

CHAPTER-V

HIJRA : PERSONALITY TRAITS

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5.1 INTRODUCTION :

It is found that when normal sex formation is not working properly and there are deformities as far as the mechanism of sex is concerned in case of a person he/she has to face a very hazardous situation. Biological reproduction is a process and in such persons the process of creation is disturbed one. When a human child takes its birth with incomplete sex organ it has to face an unfortunate situation in the human society. In the childhood these persons are protected by the parents and other members of the family in hiding their state of a sexuality. They make utmost effort to keep the reality of sexual deformity away from view of the society. But when the affected person becomes clear about the exact position of sexual reality there is no alternative left for such persons than to leave the family. The leaving of family is mainly because if such persons continue to be the members of the family, that particular family few of being molested. The third gender joins their own community and becomes hijra.

These persons have to face the problem of role identity. They do not have any ascribed role by birth and due to stigmatized position cannot acquire any role valued by the society. They are not accepted and women folk because of their sterility, they are unable to perform the function of reproduction. At the same time since they lack virility, they are not accepted as men. Thus, they do not have any role in the set-up of the society. The sex deformity or genetical irregularity is the root cause of this situation.

It is a matter of fact that excepting the sex disorder these people are normal in other aspects of life. But the as a sexulness among them has created psychological setback in them. It makes them to fear about other members of the society. They try to keep themselves away from the general social milieu. The very physical appearance of the hijras conditioned by some physiological abnormaliaties together with their mode of outward expression are creating public ridicule for hijras.

5.2 ACQUIREMENT OF HIJRA POSITION :

The group hijras under study shows that there are sexual deformaities among them but they have acquired it at different stages of life. All are not the eunuchs and have become the victim of becoming a sexual by birth. Table No.10 given below summarises the position of hijras as far as aquirement of sexual deformation is concerned at different stages of life.

TABLE No. 10

ACQUIREMENT OF A SEXUAL CONDITION
IN THE RESPONDENTS GROUP

Sr. No.	A sexual position when acquired	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	By birth	06	13.30
2.	Childhood stage (upto 15 years)	22	48.90
3.	Young age stage (15 to 30 years)	10	22.20
4.	Middle age stage (Above 30 years)	07	15.60
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

By birth 6 members have become eunuchs and hence joined the hijra community. There are 22 (48.90%) cases that is majority of the hijra community under study, nearing half of the population of the group have become physically deform at the childhood stage of life. Due to religious fear and to maintain the tradition of the family a male child is married to Yallamma and has been asked to wear female dress. In some of the cases the environmental conditions created by the family members and closeness to senior hijras make a child to adopt the behaviour of hijra. Those who have acquired this position of hijra in the young age are 10 (22.20%) and those who have enjoyed married life and due to psychological and physiological reasons have acquired sexual deformity are 7 (15.6%) as far as the group under study is concerned.

This information leads us to come to the conclusion that sexual deficiency can be found at any stage of life. But once it is found, there is no other way than to join the hijra group. They cannot remain the normal member of the society. It is found that, human society does not offer any specific role to third agender and the total social life and social interactions are based on two major sex roles, male and female. The group becomes a marginalized and stigmatized one. They become psychologically weak and tries to hide from public, do not mix freely in the public.

5.3 DRESS PATTERN :

The hijras dress and act like women and worship Renuka or Yallamma, the mother goddess. The hijras lay claim to that position after a ritual performance. They are provided with a dress of female

members after the performance of initiation ceremony at Saundatti in Karnatak.

However, it is found in the group under study that, not all the hijras dress in a feminine way.

Table No. 11 gives details about the dress pattern of hijras under study.

TABLE No. 11

DRESS PATTERN ADOPTED BY HIJRAS UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Nature of dress pattern	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	Feminie Dress	25	55.50
2.	Masculine Dress	17	37.80
3.	Both	03	06.70
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected from the researcher.

