

Jindagi 50-50: A Novel of the Saga of the Sadistic Life of Hijra Community in Social Perspective

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Abstract:

Whenever there is a discussion of hijra community, we hear specific words addressed for them like chakka, minor community, third gender, napunsak, eunuch and mostly found as the victims of the social, sexual, mental and economic exploitation leading them towards discrimination and poverty. Eunuch or third genders not only face their problems with respect to their identity, but also physical and sexual problems in social milieu. Most of them are avoided by the society calling them as 'others', 'third genders and chakka. Though the Supreme Court has conferred their own identity; still, they are suffering from innumerable problems like social and mental exploitation, mental torments, and hates etc. this group is still dreaming for equality, self-identity, proper health care and fraternity. The present paper is an attempt to peep into the actual life of hijra community and their secondary plight in social milieu.

Keywords: Third gender, discrimination, exploitation, inequality.

1. Introduction:

Transgender individuals, mostly identified as "Hijras" in India, occupy a unique yet marginalized space within Indian society. Despite centuries of cultural and religious significance, they often face systemic discrimination, limited opportunities, and deep-seated stigma though they possess a pioneering place in many religious aspects. Hijra community had no specific identity for a long time in the Indian society, but after a long protestation and experiencing their problems, the Supreme Court finally gave their own identity with the word – 'third gender' in 2014. Even after this identity their problems haven't stopped. They are still suffering from a lot of problems with respect to their identity, sexual and physical harassment, abuse and unfair treatment. The present paper tries to deal with the pitiable condition of third genders as discussed by the Hindi novelist Bhagwant Anmol in *Jindagi 50-50*.

Bhagwant Anmol, an Indian Hindi novelist is renowned for his motivational books. Though his books focus the achieving goals, overcoming challenges, finding happiness, understanding life's complexities; his present novel entitled *Jindagi 50-50* is an epitome of the sadistic life of hijra community and their descanting condition in social milieu. The novelist through out the novel arises the problems of hijra community like economic and social problem, it again studies their psychology towards the behavior of society. The novels pin points the identity of hijra community where a human being is not treated as a human being on the basis of their 'other' identity. It is the tragedy of hijra community that they are subjected to exclusion from society from their early age. They are forced from schooling, family and society. This forcible act later on carries them towards isolation and adversely affect them their mentality

to see the present society as their enemy. While living in the society they lack the equal treatment, they are never revered, they are heisted and humiliated to gain their rights. All these complexities of hijra community are elaborated in detail by the novelist here. The novelist by the end of the novelist raises many questions such as - is it a crime to born as eunuch? Doesn't hijra community bear a right to live a better life? Don't hijras have right to live with their parents? etc..

The novel starts with the birth of a hijra baby in the family of Anmol. As Anmol learns about the birth of eunuch in his family, he gets shocked in his past memories the problems faced by one of his family members who was born as eunuch. However, being an educated and responsible person, he wants to keep his baby away from the injustice, anarchy and mental agony. Though he wants to bring optimistic days in the life of his kid, he fails to bring it. He realizes that his efforts to elevate the life of a eunuch baby like Harsha will sustain no longer as society has a negative attitude before hijra community. He experiences the secondary treatment given in the past to one of his family members. Not only the secondary treatment seduced and spoiled the life of the fellow but also the mental torments and sexual exploitation was unbearable. It is a society as whole which showers pity upon them at surficial level but at root level it despises them. The novel highlights how bitterly the society uses despising words about the family in which the eunuch was born. The novel again explores how society underestimates the child and his parents for begetting such effeminate child in family. They continuously laugh at the physical disability of the child and make him downtrodden with their bitter words and hesitation. Anmol, with the torments in the society attempts to kill his child with poison but with the god's grace the poison does not affect him and gets saved from the mishap.

The novel not only depicts the pitiable condition of hijra community in the society but also how the birth of hijra in a family becomes a mean of humiliation. It is supposed that the father should be a caretaker of the disabled children but the deeds of Anmol become a stigma to the humanity and the fatherly bond between a child and a father. Anmol instead of offering love, pity, care and affections to his physically humiliated son hates him permanently and insults him by saying that he is a 'different' child. The anguish of Anmol gets multiplied with the torments of his neighbors. The life of Harsha is more severe than we feel. He is ridiculed on school also. In one of the incidents of the school incidents the teacher threatens students that the one who misbehaves during the class, will be shifted to sit near Harsha. The unexpected words of the teacher hit the head and the heart of Harsha. He is humiliated by the teacher. He feels very sorry from the both sides for the injustice made by the nature with him. The words of the teachers show that Harsha was struggling for his identity, he was not behaved equally in the class. He was supposed to sit alone in the class on the basis on his 'other' reproductive system.

The novelist through the novel shows the failure of the existing education system in which the hijra receives the ill-behavior from the educated people in the school on the basis of his physical disability. Harsha instead of receiving the affections and pity is badly ridiculed by the teacher. Thus, the novelist shows that the hijra community is not only exploited mentally but also physically in society. One may ask if they are not receiving the affections and pity from their teacher in the school then how would be it possible that the students will respect the out of the school. The so-called behavior of people in the society will definitely water to grow the negative attitude of students towards hijra community in the social milieu. This behavior affects Harsha to fill her heart with grief and says-

पता नहीं मेरे अंदर ऐसे कौनसे कांटे लगे हुए हैं जो लोग अगर मेरे पास बैठेंगे तो उनको चुप जायेंगे और उन्हे सजा मिल जायेगी।¹

As Harhsa grows up he slowly performs the behavior like a girl. She finds joy in wearing sari, to apply cosmetics on face. His change in appearance makes his father to lose his temper. His father loses his temper for his unnatural behavior and uses bitter words against him. He was again warned that he will be shifted to hijra community. The grief of Harsha did not stop there, he is kicked and beaten rudely by his father. The rude behavior by his father marks the moments of her loneliness and introverted behavior against society. However, he never grudged against anyone nor shared his father's behavior to any other member of the family.

