

**VULNERABILITY OF SAME-SEX LOVE AND ITS DISASTROUS END: A  
STUDY IN PERSPECTIVES OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF  
A. REVATHI AND LAXMI NARAYAN TRIPATHI**

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**Abstract**

History bears enough evidence of the fact that homoerotic people in India had a large number of ancestors in all parts of the country. These people were, once, honoured and became successful members of society. To enlighten the much-debated issue of same-sex love, Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai jointly edited a seminal book entitled *Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History*. In this book, they have traced back the long tradition of same-sex love in our country over the ages. With Lord Macaulay's implementation of infamous anti-sodomy law of 1861 that criminalized all forms of non-procreative sexual activity, the pluralism of sexuality in India got destroyed, thereby making the lives of the transgender people miserable. This law that criminalized homosexuality remains in place still today in India whereas in England homosexuality was decriminalized in 1967. Nevertheless, people other than the heterosexuals in India have discerned a silver lining in the Supreme Court's verdict of August, 2017 that upholds the right to individual privacy as an intrinsic and fundamental right under the Indian constitution. This verdict certainly provides hope to the LGBT rights activists that the infamous section 377 of IPC criminalizing homosexual activities is on the verge of abolition. In such a period of transition when the transgender community had already obtained the dignified status of 'third' gender category from the apex court of our country in 2014, and their inclination towards same-sex love is on the edge of decriminalization, the most pertinent question is how long a transgender person will be a subject to discrimination, deception, blackmailing and even abusive physical torture for his/her desire to be entangled in a codified relationship both emotionally and physically. The objective of this research paper, therefore, is to explore the disastrous end of love alongside their yearning for a codified conjugal relationship in the light of the autobiographies of Aka Revathi and Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, the two eminent transgender persons of India. Laxmi Narayan Tripathi is the first transgender person to represent his/her community on behalf of Asia Pacific in the United Nations in 2008. Aka Revathi happened to be the first transgender to write an autobiography.

**Keywords:** Homoerotic People, Transgenders, Same-sex love, Discrimination, Vulnerability.

History bears enough evidence of the fact that homoerotic people in India had a large number of ancestors in all parts of the country. These people were, once, honoured and became successful members of society. They contributed in many ways to thought, literature, culture and the general good. These people were not necessarily regarded as inferior in any way nor were they always ashamed of their loves and desires. In many cases, they lived happy and fulfilling lives with those they loved. Labels like 'abnormal,' 'unnatural' and 'unhealthy' are of relatively very recent origin in India. Even the inventors of these labels, Euro-American psychologists, have already retracted them and concluded that same-sex love is perfectly natural for many people. To enlighten the much-debated issue of same-sex love, Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai jointly edited a seminal book entitled *Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History*. In this book, they have traced back the long tradition of same-sex love in our country over the ages. They have divided the book into three sections based on the tradition of same-sex love over the ages. These sections are – ancient, medieval and modern, with the ancient running from the Vedic period up to approximately the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, the medieval up to the full establishment of British rule in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the modern from then to the present.

Vanita and Kidwai first mentioned the *Rig Veda Samhita* in their book, upholding an ideal of friendship as a very sacred relation. While the *Rig Veda* represents the man-woman relation as oriented towards procreation, it constructs friendship not as reproductive but as creative. In the hymns of *Rig Veda*<sup>1</sup> friendship is identified as the touchstone of rectitude. Friendship is identified with the uniquely human power of language presided over the great creative spirit Vak, that is, human interaction. The preoccupation with friendship continues in the epics of Hindu mythology also. Krishna and Arjuna are the most famous pair of male friends within the ancient Indian texts. Modern paintings and calendar art depicting the Bhagavad Gita show them alone together in their chariot engaged in dialogue. The Adi Parva or first book of *The Mahabharata* concludes with Krishna asking Indra, the king of the gods, for the boon of eternal friendship with Arjuna. It is for Arjuna's sake that Krishna commits several acts in the battle condemned for its unrighteousness. For instance, lord Krishna by his miraculous power makes the sun disappear from the sky as if it has set and then brings it back again in the sky, thereby deluding the foes. Krishna accomplishes this unrighteous act on the occasion of getting Jayadratha vanquished by Arjuna because it was a boon to Jayadratha that no one could kill him after the setting of the sun. The only justification Krishna gives for this unrighteous action is his love for Arjuna that surpasses all:

I, therefore, will do that tomorrow by which Arjuna, the son of Kunti, may slay Jayadratha before the sun-set. My wives, my kinsman, my relatives, none amongst these is dearer to me than Arjuna. O Daruka, I shall not be able to cast my eyes, even for a single moment, on the earth bereft of Arjuna [...] Know that Arjuna is half of my body. (Vanita and Kidwai 7)

The pattern of the cross-dressing girl child, the wedding of two women and the pressure for one to change into a man after marriage are recurrent motifs in Hindu mythological texts. There are instances of same-sex attachment in Vishnu Sharma's *Panchatantra* (Sanskrit) translated by Chandra Rajan and *Manikantha Jataka* (Pali) translated by Kumkum Roy.

The *Kamasutra* is perhaps the world's most famous work on erotics. Although probably a composite text, *Kamasutra* is attributed to Vatsyayana, a Brahmin scholar residing in the city of Patuliputra around fourth century AD, during the reign of Gupta kings. The definition of 'kama' as indicated in the book encompasses all types of desire. It defines 'kama' as the mental inclination towards the pleasure of the senses – touch, sight, taste, and smell. Contrary to the texts that identify procreation as the aim of sexual activity, the *Kamasutra*, while giving procreation due importance, states that kama "finds its finality in itself." (Danielou, KSI. 2:12) Friendship is given an important place in this text too. The text says that two such men who are well-wishers of one another can mutually practice sexual act with each other. Danielou in his celebrated work, *The Complete Kama Sutra* translates the Sanskrit term 'parigraha' as 'marriage' between two men. The medieval commentator, Yashodhara belonging to 12<sup>th</sup> century AD elaborates on the relationship between two men, using the term 'maitri' or friendship. They take turns to perform oral sex on one another. This being a mutual activity, Yasodhara indicates that women too can mutually engage in it. The *Kamasutra* being a compendium, thus, attempts to exhaust all possibilities and mention every possible type of sexual behaviour.

During the medieval period, Islamic culture took root in the Indian subcontinent. Various regional and religious cultures including the Muslim, Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu interacted during this period, thereby producing varied types of cultural practices. Corresponding to multidimensional divinities, medieval devotion developed many ideas of divinity between devotees and deity as well as among devotees. Some of these forms of intimacy can be found in ancient texts as well, for instance, the relationship between a male teacher (guru) and a male student. The relationship also can become primary for both teacher and student in an ascetic context. An interesting variant on the pattern occurs

in the life story of the sixteenth to seventeenth century Hindi poet Rashkhan. “*Do Sau Vaishnavam Ki Varta*” (Accounts of 252 Vaishnavas) narrates how Rashkhan Pathan, born in a Muslim family in Delhi, fell deeply in love with the beautiful son of his employer, a Hindu money lender. The story of Shiva’s attraction to Vishnu’s Mohini form is related in at least three *Puranas* which dates approximately from 850 to 950 AD. Such stories suggest how traditional notions of the fluidity of gender can work to the benefit of same-sex love. While referring to the same-sex attachment in the context of the medieval period, we cannot help mentioning the companionship of the two mystics – Sri Chaitanya and Jagannath Das. Of the extent biographies of Shri Chaitanya, the most important is the early 17<sup>th</sup> century *Chaitanya Charitamrita* by Krishna Das. Shri Chaitanya deemed to be an incarnation of Lord Krishna was born at Navadip in West Bengal. After a month of his initiation in 1509, he took leave of his mother and wife and left for Puri, the coastal abode of the Oriya tribal deity Jagannath, identified with Krishna. As Chaitanya’s message of love got proliferated, he became very popular and also met with opposition. However, Shri Chaitanya Strikes a relationship bordering on eroticism with Jagannath Das, 15<sup>th</sup>-century poet mystic as well as the author of the *Oriya Bhagbata*. Some commentators have seen Das’ relationship with Chaitanya as mystical love based on the love between Krishna and Radha. Das was nineteen when he met Shri Chaitanya. Biographers describe the encounter with varying details. According to the hagiographer, Iswar Das, Shri Chaitanya used to address Jagannath Das as Sakhi (female friend). Dibakar Das, another hagiographer, describes the relationship between Shri Chaitanya and Jagannath Das in his *Jagannath Charitamrita* as quoted in *Same-Sex Love In India: A Literary History*:

At this time Shri Chaitanya arrived at the banyan tree with his friends and was delighted to hear Jagannath Das’ rendition. Overwhelmed in love he held Das in tight embrace. They stayed in this posture for two days and a half.<sup>2</sup> (Vanita and Kidwai 121)

During the early medieval period, references to same-sex love are scattered and few whereas in the late medieval period a huge body of literature on same-sex love develops. Homo-erotically inclined men are continuously visible in the medieval Muslim history. The most potent reason behind this visibility is the cosmopolitanism of urban Islamic culture.<sup>3</sup> Increasing urbanization is a marked feature from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onward. The flourishing markets and towns created a culture of the streets based on the interaction between men. In these bazaars men from different classes, castes and communities mingled; here homo-erotically inclined met and established relations. Medieval poetry depicts romantic and erotic interaction between men across class and religious divides, for instance, Mir’s narrative poem, Shola- i- Ishq depicting love affairs between two males, one Muslim and one Hindu. This tradition had been well established among the elite since the inception of Muslim rules in India. Saleem Kidwai provides us with ample references of such homoerotic relations throughout medieval period in his jointly edited work with Ruth Vanita, that is, *The Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History*:

Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznah, often projected as the ideal Muslim ruler by medieval Muslim political theorists such as Barani, was in love with his slave Ayaz.<sup>4</sup> Mubarak Shah Khalji was in love with Khusro to the point of distraction. Terry, an Englishman who visited India in early part of the sixteenth century, wrote about emperor Jahangir’s personal establishment where he kept ‘little boys’ for ‘a wicked use’.<sup>5</sup> Jahangir, son of Akbar, discussed with another visitor the relative attractions of dark and fair slave boys. Sexual relations between eunuchs and their masters were frequent. Aladdin Khalji was enamoured of Malik Kafur. A Mughal noble man, Mira Nathan, was enamoured of a couple of eunuchs and besotted by a beautiful one called Khawaja Mina.<sup>6</sup> (Vanita and Kidwai 131)

With the advent of the modern era in India, that is, 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, there occurs a shift from generally a tolerant tradition towards same-sex love in precolonial India to a homophobic tradition in

the colonial and post-colonial India. Homophobic is the adjective form of the term 'homophobia' coined by George Weinberg, an American psychologist in the 1960's. The term encompasses a wide range of negative attitudes and feelings towards homosexuality alongside the people who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Arguably, the crushing of the 1857 rebellion followed by the official incorporation of India into the British Empire with Queen Victoria replacing the East India Company signalled the end of Medieval India. While doing laudable works on women's education and against women's oppression, social reformers tried to form an ideal society modelled on the British Victorian nuclear family. Monogamous heterosexual marriage came to be idealized as the only form of sexual coupling. With Lord Macaulay's implementation of infamous anti-sodomy law of 1861 that criminalized all forms of non-procreative sexual activity, the pluralism of sexuality in India got destroyed, thereby making the lives of the transgender people miserable. For same-sex love, the end was signalled by the law that criminalized homosexuality. This law that criminalized homosexuality remains in place still today in India whereas in England homosexuality was decriminalized in 1967. Nevertheless, people other than the heterosexuals in India have discerned a silver lining in the Supreme Court's verdict of August, 2017 that upholds the right to individual privacy as an intrinsic and fundamental right under the Indian constitution. This verdict provides hope to the LGBT activists that the court soon would strike down section 377. The court also assented to the point that a person's sexual orientation is a privacy issue. In January 2018, the Supreme Court agreed to refer the question of the validity of section 377 to a large bench for examination before October 2018. Hopefully, the section 377 will be amended to the extent that same-sex love will not be a criminal offence in future. In such a period of transition when the transgender community had already obtained the dignified status of 'third' gender category from the apex court of our country in 2014, and their inclination towards same-sex love is on the edge of decriminalization, the most pertinent question is how long a transgender person will be a subject to discrimination, deception, blackmailing and even abusive physical torture for his/her desire to be entangled in a codified relationship both emotionally and physically.

