

Bengal Journal of Social Science and Development

Volume No. 1, Issue No. 1 (January 2022)



An Online Quarterly Published Peer Reviewed Journal for Social Science Disciplines
by N.S.D. Educational Welfare Trust

E-Journal URL: www.bjssd-journal.com

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An Explorative Study on the Gender fluid/Non-Confirmative gender in Kolkata

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Abstract: In this study the topic of gender fluidity has been explored depending on different case studies. Since gender fluid people are rare even in the LGBTQ+ community, I am able to produce three cases only. The study explores their socio-economic background, family relationship and influence of peer groups on them. This study also examines the feelings that influence how people perceive and interact with them as an individual.

Keywords: Commercial sex worker, Females, livelihood, Sonagachi

Introduction: Sex is the assigned gender at birth referring to the sexual organs/ reproductive organs an individual is born with. Whereas, Transsexual defines a person had done Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS) to change the sexual organs he are born. **Gender** is the personal preference of a human. The range varies from being a man, woman or anywhere in the spectrum of third gender.

Sexologist John Money first introduced the difference between the concept of biological sex and gender as a role in 1955. His theory got recognized when feminist theory gave importance to the social construction of gender as a whole. In present date, this concept is used in social sciences and also in the documents written by W.H.O. Gender role or sex role defines the range of behaviors and attitudes that are considered appropriate by people based on his actual perception of his own gender. Gender roles are hugely influenced by the culture and the social construction of the environment he are living in. The term gender role was first used by John Money and colleagues in 1954.

Gender identity is the personal choice of an individual's own gender. It may be the same as the assigned sex at birth or may differ from it. There is strong definition of the gender identities of male and female in the society, whereas in case of non binary people, this definition is not specific and is often overlapping with other labels of the LGBTQ+ community.

Core gender identity is supposed to be formed at the age of three by the influence of both biological and sociological factors. Any attempts to reassign it in the later period of lime may result in serious gender dysphoria. Gender is perceived as feelings: gender is just something with which someone personally identify. It doesn't necessarily have to necessarily connect with

what society views as what that is. If someone feel male, that doesn't necessarily mean *he* have to like football or wear jerseys or anything. Just because someone feel female, it doesn't necessarily mean that *she* should wear dresses or play with dolls.

Genders may be of the following types:

- **Male to Female (MtF)**- When somebody that is assigned as a male at birth identifies ownself as a female.
- **Female to Male (FtM)**- When somebody that is assigned as a female at birth identifies ownself as a male.
- **Binary**- It is he genders at each end of the gender spectrum (male and female)
- **Non-Binary**- It is an umbrella term for genders that fall somewhere in the middle of the gender spectrum and are neither strictly male or female. This can be used as agender identification without further explanation. Sometimes the term, *genderqueer*, is used.
- **Genderfluid**- It refers to the people who are constantly moving between genders or having a fluctuating gender identity.
- **Bigender**- Identifying as two genders, commonly (but not exclusively) male and female. Sometimes you feel like both genders at the same time and sometimes you fluctuate.
- **Polygender**- It is the case when an individual identify with multiple genders at once. Sometimes it is also referred to as *multigender*.
- **Neutrois**- It is the case when an individual identify as agender, neither male nor female, and/or genderless.
- **Gender Apathetic**- It is the case when an individual do not identify nor care about any particular gender. He are fine passing off as whatever and he really do not have an opinion towards his own gender.
- **Androgyne**- This is a term which overlaps a lot between gender identification and presentation. It can be used to describe others and as an identification. This term is used to describe people who are neither male nor female or are both male and female. Basically it represents anyone who does not fit into a binary gender category.
- **Intergender**- Somebody who's gender is somewhere between male and female.
- **Demigender**- It is the feeling as if somebody are one part a defined gender and one or more parts an undefined gender. Terms can include demigirl, demiboy, demi agender, etc.
- **Greygender**- Somebody with a weak gender identification of him selves.
- **Novigender**- A gender that is super complex and impossible to describe in a single term.
- **Intersex**- A biological difference in sex that is when people are born with genitals, gonads, and/or chromosomes that do not match up exactly with male or

female. Intersex individuals can have any romantic/sexual orientation and can have any gender identification. Intersex individuals are known common as redheads.

- **Trans Woman**- Someone who is assigned as a male at birth, but identifies as a woman
- **Trans Man**- Someone who is assigned as a female at birth, but identifies as a man
- **Trans Feminine**- Someone who identifies as feminine, but identifies as neither a man nor a woman. He must also be assigned male at birth.
- **Trans Masculine**- Someone who identifies as masculine, but identifies as neither a man nor a woman. He must also be assigned female at birth.

Gender fluidity is the psychological phenomena of having a fluctuation of gender identity. It comes under the LGBTQ+ spectrum or the gender queer umbrella. A gender fluid person may at times identify oneself as male, female, non gender or combination of other genders.

Multi gender, non binary and transgender persons also fall under this definition.

Gender fluid persons can consider themselves as:

- **Agender** – Agender is similar to being non gender. People who choose to use this label are either genderless or want to get identified without his gender or confused about his gender identity.
- **Demigender**- Demigender people feel a partial connection to a specific gender, but not always binary gender. He might feel that he are a part of third gender or agender (but not genderless), along with his assigned binary gender. These people prefer the use of plural pronouns while referring to him.
- **Genderflux**- Genderflux people have a constant fluctuation of his gender identity. Genderflux people may also experience multiple fluctuations between multiple gender labels.

They have specified pronouns for referring themselves. (as per individual choice)

HE/SHE	HIM/HER	HIS/HER	HIS/HERS	HIMSELF/HERSELF
zie	zim	zir	zis	zieself
sie	sie	hir	hirs	hirself
ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
ve	ver	vis	vers	verself
tey	ter	tem	ters	terself
e	em	eir	eirs	emself

The verb forms used with these pronouns are not clearly mentioned till date.

Being gender fluid has no connection with the biological sex assigned to one or the sexual orientation of the individuals.

Research Objective: The term gender fluidity is very new to the Indian as well as the LGBTQ+ society. This is mainly influenced by the western ontology. In this paper the personality of the people who claim themselves as gender fluid has been explored to know more about the subject. Their socio-economic status, educational qualifications, family background, societal perception and love life has been taken into consideration while framing the interview schedule.

Research Methodology: Interview schedule has been taken into consideration to explore the research topic and the rationale for the application of this specific procedures is to identify, process, and analyze information applied to understanding gender fluidity, thereby, allowing the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.

The data was collected by the researcher by conducting personal elaborative interviews taking 3 people from the gender fluid community in Kolkata. They belong from middle socio-economic background and are students of different colleges/universities.

The interviews of the respondents were taken on September, 2018.

Case Study of Aritra Chatterjee:

- **Demographic Details:**

Name: Aritra Chatterjee, **Age :** 22 years, **Education :** Presently doing Masters in Psychology from Rajabajar Science College, **School:** South Point High School, **College:** Ashutosh College, **Occupation:** Has a coaching batch where they teaches Psychology honours, **Religion:** Hindu, **Gender:** Gender fluid/ gender queer, **Sex:** Male, **Sexual orientation:** Homosexual, **Pronouns prefer using for oneself:** 'They'.



- **Family/ background related data:**

Residential area: Amherst Street, **Type of family:** Nuclear family, **Number of sibling:** 1 (younger brother), **Lives in own house or not:** Yes, lives in own house, **Profession of father:** CA, **Profession of mother:** Homemaker, **Average monthly income of family:** 1 lakh, **Status**

of relation with family members: They is close to their younger brother and mother a lot but shares a formal relation with their father. Overall they is comfortable with their family.

On the contrary, their brother is conventionally masculine and does not show any interest in the queer community.

(The writing may not be grammatically incorrect since we are using the pronoun 'they' and singular verb form to denote Aritra)

- **Subject specific questions:**

- i) **Since when did you identify that you are somewhat different from majority?**

Remembering Aritra's childhood, *they* feel that when *they* were 2-3 years old, *their* parents identified that *they* is somewhat different from other children. Whenever *they* cried or nagged, *they* could be easily calmed down by giving them a doll or other "girly" toys. When *they* studied in the first or second standard, *they* took mother's lotion and make up product and used to do make up with *their* girl best friend. Sometimes in primary school *they* went to the girls' washroom and the 'masi's used to fetch *them* back. *They* never identified girls as some other sexuality and associated *themselves* with the feminine gender. In fact, *they* used to play with *their* mother's aunt (who lives nearby) by applying make-up on her face. *Their* mother was accustomed of *them* applying make-up on *their* own face too. When *they* were in the fifth standard *their* father brought *them* a big Rapunzel doll for birthday present and gifted it to *them* in front of their whole extended maternal family. One relative commented on the choice of present which made *them* feel bad. *Their* younger brother used to get cars and robots for birthday but *their* birthday presents were always according to *their* choice and preference. *They* feels that it was the way of showing acceptance by *their* parents about *their* gender in front of the family and society. *They* often apply make-up on *their* mother and applies on *themselves* too in front of their mother. So for *them* there was no 'coming out' to the family since the family knew about the 'somewhat different gender' of *them* since childhood.

- ii) **Have you ever shared your sexual orientation with your family?**

Till date Aritra have not directly told *their* parents about *their* homosexual orientation. *They* are waiting till *they* finish *their* education and gets financially stable, then *they* will openly talk to *their* parents about *their* sexual orientation in a formal manner. *Their* younger brother knows about *their* sexual orientation since last four to five years.

- iii) **What was the reaction of your extended family about your gender?**

Aritra received weird statements from the extended family members. The relatives often warned their mother by saying "*loke oke gay bhabbe*" (people will think that he is a gay). When *they* was in class 6, *their* one maternal uncle (*mama*), one brother of *their* own mother and another was *their* mother's cousin often bullied *them* and did *their* mimicry. *Their* uncle changed *their* petname 'Molu' to 'Moly' and pocked *them*. *They* interacted less with the family members due to this reason. *They* wanted to celebrate *their* femininity at that small age too. *They* used to do belly dancing in front of the family members. *Their* maternal aunt used to

encourage *their* dancing when they were small. After growing up, those dances were criticized (although not in a very harsh manner) by the same aunt.

When *they* was in class 5 or class 6, during the time of *Bhaifota*, *their* cousin sisters asked about the gifts *they* would like to receive, *they* said that they would like to get a face wash or a lip balm or something of that sort. *They* could feel that *they* often got judged by that.

Now after growing up, *they* feels that *their* uncles behaved in that manner due to low awareness at that point of time. Now when *they* interacts with those uncles, they notice that there in a change in the uncles' behavior. *Their* mother's cousin brother perhaps now identifies *their* sexual orientation and often asks *them* to get engaged to a partner, no matter if it is a girl or a boy.

iv) What was the kind of relation you share with your friends?

In school *they* were bullied by the male friends. The female friends acted as a support for *them* against all the bullying. Children used to laugh at Aritra during the PT classes as Aritra herself could not decide whether *they* should sit in the boys' group or the girls' group. Later *they* combated the bullying by laughing over *themselves* along with their friends (though *they* admit it was heart wrenching at the same time).

Even in the LGBTQ+ community there is a tendency of 'femme shaming' (where *they* are shamed for acting feminine).

v) When did you socially opened up about you gender and sexual orientation?

Aritra came to know about the definition of gender fluid when *they* was in the higher secondary level at school. Prior to that *they* could feel that *they* were just bisexual, but *they* could not identify *their* gender specifically. In college *they* was open about their sexuality.

vi) What is your level of comfort with your expression of gender fluidity?

Presently *they* is very comfortable in expressing *themselves* as a gender fluid individual. *Their* university is in an Islam majority locality, Rajabazaar where many people make them uncomfortable. Now *they* have attained the inner strength to ignore the society and these people altogether.

vii) Did anyone suggest you to consult any psychologist/ psychiatrist?

Once Aritra went to a doctor along *their* mother for a surgery. *They* had a lower lip piercing and after some days flesh started growing up around that piercing. Later *they* had to get it operated. The doctor made a jocular pass about *their* homosexuality and laughed off at *them* (indirectly) in front of their mother. He joked that *they* could also pierce *their* penis instead and blatantly tagged all homosexual people people needs psychological help. *Their* mother was at unease in that situation and *they* never went to that doctor again.

