

GENDER BASED EXCLUSION OF BANGLADESHI TRANSGENDER “HIJRA”
COMMUNITY FROM JOB SECTOR

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Abstract

In Bangladesh, the Hijra is a large community of third gender people, mostly consisting of male-to-female transgender persons as well as eunuchs or men who had their genitals removed. These Hijras are often a time excluded from various job opportunities. This has led to poor living standards among the Hijras. This research study was initiated to investigate the current employment situation of the Hijras, exploring the key obstacles Hijra community face while going thorough recruitment procedures or while stay on a job, investigating the discrepancy between the current Hijras means of employments vis-à-vis what Hijras would like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion or social discrimination, and lastly, assessing if Hijras' current means of income is non-traditional and non-conforming to society and how this means of employment undermine their rights as a human being. To achieve this, the study relied on social exclusion-related theories (Islam and Morgan, 2012), system theory (Schirmer and Michailakis, 2015), and advocacy theory (Payne, 2005) and had a total of 13 participants comprising of 5 individuals from the NGOs, 6

unemployed Hijras, and 2 ordinary social workers drawn from the Hijra community. The study found that most Hijra members fail to get jobs in the Bangladeshi job sectors due to their peculiar lifestyle and lack of education. This is because the Hijras in Bangladesh have no religious, constitutional, social, or legal rights, which ensure equal opportunities in social development. The study also found that lack of legal recognition through a legal policy is one of the fundamental factors that has hindered Hijras' rights in the education and therefore job sector. Most Hijras cannot acquire quality education because of people's negligence, policies, and discrimination institutions. The physical appearance of Hijra members and their behaviors subjected them to different facets of exclusion in the learning institution.

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1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Information

Bangladesh is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multilingual state. Majority of the populace in Bangladesh belongs to the Islamic religion with the remaining populace belonging to the other religions and cultures including Buddhism and Hinduism. The state's decision makers must safeguard their privileges through in-depth and amicable conversations on the needs of third gender/Hijra community. It is crucial that the Bangladesh constitution guarantees that special policies and measures will be made for the underprivileged or the government would carry out its responsibility to meet the United Nations' (UN) sustainable development goals. Despite the third gender community being the smallest part of Bangladesh's population, it has a reputation for being mistreated and backward due to the country's history (Jebin and Farhana, 2015).

The Hijra's phenomenon is difficult to define because it is made up of both cultural and personal characteristics. In Bangladesh, Hijra is identified as humans who lack genitalia and are neither male nor female. They also claim to be incapable of experiencing sexual desire. According to Freeman (1979), Hijra community can be described as a transvestite-style prostitutes or homosexuals who join society particularly to satiate their sexual urges. However, Nanda (2007) correctly notes that the term "Hijra" is always used to refer to a "eunuch" and never a homosexual. Hijra, who are traditionally described as neither men nor women, feels such pressure to an extent of social marginalization (Safa, 2016).

Al-Mamun et al. (2022) posits that the term Hijra is used in several cultures around the world and illustrates the rainbow. As it is frequently understood, gender can frequently go wrong

in situations where identity is altered (Snigdha, 2019). However, Semenova et al. (2015) posits that there still exist a room for clarity on transgender social status, perception and acceptability. In various communities' transgender individuals are fighting for their fundamental rights to live normal lives especially in Bangladesh, but they still face obstacles to social exclusion and equality despite their recognition as third gender (Aziz and Azhar, 2019). According to Walch et al. (2012), transgender are individuals who are neither male or females and exists with separate physical structure. This group of people, despite being part of the society, are mostly treated in inhuman way.

Although this group of people are protected by the 1972 constitution (A.27) of the republic of Bangladesh, the paradoxical society structure bar them from exercising their rights. According to Islam (2016), Hijra people are excluded by their family and excluded from all potential chances. They are excluded from owning their parental properties, rights to education and also denied employment rights. In most societies, the transgender individuals earn money through begging which subjects them to severe financial crisis. According to Buergethal et al. (2009), despite the international conventions, treaties and communities protecting the transgender groups rights, they are a still considered as a minority group in the society. Through the enforcement of international human rights and constitutional obligations, all human categories including transgender group should be treated as human regardless of their sex. This study focuses on gender-based exclusion of Hijra community from job sector in Bangladesh.

1.2. HIJRA Community

In South Asia, HIJRA refers to individuals born male who choose to identify as female or neither male nor female. This concept doesn't quite fit into Western gender categories, where a person assigned male at birth might later identify as female and adopt feminine roles. HIJRAs are

often mislabeled in literature as hermaphrodites, eunuchs, or transgender women. A more fitting term for them is "Third Gender," acknowledging their unique identity. While outsiders might label them as transgender, within Bangladesh society and among most HIJRAs, they see themselves as a distinct gender, neither male nor female, without undergoing transition. Many HIJRAs have undergone castration, leading to misunderstandings about their sexual capabilities and fertility (Haider and Bano, 2002). There are two very common transgender groups of people in Bangladesh: male to female (M2F), and female to male (F2M). M2F are born as male but associate themselves with female gender, they identify themselves as females. On the other hand, F2M people are born as female but associate themselves with male gender, they identify themselves as males.

The HIJRA group is primarily made up of M2F transgender, but it also includes F2M transgender, eunuchs (males who have had their testicles removed or who were born with rudimentary testicles) and intersex people. HIJRAs are classified as either males or females, depending on whether they have a penis or a vagina. The majority of them are M2F transgender who dress as females, but there is also the other side.

M2F transgender do not have breasts, whereas F2M transgender do. People who are born male develop breasts as a result of hormonal imbalances during puberty or elsewhere, a disorder known as Gynecomastia. This does not imply that these individuals must be transgender or HIJRA. HIJRAs are a subsection of the transgender community for which there is no English term. Doctors can detect intersex people at birth, but not HIJRAs, as previously stated.

Historically, HIJRAs have been living in the subcontinent for more than thousands of years, which gained them a mythological status in the Indian folklore and religious scriptures. The HIJRA formed their own esteemed social group and undertook various significant ceremonial functions. During the 17th century, the Mughal Empire, which governed much of

India and erected the Taj Mahal, greatly relied on their formidable HIJRA bodyguards for authority. HIJRAs also feature in the sacred Hindu text Ramayana, where they are part of Lord Ram's rebellious army. Impressed by the HIJRAs' devotion and loyalty, Lord Rama blessed them on his return from exile, stating that they would bestow blessings on people during important events like childbirth and marriage (Roy 2020).

HIJRAs were prominent figures within the royal courts of the Islamic world, notably during the reigns of the Ottoman empires and the Mughal dynasty in Medieval India. They attained notable roles as political consultants, administrators, military leaders, and overseers of the harems. HIJRAs were esteemed for their intelligence, reliability, and unwavering loyalty, enjoying unrestricted access to all societal spheres, thus exerting a pivotal influence on the political landscape of the Mughal period. Moreover, they held significant positions within Islamic religious establishments, particularly in safeguarding the sacred sites of Mecca and Medina as trusted custodians. Their proximity to monarchs afforded them the ability to sway governmental decisions and amass considerable wealth (Michelraj, 2015).

The colonial administration labeled the HIJRA as "eunuchs" and permitted them to engage in diverse jobs such as agricultural and household work. The British implemented laws against the HIJRA, branding them as offenders according to the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 (Hossen 2019). Moreover, in recent times, the HIJRA have been marginalized and now reside on the periphery of society.

1.3. Hijras in Bangladesh

The 'HIJRA' community in Bangladesh has always been looked down upon as inferior human beings. Although the word "community" is conventionally assigned to religious, social, or racial groups, it is also assigned to the gender-based group "HIJRA" since they often live in a group

under a certain leader (guru, or guru mata), often secluded from the mainstream society. Every guru has a group of disciples, ranging from ten to hundred, or even more, at their disposal whom they consider as “sisters” but often allegedly use for extortion and sex works to make a profit out of their vulnerability. Despite the exploitation, the gurus are responsible for the safety and protection of the HIJRAs, thus their living in groups (Khan et al. 2009).

According to Chakrapani (2010), Hijra is a group of individuals in third gender. That is, persons who are intersex, transsexual, transvestites, and eunuchs. This word originates in India (Hindustan) and translated into English as hermaphrodites or eunuch. According to Khan et al. (2009), there are different groups associated with Hijra community based on their genital appearance, sexual preferences, masculinity or femininity characteristics and social identity. The Hijra gender expression in Bangladesh is known as eunuch or hermaphrodites which refers to male mind in a feminine body or female mind in a masculine body. There have been various instances of the Hijra community in cultural context. The general public interprets eunuch’s historical significant as the pioneers of the current Hijra community, where they have been documented in various historical and religious periods.

According to Chowdhury (2020), the Hijra community in Bangladesh ranges from 10,000 to 500,000 persons compared to a population of 160 million. This community is stigmatized in the society and marginalized not only in social and political life but also in economic life (Hossain 2017; & Shuvo, 2017). Culturally, persons in Hijra community are shunned, feared, and tabooed, which can be considered as discrimination. They have been part of Bangladesh communities since prehistoric times, but for quite a good time Hijra community have been denied access to social services like better education, primary health care and better housing (Sarker and Pervin, 2020).

1.4. Rationale

The Hijra community in Islam are viewed in several perspectives with unique features. According to Josim (2012), Islam recognize transgender community and entitle them the similar rights as women and men. Hahm (2010) asserts that Hijra community was still provided with amenities and safety in the early British period by the Indian monarchs. Besides, Bangladesh state used to pay this community pensions when was under the Pakistan rule and few years after gaining independence, but later the service deprived.

Hamn (2010) posits that Hijra community has been segregated from the society norms since the ancient times. They are one of the most underprivileged and disadvantaged communities in Asia and their problems are totally different from the sexual identity communities. According to Wallen (2019), persons in Hijra community have few rights as human beings in Bangladesh as they are marginalized in economic, political and social life. The absence of the detailed information about Hijra community has hindered the government of Bangladesh from developing a structure to house this community (Shuvo, 2018).

In 2014, the government of Bangladesh announced the recognition of the Hijra community of Bangladesh as a Hijra sex through a published statement. This was viewed as a significant step to protect the Hijra community's human rights in Bangladesh. However, despite the admirable policy change, there are no explicit defined rules that qualifies the third gender traits. This caused widespread misunderstanding over how Hijra community should be understood. According to Jebin and Farhana (2015), despite Hijras recognition by the government, they are deprived of marriage and properties rights. They are considered as a derogatory term in the society, who are not respected and their dignity is often threatened. Al-Mamun et al. (2022) posits that Hijras are associated with inability to access legal counsel,

subjecting them to a limited number of available options to earn a living as they are still unaccepted in regular jobs. They access food through begging in the community and earn money from local shops (Khan et al., 2009).

The recent study by Sifat and Shafit (2021) indicated that most communities in Bangladesh have shunned their interaction with the transgender community. This has subjected them to severe poverty, humiliation, hostility and illiteracy. Besides, they face inequality in fundamental human rights and freedom and face regular reports of oppression, abuse and violence (Aziz and Azhar, 2020; and Khan et al., 2009). Shuvo (2018) posits that Bangladesh society and the government are obstructing their opportunities and fundamental human rights. This deny them access to basic citizen rights like employment, health care services, home ownership and inheritance of their parent's properties. Despite Hijra's humiliation and exclusion from the community, the civil society does not give the problem enough attention. Because of society's moralistic beliefs, in sexuality and gender, which equate variety with hardship and deviance, Hijra community is severely stigmatized. Based on the constitutional Act 28-1, all people in Bangladesh are subjected to equal rights and all individuals are equal before the law. However, Kelly (2009) posits that this Act looks human rights at the basis of someone's sex, ethnicity, religion, nationality and caste, leaving Hijras in numerous cultural, political, social and economic hurdles.

The research output is pegged on and arrived at based on the interviews that were conducted on 13 individuals including 8 Hijras and 5 community social workers. Further, the study relies on social exclusion (Islam and Morgan, 2012), advocacy (Payne, 2005) and system theories (Schirmer and Michailakis, 2015).

Moreover, despite efforts by transgender people in the growth and development of their communities and society, many have encountered discrimination and severe prejudice as a result of their sexual orientation. There also exists no anti-discrimination law that is focused on recognizing gender diversity or protecting Hijras' rights. Although there are various previous studies done on the Hijra community, there is limited literature on exclusion in job sector.

1.5. Statement of Research Problem

Aziz and Azhar (2019) posits that the government of Bangladesh have officially recognized Hijras as a third gender. This now permits them to identify their sex in official documents like the national identity instead of choosing either female or male. Despite this major milestone, the transgender community still feels excluded from social, economic, cultural, and political hemispheres. The absence of support mechanism provided to the Hijras by both government and non-governmental organizations, have limited the community from enjoying their fundamental rights as human beings (Mohammad and Sunalini, 2019). The community has limited opportunities of employment, education, social security and health, that subjects them to miserable life. According to Ahmed et al. (2014), Hijra community is harassed and neglected not only in the society but also in work places, thereby, hindering them from fulfilling their basic needs. They are living in a society where they are excluded in economic, social-cultural, and civil participation despite being able to actively contribute in the affairs of the society at large (Nova et al., 2021). Though there are various studies providing literature on the problems and challenges of Hijra, little has been done or left undone on gender-based exclusion of Hijra community from the job sector. Based on the above considerations, this study aims at bridging the hardships and difficulties that Hijra community faces in the employment sector after being

recognized as a third gender. The study will explore the key obstacles that the Hijra community faces while going through recruitment procedures or while on the job.

1.6. Research aim and objectives

The primary aim of this study was to investigate gender-based exclusion of Hijra community from job sector in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study were;

1. To investigate the current employment situation of HIJRA community by assessing how the HIJRA's sexual identity and physical appearance comes in their way to secure their cherished employment and career ambition.
2. To explore the key obstacles Hijra community face while going through recruitment procedures or while stay on job.
3. To investigate discrepancy between their current means of employments and what Hijras would really like to take as a profession given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion or social discrimination.
4. To assess Hijras' current means of income if it is non-traditional and non-conforming to society and how this means of employment undermine their rights as human beings.

1.7. Research Questions

1. How has HIJRA's sexual identity and physical appearance comes in their way to secure their cherished employment and career ambition?
2. What are the key obstacles they face while going through recruitment procedures or while stay on job?
3. What is the difference between Hijras' current means of employments and what they would really like to take as profession if given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion or social discrimination?

4. Is the Hijras' current means of income nontraditional and nonconforming to society and how does this mean of employment undermine their rights as human beings?

1.8. Structure of Thesis

There exists six chapters in this dissertation. Chapter one is the thesis introduction. Chapter two presents the literature review thereby providing the historical development of HIJRA community and the various associated parameters including the rights of HIJRA's community in Bangladesh with special concern to their employment rights. In chapter three, the theoretical approach of the study that incorporates community work concept, system theory (Schirmer and Michailakis, 2015), advocacy theory (Payne, 2005), social exclusion theory (Islam and Morgan, 2012), the concept of gender-based exclusion, and theoretical framework are presented. Chapter four provides research methodology involving choice of method, population and sample, target group, access to research sample, participants, interviews, selection of previous theory and research, methods of analysis, findings and discussion, validity and generalization, and ethical considerations. In chapter five, the analysis of the collected information that is relevant to the topic under investigation is provided. Chapter six provides the discussion, conclusion of the study and recommendation for change and future study.

2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a review of previous literature related to the historical development of HIJRA, socio-cultural, political and economic dimensions of HIJRA, emerging concept of HIJRA's right and Bangladeshi social perspective, and rights of HIJRAs community in Bangladesh with special concern to their rights to employment.

2.2. Historical Development of HIJRA Community

According to Hossain (2012), Hijra came from Urdu, which could mean inter-sex/hermaphrodites, which can be used to indicate infertility in the procreation role of a man. In light of this, a person who had previously been categorized as male but whose private parts are inconclusively that of a man in a child's bed would now be labeled intersex (Nanda, 1999). According to Chettiar (2015), the word Eunuch came from the Greek word Eunoukhos which was used to describe the mattress chamber warden. In this regard, Eunuchs had been in charge of harems since the Mughal period and were thought to make good harem guards because they were erotically impotent. Although the Hijra community plays a variety of gender and social roles, their sexual identity subjects them to complications in mainstream society.

Hijra communities are biologically humans; they reject their mannish life as time passes to be identified not as men but as women (Chapkrapani, 2010). Besides, society regarded them as homophiles, as they typically understood that they were not manlike and chose to engage in sexual activity with men. More consistently, Sifat and shafi (2021) argue that the Hijra community are those individuals who were born with both male and female parts and can survive as both woman and man. However, male Hijras have had emasculation or have had the desire to experience enervation and live as a lassie. This study considered all of the above in defining

Hijras. Therefore, Hijra can be considered as people who are equivocal vulva sex or innately males, draw attention as ladies, and frequently keeps themselves as females' contributions but recognize themselves as heterosexual.

Historically, Hijras have been present in different cultural settings across the world. In Oman, they have been referred to as the Xaniths, Hijras, jogtas, jogappas, or shiv shakti in South Asia, and servers among the Pokot community in East Africa and Dakhla in the Philippines (Khan et al., 2009). By the late 1970s, Virginia Prince, Hijra's activist, used to call them transgender, to describe them as people with characteristics falling between transsexual; people who have completely changed their genitalia to belong to the gender they were biologically not born in, and transvestite, people who occasionally dons the clothing of another gender (Jebin, 2018).

2.3. Historical Exclusion and Discrimination of Hijra Community

2.3.1. International context

During the Mughal era, Eunuchs were known as Khawaja Sira and were considered the most faithful and were entrusted with domestic servants. They were incredibly talented, held in high regard, and some of them were able to amass huge wealth. More so, they were mostly appointed as harem wardens, but some went on to become famous lecturers, court consultants, and army generals. According to Gul (2018), Hijras' influence waned with all of the Mughal empire and the wisdom of the British administration. At the beginning of the British era, Hijra community was used to obtaining protection and interest from various Indian states by setting in the Hijras community in the Indian subcontinent. These benefits included a small amount of money from farmland houses, rights of food, and land delivery in a specific location that were eventually taken away by the British as the land was not to be inherited by family or

consanguineous. The introduction of the Criminal Tribes Act in 1871 by the colonial power demanded the eunuch registration and dominance, which stopped castration, kidnapping, and sodomy behavior.

