

Social Discrimination Against the Transgender Community in Kolkata

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Abstract

Conventional perspectives on gender emphasise a dichotomy between male and female categories. This social foundation is the cornerstone upon which state policy and governance are erected. Over time, diversity has become increasingly prevalent in various aspects of society. Contemporary society is characterised by a prevalent acceptance of diverse races, religions, communities, and languages, resulting in a pluralistic landscape. However, there remains a deficiency in the realm of sexual identities concerning developmental progress. As per the 2011 Census, the male population in India was recorded at approximately 623,724,248, while the female population was approximately 586,469,174 (Iyer, S., 2014).

Furthermore, it is significant to acknowledge that a certain portion of the populace identifies themselves as eunuchs, expressing their inclination to be regarded as neither male nor female and to embrace a way of life that corresponds with their sexual nonconformity. The estimated population of intersex individuals who identify and live as either male or female and conform to societal norms in India is approximately 1.9 million as of March 1, 2022. The data provided is estimated and sourced from surveys conducted by the Salvation of Oppressed Eunuchs (SOOE). This is because eunuchs tend to inhabit a clandestine and obscure realm that they have fashioned for themselves as a means of escaping the maltreatment and oppression of mainstream society. Despite constituting a significant portion of the population, transgender individuals in India are systematically marginalised and deprived of the fundamental prerequisites for a respectable and equitable existence. This discriminatory practice suggests that the development objectives may not be attainable if a significant portion of the population remains marginalised.

Keywords: social discrimination, salvation of oppressed eunuchs (sooe), sexual identities, marginalised, Kolkata

Introduction

Before delving into a detailed discourse regarding their socio-economic standing, defining transgender to establish a clear understanding is imperative. As to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "transgender" is defined as an individual who identifies with or exhibits a gender identity that differs from the gender given to them at birth, including transsexuals or transvestites. In the Indian context, the term "hijra" is commonly used to refer to an individual who is perceived to be "sexless." This term has been defined in the dictionary as a castrated man. A hermaphrodite is an organism that exhibits the presence of both male and female reproductive organs. A transvestite is an individual who selects a gender identity that differs from their assigned sex at birth. Empirical evidence suggests that individuals who have undergone neutralisation of their gender are a relatively uncommon occurrence. The hijra community in India exhibits a distinct hierarchical organisation and geographical associations under the leadership of a group leader. Although the deity Balucharaji holds a significant place in their religious beliefs and the veneration of Ambe Mata is also observed, distinct religious boundaries exist. The majority of individuals align themselves with the majority of those who have engaged in prostitution at some point in their lives.

In Indian culture, the face is regarded as an auspicious symbol. Frequently,

they are observed donning ill-fitting blouses and vibrant saris, presenting a distorted representation of femininity while traversing bustling marketplaces in packs, instilling fear in pedestrians, and soliciting nominal sums of money. The countenance of the individual is frequently adorned with low-cost kajal, powder, and vividly hued lipstick. These individuals do not conform to the typical profile of beggars encountered on urban sidewalks. Encountering individuals who use vulgar language, accompanied by a distinctive hand gesture involving the intersection of palms, is common during commutes via the local or long-distance railway systems and at heavily trafficked intersections. The group targets vulnerable individuals who are more likely to relinquish their money rather than endure the spectacle of the group lifting their saris and exposing their mutilated genitalia in close proximity.

Origins and Development of Existence

Castrated males, commonly called eunuchs, have been present in India since the 9th century Jaffrey (1996). The term's etymology can be traced back to its Greek origin, where it was used to refer to individuals responsible for safeguarding the chambers of royalty. This term, "keeper of the bed," was particularly associated with eunuchs who were highly sought after for this role (Sinha, 2016). Eunuchs possess a longstanding historical legacy that extends over several millennia. The significance of eunuchs during the

Mughal period in the Indian Subcontinent is widely acknowledged. Eunuchs were the favoured selection of enslaved men among royal emperors due to their perceived lower security risks within ordinary Muslim harems, palaces, and domestic affairs. They were granted entry to regal residences where they served as sentinels for the harems, overseers, educators, financiers, and devoted attendants (Nanda, 1990).

