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Social Exclusion of Transgender in the Civil Society: A Case Study of the Status of the Transgender in Kolkata

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Abstract

Traditional views of gender focus on two binaries of males and females. It is on this societal basis that the state policy and governance system are based on. However, with time, diversity has permeated in all walks of life. Now a number of races, religions, communities, and languages are more easily accepted and hence society is essentially pluralistic in nature. But it is in the area of sexual identities that development is still lacking. According to the Census of 2011, India, male population is around 623,724,248 and female population is around 586,469,174, whereas, the eunuchs¹ residing in India is around 19 lakhs, as of March 1, 2011² In spite of occupying a considerable population, the transgender living in India are excluded from the basic conditions necessary for a decent and dignified living. This discrimination conveys that goals of development couldn't be reached if a big section of the society stands alienated.

Key Words: Eunuchs, Transgender, gender identity, gender role, India, exclusion.

Literature Review: The term “**Transgender**” is an umbrella term that includes transsexuals, transvestites, intersexed people, and just about anybody else who doesn't conform to the traditional model of sex/gender. “Transgender” is the most general, inclusive term. The term **Hijra** is often used as an umbrella term to signify individuals who defy prevalent binary gender constructions and who expresses or present a breaking and blurring of culturally prevalent stereotypically gender roles. It includes pre-operative, post-operative and non-operative transsexual people who strongly identify with gender opposite to their biological sex (**Chakrapani, 2010**). The word “*Hijra*” is Urdu, derived from the Arabic

¹ Here, the term ‘eunuch’ refers to only those people who wish to be treated as neither male nor female and embrace a lifestyle that is in conformity with their sexual divergence. This group does not include those intersex people who pretend to lead their lives as either males or Females and embrace a normal lifestyle.

² The figures are approximate and according to surveys carried out by Salvation of Oppressed Eunuchs (SOOE), since eunuchs live in a secretive, shadowy world that they have created for themselves, away from the abuse and persecution of society.

root “hjr” in its sense of "leaving one's tribe," and has been borrowed into Hindi. The Urdu and Hindi word “*Hijra*” may alternately be romanized as *hijira*, *hijda*, *hijada*, *hijara*, *hijrah.n*. According to UNDP ‘*hijra*’ is an umbrella term for all sexual minorities. It states that “*hijra* cultures are India’s answer to support systems for sexual minorities. Long before the West gave birth to gay lib, India’s homosexuals, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals and *kothis* found refuge under this umbrella.”

The word “eunuch” is derived from the Greek word “Euneukhos” which literally means “bed chamber attendant”. It is in this sense that during the later Mughal period they were put in charge of harems. As eunuchs were sexually incapable, due to emasculation (whether voluntarily or under force), they were considered suitable guards for harems.

According to **Sharma**, eunuchs are castrated men who do not necessarily wear women’s clothing. The practice of castration in the context of Indian Society can be stated to have originated from the tradition of desexualizing the animals. During the Vedic period horses were often castrated. Following that tradition, it used to be males rather than females who were castrated. The practice of castration was very popular for a variety of reasons especially outside India. One of the first reasons for castration was the desire to develop a particular physical and mental make-up. It was noted that performance of castration on children prevented the development of secondary sex characteristics. Such men could be later on used as senior slaves to guard harems. Being castrated these men were less attracted to their families and proved more faithful to their owners and masters. **Piyush Saxena**³, the chairperson of **Salvation of Oppressed Eunuchs (SOOE)**, explains the life of a typical eunuch in Indian society along with medical and mythological context. He observes how Eunuchs have been systematically marginalized in Indian society partly due to cultural stereotypes and expectations and partly due to bureaucratic rules that trap them in cycles of homelessness, joblessness with no access to identity documents, bank accounts, and health care facilities. He also looks at the medical details of various kinds of intersexuality and Trans-sexuality accompanied by pictures, the medical procedures involved in transformation of genders, as well as the socio-economic ramifications of such gender transformations. However, Saxena’s work does not provide a classification of the problems faced by Eunuchs compared to the other marginalized groups.

