

Indian mythological and Marginalised view of Rasaathi: The other side of a transgender

S. Dinesh Kumar¹, Dr. S. Barathi², Dr. M. Rekha³, Dr. S. Sabitha Shunmuga Priya⁴, Dr. P. Anandan⁵, A. Angayarkanni⁶, Dr. S Deepika⁷, K. Dheepa⁸

¹Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of English, Thiagarajar College (Autonomous), Madurai. Madurai Kamaraj University. dineshkumar_engsf@tcarts.in

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Srinivasa Ramanujan Centre, SASTRA Deemed to be University, Kumbakonam. barathi@src.sastra.edu

³Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sethu Institute of Technology, Virudhunagar, Anna University. rekhakrishnan7@gmail.com

⁴Assistant Professor, S&H Department, KGISL-KITE, Anna University. Coimbatore. sabithashanmugapriya@gmail.com

⁵Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of English, GTN Arts College, (Autonomous), Dindigul, Madurai Kamaraj University, anandanenglishpg@gtnartscollege.ac.in

⁶Assistant Professor, Department of English, St. Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women, Dindigul, Mother Teresa Women's University. angayarkanni_eng@sacw.edu.in

⁷Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sri. S. Ramasamy Naidu Memorial College, Sattur, Madurai Kamaraj University. deepikastral@gmail.com

⁸Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sethu Institute of Technology, Virudhunagar, Anna University. sendheeps@gmail.com

DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2023.14.03.279

Abstract

Reading a lot of different books in an effort to shed some light on the marginalized community in India, we track down a modern Indian author by the name of Sasindran Kallinkeel. He has described the life the span of a transgender, in his book *Rasaathi: The Other Side of a Transgender*, in 2020. This is the first novel the author has published, and it is meant to honour the transgender community. The term "transgender" does not refer to a specific person rather it is now used to refer to the "Third Gender Community." This bewildered male or female community is referred to with a variety of nouns, such as Aravani, Eunuch, Hijira, kinnar, Napumsakam, Gay, etc., but India still adheres to an antiquated form of bigotry. Since we are being completely honest, we believe that it provides a glimpse into the lives of the community that is probably the most stigmatised and poorly understood in the Indian Subcontinent. What would you say is the most important thing that this book imparts to its readers? The answer to all of our problems lies in acquiring the appropriate knowledge. *Rasaathi*, the protagonist, who narrates the story, is a transgender. People who are a part of the "Third Gender Community" find out more about themselves as they scroll down the pages of this book. They learn about their goals in life, the rituals they observe, the subjects they study, and the jobs they hold, as well as the ways they can live in harmony with the rest of society. By travelling with *Rasaathi*, the living icon of the community, the other two genders, males and females, are delivered from the social stigma or prejudice that is associated with the Transgender or Third Generation Community. This oppressed group will finally be freed from the ignorance that has been plaguing them. The members of the "Third Gender Community," also known as transgender, they feel proud about God's creation themselves. A healthy society gives importance to quality. Using marginalised theory and myth concept, this article attempts to trace out the solution by providing only correct knowledge and understanding of this community only will bring about a revolution toward the equality of the sexes and wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

People who identify as transgender have a gender identity or expression that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender people can also be referred to as "gender fluid." Our gender identity is our inward knowledge of our own gender; it answers the question "Who am I?" A male, a female, or someone of a different gender. The way in which we present ourselves to the outside world, be it through our behaviour, clothing, hairstyles, voices, or biological characteristics, is referred to as our gender expression. The act of a victim trying to match their gender identity and expression in a way that satisfies their need to be complete and stable is an example of gender transition. This process can take place at any point during the child's childhood, anywhere from the ages of four to eighteen. At this point in their transition, most transgender people are cast out by their biological families, never to see them again in their entire lives. This community will begin to be marginalised and excluded from society as a result of this abandonment, which is the beginning of the process.

