

I. INTRODUCTION

“Terrific transformation” is how the popular newspaper, *The Hindu* highlighted the achievements and accomplishments of Vidya, a transgender of Tamil Nadu. With the moniker Living Smile added to her name to denote her attitude, Vidya ‘transcending odds’ has succeeded in winning an award from British Council and the Charles Wallace India Trust Scholarship to pursue a six month course at the London International School of Performing Arts. Endowed with a master degree in Applied Linguistics from Tamil University, Thanjavur and with a strong determination to swim against the current, Vidya has won laurels not only for herself but also for her community. They, who have realized the value of expression and education, have used the media, both the print and the visual, to voice their concerns and to awaken the conscience of an insensitive society and to get the much needed respite from violence hatred, and economic dependence.

The perceptions of the world by men and women are different. They express their unique experiences in a wide variety of ways. Women writers adopt various strategies to counter the patriarchal literary tradition .Women believe that the personal is political and try to be intimate, and more communicative and realistic. They write about their thoughts, feelings, love, marriage, children, relationships and sufferings. This is true of the transgenders too. These people also record their feelings and the struggles they encountered in their lives. These literary accomplishments have lent teeth to their attempts to earn respect in the society.

The literary outputs of these people have helped in furthering their cause of getting equal opportunity to earn a livelihood and thereby social acceptance. This thesis endeavors to prove that emancipation has been made possible through expression in the case of transgenders in

Tamilnadu, especially through autobiographies and a fiction based on the real life experience of a transgender person. All the books have been originally written in Tamil and then translated into English. *The Truth about Me : A Hijra Life Story* (TTAM) is the autobiography of A.Revathi, translated by V.Geetha. The next work *I am Vidya* (IAV) by Living Smile Vidya has been translated by V.Ramnarayan. *The Third Gender*, (TTG) a novel written by Su.Samuthiram has been rendered into English by Dr.Parvathi Vasudev.

The nomenclature transgender has gained currency in the past few decades and its meaning is still under construction. Stryker explains that the term is used “to refer to people who have moved away from the gender they were at birth, people who cross over (trans-) the boundaries constructed by their respective cultures to define and contain that gender”(1). The term is used to designate such people who are quite sure that they belong to the other gender in which, they feel; it would be the best for them to live.

Human beings generally consider themselves as having a gender or being a gender. They do not doubt the correctness of their choice. This choice does not compromise or invalidate other works and commitments. But when someone is being transgendered, ‘who is just that way’, it makes others curious. Various theories may be proposed and all kinds of fanciful stories may be invented about how it is possible to be transgendered but it has to be accepted that some fraction of the society however small, is ‘that way.’ These members who are less in number than the majority groups often experience exclusion and bias. Society respects only the ways of the majority, resulting in ignorance and misconception about those who resist its edicts. Many people, who have great reservations about recognizing the humanity of another person, unless they recognize the person’s gender, develop a primordial fear of monstrosity or loss of humanness. This manifests itself as resentment, revulsion and hatred which then transpires into

physical, mental, emotional violence aimed at those who are deviant and such people are denied basic amenities like food, shelter, employment and security.

Modern social security benefits stem from various documents like the Ration card, Driving license, Voter ID Card, Passport, Birth Certificates, School and College records and even Professional Credentials. But these become distant dreams to those who cross the social borderline of birth gender. They lose the composite passport of a citizen and cannot afford travelling, education and even inheritance. Living a decent life is a mirage to these minions. Deprived of social security, they resort to risky and hateful activities, jeopardizing their health and straining their relationship with the law enforcing agents, and common people as well.

Gender can never be defined precisely because despite societal attribution of some characteristics as essentially male or female, there is an admixture of qualities in each of the individuals. Gender identity refers to the individual's identity, as it is experienced with regard to an individual's identity as male or female, an awareness that begins in infancy and grows along with them. It refers to the identity that an individual develops through the process of socialization, when most aspects of masculine or feminine are taught by the society and are learnt by individuals. It is the conception of an individual about himself. Most societies have expected patterns of behavior related to each sex and there are necessary axioms for the gender identity of every individual. Gender identity involves a complex procedure, which has great impact on the psychology of the individuals. If the sex of the individual coincides with the gender there are no hassles. Only when it does not, problems crop up.

The myths of gender roles and conformity to those myths have now been broken. Conventional social roles have become interchangeable between the sexes. Even in very

traditional societies, modernism has helped to alter the ideas of gender comportment. The society has accepted to an extent about individual's comportment and does not sit in judgment about the right ways to do or the wrong things done. Society is divided into male and female according to genotypic differences and distinct primary and secondary sexual characteristics. "Sex describes the biological differences between men and women which are universal and are determined at birth. Gender typically refers to the behavioral, social and psychological characteristics of men and women" (Sen, 2) Gender refers to the social roles and duties that are practiced in a culture for men and women. "The concept of gender includes the expectations held about the aptitudes, characteristics and likely behavior of both men and women called masculinity and femininity" (Sen, 2). This image is drilled into our psyche, reinforced by our socialization patterns and individual life experiences. It is nurtured, preserved and handed over from one generation to another. In its best accepted definition, gender refers to the social roles and characteristics that develop their cultural interpretation of biological and anatomical sex. Sex is natural where as gender is a social construct.

In each and every society of the world, there are individuals who feel that their gender does not correspond to their biological sex. They are sure that their physical identity is incompatible with their psychological identity. These people suffer discordance due to hormonal or other abnormal conditions during their gestation. Such persons are considered inter sexed or transpeople. It is not a medical problem alone, neither is it a psychological ailment nor a social phenomenon or a unique experience but all these, combined into one and much more.

Sexuality plays a very great role in the lives of human beings. Reproduction is the key element of sexual activity. There are diverse views on this end result. Some religions preach that sexual activity should be involved only for the sake of getting progeny. But there are others who

believe that reproduction is only one of the functions of sexual activity. They insist that pleasure derived from sexual activity is just as important if not more as reproduction. Medical and scientific advancements have given humanity control over reproduction. In fact, modern achievements have made it possible to beget babies without sexual activity-through cloning. All these advancements have revolutionized views about sexual activities and sexual orientations. Homosexuality and heterosexuality have become open topics for public discussion, of late, even in very conservative nations.