According to **Nabanita Dutt**⁴, “The most pathetic condition of eunuchs in the world is in India. All over the world their condition has improved a lot but in India they are still discriminated and are neglected of their true civil rights”. A community which was discriminated by the nature as well as by man, and which devoted their life for god and state, are as much worth of respect as we are. Her article about the poor plight of the eunuchs is a disturbing reminder that change is essential and slow coming, but at least this article is available for people to learn from. But, Dutt’s perspective is limited to India only.

³ Saxena, Piyush(2011): Life of a Eunuch

⁴Dutt, Nbanita(2012): Eunuch- India’s Third Gender, Things Asian
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Again, **Arti Jayaswal**⁵ in an article emphasizes how the eunuchs are deprived of both familial and societal love neither because they are criminals nor because they have committed any other folly but because they are suffering from some genetic disorder, in spite the fact that a baffling paradox of our society have criminals in the mainstream, enjoying all civil and human rights. The author also speaks about the prevalent Indian Legal framework that has discriminated these “third gendered” people from times immemorial depriving them of most of the rights essential to enjoy the conditions of a decent life, however in this article, there is no call for legal recognition of the sexual minority.

With analysis from legal and policy experts, activists and advocates, **Paisley Currah, Richard M. Juang and Shannon Minter** assesses the Trans gender’s Rights movement’s achievements, challenges, and opportunities for future action, examining the crucial topics like family law, employment policies, public health, economics, and grassroots organizing, this groundbreaking research is an indispensable resource in the fight for the freedom and equality of those who cross gender boundaries. Moving beyond media representations to grapple with the real lives and issues of transgender people, their research aims at creating a new movement on transgender. However, in spite of their excellent research, their work omits dealing with the problems of social acceptance of the transgender.

Nabiha Meher Shaikh⁶ in her article defines the key term “hijra”. She also tells us about the backgrounds of hijras in Bangladesh and Pakistan. She provides a historical and social perspective of their lives in the subcontinent across cultures and national boundaries and also speaks in details about the vulnerability of the hijra community in India and Pakistan, known as “the third gender”. Shaikh has also provided an insight into their way of lives, their beliefs, traditions and their professions. Shaikh’s article is limited in terms of culture. It talks about the Eunuchs primarily in the Asian countries, but it doesn’t throw light on their counterparts on the other parts of the world.

Objectives:

1. To examine the historical evolution of transgender in society
2. To evaluate the problems faced by the transgender
3. To seek legal recognition of the transgender.
4. To evaluate and assess the potentiality of the “The Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014” towards the inclusion of the transgender into the developmental discourse in India.
5. To showcase briefly the socio economic status of the hijras, and to understand the problems faced by them with specific reference to their health and the harassment they face in their day to day living.

Methodology: The study was conducted on two levels. The first was Doctrinal Research, which included the review of relevant literatures such as The Constitution of India, (primary

⁵ Jayaswal, Arti: Looking beyond Our Ghetto – A Peep into The Lives of Eunuchs

⁶ Shaikh, M.N (2008): Hijras, the Third Gender, CHANGING UP PAKISTAN

resource), Governmental Documents, NGO reports of NGOs like, (The Salvation of the Oppressed Eunuchs, Transgender Rights Association, and Seeds of Peace etc.), Articles, journals, books, periodicals, case laws and legislations. The second level was the fieldwork or empirical study. I chose to study the socio economic status of the *Hijra* community of Kolkata. During my study, I used snow-ball sampling as Snowball sampling is a method typically used with unknown or rare populations. Members of these populations have not at all been previously identified and are more difficult to locate or contact, than the general populations, hence Snow-ball sampling was much easier to adapt. I interviewed numerous members of the ‘hijra community’ of Kolkata, mostly the ones who beg at the daily local trains and the long distance mail trains, others who beg at the great city signals mostly during the traffic jams.

