



The study explores the identity and activism of a transgender individual in their memories

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ABSTRACT

This abstract, which focuses on transgender identity and activism, summarises important ideas and themes from Revathi's memoirs. Revathi's autobiographical account provides a potent prism through which to see the struggles and achievements of transgender people in India. India, memoirs, activism, empowerment, and transgender identity are the five keywords that best describe this investigation. Revathi's memoirs provide a moving story of her experiences navigating society as a transgender woman in a place where prejudice and discrimination based on gender identity are commonplace. An active transgender rights movement has emerged in India, as evidenced by Revathi's experiences and interactions with other transgender people. In the end, Revathi's memoirs are a source of strength and encouragement for transgender people, as well as an example of their tenacity.

KEY WORDS: Transgender Identity, Memoirs, Empowerment

1. INTRODUCTION

With the advent of Westernisation and Globalisation, people's lifestyles have altered globally. Another liberal perspective has placed additional value on culture and customs. We are surrounded by young people who acquire tattoos, change their hair colour, live with someone else, and adhere to strict diet regimens. We see people wearing and styling differently to look like their favourite celebrities. People change their names, careers, religious beliefs, affiliations with certain ideological groups, and, shockingly, their nationalities. We perceive them, but we also come to some sort of understanding with them. In addition to the previously mentioned, a large number of guys in India dress as ladies and approach women for money. We occasionally also hear these men screaming and fighting in supermarkets. Even if they are only given



change, a group of people should be seen yelling, shoving, and celebrating at traffic lights in an attempt to obtain more money, especially in India. They despise those who withhold money from them and reward those who donate. Who are these individuals? Do we think of them as individuals? In a society where they are rejected, how would they make a living wage? For what reason could we ever recognise them for who they really are? These transsexual ladies, known as hijras, are dressed in traditional Indian saris. Many offer them money essentially in exchange for their refusal to interact with hijras and their efforts to avoid being approached or despised by them; they acknowledge that the hijras' touch may contaminate and that their accusations may prove fruitful. It is also possible to locate these individuals on trains. Many people associate transgender persons with being seen as having sex and with aggressive roadside soliciting. In any event, not much thought is given to their boring lives. Do we hate them because we're 'transphobic' or because we can't accept a group of people who identify as "orientation deviant[s]"? Does writing allow non-conforming individuals in the local region to speak up? This essay will examine the problems faced by the transgender population, who are among the most disadvantaged groups. This thesis examines three autobiographies and a memoir written by TG males from diverse cultural, historical, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It delves into their challenges, inner turmoil, mental anguish, and physical suffering. Due to their societal rejection of the conventional gender binary, sex work, and begging (which they do in India in order to survive), transgender persons face significant social stigma. We will look closely at the transgender people's attempts to make their presence known in the "host society" by assessing their circumstances in their own homes, places of employment, and educational settings. Above all, it demonstrates their resilience in the face of discrimination from a society. Since little is currently known about their lives, it is intended that this study would raise readers' awareness and develop their empathy, which could eventually lead to TGs' acceptance and the creation of a more inclusive society. Geetha (2007) This introduction is essential to giving readers a thorough grasp of the Hijra community in India and their complex relationships within the larger queer political milieu. Readers are better able to understand the significance of the Hijra community and their contributions to the richly varied fabric of India's social fabric by providing this historical backdrop. The researcher also looks into the Hijras' legal standing, especially as it relates to rights and gender recognition. The chapter invites readers to engage with the complexities and subtleties of the Hijra



