



**Research Report of a Study on “To Increase Advocacy with Stakeholders for the betterment of Trans-gender/Hijra Community in Lahore”**

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## Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CJ	Chief Justice
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Card
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GE	Gender Equity
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSW	Hijra Sex Worker
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
KSS	Khawaja Sira Society
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
MTF	Male to Female (Trans woman)
SC	Supreme Court
TG	Transgender

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## Glossary

**Cross-Dresser:** Someone who dresses in the clothing opposite of the gender they were assigned at birth

**Discrimination:** A difference in treatment based on age, sex, ethnicity, religion or other factors, rather than on individual merit

**Gender:** The differences between women and men within the same household and within and between cultures that are socially and culturally constructed and change over time.

**Gender Dysphoria:** Unhappiness with one's physical/anatomical gender. Also, dissatisfaction with one's gender socialization

**Gender Identity:** An individual's internal sense of being male, female, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

**Gender Expression:** How a person represents or expresses one's gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, and voice or body characteristics.

**Gender Non-conforming:** A term for individuals whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender

**Guru:** Guru is a teacher in the hijra system, under whose apprenticeship a chela (student) learns the principles of the hijra subculture and through whom a chela is identified. Guru is the counterpart of a "patriarch" in the hijra system.

**Hijra:** Member of the hijra subculture in South-Asia born as males but identifying as third-gender, two-spirit, bi-gender, or transgender women. The hijra sub-culture has its own indigenous language known as faarsi kalaam, and their own mores, norms and traditions.

**Hijra dera:** House where khawajasiras/moorats/hijras live together in a community

**Khawajasira:** Respectful Urdu term for hijras, transgender women and eunuchs

**Khusra:** Derogatory term, aimed at emasculating, for someone without male sexual organs, transgender women, hijras, gay men and effeminate men.

**MTF:** A person who transitions from "male-to-female," meaning a person who was assigned male at birth, but identifies and lives as a female. Also known as a "transgender woman."

**Moorat:** Polite term for hijras and khawaja siras

**Sex:** The biological characteristics of being male or female those are genetically determined

**Sex Reassignment Surgery:** Surgical procedures that change one's body to better reflect a person's gender identity. This may include different procedures, including those sometimes also referred to as "top surgery" (breast augmentation or removal) or "bottom surgery" (altering genitals). Contrary to popular belief, there is not one surgery; in fact there are many different surgeries. These surgeries are medically necessary for some people, however not all people want, need, or can have surgery as part of their transition. "Sex change surgery" is considered a derogatory term by many.

**Sexual Orientation:** A term describing a person's attraction to members of the same sex and/or a different sex, usually defined as lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, or asexual.

**Transphobia:** is prejudice or discrimination against trans people. This can include harassment, violence and the restriction of medical, legal and civil rights.

**Transgender Man:** A term for a transgender individual who currently identifies as a man (see also "FTM").

**Transgender Woman:** A term for a transgender individual who currently identifies as a woman (see also "MTF").

**Transsexual:** An older term for people whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex at birth who seeks to transition from male to female or female to male. Many do not prefer this term because it is thought to sound overly clinical.

**Two-Spirit:** A contemporary term that refers to the historical and current First Nations people whose individuals spirits were a blend of male and female spirits. This term has been reclaimed by some in Native American LGBT communities in order to honor their heritage and provide an alternative to the Western labels of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

**Zenana:** A term used by hijras for effeminate men who has sex with men. They occupy a sub-category within the hijra culture, and wear men's clothes.

## 1. Introduction

The present study focused on the issues of transgender community regarding their education. It is one of the emerging issues of our society and directly interacts with the complexities of gender identity and the lives of these people facing the gender disapproval from the society. The objective of the study was to find out the need of education in their life and their perception about getting their education and contribution of state towards the plight of the transgender community. The research was conducted by using Two Focus Group Discussions in Community based organization "Khawaja Sira Society" Peco Road Lahore. The sample size for collection of the information was 20 participants. The overall findings of the study showed that the social prejudice is too strong towards their appearance and despite the fact that the transgender community wanted to get education but they had to stay out of this institution. The findings further revealed that there was not any single practical approach adopted by the government for the plight of the transgender community Except CNIC's. On the basis of study it is suggested that there should be a formal law/policy in the education sector that facilitate the third gender community within the institution and further there is a need of a platform at the city level to send their needs to the government.

The paper focused to find out the educational issues of transgender population in Pakistan. Gender is one of the simplest elements that make up human personality. In fact, gender is very basic to the identity that people assume a sense of being male or female with absolute certainty of the anatomical sex.

Contrary to popular belief, one's sense of gender and one's anatomical sex are two distinct elements: each developing at different times in different parts of the body (Vitale, 1997).