Significance: The social significance of my study was to curb the social frustration that has evolved centering the Transgendered people residing in the hidden corners of our society, so that they can create a place for themselves within the main stream of the social strata. My study also strived to make this forgotten community a beneficiary of all the development plans and policies of the society to make the government aware of its loopholes while dealing with the transgender people, and to see to it that this vulnerable community is not deprived of their basic human rights. The government should also take into consideration that the increasing population of the transgender people and the continuous harassment and discrimination that they face might even give rise to mass agitation by this community, therefore, disrupting law and order in society.





Introduction: Before going into a descriptive discussion about their socio-economic status, a definition is a must to clear our concepts. According to the **Merriam-Webster Dictionary**, the definition of transgender is of, relating to, or being a person (as a transsexual or transvestite) who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that differs from the one which corresponds to the person's sex at birth. In India, we commonly use the term eunuch – *hijra* – mean a ‘sexless’ person, who has been defined in the dictionary as a castrated man. A hermaphrodite is a creature possessing both the male and female organs. A transvestite is a person who chooses a sex other than the one he/she is born as. Facts tell us that neutralized neutral-sex persons are a rarity. The *hijra* population in India has a well-defined group structure and regional affiliations with a group head. Though *Balucharaji* is their Goddess and they revere *Ambe Mata*, there are religious demarcations. Most of them identify with the female sex. Within the eunuch community, incest is absent. Most of them have worked as prostitutes at one time or another.

Background: In the Indian society, their face is considered as a sign of fortune. They are often seen as dressed in ill-fitting blouses and colorful saris in a grotesque parody of womanhood as they roam the busy marketplaces in groups, terrorizing pedestrians, hustling for ten or a hundred rupees. Their face is mostly found caked in cheap kajal, powder and bright colored lipstick. They are just not the average beggars we come across in an urban pavement. With male voices shouting expletives, palms meeting crossways in a trademark clap, we often meet them in the daily local trains, sometimes in the long distance mail trains or mostly at a crossing or a busy signal. They prey on susceptible passersby, who will part

with their cash sooner than be treated to the sight of the group collectively lifting up their saris and flashing castrated genital areas right in their faces.

History of existence: Eunuchs - castrated males - have been in existence in India since the 9th Century BC. The word derives from the Greek "keeper of the bed" because castrated men were in popular demand to guard royal harems. Eunuchs have a history that spans back thousands of years. It is well known that eunuchs played an important role during the Mughal era in the Indian Subcontinent. Eunuchs were the preferred male slave choice for the royal emperors, because they posed lesser security risks at the harems, in the palace and in the domestic affairs of ordinary Muslims. They had access to royal palaces where they were employed as guards to the harems, administrators, teachers, treasurers, and loyal servants.

Changing social roles of the eunuchs: When the British came to power in India, the community's fortunes changed, with the disgusted colonists passing a law in 1897 classing all eunuchs as criminals. Since then many have been ostracized – either for cross dressing or being intersex – and have gone on to form their own communities, mostly residing in the shadowy parts of the societies, around a guru or mother figure to provide emotional and financial security. Many even took to using a secret code language known as Hijra Farsi for protection. More recently, hijras have been seen as auspicious and are often asked to bless celebrations such as marriages and births. In some Indian metropolitans and larger cities, they even forced to beg or get into prostitution, and lead a life that is no better than an animal. The effect of this dangerous work and the community's limited access to health and welfare services can be seen in the staggering fact that HIV rates among hijras.

The coming of the New Law, Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014: Apparently, the first big step towards addressing the grievances of this socially excluded group, came about in February 2014, when the Supreme Court (in what is known as the NALSA verdict) recognized 'transgender' as a gender identity and called for immediate remedial action. This inspired hope amongst the members of this community and among their supporters, but the pace of change does not quite seem to match the speed or steadiness that some hoped for in the wake of the verdict. Yet, despite welcoming the change in the law, Indian activists warn that not all transgender people feel comfortable being referred to as "third sex". Many prefer to be classed simply by the gender they have chosen, as women or men. Campaigners point out that more needs to be done to stop transgender people and *hijra* communities in particular, from being criminalized – such as overturning the controversial section 377 law that makes homosexual acts a crime.

