



Violence against
Gender Diverse Community
A contemporary situation analysis study
Moshfec Ara

Abstract

In Bangladesh, the majority of people are still against persons of different genders. People of different genders are the subject of stigmas, fears, and superstitions in Bangladesh. The "Hijra" were once referred to as gender nonconforming people by Bangladeshis. However, many people are unaware of the wide variety of identities seen in gender diverse populations. Although each identity has unique vulnerabilities, they are all subject to injustices by the state, society, and family. They are denied the dignity and human rights that come with being a state citizen and a human being. The fundamental human rights violations of intersex, transwomen, and transgender people were the main emphasis of this study.

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List of Acroamas:

FGD – Focas group discussion

KII - Key information interview

IDI – In-depth interview

MSW- Ministry of Social Welfare

NID – National Identity card

ILO- the International Labour Organization

UNGP-UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

SME (small and medium enterprises)

SOGIGSC- Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics

NGO – non-government organization

SDG – Sustainable development goal

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Finally, my best wishes for the upcoming days with the gender diverse community and general women and men and the poor marginalized, and disadvantaged communities of Bangladesh to develop themselves as defenders of human rights with enhanced capabilities to function, act, and live with dignity.

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Executive Summary:

The majority of people in the country do not yet accept gender diverse people. There are taboos, superstitions, and phobias regarding gender diverse people in Bangladesh. Historically, the people of Bangladesh have commonly known the 'Hijra' as gender diverse identity. But there are so many different identities of gender diverse populations that people are not aware of. Every identity has different vulnerabilities, but the common thing is all of them face violations from the family, society, and the state. They are excluded from the human rights and dignity they deserve as human beings and a citizen of the state. They are not getting the opportunity and the dignity they deserve. Because most of the people of Bangladesh are conservative, every government, to protect their vote, did not try to include the gender diverse community. There is no clear definition of gender-diverse population in the gazette or from the cabinet.

After a long advocacy by different human rights organization, like Bandhu social welfare foundation, Blast etc, from 2013 Bangladesh government take step to include transgender people, especially transwomen who belong hijra community. Bangladesh's government passed Hijra Gadget (hijra gadget 2013), which identified hijra as a sex. After passing the bill, the government has taken several initiatives in the past years to include Hijra & transgender, especially transwomen in different programs like social SafetyNet, special facility to the company for appointing transgender person.

However, that did not change people's behavior towards the gender diverse community. Most people still have transphobia and lack awareness. Therefore, mainstream people have a very unfavorable opinion of these people. Not only the general people but also the families of gender diverse people also believe that they are a burden for their family and society. Many of them were evicted from their family. After revealing their identity, their family started torturing them and hiding them from their relatives. They have faced physical, mental, and sexual violence in school, social spaces, and workplaces. As most of them do not get the opportunity to complete their education, they do not get a good job. Few of them can complete their education; however, they also do not get jobs as per their qualification. Because they are gender diverse, people are different from the binary men and women, and the general people judge them. How a person lives their life, what clothes they wears, and whom they chooses as a partner are personal choices. However, the majority of the people of Bangladesh do not have that sensitivity, and they enter others' personal space. Because of the different choices, gender diverse people face discrimination from their basic citizen rights.

There are many genders and sexually diverse people. All of them suffer differently. However, this study does not include all of them. It focused on the violence against the Intersex and transgender community. It does not include transgender people who are involved in Hijra culture. The study was conducted in three different areas of Bangladesh: Dhaka, Khulna, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, from January 2024 to February 2025. During the study period, the socio-political situation of Bangladesh changed a lot. After 16 years of political regime, a new political era started. So, the overall political and social situation is quite imbalanced. However, the gender diverse community always faces challenges in this patriarchal, conservative social context. The field interviewer is from the gender diverse community, and they are a vital part of this study. One of the key components of this project is also to enhance the capacity of the field interviewer. Thus, the team also faced many challenges in completing the field work.

Challenges during the study:

This study started in January 2024. Before we started our fieldwork, a fundamentalist group of Bangladesh started a social media mob and movement against the gender diverse population. In 2023, the government initiated to include gender diversity in the textbook of class seven, where they included a story of a transgender women. Asif Mahtab Utsha, a Brac University part-time instructor, ripped a class seven sociology textbook during a discussion in mid-January 2024 after criticizing the narrative that raised awareness of gender varied people. His comments were captured on film, which went viral on social media and sparked a contentious discussion about whether or not it was appropriate for adolescents. Scholars and social scientists claim that readers are misinformed by the chapter's contents, which emphasize gender concerns rather than sexuality. Later, the government removed the content due to pressure from the religious extremist group. However, after this viral issue, people started to understand the difference between transgender and intersex, though most of the people still think a hijra person's genitals are different, nevertheless, they also understand that a transgender is not different by genital organ. That understanding makes transgender people more vulnerable. After the attack on the Bandhu Social Welfare Foundation, transgender people feared and stopped using social media, changed their houses, and hid themselves.

The study started with the training of field interviewers. The team was a mixed group of intersex, trans women, trans men, and women. Because the people of Bangladesh are not sensitive about gender diversity, they were accommodated in an NGO guest house instead of a hotel. But the next day, we called to leave the room as they are from a gender diverse community. Even in NGOs' guest houses, we are unable to accommodate them.

Though that NGO is also working for marginalized people's rights. However, we managed another NGO's guest house for their accommodation.

This study only interviewed the gender diverse community and some professionals. But we were not able to talk with general people and religious leaders about the security issue. So, we missed their point of view. Based on the gender diverse community's experiences and based on some events, we give our assumption.

One of our field interviewers went to his relative's house in Khagrachori to do an interview. Because of his attire, His relatives believed he was insane and attempted to tie him to a room. He was able to get out of the residence and return home. We need to reschedule that interview in that region later and set up a focus group discussion (FGD) with the local indigenous population in Dhaka.

One of the biggest challenges of the interviews was finding a location. They failed to locate a secure location. They were terrified to converse while sitting in an open area. Finding a secure location to conduct an interview was challenging, particularly for the FGD. There was a fear of being attacked by locals. Nonetheless, the interviewer managed secure locations.

The county politics turn into turmoil when the first interview process is finished, and a new political scenario emerges. Gender diverse people become more vulnerable in the context of shifting political conditions. Every minority group, including gender diverse communities, was in danger, and Hijra people were attacked in several locations. The interview's second phase began in this evolving scenario. They were hard to locate. After witnessing the fundamentalist group's destructive activities, the majority of them experience trauma. They need time to settle down and do an interview.

Methodology:

The study aimed to empower SOGIESC youth through capacity building on field study. Since no one has ever attempted to comprehend the true scenario accurately, this study has applied an approach that involves a fact-finding study or situation analysis study, and participatory, holistic solution oriented. This study tried to fully comprehend the situation to come up with practical solutions and recommendations which will help everyone to develop further development initiatives. This is why this project is about carrying out a descriptive qualitative study that will create knowledge in the development and gender fields. To correctly identify the issues, the project would like to learn about queer people's own experiences, viewpoints, and suggestions. Most of the people who researched gender diversity did not really take gender diverse people as primary stakeholders or decision-makers. They used them simply as participants. They were not unbiased as they were Cisgender Heterosexuals. Most researchers see everything through their heterosexual lens, which creates false narratives or assumptions. For this reason, this study engaged SOGIESC people to develop their skills as field researchers who will conduct the data collection process. This program trained 8 young intersex, transwomen, transmen & cis

women through a 6-day long training workshop on a) Mental Health, b) SRHR, c) SGBV, d) Legal Services, e) Livelihood, f) Research Methodology and Data Collection, and the last day they did a have demo field work for practical experience. This research itself is a program. After this training, field researchers find out their problems and solutions themselves, additionally, they are empowered to conduct research and get various skills and knowledge so that they can become confident agents of change as they are their decision-makers. These 8 field researchers have collected data in 3 districts (Dhaka, Chattogram, and Khulna). They have conducted 12 KII and 10 FGD, and 32 In-Depth Interviews were conducted with 99 participants.

Findings:

Intersex is an umbrella term that refers to people with one or more of a range of variations in sex characteristics that fall outside the traditional conceptions of male or female bodies. Some of these differences are apparent at birth, while others become noticeable later in life, such as during puberty. There are many possible differences in genitalia, hormones, internal anatomy, or chromosomes that do not fit neatly into the binary sex categories into which people are typically assigned at birth.

Most of the people of Bangladesh have no idea about the genital formation of the intersex person, so people also have curiosity about the intersex person's body. The government also does not have a clear understanding of intersex people, so often they misunderstand the "Hijra" as "intersex". However, in Bangladesh very most of the Hijra are transwomen, not Intersex. Because of the misunderstanding of their identity by the government, most intersex people also lose the allowance provided by the government. Most intersex people do not get an education or are not able to continue school, so they also do not get decent jobs. Only a small percentage of individuals who get family support are able to finish their school despite several obstacles. Most people of the intersex community of Bangladesh are not able to fulfill their basic needs and are constant victims of human rights violations.

Discrimination begins in the **family**. They got the hijra tag after birth. The family also hid them from neighbors and other relatives. They did not want them to leave home and talk with others. Parents also avoided bringing them to any family program, such as marriage ceremonies, family gatherings, or any other family event. Parents feel ashamed to introduce them to others because of their identity. Parents also thought that the children were a result of their sins. The Family also has religious superstitions, which make the intersex person's life miserable. Not only the intersex person but also their mother faces extreme torture for giving birth to an intersex child. The study's respondents said that their mother had been verbally tortured by the father and other family members; the

mother of an intersex kid had to endure physical abuse, divorce, and murder. Because they are not born as male or female, it is assumed that to bear an intersex child is the mother's liability, it is the mother's fault the child was born.

The **social** context of Bangladesh is horrifying for intersex people. They not only disrespect intersex people but also bully and harass them verbally and sometimes physically. Intersex people are generally identified as 'Hijra' by the mass people. Most people have no conceptual clarity of the difference between hijra & intersex people. They have a misunderstanding between Hijra and intersex people. So, they start bullying and harassing intersex people the day they are born. The parents of intersex people, especially mothers, were bullied the most after the baby was born.

Most intersex people have no friends and no good relations with others. Because society does not welcome them and does not want to know about their behavior, intersex individuals live alone and avoid talking with others. Most of the respondents said that they feel fear in a mosque or any religious place. Few of them have bad memories of religious places. Not only religious places but also intersex individuals avoid going to another social programs. Their family never took them to any program. Later on, when they tried to join any program, they were humiliated by the people. People like to be more vulnerable to vulnerable people. They called the intersex "Hijra by Birth" and excluded the intersex people from all the social rights.

From childhood through their entire lives, intersex individuals must grapple with their emotions. Hiding from others, being treated as strangers in their own families, facing discrimination from parents and relatives, and experiencing social bullying leave them emotionally vulnerable. Often, they view themselves as unwanted and depressed. Unfortunately, they often lack access to counseling from professional psychologists. Only two respondents indicated that they received counseling from a community-based NGO, and they reported feeling better afterward. The other respondent has never had access to such services.

The majority of intersex people are unable to pursue education, and some never get the opportunity to be admitted to schooling. Few people are having difficulty pursuing their education. Two of our respondents completed high school, three people never went to school, one completed primary school, and others were not able to complete primary school because of the bullying and social taboos. The teachers also show insensitive behavior with the intersex children and humiliate them in the classroom. Other children did not play with them or did not include them in play, tried to open their pants, and bullied them. That makes it difficult for children to continue their education. Parents also have less interest in educating their intersex children and want to invest in other children.

They don't acquire a good job since they don't have the chance to study or drop out. Consequently, physical labor is required to complete an organic job. Since they are not connected to the conventional hijra profession, they are not being allowed to receive training.

An intersex baby is born with one or more of a range of variations in sex characteristics that fall outside the traditional conceptions of male or female bodies. Some of these differences are apparent at birth, while others become noticeable later in life, such as during puberty. Whenever it shows, the parents get horrified and try to fix it in a male or female body. Unnecessary child sex surgery is illegal in many countries, and it is ethically not allowed to do a sex reassignment surgery without the permission of that person. According to the law, a person under 18 is not an adult, and the decisions they make can be biased. However, research shows that sex surgery on children is harmful physically and psychologically. In our study, we found that sex surgery at an early age cannot make a person male or female but creates a lot of complications.

The trans community is incredibly diverse. Some trans people identify as trans men or trans women. In contrast, others may describe themselves as non-binary, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, agender, bigender, or other identities that reflect their personal experience. This study mainly focused on transgender women and transgender men. The study was conducted in three geographical areas in Bangladesh. Which are Dhaka, Khulna, and Chittagong hill tracks. As Dhaka is a capital city, most of the participants of Dhaka come from different areas of Bangladesh. Mostly, those who came out from their homes lived in Dhaka city for livelihood and opportunities. However, a few participants were born in Dhaka and nearby Dhaka city. There are some similarities and differences based on the geographical area and gender identity.

