

A PHENOMENAL REPRESENTATION OF EMILY: A MOTHER WITHOUT A WOMB IN THE TAMIL FILM ARUVI

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Civilized society tosses terms like differently abled for the handicapped, commercial sex workers for prostitutes etc as a sign of understanding and to accommodate them into society at large. But the attitude towards transgender is totally negative. Not to be loved is misfortune, but it is an insult to be loved no longer. Transgender are also very much like other people, made of flesh and bone, have similar blood coursing through their veins and have the same feelings and emotions. However, even now, there is still a significant lack of understanding of these people as human beings, who are torn between their biological sex and gender identity. The apathy and discrimination of the general public as well as the so called democratically elected governments has reduced them to a life of indigence, scratching out an existence by begging, prostitution or even crime on occasion.

Cinema related to all other forms of art is a part of social realism. They create a social change and has got a strong impact on the society. Often cinemas portray transgender as hands clapping, gruff and hoarse voices singing in unison, teasing the heroine, or the villain with lewd remarks and gestures, mainly to support the hero or on his behalf. They are often shown as objects of ridicule. But now the scenario has changed a little bit for the better. The Vicks advertisement which featured Gauri Sawant as a mother and showcased her relationship with her daughter brought tears to the eyes of many. Most people in India argue that a transwoman cannot be considered a mother because they can't give birth to babies. In a country where one who gives love and takes care of a child is respected more than the one who gives birth to a child. One of the sacred texts in Hinduism says that motherhood has nothing to do with any particular gender. The only thing that matters is a heart filled with love for children.

Yadevi sarvabhuteshu matri-roopein sansthita

Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai namo namah(Devistuti from Durgasaptashati)

Aruvi the Tamil film is a magnum opus of Indian cinema which has received acclamation. The heroine of the film is Aruvi who is lovingly raised innocent girl from a middle class family. As P.G.Woodhouse says "Unseen in the background, Fate was quietly slipping lead into the boxing-glove" similarly things take a turn in Aruvi's life when she and her family comes to know that she is infected by AIDS. To Aruvi life has become thickly sown with thorns. The home which nurtured her with love has become a execration. She is abandoned by her own family.

We may call God love, we may call god goodness but the best name for god is compassion and Aruvi gets that compassion when she meets Emily. It is Emily who brings back happiness and hope to Aruvi. Emily takes her to the NGO where she stays. Emily is also affected by AIDS. In order to eke out their living they work in a garment factory. Aruvi is harassed and raped by three men. It is Emily who gives confidence to Aruvi to expose her harassment in media through a popular show.

Emily and Aruvi face a lot of humiliation when they try to expose in media. When media tries to increase their profit by exposing Aruvi she usurps the TV channel in a gun point. They both are arrested and sent to a camp where AIDS patients were treated. Meanwhile Aruvi's health start to deteriorate and she starts to lose weight. She becomes incapable to take care of herself. Emily turns as mother and takes care of Aruvi without any shabbiness. The real mother of Aruvi could not understand the double bind of Aruvi and cannot come for her rescue. Emily though affected by the same disease bestows her fullest love and affection for Aruvi. When transgender people are portrayed as comic and lowlifes the character of Emily brings us to tears for her indefatigable service that she does for Aruvi. Without Emily Aruvi could not have subsist for a short span of time.

The film Aruvi has given a poignant dimension to the transgender community which has yielded them respect. Emily is portrayed here both as a agency - helping Aruvi and as a subject expressing her character through this apparently simple act. This transgender could easily turned the other way and concentrated on

her work and not involving herself in the affairs of Aruvi . Even when her life is in dangerous situation due to the disease she renders her utmost help to Aruvi. Through the character of Emily Arun the director of the film has portrayed the transgender community in a respectful manner. We could find Emily in a decent dress and decent behaviour. In a recent event the film-maker Raja Murugan said that gone are the days that film audiences look down the transgender people and their community. Now they have worked hard to carve out a space for them and it is high time that Tamil films have to revamp their screens.

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