From redrafting the Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014 to including transgender as beneficiaries in social security schemes, India seemed to have made great strides in ending discrimination of transgender persons in the country. But could this legal remedy get rid of the problems faced by this orphaned community totally? The points of disadvantages are elaborated below:

- **The Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016**, approved by the Union Cabinet, aims to protect the social, economic and educational right of Trans people. The bill was passed under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and it guaranteed a benefit to a large number of this shunned community in India. The Transgender Rights Bill 2016 runs into issues of defining who a transgender person is. While the NALSA verdict⁷ indicated that anyone who did not identify with the gender assigned to them by birth could choose to identify as transgender without needing a physical examination and certification, the new bill undoes this possibility both in spirit and in practice. According to the bill⁸, “transgender persons”, is defined as a person who is (A) neither wholly female nor wholly male; (B) a combination of female or male; or (C) neither female nor male. By defining the transgender experience either in the negative (as “not” male or female) or in parts (as “neither wholly” or as a “combination”) it takes away the rights of the peoples to self-determine how they wish to be identified – for instance, as just male or as just female or as a third gender category or anything outside of the three narrow suggestions the draft makes. The entire phenomenon is worsened with the presence of the ‘**screening committees**’ which comprises of doctors who will provide certificates for those who identify as transgender. Hence over here the spirit of self-determination, it also puts in place surveillance and control for an already severely shunned community.
- The Bill was supposed to benefit a large number of Trans people in India, and was passed partly as part of an effort to de-stigmatize being Trans. It gave responsibility to the Central Government as well as local authorities, to protect transgender people against abuse, discrimination and atrocities. It was expected to address the question of what exactly counted as “atrocities” against transgender persons, their means of redress and the punishments their perpetrators would face. It would also look at the question of reservations in jobs and academic institutions for transgender people, remedial measures against their wrongful dispossession and attempt to look at their access to scholarships. But what’s problematic is that who to approach in case of harassment or discrimination is not clear. There is also no mention of what justice a transgender person can seek in case of harassment and atrocities. Again four types of offences have been listed out in the eighth chapter of the bill, these ranges from denial of right to public spaces to sexual assault, but again say that the punishments cannot exceed two years. The bill also has no definition of the word

⁷ **Govindarajan, Padmapriya(2016):** India's 2016 Transgender Rights Bill: Progress or Just More Ignorance? The Diplomat

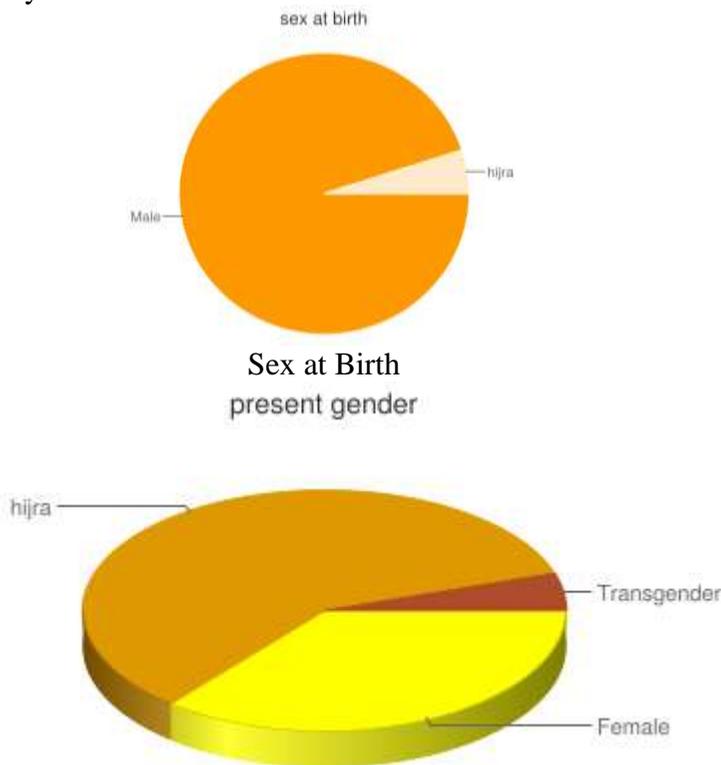
“discrimination”, there is no clarity as to who they should approach if there are cases of discrimination against them.