For both transwomen and transmen, the relationship with family depends on a few things, 1. Family background, whether they are progressive or conservative, 2. Which economic class do they belong to? 3. Whether the person reveals their identity or not, and 4. Whether they do cross-dress or not. So, the relationship with the family is based on a lot of issues. If they reveal their identity at home, the relationship becomes very bad and tortured, and most of them must leave home. If they can hide their identity, they do not face problems and have good relations with the family. Most of the participants from the ***Indigenous community*** shared that they do not reveal their identity to their family.

A big portion of transgender people, especially transwomen, are not able to hide their identity for a long time. After adolescence, the inner identity gets so strong that it gets difficult to hide. At that age they do not understand what to do, so it comes out by their attitude, approach or by the dress up. They try it hiddenly but are mostly caught by someone in their family. When their identity comes out in the family, it is getting difficult

for them to stay with their parents. So, most of the transwomen run from home. Those who live outside Dhaka are not able to hide their identity. Either they come out from home or they throw out from the home. Most of them then joined the “Hijra” culture.

There are some similarities and differences between the overall situation of a transman and a transwoman. In family relations there are also some similarities and differences between transman and transwomen. In the patriarchal society, a female wearing a “man’s dress” is not acceptable, but a man wearing a woman’s dress is treated as a crime. There are two different views of people to accept transman and trans women. As now a lot of women wear pants and a shirt, it is not unusual, but the family is not happy with it. But a male wearing a woman’s dress is unusual, and people think only hijras wear women’s dresses, so the family cannot accept that their son is wearing a woman’s dress. As the problem arises with the dress-up, it depends on some circumstances, which are: 1. What dress they wear. 2. Geographical area, 3. Are they doing top surgery or not? 4. Which family do they belong to? It is also seen that a female wearing a women’s dress is eventually accepted by the parents and family if they do not open their identity. But that also depends which area they belong. The participants from Khulna said that they are not able to wear the dress they like for society. They need to wear women’s dress. Those who wear men’s dress in rural areas do not have a good relationship with family and relatives.

Whatever the relation is, a transman needs not to leave home to wear a man’s dress. However, there is a completely different scenario in the **indigenous community**. They wanted to wear women’s dresses, but they didn’t mind wearing men’s dress in the urban area of hill track. Until a transman discusses their identity with the family, the dress up does not impact their relationship with the family. However, in Bengali community it is different. The transman also needs to leave home if they disclose their identity to family. Especially those who want to do top surgery and take hormones to grow a beard. Families do not accept a female to change a man. They also cut the relationship with the person who transforms their body or declares them a Man.

In terms of social relationships, transwomen and transman face huge bullying and violence irrespective of their geographical area. However, the perspective of bullying is different for both transwomen and transmen. Transwomen get bullied because of their feminine behavior and attitude where transman bullied because of their masculine behavior & attitude. The patriarchal social structure does not allow a female to behave like a man. However, a transwoman has more vulnerability than a transman that probably because society thinks femininity is a weakness and masculinity as a power.

Emotional vulnerability is a big issue for transgender people. Whether they are trans women or transman everyone gets emotionally vulnerable from there adolescence period. Adolescence is the age when they understand their feelings and can identify their inner

self. Does not like to play with the same sex kids and feeling alone. They do not understand what is happening to them and think only she/he is feeling this. They feel alone and cannot share their feelings with anybody. When they can identify their inner self, they also feel like an alien themselves. The person who born/live Dhaka city may have the information that some people are like them but the person who born outside Dhaka, do not get the opportunity to understand what is happening with them. So, they get frightened of self-identity. It takes a long time to understand the inner self and accept one's identity. The first struggle starts within themselves. The body they have that is not precious for them, they start to hate their body and want a body of the opposite sex.

The transgender community has childhood trauma and a history of being discriminated from by society and family. Most of them are emotionally vulnerable. Also, they have different looks and attitudes. In these cases, they were appointed without any professional training and counseling. On the other hand, the employer also does not sensitize all their staff. It seems that the employer appointed community people to meet the SDG (now some corporations also have SDG targets) and government requirements. So, the working environment is not satisfactory from both sides (the community people and the other staff). Their colleagues do not prepare to receive them psychologically at the same time the community people also do not get ready for the unwelcoming environment. In this situation, they get disheartened and leave the job.

Transgender women face more discrimination than transgender men. Transgender men have a man's outlook, and most people are not able to identify their gender identity; they get the facility of being a Man. On the other hand, all transgender women are not comfortable with cross-dressing. Whereas they were forced to cross-dress as they were appointed as transgender staff by the employee. It seems the appointment is a kind of 'quota fill-up' procedure for them, and they want to show them as inclusion.

Almost every transgender participant said they have faced sexual violence several times. But they are not able to complain about it. Especially **transwomen** do not complain to the police or anyone because of the fear of being judgmental. They face sexual violence by relatives, friends, and partners and are blackmailed by unknown online partners. Especially the indigenous transwomen blackmailed their Bengali partner and face sexual, physical violence & financial losses. Compared to the Bangali community, the indigenous community faces less sexual violence from relatives. The Bengali community faces more sexual violence from relatives, local people & family friends. However, nobody can complain to the police for fear of revealing their identity.

On the other hand, the transwoman from indigenous community faces sexual violence mostly by the unknown online partner. They want to hide their identity so that they do not

dare to find partners in the indigenous community. So, they find partners in online groups, apps, or other ways. Mostly, they found partners or had relationships with someone outside hill tracks and from the Bengaly community. They trust them as partners and are going to meet them at their premises. When they went to meet them, they faced sexual, physical, and financial violence. Mostly robbed and blackmailed by the partners and their friends. Most of our transwomen participants from the indigenous community have shared the same experience of violence.

The **transman** also faces rape and sexual violence by their partner, husband, friend & family members. Half of the transman participants from Khulna were married from family pressure, and they are living a painful life. In rural areas, it is difficult for a female, especially one who belongs to the lower class or mid-lower class, not to marry. Most of them did not get the opportunity to get higher education or to work for self-independence. They also did not able to tell their identity to the family for fear. Sometimes, they also get confused and think that it will be all right after marriage. So, they compromise or take a chance to live a life like a heterosexual person. After marriage, most of them cannot adjust to the marital relationship with a Male and have a painful life. “Marital rape” is not considered as a rape under the penal code of Bangladesh. Mostly, men think it is their right to have sex with their wife, and consent is not necessary to having sex with their wife. So, married transman is a victim of marital rape.

Most of the transgender participants, especially those who cross-dress, said that even if they face any physical problem because they face uncomfortable behavior from the doctor. The doctor also judges them and behaves rudely. So, they do not want to go to the hospital for any sickness. Those who do not cross-dress also avoid going to the doctor for fear of being exposed.

There are several legal barriers for transgender in Bangladesh. The first legal barrier is government acceptance. Bangladesh's government has not yet given legal acceptance to transgender people. The government identified Hijra as sex, however, Hijra is not a gender identity. Many transgender persons belong to the hijra culture, but all the transgender persons are not in the Hijra culture. There are so many transgenders who don't belong to the hijra culture and do not like to tell them hijra. So, the acceptance of ‘Hijra’ as a sex does not include transgender as gender identity.

Chapter 1 :

Introduction:

Space- A Foundation for Peace & Care is a non-government organization working for gender inclusion and gender education since 2020 based in Bangladesh. Since 2020, space is organizing capacity-building training on gender, SRHR, human rights, and mental health with children, adolescents, youth & adults. In addition, Space offers psychological support and promotes the rights of intersex and transgender people. This is the first study that the Space Foundation has conducted. Many studies for the transgender community have been carried out by other organizations, but we were unable to find any for intersex individuals. The purpose of this study is to determine the current state of affairs for intersex and transgender individuals in Bangladesh. 99 participants participated in this qualitative study, which was carried out in Dhaka, Chittagong, and Khulna, Bangladesh, between January 2024 and February 2025.

1.1Background:

Most of the people of Bangladesh are homophobic and transphobic. Gender diverse people are seen negatively by the public. Families of gender nonconforming individuals also feel that they are a burden to their families and society, in addition to the wider public. Many of them had to leave their families. Their family began abusing them and keeping them hidden from their relatives after they came forth with their identities. They have experienced sexual, psychological, and physical abuse at work, in social environments, and schools. They don't find good jobs because the majority of them don't have the chance to finish their school. There is a lack of education, training, and proper guidance for the gender diverse community in Bangladesh as the general people restrict them from getting the opportunities they deserve.

Some religious fundamentalist groups have continually attacked the diverse community for decades. In 2016, the founder of Bangladesh's first magazine for gender & sexually diverse community was killed with his friend, Tonoy. There were several attacks on the progressive writer and bloggers. Then, some People justified their killing in the name of religion. But slowly, with the continuous advocacy of some NGO, the government eventually tried to include the gender diverse community. Some media and corporations have also started to include them, too. In 2021, activist Tasnuva Anan Shishir was appointed as a news presenter on Bangla Vision television. The fundamentalist group didn't stop, they again started the hate speech, spread misinformation through social media, and attacked the NGO's who work for gender diverse people's rights. In December 2023, Hocheminh Islam, A transgender activist, was stopped from giving her speech at North South University's career carnival in protest of an Islamic student group called "Islamic Practitioner NSU".

This study began in January 2024 in this societal context. This study started off with two goals. To empower a few young, gender-diverse individuals who conduct field interviews and learn about the study method, and to look into the current situation of intersex and transgender persons. 8 youth community people conducted the research in three districts of Bangladesh. The districts of Dhaka, Chattogram, and Khulna will host the study. Dhaka was chosen because it is the nation's capital, a megacity with a diverse population, and a place where many opportunities and services are offered. People from SOGIESC groups can readily conceal their identities in this setting, and in some cases, Dhaka has acceptability that small cities or rural areas do not. Because Chattogram is Bangladesh's port city, it was chosen. It is more conservative socio-culturally than other regions and contains a large number of ethnic groupings. This study was specially conducted to hill tracks to compare the situation of indigenous gender diverse community and to the Bengali gender diverse community. Since Khulna is more susceptible to climate change, it was chosen. Due to salinization, unemployment, poverty, and climate change, Khulna's financial situation is not good. People are leaving this town for other cities even though it has a more liberal socioeconomic climate than other towns. It has a strong connection with Kolkata, India.

1.2 Specific Objective:

- To identify the current situation in Bangladesh for intersex and transgender people
- To identify the vulnerability of the intersex and transgender community in Bangladesh
- to engage SOGIESC young people in field study work and provide them with capacity-building training on conducting field research.

Chapter 2.

Policy Review:

In 2013, the cabinet decided to recognize the Hijra community and to provide them with national identification documents. This was the first step towards legal recognition. In 2014, the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) published a gazette notification regarding the Hijra Community. In 2018, the Voter List Act 2009 was amended to provide ‘Hijra’ as a gender category in the voter registration form, in addition to ‘male’ and ‘female’. In 2013, the MSW introduced several livelihood schemes for the Hijra community under the Social SafetyNet program. Even though these steps highlight the Government’s willingness to engage with the Hijra community and ensure their constitutional rights, any other laws or policies expressly prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity are yet to be enacted.

Official Recognition:

In January 2014, the MSW published a gazette notification stating that the Hijra community "shall be recognized as the ‘Hijra sex/gender’ (‘Hijra lingo’). This recognition expressly refers to ‘Hijra’. It does not deal with other communities and individuals who have non-normative gender and sexual expressions. It does not recognize transgender and intersex persons who do not belong to the Hijra culture. It seems that there is a misconception about Gender and culture. ‘Hijra’ is neither a biological nor gender identity. This gazette excluded the other gender and sexually diverse community with its definition and recognized only one culture as gender.

There is no clear definition of gender-diverse population in the gazette or from the cabinet. Accordingly, different government authorities were free to carry out identification processes as they chose. In 2018, the Election Commission updated NID cards to include ‘Hijra’ as a gender identity by amending the Voter List Act 2009 and the Voter List Regulations 2012. Hijras can now hold national identity cards, where they can identify as ‘Hijra’. In contrast, the Department of Immigration and Passports includes a category of ‘other’ in addition to ‘male’ and ‘female’. Some government forms (e.g., account opening application forms of state-run banks) now include a category of ‘third gender’.

Social Inclusion:

In 2013, the MSW introduced several livelihood schemes for the Hijra community under the Social SafetyNet program. According to the Bangladesh National Budget for the fiscal year 2021-22, a total of 2.25 crore BDT was allocated for the welfare of

transgender people in the country. This allocation was made under the Ministry of Social Welfare, and it included provisions for education, healthcare, and rehabilitation programs for the transgender community. Additionally, the budget also allocated funds for the establishment of a dedicated hospital for transgender people in Dhaka. It also provides an old-age allowance; only those aged 50 years and above are being given an allowance of Tk 600 per month, a stipend for ‘Hijra students’, and skill and capacity development training to engage in income-generating activities. 1,920 members of the Hijra community received training in 2023 from social welfare under the social safety net program. The social SafetyNet program does not include the other gender-diverse community. However, the program excludes the transgender and intersex people who may not be part of the Hijra culture but also face extreme vulnerability in terms of social stigma, discrimination, and violence.

