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**The autobiographical writings of A Revathi explore the intersection of queer identity and politics**

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**ABSTRACT:** Despite being biologically male, A. Revathi, the prominent figure of the transsexual community in South India, felt and behaved like a woman from an early age. Her honest and brave self-portrayal, *A Truth About Life*, addresses some of the most important issues surrounding the sexuality of a "hijra", including the agony of feeling like a stranger and being labelled as "queer," "deviant," and "unnatural" by many despite the legal acceptance of third gender and the ongoing literary and social discourses on the fluid nature of sexual orientation and choices. She is tormented by a deep unease about being trapped in an inappropriate body and a "developing feeling of enthusiastic femaleness." Through an insider's account of the hijra community this autobiography is the first of its kind in India to depict a hijra life story my paper aims to examine important questions regarding transgender sexuality and the agency and bravery displayed by Revathi in fending off and enduring the horrors that a "hijra" must endure, such as abuse at the hands of family members, sexual assault and torture by police, as well as repeated displacements in the pursuit of true love and a dignified life.

**Key Words:** A Revathi, Hijra, sexual minority, politics

### 1. Introduction

We cannot ever survive on the assumption that we fear being prodded. Or, conversely, dare to convey our feelings. Then, we ought to acclimatize to a life that is essentially meaningless." A. Revathi, the recognizable face of the transsexual community in South India, was born with a male body but has always felt and behaved like a feminine. Despite the legal acceptance of third gender in many countries and the ongoing literary and social discourses on the fluid nature of sexual orientation and choices, the tormented woman, who was plagued by a profound disquiet of being

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caught in an off-base body and a "developing feeling of enthusiastic femaleness", raises some of the most pertinent issues related to the sexuality of a "hijra" (male to female transsexuals), including the pain of belonging nowhere and being perceived as "queer," "deviant," and "unnatural" by many. Her honest and gallant personal history, *Reality with regards to Me: A Hijra Biography* addresses these issues. In an interview, Revathi stated that her life narrative should be recounted millions of times to help those going through "similar experiences" and "similar situations" "take a leaf out of my book to deal with their lives" and understand they are not some "twisted species." Through an insider's account of the hijra community—this autobiography is the first of its kind in India to depict a hijra life story—my paper aims to examine important questions regarding transgender sexuality and the agency and bravery displayed by Revathi in fending off and enduring the horrors that a "hijra" must endure, such as abuse at the hands of family members, sexual assault and torture by police, as well as repeated displacements in the pursuit of true love and a dignified life. It would also emphasize how vital it is to defend the rights of sexual minorities in order to give them the ability to fight against pervasive prejudice, mockery, violence, and persecution in both society and their family for expressing their true sexual needs and transgender identities. During the last 10 years of the 20th century, the term "transsexual" became widely used in academia to refer to a broad category of people who either get over or trans regular orientation occupations. Overall, it is employed to represent people whose sexual expression and orientation character differ from conventional norms and presumptions due to their marginalized natural sex at birth. People who identify as transgender and whose orientation personality like that of a man and a woman are known as trans men and trans women. The term "transgendered" was used in 1969 by transsexual recognized creator Virginia Sovereign, who used it to distinguish herself from other transgender individuals, such as eunuchs or hijras, who really undergo surgical procedures to change their sex from male to female. While it is possible to locate previous instances of the term "transgenderism" being used in a clinical context to denote a "encouragement for orientation ('sex') change," the way she employed the term indicated a fair distinction between sex and orientation, thus highlighting a difference between trans-ing sex (male or female) and trans-ing orientation (manly or ladylike). Nowadays, the term "transsexual" is generally understood to refer to a broad category that includes a variety of orientation types and articulations, such as drag queen, genderqueer, transgender, and sexually open. Regardless of the term's origin, it is unsettling that it is viewed as deviating from the predetermined orientation roles and roles because it challenges the dichotomies of necessary and undesired sexualities or good and dreadful. Within the broader transsexual context, the term "hijra" refers to eunuchs, or intersex people who are transitioning from male to female and carefully remove their private parts in order to live as