- Transgender in India still continue to face abuses even today. They are often tortured by the police and regularly abused and marginalized in India. The new bill doesn't specify police violence. This is a huge drawback as police violence is a regular trauma that the transgender goes through. They also face social exclusion, discrimination, and lack of access to educational facilities. The New Law doesn't bring in any specific mechanism that can prevent the transgender from being disowned by their families. Hence, when disowned by their families they may lack the means to avail education. The bill also does not clearly talk of reservations in educational institutions for members of the transgender community who do not belong to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes (although it was expected to provide for them under the category of Other Backward Classes, it has not). It is silent on the count of police violence against the community, which serves as an important reason why the community is relegated to the margins in India.
- Finally, the new Bill doesn't specify ways to rehabilitate the already existing communities of transgender people who have been disowned since birth and brought up in secretive, shadowy world that they have created for themselves, away from our society in general. Now what would these people do, how will they avail the benefits of this new law? Due to lack of the means to education, employment for them would not be possible; hence they will have to carry on with their previous professions of begging. So in a way we can say that The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016 is grossly ignorant of the very issues it is attempting to address.

Case Study: For the pedestrians and the daily office goers of Kolkata, it is a very common scene to come across group of male like women dressed in glittering saris, their faces painted with bright make up, gathering across the signals, eagerly waiting for the traffic signals to go red, so that they can immediately pounce upon the on goers and demand alms as soon as the frowned men in the car slide down their window glasses to get an idea about the unwelcomed red signal. Yes, they are the 'hijras' as we call them, but now as the third gender, after the passage of “**The Transgender Rights Bill, 2014**”. In some Indian metropolitans and larger cities, like ours, the members of this community are more often, forced to beg or get into prostitution, and lead a life that is no better than an animal, due to the dearth of acceptance by the so called civilized society of ours. The effect of this dangerous professions and the community's limited access to health and welfare services can be seen in the staggering fact that HIV rates among hijras.

During the framing of this paper, I have tried to initiate conversations with some of the familiar faces I often see from my car, at the signals, while going to work. Most of their stories are pathetic and their ways of lives are much different than the ones we refer to as the 'normal human life'. I will try to elaborate in points, the findings that I have got in hands while conversing with them.

- Gender:** All the respondents claimed to be members of the *hijra* cult/community. However, about 36 percent among them also wished to identify themselves as females. No one considered oneself as a man, though 95 per cent respondents said that their biological sex at birth was male and correspondingly during childhood they were raised as boys. Only 5 per cent (3 out of 60) claimed that their sex at birth was that of *hijra*, that is neither male or female, two among them said that in their childhood they were raised as girls and the third one stated to have been raised sometimes as a boy and at other times as a girl. Apart from that most of them were highly ignorant about the new Transgender Rights Bill, 2014, and among the few who knew about it, were not at all happy with the definition of the ‘transgender’ that was provided by the Bill.



- Age:** The respondents' age at the time of the interview varied from a minimum of 18 years to a maximum of 75 years in the range of 54.
- Educational Background:** The members of the community, who were being interviewed, were mostly un-educated, since they had been disowned by their families' right at birth. While some who were being brought up as males till the age of 14 or 15, got a chance to attend high schools. There were also a few who were transgender but they had a progressive family and hence were fortunate enough to attend college.

