

Beyond the Binary View of Transgender

We are living in the period of liquid modernity which accelerates the change facilitating the social conditions in which subcultures emerge and thrive. The postmodern theorist, Zygmunt Bauman, contends that, “Compared to the past, contemporary life (particularly in rich countries) is fluid people change jobs, religions, homes, nationalities, husbands/wives, life styles and political ideas” (Haenfler 29). These subcultures are relatively diffuse social network having a shared identity and distinctive meanings around certain ideas, practices and objects. They have a sense of marginalization or resistance to a perceived conventional society. In this regard, Susan Stryker, the founder of transgender studies, says that the subculture of transgender studies is born out of sexuality studies and feminism. She says that ‘Transgender’ as a politics and ‘trans studies’ as a twin of ‘queer studies’ emerged in the early 1990s. But Patricia Elliot in her book *Debates in Transgender, Queer, and Feminist Theory: Contested Sites* (2010), discussed the key rifts of the divergent conceptions of ‘trans’ subjects held by ‘non-trans’ feminists. With respect to feminism, transsexuality is a betrayal to feminist’s goals. Similarly, queer theorist found themselves aligned both for and against ‘trans’. No doubt, queer studies are anti-heteronormative but sometimes perpetuate ‘homonormativity,’ i.e. same-sex object choice but that transgender phenomena can also be ‘anti-heteronormative’.

This chapter aims to interrogate hegemonic assumptions of what is considered “normal” or moral or ‘heteronormativity’ and to address the paucity of gender fluid identity through a terrain of literary practices as a subculture. Unlike the west, there is no proper theory of homosexuality in India. In Indian context, it has been a highly

complicated and sensitive issue. Even in the west, the queer theory emerged as a discourse in academia in 1990s only. Perhaps, that is the reason that 'queer theory evaded the attention of a well-known critic Terry Eagleton when he published his seminal book *Literary Theory* in 1983. However it is deliberated by Foucault and Derrida. Queer is a term of self-identification by individuals who do not subscribe to the traditional binary division between male/female, man/woman, and masculine/feminine and whose gender is non-confirming. Many transsexuals can be said to be 'queer' in a sense that they challenge assumptions about the supposedly fixed and immutable relationship of sex and gender identity, but not in a sense that refuses rigid categories by approaching their gender expression and body modification in the light of postmodernism.

A well-known gender theorist, Judith Butler advocates the representation of transsexual, transgender, and intersex, lesbian, gay, and feminist groups and calls it 'the new gender politics'. According to her, they interact with each other both positively and negatively to create trouble for the gender order. Queer studies establishes the idea that the postmodern world is heterosexist and homophobic. This research intends to explore several misconceptions harboured about transgender community and to suggest measures to improve their pathetic living conditions. No doubt, the human rights movement has started to look at the concerns of this community. Legal scholar, Upendra Baxi, in the foreword to the PUCL (K) report, says:

The dominant discourse on human rights in India has yet to come to terms with the production/reproduction of absolute human rightlessness of transgender communities.... At stake is the human right to be different, the right to recognition of different pathways of sexuality, a right to immunity

from the oppressive and repressive labelling of despised sexuality. Such a human right does not exist in India. (5)

In this way, transgender studies are important for problematizing assumptions about bodies and identities and also for the continuing need to rethink sex/gender categories. In this context, Susan Stryker in her book *The Transgender Studies Reader*, contends that,

The materiality of anatomical sex is represented socially by a gender role, and subjectively as a gender identity: a (biological) male is a (social) man who (subjectively) identifies himself as such;...The relationship between bodily sex, gender role, and subjective gender identity are imagined to be strictly, mechanically, mimetic—a real thing and its reflections. Gender is simply what we call bodily sex when we see it in the mirror of representation—no questions asked, none needed. Transgender phenomena call into question both the stability of the material referent “sex” and the relationship of that unstable category to the linguistic, social, and psychological categories of “gender”. (Stryker & Whittle 9)

In this way, transgender studies calls for an end to the hierarchy that values and legitimates ‘normative genders’ and devalues and delegitimizes ‘transgressive’ genders. It also offers a critique of heteronormativity, and advocates the reconceptualization of gender for the creation of new forms of legitimacy for trans-identities. But there are plethora of myths and misconceptions about eunuchs which lead these gender non-confirming people towards sexual stigma and inhumane treatment. This study aims to analyse different dimensions and perceptions about sexuality and homosexuality through investigating and understanding the life and issues of ‘hijras’, eunuchs or the third gender

who occupy a unique, liminal space between male and female, and sacred and profane in contemporary India.

Sexuality being the basic need of human life, has been a vital part of the human existence. It may be experienced and expressed in a variety of ways including thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours and relationships which may manifest by way of biological, physical, emotional or spiritual aspects. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, sociological, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual aspects of life. It changes among individuals, within genders, within classes and within societies. Even the very meaning and content of sexuality varies. According to Foucault, since the end of the 19th century, it has been considered one of the primary elements in a person's essential identity along with race, class and gender. Similarly, Sigmund Freud believed that sexual drives are instinctive i.e. 'libido' and he viewed sexuality as the central source of human personality. He says, "The behaviour of a human being in sexual matters is often a prototype for the whole of his other modes of reaction in life" (Freud, 25). What we find erotic and how we take pleasure in our bodies constitute our sexuality. The major components of sexual identity are biological sex, gender, social sex role, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The term 'sex' refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define male, female or intersex. Sex is also different from desire as desire is mental concept while sex is physical. Further, 'sex' can be distinguished from 'gender' which is a social/cultural term that refers to one's identity as 'man' and 'woman' or 'third gender' because no one is born a woman or a man rather as the saying goes 'one becomes one'

through a complex process of socialization. Perhaps this is the reason that many universities have changed the name of their departments from women studies to gender studies. It means that gender studies is an all-encompassing term for the study of whole gamut of the term 'gender'. It has interlinkages with various institutions like caste, class and state and how these institutions position men and women in different ways. Gender Studies deals with interface of feminism, queer bodies and masculinities, and gives a nuanced understanding of social relations. It has denaturalized assumptions about the supposed coherence and essentialism of gender and sexual categories. If essentialism sees gender or sex as inherently based on anatomical markers, social constructivism understands gender as not simply biological or inherent but rather a cultural creation upheld through social order. It is something that is constructed through relations of power, and through a series of norms, and constraints that regulate gender binaries--male and female. We are so heavily conditioned by culture and its norms to categorize sex and gender in this binary of 'boy or girl' that tends to be the first question on the birth of a baby and a cursory look at the genitals usually provides the answer. Whenever one meets a person for the first time, he/she automatically, unconsciously, registers whether that person is male or female. In this way, gender is one's own specific way of interacting with and presenting oneself to the world through - physical, mental, spiritual, sexual, inter-relational or connective expression. One's sense of 'self' is organic and inter-relational. Gender is that expressive, relational, embodied 'self'. Glover & Kaplan used it as, 'a busy term' that it is very widely used in many different contexts so that its usages are continually evolving and its meaning is quite slippery. Part of the busyness and slipperiness arises from the fact that this is a highly charged concept.

Gender, as a construct, is politically deployed. It means the usage of the term has been persistently bound up with power relations between women and men. This assigned gender dictates our life and brand our behaviour. After gender assignment comes the process of developing gender identity through getting prescribed 'gender role. It is social script or myth which guides the proper behaviour and activities of a person of a particular gender. It is performed by gender comportment through bodily actions such as how we use our voices, cross our legs, hold our heads, wear our clothes, dance around the room, throw a ball or walk in high heels. For example, a man is supposed to be a doctor or pilot and a woman is supposed to be a nurse or air hostess and many different gender expressions. In this way, these are the two sides of the same coin and both must be consistent. Ideally, 'gender role' is the public expression of 'gender identity' whereas 'gender identity' is the private experience of gender role. It is defined in the preamble of Yogyakarta principles (YPs) as,

'gender identity' to refer to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms. (Yogyakarta Principles)

For most of us, sexuality can involve many body parts or physical activities as well as the erotic use of objects. It is used to describe particular patterns of sexual attraction. The term 'sexual orientation' is a more accurate version of sexuality. Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual affection or attraction toward

others. It is easily distinguished from other components of sexuality including biological sex, gender identity (the psychological sense of being male or female), and the social gender role (adherence to cultural norms for feminine and masculine behaviour). In Yogyakarta principles, the expression “Sexual Orientation” is “Understood to refer to each person’s capacity for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender” (Yogyakarta Principles). It classifies people according to the relation between their own sex and the sex of the people with whom they would, or could, enjoy sexual activities. It is even less determinate than sex. Sexual orientation is different from sexual behaviour because it refers to feelings and self-concept. Individuals may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviours. It exists along a continuum that ranges from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality and includes various forms of sexualities including straight, bisexual, auto-sexual, asexual and pansexual orientation. But these sexual preferences may depend on many factors like class, education, spiritual practices, body shape or size and dominant and submissive attributes other than genders of the people we are attracted to. This classification gets a full-fledged framework by Gay Studies and Queer Theory. According to Puspesh Kumar, “Queer includes those who openly wear sexual identities like lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and those who use indigenous terms like ‘hijra’, ‘kothi’ and ‘panthis’ to describe themselves (Kumar 8). In this way queering is highly unorthodox process of reversing and destabilizing heterosexuality as a norm. As literary theorist, Parmod K. Nayar says, “Queer includes activism and protest through art, literature, academic criticism and inclined to forge alliance with any counterhegemonic project”

(Nayar 2010). According to Peter Barry, 'Stone Wall Riot' 1968 is the stepping stone in the realm of queer theory. It was a rebellion against the harassment by New York police to the people of alternative sexual performance. In 1990s, the gay subculture reclaimed queer as a way to define the subculture and worked to negate its deviant connotations. It ceases to perish the heterosexual/ homosexual dichotomy and claims to give voice to the sexually marginalized people by making sexual orientation a fundamental category of analysis and understanding. Similarly, Herbert Marcuse, the father of New Left, regarded that the realization of man's erotic nature is the true liberation of humanity that tends to actual sexual liberation. It is not only about what you do but also it is about how you describe yourself. In this context, Foucault, in his essay "Friendship as a Way of Life," says that it is homosexuality that threatens people as a way of life not as a way of having sex. The consequence can be seen in India, where the Gay Pride Marches in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Chennai include lesbians, gays, transgenders and others who come together as 'Queer' to forge coalitional politics against the homophobic Indian society.



