
**Prejudiced Discrimination on Transgender's in India: An Analysis of
Laxminarayan Tripathi's *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi***

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Abstract

The third gender experiences inner conflicts and trauma due to discordant physical attributes in society. The way one presents one's body to the external world greatly influences how others perceive one's gender. In the transgender community, gender manifestations differ from sexual identities. Transgender people, or the hijras, attempt to change their bodies in order to produce a different body type. Even though the hijra minority has roots in ancient Indian civilization and culture, they are frequently marginalized and treated with contempt in society. A transsexual body is frequently the target of mistrust, embarrassment, and mockery. This present paper highlights the issues raised in the autobiography *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi* by Laxminarayan Tripathi. The protagonist, Laxmi, being a hijra, worked really hard to acquire a flawless feminine figure to fit in with society. She had no idea at the time that society would constantly focus on the negative rather than the positive. Dissatisfaction with life is a result of society's tendency to highlight the negative traits and flaws in the feminine and masculine characteristics of transgender persons rather than their accomplishments. Transgender people begin to doubt their identity, existence, and physical construct as a result of these circumstances and their character.

Keywords: Body Inaptness, Discrimination, Identity, Gender, Transgender.

The community which is not conforming to the binary gender norms of male and female are considered transgenders. When a baby is born, the parents or physicians determine the newborn's sex based on how the external genitalia are constructed. However, the concepts of gender and sex are completely dissimilar. Gender is socially manufactured, whereas sex is biological and natural. Transgenders have been purposefully marginalized, harassed, and shamed for millennia due to their

gender incongruity. The hijra community in India experiences assault, humiliation, and prejudice all through their lives. They are subjected to physical and psychological torture on a daily basis and are hated by society at large. They have every right to live the way they do, yet they are viewed as outsiders and are shut out of society.

When parents learn of a transgender person's gender identification, many of them disown them. Transgender persons experience significant pain and mental suffocation as a result of their parents and families' rejection of them and their affection. The transgender community works extremely hard to demonstrate their competence, ability, and value in spite of all obstacles. They aim to realize their goals and aspirations by creating chances. However, the mainstream does not acknowledge the majority of their accomplishments. Their gender incongruity casts a shadow over the recognition of their accomplishments. Dennis Prager accounts for "the human propensity to identify one minor flaw among all the wonderful features as the missing tile syndrome" in *Happiness is a Serious Problem*.

Mumbai-born Laxmi Narayan Tripathi is a transgender activist, actress, choreographer, Bharatanatyam dancer, and motivational speaker. In 2008, she became the first transgender person to represent Asia-Pacific at the UN. She spoke fearlessly about the struggles that transgender persons and other sexual minorities in India confront. She asked everyone to treat her people with decency, respect, and humanity as a representative of the trans community. Tripathi has held positions on the boards of many NGOs that promoted the rights of the LGBT community. She rose to the position of president of the DAI Welfare Society, South Asia's first officially recognized organization for transgender individuals. In order to foster the independence and well-being of sexual minorities, she founded her own organization, Astitva. As the first transgender person in India, Tripathi's passport states that she identifies as "female, transgender, and eunuch."

Me Hijra, Me Laxmi is an open and motivational account of how Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, the first-born son of a conventional Brahmin family, became a hijra and set a precedent for the transgender community in India. Laxmi describes the difficulties she had in the early stages of her transition in her book. She had known her masculine body's domination over femininity since she was a little child. However, she was terrified to express her feelings to her parents or any other family member. An elder cousin and his companions sexually assaulted her. They threatened to hurt her little brother if she didn't reveal what they had done. Heartbroken, Laxmi quietly bore all the suffering as,

Sickly as I was, I had learned to endure. I did not tell anyone about the ugly

incident. Perhaps the guy's threats scared me. But a few days later, he molested me again and then again. He was accompanied by his friends, and all of them took turns to violate me. The physical and mental torture I went through is indescribable. But I didn't say a word to anyone, either then or later. I kept my feelings bottled. (*MHML* 6)

These occurrences shocked Laxmi, who began to protect herself. When the males discovered she was resisting, they blackmailed and sexually assaulted her, but she resisted. Numerous kids who didn't match their gender were physically abused by their classmates, neighbors, and even relatives. Subsequently, they faced threats of being revealed for their feminine actions.