community's suffering by examining these hurdles and roadblocks and setting the tone for the conversations that follow in the paper Reddy (2005). A thorough and perceptive examination of the nuanced ways in which Hijras traverse and negotiate their identities within the region's diverse sociocultural milieu may be found in Dr. Reddy's research on Hijra identity in South India. As a distinct gender minority group in South Asia, hijras encounter particular difficulties in their search for social acceptability and self-identity. Through an exploration of the many facets of their life, Reddy's work illuminates the intricate network of historical, socioeconomic, and cultural influences that mould their experiences TejaswiniNiranjana. (2007). The paper under review provides an important viewpoint on the dynamics of gender identity and activism in India, even though it is not specifically focused on transgender identity. It emphasises how important translation and post-colonialism are to understanding the intricate cultural settings in which transgender identity develops across the nation. In India, there are several obstacles that transgender people must overcome, such as prejudice, societal stigma, and lack of legal recognition. Understanding the subtleties of these battles requires a deeper dive into the larger post-colonial and translational frameworks that shape the terrain of activism and identity. Suneetha(2008)The first chapter of Geetha and Suneetha's book "Playing with Fire" is an essential component in giving readers a comprehensive and perceptive grasp of the intricate realm of hijra identification in India. The writers emphasise the importance of hijra identity in Indian society by deftly placing it within the broader context of queer politics. This deliberate placement not only provides a thorough background but also makes it easier for the reader to understand the complex interrelationships between the hijra community and the larger LGBTQ+ movements in the nation. By doing this, the writers lay the groundwork for a deeper investigation of this fascinating topic that takes place throughout the book. ParthoChakravarty (2018) The article by Chakravarty explores the complex fabric of queer activism in India, illuminating its changing character and the numerous changes it has experienced recently. Revathi (2014) Readers may delve deeply into Revathi's life as a Hijra in India through her book, which is both poignant and intimate. The book offers a unique and frank look into the complexity of transgender identity, a topic frequently veiled in discrimination and misunderstanding from society. Revathi recounts the setbacks, victories, and internal challenges that have shaped her life as a transgender person via her personal story. Her narrative speaks to transgender people and can open the eyes of others who are unaware of the



problems that the transgender community faces. Revathi's book contributes to the development of a society that is more understanding and supportive of everyone's gender identification through her touching and personal story. Rahul (2015) An important addition to the current conversation in India about gay activism is Rao's work. It explores the ethical issues that underlay the fight for rights and recognition, going beyond merely chronicling the history of the LGBTQ+ movement in the nation. Rao's work provides a thorough and perceptive study of the difficulties and triumphs faced by the LGBTQ+ movement by looking at the ethical aspects of gay activism. DenizKandiyoti. (2016) The paper by Kandiyoti offers a fascinating examination of the complex intersections between activism, religion, and gender in the particular setting of India. The study explores the lives of transgender people, illuminating the complex obstacles they face in a culture firmly rooted in customs and religious convictions. This study is especially important because it sheds light on the intricate network of variables that influence transgender people's experiences in India and provides a more comprehensive knowledge of the range of challenges they face. ShikhaJha (2015) Transgender studies in South Asia have benefited greatly from ShikhaJha's comparative examination of Hijra identity, legal systems, and criminalization in India and Pakistan. This study sheds light on the intricate and varied difficulties encountered by transgender people in the area by offering a thorough analysis of the legal and social aspects pertaining to the rights and recognition of the Hijra community in both India and Pakistan.

Gender and Sex

Gender refers to the role which is assigned to a human being by the society. There seems to be a slight confusion between the terms gender and sex. Gender is a set of social/behavioural norms that are expected to be adhered to by a male or female. Sex is determined by the physical features such as sex organs and the physiological alterations observed due to hormonal changes. Gender is a psychological and cultural attribute whereas sex is a biological feature. Sex is determined immediately on birth whereas gender is developed gradually in a child by parental approaches; toys the children are given to play with, games the children are encouraged to play and the surroundings in which they grow and so on. As a result, the child learns to recognise its traits as male or female in a few of years. The orientation hole's primary cause is the social design. According to the social job theory, the division of labour leads to a



gendered society. In actuality, orientation positions "generalise" human behaviour. Orientation jobs were previously associated with the feminine and masculine. Orientation work refers to the manner in which people demonstrated their manliness or womanliness. Orientation positions state that "if we don't act out the suggested assumptions, we are neglecting to be legitimate ladies or men" (Stryker 12). The social structure should fully recognise the potential of intersex and the third orientation.

2 Objective

- To study explores the identity and activism of a transgender individual in their memories.