Background of the Study

The umbrella term "Transgender" encompasses individuals who do not conform to the traditional model of sex/gender, including but not limited to transsexuals, transvestites, and intersex individuals. The term "transgender" is a broad descriptor that encompasses a range of gender identities and expressions. The term Hijra is frequently employed as a comprehensive term to denote individuals who challenge conventional binary gender constructs and exhibit a disruption and fusion of culturally established gender roles that are stereotypical. The population under consideration comprises pre-operative, post-operative, and non-operative individuals who identify strongly with a gender that is opposite to their biological sex, as stated by Chakrapani (2010). "Hijra" originates from the Arabic root "hjr," which connotes departing from one's tribe. This word has been assimilated into Hindi after being adopted from Urdu. The term "Hijra" in Urdu and Hindi language can be transliterated as

hijira, hijda, hijada, hijara, or hijrah. As per the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the term 'hijra' serves as a comprehensive descriptor for individuals who identify as sexual minorities. According to the text, hijra cultures serve as support systems for sexual minorities in India. Before the emergence of the Western gay liberation movement, individuals in India who identified as homosexuals, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, and kothis sought sanctuary within this inclusive framework.

The etymology of the term "eunuch" can be traced back to its Greek origin, "Euneukhos," which translates to "bed chamber attendant." During the later Mughal period, they were entrusted with managing harems. Eunuchs, having undergone emasculation either voluntarily or involuntarily, were deemed appropriate for the role of guarding harems due to their sexual incapacity. Per Sharma's (1989) findings, eunuchs refer to emasculated males who may or may not adorn feminine attire. The origins of castration in Indian society can be traced back to the practice of desexualising animals. Castration of horses was a common practice during the Vedic era. By customary practice, historically, castration was predominantly performed on males rather than females. The act of castration was widely prevalent for diverse motives, particularly in regions beyond the borders of India. One of the primary historical

motivations for castration was the aspiration to cultivate a specific physiological and psychological constitution. It has been observed that the implementation of castration in minors serves as a preventative measure against the emergence of secondary sexual characteristics. These individuals may serve as high-ranking enslaved people tasked with safeguarding harems. As a result of their castration, these men exhibited reduced attraction towards their families and demonstrated increased loyalty towards their owners and masters.

Piyush Saxena (2011), the chairperson of the Salvation of Oppressed Eunuchs (SOOE), (as well as an author) provides an account of the existence of a typical eunuch in Indian society, contextualised by medical and mythological perspectives. The author notes the systematic marginalisation of Eunuchs in Indian culture, which can be attributed to cultural stereotypes and expectations, as well as bureaucratic regulations that result in cycles of homelessness, unemployment, and limited access to essential services such as identity documents, bank accounts, and healthcare facilities. The author examines the medical intricacies of different forms of intersexuality and transsexuality, supplemented by visual aids, as well as the medical interventions utilised in gender reassignment. Additionally, the author explores the socio-economic implications of gender transformations. Saxena's research

lacks a systematic categorisation of the challenges encountered by Eunuchs in contrast to other disadvantaged communities. Dutta (2012) states that India has the most deplorable state of eunuchs globally. Despite improvements in the condition of this group, they continue to face discrimination and neglect of their civil rights in India. A community that has faced both natural and human discrimination and has dedicated its lives to serving both God and the state deserves the same level of respect as any other group. The article concerning the disadvantaged circumstances of eunuchs serves as a disconcerting indication that progress is imperative yet gradual. Nevertheless, the article's accessibility allows individuals to acquire knowledge. However, it should be noted that Dutta's (2012) viewpoint is confined solely to India.

