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**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Concept of Time and its Allocation to Various Activities among Hijras: How Some Activities are Performed on Specific Time**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article investigates the concept of time and its allocation to various activities among hijra community in Pakistan. This research looks at how hijras perform their activities and events on some specific times to get the desired benefit from those activities. Explanatory research has been conducted to answer the questions in this study. In present research framework analysis tool under the thematic analysis approach of data has been used. This study involves 40 respondents, including 12 gurus, 24 chellas, and 4 chief gurus from the hijra community who are selected through purposive sampling. Data is collected from the respondents through unstructured and semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The study reveals that gurus effectively plan actions, activities and choices of their follower hijras. According to the findings of this study hijras arrange their activities according to availability of their fellows, availability of money, by following religious festivals and also by following the instructions of *gurus*.

**Keywords:** Chella, Guru, Time, Waqat , Hijras

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**Introduction**

Time is an important thing in the life of every human being. It is necessary to give importance and value to time because everything follows time. Balkenhol (2012) argues that by time we represent and understand ourselves. Time provides the way through which we conceptualizes our start and possible characteristics with relation to others. Time depends on historical moment and cultural context. Anthropologists understand time by its technologies, seasonal rituals, clocks and calendars. Time runs continuously and never stops. The running of time cannot be stopped but can be measured through various sources as by clock and calendars. People allocate time to their festivals and other activities through these clocks and calendars (Balkenhol, 2012). According to Gingrich et al. (2003) timekeeping records are not just limited to formal and institutional documents but also to individual, local and informal sources of time. The measurement and allocation of time to various activities vary from culture to culture. Time can be measured through historical events such as a person measure time by World War II that he was twenty years old when war started. Time is an important element for measurement, experience and regulation of events (Gingrich et al., 2003). Ensign (1948) explains that first clock with pinion and a wheel to measure the time was made in 1370 by a Hollander Henry de Vick. Current field of watches and other time measuring devices were developed several years ago. First clock was a heavy machine and driven by the weight of round about five hundred pounds. Before the invention of modern time measuring devices such as clock, people measured time by nature as with the help of sun, moon and stars. They could understand time by shadows of different objects. According to Vinciguerra (2006) time is counting of continuous moments. Concept of time is central in human thoughts. Different concepts of time have been developed in the field of literature, science and philosophy. Clock and calendars are

basic tools for the measurement of time. In different cultures people measure and understand time in different ways.

According to Abban (2011) time is a thing which cannot be stored and there is no stock of time. All the activities like production and consumption take time which shows the importance of time. Opportunities and constraints of time are same for each person. Time is allocated to various festivals and activities through the clocks and calendars. People follow the calendar which is given by their culture and also by ancestors. Kennedy et al. (1965) state that year is a length of time which sun takes to pass through the twelve signs of zodiac. A year is divided in twelve parts, and these parts are almost equal and called months. A solar day is one three hundred and sixteenth of a year. A month is duration taken by moon to complete its circle. Through the calendar of a year happening of future events and activities are defined. Year, month, week, days and hours are the parts of time. Through these parts time can be measured, understood and used in daily life. Time is categorised into past, present and future in order to understand it. Mughal (2014) argues that in Jhokwala Village, Lodhran District, Pakistan shows that people performed their ceremonies like marriages in the months of *Chaitr* and *Wisakh* (months of Bikrami calendar). These months were selected because of moderate weather conditions, availability of money after the harvesting of wheat crop and also because in *Chaitr* and *Wisakh* farmers were not busy in agricultural activities.

By keeping in mind the above statements this study investigates the concept of time among *hijra* community. This study generates debate that how time is allocated to different activities and also how those activities are performed on specific time. There is some work on the social lives of *hijras* but a little on the concept time. There exists a lack of scholastic material produced on time and its allocation among *hijra* community. This study has researched on this under-researched domain and also has added some new knowledge about it.

There are five sections of this study. First section consists of introduction. In section second there is brief review of literature and theoretical framework. Third section consists of data sources and methodology. Section fourth is about results and discussion and section five is about conclusion.

