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## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF HIJRAS IN SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

The paper examines and explores the problem of Hijras and socio-economic situation in social work perspective in their prevailing vicinities. The literature review provides an over view of the theoretical frame work and context of social, historical, political, economical and geographical problems of research. It provides a justification for the research as well as critical appraisal of the theoretical backup against which the data shall be analyzed. The concept of Hijras defined from various perspectives which vary from one country anther depending upon political, economic and social cultural circumstances. The researcher has tried to elicit the information regarding problems faced by the respondents from the family, neighborhood, community and society domains

### Introduction :

As we all know that there are two genders in the society i.e. Male and Female in biologically on one hand, and also know that there are three genders in literally such as Feminine gender, Masculine gender and neutral gender i.e..Third Gender/ Hijra on the other. In fact, in creation of birth, all (Genders) are born equally on earth. Our Indian constitution also stressed and emphasized that all are equal before the law 'without any discrimination in the form of not only social, physical, economical, political and cultural aspects but also Gender aspect. Despite such a constitutional entity, the Hijras have been suffering a lot especially in view of socio- economic and health. Further, they were also been treated as an excluded group in prevailing society.

Eunuchs (Hijras) – castrated males-have been in existence since the 9<sup>th</sup> Century BC. The word 'Eunuch' derives from the Greek "Keeper of the bed" because castrated men were in popular demand to guard royal harems. The practice is believed to have started in China where, at the end of Ming dynasty, there were as many as 70,000 eunuchs in the grand place itself and many thousands more waiting to fill vacancies in the quarters. Sinha (2002), who defined that the Hijras of "Normal male, physically hale and hearty born with normal genitals and testicles, which may or may not be castrated later and attire in female grabs". Coway (2002) tried to trace the prevalence of Hijra in India and gave rough estimates around 10,00,000 among over a billion people. Serena Nanda (1998), Bangalore is home to about 200 Hijras. The number of Hijras across India is estimated at between 5,00,000 and one million. The earlier reviews were also revealed about the status of Hijras (eunuchs) in the country.

### Review of Literature

The literature review provides an overview of the theoretical frame work and context (Social, Historical, Political, Economical, Geographical and Problems) of research. It provides a justification for the research as well as critical appraisal of the theoretical backup against which the data shall be analyzed. The concept of Hijra defined from various perspectives which vary from one country to another depending on political, economic, and social-cultural circumstances. (Henet. Al., 2006).

Sherry Joseph (2005) this elucidates the fact that the identities are different. While in the Hijra community the terms of bonding between the community members is in the form of the Guru – Chela (master and servant) relationship among the dhuarnis the bonding is akin to kinship discourses example, elder- younger sister, aunt-nephews mother – daughter.

The Social Exclusion Knowledge Net work (SEKN) model was developed by Popay et al. (2007). Assumes that social exclusion is driven by unequal power dynamics and operate in four interconnected and relational dimensions (e.g. cultural,



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economic, political and social) at different Levels (e.g. cultural, economic, political and social) at different levels (e.g. Individuals, groups, Households, Humanities, countries and the world as whole). The power dynamics construct a continuum, inclusion to exclusion along the line of inter related and interdependent factors such as culture, economic, political and social issues.

Economic aspects of exclusion include barrier to employment opportunities, constrained access to commodities, and livelihood opportunities, such as income, housing, land and working conditions.

Social aspect of exclusion refer to limited or no access to social, educational, legal and health service resulting from ruptured social protection and social cohesion such as kinship, family, neighbourhood and the community. Cultural aspects of exclusion refer to subordination of certain norms, behaviours, cultural practices, and lifestyles which exclusion refer to deprivations of citizen 's right, including restricted access to organizations, voter rights, legislations, constitutions and decision – making policy. This multidimensional model of social exclusion frames analysis of the experience of Hijras, in view of the socio – economic problems of Hijras, the researcher has been followed a methodology in order to elicit their problems in respective order.

## METHODOLOGY

### Need for the Study

Empirical research on Hijras in India is limited. As per the government reports which most often avoid critical analysis there is no comprehensive work on the Hijras till date. Hence the research felt that a holistic and critical study onHijras and their socio – economic problems and perspectives. Hijras would contribute substantially to corpus of literature on Hijras. In other words, the proposed research on Hijras, the Hijra community is largest net work in the Country.

However, the literature information regarding problems faced by the respondents from the family, neighbourhood, community and society.It is found that most of the Hijras have not documented Hijra. Hence their empowerment is scuttled, delayed and denied. It is in this context, it is an imperative to study the Hijra Community development and examine its appropriate measures to remedy the situations. This need can be fulfilled only through objective and cutting edge research.