Sex relates to the genitals, reproductive abilities and reproductive activities and pleasure. Gender involves more than the reproductive organs. It has social implications which do not purely relate to genitals. Sex can be treated only as an aspect of gender. Sexuality is distinct from gender but it is not independent of it, as erotic desires are labeled by such terms that depend on detecting the gender of the person towards whom the desires are directed. Gender and sexuality intersect each other. The terms homo and hetero make sense only in relation to a gender. They mean 'same as' or 'different from'. Some men and women are psychologically and physiologically dominated towards sexual inversion, a persistence of the childhood tendency. Homosexuality, transvestism and transexuality are presumed to be abnormal sexual behaviors. Homosexuality is defined as the desire shown by some people towards people of their own gender for the appeasing of their sexual desires. Transvestism denotes cross dressing and assuming or wearing clothes which are associated with the opposite sex. Transsexuality is defined "as a disturbance of gender identity in which a person anatomically of one sex has an intense and persistent desire for medical, surgical and legal changes of sex and live as a member of the opposite gender" (Shaw, 109).

The term transsexual was first used to denote a distinction between the people who merely had the 'erotic urge for disguise' and those who sought medical help to alter their physical bodies. It referred to those who have undergone surgery to alter his or her genitals so that they could live in their desired genders. Once these people have moved over to their desired roles referring them with this name became no longer appropriate. Transgender is a term that is mostly used to refer to all kinds of variations from gender norms. Of late, this has been used only to refer to those who identify with gender other than that they are born under, by abandoning their old gender, they choose the gender of their choice. Other terms are used to identify persons who do not abandon their original gender.

Sexual preferences exist in all men and women in the society. Homosexuals prefer people of their own gender to gratify their sexual longings. Those men who prefer men as partners are named gay. Likewise women who prefer other women as sexual partners are called lesbians. Those people who are sexually aroused by persons of their own and other gender are called bisexuals. These people do not exhibit any gender discomfort or gender confusion. Transvestites are people who adopt the dress and the behavior of the opposite sex. This causes great confusion because transgenders too adopt the dress and the behavior of the opposite gender. It leads to misconception that they are one and the same. It is illogical to come to the conclusion based only on one aspect or one activity. This acts as a barrier to understanding either condition. Transvestites merely enjoy wearing clothing of the opposite gender. They do not have as Stuart says the "longstanding, internal image of possessing inappropriate sexual characteristics" (12). They are more like exhibitionists and caricatures of women and are frequently called drag queens. They may have gender confusion at some points of time but they do not suffer from gender discomfort. Transsexuals on the other hand may have gender confusion but they are

totally into gender discomfort. This should be clearly understood for the better discernment about transvestites and transsexuals. All these people who have views, feelings and behavior patterns considered abnormal by the society should not be considered emotionally ill.

There is also a deeply ingrained homophobia in our society since people equate transgenders with homosexuality. They do not distinguish between gender roles, gender identity and sexual preference. This is due to lack of information and a totally inadequate job of public education about transsexualism. Further the term is misleading because the word sexual is within it. So the word transgender serves a better purpose, since an average person's exposure to sensationalism surrounding the issue is mitigated.

Sexual orientation is considered a fundamental dimension of human identity and should be considered a basic human right. The society that has taught us to hate, that has taught us to discriminate, that continues to demonize, should be made to understand that it is wrong. A society that rejects all but heterosexual form of identity and celebrates masculine privilege has denigrated anything associated with the feminine as the objects for domination. It has deemed them unacceptable and considers them not fully human. It is so engraved in the hearts of its members that to call a man by a feminine name is the utmost insult that can be inflicted on him. The men who want to protect themselves from this fear of tapping into their feminine nature perpetrate hate crimes on the people who do not conform to gender norms. Social equality and justice, liberation from poverty, participation in economic, social and cultural aspects of life are what they want. It is the duty of every individual to protect the rights of every member of our society. Social responsibility includes the identification; exposure and fighting against such abuses that specifically are targeted at some individuals as a result of their sexual orientation.

Inferior schooling, poorer health care, inadequate counseling, lack of government help and other gag rules have been deterring transgenders from airing their views. Most of them have internalized these problems but not all. Some of them have, through defiance of social oppression, come out of their self imposed cocoons to claim their rightful place in the society despite continual verbal attacks eroding their sense of self worth and self esteem and constant name calling and snide remarks affecting their mental health. It is the practice of many groups when faced with changing attitudes about non normative behavior, to shun and silence those who don't conform to their deeply held norms. They try to limit or eliminate the growth and spread of such persons who don't observe traditional behaviors.

People who are denied of these rights often join together to oppose or alter these unlawful practices and prejudicial attitudes and try to advance natural support to vent their grievances in public. Some of them draw the attention of the society by their writings to bring about the way the society looks at them and the innumerable hardships they undergo. They touch the raw nerve of the reader by elucidating the inhuman tortures they are subjected to but at the same time they try to build confidence among people of their own kind. They strive for acceptance by the society through their intellectual outputs. Hate crimes are perpetrated upon people due to their appearance or affiliation to a particular group. These restrict access to human rights. Hate crimes that are inflicted upon individuals due to their sexual orientation and gender discomfort amount to abrogation of human rights. These violations are explicitly exposed by their writing.

Recent literature on and about transgenders, returns to the issues of gender ambiguity and questions binary polarity. The works advocate cross cultural understanding of gender fluidity. The western verses non western tolerance for sexual and gender category has been the subject of discourses during recent times. The different categories of other genders from various parts of

the world, who represent an alternative to the duality of the Anglo European two gender system, the reasons for their existence, their struggle for survival, their multiplicity of social differences, and their attempt to express themselves in order to bring about a change in the general public thereby gaining acceptance and respect in the society have become central motifs of discussions

Feminism which is considered as the movement of reform, to change the world for the better and advancements in medical and psychiatric professions established, that people who have not conformed to gender norms are not “sinners or criminals but simply different kinds of people who were equally entitled to full participation in society.”(Stryker 37) Cultural diversity that the Western world experienced due to the influx of immigrants from countries other than Euro American also had a bearing on altering the views about gender comportment. The new political concepts of queerness, the AIDS epidemic, the rapid development of the internet were the other factors that caught the attention of both the visual and print media towards these people.