### Literature Review

According to Mughal (2008) time is directly linked with social order of a culture and it reflects that how time is maintained by that culture. Time allocated to an activity can be measured by the happening of another activity. Activities which are followed for the allocation of time have some historic importance from social, economic and religious point of view. In a Pakistani village Sarwar Ali events and activities are recalled and celebrated by following other events (Mughal, 2008). Lambek (1990) argues that in Mayotte (near western Indian Ocean) *Shunggue* (a festival) was a basic cultural manifestation and life of an adult was linked with it. In *Shunggue* people presented feast to one another in their groups. Those feasts did not depend on time and calendar system but depend on events in personal domain (death and marriage etc.). Most of the time events linked with *Shunggue* were celebrated after the harvesting of crop because of availability of money and people at that time. Munn (1990) says that in Papua New Guinea witchcraft is important because happening of future activities is linked with witches. Mostly after some personal conflict people linked their future happening (death and sickness) with witches. They believed that the person with whom they have conflict

attacked them by witch. According to Kemper (1980) a person has clear link with both time and space.

Damon (1982) explains that people allocate time to their activities by following tides. They use celestial phenomenon for organisation of their production. They follow tides and also tides determine that when they had to do the activities of fishing and gardening. Most of the activities which are related to sea are performed by followings tides. Those activities which are related with sea are also source for the performance of other activities in routine life. Mughal (2014) says that time is an important factor of socio-economic and political relationships. It is also important factor for human relationships. The meaning and measuring methods of time change from culture to culture. In a Pakistani village Jhokwala people celebrate their events and activities after the harvesting season when farmers are available, money come from harvesting, there are moderate weather conditions and when religious values allow (Mughal, 2014).

Freed and Freed (1964) argue that in India people follow both lunar and solar calendar. Muslim festival and ceremonies are followed by lunar calendar because Muslim calendar is lunar. Indian festival and ceremonies are followed by solar calendar because Indian calendar is solar. It shows that time allocation methods change with the change in cultural values as Muslims and Non-Muslims in India follow lunar and solar calendar respectively. Balkanhol et al. (2010) explain that time is important part of social settings. With the help of time we present and understand ourselves in world. Anthropologists explain that time itself is not timeless and it is dependent on cultural contexts. In Anthropology time is reckoned by material means such as seasonal events, calendar and clocks (Balkanhol et al., 2010).

Bergmann (1992) argues that time measuring is a process in which a particular behaviour is linked with some event which repeats regularly and those events are called reference points. Events are reference points for the happening of other events. Every event which repeated regularly and have some importance could be used as reference point. In different societies these reference points are different. Measurement of time depends on socio-economic, political, religious values and also on the nature of time. According to Munn (1992) time reckoning is process of measuring the length of time span, dating activities and coordinating events. Time is not static; it is in the condition of motion. Time is the succession of events. Anthropologists also explain time reckoning means to tell time by looking at some activity or event (Munn, 1992). Time is measured through some reference points such as happening of an event during World War II. According to Johnson et al. (2004) time is a set of numbers which we use to estimate our days. Time is related with change and motion of objects around us. Every object start, survives and ends in time. Time is not only for human beings but also for other things as stars and universe. Every moment time flows and never stops. Time changes continuously as present changes to past and past changes to future. Motion and change of things are linked with time. Change is a process in which something leaves its present condition and attains another one. This process of leaving previous and attaining new condition also takes time which is called duration (Johnson et al., 2004).

In daily routine people first get up then perform their routine activities during the day and finally sleep in night. These activities also form sequence like landmarks on a journey. Same thing is for change in season, year and months. In this way we can understand the concept of time by using the concepts of sequence, succession and duration that how long something lasts in relation to other things. Things are arranged in sequence for the understanding and allocation of time. Change of season, year and

month follows sequence and specific time as it is specified that when season of winter and summer would start (Hallpike, 1976).

