

CHAPTER-IV

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES OF HIJRAS

- 4.1 AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION
- 4.2 CASTE-WISE DISTRIBUTION
- 4.3 RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCE
- 4.4 TYPES OF HIJRAS
- 4.5 CASTE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF DIFFERENT TYPES
OF HIJRAS
- 4.6 FAMILY TYPE
- 4.7 MARITAL STATUS BEFORE THE POSITION OF HIJRA
- 4.8 OCCUPATION
- 4.9 CONCLUSION

The group under study is comprised of 45 hijras from Kolhapur district. They were contacted at Saundatti in Karnatak, Alte (Kolhapur district) and in Kolhapur at the three temples, namely at Rajarampuri, New Jayanti Nala-Mahalaxmi Nagar and Juna Budhawar.

4.1 AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF HIJRAS :

Table No. 1 gives an account of age wise distribution of Hijras in the group under study.

TABLE No. 1

AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF HIJRAS

Sr. No.	Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage to the total
1.	Up to 20	02	04.40
2.	21 to 40	32	71.10
3.	41 to 60	08	17.70
4.	61 and above	03	06.60
Total :		45	

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

The information in the above table reveals some important information about hijras.

Firstly, most of the hijras are in the age group 21 to 40, which signifies that the majority of hijras are in a productive age group in a demographic sense. However, they are not at all performing any economic role inspite of the fact they hail from that age group.

Secondly, those having more than age 60 are less in number, enquired about the old hijras, information received was that, hijras do not live longer life. The miserable life they lead as a third gender and have been socially neglected one do not have long life and the old age hijras say that they do not have any aspiration for long life and do not want to have rebirth.

Thirdly, the age group upto 20, we could contact only 2 hijras means due to change in the attitudes regarding religion and fear of the goddess there has been a decrease in this age group.

The distribution of hijras according to their age group has thus revealed these three important aspects of hijra life.

4.2 CASTE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF HIJRAS :

Hijras are a third gender and most unwanted group of people in the society. They are treated as the most marginalized and stigmatized community. However, even this community is stratified on caste basis. The small group of 45 hijras is divided into 12 Hindu castes and a Muslim hijra. Table No. 2 given below summarises the caste wise position of hijras under study.

TABLE No. 2
CASTE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF HIJRAS

Sr. No.	Name of the caste	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
2.	Brahmin	01	02.22
2.	Maratha	16	35.55
3.	Mahar (Messenger)	17	37.78
4.	Mang (Roop maker)	02	04.44
5.	Chambhar (Leather worker)	02	04.44
6.	Sutar (Carpenter)	01	02.22
7.	Parit (Washerman)	01	02.22
8.	Simpri (Tailor)	02	04.44
9.	Lingayat	01	02.22
10.	Bania	01	02.22
11.	Muslim	01	02.22
Total :		45	

Source : Information collected by the researcher

The caste wise distribution of hijras reveal that, Maratha and Mahar comprise as the major contributors to hijra community. Other castes are balutedar castes (excluding Mahar balutedar) and they are eight in total. There is one Brahmin, one Lingayat, one Bania and one Muslim hijra.

The castes shown in the table signify that they are the economically backward and socially depressed sections of the society. The Brahmin, Lingayat and Bania are the economically well-off castes and the hijras from those castes keep a distance from rest of the hijras and they feel superior, although to become a hijra they have to get initiated by Chambar a backward caste person.

The hijras is a different community and they are deprived of any social recognition in the larger society however, they do not leave their castes in which they are born.

4.3 RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENCE :

It is not the case that only rural areas are having this marginalized hijra community. They are found where the fear of the deity Yallamma is exercising control over the members of the society. They are found in villages adjoining to Kolhapur, a district place and in the ruralburn areas and in the city areas of Kolhapur and Ichalkaranji. Socio-culturally Ichalkaranji and part of the Kolhapur city resembles to rural areas. The hijras are found in the old Kolhapur, where agriculture and live-stock maintenance is the major occupation. The habitats of old Kolhapur have landed properties nearby city and being the original habitats of the city they still follow the agriculture and live-stock maintenance as their main occupations.

As far as the place of residence is concerned the hijra community under study is divided into three groups. Table No. 3 gives an idea about their residences.

TABLE No. 3
RESIDENCE OF HIJRAS UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Nature of Residence	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	Rural	23	51.10
2.	Ruralban	13	28.80
3.	Urban	09	20.00
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

Thus, it seems that hijras are concentrated more in the rural and rururban areas where the fear of deity and following of blind practices in the name of religion are dominant. The hijras in the urban areas are in those areas where the rural migrants and original habitants dwell.

They are rarely found their residence in the newly developed colony or in the extension area with housing colonies and complexes.

4.4 TYPES OF HIJRAS :

Hijras can be divided into three major types according to their acquisition of the position of hijras.

First Type :

There are some hijras, who are eunuchs, who are the victims of biological deformity. They are considered to be hermaphrodites, which is a condition caused by the maldevelopment of genitals. They are the persons with incomplete genital development.