Transgender (Hijra) has been acknowledged in ancient Hindu scriptures. In India, hijras are viewed as an institutionalized "third sex" that has always existed. They are particularly associated with the worship of Bahuchara Mata, a version of the Mother Goddess, for whose sake they undergo emasculation. In return, the Goddess gives them the power to bless people with fertility (Nanda, 1999). Transgender are found in every part of the world, they are accepted and part of Muslim's societies. During Mughal times in the sub-continent, transgender (kwaja saras) or eunuchs, guarded the ladies of the harem. While working in the field among the transgender (Hijra) of Hyderabad, Jaffrey (1996) discovered that during the Mughal era (1526 to 1857) when Hyderabad was a princely state, hijras were employed to oversee the harem, as servants in the homes of the nobility, often becoming key advisors.

It was in the modern time period that they are completely excluded from the mainstream society (Hoda, 2010). After 1870, British morality laws such as the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 and the Dramatic Performance Act, 1876 restricted the activities of hijra and their inheritance and other rights, tarring them as "sodomites." The British rulers in colonial India unprotected the hijras of the laws that granted them the security they received under Mughals and regarded them as a menace to society (CSS forum, 2010).

At present, the situation of the community is worse because they are left ignored, isolated without the survival facilities, health care, education, employment opportunities, identity crisis or even the conformity from the dominant social class. They are living more sever condition than other marginalized communities. Pakistani cities have sizable hijras communities, divided into clans, living mostly in ghettos and managed by a leader or guru. These communities are generally known as Chellas. Hijras, in past, earned their living by dancing at carnivals, weddings and births.

However, with the outgrowth of novel means of celebrations, sex work and begging remain the only available occupational choices for the hijras community

Chief Justice of Pakistan has ordered to provide the transgender community their identity as citizens of Pakistan in December (2009) and it was also suggested that transgenders/Hijras be hired for debt recovery but the community continues to face the scorn and neglect by the society. This was stated by Neeli Rana, a transvestite who is working as Social Activist in Khawaja Sira Society in Lahore.

Considering all the situation in mind, their perception regarding their own troubles through education was desired to find out in this study.

## **2. Method and Material**

### **2.1. Objective of the Study**

This study investigated the vulnerabilities and challenges that the transgender community in Pakistan is exposed to, and identified the consequences of gender non-normative behavior for transgender individuals. The research study led to the development of specific advocacy initiatives towards realization of equal citizenship and dignity for transgender individuals and community alike and find out the perception of third gender community regarding their own education and as an agent of change in their plight.

### **2.2. Instruments of study**

The instruments employed for the study were two focused group discussions (FGD) from the population under study.

During the discussion session researcher got many points and got a grip in a fluent way. Data collection was possible with the help of a community based organization KSS Lahore.

### **2.3 Focused Group Discussions**

Focused group discussions were organized in Lahore. The venue used to be a safe space, like a community drop-in center of an organization. The participants were sampled using snowball methodology. The minimum age for all participants was set at 18 years. A minimum of 10 participants took part in each FGD. The discussion was moderated by a moderator, while a second researcher Volunteer recorded the discussion and took notes where necessary. The discussion was guided by the major themes of mainly focused on Education and identity, access to justice, family and social exclusion, economic avenues, and violence & abuse.

Informed consent was taken by all participants prior to initiating the discussion.



## 2.4 Geographical coverage

FGDs have been conducted in Lahore Punjab

## **3. Results**

### 3.1. Awareness about their Sexual Orientation

All the participants under study were aware about their sexual orientation as they mentioned that the symptoms of changes in body started at the age of five years. But the development of the personality completed till the age of ten. One of the main hurdle in self-realization regarding Gender and Sexual orientation is Internalize Trans-Phobia, Stigma attach and discriminatory behaviors in our society and Family. One of the participants stated that there are three kinds of people living within our community one is known as “Zanana”, having the tendency towards male orientation. Second one is “Khusra”, having tendency towards female orientation and Third one is completely a man but behave like a woman known as “janana”.

### 3.2. Family Belongingness

Participants in this study are currently living with their communities. On asking about their family, most of them responded highlighted by Neeli Rana that provision and protection of the child is responsibility of the family till the sensible or mature age. But it is completely different in our case within Pakistani society. The attitude and behavior of the family is so rude and degrading that Saima and Lucky said that we had to run away from the home due to the harsh attitude of the family members. Disapproval within our legitimate family is painful and we find people like us and this is our family now. We joined the community to find the peace of mind at least we know that there is no one to curse us. As we reached here it seems that “hamy Maa ka payar mil gaya” It means that we got love of our mother. The facilitation for the family interaction for them is just limited with the mother and sister as Saima said that “Khusra ka sirf Maa or Behan ka rishta hota hay”

Kajal said, it's a set mind setup in our society that usually guys consider Moorats as sex object and first of all they do it an later they taunt our brothers or family that your brother had sex with me, but internal family stigma because of societal problems don't let family to accept the Trans-child to be apart of family like other children.