Additionally, under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, it was an offense for males to put on womanish clothing. Therefore, a eunuch who appeared, adorned, or embellished like a female not only in public places but in any other places intending to be seen in public areas, who participated in any public demonstration or played or swayed sound or chords was fined and sentenced to up to two years of imprisonment. Besides, all persons who, by medical reports, seem or acknowledge themselves to be powerless were criminalized. Khanam (2021) posits that the colonial law deprived the Hijra community of any type of equitable rights, including their main source of income, that subjected them to communal and destination exclusion. In the British era, Hijras were also at risk of being eliminated as a genetic recognition and social-cultural classification. Although they did not manage to do so, they were able to triumph over many trustworthy figureheads to embrace the colonial power. Currently, traditionalist Mullahs, oppose all reforms that protect Hijras' rights, gradually erasing the colonial heritage (Gul, 2018).

2.3.2. National context

Since independence, Hijras have been earning their livelihood through performing dances at wedding and blessing children. Hijras have been excluded from the majority of society's activities since the traditional social norms no longer honor them. However, Newport (2018) found out that the Hijra community performs well if they are treated with respect, even if they typically do not prefer to dance at various social gatherings. In the eras when Bangladesh was under West Pakistan, the Hijras used to get some allowances from the government in their old age. Hossain (2012) recorded that although this practice was maintained even after Bangladesh's

independence, the Hijra community has been rendered impoverished by it. In addition, academicians and medical professionals have resisted Hijra culture and gender recognition, labeling them as sexually and intellectually damaged.

In Bangladesh, the Hijra community has been recognized as a third-gender/transgender community as it enjoys similar rights as other humans. In 2013, the Bangladeshi Ministry of Social Welfare recognized the Hijra community as transgender and enacted the Implementation Manual of Livelihood development policy that emphasizes the social development of Hijras by increasing dignity in their familial structure and providing training and education (Khan et al., 2009). However, the policy did not focus on how their familial status will be increased, particularize their health facilities, whether they would get an equal share in family inheritance, or whether they would remain in their families or not.

According to Abedin and Sarker (2022), the transgender community will enjoy the same rights as other genders despite it not having been included in the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, as rights incorporated in the constitution apply to all citizens.

The preamble of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh emphasizes the importance of building a socialist society where the focus is on ensuring the rule of law, as well as political, social, and economic equality. It underscores the protection of fundamental human rights, freedom, equality, and justice for all citizens, striving for a society free from any form of exploitation.

Additionally, Article 11 of the constitution states that Bangladesh shall be a democratic republic where all the fundamental human rights, freedoms, equality, and justice shall be protected, and the worth of every person shall be protected. Hijra community should be treated

as human beings with limitless and distinctive perspectives, and not as minor citizens who cannot achieve goals like nobility, self-determination, and liberty, and should not be laborious.

2.3.3. In society and family context

Glenn (2016) argues that growing up within a family is a primary requirement for people for their existence or their survival. Article 15 of the constitution of Bangladesh indicates that the state should focus on improving the cultural and material standards of living of all citizens including securing food, housing, and clothing. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) states that all people are born with equal dignity and rights and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood. However, Hijras in Bangladesh society have been forced to leave their families as exclusion, discrimination, and favoritism are common factors in the pubescent third gender's life. Besides, their family members want to keep their identity secret which forces them to hide the fact about their sex (Jebin & Fahana, 2015). The Hijra community is sometimes considered a generator of social problems which are harmful to their family's reputation (Nayak & Panda, 2021). However, Article 2 of UDHR 1948 indicates that Hijras have equal rights as other genders, as no difference can be made based on sex. More so, every human has the right to adequate living standards in terms of health, family, food, and necessary social services, as indicated in the Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Article 11, ICESCR, 1966). However, the family and society have not yet guaranteed these rights to the Hijra community.

According to Mitra (2018), Hijras have been subjected to stigmatization due to the impressive way of understanding gender. In the study, Mal (2018) found out that a significant number of Hijras realized they were different from other genders at different ages, and their sex-gender behaviors and norms are considered as unorthodox because the society had rejected them

since childhood. Although Bangladesh is a republic of a wide range of cultures, families reject their male members who act in female behavior. Hijras are also expelled from their families because of their cross-dressing, which negatively affects their academic and professional success Aziz and Azhar (2020). According to Chowdhury (2020), Hijras in society are forced, abused, and exploited out of social and family exclusions and lives. In Bangladesh, it is common to find transgender persons being shunned by their teachers and colleagues in learning institutions. Most of them drop out of school as a result of discrimination.

The Hijra community in Bangladesh lives in a society with no sociopolitical space thus hindering them from living a dignified life (Stenqvist, 2015). They are less likely to secure employment in the formal labor market. Josim (2012) found that transgender individuals may opt to leave their families to avoid social exclusion or if their families reject their living style. Besides, Hijras are unable to access fundamental rights, and even after death, they are buried with various social and religious practices.

According to Khan et al. (2009), the Hijra community in Bangladesh lives in a periphery society, which limits them from living a dignified life due to lack of sociopolitical space. Hijra communities are banished from their families due to their cross-dressing, therefore affecting their social and economic well-being. Outside their families, they are exploited and abused (Hosseini, 2019). Jebin and Farhana (2015) posit that in Bangladesh, familial and social roles are highly valued due to gendered expectations for the family role in the country. In this case, society ignores solving the issues affecting Hijras, such as social acceptability and fundamental rights affecting the community. Gender-based exclusion from economic and social activities is common in the Hijras community lifestyle. This indicates that gender in different communities in Bangladesh is not addressed as part of a more comprehensive social and economic exclusion.

According to Islam (2019), in Bangladesh, the current social system does not favorably accept Hijras or acknowledge them as human beings. They are seen as a vulnerable minority and are limited to attending family functions, commentaries, and weddings. More so, they are excluded from mainstream society, cultural, legal, educational, and medical services and limited in exercising their citizenship rights due to their transgender identities. Al-Mamun et al. (2016) posit that the life of the transgender community fits within the Silver three paradigms of unity, specialty and monopolization. Similar to the Silver monopoly, a person becomes increasingly excluded from the lower fall in the social hierarchy. The Hijra community, based on their gender, has been rejected and excluded in socio-economic activities. Due to mainstream society's divisive beliefs on sexuality and gender, which equate to disobedience and miserly, the transgender individuals remain highly stigmatized.

Trimarchi (2022) posits that the Hijra community is compelled to live in slums, parks, or dangerous streets because they are the target of unwanted sexual attention from patrons, thugs, and security officers. They can also not pursue a rape case since no hate crime law exists. This intolerance, which is frequently brutal, can be observed in public places such as jails, police stations, and homesteads. The fundamental cause of the violence in society is the rejection that transgender individuals do not conform to the established gender norms. Most transgender people experience civil society and police persecution frequently due to various reasons; the ongoing exploitation and abuse that the media, families, and health facilities have inflicted against the Hijras (Safa, 2016). They also face physical and sexual assault, and intimidation in their homes and by police.

Because there are not enough role models, resources, and educational opportunities available, stereotypes are intentionally employed to intimidate and misinform Hijras (Islam,

2016). Although the Bangladeshi government recognizes Hijras as the "third gender," this classification does not guarantee that the general population would recognize them. Even if they do not require reading, Hijra finds it difficult to further their education, subjecting them to low-quality jobs, and they are not treated fairly by their coworkers and teachers. Despite the Hijra community's lack of social acceptance, civil society has failed to acknowledge and support the group.

In health facilities, doctors and health officers are afraid to treat and mistreat transgender individuals, making them unable to provide proper medical care. More so, they are regrettably unable to live in hospitals, similar to their families. Safa (2016) showed that Bangladesh's doctors and health officers consider Hijras as less human beings and are reluctant to provide them with the services they require, even if they can pay for them. Sifat and Shafi (2021) indicated that doctors avoid Hijras patients because they are stigmatized due to social exclusion regarding access to better healthcare services. More so, doctors and healthcare officers in hospitals are unaware of their social and cultural position and treat them as a social outcast (Khan et al., 2009). Through undisclosed activities to earn a living, such as sex work, Hijras become infected, and they cannot get it checked out because of their limited access to health services. Hijras are also compelled to have sexual relations with their customers, and sometimes they are raped, resulting in a high rate of sexually transmitted infections among them. Hijras appear 'less human' because of how society handles them and prevents them from accessing the standard medical care provided by the Bangladeshi social system. Due to the overpopulation of the healthcare system, transgender people who require testing and treatment are also discriminated against and do not get the same primary healthcare but are separated into separate wards at the hospital to prevent confusion (Safa, 2016).

2.4. The present status of Hijras in Bangladesh

The Hijra community in Bangladesh is recognized as transgender, a third gender after the male and female genders. Mitra (2018) posits that a community recognized as female and at first identified as male feels more comfortable with a third gender. The lack of opportunity to participate in the activities of the mainstream society has forced the Hijra community to develop their own way of living and customs. According to Brooks and Daly (2016), Hijras are deprived and oppressed in society for the reason that makes them feel they are not treated as humans. After they are regarded as a separate gender, they can receive equal rights in various parts of society, such as education, housing, health, food, and job, and they are prioritized because of being a marginalized section of society. However, in practice, they are excluded and deprived the rights to employment.

The adverse perceptions in society about the Hijra gender have resulted in limited opportunities for employment. Although some Hijras work in garment factories and restaurants, most of them fail to secure employment because of harassment, sexual abuse, and satire for their feminine behavior. The community found hope after the Cabinet considered and announced them as a third gender and later when the Ministry of Social Welfare announced the expansion of their field of work based on educational qualifications. The community started receiving education, and in 2012, the Ministry of Social Welfare took up a group of transgender people for education scholarships and job positions. The program gradually expanded, and the government increased the budget to provide education scholarships and technical training programs. Through these programs, the Hijras have been trained in various professions based on their qualifications.

Numerous groups that track sexual activity have a considerable understanding of and interest in politics and governance. Third-gender individuals sought local government offices out of

social responsibility, but people did not recognize them (Mal, 2015). Third-gender people build themselves as successful individuals despite marginalization and persecution, proving their potential. People who identify as the third gender have previously occupied positions of governmental power. The constitutional amendment has made the right to an education a basic one. Both national and local government should ensure that everyone has access to quality education, as is the situation in other countries. Based on the provision by the Bangladeshi constitution, which guarantee equal protection for all individuals despite their ethnicity, gender or religion, harassment and discrimination of transgender community is illegal under federal law. However, Mal (2015) indicates that transgender individuals continue to be excluded and denied legal rights. Society does not recognize their marriage, activities, and traditions. Hossain (2017) found out that the lack of a gender identity is a challenge for Hijras to complete the enrollment procedure in educational institutions. More so, Flores et al. (2021) posit that recalling the transgenderism discriminatory experience is counterproductive since it raises concerns about an individual's status among the dominant group's members.

According to Mal (2015), the right to education has been elevated to a fundamental right after the constitutional amendment, and the state should take all necessary measures to guarantee all individuals equal and good education. In this regard, appropriate legislation should be created, just like in other nations. The federal law considers harassment and discrimination toward gender-transformed individuals or Hijras as a violation of the equal protection guaranteed in the constitution.

According to Aziz and Azhar (2020), in Bangladesh, several transgender communities reside in train stations, parks, slums, and other open places, as most of them left their parents' homes at

a young age. However, in these dangerous situations, their safety is less in danger than when they reside in a cloud of fear with their family members.

Khan et al. (2009) argue that sexual orientation and gender issues in the transgender community have roots in racism, poverty, and other abuses of human and sexual rights and freedoms. The stigmatized sexual behaviors and lack of acknowledgment of the third-gender community with diverse sexual and gender identities endanger their lives. Besides, they cannot live in a safe social or political setting or have a respectable life as human beings (Hossain, 2017). Hijras are subjected to various oppression, and some have attempted to commit suicide as they are limited in participating in social, civil, and personal affairs, and there is no place to flee to (Safa, 2016).

The study by Shavu (2018) found that Hijra who registered as females, their harassment begins at home and continues throughout their lifetime. Most people have been assaulted and sacked from job sectors, resulting in a deep sense of inadequacy, self-doubt, hopelessness, and desperation, which later prompt them to get involved in the fight for survival. Similarly, Kelly (2009) found out that the Hijra community suffers from great social stigma as they are excluded from participating in cultural, political, social, and economical based on their religion, gender, race, and place of birth. Hijras survive by getting resources provided by a free society and cannot live dignified lives in any sociopolitical and economic context. For this reason, the third-gender community in Bangladesh and other surrounding societies cannot take full advantage of the institutions and conservative social advantages. According to Hossain (2022), Hijras in Transgender individuals in Bangladesh face significant barriers in establishing and asserting their citizenship rights both within their households and in the wider community. They encounter limitations in accessing sociocultural, educational, and legal services, and are not recognized as a

distinct gendered community beyond the confines of Islam. Consequently, transgender individuals struggle to affirm their potential and maintain their integrity as human beings. This marginalization is exacerbated by prevailing moralistic attitudes that equate deviation from societal norms with immorality and deviant sexuality. As a result, transgender individuals in Bangladesh are subjected to severe social exclusion and discrimination.

2.5. Emerging concept of HIJRA's right and Bangladeshi social perspective

Human rights reside intrinsically in the people's independence and even before defining their roles in society, but not conferred upon the person by the society or emerge from social orders (Grant et al., 2011). Human rights are independent of the legal system for people's persistence and result from the nation's acknowledgment. According to Pagels (1979), human rights are neither formed nor created by the court of judges nor society but determined by the rule of rights and wrongs inherent in the people. Human rights are intrinsic, like people, and inalienable; they cannot be taken away from individual human beings. Maritain (2012) posits that human rights are entitled to human beings because it is a whole, a person, and a master of themselves. It also acts as a natural law that protects people from all sought of harassment and emanates directly and indirectly from the very nature of man.

By the virtue of being a human being, everyone is subjected to all these credentials, including human rights. This leads to the inevitable collusion that all people are equal. According to Mayo (1967), Human rights are the privileges that all individuals have emanating from all the characteristics that always make them human. Bangladesh is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and it remains committed to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ensuring the protection of diverse sexual

orientations. Additionally, the Bangladeshi National Human Rights Commission plays a pivotal role in advocating for the rights of individuals based on gender identity and sexual orientation

The Department of Social Welfare survey states that there are about 100 Hijras in Bangladesh. However, due to the lack of law defining and recognizing Hijras' status, they are often excluded from fundamental rights such as inheritance, employment, health care, property rights, and education. Recently, the government has focused on creating a law to remedy this situation by recognizing Hijras as the third gender. The government also continues to uphold laws to protect Hijra's rights but punish citizens for being homosexual. The Hijra community is not always homosexual, but some have been sentenced to and prisoned for about ten years for being Homosexual. People having carnal intercourse against Article 377A of the Criminal Panel Code of Bangladesh shall be sentenced and imprisoned or liable for fines. However, there is no law that addresses unlawful acts by perpetrators motivated by the gender identity of a victim or sexual orientation in Bangladesh. More so, no anti-discriminatory laws that recognize the diverse gender identity or protect sexual minorities. Most Hijras supplement their income by selling sex or begging, but others through singing and dancing in various events in their village (Roy, 2016). Various study conducted about Hijras in Bangladesh indicates their vulnerability to law enforcement abuses; they are beaten by hooligans, mugged and exploited by their clients, and never receive support from security officers. They also fear other harassment from the security team thus, hardly report these incidents.

Khan et al. (2009) indicated that transgender communities exist in various cultural contexts and are forced to have unprotected sexual activities with no charges with local influential persons, clients, and police. Human rights Watch (2018) posits that Hijras have been on the planet from the dawn of humanity when they were nothing more than family and social disgrace.

Since the ancient days, they have been rejected by the community as human beings as they were considered an oddity and a curse. They have been labeled criminals in criminological views, treated brutally, killed, and abused (King, 2019). Hijras, however, played a vital role in the Royal Court as administrators, generals, and political advisors, as they were believed to be truthful people. After the development of the Criminal Tribes Act by British administrators in 1871, the transgender community was viewed as indulging in gay sex and addicted to serious crimes. Although this Act was repealed in 1949, the negative attitude about Hijras remained until after the Second World War, when people became concerned about people's rights irrespective of their religion, race, and sex. This contributed to equal treatment of people, and people from various countries advanced their mindset to accept the Hijra community as people (Michelraj, 2015).

The UN General Assembly in 1948 adopted the General Assembly Resolution 217A of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to protect and ensure the universal fundamental human rights, subjecting all human beings to equal rights and dignity. The transgender community in Bangladesh lives disadvantageous and hostile life caused by unacceptance and social stigma as their families still refuse to stay with them despite their understanding of their physical changes (Al-Mamun et al., 2022). They are also rejected as tenants, students, and employees. Consequently, most Hijras leave their families and start living in a designated place with other people in the transgender community (Dhaka Tribune, 2018). Various researchers and scholars, in their study on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) groups in Bangladesh, found that trans people are highly affected by social exclusion and stigmatization. The rights of LGBT in Bangladesh appear way too paradoxical and taboo, where even Bangladesh's criminal code, Penal Code, 1860, S.377, punishes same-sex relationships as it considers them unnatural.

2.6. Rights of HIJRAs community in Bangladesh related to their employment right

Article 19 of the people's constitution in the Republic of Bangladesh states that the government shall focus on enhancing equity of opportunity among all people. Besides, the government must support effective strategies to eradicate all economic and social inequalities and ensuring equitable distribution of wealth among the people, and providing resources for the republic as a whole to spur economic growth. Articles 27 and 28 of the Bangladeshi constitution guarantee equal protection and equality under the law, and no one should be discriminated on the basis of gender, caste, race, religion and place of birth. However, this article does not prohibit the state from making outstanding provisions in favor of any privileged sector of the population so as to affix their ample delineation in the service of the country. Article 29, of the Bangladeshi constitution states that all citizens shall enjoy equal opportunities in terms of employments and office positions. Hijra community, as citizens, has rights of attending school, inheriting their parent's properties, and working in an office. However, the court found that the equality clause under Article 27 of Bangladeshi constitution does not provide all citizens with equal opportunities (41 DLR 1989 AD p.30). This classification doctrine provoked the misinterpretation of equal human rights.

The government of Bangladesh in 2013 declared Hijras as third gender, which enabled them receive equal legal recognition and identified as Hijra on any official documentation (Stengvist, 2015). However, up to date, Hijras are still discriminated and excluded in most activities in the society. Inheritance of the ancestor's properties in Bangladesh is described by the personal laws, and based on gender in non-Muslim, Buddhism, or Hinduism communities. As a result, transgender individuals are deprived their inheritance rights. According to Sarker (2007),

the state should support disadvantaged group and backward society, to realize a socialist society where all humans are equally treated and free from exploitation.