Another general physician suggested them to visit a psychologist but that was in a more decent subtle manner. *They* was suffering from weight loss issue and consulted a doctor. The doctor asked *them* about *their* inter-personal relationship and also about substance abuse. That doctor also isolated *them* and asked them if *they* liked the company of women or not. Coming to know about *their* recent break up with *their* partner the doctor suggested that the weight loss might be a cause of stress and thus suggested *them* to see a psychologist.

viii) What kind of partners do you prefer to have relationships with?

Aritra is mainly attracted towards the same sex. However, extreme masculine men never turn *them* on. *They* is not comfortable with trans men due to their genitalia. *Their* search is still on for an emotionally stable gender fluid person who can understand *their* share of the pain and struggles of life.

ix) Is your fluidity consistent?

Yes it is constant. Though *they* tried to repress it when *they* were in the age of puberty. *They* tried to make the voice of a man in order to be at par with *their* male classmates.

At present the fluctuation of gender comes as a phase in *their* life and the influence of each gender role remains for a period of time.

x) What is the nature of your sexual relationships?

Aritra's first sexual relationship happened when *they* was in class 8. It was self initiated, but now *they* feels at that age *they* was not mature enough to give consent. *They* got into a sexual relationship with *their* domestic help. The age of the domestic help at that time was 18 years and he used to stay in *their* house. The domestic help claimed himself to be straight. The boy used to visit brothels also, but as it was costly to him, he found that Aritra was the easily targetable feminine male. They explored each other sexually for one year and had penetrating sex once. He even introduced Aritra to his friends over the telephone referring Aritra as his girlfriend (Aritra has a girly voice). After some time Aritra found out that the domestic help shamed him in front of other domestic workers of their house. *Their* driver also wanted to take advantage of the situation and wanted to have sex with *them*. *They* was turned into a nasty joke. Now *they* feels that the domestic help took the advantage of their inexperience and immaturity and exploited them.

Till date Aritra had 5 sexual partners. *They* goes out for sex date and have friends with benefits.

Aritra also explored females. *They* enjoyed till foreplay and making out. When the act of penetration came in, *they* felt that *they* was not liking it and stopped it. *They* think that more than attracted sexually to a girl, Aritra feel a feminine competition with girls and admire their sense of fashion and make up.

xi) What is the nature of your emotional relationships with your partners?

Aritra first thought that all *their* attractions towards their partner was mostly on a sexual basis. Then *they* realized that *they* also love being taken to dates, getting pampered with gifts and romanticizing emotionally.

Previously *they* chatted to foreigners in online sex chat rooms and shared nude pictures of themselves with the foreigners. Until that time *they* were not aware of the existence of the queer community in Kolkata. An episode of 'Satyameva Jayate' opened *their* eyes about the LGBTQ+ community and *they* finally realized that *they* can come out of closed doors and live openly celebrating *their* sexuality.

Their first emotional relationship was with *their* school senior whom *they* dated for nearly 5-6 months. This partner was bisexual and confused of his own sexuality. Aritra did not like to continue the relationship because the partner appeared to be pretty dominating.

The next serious relationship came when Aritra was in the second year of college. This relationship continued for 2 years. *They* were both of same age and were gender fluid. Aritra themselves came out of this relationship since their partner was suffering from mental health problems and became emotionally abusive in the relationship.

xii) Which version of you is mostly appreciated by your partner?

Their feminine version.

xiii) Does your mood fluctuate a lot?

No.

xiv) How do you prefer to dress up and look in public?

It mainly depends on the shade of *their* personality *they* are carrying that day. Sometimes *they* want to grow *their* beard long and trim hair short. On other days *they* feel to shave off their beard entirely, apply make-up and if possible switch underwear too.

They prefers wearing printed shirts and shorts, harem pants and skin tight jeans with a lot of accessories.

They dreams of wearing crop tops, palazzos and one day even draping a saree if the society's perception changes one day.

xv) How do you negotiate between your gender fluidity and anatomical self?

They feel that there is no function of *their* penis except urination. *They* never penetrate *their* partners during having sex nor do *they* derive any sexual pleasure from their sex organ. So *they* feel if they had a vagina, it would be better for *themselves*.

xvi) What is the perception of your body image when you are alone in a room in front of a mirror?

They often try to wear women lingerie when alone in a room. *They* stuff their bra cups with paper balls and cloths to make the impression of breasts. *They* feel that if *they* lived in western countries *they* could go out in the society in this fashion without the fear of being bullied by the people.

xvii) What is your future planning?

Career: *They* want to do M.Phil in Psychology and become a professor one day. *They* also want to become a clinical practitioner and work on LGBTQ+ mental health issues.

Family: *they* want to live alone in an apartment where *their* parents might visit and go back. Live in relationship is not very much appreciated by *them*. *They* do not want to stay with somebody permanently, rather *they* would like *their* partner to come, stay over and then leave. *They* might adopt a girl child.

Gender: *they* want *their* fluidity to be more apparent and visible to the outer world. *They* hope someday *they* become a role model in the queer community since according to *them* this community lacks positive queer role model as such.

xviii) What kind of treatment do you get from the common public?

Since Aritra avails the metro for daily travelling, *they* get a lot of uncomfortable stares because of *their* appearance. Few people also pass on comments and do open sexual harassments.

Once a passenger got intimate to *them* and caressed *their* buttock. Although Aritra liked the feeling, still this action was uninvited by *them*.

Another day in the metro a man was doing rude and vulgar facial expressions to *them* and tried to follow *them* out of the metro station. Aritra got really frightened and somehow rescued *themselves* from the situation.

xix) Were you ever ill treated by your partner?

Yes, once. *They* got emotionally exploited by the domestic help in childhood.

xx) Are you interested in BDSM (Bondage, Dominance, Submission, Sadomasochism) activities?

They feels that the rule in BDSM is that the dominant partner at first tortures and then comforts the submissive one. *They* is active in BDSM but *they* are interested in bondage and dominance and soft kinky activities. Submission and sadomasochism is not *their* area of comfort since they do not like being sex slave or *their* partners spitting on them during the time of intercourse (these are few activities in BDSM sex).

xxi) Do you prefer leading bohemian lifestyle or disciplined lifestyle?

They wants a perfect balanced lifestyle with the combination of both bohemian and balanced lifestyle.

xxii) Do you want many partners in life or want to settle down with a singer partner?

They would prefer to have an open relationship with more than one partners.

xxiii) Do you have any addiction?

They smoke cigarettes and weed occasionally with the peer group. *They* also drink with their family members.

xxiv) How would you react if your children come out to be gender fluid?

Aritra would welcome such decision of *their* child keeping in mind and teaching the child about the insensitiveness of the society. *They* might control the social appearance of the child to avoid *them* get bullied, but the child can dress as his/her wish in protected environment. When the child will reach the age of 18, *they* will allow the child to take control of his/her own life since the child will gain maturity at that age.

Case Study of Upama Mondal:

- **Demographic Details:**

Name: Upama Mondal, **Age :** 19 years, **Education :** Presently doing Graduation in English from IGNOU in distance mode..

She dropped out from her college (Dinabandhu Andrews College) where she took Philosophy major but she had no interest in the subject. At that time she wanted to take English honours. Also, since she was bullied in the college, she stopped going there.



She is now figuring out what to do . She has extreme interest in fine arts and has enrolled herself in a tailoring course in Ramkrishna Mission, Narendrapur. Next year she wants to take admission in regular course for fine arts.

School: Panchaayar Siksha Niketan, **Occupation:** Student., She once started a business of hand-made cards and crafts with her best friend. After a few months, due to personal problem with her best friend, the business stopped.

Religion: Hindu, **Gender:** Gender fluid, **Sex:** Female, **Sexual orientation:** Still figuring out, **Pronouns prefer using for oneself:** ‘She’.

- **Family/ background related data:**

Residential area: Garia Station, **Type of family:** Extended joint family (mother, brother, grandmother, uncle, aunt, cousin brother), She, her brother and her mother has a separate kitchen from the uncle’s family, Her father passed away when she was 13 years old. **Number of sibling:** 1 younger brother (aged 12-13 years, she did not remember his exact age). **Lives in own house or not:** Yes, lives in own house, **Profession of mother:** Government service in General Post Office, **Average monthly income of family:** 30,000, **Status of relation with family members:** She shares a cold relationship with her family. Her mother and brother mocks her and her friend-circle all the time.

Her grandmother blames her for her gender. She does not speak with her uncle and aunt. She shares a neutral relationship with her cousin brother.

- **Subject specific questions:**

- Since when did you identify that you are somewhat different from majority?**

Since childhood Upama felt a sphere of insecurity, confusion, discomfort and hopelessness growing around hers. While in school she got bullied by her friends and she was helpless about it since she could not show anger or defend herself. When she was in class 8, while bullying, a

friend called her bisexual. She finally found a term to define herself. Till class 10, she somehow tried to fit in society's standard version of gender.

Her best friend, a trans man first introduced her to the term 'gender fluid' and she felt that it defines her gender perfectly. Hence, it was last year when she came out to the society as a gender fluid person, though people have very little knowledge about this gender domain.

ii) Have you ever shared your sexual orientation with your family?

Upama tried to tell her mother and brother about her gender. She turned a deaf ear to her. Hence she has not still discussed about her sexual orientation with her family.

iii) What is the reaction of your extended family about your gender?

Upama's mother thinks that since she is sitting idle all day, these genders are something of her own creation. She feels that her mother tries to accept her and respects the queer community, but somehow the society influences her mother deeply and makes her uncomfortable of her daughter's gender. She tries to openly talk to her mother about being gender fluid, but feels there is a distance between her and her mother which stops her from doing so.

Her brother is conventionally masculine and is homophobic. He has disrespect for the LGBTQ community and mocks her harshly about her gender and her friends.

Recently a picture of Upama and her friends from LGBTQ community was published in 'Anandabazar Patrika' with the story of 'Decriminalization of 377 Act'. Her neighbors, relatives came to know about her and it troubled her family, especially her grandmother. Her grandmother told her that since her father passed away, she is doing things her own way as no one is there to stop her now. Her paternal aunt came and insulted her referring to her choice of feminine dress and make up (she was wearing an off shoulder top with black lipstick). Both her grandmother and aunt called her 'hijra'(eunuch) and prostitute on her face.

She does not speak to her uncle since she already had a few fights with him. She feels that her uncle instigates her grandmother about her gender. Her aunt is not bothered about anything. Her cousin brother (who is of the same age of her young brother) is curious about her gender but does not react as much.

iv) Have anyone ever took you to psychologist/psychiatrist?

She went to psychiatrist when she was being depressed and always felt like crying for a period of time. She fainted and it took a toll on her health also. Her mother identified her depression and took her to a psychiatrist.

v) What is your sexual orientation?

Upama had a boyfriend and he shared a relationship for a year when she was 17 years old. Her mother knew about the relationship but never liked the boy due to his abusive nature. Upama had a bad experience with him which made him disgusted with cisgender boys (denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with his birth sex).

She is still figuring out her sexual orientation. For 2-3 years she felt 'auto-sexual' (a person who loves own body and satisfies own sexual pleasure). Her sexual orientation has changed

over the years. She had asexual and intersex (a person who is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male) sexual orientation during different period of time.

Presently, she feels homosexual and wants to establish relationships with females or people of other sex who identify themselves as female.

vi) Do you accept your body type as it is?

She has body dysmorphia due to her changing gender roles. (It is a mental disorder in which one can't stop thinking about one or more perceived defects or flaws in her appearance - a flaw that, to others, is either minor or not observable. But one may feel so ashamed and anxious that she may avoid many social situations.).

Her long hair also made her feel uncomfortable till she chopped her hair short. Sometimes she also wanted to go bald.

vii) Do you change your partner frequently?

Upama used to date boys only when she was in class 10 because she wanted to be alike her other female friends. After that she never dated cisgender boys. She had 'friends with benefits' (having sexual relationship but having no emotional attachment) at the age of 18.

viii) Does your mood fluctuate easily? If so, why?

Yes.

Upama had been diagnosed with Boderline Personality Disorder. It is a serious mental illness characterized by pervasive instability in moods, interpersonal relationships, self-image, and behavior. This instability often disrupts family and work life, long-term planning, and the individual's sense of self-identity. She was unable to do psychometry and thus could not continue with the treatment due to no support of her family.