females. In her work "Life on the Edges: A Hijra's biography," renowned anthropologist Serena Nanda describes hijras as "a coordinated social local area with nearby, territorial, and public designs." (124) She goes on to say that "the long-term joint family, the station system, the different levelled relationship in Hinduism between masters (otherworldly tutors) and chelas (supporters), neighbourhood standing, and neighbourhood gatherings, are all important for hijra social construction." and so on. The 'master chela' rituals, many rites and traditions associated with hijra culture that they must strictly uphold in their daily lives to remain an integral part of the hijra community, are the subject of A. Revathi's latest collection of memoirs. According to Revathi, it is "essential to learn the hijras' ways, observe rules, show consideration for the elderly, and do everything a senior asks." This is what is typically expected of those who are crucial to the Hijra community." She refers to hijras as "aravani" rather than "hijra," as they are frequently brought to Tamil Nadu. When her master completely warns her that "you need to regard and keep the codes that hijras live by," she is accepted as "aravani" by the hijra family following her "nirvaanam" (sex change activity). You should learn how to behave like a lady since you are one now. Cutting your hair short and leaving for home are not allowed. We were reliant on numerous lectures of this nature. "While alternatives to male-female binaries have always flourished in all ages and cultures, they were outlawed until 1918 when the Supreme Court abolished Section 377 because societies did not accept "difference" or "others." On September 6, 2018, the Supreme Court overturned its own earlier ruling and stated that homosexuality is a "completely natural condition." Laws, customs, and the worst kind of violence, persecution, and humiliation by individuals, state governments, religious organisations, and even medical authorities have long made transgender people or LGBT/queer people targets. This has led to public trials, expulsions, incarcerations, and other forms of violence and torture. From 1850 until nearly the end of the 20th century, there were around 150 years of homosexual social movements during which various forms of violence and struggles to address the concerns and identity issues of sexual minorities were witnessed. The emergence of democratic governments and institutions, the expansion of mass media, and the 20th century's human rights movement all contributed to the slow but steady rise in knowledge of and movements for the acceptance of transgender identities and the right to a life of dignity. The savage fights against the mistreatment of LGBT by the Police that emitted as Stone Wall riots in June 1969, ended up being a defining moment in the historical backdrop of transsexual, when supporters of the well known Stall Hotel in New York's Greenwich Town retaliated against progressing police strikes of their local bar. The LGBT 'pride walks' held each June from that point forward across the US proceed to lay out the occasion as a turning point of the transsexual history. Many gay groups emerged during the 1970s gay liberation movement, but lesbian