Second Type :

There are some hijras who are man-made hijras. They are castrated males. They are the victims of religious customs and the tradition of Renuka worship present in the family. The fear of the mother goddess creates an atmosphere in the feared family to offer atleast one male to keep the continuity of Renuka worship in the next generation.

The man-made hijras are due to the reason that, they get livelihood without much efforts in the form of alms given in the name of Renuka goddess. Illiterate and socio-culturally and economically backward caste people go in for to become hijras for easy livelihood in the name of religion.

In this category, psychologically weak and those come under certain pressures in the name of the deity are attracted to become hijras.

Third Type :

This type of hijras are those who loose their biological capacity to reproduce in the later part of the life or even at an early stage of life due to physical or psychological depressions or accidents. Generally, these people try to hide their deformity as long as possible. But when the affected person becomes clear about his/her exact position of sexual nature he/she finds no other alternative but to go out of the family and join the hijras in the area.

In the group under study we find all the three types of hijras. Table No. 4 gives details about the types of hijras in the group under study.

TABLE No. 4

TYPES OF HIJRAS IN THE GROUP UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Type	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	By birth	06	13.30
2.	Man made	31	68.89
3.	By accident	08	17.78
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

The number of man-made hijras in the group under study is 31 (68.89%) which signifies that the development of hijra community is necessarily not due to the biological deficiency. It is not the genetical irregularity that causes the origin and development of hijras.

There are only six (13.30%) hijras who have been the victims of deficiency in sexual development. The number of hijras who have been put into this position due to accidents are 8 (17.78%) only. Thus, the man-made hijras dominate the group as far as their numerical strength is concerned.

4.5 CASTE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF HIJRAS :

It is interesting to know about the types of hijras by their caste (in which they are born). The information given in the Table No.5 gives an idea about the types of hijras and their original castes.

TABLE No. 5
CASTE AND TYPE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF
HIJRAS IN THE GROUP UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Caste	Type			Total
		Man made	By Birth	Accident	
1.	Brahmin	-	01	-	01
2.	Maratha	10	02	04	16
3.	Mahar	14	01	02	17
4.	Mang	02	-	-	02
5.	Chambhar	02	-	-	02
6.	Sutar	01	-	-	01
7.	Parit	-	01	-	01
8.	Simpi	02	-	-	02
9.	Lingayat	-	01	-	01
10.	Bania	-	-	01	01
11.	Muslim	-	-	01	01
Total :		31 (68.89%)	06 (13.30%)	08 (17.78%)	45 (100.00%)

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

The above details about the caste and type relation clearly signifies that, hijra in the type of man-made hijras are from the socio-culturally and economically backward caste groups of Hindu society.

The hijra community develops not because of the genetical irregularities but more because the fear of religion and other socio-economic reasons.

Those born in the higher in the hierarchy are very few and try to hide their position and do not exploit the position by getting alms. It is compulsory for every hijra to get alms for the livelihood at least from five houses and those hijras from higher caste orientation does like this, but the hijras from backward castes and from economically poor strata go round the village at every doorstep for alms and lead life on alms collected in the nature of Renuka.

4.6 FAMILY TYPE :

Though the hijras are a marginalized and stigmatized community, they live in the family. There are hijras who live in the family and perform their religious activities. They are treated as the member of the family and are allotted a status of a elderly member. This is because they are an important source of income. The group of people worshipping Renuka or Yallamma visit the house of hijra in the village to get favour of the deity in respect of their desire fulfilment. They offer alms in the form of grains, coconut, oil, money and peace of cloths. These are offered on Tuesdays, Fridays, Mondays and on ceremonies performed seasonally. Hijra performing the rituals and religious ceremonies makes these alms as his/her property. This creates a sizeable amount of wealth.

Those hijras who still live with other members of the original family lead a family life. But there are those hijras who have left their

families due to the fear of being molested lead isolated life along with one or two other hijras.

The hijras in the group under study have been divided into two major groups on the basis of family type they have. The information regarding the type of family hijras have is given in the table No.6.

TABLE No. 6
FAMILY TYPE AMONG HIJRAS UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Type of family	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	Nuclear	32	71.10
2.	Joint/Extended	13	28.90
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

The number of hijras who are deprived of the family life in the root family have developed their nuclear families and they are 32 (71.00%) in number. They visit their original families but are not allowed to stay there for long and hence they have to develop their own nuclear families. There are 21 hijra families and 11 hijras live with one or two other hijras. Those who are in the joint family they live with other family members, brothers, parents and wives and children (in those cases where the hijra position has been acquired in the late stage of life due to non-genetical reasons. They enjoy higher status in the family. The number of such hijras is 13 (28.90%) in the group under study.

4.7 MARITAL STATUS BEFORE
THE POSITION OF HIJRA :

The marital status of hijras before they were initiated as hijras is an important factor to be considered because it throws light on the fact that emergence of hijra community is due to the desire of people in the society in most cases and not only due to sexual deformities.