The tremendous burst of transgender activism that began in the early years of twenty first century came after a decade or two in which transgender community had made only small erratic strides towards a better collective existence . It is about that time that the word transgender first acquired its definition as a “catchall term for non normative form of gender expression and identity.”(Stryker 123)

The transgender movement for social change began in the West after the Criminal Act was passed in 1885 in UK which made all homo acts including cross dressing illegal. Earlier a number of cities had forbidden appearing in public in a dress not belonging to his or her sex. The increase in number of such people who cross dressed was due to the unprecedented urban

development. Industrial economy created amazing opportunities in cities for men who left the familial and religious surveillance of their rural homes. Single men who lived with other men, leaving their families, had the social circumstances to go in for same sex relationships. During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, homosexual desires and gender variance were closely associated.

First wave feminism and the surge in ethnic diversity effected some changes in the outlook of people. The developments in medical field and the introduction of the branch sexology made the cross dressers approach doctors like Magnus Hirschfield, who coined the term transvestite, for treatment. Dr. Felix Abraham performed the first sex reassignment surgery in Dr. Hirschfield's clinic. This institute became the hub of international network of transgender people and progressive medical experts. Michael Dillon, formerly Laura, obtained the first gender reassignment treatment during World War II. Dillon worked as a doctor but when his story was published, he retreated to India and lived and died as a Buddhist Convert. Christine Jorgensen was the most written about transgender in the media, because she was very pretty, gracious and dignified and people began to be awe struck by the scientific achievements in the treatment of gender related issues.

Jorgensen's popularity was a watershed event that brought about public awareness and redefined gender identity politics. Transvestism and transsexuality came to be seen as different from homosexuality or intersexuality. The second wave feminists articulated the complex and variable interrelations between social gender, physical sex, and psychological identity to add teeth to the movement. Stryker states, "A youth oriented rebellion began to unfold, in which counter cultural styles in music, psychedelic drugs, mod clothing and free love offered significant challenges to an older generation's notion"(63). Dr. Harry Benjamin's path breaking

book *The Transsexual Phenomenon* brought about a sea change in medical and legal attitudes. The result could be seen in the establishment of 'sex change' program at John Hopkins University Medical School in US.

The terms transgenderal, transgenderist and transgenderism were in use since the late 1960s. The term transgender was first used by the transactivist Holly Boswell in an article of 1971 titled *The Transgender Iterative* in the community based journal *Chrysalis Quarterly*. Leslie Feinberg gave this term a political change with hir influential pamphlet, '*Transgender Liberation Whose Time Has Come*'. The nascent movement was given an intellectual and a political agenda by these works. No account of transgender movement can be completed without a reference to the contributions of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler. Butler's concept of 'gender performativity' has become central to the self understanding of the transgender people. The main idea of Butler, 'being something' is in 'doing it' encouraged these people. Stryker explains this idea as, "gender is constituted by all the innumerable acts of performing it: how we dress, move, speak, touch, look" (131). Thus gender becomes a language that is used to communicate oneself to others and also to understand him/herself.

LGBT an initialism that stands for lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgenders has been in use since 1990. It collectively refers to a diversity of sexuality and gender based cultures. The group has been fighting for the right to lead alternative lifestyles based on sexual preference. They have been demanding justice, freedom and privilege which others enjoy. They sometimes seem to be proud that they are homosexuals. The lesbian gay and bisexual organization began including the transgender title only after the 1993 March on Washington. From then on, these communities included transgenders into their fold and began addressing transgender issues. But this effort often represented a failure to grasp the ways in which transgenders were different from

the lesbians, gays and bisexuals. Of all the members comprising this community transgenders are the most discriminated. Even LGB people could not understand the gender discomfort of the transgenders and considered them as people who have deviated from the conventional definitions of man and woman. Stryker elucidates this when she says about the misconception of the group for the misconstruction of the transgender identity:

This way of thinking about transgender tended to reinforce the similarities between homosexual cultures and mainstream society based on shared concepts of gender and to perpetuate the marginalization of transgender people, both within the mainstream society and the LGBT movement. (138)

Transgenders are different from others of the LGBT community. Apart from sexual preferences, the transgenders have to encounter the problem of appeasing their gender discomfort. They want to make changes in their bodies and the gender role they play in the society. The changes that they want to make may endanger their lives but still they are prepared for it. They need utmost courage to face the surgery. They need financial and moral support as they lose the public and family approbation. They have to unlearn what they have learnt from childhood to adjust to the 'other' gender of their choice. Though these people use their cross living experience to finalize the choice of gender, it is not easy to make adjustments to function successfully in other roles. These people do not embrace the gender condition voluntarily. They do not actually know the reason for their condition, which is thrust upon them by nature or in fact by gender disorder. Hence they need help from the society, which expects them to play a role that they do not like. Their willingness to suffer excruciating physical, mental and emotional trauma should speak to the society about their differences from others classified along with them. Most transgenders who explore the gay or lesbian worlds, mostly find out that they cannot relate

to them about their biological gender. They seek their help as they get some measure of acceptance there, compared to rest of the society, as their decisions affect relationship with families and friends and retard social and career development and create tremendous burdens of guilt.

Some sections of society accuse transgenders to be homosexuals, who go through the gender congruity process to achieve this end and that they are legitimizing their passions using this guise. This argument can be countered by proving that homosexuality has been legalized and recognized by many in the society. It has become much easier for persons to acknowledge their homosexuality, the most recent example being Tim Cook CEO of Apple Computer Inc. and it is easier to find support from society. There is no need for homosexuals to tread such a perilous path to achieve sexual peace of mind. But whereas transgenders want to cover the entire gamut of human activities in the male or female gender roles, sexual preference doesn't hinder them from seeking out their goals. Sexual preference is only a facet of human activity which is multifaceted. So they just want to relate and to be related by others in the gender roles and which are different from that assigned to them at birth. Homosexuals and bisexuals do not have these deep rooted desires and want to merely fulfill their sexual desires with persons of their own biological gender. Nature vs. nurture and biological determinism vs. cultural determinism are the factors that cause concern to the transgenders. Human beings are the most complicated form of life ever to exist and this delicate balance, which is called human life can alter its course at any point. As far as transgender are concerned, sexuality does not seem to have an effect on their gender roles. Gender defines a whole human being, but sexuality is only one aspect of the being.

The transgenders are the most severely marginalized of all the LGBT communities. This is rooted in the fact that the society is biased against the appearance and behaviour of the

transgenders. The society is prejudiced, as it cannot decipher their problems. Even in an advanced country like United States, where several activists groups are fighting for the cause of transgender people, the Federal Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA) could not be passed. The ENDA controversy proved that a bill for sexual orientation could be passed whereas the one for gender identity could not; thereby laying bare the fact that gay and lesbians who conform to gender norms seem poised for mainstream acceptance, while discrimination against gender norm transgression remained legal. This was in the year 2007. But slowly the situation has seen some rays of change as the world has diverted its attention towards understanding these people.

