

The Catastrophe Of Third Sex In Fourth World Literature With Reference To Vidya's *I Am Saravanan Vidya*

R. Maha Lakshmi

MA (Eng)., MA (J&MC)., M.Phil,
Secretary Transgender Resource Centre,
Madurai, Tamilnadu

*Abstract: Society is intertwined with many different customs, cultures and communities. A society is expected to be united to remain unique. Unfortunately, the society marginalises its own people for some irrational reasons based on religion, race, caste, creed and gender. Transgender community is one among those marginalized community which is left abandoned and unnoticed. Vidya, a transwoman broke the glass ceiling of irrational tradition with her autobiography *I am Saravanan Vidya*. Her autobiography represents her whole community and throws light upon the darker side of the society. This paper made an attempt to decipher her words and brings out the catastrophes faced by the transgenders. It also tries to drag the transgenders into the subaltern studies of English literature.*

Keywords: Marginalisation, Transgender, Catastrophes.

“To err is divine too”

When the world is being torn apart in the name of gender discrimination, we remain blind to the trauma of the third gender – who remain degenerated all through their journey in this world. ‘Marginalization’ is a word without life for it stands as a symbol of the inhumanity of human life. The word represents the darker side of human beings. In the name of race, caste, gender and creed, the society marginalized its own fellow beings. Francis Bacon said ‘Man seekth in society comfort, use and protection’ but in current scenario, a lesser privileged sector is not being given comfort, accessibility and protection by the same society it belongs to. Indians believe in the theory of karma that suppressed people had been sinners in their previous births and reap what they had sowed in the present birth. The paradoxical ideology is that one who makes others suffer in the society is considered ‘good’ and the one who bears the pain is considered a sinner or culprit. Nature has ever been a bountiful mother, unbiased in bestowing her blessings on all her creations. Some people in the society are not only marginalized, suppressed and neglected but they are also completely forgotten by the other members of the society.

The creation of God which cannot have the quality of accepting others as fellow beings shows that “To err is not only human but divine too”. The stereotypic belief is that the word ‘human beings’ consists of only two genders: male and female. There is another gender which is left out, forgotten and later vanished from the human mind and that is transgender. It is not the physique through which the gender should be identified. The gender has to be identified through thought process and mind. Sometimes it happens that a male’s soul is trapped in a female’s body and vice versa. It is not abnormal but quite natural. Such souls belong to transgender community who struggle hard to assert their gender even when their life is at stake. It has been said that around one million transgenders are living in India but the pathetic condition is that they are devoid of their own identity and been doubly marginalized by the society. If a transgender is born in a marginalized community, the child is considered as a shame of the family and is sent out of the native forever. Though science and technology has attained an incredible development, human minds are yet to be civilized even in this twenty first century. This research aims at transparent presentation of the transgender community and its livelihood.

Transgender is the state of one's gender identity not matching one's assigned sex. It does not imply any specific form of sexual orientation.

Ancient literature like Tamil and Greek literature bear witness to the life of transgenders in ancient times. Through many poems it has been found that transgenders had been in a better status in the past than at present. Here are a few examples of Classical Tamil literature which speaks about transgenders. *Tholkapiyam* is considered the oldest work in Tamil language. It has been written by *Tholkappiyar* who belongs to fourth century BC. It insists that transgenders who change their male identity to female identity should be mentioned or referred to their female identity only (she/ her). Moreover, in Tamil literature, *Dhivagara Nigandu* deals with the specific characteristics of a transgender in behavior. This gives a detail depiction about the characteristics that transgenders do bless people, they have improper reproductive organ, they have their own typical walking style with one hand in their hip, they are short-tempered, their breasts are artificial and they become furious when they are mocked. This piece of literature shows the universal characteristics of transgender community. In *Manimegalai*, the beauty of transgenders has been described. Great Tamil works like *Thirukural* and *Thirumandhiram* also has the references about transgenders and their livelihood on those days.

