

Abstract

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Gender studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that critically analyses the gender identity and gendered representation across the world. The terms 'sex' and 'gender' are substantially disparate. Sex refers to the physical differentiation between female and male, is naturally conceived and can thus be biologically explained, whereas the ideologies of gender are socially constructed and people are forced to follow them. Individuals enter into the periphery of gender categories right from birth. Gender studies include women's studies, men's studies and queer studies. A wing of queer studies, dedicated to analyze the sexual construct, orientation, identity, expression, physical and psychological traits of the third gender is called the transgender studies. Transgenders are people who transcend the categories of male- female and masculine- feminine concepts.

The research aims to bring out the identity issues, societal discriminations and psychological hostility faced by transgender individuals. There are various prevalent stereotypical notions about transgender community and the primary objective of the study is to deconstruct those ideas and create awareness about their social and cultural paradigms. The thesis is divided into six chapters.

The Introductory chapter contemplates upon the differences between the terminologies of sex and gender. It further details about the various types of gender identities identified in the society. The jargons associated with Indian transgender community are also explained. The chapter introduces the primary and secondary sources taken for study. The selected autobiographies *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* (2010) by A. Revathi, *I am Vidya: A Transgender's Journey* (2007) by Living Smile Vidya, *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love and So Much More*

(2014) by Janet Mock, *Both Sides Now: One Man's Journey Through Womanhood* (2006) by Dhillon Khosla and *Once a Girl, Always a Boy: A Family Memoir of a Transgender Journey* (2020) by Jo Ivester reveals the hardships and subjugation undergone by trans individuals during various phases of life. The aim, hypothesis, objectives, review of literature, and thesis statement is further included in the chapter.

The second chapter "Social Dynamics of Gender" elucidates the sociological constraints faced by transgender people in the society. The study is validated with the concepts from *The Scientific Aspects of Transgenders* (2019) by Ajay Majumder and Rabin Tarafder. The lack of awareness about the third gender is the primary cause for discrimination towards trans community. The binary gender ideologies are deep rooted in the heteronormative society in a way that people are afraid to accept anyone who does not fit under the cisnormative umbrella. The chapter further points out the lack of education and employment opportunities of transgender people which leads them to take up begging and sex work for survival. Many trans women succumb to death due to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The suicidal tendencies among transgender people are analyzed. The chapter also emphasizes on the importance of creating an inclusive environment for transgender community by unlearning the ingrained binary notions.

The third chapter "Pain and Stigma- A Psychological Overview" deals with the significance of love and acceptance in a person's life. Every child born in this world deserves to be loved, cared and accepted by parents, family members and society irrespective of caste, creed, race or gender. Individuals who lack the love and affection in their childhood develop a basic hostility towards their parents and as a consequence, suffer from anxiety. The German Psychoanalyst Karen Horney's Psychoanalytic Social

Theory is applied to bring out the emotional turmoil faced by individuals with gender incongruity during their childhood. Trans people are often criticized for their aggressive behaviour and mannerisms in public and this chapter examines the reason behind their stridence. Humans naturally possess a high potential to lead a confident and successful life but they need favorable conditions such as warm, affectionate and loving environment for safety and satisfaction that can lead to a holistic growth. Most trans individuals are subjected to mental and physical harassments for their gender incongruity. The bullying, abuses and obscenities they face during childhood and transition period creates in them hostility towards society. This unhealed trauma and subjugations they experience acts as a primary reason for their diffidence. The chapter highlights the emotions of grief and despair undergone by the authors and accentuates the need to be empathetic towards the trans community rather than disparaging them for their identity.

The fourth chapter “Trans Culture and Heritage Across Nations” explores the customs, rituals and practices of transgender community among various countries. The transgender culture is divergent from place to place and nation to nation. The traditions, conventions and beliefs are not the same. As transgender people exist in all part of the globe, their culture is vivid and diverse. One cannot comprehend or amalgamate that entirety in one concept or theory. The Indian memoirs are analyzed with Yulia Yu. Sakurazawa’s *Transgendered People of India: Forsaken Tributaries* (2015) , the Hawaiian culture is reviewed through Niko Besnier’s *Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space* (1994), and the American Female to Male trans memoirs are validated through *FTM: Female- to- Male Transsexuals in Society* (1997) by Aaron Devor. The references about the third gender in Indian epics Ramayana and Mahabharata proves the existence of trans

community since ancient times. This chapter focuses on the unique heritage along with the historical antecedents of transgender culture.

The fifth chapter “Writing as Therapy” focuses on the narrative styles and techniques of the primary sources taken. A detailed analysis is done on the structure followed by the authors. Victims of physical and psychological trauma tend to devise a resistive strategy to deviate their minds off the agony. This chapter highlights how the authors used writing as a therapy to overcome their horrendous memories of the past.

The Summation recapitulates the previous chapters and highlights the objectives along with the key findings. Transgender people endure discrimination and harassments from the mainstream society for centuries. It is hard to believe that a community whose existence can be traced Before Common Era (BCE) is still fighting for their basic needs and rights including food, shelter, education, employment, and a fearless life. A case study has been carried out to authenticate the research. The thesis delineates the magnitude of suffering individuals with gender incongruity undergo, and thus highlights the need to join hands for equality and acceptance without bias.