women's problems remained unaddressed. As a result, lesbians created their own political organisations and groups, including publishing houses that promoted lesbian rights within mainstream feminist groups, under the influence of post structuralism and the feminist movement of the 1970s. A significant change in the public's perception of transgender people occurred after a mass shooting at a well-known gay dance club in Orlando during LGBT Pride weekend in 2016. At least 49 transgender people were killed and 50 injured in the incident, which resulted in widespread condemnation of the perpetrators and widespread sympathy for the victims. In addition, a large number of distinguished authors and thinkers have made substantial contributions to the deconstruction of sexual binary opposition and heteronormativity. These include, for example, the poststructuralist writings of French theorists Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, who challenge binary thinking and argue against the idea that sexuality is predetermined and fixed and is instead formed by sociocultural, political, and economic discourses. Sedgwick in *Epistemology of Storage room* (1990) while recognizing the 'minoritizing' and 'universalizing' parts of same sex want, states: "The tirelessness of the actual stop has been the absolute most impressive element of the significant 20th century understandings of sexuality whether hetero or homo... what we can improve the organizing, the components, and the colossal results of the muddled administration under which we presently live." Indian Mythology is full of characters and tales that relate to LGBTQ community. Currently the most illustrious author in this field is Devdutt Patnaik, who, in his works, dissects the old Indian mythological tales to provide with the proof that queerness is as much the part of Indian culture as it is of any other culture. Regarding queer literature from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and China, among other places, Patnaik has written extensively. From Shrikhandi in the Mahabharata to Shiva, also known as "Ardhnarishwar." One of India's most renowned gay theorists and intellectuals, Ruth Vanita, collaborated with Saleem Kidwai to produce the 2000 book *Same-Sex Love in India*, which challenges the notion that homosexuality is not a native concept and suggests that same-sex love practices have been a part of Indian culture since ancient times. In one of her pieces titled "Indian Homosexuality," According to Ruth Vanita, over a long period of time, "the prevailing view persists that homosexuality is a distortion imported from middle-aged West Asia or contemporary Europe and this was non-existent." This is a necessary step because, shockingly, same-sex love is not as thoroughly investigated in South Asia as it is in East and West Asia." *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi* (2001), a journal by Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, is a compelling account of the life of the Hijra and is substantial enough to serve as a voice for those who are not heterosexual. Prominent transgender scholar Ruth Vanita, LGBT freedoms activist Arvind Narain, Gopi Shankar, winner of the Province Youth Labourers Grant, and A. Revathi have all made significant contributions to

shattering many stereotypes about the LGBT community. Understanding and appreciating the fact that gender and sexuality are flexible, not fixed, concepts is crucial. The terms "sexuality" and "sex" are sometimes used interchangeably. On the other hand, sex is decided by biology, while gender is frequently established by physical characteristics of the human body. However, defining sexuality is challenging because everyone has a different definition of it, and people's intense emotions of love and physical and emotional attraction to one another are constantly shifting. Because sexuality is "socially derived" in addition to being biologically molded and determined, and because a person's sexuality is influenced by a variety of social, political, and cultural factors, it is impossible to define a set type of sexuality. Hence, sexuality, in the broad sense of the term, cannot be considered as purely biological but is also formed by the rules and conditioning of the various forces of society. It also consists of expectations, narratives or identity formations which are conditioned by society and its different institutions like politics, culture, education and healthcare. Amorphous sexuality is used to describe people whose sexual orientation keeps on changing, like Pansexuality, which includes the potentiality of being attracted to all genders and Gender Dysphoria, which means people, who fail to identify their true gender identity and remain in constant conflict with the gender assigned to them at birth. Similar to this, a person's gender is likewise arbitrary because it depends on their sexual orientation. For instance, some people identify as female on the outside, but on the inside, they act and feel like men. Their actions indicate that they are masculine sexual beings. They so reject the conventional characteristics of the female gender and aspire to adopt those of the male gender. Because sexuality is fluid by nature and the traits of various sexualities overlap, categorizing it in rigid terms can lead to issues. It can be regarded as amorphous due to these overlapping traits of several sexual identities, such as those of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, pansexual, or gender dysphonic. Halberstam (2011) Halberstam investigates the idea of "queer failure" as a way to challenge social norms. This book presents a novel viewpoint on how, in queer circumstances, nonconformity and failure may be uplifting. Koyama Emi (2006) the political dimensions of transgender rights and the significance of marking the Transgender Day of Remembrance are covered in Koyama's article. It offers perceptions into the activism and advocacy of the transgender community. Revathi (2010) Revathi's autobiography provides a firsthand narrative of her life as a hijra, illuminating the struggles and achievements faced by transgender people in India. It offers a distinctive viewpoint on activism and transgender identity. Revathi (2018) In her second autobiography, Revathi details her experiences as a transgender activist and emphasises the value of empowerment and resistance in the fight for transgender rights in India.

