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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Dysphoria, Choice and Criminality: A Psycho-literary Inquiry in Fiction and Fact

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ABSTRACT

Literature has long served as the mirror to human life and experience, reflecting the political, cultural, social and psychological realities of human subsistence such as social inequalities, political ideologies, cultural norms, psychological conflicts, ethical dilemmas and inner materiality. It not only has the ability of redefining reality but also of remolding and critiquing it, thereby transforming human experiences and their narratives. Since literature elementarily deals with characters and their inner world of fears, conflicts, struggles and desires, it naturally goes hand in hand with psychology, especially, in narratives that traverse crime and discrepancy. This research paper endeavors to conduct a comparative analysis between the fictional transgender Rahul Fernandes from *3 and a Half Murders* by Salil Desai (Indian author) and the real-life figure of Dhananjay Chauhan (Indian Transgender Activist), both related with the problem of dysphoria, through the lens of the Theory of Criminal Personality propounded by Samuel Yochelson and Stanton E. Samenow (American Psychologists) and thereby scrutinize whether contextual conditions lead to criminality or is it the result of 'criminal thinking errors' as suggested by Yochelson and Samenow. The primary motto behind collating a fictional character with a real-life human is to analyse the intersection between crime fiction and social reality. By integrating literature with psychology and criminology, the paper seeks to proclaim the role of literature in examining human psyche and the applicability of psychology in expounding the portrayal of crime. A deeper understanding of the criminal thinking patterns can help in formulating and instituting functional offender reform among criminals.

Key words: *Crime, Criminality, Criminal Personality, Criminal Thinking errors, Dysphoria*

INTRODUCTION

The subject of crime has always attracted the attention and debate of the masses. It not only encompasses law-breaking but also reflects the darker aspects of human psyche and challenges various other facets such as morality, social order and justice. From the non-legal point of view, Robert A. Cladwell (British Sociologist), has rightly defined crime as "an act or a failure to act" extremely "detrimental to the well-being of a society" (Ahuja, 2021). The elucidation regarding crime has been subjected to consecutive research and has been redefined by various scholars and thinkers, thereby giving it new dimensions and levels. Moreover, the question of what exactly drives a person towards criminality has long occupied the convergences of literature,

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psychology and criminology. During the past decades, various theories have been generated to offer explanations, which regard various biological, cultural, political, economic, social and psychological reasons such as mental illness, lack of education and employment opportunities, poverty, negative environment, marginalization etc. as factors responsible for criminality and crime. The advocates of these theories believe that most criminals are just like ordinary people having common emotions, aspirations and hopes but victims to brutal situations or environment or people who might have forced them into a pernicious plight (Ahuja, 2021). Therefore, "a criminal" is overlooked upon "as a victim" rather than "a victimizer" (Samenow, 2014). Within this debate, the concept of 'Dysphoria' which refers to the state of overpowering psychological unease or the discontentedness between one's self and identity, marks itself as a complex factor. Moreover, Dysphoria, especially in its gendered and existential form, places individuals in a whirlpool of inner conflicts, however, dysphoria alone, does not inescapably determine the fall into criminal behaviour, but rather opens up an expanse within which the question of 'choice' becomes central. Human behaviour, even under the most distressing situations, is not predominated by external circumstances, and choice therefore, functions as an intervening force between internal conflict and external action. The same dysphoria may lead an individual towards 'criminality' while empower the other to seek for resilience and social integration.

Research Methodology and Aim of the Study

Through the application of a qualitative comparative methodology, fortified by Yochelson and Samenow's Theory of Criminal Personality, the study seeks to delineate the contrasting psyches of the fictional transgender criminal, Rahul Fernandes, and the real-life transgender activist, Dhananjay Chauhan, thereby proving that crime is not the result of challenging and uncontrollable situations but the result of 'criminal thinking errors' as discussed by Yochelson and Samenow. Various books, journals, research papers, newspaper articles, videos etc. necessary for the research paper have been examined.

DYSPHORIA

The term 'dysphoria' refers to a psychological discomfort, a state of uneasiness or a dissatisfaction which causes emotional discomfort, distress and discontentment with self and the surroundings. Taking its origin from the Greek "dys" meaning 'discomfort or malaise' and "phoros" meaning 'bearing', the earliest known use of this word in English dates back to the nineteenth century (Oxford English Dictionary, 2026).

