FARU FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE RESEARCH UNIT UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA, SRI LANKA
FARU 2023 – 16TH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE
www.faru.uom.lk
Empower Communities
December 2023

FICTIVE HOME: THE POLITICS OF URBAN HOMEMAKING OF *HIJRAS* IN KHULNA, BANGLADESH

PODDER, A. K.[1]* & SHAHIDULLAH, F. B.[2]
[1,2]Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Dhaka, Bangladesh
[1]apurba@arch.buet.ac.bd, [2]fadia.shahidullah@gmail.com

Abstract: The third gender is an identity-based category for people who do not identify themselves as either male or female. This may include people who do not feel the male or female gender roles that their culture dictates in terms of social, sexual, or gender role preference. The aim of the paper is to investigate the crucial role that the dwelling environments play in the lives of the third gender and their ultimate transformation into and stigmatization as a *Hijra*. In a context characterized by a lack of social acceptance of the third gender people into mainstream activities, and in the near absence of Government (and NGO) support, particularly toward their rehabilitation and resettlement, the third gender population commonly engages in 'anti-social' activities in order to ensure a livelihood. A significant portion of these activities, which can also be viewed as different forms of resistance-mostly absent and ritualistic, however, take place within the confines of their urban dwelling. An investigation into their family structure and household spatial implication, organization of house spaces according to their own notion of publicness-privateness, spatial sequencing, layering and hierarchy, formal articulation of houses and their setting/location to the larger urban fabric hence speak of an apparently novel culture of an undesirable community, where such novelties, as this paper argues, degrade their identity into that of a 'socially excluded' *Hijra*. Such identification and understanding of the negative socio-political-spatial products/processes of *Hijra* homes hence are expected to provide important feedback to policymaking on devising sustainable ways to construct a positive identity for the so-called '*Hijra'* population and aid through possible spatial-physical intervention (e.g. housing).

Keywords: *Social exclusion, Third gender, Fictive kinship, Social space, Hijra, Homemaking.*

1. Introduction

To be born in a traditional society of Bangladesh requires to be categorized in either of the two stereotypes: male or female. Human's biological body and its features can vary to a great extent, but whether these varieties are acceptable depends on whether these fit into the 'regular' attributes of male or female. The *Third gender* falls outside this conventional male-female category, and in fact, is not considered to be a 'normal' human being. They are recognized as biologically 'defective', for their inability to reproduce human children. Commonly brought up and known as *Hijra,* they are not allowed to participate in regular social gatherings, nor can occupy any position of higher social standing. Being unable to be categorized within the gender binary, *Hijra* suffers from social acceptance and the near absence of Government support, and are among the most deprived communities in Bangladesh (Shuvo, 2018; Aziz et al., 2019). Even the marginal jobs, which the poorest ones in our society can access, are excluded from *Hijras*. They are represented as socially stigmatised, engaging in anti-social activities, commonly perceived as 'obscene' and ritualistic (Khan et al, 2009; Hinchy, 2019).

Living in the lines of exclusion, they had to invent novel ways of survival, a critical look which reveals unique insights into their life, politics, and space-making. In this paper, their urban homemaking is explored as a way to understand how space can create a powerful impact in shaping or perhaps transforming *Third gender identity*. Traditionally, urban homemaking remains an intriguing arena of architectural research. Urban homes remain pertinent to those who can own or settle on land. The ownership of land provides a key lens, to how a home is perceived. Homemaking, thus, is commonly conceptualized and understood within a framework of stability. Home refers to the physical manifestation of landowners' expectations and dreams — an understanding that makes *homemaking* to be an *internal concept.*

The lives of *Hijras* rarely accord with stability. Their everyday struggle with social exclusion makes it difficult for them to secure a 'normal' or stable life. Although the *Hijra* are transgender people, their stigmatised identity as '*Hijra*' subjects them to social abuse, abysmal poverty, criminalisation, and not being treated as normal human beings (Safa, 2016; Divan et al., 2016). Thus, previous research often hold social customs, institutions and various actors as

*Corresponding author: Tel: +880 1787384900 Email Address: apurba@arch.buet.ac.bd
FARU Journal: Volume 10 Issue 2 DOI: https://doi.org/10.4038/faruj.v10i2.254

primarily responsible for forcing trans-people to become a stigmatised stereotype (Sifat, 2020; Islam, 2019; Sarker et al., 2020). The focus of these researches remains broadly on the external forces operating outside their dwelling environment, while the critical importance of the dwelling environment of *Hijra* appears to be ignored. Importantly, a significant portion of the *Hijra* activities and the required training to perform those 'obscene' activities occur within the confines of their dwelling (Hossain, 2021; Snigdha,, 2021; Islam, 2016). Therefore, a deeper examination of the relationship between the dwelling environment and the making of *Hijra* identity (Hillier, 2008; Heidegger, 2006). Living outside their biological family, *Hijra's* homemaking goes beyond the regular aspect of stability, gender binary (Walker, 2002; Blunt, 2006; Young, 1997) and internalization. The study set to explore *Hijras'* homemaking within a condition of instability. The argument is that their urban *homemaking* can be viewed as a powerful socio-political machine to produce *Hijra* identity, crafted in response to the wider/macroeconomic conditions, thereby shifting the traditional 'internal' focus of homemaking to an external concept. It also demonstrates how the organisation of physical spaces and materiality in *Hijra* homemaking can reveal the latter's 'obscene' identity has been shaped through space, thereby serving as the powerful root of social discrimination.