Communities that are considered marginalised are relegated to a lower social status or to the margins of society's margins. It is forbidden for members of this community to participate in any economic, political, cultural, or social activities. Marginalization can be caused by a variety of factors, including gender, geography, ethnicity, religion, or disability. The

physical, mental, and emotional health of individuals is all negatively impacted when they are marginalised. Also People who are marginalised are placed in a position where their protections are severely compromised, and they are at the greatest risk of experiencing unfavourable health outcomes. As a result, marginalisation can lead to low self-esteem, an absence of self-efficacy, labelling, and even homelessness.

Rasathi: *The Other Side of a Transgender* is a lengthy narrative, an autobiography of a transgender, and a fictional novel that reveals the difficulties and abuse that a transgender person has to go through in Indian society. A community that is frequently ignored and perceived as being mysterious and unwelcome because of its position within our Indian society. The author, Sasindran Kallinkeel reveals the other, more negative side of being transgender in order to make readers aware of the physical and mental suffering as well as the difficulties that transgender people face on a daily basis. His efforts to begin prompt some of us readers to view them as equal by narrating this heartwarming story of a transgender person whose name is Rasaathi, who is the protagonist herself.

Rasaathi was born on August 3rd, 1970 in the city of Calicut, which is located in the state of Kerala. His home birth, which was attended by midwives, resulted in the delivery of a male child. The Midwife assured me that there was nothing to be concerned about, and that he would be fine with his pennies as he gets older. She was the most beautiful of her siblings when she was just a newborn, and people could not get enough of holding her in their arms. His parents began to refer to him as the "lucky mascot" after the father won a lottery ticket worth one lakh rupees, an amount that he had been used to purchasing for many years despite having no significant wealth. The gods were looking down favourably on. Only he, out of three children, was content enough to sit on their Papa's lap. Up until he was about 4 or 5 years old, everything seemed to be going well for him. The time when he became interested in young women his own age and developed a desire to dress and accessorise like a girl, play with dolls, use mascara, bhindi, and bangles, and wear ornaments. He eventually began to admire and took pleasure in what he saw in the mirror on a daily basis.

One day, the furious father got annoyed at his son for repeatedly acting and dressing like a girl in the same way. It was said about him that he was the son of a whore. Rasaathi was too naive to comprehend the basis for his father's rage toward him. Now, he was cut off from his other two siblings and placed under constant surveillance by their parents. He has begun to pine for the girls' dress that, when he wore it, made him feel whole and finished. After his naked body was examined by their father, who discovered him to be an Aravanichi, he was humiliated and made fun of by his other siblings, who used him as a punchline in their jokes; he was also ignored when the family ate dinner together. His spirit was broken for seven days due to the effects of isolation, boredom, fear, and the fact that nobody was permitted to play or speak. In contrast to the situation in the past, which he found himself in now, he felt like a nobody when he lost his spot on his father's blissful lap to his brother. He went to sleep that night with the prayer that his dependable god, Guruva Yurappan, would turn everything around during the night. Frustration prevailed between the parents as well, until the father made the decision to abandon the child in Erode, believing that the child would be happier there with people who were similar to himself.

The train brings the father and son to Erode the following morning. At the end of the day, they set out on foot to travel to the remorse area of Erode. He saw a small hut that was constructed out of mud and palm leaves, and the interior was dimly lit with chimney lamps. In the beginning, he was confused about the location and the people there. His disappointment over his father's decision to abandon him vanished. Then, as a result of the people there caressing the child with unadulterated love and affection, his heart grow fonder of the people who lived there. The community cheered him up by singing, clapping, and dancing in circles around him as he sat in the middle of the circle. His grin at them caused them to feel happy, but it also occasionally brought about feelings of anxiety and fear. He missed his family and had a lot of thoughts running through his head about how his father had abandoned him and how he had found his way to the new habitat. What brought him joy was the fact that he retained the sunny days when he was the centre of attention in his family's lives. Everyone there was dressed in a way that appealed to him, and they all shared his sentiments and outlook. He was given the name Rasaathi in this place.

A senior person, Amma caressed him very carefully in order to figure out what he liked and didn't like. In spite of the fact that there were few amenities, he enjoyed his time there. As more time went by, he was introduced to a large number of people who were present. After Akkas and Ammas shared details about the transgender person's life, such as their birth, childhood, biological development, way of life, and career, he became interested in learning more. The desire he once had to see his parents no longer existed. Through the character of Amma, the author exposes the conspiracy surrounding the transgender community by means of myths that have their roots deep within Hindu mythology. The author emphasises that even the transgender person's parents will not want them back. They belong to a community that is on the periphery of society.