The conflation of transgenders with homosexual men in fiction, non-fiction, cinema and popular imagination is also a product of homophobic refusal to acknowledge homosexual men as full-fledged 'men' living in mainstream society. Nevertheless, there is a marked difference between a homosexual man (gay) and a transgender person as enunciated by Laxmi in her autobiography:

The gays of Maheswari Udyaan provided solace, but then they saw themselves as men. That alienated me from them. I wondered why they did not regard themselves as women, for, to me, then being homosexual and being a woman meant the same thing. Perhaps it is the conscious desire to be heterosexual, but when I was attracted to a man, I did not think myself as a man. I thought of myself as a woman. (Tripathi 29)

Both a transgender person and a homosexual man yearn another male person for the consummation of their sexual desires but in a different way. A transgender person is inwardly a woman and enjoys sexual intercourse with a male, thinking herself as a woman while a homosexual man never thinks of himself as woman and enjoys intercourse with a man as a man. Generally, a transgender person is an effeminate male having masculine physique and female soul at the same time in one entity. This anomaly in their characters makes them yearn for male love. Some transgender persons become trans-woman after sexual reassignment surgery. Some of them castrate themselves without proper surgical treatment. Some of them do not either get castration or sexual reassignment surgery, keeping their male genitals intact with themselves. Whatever their sexual orientation may be, they also want to fall in love, to marry someone and to have a family with their intended male lover. In return for their unalloyed passion and love what they receive from the heteronormative society as a reward is hatred,

deception, humiliation and brutal physical torture. Both Aka Revathi and Laxmi Narayan Tripathi in their autobiographies provide us with ample references of the despondencies and disasters resulting from their yearning for love as well as a codified conjugal relationship.

Laxmi Narayan Tripathi in her autobiography *Me Hijra, Me Laxmi* candidly gives an account of numerous sexual exploitations that she suffered, beginning with the first one at the age of seven. She felt as if her childhood was over and she had grown up before time. But, these disparaging experiences did not dissuade Laxmi from desiring 'male' love. Despite being a boy by birth, Laxmi's attraction towards male counterparts created a strange feeling in the initial years of her life. She expresses, thus, her bewilderment:

While I did not want some boys anywhere near me, I was attracted to others and strongly desired them. I wondered if this happened because inwardly I was a woman. (Tripathi 10)

