

**How to Cite:**

Ummer Ali, M., & Govindarajan, V. (2022). Ambiguity in queer resistance movements: A study on transgender reality. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S1), 12079–12086.  
<https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS1.8270>

## **Ambiguity in queer resistance movements: A study on transgender reality**

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**Abstract**--The scholar discusses the discourse on Transgenderism and its upliftment with the support of Literature, Science, and Religion. Arundhati Roy's novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* sounds for the protection and freedom of the Hermaphrodites through the story of Afthab who changed his name to Anjum later. Here the scholar put forward the scientific and religious perspective into the topic, considering the up-to-date fatwas by jurists and the stands of modern science. Arundhati Roy explains the real situations of the marginalized people, the so-called Hijras. The paper explores the different verses in the Quran and the relevant hadiths that are stated in the contemporary discussion, and what literature says and what science says to protect this gender identity. This critique is separated into three main parts: in the first part, I discuss the concepts which has been discussed in the work of Arundhati Roy with some examples from society. In the second part, the scholar presents the sources of religious law, namely the religious texts say on the topic and significant semantic terminology. In the third and last part of the article, I focus on the contents of the discussion on Transsexuality, transgenderism, and SRS in science and literature, focusing on the new political identity LGBTQI+.

**Keywords**--Transgenderism, Hermaphrodites, Hijras, Literature, Science and Religion.

## Introduction

Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression varies from their birth sex. They may or may not seek to experience gender reassignment hormonal treatment/surgery. Often used interchangeably with trans. Research and surveys support that the number of transgenders identified and gender non-conforming people is increasing. Many gender-variant people have to face the question of their ascribed gender and fail to explore their own identities. Transgender people are an underserved, at-risk population (Beemyn, 2010; Rankin, 2003). Transgender people are at risk for homelessness, unemployment, physical assault, mental illness, and sexually transmitted diseases related to being on the periphery of society (Conron, 2012 & Mass.gov, 2011). Society is not fully prepared to support transgender communities yet. As a result, they are at risk to become vulnerable to harassment and discrimination. Few offer support and help services to the transgender community in a broad aspect which disseminates difficulty in dealing with discrimination and annoyance. This study aims to search how transgenders, as a minority group in a gender normative society, make sense of the experience at a life to the success.

Literature science and religion are the three faces where the same community can build up their identity and show existence. These are the three icons in modern society where people believe in. The people look into standards of religions and they focus on the same with a reliable scientific and medical background. Literature plays a major role in creating a great space for the suppressed people of society. Literature can help people to look and search into the realities of life with easiness and by the same, the world understands the systematic and scientific approach on the same issue. The common people believe it with reliable support of the science. But yet the confusion continues that the people again perpetuate and extend into the religious texts for their clarity and authenticity as per their belief.

## Literature and Reality

“D’you know why god created Hijras? She asked Afthab one afternoon while she flipped through a dog-eared 1967 issue of Vogue, Lingering over the blonde ladies with bare legs who so enthralled her. “No, Why?”

It was an experiment. He decided to create something, a living creature that is incapable of happiness. So he made us.....

Who's happy here? It's all sham and fakery, Nimmo said laconically, what makes them unhappy? Price-rise, children's school admissions, husbands' beatings, wives' cheatings, Hindu—Muslim riots, Indo—Pak war — outside things that settle down eventually. But for us, the price-rise and school-admissions and beating-husbands and cheating-wives are all inside us. The riot is inside us. The war is inside us. Indo-Pak is inside us. It will never settle down. It can't,

Aftab desperately wanted to contradict her, to tell her she was dead wrong because he was happy, happier than he had ever been before. He was living proof that Nimmo Gorakhpuri was wrong, was he not? But he said nothing because it would have involved revealing himself as not being a 'normal people', which he was not yet prepared to do.