The story of the Mahabharata, which is considered to be Hinduism's most sacred text, sheds light on Hijira's function in the world. The battle of Kurukshetra was won with the support of a Hijira, also known as the great Shikhandi. The Pandavas' victory over the Kauravas would not have been possible without Shikhandi's participation. No one could defeat Bhishmacharya because he had been granted the boon to live forever and for as long as he desired. The curse placed on him by Princess Ambrose stated that neither men nor women would be able to take his life, which effectively rendered him immortal. Arjuna, acting on the advice of Lord Krishna, engaged Shikhandi, a eunuch, in combat with Bhishmachariya. Bhishmachariya promptly put down the weapons, which allowed Arjuna to approach Shikhandi from behind and kill him. That moment marked the decisive point of the conflict, and it was then that Hijras were acknowledged all over the world. We

were conceived in order to accomplish the will of God. The child, who had been feeling depressed, found a lot of inspiration. The young Rasaathi eventually felt an overwhelming sense of contentment and pride regarding its birth. Arjuna, too, was forced to spend a year as a hijra as a result of Urvashi's curse. That turned out to be a fortunate occurrence after all. Rasaathi viewed the situation optimistically and reasoned that God had created him for a specific purpose and was pleased with both him and his community through Amma. As a result, the child was educated regarding their role as hijra or Aravanichi, including their purpose, their mission, and the challenges they face.

As the story progressed, the legend of Mahabaratha, Koothandavar, and Yellammai unfurled. According to this legend, these people are hijras and not cursed; rather, they are the only ones who have an identity. Rasaathi goes through all the rites of a hijra at the appropriate ages under the direction of her guru, Amma. The Mahabaratha epic, of which there are several different versions, is where the story of Koothandavar first appears. Before the Great 18-day War of Kurukshetra, both the Pandavas and the Kaurava approached Sahadev, a master in astrology, in order to make rituals that would help them win the war. According to Sahadev, it is necessary to offer a human sacrifice to Kali that is endowed with all of the admirable qualities of dharma, warfare, and beauty. Krishna was concerned about Arjuna because he possessed all of those qualities, and he looked for someone else who shared their viewpoint. Aravaan, the son of Arjuna and Ulupi, volunteered to give up his life in exchange for all of the qualities that were required of him, along with two demands. At the very least, one day of his life as a married man, and the opportunity to witness the Battle of Kurukshetra after his passing. Krishna complied with those preconditions. And they searched for a woman to wed Aravaan, but no one was interested in marrying the men who would perish the next day. Therefore, in order to marry Aravaan on that night, Krishna assumes the form of Mohini, a transgender woman.

The following day, Aravaan pleased Kali by offering his life as a sacrifice to her. Draupati made a plea to Kali, asking her to restore his life. Aravaan was reborn with significant new powers and participated in the battle of Kurukshetra. Even after Alambasooru knocked his head off on the eighth day of the war, he continued to fight with only his head because of the boon from Krishna. Koothandal was the only enemy he faced. Krishna chilled his mind so that he could observe the conflict in silence. After the 18th day of the war, Krishna gave Garuda the instruction to throw the head of an Aravaan into the Sarbanga River. His baby form made it to the bank of the then-named Pennai River, and he eventually became King Chandragiri's son. After he had defeated Koothaasura, he reverted to his human form, and King Chandragiri shed many tears over the loss of his son. Aravaan told him that on the day of each full moon in the month of Chithirai, he will manifest himself as a man in order to bestow his blessings upon him, and that on those days, Mohini, a transgender form of Krishna, will wed him. Because his head fights in a battle like a dance, you should refer to him as Koothan. That town is now known as Koothanagam, and Koothan Aravaan's former home is known as Koovagam. From April to May, on every Chitra Pournami, or full moon day, transgender people from all over the world visit the temple to marry him. They grieve the death of the god Koothandavar the following day by performing ritual dances and breaking their bangles as part of the ceremony. In addition to this, during the course of this 18-day festival, a beauty pageant and a number of other competitions, including singing contests, dancing competitions, and so on, are held. They held seminars and other discussions on a variety of topics pertaining to their rights and health. The fact that this festival is helping them to advance their status as third gender members of society is a positive development.