Contrary, the study by Khanam (2021) on human rights of Hijras in Bangladesh found that Hijra community face discrimination in accessing conventional jobs. Negative societal attitudes toward Hijras make them vulnerable to exclusion from employment opportunities, and face social harassment all over the country. These limitations prevent them from enjoying fundamental rights and basic needs, hindering the realization of Hijras' human rights. Khanam (2021) observed that the Hijra community also faces marginalization from mainstream society due to familial attitudes, inadequate implementation of existing policies and laws, and a lack of awareness regarding their rights and freedoms. However, Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 asserts that every individual in society has the right to a fair and supportive work environment, along with opportunities for employment and the freedom to choose their profession. Jebin (2018) conducted a socioeconomic analysis of Hijras in Bangladesh to assess the opportunities available to transgender individuals in living the life they aspire to lead and to evaluate their achievements resulting from accessing these opportunities. The study revealed that Hijras' lives are marked by a constant struggle between their true sexual identity and societal norms. They experience unequal treatment in social and economic spheres, leading to various forms of deprivation and compromise in their chosen way of life. Hijras often receive lower wages than individuals of other genders with similar qualifications and working in comparable positions. The findings indicate that many Hijras are dissatisfied with their current professions compared to their desired ones. Although government services are perceived as more dignified, despite lower basic pay, Hijras view these positions as highly secure within the Bangladeshi context. Some Hijras express a desire for reserved government posts to enhance

their chances of employment, despite facing educational barriers and other forms of discrimination.

Education is the process through which people get moral strength, knowledge, efficiency, and propensity to occupy various employment positions (Vasudevan, 2014). The constitution of Bangladesh, Article 28 (3) provides that all people has a right to educational institutions irrespective of their religion, caste and gender. Therefore, transgender community should be entitled to get educational rights like other citizens. However, the traditional mind-set of people of Bangladesh does not provide equal opportunity of pursuing education among all the citizens. Hijras are deprived their rights to education which make it hard for them to secure their live financially and drive them to marginalized position. They are also not able to participate in employment due to low education qualifications. According to Almamun et al. (2022) some employers in Bangladesh consider employing Hijras as a social taboo and for them to be employed in a respectable position is beyond a dream. Despite Article 29 of the Bangladeshi Constitution of 1972 protecting the rights of every citizen from discrimination in any employment or office, the opposite prevails in Bangladesh. According to Khan et al (2009) the government is still permitted to establish a selection process and job requirements despite the equality provision, which is only possible when the Hijras are qualified for a certain position but denied a chance of being appointed due their gender identity. In the study to understand sociocultural exclusion of Hijras depending on their paradox sexual appearance and gender identity disorder, Mal (2018) indicated that Hijras as a members of minority population encounter various challenges based on their gender identity. This limit them from pursuing a dignified life with employment and education.

However, there are some members of Hijra community who have overcome all challenges and impediments to attain their goals and have become role models for other transgender people. For example, Tanisha Yasmin Charity is one of transgender member who faced discriminations earlier but later succeeded and become first Hijra official in the National Human Rights Commission (Dhaka Tribune, 2018). Besides, the government of Bangladesh has furnished transgender with training opportunity on various courses such as farming, driving, haircutting, computer and so on. Private television channels have recruited various transgender members to work for their security departments. This has provided a pathway for different public and private organizations to provide job opportunities to the Hijra community.

According to Pepper and Lorah (2008), dealing with discriminating co-workers and management, and unsupportive working environment may be the source of physical or emotional pain for the minority group in the society like Hijra. Divan et al. (2016), found that Hijras are discouraged from participating in various economic activities that would earn them a living. They opt to earn their livelihood by begging, threatening people for money and dancing in society events. They are involved in illegal and immoral activities such as prostitution. Therefore, economic hardship among the Hijra community in Bangladesh accrued by inability to participate in the workforce result to an increased number of mental health disorders, HIV cases among them and further complicate access to gender affirming health service. In support of this, Alexandra et al. (2018) found that Hijra community are denied their rights to work and deprived the participation in formal employment, which leads them into begging, and illegal and accountable activities like sex work, drug dealing, robbery and smuggling. The study indicated that Hijras' voices are unheard in workplace. They sometimes decide to voluntary decide to remain silent to protect themselves from adverse circumstances.

2.7. Empirical review; previous studies

According to Almamun et al. (2022), Hijras are marginalized in social, economic and political life aspects of the society and they therefore, face severe exploitation and discrimination due to socio-cultural norm. They suffer from social, economic, political and cultural exclusion and their livelihood is different from other communities in Bangladesh. Hijras' depends on prostitution and begging as their main source of income. In addition, they suffer from psychological and physical abuse and denied access to civil support, government services, and proper medication. The National Human Rights Commission (2018) indicated that the transgender community is not only denied job positions but also forced to undignified or low-paying work for livelihood, like sex work and begging. According to their study, a large number of transgender members are deprived of the right to participate in economic activities, with even the qualified Hijras being denied jobs.

Vries et al. (2020) indicated that there is a high number of unemployed transgender individuals, high rates of exploitation and harassment in the workplace, and other forms of employment discrimination, which has contributed to higher rates of poverty and lower average earnings among the Hijras as compared to members of the general population.

According to Conron et al. (2012), the Hijra community has a high probability of being unemployed and living below the poverty line compared to other members of the general population. More similarly, Loppel (2016), found a significant difference in the labor force status distribution of Hijras males and females. The males had a higher probability of being in the labor force than females. Multinomial logit analysis revealed that the differences and similarities of Hijras in the job sector are determined by the characteristics that influence the transgender males and females' labor force status. More particularly, since it is easy to identify transgender people,

it is more likely that they will be unemployed than employed. Although state legislation prohibits employment discrimination against the Hijras, it increases the likelihood of Hijra men being out of the labor market, while such laws have no significant effect on the females in the Hijra community.

Granberg et al. (2020) found that males and females of the Hijra community were less likely to receive positive responses from employers compared to other members of the general population. Although the result was not robust, the researcher concluded that the Hijra community faces a higher barrier in the job market than the general population.

According to Geijtenbek and Plug (2018), the males and females in the general population earn significantly higher than males and females in the transgender population. Equally, the transgender workers earn more when registered as males compared to transgender workers who are registered as females. These results were consistent with a labor market model in which individuals in the transgender community are discriminated against more when registered as female and also as LGBT workers. Likewise, Schilt and Wiswall (2008) found that there is a significant increase in the earning rate for a transgender individual following transition from female to male and a significant decrease in the earning rate following the transition from male to female. A transgender individual transforming into a woman brings a loss, termination, and harassment but transforming into a man brings an increase in authority and respect not only in the job sector but also in society.

In the study to investigate the cost of being Hijra, Koch et al (2020), posits that transgender individuals have wide range of access to psychological, physical and health care that is unique depending on the context of their country. The determinants of these includes law and policies surrounding discrimination, undertrained health care professionals, adequate resources, and

health care system in the home nation. Unfortunately, the discrimination of Hijras from health services and economic exclusion in the society negatively influence the mental health of the Hijras. Besides, Reback et al (2012) found out that transgender people are discriminated from employment that lead to high rate of unemployed Hijras, resulting in economic hardship. Women in transgender groups are involved in sex activities that contribute to their risk of HIV infection. The Bangladesh government has implemented a transgender-specific HIV protection case management which is set to reduce the number of homeless Hijras, sex work, reduce emotional and psychological distress and increase legal employment and income among the Hijras.

According to Abedin and Sarjer (2022), although the Hijra community in Bangladesh has a variety of social disparities and challenges, there is some hope for welfare and prosperity from them in the coming years. Some members of the third-gender community are participating in national elections, receiving development programs from the national skill development council, Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation, and the small and medium enterprises foundation. They are also encouraged to be entrepreneurs through technical and financial aid. Moreover, the Hijras receive training in skill development, technical assistance, and capacity building from the Bandhu Social Welfare Society. In Bangladesh, there are many Hijras employed as chefs and other restaurant staff members. Their work as beauticians in beauty salons is also growing in popularity. The commitment of Hijras to their creative endeavours is amazing. They are thought to perform better in the hospitality and tourism sectors. Currently, they can be involved with food preparation, tour guiding, entertainment, spa, mediation, etc. After the government of Bangladesh recognized Hijras as the third gender in 2013, some individuals secured employment in supervisory positions in public service, while others are working in manufacturing companies such as Ready-Made Garments.

According to Nazir and Yasir (2016), most Hijras have lost health insurance, reduced income, and become homeless due to loss of employment. Besides, they face discrimination in housing, such as refusal of home, employment, and job loss. The states are focused on implementing laws that protect the Hijras from this kind of discrimination. Nazir and Yasir found that employment discrimination has contributed to a huge loss, especially in Medicaid expenditure. Besides, they also found that housing discrimination has contributed to the loss in housing program expenditures and other homelessness-related costs. Their study indicated that the unemployment rate of the Hijras is double the unemployment rate among the general public. This has contributed to transgender shifting to the underground economy as drug sellers and sex workers to earn an income. They also found that a significant number of jobless and homeless Hijras are using alcohol and drugs and are highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection compared to the general public.

Ahmad et al. (2016) indicated that Hijras are the most neglected community in society. They face various challenges from individual, family, and community to the national levels. Hijras are discriminated based on gender and do not get equal opportunities in employment sectors, businesses, and education. Although employers do not prefer hiring Hijras, they are mostly good in creative work like stitching, acting and dancing, dressing design, and embroidery. Ahmad et al. found that low education qualifications, appearance, dress and makeup, communication, and goodwill contribute to Hijra's exclusion from employment. However, different public and private organizations are providing educational programs and certifications to educate people, especially the Hijras, on basic skills like cooking, sparring and medication, management skills, and stitching. This is to boost their skills and enhance job opportunities for them. Besides, these organizations are working toward bridging the gap between the transgender

community and employers to get employment opportunities and eradicate discrimination in the job sector.

According to Pal and Sinha (2022), although transgender identity is the most marginalized in society, it is a victimization site by the Hijra community and social mainstream. Pal and Sinha argued that gender dysphoria is a psychological condition that can occur to anyone and does not discriminate between persons from upper and lower economies. Hijras, who manage to access education and develop individual agency, achieve a certain degree of dignified social existence. However, for Hijras born in lower middle-class or poor backgrounds with no or little access to education, the only option available for them will be affirmative state initiatives. Therefore, employment and educational agencies and society at large should be sensitive to the transgender plight.

The individual factors that contribute to unemployment among the Hijras include behavior, attitudes, and personal choices. Khan (2017) posits that the employment decision is greatly determined by personal choices and attributes, similar to the Hijra community. The intention of the Hijras to earn a living matters a lot as some of them prefer sex work, stealing, begging, and borrowing as a way to earn money without hard work. Although these activities may earn them a lot of money, most of them do not have families, and if married, they keep it secret to escape domestic responsibilities. Khan (2017) posits that some transgender are rich enough and significantly take part in domestic responsibilities, though not enough to remove the stigma of being Hijras.

According to Lin et al. (2022), unemployment is influenced by the social behavior. The transgender community are treated as inferior and there exists lack of social justice in society thus hindering the Hijras from occupying decent employment positions. The study by Baig

(2012) found that the association of the Hijra community with dancing, sexual activities, and singing was restricted in their actions. This not only deprived them of their rights but also endangered their survival. Inhumane treatment of transgender people negatively affects their health, upbringing, education, and cognitive development, which directly contributes to their unemployment (Johnson and Rogers, 2020). Societal discrimination against transgender builds fear and lowers their confidence and esteem, making them consider being self-employed rather than being employees.

Khan (2017) state that the transgender community have limited opportunities for advancement and employment, limited civil rights, and lack of policies in the organizations. Members of the Hijra community were not issued identity cards, which restricted them from accessing various benefits and services like bank accounts and medical facilities. Besides, employers hesitated employing transgender individuals due to a lack of legal identity. The confusion about Hijras' gender identity limits them from being enrolled in schools. This limits their potential for occupying various job positions. Job advertisement also requires female or male employee candidates, and no transgender choice is usually provided in the job advertisement, denying them a chance to be part of the employment sector. They are also limited access to legal justice and are denied for appealing against exploitation and exclusion. Because of lesser policies for Hijra's treatment in the job sector, organizations' managers and employers cannot deal with these issues, leaving them unemployed. These are issues that needs to be addressed.

3. CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL APPROACH

3.1. Introduction

The study relies on the concept of social employment as well as methods and actions under the theoretical perspectives to aid in understanding the point of view of the participants in the context. Besides, the study used transgender concepts to understand the community's perspective on Hijras, social context, and where they belong. The study was not only based on a single concept but a combination of various concepts. Therefore, this chapter includes relevant theoretical perspectives regarding employment exclusion, social and community work. These theories include: social exclusion theory (Islam and Morgan, 2012), system theory (Schirmer and Michailakis, 2015) and advocacy theory (Payne, 2005).

The system theory provides an understanding on how to use system capacity to work with the communities, their networks, and social work context. Moreover, the concept of advocacy is applied in the employment and other social activities that helps in meeting the needs and goals of the Hijra community. The gender concept is used in comprehending the Hijras' life experiences, needs and social phenomena in Bangladesh.

3.2. Community/social employment concept

Popple (2015) posits that community work is a fundamental factor for community development and social changes. Community work can be described as a developmental activity consisting of a variety of processes and tasks with the sole aim of making changes in society, such as social equity, human rights, and social justice. Community work entails implementing principles of empowerment, participation, and collaborative decision-making in an organized and systematic fashion. According to Coulshed and Orme (2006), social inclusion, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination and community social justice are core to community

development and also influence the capacity, strengthen local democracy, and improve the community's voices that bring social change.

Community work involves working for the community's collective change (Schutz & Sandy, 2011). This is done through changes in practices and policies that will lead to equality, rights and inclusion for marginalized individuals and communities, such as the Hijra community. Schutz and Sandy (2011a) posit that taking a collective approach means that community workers help in analyzing the community's situations and set out strategies and visions to bring change. Moreover, community work helps the communities to identify and seek to include every person in making decisions and act together to address injustice and inequalities. Community work builds solidarity and acts to bring change in the community and ensure that communities are resourced and supported in their collective work for rights and equality (Schutz & Sandy, 2011b).

Community work is associated with community empowerment that makes communities more organized, influential and included. As per the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on community empowerment, adopting an empowering approach enables communities to enhance their capacity and confidence to participate in dialogue, collective action, and debate regarding change (Clarke, 2018). This approach allows communities to autonomously identify agendas and priorities for initiating change, ensuring their involvement in decision-making processes that directly or indirectly impact their lives. Pierson (2009) posits that the main goal of community work is to advance sustainable development and social justice. The challenge of injustice, inequality, poverty, social exclusion and discrimination is thus actively pursued by community workers. It entails that community workers uphold diversity, cherish it, and seek out ways to ensure that each and every person living in the area where they work is

acknowledged, valued, and included. Encouraging policies and behaviors that are environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable is essential for nurturing a society that prioritizes sustainability in all aspects. The community workers, through working for sustainable development and social justice, support in advocating collectively for the community's rights using policy and legal mechanisms available to them (Raco, 2005). Moreover, they help the community to challenge and address inequality in power, resources and wealth distribution in society, including between males, females, and transgender, and have a voice in sustainable development planning and policy.

Furthermore, social workers embedded within communities play a pivotal role in facilitating community engagement through counseling, empowerment initiatives, advocacy, and outreach programs aimed at enhancing community resilience and ensuring equitable participation (Coulshed & Orme, 2006). Similarly, Jim (2009) contended that every individual possesses inherent legal entitlements, irrespective of gender, nationality, language, religion, ethnicity, or any other factor. Human rights encompass a broad spectrum of entitlements, encompassing the right to employment and education, freedom of expression, protection from slavery and torture, and the rights to life and liberty, among others. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights highlights the concept of equal opportunity for every individual to achieve their full potential, representing the essence of equality. Additionally, it stresses that no one should face disadvantages in life opportunities due to circumstances such as birth, nationality, religious beliefs, or physical and mental abilities. Information provided by the Iris Human Rights and Equality Commission indicates that specific demographic groups have historically experienced discrimination based on factors like race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. Social

workers actively contribute to advancing human rights, combating discrimination, and fostering equality by challenging oppression, bias, and stereotypes through various interventions.

Furthermore, the community possesses the capacity to actively contribute to the formulation of human rights legislation, procedures, and strategies. They can assert their rights, advocate for the comprehensive rights of transgender individuals, and work towards addressing issues such as violence against transgender individuals and their inadequate representation in decision-making processes.

Coulshed and Orme (2006) indicated that community intervention includes locality development, social planning and action. In this case, social action signified the direct participation of people, especially in a group identified with mutual oppression and interest. Social work procession fosters community development through participating with the residents, community stakeholders, all interacting political, social, religious, educational institutions, families and social welfare system. Participation in community work helps in identifying the needs and problems, belief system, strength, core values and resources that aids in improving individual and community's political, social, and economic well-being (Islam & Morgan, 2012). Moreover, they help the community in facilitating the selection of a course of action; help in implementing this action; create organizational mechanisms or opportunities for community building; help the community in establishing its strategies, goals and objectives; study alternatives; training and developing community leadership and staff; collecting and analyzing data; establishing valuations and feedback mechanisms; and identifying and developing funding sources (Council on Social Work Education, 2002). Social workers acknowledge the enormous and traditionally undervalued resiliency, strength, and contributions of various groups in society.

Coulshed and Orme (2006) posit that there have been concerns within the community's situation development work about networking, responsibilities and budget, and public accountability as the action of community workers. This network may be different institutions, disadvantaged individuals, families, policymakers, neighbors or any other system with whom social and community workers are involved. By engaging all individuals in community work and development, it becomes easy to achieve community goals and objectives and enforce the required policies. Likewise, Islam and Morgan (2012) posit that engaging all individuals in the community regardless of their unique traits like gender help in identifying, rejecting, and challenging any form of discrimination and inequality; values, promotes, respects, and supports the value of difference and diversity, and develop and support anti-oppressive practices and policies. In the context of the current study, community work can help in acknowledging the diversity in society, understanding and supporting other communities to understand oppression and social diversity with respect to the Hijras community.

Coulshed and Orme (2006) have made two distinctions regarding community. Communities denote homes and locations where locals have a sense of allegiance to the region and its residents and are active participants in social networks. Additionally, the term "community" sometimes refers to individuals who share interests due to their occupations or social standing, regardless of geography. In this study of the Hijra community in Bangladesh, the common interest here could be seen as rights and freedom of employment or as a specific social disadvantage. The study of social exclusion theory, system theory, and advocacy theory forms the basis of Hijras' exclusion in the employment sector.