3 Data analysis and Discussion

This uses the theories of masculine feminization and professional route to track the difficult trip taken by Saravanan and Doraisamay to live as Vidya and Revathi. It paints a vivid picture of Vidya and Revathi's lives at several transitional points. This chapter discusses their self-realization, the abuse and humiliation they endured, their instances of cross-dressing, their need to acquire feminine clothing, their alienation from their families, their incapacity to lead a false or fake life, their life in the new home they called "jamaat," and their life following their SRS. An outline of transgender living in South India prior to SRS and following SRS is provided by this investigation. Living Grin I am Vidya: A Transgender's Journey, authored by Vidya in Tamil and translated into English in 2007, is regarded as the first book published by a transgender person. Born Saravanan to Dalit parents, Vidya grew up in a tiny village close to Tiruchi. In her native Tamil, Vidya is the author of numerous books. Her art focuses on the fight for empowerment faced by transgender people. Her autobiography makes it clear that she had to overcome many obstacles in order to get to where she is now—a theatre artist. Her passion for the arts and theatre allowed her to participate in a six-month drama and theatre course funded by the British Council as an alumni of LISPA (London International School of Performing Arts) and fellow of Charles Wallace. She is a member of the theatre group Panmai and resides in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, at the moment. Together with transgender and cisgender people, she has formed a team whose theme is women's empowerment. She dresses up as a



clown and goes to the children's hospital or children's ward in a general hospital on a regular basis with her transsexual friend Grace Banu. Through their humorous acts and appearance, they are able to temporarily cheer up the kids and help them forget about their suffering. They carry it out as a courtesy. Living Grin Vidya does not belong to any jamaat or NGO. She fears that her freedom may be restricted by her jamaat membership and that her attempts to carve out a place among transsexual people may go unnoticed. She takes a lone position and defends transgender people's rights. She actively campaigns for the mainstreaming of the tirunangais. She first gave permission for a well-known Kannada filmmaker to adapt her memoirs into the 2015 film "NanuAvanAlla." Along with numerous awards, the film took home a national title. She claims that Saravanan's (the name given to Vidya in the preliminaries) preliminal stage began when she was six or seven years old. In order to give life to his "true self," a person isolates himself during the preliminal period. When a child wants to cross dress is the first stage. For transgender people, this phase begins at a young age, before they can even comprehend why they identify as such. Vidya also documents her childhood desire to transvestise. "I used to shut myself inside and dress as a girl after they had all departed. It was an amazing sensation "Vidya remarked. Even when his family members saw it, they were unaware of the grave repercussions and assumed it was a joke. My family didn't take it too seriously at first. They gave me frequent reprimands and labelled it childish antics, but they didn't think there was anything to worry about at the time. The "hardened structure" of society denies transgender people the freedom to live their lives as they choose when it learns the truth. As a result, they begin to lie, steal, and hide the women's clothing in addition to withdrawing themselves. All of this is done voluntarily. I was helped and encouraged by my sister Manju's skirts. Transgender people typically wear their mother's or sister's clothing and cross dress. From Saravanan's cross dressing episodes one can understand the methods adopted to cross dress and his joy in fulfilling his inner longing. He loved to listen to music and dance to its tune. His favourite song was one which was often aired in the radio. "I am the princess/A fresh new one/Will my dream come true.". This word "princess" makes it clear that he imagined himself to be a girl. This imagination and deeds towards fulfilling one's desire are at the core of the pre-liminary stage. Saravanan imagined himself to be the heroine, "I floated in an imaginary world in which I blushed as they did, danced and wooed their heroes as they did, expressed anger as they did. Once I emerged from the dream and reentered the real world, I