However, numerous experiences of sexual exploitations in Laxmi's life were followed by a sequence of jilted love affairs. In Laxmi's life 'love' appeared to be a 'strange emotion' with both of its bright and dark sides. The bright side of love as reflected in her autobiography is the kind of love that she received from her parents, teachers, and friends and the dark side of love came to her life in the form of male 'lust' that made her victim of sexual assaults time and again. Laxmi had her first love affair in the new house at Khopat when she was in the sixth standard. For the first time in her life, Laxmi fell in love with Rohan who happened to be elder than Laxmi by eight years. Rohan was fair and had a strikingly good look. In the course of time, their relationship 'blossomed.' Laxmi felt 'rejuvenated' when for the first time they got sexual interaction. With Rohan, Laxmi did sex by choice for the first time in her life. All on a sudden, their sweet relationship based on love and mutual attraction seemed to be at stake. Rohan's younger brother and his cousin began to harass Laxmi. With the passing of time, Laxmi realized that Rohan himself was an accomplice with his brother and cousin in harassing Laxmi mentally. Moreover, it was Rohan, his lover who instigated them to humiliate Laxmi. After the termination of her relationship with Rohan, Laxmi befriended with many boys in other schools. Around this time Laxmi and her friends went on a school trip to Matheran, a picturesque hill station close to Bombay. At night Guruprasad, Nasir and Laxmi slept on adjacent beds. There occurred a sexual liaison between Nasir and Laxmi. After Rohan, Nasir came in Laxmi's life. Laxmi's relationship with Nasir got terminated as soon as Ravi entered Laxmi's life. Laxmi's love for Ravi was characterized by 'restlessness as well as by solace.' Ravi permeated her being to such an extent that day and night Laxmi could think of nothing and no one except Ravi. Laxmi gives a candid expression of her obsessive love for Ravi in the following lines:

I couldn't eat, drink or sleep until I'd met him. On days when we did not meet, I sobbed like a small child. When he fell ill I would carry food to his sickbed, sit by his bedside and nurse him back to health. (Tripathi 20)

Pravin, one of Laxmi's well-wisher and friend, cautioned Laxmi about Ravi that he did not love Laxmi. But Laxmi paid no heed to Pravin's warnings. Laxmi's involvement with Ravi was so intense that no one and nothing could dissuade Laxmi from loving Ravi. In the course of time Laxmi realized that Ravi was no different from the rest looking for sexual pleasure only. Ravi did not reciprocate Laxmi's passionate love for him, but he was after her 'body'. Soon their relationship disintegrated because of the incompatibility of their feeling and thinking. Laxmi realized that society would never allow any transgender like her to marry Ravi or to live with him. So, Laxmi decided that she would get her lover married to the woman he intended. She, thus, took initial steps to arrange Ravi's marriage and settled the matter down. But, it was most pathetic and heart-rending for a person to arrange the marriage of one's lover or beloved. Laxmi's next love affair with Jaspal was also doomed like the preceding ones and left Laxmi alone to suffer onward. Laxmi fancied Jaspal when she was alone and yearning someone as

her confidante. Jaspal's love for Laxmi was driven by gross carnal desire with the least emotional attachment. Laxmi summarises, thus, the disastrous end of her love affair with Jaspal:

As in Ravi's case, and, indeed in the case of everyone else who had come to my life so far, my love for Jaspal was one-sided. I loved him but he did not love me. All he wanted was sex –ejaculation. And once he ejaculated he did not think of me till he was horny again. (Tripathi 34)

Of all her disparaging as well as disastrous love affairs, this one was the most traumatic. It almost snatched Laxmi's sanity and threw her out of life. This affair also hardened Laxmi to the extent that she resolved never to get emotionally involved with anyone else.

Revathi in her autobiography *The Truth about Me: A Hijra Life Life Story* expresses her attraction to the male counterpart candidly. During the initial years of her life, Revathi felt somehow confused because despite being a boy Revathi, then Dorisamy, felt drawn towards male counterpart. The strange feeling caused an upheaval in Revathi as she narrated in the autobiography:

I felt horribly shy, and whenever I saw young men, I automatically lowered my head. I felt drawn to them, but wondered if I should not be drawn to women instead, since I was a man. Why did I love men? Was I mad? Was I the only one who felt this way? Or were there others like me elsewhere in the world? Would I find them, if indeed they were there? (Revathi 14)