Thus, it is not the case that, all hijras wear feminine dress. Those who have acquired sexual deformation at an early stage of life dopt femine dress, as it is generally found in the group under study. Those who wear dhoti, pant and shirt and turben are the hijras having been acquired this position at later stage of life. There are three hijras in the group under study using both the male and female dresses.

Thus, it can be said that, we cannot generalize about the dress pattern of hijras. They may and may not be adopting feminine way of dressing themselves.

However, at the time of ritual performances all the hijras wear sari and bangles. They have to be in the feminine dress and carry an idol put in the cane basket in a female members style.

5.4 PLACE OF RESIDENCE :

It is a popular conception that hijras as a community do have residence away from the general public. They are having their own residence away from the original family. In practice, the hijras under study have shown that they still continue to be the members of the family from which they have come.

TABLE TABLE No. 12
PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF HIJRAS UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Place of Residence	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	With family members	23	51.10
2.	With other hijras	22	48.90
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected from the researcher.

The information gathered from the above table signifies that, it is not necessary for the hijras to be away from their families. The number of hijras who reside in the family in which they are born is 23 (51.1%) more than half of the number in the group.

These families get economic benefits from the hijra member in the form of alms given to the deity on Tuesdays and Fridays and on moondays. The hijras lay claim to the status of ritual experts in the society. They perform ritual performances at the time of a male issue, at the time of attainment of puberty by a girl in the family and at the time of marriage.

They create confidence among those who are the victims of various problems in the family by performing ritual performances and eradication of the fear of the Renuka or Yallamma deity is done by them. There are number of worshipers who offer alms to the deity on various occasions apart from the birth and marriage.

Those who reside away from the root family along with other hijras perform a role of ritually superior or temple worshiper. Generally they do reside near the temple and where the temple is not existing, the place, generally at the outskirts of the village in the untouchable area is converted into a holy place, residence of Yallamma or Renuka - the mother goddess.

Those who reside in the family perform other roles like elder member giving proper guidance, father's role, role of a senior person earning through his/her religious and ritual performances. Especially, those hijras, who have acquired the position at a late stage of life and those who have become hijras as a fulfilment of demand of the tradition do play other roles.

5.5 HIJRA CULTURE :

Hijras have a sub-culture of their own. They have been deprived of a definite sex role by nature at an early stage of life in most of the cases and at a later stage of life in other cases. This is a third gender a unique and extra-ordinary group in the larger society.

In the popular belief they are considered to be hermaphrodites. They are considered as those who are having a sexual deficiency in them. They are neither men or women. The hijra is not accepted as a woman because of 'her' sterility and as a man because she negates virility.

This group is different from the rest of the society and since the membership of a general society on the basis of sex difference is denied to them, they lay down certain conditions for to become a fullfledged hijra and join the community.

To attain a fullfledged status of a hijra a male has to go through the initiation ceremony performed by the Gural Hijra and helped by the Sub-Guru hijras. The Guru hijra is a senior Jogata, a worshiper of the Renuka or Yallamma deity. Jogata may not be and generally not sexually deform or an eunuchs. The Jogata is an authority as far as the initiation of a new member is concerned. Generally the Guru Jogata resides at places where temples of Renuka or Yallamma are established and have been recognised by the general public.

The Up-Guru or Sub-Guru, is a position given to the second generation Jogata. They are at the village level temple as temple worshipers or having Renuka goddess at their place of residence. The Sub-Guru or Up-guru are always at the rescue of the illiterate and backward

caste people's religious and personal problems. There might be any type of problem, physical, economical or psychological the Sub-guru asks the villagers to submit themselves to the deity by offering alms in some chronic cases offering a male child or a person himself in the services of Renuka in the hijra position.

In the north and in Gujarat State, the hijras are worshipers of Bahu Charu Mata, a version of mother goddess. In these areas a male has to go through a ritual surgical operation after a period of apprenticeship under a senior hijra.