3.3. System theory

The system theory was developed by Niklas Luhmann, a German social theorist, from 1927-1977. The theory offers the conceptual tools needed to comprehend exclusion and inclusion in a way that is both theoretically sound and highly applicable to social work. Despite the fact that social exclusion has been a key notion in many social work-based studies, its meaning is not entirely clear from a theoretical standpoint. The word "exclusion" can also be used to refer to things like unemployment, alienation, poverty, or solitude. However, it can be argued that neither exclusion nor inclusion is always or per se unproblematic. The system theory suggests that exclusion and inclusion are existing social systems that view people as relevant addresses for communication. Besides, system theory accurately highlights what social work can or cannot do in terms of exclusion and inclusion.

According to Schirmer and Michailakis (2015), social work system's perspectives are used as a method for social work to identify various processes and components involving work as they mainly focus on social phenomena that affect community or group but not individual. System theory can be used to motivate people and social workers to focus on different environmental aspects, smaller systems within the large system such as families, wider society, government, legislation, and individuals, where all of them hold their own systems in their self-context. Coulshed and Orme (2006), open systems and closed systems are considered with the boundary systems as the foundation of system theory, where the former is influenced by external variables, while the latter represents self-contained variables. Community workers view the social exclusion and inclusion of any disadvantaged group as an open system, and if that is the case, they reframe their strategy so that other aspects of an individual's social systems can be put forth for change.

The foundation of system theory in social work lies in the concept that interconnected elements form systems that influence behavior. These elements encompass various aspects such as friendships, family dynamics, home environment, and economic status. According to this theory, these elements, along with others, shape individuals' thoughts and actions. Consequently, it serves as a framework for analyzing social structures to identify opportunities for enhancing or replacing components that may be lacking or inefficient, ultimately impacting behavior positively.

Coulshed and Orme (2006) delineate system theory into smaller systems, including the target system, change agent system, action system, and client system. The target system comprises broader societal entities such as society, the political sphere, and the family, within which the change agent aims to instigate change. The change agent system encompasses social workers, their policies, and the organizations in which they operate. The action system involves individuals, particularly marginalized groups like Hijras, with whom the change agent system collaborates to achieve its objectives. Finally, the client system comprises individuals and their communities, families, and other entities that engage with and seek assistance from the change agent system. Although all these systems are not similar, they are interconnected. Besides, the system has a feedback loop that gives a chance for change, while the system uses its energy for adjusting and sustaining itself. Moreover, the system approach incorporates the cultural, religious, legal and political understanding that influences the perception of the problems that Hijras experience and the impacts of discrimination on the Hijra community. This theory helps in providing more understanding of the complex human relationship and the circumstances. This provides an important ground on how Hijras employment is engaged in different systems for action.

3.4. Advocacy theory

The advocacy approach is used for marginalized, discriminated or disadvantaged individuals who are denied their legal rights. According to Payne (2005), the advocacy approach in various theoretical settings is used with the concept of empowering minority groups in the community, such as Hijras, the ageing population, and people with disability, but the approach has been extended into diverse situations and needs in the current literature world. In the current study, the Hijras community have practiced advocacy in the mainstream of society as a social work method. Therefore, the use of the advocacy approach provides an understanding of different challenges, exploitation and exclusion activities that the Hijra community faces within the social context.

Freddolino et al. (2004), suggested that advocacy services should focus on protecting and supporting disadvantaged groups in society. This study emphasizes cause and case advocacy. Cause advocacy indicates promoting social change for the benefit of the Hijra community. Case advocacy has been emphasized in the provision of support to the marginalized or minority group to benefit them (Payne, 2005). Case advocacy is also known as short-term or crisis advocacy. Besides, these theories are used alongside citizen, self-advocacy, and peer to provide extra support to the marginalized groups in the community in dealing with a specific problem. According to Dalru and Boylan (2013), advocacy theory is required to give the support needed for arising issues requiring special expertise, such as employment, housing, education, rights protection and financial problems which are rampant in the Hijra community. Payne (2005) proposed that advocacy could be utilized to enhance individuals' ability to govern their own lives. Additionally, the significance of networking within various spheres (such as family, neighbors, policymakers, etc.) has been highlighted as a means to improve the situation. In this

context, employees have the opportunity to either establish new connections or modify existing ones within the network. However, there is also a strong emphasis on self-advocacy, where individuals facing disadvantages advocate for themselves. This typically involves coming together to address personal challenges and needs, offering mutual support in advocating against discrimination and disadvantage (Payne, 2005). Despite facing criticism, the advocacy approach remains widely used in legal entitlement and welfare services. Based on the advocacy theory, the society should act to protect the Hijra community from all sorts of exclusion, their interest and rights. The government should change policies and decisions to eradicate issues facing the Hijras community, such as exclusion from social work, unemployment and decimation in social services like education and health due to their gender identity. The peer advocacy concept in the current study prevails in the angle that people who have been excluded or marginalized in the past or share a similar environment and experience with the Hijra community should partner to advocate for their issues. The fact that transgender individuals are excluded from the mainstream of society even after legally identifying as a third gender, people with past experience may have a better understanding, and they can be more supportive of them. In all facets of the advocacy concept, advocacy can be used in social work and the Hijra community in order to seek legal rights.

3.5. The Concept of Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is the state where individuals are incapable of actively participating in societal, political, cultural, and economic spheres due to factors that create and perpetuate this state. Lack of access to tangible resources such as employment, housing, land and income and services like health care and education, which are fundamental building blocks of well-being and are reflected in Agenda 2030, may impede participation. But people's ability to express

themselves, have their dignity and rights equally, and engage in social interaction indicates how participation is constrained. Hence, social exclusion encompasses more than just financial scarcity or tangible assets; it also entails a diminished sense of agency, influence over consequential choices, and feelings of inadequacy and estrangement. Gender identity, sex, place of residence, age, handicap, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, color, and sexual orientation have historically been reasons for social exclusion to varying degrees in most nations across the world.

Social exclusion encompasses a range of interconnected issues such as bias, joblessness, inadequate housing, limited income, familial discord, deficient skills, and elevated crime rates (Byrne, 2005). Various segments of society encounter barriers that impede their engagement in economic, social, and political spheres, potentially ostracizing them not only from the workforce, property markets, and legal frameworks but also from prejudiced or stigmatizing perceptions, beliefs, or attitudes (Barnes, 2012). Social exclusion primarily manifests based on sexual orientation, gender identity, residential location, racial background, age, religious affiliation, ability, ethnicity, and occupation. Individuals subjected to this form of social exclusion forfeit their opportunities for a fulfilling life, security, and dignity (Wilk, 2012). Loue (2013) contends that addressing the root causes of discrimination and social exclusion is essential for fostering inclusive, sustainable development and accelerating poverty alleviation efforts. While social exclusion and poverty are intertwined, social exclusion encompasses both the process and its outcomes, whereas poverty solely denotes the outcome (Silver, 2007). Silver (2007) asserts that social exclusion is an ongoing process rather than a static state, though very few— if any— individuals ever reach the supposed endpoint of this trajectory. Unlike poverty, there are no defined "exclusion thresholds" to attain. People are instead located on a multidimensional

continuum and may be advancing in one direction or another, either toward inclusion in all senses or toward a condition of complete, cumulative social rupture. This process, which includes social isolation as well as humiliation, has been referred to as "disaffiliation" or "disqualification" in society. The panel and longitudinal studies that were examined here provide evidence of some of the mechanisms that cause people to spiral downward when exclusion-related factors mount.

Without necessarily being poor, individuals are excluded because of their sexual orientation or handicap. Theoretically, social exclusion and unemployment are viewed as distinct phenomena with dynamic relationships. However, there is still very little empirical knowledge on how these two processes interact dynamically at the individual level. To shed light on the issue, Devicienti and Poggi (2011) conducted research on the primary and secondary levels of Markov dynamics. They utilized a dynamic bivariate probit model, incorporating adjustments for unobserved heterogeneity based on Wooldridge (2005)-style initial conditions. The study revealed a significant level of state dependence regarding both unemployment and social exclusion. Moreover, dynamic cross-effects indicated a reciprocal relationship between social exclusion and unemployment, suggesting mutual reinforcement between the two. These interaction effects should be expressly taken into consideration in social policies aimed at eliminating the unemployment rate and preventing social and economic marginalization of individuals.

The current study involved gender construction in providing an understanding of transgender people, their rights, needs and their exclusion from the mainstream of society. To understand the context of social work with the transgender community in Bangladesh, this part explores two types of gender concepts. Connell (1985) argues that discussion on sex and gender

is very common in the current sociological field. According to Saith (2001), the social exclusion framework's applicability to emerging nations with lesser incomes has been questioned by various intellectuals. Normality standards of inclusion and exclusion are not what we intend to do in situations when a high number of people work in precarious and informal jobs, do not finish their basic education, or lack security coverage. According to Sen (2000), social exclusion has been related to the idea, and its emphasis traits have allowed for a better examination of the process that leads to capacity deprivation and unemployment, many of whose elements are shared among regions with varying development levels. The issues related to social isolation and migrants' disempowerment have been a concern to most developing and developed countries.

Various efforts have been made to promote social exclusion from the rise of concern about social exclusion. Based on the dimension of the current study, social inclusion can be defined as a process of improving people's engagement in mainstream society regardless of their gender identity, sex, place of residence, age, handicap, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, color, and sexual orientation. This can be done by enhancing their access to resources and social services and protecting their rights. According to Silver (2010), social inclusion is also a process and goal that can be used to address various challenges associated with social exclusion in society. Hence, achieving social inclusion requires the elimination of obstacles hindering individuals' engagement in mainstream society, alongside proactive measures aimed at fostering their involvement. According to Hunter and Jordan (2010), social inclusion represents a deliberate effort to incorporate and embrace all individuals, promoting tolerance and fairness as essential responses to the challenge of social exclusion. By simultaneously addressing the disadvantages that many marginalized individuals endure relative to other members of the general population, current policy frequently focuses on "Overcoming Indigenous

Disadvantages." Such challenges are frequently framed in the contentious terms of social inclusion and social exclusion in various literature evaluations. Reflections on some useful recommendations to advance the discussion are offered as the piece ends. In theory, increasing marginalized political and social involvement in policy formulation ought to improve inclusion and lessen disadvantage by improving the efficiency of programs with a sizable Indigenous clientele. It should be mentioned that encouraging social inclusion does not guarantee people's ability to coexist peacefully. Although the current study is focused on social exclusion, understanding social inclusion is crucial as it is an indicator that is relevant to the elimination of social exclusion in society.

3.6. The Concept of Gender

Gender is a crucial component of interpersonal relationships, culture, and social life in which people must deal with difficult practical concerns related to identity, survival and social justice. Conwell (2002) posits that members of society take gender for granted in their daily life and view the roles that are assigned to men and women as the natural order. When this order is not followed by a certain individual or a group, they are stigmatized and considered deviants and dangerous to society. These people are excluded from society, which contributes to social tensions and the risk of conflict and violence, with substantial long-term economic and social costs.

According to Connell (2012), gender is not by nature a permanent condition where one can become what it is rather than being born with it, and this becoming can occasionally be unpredictable and unclear. However, most people tend to confuse gender and sex. The connection between gender and sex is used as an argument against gender diversity in that if there are two sexes, the same should prevail in gender. Although gender identity and the human

body can hardly be separated into two groups, criticizing the gender binary and adding a biological component might be helpful, as sex and gender are frequently seen as being interconnected. In a study of physical differences, the concept of gender is used to demonstrate why the social construction of gender lacks a biological foundation. Instead, there is a space where bodies are integrated into social processes (Connell, 2002).

Gender can also be considered as a matter of a group or individual's social relations. Connell (2002) posits that the differences and dichotomies in gender interaction are just two of the several patterns. When it comes to these, it is believed that the typical pattern of gender-appropriate behaviour can be identified by physical speed and strength, with men being faster and stronger than women, who are assumed as soft gender. This pattern is supported by religion, the media, teachers, parents, legislation, and other events that categorize gender into two groups. According to Connell (2012), the body model, which is primarily promoted by men, constructs gender disparities and is frequently used to support the current gender order, preserve these categories, mock feminism, and the relationship between them that results in disparities in daily life. However, this gender order disparity also impacts males who are identified as effeminate gay or have weak masculine approaches. In reference to the above literature, it can be argued that gender is not a fixed dichotomy or biological expression in human life but a social construction protected through social arrangements and daily practices and activities and also develop new structures and situations.

According to Girshick (2008), gender is a conceptual category that a culture assigns a wide range of phenomena that are not related to sex. In most cases, there are male and female gender and individuals are supposed to match their biological genital traits, hormones, and internal reproductive organs with their biological sex. Moreover, people's ordinary roles are

determined based on thoughts, feelings and behaviour developed by the culture and appropriate for two men and women genders. Therefore, it can be understood that gender identity is communicated through presentations and roles that follow gender in societal settings (Connell, 2012). The various approaches discussed above provide an illustration of a framework that contains a number of theories and concepts that primarily explore advocacy methods, social exclusion and system actions within social work settings and the community's concept that is comprised of members of a particular gender category.

The concept and community and social work have given an understanding of the community needs and their participation in mainstream society, and the methods and skills for community workers have been made possible. It has also considered the significance of social context. The system theory provides an understanding of how the use system capacity to work with the communities, their networks, and social work context. Moreover, the concept of advocacy has been stressed within this systemic approach as a strategy to be applied in the employment and other social activities that help to meet the needs and goals of the Hijra community.

The concept of gender and social work approaches correlate. The concept of gender in this part was included to understand the Hijras' life experiences, needs and social phenomena in Bangladesh. Therefore, the theoretical framework below will incorporate the notion of community work and gender and combine them with the advocacy and system methods of a Hijra community.

3.7. Theoretical framework

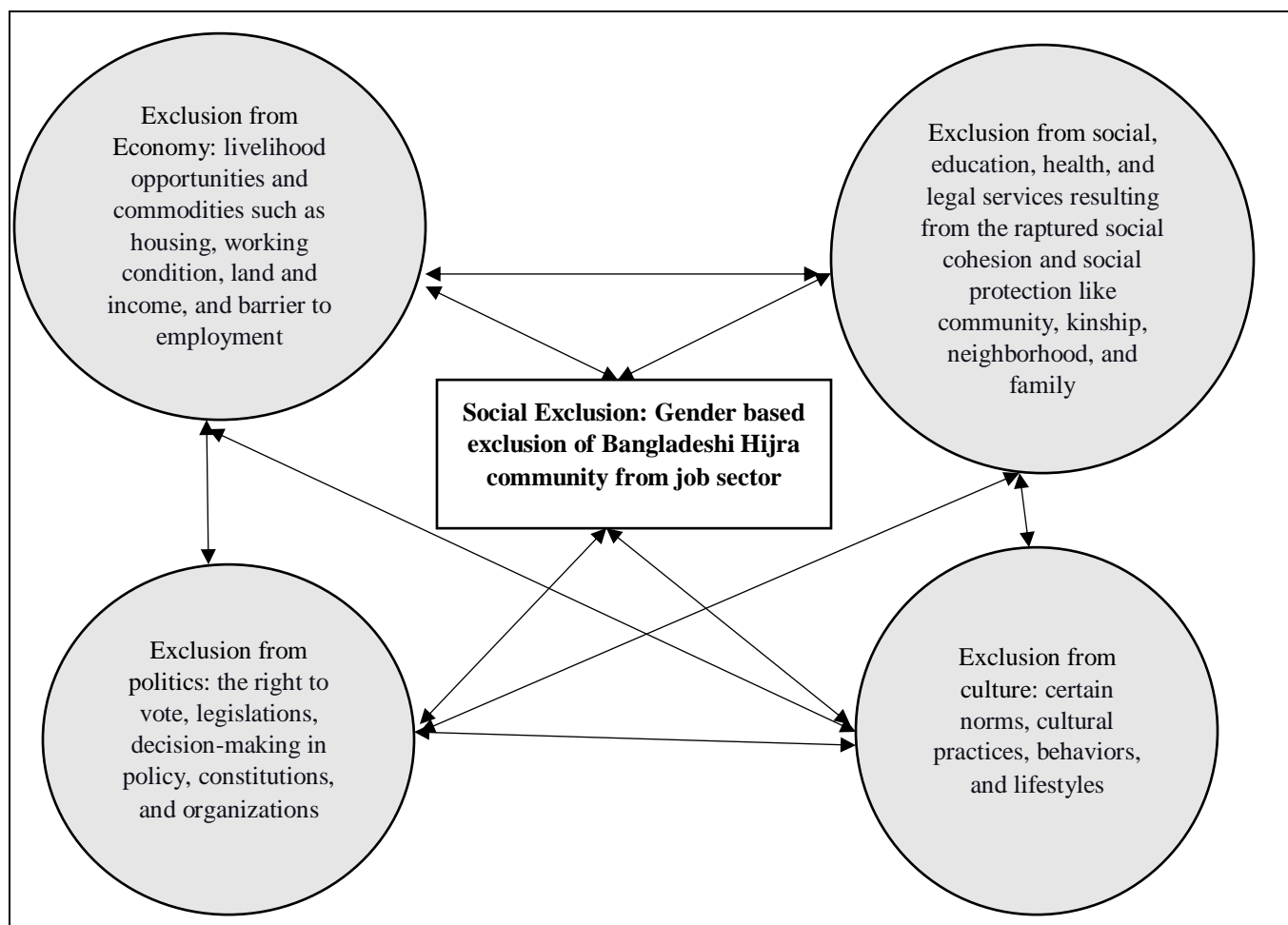
The use of social exclusion theory in various works of literature in many regions, including Bangladesh, has recently become popular for its relevance to practice and policies

(Mathieson et al., 2008). According to Estivill (2003), Social exclusion emerges from the core of the economy, politics, and society, evolving through the gradual accumulation of intersecting processes placing people, communities, territories, and groups into an inferior position in relation to central resources, prevailing values, and powers. Social exclusion, from the concept of exclusionary association based on power, can be described as a state and a process that prevent people or groups from asserting their rights and fully participating in economic, political, and social life. That is, they are excluded from social relations, denied access to services and resources, and their rights are violated (Beall & Piron, 2005). The social Exclusion Knowledge Network assumes that social exclusion operates in political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions and is driven by power dynamics at different levels, such as the world as a whole, countries, communities, households, groups, and individuals.