## 2. Objective

- To autobiographical writings of A Revathi explore the intersection of queer identity and politics

## 3. Data Analysis and Discussion

My thesis will examine the most significant issues related to transsexual sexuality and personality that A. Revathi brought up in her way-breaking personal history *Reality with regard to Me*, in light of the foregoing historical and fluid nature of orientation and sexuality. Her goal, as she acknowledges in the preface, is to "acquaint the perusers with the existences of hijras, their particular culture, and their fantasies and wants." In addition, she wants to utilise her book to give people a more accepting place and recognition for her classification of sexual minorities while also raising awareness of the fact that "hijras are able to do something beyond asking and sex work." Revathi explains that she anticipated to write this self-portrayal during her meeting with S.B. Vijaya Mary from *The Hindu*, "so that individuals with comparable encounters and who are in comparable circumstances will follow some guidelines from my experience to manage their lives." The book recounts Revathi's journey from a helpless victim of third orientation to a fearless survivor and, ultimately, to an eager dissident and a striking boss of transsexual liberty in a straightforward and lawful manner. As the youngest son in a family of five siblings, Doraisamy (as Revathi was known until she changed her name and sexual identity) was raised in a modest peasant family in a small village in Namakkal taluk in the Salem district of Tamil Nadu. As a child, he received a lot of love and attention from his parents. However, from an early age, he yearned to live and act like a girl. He preferred to accompany girls to the local school, come back with them, play games exclusively for girls, and take pleasure in assisting his mother with housework. It makes sense, therefore, that he was quickly made fun of for being a "female thing": "He felt 'painfully bashful' hearing this more and more regularly. Boys at school and others outside her home would scream out: "Hey number 9!, 'female thing' and 'female boy.'" He was severely beaten for "not being brave like a boy" and was even disciplined at school for speaking "like a girl." Nevertheless, Doraisamy "could not stop being a girl" despite the persistent taunting and her status as a "regular source of amusement and curiosity." Even after suffering the most severe forms of humiliation and insults, he was unable to control his overwhelming need to be feminine. Unable to understand his own feelings and desires, he quickly begins to act irrationally. He felt compelled to come out as a woman in public but was afraid that people would not accept him for who he truly was: "I saw myself as a lady trapped in a man's body. However, how is that

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even possible?" He begins to question God's goodness for allowing him to experience such an unusual state of suffering in which he was neither "wholly male" nor "wholly female": "I often wondered why I am a flawed human. I supposed I should bite the dust. I was not able to study. I was restless, confused, and focused." This suffering, in which it is unaffordable to be who one truly is at one's core, shattering personal identity and raising some of the most fundamental issues surrounding a person's sex at birth. Is a person's fate solely determined by their biology? Should a person's physical characteristics determine their gender at birth? Why should people who identify as binary deny who they truly are or what they truly believe to be? It is so painful to be taunted, bullied, or even policed because of one's gender that there is very little room left for one to live freely and follow their own instincts. Doraisamy endures this loneliness for a while until he encounters a group of young gay guys in a nearby town who loved engaging in feminine behaviours and addressed each other like girls. It is clear that these young men do not fit into mainstream life or society since they were forced to come to the fort that towered above the town every evening after dark in order to express their feminine identities. These males are referred to by Doraisamy as his "female comrades"—his "thozhis"—rather than just pals. They fully expressed their repressed feminine tendencies when they arrived at the hill fort after dusk, when everyone else had left. "Since there was no one around then, felt we could be women and do as we pleased," they said. For the first time, Doraisamy realised that he was not alone in the world and that many other boys shared his feelings and actions, particularly when they behaved like girls, while he was with his newfound companions. Additionally, he learned from his buddies that a male could have surgery to alter his sex and become a woman—more specifically, a transsexual—and that Dindigul had a "amma" who could assist him in doing so. Thus, Doraisamy chose to travel to Dindigul by bus with his companions, who now addressed each other as ladies and acted accordingly, because he could no longer put up with the everyday abuse from his friends, family, and strangers. At amma's place, they meet more of their kind and learn a lot about the hijra tradition, which includes touching the elders' feet, or "paampaduthi," which was a significant aspect of their culture and required a feminine man to "offer respect to the sari-clad and earn their goodwill." Doraisamy was told by an elder that she "looked like the actress Revathi" at this point. This turns into a turning point in Doraisamy's life since he comes up with a new moniker and feels "a glow of pride" at looking "like a woman." Here, Doraisamy discovers he is in a whole new world and is valued for his womanliness for the first time. "If this one (Doraisamy) were to undergo nirvaanam, (operation for castration), she'd look like a real woman," cries one of the elders. Now that she is a member of the hijra jamaat, or community, Doraisamy starts living as one of the ladies, taking care of all the domestic chores and adhering to the customs and rituals of

