



Legal Recognition versus Lived Reality of Transgender Communities: With Special Reference to Kolkata and Lucknow

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Abstract: This research explores the socio-economic background and quality-of-life issues among transgender individuals in Kolkata and Lucknow. Based on survey data gathered from 300 participants (150 from each city). To compare demographic, educational, and occupational profiles; income; housing and homelessness experiences; workplace satisfaction; and satisfaction with living conditions, we used statistical techniques such as the chi-square test, Mann-Whitney U test, Spearman's rank correlation, and binary logistic regression. The two samples selected from the cities have similar demographics (age, education, and income) but different occupation profiles. Housing and homelessness problems were more prevalent among people in Kolkata. Still, a considerable portion of respondents from Lucknow opted not to answer this question, which may indicate underreporting. Employment satisfaction did not vary between the two cities, but the response distribution differed. Living condition satisfaction differed only slightly between the two cities. Employment satisfaction and living condition satisfaction are not related. This implies that employment satisfaction and living condition satisfaction represent different aspects of quality of life. Logistic regression revealed that occupation and city both mattered in housing problems. People in informal occupations face the highest risk of these problems. The study highlights the continuing socio-economic inequalities experienced by transgender individuals and shows that employment security and housing remain important areas for policy attention.

Keywords: Transgender; Socio-Economic; Living Condition

I. INTRODUCTION

Transgender people in India are an important but complicated part of society, being at once respected and marginalized [9]. Even though transgender individuals have existed in Indian society for many years now, stigma and discrimination have been common among modern-day transgender individuals [26].

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These two elements together form the core theme of the research study, which is the social stigma and economic status of transgender people with reference to the cities of Kolkata and Lucknow in India [20]. Including such diverse urban communities in the research process will make it easier to understand the region's sociopolitical aspects and how they have affected the lives of transgender people living there [25][19]. It is traditionally different for Indian transgender people to serve in culture and rituals [17]. Ancient Indian scripts and epic stories recognise gender diversity through mythological characters who do not conform to a binary view of gender [4][10]. Even then, societal attitudes towards transgender people during the colonial and postcolonial periods have always made the transgender population outcasts or criminals in some instances [18][19]. The period of British colonialism brought along several pieces of legislation criminalising transgender identities and their traditional roles [19][25]. "The post-independence period in India maintained the colonial legal structure for decades, rendering the transgender community invisible within the legal and policy domain" [24]. However, over the past few decades, numerous legal developments have sought to correct these past wrongs. For example, the Supreme Court decision in National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India [15] in 2014 legally recognised the transgender population as the third gender, granting them rights to equality and dignity. In addition, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 further sought to prohibit any form of discrimination and promote welfare [8]. Despite all the above efforts and advancements, there are challenges when it comes to implementation because of the social stigma that persists in society and hinders the education, health, and employment of transgender persons [1][5][14].

This particular Research is driven by the necessity to gain deeper insights into the complex realities of transgender people and how factors like social stigma and economic context interact to impact their lives. The two cities chosen for the research have contrasting backgrounds, making it possible to investigate how different contexts influence the lives of members of the transgender community. Because Kolkata has a relatively progressive social and political climate and an active civil society, transgender people enjoy more support there than in Lucknow, whose background is more conservative and traditional because of its cultural heritage [1].

II. OBJECTIVES

The study has four major objectives.

- To study the difference between legal recognition and the everyday lived



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experience of transgender people in Kolkata and Lucknow.

- To study the awareness of transgender people related to the government policy/schemes.
- To explore the socio-economic status of transgender people in Kolkata and Lucknow.

III. HYPOTHESIS

H1: People from Kolkata and Lucknow face housing problems at different rates because of their gender identity.

H2: People in Kolkata and Lucknow are equally satisfied (or unsatisfied) with their jobs.

H3: People in Kolkata and Lucknow are equally satisfied with their living conditions (safety, comfort, basic needs).

H4: Even after considering someone's job and age, the city they live in still affects whether they face housing problems.

H5: People who are happy with their job are also happy with their living conditions.

