



# TO BE OR NOT TO BE: THE DILEMMAS OF A TRANSGENDER THROUGH THE WRITINGS OF LAXMI NARAYAN TRIPATHI.

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## ABSTRACT

Transgender is not contemplated as the third sex but considered a disgrace to the society. Gender is a pervasive facet that gives human their identity in society. Gender plays a very important role in the society. There are some unsaid rules that a particular gender has to follow and as a result the working of society remains stable and unquestioned. Gender discrimination is clubbed with other aspects like ethnicity, status, disability, age and many more in operating patriarchy. The psyche of the Transgender and the people in general in India is manipulated easily due to their acceptance of western psychology. The transgender are marginalised and forgotten in today's world.

## KEYWORDS

Transgender, Beginning Theory, Satayamev Jayate, Red Lipstick, Patriarchy, Lacan

## 1. INTRODUCTION

"I know I am Transgender because my brain knows its Female and my body  
Disagrees."(Alan Cohen)

Transgender is not contemplated as the third sex but considered a disgrace to the society. Gender is a pervasive facet that gives human their identity in society. Generally while revealing the gender, only male and female are taken into consideration. Gender plays a very important role in the society. There are some unsaid rules that a particular gender has to follow and as a result the working of society remains stable and unquestioned. Gender discrimination is clubbed with other aspects like ethnicity, status, disability, age and many more in operating patriarchy. Patriarchy is the working of society where the father or the eldest male of the family holds supreme power. Typically, the patricidal society are patrilineal (male inherits property and title) and

female is assigned matriarchy. The term society emerged from the Latin word 'societas' which is derived from the noun 'socius' talks of bond or interaction between parties. A society is a group of individuals in social interactions; these groups have same tradition, cultural aim, and working. These have same political and cultural expectations. The society works under Patriarchy, the hierarchical power where men are dominant and women are subordinate. Patriarchy is harmful for both men and women but for women, subordination is in almost every sphere be it private or public. Women are denied the rights and access to things that are easy for men. India is 'a congeries of micro-regions' (M.N. Srinivas, 1978), region, religion, structure, social practices, culture are varied. This diversity also leads to the absence of homogeneity which is harmful for women and their never changing spot. Patriarchy is killing men too; the mental health and existence are at risk due to the traditional and inflexible norms of masculinity. The running of society under the umbrella of patriarchy keeps the bourgeois satisfied and in power.

In the same society lives the Transgender or Trans who are the third sex. These are the people who have their gender identity opposite to the sex at birth. It is in the twentieth century that the third gender became legal. Transgenders include a wide range of non-binary wings comprising of Bigender, Pangender, Gender fluid, Crossdresser, Androgynous and many more, who come under the umbrella of transgender. Referring to the transgender community, a Bigender can be understood as both male and female whereas, a Pangender is someone who cannot be identified under the categorization of gender. Life of transgender people is not easy as they are often referred to with slangs, ostracized from the society, molested by the primary sex, beaten, and most importantly kept away from the rights and dignity they deserve as human beings.

In 1990s transgender studies came into form. This is a field of study focusing on the cultural representation, political movement, social organizations and the lives of the third sex. The transgender studies aim to give knowledge and benefit to the transgender community. The field of Trans study is developing with time and is leading the Trans people to start dreaming to live a normal life.

While dealing with the lives of the transgender, Psychoanalysis apparently plays an important role in assimilating the nuances associated to their life and living. Psychoanalysis is the method by which psychic phenomena and emotional disorders are performed through personal experiences as well as through dreams. In other words, Psychoanalysis can be summed up as the process that deals with the beliefs that lie within the unconscious mind—the thoughts, feelings, desires and memories of the human mind. Technically, the field

of Psychoanalysis deals with the psychological theories and the techniques proposed by Sigmund Freud in west and GirindraShekhar Bose in India.