With the passing of time, Revathi understood her identity as a transgender. Since childhood, she suffered varied types of oppressions, humiliations, and colonization at the hand of heteronormative society. When the issue of love and marriage came into her life, situations became more complicated. The questions remain still intriguing for Revathi are as follows —Can a 'hijra' afford to fall in love? Who would want to marry a 'hijra'? Like Laxmi Revathi also had numerous ephemeral as well as disparaging love affairs. Revathi had her first affair with Babu. Revathi first met Babu at a petrol pump while filling her brother's moped for returning home from Vinayakar temple. Babu was a film operator in a cinema hall near Namakkal in Tamilnadu. In the course of time, both Babu and Revathi developed mutual liking, and love for each other. But Revathi became suspicious of Babu's love because Revathi concealed her true identity as a transgender before Babu. So, Revathi was in a dilemma in thinking that whether Babu loved Revathi thinking her as a woman. Revathi, however, was beset with fear that if she disclosed her real identity to Babu, he might break up with her. Revathi, in fact, never acquired the courage to disclose her true identity before Babu. When Babu asked Revathi the cause of her not getting married still, Revathi could not help uttering falsehood:

I was caught off guard and did not know what to say. I managed though. 'I have not attained puberty yet. Doctors tell my womb hasn't developed. I am not fit for conjugal life.' I lied to him could not bring myself to say that I was born a man and had become a woman. I don't know what he made of my answer. (Revathi 182)

Revathi had fallen in love with Babu so deep down in her heart that she took recourse to falsehood because in no circumstance she wanted to lose Babu from her life. It was a transgender person's desperate endeavour to save her love. Babu started to come often and Revathi began to serve him as a woman did for her husband. In the morning Revathi got tiffin ready for Babu, then filled water for him to bath and then bade him goodbye. This news of Revathi's excessive doting for another person reached to her brothers. They came with a vengeance in Revathi's rented house and hurled a shower of abuses on Revathi. One of her brothers even got ready to beat Revathi. Though Revathi fought back to some extent, Babu reached in the midst of that turbulent situation and understood the whole matter. Deeply shocked, ashamed, and hurt Revathi called Babu into the room after her brothers' departure and told

him not to visit her again. Revathi's love affair with Babu was, thus, nipped into the bud because of the intervention of the coercive force of the heteronormative patriarchal society which at the same time denies a transgender person's entry into a codified conjugal relationship and also curses them for doing sex work for gratification as well as earning.

Revathi's next ill-fated love affair occurred when she joined Sangama, an organization collecting information on hijras, homosexuals, and other sexual minorities. Sangama extended help to these sexual minorities, fought for their rights, and provided them with a space 'to be who they are.' Revathi fell in love with a senior member of the organization. He was one of the most active members of Sangama. They had traveled many places and stayed together. During a trip to Mysore, Revathi ended up sharing a room with him. Unexpectedly, Revathi found herself in an intimate situation with that person. Revathi in quite a vivid way describes the event of love-making between her and the senior staff member Sangama and its subsequent resultant:

That night I discovered how my every nerve in the body is sexually charged. I thought of him as a devotee would think of a god. My memories of us together combined with my regard for him resulted in my falling in love with him. It was as if I had no choice in the matter. (Revathi 266)

However, Revathi could not bring herself to say directly the person that she loved him. To Revathi, it was like "a lame man trying to reach for a honeycomb." Accumulating all courage and strength, one day Revathi laid bare her heart before the person. In response to her proposal, the man told Revathi that he would not like the word "love." Instead, he assented Revathi's straightforward love proposal indirectly and said that he "desired" Revathi very much. His sense of "desire" and Revathi's sense of "love" failed to find alignment in the prospect of their relationship because on Revathi's part what was unalloyed emotional as well as passionate attachment and longing, was nothing but a carnal desire for him. Meanwhile, they started living together without any promise of marriage. For some days everything went normal, and she enjoyed a blessed relationship:

Watching television, cooking, the times I spent with him, the life we led, all of it filled me with happiness. I felt my heart melt at all that I experienced, all that I had not known until then. (Revathi 273)