According to Senft (1996) Trobrianders (people of Trobriand Island) celebrate harvest festivals and determine their time for next activities from those festivals. The term *milamala* refers to the period of year in which Trobriand Islanders celebrate their festival. Milamala is time of ceremonies, rituals and festivals celebrations. Time of rituals and ceremonies lasts for three months. Trobrianders visited their villages during harvest festivals and enjoyed feasts. People arrange in advance for these celebrations and during these celebrations meal is presented to guests and other relatives. Harvesting seasons are reference points for the happening of future activities among Trobrianders. According to Bowering (1997) in Islam God creates and determines the future of everything. He also determines time. Before the advent of Islam in Arabs time was characterised by fatalism *dahr* (a doctrine that everything which happen is pre-planned). With the advent of Islam Quran rejects the concept of fatalism *dahr*. Islam explains time in the perspective of monotheism which promises for paradise and threatens from punishment. *Kun-fa-ya* (be) is God's personal command. In Islam God is responsible for each happening and nothing happens without His permission. Islamic time is based on Quran and Hadith. There is Islamic calendar and religious festivals are celebrated according to that calendar. Parsad (1988) explains that in Pali (the language of Buddhism) Kathavatthu (a Pali book) there is description of the concept of time and its three components present, past and future. Past, present and future are components of time and also specify the time of any happening. Buddhagosha (a Pali book) explains that time is just a concept which is derived from phenomenal events which means that it does not exist by its own nature. Milindapanha another text of the Pali explains that time is not absolute reality. It changes with the nature of happening and culture in which thing is happening.

Gingrich (1994) explains anthropological notion of time that ritual has social time that connects it with duration. Duration is a movement towards events and also the period between events. It is time period which an activity requires for completion. People of Munebbih (a tribe of mountain peasants in north-western Yemen) follow Muslim calendar, tribal genealogy, social rites and star calendars (Gingrich, 1994). Kumar (1983) supports this argument that moment is the smallest and important unit of time. Moment is explained in a way that it is a period required for an atom to leave its earlier position and to attain other one. Two moments cannot exist together because their simultaneous existence is impossible. Present, past and future are further categories of time. Through past, present and future we can understand the nature of time. Past is time which has passed, present is currently available and future has not come yet (Kumar, 1983)

### **Conceptual framework**

An overview of the existing literature shows that there are many factors which may be responsible for the allocation of time to activities. I am borrowing certain arguments and concepts from literature for my work and I would use these arguments and concepts in my work. The concept of allocation of time to activities and events by following weather condition, availability of money and also availability of people is borrowed from Mughal (2014). According to Mughal (2014) people allocate time to their events, activities and festivals by keeping in mind weather conditions, availability of money and also the availability of people. People perform their activities by following economic conditions as they perform at the time when money is available. In the same

way activities are performed when people are free. In rural areas activities are performed after harvesting of crops when people are free to participate and also money is available. Activities are also performed when weather conditions are moderate. Events are performed by following religion as Muslims perform their activities in the months which are allowed in Islam.

The concept of allocation of time to an event or activity by following natural calendars is borrowed from Burman (1981). According to Burman (1981) people perform their activities by following natural calendars as by following the position of sun and moon, crying of birds and also through night breeze. Mostly daily routine activities are performed by following these natural calendars. The concept of reference point (performance of an activity by following the happening of other events and activities) is borrowed from Bergman (1992). According to Bergman (1992) people perform their activities by following the happening of other activities which are called reference points. Mostly old age people link happening of an activity with historical events. When people are asked about their age then they replied that they were fifteen years old when World War II ended or when flood or earthquake hit the society. Some other activities are also used as reference points as someone said that he was twenty years old when Pakistan got independence. Time is allocated to various activities by following some reference points, religious and economic factors. In this regard concepts which are borrowed from above mentioned scholars were helpful to investigate that what were those reference points and other factors in *hijra* community through which they arranged their routine activities in the content of this study.

