more likely to live in informal settlements if they have not completed a tertiary degree. Hijra may choose to leave their families to avoid further social exclusion, or they may be forced to leave if their family members object to their lifestyle. Josim (2012) claims that the hijra population in mainstream society cannot access fundamental rights like housing. Hijra's death does not exonerate them from their shame, as burying the body and arranging the burial is complicated by various religious and social practices. In the scenario of Bangladesh's hijra minority, they live on the periphery of society, with no sociopolitical space to live a dignified life. Their plight stems from their lack of acknowledgment as separate gender human beings outside the male-female gender binary (Khan et al., 2009). There are many ways in which hijra people are ostracized in society. Finally, the hijra is banished from their family for their cross-dressing. Their gender biases hinder academic and professional achievement. Outside of their homes and social circles, they are regularly subjected to abuse, exploitation, and other forms of exploitation. Social and familial tasks are highly valued in Bangladesh because of the country's gendered expectations for family roles (Jebin and Farhana, 2015). When it comes to the hijra population, civil society is not paying enough attention to the issue at hand. Their fundamental rights and social acceptability are ignored in every growth process. An example of gender-based social exclusion is represented by the hijra lifestyle, which shows that gender is not currently being addressed as part of a more comprehensive social exclusion.

3.2. Exclusion from economic participation

'Hijragiri' or 'badhai' is how most Hijra make a living (Khan et al., 2009). Greetings, Hijragiri, Badhai, or bazaar tola, refers to various behaviors, including collecting money in exchange for blessings, receiving funding from local retailers, and mugging travelers at traffic crossroads, railroad stations, and other public venues. Hijra relies heavily on 'badhai' as a stream of income since they realize how fearful people are of being cursed by them and how much faith they have in their magical abilities. 'Hijragiri', a ritual that involves collecting money from shops in the marketplace and dancing and singing for a newborn baby boy in metropolitan areas, is now a part of their daily routine (Nanda, 1999). Begging on the streets, whether in a group or individually, is another way they make a living. Often, they are forced to choose between begging and sex employment, as traditional 'baccha nachao' (recreation with newly born baby) activities are less in demand than in the past (Sarker and Pervin, 2020).

It is very tough for a hijra to find a job in Bangladesh. Individuals have a severe societal stigma against hijra, and the hijra also has a reduced capability to be proficient enough to find employment (Shuvo, 2018). Hijra individuals are unable to find work because of a lack of education or skills or because their gender nonconformity is not acceptable. No one wants to hire them because they can't find work. In several cases, people have complained that the government has failed to provide them with enough job possibilities. Employers are inclined to hire them since they will degrade the working atmosphere.

3.3. Exclusion from cultural participation

The current social system does not acknowledge hijras as human beings or accept them favorably. Because hijra people are seen as a vulnerable minority, they suffer several serious issues. Hijra cannot attend family functions, weddings, or cemeteries (Islam, 2019). It is an issue because of the influence of mainstream society and their inability to exercise individual citizenship rights. Hijra persons are harshly excluded from social, cultural, educational, legal, and medical facilities because of their non-binary or transgender identities. Silver's three paradigms, specialty, unity, and monopolization also fit the lives of Hijra (Silver, 1994; Khan et al., 2009). The lower the social hierarchy, the more marginalized one becomes, just like 'Silver's monopoly'. When it comes to social exclusion, hijra demonstrates that gender has been undervalued (Khan et al., 2009). Among the social and cultural factors that contribute to social isolation are gender and race. For the hijra, who do not fit into either male or female roles, gender normativity does not apply. As a result, the hijra is severely marginalized, especially in mainstream society's controversial views on gender and sexuality, equating diversity with disobedience and suffering.