Education	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	24	40
Primary School / Literate	20	33.3
Middle School	3	5
High School	9	15
Graduate	3	5
Post Graduate Diploma	1	1.6
Total	60	100

- **Occupation:** Most of the transgender people are school dropouts. Similarly, gays and bisexuals especially after voluntary or involuntary disclosure of their sexuality face a lot of stigma and discrimination in schools. Lack of adequate education and lack of employment opportunities, they are forced into sex work and begging. 20 out of 60 hijras, were engaged in labor works, mostly as construction laborers, under the local contractors. Some worked in NGOs run by the civil society, which mostly centered on empowerment of these communities, and some worked with a focus on HIV/AIDS. Other important professions that they were engaged into were, begging at signals or the long distance mails, dancing, demanding *bakshish* in return of the blessings they give to the new born and mostly they engaged themselves into sex-work, for which they were too exposed to HIV/AIDS.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Dancing	8	13.3
Sex Work	18	30
Begging in different forms	25	41.7
Employed in NGOs	7	11.7
Unemployed	2	3.3
Total	60	100

It is also important to note in the above Table, the main occupations (or source of income) of the hijras are mentioned, though they may be also engaging in other types of occupation. For example, a *hijra* who is employed in a project is primarily considered as employed in the project while the same *hijra* may also be engaged in sex work, begging, etc.

- **Income:** When asked, they were quite hesitant to talk about their incomes openly, might be because of some fear or something, but one of them disclosed that only those transgender who are engaged in sex work as well as the NGO projects are the ones who earn lucratively. Others contribute very little towards their household expenditures (it is to be remembered they live in clustered groups along with a head eunuch and the others are obedient towards that eunuch).

Common problems faced by the transgender:

Health: Almost 40 per cent (N=60) said that they do suffer from one or the other kind of illnesses. Seven of them said they suffered from low/high blood pressure, the older ones were diabetics. One of them said she was suffering from allergies from insect bites. An old *hijra* said she has deep cuts and which was not healing, hence she said she was taking injection twice a day for controlling her diabetes and a tablet in the afternoon for the wounded leg. She was housebound because of this condition. These interviews were conducted during the monsoon of 2016, when dengue fever and malaria had become a severe epidemic in Kolkata. The Government was taking precautionary measures to get rid of this epidemic, but few transgenders complained that though there were people from the municipalities who came in to inspect houses and sprayed in exposed water arrays to prevent dengue mosquitoes from being born, but the slums in which these transgender people lived were not taken care of. There were still many primary healthcare centers, who didn't want to entertain transgender patients even during emergency. About ten individual hijras shared that they suffer illnesses like knee pain (mainly caused due to strenuous walking and climbing during begging whether in trains or shops), cold, flu, typhoid, malaria, skin allergy, stomach pain, allergic asthma, acidity, piles, herpes and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI). Those who suffered herpes and STI infections also did not reveal their HIV status.

Problems Faced due to Police Harassment: Hijras face multiple forms of oppression from the police. They are often arbitrarily arrested, unnecessarily harassed and penalized for offences they have not done. A great majority of the hijras (80.5 per cent) stated that they have experienced problems caused by the police whether policemen from respective police stations (50 per cent), railway police (25 per cent), or traffic policemen (8 per cent). Many expressed heart rending experiences which were recorded under open ended questions. There were also stories narrated by the hijras, where they were brutally tortured, beaten up by the police men just for begging and congesting the signals, and also sometimes they were suspected to be thieves or robbers and without any fault, to their utter dismay their names were among the famous listed burglars in the police stations.

Economic Problems: Most of the transgender people are school dropouts. Since, due to their non-conformity with the normative gender roles, they face a lot of stigma and discrimination in schools. Lack of adequate education and lack of employment opportunities, they are forced into sex work and begging. The members of the *Hijra* community claim that it's difficult to get a mainstream job due to lack of education, and non-conforming lifestyle they are unacceptable for the working environment. They are mostly thrown out from a job, if they manage to get one, on the grounds of destroying the job decorum. Some got jobs but eventually were dismissed when employers learned of their sexual divergence. In some cases, many *Hijra* were abused verbally, physically, and sexually at workplaces for which they never received any justice. Hence mostly, due to their exclusion they take recourse into begging, sex work or other chores considered dirty by the society. Hence, they suffer from a great dearth of income.