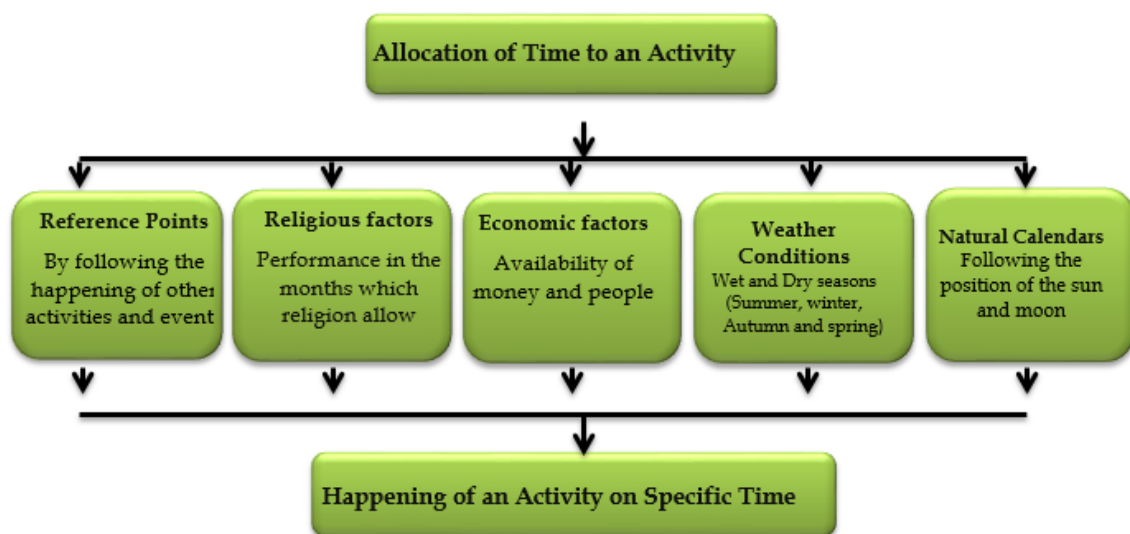


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

## Material and Methods

Present study is conducted among *hijra* community in Islamabad the capital of Pakistan. This study is qualitative in nature and explanatory research design is used. Explanatory research design is used for the explanation of things and it deals with why type of questions. In this study explanatory research design is used because focus of the present study is to explain the concept of time among *hijra* community. A sample of 40 respondents (12 *gurus*, 24 *chellas* and 4 chief *gurus*) is selected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Primary data is collected by targeting *gurus*, *chellas* and chief *gurus* in *hijra* community and chief *gurus* are key informants in this research.

Data is collected through unstructured and semi-structured interviews and participant observation methods. In this study data is analyzed through thematic analysis approach. Framework analysis tool is used in thematic analysis approach. Transcription, familiarization with data, indexing and coding and identification of themes are the steps undertaken for framework analysis.

## Results and Discussion

Period which is spent with someone is time such as if a person has conversation with other person then it is time. Hijras link time with moment and duration during which something (an activity) happens. Hijras believe that time is like a puff which passes very quickly and never waits for something (for some person or some material thing). Hijra use term *waqat* for the understanding of time. They define their time through clocks and watches. Clock is a tool through which time is allocated to some activity. When someone discuss about time then clock directly comes in mind. Time is measured through clock as a person says to get up at 11 a.m. Hijras mostly use clock, day and nights to measure their time. They get up at 9 a.m and then go for alms at 11 a.m. after finishing the work at home. Every day and night has 24 hours and one has 12 hours either day or night. Hijras allocate time to activities with the help of clocks and watches.

Time is both good (time when earning is high and money is available) and bad (time when earning is low and no money is available) for *hijras*. During bad times they have compulsions and responsibilities. Good time is time that brings good luck to *hijras* and during which everything happens in a good and right way. During this time there is high earning and person gets respect from others. While on other hand there is bad time and earning goes low during bad time. Time of *hijra* community mostly remains bad because they do not have earning sources due to which they spend their whole time in earning. In this way there is no leisure time in the lives of *hijras*. During good times *hijras* are happy and bad time is associated with sadness. Hijra community mostly links their good and bad time with economic wellbeing. When *hijras* are young then their time is good because they can earn through functions and also through other ways (prostitution and alms collection). While their old age time is bad time during which they have no source of earning and also are unable to earn. For a moment time is good while other moment it can becomes bad. It never remains same and changes quickly. Both good and bad time comes on every *hijra*. It is possible that a person who is rich today which is his/her good time would be poor with bad time tomorrow. Time has much more importance throughout the life of human beings.

## Specification of the Time of Activities

In specification of the time of activities it is decided that when an activity would be performed and also which time would be suitable for it. Hijras believe that it is not the sign of goodness if they knock the door of anyone after *maghreb* prayer. They prefer to return back home till evening and then start their work at home like cooking. They believe that evening is the time of doing work at home. It shows that *hijras* allocate time to their activities in a way that they finish their activities before evening. Hijras cannot get married due to which they celebrate their birthday parties. These birthday parties are the source of celebration for *hijras*. They also perform some other functions in their community for celebration such as they celebrate a function in which *chellas* give gold ring to their *gurus*. Hijras keep in mind that the gap between two parties of *chellas* under one *guru* should be minimum 30 days. The logic behind this gap is that during these

days people finished their work and also earn money to buy things for function and to pay money to the person who celebrates party. In this way time is allocated to next party by keeping in mind the gap of at least 30 days.