Table No. 7 given below gives us an idea about the position of hijras in their past life as far as the marital status is concerned.

TABLE No. 7

MARITAL STATUS OF HIJRAS
(PRIOR TO THE POSITION)

Sr. No.	Marital Status	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	Unmarried	34	75.60
2.	Married :		
	a) Marriage at childhood stage	08 ()	
		(11	24.40
	b) Marriage after maturity	03 ()	
		(
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

The tradition bound and deity fearing families to please the Renuka goddess marry their child at an early stage of his/her life without knowing any thing about its future consequences. There are 20 (44.44%) such hijras who are unmarried (married with the deity) the genetically

produced hijras are six in number who are also unmarried and eight other cases where physical and psychological (due to religious fears and faith) reasons are behind their being unmarried. There are 11 (24.40%) hijras who have enjoyed married life, have children and are still in their families but due to economic or religious reasons they have become hijras at present.

To develop one's family economically, to get rid of poverty stricken conditions, to pray for a male issue and to achieve certain, goals with the blessings of Renuka these 11 persons have become hijras.

4.8 OCCUPATION :

The hijras mainly live on alms collected in the name of Renuka or Yallamma generally on every Tuesdays and Fridays. However, the group of hijras from the man made type do follow other economic activities.

It is generally the impression that this third gender community people are not normal in every aspect. They do not perform roles common to general member of the society. They follow religion and worship the deity and are depending upon the alms given in the name of the deity.

TABLE No. 8

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF HIJRAS UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Occupation	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	Religious Performances	35	77.80
2.	Agriculture	04	08.90
3.	Other	06	13.30
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

The fear of deity and the faith in the deity namely Renuka or Yallamma is being exploited by the hijras who perform religious performances. The illiterate and backward people come to them for rescue and relief from individual problems and they offer alms to the deity to please her. To act as an agent between the worshiper and the deity is an occupation for hijras. They lead their life by this.

There are senior hijras who perform such functions and get alms in the name of the deity. They have a full time job as temple worshipers and perform certain religious performances.

Four hijras who reside with their family members and are not eunuchs perform agricultural activities. They perform all activities concerned with agriculture.

The number of hijras engaged in other activities include those six hijras who have small shops near the temple. They cater the needs of the visitors by providing coconut, turmeric, new cloths, Bangles and other things required for the religious performances. They have also fruit stall and one hijra has a grossary shop.

Thus, it is seen that, as far as economic role is concerned there is a variety in such roles adopted by hijras.

4.9 INCOME OF THE HIJRAS :

Economic stringency and backwardness are the qualities of the hijras. The annual income of the hijras under study reveal the same. Economically they are divided into three groups for the present study. Table No. 9 provides details about income level of the hijras under study.

TABLE No. 9
INCOME OF HIJRAS UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.,	Yearly income in rupees	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	Upto 3,000	31	68.90
2.	3,001 to 5,000	10	22.20
3.	5,001 and above	04	08.90
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

The majority of the respondents have an average of Rs. 3,000/- per year as their income from all sources which is not sufficient for to lead a normal life with two square miles per day.

Those who are supported by agriculture and other occupations have income upto Rs. 5,000/- per year and only four hijras do have income more than Rs. 5,000/- per year.

This is revealed from the table that, the hijras are poverty stricken and economically backward.

There are a number of hijras who collect alms daily as they cannot live without it. The alms collected on Tuesday and Fridays and on Mondays and other festival days are not sufficient for their survival. The fear of deity is misutilized for collection of alms by some hijras.

At the time of birth of a male child and at the time of death of a male in the family hijras go and perform religious performances and get alms. They demand more in the name of the deity. However, in recent days, educated people do not encourage hijras at such birth or death occasions and they are not given alms sufficiently.

4.9 CONCLUSION :

The above discussion signifies the position of hijras in the society.

The number of hijras in the productive age is more and in the young age it is reducing. It may be concluded that in the modern period with the spread of education and modern outlook people have

The hijras though a marginalized and a third gender community still follow the caste and caste identity to discriminate oneself from the rest of the group. The hijras are not a casteless society, though the caste society does not value them.

The number of hijras is more in rural and rural areas where religion and magic and blind faith still play an important role in social life. The fear of the deity and respect for mother goddess is more among villagers than the urbanite.

As far as typology is concerned hijras can be divided into three types depending upon how they join the community and achieve the status of a hijra. Very few are eunuchs and maximum number of hijras are man made and the reasons are economic, social and religious than genetical. There are some hijras who are due to accidents, physical as well as psychological.

The hijras are more from the higher to untouchable and economically backward castes. In the upper castes only biological deformities make hijras but in the lower castes poverty and illiteracy and fear of the deity are the major reasons for the becoming of hijras.

Hijras have a family and those driven out of the root family establish their own families. There are some hijras who have enjoyed married life and at the late stage of life they have become hijras for religious economic, psychological and personal reasons.

Temple worship is the main occupation of the hijras but few man-made hijras follow petty business and agriculture as the means for livelihood.