POD CAST

Hello Good morning, this is sheetal. I am a transgender working at sri Balaji Vidyapeeth as executive manager.

Today I am here to talk about TG in india and as well as in other countries. Biologically I was born as a male but I was psychologically a female. Today I am here to talk about myself, I am a biological male who rejected my masculine identity in due course of time. I was born in a small and beautiful family and youngest in the family. My parents work in government institution. They are not much educated. On completion of my higher secondary I choose to pursue engineering in goa. In a period of time I could realize the changes I underwent and what I was. I couldn’t open up the changes which are happening in my mind and body to my parents. My family couldn’t accept the reality and I still suffer through that trauma. This situation is not only prevalent to me but many transgenders, because the families end up living for the societies. Due to the ill acceptance of the society, parents are scared to accept the children changing the gender. The reason for my presence here is due to my education, which is not available to all the transgender in the society.

In india, transgenders are not something which we see today. If we view back into the history, we can realize that transgenders are present since the Mughal empire and the british rule. Even our holy scriptures like khuran, bible and Mahabharata mentioned about the transgenders.

I thank sri Balaji Vidyapeeth, as this is one of the first medical university or college in india that has adopted transgenders. Other government hospitals or private hospitals do not accept transgenders as either as students or for any treatments. We are called using different names in various states, like we are addressed as aravani or tirunangai in tamil nadu, hizdas or kothis in northern part of india, shivashakti or Jyothi in Karnataka, kina in bihar and kusha in Punjab.

We have a system called jammat system and in it we follow the guru- cheyala relationship, we have seven karanas, leads the nayaks and ritual ceremonies like reeth, ruthi and challas. We follow these kind o cultures even now. There are various social forums which is a big festival for transgenders, One of which is the quakem festival. Transgenders from various countries come and visit during this celebration. Some of the other festivals are the mataji festival from gujarath and ajmee festival.

There are lot of issues for the transgenders like social, legal, economical and health. In india the major issues are economical, lack of family support, lack of education, stigma and discrimination. There are various transgenders who are dropped out of schools. We also face lack of employment and there is less support to initiate own business. The major two options we do get in india are begging and sex worker. We are prone to various sexually transmitted diseases and high risk of HIV. There is lack of legal prevention for SRS and high chances of death. There is negative potrayal of transgenders in the media. There are various legal issue like regulations for gender identity of transgender in human regulation violation, right to education and empowerment, right accessibility for health and basic needs, right to marriage, right to child adoption and right to properties. We do not have reservation like SC& ST. what we need is SRS medical guidelines, skill based training, education and employment.

Sri balaji Vidyapeeth has a separate clinic for transgenders and there is a special gender care team. There are monthly meetings conducted, where we discuss about issues faced by the transgenders and save their treatment cost for surgery. SRS and basic rights for all people who come here is provided. People from all over india come to SBV. We are really thankful to the chairmen of Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth, as he has recognized us, our issues, problems. He studied us and gave us a life. They are even providing free education for transgenders. Various transgenders are getting job in SBV. They have promoted us to a good level and c akere very happy here. These kind of job opportunities are not available everywhere.

There is stigma and discrimination everywhere even the parents are reluctant to accept transgenders, atleast in abroad they are free to choose how they want to be and their families are also supportive. I have been to Australia and no one looks down at transgenders they have separate LGBT community. Their quality of education is high. These things are bound to happen one day in india.

Basically we should think transgenders are like normal human beings as they are born in mothers womb and we face the same pain and difficulties like every normal human being. Our lifestyle, feelings, harmonal and gender changes should be understood. Now we became a transgender which has to be accepted by the community. Our rights should be respected and a meaningful opportunity has to be provided without any social bias. We need support from the family, friends and society. As India is a democratic country we should also be provided with all the rights like others and should equally love us.

Now I would like to conclude by thanking SBV as the gave me a chance to express my feelings. I also extend my thanks to the pod cast team.