3.4. Disgrace from the officials and civil forces

Since they are subjected to unwanted sexual attention from customers, goons, and even the police, they are forced to live in slums, parks, or dangerous streets. Due to the lack of a hate crime law, they cannot pursue a rape case. This intolerance can be seen in public settings, police stations, jails, and even in people's houses, often harsh (Trimarchi, 2022). The main reason for the violence is that society refuses to acknowledge that Hijras do not fit into the established gender norms. Police and civic society persecution are common for most Hijras for various reasons. A direct result of the persistent brutality perpetrated against Hijras by the family, the media, and medical institutions. The Hijras face harassment and abuse from police officers in public places, police intimidation at home, verbal and physical assault, and sexual assault (Safa, 2016). Stereotypes are used purposely to misinform and intimidate because a dearth of role models, information, and education are available. Even though the Bangladeshi government has acknowledged hijras as the 'third gender,' this designation does not guarantee public acknowledgment for these people. It is practically hard for a Hijra who cannot obtain an education, has low-quality occupations, and whose coworkers and teachers cannot treat them fairly to advance their education, even if they do not require reading. Even though the hijra community is not widely recognized in society, civil society has failed to recognize and aid the group.

3.5. Exclusion from medical facilities and health care services

Medical care is unavailable to Hijras because doctors and personnel are apprehensive about serving and mistreating them. Unfortunately, they are unable to live with their family. In hospitals, the scenario is strikingly similar. According to previous research, even if they can afford to pay the physician's private chambers fees, the physicians and staff treat them as less than human beings and are hesitant to serve them. Poor health is seen as a result of social exclusion regarding access to health services. Patients with hijra are often stigmatized, and doctors avoid them (Khan et al., 2009; Safa, 2016; Sifat and Shafi, 2021).

Furthermore, most doctors are unaware of their cultural and social position and treat them as social outcasts. They may become infected if they engage in the sex trade, and without adequate treatment, they cannot get it checked out. Customer rape and compel them to have risky sexual relations with each other (Safa, 2016). Because of this, they are commonly infected with Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). The way they are treated makes it seem as if they are less human. Prejudice prevents this group of people from receiving our social system's usual medical care. Medical care in typical health facilities is not the same as

primary health care; third gender people who need testing and treatment experience discrimination because of the overcrowding of the healthcare system. To avoid confusion, third gender men and women are put in separate wards at the hospital.

3.6. Brutally subjugated by the leader (Guruma)

Most hijras follow a maternal leader known as a 'Guruma' and live in kinship bonds similar to families. Smaller-than-average-sized (chela) groups of disciples are under the Guru's direct control. People's roles in society influence how they are linked to spiritual leaders. The Guru receives a cut of the chela's profits in most cases. Research shows that hijra people tend to stick together in groups headed by a charismatic figure known as the "Guru" (Khan et al., 2009; Hossain, 2017; Sarker and Pervin, 2020). The Guru (Guruma) is expected to instruct and acclimate their chela to the hijra way of life in exchange for *ulti* (Bengali meaning "backward"), a secret language used only by hijra and influenced by Persian vocabulary, is used to train them (Khan et al., 2009). When it comes to the hijra group, all of these sterilization methods are used to seem like authentic representatives of their religion. In general, hijras are frequently subjected to abuse on all fronts by their Guru, including the physical, psychological, sexual, and material resources. In addition, hijra's spiritual legacy includes using psychokinetic powers to bless and condemn people throughout history. Some Hijras make a comfortable living without following a guru. These hijras do not only rely on 'hijragiri' or 'badhai' for their existence. Third, gender rights activism is an integral part of their work for local non-profit organizations. They do not know panhandle or perform sex work regularly. 70.4 percent of hijras are shared with Guruma; on the other hand, 23.7 percent of hijras reside in rest houses for their livelihood (Sarker and Pervin, 2020). Only 5.9 percent of hijras live in their own homes (Bay, 2019).