masqueraded as the heroine, dressing and walking around like them” The efforts he takes to cross dress and enjoy his ‘real self’, makes it clear that his intentions were very serious and not to attract anyone. For him, gathering clothes alone was not important, but finding the right time and place was equally important for only then he would not be taken to task by anyone. He narrates how he enjoyed cross dressing in his sister Radha’s house. “I took great care to shut all the windows properly, checking and rechecking that I had done so, and then filled the key hole with paper . . . I wore a sari from Akka’s pile of clothes meant for the laundry; I couldn’t fling it away in that manner if I wore a fresh sari”. This section explores Donald N. McCloskey and Paul Grieg's daily routine excursions to experience as Deirdre N. McCloskey and Paula Grieg using the concepts of liminality and expert course. This section outlines the brief phases that Paula and Deirdre experience as they successfully "emerge" and "pass" as women of the accomplished gender. The characters' self-awareness, the abuse and humiliation they endured, their desire to dress in drag, their fear of losing their families, their resolve to live two lives, their courage to come out to family and the public, the protocols that must be followed before their SRS method, their professional daily routines, and their post-medical procedure lives have all been widely discussed. She is also the author of several more books on money-related topics. The Common Temperances are as follows: Principles for a Trade Period and If You're That Astute: The Story of Monetary Capability. It is evident from the excursions of the previous three concerns under consideration that Deirdre's entire voyage is one. The only real obstacles to her otherwise normal life were her sister, who was a specialist by calling, and her marriage to her family. She could have undergone a medical treatment and gone through a normal dressing in drag time. Her confidence allowed her accomplishments and success to be possible. Neither her mother nor her workplace gave any of Deirdre's antics a thoughtless second thought. Her diary isn't addressed in any way. Even though she has a large fan base, her diary has not received enough attention. College of Chicago Press cites Ruth Shalit, who writes, "A tightly created diary of her progress from Wear McCloskey, moderate Chicago school of financial specialist, to Deirdre McCloskey, power customer, domestics, superachiever, and silly doyenne of distinction women's liberation," in her survey of this journal in Most widely used language. This instills confidence and assurance in the readers that they, too, are capable of taking charge of their lives and making them better.



Pre-Liminal stage

Cross-dressing started at a very young age in Donald's prelim period as well. He says that his mother, who used to accompany him everywhere she went out of fear that she would leave the child alone, may have given him the gift of a feminine lifestyle in the early years. After being led to the women's lavatory, he gained a decent understanding of their cosmetics. "The memory hung there like a moon, and he watched his mother use tweezers to pluck her eyebrows and whisk mascara into her eyelashes, and the woman in slippers in Filene's Basement." At eleven years old, Donald began dressing differently. Like Vidya and Revathi, he used it as a covert act to experience his first sexual sensations while he was by himself at home. He describes his mental state as follows: "He was encountering his underlying clammy dreams of taking care of business. His mother's clothes were his first female clothes." He grabbed his mother's jeans from the laundry basket higher up, put them on, and experienced an intense surge of hotness that wasn't content or fulfilling—it was just there. The young dancers, his mother, and those partially clothed in Filene's were all vividly brought back to mind with an unassuming ache that was both seductive and enjoyable (Deirdre). What he had noticed when he was five years old had been hidden in his memory until the perfect moment. He adored wearing clothes that he either got from the trash or those he had taken from his mother. When his parents discovered girly clothes in his room, they weren't overly concerned. They reasoned that it had to be the girl's clothing because their son, a young heterosexual cross-dresser, entertained her. Donald says that because his father valued other people's privacy, he did not mind him too much. Even yet, Donald felt anxious that his father might become angry if he saw him wearing his mother's clothes. In addition, he tried on his neighbour Louise's shoes without telling her because he was feeling the need to cross-dress. "During his teenage years, Donald broke into nearby homes in order to obtain the clothing, shoes, garter belts, and other accessories that were typical of a 1950s girl" (Deirdre 7). In addition, he engaged in indoor activities with females. Even after being married, he persisted in his cross-dressing for almost 41 years. His wife was aware that he was a cross-dresser, but she was unaware of how often he did it. "Donald developed a devious strategy to conceal his cross-dressing, enabling his spouse to form an approximation of his clothing amount while the kids remained unaware" (Deirdre). He took great pleasure in his seclusion. Donald learned more from reading books and talking to such transvestites. Donald's