Legal support:

There is no specific law for gender-diverse people. As there is no clear definition of gender-diverse people, they are often harassed by asking for legal support, especially when they want to file a sexual harassment or rape case. According to penal code 1860, A man is said to commit “rape” who except in the case hereinafter excepted, has sexual intercourse with a woman against her will, without her consent, when consent has been obtained by putting her fear of death or hurt. The law does not recognize sexual harassment or rape who is not biologically women. As transwomen, intersex persons, and Hijra have no women genitalia they are not entitled to filing a rape or sexual harassment case.

There is no legal recognition of gender diverse people in this country as citizens, except the Hijra community. So, all the gender diverse people, even if they don’t belong to the hijra community, need to take this identity for taking a NID card. However, there is section 377. Which criminalized gender diverse people, that mentioned Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with [imprisonment] for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine. Explanation. Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offense described in this section.

Anti-discrimination laws: The Anti-Discrimination Bill 2022 was placed in parliament on 5 April 2022 by Law Minister Anisul Huq. Long years of civil society’s engagement and advocacy with the government have catalyzed this initiative. The bill has not yet been passed.

Inheritance:

There is no specific law of inheritance for gender-diverse people in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the law of inheritance is different based on religion. Under Islamic law, the property is distributed to the son, daughter, and wife. Under Hindu law, the only son has the right to inheritance. Buddhists also follow the Hindu law, and under Christian law, the Son, Daughter, and wife get the property. But no religion mentioned intersex persons and transgender property rights. Most of them are abandoned by their family in their childhood. Transgender people cannot claim property by their own identity, they claim the property as per their biological identity. Thus, most of them are excluded from the property right.

Employment:

Neither the Gazette notification nor the Cabinet mentioned any ‘quota’ for the employment of gender-diverse communities. In 2015, the government declared that the ‘Hijra’ community people were appointed as traffic police. Then, the Hijra people applied for positions as per the government's declaration. As proof of authenticity, the Ministry of Health requires ‘authentic Hijras to be identified through medical check-ups. After the test, they were declared to be ‘fake Hijras’ because they had male genitalia and were considered to be men pretending to be Hijras. The Hijra then complained about the medical examination to the Human Rights Commission and the employment procedure stopped then. In the absence of any guidance on how to identify members of the Hijra community and Hijra culture, relevant authorities often resort to carrying out physical examinations to verify whether a person is an ‘authentic Hijra’.

However, In June 2015, the Bangladesh Bank issued a circular requesting all scheduled banks and financial institutions to include the Hijra community in their SME loan activities. This step meant Hijra individuals could apply for bank loans to set up their businesses.

In the budget proposals for 2021-2022, Bangladesh finance minister A.H.M. Mustafa Kamal proposed a tax rebate for employers who recruit 10 percent of their total workforce, or more than 100 employees, whichever is lower, from among “third gender” persons. “The rebate will amount to 75 percent of the total salary paid to workers from the third gender, or 5 percent of the payable tax, whichever is lower,” the finance minister said in his budget speech. As there is no clear definition of “third gender”, there is the caution of being physically examined by the employer.

Gender identity concerns the social and cultural behavior and expression with which an individual feels most comfortable. It depends on many factors, such as personality, environment, intimacy, and social inclusion. All these factors are important in shaping a person's gender identity. Gender identity is best understood through a spectrum, as there is a diverse range of identities beyond the 'male' and 'female' identities.

Within this context, Hijras in Bangladesh are mostly individuals who were assigned as male at birth but identify as women or intersex persons. A few of them are now referring to themselves as transwomen ('rupantorito naari'). Their 'Hijra' identity is established by their induction into the Hijra tradition, their position as disciples and wards to a Hijra elder, known as their Guru. Hijras have their own culture and customs, and a community dialect known as Ulti. Other gender-diverse people do not have the same culture, customs, and beliefs as those held by the Hijra community.

International Framework:

According to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP), rights are inherent in all human beings, whatever their nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or other status. Every individual is entitled to enjoy human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible.

Therefore, the Guiding Principles make clear:

- Depending on the specifics of their operations, companies may need to consider additional human rights standards to ensure that they respect the human rights of people who may be disadvantaged, marginalized, or excluded from society and, as a result, particularly vulnerable to impacts on their human rights, such as children, women, indigenous peoples, members of ethnic or other minorities, or people with disabilities.
- The International Bill of Human Rights and the core ILO conventions provide the basic reference points for businesses to start understanding human rights, how their own activities and business relationships may affect them, and how to ensure that they prevent or mitigate the risk of adverse impacts.

The United Nations Guiding Principles' three foundations:

The Guiding Principles have made a significant and well-known contribution by outlining precisely what States and corporations must do to guarantee that their operations uphold human rights.

Three pillars support the Guiding Principles:

- The obligation of the State to implement suitable laws, rules, policies, and procedures to safeguard human rights against violations by outside parties, especially corporations.
- The duty of corporations to uphold human rights entails acting responsibly to prevent violating the rights of others and to remedy any negative effects they may be associated with.
- Increased victim access to efficient non-judicial and judicial remedies for violations of human rights caused by business.

The Labor Law of Bangladesh 2006 amended 2023:

Bangladesh's labor law does not have any gender or sexual barrier to working in any company/industry/organization, and it does not have any special provisions for gender-diverse people either. However, it has special provisions for women workers, such as maternal leave.

Constitutional Framework:

The fundamental principle of state policy states that Every person has equal rights, and the state ensures life, freedom, and safety for all and ensures the necessities for all citizens, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care, and guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage.

According to Bangladesh constitution article 27; All citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.

Article 28(1) states that The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.

Article 28(3) also stated that no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office in the service of the Republic.

Article 29(2) declared that no citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office in the service of the Republic.

Article 42 (1) states the property rights of citizens. It says, Subject to any restrictions imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalized or requisitioned save by authority of law.

Chapter 3. Methodology:

3.1 Methodological Approach:

This is a cross-sectional descriptive study following participatory methods involving qualitative approaches. The primary elements of the study are based on an open questionnaire that comprises key variables and questions, attitudes, and targets the gender diverse community and related professionals. The questionnaires have been administered through one-to-one interviews. A range of methods, including Focus Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informant Interview (KII), and Individual Stories, were employed to enhance the semi-structured questionnaire-based study.

3.2 Geographical Area:

Three districts of Bangladesh were chosen for this study for their Geographical diversity.

Dhaka was selected because of its status as the capital of the country, its status as a megacity with a diverse population, and the abundance of services and possibilities it offers. In certain situations, Dhaka has an acceptability that small cities or rural areas do not, and people from SOGIESC groups can easily hide their identities there.

Chattogram is Bangladesh's port city. It is more conservative socio-culturally than other regions and contains a large number of ethnic groupings. This study was specially conducted to hill tracks to compare the situation of indigenous gender diverse community and to the Bengali gender diverse community.

Khulna, which is more susceptible to climate change. Due to salinization, unemployment, poverty, and climate change, Khulna's financial situation is not good. People are leaving this town for other cities even though it has a more liberal socioeconomic climate than other towns. It has a strong connection with Kolkata, India.

3.3 Data Collection Tools Design and Development:

Data collection tools have been developed based on context in a participatory method in consultation with the gender diverse group who conducted the field study. There are different contexts based on geographical area and identity. The context of intersex and transgender is different, and the situation of transwomen and transman is also different. There were 2 intersex person, One transwomen, one gender flute, two transman and two cis women were selected for the field study. After providing 5 days of capacity-building training, the questionnaire was developed with their direct involvement with a participatory method.

3.4 Study Tools: The quality data collection process began with identifying, selecting, and verifying the questionnaire through the field interviewer. Subsequently, the data collection tools were pre-tested with the field interviewer through a demo session. Pre-testing served two purposes. The primary purpose was to focus on the substance to enhance the interviewer's capacity to collect the data, while the second purpose was to focus on the average time taken to administer the questionnaire to the respondents.

- FGD checklist and guidelines for intersex persons.
- FGD checklist and guidelines for transgender persons.
- In-depth interview checklist for Intersex and transgender persons.
- Key Informant Interview–KII checklist for Doctors, mental health service providers, Teachers, NGO staff, and gender divers activists.

3.5 Sampling and Sample Size:

The data collection methods and sampling frame discussed above determine the survey's extent and coverage. That is to say, the methods discussed earlier have been applied to a specific group of populations with a definite number. The following table provides details on the data collection based on specific methods.

Table 1: Data collection based on specific methods

There were 12 KII and 10 FGD, and 32 In-Depth Interviews were conducted with 99 participants in Dhaka, Chittagong (indigenous community), and Khulna. The FGD and IDI were conducted with gender diverse people, and KII was conducted with mental health professionals, doctors, NGO staff, teachers, & transgender activists.

	Dhaka			Khulna			Chittagong			
Person cover	FGD	IDI	KII	FGD	IDI	KII	FGD	IDI	KII	Total
Intersex	6	4	3							13
Transwomen	9	4		9	4		9	4		39
Transmen	9	4	3	9	4	3	9	4	2	48
Total	24	12	6	18	8	3	18	8	2	99

3.7 Data Management and Analysis:

Data analyses were conducted using grounded theory and narrative analysis approaches. Each of the KIIs, FGDs, and ID stories were read to identify cross-cutting themes. These themes are linked into an explanatory framework to understand more fully the context of violence, Patriarchal behavior & attitudes of the mass people. Analyses were conducted to reveal patterns in the data. Each data was examined for a core narrative about their experience. Core narratives across study participants were compared to identify distinct and shared features of the narratives.

Chapter 4. Findings:

4.1 Basic Profile of the Study Respondents: There are classes everywhere. Gender diverse people also belong to different classes. This study did not include the high-class people from gender diverse community. It includes the middle class, lower middle class, and poor people from different areas. The respondents are from different educational backgrounds. Most of the intersex respondents did not get the opportunity of education, but a few of them are studying now. Most of the transwomen are completed high school and some of them completed their graduation. And most of the transman respondent have education gap, some of them continuing their graduation and few complete their education. As Dhaka is a big city, most of the participants of Dhaka have come from different areas of Bangladesh. The respondents from Dhaka have mixed educational backgrounds and social status. However, Most of the participants from Khulna are from the lower middle class and poor class. The transman group from khulna have less Educational qualification. However, almost all the transwomen from Khulna is either continuing or complete their education. Most of the respondents from the indigenous community are students, and some of them have completed their graduation.

4.2 Data Management and Analysis:

4.2.1 Situation of Intersex People in Bangladesh: Intersex is an umbrella term that refers to people with one or more of a range of variations in sex characteristics that fall outside the traditional conceptions of male or female bodies. Some of these differences are apparent at birth, while others become noticeable later in life, such as during puberty. There are many possible differences in genitalia, hormones, internal anatomy, or chromosomes that do not fit neatly into the binary sex categories into which people are typically assigned at birth.

Historically, Intersex people are the most vulnerable community within the SOGIGSC People. As their identity is mostly visible by birth, they face extreme discrimination from family and society from the day they are born. In the patriarchal societal context, parents always want a boy, and the girl is ok, but parents never expect an intersex baby. So, the parents started to run behind the doctor to change the baby's genital identity. The parents also traumatize and try to hide the baby's genital identity from the relatives & neighbors. However, it's not easy to hide from society, and when it is known to all, the baby-face different kinds of harassment from the people. The parents also get bullied for the intersex baby. There are a lot of superstitions and taboos regarding intersex people in society.

Most of the people of Bangladesh have no idea about the genital formation of the intersex person, so people also have curiosity about the intersex person's body. The government also does not have a clear understanding of intersex people, so often they misunderstand the "Hijra" as "intersex". However, in Bangladesh very most of the Hijra are transwomen, not Intersex. Because of the misunderstanding of their identity by the government, most the intersex people also lose the allowance provided by the government. Most intersex people do not get an education or are not able to continue school, so they also do not get decent jobs. Only a small percentage of individuals who get family support can finish their schooling despite several obstacles. Most people of the intersex community of Bangladesh are not able to fulfill their basic needs and are constant victims of human rights violations. We have tried to identify their situation in Family relationships, social relationships, Emotional well-being, Education, livelihood, Harmful child sex surgery, physical & sexual violence, and legal barriers.

Family relationship:

Most intersex people do not have good relations with the family; only 2 people live with their parents, and 12 respondents. 2 people were sent to others' houses for household work when they were children. After that, their parents never came to meet them. Other respondents get separated from their families at an early age, too. Most of them have no good relationship with their family members. Because of social taboos and irrational beliefs. The family becomes unwilling to educate their intersex children and makes visible discrimination between their children and family.

"I have been treated differently in my family; my other siblings get more priority than me. My opinion was never granted to my family, whereas my younger brother's opinion got priority." FGD

"All my siblings are highly educated and established; they are doing good jobs, and my 2 brothers live abroad. After completing my 7th-grade school, my mother did not admit me in class 8. She said I did not need to go to school anymore." IDI

The family also hid them from neighbors and other relatives. They did not want them to leave home and talk with others. Parents also avoided bringing them to any family program, such as marriage ceremonies, family gatherings, or any other family event. Parents feel ashamed to introduce them to others because of their identity. Parents also thought that the children were a result of their sins.

