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## DISCOVERING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL STATUS OF THE THIRD GENDER COMMUNITY WITH REFERENCE TO BARODA CITY

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### ABSTRACT:

The first issue faced by everybody after birth that the newborn baby is male or female, but when people cannot identify themselves as either male or female, they fall into the third gender category. They usually live in a small community that is isolated from mainstream society.<sup>1</sup> They have a strong social structure in their community, and this social structure has made some special aspects like different customs, behavior, attitudes, languages, sexual practices, and activities. As they are a part of the mainstream society, they had to adapt to it. But in the context of the mainstream society, they have been stigmatized because of their quite unusual customs and rituals. Generally, in terms of social, economic, and political conditions, these groups of people face extreme exclusion and vulnerability.<sup>2</sup> So, the aim of this paper is to sketch their livelihood pattern and customs or attitudes, their social and economic status, vulnerability and adaptability, pattern of their life, family and social structures, etc. Furthermore, this paper states some recommendations towards the government and NGOs for legal and voluntary actions to ensure the rights of the third gender in Baroda city.

**Keywords:** Third gender, Social Status, Cultural Status

### INTRODUCTION:

Gender and social identities have always been an issue within society, creating a bipolar debate of legality and redefinition of religious rules. Within the gender issues raises the question of the third sex arises. Discovering sexuality and gender with variations in educational institutions requires an understanding of differences in human anatomy and biological knowledge about

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<sup>1</sup> Studocu, [LCS-6301 - The position of the third gender in society Influence and Theory: Subjects of - Studocu](#) (last visited May 25, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Ayesha Siddequa Daize, Essaba Masnun, Exploring the Socio-economic and Cultural Status of Third Gender Community in Bangladesh, JNU (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [9 2 373.pdf](#)

sexuality.<sup>3</sup> Gender identity is the private experience of gender role, that sameness, unity, and persistence of one's individuality as male, female, or androgynous, especially as experienced in self-awareness and behavior.<sup>4</sup> Gender role is everything that a person says and does, indicates to others or to oneself that one is male, female, or androgynous. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual and erotic arousal and response.<sup>5</sup> A cross-cultural perspective indicates that some cultures include more than two genders.<sup>6</sup> Such alternative or third gender roles, which are neither man nor woman have been described among the Omanis of the Saudi Arabian Peninsula (Wikan, 1977), among many Native American tribes (Williams, 1986), in Tahiti (Levi, 1973), and New Guinea and among the Hijras in India (Nanda, 1990).<sup>7</sup> Hijras or hermaphrodites are people with ambiguous genitalia also called intersexed. The term Intersexed is hermaphrodite person is a person possess both masculine and feminine traits. They deal with a variety of inequities related to their identity problem. These individuals may experience prejudice and stigma from birth, and they are unable to enjoy the same social and economic privileges as others gender. Immediately after birth, the majority of them are taken from their homes and denied access to family bonds and educational resources. However, these persons have frequently been denied access to fundamental citizenship rights like property rights, health, employment, education, and political rights since there are no laws that acknowledge third gender status. These days, there is a rise in prostitution, begging, and other illicit activities. All of these odd situations of the community have made all of us curious to know more about them, like their lifestyle, economic conditions, and social positions. This paper will attempt an overview of the socio-economic and cultural status of third gender people in Baroda city.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To analyze the nature of socio-economic status of the third gender in Baroda city.

<sup>3</sup> Halder, Alpona. Education Inequality and Global Justice for the Third Gender, Hijras in India, Georgescreek (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [\\*PDF\\* Read Education Inequality And Global Justice For The Third Gender Hijras In India Download Full](#).

<sup>4</sup> Alex Byrne, The Origin of "Gender Identity" Springer Nature link (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [The Origin of "Gender Identity" | Archives of Sexual Behavior](#).

<sup>5</sup> Nanda, Sarena. Neither Man nor Woman. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Archive (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [Neither man nor woman : the Hijras of India : Nanda, Serena : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

<sup>6</sup> Wikipedia, [Gender system - Wikipedia](#) (last visited May 25, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> Chakrapani, Venkatesan. "Hijras/Transgender Women in India: HIV, Human Rights and Social Inclusion". United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [Hijras/Transgender Women in India: HIV, Human Rights And Social Exclusion](#)

2. To analyze and study the cultural status of the third gender in Baroda city.
3. To provide practical recommendations to enhance the social inclusion of the third gender into society.