From the Psychological perspective illustrated in works such as *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, 1872, by Charles Darwin, dysphoria is linked with identity disturbances and usually associates with the disarrangement between internal experience and external reality, whereas, from the psychoanalytical perspective found in Sigmund Freud's *The Ego and the Id*, 1920, it identifies itself as the manifestation of the inner conflict and unresolved repression of an individual. From the Existential perspective found in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 1942, by Albert Camus etc., it connotes the meaninglessness and absurdity of existence whereas in Gender and Identity studies such as, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, 1966 by Harry Benjamin and *Gender Trouble*, 1990, by Judith Butler etc. it refers to the incompatibility between the assigned and experienced gender. Especially in Literary Studies, works such as *The Metomorphosis*, 1915, by Franz Kafka and *The Bell Jar*, 1963, by Sylvia Plath have widely used dysphoria as a powerful lens to analyse psychological conflict, fragmented identity and alienation from society. The scope of the term Dysphoria is broad and comprehensive and encompasses various parameters involving distress related to physical features, distress arising from being treated as the wrong gender, distress generated from the incapacity to freely express one's gender identity and from the unrecognition received by political and social authorities or from the fact that one's innate gender identity is different from one's biological and social one. Narrowing down to Gender Dysphoria, which according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, is "marked incongruence between their experienced or expressed gender and the one they were assigned at birth" (Garg et al., 2023), requires two major comprehensions necessary for its understanding. The "traditional" view regards gender as a set of socially prescribed and expected roles and behaviours allocated on the basis of one's biological sex and therefore are regarded as its social upshot rather than as intrinsic aspect of identity. On the contrary, the "identity-based" view comprehends gender as an "internally generated" sense of self, which influences his feelings, hobbies and sense of dressing (Hollies, 2021).

CRIMINALITY

In simple words, the term Criminality refers to the behaviour, state or capacity of being a criminal, that is employing or engaging oneself in acts which are regarded as offensive or punishable by the law of the land. It is a dual concept which can be defined by Criminal Law on one hand and

sociology and psychology on the other. It not only encompasses the act of committing crimes but also the inclination towards criminal behaviour. As stated by Hans Jurgen Eysenck (German-British Psychologist): "Criminality is a social concept, not a biological one. The very notion of crime would be meaningless without a context of learning or social experience and of human interaction" (Ahuja, 2021). Taking its root from the medieval latin word *criminis* which means "charge" or "guilt" whose further link with the latin verb *cernere* meaning "to separate" or "judge" led to the development of *criminalis* meaning "pertaining to crime". This later influenced the French *criminel* and the modern connotations regarding criminal and criminality. Similar meanings appear in Celtic languages as well, where crime as a term, stems from the root meaning "to separate" or "to break off" which clearly emphasizes upon exclusion due to deviant behaviour (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d., Zeigler, n.d.). Moreover, earlier thinkers such as Cesare Lombroso, Enrico Ferri and Raffaele Garofalo (Italian Criminologists) have been fruitful in linking criminal behaviour to biological and psychological factors, thus laying down the basis for the study of criminality and since then, this term has been the part of scholarly discourse especially while propagating and discussing criminological theories. Criminality not only has a wide scope but is also multidisciplinary in nature and includes various areas of learning such as Legal studies which probe into the explanation and classification of crime and the expansion of criminal codes, Criminology which studies the patterns, types and reasons of criminal behaviour, Sociology which takes into account, the impact of society and its norms on criminal behaviour, Forensics and Policing which are related to the employment of Science in criminal investigations in order to understand criminal motives and ways, and lastly Rehabilitation and Reformation which is the science of managing and reforming criminal behaviour in jails and prisons. "The central message that emerges from all these studies is that criminality is an integral part of how society, and its culture, is constructed" (Canter and Youngs, 2016).