Figure 1, Showing map of the homes of *Hijra* at Khulna, (left) Homes of Rail station road, *Sonadanga*, Shibbari and Moylapota, (right) Homes of Khalishpur (*Source: Field survey, 2023)*

This ethnographic research investigated four urban homes of *Hijras* located at the periphery of Khulna, Bangladesh. The sample homes were mapped in (Figure 1), Popy *Hijra* who is also called as '*Boro Mashi'* (Rail station road), Shila *Hijra* (*Sonadanga* road), Dipti *Hijra* (Shib bari road), Shompa *Hijra* (Khalishpur) and Najia *Hijra* (*Moylapota*) (who was not interested in survey). It has given importance to conducting one-to-one semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, as the group discussions were often intervened by the *Hijra* team leader (*gurumaa*), which appeared to influence the nature of the responses, that could be received.

2. *Hijras* in Urban Khulna

Hijras are a distinct identity-based category who have transformed from third-gender people and cannot accord with what our culture dictates in terms of social, sexual or gender role preference. Their biological and emotional transformation conflict with social *normality*: their physical body can appear male, but their mind can grow as female, vice versa or to something unique.

The 'abnormal' sex-gender attitudes are rarely acceptable in traditional Bangladeshi society, as *third-gender* people encounter a hostile environment on an everyday basis. In their early life, families hide their gender identity to cover the so-called social 'shame' and ignore the truth that third-gender people are an identical gender category (interview, 2023). The respondents (2023) reveal that their family, as well as local society, comprehend them as a curse for their biological mismatch. Due to the transformation, third-gender people have to constantly play a dichotomous role. As Shila *Hijra* (2023) stated, *"…some family provides identity as their child, and some are not. A lot of them decline/refuse to give identification to their third-gender children. In some cases, for a third gender siblings, other siblings have to face many hurdles in case of marriage and other social activities. sometimes, relatives and neighbours are mocking and abashing the family for having a third-gender child. All of these made a third gender get separated from his/her biological family…"* Their denied gender identity forces them to maintain different gestures and attitudes. For a period of time, some wear female clothes and receive female names in front of visitors while adopting male gestures and clothes while living in a family (interview, 2023).

Their feminine behaviour becomes the subject of jokes and humiliation, which isolate them from fellow mates both at school and the workplace, making them experience loneliness and regular abuse. Eventually, they retract from schools, resulting in utter deprivation of formal education, and illiteracy diminishes their future employment opportunities (interview, 2023). As Shompa *Hijra* (2023) responded, *"I neither do any work nor I could study. Everyone mocked me by addressing, 'o Hijra! o Hijra!'. Then I came to know there is a community named Hijra that would be similar to my strange attitude… I started to think I was different from others, and I needed to find who was similar to me…"* In

an exceptional case, if they somehow manage to enter regular jobs hiding their gender identity, and if that has been revealed, they are fired by the employers to save the workplace from 'sexual pollution'.

3. A New Life in *Hijra* Identity

After they (third-gender people) are forced to leave their families and find shelter in a *Hijra* home – which consists of a fictive family of similar social outcasts (interview, 2023). As Shompa *Hijra* responded (2023), *"...In our area, Hijra used to come for 'babu nachano', where I found the 'Hijra' community, by which name I was mocked. My sisters tried to engage in domestic work and were not willing to have me around anymore. I was poor, I came here by myself and shifted to my gurumaa about 28 years ago…"*. Within the premise of the *Hijra* home, their vulnerabilities, frustrations, and insecurities have been channelled in an alternative socio-physical environment, and where their third-gender identity has been shaped by the complex negotiation for co-existence in the new family. The leader of the Khulna *Hijra* community, Popy *Hijra*/ *Boro Mashi* (2023), responded on their exclusivity from the society, "*We are Bangladeshi, we drink water from the same river. Is my body tattooed with the written 'Hijra' by born? (Amra Bangladeshi, ek nodi er paani khaai… Aamar gaye ki likha ase je ami Hijra?) Then why do you separate me from your society?"*

This paper has used Henri Lefebvre's theory of space (1991) to decode the complex layers of the socio-physical environment in *Hijra* homes. It analysed and distinguished the layers of space (*Hijra* home) into three categories: the 'conceived space', 'perceived space' and 'lived space', as put forward by Lefebvre. It has examined the rituals, interactions, and physicality of *Hijra* homes, as experienced by the third-gender people when they entered *Hijra* homes with a new identity of *chela* (disciple).