The visibility of male to female transgenders is more than female to male transgenders in any society. This relates to the traditional makeup of the society because as in other social mores, women in culture have been raised to repress any sexual feelings they have, while men by comparison have had pretty much liberty over their sexuality. Women can easily escape attention wearing androgynous clothing but men come under scrutiny concerning their dress, since the society places much more priority on manhood than womanhood. Male to female transgenders face more problems regarding sartorial codes than female to male. The reassignment surgery for male to female is less complex and more satisfying than the surgery done for gender congruity of female to male people.

Newzealand based Ryan Kennedy who lived as female until his transition has recorded in her book, *F2M: The Boy Within*, the reasons very lucidly:

One of the reasons why FTM are invisible in society is because society in general isn't that interested in what women do. Yes, MTFs are generally more visible because

they don't pass as well, but they are also much more interesting to people like you, because a man is doing something out of the ordinary. They are not actually men, but that's how people like you see it "Women dresses butch" isn't in the radar but it's news if it is the other way around. (254)

The transgenders have been gaining rapid visibility in Indian mainstream, in media, in courts and in everyday life. They are "transforming themselves from object of ridicule and repositories of shame to ideal citizens" (Reddy, 223). In India the transgenders do not want to be called eunuchs and their preference is for the word hijra, since there has always been a suggestion of external compulsion in the usage of the word eunuch. During the Moghul rule some men were compulsorily castrated by the kings to use their services in the harems. Eunuchs were given respect during the Delhi sultanate regime holding important portfolios in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Under Khilji and Moghul times, during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they enjoyed a pride of place. At first they were brought as slaves into the houses of nobility of Awadh and Hyderabad but were given respect and trusted with the sensitive duties.

The category of a third sex has been present in Indian myths and folklore and epics. They are called kliba, pandaka, tritiyaprakriti and napumsaka. Those who did not have procreative ability were classified into the third category. The elaborations on the choice of sexuality and the notion of third sex have been in existence in literature in India, dating back at least to the third century. Though the next few centuries comment about the trends of the earlier days no individual reference is found. Only after the advent of the Muslim rulers during the medieval period, their presence and positions of significance increased. Apart from the traditional occupation as the guardians of the Prophet's sanctuary in Medina and in holy cities the prestige

of eunuchs lay in the fact that they were appointed to guard the treasures stored there. They were trusted because of their lack of progeny and because they could handle women as they were not men. By the eighteenth century, this frame work had been transformed by the European colonial encounter, which viewed them as criminals and pushed them to the fringes.

Hindu mythology plays an all important role in the construction of hijra identities. It serves as an important discourse in validating their history. It also legitimizes their claim as religious symbols in day today life. Their affinity with Shiva in his Ardhanariswara (half man and half woman) form is established by the hijras in India through myths. They also establish their symbolic connection with Vishnu who took the Mohini avatar (incarnation) to get the immortalizing 'amirtha' (heavenly food like manna) from the asuras(demons). Vishnu's Mohini form is also associated with Lord Ayyappa, who was born to Mohini who took Shiva's seed, to appease him. Hindu mythology from Bengal likewise has the case of Bhagiratha who was born to two mothers.

The two great epics *the Ramayana* and *the Mahabharata* also speak of people who were neither men nor women. When Rama came back after spending 14 years in the forest and getting rid of Ravana, he saw some people who were still lingering on the borders of his empire. When he questioned them, they answered that they did not get back to their places in the city after Rama left, because Rama had asked only men and women to get back to their duties. As they were neither, they languished there awaiting his arrival. Moved by their devotion, Rama bestowed them with the boon that whatever they spoke would come true, be it a wish or a curse.

The Mahabharatha, the epic story of the feud between the Pandavas and the Kauravas has many references to hijras. "The theme of eunuch hood resonates throughout the

Mahabharata” (Reddy, 89). Shikhandi was the reincarnated form of Amba, one of the princesses who was abducted by Bhishma as a bride for his step brother. She was slighted by the prince for her love. Her lover refused to accept her either. So she avowed to take revenge on Bhishma, her abductor. After a period of penance she was born as a eunuch. Using her as a shield Arjuna aimed the fatal arrow at Bhishma, who refused to take arms against Shikhandi, whom he perceived only as Amba, thereby bringing him down Bhishma. Of all the mythological figures Shikhandi was the one who was out and out a eunuch unlike all others who were simultaneously man and woman.

The character who cross dressed and lived the life of a woman for a year, in the Mahabharata is the epic hero Arjuna. When the Pandavas were in exile Arjuna disguised himself as Brihannala a dancer, musician and a eunuch transvestite, whereas all his other brothers were acting the role of different male professionals. Arjuna who had earlier had his encounter with Shiva reminded one of unambiguous identification with Shiva. Arjuna brings the theme of hijras to the center stage when he acted the role of Brihannala. “Arjuna is a eunuch who presides over both a marriage and a birth” (Reddy, 90). The hijras associate their occupation of badhai citing the case of Arjuna. They claim that they derive their power to bless newly married couple and just born children for fertility from these myths.

The character of Aravaan the son of Arjuna and the Naga princess Ulupi has a bearing on the life of hijras in India even today. The flawless brave hero volunteered to be sacrificed before the Kurukshetra war to ensure the success of Pandavas. The only return he wanted was to enjoy conjugal pleasure before his death. But nobody was ready to marry him knowing about his impending death. So Lord Krishna had to take the form of a woman to appease his request. Even to the present day the transgenders enact the death of Aravaan during the assigned day at a place called Koovagam in Tamil Nadu where he met his end. Most of the transgenders assemble there

and undergo the ritual of breaking bangles and removing all signs of marriage and enact the role of widows. They do this under the presumption that their mythical husband is dead.

Hindu mythology serving as a source of history demonstrates the significance of religious symbols and in turn legitimizes hijras' existence. Hindu mythology and folk tales say that sexual abstinence can be transferred into creative power by 'tapas' (ascetism). When Shiva was once asked to create the world, he prepared himself by undertaking a tapas for a thousand years. Vishnu and Brahma, who were worried and impatient, started creating all things. When Shiva learnt of it, he broke off his phallus and threw it into the earth, thereby becoming a universal source of fertility, though he lost his individual fertility. The transgenders who undergo the removal of their organs believe that they derive their special status with respect to fertility and creativity just like the god.