Sunny said, Image of transgender people in our society is not good as their professions are not supposed to be decent profession. And we don't have any role model so families accept their children as Trans-person or Hijra.

It means that they have only relationship with mothers and sisters and stated if our

sisters got married or mother died they completely lose their family. One Transgender stated that “Brothers and fathers never bother to think about our situation perhaps they thanked to God if we left the home”

### 3.3. Feelings on Social Behavior



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Social prejudices are very strong towards them. As they cannot easily move within the society, not even to get the entertainment and perform the religious rituals at mosques. One of participants told that they also want to say prayers but they are not allowed to enter into the mosques for pray as the people scold them that there is no place for them in mosque. During Eid days they have to stay at homes as they step out for celebration, people's attitude is very humiliating and weird towards them. They cannot easily move in parks for the entertainment. While asking about the social attitude, they replied that degrading behavior of the people do not heart us now as we are used to of it but feel emptiness in our souls and pray to God that "kisi ka ghar kuda khsra na payda kary" It means that God never bore anymore third gender person in any family. We all know that it is natural but it is our fate.

#### 3.4. Problems during Getting Education

Institution of education contributes as a healthy place for the children to grow and meet the challenges of the world. The situation is very grim for third gender persons as there is no concept of getting education for this community. They have no acceptance and equal access of education and no place to make their lives like others.

Some of them tried to get education but they faced lot of problems in terms of their enrollment in schools, group selection in the class rooms and to answer the unknown questions of the fellows.

In the initial stages, family is not serious about their education as they knew about their gender. Secondly the economic situation of the family also effects the decision of their education.

According to the older participants there was no concept of getting education for the people like us at that time. Resources were not enough to get education, and the head "gurus" also focused on learning those skills that help to earn the livelihood. The guru trained for survival through dancing. While the young educated respondents stated that the social attitude towards them is very insulting and inhuman that the parents did not like to send the schools.

The most injustice situation is prevailing within the institution itself. There is no support system within the premises to favor the children. Teachers and school administration never bother to concern what is actually happening with the children in the class rooms and school.

### 3.5. Perception about Education

The participants were asked to respond on what they think about role of education in their future, education as an agent of change, education can increase job opportunities, reduce social prejudice, bring confidence to face social attitude, need of separate schools.

Table No: 1 Role of education

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very True	20	100%
Certain	0	0%
Not Necessary	0	0
Total	50	100%

The table 1 shows the perceptions of third gender community towards the significance of education in their lives. 100% of the members agreed that education can play a very important role in a person's life and to their upward mobility in society. They were interested in education that could cater their needs. 6% participants were not sure about the importance of education in their existence as they were more concerned about their earning for living.

Table No: 2 Education As an agent of change

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very True	20	100%
Certain	00	0%
Not Necessary	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The table 2 indicates that 10% participants truly believe that education can bring change for their betterment while 0% participants were not in an opinion that education can bring change in their life rather they believe that it depends not only on third gender community's education but also on the social consideration. And 0 % believe that it is not necessary that education can bring change in their betterment because social prejudice is very strong.

Table No: 3 Education can increase job opportunities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very True	19	95%
Certain	01	05%
Not Necessary	00	0%
Total	20	100%

Table 3 illustrates that 95% participants perceive that their education can increase existing as well as new job opportunities for them. While 05% believe that it depends on government interventions. While 0% said that it is not necessary that job opportunities be increased as the attitude of the society is a big hurdle.

Table No: 4 Education can reduce the social prejudice

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very True	00	0%
Certain	20	0%
Not Necessary	00	0%
Total	20	100%

The table 4 displays those 0% participants who are in a view that it can never be possible that their education can reduce the social prejudice towards them as most of the members of society are already educated. People consider them abnormal human being. 100% of the total participants perceive that their education can reduce the social prejudice as they get education people will start thinking positive towards them.

Table No: 5 Education can bring confidence to face social attitude

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very True	17	85%
Certain	03	15%
Not Necessary	00	0%
Total	20	100%

The table 5 indicates that 85% participants in the opinion that their education can bring them confidence to face social attitude to move in the society. Other 15% participants were not sure about that education can bring confidence to face the social attitude. The rest 0% were sure about it that education cannot bring confidence to face social attitude, it is their training within the community that gives confidence to face social attitudes.

Table No:6 Necessity of separate schools

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very True	1	5%
Certain	07	35%
Not Necessary	12	60%
Total	20	100%

The table 6 shows that 12% of the community perception is that it is not necessary to make separate school for them as it will again create a border line between them and the society. There is a need to make likely place for them within the society. Similarly 35% of the participants also show their concerns for the separate system of their schooling due to the rude behavior of the people while other 5% respondent shows that it may necessary for a separate system initially for their upward mobility.