Criminal Personality

The term 'Criminal Personality' has been coined and popularized by Samuel Yochelson and Stanton E. Samenow, in their ingenious work, *The Criminal Personality, Volume I: A Profile for Change* (1976), the first of the three-volume series in which they "discard sociologic and psychologic theories of causation in favor of a careful probe into the criminal's thinking and action patterns" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a) and argue that criminality is the product of deep-rooted thinking patterns known as 'Criminal Thinking Errors' or "mental processes required by the criminal to live his kind of life" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a, p 359). In the 18th century, the Classical School of Criminology comes into existence with the pioneering works of its founders namely, Cesare de Beccaria (*On Crimes and Punishment,* 1764) and Jeremy Bentham (*An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislations*, 1789) who regard criminals as free-willed individuals whose deeds are inspired by the pleasure and pain norm and therefore, this school has regarded the 'offence' of an individual as the main subject of study. On the contrary, the Positivist School of Criminology propounded by Jeremy Bentham through *The Atlas of Criminal Man*, 1876, has considered various biological, environmental and social factors as responsible for the actions of an individual and therefore, the main subject of study undertaken by this school has been the 'offender' and not his offence (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). Samenow dedicates his career towards the study and rehabilitation of criminals alongside Yochelson at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington D.C., and after spending "14 years" and conducting approximately "240 interviews" of criminal offenders and mental patients through the framework of Freudian based theory of Psychoanalysis, they learn that criminal behaviour is the outcome of a distinct pattern of cognitive distortions or 'criminal thinking errors' which are consistent in all the criminals (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). These incline them towards law-breaking. Yochelson and Samenow have recognized a total of '52 thinking errors' including "zero state, anger, pride, the power thrust, sentimentality, religion, concrete thinking, fragmentation, uniqueness, perfectionism, suggestibility, the loner, sexuality and lying" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). which form a contorted cognitive system, making crime a way of life rather than an accident. This deconstructs the age-old criminological theories which state that a criminal is the fatality of various uncontrollable coerces, and that criminality is the result of biological, sociological or psychological factors (Schafer, 1969). Yochelson and Samenow realize that 'Crime' is rather a conscious decision, and that criminals can also think rationally just like ordinary people, the problem lying solely in their ways of thinking which are situated in the frequency with which these criminal thinking errors occur in a criminal's mind and affect the way he experiences and reacts to people and situations. These errors when ignored, combine to form Criminal Personality (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). Yochelson and Samenow have compiled their observations in the three-volumes (from 1976-1986), titled *The Criminal Personality, Volume I: A Profile for Change* (1976); *The Criminal Personality, Volume II: The Change Process* (1977) and *The Criminal*

Personality, Volume III: The Drug User (1986). Samenow has also authored the book, *Inside the Criminal Mind* (1984) which again shatters the existing theories and offers new insights into the minds of the criminals and their thinking patterns.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the fictional transgender, Rahul Fernandes in 3 and a Half Murders (2022) by Salil Desai

The novel, *3 and a Half Murders* centres around the case of Sanjay and Anushka Doshi, a married couple found dead in their flat in the city of Pune, Sanjay's body hanging from the ceiling fan, whereas, Anushka's body lying on the bed with acid spilt on her face. A suicidal note is found which states the clear reason behind the catastrophe. Accordingly, Sanjay Doshi has murdered his wife Anushka after learning about her affair with someone, and thereafter, being guilty for his brutal act, he has consequently committed suicide. As the investigation takes place, the new leads and evidences link the case to a former unsolved murder mystery that took place in Bangalore, 7 years ago. It turns out to be that Sanjay Doshi alias Krishna Bhupathi along with two other friends cum business partners, namely, Shaunak Sodhi and Rahul Fernandes ran a lucrative immigration racket in Bangalore, known as "BORIS- Bingo Overseas Recruitment & Immigration Services" (Desai, 2022), which lured thousands of gullible, desperate and foolish men and women into depositing a few lakhs in the hope of procuring a stable job in a foreign land. Consequently, the culprits were arrested by the police for the forgery committed by them. After a rigorous investigation process, it is so revealed that Rahul Fernandes, who had been considered to be murdered by his partners 7 years ago on account of deceiving and getting them arrested, is still alive, has killed all his partners and is behind the recent murder mystery as well. He no longer exists as Rahul Fernandes but has undergone Gender reassignment surgery due to the fact of being a patient of Dysphoria, "the compelling psychological and physiological urge to change one's sex" and has now taken the identity of Anushka Doshi (Desai, 2022). Anushka Doshi alias Rahul Fernandes thereafter forces Shaunak Sodhi alias Krishna Bhupathi to live and have the same relation with her as a husband. The threat that his state will be exactly like his friend Sanjay Doshi whom Anushka Doshi alias Rahul Fernandes has previously shot "at point-blank range" and had "severed" and "dismembered" thereafter, makes Bhupathi agree. Fernandes keeps Bhupathi alive to "tell the story that Rahul Fernandes had been murdered and Shaunak Sodhi has been absconding". She later rationalizes killing Shaunak Sodhi alias Krishna Bhupathi as: "He was freaked out by my sex change and by staying with me. He was repulsed by my demands. He didn't want to have intercourse with me… he had become a complete mental wreck" (Desai, 2022). This also highlights the nerve-racking reality that the lady who had been murdered in the beginning of the novel as Shaunak Sodhi alias Krishna Bhupathi's wife, has actually been a victim of the real Anushka Doshi. In addition, the very letter found by the police explaining the murder cum suicide serves as a powerful tool to misguide or mislead the actual narrative, another cunning ploy of "lying" and "manipulation" (criminal thinking errors), schemed by Anushka Doshi alias Rahul Fernandes which according to Yochelson and Samenow is "a pattern of thought and action that is universally recognized and obvious characteristic of the criminal" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a).