Many esoteric Hindu rituals include male transvestism as a method of devotion. A sect of Vishnu worshippers does not worship Krishna directly. They worship Him by worshipping Radha His lover. It is through Radha, the consort they pray to Krishna. During prayer they imitate feminine behavior in order to become one with Radha and thereby with Krishna. The fourth century erotic treatise and love manual *Kamasutra* by Vatsayana mentions other categories of people who provide alternate methods of sexual gratification. The mention of sukumarika who appears in a sanskrit play is portrayed as a third sex. Though in the ancient law books like *Manu Smrithi*, homosexuality was condemned, some sacred Hindu texts violate the prescription. They accommodate and celebrate these acts which are non normative, only to point out that these predilections exist and they have to be tolerated. Thus Indian society and Hindu mythology provide accommodating roles for such sexually dubious figures, unlike the west, which attempted to resolve sexual ambiguities by refusal. Hinduism allowed opposites to exist

“celebrating the idea that the universe is boundlessly various and...that all possibilities may exist without excluding each other.” (Reddy, 318)

Harvey contends in *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, that, Sex change is not seen as ‘limiting spiritual potential’. The *Vinaya Patrika* tells of two stories of a monk becoming a nun and a nun becoming a monk. Both are spiritually devoted persons in the beginning and remain so throughout the process. These stories refuse to depict the biological sex as rigid and unchangeable. There are two categories of non normative biological sexes with various hierarchical implications, the hermaphrodite and the pandaka. The second category is seen as sexually defective due to sexual morphology. Harvey contends that hermaphrodite has the sexual characteristics of both genders whereas pandakas have the characteristics of neither gender. They were seen in palaces and harems and are believed to be incapable of keeping the secret and thus are eliminated from the monarchy. The texts never prescribe violence against non normative sexualities but stifle the spirituality of these people.

Jainism, another ancient religion of India, is known worldwide for its doctrine of nonviolence to any creature. Linguistically, it has three genders which can be translated as masculine, feminine and neuter. The neuter or ‘napumsakalinga’ is the one they use it for undetermined gender.

The western culture is strongly grounded in the belief that human race is divided into two sexes – male and female without any reminder. Both biological and social sexes take it for granted that the concept of sex is binary in nature and that there are no variants. Till recently even gender was considered to be binary in nature and also permanent. The rise of feminism liberated this biological determinism from the concept of gender. Studies across cultures, exhibit

an immense range of masculine and feminine roles and characteristics in different societies. This established the view that gender is a cultural construct the content of which varies from society to society. This view is substantiated by the approval of academia that psychological and behavioral aspects make up gender. The opposition between sex and gender which has so far been inbuilt in the western philosophy is now being reexamined. Western philosophy that has been accused of falsely legitimizing biological difference and ignoring the interaction between culture and biology has revised its opinion about gender and sex after its exposure to non western cultures.

Every society at times faces the problems of people who don't fit into the fixed categories. There were people who desired what was thought correct for the opposite sex. Various cultures dealt with these issues in a wide variety of ways. For example, Indian culture not only accepted gender to be fluid but also acknowledged multiple genders including these concepts in its myth. The possibility of changing the sex and gender within a person's lifetime has been recognized not only in India but in various other cultures, also thereby provoking a reexamination of opinions about gender systems.

In some cultures sexuality forms the main criterion for gender differentiation. The genitals and reproductive capacity of man are not considered for defining gender roles. In many cultural realms of Brazil, there are people called 'travestis' who do not undergo surgery. In the Condomble religion, the priestesses are women since they are mounted by the gods in possession trances. The association of gender with religion is also found in the Yoruba religion in West Africa.

Transgenderism in Japan began during the Edo period. Women actors were barred from Kabuki theatre performances and in turn effeminate male performer took on the roles of women. If a man acted like a woman, dressed like a woman and took on the social role of a woman he was simply socialized as one. The all encompassing term which refers to the non heterosexual and gender variant activities and identities practiced by individuals is 'Konosekai'.

The hermaphrodite who did not belong to the male or female category was classified as 'kathoey' in Thailand. The term has the meaning of being a defective male. They are not only effeminate but their sexuality also is directed only towards men. They are sometimes viewed as midway between men and women. Thailand Shows evidence of the existence of the third sex in 'kathoey'. Buddhist myths, most popular in Thailand speak of the existence of male, female and the hermaphrodites. Nanda says that kathoey are identified, "not as variant of either male or female but as an independently existing third sex" (141). They are considered as a 'second kind of woman'.

In Oman, an Islamic society in the Saudi Arabian Peninsula 'xaniths' meaning impotent, effeminate and soft, are recognized as the third gender. "They were regarded by the Omanis as having the characteristics of both men and women" (Nanda 130). They are born males and they have genitals. They do not undergo emasculation. They are given male names and they have liberties that are denied to women, like deposing in courts and worshipping in mosques with men. They support themselves economically unlike woman. But they do women's chores and are good cooks and housekeepers. Their appearance as beautiful women with white skin, black hair and chubby cheeks get them classified with women for many social purposes. During festivals they can dance and sing with women which their men cannot. Another privilege they have is that they can, see the brides face on her marriage night which no other man is allowed to do.

The reason why 'xanith' are not considered men is, because in the Omani society only virile men, who can prove their ability to perform sexual intercourse and who can publicly demonstrate their potency with proof (as penetrator) can be classified as men. The 'xanith' who takes the receptive, passive role of a male homosexual prostitute, is not validated as man. But a 'xanith' by proving his ability can become a man. The 'xanith' who are not men are not considered women since they are debarred from wearing women's clothing including the 'purdah'. They roam around the city freely, unlike women whose movements are restricted. Xamith are the prostitutes, whereas women in Oman are regarded pure, though there are rare cases of women prostitutes also. Their sartorial ways and behavior is in between men and women. Voice expressions, swaying movements and walk which are in imitation of women's ways set 'xamith' apart. Their dress is also in between that of men and women. A Tunic is bound tight around the waist but unlike men, they wear colored clothes. The length of hair, the way in which it is combed also indicate their status. When both men and women in Oman cover their heads, they go bare headed. Thus the 'xanith' publicly demonstrate their gender role by many markers and constitute an alternative gender to men and women.