The novelist projects the physical exploitation of Harsha in very impressive way. The episode of tragic incidents in the life of Harsha continues when she was raped by the unknown people of the village while he was coming back to home. Here he experienced unendurable pains. Nobody tried to save him from such inhumane incident nor tried to offer him justice. He returns back to home with deep heart and wanted to express his agony. But everything was in vain. Nobody entertained at home. Thus, Harsha, a representative of hijra community shows pitiable and foul the life of hijra is in actual. The rape incident marks him to leave his family and join hijra community. Before joining hijra community he hates to the shameless society which had scolded him to call convict. He calls for the punishment to the criminals and appeals for justice but nothing positively comes to him. In this case no rapist was punished but Harsha was scolded badly. He was not entertained by the society nor tried to experience his pain. He was behaved in the same way as he was behaved in his school by the teacher where he was laughed at and scolded at each foot. All these events challenge him to join the hijra community and shares his emotions to other members of the community to console himself. The impact of injustice given by the society makes his mind to bring changes within him and changes her name as Harshita from Harsha.

Harsha later on leaves his family with deep heart and shifts to Mumbai where he finds the life of hijra more difficult, miserable and regretted. In Mumbai, she finds that there is nothing to bother about their chastity. She finds that all hijras were directly connected to prostitution. She, there finds that there is not integrity among hijras. Prostitution was the prime motto of their lives and while making it there was a comparison made on the basis of earning money. The life of Harsha becomes more difficult and challenging than her past. However, she feels that such type of behavior is nothing as compared to the tragic life of hijras in a village. Thus, she continued her miserable days in all hardships with dreaming that she will meet her brother and ask for his family. The novelist while recording the incidence in the life of Harsha shows that hijras have the same sense that we have. They too want pity and love. They too want to live in family but the accusations by the people make them different. They too want to help their families in each up and down, but their dreams remain incomplete forever. Harsha, in the novel is a representative of hijra community in sketching their miserable condition. Harshita on one of the difficult situations stands against the injustice of her family and becomes its support. She assists her father financially though she was seduced badly by him in the past. She feels happy to assist her father financially in a critical condition. Her financial assistance makes her family to regain the good status in society and to bring the happiness on their faces and never turned back to feel sorry. Thus, Harshita, a representative of hijra community in the novel sends a message that hijra are not others, they are not wicked, they are not incapable but they

are full with all potentials as male and female have. It also directs that they too can strive best for the welfare of the community as a whole until they are given equal treatment.

Harshita (Harsha) despite of innumerable hazards and mishaps in her life does not want to lose her family nor her community. Rather she showers love, affections and pity for them. Thus, she is the symbol of cooperation, love, pity, and humanity. She is ideal before the people who do nothing for their family who devotes herself in all problematic conditions and tries to prove herself as the best child. Thus, her devotion for her family is remarkable which is not tried to be understood by society. It is the misunderstanding of the society that the hijra community are other than male and female. While assisting financially to her family she faces many problems. She fully devoted her chastity to quest the physical hunger of others just to collect money for her father. However, she never wants to come back to her family again because she knows that she has already lost her valuable chastity which will never come back again. While offering physical pleasure to others she never grudges any other because she feels that she has become a sex-worker, a whore not for her but for her family. She, in her community becomes a prostitute which later on makes her the victim of AIDS. Her illness does not let her to live more. She finds heavenly happiness in death. She attempts for suicide. Before it she writes a moving note in address to the whole society-

किन्त्र होना इतना बड़ा अभिशाप क्यूँ है बस मेरा अधुरापन ही तो ना. कैसे कैसे पल आये इस शरीर ने सब सहा डाला. जिस शरीर का लोग मजा उड़ाते थे उसे ही रात को अपने मन बहलाने ने का जरिया बनाते हैं. मेरे शारीरिक अस्तित्व में दोरा पण है लेकिन उस तथाकथित समाज के व्यक्तिमत्त के दुहरेपण पर मैं थूकती हूँ.²

In this way the novelist through *Jindagi 50-50* highlights the imaginary life of hijras in our point of view and as it is in reality. The novel not only highlights the plight of eunuch community in society but also raises many questions like search of identity, pessimism, insult, mental agony, etc. the novelist throughout the novel addresses that we should not misbehave against hijras on the basis of their reproductive system. Rather he wants that we should offer pity, affections for them and behave as equal as we behave with other genders. The novelist also appeals that we are educated people, we should not laugh at their disability instead, he adds that it is our responsibility to make them happy. The novelist precisely talks that the Hijra community primarily expects social acceptance, legal equality, and an end to systemic discrimination and marginalization from us. they seek recognition as a legitimate "third gender" with equal access to education, employment, and housing, moving away from forced begging or sex work and also dream for respect for their traditional roles and dignity in daily life.

References:

1. Bhagwant. Anmol, *Jindagi 50-50*, Rajpal and Son's publications. Delhi, edition I, 2017, p. 30
2. Ibid, page. 163