Anushka Doshi combed his hair. She'd dreamed of having long tresses but even now they were barely shoulder length, something she'd managed to grow even as Rahul Fernandes. She kept the comb down, picked up the lip gloss and began applying it on his lips. Bitterness seared through her soul as she looked at his face in the mirror. He should've known she would never be able to completely look feminine or pretty. Rahul peeped out from too many features […] The less said about her body the better with (Desai, 2022).

The passage identifies the criminal thinking error of "victim stance" generated from poor self-concept, emotional instability and identity fragmentation wherein Anushka Doshi and Rahul Fernandes exist in contrasting spaces. This inner turmoil leads to a cognitive disturbance wherefore Doshi feels that she has been wronged by society and its unjust people. Yochelson and Samenow have rightly pointed out that: "Criminals view society as unfit for them, rather than regarding themselves as unfit for society. The world does not give them what they think they are entitled to, so they view themselves as poorly treated and thus victims" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). The gender dysphoria, self-hatred and victim mentality mark themselves as the major factors behind Doshi's criminal mindset who rationalizes her crimes articulating: "God makes innocent victims out of so many of us, nobody calls him a pervert or a sadist. So why can't I victimize?" (Desai, 2022). Another error, which is crucial from the Criminal Personality perspective, is "monasticism" or the urge to undo and get back to the past identity. Yochelson and Samenow have regarded this as the "tyranny of conscience" which "actually facilitates crime" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). When interrogated by the police inspectors, Doshi very bitterly expresses the dissatisfaction she has felt right from

childhood for being caged inside a man's body and the intense disappointment, emotional pain and betrayal she felt when the Gender reassignment surgery did not work out according to her expectations:

"Do you know what it is to feel the way people like me do? To be a man outside and throb like a woman inside, every minute! To live like a totally different being than what you are born as, to feel a stranger in the body you have not chosen for yourself, year after year? To want a vagina, where there's a penis? To be bloody trapped! And when you change into a woman, to feel cheated, deceived, left stranded! To want to go back to being a man, if you can't really be a woman… it's hell. Damn it, it's a living hell" (Desai, 2022).