the group. But even after "nirvaanam," Revathi quickly learns that living as a hijra was not simple. Life was extremely difficult because of the constant harassment, abuse, threats, and violence from men on the streets, as well as the constant arguments among the hijra community with her gurubais and other hijras. Above all, there was sexual and economic exploitation of the worst kind. Revathi wondered, "Why must hijras suffer so?" after hearing horrific stories of everyday hardship. Living with other hijras and begging in different stores offered constant harassment and insults, but living alone was equally difficult and "brought with it a host of new problems" for a hijra. Revathi also had a strong desire to get married, settle down, and lead a normal life now that she felt like a whole woman. In an attempt to satisfy her sexual cravings, she moved to Mumbai and started having sex with other hijras. She also adopted a new guru in the slim chance that she would meet a man who would be able to respect her and take her as a wife: "I became a chela to my new guru because of my desire for sexual happiness, in order to fulfil my sexual longings." She had to endure the most horrific forms of dehumanisation at the hands of both her own clan members and outsiders during her life as a hijra sex worker, which proved to be more cruel than all the previous horrors. She suffered from constant harassment and insults, was sexually attacked, brought to a police station, had her belongings robbed, was raped by a raucous person, and was threatened with death. She consequently became a compulsive drinker and sought solace in pubs. Filled with uncertainty and bewilderment, she fled back to her Nammakal home when everything became too much to handle. She had nothing but disdain and abuse from her relatives, who had assumed she was dead, but this time she refused to take it all lying down and shot back, saying, "Look! I got surgery, and I'm now a woman. I will now live my life as I please. You no longer have the same ability to defeat me. Nonetheless, the family members were not inclined to acknowledge her as a woman. It was "what will the world say" that scared them more than attempting to deal with the emotions of a member of their own family. She made an effort to convey to them that she had returned solely out of love for them and that she had no desire to humiliate them or claim her rightful portion of the land. Ultimately, Revathi's father accepts her fate as what it is and makes it plain that she should be left alone to live her own life as there is nothing more that can be done. In the meantime, her brother and mother established a set of guidelines for her that prohibited her from hanging out with guys and from appearing in public at all. Even though she felt awful about it, she accepted being called Doraisamy without any objection. Later on, her mother's and sister's families even started to encourage her, and she progressively started to feel like her "usual self." Nonetheless, her villager community whispered to one another that they found her "curious." That she had been reduced to "a thing to be looked and laughed at, an oddity, a comic figure" hurt her deeply. Her eyes scanned the streets restlessly,