She feels anxiety in the morning and has anger issues. The pattern of mood fluctuations has changed over the years.

ix) What struggles do you have to face while dressing up?

There is no pre given time of Upama's gender switching. Hence if she's wearing a dress and her gender switches from feminine to masculine she feels extremely uncomfortable in that attire. To avoid this problem, most of the time she tries to wear unisex clothes (jeans, tee shirts).

x) What is your future planning?

In the future, she wants to proceed in her career as an artist or a fashion designer. She do not want to marry or to live in with her partner. She wants to adopt an intersex kid. She cannot predict her sexual orientation since she is still figuring it out and not clear about it.

xi) What do you feel about the society's perception about you?

In social media she gets positive response about her gender fluidity. Presently she does not go to her friends and tell about her fluidity on her own, since she feels people chance their perception about her after hearing it.

Neighbors assume that she is a *hijra* (eunuch) and they have no clear idea about different genders. They also blame her best friend, who is a trans man, for Upama's transformation into a gender fluid person.

xii) Do you get cold behavior from your co-passengers in public transport?

People stare at her because of her short hair and dressing pattern.

xiii) Do you want many partners in your life or want to settle down with one partner?

The number of partners will depend on the kind of lifestyle she will have in future and the way it will affect her adopted child. Presently, she is open to all since she does not like emotional attachments anymore. She wants a balanced lifestyle in which she will be disciplined while at the same time have fun also.

xiv) If your children come out to be gender fluid, how would you react?

Upama will be a welcoming parent towards her child's choice of gender and she will give him/her the freedom of dressing according to his/her wish. Most importantly she will talk to her child about genders so that he/she may feel more confident about him/herself.

xv) Do you have any addiction?

She smokes cigarettes (though not chain smoker). She is addicted to *bhang goli* which is available for 3 rupees in some selective shops in Kolkata (her best friend introduced her to this addiction).

xvi) What is your perception of your body image when you are alone in front of a mirror?

Upama has come long way in life and accepted herself in the way she is. Still she struggles on her male gender days since she does not want to have her breasts and cut them off.

Case Study of Shrey (Shreya Gain):

• **Demographic Details:**

Name: Shreya Gain (prefers to be called Shrey), **Age :** 20 years, **Education :** Doing graduation on Mass Communication, **School:** Vivekananda Mission High School, Midnapore, **College:** Ashutosh College.

They first took admission in a college at Midnapore with English honours but discontinued the course and came to Kolkata.

Occupation: Freelance content writer, **Religion:** Hindu by birth: agnostic by choice, **Gender:** Gender fluid, **Sex:** Female, **Sexual**



orientation: Homoflexible, but cannot accept a partner with a penis (in case of trans woman),
Pronouns prefer using for oneself: *They*

- **Family/ background related data:**

Residential area: Joka, **Type of family:** Now stays alone in Kolkata. In Midnapore *they* have *their* parents and a sister who is 15 years old, **Number of sibling:** 1, **Lives in own house or not:** Yes, own house in Kolkata, **Profession of father:** Development Officer in LIC, **Profession of mother:** Teacher in government school, **Average monthly income of family:** 50,000-60,000, **Status of relation with family members:** Not good. They know about their gender and sexual orientation but do not openly talk about it in the family. *They* feels that there is a communication gap in the family. Whenever the family members talk to each other they usually fight.

(The writing may not be grammatically incorrect since we are using the pronoun 'they' and singular verb form to denote Shrey)

- **Subject specific questions:**

- i) **When did you come to know that you are different from the majority?**

In Shrey's school there was a culture of having boyfriend, but *they* never felt romantically attracted towards any boy. Since all *their* friends had boyfriends, so under peer pressure *they* went into a relationship with a boy when *they* was in class 8. The boy was 16 years old. The relationship was alright until the boy wanted to kiss and have sex with *them*. At that point *they* understood that *they* does not want a heterosexual relationship. After break up, *they* came out as a bisexual person. At the age of 16 *they* faced a traumatic experience which made *them* penis-phobic. Thus, *they* does not want to go into a relationship with a person who have penis. At the age of 17 and a half years, *they* fell in love with a girl and realised this is the thing *they* wanted for all their life. Thus, *they* came out as a trans man. *They* realised that *they* is gender fluid when *they* reached the age of 18. Some days *they* feel masculine/feminine/agender/androgynous (mixture of both the genders).

- ii) **When did your family members feel about the gender fluidity?**

Their family members do not understand about the gender spectrum. *They* officially came out to their family as homosexual person when *they* were 16 years old. Hearing about it *their* mother freaked out. So *they* didn't try to communicate with family regarding this matter after that. Marriage proposals started coming from *their* village (paternal house area) for *them* when they were 15 years old. Presently *they* don't dress as a masculine, so *their* parents does not understand about the gender fluidity. *They* know about *their* sexual orientation. The family did not take it very well initially, but now *they* talk less about it. Apart from *their* parents and sibling, *their* cousins also know about her sexual orientation.

iii) Have you ever tried to share it with other elderly members of the family ?

Their paternal grandfather passed away when he was 83 years old. He was bedridden from the age of 81. Grandfather knew about Shrey and her ex lover (a trans man) friendship. *Their*

Their lover met *their* grandfather also. Their grandfather told them to marry and felt that *their* lover will keep Shrey happy. *They* told *their* maternal aunt about her gender. She did not give any negative reaction but was neutral about it.

iv) Did you have to face any torture by the members of the family?

There was no physical torture but Shrey has been mentally suffocating since *they* can't openly talk to *their* family about *their* partner. Cousins come and talk about their boyfriend/girlfriend, but *they* can't. Family said them to do whatever *they* want, but ultimately to marry a boy only.

v) Have anyone ever took you to psychologist/psychiatrist?

Shrey has been going to psychologist from the age of 16 (after the traumatic experience which made *them* fear of penis). Currently *they* are under therapy. *They* have the problem of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), anxiety. *They* recurrently dream about a partner who was abusive. As a coping mechanism *their* childhood memory has become blurry. *They* used to do a lot of self harm before but have now recovered from it.

vi) What kind of partner do you prefer ?

Shrey is homoflexible and *they* is attracted to women (97%) and trans man (3%). *They* are also open to trans women but that person should remove their penis (through Gender Reassignment Surgery) before making any love relationship.

vii) Do you change your partner frequently?

No. Shrey had been in a good relationship for almost 2 years. *They* broke up since *they* did not find a good friend in their lover. Shrey is monogamous and is not interested in open relationship.

viii) Which version of you is mostly appreciated by your partner?

The feminine version. There was just one partner who accepted *them* the way they is.

ix) Does your mood fluctuate a lot?

Yes. Shrey experience PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) over the month. *They* has been suffering from depression, mood swings and anxiety issues over eight years. Since Shrey stays alone in Kolkata *they* feels lonely at times and has very formal communication with *their* family.

x) How do you prefer to dress up?

In real world Shrey likes to dress up in jeans, trousers, tee shirts and palazzos. *They* would love to wear a well tailored suit.

Majority of the times *they* try to dress in unisex wear but sometimes dresses according to the gender phase *they* are experiencing on that particular day.

xi) What is your future planning?

Shrey wants to be an editor of a daily newspaper/ magazine. *They* plan to open a restaurant when *they* save up enough money. *They* have no plans regarding taking a kid, but if *they* does *they* will adopt a kid. *They* would love to have lots of pets, preferably cats (since cats are less clingy unlike dogs). *They* would prefer a queer woman to be their partner. *They* are not attracted towards masculine woman much.

xii) What do you feel about the society's perception about you?

Shrey can feel that the society sees *them* as a misfit. *They* comment on the way *they* represent themselves. Every time *they* get looks from copassengers. People do comment on *them* but *they* hide those things from their parents to avoid tension in family. One day an auto driver refused to take *them* since they is fat and he demanded fare of two passengers since he felt that *they* will be occupying space of more than one person.

xiii) Were you ill treated by any neighbors or relatives?

Shrey has been fat-shamed within and outside their family. (As an effect of steroid medicines taken by *them* in childhood, *they* are becoming fat in present day which is beyond *their* control.)

xiv) Have you ever been ill treated by your partner? If so, the manner of treatment.

Shrey has been in the BDSM community of Kolkata for the last 2 years. *They* like to play the submissive role. She dated a queer community member for a month and went into BDSM activity. That person exceeded the level of dominance over Shrey and continued hurting *them* without *their* consent and then *left* them alone. That affected Shrey a lot both physically and emotionally. Hence *they* feels they had been violated the basic rules of BDSM in that particular act.

xv) Do you prefer leading a disciplined lifestyle or a bohemian one?

Shrey would prefer to have a 9to5 job and then lead a bohemian life in their personal space.

xvi) Do you prefer many partners in your life?

No. Shrey wants to settle down with a single partner.

xvii) If your child comes out to be gender fluid, how will you react?

Shrey would support their child so that he/she can gain confidence and fault his/her gender and sexuality with dignity.

xviii) Do you have any addiction?

No. Shrey consumes alcohol occasionally (once in two months).

xix) What kind of relationship do you share with your peers and teachers?

Shrey has a few good friends both inside and outside the LGBTQ+ community. In school *they* had good relationship with the teachers.

xx) Do you think your gender fluidity as a phase?

No. Shrey feels that they will be a gender fluid person forever in their life.

xxi) What is your kind of expression of gender fluidity in school/college/workplace?

Shrey does not flamboyant about *their* gender fluidity on their own but at the same time does not want to hide it. Also, *they* have stopped coming out to every people and telling about *their* gender since it makes people self aware when they are with them.

xxii) How do you negotiate with your body image?

Shrey does not like being fat, but *they* is slowly accepting the fact since *they* cannot stop being fat due to the effect of the steroid. Slowly *they* started doing make up and doing dress up according to *their* body type to feel better.

Sometimes *they* have top dysphoria. *They* does not like their breast, wants a sharper face and well built body.

Findings:

- There is a stigma attached to the feminine action of males even in the LGBTQ+ community.
- Most of the parents and extended family members are not willing to accept anything beyond the binary gender and they have very little or no idea of the broad gender spectrum.
- In most cases of females, it has been seen that they have past experience or rape/sexual harassment which made them feel traumatic of having sex with straight men.
- The concept of gender-fluidity is mostly unknown, and only educated class know about this spectrum from the internet and scholarly articles.
- Many of the respondents were first confused between being bisexual and being gender fluid. Some are still figuring out about their sexual orientation.
- Most of the respondents are not willing to marry, instead they are option for open relationships.
- The society has a negative perception about the gender-fluid people.
- More or less, all of them suffer from body dysphoria.
- They try to dress in an unisex manner, since the switching time of their gender in not known beforehand.
- Majority are interested in BDSM (Bondage, Dominance, Submission, Sadomasochism) sexual activity.

Conclusion: To return to my main inquiry, what is gender fluidity? Gender fluidity is a constant but inconsistent fluctuation of the feelings of gender. The feelings of gender accentuate the idea that gender fluidity derives from the Western ontology of gender – that is, gender is related to the body. My informants conceptualized these feelings in three distinctive yet overlapping categories: the sense of self within the body, the biological component that is ingrained within the body, and the body's external expressions. Furthermore, as the feelings of gender are connected to the body, they influence how one goes about perceiving and carrying one's body. Thus, while gender fluidity relates to the inconsistencies of the feelings of gender, a majority of my informants have experienced social and physical dysphoria. The attempt to androgenize the body was not only a way for my informants to try and overcome the body's limitation of passing as a particular gender, but it was also a mechanism that enabled them to explore and understand their gender fluid identities in greater depths. In addition, I have identified various influences that were critical for my informants to understand their gender fluid identities. While my informants have recognized their gender identities since an early age, they struggled with recognizing who they are and interacting with others due to society's binary structure. Part of my informants' processes of discovering their identity involved them engaging in a particular discourse, which primarily came from educational settings and the internet. It would be interesting to see a comparison between how the discourses from educational settings and the internet influence individuals' sense of self – as they have influenced how my informants perceived themselves. Finally, discourse ultimately allowed my informants to find the appropriate linguistic terminology with which they identify themselves. As some of my informants have described their process of trying to predicate on their gender identity, it was not until they learned gender fluidity when they finally developed a better understanding of self and how they ought to go about in the world.