3.1. CONCEIVED SPACE OF *HIJRA* HOME

The conceived space of the *Hijra* home is essentially a mental space. Theoretically, it conceptualises a space without life, that exists in imagination. The third gender people are somewhat forced to embrace a new life of *chela*, their lives are bounded by an imagined space of *Hijra* home. One has to harness a new relationship in a network interwoven by a fictive family. The relationships in their fictive family are not established through marriage or blood but forged and defined by the boundary of home.

In the absence of a conventional family, fictive relations bend third-gender subjectivity according to the norms set in *Hijra* homes. After a third-gender person has joined the (*Hijra*) family, he establishes familiarity and closeness among the people who are, by all means, strangers. The fictive relations work by imitating 'normal' family relationships. Their fictive relations broaden the mutual support networks to create a sense of family and thus extend social control to the new members of the *Hijra* community.

Unlike the family relations reinforced by the traditional norms of Bangladeshi society, fictive ties are relatively fragile and require effort to sustain. For maintaining the kin ties, control and the creation of belongingness are integral, where the *Hijra* home plays its role.

Two aspects necessary for the fictive relation: control and belongingness, are carefully crafted in the conceived space of the *Hijra* home. As each home is governed by *gurumaa,* the head *Hijra* of the house, the spatial layout carefully configures a system of surveillance. The newcomers are accommodated in the living room to cohabit with fellow *Hijra*s. As Shompa *Hijra* (2023) responded, "*We have several rooms and bedding so that we could flexibly accommodate all of us. The newcomer could sleep anywhere, but he/she remains under observation until they gain the trust..."* Sharing the room to live collectively forces a physical condition for the *chelas* to bond with the new members of a fictive family. The space for its configuration, allows *chelas* to be constantly observed and groomed by the *gurumaa* and other *shissho-meye Hijra*s. The conception that they have to occupy and live in a single room every day and perhaps for the rest of their life asserts a spatial condition that normalises interactions of the fictive family, which otherwise is different from the characteristics of the Third gender.

The spatial layout of a *Hijra* home maintains a centralised focus (Figure 3). A central courtyard connects other spaces of the house, which fall mostly to semi-public or public zoning. The courtyard can be outdoor or semi-outdoor and works as the most used space in the house. Only the guru-maa and the second in command live separately, yet their rooms remain in proximity to the living room.

The two layers of proximity: collective living in a single room and living beside *gurumaa's* room, create close surveillance of the everyday living of newcomers. The proximity helps *guru-maa,* in particular, to deploy machineries of control, including restricting mobility and interaction with outsiders (Figure 2). The interaction with *gurumaa* responded by a *shisso-meye* as, *"she is our leader and guide (uni amader netri..). We do not sleep in her bed from the place of respect and cultural practice of norms"* (Figure 2). A new *Hijra* identity is shaped by the conceived control of *Hijra* homes. The proximity creates a sustained conception of being watched by the *gurumaa* and fellow *Hijras*, even when the latter are not physically present in their room. A *chela* cannot even talk to a visitor openly without the permission of *gurumaa.* The spatial conception makes a *Hijra*-identity protective in nature and sustains the control of a *gurumaa* in a fictive family.

Figure 2, Showing interaction and cultural norms with *gurumaa,* (left) *Gurumaa Hijra* of Sonadanga and (right) *Gurumaa Hijra* of Rail station road *(Source: Field survey, 2023)*

The second aspect of *Hijra* homemaking is belongingness which provides the glue for the fictive family to function. As Popy *Hijra/ Boro Mashi* (2023) responded on their *Hijra* community unity and inter-dependence, *"… as a fish could not live without water, we cannot live without our community".* Among the various aspects of *Hijra* home, one important aspect is the religiosity of space. In Bangladesh, third-gender people are observed to come from both Hindu and Islamic beliefs and practices. While, historically, religion has played a powerful role in defining traditional homemaking, a *Hijra* home shapes uniquely.