Other sorts of harassment face by the *hijra* community are:

1. Harassment by the police in public places
2. Disowned from family
3. Verbal, physical and sexual abuse
4. Police entrapment
5. Abuse/harassment at social space
6. Rigid dress codes that differ for males and females
7. Lack of accurate information and education
8. Deliberately incorrect and disrespectful use of names and pronouns
9. Lack of housing facilities and social participation

Hijras face multiple forms of oppression. The various issues faced by Hijras are frightened with different social exclusions. The study revealed no safe sociopolitical space where a *Hijra* can lead a dignified life of a human being with dignity. In India as well as the study area, there is less space for Hijras in socio-cultural, economic and political spheres; they are unable to get proper benefits from conservative social structures and institutions. Socio-cultural, legal, educational and health services are extremely constrained for a person with a *Hijra* identity. The overall findings signify that most deprivations in the lives of *Hijra* are grounded in non-recognition of a *Hijra* as a separate gendered human being beyond the male-female dichotomy. This has prevented them from positioning themselves in the greater society with human potential and dignity. Thus, *Hijra* are extremely excluded, particularly because of moralistic standpoints regarding gender and sexualities of the mainstream society where diversity is synonymous with deviation and deprivation.

Conclusion: Still recently the Hijras are deprived from social and cultural participation, are shunned by family and society, have only restricted access to education, health services and public spaces and have excluded rights as Indian citizens such as right to marry, to contest elections, to vote, employment, obtaining passport, driving license, ration card, identity card and livelihood opportunities in a large extent. Although in the 2011 census, the Indian State identified Hijras, which only met the approval of some Hijras. The 2014 Supreme Court verdict ruled that Hijras should be recognized under a separate, third gender category. In India, Hijras now have the option to identify as a eunuch ("E") on passports and on certain government documents. Recently the Election Commission (EC) forms have a separate column 'O' for 'Others' (Transgender or Hijras) in the voter enrollment and registration forms. Following in the footsteps of the Election Commission, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) too recognizes the transgender. Enrollment forms of the UIDAI have a third column of 'T', for 'Transgender' along with 'M' and 'F' for 'Male' and 'Female' respectively (Janardhan, 2013). Some of the key problems which need consideration and appropriate action are access to essential services, education, health and resources. These problems can be well addressed by implementing some progressive measures such as:

1. To sensitize the society with regard to their identity.

2. Support of civil society organization to advocate for their cause and efforts like advocate for land and shelter, creation of separate public toilets, hospital wards, recognition of their right to vote as citizens, reservation of seats in elections, etc.
3. Support of Media both print and electronic, to highlight their status and plight rather than portraying them in poor light.
4. Extend financial support for Community Based Organizations run by transgender communities. All Hijras are human beings and logically all human rights apply to them. As all human beings have the right to live with dignity at all times, regardless of their legal, social or political status so do Hijras.
5. Few Hijras complained that they suffered inhuman and disrespectful treatment especially in the Government hospitals at the hands of the doctors and nurses. There are various NGOs which have been working for the social uplift of Hijras. Some of them provide professional training to financially empower them.

But these small steps will become effective only when people have more open-minded approach towards them. Till the time they are looked down upon and the “third sex” does not come at par with the remaining two sexes, transgender will continue to live a life full of ignorance, negligence and hushed voices around them wherever they go. Social exclusion of this largely orphaned community not only generates tension, violence and disruption but also perpetuates inequality and deprivation in Society. Overcoming 'exclusion' constitutes the most elementary pre-requisite for the building of a democratic society, in the truest sense of the term.

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