The future scope of this research is intense as there is no such study on gender fluidity especially in India. Many people have not been able to come out as gender fluid because of social constraints. Attempts should be taken to make a record of such individuals and to concentrate on their demands and social rights.

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Bengal Journal of Social Science and Development

Volume No. 1, Issue No. 1 (January 2022)



An Online Quarterly Published Peer Reviewed Journal for Social Science Disciplines
by N.S.D. Educational Welfare Trust

E-Journal URL: www.bjssd-journal.com

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Golden Era of Women Education: An In-depth Study on Savitribai Phule

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Introduction:

*“ Make self-reliance your occupation,
Exert yourself to gather the wealth of knowledge,
Without knowledge animals remained dumb,
Don't rest! Strive to educate yourself. ”*

-Savitribai Phule

These days, we can witness an enormous number of examples which are confirming women's achievement in the field of education and their contribution towards the same. As an example, in the UPSC examination which is known as the toughest examination in India, girls are competing with the boys at the same level. From 2014 to 2017, the top rank was secured by a girl, and also in 2020, 6 out of the top 10 rankers are the girl. Further, there is a countless number of women who are controlling and managing countries' responsibilities and duties by holding various positions. Also In our country, the government introducing lots of new and unique schemes and scholarships to attract girls' children in school and make them educated such as “Kanyashree Prakalpa” which got global recognition. Moving ahead, The Main reason behind showing all of these examples and instance is to explain the current scenario and condition of women's education in India. But, is the condition was always like that? Was taking the first step towards women's education that easy? Were women always blessed with the freedom of getting an education as a fundamental right? The answer is undoubted no! There was an enormous number of people specifically, women behind this today's flourished scenario who devote their entire life to provide equal opportunity and rights to every woman expressly for tribal one. The fearless and outspoken woman, Savitribai Phule was the one of them who first took the initial steps and fought for women's rights and dignity. She was the first person who established India's first women's school and was the first female teacher and headmistress of India. Indian women owe her. For in today's world, whether an Indian school girl reading English, an Indian woman who reads, an Indian woman who is educated, or an educated international desi woman, her education as an Indian female grows from the garden planted by Savitribai Phule (WOLF, 2011). In 1897, Savitribai Phule died due to cholera when she was serving a cholera patient.

Aim and objectives of this study:

The main objectives of this study are to describing the process of education which was started by Savitribai Phule. This study specifically focused on-

1. To describe the significant and prominent information about the first female teacher of India – Savitribai Phule
2. To state the history of women education in India
3. To find the contribution of Savitribai Phule on 19th century women education

Life of Savitribai Phule:

Savitribai Phule was born on January 3rd, 1831 in Naigaon (presently in Satara district), Maharashtra, and was the elder daughter of Khandoji Neveshe and Lakshmi Devi. She devoted her whole life to uplifting women's right to education and to spreading the novel cause of women's education. She was a social reformer, a poet, and a feminist simultaneously. Savitribai was married at a very young age of 9 to social reformer Jyotirao Phule. Jyotirao was 12 years old at the time of marriage. It was Jyotirao who helped her learn how to read and write. He helped her attain high levels of education and live her life with her head held high. (ONLINE, 2018). Shortly after the marriage to Jyotiba Phule, the Education of Savitribai Phule started. Impressed by her thirst for learning, Savitribai's husband, Jyotirao Phule, taught her to read and write. Becoming fond of teaching, Savitribai trained at Ms. Farar's Institution in Ahmednagar. (asher, 2016) . Furthermore, In the social and educational history of India, mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule and his wife Savitribhai Phule stand out as an extraordinary couple. They were engaged in a passionate struggle to build a movement for equality between men and women and social justice. Recognizing that knowledge is power and that progress of women and Dalit-Bahuians was impossible without it, they dedicated their entire life to spreading education. (Narke, 2012)

Action Taken by the India's First Female Teacher for Women Education:

Savitribai Phule is not just a name, it denotes the starting time of women's education. At that time, when education was an unholy thing for women, she was the only one who made educated herself and then established the first school for women in India. Besides it, there are a lot of things which she had done for women. Savitri Bai Phule started several initiatives for social transformation much before the early nationalists took up social reform as a campaign strategy. One of the main focuses of her interventions was the challenge she posed to the well-established patriarchal and Brahmanical relations especially in terms of combating female illiteracy and caste (BHAI, 2017).

In 1848 she become the first women teacher in India and started a very fast women school in Bhidewada. She initiated the war against brahmins and bring the wave of revolution. She insisted girls go beyond and break the conventional educational system of society. In 1849 she started the first schools for Sudras and anti-Sudras with the help of Fatima sheik who was initially educated by his brother.

The concept of RTE and mid-day meals is not a new concept in the 21st century in India. At the time, in 1850 she started a new scheme and scholarship to attract children for education. She offers stipends to poor students and started providing mid-day meals to fulfill the nutrition need of students. Also, at that time she inspires her students to write essays. One of her students wrote one essay which was recognized by the British government.

In 1851 Savitribai Phule along with her husband started to run three schools simultaneously. In 1852 she started Mahila Seva Samiti to motivate women to speak against the unreasonable rules and regulations about women in society and raise their voice for their rights and dignity. Further, she started Barbar strikes, against the rule of shaving hair of widow women. In 1854, her very first poem got published namely Kavya Phule. In 1863 started first Orphanage house for children and in 1868 enabled the well for untouchability. In the year 1892 Bevan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar poem got published by her.

Challenges and Achievements of Savitribai Phule:

Even though she had done a Nobel job and started the war against the brahmins and upper class who were against women's education, still she is neglected in our history. She is known as the wife of Jyotirao Phule who was a social reformer. But she deserves to be recognized individually and firmly for the praiseworthy step she courage to take.

Shockingly, a researcher has witnessed that there is an enormous number of books regarding women's education but rarely have written anything about her. It is shocking, that a person who was the first one to talk and fight against stereotype society systems, can't get a place in the library in various places. We should concentrate more on that what she had done and consider the fact that how is she still inspiring 21st-century education and should show gratitude towards her. Similarly, when she started this Nobel Job she faced various obstacles.

Brahmins or upper-class people who were against this revolution have thrown up mud, stones, and dirty water on their way to school. That time she carried extra dresses and sharee them with her and changed that after reaching school. That time Savitribai said, "as I do the sacred task of teaching my fellow sisters, the stones or cow-dung that you throne seem like flowers to me".

Moving ahead, she and her husband were thrown out of their house as their family was scared that society will throw up from the society if they don't throw up them. At a very young age, when they just started, they lost the roof from their head, but still, they did not stop.

After a long struggle, she managed to get some achievements. Like, she was the first woman whose poem got appreciated by the British empire and published in 1854. She was the inspiration for other Dalit women as well as for other women. Now, on 3rd January, the birthday of Savitribai Phule is cherished as Balika Diwas honoring to girl child and her right to education. In 1983, Pune city corporation created a memorial for her and in 1998 created post stamp to honour her. In 2015 Pune university converted self as to Savitribai Phule university. In 2017, google doodle for Savitribai Phule to show her respect.

Conclusion:

Lastly, the researcher would like to wrap up by mentioning that, Savitribai Phule is the milestone of India's women's education. She conceptualized knowledge as Tiritiya Ratna for liberation and freedom from the darkness of illiteracy. She is memorized as the mother of Indian's women education for her novel job and her contribution to women's education. She was the one who first spoke up against the upper-class brahmins and bring the light of education towards Sudras and Dalit women's life. also, she is the missile of establishing women's empowerment. Though, after her, other people have also contributed for the same, but Savitribai Phule was the inspiration for all. If there is a start then progress will come but if there is no start then there will be no progress. Same like this example if she did not start that then we don't know for how long women would live in the darkness of life. Therefore, undoubtedly, we can consider her era as the golden era of women education as that time is the memorable time women got consideration as an individual human being who have the right to access knowledge and allowed to contribute to the society.

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Bengal Journal of Social Science and Development

Volume No. 1, Issue No. 1 (January 2022)



An Online Quarterly Published Peer Reviewed Journal for Social Science Disciplines
by N.S.D. Educational Welfare Trust

E-Journal URL: www.bjssd-journal.com

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Bangabandhu & Amar Sonar Bangla: An Unending Struggle for Maintaining Secularism

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Abstract: *People's Republic of Bangladesh is going through a crisis situation. Uninterrupted attacks on minorities have put the secular identity of Bangladesh under serious threat. Though Bangladesh got independence from the control of West Pakistan as a secular Country based on Linguistic Nationalism but later developments have blurred the principle of secularism. Though in first Constitution of Bangladesh Secularism has been included as one of the four pillars of Governance but with the assassination of Bangabandhu and capture of power by pro-Islamic groups secularism has been omitted from the new revised Constitution. Islam has been declared as state religion. With this transition minorities have been targeted by religious fundamentalists. Recent attacks on minorities during Durga Puja are a matter of serious concern. Though Bangladesh government led by Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina has adopted a strong determined approach to root out this religious fundamentalism from the soil of Bangladesh still whether this country will enable to uphold the principle of secularism of Bangabandhu is a matter of serious concern under the present situation in Bangladesh.*

Keywords: Secularism, Linguistic Nationalism Democracy, Minority Rights, Fundamentalism, Jihad, Tolerance, Civil Society.

Introduction: People's Republic of Bangladesh is going through its most critical situation. Each and every day its ideological orientation is dwindling among rightist and leftist element of the society. Recent events like attacks on minorities in Bangladesh by religious fundamentalists have caused severe damages to country's secular ideal which has been supported by linguistic Nationalism. The country which once opted for language as a process for political integration placing the religious identity at the corner that country is now burning in the fire of religious intolerance. Bangabandhu- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who has brought the fervor of linguistic nationalism to unite the erstwhile East Pakistan to fight for emancipation

from the servitude of West Pakistan will be hurt seeing how his *Sonar Bangla* is being stripped off the distinct identity by assigning religion a determinant role in politics. Secularism which was one of the cherished ideals of Bangabandhu is being undermined in his country through the frequent attacks on religious minorities i.e. Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs etc. Though, Bangladesh government under his daughter's leadership has tried its best to provide equal rights and equal amounts of freedom to all religious communities still there seems to emerge wide gap between its announcement and what is actually going on presently in Bangladesh. Drastic reduction in the minority population in Bangladesh indicates towards that in upcoming years Bangladesh will be turned into a full-fledge Islamic Country devoid of minorities. This paper starts with a focus on the secularism as conceived by Bangabandhu as one of the pillars of independent Bangladesh. After that we will look into the present conflict among secularism and fundamentalism which has been expressed in the form of religious atrocities and domination over religious minorities. Finally this paper will explore how far present Bangladesh Government has been successful in realizing the ideal of Bangabandhu who never expects his country's present shift towards religious intolerance and chauvinism reducing the language factor at secondary status.

Literature review: Many useful literatures are available from which we can draw up our information which will help us to understand the subject more comprehensively. Due to shortage of passage we have restricted us to few important literatures in this research paper.

Md Sikandar Ali in his paper (Ali, 2020) has attempted to put forward views of Bangabandhu over secularism. Though initially he was known as an activist of Muslim league but he belonged to progressive element within that party. When his romanticism for nation based on religion has been pulverized by constant oppression and exploitation of East Pakistan by West Pakistan, it became clear to him that secularism based on identity of Bengali language which would bridge the gap between Muslims and other religious communities was essential to achieve independence from the servitude of West Pakistan. Though he has incorporated the principle of secularism in 1972's Constitution but later pro-Islamic elements within the Bangladesh through their ascendancy to power have attempted to destroy his legacy through the removal of the word secularism by declaring Islam as the State religion. Though, hopes are there as his daughter Sheikh Hasina is continuously trying to protect the legacy of his Father.

Giving his lecture on the bangabandhu and Vision of Bangladesh (Sen, 2021) Noble Laureate Amartya Sen has praised the secularism as practiced by Mujibar rahman to be followed by all other countries. To Prof. Sen, Bangabandhu's secularism is distinct from those of western version of secularism. For Mujib, freedom of all religious communities to practice their own religious rituals freely and prevention of use of religion as a political weapon was a kind of secularism which can be applied in other countries to erect an egalitarian society. Language for Bangabandhu was a means to unite all people from different religious communities for the attainment of independence.

