

Rituals and Practices of Transgenders in India-A Review

Lalini .M

Date of Submission: 01-10-2020

Date of Acceptance: 19-10-2020

ABSTRACT: Transgender people have been a part of our society for centuries. The Public has been pretending not to see transgender .We can see transgender people in everything in myths and legends. They have their own customs, rituals and beliefs. Bahucharimata is their idol. The general,public often despises transgender customs and practices. This article discusses the place of transgender people in myths and legends. It mainly deals with the rituals, beliefs and practices of transgender people.

Keywords: Transgender, jalsa, HaldiMahanti,Nirvan,ThayammaNirvan

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender identity is one of the most fundamental problems faced by people in all societies. Gender discrimination and gender determination are two aspects of this problem. Usually society recognizes ones gender by his/her birth. The gender difference is not created by human being, but the birth of male or female is formed through the biological structure. We can do nothing with it .The Genetical structure and circumstances are responsible for this birth. In the animal kingdom, there are male and female, but there are neutral also. They are called Transgender. They are differently addressed in different countries. They are called Berdashes among the American red Indians. Bachulus is their name Philippines. They are Sathils in Oman, MurathSinais in Pakistan. They are addressed as Jogappas in Southern Asia, Jogthas, Hijras etc. But in Indian Society they are called Gandu, Chakka, Koja, Theyyaro, Pennai are local names are used in Kerala. This article focused up on the historical importance, customs and practices of transgenders in India.

II. THE HISTORY OF TRANSGENDER

The Indian Society generally addressed as Nampusakanga (Neutrals in Cambridge English). There are many information in the Indian Epic and legends .The legends of Brahmanda written centuries ago consisted of clear cut reference about transgender, definitions and their birth also. A new child is born from the male-female sexual intercourse. During the intercourse the male sperm

enters in the womb of woman and mix with the blood there and form an infant. According to the explanation given in the 48th chapter of Brahmada Puranam, the rate of the mixing up sperm blood in the womb will determine male, female, neutral birth. In the mixture sperm blood the measure blood is increased, a male child will born. If the mixture sperm-blood is equal, the Napumsaka will come out. According to the legends the Napumsaka is also a normal birth.

There are reference of Transgender in Mahabharata and Ramayana. These are well known to our society. In the Ramayana, Ram, according to the order of his father was going to the forest for 14 years of forest life. He was accompanied Sita and his brother Lekshmanan. When they started from the palace a large number of people, women, men, and children from Ayodhya followed them. When they are at the entry of the forest Rama said to them that the women, men and children will go back. They obeyed, but some people were there, they could not go back for they were transgenders. Ram returned to them and blessed them. There after they will be invited where triumphant activities take place. The belief is that their presence will bring back triumph and success.

In Mahabharata there is Shikanti who attained popularity than that of Ramayana. Shikanti means neither male nor female. Shikanti is the re birth of Amba, the daughter of the king of Kashi. Shikanti lived to kill Bhishma who harassed her. Shikanti played an important role in the triumph of Pandavas in the Kurukshetra battle field. Bhishma has got the boon of unperturbed death .So Arjuna placed Shikanti before him, and shikanti darted arrow at Bhishma. Shikanti had an attachment with Pandavas Shikanti came to the wedding day of Abhimanyu , the son of Arjuna, Besides in the story of Iravan , there are references of Transgender. When Bhishma tried to kill Iravan, he put forth a regression, he wished to be married and to live even a day, Bhishma allowed him, but no woman was ready to marry Iravan for he was going to die. So he hadn't got a bride. So Lord Krishna disguised as Mohini has turned to Iravan's bride and his wish was fulfilled.

The oldest book of Indian Law known as Manusmriti, and the authentic book on

sex, Kamasutra there are references about transgenders. Manu called 'Cleeban' and was not given a sympathetic attitude towards them. The Cleebanses were regarded as boorish and suggested that they will be kept off from the rituals, yagas and homas for the dead. In the Kamasutra, Valsayana Rishi in the chapter 'Ouparishtak' pointed out male female and a third gender. This is the Transgender of the present day.

In the Kamasutra there are references about the sexual activities of Transgenders. There are references at the mouth sex activities of Napumsakas. Anima and animus presence will create fiction in the human body is also written in Islamic Karma Shastra.

The Legend of Bahucharimata, the idol of Transgenders

The husband of the girl will never come near her in the night. But instead he would mount up the white horse and go away from her. Every one rebuked her. She is not a suitable girl for him. He would have some concubines. For clearing the confusion, the girl followed him. She hasn't any horse to travel. Seeing her pathetic situation a big goose asked her to mount at its back. She travelled thus and found out her minion. He behaved like a hijada she changed her figure as goddess Bahuchara and asked him why did he destroyed her life. He was frightened. He revealed the truth that he was compelled to marry her. It was for the sake of the existence of family with children. She came to know that she was cheated but she felt sympathy to her husband. The men like you become transgender yourself and become my devotee and I am your goddess (Shikantis, an untold Story, Devadatt Patnaik).