### Objectives

The following are objectives of the study

- To ascertain the Socio- Demographic characteristics of the respondents.
- To elicit the information regarding problems faced by the respondents from the family, neighbourhood, community and society.
- To find out the socio-economic problems and reasons of the respondents.
- To study the future expectations of the respondents.

### Study Setting

Nellore was known by the name VikramaSimhapuri till 13<sup>th</sup> century. The district had an important role during emergence of the Telugu language and the formation fo the state of Andhra Pradesh. Nellore city stands unique among other places of Andhra Pradesh as it is supposed to be the place of Sri Pottisiramulu, Telugu patriot and activist who fasted to death formation of Andhra state.

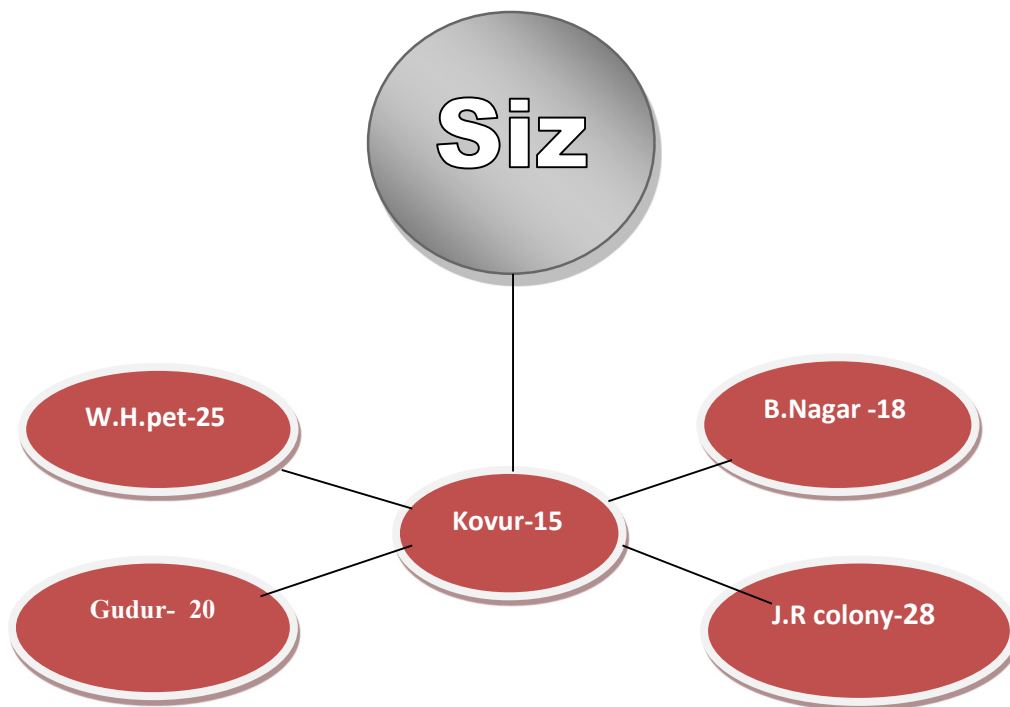
According to 2001 censuses, the population of the district is 26.68 lakhs, out of which male population is 13.45 lakhs and female population is 13.23 lakhs the rural population is 20.69 lakhs. Urban population is 5.99 lakhsth. The Nellore vicinity consists of 46 revenue mandals out of which the researcher was selected five areas such as (1) Pdugupadu (Kovur), (2) Janardhan Reddy Colony, (3) Woodhouse pet, (4) Balajinagar and (5) Gudur (slums) for the purpose of collection of data.



## Sampling Design

One hundred and six members (Hijras) were participated in the study by completing a questionnaire at the start of the Chela community. The sample Hijras was taken for the purpose of the study using snowball sampling method. A total of 106 respondents were covered by the researcher in various areas in Nellore vicinity. Thus, 106 Hijras spread over in five areas such as Kovur, Balajinagar, Janardhanreddy colony, Gudur, Wood house pet of the Nellore District were included in the study which also is shown in the form of diagram.

## Areas and numbers wise sample distribution



## Designations of the respondents

S.No	Designation	n = 106
1	Nayak	1
2	Guru	12
3	Chela	93

## Research Tools

In order to elicit the information from the respondents, the researcher had been used research tools viz Structured interview schedule and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The schedule was devoted to presentation of socio-economic perspectives of the respondents. Focused group discussions were conducted with all the selected community members. Other Chela community members were also involved in focus group discussion. In each group there were 6 to 20 members.



