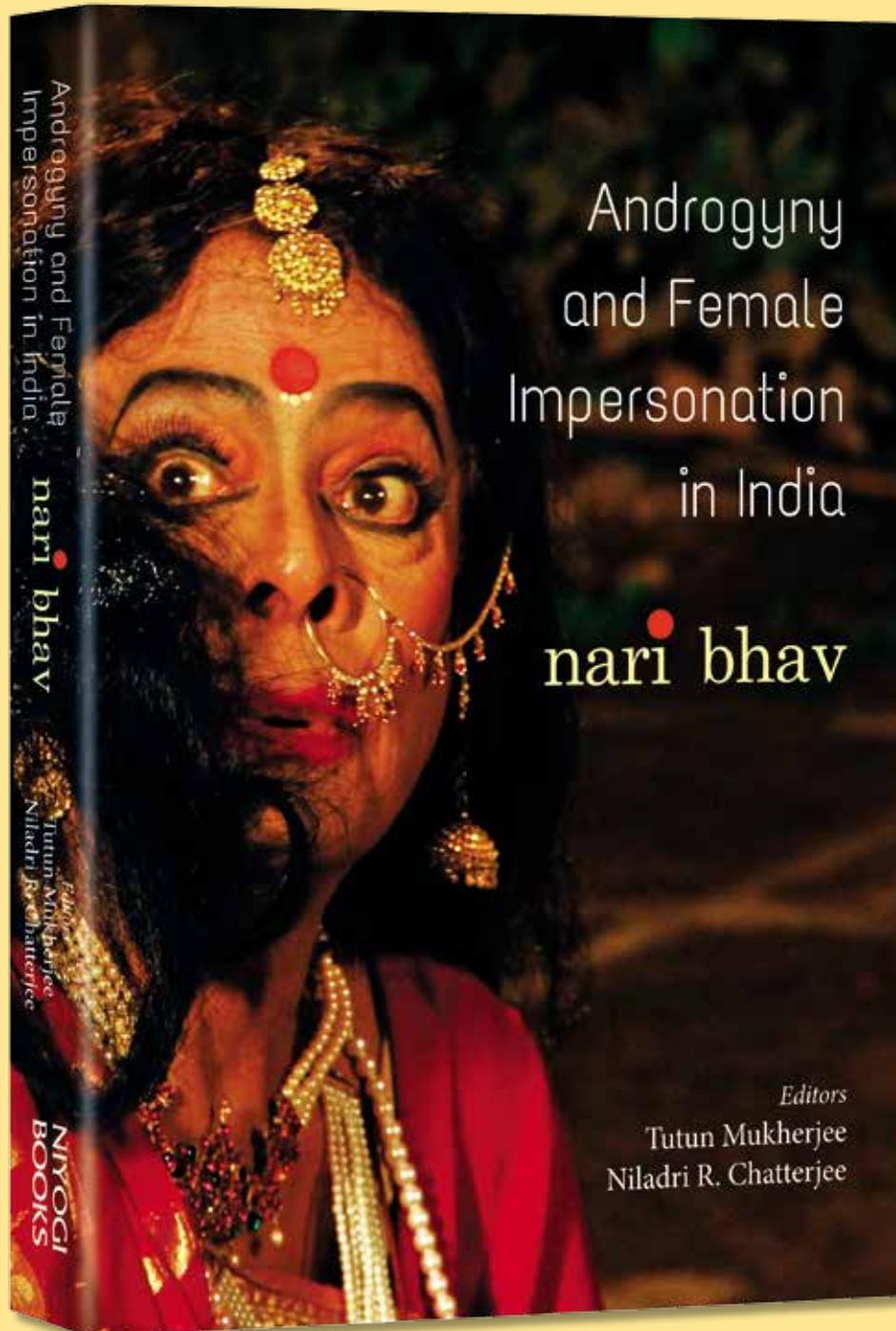


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Androgyny  
and Female  
Impersonation  
in India

# nari bhav

by

**Tutun Mukherjee Niladri R. Chatterjee**

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Androgyny is an engaging subject of discussion and research in the present times. This volume makes an effort to understand concepts of androgyny and 'nari bhav' or sensibility of the feminine beyond the anatomy-directed definitions circumscribed within the dubious realm of the 'third sex', or 'third gender'. As expressed through various literary and performative traditions in India that emphasize interrelatedness of art and society, the concept of 'nari bhav' is a deeply rooted cultural belief in the fluid interplay of the female and the male symbolized, for example, as Ardhanariswara.

The volume discusses concepts of androgyny that permeate Indian cultural ethos and as expressed through female impersonators not only in religion, theatre and dance but also in contemporary performative mediums like films, television, and the internet. The volume also presents interactions with performers of the dying art form of female impersonation.



**Striving towards bringing an end to gender polarization, the essays traverse the concept of 'Androgyny', emphasizing on the constructed and performative aspects of gender and not on the dichotomy of sex.**

**Conversations with the performers reveal how female impersonation has gained, and is in the process of acquiring, a certain position of respectability and recognition in society, as well as how it has been able to create a unique new craft on stage.**

**By including contemporary performative mediums like films, television, and the internet, the volume makes meaningful contribution to the scholarship on the subject from a pan-India perspective.**



**Tutun Mukherjee** is Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Hyderabad, India, and has also taught courses at Centre for Women's Studies and Department of Theatre Arts at the university. Her specialization is Literary Criticism & Theory and research interests include translation, women's writing, theatre and film studies



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