An article by Jayaswal (2011) emphasises that eunuchs experience a lack of familial and societal affection due to a genetic disorder rather than criminal behaviour or wrongdoing. This poses a puzzling contradiction in a society where persons engaged in criminal activities can have unrestricted civil and human rights. The author discusses the historical discrimination faced by individuals who identify as "third gendered" within the Indian Legal framework, resulting in the deprivation of fundamental rights necessary for a dignified life. However, it is noteworthy that the article does not advocate for legal

recognition of this sexual minority group.

Currah et al. (2006) analysed the Transgender Rights movement with input from legal and policy experts, activists, and advocates. Their assessment evaluates the movement's accomplishments, obstacles, and potential for future action. The study delves into significant areas such as family law, employment policies, public health, economics, and grassroots organising. This pioneering research is crucial in the ongoing struggle for the liberation and parity of individuals who transgress gender norms. The research endeavours to establish a novel transgender movement by delving into the authentic lives and concerns of transgender individuals, surpassing the confines of media portrayals. Notwithstanding their exceptional research, their work neglects to address the challenges surrounding the societal acceptance of transgender individuals.

Objectives

This investigation examines the evolution of transgender persons in relation to various social frameworks throughout history. The objective is to seek formal acknowledgement of transgender persons through legal means. This research aims to evaluate the feasibility of the "The Rights of Transgend Persons Bill, 2014" as a strategy for incorporating transgender persons into the developmental dialogue in India. This research aims to present a concise summary of the socio-economic condition of the hijra population

while also analysing the obstacles they face, specifically about their well-being and the ongoing persecution they encounter in their routine activities.

Methodology

The research was carried out at two distinct levels. The initial phase involved Doctrinal Research, encompassing an examination of pertinent literature sources such as the primary resource, The Constitution of India, Governmental Documents, and NGO reports from organisations such as The Salvation of the Oppressed Eunuchs, Transgender Rights Association, Seeds of Peace. Articles, journals, books, periodicals, case laws, and legislation were also reviewed. The subsequent tier entailed conducting fieldwork or empirical research. The selected research topic examines the socio-economic status of the Hijra community residing in Kolkata. During my research, I employed the snowball sampling technique, which is commonly utilised when dealing with populations that are either unknown or rare. Due to their prior anonymity, the identification and contact of individuals from these populations have posed a challenge, rendering snowball sampling a more feasible approach. The present study involved interviews with many individuals from the "hijra community" in Kolkata. The sample primarily comprised individuals who engage in begging activities at local and long-distance trains and those who beg at major traffic signals in the

city, particularly during congested periods.

Importance of the Research

The study aimed to address the social frustration experienced by transgender individuals who reside in marginalised areas of society. The goal was to facilitate their integration into the mainstream social strata. The present study aimed to ensure that the marginalised transgender community is included in the development plans and policies of society. Additionally, it sought to highlight the government's shortcomings in addressing this vulnerable population's needs and advocate for protecting their fundamental human rights. The government must acknowledge the growing population of transgender individuals and the persistent discrimination and harassment they encounter. Failure to do so may result in widespread unrest within this community, potentially leading to societal disorder.

Altering Social Roles Among Eunuchs

Upon the British colonisation of India, the status of the eunuch community underwent a significant transformation. The colonisers, expressing their disapproval, enacted a law in 1897 that categorised all eunuchs as offenders. Subsequently, numerous individuals have faced ostracism due to their engagement in cross-dressing or identification as intersex. As a result, they have established their communities, typically inhabited marginalised areas of society and sought guidance

and support from a revered leader or maternal figure to ensure their emotional and financial well-being.

Numerous individuals resorted to utilising a covert linguistic system called Hijra Farsi to safeguard themselves. In contemporary times, hijras have garnered a reputation for being propitious and are frequently invited to bestow blessings upon festive occasions such as nuptials and childbirths. In certain urban areas of India, individuals may be compelled to engage in begging or prostitution, resulting in a substandard existence akin to that of an animal. The impact of the hazardous nature of this occupation and the restricted availability of healthcare and social welfare resources within the community is evidenced by the alarming statistics indicating a high prevalence of HIV among hijras.

Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014

In February 2014, the Supreme Court made a significant advancement in addressing the grievances of a socially excluded group by recognising "transgender" as a gender identity and urging prompt remedial action. This landmark decision is called the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) verdict. The verdict instilled a sense of optimism within the community and its advocates. However, the rate and consistency of progress achieved thus far have not met some expectations. However, notwithstanding the positive reception of the legal amendment, Indian advocates caution that not all individuals

identifying as transgender are at ease with being denoted as the "third sex". Many individuals opt to be categorised solely based on the gender identity they have selected, either as females or males. Advocates assert that additional measures are necessary to prevent the criminalisation of transgender individuals and hijra communities, particularly through the revocation of the contentious Section 377 statute, which deems homosexual conduct unlawful (Govindarajan P., 2016).

India has made significant progress in addressing discrimination against transgender individuals within the country, as evidenced by efforts such as the revision of the Rights of Transgender Persons Bill in 2014 and the inclusion of transgender individuals as beneficiaries in social security schemes.

The Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016

The Union Cabinet has approved the Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016, which seeks to safeguard the social, economic, and educational rights of transgender individuals. The legislation above was enacted under the auspices of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and conferred a substantial advantage upon a significant portion of the ostracised populace in India. The Transgender Rights Bill of 2016 faces challenges in its attempt to establish a clear definition of individuals who identify as transgender (Govindarajan P., 2016)

The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) verdict

established that individuals who do not identify with their assigned gender at birth have the right to self-identify as transgender without the requirement of a physical examination or certification. However, the recently proposed Bill negates this opportunity in principle and implementation. As per Bill 3, the term "transgender persons" refers to individuals who do not identify as exclusively male or female and may identify as a combination of both genders or neither gender. The act of defining the transgender experience negatively, such as placing it as "not" male or female, or in fragmented terms, such as "neither wholly" nor a "combination," can potentially infringe upon an individual's right to self-identify. This may limit their ability to choose how they wish to be recognised, whether as male, female, a third gender category, or any other identity outside of the limited suggestions presented in the Draft. The presence of screening committees consisting of medical professionals who provide certification for individuals identifying as transgender exacerbates the overall phenomenon. Therefore, the concept of self-determination is accompanied by measures of monitoring and regulation for a marginalised community.

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019

The 2019 legislation eliminates a limited number of the contentious elements in the 2018 bill, including the district screening committee and the criminalisation of begging. The 2019 act's statutory provisions entail

the prohibition of discrimination against individuals who identify as transgender. The 2019 act, akin to its 2018 predecessor, encompasses intersex individuals, hijras, jogtas, and kinnars in its delineation of transgender individuals. Additionally, the act incorporates trans-men, trans-women, and genderqueers, albeit without providing explicit definitions for these terms. The 2019 act and the 2018 bill both define a transgender individual as an individual whose gender identity differs from the gender assigned to them at birth.

However, it remains to be seen whether this legal recourse can effectively resolve all the challenges encountered by this group of individuals who have lost their parents. The following section elaborates on the disadvantages.

- The Bill was enacted to provide benefits to a significant population of transgender individuals in India and was passed, in part, as a measure to destigmatise transgender identity. The legislation above confers responsibility upon both the Central Government and local authorities to safeguard transgender individuals from instances of maltreatment, prejudice, and acts of violence. The inquiry aimed to elucidate the precise definition of "atrocities" committed against individuals who identify as transgender, the available avenues for seeking justice, and the corresponding penalties for those found guilty of such offences. The study would also examine the issue of affirmative action in employment and educational establishments for individuals who identify as transgender, as well as potential corrective actions. In light of their alleged unjust displacement, there is a need to examine their eligibility for scholarships. However, a concern arises regarding the appropriate individual to contact when experiencing harassment or discrimination. The user's statement lacks clarity. The text fails to address the available avenues for seeking justice in cases of harassment and atrocities against transgender individuals. The eighth chapter of the Bill enumerates four distinct categories of offences, which include the deprivation of access to public areas and sexual assault. However, it is important to note that the maximum penalty for these offences cannot exceed two years. The Bill lacks a clear definition of "discrimination" and fails to guide the appropriate channels for individuals to report instances of discrimination.
- Transgender individuals in India are still subjected to various forms of mistreatment and harassment in the present day. In India, individuals belonging to certain groups are frequently subjected to police brutality, torture, and systemic discrimination, leading to their