"When my aunt got married, my parents did not allow me to join the marriage ceremony, and after marriage, every time my aunt and uncle (husband of aunt) came to our home, my parents hid me in a separate room, and I was not allowed to come out from that room. After 8 years of my aunt's marriage, one sudden day, my uncle got to know about my existence." IDI

This extreme behavior shows how the parents are ashamed of themselves for the intersex children born; they showed extreme negligence and ignorance of their existence. Take away their love and responsibility from the children and give them an inhuman life. The discrimination begins with the family, from the people who bring them into this world. But then they eliminate all the rights to live. However, we found one respondent who said she has a good relationship with her mother, and she lives with her mother. Though she didn't face negligence by her parents, she didn't get acceptance from society and all her relatives.

Not only the intersex person but also their mother faces extreme torture for giving birth to an intersex child. The study's respondents said that their mother had been verbally tortured by the father and other family members; the mother of an intersex kid had to endure physical abuse, divorce, and murder. Because they are not born as male or female, it is assumed that to bear an intersex child is the mother's liability, it is the mother's fault the child was born. In this patriarchal society, women are always thought of as weak. Two of our intersex respondents share an extreme form of violence with their mother.

“My mother was killed because of my identity after my birth.” IDI

An intersex child is thought of as a curse for a family only because they will not be able to give birth to a child. Because a child is born in the mother's womb, it is taken as the mother's fault to give birth to an intersex child. So, they kill the mother of the intersex child. In a patriarchal society like Bangladesh, men do not take responsibility for girl children too, they only take responsibility of a Son. In most cases, the intersex person's mother also faces violence with their child.

Social relationship:

The social context of Bangladesh is horrifying for intersex people. They not only disrespect intersex people but also bully and harass them verbally and sometimes physically. Intersex people are generally identified as ‘Hijra’ by the mass people. Most people have no conceptual clarity of the difference between hijra & intersex people. They have a misunderstanding between Hijra and intersex people. So, they start bullying and harassing intersex people the day they are born. The parents of intersex people, especially mothers, were bullied the most after the baby was born. There is a superstition in society that an intersex person is a result of a mother's sin. The child grows up with fear and gets bullied by society.

“In my childhood, when I went outside from home to play, lots of people tried to open my pants and see my genital organ. It was fun for them, or maybe curious, but I was so afraid that I stopped going outside and was scared to see people. I used to stay in a dark corner of my house so that people could not find me.” IDI

The family also suffers and, in some cases, is ostracized by society. People don't want to maintain a relationship with that family. When an intersex child is born, people think it is a curse for that family or that the parents have some sin, so the intersex child is born. They also bully the parents or other family members of the intersex child. No one wants to make a new relationship with that family because they thought if they married any sister or brother of the intersex person, there is a chance to bear an intersex child of their family too.

“My younger sister is an adult now, and my family tried to arrange her marriage, but already two proposals got refused for my identity” IDI

The bullying does not stop there, an intersex person gets older with bullies. Whenever they go outside, whether it is for school, college, shopping, or work, they get harassed. Mostly, the local young boys harassed them whenever they went outside for something. They give claps behind them or make bad sounds to them. Sometimes, kids are also bullied on the way and with brickbats behind them. Society is too cruel and insensitive that they bring up their children with harmful norms and behavior that young people cannot respect the diverse people in society.

Most of the respondents said that they feel fear in a mosque or any religious place. Few of them have bad memories of religious places. They have been harassed and critiqued by the people at the mosque and the Imam, so they avoid going to religious places. The people think that the mosque will get unclean if an intersex person enters the mosque. They are not able to go to the local area where they grew up. Some of them go to mosques, hiding their identity in another area. Not only religious places but also intersex individuals avoid going to another social program. Their family never took them to any program. Later on, when they tried to join any program, they were humiliated by the people.

“I do not go to any event. Once I joined a local program, I felt discomfort there; people were laughing at me and strangely looking at me. After that, I never go to any social program”. FGD

Most intersex people have no friends and no good relations with others. Because society does not welcome them and does not want to know about their behavior, intersex individuals live alone and avoid talking with others. People like to be more vulnerable to vulnerable people. They called the intersex “Hijra by Birth” and excluded the intersex people from all the social rights.

Mental health:

From childhood through their entire lives, intersex individuals must grapple with their emotions. Hiding from others, being treated as strangers in their own families, facing discrimination from parents and relatives, and experiencing social bullying leave them emotionally vulnerable. Often, they view themselves as unwanted and depressed. Unfortunately, they often lack access to counseling from professional psychologists. Only two respondents indicated that they received counseling from a community-based NGO, and they reported feeling better afterward. The other respondent has never had access to such services.

The person whose identity is identified to society at birth grows up with this understanding that they are different, but the person whose identity was not identified at birth and it showed in adolescent age they face more discrimination. Parents often want to give a binary identity to their children: it's either male or female. So, they give a male or female-biased name and grow up as a boy or girl. However, at the adolescent age, their bodies change differently. That does not match with their social identity. For example; a boy in society at the adolescent age has breasts and a voice that changes like a woman's, making them more uncomfortable. In this situation, they face extreme bullying from school friends and society.

“I was growing up as a boy and admitted to a boy’s school. From my childhood, I knew that I was a Hijra by birth, but I didn’t know that I was an intersex person. I always wanted to hide my identity from my friends and teachers, I was afraid that if they knew my identity, they would not talk with me. I had no vagina, no ministration, but at the adolescent age, my breasts started to develop, and my voice tone was like a woman’s. It was not possible to hide anymore. People were looking at me weirdly, and friends started to laugh at me and bully me at school. I didn’t know what to do. Even teachers started to bully me in class. I was sitting on the last bench of the class. I was crying when coming back home and sometimes thought of suicide. I was born in a small town. The people who did not know me before thought I was a girl and bullied me for my dress up as I was wearing a shirt and pants, and I had short hair. I stopped going to school. After two years of school break, I was admitted to another school far from our home. I was feeling uncomfortable with my name, dress, and body structure. Later, I grew my hair long and started wearing women’s clothes. I give myself a woman’s name, but still, my certificate and other documents have a man’s name.” IdI

Most intersex people have childhood trauma for socially toxic behavior; as a result, they fear talking with other people and avoid others. As they are bullied from childhood and the family, they face ignorance, which makes them reject their own body. It causes them

extreme depression, and most of them attempt suicide many times. Mostly, they live alone. The childhood trauma broke their self-respect and confidence. They always feel guilty and unwanted. Most of the participants said that they feel like animals when people look at them. *“Every day, lots of people come to our house to see me how I look like as if they came to a zoo to see an animal.”* IDI Lack of awareness about intersex identity and harmful patriarchal behavior of mass people make an intersex person's life terrible.

It is also difficult for them to find a partner for love and sharing. But they have feelings of romance, love, and sexual need. But most of them do not find any romantic or partner to meet their desire. *“I can't find anyone to have a physical relationship with even if I want to,”* An intersex person said. It is difficult to get a life partner for an intersex person as they cannot produce a baby, and inheritance is an important issue for the people of Bangladesh. Also, people have a mindset of sexuality. Most people in Bangladesh think that penetration is the only sexual intimacy; the intersex people also think like that. So, Intersex people also feel upset and do not find a partner. The thought of getting rejected is dominant in them, and they do not try for any relationship. However, *there is an intersex couple in Pabna District who have been living together for 16 years (KII)*. There is also a need for emotional attachment to the baby. They also want to be a parent. But they have a physical barrier to having a baby, and there are legal barriers to adopting a baby according to Bangladeshi law.

Education:

Most intersex people were not able to complete their education, and some never got the opportunity to be admitted to school. Two of our respondents completed high school, three people never went to school, one completed primary school, and others were not able to complete primary school because of the bullying and social taboos. The teachers also show insensitive behavior with the intersex children and humiliate them in the classroom. Other children did not play with them or did not include them in play, tried to open their pants, and bullied them. That makes it difficult for children to continue their education. Parents also have less interest in educating their intersex children and want to invest in other children.

“I didn't have any friends in my school, I was sitting alone on a bench. No one wanted to talk to me. The students laughed at me; the teachers also didn't like me. Some students drew my body on the school wall so ugly that I never forget it. That's a trauma for me. When I was in class seven, the school principal called my mother and told her to move me to another school because of my identity. But my mother did not admit me to any other school again.” IDI

Most people, including parents, think that the intersex person cannot do any other job except “Hijra Giri.” They believe it is the profession they were born for, so they do not need any education because finally, they have to engage in the Hijra profession. But in reality, there is no hijra within the intersex network in Bangladesh.

Intersex people who can fight with society and continue their education also need to suffer a lot at their institutions. Teachers have no idea who intersex people are, so they also judge intersex students. But there are some good examples, too.

“I have got some good friends & teachers in my college; they accept me as I am and understand me. but I faced problems when I take the board exam. There were teachers from other colleges. While I was in class the confused when I saw my identity card as I look like a woman and my identity card showed that I am a man. So the teacher didn’t want to allow me to take the exam, and he stopped my writing. He thought I was giving a proxy to another person. All the students were looking at me, stopping writing. I told the teacher that I am an intersex person. After some time, he understood and permitted me to take the exam”. IDI

It is seen that the teachers and students at college are more sensitive and positive than primary & high school students and teachers. Maybe not all, but a few teachers and students have a positive mentality for diverse people. However, the main problem for the education of an intersex person is their family and primary school teachers. If the teachers do not have a positive mentality, then the students will not be positive.

Livelihood:

Most intersex people are not able to get an education from formal schools; most of them must do odd jobs or work in small businesses. But they need to do that job outside of their locality. They cannot get any work where they are born as most of the people of their birthplace know about their identity. They also do not feel comfortable with the Hijra profession; none of our participants were involved in the hijra profession. As the people of Bangladesh have a common understanding that intersex people are hijra, the hijra community also threatens intersex individuals not to reveal their identity. They also create some problems for intersex individuals who try to do small business. The Hijra community feels insecure about intersex people for losing the sympathy of mass people about them.

“I have a small food van which I was running in Savar, but I got threatened by the Hijra people. They threatened to stop my food van, and when I refused to do so, they broke my van and threatened me not to start it again.” IDI

Though the Hijra community is also a minority group, and they are vulnerable too, there is a conflict of interest with the intersex people. The government also provides some allowance under the social safety net for the hijra community intending to serve intersex people. But the government didn't have that understanding that Hijra's identity is not by birth; they chose to go to that community. After the hijra gadget passed by the government in 2015, the government of Bangladesh decided to appoint "Hijra" people as traffic police. According to a government circular, the people from the 'Hijra' community apply for the job. But later, they were rejected in a medical test, which said that *"they are not real Hijra"*. Here is the misconception of the government, even the medical board that took the test. Everyone thought a Hijra is an intersex person, but the government is not aware of the term "intersex". So, the appointment of hijra people was postponed because they did not pass the medical test as a Hijra (KII) People who identify as intersex do not receive the government allowance because of this misperception between hijra and intersex. The Hijra community, on the other hand, wishes to dispel the misconception because, although people may reject "interx" identities, they do not believe that doing so is sinful because this is how they are born. People might not permit Hijras if they know that they are not by born. As a result, Hijra people are likewise afraid to come out as themselves and adopt an intersex identity.

Most intersex people work as support staff in hotels, medical facilities, shops, domestic care workers, or as day laborers. Mostly, they hide their identity and introduce themselves as women or men. But it is not easy to hide identity; someday the employer or other staff can identify their identity, and they lose the job. They need to shift the area again and search for a new job. Sometimes, they face physical violence after opening up their identity.

" I was working as a cook in a hotel, but after some time, some local boys knew my identity and physically harassed me. They laughed at me and bullied me. When my employer got to know my information, he discontinued me from the job. Now, I am working as a cook in a boarding house." IDI

Harmful child sex surgery:

An intersex baby is born with one or more of a range of variations in sex characteristics that fall outside the traditional conceptions of male or female bodies. Some of these differences are apparent at birth, while others become noticeable later in life, such as during puberty. Whenever it shows, the parents get horrified and try to fix it in a male or female body. Unnecessary child sex surgery is illegal in many countries, and it is ethically not allowed to do a sex reassignment surgery without the permission of that person. According to law, a person under 18 is not an adult, and the decisions they make can be biased. However, research shows that sex surgery on children is harmful

physically and psychologically. In our study, we found that sex surgery at an early age cannot make a person male or female but creates a lot of complications.

“I was born with confusing genitalia, and my parents didn’t understand my genital identity. They thought of me as a girl and gave me a girl’s name. They went to the doctor to fix my genitalia in a private hospital. The doctor said there was a hernia beside my vagina. However, my vagina was not clear. The doctor suggested my parents do surgery, they said it could fix my body. After the surgery, the doctor told my parents that it was my testis which they thought was a hernia, I am a male, not female. After that, till the age of 14, they did 6 surgeries on my body to make me a boy. Before my 7th surgery, which was to remove my breast, I asked the doctor “Doctor can I be a man after this surgery? The doctor replied, you cannot be a man, but you can live like a man”. Then I refused to do that surgery and ran away from the hospital. I didn’t go home after that for a long time. For that surgery, I could not walk for a long time, step up the stairs, or sit for a long time. I have back pain. I don’t want to be a Man or Woman; I want to live as an intersex person”. IDI

Though sex surgery on children is harmful and sometimes causes death, it is not illegal in Bangladesh. Both government and private hospitals do sex reassignment surgery for infants and children. According to doctors, it is a physical disorder or a sickness that is possible to fix in a man or woman.

