

Internalised Cissexism - an Anti-transgender Bias causing Psychological Trauma on the TGNC Community in A. Revathi's *Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story***Joy Hepzibah C.**Research Scholar, Dept. of English
Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science Coimbatore**Dr. J. Arul**Associate Professor, Dept. of English
Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science Coimbatore**Abstract**

The universe, a vast space the human race breathes, is gifted by the almighty irrespective of traditional notions acclaimed in society towards gender, race, nation, creed and colour. In such a context, with two distinct complementary sexes, male and female are prioritized, neglecting the third-sex people who are "Transgender". "Transgender" is a term derived from the Latin term "Transgenre" and it is pertained to an array of personage, whose gender, appearance, personal characteristics, or behaviour differ from stereotypes about how a man and a woman is supposed to be. Transgender is the state of one's gender identity or gender constrain not matching one's assigned sex. Transgender people have existed in every, race, sector and class since the story of human beings' life had been recorded. In India, they are addressed as Hijras and the story of Hijra has been studied through a memoir of A. Revathi. Transgender people's psychological trauma has been explored across the spectrum of typical challenges they experience in society. In other instances where individuals have been marginalized and mistreated, their emotional predicament has become intolerable due to "Internalised Cissexism". Many people would not to recognize that the transition is not their fault or error. The purpose of this study is to obtain a better knowledge of transgender persons, who are constantly subjugated against because of their identity, appearance, and behaviors. Transgender people go through a number of unpleasant events and hardships called gender dysphoria in order to find their identity. Some of them have followed dangerous paths as a result of those traumatic experiences. This paper highlights how the third gender are being marginalized during their transitional period and the psychological trauma faced by them.

Keywords: third-sex, psychological trauma, Gender dysphoria, internalised cissexism, anti-transgender bias etc

To answer a gender-based question “Male or Female?” The response would be quite immediate and evident for cisgenders because their feeling of being male or female was allocated at birth. Gender identity is strongly established with oneself from childhood, whereas the vast majority of people are unsure of their gender assigned at birth. In such discourse, the impact of society and its positive or negative variables influences the psychological well-being of the third sex, resulting in parting from living with parents and their community. The internal feeling of being male, female, or third sex of a person is biological. The presence of family support improves one's ability to live a better life while fighting societal criticism.

Among the most oppressed minorities, the TGNC (Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming) community is more prone to be oppressed and stigmatized than the cisgender individuals. Transgender become the victim of various forms of violence and abuses that the society imparts. They are most likely to experience physical and psychological trauma in the form of social exclusion, discrimination, sexual abuse, public harassment and so on. This causes individuals to suffer from severe psychological trauma.

Transgender and Gender Non-conforming people's transition (from male to female) is fraught with difficulties and sufferings. Even after enduring a succession of physical and mental hardships, they are shunned by society. These psychological traumas result in self-inflicted circumstances. Although there are some viable solutions like body alterations and sex-reassignment surgery, those cannot pave way for the extension of psychological trauma that they undergo. Society bears the primary responsibility for inducing psychic trauma, which leads to a variety of mental diseases. Transgender persons are a stigmatized and underprivileged minority who endure disproportionate discrimination because of their gender change and identity.

Transgender individuals often get Internalised Transphobia which is also called as Cissexism is the discomfort that a transgender individual experiences. They most often internalise the society's normative gender expectations. They experience stigmatization and very easily it causes them to internalise gender attitudes and develop negative health outcomes. Stigmatization, injustice, and discrimination are common experiences that contribute to mental health concerns and internal trauma. The difficulties that exist in society contribute to their psychological distress. They encounter 'transmisia', a prejudice that has been set up by the society resulting in the state called 'Internalised Cissexism' which occurs when a person judges through the anti-trans bias framed by the society.

People with Internalised Cissexism may often feel ashamed of their gender and traumatized by the prejudices of the society and remain closet. The binary system believed by the society ignores relativist perspective of disbelieving no absolute truth and accepts the diversity. The binary paradigm makes transgender persons feel abnormal and causes them to internalize their trauma.

If a zoom is done on Literature to determine its collaboration with other fields, literature intersects with several disciplines such as History, Social, Psychology, Law, Medicine and so on, paving way for interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research. The psychological trauma of the transgender has been analysed through A. Revathi's autobiography *Truth About Me*. Revathi, a trans woman is a writer and a Bangalore-based activist who always give her voice against the oddities happening on the sexual minorities in South India. *Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* is her second work of art which was translated by V. Geetha and published in the year 2010.

Revathi, being a part of an NGO "Sangama", fights for the civil rights of the transgender community. Her first book named "Unarvum Uruvum"(Feeling of the Entire Body) was

written in Tamil. Revathi explores the hidden challenges of transgender people and the hardships they endure in order to thrive. She not only expresses her pain via her Art, but she also made true her dream of becoming a writer. She has thoroughly investigated all areas of transgender barriers that have been overcome by hijras.

