

Victim of Discrimination and Continuous Existence of ThirdSex in Living Smile Vidya's *I am Vidya: A Transgender's Journey*

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Abstract

The society persist their impression on third sex, which causes discrimination and unbearable pain to them. There are many questions on gender roles rises in society. The society know that gender roles plays a vital role, but when they talk about the third sex what comes to the mind, the discrimination starts here. They did not find a solution and it is unsolved yet. Talking about relationship, our mind jumps up to the relationship between male and female and they are meant to be the one to live a normal life, obviously in this society. What about the life of third sex, they are called to play rituals for marriage ceremonies and other kinds of occasions, but are not ready to welcome into our family. There are lot of questions without answer and no one is ready to bring a change. Thus, the plight of a transgender, Vidya, shared the vision of her life in this society through this novel. Will it be resolved or still will it be a big question mark.

Keywords: Discrimination, exclusion, identity, third-sex, trauma.

“Exclusion is derived from fear, ignorance, and power, whilst inclusion is derived from love, compassion, and respect.” -Michelle Emson.

Living Smile Vidya, or Smiley, is an Indian Trans woman actor, assistant director, writer and a transgender activist. She comes out with her own traumatic experience and chaos of her family and the society, who finds out her behaviour as girl, outwardly in a man's body. The same judgment starts when they tend to work as part of society. They suffer under a pressurized circumstance due to the living style and rights. They are killed with looks; harassed with words; kicked out from our society. How pathetic life they are living. Smiley, or Living Smile Vidya, in this novel *I am Vidya: A Transgender's Journey* has broken the typical talk about transgenders and rise out as a shooting star with her thirst on living with pride, finding a job like other human than to be a beggar or sex worker. Her memoir is shared, being a boy he finds out that he is no more a boy, but a girl trapped in masculine body and she escapes or releases herself from that identity to a complete Vidya.

Living Smile Vidya, or Smiley, was born as the sixth child to Ramaswami and Veeramma on 25th March 1982. She was born after many years of prayers for a boy. First child was stillborn, following four girls Radha, Manju, Vembu and Vellachi. Vembu and Vellachi died due to some disease and the other two survived. There is a belief that giving birth to boy can bring wealth and he will work to take care of the family. So the birth of boy after five children as sixth gave them joy and they named him Saravanan, after vowing to Vayalur Murugan temple. He was brought up under privileged living among the daughters who should do all other household chores. He enjoyed the concession.

Saravanan was grown as mama's boy and his two sisters took care of him. They did not know about the boy's behaviour is changing little by little. He considered himself as a princess, wearing his sister's dress and tying his hair under a towel as his imaginary long hair. He felt comfortable in girls garb than boys. But these feminine traits were noticed by his family members and neighbourhood. He was thrashed to floor by Appa. The trapped life tries to come out often but was shattered due to fear and discrimination. But he controls it and opens it out in secrecy and enjoys it privately. So he grew under two lives in one body. When

he met a friend, Senthil, he felt free to converse with him. He realized soon that Senthil was also like Saravanan. They shared their thoughts and often met each other. They addressed themselves as 'dee' only when they meet personally.

After graduating she remembers about her dream to become an actor or pursue linguistics than fulfilling her father's dream as IAS or into engineering college. But a different world was waiting for her to welcome. When she met a group of Kothis a Non-governmental organization, her inwardly thirst appears when she saw some wore women's clothes and looked feminine and some of whom had gone sex change operation, was referred as tirunangais. Leaving the entire past and future dreams of becoming an actor or to find a job, she ran towards her thinking of becoming a woman completely. She went to Pune and Mumbai which is known as the land of freedom for tirunangais.

There she lived as 'kothi' to earn money for the sex change operation. This operation known as nirvana is done to show off that she completely transforms into a woman. So that she will be recognized as 'tirunangai'. She was humiliated by many, was thrown out of the train due to begging, and was questioned by elderly woman to live by earning through some other jobs other than begging in a healthy body. So she started her new idea of selling whole sale products of keychains, small torch lights, pouches, etcetera with her group. But that too did not give her joy for living. The problem was that the same people who gave coins when she was begging were not ready to get the products she sold. They did not see the product but the person who was selling those. For her, life was like a pendulum moving to and fro. The society which says them to stop begging and to indulge in works or other jobs is not ready to encourage when they come out with their pride to earn money by selling products.

The idea was not hopeful for earning. The dream of becoming an actor again pops out. She left the community and joins with her fellow college mates. She pursued help from Nehru, Mu Ra, Murugabhupathi, Selvam, and Viji, all of them on a job hunt. Luckily she got a job at Coimbatore corporate office. The happiness which bound her could not be measured and was finally released from a captive for ages. In the working place, she was considered as part of God's creation, never a destitute or sinner or tirunangai. She runs a blog, sharing her views and experiences.

The expectations of hijras are simple. They wanted to live a normal life like us. They should be considered one among us. They need equal opportunities to work and earn a livelihood. They wanted the government to legally run hospitals for their surgeries and also the rights to change their names. Children from young age should be taught about them and to respect them, not to spare or humiliate them.

Transgender women require understanding and support of the government, health care professionals, general public as well as their family members. Thus the society needs to understand and accept that humans are diverse. People have the right to be what they are and what they want to be. For transgender people, the same holds true.

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