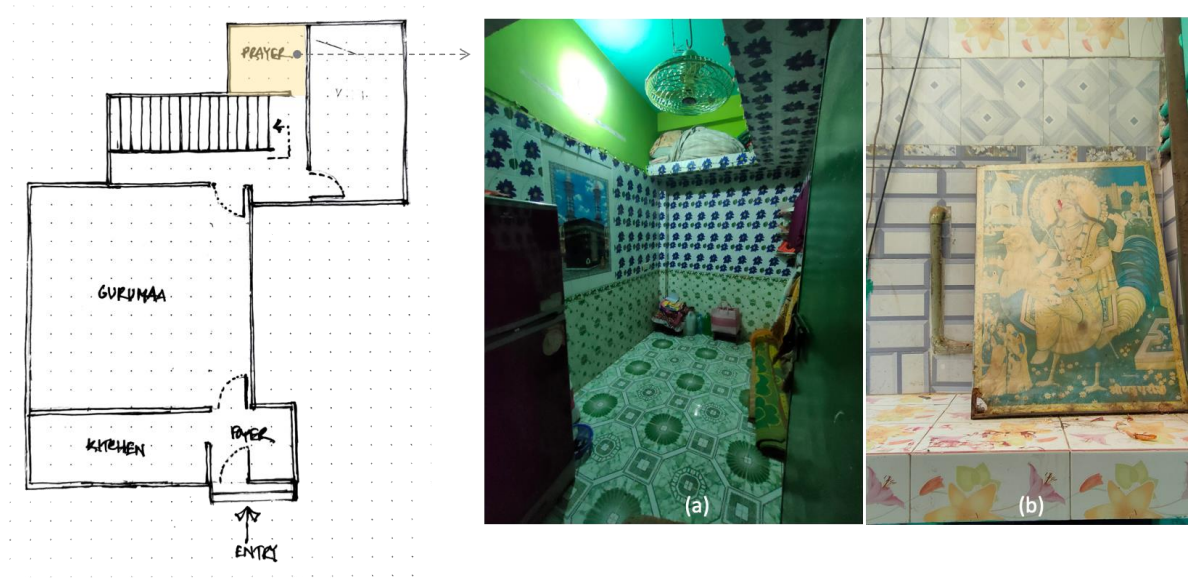


Figure 3, Showing dual religious practices in spatial layout, (a)Muslim prayer space and (b) Hindu prayer space *(Source: Field survey, 2023)*

The spaces of the *Hijra* home embody both religious beliefs and remain accessible for both. Popy *Hijra/ Boro Mashi* (2023) responded, *"…this bride belongs to the Hindu religion, and I am a Muslim. But we shared the same room and roof without any collision. We do not discriminate against race, caste, religion, etc."*. Different prayer spaces are seen to be arranged in the same house/home, reflecting a culture of religious dualism. Here a conception of inclusiveness has been created for the group of social outcasts, whose overall identity has been rejected by society, but a mental image of acceptance/belongingness in *Hijra* home is produced to rehabilitate their chosen values and beliefs that they wish to take.

3.2. PERCEIVED SPACE

Perceived space is similar to the terms: physical space, abstract space, sur- faces, materialism and visual. It is also the same as 'spatial practice', according to Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1991). Spatial practice holds the collection of spatial sets of characteristics on a particular location in a society in response to some given conditions. The experience in the perceived space mediates through the conceived space. In that sense, perceived space leads to the conception and maintains a high degree of cohesion with Conceived spaces.

Unlike the Conceived space, however, the Perceived space is a physical space. In *Hijra,* home perceived space is created by the everyday social interactions between the occupants and the outsiders. Where the *Third gender's* social

interaction is a form of negotiation/conflict with their socially unrecognized personality, *Hijra* is a relatively acceptable social stereotype. Thus, the newcomers had to realm with dual personalities between *third gender* and *Hijra*. They cross-dress between home and outside, as their third gender identity stays hidden from society. Their home provides the envelope to cultivate the duality.

When a third gender person is first introduced to *Hijra* home, he/she joins to an existing number of *chelas*. The newcomer has clearly circumscribed roles and relationships, neatly bound into hierarchical relationships of the fictive family and maintained by a strict order of their clan. Shompa *Hijra* (2023) responded on a newcomer's journey, *"After moving out, we all have to go through a pain for two years to five and then slowly we became one of us."* With a *gurumaa* at the helm, the scores of others live in the same group are referred to unambiguously as *chelas* or learners. In order to gain entry into a (different) group/fictive family, one must find sponsorship from the *gurumaa, w*ithout which, one is not allowed, by which *Hijra* communities maintain a clear structure of leadership and control over the group. This structure works as a systematic cycle, *"now, as a gurumaa, I took the responsibility of the newcomer. When they will start to earn, and I am not able to earn for age, they will earn for me"* (Shompa *Hijra*, 2023).

After gaining sponsorship, a fee has to be paid to the community, and this makes the new member to be finally accepted. Then there are the protocols for the physical makeover: as the male form is cast off for the female, initiates cannot cut their hair or shave their face. Traditional pluckers from the *Hijra* community pluck all the hair on the faces of the initiates. They then start going out in public as females. After the completion of all these formalities, the *chela* will then learn the *ultabhasha,* a language that the members of the community share.