LGBT community and supporters attend the 5th Delhi Queer Pride parade on November 25, 2012. (Photo Credit: Sajjad Hussain) < <https://www.pri.org/stories/2012-11-25/> > (Accessed on 10th May, 2016)

In this way, the key terms ‘heterosexuality’ and ‘homosexuality’ have beset the study of sexuality. According to Peter Barry, all identities including gender identities like LGBT are kind of impersonation and approximation- a kind of imitation for which there is no original. The acronym LGBT can be further extended as, LGBTT2QQAIIIP which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Two-Spirit, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, Allies, Intersex, Intergender and Pansexual. These days, teens are declaring themselves as pansexual, genderflued and genderqueer. In this context, feminist writer Virginia Woolf, in her letter “The Humane Art” says that self that goes on changing goes on living’. Ultimately, gender has become the chosen ground for a new wave of identity politics like feminist criticism. According to radical feminist writers like Rubin, Vence and Sedgwick, sexuality is key to theorizing gender. Following Foucault, Rubin identifies ‘the hierarchical valuation of sex acts’. She argues that a sexual hierarchy rewards those at the top with certified mental health, respectability, legality, social and physical mobility, institutional support and material benefits’ while those who are at the bottom of the scale are subjected to a presumption of mental illness,

disputability, criminality, restricted social and physical mobility etc. In this regard, V. Geetha questions ‘compulsory heterosexuality’ in her small but brilliantly written volume on ‘patriarchy’. Chayanika Shah, a queer feminist questions – ‘Is compulsory heterosexuality only about controlling desire or is it about dictating that the world can have only two kinds of people—women and men?’ (Qtd. in Geetha 197). Many of the earliest ‘non-trans’ feminist perspectives on transsexuals were marked by hostility. It gets thorough description in Janice Raymond's *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (1979) where she writes:

All transsexuals rape women's bodies by reducing the real female form to an artefact, appropriating this body for themselves. However, the transsexually constructed lesbian-feminist violates women's sexuality and spirit, as well. Rape, although it is usually done by force, can also be accomplished by deception. (Raymond 104)

Actually, life and nature are a lot more complex than this. Establishment of such rigid norms leads to ignore a wide range of bodies as invisible or illegitimate. According to American Psychological Association, behaviour that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as normative behaviour while those incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity and hence immoral. Anne Fausto-Sterling, a biologist and historian in her book *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, argues that two sexes are not enough and there is need to redefine this male-female dichotomy. She also offers new guidelines on how doctors should handle intersex babies. The triangular relationship between social, personal and sexual factors together form human life.

However, the diversity of genders and sexualities existed in Indian culture since time immemorial. It is truly a rainbow of many fascinating hues like lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. But this chapter explores the most rendered invisible transgender population who are recently labelled as 'third gender' by the landmark decision of honourable SC of India on 15th April, 2014. Transgender practices whether homosexual or heterosexual are generally constrained and penalized. For instance, infants born with ambiguous sexual characteristics or eunuchs or men and women who do not feel comfortable to follow the dress norms prescribed for their gender are considered as abnormal. Today shock-horror style newspaper articles are building public knowledge of transgender issues. They might be revelations of women who had passed most of their lives as men and vice-versa or they might be autobiographical accounts by people who had sex change operations. So, gender is something more spiritual than biological--a feeling that has been echoed by many 'Trans' people.

Following the deconstructive practices of poststructuralist theory at the end of 20th century, 'queer' takes on the meaning of disruptive and destabilized performances of gender and sexuality which are not the product of any kind of essentialist identity. Judith Butler sees gender and sexuality as an act or performance- a form of drag where people play the role of a man or a woman or sometimes a sexy man or woman. She claims that all of it, heterosexual or homosexual, is un-natural. They are performances, not essences. In her book *Gender Trouble*, Butler writes, "there is no gender identity, behind the expression of gender identity is performativity constituted by the very expression that are said to be its results" (25). An American academic scholar, Eve Kosofsky in her book *Tendencies* subordinates, the idea of gender to the study of sexuality. Foucault says that

sex is not something you do instead the kind of sex you have become a symptom of something else i.e. your sexuality. In 16th century, the focus was on regulating the sexuality of the married couple, ignoring other forms of sexual relations. But in his book *History of Sexuality*, Foucault says that the notion of sexuality is constructed against essentialist views of sexuality and developed it into a marker of identity because nothing of his full personality escapes his sexuality. He says, “Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual is now a species” (43). Hoshang Merchant, in his book *The Man Who Would Be Queen*, writes, “In modern society biology is lost. Men loving men have come to the centre of society (as writers, artists, even politicians in the west)” (91). Later it is appropriated as a source of pride and reclaimed to unify all ‘sexual minorities’ not just gay man and lesbians but also bisexuality, transsexualism and transgenderism. In the beginning of the 20th century, the famous German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935) coined the words ‘transvestites’ and ‘transsexuals’. For both these words, a blanket term ‘transgenderism’ was coined by Virginia Prince.

Another pioneer in the study of transgenderism was U.S. endocrinologist Harry Benjamin, a campaigner for sexual reform who treated hundreds of patients and introduced Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) at the John Hopkins Hospital. He sparked further interest in cross-gender identities by distinguishing transvestism and transsexuality as: “transvestism... is the desire of a certain group of men to dress as women or of women to dress as men. It can be powerful and overwhelming, even to the point of wanting to belong to other sex and correct nature’s anatomical error. For such

cases, the term transsexual seems appropriate” (Qtd in Hines 11). The terminology of transgender is less than 40 years old, however transgender people have existed in every culture, race, and class since the dawn of human civilization. The contemporary term ‘transgender’ arose in the mid-1990s to represent the gender-different people. It is an umbrella term that includes transvestism, transsexuals, cross dressers and intersex people, ‘androgynes’, ‘bigenders’, ‘genderqueers’, ‘drag performers’, butch / femme practices and just about anybody else who doesn’t conform to the traditional model of sex/gender. People whose gender identity matches their biological sex are called cisgender, which means ‘matching gender’ and whose identity differs from their biological sex are called transgender. It may refer to individuals who have undergone hormone treatment or surgery to reconstruct their bodies or to those who cross genders in less permanent ways. A transgender individual may have characteristics that are normally associated with a particular gender but that individual gets identified elsewhere on the traditional gender continuum, or exists outside of it as “other”- ‘gender blending’, ‘gender fucking’, ‘gender crossing’ and “inter-gender” or third gender. Sudeshna Mukherjee, in her paper “The Curious Case of Shanthi: The Issue of Transgender in Indian Sports”, says, transgender is a challenge to the social construction of gender. In the light of three possible meanings of the prefix ‘trans’ she considers to deconstruct gender and observes:

Trans means change, as in the word “transform”. In this first sense transgender people change their bodies to fit the gender they feel they always were.... In the second sense “Trans” means across as in the word “transcontinental”. In this sense a transgendered person is one who moves across genders.... The emphasis is on the “crossing” and not on any

surgical transformation.... Third meaning of “trans” is beyond or through”.... This third meaning is the most radical, which talks for elimination of gender. (124-25)

In its broadest sense, transgender encompasses anyone whose identity or behaviour falls outside of stereotypical gender norms. This community faces discrimination, depression, unemployment, homelessness, lack of educational, medical, HIV care facilities, hormone pill abuse, tobacco and alcohol abuse and problems related to marriage and adoption. In 1994, transgender persons got the voting right but they could not enjoy it and were caught up in the male or female question for getting voting cards. They also feel neglected for inheritance of property or adoption of a child. They are often pushed to the periphery as a social outcaste and many may end up begging and dancing. They even engage themselves as sex workers for survival.

Histrio-mythical Background of Hijras

According to Hindu Civilization human sexuality, sexual pleasure and sexual love being, one among the four prime aims or goals of a person’s life i.e. (I) Dharma (Duty of one's being), (II) Artha (Acquisition of wealth), (III) Kama (Pleasure of sex, sexual fulfilment), and (IV) Moksha (release, liberation from the cycle of birth and death) gets a highly respectable place in all aspects of life, art, literature, and even religion. Homosexual conduct and transgender identities have been displayed through various classical Sanskrit texts, orthodox Hindu literature and Buddhist and Jain writings. American Indologist, Wendy Doniger has observed, “Many texts are “significantly silent” on the subject of alternate genders and sexualities, in some there are “hints from which we can excavate a pretty virulent homophobia”. (332-34)

Eunuchs or castrated males have been in existence since 9th century B.C. The word is derived from the Greek and it implies “keeper of the bed” because at that time castrated men were in dire demand to guard royal harems. This practice is believed to have started in China where at the end of the Ming dynasty there were as many as 70000 eunuchs in the grand palace itself and many thousands more waiting to fill vacancies in the royal quarters. Gender fluidity in India is steeped in centuries of history and spiritual mythology. The third sex gets extensive mention in ancient Vedic writings of India, dating back before 300 AD. Ina Goel traces the history of eunuchs as:

History is replete with stories of their non- threatening bodies because of which they were entrusted with guarding the royal harems during the rule of the Mughal dynasty. The king of course ensured that the hijras were castrated and therefore unable to impregnate the women in the harem. (78)

Hijras have a recorded history of more than 4,000 years but the estimates of their population vary. Today, the most commonly cited estimate is between two and three millions. According to ancient myths, they are bestowed with special powers to bring luck and fertility. Their existence found in a collection of Indian myths like, *Satapatha-Brahmana* which explains that the castrated bull is neither female nor male. The same ambiguity and indecisive ‘hijra’ identity is defined by the poet Shivabhakta, Devara Dasimayya:

If they see breasts and long hair coming,
They call it woman,
If beard and whiskers
They call it man.