Native North American societies too have had alternative gender roles referred to as 'berdache' which the European observers presumed to mean 'kept boy', 'male prostitute' or 'slave'. The berdache was frequently referred to by later anthropologists as a "form of institutionalized homosexuality" (Nanda 131). Since the Native Americans felt the terms to be inaccurate and derogatory, the term two spirits has been suggested as a replacement, as it better reflected the spiritual powers these people had. Though these roles were for both the sexes mostly men took them. They were perceived by their divergent dress, jobs, linguistic expression and ritual position. In many societies they took ordinary people of the same sex as their spouses

though, they were not deemed gender divergent in any way. By the time interest was shown towards the two spirit people their culture was almost in shambles and destroyed by the Europeans, whose gender ideology was centered on sexuality. Whatever documentation available talks about the transvestite ceremonies that publicly announced the individual's taking an alternative gender role.

The Mojave clan of Native Americans had two alternative gender roles, the 'alyha' and 'bwame'. The gender status of the children are said to appear in the dreams of pregnant women. "A boy indicated he might become an alyha by acting strangely around the age of ten or eleven before he had participated in the boy's puberty ceremonies" (Nanda 135). When the future alyha avoided manly activities and showed a liking for domestic work of women and preferred wearing female bark skirt rather than male breech, his status would be guessed. At first his parents would try to talk him out of this but the persistence on the part of the boy would get him the nod for the conduct of transvestite ceremony, though it would be a surprise to him. The relatives surreptitiously arrange the ceremony. The ceremony doubled as a test of his inclination as well as his initiation. During the ceremony transvestite songs would be sung and if the boy danced to the tune as women do he was confirmed as an alyha. Then he was bathed in a river and given the dress of women. After this the alyha assumed a female name and started resenting all male nomenclature.

The alyha were industrious and hard working and so easily found spouses. Though they were not counted as young girls they were treated like widows and divorcees and always took the female role. When an alyha took a husband he imitated menstruation by scratching his legs till blood appeared and submitted to puberty rites in which the husband also participated. They also feigned pregnancy and followed the pregnancy taboos and openly declared pregnancy which

Mojave women did not. They also imitated labor and child birth. Near the time of delivery they induced constipation and went into the bushes .The feces which comes out was treated as still born child and wept over. Both the husband and wife clipped their hair in mourning.

The alyha who did not involve themselves in the tribal war like men, did participate in the feast given to welcome the warriors back like women. In short the role of alyhas was accepted by tribe since they believed that it resulted from ‘temperamental compulsion’ and it was also predestined in the dreams of their mothers. This prevented them from being mocked at, as they were considered ‘powerful shamans’ in curing syphilis.

Diverse gender roles exist in Polynesia with these roles named differently in different places. Though these gender roles are less institutionalized than in Asia and North America they suggest acceptance of sexual and gender diversity that is in contrast to the exclusivist system of binary oppositions of the west. In Tahiti, these people are called ‘mahu’. Though they were not castrated, they participated in rituals like women. “The mahu as fellator is seen as a substitute for a woman, and no stigma or shame is attached to the mahu’s partner other than the potentially negative connotation that a person who seeks a mahu for a sexual partner does so because he could not obtain a woman” (Nanda, 136). The alternative gender role of mahu is supported by the fact that Tahitians have a name ‘raerae’ for homosexual which they feel is European importation. This word referring to sodomy means ‘sex-role reversal’.

The role of ‘mahu’ is publicly accepted by someone voluntarily who takes on the occupation, actions and dress code of women. They mingle with women freely. A ‘mahu’ is not circumcised but coached into the role by his seniors and if his urge to become a ‘mahu’ is irresistible, he is not deterred from becoming one. But a ‘mahu’ can cast off his role, if he wants.

Samoan culture has the third gendered people called 'fa'afafine'. They are recognized as an integral part of traditional Samoan culture. They are born male but embody both male and female traits. Their gendered behavior varies from extravagantly feminine to mundanely masculine. The prefix 'faa' means in the manner of and the word 'fafine' means women. It is interrelated with words in other Polynesian languages like 'fakaleit' in Tonga, 'pinapinaaine' in Tuvalu, and 'whakawaline' in Maori. Traditionally they are trained in women's chores. They are very well accepted in Samoan culture and have sexual relationship with men. Just like anywhere else, some 'faafafine' recall engaging in feminine activities. There is no hesitation or ridicule in Samoan culture when a biologically male child claims to be a woman. Some of these gender liminal people have achieved fame by recreating traditional cultural performances. A point of difference between other gender roles and Polynesian gender roles is that Polynesian third genders do not cross dress. They use the opportunity of cultural performance to cross dress as women. Though they often wear "flowers, garlands, perfume and heavy makeup and accessories associated with young women" (Reddy 137) they do not dress permanently as women. Though social mobility and economic benefits are derived from performances, the Polynesian gender divergent roles do not seem to be associated with religion.

In all cultures mentioned above, the gender roles are for sure differentiated. Male and female are considered complementary to each other. Each of them is born with different characteristics and different reproductive organs. Their roles in marriage, sexual relationships and reproduction are clearly demarcated. The difference between the two sexes finds ample evidence in ancient medical and ritual texts. In spite of these well developed binary opposites, these cultures are not blind to gender overlap, gender transformations and alternative gender in myth and in reality. This is where these cultures differ from the Western culture. These cultures

allow greater flexibility. As far as Hinduism is concerned this variance is in its basic tenets. Hinduism does not advocate any singular route to attain salvation. It has recognized that humans differ in their capabilities and talents and has given them a wide span in behaviors. This has resulted in finding a place for individual difference in all matters including sexuality.

Indian culture that came under the influence of the super imposed European culture, regained its resilience along with the attainment of political freedom. Supported by the revolution in views about sexuality, Indian scenario also witnessed changes in its outlook. Unlike the west which is characterized by its propensity for dichotomies, India which does not view the binary opposition so rigidly started including the overlapping and contradicting categories into its folds. In India there is a well developed essentialist sex/gender system of binary opposites. But Hindu gender ideology recognizes gender overlap and gender transformations in myth and human experiences.

There is greater flexibility in India regarding these gender systems. This fluid thought process makes India partake in the celebration of LGBT community. Pride parades that serve as demonstrations to demand legal rights take place annually around June to commemorate the Stonewall riots. When the police raided the the stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village near New York city on Saturday 28 June 1969 all the LGBT people revolted making it a pivotal movement in LGBT social events. Four Indian cities from different corners, Delhi, Bengaluru, Pondicherry and Kolkatta saw coordinated pride events celebrated every year.