Iftexharul Bashar in his paper (Bashar, 2015-2016) has put light on the attacks on bloggers by Islamist militants due to their criticism of religious extremists. Though old groups have to a large extent been contained by the sheikh Hasina Government but hybrid or new terrorist groups are capturing ground through the use of social media. Propagation of fundamental ideas and rampant killings in the name of Jihad are serious issues which the government needs to

tackle cautiously. Though Zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism is really a desirable step but government needs more planned strategies to contain the expansion of religious extremism in the Country.

Sumit Ganguly in his paper (Ganguly, 2006) has exhibited how Bangladesh basically a stable, democratic nation has achieved economic and human developments. Though through general elections democracy has been restored in Bangladesh but since 1991 attacks on liberal individuals, scholars, minorities have been increased by the Islamic militants. This religious intolerance has resulted into crisis of rule of law, respect for human rights and freedom of religion. In this context it is crucial to watch how much Government is dedicated to tackle the issue of religious terrorism.

A cautious review of the book '*The Unfinished Memoirs*' (Rahman, 2013) will bring to us many qualities of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Though he started to write the book but the main hero of this book is Suhrawardy. Much has been discussed about the elevation of a student political leader to the status of national leader. The author in this book has put forwarded several political, economic events from the viewpoint of personal experience. For the better understanding this book can be divided into three sections based on real life experiences which have helped us to explore political leanings of Bangabandhu.

Research Objectives: Research Objectives are essential for the successful completion of a research work. Based on the study following research objective has been drawn:

- a) To explore the role of religious extremism on democratic rights thus nullifying the ideals of Secularism through the attacks on minorities who do not submit to its ideology.

Research Question: Without proper research questions it is not possible to complete a research paper. Based on the study following research question has been formulated:

- a) Whether People's Republic of Bangladesh is losing its character of Secularism as conceived by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman following recent attacks on minorities in Bangladesh?

Research Hypothesis: Research Hypotheses are integral part of any research work. Without hypotheses a research is unable to be carried out. Based on the research question following hypothesis has been formulated:

- a) There is no relation between attacks on minorities in Bangladesh and dilution of secularism with the spread of fundamentalism.

Views of Mujibur Rahman on Secularism: Secularism is a word which has been defined from different perspectives. We have applied it differently in subcontinent from that of western interpretation of secularism. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman though has been brought up in a Islamic environment still his self consciousness and rationality has forced him not to accept anything blindly. During the great Calcutta killings he was among them who came forward with the message of peace and religious tolerance.

Like Gandhi he has also performed his role as a preacher of compassion and brotherhood. Though Bengal has been partitioned following the two nation theory as espoused by communal Muslim league but later events of communal killings and genocide has illuminated Sheikh Mujibur's consciousness. His fancies for nation based on religious identity received a great set back. Constant communal riots in East Pakistan by West Pakistan forced Mujibur to rethink about nation based on religious identity. Rampant discrimination and oppression by dictators of West Pakistan has prompted Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to think about the emancipation of East Pakistan from the bondage of West Pakistan. It would be wrong if we say he was against constitutional reforms. Several times using several opportunities he and his party Awami League has argued for constitutional reforms to gain more autonomy and representations for the people of East Pakistan. But constantly those reforms proposal have been denied by leaders of West Pakistan who continuously has endeavored to unite East and West Pakistan under the religious identity. But East Pakistan has enjoyed a passion for Bengali language which for West Pakistan was a rejection of the acceptance of Urdu as an official language. Naturally Mujibur Rahman has been projected as an agitator against the leadership of West Pakistan. His secular mindset was against the policy of West Pakistan. Naturally he was detained. Seeing no other way Bangabandhu stood for the demand of mukti juddho. Now why, he has opted for identity based on language rather than identity based on religion. Bengali as a language of East Pakistan has kept people of different religions united. Though people of East Pakistan varied in their religion they still share feelings of commonness through the Bengali language. Naturally, Bangabandhu who has been known as practitioner of secular ideals wanted to expand secularism throughout the East Pakistan. Here Language has helped him to achieve his mission. Though anti-secular elements were there among the people of Bangladesh but Bangabandhu's clarion call for final war for emancipation has surpassed all other demands. Naturally when East Pakistan has achieved independence from the yoke of West Pakistan in 1971 with the humanitarian and military assistances of India, Bangabandhu's plan for a secular nation has taken its most strong roots into the soil of newly independent Bangladesh. Now what does secularism actually mean to Bangabandhu? The correct answer lies in 1972's Constitution of the Independent Bangladesh. Section 12 of the Constitution which forms the part of Secularism has been interpreted to eliminate:

- a) Communalism in all forms;
- b) The granting by the state of political status in favour of any religion;
- c) The abuse of religion for political purposes;
- d) Any discrimination against or persecution of persons practicing a particular religion (https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Bangladesh_2011.pdf, 2021)

For Mujibur Rahman religion should not be mixed with Politics. Religion for Bangabandhu was mainly a private concern. For him state must prevent religion from using it for the achievement of political goals. Each and every citizen of Bangladesh from different religions must have the freedom to practices and profess his own religious rituals freely. State cannot use religion as a weapon in political matters. So it is quite clear that for Bangabandhu secularism stands for freedom of religion for all. It is responsibility of state to ensure proper environment in which people of all religion can live together under the feelings of fraternity and mutual respect for each other.

Recent Atrocities on Minorities in Bangladesh: a Negation of Bangabandhu's Vision:

In this age of social media we have Facebook University or WhatsApp University to get information without judging its credibility. Several times some Facebook pages have presented to us distorted news. Recently, in some Facebook pages it is being propagated that independence of Bangladesh has been achieved by the blood of Muslims only and non-Muslims had contributed nothing. Is it acceptable to us as we know the proper history? This kind of distortion of news or history has caused severe damages to Bangladesh's secular democratic polity. 28% minorities, who existed during 1940s in the East Pakistan now they have been drastically reduced to only 9.8%, which clearly indicates that secularism in the form of freedom of religion in Bangladesh is under serious threat. Amar Sonar Bangla, the dreamland of Bangabandhu is losing its glory under the environment of religious extremism. A report by minority Rights group International (MRG) has shown how since 2013 attacks on minorities have been increased through several means (<https://minorityrights.org/2016/11/17/religious-minorities-threat-bangladesh-complicit-authorities-must-new-report/>, 2016). 2014 was the year when these atrocities got high speed from religious goons of fanatic Islam (<https://www.sify.com/news/attacks-on-religious-minorities-in-bangladesh-3721-houses-temples-vandalized-in-9-years-news-international-vktbTcejcjd.html>, 2021). The problem is not only that Hindus, Buddhists and Christians are under attack but Ahmadiyya and Shia Muslims along with secular minded peoples are at gun points of these fundamentalist groups. Killings of Bloggers and secular minded intellectuals are enough to prove this trend. Utsab Chatterjee, Executive director of Hindu Pact told "*It is especially horrifying to see the last remaining Hindus in Noakhali being attacked in this way, 75 years after Islamists demanding the creation of Pakistan, killed 12,000 Hindus and forcibly converted 50,000 to Islam in October 1946*" (<https://zeenews.india.com/world/freedom-of-religion-under-attack-in-bangladesh-us-condemns-reports-of-violence-2403705.html>, 2021). Most deadly year is 2021 as this year has witnessed the most horrendous expression of perverted ideology of radical Islam. Bangladesh-a culturally linked country to Indian State of West Bengal which have allowed its people freedom of religion to enjoy their religious festivals whole heartedly are under attack from bigoted Islam. When entire world is celebrating the greatest festival of Bengali Hindus Durga Puja, the dreamland of Bangabandhu has witnessed bloodsheds. It is 15th October 2021 when an angry mob has attacked a Durga puja pandal in Comilla district. Rumor has been spread that Hindus have kept Koran on the knee of a deity in a temple. This news has been spread so widely that it has taken the form of communal attack on Hindu minorities. (<https://www.opindia.com/2021/10/bangladesh-islamic-extremists-vandalize-multiple-durga-puja-pandals-violence-against-hindus/>, 2021) Religious goons who lack the proper knowledge of Koran and compassion towards other religious communities have vandalized several Durga Puja pandals in several districts of the Bangladesh. Not only this, several houses of minorities have been destroyed and set on fire by these mobs. A girl child has been raped by angry mob which has also put the question about the security of women in Bangladesh under serious challenge. These kinds of planned atrocities on minorities are nothing but expression of religious extremist. Either, you have to embrace Islam or you will be killed- these two options are being offered by these Islamist militants who want to reject the legacy of Bangabandhu. Though, after these attacks several thousand peoples who believe in peaceful existence of all communities in new Bangladesh have gathered to call for an end to

this violence. Government has already taken a strong attitude to counter this extremism. More than 500 hundreds accused peoples have been arrested by police. Sheikh Hasina has strongly condemned this attack and gave assurance that no one will be spared. These moves are very commendable but why every time minorities are being killed in Bangladesh. Do the lives of minorities really matter to Bangladesh government?

Conclusion: A secular democratic Bangladesh is turning into a myth. Rampant killings of Minorities and bloggers are indicating towards extermination of roots of secularism from the soil of Bangladesh. The ideal of secularism, for which Bangabandhu has been assassinated by pro-Islamic clique, is going through the phase of acid test. The open minded and liberals don't know what is waiting for them in the next morning as with the every passing day their voices have been dominated. But this is not the end. We always wait for a fresh new morning when some new rhythms will prompt us to do something new. The unfinished struggle for the protection of principles of secularism is still going on in People's Republic of Bangladesh. Present Awami League government under Sheikh Hasina has already taken necessary steps to ensure fundamental right to practice religion freely. But much more is required to implement as situation in Bangladesh is not suitable for religious minorities to stay there peacefully. Apart from this government has to take harsh measures like ban on those formal or informal organizations which are spreading ideology of Jihad. Only action by state police armed forces is not enough. Civil society needs to come forwards. A strong and vibrant civil society in Bangladesh has to bear the responsibility to propagate lessons of humanity, secularism, fraternity, compassion and kindness. Only a progressive liberal Bangladesh can protect the secular identity of the country. Though the word secularism is not there in the Constitution of Bangladesh still efforts can be taken towards upholding this ideal in practice. Recently the leftist elements in the Bangladesh have raised demand over the rejection of Islam as the state religion. For them, in a secular country state does not have a particular religion. We may conclude that a secular democratic Bangladesh is the utmost need of this present crisis situation. Fundamentalist elements in the Bangladesh which want to turn Bangladesh an Islamic country following the path of Pakistan have to be countered by secular elements. A strong civil society with fresh youth minds is the real hope to maintain the ideal of secularism.

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Bengal Journal of Social Science and Development

Volume No. 1, Issue No. 1 (January 2022)



An Online Quarterly Published Peer Reviewed Journal for Social Science Disciplines
by N.S.D. Educational Welfare Trust

E-Journal URL: www.bjssd-journal.com

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An explorative study on livelihood of female commercial sex workers of Sonagachi - the largest red-light area of South-East Asia

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Abstract: This paper is an intensive study on the commercial female sex workers in Sonagachi (largest red light area in South East Asia) and explores the livelihood of the sex workers. In terms of sociology, prostitution is a way for an individual to maximize their monetary intake or in other words 'benefits' by selling the thing that they have readily, their bodies. In other words, it is the act or practice of participating in promiscuous sexual activity especially for money. Sex work has been in existence for ages, going back to the Byzantine, Roman, Greek, and Egyptian Empires. This paper explores the living conditions, grade of sex workers and the societal behaviour of the targeted individuals. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been applied to get an insight of the lives in brothels of Kolkata. Case studies have also been presented to give an outlook of the circumstances of the sex workers behind choosing this profession. This paper reflects various perspectives that pertain to violence used, social perceptions; different ways sex is understood and different factors that shape it, so that the lives and struggles of sex work are reflected through this paper.

Introduction: Commercial sex work is the oldest profession of the world. Sex work means when a person (it may be both man and woman) is offering sexual pleasure to another person and in exchange of that he/she will get some money or commodity or favour. In India the number of female commercial sex workers is hugely greater than the number of male sex workers. There are different school of thoughts regarding the prevalence of this occupation. Some feel that this profession should be banned while others feel that everyone has the right on their own body and they can earn through it. In India, sex work is not illegal if it is behind closed doors, but collecting customers from the road or the activities of pimp is illegal. So sex work is semi legal in India and thus this is the origin of all the problems and confusions among the citizen of the country regarding this profession.