But look, the self that hovers in between

Is neither man nor woman (Qtd in Rajeev & Ashok 227)

‘Third sex’ is also discussed in ancient Hindu law, medicine, linguistics and astrology. The foundational works of Hindu law, the *Manu Smriti* and *Arthashastra* considered ayoni (non- vaginal sex) as impure. *Manu Smriti* explains the biological origins of the three sexes- a male child is produced by a greater quantity of male seed, a female child by the prevalence of the female and if both have equal prevalence, a third-sex child or boy and girl twins are produced. The Vedas (c. 1500 BC - 500 BC) describe individuals as belonging to one of the three separate categories, according to one's nature or prakrti. These are also spelled out in the sex manual *Kama Sutra* and elsewhere as ‘purus-prakrti’ (male- nature), ‘stri-prakrti’ (female-nature), and ‘tritiya-prakrti’ (third-nature). The chapter “Auparishtaka” describes homoeroticism of both male and female. But it also does not consider homosexuality to be the ideal natural ‘dharmic’ path. In Vedic astrology, the nine planets are equally assigned to one of the three genders; the third gender, tritiya-prakrti, is associated with Mercury, Saturn and (in particular) Ketu. In the *Puranas*, there are also references to three kinds of ‘devas’ of music and dance: *apsaras* (female), *gandharvas* (male) and *kinnars* (neuter). The sacred epics and *Puranas* contradict the law books as they depict Hindu deities as examples of saints, demigods and incarnations of the lord associated with gender transformation or diversity springing from ayoni sex. Sri Ayappa who is born from two male deities Shiva and Vishnu is very popular among the third sex in south India. King Bhagiratha was born of two vulvas. The Hindu god Shiva who is often represented as ‘Ardhanarishvara’ having dual identity of male and female is sometimes described as a hermaphrodite. The sculpture of Shiva as

‘Ardhanarishvara’ is one of the great attractions of the Elephanta Caves. Patanjali's work on Sanskrit grammar, the *Mahabhaya*, states that Sanskrit's three grammatical genders are derived from three natural genders. The earliest Tamil grammar, the *Tolkappiyam* (3rd century BC) also refers to hermaphrodites as a third "neuter" gender (in addition to a feminine category of unmasculine males).

Existence of a third gender is also indicated in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Lord Rama, while leaving for the forest turns around to his followers and asks all the men and women to wipe out their tears and return to the city. But those people who were neither men nor women waited there for 14 years because they thought that Rama had not asked them to go. Impressed with their devotion, Rama granted them the power to confer blessings on people on auspicious occasions like childbirth and marriage, and also at inaugural functions. This custom of ‘badhai’ in which ‘hijras’ sing, dance and confer blessings prevails even today. In the legend of Aravan, the son of Arjuna and Nagakanya is offered to be sacrificed to Goddess Kali to ensure the victory of the Pandavas in the Kurukshetra war. His only condition was to spend the last night of his life in matrimony. It was not so easy to fulfil his wish because no woman was willing to marry one who was doomed to be killed. To fulfil his desire, Krishna assumes the form of a beautiful woman called Mohini and marries him. Since then, the hijras of Tamil Nadu consider Aravan their progenitor and call themselves aravanis. On the festival day, the priest at Aravanani’s temple marries them off to the deity. The next day, the priest cuts the ‘mangalsutra’, the marriage chain and all the hijras become widows. Besides, in one of the instances, the Pandavas used Shikhandi, a eunuch, to thwart the invincible Bhishma Pitamah in the battle of Kurukshetra. Arjuna disguised himself as a eunuch as

Birhannala and served the ladies of the court of King Virata. He manifested all three genders consisting of male, female and hermaphrodite. The *Markandeya Purana* carries the story of 'Avikshita', the son of a king who refused to get married because he felt like a woman. Transvestites, homosexuals, and members of the third sex are mentioned in a positive light in the most famous sex manual *Kama Sutra*. It is believed that Kamdeva who is the god of sex was given a curse and he became formless without any physical entity. Another Sanskrit text *Natyashastra* gives instructions regarding third gender. Although the *Vedas*, one of the earliest Hindu law books, do not speak about hijras or intersexual specifically, they mention castration as a degrading punishment for very bad deeds. During the Mughal Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries, castrated hijras – or eunuchs – were respected and considered close confidants of emperors, often being employed as royal servants and bodyguards. These jobs were so coveted that historians say some parents actually castrated their sons in order to attain favour with the Mughal kings and secure employment for their children.

The Muslim practice of keeping eunuchs as favoured servants started around twelfth century CE in Medina, and, interestingly, the majority of early eunuchs were imported from the Indian subcontinent. Islamic law prohibited the act of castration, but already-castrated men from other countries were afforded high level of respect, although they were sometimes seen as more feminine than other men and thus were perceived as limited by women's lower rational abilities. When Muslim courts moved to India, their eunuch system moved as well. Muslim ruler Babar has love affair with a boy named Baburi. Carvings in the Khajuraho temple in Madhya Pradesh reflect the homoerotic nature of that period. For this reason, many contemporary 'hijras' see themselves as

(metaphorical, not biological) descendants of Muslim court eunuchs. Apart from Islam, the early Indian Buddhist writers generally frowned on all sexual activities because it leads to worldly attachment. In Jain texts, they were referred to as 'napunsaka'. These literary evidences indicate that Eunuchs were celebrated in sacred Hindu texts and they have been prevalent across the Indian subcontinent throughout history. In this way ancient India was a highly sexualized society and the erotica depicted in art was an integrated part of our past. Although Hindu tradition has recognized the wide range of human sexual diversity but it prescribes none other than heterosexuality.

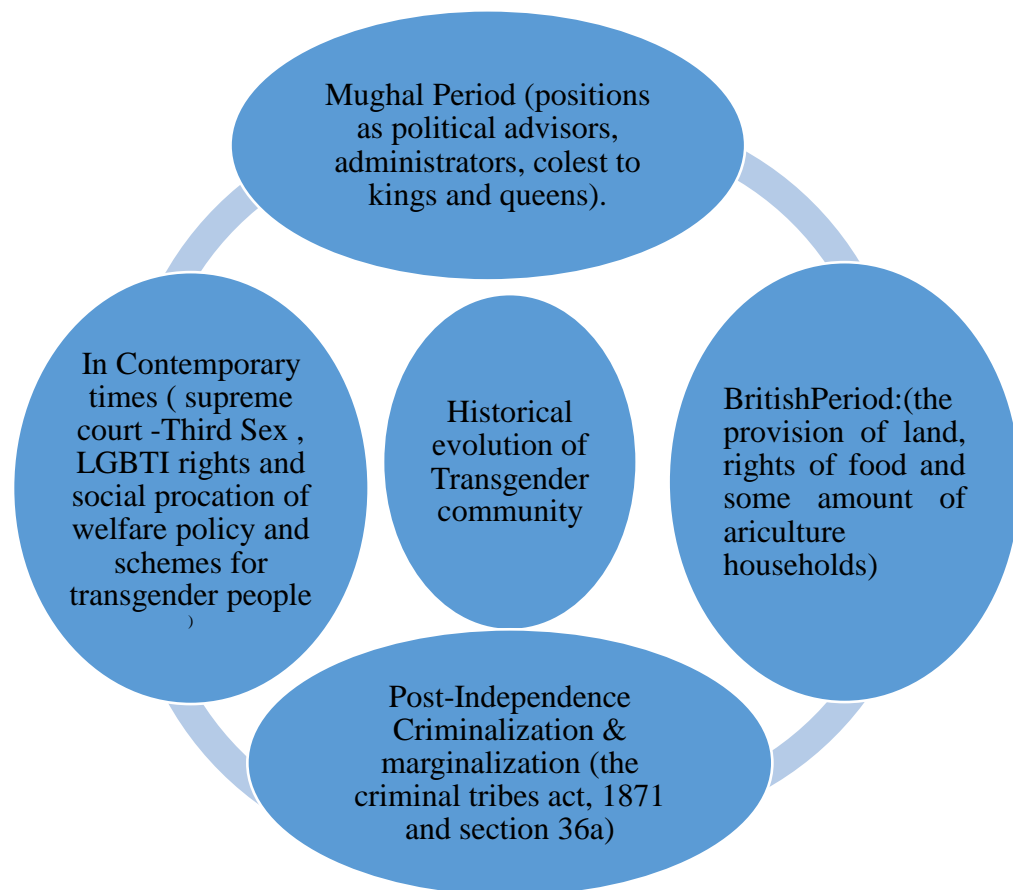


Fig.1 Evolution of Transgender Community in India

India has a rich and healthy history of celebrating alternative sexualities or sexual liberty. In this way homosexual behaviour is not a new thing in India but the concept of 'homosexuality' is of recent origin. It is considered a western import because before the colonial period the term 'homosexuality' was not popular in India. But the above discussion shows that it is not alien import, rather, it has existed in Indian society throughout the ages. It was invisible but flourishing amicably with the socio-political, cultural and economic framework. With the advent of British power in India, the community's fortunes changed because the disgusted colonists brought homophobic atmosphere and classed all eunuchs as criminals by passing a law. Since then many have been ostracized – either for cross dressing or being intersex – and have gone on to form their own communities, around a guru or mother figure to provide emotional and financial security. In 1871, the Criminal Tribes Act was implemented to criminalize homosexuality and 'hijras' were notified as one of the criminal tribes. In this regard Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai write:

In 1895, in Britain, poet Oscar Wilde was convicted under a new law that criminalizes indecency between men (as distinct from sodomy)' and his sufferings in prison led directly to his death. This widely reported case functioned to instill fear into homosexuality inclined men in England and could not but has similar effects in India where newspapers in English and in other Indian languages picked up reports of the case. (195)

It is irony to note that in India homophobia, which is a psychological or psychosexual shortcoming, is not an ontological fact spread before the realization of homosexuality itself. In a study on 'Working with Homosexuals', Joseph discussed that

Homophobia not only applies to heterosexuals but also homosexuals undergo the same feeling of awe and its serious implications. A homosexual individual, like others, has also grown up in an environment that devalues homosexuality. These internalized negative beliefs and attitudes affect the self-esteem and identity development of a homosexual individual. They may devalue themselves by considering their same sex fantasies and behaviour as 'wrong', 'unnatural', 'immoral' or 'sinful' and involve themselves in self-destructive behaviour. John McLeod in his book *Beginning Postcolonialism* defines assumptions about gender as:

Popular gendered stereotypes circulated such as the effeminate Oriental male or the sexually promiscuous exotic Oriental female. The Oriental male was frequently deemed insufficiently manly and displayed a luxuriousness and foppishness that made him appear a grotesque parody of the (itself stereotyped) 'gentler female sex. The exoticised Oriental female often depicted nude or partially-clothed in hundreds of Western works of art during the colonial period, was presented as an immodest active creature of sexual pleasure who held the key to a myriad of mysterious erotic delights. In both examples, the Oriental is deemed as failing to live up to received gender codes: men by Western standards are meant to be active, courageous, and strong; by the same token, women are meant to be passive, moral, and chaste. But Oriental men and women do not comply with these gender roles; their gender identity is transgressive. (McLeod 45)

Transgender communities have existed in most parts of the world with their own local identities, customs and rituals. They are called 'Baklas' in the Philippines, 'Berdaches' among American Indian tribes and 'Serrers' in Africa, 'Kathoey' in Thailand and 'Moorat' in Pakistan. The word 'hijra' is an Urdu-Hindustani word derived from the semantic Arabic root 'hijr' in its sense of 'leaving one's tribe' and has been borrowed into Hindi. It is translated into English as Eunuch or hermaphrodite where the irregularity of the male genitalia is central to the definition. In Hindi, 'hijra' may be spelled 'hijada', 'hijara', 'hijrah' and is pronounced somewhere between 'heejra' and 'heejda'. They are called by different names in different Indian languages like in Telgu 'Napunsakudu', in Odia 'hinjida', In Punjabi 'Khusra', in Sindhi, 'Khadra', in Tamil, 'Thirunangai and in Gujrati, 'Pavaiyaa'. They are also known as Aravani, Jogappa and Aruvani. The term Shiv-Shakth typically refers to a community of transgenders in Andhra Pradesh. One more respectable term for hijra is 'Kinner'. The term 'Koti' refers to a male who takes receptive or feminine role in sex. Apart from these, abusive slangs like 'Number Nine', 'Six' 'Chakka' are used for them. In this way human sexual diversity or gender variance have been prevalent across the Indian subcontinent, throughout history, and Hindu devotional practices, philosophy and literature emphasized the eroticism of the gods and projected 'Kama' as one of the four aims of life. Ironically, with the advent of British rule, these diverse perspectives of sexuality were suppressed and criminalized in India by introducing section 377 of Indian Penal Code drafted in 1860 which implies all non-procreative sexual activities as unnatural sex against the order of nature because it is a faithful mirror of colonial beliefs. For example the Victorian puritanical system had strong reproductive assumptions about sexuality. In this way, there is disjunction between

culturally defined hijra roles and reality of their lives. After deterioration of their status, Eunuchs were considered as social “outcasts” and “strangers” in the society. In this context, Dr. Rajesh Talwar, a lawyer writes:

Eunuch, generally, looks like a huge and unattractive person, wearing high tone colors and makeup (facial hair is visible) with big hands and feet , nonverbal activities as well as naughty jokes, clapping, speaking vulgar and gesticulate with exaggerated movements of certain body parts (breasts, hips). (23)

But these attempts of suppression at legal and cultural level were partially successful and the legacy of historio-mythical diverse sexual perspectives especially homosexuality in its various forms got nourished in modern movements for equality of sexual minorities. The post-independence period brought home the concept of freedom of expression and speech, equality, liberty of movement and right to life with dignity, respectively through Article 19(1) (a), Article, 19(1) (d) and Article 21 of Constitution of India. Article 15 of the Constitution entails non-discrimination based on caste, creed, language and sex. But the term ‘sex’ is widely used in Constitution in strict anatomical sense of being a man or woman with a deep silence on the existence of sexual minorities. In such a scenario, literature regarding LGBT is quite scant and sought to be suppressed, as was Ismat Chughtai’s most celebrated short story, “Lihaaf” (The Quilt) published in 1942 in the Urdu literary journal *Adab-i-Latif*, was labelled with charges of obscenity for her delicate evocation of the relationship between two women. The Rabindranath Tagore, in his one act play *Chitrangada*, depicts Chitrangada a crossdresser manly princess who falls in love with Arjuna and requests to god of love to make her more womanly but

when Arjuna came to know about her exceptional warrior ship he loves her more than earlier. The play is adapted into a film by director Rituparno Ghosh with the same title *Chitrangada- The Crowning Wish* (2012). *Vadamalli* by novelist Su Samuthiram is the first Tamil novel about an Aravaani. In 1977, Shankuntla Devi published first study of homosexuality in India.

There are a host of prolific literary critics and creative writers such as Hoshang Merchant, Suniti Namjoshi, Manju Kapur, Shobha de, Khuswant Singh, Ruth Vanita, Saleem Kidwai, R. Raj Rao, Ashwini Sukthankar, Eunice de Souza, Ashok Row Kavi, Firdaus Kanga, Kamaleswar and so on. Hoshang Merchant considered as India's first openly gay poet, has produced a plethora of creative writings that include numerous collections of poems, anthologies of gay writings and theorizations on homosexual love. Indo-Anglian Literature depicts the awakening among the modern youth regarding issues of gender and individual assertion regarding sexual orientation. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* registers the silencing of women and their victimization in the patriarchal society. Khushwant Singh's novel *Delhi* portrays Bhagmati, a hijra, who earns her livelihood as a semi-prostitute who is wanted in the diplomatic circles of the city. She is represented in a positive light outspoken, plain-looking with worst dressing style, dominant and yet docile, caring and above all humane, with whom the readers will surely develop a 'liaison,' once they know her inside out. However, the novel also highlights the sexual abuse of "hijras" by different people; some enjoy them like a woman and some others like a boy unnaturally. But Bhagmati is all-purpose man-woman sex-maniac:

When men came to expand their lust on ‘hijras’—it is surprising how many prefer them to women—Bhagmati got more patrons than anyone else in her troupe. She could give herself as a woman; she could give herself as a boy. She also discovered that some men preferred to be treated as women. Though limited in her resources, she learnt how to give them pleasure too. There were no variations of sex that Bhagmati found unnatural or did not enjoy. (30)

The playwright Mahesh Dattani, in his plays —*Seven Steps Round the Fire* and *Dance like a Man*, speaks about the marginalized sections of society in terms of gender and sex which in turn unravels the hypocrisy of the heterosexual society. His play, *Seven Steps Round the Fire* dwells round the theme of eunuchs and presents the injustice against a hijra named Kamla who secretly marries the son of a minister and bears dire consequences resulting into her death. *Dance like a Man* is another classic example of how institutionalized heterosexuality works. Jairaj’s father finds that his son is unnatural because he is not adhering to the prescribed gender role assigned to the males. Another acclaimed author Raj Rao founded the Queer Studies Circle at Pune University. He was one of the first to offer a course on LGBT literature at university level in India in 2007. After years of resistance on the part of his academic superiors he clubbed the Queer literature with Dalit literature and started it under the genre of Alternative Literature. In his novel, *The Boyfriend* (2003), he associates untouchability with homosexuality. The gay protagonist, Yudi who is Brahmin by caste says to a dalit boy Milind, “Homos are no different from Bhangis. Both are Untouchables. So why should I have a problem eating your Jootha?”(81). Another celebrated author Vikram Seth writes an open letter against

section 377 in defence of a truly democratic and plural India. He urges upon the people to collectively fight against laws and policies that abuse human rights and limit fundamental freedoms. In his poem “Dubious” he says that I am like both Jack and Jill and asks about his identity as:

The strict ranks of
 Gay and straight
 What is my status?
 Stray? Or Great (Seth)

An Unsuitable Boy, a memoir by Karan Johar co-authored with Poonam Saxena, is a frank and riveting account of Johar’s life. He was mocked at by his friends mercilessly for being pansy and feminine. In this memoir, Johar openly criticizes India’s criminalization of homosexuality under section 377 of the IPC. He gives a word of caution to homosexuals against coming out of their closets otherwise they will be tortured in different ways under section 377 of IPC. *I Am Vidya* (2008) is an emotionally power packed autobiography by Vidya a transwoman, who acquires her womanhood, facing excruciating pain and despicable behaviour of the society which is a common phenomenon with all the transgenders. They constitute the most marginalized group whose crime is not to meet the traditional social norms of gender binary. Their ambivalence is indicated through the like ‘Actress’ at the top and ‘actor’ at the bottom. *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi: A Candid Biography of India’s First Transgender Principal* by Manobi Bandyopadhyay with Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey is the recent publication on transgender issue. It is a frank account of a transgender trapped in a wrong body. She writes about people who provided her social space like political groups and mentorship

by professors. She went to do a PhD in Bengali literature and became the Principal of a women's college in Krishnanagar, a district town in West Bengal. *The Invisibles: A Tale of Eunuchs* by Zia Jaffrey is a bold, beautifully written, thought provoking book about the hijras of India. The book gives a detailed description of the lives, practices, culture and history of this unfortunate gender and raises pertinent questions about society's attitude, and in many ways illuminates not just the grim world of the eunuchs but also that of India, itself. In this book, Anita, a hermaphrodite is handed over to the hijra community by her parents when she is just four years old because they cannot accept the fact that they do not have a 'normal' child and are crushed by what they see. Another character, Kamal, born as a male, believes herself to be a female and castrates herself, while a third character Jagoman is kidnapped in Delhi, drugged and then castrated against his will. According to Susan Stryker and Whittle, "...in order to counteract the colonization of their bodies by the binary gender system, transsexuals should refuse to pass and instead allow their bodies and life histories to be read so as to disrupt its terms" (Stryker &Whittle 221).