Sigmund Freud was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis. He in his psychoanalytic theory of personality talks about the human behaviour where he talks in detail about the three component of mind: the id, ego and the superego. The first and most primitive part, the id consists of the basic physical needs and urges. This part he called to be functional unconsciously. The second part, the superego is concerned with the social rules and morals which can be easily understood by the conscience or moral. The last part, the ego is the rational part of the human mind. The three part of mind are in continuous conflict with each other. Freud believes that the conflicting nature between the three parts undergo change in a human as they grow from childhood to adulthood. This progress he explained through the five basic stages focusing; oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. This idea was termed as psychosexual theory of development. This can be understood as the id being “I want” phase of the mind, where superego will be “It’s not right to do” phase and the ego is the “compromise can be done” phase of the mind.

Jacques Lacan, a French psychoanalyst commented on the writings of Freud, where he developed a completely new psychoanalytic theory of humankind. He always aimed to go back to the real teaching of Freud which according to him until date was not Freudian enough. He started with the reinterpretation of the Freudian theories. The central pillar of Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory is that “the unconscious is structured like a language” (*BT* 113). Lacan believed that the human psyche works within three orders—the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. He also reinterpreted the theory of Freud on the unconscious in terms of the ‘self’ and the ‘other.’

Lacan asserts that before the sense of self emerges, the young child exists in a realm, which Lacan calls the imaginary (Pre-Oedipal). In this stage, there is no distinction between the self and the other, and the idealized identification for the child is the mother. The child experiences both itself (innenwelt) and its environment (umwelt) as a random, fragmented and formless mass. At some point between six and eight months occurs the Imaginary stage, where the child sees its own reflection in the mirror and starts to understand himself separate from the world. This stage corresponds to Freud’s stage of primary narcissism (the subject is in love with its own image and its own body preceding the love of others). As per Lacan, the ego emerges at this moment of alienation and fascination with its own image. Lacan says the ego is based on the image of this wholeness of the

child, which is misrecognition of truth and of alienation. This is an illusion which Lacan refers to as the “lack of being”. The next stage, “the symbolic stage” is where the child undergoes language system. This stage marks the beginning of socialization, prohibitions, restrictions and also the association with the father figure (patriarchy) which disrupts the narcissistic balance of the child and mother. This shows the importance of phallus being the privileged signifier. The last stage is the real stage which is the formation of psychic structure. The phallus is the privileged signifier that operates all the three registers- the imaginary, the symbolic and the real.

Lacan thus gave the theory of the other as the big other which was capital ‘O’ and the little other the small ‘o’. As per Lacan, the small ‘o’ designates any other person or the counterpart whereas the capital ‘O’ is the concept of otherness. The small ‘o’ is the mirror of oneself whereas the capital ‘O’ is the separate entity as whole. The mirror stage sets up the ego as an ideal for the subject ‘O’ and this ideal ‘O’ turns out to be the subject’s experience.

On the other hand, in the east, Indian psychoanalysis was initiated with the work of GirindraShekhar Bose, an Indian psychiatrist from Calcutta. In 1921, Bose was the first Indian to have received the award of the Doctor of Science Degree in Psychology for the thesis “*The Concept of Repression*” where Bose laid on “special and unwanted stress on the tendency to polarity in the human mind.” This concept deals with the Re-reading of the Indian epic Bhagavad Gita. Bose had the roots of his theory in Indian tradition; he consulted pundits, translated yoga texts and many other ancient wisdom texts too.

Bose developed his psychoanalytic ideas independent of Freud; his techniques included suggestions, memories and association encouragement. His theory urged that there is no wish without any counterpart and all wishes are pleasurable. Bose in his theories never mentioned Penis envy which on the other hand was important part of Freud’s research. Bose also gave a unique concept of castration anxiety and had his own version of the Oedipus conflict where the role of super ego is completely changed. Bose also talks about dreams which discord from Freud theory. However, Bose was highly influenced by Freud theories but created an Indian Psychoanalysis with distant notions than that of west. He was rooted to his Indian traditional philosophy. Bose founded Indian psychoanalytical society in 1922 and the image symbolises the image of Ardhanarishvara, the combined image of Hindu God Shiva and his wife Parvati symbolising bisexuality. The society objective was to “cultivate and furtherance of the science of psychoanalysis.”