*(The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, 23)*

The story of Afthab, the central character of the novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a fiery Hijra whose individuality leads her to build a life for herself completely on the margins of society. Born intersex and gendered a boy by her mother, in childhood, Anjum is known as Aftab. As a child, Aftab loves to sing but stops when other children begin to tease him for having a feminine-sounding voice. One day, home from school after his sex-change operation, Aftab sees a Hijra and is so entranced by her that he follows her to where she lives, which is the Khwabgah. Aftab begins to frequent the Khwabgah, where he finally feels he has found a home. Her story expresses a transgender can the shelter and can live life as ordinary without destructing the values of society.

Transgender people have faced biases for decades from society. They are not given opportunities and are outcasts from the mainstream. They are "impure". Without waiting for apathy and pity, they survived the bigotry and challenges created by the society in their growth, and have branded their name proved their mettle across many domains.

The story of Daya Gayathri, the story of a girl who lives in the body of a man, is one of the so-called Transgender, born as a daughter of Anadu and Alfonse from Angamali. A boy but with feminine character, no one could understand her. She is abused sexually in early childhood. School life still remembers, the time where she is harassed badly by friends, she quit her degree at Sri Shankara College, but her power of the mind was not ready to be suppressed, joined Maharajas College where she could find the real identity, real gender. She did jobs at Ernakulam. Parents accepted her, and today she knows herself well. She is Daya Gayatri.

Jamsheer born at Thalasheri in 1995, Calicut became a famous actress in Kerala as Anjali Ameer. He lost her mother when he was 6 months old. He realized his differences while he was seven years old. After the release of Chandpott a Malayalam movie, friends started laughing at her calling the same name. He became friends with girls and joined Dance School. She went to Banglur and did SRS and became a girl.

The stories go on. Their life as much I studied is successful academically but they can't live a family life. They can't become a real father and mother. But science says it is a good option to select SRS and can become a complete man or girl as their mind says. But that too is limited and can't be a permanent solution. They have to follow a correct and vigilant treatment to the remaining life.

### **Religion and Transgender**

Once Gudiya tried to tell her that Hijras had a special place of love and respect in Hindu mythology. She told Kulsoom Bi the story of how, when Lord Ram and his wife, Sita, and his younger brother Laxman were banished for fourteen years from their kingdom. The citizenry who loved their king had followed them, vowing to go wherever their king went. When they reached the outskirts of Ayodhya where the forest began, Ram turned to his people and said, 'I want all you men and women to go home and wait for me until I return. Unable to disobey their king, the men and women returned home.

Only the Hijras waited faithfully for him at the edge of the forest for the whole fourteen years, because he had forgotten to mention them.

'So we are remembered the forgotten ones? Usthad Kulsoom Bi said.' (Roy, 53)

The politics of religion is different from that of the politics of transgenders, especially in the case of Islamic principles. The Quran and Hadith the main two principles of Islam do not allow the SRS (sexual reassignment surgery) as it is the first step to cure the illness as happens today. Islam has always spoken for the worried and oppressed rather than with the oppressor since the day of its formation and establishment, and this consists of taking a stand against transphobia, misogyny, and xenophobia. It is said that sex-reassignment surgery (SRS) is still an important question for Muslim transgender people.

Islam looks very carefully at the issues of transgenders. It has seen in the Islamic texts and discussions five manifestations of gender ambiguity. Hijras are people who are born with male sex organs and raised as boys, but after becoming adults, they undertake a female identity. They costume female clothing, grow their hair long, use makeup and wear jewelry. They try to exaggerate their role by copying the female voice. They are conceived as "third gender" (neither male nor female) in their societies (O'Brien, 2008; Nanda, 1999).

Here the religious perspective in this issue is clearly explained in the Islamic texts and Fatwas. All the individuals and teams described above have had a rigid and hard time living in their respective patriarchal cultures and societies. Indeed, traditional Muslim scholars and jurists often just ignored them as it was a rare issue and was not explicit as it is nowadays. According to their point of view, these groups are biologically ambiguous. Scholars explained to them because their ambiguous nature had to be well-defined concerning Islamic obligations. But the scarcity of these issues and lack of knowledge have had the reasons for many problems and issues in Islamic society. Many ridiculed Islam on account of its ambiguous stand in such issues. But it was not the problem of religion but the understanding of Islamic perspective with realities was mistaken. The Muslim scholars ignored the awareness classes of the common people.