Exclusion within economic dynamics encompasses limited opportunities for livelihoods and access to essential commodities such as housing, employment conditions, land, and income, along with obstacles to securing employment. From a social perspective, social exclusion refers to impediments in accessing education, healthcare, and legal services due to fractured social cohesion and a lack of social protection from communities, kinship networks, neighborhoods, and families. It also entails the denial of citizens' rights, including restricted voting rights, limited involvement in policy-making, legislative processes, and organizational decisions (political aspect), as well as the marginalization of certain norms, cultural practices, behaviors, and lifestyles that marginalize specific groups and individuals (cultural aspect). This comprehensive understanding of social exclusion guides the examination of the experiences of Hijras within mainstream society, particularly focusing on the economic dimension, specifically the employment sector

The link between rights and exclusion encompasses discrimination based on gender orientation. Discrimination based on gender orientation is a direct connection between rights and exclusion. Ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, and people with disabilities, were labeled by many academics as excluded groups (Johnston, 2009). Domestic helpers, elderly individuals, refugees, migrants, women, illiterate individuals, and disadvantaged individuals are also frequently included (Khan et al., 2009). The rights of transgender community or those people who prefer to live with alternate genders and sexual orientations have been violated in various occasions are excluded due to their gender orientation. The theoretical framework and conceptual investigation of gender-based exclusion of Bangladeshi Hijra community from job sector in this study was based on SEKN model

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Human rights are inherent to each unique human being, and exist before even that person participates in society. As a result, human rights represent the nation's recognition of them, but because of their judicious independence from the legal system, they have persisted. Since human rights are unalienable, they cannot be restricted by anyone. The inherent nature of humans includes their rights. According to Maritain (2012), every human being is subjected to legal rights, which should be respected, possess rights, and is subject to rights simply by virtue of being a person. Human rights do indeed stem from human nature, whether indirectly or directly. Based on this argument, it can be argued that human being entails inheriting all of the attributes that are ingrained in human personality, including natural rights. Therefore, all people are equal

and human rights are privileges that all individuals have as a result of their characteristics that make them unique and always human (Kayess & French, 2008).

While recognizing the complex nature of social exclusion, unemployment emerges as a central factor, or closely intertwined with it. This is because gainful employment not only serves as the primary source of income but also as a key determinant of individuals' self-esteem and identity. Most social connections and feelings of belonging within the community are often contingent upon one's employment status. The Hijra community in Bangladesh illustrates various indicators of social exclusion, including high rates of unemployment, homelessness, poverty, and low financial earnings. According to Khan et al. (2009), while social exclusion is seen as leading to unemployment, prolonged joblessness can also perpetuate social exclusion.

Additionally, Khan et al. (2009) found that the Hijra community in Bangladesh occupies the lowest levels of societal inclusion, depriving them of leading dignified lives. Their human rights are restricted due to their non-recognition as a distinct gender beyond the traditional male-female binary. This marginalization hinders their integration into mainstream society, denying them access to human security, opportunities, and employment. Many Hijras employed in various sectors face verbal, physical, mental, and sexual abuse, further eroding their social worth and self-esteem. Consequently, Hijra individuals with employable skills often struggle to find jobs due to fear of exploitation, discrimination, and harassment. Nevertheless, it is crucial for Hijras to acknowledge their place within the gender spectrum of Bangladeshi society before comprehensive interventions for safer sexual practices can be effectively implemented on a broader scale.

According to Goel (2016), Hijras have long been marginalized in society, facing severe poverty resulting from high unemployment rates and low wages for those fortunate enough to

find work, alongside exclusion from mainstream normalization efforts. Subjected to intolerance and prejudice, transgender individuals in the job market reside in constant fear, often relegated to living in segregated and concealed areas of society. Their obscured status significantly restricts their ability to explore various employment avenues.

For many years, the Hijra community has faced barriers to accessing social institutions like education and primary healthcare (Khan et al., 2009), posing a significant obstacle in the job market. In Bangladesh, denying the Hijra community access to better education limits them from participating in the job market. Based on the demand theory; the human capital theory, the employment level is inversely correlated to the unemployment rate (Lavrinovicha et al., 2015). Riddell and Song (2011), indicated that there exists a positive correlation between education level and labor force transitions. Education is believed to significantly increase the re-employment rate of employed people.

Davy et al. (2016) indicated that health and unemployment significantly influence each other. Hindering the Hijra community from access to healthcare facilities increases unemployment duration. More so, issues relating to social and cultural dominants of health, such as low education and unemployment, influence whether the Hijra community, patients, and their families can access health care. In Bangladesh, inequalities are tied to gender, geography, and socioeconomic status. Despite gains in access to healthcare in the country, these inequalities are exacerbated by high out-of-pocket costs, with households bearing more than 75% of the country's rising healthcare costs (Balarajan et al., 2011). Moreover, poor physical access to high-quality health services and an imbalance in resource allocation between the Hijra community and the general population limits the employment chances of Hijras in the job sector. Hijras are

discriminated against in the health sectors and cannot secure opportunities as human resources for health.

Jebin and Fahana (2015) indicated that society in Bangladesh had shunned their relationship and interaction with the third-gender community. This has limited them to illiteracy, humiliation, and hostility. In the job market, Hijras, especially those who registered as women, are discriminated against, making it hard for them to secure employment. Women Hijras in Job sectors are exploited and sexually harassed by managers and security officers. Hijras claim that they are not recognized as a normal human in the job market, and their social deprivation and harassment have never been taken seriously in the employment sectors. Through violation of Hijras' human and sexual rights, especially those registered as women have been subjected to HIV/AIDs. Moreover, they are overlooked regarding social and legal services in terms of establishing their rights as citizens. The high rate of HIV among the Hijras has limited their access to the job market (Sifat & Shafi, 2021).

Hijras' current means of income are nontraditional and nonconforming to society. Khan et al. (2009) posit that most Hijras make a living through 'badhai' or 'hijregiri.' This includes various behavior, including receiving funding from local retailers, collecting money in exchange for blessings, begging at railroad stations and traffic crossroads, nagging travelers, sex work, and selling drugs. '*Hijragiri*' included a ritual involving dancing and singing for a newborn baby boy in metropolitan areas and collecting money from retailers in the market (Nanda, 1999). Besides, the Hijra community has realized how fearful they are and the faith they have in magical abilities (*dadhai*). Hardships in the employment sectors, the increasing unemployment rate, and the money needed to cater for daily needs have forced the Hijra community to beg in the street either as a person or as a group (Sarker & Pervin, 2020). Moreover, with a decreasing demand for

Hijras in the recreation with the newly born baby (*bacha nachao*), in society, they are forced to choose between sex employment or begging. These means of employment undermine their rights as human beings and are against their wish if they were given equal opportunities in the Job market and equal protection of rights as human beings.

According to (Shuvo, 2018). Hijras in Bangladesh are involved in a societal stigma that reduces their proficient ability to search for employment. Shuvo (2018) also found that education skills are limited in the transgender community in Bangladesh because their gender nonconformity is not accepted, reducing their chances of finding work. Employers and organizations avoid hiring Hijra individuals because they cannot find work and that hiring them will degrade the working atmosphere.

According to Shah et al. (2018), employed Hijras suffer an issue of safe homes caused by discrimination from the house owners. Most landlord associates Hijras with illegal activities like sex employment and drug sellers; therefore, they are unwilling to house them as tenants. In the organization, Hijras are not given the same housing benefits as other employees in the general public. The housing problem increases Hijras' unplanned absenteeism and lowers their work morale, resulting in an increased turnover rate. The high absenteeism rate among the Hijras results in being dismissed from their organization. Moreover, living away from the workplace and sexual harassment increase their fear of walking at night and also decrease their chances of overtime working and night shift (Abdallah et al., 2012).

4. CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the methods to be used accomplish the objectives and answer the research questions.

4.2. Research Philosophy

Graue (2015) contends that research philosophy serves as a guiding framework delineating the appropriate analysis of collected research data, thereby ensuring coherence throughout the study. This philosophical foundation dictates the epistemological and ontological stances of the research, establishing the interconnection among sources, methodology, and methods (Grix, 2004)

In this study, the ontological stance is consistent with constructionism which states that social actors constantly construct social phenomena and their explanations. According to Hofferberth and Weber (2015), this indicates that social phenomena and categories are always being revised in addition to being processed through social interaction. Social reality results from processes are used by social actors to negotiate for meaning, situations, and actions (Blaikie, 1993). Constructionism also indicates the indeterminacy of the social world's knowledge. Thus, it is also connected with social construction.

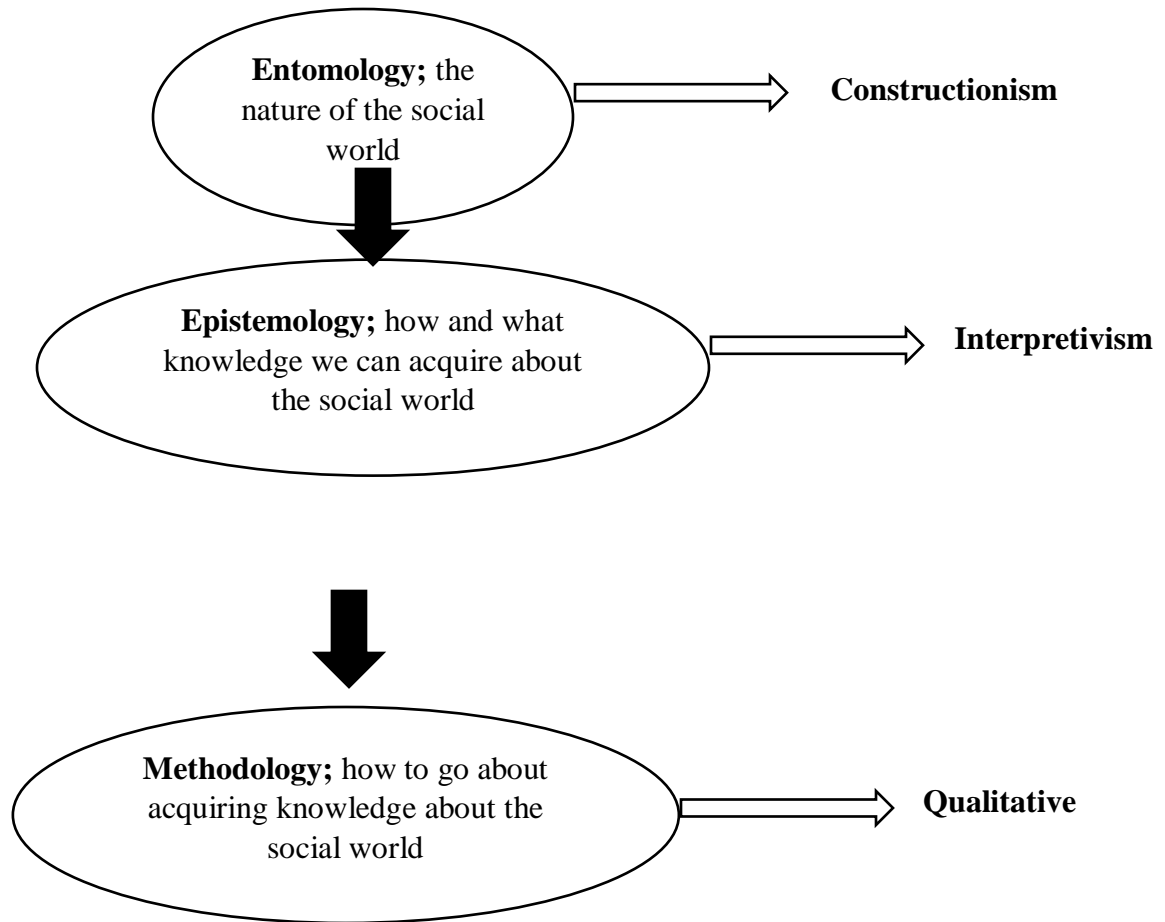
Since the research studies the gender-based exclusion of the Bangladeshi Hijra community from the job sector, the study relies on use of social constructionist rather than a positivist approach. Agarwal (1997) asserts that the mechanisms underlying the social construction of transgender inequalities, and their potential evolution, remain poorly elucidated. Kanbur (2001) advocates for social constructivist research, highlighting its advantages in

studying specific populations where members can engage actively in inductive research methodologies.

The philosophical perspective of this study follows the epistemological stance of the interpretivism paradigm that emphasizes that reality is socially constructed and that researchers should focus on understanding the meanings people assign to reality. It also emphasizes that multiple realities can be measured as different individuals perceive the same things differently. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), social science should concentrate on these realities because these are the realities that can be measured. This study aims to assess the gender-based exclusion of the Hijra community from the job sector in Bangladesh. In this respect, the study uses the interpretivism paradigm to accomplish the research purpose.

The study focuses on the gender-based exclusion from employment of the Hijra community in Bangladesh. Therefore, the study highlights various institutional and structural limitations. According to Rudman and Glick (2021), gender relations are structured based on power and emotional attachment, division of labor, and in every state relationship, where the state's organization determines gender relations. Therefore, the gender-based argument is found in the resources and labor division and in different behavior patterns, attitudes, personality traits, and attitudes. Therefore, it can be argued that the Hijra community in Bangladesh has an interconnection between themselves which define their status and try to interact with different environmental aspects to constantly adapt their status. The Hijra community in the current study is considered a marginalized community who are pushed to the extreme margin of society and excluded from mainstream society. Therefore, interpretivism and constructionism frameworks best fit this study based on ontological and epistemological positions.

Figure 1: Entire Research Process



4.3. Research Approach

According to Armat et al. (2018), the research approach highlights a specific process, which includes different aspects of gleaning data, and analyzing and interpreting it based on the study's nature. Two research approaches include deductive and inductive research approaches. This research study relies on inductive research approach.

An inductive research approach is used to develop a theory based on the gathered facts that are used to investigate a particular event. Data collection in inductive research is the foundation for the researcher to build a conceptual framework and subsequently provide

concluding theories yet to be proven. In other words, an inductive research approach allows the researcher to move from a specific to a general scale (Woiceshyn & Daellenbach, 2018). This approach is mostly used when a researcher wants to analyze the context of particular situations. The inductive approach can be put in small samples, especially in qualitative analysis, to get various viewpoints.

4.4. Research Method

The study relies on qualitative research method based on the epistemological and ontological viewpoints. According to Al-Saadi (2014), diverse research methodologies for social exclusion are based on different epistemological and ontological considerations in qualitative and quantitative research. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research provides a suitable means of classifying diverse approaches to social science since it is a beneficial umbrella for various drawbacks related to social research. The qualitative research approach is connected with an ontological concern with 'constructionism' and an epistemological consideration of 'interpretivism.' In contrast, the quantitative research approach is connected with an ontological position of 'objectivism' and an epistemological position of 'positivism' (Dieronitou, 2014).

Rees et al. (2021) posit that giving voice to the marginalized community in society, in this case, the Hijras in Bangladesh, is one of the main goals of qualitative research. Researchers use the eyes of the group they are studying to explore a certain topic. Bryman (2015) posits that qualitative research can explore various problems marginalized groups face and enhance their visibility in society. Through qualitative interviews, the researcher can access people's reflections and experiences through direct conversation. The researcher can also get detailed information and comprehend how people in the population of interest understand things (Seitz, 2016). Based on the above ideas, it can be urged that in a survey study with a positivity framework, a

quantitative research approach is frequently used and aims to identify causal relations. However, this study takes an interpretivism viewpoint. It focuses on an inductive approach that tests the relationship between research and theory. People's experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes in social contexts are used to develop a vision of social reality. Consistent with the findings by Clisby et al. (2007), who argued that qualitative research methodologies permit the collection of personal experience and perception, commonalities, and understandings of people's lives. In this regard, the researcher believes that qualitative will help understand the gender-based exclusion of the Hijra community of Bangladesh in the job sector.

4.5. Population of Target

The research centered on the Hijra population in Bangladesh, encompassing their widespread presence across the nation. It also involved conventional social workers operating within specific regions of this community. Given the research's emphasis on understanding how both social workers and the Hijra community perceive gender-based exclusion of Hijras in job sectors, the researcher deemed it valuable to include representatives from both groups in the study sample. The target groups were considered in this study to obtain respondents with various backgrounds and experiences.

In the target group, the ordinary Hijras were those involved in traditional work such as dancing for a newborn child and sex employment. In contrast, professional Hijra social workers worked in CBOs and NGOs. The social workers from mainstream society were from Public Welfare Departments or Non-Government Institutions. The researcher chose Hijra members from two groups to comprehend their social experience and changes through providing and receiving services. On the other hand, non-Hijra social workers were used to understand the mainstream society's perspectives and their social work approach to Hijra's rights. Due to the

lack of network in most cities in Bangladesh and time limitations, the researcher selected the study participant from Dhaka. Moreover, based on the time and resources available, the researcher considered Dhaka the most convenient place because the majority CBOs, NGOs, and welfare departments for this community and the majority of Hijras live and work in Dhaka.

4.6. Sampling techniques

There are two different sampling methods: probability and non-probability sampling (Miller, 2010). The study uses interview method and has chosen interviewees who are competent about the subject of the study, willing to talk, and represent the spectrum of opinions. In this regard, this study used purposive sampling/subjective sampling. This non-probability sampling technique relied on the researcher's judgment while choosing participants from the sampling frame to participate in the surveys. This implies that only individuals in the population of the target with knowledge about the topic of the study were used. The method best fits this study because most Hijra individuals are illiterate as they are excluded from mainstream society and deprived of their rights of access to social services like education.

4.7. Reaching the Target Group

At the beginning of the sampling process, the researcher used the organization's website and reached out to the assistant manager of a Dhaka-based NGO that advocates for Human rights and sexual minority groups. Regular communication was maintained with the NGO, during which the researcher described the study's aim, objectives, and target population. Besides, the researcher contacted a social worker Hijra through a friend, and they subsequently scheduled an appointment so the researcher could explain the study's goals and find out if she would be ready to participate.

It became abundantly evident during the different meetings with the NGO and the Hijra that getting in touch with the typical Hijra member requires the assistance of a guide. These guides typically belong to the sexual minority group, hold mainstream employment, and assist researchers in connecting with typical Hijras. Because Hijras live in distinct colonies with their families to feel secure from society, ordinary people typically do not enter their homes alone if they do not know anyone from that community. The Hijras claim that this is because the majority population treats them abusively and with neglect. Making them feel unsafe living in mainstream society.

The researcher was asked to pay the ordinary Hijra for their interviews to simplify the community's condition. The reason behind this request is that transgender who follows conventional lifestyles must take time away from their regular employment to attend the interviews; as a result, they want compensation for the time missed at work. The guide who assisted the researcher in getting to the Hijra community also insisted on getting paid, although they didn't simplify how much they wanted. In the meantime, an NGO the researcher had in touch with provided contacts for some social workers from mainstream society to participate in the interview. Through NGO and Hijra's network, the researcher was able to locate other participants from ordinary social workers and the Hijra community. The researcher of this study also tried to find participants from public welfare departments but finding the social work activists' consent was very hard for the interview related to this topic. During the interview with the Hijras' homes, the researcher noted that most Hijras live in poverty and depend on everyday earnings. If they miss an opportunity to earn something, they are stressed about feeding themselves that day. They have taken part in different media interviews, and nothing has been done to change their situations; they are quite reluctant to participate in any kind of interview.

