

# EXPLORING QUEERNESS IN DEVDUTT PATTANAİK'S SHIKHANDI AND OTHER TALES THEY DON'T TELL YOU

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## ABSTRACT

Man centric society states that men are better than women, Feminism explains ladies and gents are equivalent, Queerness addresses what comprises male and female.

Queerness is indeed not just modern, Western, or sexual, state mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik. Investigate the tremendous composed and oral customs in Hinduism, some more than 2,000 years old and you will discover stories of Shikhandi, who turned into a man to fulfill her better half Mahadeva, who turned into a lady to convey an aficionado's kid Chudala, who turned into a man to illuminate her husband Samavan, who turned into the spouse of his male companion and few more.

Fun loving and contacting and now and again upsetting these tales when contrasted and stories of the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh, the Greek Ganymede, the scriptural Sodom or the Chinese 'cut sleeve' Emperor uncover the interesting Indian method of understanding queerness.

**KEYWORDS:** Queer, Mythology, homosexual, Shikhandi.

## QUEER THEORY AT A GLANCE

Queer theory is certainly not a solitary or efficient, conceptual or methodological system, however an assortment of intellectual commitment with the relations between gender, sex, and sexual needs. Queer can be utilized as a derogatory noun or adjective for homosexuality or effeminacy. It can likewise be utilized to depict something that isn't standard. It is a 'contractedness of gender and sexual personalities and classifications. Today we see the world is progressing in science and technology, medicine, intellect, and every realm possible. But if we take a deep reading

we find what is now called progressive has actually imbibed its roots from ancient time. And literature of particular era has always been reflective of its society. One of the major concerns of today's time is equally of genders especially transgender and queer.

Rather looking back we see instead of marginalization of these identities in contemporary era they were recognized as 'naturals and as equals.' Humanity is struggling for its rights in a constrained conventional society.

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When we see developed countries like USA they are on their way of achieving absolute equality, developing countries like India are recently stimulated by the hovering concerns of egalitarianism. In order to understand the status of equality in the present, we must be able to comprehend equality in the past. When we look back, we get to know that the world was not emancipated of these concerns in the prehistoric age, and were free from burden of equality. Perhaps they had relished the establishment equality among every realm possible.

Devdutt Patnaik explains queerness elaborately in *Shikhandi* and other tales they did not tell you. "I have a man's body. I reject this body. I desire no one. I have a woman's body. I reject this body. I desire no one". He discusses this queerness through stories of men who become ladies, and ladies who become men, of men who create kids without ladies, and ladies who create children without men, and of animals who are neither this, nor that, yet a smidgen of both. *Shikhandi*- a queer character, the name itself, serves the idea of queerness. Universally known as a product of the most initial sex change who turns into a man to kill Bhishma. She also stands as one of the most known examples of queer identity in Indian mythology. Wendy Doniger in *On Hinduism* writes, "...Shikhandin retained her female gender when she lost her female sexuality. Indeed, it is imperative for Bhishma that Shikhandin is in essence (in this case, in gender) a woman, despite her outer male form."<sup>6</sup> Thus, Pattanaik's book *Shikhandi* comprises of the most mesmerizing, appalling, idiosyncratic, and atypical stories of queerness that presents the world more harmonious for the individuals with vivid and varied sexualities.

The term "queerness", is elaborated by the writer, which addresses what establishes male and female starting with a very relatable admonition to the peruser about the land

where abstinent men choose what is acceptable and terrible sex, the author makes a reasonable point that to comprehend what is queer, social channels are vital; conduct that may be viewed as queer in one culture may not be thought of so in different societies.

In India, Vedas (4000 CE-3000 CE) specifies two distinctive genders of people as "Purusha" (male) and "Prakriti" (female) yet in addition perceives the presence of another sex – "Tritiya Prakriti" of "third gender". Sanskrit language that began in India (~4000 CE) makes reference to the presence of four sexual orientation states—Pung (manly), Stree (ladylike), Kliba (neuter) and Vedas and *Manusmriti* say about "Gender Identity" and "Sexual Identity" which reveal the presence of Queerness in Indian contexts Ubhayalinga (common gender). The same in the case of Queer theory studies which is not a western import, modern or sexual. *The Vedas and manusmriti say about "Gender Identity" and "sexual Identity" which reveal the presence of Queerness in Indian contexts before many centuries before many centuries.*

*Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell you* is a collection of various myths across India. In this research work, 'LGBT' group is explained with one or two stories for each category is discussed here. Lesbianism is explained in the story of Ratnavalli; Gay is explained in the stories of Somavan and Aravan; Bisexual is explained in the stories of Mohini (Vishnu's avadar in a femaleform) and Transgender are explained in the stories of Shikhandi and Arjuna. Apart from that Cross-dressing is explained in theories of Krishna and Samba. These mythological characters are hidden in the Grand Narratives of Indian Epics. Devdutt brings this hidden idea of queerness in the mythology.

The story of Shikhandi made Sthuna to lend his manhood to her for one night. This made Shikhandi to prove her masculinity to the princess. Kubera, lord of "yaksha" was

extremely furious with Sthuna for loaning his masculinity such things aren't to be finished. When Shikhandi came to Sthuna to restore his "borrowed organ", Kubera was satisfied with his trustworthiness and permitted Shikhandi to utilize the masculinity as long as he lived. In the Kurushetra war, Bhishma announced his promise of chastity and nobody can kill him just he pick the ideal opportunity for his demise. Krishna provided the insight of Bhishma's darma which was to bring down his bow, not before a man yet positively before the lady. In any case, ladies were not permitted to enter the battlefield according to the law. Durupada sent his oldest child Shikhandi who was conceived as a lady and later turned into a man yet Bhishma will consider him to be a lady. Shikhandhini, who became Shikhandi is the thing that modern queer jargon would call a female-to-male transsexual, as her body experiences very specific change genitally. Yet,

re-tellers keep away from detail and will, in general, depict him/ her either as a eunuch (castrated male), a male-to-female transsexual (a man who dismisses his male biology), a male-to-female transgender (a man who wears ladies' garments as he feels like a lady), an intersex bisexual, or just a man was a lady (Amba) in his previous life. It uncovers a man-centric inclination even in the queer space. The Queerness made here not incidental but rather very intentional. The possibility of a forest soul mystically empowering sexual change is found in numerous folk stories like 'Teeja Beeja', Rajasthan folk tale in oral tradition.

## REFERENCES

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