### 3.6. State Contribution towards their Plight

While talking about the current change in the state steps towards their plight they all are very clear about it. They are of the view that just the announcements never guarantees for the open opportunities for them until state never adopt a practical approach. There is not any practical approach working for their rights.

They stated that just their education is not matter for them in real terms but the social attitudes need to be changed. Kajal stated “There is no place where we can go to ask about our rights”

### 3.7. Problems faced Transgenders/Hijras in these livelihood options

- Always considered as a sex object and sex work is not legalize in Pakistan so they face a lot of issues considered sex work as an illegal profession.
  - sex work is Religious issue in our society.
  - Violence in sex work.
  - Rape in sex work
  - Police interference, blackmail, extortion , rape, forced sex
- Moon said: even if you meet criteria at work place but TG's/Hijras face discrimination on gender and sexuality perspective.
- Imli Butt: During Begging they usually do gender discrimination. Bhatta system/Bribery to Police and other system operator is also common.
- During Tooli there are several issues faces by the community mentioned below:
  - This ritual is getting abolished with the passage of time.
  - Only specific TG/Hijras are allowed to go for Tooli.
  - New Zananas are usually not allowed to go on Tooli.
  - People are not welcoming to TG/Hijras when they go for Tooli or Wadahaye.
  - Naseebo Lal said Wadaye is high source of earning rather than Dheenga.

## 4. Discussion

The present study was conducted in Community Based Organization Lahore city. The study emphasis on the core hurdles behind acceptable and equitable access of education for the third gender community, the perception of third gender community towards their education and state's contribution towards their education. Entry into the institution of education is the prerequisite of a legitimate birth certificate that they do not have at present. The response of the participants showed that they did not receive protection from their families and are considered as morons or sign of embarrassment for them as Imli Butt stated that “Brothers and fathers never bother to think about our situation perhaps they thanked to God if we left the home”

Another participant Saima said that “Khusra ka sirf Maa or Behan ka rishta hota hay”. It means that they have only relationship with mothers and sisters and stated if our sisters got married or mother died they completely lose their family. And this is also supported by Richerdson (2009) that the exclusion of this community from the family makes them isolated and scary for others which lead the prejudice towards them.

Beside family rejection, social prejudices are also very strong towards them. As they cannot easily move in the society, not even to get the entertainment and perform the religious rituals. During Eid days they have to stay at homes as they step out for celebration, attitudes of the people are very humiliating and weird towards them. They cannot easily move in parks for entertainment. They cannot freely visit to a doctor as they hesitate to examine them due to their blurry identity. They cannot go for employment as people never trust on them. Under such narrow environment, the chance for getting education is not possible.



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After the recent order by the Chief justice of Pakistan on the issues of Third gender community there come only few changes. People are recognizing as human beings.

The community wants to get an honor and dignity of their lives, their personalities and their emotions as well. This is supported by “India’s third gender gets own identity in voter rolls” (Lerum, 2009). Further third gender community in India is working to raise the awareness about HIV on county wise. In the same Supreme Court of Nepal made historic decision ordering the Government of Nepal to recognize third gender according to their gender identity (Pant, 2008). They got their one representative person in parliament. The underlying problem in Pakistan is that there is not a proper system where they can go to get their announced rights. Not a single movement or representing person in the parliament which truly depicts the whole community situation at country wise.

They are not fully satisfied on what is going on for their betterment from the state side. It seems there is a structural flaw which keeps them away to enjoy the fruits of state’s decision and they are passing their lives as marginalized. As it stated that marginalized people are poorly integrated into the structures of mainstream of the society and rarely in a position to effectively participate in the formal processes of polices making which is necessary to challenge unfair structures (Richardson, 2009).

## **5. Conclusion**

It is concluded from the study that a person needs all the institutional support from the society to survive and live the life as better as it possible. All the institutions are the pillars of any society and family is one of the important one and in the same manner education, employment and politics. If we make a narrow place for a certain person and categories the institutions on the bases of sex, gender, class or ethnicity, unintentionally we are destroying the whole structure of the society. It is just like we are keeping aside a larger portion of the human resource out of the flow of growth and same contributing the society. There is a need of wider space within the institutions for all the human beings without any kind of discrimination. It will harness the society with progress and leads towards the prosperity.

There is a need of proper legislation on the issues of third gender community in all the institutions especially within the family, as core of the society. In the same way, provision of education facility for the community so that they can be able to meet the challenges of the world like the others. Law making firms should cater the needs of the third gender community through participatory approach and people should show the responsible concern towards the presence of the third gender people, consider them as human being without keeping any prejudice and negativity.

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