marginalisation and abuse. The recently proposed legislation lacks specificity regarding instances of police brutality. This presents a significant limitation, given that instances of police violence are a recurring source of trauma experienced by transgender individuals. In addition, they encounter social marginalisation, prejudicial treatment, and limited availability of educational resources. The New Law does not incorporate any particular mechanism aimed at preventing the disownment of transgender individuals by their families.

- Consequently, when individuals are rejected by their families, they may encounter difficulties accessing educational opportunities. The legislation fails to provide explicit provisions for reservations in educational institutions for transgender individuals who are not affiliated with the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. Despite the anticipation that such provisions would be included under the Other Backward Classes category, the Bill does not address this matter. The lack of discourse surrounding police brutality towards the community is a significant contributing factor to the marginalisation of said community in India.
- The newly proposed Bill lacks provisions for the rehabilitation of transgender communities that have been ostracised since birth

and raised in a clandestine environment, isolated from mainstream society. What actions can these individuals take to access the advantages provided by this recent legislation? The absence of access to education prevents individuals from securing employment opportunities, resulting in a continued reliance on their previous occupation of begging. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016 can be deemed significantly uninformed regarding the matters it seeks to resolve.

Case Study

In Kolkata, it is a frequent occurrence for pedestrians and daily commuters to encounter clusters of individuals who identify as male but present themselves in feminine attire adorned with sparkling saris and vibrant makeup. These individuals congregate at traffic signals, eagerly anticipating the red light to solicit alms from passing motorists who lower their car windows to assess the situation. The individuals in question are commonly referred to as "hijras" and have recently been recognised as a distinct third gender following the enactment of "The Transgender Rights Bill, 2014." In certain urban areas of India, particularly those with larger populations, individuals belonging to this community are frequently compelled to engage in begging or prostitution, leading to a substandard existence akin to that of an animal. This is largely due to the lack of acceptance by the purportedly civilised society in which they reside.

The impact of hazardous occupations and the restricted availability of healthcare and welfare resources within the community is evidenced by the alarming prevalence of HIV among hijras.

While constructing this manuscript, I have endeavoured to engage in discourse with certain individuals whom I frequently encounter during my commute via automobile at intersections en route to my place of employment. The majority of their narratives evoke feelings of pity, and their lifestyles deviate significantly from what is commonly regarded as the standard human experience. I will expound upon the results I obtained through dialogue with them, utilising a point-by-point format.

Social Structure

Gender. All participants self-identified as members of the hijra cult/community. Approximately 36% of this demographic expressed a desire to self-identify as female. Despite 95% of the respondents indicating they were assigned male at birth and raised as boys during childhood, none identified themselves as male. Merely 5% (3 out of 60) of the participants reported their gender at birth as hijra, which denotes a non-binary gender identity. Among them, two individuals indicated being raised as female during childhood, while the third reported being raised intermittently as both male and female. Most individuals exhibited a significant lack of knowledge regarding the Transgender Rights Bill 2014. Furthermore, among the minority

who possessed some level of awareness, there was notable dissatisfaction with the definition of "transgender" as outlined in the Bill.

The age range of the interviewees varied from 18 to 75 years, with a range of 54. Regarding the educational background of the community members interviewed, it was found that the majority had not received formal education due to being disowned by their families at birth. In certain cases, individuals who were socialised as male until age 14 or 15 were allowed to enrol in secondary education institutions. A small number of individuals identified as transgender; however, their college attendance was facilitated by their supportive family dynamics.