A rainbow parade was held at Chennai where a demand to repeal the antigay laws was raised. The ruling was given by a high court in Delhi on 2 July 2009 which declared that relationship between consenting adults was not a criminal act. So even smaller cities in India,

like Madurai, celebrated Asia's first international gender queer pride parade and the Alan Turing Rainbow festival within its portals.

The transgender Pride flag designed by Monical Helms during the Pride March in Arizona US in 2000 is used by these people to denote their unity. The flag consists of five horizontal stripes two light pink and two light blue with a white stripe in the center. The light blue for boys and the pink for girls and the white in the middle for those who are transitioning or for those who feel they have no gender. The pattern, irrespective of the way of hoisting always means the same suggesting that transpeople are trying to find correctness in their lives. The other symbols usually associated with the people include the butterfly (symbolizing metamorphosis) and a pink / blue yin yang symbol. Yin Yang is the concept of duality forming a whole. It shows how apparently opposite forces are complementary and inter dependent and how they give rise to each other.

Popular symbol used to identify transgender people frequently consist of modified elements of both the male and female symbols. Holly Boswell depicted a circle with an arrow on the top-right for the male and a cross projected from the bottom as per the female with an additional arrow combining the female cross and male arrow from the top left.



Yin Yang



Popular Symbol



Transgender Flag

The various feminist movements and their supports gave impetus to the already simmering cauldron of change. The human right movements which fought for the subalterns augmented the agitation for rights. The enlightenment that dawned on the discriminated like the transgenders made them express their plight through their writing. The more the transgender people were scoffed at the more their efforts were to gain acceptance. Undeterred by ridicule they began to express their talents through arts. Mainstream cinema that used them as butt of ridicule began highlighting their nobility. Some understanding and humanitarian writers like Su. Samuthiram, made them heroes of their works. Supported by these trends, the transgenders themselves came forward to write their experiences and vented out their feelings through their writings.

The transgender movement has raised some important issues. One of these is the question of cultural and social acceptance of gender variation in many societies. We fail when we refuse to recognize diversity and variation within and between cultures. Like all other people, transgender people also express their experience within a frame work of cultural meanings, from which we know about their emotions, motivations and behavior. Though they live on the margins of the society, they are essentially human as they make their lives meaningful by interpreting and contracting culture.

When referring to a transgender person it is respectful to always use that person's preferred name and pronoun regardless of their legal gender status. The pronoun used nowadays for these people is hir. Sexual orientation describes an individual's enduring physical, romantic and spiritual attraction to another person Professional literature now uses terms such as attracted to men (androphilic) attracted to women (gynophilic) to describe sexual orientation of people without reference to their gender identity. By the time the transgenders prepare themselves for

surgery they function in gender roles different from the others they were assigned at birth. Actually they do not question the gender roles of the society, but they question the roles they have been placed on the basis of their genitals, because they are uncomfortable in those roles.

The works of the transgenders suggest that they can no more be reduced to be merely metonymic objects but provide an insight into the examination of their sexuality within other arenas of day to day life. When an Indian cosmonaut went into space along with the crew in the 1980s the hijras demanded that 'sexually under privileged' be sent into space in future. When a hijra wanted to contest the parliamentary election he declared, that one does not need genitals for politics. What one needs is integrity openly highlighting their inability to beget progeny and hence, they would not be corrupt. They claim that they could be the perfect antidotes to the rampant corruption and nepotism of modern Indian politics. In the past few years many reforms have been effected. The major parties have started wooing them as candidates for future election.

Arrested on suspicion of prostitution, vagrancy and loitering and many other so called nuisance crimes they were unable to complain about mistreatment. Driven in police jeep for hours together, forced to perform oral sex, strip searched and humiliated in prison, placed among male prisoners, where their feminine appearance made them vulnerable to assault, rape and murder, the plight of the people have found expression in their auto biographies. Marginal and oppressed people in most cultures are silenced by the dominant. Very little of what has been written about them gives them a voice of their own. Only when they begin to voice their plight and only when they plead their case, attention is directed towards them.

Musical performers like Antony Hegarty and Lady Gaga who performed in India have expressed the pathos and power of living outside the gender binary. Western movie world had

many films to show cause the issue of transgenders. In the Indian panorama, though the transgenders were initially used as butt of ridicule and symbols of lewdness, recent directors have brought out the best facets of transgender personalities. In the classic film 'Bombay' by Mani Rathnam, which addressed the communal riots in Bombay the separated children of the lead couple are saved by a transgender who protects them and hands over them safely back to their parents. The implicit message given by the director is about the humanity of the transgender, who could not procreate, who did not lose his sanity and stayed outside the madness and cacophony of violent communal hatred. Yet another movie that highlighted the character of a transgender is Muni II Kanchana. With his portrayal of Kanchana, the director Lawrence Ragavendra had almost succeeded in wiping away misconception about transgenders from the minds of Tamil movie goers. The lives, that one considered unworthy and useless in offering any kind of value to society, shame the society by their sacrifice and attitude in the movie.

Tamil, which is a classical language, refers to transgenders by the word 'pedi'. Modern equivalent of the term is 'thirunar'. Thiru is a honorific prefix indicating respect and 'nar' standing for human beings. Male to female transgenders are called 'thirunangais' whereas female to male are called 'thirunambis'. Nangai refers to a girl and numbi refers to a boy. The other term used to refer to them in Tamil is 'Aravani' and it is the female form of the word 'Aravan' who is considered the mythological husband of the transgenders. The word has been in vogue since the 1990s.

Tamil media both print and visual have played a great role in breaking the taboos about transgenders. Transgenders have been anchors of shows in popular channels and interviews featuring them in the television have served as eye-openers to the public. The articles in the print media have made the State receptive to their problems. In a pioneering effort, Star Vijay Channel

hosted a talk show by a transwoman named Rose Venkatesan. The programme titled 'Ippadikku Rose' translates into 'yours truly Rose'. Plum roles by transpeople like Kalki Subramaniam, Karpaga and the legendary Revathi (who played the role of the transgender chief in the Tamil film, 'Thenaavattu') in popular cinema reflects the changing scenario in the state. The cloak of invisibility that these people had on them is now slowly slipping away. Change seems to be on the horizon as could be seen in the victories won by the transgender people in their struggle for inclusion into the society. The dramatic changes are mainly due to the emergence of transgender icons like Revathi, Vidya, Rose, Priya Babu and Noori who was the inspiration to writer Su.Samuthiram to write the story *Vaadaamalli*, which was later translated as *The Third Gender*.