However, with the British colonisation the development of psychoanalysis in India was heavily disturbed and the psyche was also heavily influenced. The psychoanalysis was used as the tool to repress Indians and rule. There was a split self representation in Indian psyche, "Intrusive dominating foreign British self and the native, submissive, inferior Indian self." (*Freud Along the Ganges: Psychoanalytic Reflections on the People and Culture of India*, 457) Gradually after the independence in 1947 the psychoanalysis in India lost its position and declined with poverty and partition. Revolt against colonialism and involvement of religion, early tension between the psychiatry and psychoanalysis and most important the lost Indian cultural belief all led to the decline of psychoanalysis in India by mid 1950s.

The Primary text of the dissertation is *Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life* by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi. Laxmi Narayan Tripathi known as Laxmi is an Indian transgender who is an activist for her community and is seen in bollywood movies too. She is a transgender celebrity in India—a choreographer and a motivational speaker. Laxmi has done her post graduation in Bharatnatyam or SadirAttam (a form of Indian classical dance). She is also the first Indian transgender to represent Asia Pacific in the UN, 2008 and played an important role in fighting for transgender rights in India. Currently she is the Acharya Mahamandaleshwar of **KinnarAkhada**. She believes that transgenders need to be considered natural and given equal rights and she asserts the fact how for 311 years the transgender/ Hijra have been thrown out of the mainstream society. Her aim in life is to bring back the position of the Hijracommunity as it were under the Sanātana Dharma, (another name for Hinduism) during Tretayugaand dvaparayuga. Laxmi had a grand appearance in the Indian television as transgender in the reality show **Big Boss** too in 2011, where she openly talked of who she is and how much she loves herself as a person. Also in **SachkaSamana**, 2009 which is another television show, she openly answered all the questions that were asked about her reality. She with her parents talked about some problems she faced being a Hijra. In her words:

“roohmerijanani, hij mere kaleje me hai ...”

Laxmi Narayan Tripathi has two books to her credit, *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi*(2015) and *Red Lipstick: TheMen in My Life*(2016). The book, *Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life*, serves as the primary source for the present research work. The book is an autobiography wherein she deeply talks about all the men in her life that helped her in her journey of destruction, transformation, acceptance and love. The book talks about her childhood and all the influential experiences of her life. Laxmiat present is living the life of comfort and ease but

there are thousands of Hijras in India who are still living a life of hell. Choosing to be a Hijra attracts varied challenges in the society and in her journey so far, she overcame many of the difficulties successfully and have now reached to a point where she is looked upon by many and revered too.

Guru Deep Singh's article *Transgender and Their Social- Legal Status: An Empirical Study in State of U.P.*, talks in depth the history of the third sex world. It explains how from the starting they were marginalised leading them to cursed lives that they live. The attitude of the so called normal people of society leads to mental health problems for approximately 52.1% of the transgenders. The work specially focuses on the Indian state, Uttar Pradesh and suggests as to what all can be done to provide a better life for the third sex in India. Thus, the work gives a brief and clear idea of the Transgender community. Beside this, Nayanika Nambiar and Parmesh Shahani's work *A Manifesto for Trans Inclusion in the Indian workplace* bring into light the truth of the lives the transgenders. The research also gives a better understanding of the community at work places through some case studies done in metro, hotels, cafe and many more. Dr. Venkatesan Chakrapani's article *Hijras/transgender Women in India: HIV, Human Rights and Social Exclusion* too analyses the health related issues faced by the transgenders who are forced as sex worker due to no job and exclusion from the mainstream society. In addition, Salman Akhtar's Book *Freud Along the Ganges: Psychoanalytic Reflections on the People and Culture of India* examines the marginalisation of the Indian psychoanalysis at the arrival of the British. The ups and downs in the history of the Indian Psychoanalysis is being dealt with, leading to the fading away of the traditional psychoanalysis by Bose.