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## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

### Rented Houses and Problems of the Respondents

The problems of the respondents while getting rented houses. It can be observed that the one third of the respondents (77.4%) did not have any type of houses as their own. A significant number the respondents (22.6%) had their own houses. However, these numbers of the respondents have been facing vehement problems in getting houses on rental basis in Nellore vicinities due to genderdiscrimination.

### Respondent's Opinion about Their Satisfaction on Social Participation

The interpretation of the social participation includes marriages, functions, meetings, ceremonies etc. As regards the social participation, the data evidently shows that a majority of the respondents (65.1%) have been emphasized that their social participation was not good. Pertaining to the satisfaction on social participation of the respondents, the data interestingly indicates that a significant number of the respondents (81.1%) opined that they were not satisfactory on their social participation. A few of the respondents (18.9%) expressed that they felt satisfactory on their social participation.

### Humiliation and Harassment of Hijras by Various Groups

It can be observed that the majority of the respondents 77.4%) were indicated that they were humiliated and harassed by the rowdies towards forcible sex and pulling the cash from them at the level of hotspots in the Nellore vicinities in particular. However, a few (22.6%) have expressed that they were caught, humiliated and harassed by the police for preventing and controlling their perverted behaviour in general.

### Gender Identity

We are aware that there are genders on the earth in creation. According to the oxford dictionary and literally the genders are three such as Masculine gender, Feminine gender and Neutral gender. Out of these, the Masculine gender meant for male, feminine gender meant for female and Neutral gender or Third gender interprets in dilemma and confusion due to combination of mixed hormones of male and female i.e. called "Hijra" (Eunuch) or Third gender. As regards the gender identity, it is found that the data emphasized that all the respondents sought in consideration of their gender identity as a 'female' by the society. They also strongly stressing and striving for their gender identity and sustainability.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

### Social Perspective

- The age classification of the respondents reveal that the half of the respondents (Hijras) were in the youngest group from 20-30 years i.e. (51.9%) .
- The educational background of the respondents indicate that a nearly half of the respondents were illiterate.
- The caste details of the respondents reveal that the above one fourth of the respondents (32.2%) belong to the schedule tribe (ST).
- Another significant number of thge respondents (30.2%) belong to other communities (OC).
- The religion composition shows that a little below three fifth of the respondents (71.7%%) from the Hindu religion.
- Pertaining to the marital status of the respondents, the most of the respondents (84.9%) were unmarried. In case they want to be marrying with the masculine gender they maintain wives relationship.
- The half of the respondents (50.0%) preferred love marriages.
- A little above three fifth (63.2%) of the respondents are not having their voter cards.
- A four fifth of the respondents (82.1%) do not have their ration cards
- A little below three fifth of the respondents (72.6%) not having their bank account also.
- A majority of the respondents (86.8%) were not have Rajeev Arogyasri card for their health care.



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- Little above half of the respondents have stated that the gender problem i.e. 53.8 percent.
- One fourth of the respondents expressed that they have tried but not availed i.e. 28.3 percent.
- A majority of the respondents (87.7%) opined that the 'Guru' was their head of the family.
- 12.3% were stated that the Nayak was the head of the entire community.
- Nearly three fifth of the respondents (77.4%) were staying together with their community people.
- All (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed their opinion regarding breaking thali.
- Majority of the respondents did not adopt any children.
- The above half of the respondents (54.7%) have stated that they were simply rejected by the self-help group due to gender discrimination is one aspect.
- A sizeable number of the respondents (44.3%) revealed difficulties in availing public toilets.
- In order to find out the respondents relationship and with their neighbourhood that the four point scale was used by the researcher.
- The above half of the respondents (62.3%) opined that there was a good relationship between respondents and their neighbourhood.
- The majority of the respondents have stated that the perception of the society have been hated about the Hijra community i.e. (73.6%).
- The above one third of the respondents (77.4%) did not have any type of houses as their own.
- A majority of the respondents (65.1%) have been emphasized that their social participation was not good.
- A significant number of the respondents (81.1%) opined that they were not satisfactory on their social participation.
- The majority of the respondents (77.4%) were indicated that they were humiliated and harassed by the rowdies towards forcible sex and pulling the cash from them at the level of hotspots in the Nellore vicinities in particular. However,
- A few (22.6%) have expressed that they were caught, humiliated, harassed by the police for preventing and controlling their perverted behaviour in general.
- All the respondents sought in consideration of their gender identity as a 'female' by the society.
- They also strongly stressing and striving for their gender identity and sustainability.