The Koothandavar Temple is where all of the festivities will take place. Rasaathi is also a participant, along with many others who marry the Lord Koothandavar, thus reenacting a historical event from the time of Lord Krishna. The drama of the Kurusetra war was reenacted, and Rasaathi suddenly had a vision of Aravan on the battlefield, but he disappointed her in an instant. They believed that they were incarnations of Mohini, and they set out to marry Koothandavar. They wore silk sarees with ornaments on them, and they decorated their hair with jasmine flowers. Rasaathi turned into a genuine hijra in spirit as a result of being pushed by the nearby hijra who stood behind me. She must now carry out all of the actions required of a hijra. The following day, everyone participates in the funeral elegy for God Koothandavar and expresses their sorrow by performing ritualistic dances and breaking their bangles. The act of accepting one's status as a widow was a horrible thing to have to go through.

Once a person is selected to become a guru, it is against the rules for him to switch gurus at any point during his life. The guru is responsible for acting as a caretaker, providing nourishment, and also guiding the disciple with regard to important life decisions. They make a living by soliciting alms, receiving blessings, and engaging in prostitution. The earnings of the guru provide financial support for his or her followers until such time as they are ready to pursue their own financial goals. Despite the fact that men are drawn to them for their beauty and care, they are unable to work because the human heart is not enlarged enough to support a hijra. Men who want to help transgender people and bring about a revolution for the betterment or upliftment of their community have a greater fear of the world questioning their charity and excluding them from society. This is especially true for men who wish to help transgender people. Therefore, the fight to better one's life and ensure one's continued existence is an ongoing struggle in the life of every transgender person.

Rasaathi was young, beautiful, and had an appearance that was appealing to the sexual desire, so her first experience with begging began in a playful manner. She was instructed to bless married couples and newborns by clapping her hands and whistling. She took to the job well because it was considered a respectable role for a hijra. They feel uncomfortable begging on the streets because it puts them in danger; the teasing and fondling annoyed her at first, but she was happy to get more

money. In due time, we came to the conclusion that she was taking advantage of her youth and beauty in a way that a typical human being would never do. The vast majority of men only give money to women in the hopes of coercing them into having sexual relations with them. She sets aside some of the money that she has earned to buy food, and the other half of it is deposited into a savings plan for the betterment of their community. She has high hopes for the development of her community in the years to come.

They may engage in prostitution if they so choose, or they may choose not to do so in order to provide financial support for their followers and their group. In addition, they find fulfilment in their own lives by bringing pleasure to others through acts such as giving sex and bestowing blessings. Oral and anal sex with transgender people, who have more stamina than regular women, satisfies the sex needs of men who have a higher natural sex drive than their wives do, which means that these men can maintain a healthy relationship with their partners. Transgender people are subjected to physical harassment at the hands of men, which, over the course of their lives, ultimately leads to their demise. They wear bright clothing to hide their suffering and the shame they feel. Another false belief about transgender people is debunked when it is revealed that, contrary to popular belief, transgender people do not experience sexual arousal.

The transgender person, just like any other human being, is capable of falling in love, but unlike other humans, they do so for reasons other than sexual attraction. They end up their feelings knowing how their lifestyle could only be, which is something that is practically impossible to live in. The passing of an Akka brought to Rasaathi's attention her obligation to the Hijira family that had raised her after her own family had deserted her when she was a child. The culmination of fifteen years' worth of toil is displayed here. A normal child will receive an inheritance that is proportional to their age. But this is no longer possible because their biological families do not care about them, despite the fact that they are family members.

The constant re-experiencing of suffering has become ingrained in their way of life. Shankar's entrance into Rasaathi's life is akin to the arrival of an oasis in the middle of a desert. Perhaps we should refer to him as her boyfriend. He complied with whatever decisions she deemed to be reasonable and just. They were very well suited to one another in terms of compatibility, chemistry, comprehension, and future plans. She had faith in him and believed that he would never turn back on some accidental or unintentional happening. After hearing that Shankar had married his cousin, her plans and hopes for a normal life, which included getting married to a man and having children, were dashed to pieces.