Although, a good amount of research has been done on transgender community with the application of the Lacanian theory, yet topics related to Lacan's psychoanalysis in relation to Indian Transgender lives is relatively less explored. Hence, an effort has been made by the researcher working on the Mirror Stage theory proposed by Lacan, specially on the part psychoanalysis plays in transsexualism. While researching on the topic, Lacan's theory in connection with feminism and transforming theory is also taken into consideration. Apart from the above mentioned, several case studies, debates and presentation have also been dealt with by the researcher, conducting the research.

The present research progresses keeping in mind the role of Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis and how it has played an important role in positing transgenders in India as 'Others' in the society and this lies at the core of all the injustice and mistreatment meted out to the third sex in the society.

Taking into consideration all these observations, analyses and critical interpretations of Transgender studies in India- the researcher proposes to make a close reading of *Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life* by Laxmi and explore the challenges in a transgender's life through a psychoanalytical study taking into consideration Lacanian theory. The focal point of the dissertation will be to execute a critical survey into the gradual history of the Transgender community with a particular focus on Laxmi's voice through her work. The objective of the current dissertation is to focus on the concept of treatment on the third sex/ transgender/ Hijra in India, how they are ostracised from the society and what solution can the Psychoanalytical theory offer in understanding the human psyche and how Laxmi acts as a tool of empowerment, awakening and resilience against the colonised minds of the modern India.

## 2. SHADES OF MARGINALISATION

India has about 490,000 transgender people. These people stay on the fringes of society, in poverty, ostracised due to their gender identity. Many of them earn living by singing, dancing in bars, begging and even prostitution. Laxmi, the transgender activist emphasises not to be called a Hijra than a transgender as the term transgender was given by British and Hijra/ kinnar makes her feel more connected to the Hindu culture. She says she was never different or unnatural; it was the world that made her think like that. She replies to being a hijra and what was it that made her different from the rest:

“Mai bhiekmaakikhokh se paidahui, maibhiusichatisnaaso se dhudhpeeke, merabachpanuskeangaan me beetha” (TDTT2016)

Laxmi's father supported Laxmi and when asked on the television show *Sachkasamana*, about her being a Transgender, he said: “why should I feel ashamed... Nobody throws away a desi ghee laddoo, whether it comes out perfectly round or misshapen. My child is and always will be my child” (RL 19)

Despite being a transgender, Laxmi had been lucky in many ways. Before undergoing external or social discrimination, transgenders usually undergo discrimination within the familial structure first. However, Laxmi had supportive parents. She was not kicked out of her house to beg like Simran Shaikh, another transgender whose father told her “You are dead to me. You are disgrace to our family” (SY 2013) because of her being Trans. Nevertheless, Laxmi's life too had been no less than a roller coaster ride. She was born a male child at the time of birth but as life moved on she chose to be what she felt more— a woman. Since her childhood, she liked

things which the society considered normal for girls to do. She was abused at a very young age which is a common problem faced by every transgender. She too like many others fell victim to molestation and rape in the hands of her relatives at home. She openly declares how she received consolation from her guru Ashok Row Kavi when he said:

“The world around us is abnormal, baby. You are normal.” (RL2)

Her sexuality was abused till the time she learned to say “NO” and respect her own sexuality. When in grade five, she came in contact with one of the gays and that was the time she realised her sexuality as transgender. With time Laxmi got into activism and stood for transgenders and their rights. In 2002 she became the president of an NGO **Dai Welfare Society**, the first registered organisation for transgenders. In 2007, she stood up herself and started another organisation of her own named **Astitiva**, through which she aimed to fulfil the welfare of sexual minorities providing support and development as key cause. Laxmi has done a lot for transgenders and their rights. She had also been awarded with **The Indian of the year** in 2017.