The same language further strengthens the fictive family bond, through which the *Hijras* form a unique emotional and mental support system for each other. It is, however, important to highlight that their bonding in fictive family is underpinned not only by the emotional commitment but more by the economic commitment, as they are bound to contribute part or all of their earnings to the family, as well as assist with household chores. As Shompa *Hijra* (2023) responded, *"At first time, it was hard to cope up, as a newcomer have to do a lot of work- dishwashing, food serving, cooking, nursing the seniors with body massage etc. orders from the seniors."* Also responded on the trainee phasing, *"they do not go outside for a certain time during their adaptation. Initially, they are being loved to heal their departure from their family. After a while, they are occupied with heavy workload and mental stress, so that they could not get a space to remember their family."* Besides, Popy *Hijra/ Boro Mashi* (2023) responded, *"At least for year, they have to be groomed and trained for the works- dance, music, communication style etc."* In return of economic contribution, they secure a place in their fictive home, training for income, source of earning and security. Shompa *Hijra* (2023) responded, *"Each of us has pain, sometimes, I use harsh words to the shissho-meye when they are arrogant, and they are rude to me, again, we deliver affectionate words to each other. We have to live all together for survival. If we roam outside alone, people tease us, but when we go out with our groups, none deliver a single mockery word."* The price, which, they have to pay to be part of the fictive family, is what dictates their transformation from *Third Gender* to *Hijra subjectivity.*

Figure 4, Showing the interior of *Hijra* homes, (left) the exhibit wall or the wall of fame and (right) the *gurumaa Hijra* sitting in front of the wall. *(Source: Field survey, 2023)*

Thus, *Hijra subjectivity* should no longer been seen as a social or gender stereotype, rather an economic construction, as without the transformation from third gender to *Hijra* subjectivity, the former can no longer pay the price of being part of the family*. Hijra home* crafts the *Hijra* subjectivity, as a way for the third gender to survive economically. The perceived space of their fictive home dwells between the making and the maker. As the older *chelas* make their home, where they have been trained to secure their earning, the home makes the fresh *third gender* to

become *chelas*. A *shisso-meye* responded on their training, *" we had been raised by our guruma, taught values and economic activities from our guruma. 'jaa shikha dise, taai shikhsi'. We arrange a 'boithak' in a week in our home, we enjoy ourselves with cultural practices like dance, music, musical instruments playing etc. and even in behavioural culture, how to communicate with people etc. we practice. For example, when we go for 'baccha nachano', we greet, sit in a certain manner and deliver some sweet words- all these are taught and trained by our guruma."* The home, by distinct architectural zoning, limits the outsiders to see the training/practice area. The home provides an envelope that visitors can rarely access, giving a perception of being secluded and inaccessible for the public.

These secluded spaces of the society, however, are decorated with images of performance, wrapped on the walls of *Hijra* home (Figure 4). The pictures embody the *Hijra family's* pride, and success creating a perception of self-dignity of the fictive family in its chosen economic path. *Hijra Home* in that course, is like an industry or a production house of *Hijra* making, where its physical environment mediates a path of glory, primarily perceived among the fictive family or the broader community of *Hijras.* Shompa *Hijra* (2023) responded on the journey of upbringing or grooming journey of a *Hijra* home as a SCHOOL, "*as in school, one could get skilled and cross the classes, I also had some phases to grow and skill development with communication, care and love".* The new *Hijra* subjectivity is cultivated/crafted within the incentive of glory, and instilled in the layers of crafted spatial perception within which they live in.

3.3. LIVED SPACE

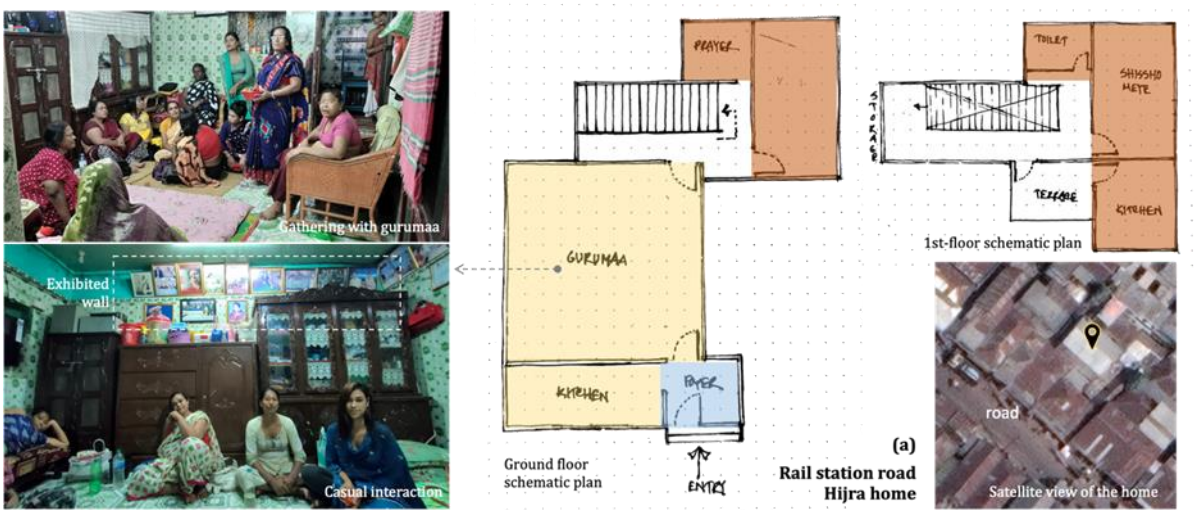
Lived space is a term used both in the works of Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja, it is also known as the spaces of representation. Within the trialectics of spatiality, the Lived space is an intermingling of conceived space and perceived space. This is the space where social relations take place and can be actively experienced.