With the emergence of homosexuality in literature and activism of sexual minorities. Hijras, a comparatively large group of homosexuality in India now claims socio-religious identity and political rights. Consequently, Shabnam Mausi became the first transgender Indian or *hijra* elected member of the Madhya Pradesh State Legislative Assembly from 1998 to 2003. In 2003, Hijras in Madhya Pradesh have announced establishing their own political party called "Jeeti Jitayi Politics" (JJP), which literally means 'politics that has already been won'. The party also released an eight-page election manifesto to make the difference from mainstream political parties. In 2009, Delhi High

Court established the redundancy of colonial blow against sodomy. In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council passed its first resolution recognizing LGBT rights because of reports documenting violations of the rights of LGBT people including hate crime and criminalization of homosexuality. As a step forward, transgenders were counted for the first time in census 2011 in India. As per census 2011, their total population is around 500,000 while 'trans' activists estimate the number to be six to seven times higher. Moreover in the case, *Koushal v. Naz Foundation*, the Supreme Court overturned the 2009 Delhi High Court judgment, in December 2013, reinstating the constitutional validity of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code to criminalize all non-procreative sexual acts. It shows the insignificance of a "minuscule fraction of the country's population. But surprisingly, few months later the Apex Court, in response to a writ petition filed by NALSA (National Legal Services Authority) against Union of India and supported by activists like Laxminarayan Tripathi, recognized the transgender community as the 'third gender' on 15th April, 2014 and also instructed the states to provide reservation for them in employment and education sector. This judgement was hailed as a human rights document for the recognition of stigmatized transgender community. In this regard, Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan and A.K. Sikri said, "Recognition of trans-genders as a third gender is not a social or medical issue but a human rights issue". (SC)

Present research explores the sexual violence of the most invisible, unheard and sexual outcaste transgender community and their resistance as a particular sexual minority through two self- narratives- *A Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* by A Revathi and *Me Laxmi Me Hijra* by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi. People commonly believe that hijras

(transgender) are somehow psychologically different from normal people, not just different but damaged and deviant as well. In this way, these two autobiographies not only captures revolt against the rigid taboos and conventions, but also reflect the overpowering impact of prevailing postmodernist thought of celebration of differences. A Revathi, the first Hijra to write about transgender issues, served as the Director of the NGO 'Sangama' which works for the cause of sexual minorities and sex workers. Her recent book *A Life in Trans Activism* describes her journey from office assistant to Director in the NGO Sangama. In the second part of the book, she offers her experiences of marginalization, courage, resistance and triumph of being 'transmen'. She also worked in a national award winning film 'Navarasa' centered on transgender community in Tamilnadu. Her autobiography originally written in Telugu entitled *Nijam Cheptunna: Oka Hijra Atmakatha* was translated into English by feminist historian V. Geetha. In her narrative, she dares to pen the most gruesome and difficult times of her life journey from her hometown Namakkal in Tamil Nadu to Delhi to Bombay to home and finally to Banglore as a hijra, with utmost frankness. She was born as a male and her name was Doraisamy who felt plagued and tormented for being trapped in the female body inside and male outside from childhood. From a very young age, she enjoyed the tasks that were assigned to her sister more than the assignments given to her brothers and always played the typical feminine games. She explains, "I loved to sweep the front-yard clean and draw the kolam every morning. I even helped my mother in the kitchen, sweeping and swabbing, washing vessels" (Revthi 3). At heart, she feels the rapture to be woman: "I walked and sang and danced to my heart's content, imagining myself to be a girl" (5). In school the thought of being a girl haunts her: "In class, I would sit staring at the girls,

taking note of the way their braids fell, the intricate knot of their colourful ribbons, the jasmine and kanakambaram they wore in their hair, and their skirts and blouses. I longed to be like them and suffered that I could not dress so” (6). She describes her anguish as, “I wondered why God had chosen to inflict this peculiar torture on me, and why he could not have created wholly male or wholly female. Why I a flawed am being, I wondered often” (15). On a special Mariamman festival she dressed up as a girl for dance to a salutation to the gods. When she came off the stage, people called, “Disguise! Disguise! Female Disguise!”(16). Finding herself reluctant to shed the female clothes, she states her plight as: “As I re-emerged in my man’s garb, I felt that I was in disguise, and that I had left my real self behind” (16). Fed up with constant torments and abuses like ‘mother fucking sissy’, ‘girl-boy’, and ‘number 9’ by family and community, he ran away from his home to Delhi to join the people like him. There, he met hijras and learnt all rituals and customs of hijra community. Ultimately, he passes through the ritual of emasculation called ‘nirvana’ with excruciating pain and transformed into desired, felt, role i.e. feminine, woman. In this way by putting their lives into risk they undergo non-medical castrations to synchronize their physical self with their psychological self. In this context, anthropologist Serena Nanda says, “The meaning of the word nirvana runs parallel to Hindu scriptural condition of calmness and absence of desire as well as liberation from the finite human consciousness and a consequent move into a higher plane of consciousness” (Nanda 26). This condition is called rebirth by both Hindu Scriptures and the Hijras who are devoted to Bahuchara Mata. But this rebirth is not a state of ecstasy for hijra. A. Revathi portrays her sordid life at her guru’s home where she

has to face constant threats and violence from street men. She explains the brutal experiences as:

Once a large dark rowdy tried to force me into having sex with him. I ran into hut, but he followed me... I felt trapped and not knowing what to do, I had to accede to his demands. I held onto his legs and pleaded when he wanted me to do things that I did not like doing. (He wanted me to have anal sex with him). He spat abuse at me and forced me into the act. When I screamed in pain and yelled for my guru, he shut my mouth with one of his hands, whipped out a knife with the other and threatened to take it to my throat. I was hurting all over and yet had to give in and do as he told me the skin down there felt abraded and I was bleeding. Unmindful he left but only after he had snatched my purse away from me. (108)

She also tells that hijras are deceived by men who praise their beauty and show them dream of family life to enslave them as the bread earner. She describes:

Hijras who suffered from sexually transmitted diseases and did not receive proper medical care and therefore died; those who had to put up with the capricious demands of clients who paid them a mere fifteen or fifty rupees and who used them as they wished, brutally and left them with bite marks on their bodies, as if they had been bitten and abandoned by mad dogs; those young with great sorrow in their hearts who yet stood on the streets with powdered faces and painted lips, smiling at prospective customers. (133)

Hijras are not considered for mainstream jobs due to lack of education and unusual non-conforming lifestyle which is unacceptable for the working environment. They, because of their feminine gesture, do not have access to any job. They are always kicked out from the job on the grounds of polluting the job environment. Those who get jobs eventually get dismissed when employers learn of their feminine attitudes. In some cases, Hijras are targeted with verbal, physical and sexual abuse at workplaces for which they rarely expect any justice. As a result, the employers prefer not to appoint hijras who, according to them, cause social pollution. Most employers deny employment for even qualified and skilled transgender people. It is beautifully narrated in *Truth About Me*:

If we are to employ you, you'd be the ruin of all the boys here. If you worked for us, we'd have to shut shop, and steal away, a towel on our heads! We can't employ people like you. What do you know anyway? Get lost go to Mumbai or Delhi and be with those like you. You're all fit only for dancing on the roads, and having cheap, riotous fun! (161)

Desperate poverty and unemployment led her to take up traditional hijra work i.e. 'badhai' work to make her ends meet. But the meagre earnings from 'badhai' work further made her to beg from shops with relentless harassment and unending insults. Further, she took sex work and got assaulted at the hands of fellow hijras, drunken men and the police. In this context, A. Revathi says, "It seems like there is nothing for us hijras to do but sex work. We lack the education to do much else, there's no one to offer us work. Sex work brings with it all kinds of problems-we suffer at the hands of both the police and rowdies" (240). She tells her experience of earning livelihood:

To earn that, I suffered at the hands of all sorts of men. I did not mind climbing the steps of the police station several times. I got beaten, tortured. I earned even when I had to sell my body, become a prostitute! I earned by dancing in all sorts of places till my feet bled... I actually danced up and down streets to earn that money. I went out every day to earn and was never sure when I left my house in the morning if I would come back in one piece. I knew I would have to deal with rowdies, with the police, with all these kicks and beatings. And for all my pains, I got called a prostitute, whore, number nine, hijra, pottai. (252-53)

