

Third Gender and Society With Reference To The Ministry of Utmost Happiness

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Abstract:

India is a multicultural country which hosts different cultures and ideologies. In India, transgenders have a very ancient history. *Hijras* are one of the most discreditable social groups which over the years have occupied an extremely marginalized position in Indian society. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* takes us on an intimate journey of many years across the Indian subcontinent- from the cramped neighbourhood of Old Delhi and the roads of the new city to the mountains and valleys of Kashmir and beyond, where war is peace and peace is war. It is an aching love story and a decisive dispute, a story told in a whisper, in a shout, through unsentimental tears and sometimes with a bitter laugh. The fiction holds the unbearable truths of society such as miserable condition of minorities, humiliated lifestyles of transgenders, mediocre government, and life of injustice, inequality and prejudice. This dissertation is an attempt to read the transgender characters of this novel especially Anjum, one of the major character, through queer theory and in the light of the idea of transgender equivalence. Their condition based on rejection by family, cultural and societal isolation is still neglected. Their identification as a uniquely positioned third sex becomes much more complicated when the *hijra* lifestyle is discussed with respect to this contemporary reality, instead of historical or mythical representation.

KEYWORDS: Transgenders, Hijra, Gender, identification, queer

INTRODUCTION

Intersex is a sex identity whereas transgender is a gender identity. All Hijras come under the transgender umbrella but not all trans people are Hijras. Intersex people are born

with ambiguous reproductive organs and/or may have several variations in sex characteristics, including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones. The Hijra community is one of the oldest gender identities in India and has their own language, traditions, rituals, and code of conduct. A few intersex people choose to identify as trans but that's not the identity of our entire community.

It aims to prove the Anjum was greatly proud of her identity and existence and is a character with high transgender resemblance, irrespective of all the trials and tribulations she faced in her life. The work also focused on the approach and attitude taken by the author to establish the position of transgender in the society by focusing on their worth, qualities, lifestyle and culture.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness can be seen as a political fiction which is explicitly political and aggressive discursive. The Ministry of Utmost Happiness explores the cultural clashes and interpersonal conflicts that drive modern Indian society. The Society overlooks at transgenders with fear and suspicion. The Ministry of Utmost Happiness is loaded up with an assurance to discover triumph, expectation and indeed, satisfaction, in spite of a mind boggling feeling of despairing.

Gender and sex are generally used as interchangeable terms. However, these terms differ from each other. Gender and sexuality are socially constructed, whereas sex of a person is biological. The society decides the roles for each gender and expects them to act accordingly and those who act differently to their gender are considered as queer. Gender identity differs for each person. Gender identify is generally considered as the sense of people as male or female and is related to people's existence as male or female. Transgenders are those whose gender identity does not match with their biological sex. Transgender is the state of one's "gender identity" not matching one's "assigned sex". (Golden Kisha 2013).

Our society in general, acknowledges only two polarities or sexes based on the genitalia at the time of birth and they are male and female through the process of sex assignment. Sex assignment takes place even before birth in the mother's womb basing on

the external genitalia. But, there are some exemptions in which the infants cannot be easily identified as male or female in live births. In such cases sex chromosomes, external genitalia and internal reproductive system do not confirm to the males and females and they are called as intersexual. Such intersexual are considered as third gender or transgenders where they do not belong to either gender.

HidaViloria the intersex activist states that, "I notices in an interview that she used "hermaphrodite" and then later used "trans " to describe the same characteristic. Very irresponsible of her as a writer to not research the character she is writing about enough to know what they are."At the outset, Anjum is described as an intersex person and later on, she is said to be a Hijra. I am an LGBTQIA+ activist myself and I'm not averse to the Hijra community. However, being identified and misrepresented as what you are not and do not prefer to be identified with is absolutely wrong. Sex is seen as a 'biological identity' that is assigned at birth as 'male', 'female' or 'intersex'. Gender is a social role. There are innumerable gender identities and sexual orientations. Sexual orientation is what gender we are attracted to. But, in India not many are aware of these differences. Indian creator Arundhati Roy's tale *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) is a broad, Delhi-set story that highlights a huge cast of characters and address probably the darkest and most rough episodes in current Indian history, including the 2002 Godhara prepare assault and the continuous battling in Kashmir. Highlighting a differing gathering of characters from crosswise over Indian culture, including a trans lady or hijra), a designer who conflicts with society, and a proprietor with a second life in the insight benefits, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* investigates the social conflicts and relational clashes that drive present day Indian culture. Broadly praised, in spite of the fact that it didn't make the quick progress of Roy's presentation *The God of Small Things*, it was for quite some time recorded for two noteworthy abstract honours - The Hindu Literary Prize and the Man Booker Prize. Arundhati Roy's throughher notification writings has taken the rule of a spokesperson to support the oppressed, marginalized and the deserted. Her writings can never be apolitical, and it truly makes the readers pained and provoked. Roy is typical in giving voice to the

voice to the voiceless and in championing the misfits and outcasts of the society. The novel *The God of Small Things*, fetching its author the coveted Booker prize, presented the subaltern characters Ammu and Velutha as the embodiment of subaltern identity. Gender subalternity is represented by Ammu in the novel and her counterpart Velutha stands as a victim of caste subalternity. It presents both caste and gender subalternity from a historical perspective. The debut novel used a circumscribed bounded space like the town Ayemenam, Kottayam, Kerala. But in the second novel, she used a vast canvas by bringing in Delhi, Gujrat, Kashmir and other such historically and culturally significant places in India. In 1990, Judith Butler made maybe the biggest commitment to the possibility that sexual orientation is a social build detached to yet socially dictated by natural sex and upheld through social convention with the distribution of *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, a content which has turned into the scholastic go-to for the possibility of sex being, socially developed and falsely restricted. This is the supporting idea from which both women's liberation and Queer Hypothesis have drawn, two regions which intensely advise this proposal. The thought that the normal traditions ascribed to a given sexual orientation, both as far as the individual and on a more calculated level are socially developed and hence are delicate to sociological, geological and chronicled variety is currently typical without, as is socially obvious, being select. Starting from a supporting hypothetical position of perceiving sex as socially developed, this proposition perceives that not exclusively complete an extensive and expanding number of people self-distinguish as an option that is other than the parallel classes of 'man' or 'lady', however in certain sociological areas extra sexual orientations are perceived inside writing, inside more extensive social creations, and in a few examples by the state. Most by far of hijras are conceived biogenetically male, however uncommon instances of bio-hereditarily female individuals who never started to bleed getting to be hijras have been recorded. Most hijras leave their families to live in hijra-selective families.

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