Another Myth

The goddess of Shikantis is Bahucharimata. A king in Gujarat, fell in love with a goddess whose means of conveyance as peacock. The King wished to marry her. The goddess was really wished to lead the life of virgin. However she cannot stand with the disturbance of the king, so she told the king to sink himself in a pool and come back. She showed him a pool in the jungle. The king jumped in the pool, sank and then got up. The King has turned out to be a Napumsaka. He was very sad but bahucharimata advised that he would have followers and he was consoled.

The Rituals of Transgenders

Nirvan-One who comes to become the transgender community will consider as chela. The guru will receive him and will observe the chela for

the following time and if he gets satisfied the chela will be chosen for Nirvan. For the sake of a transforming male body into feminization, castrating his male sex organs.

Thayamma Nirvan

Nirvan is done in two ways got to some hospital and castrate, second method to approach a transgender and get oneself castrated. This kind of Nirvan is known as Thayamma Nirvan. This kind of castration is considered by the modern times as boorish and barbarous way of removing sex organ. When this kind of removal of male sex organ and testicles, the possibilities of chela's death should also be expected.

Haldi -Mehanti

Haldi Mehanti is a rite to change the transgender into she. It is a ritual extended to 40 days and thus duration of time is considered as the festival of flowers in her life. On the twelfth day there is ritualistic bath, on the 20th day the second ritualistic bath is celebrated. Water will be poured on the head of transgenders. Those who around them will anoint turmeric and filled the mouth with sweets. Those who had earned Nirvan will be gifted with wheat, sugar, ghee and Tea.

Jalsa

Jalsa is celebrations begin on the midnight of 40th day. Transgenders of the neighboring places will arrive to share the moments and giving gift who takes nirvana. The major part of the gift is dress materials and make up items. Those who have taken nirvan will be placed under canopy prepared in the courtyard. Anointing turmeric and gave them bath and they are taken to room and dressing them with green coloured clothes and cover their face with clothes and place a pot with milk and bring them out. The milk will be flown in the nearest river or well, then the nirvana chela exhibit her nakedness before a green tree. Later the cloths which cover the face will be removed, and the Guru shows her a mirror. With this ritual chela is turned out to be a woman. The mirror showing is taking place before the picture of the family goddess santhoshimata.

The forty days of Nirvan stage the chela is not to be allowed to look at the mirror. Only at the jalsa ceremony the chela see the mirror. After thus the fruits kept before the picture of santhoshimata, and fried items are allowed for chela to eat according to her appetite. The rest of them will be given to the participants as something divine or prasadam. The future decision is based on the first food article which chela eats. Those who are eating

fruits or fries could have a happy future. The aged transgenders will bless the new chelas. This is the systematic way of life they follow. They will teach the chelas about the life system. At the day break the Jalsa ritual will come to the end everyone will go back to their places. After the Jalsa, the transgender can enjoy the freedom of transgenders.

III. CONCLUSION

Transgenders are following their own rituals and mannerism. The public society could not with stand with their customs. For many centuries transgenders had been living here, but in Malayalam and some other languages there are no respectable names to address them. Society consider male are the first gender, female are second gender and transgenders are not regarded as the third gender. The sex between male and female is natural, and other sex of neutrals and transgenders are regarded as unnatural. Third gender categories are LGBT. This is the narrow mindedness of the human being. Change their attitudes and approach this with an open mind, then only the existing problems will ended. A boy/girl and transgender identity will be approved. But instead forgetting their mental activities and what is the external is only regarded and thus family and other social establishment rejected these human beings. This situation compelled them run away from their native land. However, the new generation will try to understand the contradictions and think that they are also part of our society.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Surendran, P.(2008).HijadakaludePorul. D.C Books.Kottayam.
- [2]. Soman, P. (2014). Marxism Laingikatha,SthreePaksham .Curent Books.
- [3]. ReshmaBharthdwaj,(2004).Mithyakalkappur amSwavargaLaingikathaKeralathil.DC Books.Kottayam.
- [4]. Reshmi,G.AnilKumar,K.S.(2016)VimathaLa ingikatha,Charitram,Samskaram,Prathinitha nam. ChinthaPublishers.Thiruvanathapuram.
- [5]. DevadauttPatnaik,(2019).ShikantiyumMattar umParayathaApoorvaKathakalum. D C Books .Kottayam.
- [6]. Preeti Sharma, (2012). 'Historical Background and Legal Status of Third Gender in Indian Society', IJRESS, Vol.ED-2(12), December.
- [7]. Michel Raj.M,(2015). 'Historical Evolution of Transgender Community in India',Asian Review of Social Sciences', ISSN:2249-6319,Vol-4.
- [8]. Dona John (2017). 'Living a Life of Exclusion:Being a Transgender in India'. Friedrich-Naumann- Stifungfur dieFrieheit. Postdam.
- [9]. Joseph,S.(2005). 'Homosexuality in India: Historical and Contemporary Situation'.In S. Joseph Social Work and Practice and Men Who Have Sex with Men.Delhi:Sage.