“I think it is necessary to do surgery for an intersex baby. It is a sickness like any other disease. We are trying to fix intersex children so that they can lead a proper life. Usually, they go to Hijra’s place when they get younger and destroy their life. It is a long-term surgery and new in Bangladesh, but we tried to raise awareness about it, and different international organizations are helping us to do it. We do this surgery step by step and within one to two years make it a normal organ. We get consent from their parents. Even though it said that having this operation before the age of 18 is not acceptable, things are different in Bangladesh.” KII, Doctor

However, another doctor said differently. He said, *“Having sex change surgery before the age of eighteen is not acceptable. Before the age of 18, the entire body does not develop; this includes hormones, chromosomes, emotions, and genitalia. To correctly alter their physique, the doctor must also alter their hormones, even if they alter their genitalia at a young age. Additionally, children may experience a shift in their gender identity as they get older. Therefore, having surgery before turning 18 is not a solution; rather, it is a catastrophe for that individual.”*

Intersex Bangladesh is a small organization in Bangladesh that tried to raise awareness with parents who go to the hospital for sex change surgery. For this work, two of their members continuously went to the National Children's Hospital in 2023 for 8 days. Where they saw parents come to make a sex change surgery for their intersex baby. Intersex Bangladesh network tried to make them aware of the bad impact of this surgery, but the parents didn't listen to them. Later, that baby died after commencing the surgery.

Physical and sexual violence:

Most of the participants in this study said that they faced physical and sexual violence. Mostly face physical violence from family members and the workplace. There is also intersectionality among intersex people. The intersex people who look like women or dress up like women face more physical & sexual violence than the intersex people who look like men.

“At a young age, my parents sent me to work as a domestic worker at a relative's home. They frequently gave me too much work and often spanked me for mistakes. I later left that house and the neighborhood. I still work as a domestic helper, but I don't live at my employer's house.” IDI

“As I look like a woman, several times I face sexual violence. I do labor work; people do not understand my identity. They tried to force me to have sex at the workplace. Not only at the workplace, I was also abused at my home when I was a child by a relative”. FGD

As people are curious about intersex people's bodies, they often have to face physical harassment in society, school, and the workplace. In childhood, most intersex individuals face physical abuse. People tried to look at their genitalia and open their pants at school. The neighbors and sometimes people came from far away to see them.

Legal recognition:

Intersex people have no legal recognition as per Bangladeshi law. The government made a hijra gadget in 2013 that recognizes hijra as a sexual identity besides men & women. However, that does not include intersex people as hijra is not a sexual identity but a culture & profession. Intersex people don't feel comfortable with the hijra identity. Most of them are involved in different professions and have never been involved in the Hijra profession. After 2013, there was a part in the birth certificate that included Hijra as a sex. Parents also have the same misunderstanding about Hijra, and they identify their children as hijra on the birth certificate. So, when they grow into adults, they must identify them as hijra whether they want to or not. The national Identity card has the same rules as the birth certificate. It only includes Hijra as in the national identity card. Intersex

people need to take that identity under compulsion. But this identity doesn't give them comfort.

Adoption in Bangladesh is not specifically governed by any laws. But under the Guardians and Wards Act of 1890, anybody can seek to be a guardian of a child's person or property. The Guardians and Wards Act of 1890 and the Children Act of 2013 regulate the adoption procedure in Bangladesh. Only when it is in the child's best interests is adoption permitted, and a court of law must approve the adoption. Although Bangladesh is not a party to the Hague Convention and does not legally recognize adoption, its residents are permitted to gain legal guardianship of children under the law. But to make a birth certificate of a child, it is mandatory to have both the father's and mother's names. So, if any intersex person is even able to take guardianship from the court, they cannot take the birth certificate of the children. Suchi is an intersex person who wants to adopt a child and be a mother. However, they are not able to adopt the child because of the legal barrier.

4.2 Situation of Transgender People in Bangladesh:

The trans community is incredibly diverse. Some trans people identify as trans men or trans women. In contrast, others may describe themselves as non-binary, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, agender, bigender, or other identities that reflect their personal experience. This study mainly focused on transgender women and transgender men. The study was conducted in three geographical areas in Bangladesh. Which are Dhaka, Khulna, and Chittagong hill tracks. As Dhaka is a capital city, most of the participants of Dhaka come from different areas of Bangladesh. Mostly, those who came out from their homes lived in Dhaka city for livelihood and opportunities. However, a few participants were born in Dhaka and nearby Dhaka city. There are some similarities and differences based on the geographical area and gender identity. There are so many things to address in a person's life, though we try to find out seven basic issues that a person regularly faces in their life, which are family relationships, social relationships, emotional well-being, education, livelihood, sexual violence, and legal barriers.

Family relationship

A baby boy is always praised in our society, and a girl is not welcomed like a boy; however, usually, they are not ignored in the family. A transgender person is also born with male or female genitalia. So, they get love, attention, and care like the other children until they unfold their identity to the family. For both transwomen and transmen, the relationship with family depends on a few things, 1. Family background, whether they are progressive or conservative, 2. Which economic class do they belong to? 3. Whether the person reveals their identity or not, and 4. Whether they do cross-dress or not. So, the relationship with the family is based on a lot of issues. If they reveal their identity at

home, the relationship becomes very bad and tortured, and most of them must leave home. If they can hide their identity, they do not face problems and have good relations with the family. There are opportunities for some Dhaka residents to learn more about who they are from various sources. Those who lived outside of Dhaka, however, had no idea how they were feeling. They experience loneliness and anxiety, and they occasionally lack direction. They act on their feelings. They attempt to follow their desires and dress however they like. Then, the issue appears.

“I do not face problems at home because I haven’t revealed my identity at home yet. I dress like a man and look like a man, so nobody can understand who I am”. Transwomen, FGD, Khulna

“Still, my family does not know my identity. So my relationship with them is very good” FGD, Transwomen, Dhaka

Most of the participants from the *Indigenous community* shared that they do not reveal their identity to their family. They also want to wear women’s dresses and want to wear ornaments, but they cannot do it because of the fear of getting separated from the family. Some said they do makeup in their room, hidden from their family members. The fear of losing family and being unwanted by family members stopped them from opening up with family members and declaring their identity.

“I used to make lipstick from ‘Siddur’ and lip gel and use it in my lips. I used to do it when I was alone in my room. I love to do makeup and wanted to purchase them. But I feel shy about purchasing them. I have a good relationship with my family because they don’t know that I am a transwoman. I always wore a man’s dress, so my family couldn’t understand my identity. If I told my family, they would not accept it.” FGD, Indigenous transwomen, CHT.

Many transgender women do not disclose their identity and do not cross-dress. Until their identity is revealed to the family, the relationship with the family member is good. The geographical location does not matter if the family does not identify it. However, it is not easy to hide the identity. A big portion of transgender people are not able to hide their identity for a long time. After adolescence, the inner identity gets so strong that it gets difficult to hide. At that age they do not understand what to do, so it comes out in their attitude, approach, or dress up. Sometimes they try to wear their mothers or sisters’ dresses and ornaments. They try it hiddenly but are mostly caught by someone in their family. When their identity comes out in the family, it is getting difficult for them to stay with their parents. So, most of the transwomen run from home. Those who live outside Dhaka are not able to hide their identity. Either they come out from home or they throw out from the home. Most of them then joined the “Hijra” culture. The people born in

Dhaka get information about their identity from different sources, so they become aware of their identity and learn how to manage it. But the people who live outside Dhaka don't understand why they feel different and how to manage it. So, their change becomes visible, they try cross-dressing at home. So, they face torture at home, especially from the father and elder brother. As a consequence, most of them leave home as teenagers and break their relationship with the family.

The violence starts when they start cross-dressing. Some transwomen's attitudes and body language are visible, but they do not face torture in the family for it. The geographical location does impact when they start to cross-dress. In the indigenous community, transgender women are also not accepted in the family, but they face comparatively less violence than the other areas of Bangladesh. Few transwomen cross-dress in hill tracks. They also face psychological violence in the family, but they do not face physical torture like others at home. There are differences between the areas within the hill tracks. The indigenous people from Khagrachori are more flexible and open than the indigenous community in Rangamati & Bandarban. It is probably because in Khagrachori, the Indigenous community is more influential than the Bengali community. Whereas the Bengali community has more influence in Rangamati & Bandarban. So, it is quite acceptable in Kagrachori, but in Rangamati and Bandarban, it is not acceptable.

“When I started cross-dressing, my family didn't accept it immediately, especially my father. But later I show them pictures of different transwomen and able to make them understand that it is normal. My mother understood me easily, and later, my father also accepted it. Now my mother gives me her dress when I go outside” IDI, Transwomen, Khagrachori

“Once, I was caught by my father when I was wearing ornaments. My father was so angry and also angry with my mother. He told me “Hijra” and told me to beg on the road like a hijra. After that, I didn't wear ornaments in front of him.” FGD, transwomen, Rangamati

Though in Hill Tracks there are different situations in one family to another family or area wise, we did not find any story where they have to leave home for the unbearable situation. However, some of them came to Dhaka for education purposes and enjoyed the freedom to wear dresses they liked. In Dhaka city, it is quite normal now to see a transgender woman with the cross dress. Because there are so many organizations working for transgender rights and there are some famous transgender activist who is visible and advocating for transgender rights, people get to know about them, and some are aware about transgender rights. Whatever, the people born in Dhaka do not get the

opportunity to get acceptance by the family. The relation with the family is almost the same for all.

Most of the participants mentioned that they have a good relationship with their mother; even if they leave home, they continue to talk with their mother. Mostly, mothers want to accept them and welcome them at home, but they are not able to do it because of the father's domination. Some of them have a good understanding with their sisters. It is also seen that women, especially mothers and sisters get empathetic with the transwomen person, but fathers & brothers with their patriarchal mindset and masculine behavior, do not accept a transwoman with their identity.

There are some similarities and differences between the overall situation of a transman and a transwoman. In family relations, there are also some similarities and differences between transmen and transwomen. In the patriarchal society, a female wearing a "man's dress" is not acceptable, but a man wearing a woman's dress is treated as a crime. There are two different views of people to accept transmen and trans women. Now a lot of women wear pants and a shirt, it is not unusual, but the family is not happy with it. But a male wearing a woman's dress is unusual, and people think only hijras wear women's dresses, so the family cannot accept that their son is wearing a woman's dress. As the problem arises with the dress-up, it depends on some circumstances, which are: 1. What dress they wear. 2. Geographical area, 3. Are they doing top surgery or not? 4. Which family do they belong to?

Some transmen do not open their identity to their family. If they do not reveal their identity to the family, their relationship with the family remains normal like other girls. They do not need to face any obstacles. But most of the transmen wear pants & shirts and cut short hair. The family does not like a woman with short hair and wearing men's wear. Yet, the family also cannot identify them as a trans person. They think of her as a rude and uncontrolled girl. There is domination and unsupported from the family not to wear manly dresses and shorten hair. The relationship with my family became bad but not broken.

"From my childhood I like to wear man's attires. My parents didn't want me to wear women's dress when I was child. But when I got younger, my parents pressured me to wear women's clothes. They want me to wear women's dress not only for their pleasure but to avoid relatives and neighbor's bullying. But I always stick to my decision and wear what I want. Eventually, they accept it. I didn't tell them that I am a man. Now they are ok with my short hair and dress up, but I am not sure what they will do if I tell them my identity". IDI, Transman, Dhaka

It is also seen that a female wearing a women's dress is eventually accepted by the parents and family if they do not open their identity. But that also depends which area they belong. The participants from Khulna said that they are not able to wear the dress they like for society. They need to wear women's dress. Those who wear men's dress in rural areas do not have a good relationship with family and relatives.

“I do not have a good relationship with my family. They do not like my dress and gestures. But I don't like to wear women's dress, it suffocates me,” FGD, transman, Khulna

Whatever the relation is, a transman needs not to leave home to wear a man's dress. However, there is a completely different scenario in the **indigenous community**. They wanted to wear women's dresses, but they didn't mind wearing men's dress in the urban area of hill track. Until a transman discussed their identity with the family, the dress up does not impact on their relationship with the family. But discussing the identity with the family affects differently in indigenous community. They believe it is an impact of black magic or evil eye on them, so they are doing it.

“I always wanted to wear a man's dress, and my family did not have any problem with my dress. My father loves me so much. But when my neighbors started talking about my dress and short hair, my parents told me to wear women's dress and not to cut my hair. Then, I told them about my identity. They didn't understand what I was saying. I try to make them understand that I look like a woman, but I am not a woman. I am a Man, I like women. They thought I had lost my mind and got mad. They took me to the local exorciser, who tied me and thrashed me with a broom. There was smoke and the smell of red chili. I felt sick and less. I tried hard to make my parents understand that I was a man, but I failed. Later, they stopped my education and locked me in a room at my house. It's a long time since I've had the opportunity to talk with anybody. Later, one of my uncles talked my father into letting me. It's not that my parents didn't love me, but they don't understand my situation and believe in superstition.” Indigenous Transman, Bandarban, hill tracks.