Revathi begins her memoir with a question to our society, “In our society, we speak the language of rights loudly and often, but do the marginalized really have access to these rights?” (*Preface*). She starts with pointing out the sidelines position of the sexual minorities in the country. In a small town in Namakkal, Salem district, Tamil Nadu. Revathi was born and brought up by her parents as Doraiswamy. She has had feminine traits since childhood. As the youngest kid in her family, she was very affectionate towards her parents and her father would always consider her close to his heart.

Revathi as a child showed more interest to play games which are only girls’ oriented. At the age of ten, the changes were visibly seen in her body and mind. She began to have gender issues that she could not fully comprehend. She began to experience gender dysphoria within herself, which traumatized her greatly. In addition, she was given derogatory names, and people began using filthy language around her, and she was frequently excluded from school. The majority of the villagers began to discuss her abnormality, which society constructs. She could not change her natural behavior with feminine features after taking in all of those comments. She had to be in a state of bewilderment. Majority of the village people started to talk about her abnormality which the society constructs.

Having taken all those comments in, she could not make any changes in her natural behaviour with feminine qualities. She had to be in the state of confusion and dysphoric about her own identity without knowing the causes of it. Regardless of their pain, society never fully

comprehends them. They are always viewed as abnormal, and the attitude of the society traumatized them. Their family does not accept them as they are, but instead tortures them to behave normally with the little knowledge they have. Even after her bullying, Revathi keeps her true gender hidden from her family and society. “How could I expect them to know what I was going through? I bundled my feelings and confusions into a tight roll, laid it aside, and, in spite of all the teasing and bullying, went about doing what I was asked to do” (Revathi 11)

An extreme psychological trauma before the transitional period occurs in every transgender individual that makes them feel that they do not belong to their own body. The feeling of spiritually born as woman and biologically as men shuttles in their mental state.

I experienced changes in my body and in my being. I experienced a growing sense of irreplaceable femaleness, which haunted me, day in and day out. A woman trapped in a man's body was how I thought of myself. But how could that be? I longed to be known as a woman and felt pain at being considered a man. (Revathi 15)

Right from the early childhood, their families and friends fail to understand them as they are and this creates Internalised transphobia within them. In Revath's case it is the same and in fact, her family gave more importance to social status rather than her feelings. As a child, she spends most of her childhood days with uneasiness. When she tried to connect her body in harmony with her inner self, she failed. She found herself caught between societal gender standards and her biological self. This is evident in her words,

I wonder why God has chosen to inflict this peculiar torture on me, and why He could not have created me wholly male or wholly female. Why am I a flawed being, I wondered often. I might as well die, I thought. I could not study, yet pretended to, and all the time I was obsessed, confused and anxious (Revathi 15)

Revathi has sometimes been chastised for her femininity and for being herself. The social conventions restrict her from expressing her inner feelings. When she attempted to flee to join the hijra community in Dindigal, she was subjected to additional tortures:

He bet me hard mindlessly, yelling that he wanted to kill me, I who had dared to run away. I tried to protect my face and head with my hands to keep the blows from falling. But nevertheless they came down hard, and I felt my hands swell. I was beaten on my legs, on my back, and finally, my brother brought the bat down heavily on my head. My skull cracked and there was blood all over, flowing warm. That's right. Beat him and Break his bones. Only then, will he stay at home and not run away. I hear my mother say.
(Revathi 55)

Tortures have become a ritual for her every day. Transgender are always characterised by isolation, violence and discrimination. Her school recollections are always filled with insults and exploitation. She struggled to handle her school days and was frequently chastised for her feminine behavior. Revathi was once chastised in school for her girlish behavior, which caused her to internalize cissexism: "I got punished by the PT teacher too. He would box my ears and yell, 'Are you a girl or what? Pull your trousers down, let me check.' He would make me as if he was going to strip me and I would start crying. The other boys laughed at this" (Revathi 7)

A. Revathi unveils the hidden and unprecedented trauma throughout her life as hijra. Even after passing the Rights for Transgender People Act (2014), which ensures the preservation of transgender people's rights, its full implementation remains a question. It is the responsibility of society as a whole to defend the realistic perspective that opposes the structure of binary perspective as primitive thinking. Since they are subjected to Internalised Cissexis, they frequently face rejection and are subjected to harsh prejudice. They eventually reach a point

where it causes bad emotions and sensations. In her essay Truth About Me, A. Revathi focuses on her experiences with internalized cissexism. Her work portrays her great anguish as,

I feel despair, and wondered that people could be this way. How could ever hope to make a living? God has made us this way, I thought, we have no work of our own, our parents do not understand us and this world looks upon us with distaste. Yet we too go hungry. Above all, we wanted to live as human beings do, with dignity. (*Revathi* 30)

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