They saw their life as fate “written on their forehead,” and accepted with resignation whatever insults or abuses were meted out to them. They worked all day, every day, at whatever they did to earn a living, whether begging alms from shops, or serving in bath houses, or at various domestic chores within their households, which included cooking, cleaning, or small tasks such as grinding spices, which they did for outsiders to earn a few extra rupees. These Hijras had few interests or social contacts; some were even relatively isolated within the Hijra community itself. Sporadic success stories of self-employed Hijras who run food shops, or organise cultural programs are reported in some states. However, those are exceptions. Lack of livelihood options is a key reason for a significant proportion of transgender people to choose or continue to be in sex work with its associated HIV and health-related risks. A. Revathi says:

Since law and society in this country do not acknowledge our right to live as we wish.... Today sex change operations are carried out in few private clinics, where surgical procedures are seldom followed, and which do not

extend the sort of care we require afterwards. Many of us end up suffering all sorts of infections. (262)

This autobiography deals with Revathi's fight against brutal violence, hate at home and outside home to find a life of dignity. She herself writes in the Preface: "...that by publishing my life story, larger changes can be achieved. I hope this book of mine will make people see that hijras are capable of more than just begging and sex work." (v)

Further, the chapter studies celebrity Laxmi Narayan Tripathi's autobiography *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi* originally written in Marathi by her disciple Vaishali Rode later translated into English by R. Raj Rao and P.G Joshi. She is a transgender activist, Hindi film actress and Bharatanayam dancer. She is first transgender person to represent Asia Pacific in the UN in 2008. She featured a project 'Bolo' a documentary series about LGBT Indians that has been released on DVD. She also starred in 'Queens! Destiny of Dance', an award winning Bollywood movie about hijras. Apart from it, she runs her own organization named 'Astitiva' which works to promote the welfare of sexual minorities. In her recent book *Red Lipstic: The Men in My Life (2016)*, she feels good that she is beyond the binary and questions the notion of heterosexuality as, "If you think about it a woman is complete. She is xx and therefore complete. It is the man who is xy and hence has the woman in him. This manliness, then is just a show, nothing but a convenient construct a pretence to keep patriarchy alive to keep women tamed (Laxmi & Pande 6). She captures their unique experiences and advocates the rights of transgender. The title of Laxmi's autobiography foregrounds her hijra identity using 'Me' which is associated with the public self rather than 'I' which is more private. In her interview with Jerry Pinto in Jaipur Literature Festival, she says, "if we use 'roti for roti why not hijra

for hijra'. She says, *"I am neither a woman nor a man. I am a hijra."* Tripathi boldly states that she is a hijra who enjoys femininity and that is how she wishes to be accepted. She has no qualms admitting it. Hailing the remarkable Supreme Court verdict, she believes that India has recognized transgender rights. While the journey is far from complete, the foundation of this journey remains in her firm individual self.

It is also argued by Mark Currie in the chapter entitled "The Manufacture of Identities" of his book as:

Identity is relational, meaning that it is not to be found inside a person but that it inheres in the relations between a person and others... in other words personal identity is not really contained in the body at all; it is structured by or constituted by difference....identity is not within us because it exists only as narrative. Two things are meant by this: that the only way to explain who we are is to tell our own story to select key events which characterize us and organize them according to the formal principles of narrative-to externalize ourselves as if talking of someone else and for the purposes of self-representation; but also that we learn how to self- narrate from the outside from other stories and particularly through the process of identification with other characters. (Currie, 25)

In her autobiography, she defines her struggle of being and advocates for the transgender community as a whole. She says that she loved dance since childhood and was always selected by the teachers to perform on the stage. But the patriarchal and misogynistic culture sees dancing as a womanly pursuit and she was called and teased by names like 'homo' and 'chakka'. She tells that she was sexually exploited at the tender age of seven.

Later she was molested again and again by older cousins and their accomplices. She defines her plight as, “These sexual assaults transformed me. I became secretive and incommunicative, hiding my feelings from my family and friends. Suddenly, it felt as if my childhood was over and I had grown up before my time” (7). She emphasizes that social exclusion not only generates tension, violence and disruption but also perpetuates inequality and deprivation in Society. She tells that ‘hijras’ live on the fringes of Indian society and face discrimination in every phase of life. The discrimination starts from their own family. Their parents think that they will bring disgrace to family as they cannot beget children and extend the family and are unable to take care of them in old age. Some parents may out rightly disown and evict their own child for crossing the prescribed gender norms of the society and for not fulfilling the roles expected from a male child. Laxmi says, “trans-men and trans-women are often shown the door by their families. Their friends boycott them. She tells that even her own mother, when she first came to know about Laxmi’s transformation, reacts that, “No one in fourteen generations has done such thing in our family. We are a noble, high-caste Brahmin family. Didn’t you think of our self-respect? Your sister is married. What will her husband’s family think of us?”(48). She also depicts the dual nature of the society and hijra parents as, “Supermen are okay as long as they are born to others. No one wants superman in their own homes. My parents wanted me to lead a normal life. They wanted me to get married and beget children.” (49). In such a situation, parents must come forward with an informed attitude guided by the respect for all the children, irrespective of gender. Similarly, society has a larger role to play so that the parents are not mocked at. It is also depicted in the Hindi novel *Teesri Tali* by Pradeep Sourabh who says:

हम सब असल में एक सामन्ती मानसिकता या कहें कि लिंगधारी मानसिकता वाले समाज में रह रहे हैं. हमारे भीतर लिंग को लेकर गहरे तक गर्व का भाव है. यही कारण है की मानसिक रूप से ग्रस्त बच्चे को तो हम 70-70 साल तक करोड़ों रूपये खर्च करके पलते है लेकिन लिंग अस्पष्टता वाले बच्चे को हम तुरंत परिवार से बाहर कर देते हैं. हमारा पौरुष और हमारी मर्दानगी अच्छे काम के बजाय जब तक मूँछों से तय होंगी तब तक इस मानसिकता से छुटकारा संभव नहीं है.

(Sourabh 7)

She explains that most of the transgender people are school dropouts. They are not granted education in schools, colleges or universities. Over ninety percent of the hijras have not even completed their secondary education. She laments, "...Employment is not a word that normally exists in the vocabulary of a hijra" (Laxmi, 62-63). Hence, they are left to do only a few things for survival. They have limited career prospects such as, "begging, singing, dancing, and sex work. Can a hijra in India ever aspire to be doctor, engineer, teacher, journalist, or business manager? The answer is resounding No" (110). It is believed that they are endowed with the power to confer fertility on newlyweds and new-born children as Uma confides:

Perceived as the lowest of the low, they yearn for family and love. The two events in mainstream Hindu culture where their presence is acceptable- marriage and birth- ironically are the very same Privileges denied to them by man and nature. (Laxmi 110)

Hence, they get employed only in rare occurrence and the salaries they receive are minimal. They routinely face demotions, unfavourable conditions of employment and discriminatory terminations due to employees discomfort with them. In such situations,

“They lose their jobs and receive death threats. Many switch jobs deliberately, preferring the anonymity of a new job in a new city, where nobody knows them” (88). Left with very few economic options, they resort to sex work, drugs and begging as their destiny. These people are generally considered repositories of the virus and as high risk groups for HIV/AIDS because they do not practice safe and hygienic sexual practices. Though the usage of condoms is insisted by them to protect themselves as well as their clients from HIV/STD, the people involved in this flesh trade are still prone to getting sexually transmitted or skin diseases in absence of hygienic and safe practices. Even in hospitals and clinics, many transgender and transsexual people are discriminated against, and not given the respect or dignity that every human being deserves. Due to hostile environment, Hijras do not prefer to visit government hospitals or any other health care centre. For instance, there is no space available for them, say in hospital wards. The authorities do not admit them in women’s ward because women do not feel comfortable or free in their presence and in men’s ward they face sexual abuse. Thus, Transgender people face unique barriers when accessing public or private health services in accessing HIV testing, antiretroviral treatment and sexual health services. This makes them feel like no less than the untouchables of past. Laxmi in her autobiography says, “When they went to the District Civil Hospital in Thane (or to any other hospital for that matter), no one touched them- neither the doctors, nor the nurses, nor even the ward boys and ayahs. They were pariah” (91). In many private health care clinics and also in government clinics, the discrimination still exists in treating a transgender patient. A transsexual woman may not be addressed with proper gender identity and she may not be treated with dignity. Medical fraternity still needs to completely understand the issues of transgender

community so that they may treat them with respect and dignity. Only the National AIDS Prevention and Control Policy recognizes sexual minority and homosexual in the context of identifying 'high risk behaviour'. They are often beaten and raped. They're also denied access to healthcare, housing, and employment outside their traditional spheres. The effect of this dangerous work and the community's limited access to health and welfare services can be seen in the staggering fact that HIV rates among hijras stand at 18% in Mumbai, while the rate among the wider population is only 0.3%. Recently Supreme Court in the verdict of 'Third Gender' recognition directed the Centre and State Governments to operate separate HIV Sero-surveillance Centres for Hijras/ Transgenders. The apex court has also asked the government to provide transgenders separate public toilets and other facilities. In 2015, India HIV/AIDS Alliance, initiated a new programme called 'Wajood' which literally means "Existence" It is an initiative to empower people to realize their sexual and reproductive health rights.