The tendency of undoing the past might strike a non-criminal also, but is not immediately executed if not possible or unethical. Moreover, a non-criminal will never think of hurting others or committing a crime and using it as an excuse to hide his fault. But on the contrary, Anushka Doshi's extreme desire to undo her past leads her to commit many more crimes. When she realises that even after successfully undergoing the Gender reassignment operation, her identity is not what she expected, she kidnaps Geeta Chaudhari, Dr. Dhingra's beloved and injects testosterone hormone in her body to mutilate and destroy all femininity from her body, thereby avenging herself upon Dr. Dhingra whom she considers to not have conducted the Gender reassignment operation properly. She confesses to the police: "I was planning to keep her for a few weeks till some signs of masculinity spoilt her feminine features that had so bewitched Dhingra. I had planned one shot a week as they do during the hormone therapy… that would have been some revenge" (Desai, 2022). These lines very aptly describe the egocentric attitude of Anushka Doshi alias Rahul Fernandes who takes illegitimate "ownership" (criminal thinking error), over other people thereby considering them as pawns for fulfilling her objectives. Yochelson and Samenow have identified Ownership as "the process of thinking whereby, if a criminal wants something, the item is his or the person will do as he desires" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). She also afflicts fatal wounds on to Geeta Chaudhari's private parts, leaving her almost half dead by the time she is rescued by the police. When asked for an explanation, she quickly puts forth all the suffering she has gone through and therefore, regards it quite legitimate to afflict others with the same pain. Yochelson and Samenow have rightly elucidated upon this criminal error identified as the "failure to put oneself in another's position" as the "most disturbing element of the criminal's way of life" who when subjected to liability "regards himself as the injured party. After all, he was the one interfered with; he is the one now under restraints" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). In addition to this, the error of "extreme anger" leads to emotional coldness and cognitive indolence within Anushka Doshi. The urge to gain power and control over her dream of becoming and feeling like a woman distorts and blurs her thinking process. She then enters into a "zero state" which according to Yochelson and Samenow, is the greatest fear of a criminal, who is regareded in a "zero state when his self-esteem is at rock bottom" and this state "paralyzes him in a way that other fears do not" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). For Anushka Doshi, the greatest fear is the loss of carefully constructed self-image and the resultant rejection from society. While in a zero state, she believes that she is worthless and in order to gain the identity of "somebody" she commits heinous crimes, considering them as a necessary move for asserting "power thrust", the criminal thinking error which according to the Criminal Personality perspective gives a sense of elation to the criminal "as an extraordinary and prestigious figure" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). Moreover, all the crimes committed, ranging from exploiting innocent and poor people through BORIS, the fraudulent business mentioned earlier, to embezzling the money of the firm and murdering all the business partners cum friends, and then declaring one's own death to befool the law and then transforming oneself into a woman, not only demonstrates the criminal error of "premeditation" that is the "feasibility, practicality" of the execution of crime but also the error of "superoptimism" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). in which a criminal views "crime as a fait accompli" and fails to "evaluate realistically or even consider the consequences" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). Anushka Doshi (Rahul Fernandes) is thereafter seen feeling offended and insulted by the police officers for not being treated with awe and surprise. She boasts of her criminal achievements stating: "I'm not an ordinary, cold-blooded killer. I fooled the law for seven years. I almost got away even this time. […] "You have in front of you a criminal mind with extra ordinary motivation and instead of giving respect and cajoling and coaxing me to reveal more, you scoff at me thinking I'll talk" (Desai, 2022). This dialogue illustrates the error of "criminal pride", "an extremely and inflexibly high evaluation of oneself" and the thrill and excitement of a criminal "in doing the forbidden and getting away with it" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004a). Therefore, it can be concluded that the criminality of Rahul Fernandes alias Anushka Doshi has not been the result of sudden instinct but has rather been the product of the aforementioned criminal thinking errors as

suggested by Yochelson and Samenow in their Theory of Criminal Personality. The recent studies on Salil Desai's novels commend him for his subtle ability to blend fiction with realism. Most of his works have been inspired by real-life incidents and compelling situations which augment the authenticity and emotional potency of the works. Critics have also appreciated his mastery in portraying emotional conflicts, social challenges and moral dilemmas and the darker aspects of human psyche thereby, creating effective connections between fictional crime narratives and real-life policing issues and offering new insights on the subject of crime, investigation and administrative and political challenges in the contemporary Indian society (Ray, 2017; Tyagi and Singh, 2023).