Many people of hill tracks do not understand the term transman. As they are used to seeing Hijra, they identified transwomen as hijra, but they are unaware about the transman concept. So, they think it is a woman who is uncontrolled and breaking social norms. Though indigenous people are flexible in terms of women's dress up, they cannot think them as a transman. In rural hill tracks, they still believe in ghosts, black magic, and superstition. So, they think transman is an impact of ghost and not able to understand their identity.

However, in Bengali community it is different. The transman also needs to leave home if they disclose their identity to family. Especially those who want to do top surgery and take hormones to grow a beard. Families do not accept a female to change a man. They also cut the relationship with the person who transforms their body or declares them a Man. A transwoman can get mother support, but a transman does not get even the mother's support too. A transman who did top surgery, took hormones and was a participant in our study said,

“I have no connection with my family. I left the house a long time ago. I have no family; they do not want to see me.” Two months after this interview, he died in a gas cylinder accident at his home in Dhaka. He was taken to the hospital by his neighbor. After his death, the community people tried to communicate with his family, but no one responded. His mother replied over the phone, **“We don't know anybody by this name.”** But the hospital refused to hand over his dead body without his family members. At last, his younger sister came to receive his dead body, but it was not taken home. His dead body was buried by his friends from the community.

Social relationship:

Transwomen and transmen face huge social bullying and violence irrespective of their geographical area. However, the perspective of bullying is different for both transwomen and transmen. Transwomen get bullied because of their feminine behavior and attitude whereas transmen are bullied because of their masculine behavior & attitude. The patriarchal social structure does not allow a female to behave like a man. However, a transwoman has more vulnerability than a transman probably because society thinks femininity is a weakness and masculinity is a power. On the other hand, socially as transwomen are more vocal about their rights, whether transmen are not willing to talk about their identity and their rights. Some transwomen are more feminine, and their appearance is visible, but some transwomen are not feminine in their attitude. Those whose femininity is visible are harassed socially, even if they do not cross-dress.

“When I was a child, teacher did not said anything about my appearance, but when I grew younger teacher also start to bullied me in class. Students in the class called me half-ladies. So many times, they tried to open my pants in the school.” Transwomen, Khulna

In Indigenous communities, whether the family accepts them or not, they also face bullying from their community. Even if they do not cross-dress and wear ornaments, they get bullied by society because of their feminine attitude. People used to see a man with masculine attitude they do not like a male with a feminine attitude. Even the indigenous community faces violence for it.

“My family does not tell anything to me as I didn’t reveal my identity to them, but I faced bullying at school for my feminine attitude. They often called me half ladies and hijra. Once, I purchased lipstick from a shop, and I didn’t realize someone was watching me. I don’t know how people know, but people started bullying me for purchasing lipstick.” Indigenous Transwomen, Rangamati, hill tracks.

The transwoman of Dhaka faces different violence than the other area. Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and most of the Transwomen here are migrated from different areas of Bangladesh after they leave home. As Dhaka is a busy city and people here are unknown to each other transwomen can do what they want. Though they get bullied on the road, that is not like the village. Also, people at Dhaka are quite used to seeing transwomen on the road with cross-dressers. Mostly they face problems in finding a house for rent. People are unwilling to give rent to a transwoman. Sometimes, they take house rent to hide their identity, but later, people understand their identity and are forced to leave the house.

“When I took the house, I said that I was a model, so I needed to do makeup and wear ornaments. They agreed to give me rent. Six months later, they told me to leave the house without any reason.” Transwomen, Dhaka

There are different levels of vulnerability between transman based on their look. The transman who did top surgery and has a beard faced fewer problems than a transman who didn’t do top surgery and has no beard. Society always wants to show power to women. So, the manly look also protects a transman to get harassed. A transman who is an advocate of Dhaka Judge court said:

“As I look like a man, people don’t understand my identity, so I don’t face any problems from society now. I can smoke outside and get house rent easily because of my profession.” IDI, Trans man, Dhaka

Not only the look but social position also protects people from harassment. A well-established job and good social position work as protection. Three transmen from Dhaka said they can go mosque for prayer as they look like boys. But they didn’t talk with anybody as they had female voices. However, transmen who don’t have a beard and have a female voice face a lot of social problems. Often, people think of them as men to see their attitude, but when they talk, people understand that they are women who have short hair and wear men’s clothes. They are mostly harassed in educational institutes and women’s spaces.

“ I didn’t face any problem at my school, but when I was admitted in Lalmatia Women's college, Dhaka, I was harassed by the college authority. The day I came to join classes, I stopped at the gate. I was wearing pants and a shirt, and I had short hair. They thought I am a Man. Then I showed my admission paper, but they disagreed to accept that I am a female. As that was a women's college, Man was not permitted to enter the college. Later, they checked my body with a female guard to confirm that I was a female. I was feeling like raped. In my entire college, I was alone. Because of my boy cut hair, girls used to avoid me and look at me weirdly. I was also known to my college for my looks. Teachers also do not like me for my looks. The college authorities called me and asked me a lot of humiliating questions.” IDI, Transman, Dhaka

Though wearing man’s cloths is not a big issue for indigenous people, the transman in indigenous community also bullied by the society. All the indigenous transman participants said they do not have good relationship with neighbor. Though the family does not take it seriously, the relatives and neighbors criticize them for their dress. The indigenous people have always had tension with their security from the military and the Bengali community. So, they also do not focus on this issue much. Though they get bullied, compared to the Bengali community indigenous transman face less violence from the society.

But the transman from Khulna does face a lot of problems about their look and dress up. In Dhaka and Hill tracks it is quite normal a female wearing pant and shirt. But in the Khulna division, it is not normal. The area is conservative. So, most of the transman do not wear the clothes they like. They do not cut their hair and wear salwar kamiz. Few of them dare to wear what they want. They face extreme bullying from society; to them, a woman with short hair and a man’s dress is shameless. People do not appreciate them, people tell them bad girls, but they do not able to identify them as transman.

“ I don’t care what people said to me. I don’t like to wear women's clothes, they suffocate me. I wear clothes of my choice and have my haircut as my wish. Here, everyone knows each other. In the beginning, they used to tell me a lot of things; some people told me “women hijra,” some told me that I don’t get good groom, and some look at me weirdly. Eventually, they stopped.” Transman, Khulna

Emotional health: Emotional vulnerability is a big issue for the transgender person. Whether they are trans women or transmen everyone gets emotionally vulnerable from there adolescence period. Adolescence is the age when they understand their feelings and can identify their inner self. Does not like to play with the same sex kids and feeling alone. They do not understand what is happening to them and think only she/he is feeling this. They feel alone and cannot share their feelings with anybody. When they can

identify their inner self, they also feel like an alien themselves. The person who born/live Dhaka city may have the information that some people are like them but the person who born outside Dhaka, do not get the opportunity to understand what is happening with them. So, they get frightened of self-identity. It takes a long time to understand the inner self and accept one's identity. The first struggle starts within themselves. The body they have that is not precious for them, they start to hate their body and want a body of the opposite sex.

“I always like to play with girls. I didn’t like to play with boys. It was not a problem when I was a child. But when I grew adolescence, I wanted long hair like a girl. But boys aren’t allowed to grow their hair long. I love to do makeup. Sometimes I use some makeup from my mother, they didn’t mind when I was a child. But when I was an adolescent, my mother didn’t like it. In my school, the teacher didn’t say anything about wearing makeup when I was a child, but later, they also started to shout at me. boys from school often tried to open my pants. Several times, I complained to the teacher, but they did nothing about it. I had no friends at my school. I was all alone. When my voice changed, that was heartbreaking for me. I was waiting for a woman's voice and breasts to grow, but that didn’t happen. I used to cry in my room. I was so upset with my body that I started to wear cross-dressing clothes and use makeup. My parents didn’t like it, especially my father. He used to shout at me and beat me. I was not able to compromise with my identity. I came out from my home after my HSC. I look like a woman, and I always wear Sharee, so people are not able to identify my gender identity. I often feel upset living alone without my family, but I cannot go to them. They will not accept me. I tried to commit suicide once. There is no mental health counselor in Khulna. Whatever, once I found one and went to him. He told me that “being transgender is a sickness, people should beat trans women and send them to jail. Then we will be ok”. After visiting him, I never went to any other mental health professional”. IDI, Transwomen, Khulna

Every transwoman participant said they have depression and often feel alone. All of them are fighting with the inner self and the body. Most of the participants discussed that they feel different from their adolescent age and start fighting with the body and inner self. They strongly feel the feminine identity inside and hate the male body they were born with. The person who hides her identity, whether they have a good relationship in family and society, also has an emotional breakdown and depression for hiding and covering up their identity.

“I felt like a bird in a cage; it suffocated me and made me suicidal. I don’t like this life. I am a different person inside, but I have to suppress it. This is unbearable for me.” Indigenous transwomen, Rangamati, hill tracks

In Bangladesh, there are very few trans friendly mental health counselors and psychologists who live in Dhaka. But the person who lives outside Dhaka has no opportunity to get emotional well-being support. Even the people who live in Dhaka do not get the opportunity to find a trans friendly counselor or psychologist. Most of the psychologists provide them hormone capsules and sleeping pills. Some of them suggest doing marriage a opposite sex and few of them send to mental hospital or rehabilitation. That treatment makes them sicker. Only 3 participants said they felt good after getting a mental health session, which they received from the community-based NGO.

The *transman* also feels the same emotional depression and frustration about their body. All the trans male participants shared that they hate ministration. The ministration time is unbearable for them. All of them hate the ministration. Like transwomen, transman's first fight also started with themselves. Adolescence is the most difficult time for transpersons when they start identifying themselves. Feeling alone and accepting the inner self make them unhappy and depressed. When their breasts start growing and their voices get soft, they feel uncomfortable. Always try to hide the visibility of their breast. Want to be like a man. At the same time, hiding one's self-identity from family and friends is a big challenge. I always need to pretend like someone he is not. In Dhaka, at least they can wear men's clothes but in khulna or outside Dhaka most of the transman do not able to wear a dress they like. They need to wear so-called women's clothes. That makes them more unhappy and frustrated. Living an unwanted life makes them more depressed and angrier.

“The ministration time is frustrating. Sometimes, I stopped it with pills, but it came back. I feel disgusting and angry. I cannot wear the dress I like. Have to wear a salwar kamiz, which makes me discomfort and sad. This hiding is unbearable.” FGD, Tranman, Khulna

“I was brought up in a broken family, my parents were separated. along with my younger sister & brother, stay with my father. My father was an angry person. Both of us kept our distance from my father from my childhood, I was always unhappy for my family. I need to take care of my sister & brother, and I am always afraid for them. When I was in class 9 my father attempt to rape me and forces me to intimate with him. That was a trauma for me that I still carry with me. I told my mother about it and shifted to my mother. I always need to hide myself; that is unbearable. Always need to be conscious about my identity. If I told my family about my identity, they would kill me. Now, I work in a community-based NGO, where I got counseling. Probably I got job here because it works for us. But can not get better opportunity to other organization for my look. All the circumstances are frustrating and depressing. I don't understand what to do. To get counseling from a private phycologist is costly, so I cannot afford it.” IDI, Transman, Dhaka

As transman are visible like transwomen in this society and most of them do not want to be come out in society, so usually they don't go to counselors or psychologists. They cannot trust counselors, and as it is costly, they cannot afford it. Whereas indigenous people or people outside Dhaka do not have the opportunity to take emotional health support. There are very limited emotional well-being counselors in Bangladesh, and most of them are based in Dhaka. Even those who practice in Dhaka are mostly transphobic. So, those who stay in Dhaka also avoid counseling. Some of them are taking counseling from the community-based NGO's mental health care service.

Education & Livelihood:

Transgender persons are born as male or female, so there is no visible difference in early childhood. They grow up like the other children in society and thus do not face any problems at primary school. At the adolescent age, they can understand their feelings and can identify their inner identity. In this process, eventually, it makes them alone, and unconsciously they make a distance from the other children. However, that does not stop their education. The real problem started when their behavior changed. Especially the transwomen whose feminine attitude and behavior get visible they face bullying and violence at school. That makes them uncomfortable to go to school. At the adolescent age, some transwomen drop out of school and some of them have been able to complete their education.

Because transman is less visible than transwomen, they get less bullied at school. Transman faces more problems at home than in school or society. The people of Bangladesh, especially the lower class, do not want to educate their female children. They find no reason to educate their female children as they will go to their in-laws' house and serve them. So, parents do not want to waste their money on their girls. As a transman have female bodies, they are treated as a girl at their home. Most of our transman respondents were from Khulna and most of them were not able to complete their high school for the unwillingness of the family. However, three transwomen from Khulna are continuing their education but they do not face any problems with their institute as they do not cross-dress. However, transmen who do cross-dress and have short hair, they face problems at school and college. Especially those who studied at girls' schools face more problems. Girls do not want to be friends with them as they look like boys. Teachers also exhibit rude behavior and do not welcome them. Some of them have study gaps due to the noncooperative behavior of families and educational institutions.