The position of transgender is talked in the chapter “**The Preserver**” of the *Red Lipstick*. Laxmi sticks to Hinduism and talks of their position as Demi-Gods. In India, the Hindu mythologies hold a special place for the transgenders. The epics hold place for lesbians, gays and also bisexuals where they are seen as gender variance and non-heterosexual sexualities. Hindu epics have a number of incidents where there are sexual interactions between the same sexes. In Hinduism there are deities both male and female. Ardhanarishvara is created by the amalgamation of the god Shiva and his consort Parvati. The half right body is male whereas left body is the female body. The name Ardhanarishvara means "The Lord whose half is a woman". A similar blend of goddess Laxmi and her husband Lord Vishnu, where they form a hermaphroditic Lakshmi-Naryana which shows that husband and wife complete each other and that without the one, other is incomplete. In Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu takes the form of the enchantress Mohini, in order to trick the demons into giving up Amrita, the elixir of life. Their union later gives birth to God Ayyappa. In *Mahabharata* the character Shikhandi was born a girl named 'Shikhandini' to Drupada, the king of Panchala. Shikhandini was a woman named Amba, who was left unmarried by the hero Bhishma. Later, Amba was then reborn as Shikhandini. Incident says that a divine voice told Drupada to raise Shikhandini as a son; he was raised like a man, trained in warfare and also married to a female. Later the wife discovers that her husband is a female and she insults her. Shikhandini then flees to a palace where she changes her sex and returns as a man.

Many deities in Hinduism are said to be of third sex, they are seen as gender fluid and falls into the LGBT spectrum. There has been evidence of same sex relation in Vedic times too. Hinduism has never banned homosexuality; Indeed Hindu philosophy always had the concept of third gender. The Hindu native tradition enlists heterosexual activity and includes deities like Ardharivara, Aravana, Harihara, Bahucharamata, Gadadhara, Chandi-Chumuda, Bhagavati-devi, Gangamma and Yellamma. Facts depict a place of third gender in Indian society from the very beginning; an episode in Ramayana gave the third gender a special place in society, the Demi-gods. The time when Lord Ram was going for exile he told men and women to go back if they love him. The epic Ramayana claims when he returned from exile he found a Hijra/ transgender standing there, as he only told men and women to go back. This gave them a special position that they can bless or curse people. Thus, they get their place as Demi-gods.

Since ages Hinduism had a place for transgenders but with the passage of time, the modern Indian society has lost hold of the traditions and understandings with them. Hindu temples show inscriptions of man reaching man with erected penis, man who receives fellatio from seated male, multiple male having sex with male etc., which reveals the existence and acceptance of transgenders in India since time immemorial. The transgender community in India comprises of Hijras, eunuchs, Kothis, Aravanis, Jogappas, Shiv-Shaktis and also other sets, the major groups being the Hijras, Aravani and Jogappas. The Hijra community, are the followers to Bahuchara Mata. It is not important for all the Hijras to undergo castration process but all have to follow strict rules and rituals. This community is majorly seen in north India, which holds about 50,000 in number. The Hijras perform dances, songs and blesses the family at births and weddings. The second group of transgenders include The Aravani or Ali group, the group is mostly seen in Tamil Nadu the south of India who worships the Hindu god Aravan. This community undergoes the castration process. The last set is The Jogappa which is also in south India, majorly in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. This group worships goddess Yellamma (Renuka) and includes both Trans and homo. The group is associated with prostitution or sex work. They also do not undergo the castration process.

During the Mughal period the transgenders were given the name of KhawjaSarae, and held high position as political advisors, administrator as they were the most trustworthy and closest to the king and queen. They even guarded holy places like Mecca and Medina. During the British era, initially they were accepted by the British too, as they had provision of lands and right to food and agriculture but from 18<sup>th</sup> century things began to