Hijras' home can be marked as that they always keep the entrance of the house open and hang a curtain outside when they are in. This reflects an important dilemma of *Hijra* home: while the openness refers a goodwill and an openness towards friendship with the residing community, the curtain reflects a relatively fluid and symbolically negotiated barrier. The physical presence of the barrier creates an introvert environment of the house isolating it from the residing community. This dual personality of *Hijra* home simultaneously visibilise and isolate from the community.

This dualism appears to protect the dual personality played by *Hijra*s. When they go out for income through *badhai* or money collection, their extrovert and aggressive characteristics have come visible in public realm. However, in their house, a highly modest character of *Hijra*s are observed. They are not comfortable with external windows, which open by the road or open space. They try to solve natural light and ventilation by the internal court, suggesting that they do not want to visiblise their life to other.

The afternoon and evening are the most important period for the shaping of *Hijra* subjectivity. As the yellow-coloured zone in the figure (Figure 5) is the most important to make a *Hijra* stereotype, their activity in this part of the home is not visible to other people.

After 8 pm *gurumaa* goes to her room and *chelas* in their room or sleeping area. Sometimes *chela's* sleeping area is not defined in a *Hijra* house. Popy *Hijra*/ *Boro Mashi* (2023) responded on the newcomer's staying, *"They usually stay on the first floor (do—tola) as a newcomer".* From the chart, we can define the most active space of *Hijra* house which helps most to make from excluded third-gender people to *Hijra*. For searching new identity as the third gender, a sense of isolation from society & family third gender, people get into the *Hijra* community. A *Hijra* house is responsible to the formation of *Hijra* identity, not the third gender identity. So, the sense of isolation, ignorance and identity crisis continue to sustain in the making of *Hijra* home.



