

## 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](#)

- [1117](#)

USA, USDOS, 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh,, 20 March 2023, [url](#), section 6

- [1118](#)

Mozumder M. K. et al., Mental health and suicide risk among homosexual males in Bangladesh, PLoS One, 15 August 2023, [url](#), p. 2

- [1119](#)

VOA, Pride Month is a secret celebration in Bangladesh, 26 June 2024, [url](#)

- [1120](#)

Al-Mamun, M. et al., Discrimination and social exclusion of third-gender population (Hijra) in Bangladesh: A brief review, *Heliyon Society and Politics*, October 2022, [url](#), p. 1; EU, Election Expert Mission to Bangladesh 2024, Parliamentary Election, 7 January 2024, [url](#), p. 16

- [1121](#)

Equaldex, LGBT Rights in Bangladesh, n.d., 2025, [url](#)

- [1122](#)

Equaldex, World Equality Index, n.d., 2025, [url](#)

- [1123](#)

Daily Star (The), The illusion of inclusion: Empty policies and promises for Bangladesh's hijra community, 4 July 2024, [url](#)

- [1124](#)

Reuters, In Bangladesh, new school textbook features transgender people, 24 February 2023, [url](#)

- [1125](#)

Reuters, A transgender woman's fight for dignity in Bangladesh's Rohingya refugee camps, 26 March 2025, [url](#)

- [1126](#)

BBC News, Transgender in Bangladesh: First school opens for trans students, 6 November 2020, [url](#); Daily Star (The), The illusion of inclusion: Empty policies and promises for Bangladesh's hijra community, 4 July 2025, [url](#)

- [1127](#)

BBC News, Heart and Soul: The mosque for Bangladesh's transgender women, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

- [1128](#)

Islam, S., et al., Education failure: Untold tales of Bangladeshi transgender's unquenchable educational aspirations., *Teacher's World: Journal of Education and Research*, Volume 50, Issue 1, June 2024, [url](#), pp. 12-13

- [1129](#)

Erasing 76 Crimes, Bangladesh: How are hijras and the LGBTQ+ community different?, 23 September 2024, [url](#)

- [1130](#)

Hossain, I. et al., Marginalization and Societal Isolation faced by the Third-Gender Community (Hijra) in Bangladesh, IJFMR, May-June 2024, [url](#), p. 8; Daily Star (The), The illusion of inclusion: Empty policies and promises for Bangladesh's hijra community, 4 July 2024, [url](#)

- [1131](#)

Bangladesh, Department of Social Services, Livelihood Development Program for the Hijra Community, n.d., 2025, [url](#)

- [1132](#)

Bangladesh, National Human Rights Strategy to Remove Human Rights-related Barriers to HIV Services in

- [1133](#)

Bangladesh, National Human Rights Strategy to Remove Human Rights-related Barriers to HIV Services in