3.7. Exclusion from political and legal participation

According to Mal (2015), many sexual monitoring organizations have sufficient political and governance knowledge and interest. Even though third-gender people ran for local government with a sense of social obligation, the public did not recognize them. Despite exclusion and discrimination, third-gender people establish themselves as successful individuals, demonstrating their potential. Third-gender people have held positions of political authority in the past. Following the constitutional change, the right to education has been elevated to a fundamental right. As it is the case in other nations, the government should take all necessary measures to obtain an adequate education. According to the Constitution's equal protection guarantee, discrimination or harassment directed toward third-gender people may be illegal under federal law (Mal, 2015). However, Hijras continue to be denied legal status in our society. Society does not recognize their traditions, activities, or marriage. When the Bangladeshi government-approved is allowing hijra to use the term "third gender" on official documents like passports and national identification cards in 2013, Hossain (2017) studied the implications of that decision. Hijras may still have difficulty completing the enrollment procedure due to the lack of gender identity options under this provision. Besides, recalling the discriminatory experiences of hijras is counterproductive since it raises concerns about one's status among members of the dominant group (Flores et al., 2021).

3.8. Living on the extreme margin of third-gender community

Several hijras found themselves living in parks, train stations, and other public locations at one point in time. Since fleeing their parents' homes as children, many hijras have lived in slums or train stations. Their safety was less threatened in these perilous settings than when they were living under a cloud of fear with their relatives (Aziz and Azhar, 2020). When it comes to the hijra's life, gender and sexual orientation issues are rooted in poverty, racism, and other violations of human and sexual

rights (Khan et al., 2009). The lack of recognition of the hijra as individuals with distinct gender and sexual identities and the stigmatized sexual activities put their lives at risk (Hossain, 2017). There is no secure social or political place for a hijra to live a dignified existence as a human being (Khan et al., 2009). When there is no place to flee, some hijra has attempted suicide because of their limited participation in personal, social, and civic affairs. This is known as the "Palabar jaiga nay" (no place to escape) situation (Khan et al., 2009; Safa, 2016).

As a result, Hijras are subjected to a variety of oppressions. Various factors contribute to the difficulties faced by hijras, including social exclusions. The concept of 'social exclusion' is critical to understanding how Hijras are treated in the mainstream society. Female harassment begins at home and continues throughout their lives. Several people were sacked after being assaulted at work. For the most cases, they indicated a deep sense of self-doubt and inadequacy. Desperation and hopelessness prompted them to get involved in the fight for survival, as seen above (Shuvo, 2018). There shall be no discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or place of birth by the state (Kelly, 2009). The hijra community, on the other hand, is shut out of participation in society's social, political, and economic life, and they suffer from a great deal of societal stigma. Individuals can use the benefits and resources provided by a free society. For this group to carry out its tasks and duties, society has to support it.

Hijras are unable to lead dignified human lives in any stable socio-political context. For this reason, Hijras in Bangladesh and the surrounding area are unable to fully take advantage of the benefits of the country's conservative social structures and institutions. They cannot exert influence or establish citizenship rights at home or on the broader community. Socio-cultural, legal, educational, and health services for Hijras are severely limited. Hijra's deprivation is rooted in the fact that they are not recognized as distinct gendered human beings outside of Islam. For them, this would have made it difficult to establish themselves as human beings with integrity and potential. Consequently, the hijras are severely marginalized, particularly by mainstream society's moralistic views on gender and sexuality, equating variation with immorality and privation.

3.9. Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on Hijra

Hijras have long been subjected to high levels of social stigma, discrimination, isolation, and separation, and many Bangladeshis still hold a negative view of community members (Islam and Hossain, 2021). Members of South Asian society who are the most marginalized are enduring a crisis of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) lockdown (Sifat, 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hijras in Bangladesh have been negatively affected, notably during the nationwide lockdown (Matin et al., 2020). Bangladesh was among the countries affected by the lockdown regarding mental health issues such as anxiety and depression and suicide and domestic abuse (Hossain et al., 2022). More than 94% of hijras were concerned about their finances, and 68% were concerned about their food supply due to the lockdown (Rashid et al., 2020). Despite the prevalence of mental abuse, only a low percentage of the Hijra respondents were subjected to physical violence and torture (Matin et al., 2020). Due to the numerous types of linked prejudice suffered by hijras, they are more susceptible to disease and long-term psychological disorders (Rashid et al., 2020).