Transgender people, as Dr. Mirjalali (Iranian sex-change surgeon) states, "suffer from a lack of awareness, within their own family and in wider society. That increases the psychological pressure and contributes to the higher number of operations." There are always issues and risks that transgender Muslims face in Islamic countries and other countries which are dominated by cultural and theological patriarchy. These risks mostly come from society and misunderstanding of shari'a and state laws.

Islam follows four basic principles Quran, Hadees, Ijmau, and Qiyas. Quran is the voice of almighty Allah, Hadees is words of Prophet Muhammad, Ijmau means the consents of the scholars who discussed together and reached into a single result in an issue and the last one is Qiyas, which means the new contemporary issues are linked to the other similar issues happened in Islam and the religious scholars who issue a Fatwa on that same issue.

The persons who give solutions to the problems of Transgender are destructive kinds of solutions. Some first-class countries permit the children to do SRS without even the consent of parents. Even the concept of psychotherapy treatment is considered as Transphobia and those families who undergo the treatment from a doctor, or psychiatrist are thoroughly neglected and considered uneducated and unconventional.

Under the umbrella term Sex education, the children are forced or the innocent mind is supported to undergo SRS and finally becomes addict to the medicines as long as he/she lives. The study on the SRS and its after-effects say: 10 to 15 years after the surgical reassignment, the suicide rate is 20 times that of comparable peers. LGBTQI+ movements and Activism works here very excessively who block any study against their movements and allows only the studies that take cudgels for the same activism. They work together in the social and educational institutions to talk accordingly, and the leaders of the same community register the names of the people who argue against the same activism badly and consider them pragmatic.

There are many questions have raised among the society about the stand of Islam in Transgender cases. First of all, religion can't open a door unless it is mandatory. It looks into the details and studies the problem at the grassroots level, in-depth and there the scholars sit together and find a solution in such cases.

That is the case of Sayyid Abd Allah, a young man who was studying at the medical college of Al- Azhar in Egypt in the early 1980s. During his education there he started facing the gender ambiguity problem. He consulted a psychologist and informed the doctor of the extreme depression that he is suffering. He understood the problem is "psychological hermaphroditism" (al-khunutha alnafsiya). The psychologist treated him with all possible ways to return and restore the male sexual identity to him but he couldn't and gave up the restoration technique through counseling. The psychologist proposed and claimed that sex reassignment surgery is the solution for Sayyid. He went to see a surgeon but the doctor again proposed another psychologist who also diagnosed and finalized the case of Sayyid as problematic and the treatment for the same is SRS. He became Sally and he lived in Egypt.

There started many discussions and accusations on the same matter. Many doctors argued for and many were against the treatment as surgery. The Doctors' Syndicate directed a letter to the Mufti of the Republic, Sayyid Tantawi, requesting him for a fatwa on the matter On May 14, 1988. His reply was: if the doctor testified and diagnosed as the only solution is SRS, then it can be preceded as a treatment. Through this fatwa, the decision was taken as state law and still the same follows as per the condition and permission from the trustworthy doctors on the same issues.

The discussions continue on the same issue if a person changes his sexual organ through operation, the essence of man and woman is not changing, so they still exist as they are. If it happens in the husband and wife, their marriage and life

will not be affected as per the religious law. If the case is a change of essence of man and woman, they are considered in the transformed essence. (Sharvani 1-137)(Bajoori 1-69). It can be sum up as clarity is very important whether the change is in the essence or just in the shape.

Mukhannas (Transgender) is another issue as Prophet Muhammed (s) says almighty god has said shame on the mukhannis team. The question is god creates a category and expresses his shame upon them, isn't it contradictory. Imam Navavi says: there are two types in mukhannas. The first one is a group that is created as it is. They are not trying to act the opposite sex. There is no problem upon them and it is not a sin at all, and do not blame too. The second type acts to follow the opposite sex, the religion never accepts at all and says it is not at all allowed and sends them out of the place and have to blame them. These are some basic principles, Islam, as religion says.