trying to figure out who was staring at her and what they were mumbling, as people stopped to stare at her. Given the situation, Revathi decides once more to return to her own people in order to become independent and earn a living. "Once I had money, all other things would fall into place—respect and consideration," was her belief. On the understanding that she wouldn't hang around with other hijras, drink, fight, or hunt for a husband, her previous guru in Ghatkopar made arrangements for her to be sent to her gurubai's household on Crane Road, which was known for sex business. She had to adjust to a completely new set of experiences while working here as a body seller. These experiences taught her about the many painful jobs hijras were forced to take on due to their poverty and the responsibility of supporting their families, as well as the sufferings endured by eunuchs who had been "abandoned by their husbands, cast away by their lovers; because they had been raped and left unchaste." Her heart was "melted" by the lost hopes, sorrows, and tears of her own people, and she grew to feel a strong bond with them. Revathi was horrified to witness these eunuchs standing on the streets "with powdered faces and painted lips" trying to entice their customers and suffering police abuse without any fault of their own, despite constantly being duped, assaulted, bruised, and abandoned. She believed that the suffering of her fellow eunuchs was far greater than her own, and that this caring sharing of sufferings strengthens her resolve to "journey in this world." Even though there were arguments and problems every day, she had to put up with it since this was her workplace. She ends up going to bars to drown her sorrows in alcohol. In an attempt to discuss her problems and "forget them temporarily," she starts drinking. When her mistress caught her intoxicated during the day and she was unable to defend herself, she once took up one of the glass shards and severely cut her own forehead. Because she was unable to release her hurt and rage on other people, she wound up hurting herself. Revathi's decision to move to Bangalore and join a hamam (bath house) managed by hijras was prompted by her brothers' humiliation of her over a man who used to frequent her home. There, she might meet Mya, her previous chela who was now her gurubai. Mya attempted to talk her out of living there because the area was incessantly overrun by thugs who would often throw stones at them and threaten them with knives, but Revathi had nowhere else to go. In addition to being fed, sex workers were not imprisoned here, as in the previous location in Kamatipura, nor were they required to perform errands for other people. Revathi made the decision to remain there and expressed her desire to be Mya's gurubai's chela once more. She was welcomed as her "chela" by her third guru with joy. Her problems with the sex industry persisted since she was frequently seen strolling down the street with her face beaten in plain sight by the cops and thugs. She was once dragged against her will to a police station, locked up in a cell, kicked viciously, forced to undress in the freezing night, and subjected to sexual assault: "That night I cried silently to myself..I felt

intensely ashamed and enraged." But now her attitude was definitely different. Now that she was more conscious of her rights, she started to oppose and rebel against the several forms of discrimination that the government was imposing on them. She becomes enraged with the driving school inspector when he refuses to grant her a licence, and she publicly vents her frustration by asking, "Why fling these documents and show so little respect? Is it not legal for you to grant licences to individuals such as myself? She even makes a threat to the Inspector, saying that "the government only issues licences to men and women, not to people like me," to the media and public. Refusing to give up, she eventually obtains her licence, identifying herself as "Revathi, who is Doraisamy." She even starts approaching those who made fun of her while driving. In one such instance, she stepped off her scooter and publicly challenged a group of autorickshaw drivers who were trying to decide if she was a guy or a woman in the middle of the road. "So you want to take bets on who's a male and who's a woman? What are you guys hoping to achieve by talking in this way? I am a pottai, listen! I used to be a man, but I became a woman." During her time in Bangalore, Revathi had a visit from three well-educated young friends who wanted her advice on how to pursue a life similar to hers. They insisted on being adopted as her daughters, and Revathi eventually consents to become their guru in accordance with the eunuchs' traditions and rituals. As their guru, Revathi did not want to obstruct their freedom or make them go through the same suffering that she had to endure over and over again. She didn't want to use her power over her chelas to get money, nor did she want them to work for her. Although Revathi lived "in the world of hijra community with all its particular sorrows and joys," she granted her chelas complete freedom to live in the outside world with their own homes, just like other women and their partners. This demonstrates once more how Revathi's personal sufferings helped her comprehend the issues facing people of her kind and transformed her into a very understanding and kind person. "I liked living in the hamam with my own kind, but I also liked the way my chelas lived (in their own homes and as per their wishes)," Revathi admitted to herself. Her three chelas, who were raised in Bangalore, were educated, independent women who lived free lives as college students, dressing however they pleased, from skirts to jeans. Being their mother to the outside world pleased Revathi, who had never seen or heard of such a thing before. Her heart was "warmed" by the loving care of her daughters, who were her chelas: "It had a healing effect." Their camaraderie never failed to astonish me. According to Revathi, Famila, one of her three educated chelas, was the first woman in Karnataka—possibly even in all of India—to publicly acknowledge in the media that she was a sex worker and that the industry is a legitimate one. Her friendship with her young, well-educated chelas in Bangalore turned out to be a significant turning point in her life when Famila introduced her to Sangama, an organisation founded in 1999 to assist