Hijras are forced to work as sex workers and collect money from shops because of social stigmatism (Aziz and Azhar, 2019). According to a study on the lockdown's impact on the hijra community, 82 percent of respondents reported not earning "a single dime in the last two weeks," and 59 percent reported receiving no assistance from humanitarian organizations (Akhter, 2020). BDT 296 was the average day-to-day income for transgender people in Bangladesh, but it has now fallen to just BDT 14 (Amanullah, 2021). There was a disparity in who received primary health care treatment during the lockdown, particularly for hijra people. Hijras face difficulties obtaining treatment and testing for COVID-19

because hospital wards are classified for men or women, and there is no center for hijra community members in the medical infrastructure (Sifat, 2020).

4. Discussions

The hijra, who are neither male nor female and pervert gender normativity, exist outside of a bipolar gendered society. Thus, a hijra is significantly marginalized due to mainstream society's sanctimonious stances on gender and sexuality, which view variation as synonymous with deviation and deprivation. Our results demonstrate that most of the degradations suffered by the hijra are attributable to their gender-specific nature, which is corroborated by certain past pieces of literature. The current situation of hijras in Bangladesh, according to a study by Khan et al. (2009), has resulted in tremendous deprivation, ignorance, hostility, and humiliation. Most Bangladeshi culture appears to have rejected interactions with the hijra group, according to Sifat and Shafi (2021). Because of the way things are now, they are living in terrible poverty, ignorance, hatred, and shame (Islam, 2019; Aziz and Azhar, 2020).

In Bangladesh, the hijra population has historically been the most vulnerable and neglected sexual minority group. The majority of Bangladeshi society has continued to reject any community connections with members of the hijra minority. They have no legitimacy within civil society, even when cultural, traditional, recreational, and marital practices. Their ability to integrate into the greater community has been hindered. They face less opportunity for educational, financial, and health benefits, and their quality of life is diminished (Hossain, 2017). Society negatively interacts with rants and ignores them. Hijras are prevented from having full personhood and other essential benefits they require to lead a decent life and earn a decent living. In contrast to the hijra, the hijra group is barred from society's political, social, cultural, and economic life. Therefore, they are discriminated against more heavily in these aspects of life. Individuals should have the right to use society's resources to their advantage. Third-gender individuals may move between acceptance and exclusion. However, hijras cannot make this journey because they are born outside of the social spectrum and will remain on the outer perimeter throughout their lifetimes. Hijras cannot be assured of a burial site in death. An investigation into hijra criteria shows a wide range of views from cultural, scientific, and ideological standpoints. However, the study focused on Bangladesh's poorest community, the hijra (Husain, 2005).

Society must support the hijra community in order for them to carry out their tasks and responsibilities. In Bangladesh, the administration treated the hijra as a third gender. They have continued to advocate for minorities denied access to social programs. Despite efforts by humanitarian organizations and the government to address some of the hijra community's issues, they continue to face severe obstacles. The Hijra people have enormous disadvantages in social, cultural, political, and economic conditions. They frequently suffer from a lack of educational opportunities, health care, and the ability to vote. A more significant impact on this vulnerable part of society may be seen if local governments and other organizations become more severe and sensitive to their problems while collaborating on development projects that incorporate the hurdles. There is no evidence to support the idea that when hijra arrives at the end of this continuum, positions of inclusion and exclusion are evenly dispersed.

Bangladesh government is already taking various initiatives to create opportunities for Hijras to join the workplace. Bangladesh has proclaimed a tax incentive for businesses that employ third-gender individuals to increase social inclusion efforts for the marginalized population in the Muslim-majority South Asian nation (Alzjazeera, 2021). Various activities are being undertaken for the Hijra community under the Directorate of Social Services, e.g., identity cards, scholarships to educate and develop Hijri students; empowerment of Hijra youth through training and engagement in income generating activities; socio-economic development, and provision of social security for the elderly Hijra population, etc. (Department of Social Services, 2022).