change drastically. By the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, British administration took all the fundamental rights of the transgenders and labelled the Hijra population as criminal tribes(Criminal Tribes Act, 1871)due to their nomadic life ways.Society too eventually began to treat them as aliens and kept them away or ridiculed their existence. Even after death, a Hijra is not left in peace. Every religion has their own way of paying respect to the dead and performing the last rites of their near and dear ones. In Hinduism, a dead person is cremated during the day and a long list of rituals is followed thereafter for the soul to rest at peace. However, the Hijras are not cremated but are laid on grave. Not just that, the last rites are performed at midnight, wherein the corpse is held straight in walking position and then beaten, cursed and abused asking it not to be born as a Hijra again in the next life. This only reveals as if the cursed life that Hijras live is not enough that such rituals need to be followed after their death too. The Hijras are punished even after their death for all the bad deeds that they had done in their lifetime but no one ever questions as to what made them do such bad deeds. Human beings are believed to be the finest creation of God but those born with different sexual orientations and not accepting certain them as normal human beings is certainly disrespecting God's creation. The current situation considers the third gender a curse, just like other a gender with same emotions, needs and desire appear as curse to the society and they are forced to live a life in hell. Some get lucky to have supportive family and a roof on top, not left to beg for food but many suffers as they are beaten, molested and raped by family members and also forces them to undergo treatment. It was only in 2018 thatthe Supreme Court of India declared Section 377 of the 1860 Indian Penal Code (IPC) – which criminalised sex “against the order of nature” to be a natural existence. This came as a relief to the 490,000 transgendersandalso others who fall under the category.

The Indian psychoanalysis is way older than that of Freud's founded psychoanalysis in Germany. Before Freud India had Yoga sutra, which talked about the nature of praxis. The Indian psychoanalysis is built with the foundation of BhāgavadGītā, whereas the western Psychoanalysis is taken from the Greek tragedy. The clear distinction between the foundations of psyche of human mind is seen between Indians and the west. India is a place of divided perspectives, but the main source of the wrong road has been the British colonisation. Before colonisation, Indians though had different perspective on transgenders were rooted to their soil and culture with their ideologies held high.However, with colonisation, the brushing up of innocent minds started taking place. Problems for transgender started when in 1897;the Britishcriminalised the transgenders and declared them as “criminal tribe”. Indian thoughattained her freedom from the BritishRaj in 1947 yet the mind of the Indian remained still colonised. The stigma persisted and they were placed in a society with no medical facility,

employment or rights. Although the British had changed their way of considering the transgenders years back, yet India took 311 years to identify them as normal human beings.

“What we’re assigned as at birth- male or female- is our gender. And somewhere along the way, we human being decided that that gender would dedicate our lives, steer us down certain paths, brand our behaviour, and inform almost all our choices- from something as trivial as the colour of your car to bigger decisions such as choosing partner for life. Nobody ever seemed to realize that gender is nothing but an unromantic box” (Laxmi, Asmita Parva)

The lines reveal the psyche of Laxmi about gender identity. Laxmi was born with the body of a male child but she is a girl by soul. She found herself attracted towards things that girls usually love, like saris, bangles and lipstick (RL2). There had been a time when she was in a dilemma questioning her own identity at every point of life till she decided to be a Hijra.

“I wondered about all this as I went on with my life, checking the boxes I was tagged under as a gay man, as a drag queen. But the question of my identity, that dialogue with myself, remained unanswered, unaddressed. Who am I when it’s just me, alone in my room? Who I am for the world? Are these two selves different, do they have to be?” (RL4)

Being in an abyss she always wanted an identity of her own. There was finally a time when she embraced the identity of hijra deliberately: “it was a conscious choice I made, one that not too many understood...” (RL7). Laxmi always emphasised on being called a Hijra rather than a transgender. She always compared the term Hijra with power and identity. She in her book *Red Lipstick: The Men in My life* explains the meaning of the term Hijra as it derived from the word ‘Hij’ referring to a holy soul and the body in which it resides is ‘Hijra’. She always believed that being a woman is beautiful and powerful, “ ... And when I’m shining in my femininity, driving men crazy, I feel more like a woman than even the most womanly of women one could imagine. Like Cleopatra, or Umraojaan- both ultimate symbols of femininity.” (RL 9) She was feminine from the very childhood and hence made the right choice of embracing womanhood and thereby motherhood by adopting two children and gave them the best life any parent could give.