persons who identify as third gender. The group gathered data on all transgender people, including gays, lesbians, bisexuals, eunuchs, and anyone else who did not fit into the gender binary. After being made to feel quite welcome, Revathi was astounded to see that there was no formal hierarchy or division of labour between the sexes and that third gender persons were treated as regular people with an abundance of love and respect. After three months, she received an opportunity to work for the company as an office assistant, earning 2,500 rupees a month. She was more interested in getting a chance to go to work like other women and "do something for society" than in the money. Even if the offer was lightly paid, she quickly accepted it in order to finally break free from the life of a prostitute. Revathi was quite clear about her goal and intention, even though her guru did not agree with her choice and did not comprehend it at all: "Amma, people like us have done this forever." We have only been able to engage in prostitution or sex work for centuries. For what length of time is this appropriate? My generation's hijras are demanding more. We want to live like others and introduce the world to our lives. For that reason, I'm heading to work. Revathi's insatiable desire to leave the life of sexual minority behind and interact with the greater human world is what ultimately led to her freedom and liberation. She quickly won over the senior staff due to her devotion to all office duties, and she also started learning about the effects of war by more powerful nations, the suffering of all minorities in general, including dalits, and she started going to seminars and workshops, and before long, the organisation gave her more responsibility. Her views and personality underwent a significant transformation as she struggled more and more to refute numerous "stereotypical and incorrect perceptions of sexual minorities." With time, she came to understand that she and other sexual minorities could live a different, more inclusive, and dignified life. As a third gender activist, she began taking part in the various events and giving speeches about "hijra culture, hijra ways of living, and the violence and discrimination that we faced." I also discussed property rights and hijras. The important thing about this was that Revathi wanted to fight against violence against women in general, breaking down barriers of caste and class, rather than only focusing on her own community. "I wanted to fight against sexual violence as such—it was not enough for me to merely challenge the violations suffered by sexual minorities," the woman claims. She had the exceptional chance to fulfil her "vocation as a social worker" because to Sangam. Throughout her work as an organiser, she came to see that things were slowly but surely improving. She saw that sex work was becoming less violent than it had been in the past, and that both the police and the general public had changed for the better in that they were becoming less likely to harass eunuchs. Revathi was fighting for the dignity and respect due to all Hijras; her battle was not an individual one. It was not just a personal accomplishment for a eunuch to go to schools and institutions and teach seminars on sexuality, identity, and