## WHAT IS HIJRA?

In the Indian sub-continent, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, several countries, the third gender or third sex people are known as Hijra.<sup>8</sup> The term Hijra is often used as an umbrella term to signify individuals who defy rigid, binary gender constructions and who express or present a breaking and blurring of culturally prevalent stereotypical gender roles. It includes pre-operative, post-operative, and non-operative transsexual people who strongly identify with the gender opposite to their biological sex.<sup>9</sup> Hijra, the word is originally from the Semitic Arabic root Hijra.<sup>10</sup> The meaning of the word in Arabic is very broad, which indicates leaving one's tribe, migrating to another group, or fleeing from one place. The word is described differently by different Hijra individuals. Some address it as a group outside male-male-female binary, some address it as a mix of male and female identities,<sup>11</sup> some address it as a group of females who were all gender assigned male at birth, and the list goes on.<sup>12</sup> Most of the people use the word Hijra as a slur, and most of them do not know who the Hijras are. They have ranks within their community. The rank orders are shown below:

1. Guru ma
2. Pradhan shishya
3. Shishya/ chela
4. Thika hijra

Guru ma is the main or chief of a Hijra community. She has one or more Pradhan shishya<sup>13</sup> who are more trusted and beneficial than others. Guru Ma has several chela or shishya in her

<sup>8</sup> Ayesha Siddequa, *Supra Note 2* at 2294.

<sup>9</sup> Hossain, Adnan. "The paradox of recognition: hijra, third gender and sexual rights in Bangladesh", Culture, Health & Sexuality (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [Full article: The paradox of recognition: hijra, third gender and sexual rights in Bangladesh](#).

<sup>10</sup> Academia, [\(PDF\) Let Us to Live: Social Exclusion of Hijra Community](#) (last visited May 25, 2025).

<sup>11</sup> Wikipedia, [Gender system - Wikipedia](#) (last visited May 25, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> Abdullah, Abritti. "Living Through Resistance: A Feminist Analysis of Bangladeshi Hijras" *degree of Master of Arts*, Women Gender and Sexuality Studies, University Cube (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [Jacob Bell | Texas Tech University | University Cube](#)

<sup>13</sup> E-Bangla, [Online Research Paper: THIRD GENDER: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO IDENTIFY AS BEING NEITHER MAN NOR WOMAN](#) (last visited May 25, 2025).



gang. There are some other lower categories<sup>14</sup> of chelas who are known as Thika or Jon Hijra, who are not permanent Hijras in any community.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The primary data is collected from the Hijra participants by the survey method. The secondary data is collected from books, articles, and journals. The primary data are from the parks and public places, shopping malls, and markets in these areas, and these places are safer than another remote areas. The reason behind selecting these areas for investigation is the active presence of third gender people in these areas. The researcher has applied convenience sampling for this research. The sample size of this research was 47 respondents from Baroda City. On the other hand, the quantitative data from the survey questionnaire are analyzed with the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software<sup>15</sup>.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Hijras are imitating their identity to perform their role in society, and their identity in society is neither male nor female. Impression management is a vital factor for them to analyze their social as well as sexual life, which can be approached adequately<sup>16</sup> by Erving Goffman's work on Impression Management (1959)<sup>17</sup>. The people of our society cannot accept Hijra people properly, and it makes them excluded from society. As a result, they live a very miserable life in society<sup>18</sup> and are treated as a marginalized group in society. In Judith Butler's other work, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (1990)<sup>19</sup> Judith Butler challenges assumptions about the distinction often made between sex and gender, sexed bodies cannot signify without gender, and the apparent existence of sex prior to discourse and cultural imposition is only an effect of the functioning of gender. Sex and gender are both constructed.

<sup>14</sup> Ina Goel, Chapter 5: Understanding Caste and Kinship within Hijras, a "Third" Gender Community in India, Milne publishing (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [Chapter 5: Understanding Caste and Kinship within Hijras, a "Third" Gender Community in India – Gendered Lives](#).

<sup>15</sup> Afrifa Rahman, SPSS: An Imperative Quantitative Data Analysis Tool for Social Science Research, Researchgate (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [\(PDF\) SPSS: An Imperative Quantitative Data Analysis Tool for Social Science Research](#)

<sup>16</sup> E-Bangla, *Supra* note 13 at 2295.

<sup>17</sup> Goffman, Erving. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Doubleday: Garden City, New York, Archive (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [The presentation of self in everyday life : Goffman, Erving : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

<sup>18</sup> Ayesha, *Supra* Note 2 at 2295.