“I have wanted to be a mother ever since I was a child myself. If there is one emotion I knew I wanted to fully understand and experience, it was of motherhood. ... I felt I was ready to be a mother. And when the opportunity arose, I took it.” (RL 66)

Laxmi calls herself a feminist but also understands how difficult it is for women in Hindu culture in India. She believes her sexuality is like Ganges but was always looked down since she did not meet the parameters of being a complete man and woman. The authorities figure the father was not a problem for Laxmi's life. As she says; "fathers have the power to ruin your life; they force you to do things, exploit with their 'because-I-said-so' authoritarian status, but never my father." (RL 18) She when turned 14 joined the Hijra community, which at first made her parents shocked but accepted the reality and never disowned her. Acceptance is what a human craves for which was there in Laxmi's life despite being a transgender. Laxmi was named Raju by her parents but she named herself as Laxmi as she took her identity, just like Goddess Laxmi, the symbol of purity and courage. The name Laxmi for her is like Manthan, the churning of her own identity. No doubt, the title of the book the *Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life* symbolises Laxmi's identity, Laxmi who always wears a Red lipstick symbolises herself as powerful, bold, strong, seductive and dangerous too.

The mirror stage for Laxmi had been same like the other children. The progress from real state to imaginary state has been same for her too. For Laxmi the identification of the self was just like what it would be for male/female infant apprehending the body as whole similar to others, ignoring the organic body. This is as per Lacan's, object 'o'. In 1914, Lacan asserted that human subject is fascinated by human form and the body represents something for an 'other', this is an object of desire. This is when Laxmi found out her real identity. On the other hand, being a transgender Laxmi could not suit the concept of desire of her parents and society. Lacan's psychoanalysis talks of having a unified and autonomous self and human subjectivity as heterogeneous and other dependent that have three levels. First the object, the modalities of the subject's value and of his position in relation to the other which Laxmi questioned. Always called by names like eunuchs or Meetha she was told "Ladkiyon jaisi harkat mat kar." (RL2) According to Dr. Anjali Chhabria (psychoanalyst) "being Trans is not a disease, it is natural there seems no fault in the child or parents... No medical treatment is possible; no shock treatment will be helpful..." (SJ) Second, being in the body image Laxmi questioned her own self as she had the body of a male but the soul of female. The last being the signifiers that represent him in the symbolic order, She didn't know she was not normal or legal to the society. The only loss or absence she had was to be a female and accepted as complete. As per Lacan she was not in the parameters of the symbolic register which included the human existence and this was already a question as the gender was not legal. Due to this distinction the Hijra community has their own symbolic register including their own language, tradition, ritual and culture. This is due to this symbolic register that Trans-child is not considered abnormal. In Freudian terms, in order to have a

self, the lack was important and it is the repression of Laxmi of the object 'o' which makes her the subject's heterogeneity normally non-apparent to him and creates his illusion of having a self. Lacan proposed a link between image and object 'o', which designates the image I as getting its consistency from the object 'o.'

Laxmi questions the idea of phallus' envy in the book too. Laxmi who was Raju at birth (Raju's monologue, *RL*) always felt incomplete as she always wished to embrace femininity, targeting the concept of Lacan's, phallus envy. For Lacan, phallus is a signifier and so the anatomy is a destiny if phallus is a signifier. Talking of Laxmi who turned from Raju to Laxmi is standing against the ideas of the penis envy. She always believed that men are XY whereas female are XX which clearly shows women to be complete than men, and thus wanted a vagina to that of a penis. Thus the word 'Kinnar' can also be seen as a signifier in the Indian mythology when the Kinnar or Hijra had place and even Lord Ram gave them a place in society and even Mughal who gave them position of 'khaujasarae'.

The Symbolic Order or the "big Other" as per Lacan is made possible with the name-of-the-father and the laws and restrictions that control desires and also one that rules out communication: "It is in the name of the father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law." (Jacques Lacan) For Laxmi the symbolic order was the acceptance of the society marginalising her. The symbolic order is where the desire for love begins, "functionally realisable" which is evident in the book *Red Lipstick* that shows the number of men she had in her life for her desire, pleasure or killing the Patriarchy or summed up loving herself and her journey.