Economic Background. A significant proportion of transgender individuals have not completed their education. Likewise, individuals who identify as gay or bisexual, particularly after the intentional or unintentional revelation of their sexual orientation, encounter a significant amount of social disapproval and bias within educational institutions. Individuals who experience insufficient access to education and limited employment prospects may be compelled to engage in activities such as sex work and begging. Out of a sample of 60 hijras, 20 were employed in labour-intensive occupations, with a majority working as construction labourers for local contractors. Certain individuals were employed in

non-governmental organisations operated by civil society, primarily emphasising enhancing these communities. In contrast, others were engaged in activities that specifically targeted HIV/AIDS. Other significant occupations in which they were involved included soliciting at intersections or delivering mail over long distances, performing dances, soliciting gratuities in exchange for blessings bestowed upon newborns, and primarily engaging in sex work, which put them at high risk for contracting HIV/AIDS.

It is noteworthy that the above delineates the primary vocations (or means of financial sustenance) of the hijras, notwithstanding the possibility of their involvement in additional occupational pursuits. When a hijra is employed in a project, their primary designation is an employee. However, it is noteworthy that the same hijra may also be involved in other activities, such as sex work and begging, among others. The participants exhibited reluctance to discuss their income, possibly due to apprehension openly. However, one of the participants revealed that transgender individuals who engage in sex work and participate in NGO projects are the ones who earn a substantial income. Notably, some individuals residing in clustered groups under the authority of a head eunuch exhibit minimal financial contributions toward their household expenses.

Common Problems Faced by the Transgender

Health. Regarding health, approximately 40% of the sample (N=60) reported experiencing one or more illnesses. Seven participants reported experiencing either low or high blood pressure, while the elderly individuals in the group were diagnosed with diabetes. One individual reported experiencing allergic reactions resulting from insect bites. A mature hijra reported having sustained deep lacerations that were not healing. She disclosed receiving bi-daily injections to manage her diabetes and taking a tablet in the afternoon to address the wound on her leg. Due to this medical condition, she was confined to her residence. The interviews were conducted in Kolkata during the monsoon season of 2016, which was marked by a significant dengue fever and malaria outbreak. The government had implemented preventive measures to combat the epidemic. However, a group of transgender individuals raised concerns that despite the presence of municipal officials who conducted inspections and sprayed exposed water sources to prevent the breeding of dengue mosquitoes, the slums inhabited by these individuals were neglected.

Numerous primary healthcare facilities continued to refuse treatment of transgender patients, even in emergencies. Approximately ten hijras reported experiencing various health ailments, including knee pain resulting from strenuous

walking and climbing during begging, both in trains and shops. Other illnesses mentioned included cold, flu, typhoid, malaria, skin allergies, stomach pain, allergic asthma, acidity, piles, herpes, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Individuals who have experienced herpes and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) have also refrained from disclosing their HIV status.

Police Harassment. Hijras encounter various manifestations of subjugation at the hands of law enforcement personnel, giving rise to multiple predicaments. Frequently, individuals are subject to arbitrary detainment, unwarranted harassment, and unjust penalties for transgressions they have not committed. The study revealed that a significant proportion of hijras (80.5%) reported encountering difficulties attributed to law enforcement personnel, including officers from local police stations (50%), railway police (25%), and traffic police (8%). Numerous individuals shared poignant personal accounts, which were documented through open-ended inquiries. The hijras also recounted narratives of severe mistreatment, including instances where they were subjected to physical abuse by law enforcement officials for engaging in begging and obstructing traffic signals. Additionally, they were occasionally accused of theft or robbery without evidence, resulting in their names being included on police station lists of notorious burglars, much to their dismay.

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The hijra community is subjected to various forms of harassment:

- The phenomenon of police harassment in public spaces.
- Experiencing familial disownment.
- Instances of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse.
- The practice of police entrapment.
- Instances of abuse and harassment within social spaces.

- Dress codes that are inflexible and vary based on gender.
- Insufficient access to precise and reliable data and inadequate instruction and learning opportunities.
- The intentional and impolite misuse of personal names and gender pronouns.
- Insufficient availability of housing accommodations and limited engagement in social activities.