The hijras have a ritual status in the larger society and they perform it since the historical time. There are some hijras who are best cooks and serve the wealthy families and womenfolk from elite sections. These are appointed as personal servants to the lady of the house in wealthy society due to their asexual position.

Hijras claim that they are the temple worshipers and hence have a superior culture of their own. They seek legitimation through the androgyny of Hindu deities.

Hijras are an institutional antithesis of both male and female principles. It is a negation of the dominant construction of 'androgyny' in Indian culture. The capacity to reproduce is regarded as the best and essential quality of persons but the hijras lack it and are looked upon differently by the larger society people. They are the victims of public ridicule. To identify themselves and to have an established sub-culture hijras have taken shelter at the steps of Renuka or Yallamma - the mother goddess. They have institutionalized their religious and ritual

roles and statuses. They observe certain rules and regulations as far as their behaviour pattern is concerned. They have their own value patterns and are controlled by specific norms and agencies of control.

The initiation gives them a specific ritual role. Throughout the life they have to follow their seniors and be submissive to the deity. They dress as per perceptions and do not violate rules of conduct.

They are buried after death and no one than the hijras attend it. They do not perform any observances as they are performed in case of either sexes from Hindu religion. The death ceremony is conducted by a Muslim. He performs the funeral and on tenth and fortieth day rituals are performed according to Muslim customs.

As far as material aspect of the life is concerned, hijras do depend upon alms offered to the deity and they lead a life without any aspirations and in a poverty stricken condition. They do not have any ambition as such.

The hijra leads a miserable life and hence at the time of death ritual on burial they beat the burial by sandless and abuse and say that the deceased should never get any birth. They do not wish to have re-birth.

Hijras are generally from the socially and economically backward castes and mostly illiterate. The group under study has revealed that the man-made hijras are more in number and have taken a shelter in the form of ritual worshiper. It is a defence from the larger society.

Hijras are male prostitutes in many cases. They are exploited for sex abuse by a larger society. Those who are interested in homosexual relations use the hijras for their purpose. The hijras also act as agents as far as female prostitution is concerned. They give shelter to prostitution at their residence and earn money from such business like act. They are neglected and treated as deviants due to such acts.

Hijras suffer from different vices. The chewing of tobacco and bettlenut is common among them. Table No. 13 gives information about hijra's vices.

TABLE No. 13
DIFFERENT VICES OF HIJRAS UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Nature of vice	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	Pan-Tobacco	30	66.67
2.	Wine/Liquor/ Smoking	08	17.78
3.	Do not have any vice	07	15.55
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

In the rural area chewing pan and tobacco is a common vice and socially approved one. In a larger society family members do not find any ill in eating pan and tobacco. Father and son can also exchange pan and tobacco. But smoking and liquor drinking is not accepted by the society.

The hijras who are addicted to liquor drinking are psychologically depressed and want to forget about the present and the future of the life. They consume country liquor. To get that country liquor they indulge into deviant practices and work for deviant acts in the larger society.

However, the number of such deviant hijras is comparatively less in the group under study. Those who lead life by performing ritual performances is more. In the group under study we find that all hijras do not perform religious duties. Table No. 14 gives an information about hijras performing religious performances with sincerity and others who do not perform it or perform only Tuesdays and Fridays.

TABLE No. 14

RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCES OF HIJRAS UNDER STUDY

Sr. No.	Nature of Religious	Number	Percentage to the total N = 45
1.	Daily worshipping	20	44.40
2.	Worshipping on Tuesdays and Fridays only	17	37.80
3.	No worshipping on any day	08	17.80
Total :		45	100.00

Source : Information collected by the researcher.

The information given in the table shows that it is not at all found that all hijras perform ritual performances. They deviate from their role assigned by the community at the initiation ceremony. They cannot be regarded as persons who depend only worship of the mother goddess for their position after attending a status of third gender. Religion may not be and need not be the shelter for them.