This research was conducted with the help of Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee and. Face to face interview with 100 commercial sex workers were conducted and their lifestyle was explored through this research.

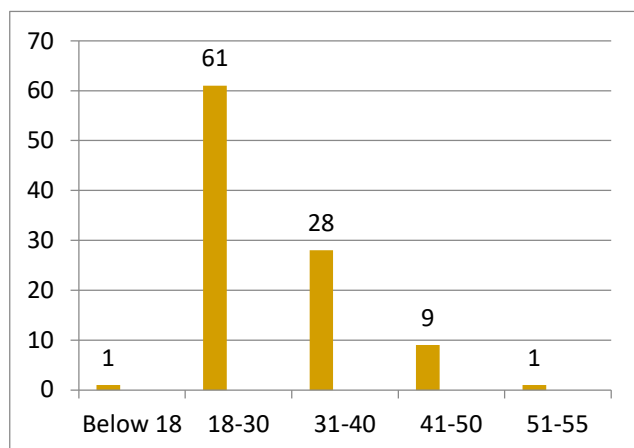
In ancient India the sex workers were known as recreational artists and they enjoyed a high position in the society. In Hindu mythology the roles of Apsara, Urvashi, Menoka are of great significance although there is a debate regarding the association of sex work activities by these 'goddesses' (Sinha, Basu, 1933). Generally during the 18th and 19th century gift of a girl child to the local temple would raise the status of the family in the society as the girl was then married to the temple. This was the idea behind the Devdasi system. Gradually it was seen that the Devdasi's became the sex partner of the temple authorities and she was dragged into the sex work profession in her later life. In many cases, after reaching the age of 40, the 'Devdasi's were no longer capable of sex work and they lead a miserable life. (Janaki Nair,1994). The existence of 'Nagarbadhu' in the medieval times was the substitute of today's sex workers. The concept was the most beautiful lady of the town/city was isolated from the family and they she was subjected sexually by all the men of the town and all could enjoy her company. This is how the modern version of prostitution came into its formation. (Sahni,Shankar, Apte, 2008)

There is an intensive study on the present status of the sex workers in our society. Despite of several recommendations made by UN Organizations and ILO (International Labour Organization), the basic level of health facilities available to the sex workers and hygiene of the workplace is questionable in India. (Pai, Seshu ,Gupta) The working conditions and level of exploitation the sex workers have to face in a daily life. Since they don't have any organized forum it is very easy for the customers and the brothel owners to exploit them and give them low payment. Thus the life satisfaction of an average sex worker is very low in India. (Susan, Asir, 2014)

Results: All participants provided informed consent. A survey was administered in 2017 through face-to-face interviews with 100 sex workers in randomly-selected households in the large red light areas in Kolkata Sonagachi. Sex worker households (i.e., brothel rooms where sex workers work and typically live) were visited in a multi-stage process beginning with identifying brothel buildings, visiting rooms occupied by sex workers within brothels, then talking with sex workers within rooms if more than one occupied the room. Participants were then randomly selected from the area.

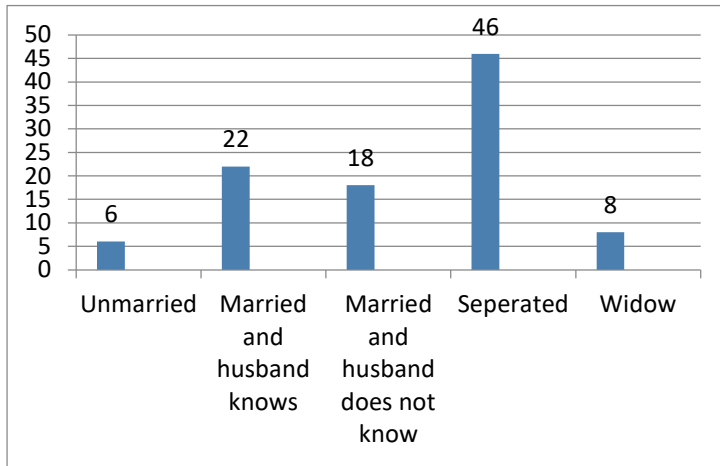
Figure 1: Age Range of the Commercial Sex Workers

In figure 1 it is seen that only one sample is under the age of 18 and one sample is above the age of 55. The age of 61% girls in the red light area lies within the range of 18 to 30 years. 28% lies between 31 to 40 years and only 9% lies between 41 to 50 years. The age distribution is in this manner because prostitution under the age of 18 is illegal in India. Whereas the demand of the girls decreases with the increase in age and vice versa. Only one sample was found who was still continuing with this profession at her late 50s. It is generally seen that women who are in this age range (51-55 years) also have some additional income (like working in any NGO) since they cannot support their life only through income through



prostitution as the rate drastically drops during this age. Most of the women leave this profession and adopts some other means to take care of their life.

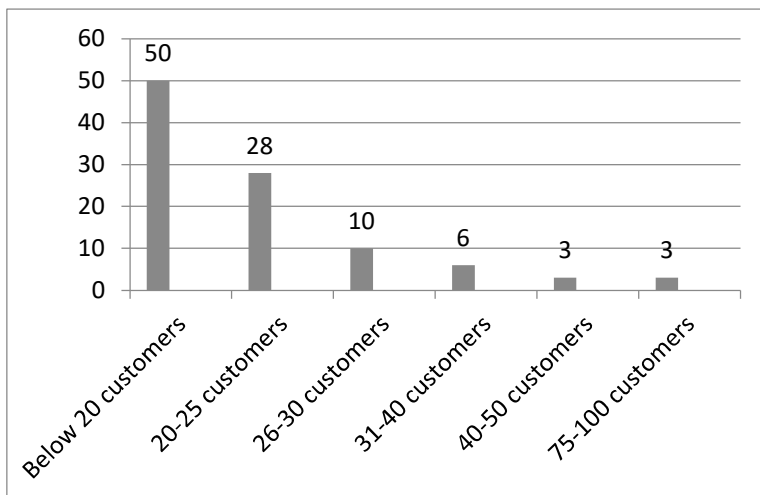
Figure 2: Marital Status of the Commercial Sex Workers



The marital status of a woman is reflected in figure 2. The high demand is mainly for unmarried girls and women with no children. But the real data shows something else. Most of the women who came in this profession (46%) are separated and they adopted this life mainly to support their family and their own financial needs. The second highest range (22%) consists of women who are married and their

husbands also know about this profession. Sometimes their husbands are the one who bought them in this profession. Then comes the percentage of women (18%) who are married but who has been successfully able to keep this profession a secret from their husband and family. Only 6% of the respondents are unmarried in this profession (mostly girls who come for earning their pocket money) and the rest 8% of the sex workers are widow.

Figure 3: Number of Customers in a Month

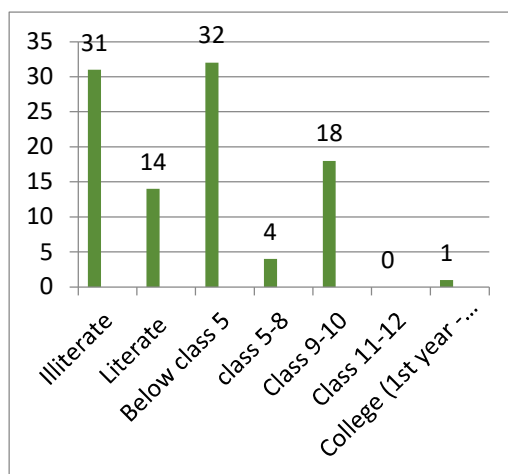


In figure 3 the bar diagram, the Y axis shows the number of women and the X axis shows the number of customers they take on a monthly basis. Since the research also consisted of flying commercial sex workers, and they mostly come in the red light area only for 2-3 days in a week, 50% of the women take less than 20 customers in a month. They usually rent a room and carry on their work there. 28% of women

take 20-25 customers, 10% takes 26-30 customers and 6% takes 31-40 customers. The percentage of sex workers who take 40-50 customers and 75-100 customers are generally termed 'flying' just because they go from one red light area to the other depending on the season and the number of customers they gets from the different red light areas go higher.

Figure 4: Education

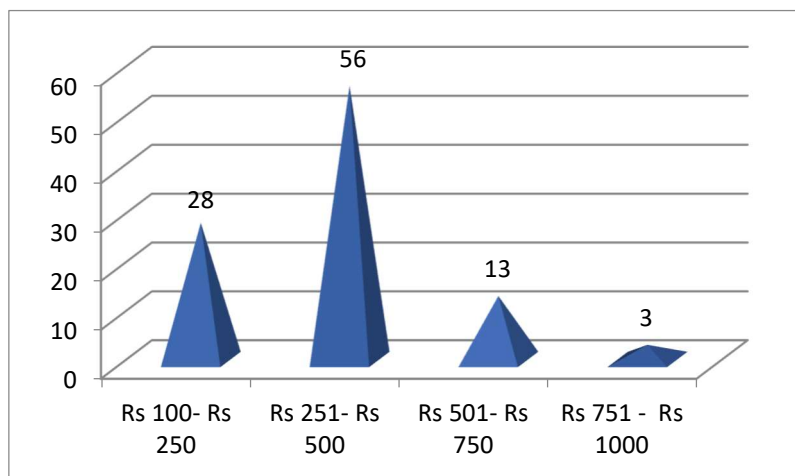
Figure 4 shows the education level of the commercial sex workers of Sonagachi. The highest percentage of sample is primary educated people (32%). The second highest percentage is the illiterate people who consist of 31% of the total population. Then comes 18% of the total population who have appeared for Madhyamik (10th standard final exam of West Bengal state). Other 14% are literate, which means that they can sign their names. 4% of the women have studied between class 5 to class 8 and only one woman was found in the research who went to the college level.



It was noticed that the level of education and the income level was directly proportional to each other. Illiterate women were doing the work for a lower amount of money while the comparatively literate ones charged a higher price. Also, educated women could get good (or rich) customers while the uneducated got mostly the labour class customers.

Figure 5: Rate per Customer

In figure 5, the X axis measures the number of customers and the Y axis measures the number of commercial sex workers. Since the research has been held in the Sonagachi area, mostly

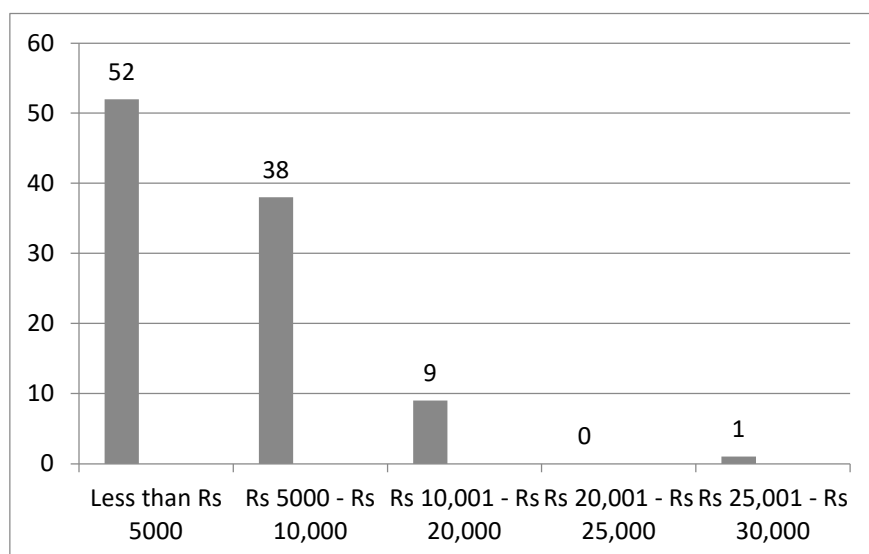


women from low socio-economic background was found for the sample collection. Hence, the highest percentage (56%) of rate per customer lies from Rs 251 to Rs 500. The second highest rate is surprisingly between Rs 100 to Rs 250. Mostly the customers of the sex workers in this range are poor labourers who do not have

much to offer and they themselves belong from low financial group.