The autobiography of contemporary Indian writer, Vidya gives a transparent view of the plight of transgenders' community in this twenty first century. Oxford dictionary defines autobiography as "An account of a person's life written by that person". It projects the ambiance of the community in which the person is born and brought up. It represents the era, culture and tradition of a particular society. It is a refined form of the personal dairies in which they pour out their emotions and thoughts. The writers reveal their life through writing and the readers get a peep into their psyche. Vidya belongs to transgender community and her autobiography throws light upon the darker side of Indian Society and also highlights the lifestyle of transgenders in India. Their life is filled with suppression, rejection, and sufferings. Society is intertwined with many different customs, cultures and communities. A society is expected to be united to remain unique. Unfortunately, the society marginalizes its own people for some irrational reasons. The complications faced by such marginalized people are inexpressibly tragic. Transgender community is doubly marginalized in Indian society. If a person is born as a transgender in a marginalized community the person is again marginalized from that community. There are almost nine million transgenders in India today, but Indians hardly consider them as their neighbors. Their habitat is a great mystery in India. They make their habitat in the outskirts of the cities. Moreover, Indian society is known for its family structure. The family acceptance of a transgender is hardly found. They are forced to run away from the family and native place in order to escape from the life threat given by their own family members and kith and kin. Vidya, who is named as Saravanan was born to middle class parents as their sixth child after five daughters. As usual, parents have lots of expectations from their only 'son'. Since she is born in a community which has been considered lower caste, all want 'Saravanan' to become an

IAS officer to come up in their life. Vidya excels in her education till she feels her real gender identity. The dilemma affects her grades. She is beaten up by her father black and blue for getting lower grades (84%). Her father puts her in a new school where she is seen as a symbol of fun and mockery.

"My effeminate ways hitherto an object to ridicule on my street, now became the target of my schoolmates' taunts. Even kids from lower classes teased me at school. 'Look at this lady', they shouted after me. It became quite common for the boys to tease me. I was still a bright student, but I was lonely kid through high school. The problem affecting my studies" (Vidya 31)

Transgenders in their teen age undergo a hectic pressure. The children face lots of strange happenings around them and they feel a hostile environment even within their own arena. Like male and female, the birth of a transgender is also quite natural and not an abnormal one. Due to lack of awareness among people, they pressurize the children regarding their behavior in childhood. Vidya is not an exception. Her uncle insisting her behavior as a girl and pricks her heart often. The questions put forth by her uncle are "Why do you traipse like a girl? Why can't you speak loud like a man?"(39). When the family members find that their child is a transgender, they try to change them and many corrupted doctors use the parents' ignorance and pretend to treat their kid. At last when the situation is out of their hand the child is forced to move away the family and seek refuge in transgender community.

"My situation was no different from that of thousands of thirunangais. Just like them, I too could not live in my own home, with my own family as a thirunagai" (86)

The children who give happiness in the family, who excel in studies and bring laurels to the home suddenly become a symbol of insult when it is found that the child is a transgender. The child gets hurt physically and emotionally by her own family members and decides to leave her home. The problem is that in India the transgenders do not get jobs in any places so they have to go for prostitution and begging for their livelihood. Vidya, who has completed her MA linguistics, was sent to seek alms in market places and railway station. One day while she is begging in train she is beaten up by a passenger and thrown out of the running train. It happens in India. None raised voice against that 'civilized' man. Moreover, corruption plays a very vital role in the life style of transgenders in India. SRS (Sex Reassignment Surgery) has not been made in a proper way.

"What happens here is no SRS. What we undergo is merely castration under local anesthesia (105). I was screaming and shouting all the time. I begged the nurse to give me an injection to kill the pain while she was negotiating a higher tip (107).

Though the Indian society has its own honor and pride, it still has its own conservative ideas. Vidya gives vent to her grief thus,

"How could I find employment in a country which did not recognize people like us, where there was no social concern for us, no legal status, where even family support was non-existent?"(111).

Transgenders in India are living in a chaotic state. They are excluded from all the privileges that a citizen can enjoy. The subaltern study is a study which raises voice for those

who do not have one. But under subaltern category the transgender community has not been taken into consideration till now. Marginalization is a word which gives 'recognition' to many persons and it takes away the life from them. It spreads its fire wings everywhere, all around the world irrespective of cultures and countries and those who are marginalized are prey to it. A nation's development should not be measured only by the improvement in the field of science and technology, but it has to be seen in the way that how far the citizens of nation give justification to the word 'humanity' and 'rationality'. The country which is devoid of discrimination and where all the souls are treated equally can be considered as a developed nation. We, the aspirants, students and teachers of English literature are discussing about aboriginals of Australia, tribes of African countries and Jews, whom we does

not even know. It is not said that we are not supposed to raise our voice for them, but it is also insisted that we should look into the lives of people around us. When we marginalize a person in our own home, it is not fair to raise our voice for the marginalized of other nation. Hence, this paper is a beginning to make people aware that they are marginalizing a community in their daily life. A society can claim itself as civilized when every human being enjoys all the privileges of nature and nation as well.

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