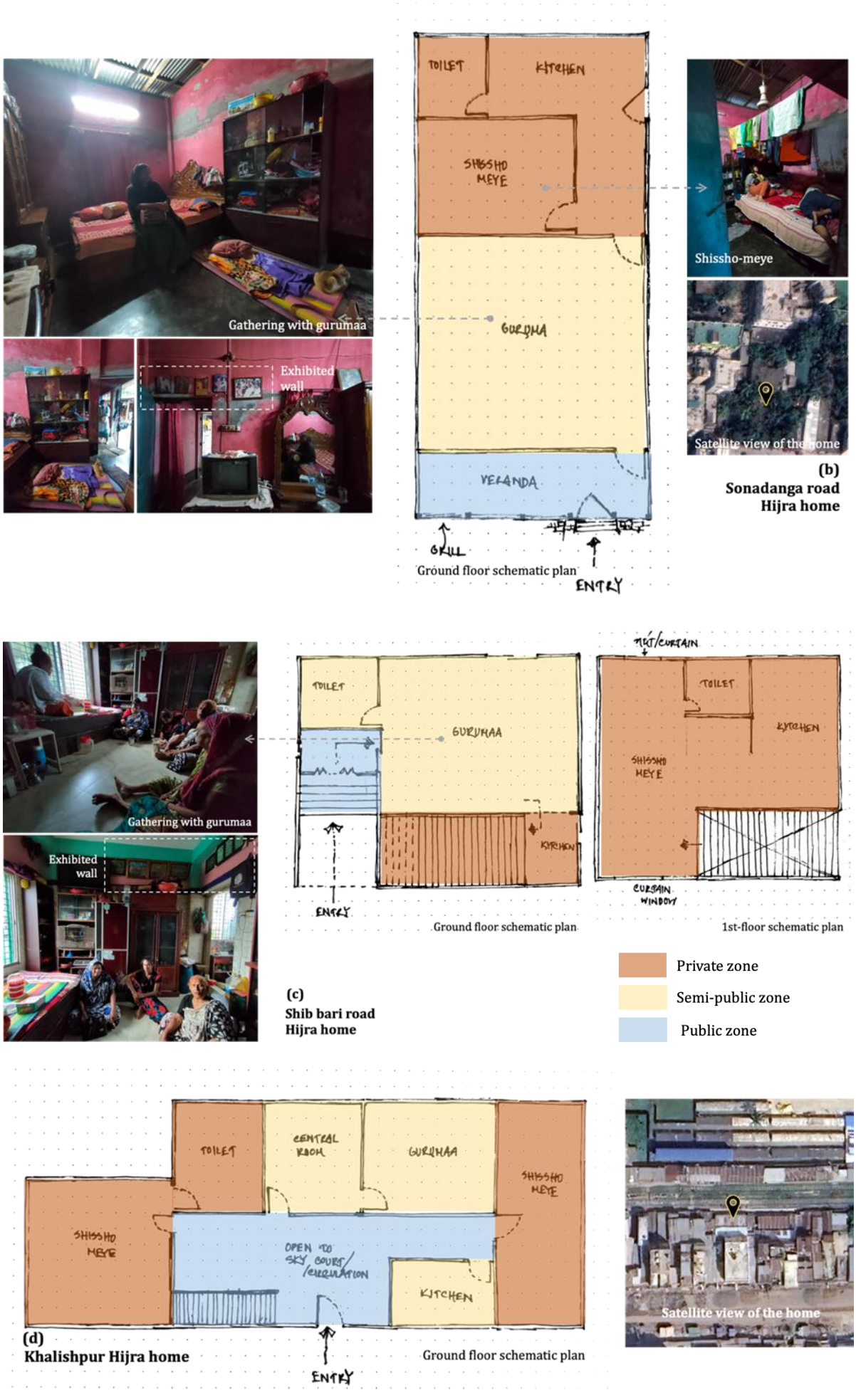


Figure 5, Showing Spatial layout of *Hijra* homes with activity photographs (a) *Rail station road Hijra* home, (b) Sonadanga *Hijra* home, (c) *Shib bari* road *Hijra* home and (d) *Khalishpur Hijra* home. *(Source: Field survey, 2023)*

4. Fictive Home and Conclusion

Walker Lynne (2002) argues that in Victorian time, homes are planned, segregated and specialized by the gender of resident. Women was privileged in private world both in spatial and cultural term, while male being the head of the house performs as an actor in the wider world. The masculine zone de- fined the public and the feminine one defined the private. Thus, home, in Victorian time, can be defined as female territorial zone. Hooks (1991) explores the political dimension of home, as he sees it ('home') as a place from which to build a politics of resistance, where home is identified with particular representations of Woman and with particular versions of femininity. Hooks' definition suggests 'home' not only as a spatial outcome of certain cultural practice, but also a representational space for ideology.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of home, increasingly, became a site of social and moral regeneration (Muthesius 1904, 1979). Home and its making were treated as an ideological instrument by the architects, residents, or observer. This approach made home an object of formal experiment. It also scrutinised home's formal attributes, including scale, ornamentation. Home was seen as a formal sculpture, reflecting a language of moral and ideological standing.

The successive critics of the outer shell encouraged home to see as a functional concept. In this intellectual stream, home was re-conceived as 'a machine for living in', emphasising the functional role of homes. This stream of home-scholarship downplayed the importance of mass, and treated space as a crucial structuring and ideological instrument. Thus, open plan without dividing-walls has been experimented playing to the dynamic spectacle of 'flowing space' and to achieve 'transparency'.

Nicky Gregson and Michelle Low (1995) explore home within the geographical literature, where they found home-making as a new way of expressing 'the spatial'. Home has been argued as equivalent to spatial form, spatial organisation and spatialisation at a given time of society. These conveyed conceptualised spaces akin to constructs of time and conceived in terms of temporality. However, home and home-making's relationship with the particular socio-political reality of the users has remained relatively unexplored.

Hijras' home-making chips into the socio-spatiality dimension of home. Third gender people's life within the boundary of fictive family defines home neither as an ideological experiment of form, nor an innocent organisation of function. Rather, space has been seen here as a powerful instrument for their transformation from third gender to *Hijra* makes home, therefore, becomes a machine to produce subjectivity. In *Hijra* homemaking, they practice a fictive feminine center, who is called as a guru-"MAA". Their responses were, *"…only a mother can embrace her every child with her affection and love equally, whereas no one and not ever a father could perform so*." *"In our house, no one calls me Hijra, they call me as 'MOTHER'* (gurumaa Popy *Hijra/ Boro Mashi*, 2023). Also, a *shisso-meye* responded, *"She is not only a mother of Hijra, but also called as mother by whole community."*

In a society, where being third gender type is not acceptable, but a changed stereotype of *Hijra* is normal, *Hijra*-home takes that normalizing role. Home's role in normalising *Hijra* transformed its space into a highly political one. The home creates a socio-physical environment where a fictive family is defined. To the third gender, who are socially outcast, the spaces of the home create a belongingness, though fictive, in nature, yet works as a political instrument in their transformation. Home to these third genders is a fictive home, where the spaces construct and embody the fictivity.