IV. METHODOLOGY

To evaluate socio-economic background and quality of life, this research used a quantitative method. A sample size of 300 was chosen from both cities. Data were collected using an open-ended interview schedule covering age, education, occupation, monthly income, housing and homelessness challenges, employment satisfaction, and living-condition satisfaction.

The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistical tests. Pearson's chi-square test and Cramér's V were used to examine associations between categorical variables. The Mann-Whitney U test compared employment and living-condition satisfaction between the two cities, while Spearman's rank correlation examined the relationship between these two satisfaction measures. Binary logistic regression identified factors associated with housing and homelessness challenges. We set statistical significance at $p < .05$.

Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the study by [3], the Act, despite its 2019 amendments, addresses legal rights in isolation from practical implementation and structural support. This means that, while rights are legally recognised, insufficient mechanisms exist to ensure their effective exercise. Even with legal recognition, non-binary communities in India continue to face severe abuse and discrimination [13]. India's Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act highlights its failures despite recognising non-binary persons' constitutional rights and gender identity. This is mainly due to the lack of guidelines and support structures to ensure these rights are effectively realised in practice. As a result of this divide, there remains the issue of continued serious discrimination and abuse of transgender rights based on the real-life situations of 15 transgender people living in Kolkata. This research shows large differences between law and practice in matters of family, employment, education and health. To address these

problems, the paper suggests ensuring educational equality, training doctors for specific interactions with transgender patients, and increasing the number of people representing non-binary identities in negotiations [3]. While Indian laws and policies recognise transgender rights, their implementation excludes more and more people through the imposition of a narrow, medicalised, and bureaucratic definition of transgender identity. This demonstrates the hierarchies formed through the privileging of some transgender identities over others, namely the ones of working-class, Dalit, transmasculine and non-gender-conforming individuals. Conclusion: The findings of this study suggest that the resistance actions undertaken by transgender communities threaten the above-stated frameworks, highlighting the limitations of state-led inclusiveness [2]. Despite the legal recognition of their gender identity, transgender individuals in India still suffer from continuous discrimination, stigma, and social exclusion. This shows the major obstacles they face in accessing education, employment opportunities, health services, and identity documents necessary for economic independence and social inclusion. The poor enforcement of laws, along with a lack of social acceptance of transgender people, does not allow individuals to fully exercise their right to identify themselves with their chosen gender and live in dignity [12]. The legal changes made in India and its constitutional rulings (for example, decriminalisation of consensual same-sex relations and recognition of the right to privacy) are seen as steps taken by the country to promote the rights of the queer population. However, the laws mentioned above do not provide any legal protection or sustainability to different types of queer kinship that do not fit the heteronormative family structure. On the contrary, laws such as Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019 and the Draft Trafficking in Persons Bill 2021 entrench the surveillance and policing of non-normative families and criminalise queer relational networks outside of the traditional conjugal home. This study also claims that the current preoccupation with the legal recognition of same-sex marriage has diverted attention from the urgent need to protect existing queer family structures [21]. The gender identity of transgender people cannot be regarded as a moral fault or personal choice. Gender identity goes beyond simple dichotomies and is based on one's own experience. The main problem is the fact that society views transgender identity as an individual choice and immoral behaviour. Prejudices towards the transgender community are based on ignorance and social norms that make it impossible for them to stay outside the margins of society, and the need to recognise this and act according to legal, policy, and community standards that would contribute to the promotion of dignity, equality, and social justice for the transgender community [7]. Though the Indian Constitution's fundamental rights (Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 especially) can be interpreted in a way to protect sexuality and gender identity – as it happened in the cases of [15] v. Union of India (legal recognition of transgender identity and right to self-identification as a fundamental right) and Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (decriminalization of same-sex conduct) – there is still a gap between theory and