She put up a valiant effort to overcome her feelings, as every lover does, but in the end, she came to the realisation that their community requires their support once more and began begging and engaging in prostitution in order to make a living. She recalled being selfless, determined, and committed to the mission, sacrificing everything, including her beloved, but never looking back with regret on anything she had done at such a young age.

One more thing that happened with Rasaathi that will remain in everyone's memory until the day they die is the kidnapping and the gang rape that took place. In addition to making her feel inferior by teasing, abusing, and humiliating her, an unexpected group of people kidnapped her and used her as a ragdoll to satisfy all of their sexual deviances. In front of the other Akka Hijiras, a group of men repeatedly raped her until she passed out and then continued to molest her after she had lost consciousness. Our elders wanted to file a complaint at the police station, but the officers there thought it was a joke, so they yelled at them and chased them away while calling them whores. In spite of the fact that he was only twenty years old when they committed these horrendous acts against him, they refused to waste their time filing a police report (FIR). PETA extended its protections to animals as well, but a hijira has nowhere to go. The only thing that will ever heal their scars is the passage of time. It was not their feelings but rather their intelligence that brought them this far.

Rasaathi's intention is to bring the plight of the Hijiras to the attention of the government by establishing a national association for them in Delhi. As a result, she went on a trip to Mumbai and Delhi. She was pleased to see members of the Hijira community working respectable jobs in the Kodambakam neighbourhood of Chennai. Rasaathi discovered that even regular prostitutes were well compensated in cities like Mumbai, whereas hijiris were only mistreated and given poor treatment. She spoke on behalf of Hijiras in Mumbai and Tamil Nadu regarding the establishment of an association. Rasaathi's bravery won over her people, and they were overjoyed to have her lead them. Her objective is to achieve a satisfactory income and to be treated with respect, just like any other member of the society; this will contribute to the general well-being of the Transgender Community within the society.

All of the challenges that a marginalised community must confront, such as limited economic, political, cultural, and social activities, inadequate protection, and the highest possible risk of poor health, are confronted by these people throughout their entire way of life. They always have a cigarette in their pocket to keep their standard of living up. But in the end, they are the ones who are assaulted physically and verbally, subjected to sexual assault and illegitimate partner violence, and are cast out of society as people. Rehabilitation for prostitutes often involves making comparisons between themselves and animals, which reflects their lower levels of self-esteem. Their desire to live as normally as other people is stifled and ultimately extinguished within their own minds. The very term "transgender" is used to ridicule and exclude transgender people. On the final page of the book is a letter that is written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a note of gratitude and as a plight to every brother and sister in India, asking that they be considered equal and given opportunities as employees. They are born with a biological disorder that is caused by a mismatched hormonal fate.

In an effort to shed some light on the transgender community because they are being often discriminated. Further, he has

taken careful consideration to convey how they are feeling. They exhibit realistic emotions, such as crying, laughing, and falling in love. The effect that reading this book will have after renderings will move inches of consideration about this God's creations and how it is not necessary to turn away from them but rather to give face to them, assist them, elevate them, and treat them equally. The novel also ends by implementing proper and correct knowledge through proper education from the primary school education. The education only brings good transition from the other genders. The researchers suggest that the students of Diploma in Teacher Education and Bachelor of Education should be undergone awareness training about transgender.

REFERENCES

1. Kallinkeel, Sasindran. *Rasaathi: The other side of a transgender*. India: Thomson Press (India) Ltd, 2020.
2. National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. <https://vawnet.org/sc/serving-trans-and-non-binary-survivors-domestic-and-sexual-violence/violenceagainst-trans-and>© Copyright 2021.
3. <https://currentaffairs.adda247.com/ex-spg-officer-pens-novel-rasaathi-on-transgenders/>
4. <https://indianexpress.com/article/books-and-literature/ex-spg-officer-pens-novel-on-transgenders-6995667/>