Analysis of Indian Transgender Activist, Dhananjay Chauhan Mangalmukhi

Dhananjay Chauhan is the first transwoman to have graduated from Punjab University and is presently a Transgender Activist. She is also the member of Chandigarh Transgender Welfare Board and President of the Saksham Prakriti Welfare Society established in the year 2002, a non-governmental organisation working towards the shift of the transgender community towards the mainstream population. Dhananjay in the research paper, namely, "Voices From the Field: Identity Politics, Educational Participation and Transgender in India (Featured Profile: Dhananjay Chauhan, Chandigarh)" published in the *Indian Journal of Health, Sexuality & Culture* which featured her story and has been personally written by her, recounts that her realisation about herself and her "sexual identity" which seemed to be incomprehensible initially, created insecurity and anxiety within her. She further proclaims that: "I am a woman completely from inside, but the body I inhabited was of a man! My soul and body were incompatible, and I did understand that I am different" (Chauhan et al., 2019). While at school, she had problems in using the washrooms as she was not allowed in Female washrooms and was bullied while using male washrooms. Her house members regarded her as a boy and gave her that identity for the fear of society and when she informed her mother about herself, some tantric rituals were conducted over her to remove the so-called evil spirit inside her. In the ninth standard, she became the patient of 'gender dysphoria' and wanted to commit suicide due to the increasing number of ragging, bullying and body shaming incidents taking place with her. She was then rescued by her mother who asked her to study, progress and be positive in life. She thereafter took admission and topped all the fields of Government College Sector 46. Moreover, she also took admission in the History Department of Punjab University, undertook some private job and also got enrolled in a law program. She recounts that "I was ragged by a few students at the University, and they made me run down to different classrooms in the naked body. They were bullies and made me do unspeakable things". She complains that "Sex education" has always been regarded as a "taboo" and due to the "significant stigma in Indian society", she had to hide her "true identity" to achieve her goals (Chauhan et al., 2019). In 1994, she also had to dropout from L.L.B. Course, as again, she was sexually abused by almost 12 men and was later gang raped by 20 men, who left her to die. In an interview with Taruna Singh, namely, "Valiant & Brawny- Meet Dhananjay Chauhan, A Transwoman We All Need to Know & Learn From", Chauhan recounts: "The most horrifying incident" of her life had been "when she was kidnapped by two boys who took her to a hostel in Ambala where 20 boys raped her". But irrespective of all the assaults and atrocities "a strong-willed Chauhan" proved herself as an outstanding example by establishing an NGO named "Saksham Trust" in the year 2009. She thereafter, gave up herself to self-studying as she realised that education is the greatest tool which can change the mind set of society. Therefore, she decided to help the people of transgender community to establish a respectable place in society rather than just earning their livelihood through begging, dancing and clapping (Singh, 2022). She has been a prominent figure in advocating for the rights of the Transgender Community so much so that after fighting the NALSA-National Legal Services Authority vs Union of India Case, the Supreme Court recognised "Supreme Court" recognized the "transgenders as third gender and also requested the Centre "to treat transgender as socially and economically backward" and provide them the right to education and employment opportunities (Mahapatra, 2014). In 2015, she readmitted herself in Punjab University and post graduated in the subject of Human Rights. In an interview with Monica Sharma, namely, "45-year-old transgender joins master's in human rights at PU, shares life lessons" published in the *Hindustan Times*, Chauhan summarised her aim of studying Human Rights as pivotal "to bring awareness about the transgender community". She reprimanded the Indian society and its inhumanity of being indifferent to the Transgender community. She further voiced that: "Social acceptance is a must to ensure that we are not looked down upon, mocked or judged" (Sharma, 2016). While at the University, she requested the Vice Chancellor, for a washroom, and immediately, a Budget of Rs 23,00, 000 was passed and washrooms were constructed. She also established a Transgender Welfare Board and an anti-discrimination cell inside the university. Chauhan has also represented her community at