practice. It proves that legal recognition has improved the protection of gender minorities but still leaves them vulnerable regarding their civil rights (marriage, adoption, inheritance, employment, social inclusion) since the law focuses on particular identity categories, thus leaving other queer communities in the shadows. In general, the study shows that constitutional norms advance rights in principle but still leave room for improvement, with incomplete protection of statutory rights and a lack of implementation [6]. Constitutional norms of equality and non-discrimination, and protection of fundamental rights of transgender people recognised by the Supreme Court in 2014 as the legally protected third gender (fundamental rights under the Indian Constitution), are far from the real lives of third gender people, who still suffer from discrimination, marginalisation, and social exclusion. It shows that constitutional norms of equality and non-discrimination, and many rights and welfare protections, are still vague in practical application and do not provide real-life opportunities for third-gender people to have equal dignity, legal recognition, access to education and employment, and social inclusion. The study proves that only public awareness, law enforcement, and culture change can make such equality real [22]. Though India has already made many legislative changes (recognised transgender persons as a legally distinct group with constitutional protection and adopted the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019), the gap between legal rights and the real lives of transgender people is still enormous. It shows that discrimination, stigma, and various barriers (in education, employment, healthcare, social inclusion) still prevent transgender people from exercising their rights provided by the legislation. According to this research, mere legal acknowledgement is not enough without effective enforcement, social acceptance, and supportive structures to guarantee human rights in practice. While there is legal protection for the transsexual community in India, they are marginalised socially and economically. This proves the point that, due to heteronormative and stigmatised mindsets of people in the country, education, proper employment and other socio-economic opportunities are very scarce for them. Therefore, they have to lead a very tough life [23]. The transgender community in India faces various kinds of social, economic and legal issues in terms of their lives despite being more visible and recognised in India. They experience stigma, discrimination and exclusion when it comes to education, employment, health care facilities and other areas of rights in the country, which prevents them from being included in mainstream society. Their marginalisation forces them into informal occupations and thus causes poverty and social isolation for them. The study indicates that these problems require solutions through policy implementation, public awareness, and other measures [16]. According to "The Hijras of India: A Marginal Community with Paradoxical Sexual Identity", while being a part of Indian society since old times, due to their sexual identity that does not follow male-female binaries, Hijras experience severe sociocultural exclusion from daily life in India. Hijras lack legal recognition and suffer from unemployment, insufficient housing facilities, poor health care services, constant violence and discrimination that forces them to lead an insecure life as beggars, sex workers, or engage in some other occupations.

Their identities do not conform to strict male-female binaries; however, they remain marginalised due to a lack of social recognition of their rights and rights-based interventions, and they need recognition of their presence on the gender continuum to be protected [11]. While India has constitutionally recognised the right to privacy and autonomy, and gender self-determination for its citizens, children who were born intersex continue to suffer from unnecessary "normalising" genital surgeries that are performed without their consent and lead to serious long-term physical and psychological consequences. It proves that the current Indian legal and medical system does not recognise the existence of non-binary people and is based on gender binary stereotypes and stigma in relation to intersex babies, while disregarding their fundamental right to bodily autonomy. According to the paper, while the legal discourse on queers' rights has widened, it does not protect intersex children sufficiently. It suggests reforms grounded in ethics and international human rights standards.

VI. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

A. Data and Methods

This report analyses individual-level responses from 300 transgender respondents (150 in Kolkata, 150 in Lucknow), covering demographic and socio-economic characteristics (age, education, profession, monthly income), experience of housing or homelessness challenges attributable to gender identity, satisfaction with current employment status, and satisfaction with overall living conditions. Unlike the aggregate cross-tabulations reported in companion survey materials, this dataset permits respondent-level statistical testing, including multivariate modelling.

Associations between city and categorical variables were tested using Pearson's chi-square test of independence, with effect size reported as Cramér's V (small ≈ 0.10 , moderate ≈ 0.30 , large ≥ 0.50). Where an outcome was ordinal (employment satisfaction, living-condition satisfaction), a Mann-Whitney U test was additionally used to test for a shift in central tendency, since chi-square alone does not use the ordering of categories. Associations between two ordinal variables were tested using Spearman's rank correlation. A binary logistic regression was fitted to identify independent predictors of housing/homelessness challenges, controlling for city, profession, and age simultaneously. Significance was set at $p < .05$. One respondent had an invalid income code and was excluded from income-specific analyses; city labels were case-standardised (a research-team data-entry inconsistency, not a substantive finding).