Revathi's autobiography has to be read for the expression it gives to queer spaces. By telling her story which involves that of her community, she has given the reader an opportunity to understand the hijras and their struggles and hardships. The glimpses that a reader gets into the otherwise not so visible lives of these marginalized and derided denizens bring about a change in perception about the identity of these outcastes, who live on the fringes of society. Revathi's role as an activist working with Sangama, a Sexuality Rights Organization based in Bangaluru, gave her this impetus to relate the day to day violence they endure. She stated in an interview to Nithin Mayanath "Infact I believe that not just writing but all the arts offer us a way to do this. Art is able to connect us when all face to face conversations have failed due to prejudices or feelings of hurt and pain."As a result of her earlier experience, that of compiling the experiences of other transgenders, when she could not get them to speak of some issues freely and in order to present the graphic details, she presented her own life story. As she herself says "I would have shied away from talking about any of the incidents in my life to another person". Through her

autobiography she has succeeded in her hope of making, “people see that hijras are capable of more than just begging” as she says in her Preface.

Living Smile Vidya, the author of *I am Vidya* also has used the genre of autobiography to present the ordeals of her suffering. The psychological trauma she underwent as a boy, as a teenager and the physical pain she had to endure during the operation and the emotional stress she had to undergo as a transgender to earn her keep despite her postgraduate degree, given in graphic detail make it explicit to the readers that, transitioning is a hazardous process that needs grit and determination. A person who opts transition does not do it for fun, but only out of dire necessity and to question the intention of these people warrants no necessity. Along with Revathi and Vidya, activists like Priya Babu have sown the seeds of change which already has started germinating.

The next work chosen is *The Third Gender* by Su. Samuthiram, which was serialized in the popular Tamil weekly Ananda Vikatan, that has all the ingredients necessary to make it a popular read. The author felt, as he himself says, that ‘serialization in a respected and dignified journal, would go a long way towards the dissemination of information’ and enlightenment of the eunuch’s lives. Thanks to the sponsors, the United Nations Programme on HIV/ AIDS (UNAIDS) an English translation of the book had been made available by Dr. Parvathi Vasudev thereby increasing the reach of this novel. It is different in two ways. It is not the sufferer who tells his own story. It is by an omniscient author, who not only sees the physical but also the mental trauma of the protagonist. The other aspect is the portrayal of the effect of the decision of the hero that has a negative bearing on all the other members of the family.

The other two auto-biographies limit themselves to the protagonists, this novel is far too wide and the intention of the author is spoken out in the novel through the characters. His devotion to human rights and his interest in earning a place for the transgenders in the society have made the author convey the plight of hijras through his dialogues. Extraneous details, which are the figments of his imagination, have achieved his purpose of eliciting sympathy from his readers. The two autobiographies are verisimilitudes but this is not so. The author's, selflessness in alleviating the marginalized cannot be misunderstood. When he states his views about the awards he laments, that the awards given to the novel have not made the "Scientist... human enough to conduct any research on birth of eunuchs".

The changes have been taking place, though not at the rapid pace Samuthiram wanted. The situation has become so positive that throughout the world adequate awakening has been created. To lend credence to this statement, the recent example of the transitioning of Bruce Jenner, an Olympian from male to female can be given. This is a proof that the mentality of the people towards transgenders has been changing and people have begun to show respect to individual's wishes about his or her identity.

The spellings in these texts are used as such and hence the same words are spelt differently in different places, for example the word rit/reet/reeth and nirvan/nirvana/nirvana. Many words are spelt differently at different places, because Tamil does not have a universal phonetic script or separate letters to denote the aspirated consonants. The pronouns used in the thesis are also used according to the gender of the characters. Till the operation or emasculation surgery is performed the characters are identified as male and after the surgery they are referred to with the feminine pronouns. A special pronoun hir used now days has only been sparingly

used. Most of the Tamil words used in the text have their meanings given in parenthesis to make them comprehensible for a non Tamil reader.

After the introductory chapter the queer aspects of the texts are analysed in the “Queer Theory – A Study” Queer studies is gender oriented and is emerging as a field of study to critically examine the attitudes of our society towards queer population. The theory questions the centrality of gender as fundamental category of historical analysis and understanding. Queer theorists aim at removing the prejudices against homophobia. They try to break silences in order to question the hegemonic social realities. The texts argue that identities cannot be compartmentalized into categories and several things go into making an identity. By bringing to light issues and problems in the lives of those affected by discrimination, these books fill a major gap in the literature about these people. They serve as comprehensive examples of the need to ‘come out’ and the results wrought by voicing their concerns. The language peculiar to hijras of India is also highlighted in this chapter.

“Not descended from the sky”... ‘born of mothers’, which is the next chapter explores the reasons behind the birth of these people. An analysis of evolutionary biology and environmental conditions which amplify the birth of such people suggest that biological sex cannot be accounted as the only yardstick for behavioural patterns. The brain structure of the individuals too plays a stellar role in deciding trans-sexualism. The phantom limb-syndrome adequately explains the link between brain based internal body image with external genitalia. This chapter further looks into the psychological changes wrought in the trans-genders due to their ‘difference’. The trauma of estrangement from the family, lack of financial support, their teen worries and the stigma of operation are highlighted. More over the reason behind the behavior of mainstream society towards them are also analysed herein.

My world my people, the penultimate chapter is a segment that talks about the relevance of trans-gender culture within the history of India as their roles highlight many Indian cultural themes. Their activities that appear absurd become meaningful when it is studied in the Indian context. This chapter vindicates their existence shattering the myth of the in universality of Western binary views. The dependence on mainstream society and their traditional roles as ascetics, bestowing fertility and benign benevolence on bride grooms and just born baby boys are examined citing various myths in the Indian culture.

Winners not sinners, they too are ours is the concluding chapter which highlights the achievements, as a result of expression of thoughts and feelings through literature. It also highlights the expectation of these people from state and society. An egalitarian society cannot ignore a section, which is a part and parcel of it and should embrace them into its fold. The welcome changes in the fields of education and law serve as a beacon of hope. But the society has miles to go to achieve this gender equality.