13% of the sex workers get Rs 501 to Rs 750 as their rate per customer and only 3% gets a rate of Rs 751 to Rs 1000 rate per customer. It is generally seen that women in this strata are basically a little educated from the other strata and hence they never settle for a lower rate. The percentage of such women is relatively lower in the Sonagachi area as the educated commercial sex workers mostly prefer to work in agencies where there is security and they can earn more money.

Figure 6: Monthly Income Range



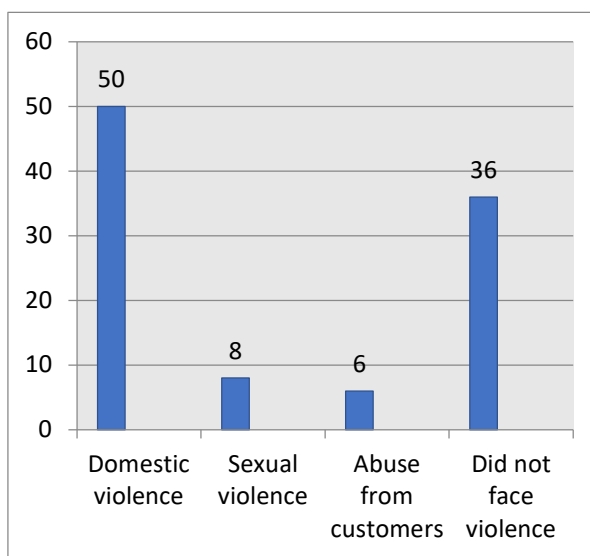
In figure 6 the X axis measures the income level and the Y axis measures the number of commercial sex workers. As it has been discussed earlier, Sonagachi is an area where the major percentage of the population belongs from low socio-economic background and the flying sex

workers earn comparatively less than the permanent sex workers. 52% of the total population earns below Rs 5000 and 38% earns between Rs 5001 to Rs 10,000. Only 9% of the total population gets a monthly income ranging from Rs 10,001 to Rs 20,000 and only one woman was found who earned between Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000. Monthly income depends on several variables like beauty and skin complexion of the woman, her attitude, hygiene of the room they are staying in, AC and other facilities in the room, kind of sexual activities they are performing and the number of customers in a single slot.

Figure 7: Number of People Facing Different Types of Violence

While searching for the greatest threat in a woman’s life, i.e., violence was it was seen in figure 7 that 50% of the women, that means half of the sample have been victim of domestic violence both in their own house or in their in-laws house. The form of the domestic violence is mainly physical in nature where they have been beaten by the husband or other family member.

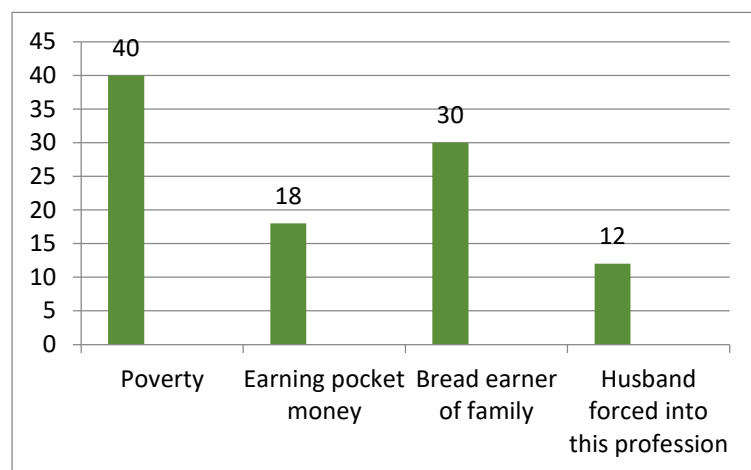
Surprisingly, 36% shows that they have not faced violence. This might be true since they have chosen this profession according to their own will and their family members have no idea about it. Thus there is no sigh of violence in their life.



8% have already faced sexual violence in their family (male members of the family). Such experience changes the mentality of women where they start thinking that since they are already physically exploited, why they shouldn’t start earning from this profession. The

remaining 6% faced violence from the customers when the customers try to force them with unnatural sex and make problems regarding the payment.

Figure 8: Reasons for Choosing the Profession

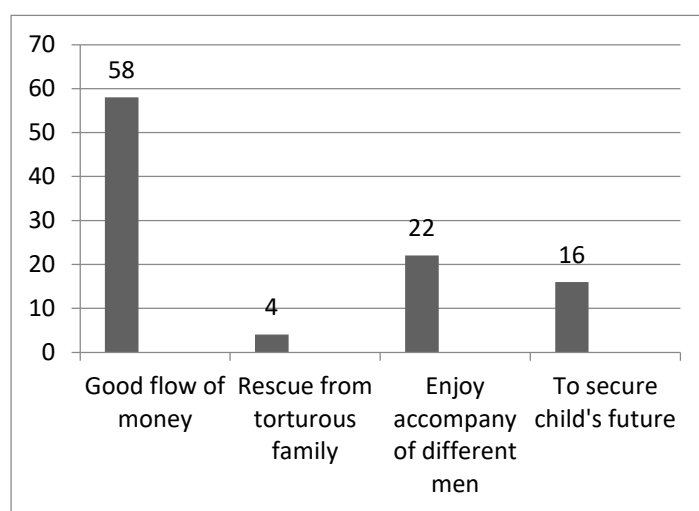


In the figure 8, the X axis measures the reason for choosing this profession and the Y axis measures the number of commercial sex workers. Mostly women come in this profession to get rid of poverty they have been facing all their life. Thus the percentage of such women is high (40%). The second highest rate of interest (30%) is also of the same kind, i.e., these women are the

bread earners of their family (it may be because of separation from their husbands or if the husband is unemployed). 18% of the population has come in this profession solely for earning pocket money which is additional income to their family income. The remaining 12% has the most pathetic reason for joining this profession, their husbands forced them into this profession. In one way it can be said that these women got trafficked in the red light area after their marriage.

Figure 9: Reason For Continuing This Profession

After a lady or a woman is free from the trap of a pimp or ‘masi’ it is seen that the person still continues with this profession. Primarily there is a stigma attached with this profession as a result of which former sex workers do not find acceptance in any other professions and have to return back to the same flesh trade. Apart from this, other reasons for continuing the profession were explored and the according to that figure 8 was constructed.



In figure 8 it is seen that mostly women (58%) come in this profession because of poverty and they continue it for the good flow of money. 22% are continuing since they are enjoying the company of different men. 16% are in this profession to raise money for rearing their children. They are mostly single mothers. Other 4% came here to get rescue from their torturous husbands or other family members.

Figure 10: Number Of Years Into This Profession

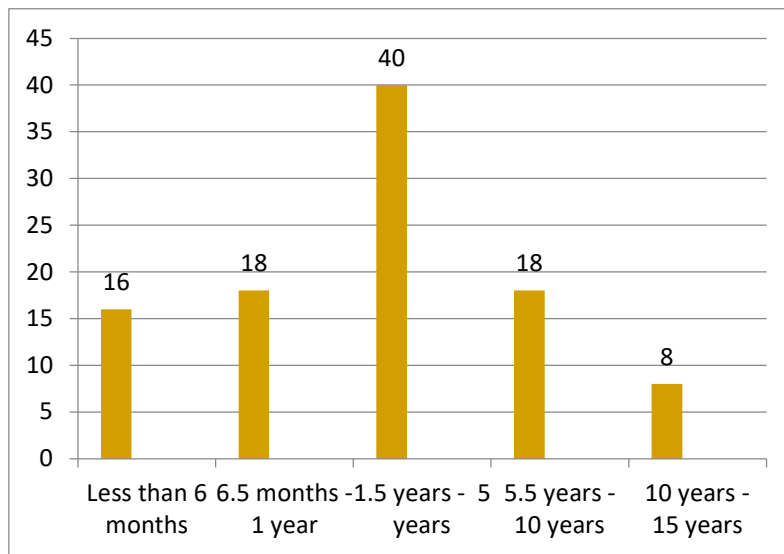
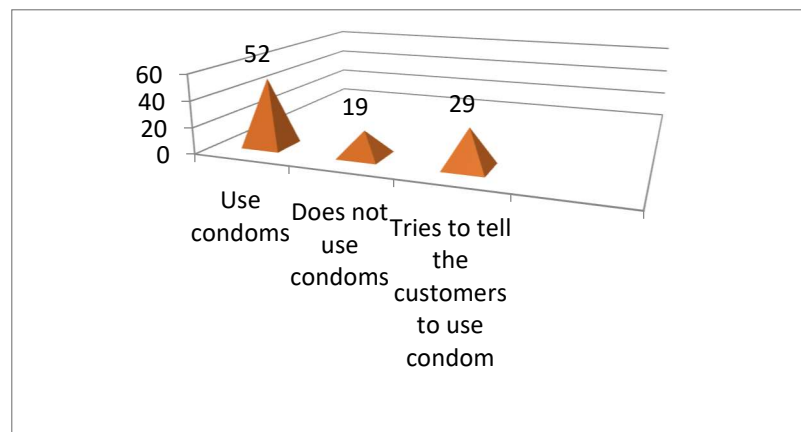


Figure 10 shows that the highest number of women (40%) are working in this profession for 1.5 years to 5 years. 16% are working for less than 6 months. 18% is working for both the periods: 6.5 months-1 year and 5.5 years-10years. 8% are working for the span of 10 years to 15 years. They are mostly middle aged women.

Figure 11: Usage of Condoms

30 years ago with the first breakdown of AIDS/HIV virus all over Kolkata, scientists and doctors started to find out the main source of spread of this disease and how to stop the expansion of the virus. Since there is no effective vaccine or cure for HIV, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is not widely accessible to the population, the sex workers of Sonagachi were distributed free condoms to encourage the practice of safe sex.



From the responses received it is seen in figure 11 that 52% uses condom due to awareness and this is a positive change in our society. 29% tries to tell their customers to use condom but usage of condoms depends on the will of the customers. 19% does not use condom since they are unaware of HIV/AIDS.

Case study:

Case No 1: The flood in the year 1978 bought the family of Chumki (name changed) to nowhere. All their properties and house were gone. They didn't have any place to take shelter. At that time Chumki was in the womb of her mother. Her parents along with her four other siblings came to her maternal aunt at Sonagachi. Her aunt was already in the business of sex work. Reaching there her father told her mother ‘You stay here with the children, I'm going back to recover our house and property. I'll come soon to take you back home’. And her father never returned.

This was the scenario when Chumki was born in a local municipal hospital in Sonagachi. After her birth, her mother came into the flesh trade in order to provide food for her five children. At

that time her mother met a man and made him her 'babu' and that man became Chumki and her siblings' 'baba' in literal sense. He provided them a better life but had an early demise.

That was the starting of struggle in Chumki's life. Her mother married off her elder sister. She gave birth to a girl child after a boy child. Her in laws kept the boy with them and threw out her sister and her new born girl child. Thus her sister was also forced to come into the business. Chumki's brothers were child labours in a nearby shop.

Chumki became a prostitute at the age of fourteen. She hired a room for Rs80 (present rent) per day and continued her business. She never married seeing the life of her mother and sister, but she also had a 'babu'. Eventually she gave birth to a son, the son of that babu. Her son is now 19years old. Her mother and brothers are now taking care of her son at Habra (her mother was able to buy a house at Habra and her whole family shifted there). Seeing her son, the neighbours of Habra started questioning whose son was he. Chumki was compelled to take her 'babu' to Habra and introduced him as her husband.

But fate had something else to be destined for her. Her 'babu' left her and married someone else at Bankura. He had 2children from that marriage. This affected Chumki a lot and she lost all contact with her 'babu'.

In 2007 Chumki had a Gallbladder operation. She did not go to Habra for 12 years after her 'babu' left her for she was afraid her neighbours will ask her many unwanted questions. During her operation, someone told her 'babu' about her operation and he came to see her at her house. She at that time came to know that he now have a failed marriage. Thus they started living together renting a room in Sonagachi. Her 'babu' was unemployed and her income was the only source of income. Her 'babu' gradually started to physically assault her. Once he broke her skull while beating her with a sharp object. That was the time she came to Durbar Clinic and ultimately she came to know about Durbar.