It is often contended that transgender people often live crazy lives and are confused about their gender identity because of their physiology. They face gross human rights violation in forms of abduction, arbitrary arrests, detention, beatings and gang-rape by law enforcement agencies and others. There have also been reports of molestation, both on physical and psychological levels, of people with non-heteronormative gender expressions and attributes. Even the murders of transgenders go unprosecuted and unpunished as Laxmi tells about her *chela* Subhadra who went missing and was later found dead. But the case was finally closed for lack of evidence- "A hijra's death, nay murder, didn't seem to matter to anyone" (57). Out of the fear of police, she finds herself helpless even to claim the body who "would arrive at the most unearthly

hour and randomly pick anyone of us up for questioning” (57). Further, Laxmi explains that even after death their bodies are not treated in proper way:

The funeral of a hijra is performed late in the night and she is beaten with slippers. The unearthly hour is chosen, it is said, so that none should witness the funeral...when carrying the corpse of a dead hijra to the graveyard, we shed our women’s clothing and dress instead in shirt and pant, or in kurta and pajama. We do this to hide the fact that the deceased is a hijra. (158)

Both autobiographies are the testimony to the collective trauma of the transgender community in terms of sexual abuse, attempted suicide, and problems of livelihood, health issues and use of aggression as a means of survival, and seeks to dispel myths about the hijras and help us shed our prejudices. Overcoming 'exclusion' constitutes the most elementary pre-requisite for the building of a democratic society. Both authors come out with an alternative literature to establish trans-subculture as a literary field of study. In this context, Dick Hebdige, an influent theorist of contemporary popular culture, seeks to define non hegemonic cultures as ‘subcultures’:

Subcultures form up in the space between surveillance and the evasion of surveillance, it translates the fact of being under scrutiny into the pleasure of being watched. It is hiding in the light. The subcultural response is neither simply affirmation nor refusal neither commercial exploitation nor genuine revolt. It is neither simply resistance against some external order nor straightforward conformity with the parent culture.it is both a declaration of independence of otherness of alien intent, a refusal of

anonymity of subordinate status. It is an insubordination. And at the same time it is also a confirmation of the fact of powerlessness, a celebration of impotence. Subcultures are both a play for attention and a refusal. (Qtd. in Woods 191-92)

These trans-writers and activists invite us to rethink the negative perceptions, attitudes, and practices that affect their lives. Trans-persons should be taken seriously, at least by those whose work may have some bearing (directly or indirectly) on their lives. For non-trans feminist and queer theorists this does not mean listening to and learning from ‘trans-persons’. It also means thinking, writing, theorizing—all parts of a process of making sense of the challenges that ‘trans’ experiences pose for the gender order as well as to other social, legal, medical, and state institutions

Today, transgender activism has become more visible, policymakers have begun to respond to demands for more equitable treatment. We can see in general election of 2014, there were at least four transgender contestants- Bharathi Kannamma from Madurai, Uttam Senapati from the Nagpur parliamentary constituency, Sonam Kinnar contested against Rahul Gandhi in Amethi; and Baseer Kinnar against Modi in Varanasi. The honourable Supreme Court in its historic decision in 2014 conferred the transgenders with the identity of ‘third gender’. It was supported by various social, religious, academic and spiritual leaders. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the international movement ‘Art of Living,’ said, “Every individual has both male and female in them. Sometimes one dominates sometimes other, it is all fluid” (Ravi). He also tweeted that lord Ayyappa was born as Hari- Hara out of intercourse between the gods Shiva and Vishnu when the latter temporarily took a female form. In this context, *Srimad Bhagavad-Gita* says that

sometimes you may think yourself a man, sometimes a chase woman and sometimes a neutral eunuch. *Rigveda* one of the four canonical sacred texts of Hinduism emphatically establishes that *Vikruti Evam Prakriti* (what seems unnatural is also natural). Devdutt Pattanaik, an Indian author of mythology supports gay rights in India. Tamil Nadu is first Indian state to introduce Transgender welfare policy and Board in 2008 to include them in mainstream. According to this policy, they can access free sex reassignment surgery SRS in government hospital, a free housing program, admission in government colleges and alternative sources of livelihood through self-help groups SHGs. India's first helpline for the LGBTQIA community was formed in 2011 at Madurai. In July 2014, two important books *Gender Queer* and *LGBTQIA* were published. India's first transgender school named Sahaj International opened in Kochi.

It is encouraging to note that Padmini Prakash became India's first transgender TV anchor and Kalki Subramaniam, the founder of Sahodari Foundation is known as India's first transgender entrepreneur. The appointment of Amruta Alpesh Soni, as a Transgender Advocacy Officer for the states of Punjab, Haryana and Chattisgarh for the National AIDS Control Project is regarded to be the first step towards curbing stereotypes against transgender community. Apsara Reddy, is the most iconic and inspirational transgender of India and the only trans- personality to head several Newspapers across the world like BBC WORLD SERVICE, The Hindu, Commonwealth Secretariat in London, New Indian Express and Deccan Chronicle. Anjali Lama became the first transgender model to grace the catwalk at India's premiere fashion event. K Prithika Yashini became the first transgender to be appointed as a police officer in Tamil Nadu. In the recent past, initiating a step towards facilitating transgender, Facebook introduced

dozens of options for users to specify their gender including custom gender option as well as allowing users to select between three pronouns him, her or their. Nowadays, internet has become an important cultural and political tool for members of minority gender and sexual groups. It allows them easy access to public discussion and news broadcasting. Much information can be disseminated through sites such as <http://www.queerty.com>. Later, Facebook added a gender neutral option for the users to identify family members. Similarly, Google Plus has introduced a new gender category which generates custom text field and a pronoun field and also provides users with an option to limit as to who can see their gender. In this way transgender studies is the latest area of academic inquiry to grow out of the exciting nexus of queer theory, feminist studies and the history of sexuality. Despite all, there are various complexities and nuances associated to Hijra. In his article “Being a Eunuch”, Siddharth Narrain provides a detailed account of the laws used to victimize the community:

The violence that the hijra community faces from the police can be traced to the 1897 amendment to the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, which was subtitled ‘An Act for Registration of Criminal Tribes and Eunuchs’. Under this law, the local government was required to keep a register of the names and residences of all eunuchs who were ‘reasonably suspected of kidnapping or castrating children or committing offences under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. (14)

In India, the Hijras constitute a close-knit community in cities and townships. The law in India is a powerful force to control the Hijra community. It criminalizes the

very existence of Hijras, making the police an omnipresent reality in their lives. Apart from criminal laws which have invited the unwarranted authority of the police in their lives, civil law has not heeded the demands of citizenship and equality for the Hijras in India. But article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (to which India is a party), refers to privacy and states that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home and correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation. Recently, Tiruch Siva, a member of parliament, moved the popular bill to ensure that transgender community gets benefits similar to reserved communities like SC/ST. Recently, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016 was introduced in Lok Sabha. It has seen much opposition from the 'trans' community as major provisions pertaining to a rights framework have been diluted. An analysis of the weaknesses of the new bill highlights the need for further discussion. Post-modernist theories and approaches engage the academia in deliberations over differing viewpoints on social, economic, political and religious issues. A. Revathi, in her *The Truth About Me*, finds a new dimension to her life and her true self when she opens herself up for a wider world with wider perception. In this regard, Robert Bittner, a PhD student in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University (SFU), says that a young [LGBT] person has always legitimate desire or longing to be considered normal.

Recently, two Indian gay activists, Sridhar Rangayan founder of KASHISH International Queer Film Festival and TV actor Manish Gandhi were selected to be part of British Council's first five films for freedom Global List of 33 inspiring people who are changing social perceptions about LGBTQ communities throughout the world.

Rangayan thinks that books and movies are key elements in changing mentalities. LBT helpline is the brainchild of Shobna Kumar, founder of online queer literature book store Queer Ink. *Pink Pages* by Udhyan Dhar is India's largest online LGBT magazine. Several NGOs and government organizations like the Naz Foundation (India) Trust, the National AIDS Control Organization, Law Commission of India, Union Health Ministry, National Human Rights Commission and Niti Ayog are actively engaged in the policy frameworks and discussions to ensure tolerance and social equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Sangama, an organisation working with hijras, kothis and sex workers in Bangalore, has played a key role to organise hijras. Its services include organizing a drop-in centre for hijras and kothis; conducting a series of public rallies and marches; legal assistance in case of police harassment; and establishing links with other social movements. On 15 April, 2015, Lenskart, along with the Transgender and Transsexual community across India marked the first anniversary of landmark decision of supreme court recognizing 'Third Gender' by conducting a procession at Jantar Mantar. They decided to pledge their eyes to thank for this eye of identity recognition. The number of pledges that were received crossed over 16,000 and the community has vowed to bring this number up to 2 lakh, making it the single largest pledge of the country. Justice Sikri and Justice Radhakrishnan, in turn, handed over the pledges to Eye Bank of India. As a historic step towards inclusion, Indian train network made history by employing transgender workers.

In the present age dominated by social media and cyber activities, transgender are finding encouraging space. There are various thought provoking movies to raise questions about the social status of transpersons such as, Mahesh Bhatt movies *Tamanna* and *Sadak*

which break the stereotypes against hijra. In *Tamanna*, Tikku (Paresh Rawal), a eunuch gets Oscar award for bringing up an abandoned girl Tamanna (Pooja Bhatt). In a recent Kannad film by B.S. Lingadevaru, 'Naanu Avanalla', Avalu, celebrates the lives of transgenders who survive the politics of homosocial normativity. There are other short films like 'Others', 'Kinnar lok ka Sach', 'Sach', 'Taali' and 'Aadhe Adhure' which represent the pain and suffering of transgenders. In August, 2015, You Tube channel 'Yathartha Pictures' created a music video featuring 7 hijras in different outfits of various professions singing National Anthem of India. This video went viral for being the first national anthem video sung by hijras in India. The hijras featuring in the video were brought together by the Humsafar Trust, a Mumbai based NGO. Y-film, on 6th Jan, 2016, launched India's first transgender band, the Brooke Bond Red Label 6 Pack Band with song 'Hum Hai Happy' to further the cause of gender equality in India. Later, Sonu Nigam released a brand new song 'Sab Rab De Bande' to make the world a more welcoming place for transgender community. It is inspired by beautiful couplet of *Guru Granth Sahib* which gives the heart rending message that all are equal in the eyes of Almighty irrespective caste, creed, color and gender. All should practice the religion of humanity which is the ultimate religion. The song goes like this:

Awal allah noor upaya

Kudrat ke sab bande

Ek noor te sab jag upjeya

...