Hijras believe that few things have special order which cannot be disturbed as prayers have specific time which cannot be disturbed. These social orders are set by society and cannot be disturbed such as *fajar* prayer has specific time and it cannot be offered in evening or after rising of the sun. In this way *hijras* follow already set social order for the allocation of time to those activities which have specified by society and their time cannot be disturbed. After getting up they prefer to offer prayer if time is left for prayer otherwise they perform their activities like other human beings (as other male and female perform their activities in routine life). After getting up they offer prayer then clean their house. Then prepare their meal and take bath, finally after eating their breakfast they go out for work. Hijras do not perform those activities which disturb social order (they do not sleep during the day without any special reason because day time is not sleeping time). In this way *hijras* perform and arrange their activities like other human beings by following already set social order.

Religion is much more important for *hijras* than any other thing. Hijras specify the time of their functions and parties by keeping in mind the religious celebrations. They do not celebrate their functions in the months of religious celebrations. They give respect to holy months of Islamic calendar (Muharram, Ramzan and Rabi-ul-awal). They do not celebrate their functions (parties) in Muharram and Ramzan because Muharram and Ramzan is the time of religious celebrations. Hijras just perform religious activities in these months. They allocate time to their celebrations (birthday and ring giving parties) in a way that either they celebrate before these months or after the passing of these months. They do not go outside to perform in functions in Muharram because it is month of mourning in the history of Islam. In this month they leave their routine life activities and just pray to Almighty Allah and recite the Holy Quran. Like other Muslims, *hijras* also fast and offer prayers in the month of Ramzan. They do not involve in prostitution in this month. In this month they also quit alms collection and other activities of their routine life and just perform religious activities (fasting, prayers and recitation of Holy Quran). Mostly *hijras* do not go outside on Friday. On this day from 12 to 3 p.m. they live at home and offer *Juma* prayer after getting ready for it. God is responsible and determines the happening of everything in Islam (Bowering, 1997). Muslims link their time and happening with Allah. Hijras also link their activities and happenings with God. Even something bad or good happen they link it with Allah that it is determined for him by Allah and also is best for him. Like other Muslims, *hijras* quit their all activities and pray to Allah at the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Rajab. They offer prayer and recite Holy Quran at this night for the sake of Almighty Allah blessings. It is believed that on night of 15<sup>th</sup> of Rajab, Allah writes future of every person for next year, so people pray for their better next year. It is the reason that *hijras* leave their activities (alms collection, prostitution and dance performance) and pray to Allah at this night.

In this section it is explained that how *hijras* specify the time of their activities. It is also need to explain that who is responsible for the allocation of time to activities and also for the arrangement of activities in *hijra* community. The things or persons who are responsible for the arrangement and allocation of time to activities in *hijra* community have been explained in the following text.

### **Arrangement of Activities**

Activities are arranged in *hijra* communities because many things cannot be performed at the same time. When an activity is arranged then there is a chance that it would be performed timely because time slot is allocated to it. On other hand if an activity is not arranged then there are more chances of its delay because the time for its occurrence is not specified. Due to these reasons arrangement of activities is necessary for *hijras*. Gurus are responsible for the arrangement of event and activities in *hijra* community. Order of a person or leader can also identify the happening of something. It depends on the importance of that person that how much importance and respect is given to that person with whom the happening of an activity is linked. If that person is respected and given much importance then happenings are directly linked with the order of that person. Hijra follow the order of *guru* to perform their activities.

Guru is the person under whose leadership *hijras* live. Guru is given much more importance and respect in *hijra* community. Instructions of *gurus* are followed strictly because *hijras* respect them like parents. Hijras follow the order of *guru* for allocation of time and performance of activities of their routine life. They leave all those activities which are forbidden by *guru*. In the same way they perform all those activities which are ordered by *guru* even they are not happy and willing for those activities. Hijras believe that anything which *guru* order is best for them. Guru arranges birthday parties of *chellas*. Guru arranges the parties in a way that every *chella* could celebrate party after specific time period as after every six month or a year. Hijras discuss these parties and all other matters of their life with *gurus*. Even prostitution, dance performing and alms collection are discussed with *guru*. All the activities either personal or private are discussed with *guru*. If an activity which is arranged by *guru* results in loss then *guru* is not blamed for that loss. It shows that *guru* is respectable and responsible for the arrangement of *hijras* activities. Arranged event and activities are also canceled and postponed on the instruction of *guru*. Hijras delay their activities in case of illness, death, accident and any other mishap like injury with *guru*, relatives and other fellows.