B. Hypotheses and Findings

Before the technical results, this section states each hypothesis in plain language and gives a short, non-technical verdict. Section numbers below point to where the full statistical detail can be found.

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Hypothesis 1: Respondents From Kolkata and Lucknow Face Housing Problems at Different Rates Because Of Their Gender Identity

Verdict: True. Kolkata respondents reported housing problems much more often than Lucknow respondents (45 per cent v. 16 per cent), and this gap is too large to be chance. However, almost half of Lucknow respondents refused to answer this question, compared to only 1 in 10 in Kolkata — so the real gap may be smaller than it looks, since some people in Lucknow may be hiding a “yes” behind “prefer not to answer.”

Hypothesis 2: Respondents From Kolkata and Lucknow are Equally Satisfied with Their Jobs

Decision: Both true and not true. Overall, there is not much difference between people from the two cities, and they feel pretty similar – “neutral.” However, their responses differ dramatically: people from Lucknow unanimously responded “neutral,” whereas in Kolkata, people were divided between those who were “very happy” and those who were “very unhappy.” The overall mood is the same in both cities, but their variance differs.

Hypothesis 3: People in Kolkata and Lucknow are Equally Satisfied with their Living Conditions

Verdict: True for the most part, except for a minor variation. Both of the cities have quite a lot in common. The only notable variation is that some people from Lucknow answered “very satisfied,” whereas none from Kolkata did.

Hypothesis 4: The City They Live in Still Affects Whether They Face Housing Problems, Even After Accounting for Someone’s Job and Age

Verdict: Yes, it is true. When comparing two individuals with the same job and age, the individual based in Kolkata is 4 times more likely to report any housing problem than the individual based in Lucknow. Thus, the city matters more than the nature of the job. The nature of the job is even more important than the city.

Hypothesis 5: People who are Happy with Their Job are also Happy with their Living Conditions

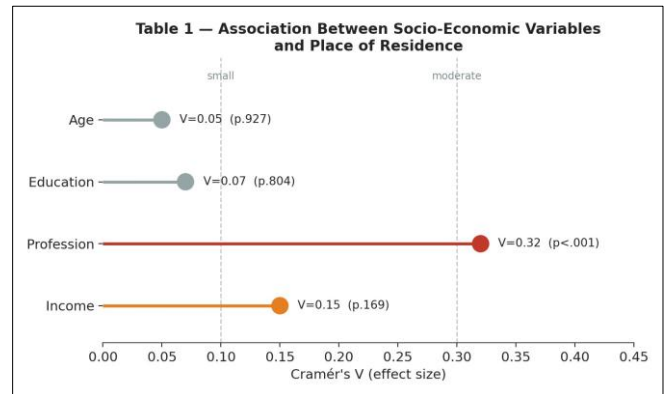
Verdict: False. There is essentially no connection between the two for the same person. Knowing someone is happy with their job tells you nothing about whether they are happy with their living conditions; these appear to be two separate experiences rather than one combined “quality of life.”

C. Comparability of the Two City Samples

Before testing outcome variables, the two city samples were checked for comparability on demographic characteristics. Age and education showed no significant association with city, indicating the two samples were demographically well matched on these dimensions. Occupational profile differed significantly and moderately by city; monthly income showed a non-significant, small association.

Table I: Association Between Socio-Economic Variables and Place of Residence

Variable	χ^2	df	p-value	Cramér's V	Interpretation
Age	0.88	4	0.927	0.05	No association
Education	1.63	4	0.804	0.07	No association
Profession	30.71	4	< .001	0.32	Moderate association
Income	6.43	4	0.169	0.15	No association



[Fig.1: Socio-Economic Variables and Place of Residence]

Because age and education are balanced across cities, differences observed on the outcome variables below are unlikely to reflect an unbalanced age or education profile between the two samples. Profession is not balanced, and is therefore controlled for in the multivariate model in Section 5.