As the paper shows, his fictive home is broadly an external economic construction, as the making of *Hijra* is necessary for the sustenance of the third-gender people. By unravelling the layers of space in *Hijra home*: the mental, physical and lived images all co-ordinate to make *Hijra's* fictive relationship work and gradually create an amnesia, where the third gender people forget who they really are or what they are capable of. *Hijra* homes, hence, serve as a spatio-political machine, which requires to be rethought in policy making (e.g. housing) for devising sustainable ways to construct a positive identity for the so-called '*Hijra'* population and aid through appropriate spatial-physical intervention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Names and identities of the interviewees have been protected by using imaginary names to maintain the integrity of the qualitative research. The authors of the paper are indebted to Tahmina Azad Munni for the discussion and her valuable feedback. They also acknowledge the incredible support of Labanya Mandal in the fieldwork of this research.

5. References

Alexander, C. 1977 A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction, California, Oxford University Press.
Aziz, A. and S. Azhar. 2019 *Social exclusion and official recognition of Hijra in Bangladesh*, Journal of Research on Women and Gender 9(1), 3-19.
Blunt, A. and R. Dowling. 2006, Setting up home: An introduction. In Home (key ideas in geography), 1-31. London: Routledge.

Boccagni, P. 2014 *What's in a (migrant) House? Changing Domestic Spaces, the Negotiation of Belonging and Homemaking in Ecuadorian Migration*, Housing, Theory and Society, 31, 277-293.
Cooper, J., Lewis, R. and Urquhart, C. 2004 *Using Participant or Non-Participant Observation to Explain Information Behaviour*, Information Research, 9, 9-4.
Divan, V., Cortez, C., Smelyanskaya, M. and J. Keatley. 2016 *Transgender social inclusion and equality: A pivotal path to development*, Journal of the International AIDS Society 19(Suppl 2): 20803.
Hakim, S. S. 2013 *Scarcity, Control and a 'Third World' Urban Form. Scarcity and Creativity in the Built Environment*, London: University of Westminster, Humanities in European Research Area.
Hinchy, J. 2019, *The long history of criminalising Hijras. Himal Southasian*. https://www.himalmag.com/. (accessed 16 February 2022).
Hossain, A. 2021, Beyond emasculation: Pleasure and power in the making of *Hijra* in Bangladesh, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Islam, A. 2016 *Right to education of the third gender of Bangladesh: An overview*. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 21(9), 29-34.
Islam, S. 2019 *A theoretical analysis of the legal status of transgender: Bangladesh perspective*, International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 3(3), 117-119.
Khan, S. I., Hussain, M. I., Parveen, S., Bhuiyan, M. I., Gourab, G., Sarker, G. F., Arafat, S. M. and J. Sikder. 2009 *Living on the extreme margin: Social exclusion of the transgender population (Hijra) in Bangladesh*, Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition 27 (4), 441-451.
Lefebvre, H. 1991 The Production of Space, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
Madison, D. S. 2011 Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance, California: Sage.
Masud, M. K. 1990 *The Obligation to Migrate: the Doctrine of Hijra in Islamic law*, Muslim travellers: pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination, 9, 29.
Safa, N. 2016 I*nclusion of excluded: Integrating need-based concerns of Hijra population in mainstream development*, Sociology and Anthropology 4(6), 450-458.
Sarker, B. K., and M. T. Pervin. 2020 *Socio-economic status of Hijra community: a study on Dhaka city*, International Journal of Science and Business, 4(1), 276-284.
Shuvo, S. H. 2018 *Life of Hijra in Bangladesh: Challenges to accept in mainstream*, International Journal of Social Sciences 5(3), 60-67.
Sifat, R. I. and F. H.Y. Shafi. 2020 *Exploring the nature of social exclusion of the Hijra people in Dhaka city*, Journal of Social Service 47(4), 579-589.
Snigdha, R. K. 2021, Beyond binaries: An ethnographic study of *Hijra* in Dhaka, Bangladesh. PhD Diss., Auckland University of Technology.
Stemler, S. 2001 *An Overview of Content Analysis, Practical Assessment*, Research & Evaluation, 7, 137-146
Stenqvist, T. 2015 *The Social Struggle of Being Hijra in Bangladesh- Cultural Aspiration between Inclusion and Illegitimacy,* Malmö: Malmö University.
Walker, L. 2002 *Home Making: An Architectural Perspective*, Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 27, 823-835.
Watkins, C. 2006, *Representations of space, spatial practices and spaces of representation: An application of Lefebvre's Spatial Triad*, Culture and Organization, 11(3), 209-220.
Young, I. M. 1997, House and home: feminist variations on a theme. In Intersecting voices: Dilemmas of gender, political philosophy, and policy, 134-164. Princeton: Princeton University Press.