Laxmi herself was a victim of the patriarchy when her guru Ashok Row Kavi turned against her. Men are always taught to hold power over women and Ashok had also been one such person. He was the person who earlier made Laxmi realise that the world around her is not normal later turned to be the one to throw her out from her social work. Being a male and a leader of the LGBT rights activism, he believed that Laxmi should not call herself a hijra and rather be a gay man, which Laxmi confronted, "... Ashok who are you to decide we are men? Transgenders are different." (*RL*162) Another incident where Laxmi fell victim to patriarchy was when at a very young age of six Laxmi was abused by her cousins and his friends. Laxmi was feminine in her behaviour as a child and this led the hands of the monsters who surrounded themselves around with the ideologies of patriarchy make her go through such a pain. "... the pain was so intense I felt something ripped apart inside me, something was broken that could never be fixed..." (*RL*167)

Rejecting Lacan's male centric theory of psychoanalysis, where the phallus or the penis holds the supreme power, Laxmi like an ardent feminist shuns this norm in her book *Red Lipstick*. After the realisation of the assaults that was done to her, she had wrecked revenge on men exploiting one after the other, deliberately. Full of revenge and anger she also took men of her family where they would beg and let her crush their chauvinism. "... I forced them into my bed and wielded my femininity as a weapon- I would make them so bloody paralysed that they would submit themselves to me completely ... " (*RL* 168) Laxmi believes that her sexuality is like Ganges, she had many relationships which were fully for her pleasure not for work. She understood the advantage she had being a woman. "... all those men who were so intoxicated by my femininity that they could not hold even an inch of their manhood. How I made their patriarchy come crawling to me, on its knees, to my doorstep- to be on my satin bed sheet..." (*RL*, 56) Laxmi in her life experienced the best of womanhood, became a mother, a lover, a friend.

Thus through Laxmi's life one gets to see that the 'Real' concerns and needs, is same for all, be it male, female or a transgender. The 'Imaginary' is all about demands, where the transgender or Laxmi needs to have a body and soul of the same sex and the 'Symbolic' is about desire, the desire of being accepted in the society and live a life of a human being. The Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic phase all work together to create the tensions of our psychodynamic selves.

Jacques Lacan also gave the theories in relation to the mirror stage, where there is mastery of seeing oneself as the ideal ego. In the mirror stage the subject, enters into culture and language and creates its own subjectivity through the fantasy image inside the mirror, "a stable coherent version of the self that does not correspond to the chaotic drives of our actual material bodies". As per Lacan's module on the structure of the psyche, the fantasy image of self can be filled in by others who want to emulate in adult lives and this is different for transgender as their psyche is different from that of male or female.

### 3. CONCLUSION

India has been a culturally strong country for ages. Although, the country was divided by kingdoms, it remained rooted to its soil. Not only culturally, India was far more developed in the field of education too. Talking of old times, the first flying machine was seen in Ramayana, the Indian epics which reveals how powerful and developed science had been in India. However, the symbol of supreme power diminished after the

invasions of Mughals and the British. Everything shattered after the British colonised over the minds too and Imperial exploitation began.

Lacan had been the pillar of psychoanalysis but still there is no place for third sex in his theories. The psyche of the Transgenders and the people in general in India could be manipulated easily because of the acceptance of western psychology. Hijras like Laxmi do not stop to question the norms of the society and try to move forward in life. The book *The Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life* is the perfect example that a transgender is just as normal as other genders and that every desire of the body is holy.

The Researcher has potentially and systematically, done a reading of *Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life* taking into consideration how Laxmi, a Hijra became an example for all the other hijras who are scared, forgotten and live in dark. Although they try to voice out in many forms yet their voice remain unheard. However, the ultimate goal to be reach and break out of the conventional norms is wonderfully achieved by Laxmi. Thus it could be said that Laxmi's story in *Red Lipstick: The Men in My Life* very well echoes the repressive power of resistance.

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