### Economic Perspective

- ❖ A little above three fifth of the respondents were in the Dhandha (Sex)/Begging i.e. (7.0%).
- ❖ Nearly three fifth of the respondents (68.9%) earn their income of Rs.1000-5000 per month.
- ❖ The above half of the respondents (66.0%) was not saving their money.
- ❖ As regards a monthly expenditure of the respondents, half of the respondents (52.8%) stated that they have been spent their money on clothes and cosmetics.
- ❖ The data evidently shows that 77.4% of the respondents have been facing economic problems.
- ❖ All the respondents should pay the honorarium to the family head for their survival and reorganization as a transgender.
- ❖ A majority of the respondents (93.4%) have to be paid daily.
- ❖ As regards the amount of payment for family head, 93.4% of the respondents have been paying amount Rs.100-1000 daily basis.
- ❖ A majority of the respondents (73.6%) were not migrated for their livelihood.
- ❖ A above half of the respondents (61.3%) indicated that they had been migrated to Chennai.
- ❖ Another significant number of the respondents (91.8%) expressed that there had gone to migration for earning money.
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## Implication to the Policy in Social Work Perspective

Pertaining to the policies in India that there were several national policies formulated by the government of India such as National New Economic Policy, National Educational Policy, National policy for the Children, National Policy for women and National Youth Policy etc. Which weremeant for Male and Female so far only. If we introspect and retrospect about the Third Gender i.e. Hijras were totally neglected, delayed and denied in all perspectives in the prevailing society. If we look into reality, the Third Gender i.e. Hijra is under the excluded and vulnerable section in the present society. Is it lack of awareness on Humanity or gender Justice? Why? Are they not Human beings? if they are Human beings, why the government and non-government organizations are showing disinterest among them? Actually, what the Hijras are thinking about them, their Government and the society? These are very much interesting, interrogation through interactions by using research tools by the researcher in order to elicit the actual information pertaining to the Hijras in Socio-economic and health perspectives in Nellore vicinities. The researcher after procuring the information from the Hijras, their Socio-economic, Health problems and perspectives are wretched and the researcher perceived that they that they are confronting inhuman situations. Even some important identification cards of the respondents such as Voter, Ration, Health and Bank Account were also not provided and facilitated by the Government so far. This was very serious enrich of research. One of the major and painful findings is during sickness of Hijras, they were intentionally neglected and rejected by the doctors without admission into the hospital because of the Gender discrimination.

According to the Indian constitution, Articles 14 and 15 in fundamental rights have been also emphasized that All ARE EAQUAL BEFORE THE LAW without any discrimination that means gender aspect also included. Further, in social work perspective, the core values, principles and philosophy of Social Work also stressed on enhancing and enabling human relationship, protecting the human values, Striving for the welfare of the weaker sections and rendering services for the vulnerable communities in the society based on the humanitarian perspectives irrespective of any kind of discrimination which too covered the concepts of social justice and the gender justice. In order to provide services for the third gender community through inclusive policies and for the social development that the practice of Social Work which pave the way and there would be vital chance to make convergence role by taking into consideration of human values, policies and practice towards elimination of gender discrimination and protect the Gender justice for the amelioration of Hijras on par with others.

In the year 2000, the United Nations convened the Millennium Summit which brought together head of the states from around the World. In that summit the 8 millennium Department goals were developed. Out of which, “Promotion of Gender Justice” and “Combat on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases” are the prominent goals in order to avoid gender discrimination and protect the gender justice around the globe. In this connection the researcher designed the slogan entitled “**Promotion of Gender Justice – Protection of Human rights**”. In tune with their goal the members of summit resolve to develop and implement strategies give a people everywhere a real chance to find decent development without any Gender discrimination.

## Summary and Conclusion

The latest National Youth policy (2003) also emphasized on “Gender Justice”. The policy recognizes the gender bias to be the main factor responsible for the poor status of health well-being of women in our society without any discrimination on grounds of sex violets the basic rights of individual concerned and it therefore stands for elimination of Gender discrimination in every sphere. The policy focused on Gender discrimination in every sphere. The policy focused on Gender discrimination in every sphere. The policy focused on Gender Justice which meant for male and female. In this context, the Hijras also strongly sought in consideration as female or otherwise the policy would change and extend its scope to include Hijras into social inclusive policies from the exclude section for elimination of gender discrimination. Unless changing our policies, programmes, peoples mindsets and unless we extend our co-operation and consideration of Human rights that our reservoir of knowledge is being wasted. In this backdrop, there is an imperative need in bringing awareness among the public at all levels such as Socio-economic and Health perspectives of Hijras on humanitarian grounds.



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