exposure was significantly different since he had access to the media and the internet, which allowed him to effectively cross-dress. When it came to his instances of cross-dressing, he was very careful and cautious, especially around his kids. When his kids moved away to college, he felt liberated and content. He didn't dress like a lady for fun, nor did he do it to experience what it's like to feel that way. "It was not an interest in finding out what women wore under their clothes. It was a question of curiosity: "Donald enjoyed spending time with girls because he felt at ease among them. He used to play chess with his neighbour and he enjoyed this. Even during his cross dressing episodes he made it a point to be amidst women who did a lot of chatting. ". . . Donald talked for a long time with two young women professors and had better success closing the gap" This made him feel the woman within him. "Once inside Donald was again bumptious, buying makeup, nightgowns, garter belts, camisoles, hid-padded panties..." His love for cross dressing and his love to be a woman has been expressed in a book titled Writing on the bias. The nuances of womanly grace find a place in this book. "As any woman knows, "on the bias" describes the drape of cloth. . . the drape to give the dress special movement and grace" The happiness he felt, when he was identified and treated as a woman, has to be mentioned. "They regarded Jane as bold to go with the girls barhopping on this first night out" (Deirdre). His gender crosser friends who were couples gave him more joy and happiness when they asked him to present himself in his female self when he attended the party. Jane was really happy and felt "Oh, for such a loving acceptance" (Deirdre). Their acceptance and Donald's anticipation to be read as a woman were the driving forces behind his survival. In addition to wanting to appear feminine at this phase, they also want to be perceived as such by everyone around them. When he was among the transvestites, Donald changed his name especially because he was quite particular about this. He identified himself as Jane, and he promptly corrected anybody who called him as "Sir" by saying that he was "ma'am." This demonstrates how feminine he was at every turn. ""Thank you, sir," the maid responded to the booming voice as she began to take it. Snatching the bill back, Jane corrected her, saying, "Please! "Ma'am," that is!" The maid chuckled and uttered the secret phrase (Deirdre 36). Donald, a transvestite, felt ashamed when he entered the women's lavatories and was identified as a man dressed as a woman. Even though he didn't fear more women, he was apprehended by security when they asked him to leave the women's lavatory. "The caretaker was furious—he had



intended to apprehend the transvestite prior to his entry. The caretaker yelled at Jane to scream, and she obeyed."

4. Conclusion

Through their works I am Vidya: A Transgenders Journey, Truth About me: A Hijra Life Story, Crossing: A Memoir, and No Man's Land, the transgender subjects Living Smile Vidya, Revathi, Deirdre N. McCloskey, and Paula Grieg attempt to communicate their struggles for locating and establishing their identity as well as their longing for inclusion. This study is an attempt to analyse how autobiographical fiction has given the voiceless a platform to express their opinions. Despite the fact that numerous laws supporting transgender people have been passed, they are merely words on paper. The sad fact is that although they are officially documented as receiving some facilities, TGs are nonetheless marginalised. A reform was implemented in Tamilnadu in 2015. This made it easier for transgender students to get admitted to engineering institutes; on their employment application, they could indicate that they were transgender. As it is, transgender people struggle to survive in a culture that still views gender inequalities. Grace Banu, an engineering student, finds it extremely difficult to socialise because other people perceive her as the "other." During her training, Preetika Yashini, the first TG sub-inspector, experienced a great deal of stress and humiliation. Since most transgender people are unable to finish even their most basic education, the provisions offered at the higher education level would not benefit them. It is not enough to just list the category on application forms; measures must be taken to guarantee its long-term viability. This has not occurred primarily as a result of the host society's "negligence." The host society's perception of transgenderism has been distorted by the "ignorance" around it, which has hindered acceptance and mainstream inclusion of transgender people. In essence, the statements below by Revathi affirm their right to respect and identity: "I thought about how, because God created us in this way, we are unorganised, our parents cannot understand us, and everyone else views us with contempt. Nevertheless, we also experience hunger. Each box obviously contains horrible eggs, and the reasons some end up there are fear and ignorance. Victims of gender identity confusion are seen as helpless against social prohibition and disappointment, which can lead to prostitution, addiction, depression, and, sadly, early death for some transgender persons. These



findings set us apart from the general population even further. All we ask for is to be treated on an equal footing with everyone else, with comparable rights and, of course, the ability to assume comparable responsibilities. We are not discussing a unique course of care. Everyone is equal before the law, according to the law. "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law," reads Article 21 of the Indian Penal Code. However, the writings of Vidya and Revathi list the ways in which their rights have been violated, questioning each and every action. They are unable to live their lives as they choose and have limited freedom. These people find it extremely difficult to shift official paperwork, whether it be for a name change or to obtain a licence and passport, as social standards often have more authority than the law. Changes at the school level are necessary for transgender people's lives to take a significant turn for the better. It's important to teach the kids how to interact with and handle these folks.

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