### **The Voice of Science**

Medical science argues in favour of transgenders and advises SRS (Sex Reassignment Surgery) and some are against it. Agony, anguish, pain, dilemma, discontent, desperation, these are the few symptoms the transgender people suffer in their daily life. They are seeking the solution to the cases like and shelter where they can breathe comfortably with pride. It is the case in modern science called Gender Dysphoria. It means an individual feels as she/he is entrapped in a body of a different body altogether, their mind and body are not congruence and feels this is a wrong body where I am always seeking to get liberated and rehabilitated.

Gender dysphoria is not listed in the rare diseases; it is prevalent and permanent across the world. It comes as a conglomerate of two terms gender and dysphoria. Gender as the state of being. Male or Female typically used regarding social and cultural differences rather than biological ones.

Dysphoria is the state of unease or generalized dissatisfaction with life. It is from a Greek word that means *Hard to Bear*. In the words of Harry Benjamin the father of gender dysphoria, sex is what one sees and gender is what one feels and in chorus between these two lead to the state of gender dysphoria, which is very well personalized by the universal symbol of gender with a male arm and female arm and trapped within the third gender or third arm. The story of entrapment sadly goes through all their lives.

Transgenders or gender dysphoria is a very strong and internal intrinsic and a non-negotiable feeling which individuals live with and something where body and mind congruence is not like the normal people. It is completely different altogether. The world has moved on to the clinical subject. The studies happened in the area. Brain Mapping studies of individuals, which are men and which are women, and then the transgenders.

It has been seen that on the functional MRIs when the brain is stimulated the functionality and activation are different areas which glow to different activities. The function of the brain of a transgender too amazingly different stuff which

happens around them blow differently. That is the case of individuals who have gender dysphoria, their brain wiring could be completely different which is still being unraveled.

The treatment is gender reassignment as a journey to come out of this entrapment. It is not treating the mind, attempting to treat these differently-abled a wired mind to bring to congruence is like trying to adjust the mind to the body but it is always seen as a failure. Society does that with coercion, with rewards, with psychotherapy but finally leads to more suffering and sadly into suicides.

Gender Dysphoria therapy is to bring the body to the mind by gender reassignment journey which ends with surgery. It helps to bring them out of entrapment and liberate them get them evolved as to what desire is. It is complex ablative and reconstructive surgery. After they are provided aesthetic functional and sensate organs that they dream of. This is a near-complete approximation to what God has given to other individuals. That is the dream and cherish that is the transformation that happens around the body control, the boys the genital organs the unitary organs while they continue in the journey of hormone replacement. It rehabilitates and liberates them completely and brings them the independence that they dream of. It is the time from dysphoria to euphoria.

## **Conclusion**

The states of India give much attention to the same community, offering economical support. Kerala Government supports by cash about 3.5 lakh for Trans men and 2.5 lakh for Trans women for their surgeries and three thousand every month. It attracts many transgenders to Kerala. The awareness programmes using social media positively, help a lot to back and support these people and to lend a hand to the forefront of society. The concept of marginalized has changed a lot and they have become at the centre especially in the social debates and discussions.

Even though the same community was in the religious texts' discussion, but the believers were unaware of the same issues and follow the unethical activities against this sect of people. The religious scholars set off the discussions among the people giving guidance and support to the same people. This is a great change and the people will not go behind laughing at them. They can live to understand and following the religious rules and regulations if they wish. But that's sure no religion will be a hindrance in their activities and life.

There are many issues which the transgenders have to be in mind, that the leaders and icons of the same community have to lead constructive type of discussions and activities which will reach into the society very easily and can construct a world of reality where there is no discrimination and impatiens. The support of literature is the pillar behind the success of transgender people. It paths way where no one has treaded yet and the same lead them to the success were, others need to travel much to their dream. They need to be very much systematic in the dealings of the issues related to them and have the responsibility to give awareness to the people and world, where their voice will be accepted and can build a home and space one's own.

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