

Affinity of a Hijra towards the Society from Anuradha Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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Abstract

God's creations are unique with different specifications in particular. He has given men the dominion over his creations and crowned with glory and honour. His every creation is exclusive by nature. The Almighty's one of the exclusive creations is the transgender. Each and every transgender rely on the other for their day-to-day life. In general, it can be said that they are not independent. Arundhati Roy in her writings *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* describes a boy named Aftab, found to be a transgender who gets involved in comforting forsaken people like orphans, men and women cast out of family, uncared, destitute, etc., in a remote prohibited graveyard. She engaged herself in Karbala, generally known as Jantar Mantar where the battle for Justice, the battle of good against evil was being fought.

Keywords: Anuradha Roy, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Transgender, Jannat Guest House. Society, Service etc.

Introduction

Hijras are the people considered to have low esteem in the society as they beg for their livelihood in road, signals, bus stand and tolls, demanding shopkeeper etc. They strive hard for their bread thus receives mocks, comments, abuse, kicks and even made as banter. People never think the third gender has feelings, emotions, sentiments and they differ only in physical body parts but not in the possession of heart and mind. In general this community is dependent and have to be cared, privilege to be given, needs have to be met, morally to be supported for a well survival in the society.

God's special creation -Transgender

Customarily hijras aren't given privilege and considered as other men, criticizing their emergence, attitude etc., Roy excels in describing the unique Hijaras' physical fitness, appearance, way of dressing, their walks & talks, religious activities, custom and asserts them as privileged people in the sight of Almighty. They are defined by Nimmo Gorakphuri as, "It was an experiment. God decided to create something; a living creature that is incapable of happiness."pg 23. No hijra is happy but left unhappy all the time. She also quotes, "The riot is inside us. The war is inside us. It will never settle down. It can't." Pg 23. "We're jackals who feed off other people's happiness, we're Happiness Hunters." Pg. 24. Ustad Kulsoom Bi, Anjum's guru made her understand that "Hijras were chosen people, beloved of Almighty. The word Hijra, she said, meant a Body in which a Holy Soul lives." Pg 27.

Remarkable Positions of Hijras' in History

While addressing the haveli members Ustad Kulsoom Bi was clear that the walls of haveli were built during the construction period of Red Fort and Jama Masjid, floors carpets were from Isfahan ceilings decorated with mirrors. Rulers trusted them to take care of their wives and mothers. “This house, this house hold, has an unbroken history that is as old as this broken city”. Pg. 48. “We were never commoners, you see, we were members of the staff of the Royal palace”. Pg. 7

Author has also cited the love and respect rendered to hijra’s in Hindu mythology through the exile of Ram, Sita and Laxman from Ayodhya for fourteen years. Thence Hijras waited faithfully for Ram at the edge of the forest for the whole years. Ram had forgotten to mention them. “So we are remembered as the forgotten ones?” Pg. 51.

Author signifies the rules, the discipline, and the sacrifices of them to the world. The humiliation at traffic lights for alms, the speciality of their residing place and it was called khwabgah as blessed special people whose dreams that could not be realized in the world. It was a place where Holy souls were liberated from the trapped wrong bodies.

Tender heart’s contribution to the society

Roy, a notable writer focused the rhythms of unique personalities like Anjum a transgender. She had figured out a transwoman struggling to make a life for herself in Delhi. She was attracted by her community people and made her living in a multigenerational joint family. She grew a girl named Zainab whom she found on the steps of Jama Masjid. She liked to be the mother of Zainab that revealed her emotions, feelings and sentiments. This incident proven that the third gender has heart and mind. She had ambitions, so she quit Khwabgah in order to fulfill her dreams. She settled down in an unprepossessing graveyard that was used occasionally. Similar to Djinn spirit she comforted the grieved souls while they buried their kith and kin. Her old client Mr. Gupta constructed a temporary shack in the graveyard. The municipal officers feared the curse of Hijra so namesake they stuck a notice on graveyard that squatters were prohibited and agreed to receive an inconsiderable sum of money with a non-vegetarian meal on Diwali as well as Eid. Her tender heartedness brought many visitors to the graveyard. She managed with a small pension from Khwabgah. She rented rooms to travellers with restrictions. Imam Ziauddin, a desolated old man became the first permanent guest of Jannat Guest House followed by Saddam Hussain, a worker in the mortuary.

Once a brothel team consisting of eight young women and a small boy under the leadership of Anwar Bhai received one of their woman Rubina's dead body from Government hospital with her eyes missing. It was stated that rats had taken it, but Anwar Bhai and his fellow members confirmed that the hospital authorities had taken it as a group of whores could not complain to the police and struggled to cremate the dead body due to improper residential address and sought the help of Saddam and Anjum. They interred Rubina’s body with the prayers by Imam Ziauddin. Soon after this Jannat Guest House became a funeral parlour for the rejected ones of Duniya’s imams and graveyard.

Anjum participated and joined in the protest with retired bureaucrats, policemen, army officers at Jantar Mantar probably known as Karbala where the protest against various scams like Latur Earthquake money settlement, Manipuri Nationalists asking for the revocation of the Armed forces Special Powers Act, Association of Kashmiri Mothers of the disappeared, protestors’ of Union Carbide gas leak in Bhopal, Association of Kabaddi Wallah’s (waste-recyclers’), Association of Sewage Workers’ Union protesting against the privatization and

corporatization of the city's garbage and sewage etc., people considered the protest as 'Second Freedom Struggle'. Both the unaddressed baby that left out on the pavement of Jantar Mantar and forsaken lady named Tilo came under the shelter of Jannat Guest House.

When Anjum stepped out to help the poor and the needy her community made remarks that world wouldn't accept the service of the third gender. Possessing courage and compatibility with great passion she started to serve the society and disapproved their community views towards the universe. Later it was spread quickly and became fame that Jannat Guest House not only as an Education Sanctuary among the poorer quarters, a place for growing birds, animals, vegetable garden etc. They slept between the headstones, plant vegetables; create a new kind of human family that can obliterate the divisions between the living and the dead. As she turned over the pages of the establishment of Jannat Guest House her heart was filled with contentment and accomplishment.

Conclusion

The Supreme Court of India had declared hijra community as The Third Gender. Even our Miss India 2018 Anukreethy Vas aims for bias-free society for transgenders. There are exceptional examples of distinguished transgender individuals who have climbed the ladder of great success by amalgamating talent, hard work, dedication and urge to do something for their community like first transgender Entrepreneur Kalki Subramaniam, first transgender News Anchor Padmini Prakash (founder of Sahodari Foundation), first transgender Mayor Madhu Bai Kinnar, first transgender Pastor Bharati, and first transgender Principal Manabi Bandyopadhyay. According to the proverb "Good dress contributes half the impression" in particular a person is estimated by their physical appearance, their outward semblance, behavioural pattern and by every walk of life. In the case of transgender, they are estimated in the same way thus they possess a low esteem. Even the protagonist knew that she was only Butcher's Luck and rest of her life remained precarious and reckless. Still, Roy's heroine Anjum sprung out of the regular cocoon not only to upgrade their community's life style, unlike realistic transwoman examples but proved herself to be self-reliant in nature, rendered a helping hand to the forsaken, deserted and abandoned by providing shelter, care, share and showering abundance of love and blessings on them. Hence, her Guest House functioned as a secular, multifaith sanctuary highly protected from the tumultuous outside world.

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