Hijras are subjected to various forms of oppression. They encounter a range of challenges that are associated with diverse forms of social marginalisation. The findings indicate a lack of secure sociopolitical environments in which Hijras can live with the same level of respect and dignity afforded to other individuals. Hijras in India and the study area face limited opportunities for socio-cultural, economic, and political inclusion, resulting in inadequate access to benefits from traditional social structures and institutions. Individuals who identify as Hijra face significant limitations in accessing socio-cultural, legal, educational, and health-related services. The general conclusions indicate that the majority of hardships experienced by the Hijra community stem from the lack of acknowledgement of Hijras as a distinct gender identity, which extends beyond the traditional male-female binary. This circumstance has impeded their ability to establish a position within the broader societal context, limiting their potential for personal growth and preserving their

inherent worth as individuals. Hijra individuals are subject to significant marginalisation, primarily due to moralistic perspectives on gender and sexuality within mainstream society, which often equates diversity with deviance and disadvantage.

Conclusion

The Hijra community is presently subjected to social and cultural marginalisation, familial and societal ostracism, inadequate educational and healthcare opportunities, and curtailed civil liberties as citizens of India. The constraints above encompass the entitlement to enter into matrimony, engage in electoral processes, exercise suffrage, pursue job opportunities, acquire essential identification papers, and strive for subsistence. The Indian State officially recognised the Hijra community in the 2011 census. This decision was met with mixed reactions, with some community members expressing approval while others maintained a degree of scepticism. As per the verdict of the Supreme Court in 2014, Hijras are to be recognised as a unique and autonomous gender classification, distinct from the conventional binary genders. In India, Hijras can self-identify as a eunuch ("E") on passports and certain government documents. The Election Commission (EC) has recently incorporated a new column labelled 'O' in their voter enrollment and registration forms, specifically designated for the inclusion of 'Others' (Transgender or Hijras). The Unique Identification Authority of

India (UIDAI) has recognised the transgender community, much like the Election Commission. Janardhan G. (2013) reported that the enrollment forms of the UIDAI incorporate a third column designated by the letter 'T' to signify the transgender community. This supplementary column extends the conventional 'M' and 'F' columns corresponding to the male and female genders.

Several pressing concerns necessitate meticulous examination and efficacious interventions, such as the availability of essential amenities, education, medical services, and resources. The challenges above can be effectively addressed by implementing progressive measures, such as increasing societal consciousness regarding personal identities. Civil society organisations receive assistance to promote their objectives and initiatives, including but not limited to advocating for land and housing, creating specialised public facilities for sanitation and healthcare, recognising their right to vote as citizens, and securing representation in electoral processes. It is imperative to assist with traditional and digital media forms to illuminate the conditions and obstacles individuals encounter rather than portraying them in an unfavourable light. It is advisable to furnish supplementary financial aid to community-based organisations that manage transgender communities. It can be deduced through logical reasoning that Hijras, a constituent of the human species,

possess the complete spectrum of human rights. Hijras, as with all individuals, have an inherent entitlement to maintain a dignified existence, regardless of their legal, social, or political status, in alignment with the fundamental human right to life. A subset of Hijras has reported instances of dehumanising and disrespectful treatment, specifically within government hospitals, at the hands of healthcare providers. Several non-governmental organisations have been committed to advancing Hijras's social status. Several organisations provide vocational training programs to improve their financial capacity. The effectiveness of these gradual actions relies on the willingness of individuals to embrace a more open and inclusive mindset toward them. Transgender individuals are likely to persist in experiencing a marginalised existence marked by a shortage of awareness, disregard, and muted discourse in their daily interactions as long as they are subjected to societal discrimination and relegated to subordinate status as the "third sex." The social exclusion phenomenon encountered by the primarily orphaned population not only generates discord, hostility, and disruption but also perpetuates societal inequity and privation. The resolution of exclusion-related issues is a fundamental requirement for the establishment of a truly democratic society.

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