However, even if a transperson completes their education, it is not easy to get a job. Transpersons with educational qualifications do not get jobs; whoever gets the job must join lower positions. Do not get promotions and get bullied in the office space. Some of them work in community-based NGOs, but that job is not sustainable. The job will end

when the project ends. Most of the projects end within 1 to 2 years, and most of them aren't extended, so the transpeople lose their job. Also, there are so many NGOs in Bangladesh, but transgender people only get jobs in organizations that work for gender diverse communities. There are a few employees at BRAC, Blast, the Uttaran Foundation, and some community-based NGOs.

Other than NGOs, there are some corporate companies where transgender people are appointed. BRAC Bank and Standard Chartered also appointed two transgender people. With the advocacy of NGOs and the government's positive initiatives, a few companies have initiated the appointment of transgender employees. The government of Shaikh Hasina declared a five percent tax rebate or a refund of 75 percent of trans employees' salaries if 10 percent of their total workforce, or 100 workers, were trans for the companies. Shawano Super Shop, Walton, Apex, and Pathao Bike Ride have appointed a group of transgender employees. 2020 In March 2021, Pathao appointed 50 transgender persons as food delivery agents. CKDL garments and ACI Motors appointed a few transgender people as per their skill and qualification. Though there are a few garments, corporate companies, and NGOs that have appointed a few Transgender People, it is still very few. Few transgender people also work as entrepreneurs in the fashion and beauty industry. Some are working as models. Yasin Ahmed Sokal is now a famous model and recently won runner-up in the Miss Evergreen beauty contest.

But the challenge is to continue the Job for a long time. Pathao Food has appointed 50 transgender People as food delivery agents, but none of them are working now. Some of them left the job for various reasons, such as the bicycle provided to them for food delivery was not good in condition, bad behavior of the supervisor, workload was too much, also they think that cycling is a man's job, as they are women it is not suitable job for them. A few of them also lose their job for indecent behavior with co-colleagues, such as sexual harassment of male colleagues by transgender staff. The same situation was also found in the case of Shwapno Super Shop; none of them worked for more than six months. They face discrimination and workload issues from employers, also, the employer complains that they did indecent behavior & sexual harassment towards male co-workers, so they are bound to discontinue a few transgender staff as per their policy of zero tolerance on sexual violence. However, most of the transgender participants said they are facing gender-based discrimination at their workplace.

Discrimination at the place /The common reason for not continuing a Job is:

The transgender community has childhood trauma and a history of being discriminated from by society and family. Most of them are emotionally vulnerable. Also, they have different looks and attitudes. In these cases, they were appointed without any professional training and counseling. On the other hand, the employer also does not sensitize all their staff. It seems that the employer appointed community people to meet the SDG (now

some corporations also have SDG targets) and government requirements. So, the working environment is not satisfactory from both sides (the community people and the other staff). Their colleagues do not prepare to receive them psychologically at the same time the community people also do not get ready for the unwelcoming environment. In this situation, they get disheartened and leave the job.

Most of the transgender employees who are doing desk work have said that they are not given the work they are supposed to do. The senior colleagues are not interested in teaching them the task, and most of the time, they do not provide any work to the transgender staff. So, they had nothing to do.

“I am joining as an admin officer, but mostly they give me the support staff work. If I do not ask them for work, they do not give me any work. I have nothing to do. But they did not increase my salary because I do not work properly. If they do not include me in the work, how could I learn it?” (transwomen,FGD) She also said that she was repeatedly not informed about the monthly meeting, and when she wanted to know about it, her senior said the meeting was not important for her. Though she said the top management was good in behavior when she complained about this issue, they did nothing.

As the organization does not have previous experience in recruiting transgender employees, they also do not understand what kind of behaviors they need to do. Few organizations make separate dining tables and separate washrooms for transgender staff. They have chosen them but are not willing to provide the same facilities the others have.

Transgender women face more discrimination than transgender men. Transgender men have a man's outlook, and most people are not able to identify their gender identity; they get the facility of being a Man. On the other hand, all transgender women are not comfortable with cross-dressing. Whereas they were forced to cross-dress as they were appointed as transgender staff by the employee. It seems the appointment is a kind of ‘quota fill-up’ procedure for them, and they want to show them as inclusion.

Transgender Models also face discrimination from the media. They need to wait a long time for the photoshoot, whereas others do not need to wait such a long time. They also paid less than the other models. Sometimes, they were called for one type of shooting, and then they rejected the entire shoot after a long wait. Most of the production houses/Media use their identity in the name of inclusion but do not behave well.

“I was contacted for a lead role in a movie, they gave me the script, and I was prepared for it. When I went for the shooting/acting, they changed my role and gave me a small role after a whole day of waiting”. IDI, Transwomen,

Mostly transgender people face discrimination in the workplace for their identity. After the government initiatives and the company’s target to meet the SDG goal, some of the

companies initiate to include the community as a staff in various positions. Most of them were appointed as junior administrative officers, receptionists, sales, and support staff. Though most of them have experienced facing discrimination, there are some positive experiences at NGO's. As NGOs work for inclusion and they do work for social change, the transgender community who are working at NGOs have good working experience and continue their job. However, some transgender women also face discrimination at NGOs.

“Once I complained about sexual harassment I have faced by my male colleague, he lost his job based on my complaint, but I lost my job too. This has not happened to a woman who complained before, but it happened to me as I am a transgender woman.”
Transgender women, FGD, transwomen

Transman also faces a lot of problems getting a job for their short hair and getup. They have to face a lot of uncomfortable questions about their getup and are requested to wear Sharee or salwar kamij after getting a job. Most of the transman do not get a job even if they qualify. Some of them get jobs in community-based NGO or human rights organizations. But to get a job in another field, they need to either compromise with their choice or they need to leave the job for the official environment.

Sexual violence:

Almost every transgender participant said they have faced sexual violence several times. But they are not able to complain about it. Especially **transwomen** do not complain to the police or anyone because of the fear of being judgmental. They face sexual violence by relatives, friends, and partners and are blackmailed by unknown online partners. Especially the indigenous transwomen blackmailed their Bengali partner and face sexual, physical violence & financial losses. Compared to the Bangali community, the indigenous community faces less sexual violence from relatives. The Bengali community faces more sexual violence from relatives, local people & family friends. However, nobody can complain to the police for fear of revealing their identity.

“Yet I do not reveal my gender identity to my family. My attitude is more like a man's, so people are also not able to identify my gender. My father has a grocery shop, I often go there after school. One of my father's friends, who is also a police officer, often came to my father's grocery shop to chat with my father. He also came to our house. Sometimes he touched me inappropriately and I didn't feel it good. One day, I went to a local fair, and he was also there. When I saw him at the fair, he grabbed me and took me to a secluded corner. That day he forcefully sexually harassed me and did anal sex. It was painful for me. I told my mother not to admit him at our house but could not say why. After that day, several times he abused me sexually.” IDI, Transwomen, Khulna

Another participant said, “I was brought up in a joint family. I often shared a bed with my cousin's brother when I was a child. Often, he touched me so badly that I felt discomfort. I didn't want to sleep with him. But when there was a guest, I needed to share my bed with him. At my adolescents age, one night I was sleeping with him suddenly he forced me and did anal sex. After that, he frequently started to do it with me. I am bound to tell my mother everything. My mother sent me to my aunty's house and admitted me to school there. Then, my cousin's brother started to go there and forced me to have sex with him. Later on, I shifted Dhaka and got released from his torture. ” IDI, Transwomen, Dhaka

In both cases, the participant's identity was not open to family and society. But they were also a victim of sexual violence by men while they were children or adolescents. From this, it also can be assumed that man is also a victim of sexual violence while they are children or adolescents. But they do not share it with anybody for the sake of the male ego or being insulted by others. However, the participants who were identified as transwomen also were victims of sexual violence. Most of the participants said that they did not share the sexual violence they have survived with anybody, but one transwoman said that she complained about the violence she faces to the police and get harassed by the police.

“I had faced sexual violence several time, but didn't get the courage to complain to the police because of section 377 of the criminal law. However, once I complained to the local Thana, they refused to file an FIR and told me to go to the Hijra guru to complain.” FGD, Transwomen, Khulna

The belief that transwomen do not engage in sexual harassment is widespread among both men and women. The majority of people believe that all trans women are prostitutes. Therefore, they are neither sexually harassed or raped. When transwomen report sexual harassment, police also make fun of them. Transwomen's complaints of sexual harassment are not taken seriously since they lack a vagina. Since most people are unaware of the difference between hijra and transwomen, they believe that hijra gurus should handle all transpersonal problems.

On the other hand, the transwoman from indigenous community faces sexual violence mostly by the unknown online partner. They want to hide their identity so that they do not dare to find partners in the indigenous community. So, they find partners in online groups, apps, or other ways. Mostly, they found partners or had relationships with someone outside hill tracks and from the Bengaly community. They trust them as partners and are going to meet them at their premises. When they went to meet them, they faced

sexual, physical, and financial violence. Mostly robbed and blackmailed by the partners and their friends. Most of our transwomen participants from the indigenous community have shared the same experience of violence.

“ I did a relationship with a Man through an online group. He was from Shylet, A Muslim from the Bengali community. We shared our feelings and engaged in a relationship for six months over the phone. During this time, he also came to Bandarban to meet me, and we visited Sajek together. That tour was nice. I thought he loved me; I trusted him. After six months of our relationship, I went to Shylet to meet him. After I met him, at first, he locked me in a room and did physical and sexual torture on me. Then he called his friend, and they also tortured me sexually. They took everything I had and told me to call my family to send money. They took my mobile and said if I didn't arrange 100 thousand money they will directly call my family and tell them about my identity. Then I negotiated with them and arranged 50 thousand money. After that, they leave me.” IDI, Indigenous Transgender women, Bandarban.

It is noticeable that the perpetrators mostly targeted the Indigenous community for blackmailing. As the indigenous community is a small community in Bangladesh and the transwomen from the indigenous community fear to open up themselves, so they didn't know each other and can not make any relationship from the indigenous community. For this circumstance, they search for a partner in dating apps and online groups. The perpetrator takes the chance of indigenous transwomen's fear. It is not confirmed whether the perpetrator is homosexual or heterosexual. They might be homosexual or heterosexual, but they are using the groups to trap transpeople and homosexuals to blackmail. The indigenous community and the gender diverse Bengali community use dating apps and online groups to search for partners. However, the participants of transgender people from the Bengali community did not share any story of blackmailing.

The **transman** also faces rape and sexual violence by their partner, husband, friend & family members. Half of the transman participants from Khulna were married from family pressure, and they are living a painful life. In rural areas, it is difficult for a female, especially one who belongs to the lower class or mid-lower class, not to marry. Most of them did not get the opportunity to get higher education or to work for self-independence. They also were not able to tell the family their identity for fear. Sometimes, they also get confused and think that it will be all right after marriage. So, they compromise or take a chance to live a life like a heterosexual person. After marriage, most of them cannot adjust to the marital relationship with a Male and have a painful life. “Marital rape’ is not considered as a rape under the penal code of Bangladesh. Mostly, men think it is their right to have sex with their wife, and consent is not necessary to

having sex with their wife. So, married transman is a victim of marital rape. Not only Khulna, the transman from Dhaka also shared that they are the victim of marital rape.

“My family forced me to get married when I passed my H.S.C. I spent two painful years with my husband. Without my consent, he forcefully had sex with me day after day. I used to cry and beg him, but he didn’t listen to me. I also told my mother, but she told me to adjust with my husband. After two years, I divorced him against my family's consent and broke up the relationship with my family, too.” IDI, Transman, Dhaka

Not only marital rape, but transman also faces sexual violence by family members, friends and outsider. It is not surprising that a female gets sexually abused at home. Even knowing their identity, they also face sexual violence. A transman respondent shared that his male friend calls him in his room and rape him knowing that he is a Man. Another participant shared that his cousin's brother sexually abused him at their home. But surprisingly transman from indigenous community shared that they never face sexual violence.

No participant complained to the police or shared the story of violence to anybody for fear of getting exposed or judged by others. As most of the transman dressed by their choice and against the family, they think that they are judged by the family member if they share it. So they do not share it with anybody. However, it is also observed that the transman who has masculine behavior did not face sexual violence. Also, when they shortened their hair and dressed like a man, they got less sexual violence than those who did not cross-dress. This is because, without their voice, they may not be identified as a female by others.

Medical support:

Most of the transgender participants, especially those who cross-dress, said that even if they face any physical problem they face uncomfortable behavior from the doctor. The doctor also judges them and behaves rudely. So, they do not want to go to the hospital for any sickness. Those who do not cross-dress also avoid going to the doctor for fear of being exposed.

“I had some sexual infection when I went to the doctor and discussed my problem he suspiciously look at me. I get fear with his look. After that I warried to go to doctor and avoid them” IDI, Transwomen, Khulna

“I had some gynecologist problems. I went to a female doctor, but she looked at me weirdly to see my cloths as if I was a criminal. After that I did not went to the doctor”. IDI, Transman, Dhaka

As people have transphobia and are conservative with this issue, transpersons always have a fear of getting judged. Therefore, they also avoid going to the hospital and the doctor. Whether the doctor is conservative or not, the trans people have anxiety with it. There are some community-based NGO that provide medical services now, especially for STDs, but it is not outside Dhaka, and most of them do not have the information.