There were many obstacles before her for joining Durbar. Durbar needed the openness of their members to come out freely in front of camera and media. But Chumki was hiding the identity from her neighbours at Habra. Hence she went back and the torture of her 'babu' continued. Later, she came to know about the legal and financial help that Durbar provides and she was ultimately able to leave her 'babu'. That was a dark phase of her life. Finally she joined Durbar on 6th May 2012. That was a new start of her life.

In the mean time, while her 'babu' was torturing her on a regular basis, a man called Bubun (name changed) came in her life. Bubun was initially her customer, but seeing her 'babu' in her room he used to hesitate to unite physically with her. But he used to provide Chumki with all her needs and demands. He didn't have any kind of physical connection with Chumki but still he used to give her money to help her financially. Now, after Chumki left her previous 'babu', Bubun is the present 'babu' of Chumki. Chumki is presently 40 years old.

Happiest memory:

When Chumki first joined Durbar it was a very new experience for her. Previously the sex workers were harassed by the local club members, police and pimp. But now when she introduces herself as a Durbar official she gets the respect she never got before.

Worst experience:

Chumki once left Kolkata and went to Mumbai due to a fight with her mother. She stayed at

Bombay's red light area for 3years. An incident occurred there. A man approached her and offered her Rs350. She went with the man and that man took her at a place where 12 men had intercourse with her against her will.They left her without paying any money. Ultimately she came back to Sonagachi after that experience.

Case No 2 (Sikha)

- **Name :** Sikha (name changed), **Age :** 17, **Education :** Primary level, **Marital status :**Unmarried
- **Way of coming into this profession:** She just joined the profession for two days. He paternal cousin bought her in this profession. Her family has no idea about this.
- **Reason of joining this profession :** She joined the flesh trade only to earn some extra pocket money and to get company of different men.
- She is a virgin girl and this is the first time she is getting any sexual experience in the red light area and she is liking it.
- **About the income and experience :** Her rate is Rs 1000 per customer since she is a young girl in this field. All her customers were of the age range of 21-30 years. They used condom during the intercourse and they were well behaved with her. She is very much impressed with this [profession and plans to join this profession permanently.

Case No 3 (Dipti)

- **Name:** Dipti (name changed), **Age:** 25 years, **Education:** Primary level, **Marital status:** Married
- **Way of coming into this profession:** Two women of her close acquaintance were in this profession. They introduced her in this profession.
- **Reason of joining this profession:**Dipti's son is a patient of Thalassemia. In order to support the expenses of her son's treatment she has joined this profession for some extra income. She also works as a nurse in a government hospital.
- **About the income and experience:** Her rate per customer is Rs 200-Rs400. Everyday she takes 3 customers on an average. She took her first customer after admitting her son in the hospital. She uses condom and take pills too. She is not at all liking this profession but have to continue for the sake of her son.

Qualitative Findings: *Visiting the brothels and the streets of Sonagachi I came to know about a few things, such as :*

- Sex workers are mainly of three types -
 - i) Who work under someone
 - ii) Who work independently
 - iii) Who now have some girls working under them.

- They have three categories
 - i) A category- The package of strip dancing and one shot is given to the customer in one hour. They usually charge 3400 per hour.
 - ii) B category - They remain in the brothel and customers can come to them or contact them for the sex work. They work in both hour basis and shot basis. Rates varies from person to person based on their beauty, sex appeal and bargaining power.
 - iii) C category - They come out on the road in search of customer. If they get a customer they usually hire a room with Rs20-30 for 15 minutes and get the work done. Their charge is very low.
- They are again divided into two categories :
 - i) Permanent workers - Who remain in a particular place for the business.
 - ii) Flying workers - They migrate from one place to the other depending on the rising demands of the customers in each area.
- The sex workers are usually not interested in going to trips with the customers. This is because the customers might take them and break the contract by compelling them to do sex work with several people against their will. They are even threatened to death if they do not listen to the customers. Thus the sex workers feel safe working in Sonagachi itself.
- Many of them are married and have a different life outside the red light area. Nearly all of them tell their families that they work in Kolkata as domestic help or sales girl.
- They usually rent their room on a daily basis (Rs 80/day for a B category sex worker)
- If the room consists of AC, sound box, light and fan, they are charged individually for these apart from the room rent. For eg : Suppose the rent of the room is Rs 20,000. The rent of the AC is Rs 10,000. The rent of light is Rs 1,000. This is how they calculate room rent on a monthly basis.
- Many of them who are working for nearly 1-2 years are able to buy a vehicle and they now rent them and earn a side income.
- Almost in all brothels there were pictures of Hindu God and goddess in the entrance.
- The timing of work is generally in the afternoon and night.

Conclusion and Recommendation: In this research the agony of the informal sector commercial sex workers has been the prime focus. It is observed that they are mostly from the age range of young adulthood and are not educated enough to maintain their economic life through other professions. During the research it was seen that more than 80% of the commercial sex workers are coming from North 24 Parganas and they maintain a dual life in their professional and personal sphere. Most of the common excuse they give to their families for living in the city of Kolkata is that they are engaged in some homes as domestic helper and they are earning a lot from there. After staying few months in this profession they cannot move

themselves out due to the easy flow of money as well as the stigma attached with the word 'sex worker' in the outside world.

The rights of the case workers should be preserved. The under-aged sex workers should be traced and should be taken back to their families or governmental homes so that they can get access to proper education and can start their life afresh. Girls who are trafficked (by their husband or others) should be traced and rescued so that they get a chance to get out of this tragic life. Coming in this profession should be a free choice but it should not be imposed on some person forcefully. Sex education is very much needed in this profession to combat against HIV/AIDS and other STDs. Social measures should be taken to stop stigmatizing the commercial sex workers. Organized government interventions should take place so that no people can join this profession against her will. Women who are currently in sex work but wants to get out of the profession should be provided assistance to raise awareness and vocational training about other professions too.

Whether sex worker should be an option for livelihood is a much debated question. Some say that the legalization of this profession would actually transfer the power to the pimps and the exploitation towards the marginalized girls coming from backward society will be increased. If only 'empowered' and educated women come forward and choose this profession with the full knowledge of the pros and cons, then only they should be allowed to enter in this flesh market.

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Bengal Journal of Social Science and Development

Volume No. 1, Issue No. 1 (January 2022)



An Online Quarterly Published Peer Reviewed Journal for Social Science Disciplines
by N.S.D. Educational Welfare Trust

E-Journal URL: www.bjssd-journal.com

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Fatima Sheikh as India's First Female Muslim Educator-Teacher and her Role to Promote Women Education during 19th Century

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Introduction:

It seems ludicrous to ask someone in today's socio-environment if they favour female education, given that it is not only established in our Constitution but also endorsed by mainstream public debate. Regardless of wealth, caste, or religion, there are various government programmes and initiatives dedicated to the education of girls (Desk, 2020). Savitribai Phule valiantly fought against oppressive caste and gender hierarchies to challenge untouchability and educate girls, among other critical social interventions, and Fatima Sheikh, the woman who started the unofficial 'Beti Padhao' movement as early as the 1840s, will be familiar to those with even a cursory knowledge of the history behind education in India.

Fatima and Savitribai defied all expectations by establishing a school and enrolling in a teacher training programme. Their school's curriculum differed from what was taught at their home schools by Brahmin instructors. Instead of Brahmanical books like the Vedas and Shastras, it contained arithmetic, physics, and social studies.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of this research study are mentioned below:

- To explain the struggling phase of Fatima Sheikh's Life
- To elaborate the contribution of Fatima Sheikh on Savitribai Phule's Movement.
- To describe the role of Fatima Sheikh in the field of women education.

Methodology and Data Source

Basically, this study is a qualitative study. Beside this, researcher try to collect different types of data from different sources like websites, news portal, blogs, online video archive, news reports etc. for this study and use document analysis method to analyze the qualitative data.

Fatima Sheikh's Hidden Life

She has been referenced on Twitter several times, with accounts claiming 9 January to be her birth date. She is widely recognised as India's first female Muslim teacher. While there is no evidence to back this idea, it is known that Fatima Sheikh collaborated with Savitribai Phule to create the first girls' school in her home. At a period when education was reserved solely for high caste males and female educators were unheard of, the two ladies pioneered reform (Mondal, 2019).

Fatima Sheikh as Great Companion of Savitribai and Jyotiba Phule

Fatima Sheikh was one of India's first Muslim teachers, and she taught Dalit children at Savitribai and Jyotiba Phule's school. The memory of this educator and social reformer, like that of many other women who opposed injustice, has been wiped out of Indian consciousness. Despite her intimate relationship with Savitribai and Jyotiba Phule, she has remained forgotten in history to this day (Sarkar, 2020). According to the many dalit novelist, Fatima Sheikh was India's first Muslim female educator. Savitribai and she were pioneers in education at a period when it was only available to upper-caste males. She assisted Savitribai in the establishment of their first girls' school, the "Indigenous Library," in her own home, defying both upper-caste Hindus and conservative Muslims.

Fatima Sheikh as a Shelter of Phule Couple

When Fatima Sheikh and Savitribai Phule began teaching women and others from disadvantaged castes, they were confronted by locals who threatened them. Their family were also singled out and given the choice of either ceasing their activities or fleeing their houses. They appear to have chosen the latter option. When the Phule couple's effort was not supported by their caste, family, or community members. Abandoned by everyone they know, the couple seeks refuge and endures societal tyranny in order to pursue their educational goals. During their hunt, they came across Usman Sheikh (Fatima Sheikh's brother) a Muslim guy from Pune who was residing in Ganj Peth (then known as the Pune). Usman Sheikh provided his home to Phule's couple in exchange for the right to establish a school on the property. In 1848, Savitribai established the first girls' school in their home.

Fatima Sheikh's Journey with Savitribai Phule

Fatima Sheikh was one of the first Muslim female teachers in modern India, and at the Phule School, she began teaching Dalit youngsters. The Dalit communities were accused of spreading education by Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule, as well as Fatima Sheikh (Wikipedia, 2021) Fatima joined Savitribai on her quest for teacher certification, and she appears to have attended the same institute as her. Savitribai taught at all five of the Phules' schools until 1856, when she became unwell and returned to her mother's home. It's no surprise that nearly everyone in Poona's higher caste was against Fatima and Savitribai Phule, and even sought to stop them because of their social disgrace. Fatima Sheikh was the one who backed Savitribai in any way she could.

Fatima Sheikh began her education at the same institution as Savitribai Phule. Sagunabai, who subsequently became another leader in the education movement, was alongside Savitribai and Fatima. Osman Sheikh, Fatima Sheikh's brother, was similarly influenced by Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule's initiative. According to historical records, Osman Sheikh pushed his sister Fatima to disseminate knowledge across the population. People from Pune used to harass and insult Fatima and Savitribai when they started attending Jyotiba's schools. Because it was unthinkable, they used to hurl stones and even cow excrement at them.

Fatima Sheikh's Journey for Social Improvement

Fatima Sheikh's journey was made more difficult by the fact that she was opposed by both the Hindu and Muslim communities for what she was doing. However, as we now know, she never gave up and continued to encourage families and parents, particularly those from the Muslim community, by going door to door. According to numerous sources, Fatima used to spend hours counselling parents who did not want their daughters to attend school.

Struggling life of Fatima Sheikh and Savitribai Phule

Most males were worried about universal access to education, which had hitherto been a luxury reserved for upper-caste men. The upper castes responded angrily, even violently, to the establishment of these institutions. While they were on their way, they threw stones and even cow excrement at Fatima and Savitribai. People allegedly threw stones and excrement at her and verbally abused her, so they carried an additional sari when heading towards her school. Both ladies, though, were unfazed. Fatima was the first Muslim woman teacher in India, teaching at the school until 1856.

Conclusion:

Although there isn't much literature on Fatima Sheikh's life and career, the government has made steps to recognise her significance. Fatima Sheikh's profile was included in the Bal Bharati Maharashtra State Bureau's school Urdu textbooks in 2014, alongside Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Zakir Hussain, and Abul Kalam Azad. Fatima Sheikh's life is a monument to the social changes championed by Indian women in the pre-independence era, despite enormous societal opposition.

She is a significant character in Muslim history, and we as a Indian community must honour her. Her work is particularly significant since she is thought to have marked the first combined fight of Dalits and Muslims. The oppressed groups' solidarity has always guided the liberation fight, as seen by later bigger movements.

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