

CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE ON

HIJRA COMMUNITY

The literature on hijra is very limited and a scattered one. There are some genuine efforts by social scientists for to explain the nature and extent of this community.

Serna Nanda¹ has worked on this issue. She has produced a book titled, 'neither man nor woman' dealing with hijra community in India. This work is about a unique and extraordinary group, the hijras of India. The popular belief that hijras are eunchus has been questioned by the author, and she shows that hijras are different from eunchus. She describes a person attains a fullfledged hijra stage and status. Hijras claim that they are ritual experts and have to play important role at the time of marriage and at the birth of a son.

The author describes how hijras have a different sub-culture of their own by drawing upon androgynous themes from Hindu mythology.

The author shows how this sub-culture, centering around the worship of Bahucharu Mata, has evolved a distinct hierarchical social organization which recruits new members and prescribes and performs the imitation ceremony of emasculation.

After describing the social implications of the role of third gender posed by the hijras the author presents how person loses his identity and gradually undergoes a transformation into a hijra role.

It is an important work on the neglected subject. Sharma S.K.² has studied Hijras as The Labelled Deviants. He has described in detail about the world of third sex and how they are treated by the

society. His study tries to explore many interesting facets of hijra life and it is a valuable addition to the very few and stray works on this issue. The author has put forward that the hijras are commonly called as the labelled deviants. The deviation in their life has been caused by the mal-development of genitals, in certain cases they are castrated and become asexual in nature. They, in due course, develop a stigma of asexuality which makes them isolated from the rest of the society. A hijra though he/she lives in the family of orientation during the early phase of his/her life and the parents concerned make utmost effort to keep the reality of sexual deformity away from the view of the society. But when the affected person becomes clear about his/her exact position of sexual nature he/she finds no other alternative but to go out of the family concerned for fear of being molested. From a number of case studies given by the author, this situation has been pinpointed.

Dr. Sharma has tried to focus the life of the hijras with a view to answer some basic questions like the nature and extent of their deviant behaviour role development and identity formation giving rise to the phenomenon of institutionalization.

The identity crisis and the problem of adjustment of the hijras are acute features in their life and these have been analysed by the author giving factual support. He puts that hijras try to form their own mini-society as defence mechanism.

The literature concerned with Renuka or Yallamma - mother goddess deals with the problems of hijras as they are the worshiper of

of the mother goddess and seek protection from rest of the society with the help of the goddess.

In this regard B.R. Patil³ has thrown some light on the Jogatis in Karnataka. The cultural history of India has no parallel in the world. The religion of the common man has contributed a great deal to it. Many socio-religious institutions, customs, and ceremonies have been given rise to by the common man in association with or under the guidance of the priest. The institution of devadasis was one such institution that was created with the joint efforts of the Brahmin priest and the common man. The institution of Devadasis drew its strength and force through factors like devotion to, faith in, fear of the deity, and a desire to be subservient to the deity voluntarily or under compulsion. The hijras of the area under study have followed the path of Devadasis and become subservient to the deity voluntarily and in many cases under compulsion.

Prof. Gosavi R.R.⁴ in his work Panch Upasana in Marathi, has shown that during 6th century A.D. the practice to offer Dasi (female worshiper) for the worship of Shiva and hijra (eunuchs) to mother goddess Pawati was in practice. A male who worships the mother goddess Parvati after taking female dress and behaving like female member was very much appreciated religiously. They used to get higher ritual status. Prof. Gosavi is of the opinion that the origin of hijra community might be due to this type of religious practice.

Pandit Mahadev Shastri Joshi in the Bhartiya Sanskruti Kosh, Vol. 10⁵ describes about the origin and types of hijras. There are two types of hijras, one eunuchs or having genital deformity and the other man made or surgically operated and made a sexual. According to this volume the hijaras are found among Muslim people also, there, they are known as Khojas and they are the man made hijras. In Gujarat the Bahu Chura goddess is worshiped by hijras, they are known as Pavaya in local terms. The ritual surgical operation to make a male person hijra was legally stopped in 1880 A.D. by the then Maharaja of Baroda.

In the southern part of India, Hulligam Devi in the name of which Basavis (females) are asked to do temple service for the whole life. They are not allowed to marry and have to devote their life for temple service. In this group of temple servats hijras and asexual personalities were also included. In the Raichur District of Karnatak State, hijras carry a cane basket having Hulligam Devi idol and dress like females and submit the goddess for better prospects in the life and to get rid from physical and personal problems.

When a hijra dies, the funeral is performed by a Muslim and the observances after death are observed according to Muslim religions prescriptions.⁶

Rajan Gavas⁷ in his novel Bhandar Bhog in Marathi, has described the social and economic conditions of hijras in the present society. The crisis of identity and individuality in the life of the hero of that novel reveal us the psychological state of conditions of hijras

in general. The hero of the novel tries to unite all hijras of the area to get rid of the depressed conditions, but he is unable to bring all hijras together to form an organization. The hero lastly says that, to worship Renuka is the ultimate goal of every hijra, without which hijra will not survive.

Nagnath Kota Palle⁸ in his work Gandhariche Dole (Eyes of Gandhari) in Marathi describes the fate of a female hijra named Chameli. She worships Yallamma (Renuka's local name) and tries to lead a peaceful life. But the outlook and attitudes of the people around Chameli do not allow her to lead a peaceful life. Chameli is exploited both physically and psychologically. She becomes the victim of sex urge of people in the society and nobody is sympathetic towards her. Those who tried to help Chameli were criticized and troubled by others.

Rajan Gavas⁹ has written another Marathi novel titled Chaundake. The story is of a young girl of six named Suli. Suli meets with a problem regarding her hair and her mother attaches this problem to Renuka (Yallamma) and Suli has to marry Tallamma and become hijra. The fear of the deity Yallamma spoils her life. She has to become Yallamma's worshiper under compulsion.

Dr. Leela Patil,¹⁰ in her Bhartiya Stree Jivan (in Marathi) has described how the fear of deity illiteracy and blind faith crushes lives of innocent female members. In the name of religion the female section from the illiterate strata, of the society is exploited for sex by the urban centres.

Uttam Bandu Tupe¹¹ in his Zulava (in Marathi) has described how a hijra to make his future safe exploits a young girl, she by compulsion has to marry Yallamma Devi and becomes the sex victim of the people. Hijra known as Parsu works as an agent for the prostitution of that girl and makes his livelihood secure.

Uttam Kamble¹² in his work Devdasi and Naked Worship (Devdasi and Nagna Pooja) in Marathi has tried to throw light on the blind faith of the masses and their fear of the deity Yallamma in detail. He has shown how the naked worship ceremony is performed in the public and by compulsion and how the backward class worshipers are more in number as the victims of this pooja. He shows the role of hijra in this Naked Pooja is one of the important one.

R.C. Dhere¹³ has written about Renuka and Matangi in Pratishtan (Marathi Journal). He describes the relation between the mother goddess Renuka and worshiper Matangi as a subservient to the deity voluntarily and in some cases under compulsion.

Dr. P.N. Joshi¹⁴ has written Shree Renuka in which he describes the origin and role of hijras along with the religious ceremony performed as the initiation ceremony for the conversion of a male into a hijra.

These are some of the works related to hijra community. However, there is dearth of sociological research on hijra community and requires special attention by sociologists and other social scientists.

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