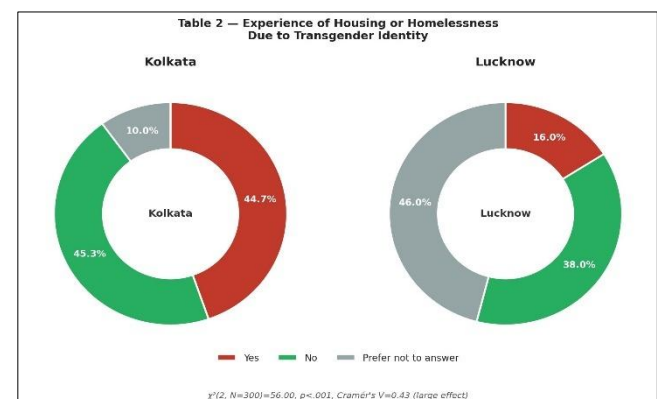
D. Housing and Homelessness Challenges

Respondents were asked whether they had encountered housing or homelessness challenges attributable to their transgender identity. The association with city was strong and highly significant.

Table II: Experience of Housing or Homelessness Due to Transgender Identity in Kolkata and Lucknow

Response	Kolkata (%)	Lucknow (%)
Yes	44.7	16
No	45.3	38
Prefer not to answer	10	46

Note. $\chi^2(2, N = 300) = 56.00, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = 0.43$, indicating a large effect size.



[Fig.2: Experience Homelessness Due to Transgender]

The pattern is not simply “more reported problems in Kolkata.” Kolkata respondents were nearly three times as likely as Lucknow respondents to report a housing challenge (44.7 per cent v. 16.0 per cent), but Lucknow respondents were more than four times as likely to decline to answer the question (46.0 per cent v. 10.0 per cent). Since non-response in itself is unevenly distributed across cities, the 16.0% figure for Lucknow should be considered as a floor and



not an established figure of prevalence – if a minor percentage of Lucknow’s “prefer not to answer” respondents are hiding their “yes,” then the actual difference in housing insecurity between Lucknow and other cities is much smaller than suggested by the numbers. This difference in non-response is itself a result; it suggests greater hesitation about issues concerning gender identity among Lucknow’s population.

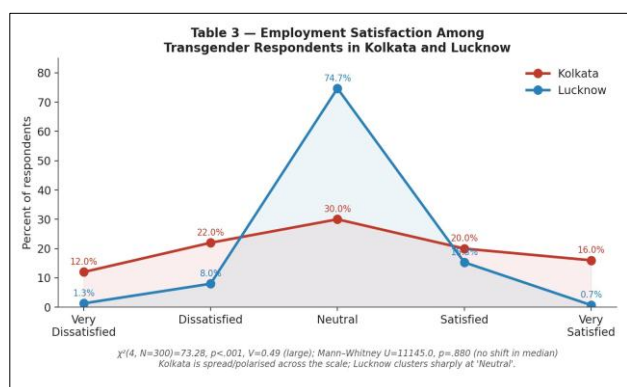
E. Employment and Living-Condition Satisfaction

i. Employment satisfaction: distribution shape, not just level

Table III: Level of Satisfaction with Present Living Conditions Among Transgender Respondents in Kolkata and Lucknow

City	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Kolkata	16	20	30	22	12
Lucknow	0.7	15.3	74.7	8	1.3

Note. $\chi^2(4, N = 300) = 73.28, p < .001$, Cramer’s $V = 0.49$, indicating a large effect size.



[Fig.3: Level of Satisfaction of Transgender Individuals with Present Living Conditions]

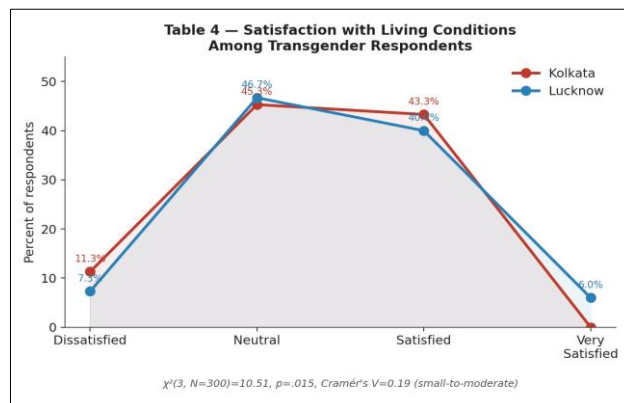
Nevertheless, a Mann-Whitney U test, which focuses on change in the central tendency rather than the form of distribution, did not reveal any statistically significant difference between the two cities ($U = 11145.0, p = .880$; median “Neutral” in both cities). These two conclusions do not contradict each other, as they address different questions. Lucknow respondents cluster predominantly around “Neutral” (74.7 per cent). In contrast, Kolkata respondents are spread across the scale, with some at both ends (16.0 per cent very satisfied and 12.0 per cent very dissatisfied). Overall satisfaction is statistically similar in both cities, but the distributions differ: polarised in the first city, more central in the second. This may reflect a more uniform job experience in the first city, or a more careful approach to answering, or an unwillingness to express an opinion; the survey tool cannot determine the exact reason.