culture: "It was a matter of pride for all hijras." In every aspect of life, including health, education, work, and the ability to vote and run for office, they should have been granted the same chances and rights as other marginalised people. Knowing full well that "Alone, I could achieve nothing, we had to somehow pull together," she started organising her fellow hijras around these causes. Her battle on the home front was equally difficult, and when she ran out of money to support her activism as a public figure, her father threatened to rewrite his will and take away her promised portion of the house's property. This breach of trust causes her father, to whom she had been paying money all along, to become very angry and even start to deny ever getting any from her. Revathi even considered burning herself alive in a fit of rage and agony, but she eventually changed her mind when she realised she was missing a matchbox. As Revathi puts it, she felt "cheated and emotionally drained," rather than having a problem with money or property in general. Her father was prepared to put her name on the house registration after realising his error a week later. Revathi managed to get the deed written in such a manner that it would not create any problem for anyone and made sure that all the bills and receipts were issued in the name of Revathi. Meanwhile, while working in Sangama, Revathi grew intimate with a senior staff member and it took her a lot of courage to finally confess her love to her senior colleague who claimed to be a bisexual. He reciprocated her with equal warmth and the two formally decided to enter into a relationship and eventually marry. They offered to resign from Sangam in the event that their relationship caused issues at work, but the board of Sangam met and determined that the organisation shouldn't get involved in personal matters and should let the parties involved handle ensuring that their relationship didn't interfere with their ability to do their jobs. "Pleasant shock" was what Revathi was experiencing. She considered herself "blessed" to be marrying someone who truly understood her; it was a dream come true for her. Her gurubais also approved of her marriage, which was consummated in a modest ceremony within a temple that involved only the passing of candy and flowers. Both were delighted to tell their friends and acquaintances over the phone. They celebrated their marriage with the help of other women's groups and the Sangam office personnel. Upon learning of her marriage, her mother expressed concern that her spouse would now claim her belongings. However, she and other family members were reassured by Revathi that her marriage was not motivated by her property. The fact that her family and society at large had recognised their marriage made Revathi pleased and relieved, but her enjoyment was all too fleeting. The couple had broken up within a year of her marriage. She was even more devastated to discover that some criminals had brutally killed both her guru and her own chela, adding insult to injury. Revathi experienced a great deal of loss and occasionally even questioned if she should live at all, but her gurus and gurubais gave her comfort. She eventually went for

Tamil Nadu to conduct research on aravanis (eunuchs) for her book, but not before feeling depressed, confused, hurt, and worn out. Revathi came to the realisation that she was not the only one who had been "singled out for sorrow" as several eunuchs confided in her endless tales of misery, and that her struggles paled in comparison to those of many others in her community. Thus, Revathi's autobiography and life activism serve as an appeal for the acceptance of hijras as respectable citizens of society and as normal people who, like all other groups of people, have the right to live in this society with love, dignity, and equal rights and opportunities. In conclusion, it may be said that Revathi has given voice to the rights of sexual minorities, particularly in the South, through her literature and action. She is still fighting to make society acknowledge the third gender and to establish norms that allow people to respect one another's gender choice. On majority of occasions, the callous and cruel attitude adopted by family members who are only bothered about their own perceived notion of family honour and dignity and do not make even the smallest attempt to relate to the sexual reality experienced by one of their own family, compels many of them to leave their homes at some stage of their lives. Lesbian and trans-women in particular are the targets of such familial violence. But similar violence is often faced by gay men, effeminate boys and transgenders too. To add to their woes, they are subjected to teasing, bullying, street brawls, and above all, which includes constant abuses, threats and violence from men in the streets as well as by police and other authorities. Obtaining their passports, driver's licences, gender-marked identity cards, and other official documents from the relevant authorities is incredibly difficult for them. Some of them, like eunuchs, are compelled to become prostitutes. These sections do not have access to decent work that demonstrates self-respect.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Thus, Revathi's autobiography and life activism serve as an appeal for the acceptance of hijras as respectable citizens of society and as normal people who, like all other groups of people, have the right to live in this society with love, dignity, and equal rights and opportunities. In conclusion, it may be said that Revathi has given voice to the rights of sexual minorities, particularly in the South, through her literature and action. She is still fighting to make society acknowledge the third gender and to establish norms that allow people to respect one another's gender choice. On majority of occasions, the callous and cruel attitude adopted by family members who are only bothered about their own perceived notion of family honour and dignity and do not make even the smallest attempt to relate to the sexual reality experienced by one of their own family, compels many of them to leave their homes at some stage of their lives. Lesbian and trans-women in particular are the targets of such familial violence. She is tormented by a deep unease about being trapped in an inappropriate body and a "developing feeling of enthusiastic femaleness." Through

an insider's account of the hijra community this autobiography is the first of its kind in India to depict a hijra life story my paper aims to examine important questions regarding transgender sexuality and the agency and bravery displayed by Revathi in fending off and enduring the horrors that a "hijra" must endure, such as abuse at the hands of family members, sexual assault and torture by police, as well as repeated displacements in the pursuit of true love and a dignified life.

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