Laxmi had a profound and heavenly love for dance. She forgot her problems and agony while dancing. Dancing allowed her to fully express her femininity. She felt like a goddess, releasing all traces of masculinity and embracing her feminine side as her hips and feet moved in time with the music. For her, Baby Jhonny, her dancing instructor, was more than just a mentor—she was an inspiration. Laxmi internalized her teacher's teachings and lived out her beliefs. On and off stage, Baby Jhonny demanded that her students retain the poise and elegance of a dancer. She thought that even when a dancer is strolling through the streets, their movements should always be graceful. Baby Jhonny's remarks had a deep effect on her. She continued to wear her saree, walk, and speak like her instructor, even after coming out as a hijra in public. “Everyone compliments me on my overall demeanor and my outfit these days. However, Baby Jhonny deserves all the credit for that (*MHML* 25). Laxmi reached new heights as a result of her dance abilities. Vidya Nritya Niketan, the name of the dance school she founded, was eventually changed to Lucky Chap Dance Academy.

When someone deviates from the heteronormative society's ideals and standards, they are always likely to find fault with them. Regardless of their skill, bravery, or manners, they are consistently labeled as misfits. Every time Laxmi was recognized by society as a male, she felt deceived. Her desire was to live like a woman and become a woman. She visited Byculla, a neighborhood in Mumbai where hijras resided covertly. She became Shabina's (another hijra) chela, or disciple, or daughter. The initiation ritual had filled her with such excitement. But out of dread for her family's reaction, she kept this a secret. Laxmi was a talented dancer and choreographer, but society did not recognize her accomplishments; instead, it discriminated against her because she was transgender. Dennis Prager describes this

type of human behavior as the "missing tile syndrome" in his book *Happiness Is A Serious Problem: A Human Nature Repair Manual*. Humans have a propensity to ignore the kindness that is displayed and criticize what is lacking. Seeing something lovely and focusing on something tiny or wrong is one of the best ways for human nature to undermine enjoyment. Prager states,

This tendency is easily demonstrated. Imagine looking up at a tiled ceiling from which one tile is missing— you will most likely concentrate on that missing tile. In fact, the more beautiful the ceiling, the more you are likely to concentrate on the missing tile and permit it to affect your enjoyment of the rest of the ceiling (50).

In India, transsexuals were frequently hated for engaging in prostitution and the sex industry. The Transsexuals are regarded as a nuisance as their loud claps and voices annoy the general population. However, Laxmi was not at all like that. Despite her education and good manners, society did not accept her as a fellow human. Laxmi's parents were confused and upset when they learned that she was a hijra. Her mother yelled at her for sullyng their neighborhood and family honor. In her attempt to live like a man, she even tried to buy Laxmi into opening a new company. Laxmi sympathized with her parents since she had betrayed their confidence and aspirations. She made an effort to persuade them by describing her accomplishments and capacity for survival. The following lines depict "My father did not speak to me. As for my mother, she cried non-stop for three whole days. Things came to a head when, in a fit of anger, she sheared off some of my hair. I could take it no longer. I drowned my sorrow by starting to work for the hijra community" (*MHML* 49-50). Prager notes that everyone experiences the missing tile syndrome.

In one way or another, people are not content with what they currently have and instead search for the emptiness. He goes on to say that the only thing lacking in people's lives would be whatever they consider to be the most significant quality in others. A trans woman is a person who, although having male genitalia at birth, eventually recognizes her femininity and changes her sex to female. Prior to transition, every trans woman would be held accountable for acting like a girl, possessing a feminine body, and not being much enough. They mock them for their uncontrollably feminine character and draw attention to their lack of manliness. They are singled out simultaneously following the change. Prager describes this human conduct as miserable. He criticizes the tendency of human nature to focus on what is lacking and suggests that unless individuals learn to focus on what is available and find contentment in it, they will eventually get fixated on the missing tiles, causing them and others to feel anxious, hostile, and humiliated.

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With her disclosure as transgender, Laxmi began advocating for the rights of sexual minorities. During her G4 visa visit to the UN for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly, she came to the realization that transgender people were destined for greatness, not for prostitution and begging. In contrast to India, she respected the transgender population in America for living a decent life. She labored and dreamed of a brighter future for transgender persons in India. Similar to Prager, Laxmi discovered contentment in the distinctiveness of her body, mind, and soul. In her life, she never bothered to look beyond the missing tile. "I had a sense of empowerment, even though a hijra does not often use the word empowerment in their vernacular. Although I, Laxminarayan Tripathi, enjoyed taking on new challenges as a human, I was never permitted to do so as a hijra" (*MHML* 62–63).

Laxminarayan Tripathi is shown in the book *Me Hijra. Me Laxmi* is a multifaceted individual who is at once a kid, a dancer, a lover, a lady, a friend, a devoted son, and a hijra.

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