4.8. Sample Size

The participants of this study were all from the Hijra community in Bangladesh. Although it was not specific on the participants' age, all were adults between 22 and 45 years. As mentioned earlier, not every Hijra individual could be included in the study; only those knowledgeable about the research study.

From the contacts given by the NGOs, the researcher sent thirteen emails, and only eight emails were received, with some immediately accepting to participate in the study while others were requesting for more information about the research. After providing further information, the researcher ended up with 5 participants who were willing to participate in the interview. Moreover, by visiting the Hijras' homes, the researcher managed to get eight interviews; six were unemployed Hijras, and two were ordinary social workers. The five social workers from mainstream society had advanced degrees and actively participated in the NGOs.

4.9. Data Collection

According to Bendassolli (2013), qualitative research involves an inductive process that observes experiences that can be immediately identified. This type of study begins by observing social interactions and conducting detailed interviews with social actors before developing an explanation of the findings. The Hijra's perceptions and experience must be analyzed in order to investigate the situation of the Hijra community and their social exclusion in the job sector in Bangladesh.

However, gender exclusion in this study was researched in connection to the participants' social, cultural, personal, economic, political, and education levels, especially Hijras. The qualitative data was collected as primary and secondary data.

4.9.1. Primary data

arious techniques such as observations, interviews, personal experiences, and survey questionnaires can be employed to gather primary data (Driscoll, 2011). In this particular study, the researcher opted for interviews as the method for primary data collection from participants. These interviews were conducted both face-to-face and via Zoom meetings, facilitating interaction between the researcher and the participants. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in both Bengali and English to ensure all participants could express themselves comfortably. Conversely, Zoom meetings, conducted in English, involved participants who were highly educated and actively engaged in mainstream society (NGOs). To document the interviews, the researcher utilized a voice recorder, transcribing the conversations verbatim. This approach enabled the researcher to gain insights into the perceptions and experiences of the Hijra community regarding gender-based exclusion from job sectors and their broader societal experiences.

4.9.2. Semi-structured interview

The semi-interview method allows the researcher to go beyond the interview guide and ask questions that may arise from the interviewee's response (Graue, 2015). Allowing free participation during the interview allows the researcher to identify the most relevant topics relevant to the interviewees.

Before the main interview, the researcher developed an interview guide and shared it with the assistant manager of a Dhaka-based NGO and the guide who assisted in locating the participants for feedback. The interview was done individually but not in a focus group or group, which helped the researcher get a clearer sense of the participant's perceptions and experiences. Since the study involved a sensitive topic, the interviewees were guaranteed their privacy and

anonymity during and after the study, and the data collected was only for research purposes. The researcher also provided the participants with the privacy need to share any private or personal issues during the interview.

4.9.3. Data recording

Data recording in this study was done using field notes, an interview schedule, and a voice recorder. Although the main item was the interview schedule, a voice recorder was used to record the interviewees who could not express themselves in English, where their voices were transcribed word by word. The researcher gathered extra data through recording, which often gets omitted in unfocused note-taking. The researcher used the field notebook to collect information about the participants' social life and demographic information. None of the participants denied using voice notes but was asked permission before recording.

4.9.4. Secondary data

Secondary data can be information collected by other people for other primary purposes but used in another study to save resources and time (Johnston, 2014). The researcher can use secondary data to get a deeper insight into the studied topic, which may lead to the primary data collection process.

The backbone of this study's methodology and the literature review was based on secondary data, which helped shed light on the understanding and building of the foundation of this study. Reading and filtering several research papers and information relevant to the purpose of the current study from google scholar, Scopus, and Primo, gave the researcher a general idea and critical information to develop this study.

Using theories in a theoretical framework assisted in explaining and comprehending the findings of previous studies on the social exclusion concept. To understand the gleaned

information in the current study, it was good to relate it with different findings to have an in-depth understanding and make valid conclusions and recommendations. A literature review related to the topic under investigation is important in any social research. Although there is extensive discourse on transgender issues in Western and European settings, previous studies have explored the contexts of South Asia and Africa to gain insight into the social phenomenon of the Hijra community and social work practices within distinct societal norms and values. However, due to the scarcity of research on the African continent and, to a lesser extent, the South Asian continent, much of the existing literature relies heavily on findings from earlier studies conducted in South Asian contexts, often discovered through internet searches

4.10. Method of Analysis, Findings, and Discussion

The researcher provided the participants of the study with some assistance codes to easily conduct the study. The researcher also read the transcribed information collected using the Bengali language during the interview twice and collected it under different subheadings such as social acceptance, work done to daily upkeeps, recognition in the job sector, and so on. The findings from the interview and the analysis were combined together to explore the research question's answers and comprehend the gender-based exclusion experienced by the Hijra community in Bangladesh.

Additionally, direct words from the respondents were translated into English and put within the quotation in the analysis part. The data collected during the interview was thoroughly reviewed using secondary data from previous studies, concepts, and theories to fully understand the social exclusion perspectives and experiences among the Hijra community in Bangladesh. A discussion of the findings was also conducted, which reflected the analysis of and the research findings.

4.11. Generalization and Validity

The researcher ensured that data collection encompassed Hijra individuals and those familiar with gender exclusion within the Hijra community, such as social workers operating within mainstream society and engaging with Hijras. The research inquiries were carefully crafted to elicit comprehensive responses from the sample participants. These inquiries were straightforward and precise, allowing participants to communicate their experiences in their preferred language, be it English or Bengali. Some statements made during the interviews seemed biased, aimed at advancing individual agendas. To counteract this, the researcher employed cross-comparison techniques, analyzing responses from both Hijra individuals and social workers.

Participants were given the freedom to express various social challenges they encountered due to exclusion and discrimination in mainstream society. However, if discussions strayed from the research focus, the researcher redirected them accordingly. Throughout the interviews, the researcher clearly outlined the required information and expected responses. Transcriptions were made for all interviews conducted in Bengali to ensure accuracy.

Existing studies examining the social context and situations faced by Hijras were utilized to support the research. Despite being conducted in Dhaka, many Hijras involved in the study still face barriers in accessing social services, a plight shared by Hijras nationwide. Consequently, the insights gleaned from the research are not only pertinent to understanding the experiences and challenges within the Dhaka Hijra community but also applicable to Hijras across Bangladesh

4.12. Ethical Consideration

These factors encompass the study's altruistic nature, respect for informants' anonymity rights, prevention of malicious intent, and proper management of collected information. They guarantee that informants are well-informed about the analysis, sorting, and handling of their contributions to prevent fraud, misuse, and unauthorized disclosure of personal details. To achieve all these, the interview was done face-to-face, and through zoom meetings, the selected were given a brief idea of the study's aim and objective. The interview sessions were done with the participant's informed agreement. Before the interview started, the interviewer provided specific bullet points such as background, nature, and purpose of the study to remind the interviewee and avoid deception. Moreover, they were assured of confidentiality and were not to use personal information that would lead to their identity. All the interviewees were asked to remain anonymous, and the names of the organizations they were working with also remained a secret.

5. CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

This section presents an examination of the data gathered from interviews conducted with Hijra individuals and social worker. The interview was conducted with 13 participants; five were social workers working in NGOs, six were Hijras, and two were ordinary social workers as depicted in Table 2. Data collection through interview and coding was based on four interesting objectives; the current employment situation of the HIJRA community; the key obstacles the Hijra community face while going through recruitment procedures or while staying on a job; the discrepancy between their current means of employment and what Hijras would really like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion or social discrimination; and how Hijras' current means of income is nontraditional and nonconforming to society and how this means of employment undermine their rights as a human being.

Table 2: Overview of Respondents

Respondent ID	Gender	Occupation
R1	Male	NGO
R2	Male	NGO
R3	Female	NGO
R4	Female	NGO
R5	Male	NGO
R6	Hijra	Social Worker
R7	Hijra	Social Worker
R8	Hijra	N/A
R9	Hijra	N/A

R10	Hijra	N/A
R11	Hijra	N/A
R12	Hijra	N/A
R13	Hijra	N/A

5.2. The Hijra's Current Employment Situation.

The findings of the study indicated that the Hijra community finds difficulties in securing employment in the Bangladesh's job sector. Hijra members in Bangladesh complained of not getting any kind of employment. Although some Hijras secure employment in some sectors, they are terminated after the employers and fellow employees know their sexual identity. More so, the majority of the Hijras fail to get jobs in the Bangladeshi due to their peculiar lifestyle and lack of education and are considered unfit for most job opportunities. Thus, they end up surviving as sex workers.

The study established that although there exists a legal arena, a well-established notion that all employees are to be dignified and paid according to their ability and work, the reality is not the same, especially for the Hijra community. Hijras in Bangladesh have no religious, constitutional, social, or legal rights, which ensure equal opportunities in social development. They believe that a peaceful gender-friendly environment can be the solution to the human dignity problem, where all individuals are equally treated regardless of their sexual identity and status. They also believe that impeccable manners and immaculate courtesy, and vocational training can promote the Hijra community's adaptive behavior that will help them secure a job in various job sectors in Bangladesh. R7 mentioned that,

"We are fired in job sectors of Bangladesh on the ground of interfering with the job environment which does not guarantee justice and equity in the society."

The study findings reported that there are some Hijras working in the beauty parlors, garment industry, sex work, and security services. The study established that a majority of Hijras completely rely on collecting money from pedestrians at bus and train stations and streets as their main source of income. It was evident from the interview that although most participants viewed the Hijra collection's tradition as a substantial issue that needed to be solved, all the respondents admitted that the Hijra community participates in it. The study was able to collect information from Hijras, who participated in collecting money from the pedestrians, despite them not living in a particular address. It was also possible that Hijras, who participated in the study and engaged in such money collection, may be reluctant to acknowledge it publicly. This is a clear manifestation of how the social exclusion theory is executed within the community.

The study supported that employed Hijras participate in low-paying jobs and hard work as they lack the knowledge required in most social works. This is due to harassment from teachers and peers in the learning institutions that leads to dropouts.

However, Hijras, who participated in the study and worked at NGO, took pride in completing their education to a higher education degree but agreed that securing a job that is sufficiently paying is a problem.

The baby collection has been a secondary source of income for the Hijra community. It is notable that many communities in Bangladesh consider Hijras' blessing to be sacred. They are called to perform during the birth of a child, and the community rarely refuses to pay them when called to perform. This is how the tradition of collecting money from families with a newborn child or the baby collection came into existence.

The finding of the study found that the Hijra community has mixed feelings about their identity and employment statuses. Although some members of the Hijra community are disgusted by the term 'Hijra', some have tried to be fine with it, for it is their identity. From the conducted interviews, the study established that the Hijras have a problem with the term 'Hijra' when used in a derogatory tone. Besides, the unacceptability of the term 'Hijra' has contributed to unemployment.

The ordinary Hijras feel left out despite various efforts by the government and civil society to address their unemployment problem through strategies like vocational skill development training to build capacity to participate in different social works and in mainstream jobs.

Religious norms and government policies have made the Hijra community feel insecure during their work. The ordinary Hijra participants argued that they are bound with unofficial commitments whenever they are employed in governmental departments. When talking about legal rights and sexual rights, the Hijra community is often overlooked, but when they talk about health support, they get responses from NGOs. Social workers responded that they have no legal support for the Hijra community. According to the respondents, if the government barn their work, they have nothing to do. This is in congruent with the advocacy theory that anticipates that the rights of every citizen have to be adhered to. R10 said that

“In this society, promoting sexual rights is quite difficult. we frequently encountered various binding agreements that made it difficult for us to cooperate with the administration. Therefore, persuading the state to support the Hijra community’s goal appears to be the most difficult task.”

Society believes that Hijras' sex work is against religion, which makes them scared. Along with the state and religious pressure, the Hijra members participating in sex work find difficulties in disclosing to their families. They are more afraid to disclose to the people as these activities are not allowed in the religion and in the family setting. They believe that disclosing these activities to their families and allowing these activities in society might influence children to go in the wrong direction.

Although most employees and employers would be comfortable working with Hijra individuals, they still have some degree of fear of harassment. Hijras are believed to harass people for money. The appearance of Hijras makes people develop a fear of being harassed. However, R2 mentioned that,

“even though most people have experienced harassment from Hijras, I would not mind working with them as my colleagues in a formal workplace if they behave well.”

The social workers who participated in this study indicated that currently, the employment situation of the Hijra community in Bangladesh job sectors is changing but not so fast. A clear manifestation that the system theory is at play and sooner than later, Hijras will be involved in the mainstream employment in big number. According to the study findings, it took quite a long period to notify the state about the existence of the Hijra community, and they believe it will also take a long time to create awareness about this community in society. Since the Hijras believe that the existing job sectors and the society at large are not in a position to deal with various problems, they need to step out further based on the country's social situation and mainstream society's reaction.

Hijras are increasingly becoming more conscious of their entitlements and capable of speaking out against discrimination. The study also established that the NGOs are not only

concentrating on providing health services to the Hijras in the Job sectors of Bangladesh, but they are now dealing with inclusion issues and human rights of Hijras according to the community's requirement. The social workers involved in the study elucidated that a positive shift is evident among the younger generations. Besides, various job sectors in Bangladesh are increasingly working with sexual minority groups like Hijras.

5.3. Obstacles faced by the Hijras during job recruitment or in employment.

5.3.1. Legal recognition

Lack of recognition through a legal policy is one of the fundamental factors that is becoming an obstacle to Hijras' rights in the job sector. According to Khan et al. (2009), lack of legal recognition has been the greatest obstacle in the employment sector. There is no legal policy regarding Hijra individuals' employment and no existing clarification stated anywhere on how Hijras will contribute to society. The study established that there is a need to have transgender being legally recognized as a third gender.

Besides, recognizing the Hijra community as a third gender would make them feel more comfortable as non-binary as was pronounced by R9 in the excerpt:

“personally, I would recommend to have the legal in place to be recognized, as this will make us feel like we are part of the employment team.”

Some respondents, especially ordinary social workers, argued that they don't care whether the state recognizes or care about them or not. However, some respondents argued that although they are never recognized, and they don't feel like part of society, it would be nice to have a legal policy even if they do not know whether it would be important for them or necessarily feel like

they need it. This justifies the social exclusion theory that states the exclusion of the Hijras from formal community activities.

Besides, Hijras believe that recognizing them as a third gender and including the third gender in job application forms and within the organizations and departments will be the beginning of getting rid of various obstacles facing Hijra individuals in the job sector.

Contrary, some individuals think that recognition has contributed to various challenges facing the Hijra community, but recognition will not significantly change anything. According to their statement, although the government of Bangladesh has formally recognized Hijra individuals as a third gender, they still face various challenges within society. However, the respondents believed that provided there are no legal provisions and policies describing the penalties meted on individuals who violate the Hijra gender, it would be almost impossible to solve problems affecting the Hijra communities in the job sector and in society in general. The participants believe that changing the mindset of society, cultural change, attitude change, and getting institutions to change will help in eradicating gender-based exclusion in the job sectors, healthcare services, education services, and other services in society.

5.3.2. Education status

Although Hijras in Bangladeshi, constitutionally, are identified as third gender, they lack access to educational and skill development facilities. This implies that the children from Hijra community are deprived the educational opportunity. The study established that despite some Hijras getting admitted to schools at early age, other students' parents rebuked their children for studying with Hijras after identifying their gender. It is unfortunate that Hijras have been deprived the right to education, which make them unable to have adequate source of income. The study established that the Hijras rarely gets an opportunity to be admitted to any education

facility. Besides, many Hijras' parents were unable to send them to school, and those who got a chance to get primary and secondary education encountered variety of hardship. R11 elaborated that:

“There are only about five individuals in our community who have managed to complete high school education, and only one Hijra completed his graduation. Many children never got an opportunity to step their foot in any classroom. Although their desire was to study and get a good job.”

Additionally, the study established that the education status among the Hijras is very low. Most Hijras are unable to acquire quality education because of people's negligence, policies, and discrimination in the learning institutions. Majority of Hijras face verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, and sometimes physical abuse from other students and teachers in the schools. The physical appearance of Hijra members and behaviors subjected them to different facets of exclusion in the learning institution, while others were ousted from the institutions after revealing their gender identity. Being social excluded from enjoying the rights that the rest of other genders enjoy is a manifestation of both social exclusion and advocacy theories. R7 articulated that:

“There should be a policy that will focus on protecting Hijra students' rights violation in both primary and tertiary learning institutions.”

According to Teichler (2015), the link between education and employment is determined by the function of education in preparing students for subsequent job tasks and also the fact that education selects the monetary resources in an education-based meritocracy and societal acknowledgments, predominantly influenced by individuals' educational achievements and competencies acquired throughout their learning journey. Therefore, the exclusion of Hijras in

educational institutions and their inability to access education rights limit their competencies to various job opportunities in the job sector. The Hijra community should be guaranteed equal access to education just like other people in the general population.

The confusion about gender identity among the Hijras limited them from being enrolled in schools, which in turn limited their potential for occupying different employment opportunities in the Bangladesh job sector. More so, an uncondusive learning environment in schools limits their development toward skilled employees. According to findings, Hijra students are unable to share anything with their classmates who have been inflated, limiting their development and nourishment. R9 elaborated that:

“I attempted multiple times, but I failed to enroll in any school in Bangladesh to erase this prevailing image in society.”

This was also echoed by R11 and R12 respectively, who said that:

“I faced discriminatory attitude from not only my fellow students but from teachers whenever I asked complain regarding to problem we faced in the playground and classrooms”

“Hijra students cannot play with their schoolmates in schools' playgrounds due to bullying that makes them have aggressive attitudes.”

These have decreased their morale for learning and schooling, leaving them behind in various employment opportunities and development activities in society.

However, there exists various projects within the NGO world that are aimed at working for the Hijra community and other marginalized communities as shown by the excerpt from R4 and R5 below.

“We have a project that focus on providing basic non-formal education; about how to write and read for the Hijra people. However, we don't have any project related to education.”

“Only seven district initiatives were underway by the government prior to the third gender recognition. Following their designation as the third gender, the government launched 14 additional district pilot programs in 2014–15. We are currently attempting to launch district-wide pilot programs for the hijra population. The Bangladeshi government offers stipends to Hijra individuals who desire to pursue higher education. For primary students, they provide them 700 Taka each month; for intermediate students, they give them 800 Taka; for higher secondary students, they give them 1000 Taka; and for tertiary students, they give them 1,200 Taka.”