ii. Living-Condition Satisfaction

Table IV: Satisfaction with Living Conditions Among Transgender Respondents in Kolkata and Lucknow

City	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Kolkata	0.00%	43.30%	45.30%	11.30%
Lucknow	6.00%	40.00%	46.70%	7.30%

$\chi^2(3, N = 300) = 10.51, p = .015$, Cramer’s $V = 0.19$ (small-to-moderate effect)



[Fig.4: Satisfaction Level of Living Condition]

A real but modest association, driven mainly by the “very satisfied” category, which no Kolkata respondent selected.

iii. Relationship between employment and living-condition satisfaction

If “quality of life” were a single underlying construct, respondents satisfied with their employment would generally also report satisfaction with their living conditions. A Spearman rank correlation between the two ordinal measures was effectively zero for the pooled sample ($\rho = 0.008, p = .885, N = 300$), and remained non-significant within each city separately (Kolkata: $\rho = 0.028, p = .731$; Lucknow: $\rho = -0.025, p = .762$). Employment satisfaction and living-condition satisfaction appear to be functioning as largely independent dimensions of experience in this sample rather than two indicators of one underlying “quality of life” factor — a caveat for any composite quality-of-life index built from these items.

F. Multivariate Predictors of Housing/Homelessness Challenges

Section 3 showed a strong bivariate association between city and housing challenges. Still, a bivariate test cannot rule out that this is really a profession or age effect that happens to be unevenly distributed across the two cities. A binary logistic regression was fitted with housing challenge (Yes = 1, No = 0) as the outcome and city, profession, and age as simultaneous predictors ($n = 182$; respondents who selected “prefer not to answer” were excluded from this binary outcome, as were the 34 students in the sample, none of whom reported a housing challenge — a complete-separation case for which no finite odds ratio exists, discussed further in Section 6).

However, controlling for profession and age, the “city effect” persists: respondents from Kolkata were three times more likely to have housing problems than Lucknow respondents in the same professions and age groups. Nevertheless, profession is the more important explanatory variable in the model, not city, because individuals in the informal and “Others” sectors are about 26 times more likely to have housing problems than government-sector employees. In comparison, those in private and self-employment have between

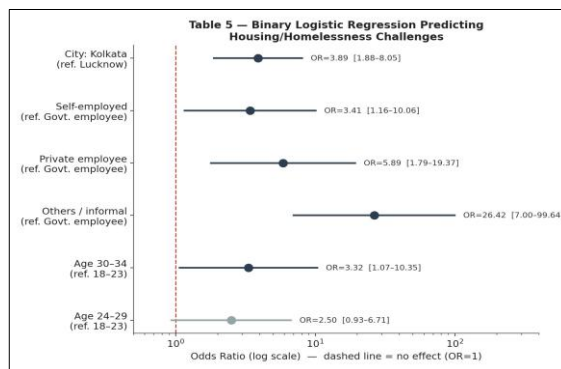
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3 and 6 times the likelihood relative to government employees.