<sup>19</sup> Butler, J. (1990) Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. Routledge, Taylor and Francis group (May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), [Gender Trouble | Feminism and the Subversion of Identity | Judith Butl](#)

In this book butler mentioned an intersexed person Herculine Barbin who committed suicide for this trouble inside. She had a female soul in her, but society imposed on her to be a man, and finally, death diminished all the contradictions. Queer Theory (1990)<sup>20</sup> Refers to transsexual people doing gender-corrective surgeries, aligning their bodies with their minds, and they can also enjoy their marriage and sex lives. Cross-dressing is another vital issue, though anyone can wear what they will as human beings, but society has prescribed that we wear dresses according to our gender. Many transsexual and intersex male-looking people wear sarees and salwar-kameez, and they are comfortable with that, but other people are found laughing at them. Though all these matters are just because our society<sup>21</sup> has prescribed us so many rules and regulations according to our gender.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

### • SOCIAL-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE THIRD GENDER

The present study shows that about 6.38 percent of people are aged up to 20 years, 17.02 percent are aged 21-30, 34.04 percent are aged 31-40, and 42.55 percent are above 40 years old. Among them, 72.34 percent of respondents are Hindu and 27.66 percent are Muslims, and no people from any other religion are found during this survey. The educational qualification is very low for their exclusion from positions in the family and society. Among the respondent's 29.79 percent are illiterate, 55.32 percent have passed only the S.S.C, and only 14.89 percent have passed H.S.C.

The monthly income generated by them through standing on toll tax, marriages, shops, etc. 40.43 percent respondents have up to Rs.5000/- income generation, 34.04 percent have Rs. 5001 to Rs.7000/- monthly income, 19.15 percent have Rs. 7001 to Rs.10000/- monthly income and only 6.38 percent respondents have above Rs. 10000/- monthly income.

<sup>20</sup> Jagose, A. (1996). Queer Theory: An Introduction, CI(May 25, 2025, 8:00 P.M.), <https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA44014877>

<sup>21</sup> E-Bangla, *Supra Note 13* at 2296.

| Social – economic status | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Age</b>               |           |         |
| up to 20 years           | 3         | 6.38    |
| 21-30 years              | 8         | 17.02   |
| 31-40 years              | 16        | 34.04   |
| Above 40 years           | 20        | 42.55   |
| <b>Religion</b>          |           |         |
| Hindu                    | 34        | 72.34   |
| Muslim                   | 13        | 27.66   |
| <b>Education</b>         |           |         |
| Illiterate               | 14        | 29.79   |
| SSC                      | 26        | 55.32   |
| HSC                      | 7         | 14.89   |
| <b>Monthly Income</b>    |           |         |
| Up to Rs. 5000/-         | 19        | 40.43   |
| Rs. 5001 - Rs.7000/-     | 16        | 34.04   |
| Rs. 7001 - Rs.10000/-    | 9         | 19.15   |
| Above Rs.10,000/-        | 3         | 6.38    |
| Source: Primary Data     |           |         |

### CULTURAL STATUS OF THE THIRD GENDER:

| Relation with family                      | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| <b>Contact with family members</b>        |           |         |
| Live with family                          | 2         | 4.25    |
| Once met                                  | 9         | 19.14   |
| Whenever need                             | 11        | 23.40   |
| Never meet                                | 25        | 53.19   |
| <b>Own property from family</b>           |           |         |
| Yes                                       | 12        | 25.53   |
| No  | 35        | 74.46   |
| <b>Expectations from family</b>           |           |         |
| Should give emotional Support             | 23        | 48.93   |
| Should give financial support             | 4         | 8.51    |
| Protect from hostile behaviour of society | 12        | 25.53   |
| Help in overall development and others    | 8         | 17.02   |
| Source: Primary Data                      |           |         |

Table 7.2 Cultural Status of Third Gender

The third gender community faces multiple forms of suffering, exploitation, inequity, etc., due to family and society shunning. So, they are marginalized and excluded from their family, society, and cultural or political participation. The present

study shows that only 4.25% of respondents live with family; other respondents live alone or with the Hijras community. Among them, 19.14% contact and communicate with parents and other family members once, and 23.40% percent they meet with the parents whenever they need, but mostly respondent's 53.19%percent never met them after being entrusted or

abandoned. 74.46% of respondents did not have any property in their family because family can hate them and not give them any rights to property, whereas only 25.43% of respondents have having own property in their family. In other hand, 8.51% percent respondents said that they want financial support from their family, that's why financial support should be given by their family so that they may be safe in their future and 48.93% percent respondents wanted that family should give them emotional support, because with the help of support any one can do anything in their life. Some respondent's 25.53% percent wanted their family should secure them against the hostile behavior of society. They can also do everything like others if their family gives them support and facilities.

### **HYPOTHESIS TESTING:**

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean score value of Age and their expectation from their family.