There is also a need to initiate collaborative talks with various governmental agencies in order to have the budget funding increased for the marginalized communities. Respondent 1 said that:

“We have been negotiating with the Bangladeshi government to allocate more budget for the minority community, particularly the Hijra people. more than 1247 registered students from Hijra community have already received stipends from the government this year.”

5.3.3. Exploitation in Bangladesh Workplaces

The Hijras in Bangladesh are considered an underprivileged group, just like the indigenous population, immigrants, women, children, the illiterate, the disabled, the aged, and the lowest levels of national society in other countries. They sink into a state of apathy and legislation although they may possess the knowledge and other means to combat exploitation in workplaces. Based on the study, the exploitation of the Hijra community in the workplaces in Bangladesh thrives on two tools: segregation and discrimination, which is a justification of the social exclusion and system theories. The system has established it as such and is often viewed as a norm.

The study found that it was difficult for the Hijra community to move and search for new job recruitment, especially during the COVID-19 time. More so, sourcing safe homes for Hijra employees was another issue due to discrimination from the landlords. In addition, the new gender-diverse workforce in different job sectors in Bangladesh faces various discrimination and harassment cases.

Sexual harassment is another key issue facing Hijra employees in the job sectors in Bangladesh. Hijra individuals registered as females face sexual violence despite the availability of various policies against sexual harassment. The study also found that Hijras' complex gender role and having no legal rights have significantly affected their social life and any social activities. Their non-recognized gender identity limited them from securing any position in the job sector in Bangladesh. R8 asserted that:

“In my previous workplace, I experienced mistreatment due to my gender, and I continue to face harassment from local boys and security personnel in my current job as a sex worker.”

This was also echoed by R9 who said that:

“When we ask for justice in workplaces, especially when we are sexually harassed, people wonder what kind of justice we can have as a Hijra.”

The respondents think that the lack of official gender identity policies in the Bangladesh job sector is the main contributing factor to their harassment and discrimination. They believe that legal policies would protect their rights within the legal framework and acquire inclusion and other basic rights in the job sector and society at large.

The study established that despite the Hijras receiving help from NGOs and CBOs, especially in healthcare, the housing problem is still a major problem. Discrimination from landlords is a rampant issue in Bangladesh. Most of them believe that Hijras will not pay rent

and they will use their houses for sex work. The NGOs/CBOs have helped the Hijras to get a house, but Hijras are afraid that they might not receive these services when they shift to another area or better organization, which is far from their places. In addition, most of them feel they are deprived of everything.

5.4. Discrepancy Between Hijras' Current Means of Employment and What Hijras Would Like to Take as Profession If Given a Level Playing Field Devoid of Gender-Based Exclusion or Social Discrimination.

The study established that most Hijra individuals cannot secure employment because of lack of access to workplaces. Individuals in mainstream society have a strong stigma about the third gender group, and the third gender group has limited ability to access better education that would prepare them for better job positions. Many Hijras participate in “badhai” and “hijragiri” to earn a living. "Badhai" and "hijragiri" include collecting payment through newborn child blessings, manhandling the passengers in the streets and transport stations, collecting donations from local shopkeepers, etc. According to Aziz and Azhar (2019), "badhai" involves public performances, such as singing, clapping, and dancing, that prompt people to donate money to the Hijras.

The Hijra community also participates in daily wage labor, such as selling items in the market and cleaning homes. The study found that a significant amount of money earned by the Hijra community is given to their leaders in addition to food expenses fees. R13 said that:

“In a productive day, one can earn more than five hundred Taka, but half of that total earned is given to the guru.” Guru is the leader of an established and specified Hijra group.

The guru provides food and housing to the Hijra group besides connecting them to various economic activities including sex-related works. Hijras follow strict rules in their jobs to show respect to their guru. R10 said that:

"every Hijra must have a guru.... Even if one needs to live and do sex work alone without interacting with other Hijras, they won't allow it."

At times, Hijras are verbally and physically mistreated by the gurus. But if a level playing field that is devoid of any gender-based exclusion or social discrimination is presented, then it would yield them an opportunity to escape the abusive environment. R9 uttered that:

"My leader will severely beat me up if I quit. She will shave off my hair and burn me with a hot iron spatula if I completely leave her to another task. She has been threatening me, but if I land to a job with the government, she will be powerless to intervene."

The study also verified that numerous Hijras earn a livelihood through begging, engaging in sex work, offering blessings at birth and wedding ceremonies in exchange for donations, and receiving payments from shop owners. These activities reflect their social marginalization and hardship in getting something to put on the table.

The study found that despite verbal, physical and sexual harassment from the employers, Hijras never receive any justice. Most of them are kicked out of their work because their employers want to keep their workplaces free from sexual pollution. R6 echoed that:

"When I was working in the garment factory, I couldn't even go to the toilet. I was scared that men will come and rape me as they always tried to have sex with me. The threats were even higher during the night shift. My supervisor once compelled me to have sex with him and I had no choice but to do it. Later it became public and that how I lost my job."

Through oppression and exclusion from society, Hijras think society does not take them as human beings as was echoed by R7 and R8 respectively

“... so why should I care it is a norm of behaviors or about what other people think or see me?”

“I live how I want not what others want.”

Their behavior have created tension between them and mainstream society, which views them as uncivil, disreputable, or indecent, perpetuating stereotypes about them.

Most Hijras participate in "hijragiri" activities because they are denied equal opportunities in the labour market. The Hijra participants indicated the existence of a huge disparity in what they would like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of gender-based exclusion or social discrimination. They asserted that the government in Bangladesh doesn't provide them with any employment prospects, which forces them to participate in activities that are non-traditional and non-conforming to society to earn income and sustain their family needs. Therefore, most people in society have limited interaction with them, and this mostly happens within Hijras' contest of bestowing blessings or soliciting money.

Because Hijras routinely endure prejudice and isolation from mainstream society due to their traditional techniques of surviving to go against accepted social norms, they are further marginalized because of the perception that their actions are "politically unintelligible, illegitimate, or uncivil."

Hijras' current means of employment subject them to severe discrimination and harassment. They are also unable to carry out basic administrative tasks such as opening a bank account, which is different from what they would like if given a level playing field devoid of gender-based exclusion or social discrimination. The participant argued that if Hijras were

legally recognized and accepted in society, they would be free from intense harassment, verbal and physical, from their employers and other people.

Hijras are not given similar education rights to others, leading to a non-conforming lifestyle that is unacceptable for the working environment. R6 uttered that:

“we do not have access to the any job of our dream because of our feminine gesture. We are always accused of destroying the job environment. Although some Hijras got employed, they are eventually kicked out when employers learn of their feminine attitudes.”

The study found that if Hijras are given similar education opportunities as other members of the society and get acceptance for their gender non-conformity, they would be able to get the job of their dreams. According to the Hijra participants, employers do not recruit them because they interfere with the job environment. They end up being field workers or social workers. This study establishes that very few Hijra members work in professional jobs like in government and NGOs.

Very few Hijras are living in their community, and few people among this group are employed in shops and NGOs. Different non-governmental organizations are working for marginalized communities, such as the Hijra community, and some of them are providing employment opportunities. However, the salaries remitted to these individuals do not increase and they remain stagnant within a particular position for long.

The Hijras have the desire to be involved in any professional occupation, but they are rejected in the labour market. Their involvement in the "hijragiri" is as a result of social exclusion. Traditional Hijra occupations have different constraints. For example, practicing “badhai” eventually became difficult in different parts of Bangladesh, both rural and urban areas, as people refuse to pay after the performance. Hijras were influenced to make rude remarks

followed by traditional clap (tin tali) and removing their clothes to show their genital parts publicly. These behaviour made society treat them as social outcasts and identify them as unusual.

The modernization and urbanization trend have made it difficult for the Hijras to enter town and market due to the securities manning these places. More so, Hijras have indicated difficulties in collecting money from people and shopkeepers in the current economic recession period as they did earlier. This is a contributing factor to an increase in the number of sex workers, which is totally different from what they would really like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion.

However, even though selling sex has been considered an economically profitable activity in the current economic crisis, Hijra encounter problems in society, particularly because they are perceived as "sexual outcasts." Therefore, sexual activities make them more stigmatized. Besides being sexually exposed in public, they become further marginalized by their community and face sexual harassment through forceful unprotected sexual activities. It was revealed that sex workers were exploited by clients, beaten by hooligans and mugged, but they never received justice or support from security officers. The police and other security officers also sexually harass them, and therefore they hardly report the cases. These were echoed by R8:

"In the sex trade, not even Hijra are safe. We are compelled to engage in free, unprotected intercourse with customers, prominent locals, and law enforcement. I now believe that I should stop sex selling activities, but the main questions are where should in work, how can I get money, and how can I survive? I'm really sorry; even though it would be preferable for us Hijra to pass away, our bodies would cause problems for my family once we passed away. How regrettable!"

The respondents working in NGOs/CBOs have been involved in HIV/AIDS intervention for marginalized communities, including Hijra and homosexuals. They have mentioned unpleasant incidences where people in these communities are abused by security officers for bringing dildos, lubricants, and condoms during outreach services. According to them, some people from these communities experienced repulsive behaviour and were roughly treated by their management, especially when visiting offices of partner organizations.

5.5. Hijras' Current Means of Income is Non-traditional and Non-conforming to Society, and How This Means of Employment Undermine Their Rights as Human Beings.

The Hijra community faces different obstacles and challenges in the job sectors in Bangladesh. However, they are eager to integrate with other members of the population in mainstream society and desire equality in all job sectors. R6 said:

“Although sex work is economically profitable, it is against the religious and social norms in Bangladesh. We are subjected to more stigma and vulnerable situations.”

Hijras participate in sex work and money collection from pedestrians due to discrimination and exploitation in job sectors, inability to secure a decent job in the Bangladeshi sectors, and termination from their jobs due to their sexual identity. The Hijra community is vulnerable to HIV/AIDS through their sex sale and prostitution, which subjects them to more stigma. This was echoed by R9:

“the activities are so risky, sometimes our customers force us not to use protections. Most of us have contracted HIV/AIDS, UTIs, and other STIs. It is not ones I have had STIs.”

The perception of the people about Hijras' hostile and unusual behavior toward society is the main contributor to discriminatory behavior from every job sector and their economic

poverty. Most people believe that Hijras are hostile, especially when demanding for money which makes them not to be employed in organizations. However, Hijras think regular employment can ensure a respected life in society and relieve economic hardship.

Hijras in Bangladesh are willing to join ordinary jobs that guarantee them a basic income to cater for their basic needs and security. The participants of this study believed that limiting them from participating in the job sectors not only limits their economic flexibility but also prevents them from acquiring new experience, knowledge, and space by which Hijras could find the path to strengthen their capacity to achieve the gender equality, integrate with the mainstream society, and acquire other rights.

Hijras' current means of income are nontraditional and nonconforming to society. Because people are recognized and honored by their job, society's perception of Hijras' means of income subjects them to major obstacles in their every step. According to the conversation with the respondents, this perception subjects Hijras to discrimination and segregation.

To be provided a respectable and valuable life, people are concerned about their civil, social, and economic rights. However, different gender approaches against the ordinary norms subject the Hijra community to an inaccessible situation in all the social services. The participants in this study indicated that the Hijra community is still discriminated against as they do not consent to live in the binary norm even though they can access social rights within the binary gender system. Hijras have to be identified as female or male, or they are not granted their fundamental rights and cannot access any social resources. All respondents assert that people recognized separate gender beyond the binary dichotomy, like Hijras, as the reason for their deprivation in job sectors and other social rights like education rights and health rights. Based on the nontraditional and nonconforming activities associated with the Hijra community, social

institutions do not recognize them, limiting their access to all the social services and consistently discriminating against their efforts to improve their life.

They believe that a positive perception of society about Hijras and recognizing them as a separate gender identity could bring the achievement of social acceptance and provide them with the ability to access social systems. The findings of the study indicate that gender diversity in the Bangladeshi context is not rare, especially among the Hijras but relating them with nontraditional activities to earn money deprives them of social acceptance. Besides, formal employment in mainstream society may enhance the social inclusion of the Hijra community, but this has been an issue based on the fact that Hijras are not educated and find difficulties in getting a job in mainstream society. Their economic activities cannot allow them to enter mainstream society's jobs, and this leads to the loss of their self-esteem. They are also unable to disclose these activities to their family members and friends, who can provide them with moral support to gain self-confidence to participate in the social resources for further quality of life development.

The respondents emphasized the legal recognition of the Hijra community and protection of their social rights and approval of the third gender in which they can seek their gender identity and access and protection of rights to all social services. R7 echoed these sentiments:

"Our community requires official acknowledgment, both in principle and in action. This is essential because we encounter significant challenges in obtaining recognition for our distinct gender identities and securing our rights against exploitation and discrimination. Regardless of our stance on societal norms, we endure harassment from the prevailing social structures."

Although the Hijra community is very strong in protecting themselves, their means of employment put them in vulnerable situations where they cannot even claim to have fairness in the Bangladeshi job sectors. The study realized that the Hijra community has high regard for

their health care services, but there is a questionable approach used to recognize their health rights and the rights of other minority groups. Hijras' economic activities expose them to HIV/AIDs infection and other health-related problems.

Despite their awareness about their deprivation from health services, they continue exposing themselves to activities that have direct health impacts. The participants recommended that healthcare professionals familiarize themselves with the culture and sexual identity of the Hijra community and take steps to safeguard their rights to health care. Most Hijras find it difficult and shameful to explain their health issues to the doctors as mainstream society is against their methods of earning income. Before being considered patients, doctors criticize them for their untraditional professions and strange body, and only the social workers from NGOs show accountability for the Hijra community's health and sexual problems. All respondents supported that the lack of female organs left no choice for sex workers to use anal sex for their money exchange and sexual satisfaction.

The study established that social circumstances deprive the Hijra community of sufficient economic support, information accessibility, and another social system, which forces them to seek space in sexual life to earn a living and for other securities. In this context, most Hijras are not concerned about safer sex and other health risks which influence the risk of UTIs.

The study also found that various health services provided to the Hijra community are temporarily based on the fact that they participate in untraditional economic activities to earn a living. The support provided by the social workers from NGOs is not according to the needs of this community, which indicates that they are still overlooked to be recognized based on their rights as humans. The support provided aim not to enhance the quality of life but urge them to be careful about the working approach that undermines their rights as human being.

Society often accuses the Hijra community, especially when they show aggressive behaviors. Society also generalizes them with this behavior, limiting them from accessing job opportunities and other social rights. R2 uttered that:

“Hijras must adjust their behavior to align with mainstream society's cultural norms, promoting privacy in intimate settings. Additionally, they should enhance their understanding of the social context affecting their relationships within cultural norms to protect themselves effectively.”

Since working in mainstream society is one of the primary steps for the Hijra community to attaining societal approval, respect, and access and protect their rights as human beings, the Hijra community needs to be trained instead of providing them a direct job. The respondents argued that Bangladesh has a high rate of unemployment and vocational training are provided according to the need of the community. The vocational training provided is also based on organizational funding, which means that providing Hijras vocational training makes them qualified for various jobs in various job sectors in Bangladesh.

6. CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Discussion

6.1.1. Discussion on the current employment situation of the HIJRA community

The findings of this study align with the research findings of Beall and Piron (2005). They stated that people in the mainstream society have consistently refused to develop social interaction with the Hijras thus preventing them from access to employment, resources, social institution, and other services. Powerless Hijras are unable to participate in economic, political, social, and cultural activities nor associated with the systems of mainstream societies and institutions. They are also abused and dominated by non-Hijras in society, making them unable to establish citizenship rights and exercise power in their homes and society. The inability to access social, educational, health, legal, and cultural services have limited the Hijra community from different opportunities in society.

The study indicated that the Hijra community is eager to participate in mainstream jobs in society. Hijras believed that their participation in low-income jobs is as a result of social exclusion. Supporting this finding, Khan et al. (2009) asserts that involving Hijras in mainstream society and jobs would enable them to earn enough money and earn respect in the working places. Although some Hijras indicated that they earn a livelihood through "Badhai" and "hijragiri," including collecting payment through newborn child blessings, manhandling the passengers in the streets and transport stations, collecting donations from local shopkeepers, participating in commercial sex which was considered as more economically profitable, most of these activities are strongly against religion and social norms, subjecting Hijras to more stigma and making them vulnerable to various situations (Chapkrapani, 2010).

Hijras believe that the provision of similar job opportunities as other citizens can would make them have a respected life in the society and provide them with relief from economic hardship (Hahm, 2010). According to Jebin and Farhana (2015), instead of the society perceiving the Hijras' experience in life in terms of their desire for inclusion into mainstream society through involvement in economic practices, they ridicule them. Hijra complained about not getting any kind of employment for their survival. Although some Hijras secure employment in some sectors, they are terminated after the employers know their sexual identity. More so, the majority of Hijra members fail to get jobs in the Bangladeshi job sectors due to their peculiar lifestyle and lack of education and are considered unfit for most job opportunities. Hijras believe that their participation in the labor market within mainstream society will assist them in gaining awareness of their social rights and self-confidence. Similarly, Hahm (2010) supports this finding by mentioning that Hijra is willing to join mainstream society through ordinary jobs to find cash for maintaining their livelihood and other securities. The finding of this study has revealed that involving Hijras in mainstream society's job ensures them economic flexibility and enables them to acquire the experience, knowledge, and space by which they could find means to strengthen their quality and capacity to further achievement to the gender and other human rights and interact with other non-Hijra individuals in the mainstream society.

The results of the research also suggested that the Hijra community has no religious, constitutional, social, or legal rights which ensure equal opportunities in social development. According to Al-Mamun et al. (2022), a peaceful gender-friendly environment can be the solution to the human dignity problem, where all individuals are equally treated regardless of their sexual identity and status. Hijras are also fired from their jobs as the employees believe that they are interfering with the job environment. Humane treatment of transgender people

negatively affects their health, upbringing, education, and cognitive development, which directly contributes to their unemployment (Johnson & Rogers, 2020). Societal discrimination against transgender builds fear and lowers their confidence and esteem, making them consider their employees than being employed elsewhere.