4.1. Recommendations and possible solutions to overcome the situation

In Bangladesh, social aspects of hijra have indeed been found and their level of support from family, education, health, and employment. Following the Supreme Court's decision, it is evident that the Hijra community's legitimacy as a third gender has grown in their community. In general, all citizens have a legal responsibility to appreciate the Hijra community's feelings or emotional condition. They exist, and they are a part of our culture. They have established themselves and grown in this culture. We have to create an environment that carries out specific functions effectively in society. People in society have a pivotal role in their economic and social development. The authorities might have used Hijra community members as critical influencers for social awareness and welfare programs at national events. On a national and cultural level, it will respect the inhabitants of this community.

The integration of the third gender issues in national school curricula is required so that our youth understand them well. This will boost society's regard for third-gender people and assist them in learning to respect variety. There must be consultation and discussion on how the hijras would like to be recognized by society before any decisions are made. Based on the evidence, people from the Hijra community should work in public, semi-government, or nongovernmental institutions. Legislation recognizing hijra as a legitimate third gender should be passed further to increase social acceptance and access to government social assistance. State authorities are tasked with guaranteeing fairness and opportunity for all citizens. The steps listed below may alter the negative realities of life experienced by the hijra community:

- > Bangladesh's government can establish a Hijra Welfare Board. To protect the human rights of this community, the board should be concerned about these issues.
- > In this community, there is no centralized database of information. The government should create a quick list to assess their numbers, needs and demands and develop solutions. Cooperation among governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can also benefit the Hijra Community.
- > Aid groups, such as charities, focus on their causes and activities, such as working for access to land and housing, gender-neutral public restrooms, health care wards, voting rights, and voting seats reserved for citizens.
- > Promote from the print and electronic media to raise awareness of their situation and plight rather than characterizing them.
- > Parents need to pay close attention to their children's behavior during adolescence. They should create a welcoming climate that encourages young people to talk freely.
- > Political advertisements favorable towards the transgender population are required to develop positive attitudes towards the hijra community (Flores et al., 2021).

According to their qualifications, various government and NGOs can appoint hijras as drivers, peons, cooks, and executives. Although all Hijras are sentient beings, they are entitled to the same rights as other humans. Regardless of legal, social, or political status, Hijras have the right to live in dignity. Some Hijras have been allegedly abused and disrespected by medical professionals, particularly in government facilities. Various NGOs have been attempting to enhance the socio-economic status of Hijras. Some of them provide professional training to help people obtain financial independence. However, these little steps would only be beneficial if individuals encounter them with more diverse opinions. Until there is an equal consideration for third-gender individuals, they will continue to live with ignorance, neglect, and peaceful discussions around them.

5. Future directions

The third gender population, particularly in Bangladesh, numerous research loopholes must be filled. There is a shortage of primary

epidemiology data, a lack of sociological (cause) explanations for the hijra community; a dearth of efficacy and cost-effectiveness evaluations of treatments; and a dearth of policy analyses in the future. Organizations and institutions must do the necessary research to address these knowledge gaps.

6. Conclusions

Man is true above all things. The goal must be to create a liberal society free of gender discrimination towards women, men, and third-gender persons. Regardless of gender identification, a person will receive opportunities and respect. Overall, third-gender individuals in Bangladesh have colossal health, education, and job drawbacks. Still, they have limited political freedom and deny that they are not recognized at the democratic matter layer. Just as people need to be aware of the rights of transgender people, governments and NGOs need to be mindful of their rights. Hijras can be protected from prejudice and violence only if the state enforces laws, regulations, and initiatives that assure fair treatment for the community. These fundamental human rights are in jeopardy, especially voting and running for public office, the right to livelihood, free and fair media representation, and dignified life as a transgender person.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Md. Al-Mamun: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Md. Jamal Hossain: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Morshed Alam : Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Shahin Parvez: Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Bablu Kumar Dhar: Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Md. Rabiul Islam: Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

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