**H1<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant difference between the mean score value of age and their expectation from family.

| <b>Table 8.1.1 One-Sample Statistics</b> |    |        |                |                 |
|--|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
|  | N  | Mean   | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Age                                      | 47 | 3.1277 | .92353         | .13471          |
| Relationship with family                 | 47 | 3.2553 | .92002         | .13420          |

**Interpretation:** Table 8.1.1 above shows that the mean score of Age is 3.127 and the mean score of relationship with family is 3.255, which is higher than the mean score value of Age. So, there is a significant relationship between the mean score of age and their relationship with family.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean score value of Income and their expectation from their family.

**H1<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant difference between the mean score value of age and their expectation from their family.

| <b>Table 8.1.2 One-Sample Statistics</b> |    |        |                |                 |
|--|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
|  | N  | Mean   | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Income                                   | 47 | 1.9149 | .92853         | .13544          |



|                          |    |        |         |        |
|--------------------------|----|--------|---------|--------|
| Expectations from family | 47 | 2.1064 | 1.20206 | .17534 |
|--------------------------|----|--------|---------|--------|

**Interpretation:** Table 8.1.2 above shows that the mean score of Income is 1.914 and the mean score of expectation from family is 2.106, which is less than the mean score value of Income. So, there is no significant relationship between the mean score of Income and their expectation from with family.

## DISCUSSION:

The rights of the excluded Hijra population in Baroda city<sup>22</sup> are consistently disregarded, rejected, or not acknowledged, despite the city's constitution acknowledging equal rights for citizens of all castes, classes, races, ethnicities, and religions. As a result, these individuals experienced violence, exploitation, marginalization, and segregation. In addition, society's persistent disregard and lack of concern for Hijras who have been excluded due to their contradictory gender identity, as well as the ongoing denial of equality, are other factors<sup>23</sup>. They are consequently denied access to resources, opportunities, development outcomes, freedom of movement, political citizenship, and social inclusion. Although the city's constitution recognizes equal rights for citizens of all castes, classes, races, nationalities, and religions, the rights of the excluded Hijra population in Baroda city are often ignored, denied, or not acknowledged. These people thus endured segregation, marginalization, exploitation, and brutality. Other issues include society's continued denial of equality and its continued indifference to Hijras, who have been ostracized because of their contradictory gender identification. As a result, they are excluded from opportunities, resources, development results, freedom of movement, political citizenship, and social inclusion.

Hijras are severely marginalized, especially due to mainstream society's moralistic views on gender and sexuality, which equate variation with deprivation and transgression. Despite the fact that the majority of them are below the poverty line<sup>24</sup>, without family support, and have no savings for the future, many of them managed to turn their circumstances around through hard effort and live sustainable lives. These people typically experience various sorts of social marginalization and rejection from their family and other social groups. Many members of this community have attempted suicide due to their severe depression. They are profoundly

<sup>22</sup> E-Bangla, *Supra Note 13* at 2299.

<sup>23</sup> Academia, [\(PDF\) Let Us to Live: Social Exclusion of Hijra Community](#) (last visited May 25, 2025)

<sup>24</sup> Ina, *Supra Note 14* at 2299.

perplexed by their lives. Many of them developed alcohol and tobacco addictions in an attempt to alleviate their depression. The startling reality is that many of them have experienced sexual harassment at some point in their lives, and some of them have ties to prostitution as a source of income. It is necessary to alter people's impressions about this group. Like everyone else, they are entitled to a job. Their terrible poverty can be lessened by providing them with additional employment opportunities and amenities, as well as by encouraging more handicraft and entrepreneurial ventures. They have the right to coexist as next-door neighbours as they are also citizens of our nation. It is asked that the government and other institutions take the initiative to provide living facilities for them so they can integrate into society.

### CONCLUSION:

In the sociocultural, economic, and political arenas, third genders have fewer opportunities; they are unable to fully profit from established social systems. In their homes or society, they are unable to exercise authority or fully enjoy their civic rights. For someone who identifies as Hijra, sociocultural, legal, educational, and health resources are severely limited. Overall, the results show that the majority of exclusion and prejudice experienced by the Hijra community stems from the failure to acknowledge Hijras as distinct gendered individuals who go beyond the male-female binary. They have been unable to live with human dignity and self-respect in the larger society as a result. Thus, the Government of India and some NGO have already taken several initiatives for the development of the community. The state is necessary to generate and put into practice laws, policies, and programs that make it easy for Hijras' rights as citizens. The right to protection against violence and discrimination, the right to equality under law, the right to vote and nominate for election, the right to property, and a life with dignity as a social human being.

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