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8.5.2. Social attitudes

As reported in the [2024 EUAA COI Report: Bangladesh – Country Focus](#), sources described a stigma surrounding sexuality in Bangladesh,[1117](#) and that homosexuality is met with societal disapproval[1118](#) 'deeply ingrained and reinforced by the legal system, societal norms, and religious beliefs.'[1119](#) Hijras reportedly also faced social stigma and discrimination.[1120](#) According to the Equaldex's Equality Index measuring the status of LGBT rights, laws, and freedoms as well as public attitudes towards LGBT people, Bangladesh rated 23 (with 100 being the most equal),[1121](#) ranking Bangladesh 138 out of 197 countries in 2025.[1122](#)

Hijra is considered the oldest transgender group in the world[1123](#) and there are about 10 000 hijras in Bangladesh according to an official estimate.[1124](#) Rights groups claim the figure could be as high as 1.5 million in a population of 170 million people, as reported by Reuters.[1125](#) Government initiatives have included opening separate Islamic schools for hijras[1126](#) as well as a one mosque dedicated to the community,[1127](#) but hijras have continue to face social stigma, [1128](#) discrimination,[1129](#) and socio-economic marginalisation.[1130](#) Historically, the hijra community has been impoverished,[1131](#) although they have been holding an important traditional role in entertaining at marriage and birth ceremonies.[1132](#) According to national authorities, 'modernisation has diminished the traditional earning opportunities' for hijras, and with limited education and skills many engage in high-risk sex work for survival.[1133](#)

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