Table V: Binary Logistic Regression Predicting Dissatisfaction with Living Conditions

Predictor (Reference Category)	Odds Ratio	95% CI	P-value
City: Kolkata (ref. Lucknow)	3.89	1.88–8.05	< .001
Profession: Self-employed (ref. Govt. employee)	3.41	1.16–10.06	0.026
Profession: Private employee (ref. Govt. employee)	5.89	1.79–19.37	0.004
Profession: Others / informal (ref. Govt. employee)	26.42	7.00–99.64	< .001
Age 30–34 (ref. 18–23)	3.32	1.07–10.35	0.038
Age 24–29 (ref. 18–23)	2.5	0.93–6.71	0.068

Model fit: McFadden pseudo- $R^2 = 0.19$, likelihood-ratio $p < .001$



[Fig.5: Housing and Homelessness Challenges]

VII. LIMITATION

Several limitations exist. The first one is related to the fact that the current data set (housing issues, employment satisfaction, and general living conditions) uses a different survey tool from the discrimination and policy awareness data set described in the companion material, and the two should not be combined or seen as coming from the same study population, even though both have 150 respondents from each city. The second limitation is that the logistic regression cannot use the 34 students due to the lack of housing issues, thus creating a completely separate category; it should not be interpreted as “no risks of housing issues among students,” as it is simply a data issue. The third limitation is that while ordinal questions about satisfaction (from very dissatisfied to very satisfied) are treated as ordered categories in chi-square and Mann-Whitney tests, they are not equally spaced; ordinal logistic regression can model satisfaction alongside other predictors. As with the companion data set, the fourth limitation is social-desirability and non-disclosure bias in self-reported answers about stigma-related issues (especially housing discrimination), as shown by the high percentage of “prefer not to answer” responses in the big city. Moreover, finally, sampling was not random (as seen in the companion data set), so the odds ratios and percentages apply only to the current sample.

VIII. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Income, education and age are statistically comparable across the two city samples; profession is not.

- Housing/homelessness challenges are significantly more commonly reported in Kolkata than Lucknow. Still, Lucknow shows a much larger non-disclosure gap, so the true city difference is likely narrower than the raw percentages imply.
- Satisfaction of employment does not fluctuate significantly in central tendency between cities, but differs sharply in distribution shape; Kolkata is polarised, Lucknow centrally clustered.
- Fulfilment of living conditions shows a small but real connection with city, concentrated in the “very satisfied” category.
- Employment satisfaction and living-condition satisfaction are statistically independent of one another within respondents, cautioning against combining them into a single quality-of-life index.
- In a multivariate model, city remains a significant, independent predictor of housing/homelessness challenges (OR = 3.89) even after controlling for profession and age. Still, occupational informality is the stronger driver (OR up to 26.4).

IX. CONCLUSION

This study examined the socio-economic conditions and quality of life of transgender individuals in Kolkata and Lucknow using survey data from 300 respondents. The findings show that while the two groups are similar in terms of age, education, and income, they differ in occupation and some important life experiences.

Despite being a matter of grave concern, housing remains one of the key issues faced by the participants in this study from Kolkata. At the same time, the significant number of people from Lucknow who chose not to respond to the housing question implies that the problem at hand is graver than what was reported.

The study also found that employment satisfaction and living-condition satisfaction are different aspects of quality of life. Although overall employment satisfaction was similar in both cities, the response patterns differed. Satisfaction with living conditions differed only slightly between the two cities.

The logistic regression analysis showed that occupation is the strongest predictor of housing challenges. Respondents working in informal or less secure occupations were much more likely to experience housing problems than government employees. Even after considering occupation and age, respondents from Kolkata remained more likely to report housing challenges than those from Lucknow.

In summary, the study results indicate that the provision of better employment opportunities, minimisation of housing discrimination and provision of social welfare facilities are some ways that can be adopted to improve the lives of transgender people. Future research should consider more cities, a larger sample size, and other variables such as mental health, family support, and government welfare programs.



DECLARATION STATEMENT

As the article's author, I must verify the accuracy of the following information after aggregating input from all authors.

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- **Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate:** The data provided in this article are exempt from the requirement for ethical approval or participant consent.
- **Data Access Statement and Material Availability:** The article's resources are not publicly accessible. Credential required for data access and material availability statement. Facilitate access to the data when it is not publicly accessible. Contact the Corresponding Author
- **Author's Contributions:** The authorship of this article is contributed equally to all participating individuals.

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