various national level Transgender seminars and conferences (Chauhan et al., 2019). Since 2012, she has been advocating for the prerogatives of the Transgender community. Her interviews have featured on Aamir Khan's 'Satyamev Jayate' programme and on "Doordarshan's National channel", and her life has also inspired "documentaries" created by various researchers and social scientists around the world. Even in America, in the year 2015, her "photo was taken in every street square and shopping mall in a pride festival in the Norwegian capital of Oslo!" She also received the privilege of joining "the conference in Holland and France" and representing the nation at the "proud festival" organized there (Chauhan et al., 2019). In another interview uploaded on *Sociostory.org*, Dhananjay Chauhan bluntly asserts that she has been accepted by society as she chose "education" rather than "begging". She proudly expresses of not only the contentment and satisfaction she has experienced but also brags of being the recipient of 150 awards from various Asian and European countries for working towards the welfare of her community: "I am very happy with my life and I feel there is something that I have contributed towards the well-being of others in my community (Jain, 2021). In the year 2020, the life-story of Dhananjay Chauhan inspired a docu-drama film known as *Admitted*. Directed by Ojaswee Sharma, the film chronicles the five-decade-long outstanding struggle of Dhananjay Chauhan in striving to accomplish the milestone of gaining acceptance as the first ever transgender student of Panjab University. It not only captures personal perseverance but also highlights the deep-rooted social prejudice and political hurdles being finally defeated by the right to learn. The film received the Silver Conch award for being the best documentary film. In addition to this, at the 68th National Film Awards, it also grabbed the National Film Award-Special Jury Award. Chauhan has also been interviewed by various national and international communities (Sharma, 2020). In her research paper, titled, "Human Rights Violations against LGBT People in India: Need for Introspection", Pushpinder Kaur vocalizes upon the urgency of a socially equitable society: "We do not yet live in a world free from homophobia, transphobia, prejudice and discrimination and we live in a world where majority wins and overpowers the minority". She further pleads the general public to have a sensitive ear towards the weaker sections and differently abled individuals: "LGBT people are exactly that- a minority within our homes, families, schools, institutions, communities, work places etc" (Kaur, 2016). Similarly, the TEDx talk, "A Transgender's Transcendent Journey", "Struggles of being a transwoman" by Dhanajay Chauhan and the podcast "TRANSGENDER ACTIVIST MX. DHANANJAY CHAUHAN" are first-person accounts of the familial rejection, societal conservatism and sexual abuse faced by Dhananjay Chauhan. The talk journeys from personal victimization to a broader call for action, illuminating the problems and demanding the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, thus transforming resilience against systemic rejection into the voice of the community (Chauhan, 2021, 2023a, 2023b).

Dhananjay's life in this way symbolises self-awareness and acceptance in a society which fails to recognise and accept. Rather than being a victim of stereotypical attitude, dysphoria and social violence, she transformed weakness into strength, thereby symbolising empowerment and asserting dignity. Moreover, her activism also represents the collective struggle of her community which remains ignored and unheard and her story not only represents the collective memory of the sufferings of numerous individuals like her but also motivates the people of her community to uplift themselves by following her example.

Comparison

When read alongside the character Anushka Doshi alias Rahul Fernandes who is believed to have descended into crime as she "faced issues like unacceptance, criticism from society" (Rathi, 2021), Dhananjay Chauhan stands as an apt example to showcase the life-turning response to gender dysphoria and identity crisis. She is a symbol of struggle, resilience, healing, constructive development and empowerment. While the fictional character of Anushka Doshi alias Rahul Fernandes depicts dysphoria leading to violence and destruction, the real-life of Dhananjay Chauhan very remarkably, proves that identity when accepted and respected, becomes a powerful weapon to erase social injustice, alienation and hopelessness. This smashes the age-old glorified beliefs and concepts which Samenow almost breaks down stating: "For decades, the prevailing conventional wisdom about criminality has regarded the offender as a victim of forces over which he has little or no control" (Samenow, 2014). The contrast between Rahul Fernandes and Dhananjay Chauhan highlights that criminal behaviour is the product of 'choices' which are often moulded by criminal thinking patterns as suggested by Yochelson and Samenow and not necessarily the repercussions of biological defects, psychological sufferings and social challenges.

CONCLUSION

The panacea to crime does not lie in making amendments in social conditions alone, but rather, in confronting these 'criminal thinking errors', motivating the criminal to accept them

"when his opinion of himself as a good person is at an ebb and when he recognises that he has failed even at being a criminal" (Yochelson and Samenow, 2004b), and fostering moral development through constructive rehabilitation practices. Blending literary analysis with psychological insight illuminates that the 'change of heart' within a criminal operates most effectively during instances of existential crisis and emotional vulnerability. Literature thus becomes a powerful mirror to the inner self, thereby illustrating both, the dangers of unexamined and pent-up impulses as well as the power of enlightened self-reconstruction. Not only does it reflect life, but also interrogates and anticipates it. This research is socially significant as through a subtle blend of literature, psychology and criminology, it aims to shift the focus of the discourse on psyche of the criminals rather than actions. By identifying and recognizing the psychological conditions and vulnerabilities which restrict a criminal to change, the society can promote more compassionate and empathetic rehabilitative practices to diminish crime and end marginalization.

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***Abbreviation*:** LLB-Legum Baccalaureus or Bachelor of Laws, LGBTQ+- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual, NALSA-National Legal Service Authority, NGO- Non-Governmental Organization, TED-Technology Entertainment Design

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