Legal barrier:

There are several legal barriers for transgender in Bangladesh. The first legal barrier is government acceptance. Bangladesh's government has not yet given legal acceptance to transgender people. The government identified Hijra as sex, however, Hijra is not a gender identity. Many transgender persons belong to the hijra culture, but all the transgender persons are not in the Hijra culture. There are so many transgenders who don't belong to the hijra culture and do not like to tell them hijra. So, the acceptance of 'Hijra' as a sex does not include transgender as gender identity.

A transgender person is born either Male or female. So, their birth certificate and other legal documents are created as male or female. That also creates problems when they do cross-dress or want to change their identity. Especially when they applied for a job and sat an exam.

“ I face problem for my identity card picture, name and my look when I sat for bar council exam. My look doesn't match with my ID card. As I look like a Man, it is difficult to identify that I am a female. The hall controller got confused when to saw my ID card. Later, I need to tell him that I cut my hair; that's why I look different.”
Transman, Dhaka.

Most transgender person do not feel comfortable being identified by their birth name. because the birth name is based on their biological identity. As they identify themselves in a reverse identity, they want to change their name and sexual identity. The birth name and identity are also a psychological torture for them as they do not own that identity. However, changing the identity takes a long time and requires a long process. They need to show their medical certificate, which proves that they are in the process of transformation. They also need to show a certificate from a psychologist that they are not abnormal. But most of the transgender people in Bangladesh do not go through the process of the surgery; or go to the phycologist in that case, they can't change the other related certificate, that is school certificate, collage certificate, etc. kII, Tasnuva Anan Shishir, transgender rights activist

4.4 Difference in vulnerability after August 24 :

During this study, there was a change of government. The political change also changed the situation for the SOGIESC community in Bangladesh. The past government had several initiatives to include transgender people, especially those who belong in the hijra culture, in several government and nongovernment programs. After the July Revolution, the past government fell, and the interim government took power. After the interim government took power, the religious fundamentalist group became more powerful and uncontrolled as the administration did not work properly. In this time, the religious fundamentalist Man did several attacks on women, Indigenous communities and to the gender-diverse community. Asif Mahtab Utsha, who was arrested for tearing an NCDB book about transgender people in class, was released from jail by the interim government. Not only Asif Mahtab but most of the people in Bangladesh are homophobic & transphobic. Religious fundamentalism provoked extreme hatred for women, indigenous people, different religious beliefs, sex workers, and gender-diverse people. It is not new, but as there is no elected government in Bangladesh now, they are doing extreme violence. Sex workers are attacked by the mob trial in road and beaten publicly several times in a different area of Bangladesh including Dhaka city. A hijra shantytown was burning three months back in Sherpur, which has no news in the newspaper or on the television. In this situation, gender-diverse people feel more vulnerable and at risk.

“We used to go someplace and gather there for chatting with each other almost every afternoon and evening. But now we do not go outside without emergency work. Man with long Panjabi and Tupi (cap) gather those places, so we don’t feel safe to gather those places now.” FGD, transwomen, Khulna

Whether a transman from Khulna said, “whatever the people think I didn’t bother before, I did what I like, I wear jeans and shirt and do short hair but now I afraid to go outside. A few days before, I witnessed women killed at the road. People with long Panjabi and tupi are everywhere. I feel fear now when going outside. Most of the time, I stay at home.” FGD, Transman, Khulna

Whether transwomen, or transman both are afraid to go out from home now. The fear of being beaten or killed by the religious fundamentalist group or people’s mob. People justified beating or killing a transgender person in the name of religion. After the fall of the past government, the Muslim religious people got uncontrolled and provided hate speech towards the women, sex workers, indigenous people, and gender diverse population. Shila hijra, A transwomen were killed in Rangamati in February 2025, Shila was an advocate of transgender rights. It is not that all the people who wear tupi and

Panjabi are fundamentalist, but the trauma is so deep that the community fears any person seen with a tupi and Panjabi. So, their area of roaming gets narrower now, and they block themselves in a room. The fear now turned into a trauma.

Other transwomen from Munsigange, Dhaka, said “I am working in an NGO, where I work as a STD awareness provider in the community. I used to go to the village, and we gathered a place and showed how to use condoms and take protection to the MSM group. But now it is impossible. When I visited one of my fields for field work, a few local people were gathered there, and some were whispering about our identity. I quickly closed the meeting. After that day, we did not able to do any meeting in any field”.

The devastating behavior of the Muslim fundamentalist cis man not only threatens the SOGIESC people but also stops NGO’s from working for the community and any reproductive works. The field workers of the NGO’s are not feeling safe to work in the fields whether they are transgender or women or men. The past government started some work for the Hijra’s community, but now Hijra’s are also in threat. The people who were positive and supportive also feared talking with the community, so they cut off the relationship. It is always a challenge for a transperson, especially for a transwoman, to get a house rent but now they have face unbearable problems finding a house for rent.

“I live in Mugda, Dhaka from 2 years. There are so many Madrasahs in that area. I didn’t feel comfortable before, but now I feel afraid to go outside. Some madrasah students who were following me advised my landlord not to let me rent any more. So, my landlord got afraid, and he told me to leave his house within one month. Now it is difficult for me to find a house. No one wants to give me rent.” FGD, Transwomen, Dhaka

Another transwoman from Khulna said, “I have two cisgender heterosexual friends who understand me and was nonjudgmental. Now, they avoid me. One of them told me to think like ‘normal’ people and also said that what I am doing is not allowed in Islam.”

Most of the people in Bangladesh tend to follow the muscle power and money power. There is also a tendency to force another person to conform to Islamic beliefs, whether the person is ready to conform or not. There is a tendency to obey people who show power and rudeness. As the religious fundamentalist is destructive and killing people in the name of Islam, most of the people go with their beliefs and do mob with person who do not go with their thoughts and beliefs. As a result, people who were sensitive to transgender people are leaving them now.

However, indigenous transgender persons have a different perspective. Bengali and indigenous groups in Bangladesh's hill areas are always at conflict. The history of

violence in the CHT region dates back to the British colonial policies that encouraged Bengali settlement in the highlands. As a result, Indigenous populations were marginalized and displaced. Assimilationist policies were then implemented by Bangladesh's subsequent administrations, which exacerbated mistrust and animosity in the country's sparsely populated hilly area. The region is still dealing with the aftermath of a decade-long conflict that tore through the CHT. It has seen innumerable petty, ethnic, and political killings. There is a serious threat to the indigenous people in Bangladesh's hill regions from both the Bengali community and the armed forces. Extensive control by Bangladesh's armed forces in the CHT region is another topic. The military's participation in the CHT is seen by many as reflecting a lengthy history of governmental authority and going beyond peacekeeping. Since the Indigenous people frequently view the army as an oppressive rather than a protective force, this power dynamic makes them feel vulnerable and distrustful.

After the interim government took power, the indigenous people felt more vulnerable because of the Muslims violent groups who started attacking the women & minority groups. As there is a history of violence in the hill track by the settlers, in this political unrest situation, they feel more violence. In January 2025, an organization called "Students for Sovereignty" held protests at the NCTB building in the morning with five demands, including punishment for those responsible for adding the word "Adibashi" (indigenous) and an image of graffiti. Meanwhile, another small group from the indigenous community, under the banner of "Aggrieved Indigenous Students-People," held protests at the same venue, demanding reinstatement of the graffiti image with the word "Indigenous" in textbooks. While the indigenous group attacked by the Islamist group called student for sovereignty and injured. So, not as a gender diverse community but as indigenous people, they always feel unsafe, and now they get traumatized and feel more insecure.

“Not only my transgender identity, but I also always feel fear for my indigenous identity. As an indigenous person, I am always vulnerable, it doesn’t matter if I am transgender or cisgender.” FGD, transwomen, Rangamati

Chapter 5

Recommendation:

The SOGISC community has faced violence from their childhood, and so the educational institutes, especially transgender women and intersex people face violence largely. Those who are well-educated also face violence and discrimination at work for their identity and expression. Most of them do not receive any professional or vocational training. To include them in the mainstream job sector they need professional behavioral training, skill-based training, and vocational training too. However, there are different needs for different identities. Considering who they are, the risk and necessity vary. Based on their different identities, the following recommendation is suggested:

Intersex:

- Advocacy and lobbying with the government for the recognition of intersex identity. Intersex people are often confused with Hijra people. Thus, hijra people also pretend to be intersex persons for their safety and security. Though people are not welcoming of intersex identity, as intersex people are by birth, they do not have life risk from the fundamentalist group. Thus, it is important to raise awareness about intersex rights and give them an intersex identity and, at the same time, ensure the safety of the hijra community.
- Stop unnecessary gender identification surgery through implementing policy.
- A mass awareness raising program with doctors to stop the sex identification surgery.
- A mass awareness raising program with parents for accepting the intersex child as they are and stopping the sex identification surgery.
- Awareness raising program with the School so that school teachers get sensible and protect the intersex children being bullied from the other students and make another student sensible.
- Developing professional and learning skills through workshops, which leads them to find sustainable jobs & entrepreneurship. The skill-based training could be:
 - Business handling or promotional training
 - English speaking and writing courses.
 - Computer skills development, internet browsing, Photoshop, and graphics design courses based on educational qualification
 - Online freelancing training based on educational qualification
 - Beautification courses
 - Tailoring, crafts, boutique, block, boutique, etc.
 - Food processing, cooking, baking, etc.

- Improve and raise the economic situation through sustainable work opportunities.
- Provide Quata and financial support/scholarships to financially unstable students.
- Develop awareness and knowledge through participation in workshops, seminars, etc.

Transgender :

- To ensure the human rights of transgender people, it is important to establish an agender-inclusion policy for all institutions in Bangladesh.
- The government can establish a one-stop service facility for the community to quickly exchange educational certificates and NIDs.
- A mass awareness program is required to raise awareness and foster community resilience. Advocacy initiatives involving medical and mental health professionals are necessary to end transphobia and raise general knowledge about transgender issues.
- Advocacy programs in the education sector are much needed. Most of the community people were not able to continue their education because of the insensitive behavior of teachers and students.
- It is mandatory to provide professional training before they join the job and also, gender-sensitive training needs to be provided to all employees of the company they are going to join.
- Few transwomen received training courses from social welfare and NGOs. After the training, they have provided an amount of money to the community. But there is no follow-up to what they have done with this money. It needs to be followed up by the institution that provided the training.
- The need for training and skill development is different for each person because everyone's choices and interests are different. Based on the interview, the following training they need to receive:
 - Soft skill training such as professional behavioral training, office rules, and attitude.
 - Business handling or promotional training
 - English speaking and writing courses.
 - Computer skills development, internet browsing, Photoshop, and graphics design courses
 - Online freelancing training
 - Beautification courses
 - Tailoring, crafts, boutique, block, boutique, etc.
 - Food processing, cooking, baking, etc.
 - Farming (fisheries, poultry, cattle, etc.)

Chapter 6.

Conclusion

This study focused on Intersex, transwomen, and transmen, who are extremely vulnerable and discriminated. Because of their gender identity, they have faced discrimination from their families, society, and the state. Social stigma, taboo, and religious fundamentalism are the main reasons behind their discrimination. People have a misconception of the identity of Hijra, transgender, and intersex people. As Hijra people are more visible in society, most of the people think any person who is a different gender identity is a hijra. With this misconception, the government also passed the hijra gadget. Which mentioned hijra as sex. Most of the activists appreciated it and took it as one step towards stopping discrimination against the diverse community. Some activists also think that misconceptions provide safety for transgender and hijra people. The question is, what is the role of the state? It is the state's responsibility to ensure every citizen's right and dignity. Whereas the diverse gender people are facing violence from the family and society every time. There was less information before, and people identified everyone as Hijra. Their concept about hijra was as an “intersex body”, but now, eventually, few people understand the difference between the gender diverse group. The more people know about the difference the more the group gets vulnerable. Again, the question is how long they will be protected with this misconception of the general people?

Articles 27 and 28 of the Constitution provide that all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law, and the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. However, in practice, people are not treated equally before the law in Bangladesh. In a patriarchal society, stigma and power practices are deeply rooted in people's minds. They like to judge the person who are vulnerable and show their power to the vulnerable group. The culture of impunity makes people more devastated towards other people's rights, whether they are gender diverse people, or indigenous people or a woman. Gender diverse people get more vulnerable in this kind of society. The state's inability to embrace a gender diverse community is primarily due to society, particularly religious fundamentalists. The religious fundamental group stopped the state from including the gender diverse community in their rights and were able to attack them repeatedly because most of the people justified their extremism in the name of religion.

People's sensitive and nonjudgmental behavior can stop violence against diverse gender communities. But it seems impossible to be aware of the general people about gender diverse people's rights. It is the state's responsibility to make people aware of their rights and ensure everyone's safety and security. However, until there is section 377 of the penal code, the right & dignity will not be ensured for the gender diverse people.

Chapter 7. Anex:

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