Kon bhale ko mande

...

Sab rab de bande (x8)

Ye pattiyan ugte hue zaat na dekhe

Rang na badle dharam ko leke

Isse kuch to seekhein

Chal chai peete hain

Na koi right na koi wrong

Bas insaniyat apni kaum

Yo Tohseef Tejas Tom

Chal chai peete hain

Ye zingadi hai sidhi sidhe

Simple iske funde

Galat fehmi mein kyun jeeni

Chal chai peete hain

Arey sabka ek cup

Ek hi chamach se dudh

Sabki ek jaisi cheeni

Chal chai peete hain

Sab rab de bande (x8)

Ek hi maati se usne to

Aadam zaat banayi

Kisne yahan banye Hindu

Muslim Sikh Isayi (x2)

Oye tod de phera deen dharam da

...

Khul jayein sab fande

Sab rab de bande (x20)

Awal allah noor upaya. (Lyrics written by Nishant)

Therefore, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the conceptualization of gender, sex, and identity categories became more crucial with the emergence of sexology as an organized field of study. According to Whittle, "... The most controversial issue in sex and gender theory. Is the basis of gender identity essential and biologically based or is it socially constructed? (Whittle 2006, XIII). In this context, the existential writer, Nietzsche advises to 'become what you are'. It is the need of the hour to reinvestigate and remould the social myths to save humanity from chaos. It is essential to have coordination between social conventions and consciousness of human dignity. With all these positive vibes, the present research hopes that this legal recognition will counter the social stigma that has plagued transgender people for decades and will further the cause of their visibility as envisioned through the historic judgment recognizing transgender people. The Supreme Court of India observed:

... there seems to be no reason why a transgender must be denied of basic human rights which includes Right to life and liberty with dignity, Right to Privacy and freedom of expression, Right to Education and Empowerment, Right against violence, Right against Exploitation and Right against Discrimination....Now it's time for us to recognize this and to extend and interpret the Constitution in such a manner to ensure a dignified life of transgender people. All this can be achieved if the beginning is made with the recognition that TG as Third Gender. (SC)

There's a gender in your brain and a gender in your body because for ninety nine percent of people, those things are in alignment. For transgender people, they're mismatched. That's all it is. It's not complicated, it's not a neurosis. It's a mix-up. It's a birth defect, like a cleft palate. An inspirational song by a German folksinger and educational psychologist, Peter Aslop's song "It's Only a Wee Wee" goes like this:

As soon as you're born, grownups check where you pee

And then they decide just how you're s'posed to be

Girls pink and quiet, boys noisy and blue

Seems like a dumb way to choose what you'll do

Well it's only a wee wee, so what's the big deal?

...

Now girls must use makeup, girl's names and girl's clothes

And boys must use sneakers, but not pantyhose

The grownups will teach you the rules to their dance

And if you get confused, they'll say "Look in your pants"

...

Boys must not cry, and girls must make cake

It's all very formal and I think it smells

Let's all be abnormal and act like ourselves.

There's better things to discuss! (Peter Aslop)

On the basis of the discussion in the chapter it may be concluded that one needs to open one's mind to be more rational to the existential questions like 'hijra identity'. Homophobia and sexism is not the matter of your genitals or with whom you sleep, rather how you perform the self in ways that are contradictive to the hetero-normative framework which is just common. The chapter highlights the urgent need for public awareness to alleviate the often violent repudiation of 'trans-people'. A comprehensive sex-education program should be included in the school curriculum to alter the heterosexist bias in education. It will foster a liberal outlook with regard to matters of sexuality, including orientation, identity and behaviour of all sexualities. The Press Council of India and other watchdog institutions of various popular media (including film, video and TV) should issue guidelines for the sensitive treatment of these issues.

Besides, early western bio-medical sciences looked at the 'hermaphroditic people' as freaks or 'aberrant cases' needing medicalization and correction today. The World Health Organization removed 'homosexuality' from its list of mental illnesses in 1981(www.who.org). Homophobia has serious implications on the personal life of a homosexual individual. It manifests itself both at the societal and personal levels, differentiated as societal homophobia and internalized homophobia. Researchers are of

the opinion that there are vast opportunities for homosexual activities within the family and social network. Due to social distances between male and female, men seek pleasure in relationship with another male. These activities are invisible and denied. Researchers say that Indian culture is highly homosocial where displaying affection, body contact, taking bath together and sharing of beds among adults, school friends and relatives are common and socially acceptable, however it is non-penetrative in nature. The pandemic of AIDS has made homophobia a more serious problem. Despite all these constructed myths and phobia there is need to celebrate and recognize the diversity of creation which also includes diversity of biological sex, gender and orientation that forms queer community. The recognition of non- gender confirming people is as essential as to recognize the intermediate states between day (light) and night (dark), land (dry) and water (sea). But day can be dull and dark and night can be full moonlit. Similarly, apart from land (dry) and water (sea), there are rivers, lakes, deltas, planets, and galaxies because all are made in the image of God. Hijras who are considered born –clappers can get clap for themselves.

Works Cited

- Baxi, Upendra. "Forword" *Human Rights Violations against the Transgender Community*. Ed. PUCL-K Karnataka: PUCL, 2003. 5 Web.20 May 2017.
<<http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/PUCL/PUCL%20Report.pdf>>
- Bhargava, Rajeev & Acharya Ashok, eds. *Political Theory: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Pearson, 2014.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Currie, Mark. *Postmodern Narrative Theory*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011. Print.
- Doniger, Wendy. *Splitting the Difference: Gender and Myth in Ancient Greece and India*. Chicago: CUP, 1999. Web. 15 May 2016.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality – Volume I: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Sexuality and Psychology of Love*. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1997. Web. 15 May 2015.
- Geetha, V. *Patriarchy*. Calcutta: STREE, 2007. Print.
- Goel, Ina. "Beyond the Gender Binary" *EPW*. XLIX. 15 (2014): 77-78. Web. 15 May 2016.
- Haenfler, Ross. *Subcultures: The Basics*. London & New York: Routledge, 2014. Print.

- Hines, Sally. *Transforming Gender: Transgender Practices of Identity, Intimacy and Care*. UK: Policy Press, 2007. Print.
- Kumar, Puspesh. "Queering Indian Sociology: A Critical Engagement." *CAS Working Paper Series*. Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, May 2014 CAS/WP/14-7. Pp.1-29. Web.15 June 2015.
- Laxmi & Pooja Pande. *Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life*. UK: Penguin, 2016. Web.
- McLeod, John. *Beginning Postcolonialism*. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2011. Print.
- Merchant, Hoshang. *The Man Who Would Be Queen*. India: Penguin, 2011. Print
- Mukherjee, Sudeshna. "The Curious Case of Shanthi: The Issue of Transgender in Indian Sports." *Rupkatha Journal*. VI. 3 (2014): 124-125. Web. 1 May 2015.
- Nanda, Serena. *Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990. P- xxiii-xxiv.
- Narrain, S. "Being a Eunuch". *Frontline*. (2003). Web. 15 May 2016.
- Nayar, Pramod K. *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism to Ecocriticism*. Delhi: Pearson, 2010. Print.
- Rao, R. Raj. *The Boyfriend*. India: Penguin, 2003. Print.
- Raymond, Janice. *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979. Web. 15 May, 2016
- Revathi. A. Trans. V.Geetha. *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2010. Print.
- Singh, Khushwant. *Delhi: A Novel*. India: Penguin, 1990.
- Sourabh, Pradeep. *Teesri Tali*. New Delhi: Vani Parkashan, 2011. Print.

Stryker, Susan and Stephen Whittle, eds. *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Talwar, Rajesh. *The Third Sex and Human Rights*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1999. Print.

The Supreme Court of India, Civil Appellate Jurisdiction, Civil Appeal No.10972 of 2013. 10 June 2016.

The Supreme Court of India, Civil Original Jurisdiction, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 400 of 2012 with Writ Petition (Civil) No. 604 of 2013, 15 April 2014.

<http://supremecourtfindia.nic.in/outtoday/wc40012.pdf>

Tripathi, Laxmi Narayan. *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi*. Trans. R. Raj Rao & P. G. Joshi. New Delhi: Oxford, 2015. Print.

Vanita, Ruth & Saleem Kidwai, eds. *Same Sex Love in India*. India: Penguin, 2008. Print.

Woods, Tim. *Beginning Postmodernism*. 2nded. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2011. Print.

Electronic Sources:

Nishant. "Sab Rab De Bande". Web. 16 May, 2016.

<<http://songolyrics.in/singles/sab-rab-de-bande>>

Peter Aslop, "It's Only a Wee Wee" Web. 10 June, 2016.

< [http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/11/germany-has-an-official//third/gender/281254/](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/11/germany-has-an-official-third/gender/281254/) >

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/what-hinduism-buddhism-sikhism-and-jainism-really-think-lgbti-people-will-surprise-you240415/#gs.X_AL_Yc

Accessed on 10 June, 2016

Vikram, Seth. "Love Out Lawed or Loled" Youtube. Santanu Dutta. 28 Jan, 2014. Web accessed 15 /June, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzyZWCy8ZME>

Yogyakarta Principles: The Application of International Human Rights in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Web. 15 May, 2015.

http://www.yogyakartaprinciples.org/principles_en.htm