### **Performance of Activities on Specific Time**

After arranging and prioritizing different activities of routine life next step is to follow the arrangement and perform those activities on their specific time. When things (activities of routine life) are just arranged but not performed on specific time then there is no benefit of arrangement. If activities are not performed on specific time then they lose their importance. If first activity is performed on specific time then latter activities would not get late because first activity is not delayed. When things are arranged and an activity is left unfinished due to some reasons, then that activity is left unfinished and next is performed on its specific time. If the performance of other activities is delayed due to one activity which is left unfinished then whole arrangement get disturbed. It is the reason due to which unfinished activity is postponed and performed latter in *hijra* community. Things which are performed with in time resulted in more benefit than the things which are performed after passing their specified time. Hijras believe that it is the responsibility of human beings to perform things on time. If *hijras* do not go on given time in functions (their parties) then they are scolded by *gurus* and people who are present there. Before sleeping at night *hijras* kept in mind the arrangement of activities. Because of the arrangements of activities they get up early in the morning and after offering prayers things are performed according to their arrangement. When a person cannot perform activities on time then he/she gets lazy and become hopeless due to suspension of arranged things.



If activities are delayed then it results in the insult of *guru* before other *gurus*. When activities are arranged but not performed on their specific and allocated time then *hijras* feel insulted and *gurus* also get angry with them. A *chella* who delays any activity such as party is punished with fine by *guru*. So *hijras* perform their activities on time because of societal pressure. Hijras perform their activities on specific time because it is necessary for survival and those things which are not performed on specific time left unfinished. Performance of activities and events of routine life on specific time is necessary for proper survival in society. Hijras perform their activities on specific time for their own benefit. If things are not performed on their specific time then *hijras* mentally get upset and cannot decide that which activity should be performed first. If activities are not performed on specific time then a person cannot decide that what to do and when to do. In this way performance of activities on their specific time is necessary for survival in *hijra* community. If arranged activities are not performed on specified time in *hijra* community then those activities left unfinished or incomplete. When arranged activities remain unfinished or incomplete then *hijras* get mentally disturbed. Importance of unfinished or incomplete activity makes them upset. When all the activities which are arranged are performed according to proper arrangement then *hijras* get relaxed. In this way it is necessary to perform arranged things on their specific and allocated time for *hijras* otherwise things left unfinished.

### Discussion

Some activities or things happen in every society because people perform things for their survival. In some of the societies happening of some other things are followed as reference points for the performance of an activity. Time is measured and allocated through some reference points as time of some activity or happening is remembered with the help of World War II (Munn, 1992). It is reminded that activity was happened three years after the start of war or when flood hit the society. These reference points can be religious, historic, economic or any of activity which repeated on regular basis or has some historic reference and importance. In religious activities it can be the celebration of some religious festivals such as Eid among Muslims is used as reference points.

### Conclusion

In Pakistan there is no importance and opportunity for *hijras*. They are ill-treated on both societal and governmental level. People are not willing to trust them. They leave their homes and live in *hijra* community with their other fellows. This study confirms to the existing scholarship which asserts that *hijras* are exploited and not given opportunities. Due to lack of opportunities they are wasting their time. They are unable to use their time in positive way (a way which is helpful and suitable for society and *hijras* as well). Hijras just use their time in performing in function and prostitution. They give importance to time and allocate time to their activities in advance. After the allocation of time to some happening they also try their best to perform that activity on specific time. They perform activities on specific allocated time to get desired benefit of those activities. Hijras specify the time of activities by keeping in mind socio-economic and religious values. They specify the time of their activities by keeping in mind the availability of people and money and following already set social order. *Guru* is respectable in *hijra* community. By following the instruction of *guru* future happenings are arranged and time is allocated to those activities in *hijra* community.

### **Recommendations**

Hijras are living marginalised lives in Pakistan. Their lives and time are not given importance because they are not considered common people. It is required to give importance to their time and also they should be given opportunities. There is need to change our attitude toward hijras so that they can use their potential for the well beings of society. Hijras should be given opportunities like other members of society so that they can use their time in productive activities. It is the responsibility of government to take some active steps for the provision of opportunities to *hijras*.

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