The study also recorded that there are few Hijras working in the beauty parlors, garment industry, sex work, and security services but a large number of them completely relied on "Badhai" and "hijragiri." The study also recorded that people in the society viewed the Hijra collection's tradition as a substantial issue that needed to be solved. Khan et al. (2009) stated that vocational training can promote the Hijra community's adaptive behavior that will help them secure a job in various job sectors in Bangladesh. Their inability to access better education and different challenges, such as harassment from teachers and fellow students that forced them to drop out of school, have led them to low-paying jobs and hard work as they lack the knowledge required in most social works. However, Hijras who completed their education to tertiary level got an opportunity to work at NGO, though Hijras securing a job that is sufficiently paying is a problem. Ahmand et al. (2016) assert that limited job vacancies forced Hijra to participate in Hijra Collection, indicating that education was only necessary for formal social employment but did not determine their employment at all in employment sectors. Similarly, Khan (2017) posits that employment decision is greatly determined by personal choices and attributes. The intention of the Hijras to earn a living matters a lot as some of them prefer sex work, begging, and borrowing as a way to earn money without having formal work.

The findings of the study indicated current employment condition of the Hijra community is faced with various challenges, especially in achieving gender identity rights and legal support regarding their gender. Religious norms and government policies have made the Hijra

community feel insecure during their work. Besides, the study revealed that ordinary Hijras are bound with unofficial commitments whenever they are employed in governmental departments. They are humiliated by society as they are associated with activities like sex work, which is against religion. The study also found that Hijras, especially sex workers, are more afraid to disclose to the people as these activities are not allowed in the religion and in the family setting.

The finding of the study supported Aziz and Azhar (2019) by indicating that Hijra workers work in an uncondusive working environment. Workers and employers have some degree of fear of harassment from Hijras, especially when asking for money.

However, Aziz and Azhar (2020), similar to this study, indicated that the employment situation of the Hijra community is changing. According to the findings of the study, it took quite a long period to notify the state about the existence of the Hijra community, and they believe it will also take a long to create awareness about this community in society. Therefore, Hijras need to step out further based on the country's social situation and mainstream society's reaction.

The study found that the Hijra community also earns their living through the baby collection as a secondary source of income. Humaira et al. (2018) indicated that most communities in Bangladesh consider Hijras' blessings to be sacred and are called to perform during the birth of a child, and the community rarely refuses to pay them when called to perform. This is how the tradition of collecting money from families with a newborn child or the baby collection came into existence.

The study also found that the Hijra community feels that if the government creates more opportunities targeting the Hijra community and other marginalized communities. They will be able to avoid having mixed feelings about their identity and employment statuses in society. Some Hijras are disgusted by the term 'Hijra,' while some have tried to be fine with it, for it is

their identity. The unacceptability of the term 'Hijra' has contributed to unemployment (Roy et al., 2020). Besides, employers use this term to describe the Hijra employees who feel disrespected, increasing turnover intentions. The research findings suggest that despite the efforts of both governmental institutions and civil society to address their unemployment problem through strategies such as vocational skill development training to build capacity for participation in various social works and mainstream jobs, this is only achievable in theory and not in practice. More similarly, Stengvist (2015) indicated that Hijras are still discriminated against and excluded in most activities in society and deprived of their inheritance rights despite the state recognizing them as the third gender in Bangladesh.

6.1.1. Discussion on The Key Obstacles Hijra Community Faces While Going Through Recruitment Procedures or While Staying on a Job

According to the finding of the study, official recognition of other genders beyond male and female identity influence Hijras' acceptance to participate in economic activities. The study indicated that although they are formally acknowledged as a third gender according to constitutional provisions, society has refused to accept them, which poses a significant obstacle in every aspect of their lives. The participants of this study indicated that they are always deprived and discriminated against in different social settings such as the labor market, bank system, transport system, and other systems. Although citizens in Bangladesh are concerned about civil, economic, and social rights to be respected and valued, however, different gender approaches against the ordinary male and female norms have resulted in an inability of the Hijra community to access social services. The findings of the study indicated that although some Hijras can access these social services, most of them are unable or are discriminated against as they refuse to agree to live in the binary norm.

In line with the results of this study, Khan et al. (2009) posit that lack of legal recognition has been the greatest obstacle in the employment sector. There is no legal policy regarding Hijra individuals' employment and no existing clarification stated anywhere on how Hijras will contribute to society. According to the respondent of this study, legal recognition makes people more comfortable in different facets of life, including the employment sector.

Hijra fails to access various social resources and services, and their fundamental rights are not granted as they are not identified as either male or female. This study found that some participants, especially ordinary social workers, do not care whether the state recognizes them or cares about them or not. But some indicated that although they are never recognized, and they don't feel like part of society, it would be nice to have a legal policy even if they do not know whether it would be important for them or necessarily feel like they need it. Similar consequences were recorded by Khan et al. (2009) that the non-recognition of Hijras as a separate gender beyond the male and female norm is the main reason for them to experience deprivation in the employment sector, education, and other social resources. More so, Connell (2002) indicated that by neglecting the reality that gender is socially created, ordered, diverse, and fluid in nature, these phenomena show that societal systems have imposed male and female norms on any group, including the hijra community. As a result, the answers to this study's survey expressly encourage gender equality, which could position their presence within social structures. When social institutions only accept male and female identities, it frequently restricts the informants' access to all social services and results in persistent discrimination when they attempt to improve their quality of life, keeping them in a marginalized position. More so, the study revealed that official acknowledgment of different gender identities beyond binary gender could assure the Hijra community of access to all social systems and bring social acceptance

achievement. In other words, Hijras believe that recognizing them as a third gender and including the third gender in job application forms and within the organizations and departments will be the beginning of getting rid of various obstacles facing Hijra individuals in the job sector.

Aziz and Azhar (2020) indicated that recognition has contributed to various challenges facing the Hijra community, but recognition will not significantly change anything. Supporting these findings, the participants in the current study indicated that the government of Bangladesh has already recognized Hijra as a third gender, but they are still facing various challenges in society. Claiming that recognition is possible in writing but not in practice. And believe that recognition by the state will not affect everything else in society, and they are likely to continue being excluded not only in the job sector but from mainstream society in general.

The study also indicated that education status is a major obstacle in the Hijras' recruitment in the employment sector. According to the findings of the study, Hijras do not have educational and skill development facilities and are deprived of this opportunity in mainstream society. The study indicated that although some Hijras were admitted to schools at an early age, other students' parents rebuked their children for studying with Hijras after identifying their gender, which led to them to dropped out of school. Supporting this finding, Khan et al. (2009) indicated that depriving the Hijra community of an education right makes them unable to have an adequate source of income and parents are unable to send them to school, and those who got a chance to get primary and secondary education encountered a variety of hardship.

According to Singh and Kumar (2020), low education status among the Hijra community is a common issue as they are unable to acquire quality education because of people's negligence, policies, and discrimination in institutions. The majority of Hijras faced verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, and sometimes physical abuse from other students and teachers in the schools.

consistently, the findings of this study indicated that the physical appearance of Hijra members and behaviors subjected them to different facets of exclusion in the learning institution, while others were ousted from the institutions after revealing their gender identity. This, in turn, limited their potential for occupying different employment opportunities in the Bangladesh job sector. Participants in this study indicated that an uncondusive learning environment in schools limits their development toward skilled employees. Hijra students are unable to share anything with their classmates who have been inflated; they face scolding/bullying and discriminatory attitudes that decrease their morale for education right, leaving them behind in various employment opportunities and development activities in society (Aziz & Azhar, 2019).

The study also revealed that exploitation in Bangladeshi workplaces is also a major obstacle facing the Hijra community in the employment sector. The study indicated that exploitation of the Hijra community in the workplaces in Bangladesh thrives on two tools; segregation and discrimination. It was difficult for the Hijra community to move and search for new job recruitment, especially during the COVID-19 time. More so, sourcing safe homes for Hijra employees was another issue due to discrimination from the landlords. Consistent with the findings by Al-Mamun et al. (2022), the current study revealed that sexual harassment was among the key issues facing Hijra employees in the job sectors in Bangladesh. Hijra individuals registered as females face sexual violence despite various policies against sexual harassment.

6.1.2. Discussion on the discrepancy between Hijras' current means of employment and what they would like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of gender-based exclusion or social discrimination.

The study revealed that different obstacles related to the gender-based exclusion of the Hijra community in mainstream society had led them to activities that are not only non-

traditional and non-conforming to society but also activities that they would not like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of gender-based exclusion or social discrimination. Similar to Khan et al. (2009), the study found that the Hijra community is unable to secure employment due to a lack of access to workplaces, discrimination, and low education level. As a result, they end up participating in "badhai" and "hijragiri" to earn a living. That is, collecting payment through newborn child blessings, panhandling the passengers in the streets and transport stations, collecting donations from local shopkeepers, sex work, etc.

The study also found that the Hijra community also participates in daily wage labor, such as selling items in the market and cleaning homes, but half of the earnings are given to their leaders in addition to food expenses fees. Supporting the findings from the study by Aziz and Azhar (2019), the study also found that Hijras follow strict rules in their jobs to show respect to their guru, who provided them with food and housing and connected them with economic activities such as sex work. In line with Al-Mamun et al.'s (2022) discoveries, the research also validated that numerous Hijras support themselves through activities such as begging, engaging in sex work, offering blessings during births and weddings for donations, and receiving payments from shopkeepers. These activities reflect their social marginalization and socio-economic suffering due to social exclusion and discrimination, arguing that if given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion or social discrimination, it would present them with opportunities to escape an abusive environment.

Despite verbal, physical, and sexual harassment from employers, the Hijra community never receive any justice. Through oppression and exclusion from society, Hijras think society does not take them as human beings. People in mainstream society view their behavior as uncivil, disreputable, or indecent, perpetuating stereotypes about them. Besides, they claimed

that the government in Bangladesh does not give them any job opportunities, which forces them to participate in activities that are non-traditional and non-conforming to society to earn income and sustain their family needs, which is against what they would like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of gender-based exclusion or social discrimination. According to Humaira et al. (2018), it is the expectation of every human to live a respected life free from exclusion and disclamation in all facets of society. Contrary to these statements and against their wish, Hijras' current means of employment subject them to severe discrimination and harassment, and they believe that if they are legally recognized and accepted in society, they would be free from intense harassment, verbal and physical, from their employers and other people.

Although non-governmental organizations are working for marginalized communities, such as the Hijra community, and some of them are providing employment opportunities, the study found that their salaries are not fixed, and they receive the same salary, no promotions, and extra facilities. It is their desire to be involved in any professional occupation, especially this time when practicing "badhai" have become difficult in different parts of Bangladesh, both rural and urban areas, as people refused to pay after the performance. According to Al-Mamun et al. (2020), the modernization and urbanization trend have made it difficult for the Hijras to enter towns and markets due to the securities manning these places. Besides, collecting money from people and shopkeepers in the current period of an economic recession is difficult, thus jetting into sex selling, which is different from what they would really like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion. The study found that sexual activities make them more stigmatized as they become further marginalized by their community, face sexual harassment through forceful unprotected sexual activities, exploitation by clients,

being beaten by hooligans and mugged, and never receiving justice or support from security officers.

6.1.3. Discussion on Hijras' current means of income as a non-traditional and non-conforming to society and how this means of employment undermine their rights as human beings.

The study revealed the current mean of income earning among the Hijra community is non-traditional and non-conforming to society. However, their Hijragiri activities are a result of discrimination and exploitation in job sectors, inability to secure a decent job in the Bangladeshi job sectors, and termination from their jobs due to their sexual identity. According to Ahmed et al. (2014), the unusually hostile behavior of the Hijra community toward society contributed to the deprivation and discriminatory behavior from every job sector and their economic poverty. Employers are relaxant to employ them, and employees fear working with them because of their hostile nature, especially when demanding their money.

The Hijra community is willing to join ordinary jobs that guarantee them a basic income to cater to their basic needs and security. For example, the participants of this study believed that limiting them from participating in the Job sectors not only limits their economic flexibility but also prevents them from acquiring new experience, knowledge, and space by which they could discover ways to enhance their ability to attain gender equality, integrate with the mainstream society, and acquire other rights. The participants also mentioned that their vulnerability to non-conforming activities in society is affected by the absence of knowledge on gender identity away from the binary gender system and the lack of legal support against deprivation and discrimination. Therefore, the findings of this study drew the correlation between gender identity and discrimination and segregation, which subjects them to major obstacles in their every step.

Moreover, the findings suggest a relationship between gender identity and social rights that approve the Hijra community; a third gender can seek their rights as human beings and get access to all social resources. Hijra communities have no legal recognition of their rights as normal humans and are in trouble of seeking separate gender identities. Instead, they are psychologically subjected to physical harassment by the broader societal structure, regardless of its alignment with traditional norms. Ahmed et al. (2009) support this finding by indicating that the Hijra community is still discriminated against as they refuse to agree to live in the binary norm even though they can access social rights within the binary gender system. This indicates how strong they are in protecting themselves, although they cannot claim to have fairness in the employment sector due to inadequate legal support. The findings indicated that Hijras are not granted their fundamental rights and cannot access any social resources as they are not recognized as separate gender beyond the binary dichotomy. More so, social institutions do not recognize the Hijra community and limit their access to all the social services and constantly discriminate against their efforts to improve their life due to the non-traditional and non-conforming activities associated with them. Therefore, they believe that recognizing them as a separate gender identity could bring the achievement of social acceptance and provide them with the ability to access social systems such as education that will allow them to participate in formal employment in mainstream society.

The study indicated a correlation between Hijra's economic activities and legal rights. Hijras' economic activities cannot allow them to enter mainstream society's jobs, and this leads to the loss of their self-confidence. As a result, they are unable to disclose these activities to their family members and friends, who can provide them with moral support to develop confidence in oneself to participate in the social resources. Despite Hijras' awareness of their deprivation from

health services, they continue exposing themselves to activities that have direct health impacts. For instance, the lack of female organs left no choice for sex workers to use anal sex for their money exchange and sexual satisfaction. Most of them find it difficult and shameful to explain their health issues to doctors. Similar to the findings by Aziz and Azhar (2019), the study indicated that before being considered patients, doctors criticize them for their untraditional professions and strange body, and only the social workers from NGOs show accountability for the Hijra community's health and sexual problems. The support provided by the social workers from NGOs aims not enhance the quality. of life but urge them to be careful about the working approach that undermines their rights as human beings. Therefore, since working in mainstream society is one of the primary steps to attain societal approval for the Hijra community, respect, and access to and protect their rights as human beings, they need to be trained through vocational training and other professional training that makes them qualified for various jobs in various job sectors instead of providing them a direct job.

6.2. Conclusion

The main aim of this research was to examine the gender-based exclusion of the Hijra community from the job sector in Bangladesh by investigating the current employment situation of the Hijra community by assessing how the HIJRA's sexual identity and physical appearance comes their way to secure their cherished employment and career ambition; exploring the key obstacles Hijra community face while going thorough recruitment procedures or while stay on a job; investigating the discrepancy between their current means of employments and what Hijras would really like to take as a profession if given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion or social discrimination; and assessing Hijras' current means of income is non-traditional

and non-conforming to society and how this means of employment undermine their rights as a human being.

Based on the notion of gender and social exclusion, system theory, and advocacy theory, the study found that the perception of society on hostile behavior toward Hijras is the reason for their economic discrimination behavior and poverty in the Hijra community. The majority of Hijra members fail to get jobs in the Bangladeshi job sectors due to their peculiar lifestyle and lack of education. Instead of the society perceiving the Hijras' experience in life in terms of their desire for inclusion into mainstream society through involvement in economic practices, they ridicule them. However, it is believed that involving Hijras in mainstream society's job would ensure economic flexibility and enables them to acquire the experience, knowledge, and space by which they could find means to strengthen their quality and capacity to further achievement to gender and other human rights. The study also recorded that people in the society viewed the Hijra collection's tradition as a substantial issue that needed to be solved.

The Hijra community is faced with various challenges, especially in achieving gender identity rights and legal support regarding their gender. The intention of the Hijras to earn a living matters a lot as some prefer sex work, begging, and borrowing as a way to earn money without having formal work. They are humiliated by society as they are associated with activities like sex work which is against religion. Through the empirical review, the study found that most communities in Bangladesh consider Hijras' blessings to be sacred and are called to perform during the birth of a child. This is how the tradition of collecting money from families with a newborn child or the baby collection came into existence. The study also revealed that the Hijra community feels that if the government creates more opportunities targeting them, they will be able to avoid having mixed feelings about their identity and employment statuses in society.

Although Hijras are officially recognized as a third gender by the constitution, society has refused to accept them. The study indicated that they are always deprived and discriminated against in different social settings such as the labor market, bank system, transport system, and other systems. According to this study's findings, legal recognition makes people more comfortable in different facets of life including the employment sector. Therefore, failing to recognize Hijra as a separate gender beyond the male and female/binary gender system is the main reason for their inability to access social services. Hijras believe that recognizing them as a third gender and including the third gender in job application forms will be the beginning of getting rid of various obstacles facing Hijra individuals in the job sector. Moreover, Hijras do not have educational and skill development facilities and are deprived of this opportunity in mainstream society. It was revealed that education status is a major obstacle in their recruitment in the employment sector. The majority of Hijras faced verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, and sometimes physical abuse from other students and teachers in the schools. This in turn limited their potential for occupying different employment opportunities in the Bangladesh job sector. The study indicated that an uncondusive learning environment in schools limits the development of skilled employees. It also indicated that sexual harassment was among the key issues facing Hijra employees in the job sectors in Bangladesh.

The Hijra community is unable to secure employment due to a lack of access to workplaces, discrimination, and low education level. As a result, they end up participating in "badhai" and "hijragiri" to earn a living. These activities reflect their social marginalization and socio-economic suffering due to social exclusion and discrimination. The study indicated that if given a level playing field devoid of any gender-based exclusion or social discrimination, it would present them with opportunities to escape an abusive environment. Hijras believe that if

they are legally recognized and accepted in society, they would be free from intense harassment, verbal and physical, from their employers and other people. The study found that sexual activities make them more stigmatized as they become further marginalized by their community. Although it is the expectation of every human to live a respected life free from exclusion and disclamation in all facets of society, the Hijra community remains excluded from mainstream society and social resources.

Bangladesh's Hijra community is willing to join ordinary jobs that guarantee them a basic income to cater to their basic needs and security. However, their Hijragiri and badhai activities are a result of discrimination and exploitation in job sectors, inability to secure a decent job, and termination from their jobs due to their sexual identity. This study drew the correlation between gender identity and discrimination and segregation, which subjects them to major obstacles in their every step. It also indicated a correlation between Hijra's economic activities and legal rights, where Hijras' economic activities did not allow them to enter mainstream society's jobs, and this led to the loss of their self-esteem. Therefore, the support provided by social workers from NGOs aims not to improve the quality of life but urge them to be careful about the working approach that undermines their rights as human beings.

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