Revathi nowhere in the autobiography mentioned the name of the person she loved so dearly. Staying in a relationship without marriage, Revathi felt somehow unsecured. She implored her lover to marry her. Though disagreed initially, the person gave his assent to marry Revathi. Revathi became ecstatic after getting her lover's assent to the marriage. She was in a state of euphoria before the auspicious event occurred. We may quote the following words to express Revathi's ecstasy:

I WAS IN a state of pleasant shock. My life's dream was about to be fulfilled. The person who understood me was going to be my companion for life. I felt that I was indeed blessed. (Revathi 278)

Revathi's heartfelt desire of getting married to a person and of having a family of her own seemed to be fulfilled because Revathi's parents and society at large accepted their marriage. But, the irony of the situation was that even after the marriage Revathi began to feel lonelier than before. It seemed to Revathi that her husband was growing indifferent towards their conjugal life day by day. Even if her husband came home early some days, he spent time on the computer, writing and sometimes playing games. Revathi explained her pathetic situation devoid of love and romance even under the institution of marriage. Revathi narrates her deplorable condition thus:

It was as if I had to extract love and romance from my husband. But the thing is, he got angry when I asked to love [...] he stopped relating to me sexually. Gradually and slowly he

stopped making love to me. He even gave up hugging me as we slept. Sometimes, when I begged him to hug me, he would get angry, throw a set over my face and then hug me. I felt great anger and shock when he did this. I don't know what went on my husband's heart but he seemed to have lost all desire for me. (Revathi 287)

Things reached such a pass that Revathi could not bring herself to speak with people. Revathi kept all her feelings, anger, depression bottled up in herself. Sometimes, Revathi felt astonished in thinking that what sort of relationship she had with him because despite knowing her expectations, he never did want to acknowledge those. Under such a relationship devoid of love and affection, Revathi almost stifled. On the verge of the disintegration of their relationship, Revathi bewails thus:

He decided to leave me, but is it right that he just walks away? You know how difficult it is for someone like me to find a house? I lived in that house for three months, all myself [...] let's not forget that he lent his voice to our claim that aravanis ought to be respected as women. This is what makes me heavy-hearted. Really, what is the difference between him and the man on the street. (Revathi 291)

Such is the hypocrisy of the heteronormative patriarchy that despite being an active member of the Sangama organization, Revathi's husband utterly failed to deal out justice to Revathi because he left Revathi to suffer alone for the rest of her life. He knew quite well how difficult for a transgender person like Revathi to have a husband or a family. After the separation, Revathi got assailed by the memories of her lover continuously for some days. She took to drinking, and her health got deteriorated. Under such a hectic situation, Revathi became more heartbroken when she received the news of Famila's suicide. Famila happened to be one of Revathi's 'chellas' (disciples). Revathi's mental aberration and physical deterioration gradually restored after her joining Sangama again.

In this way, Laxmi and Revathi shared almost the same feelings and experiences regarding the disparaging, rather the disastrous ends of love in their lives. They spoke on behalf of the millions of transgenders suffering similarly, even worse than that. They were jilted in love numerous times throughout their lives because heteronormative society never paid any importance to their emotion, passion, and feeling. The heteronormative patriarchal society could afford to use the transgender persons only as sex toys just for ejaculation and sex. One of the sole reasons behind the dissolution of their love affairs and marriages is their inability of procreation because despite implanting female sex organs through surgery, they never menstruate. Taking advantage of this weakness, the sex maniacs of heteronormative society played the game of pretended love with them only for having sexual pleasure. Even sometimes, the transgender persons become the subject of violence and brutal torture at the hand of their pretentious lovers. Revathi vividly describes such inhuman behaviours in her autobiography:

When I went to the shops, I met other hijras and heard harrowing tales of how some of them had suffered at their husband's hands. I have met and spoken to those whose faces had been scarred by a nasty blade, who had poison forced down their throat and those who had been burnt and were still raw from it [...] Even if I got married, I would not be able to have a child. And I knew of so many who had been beaten black and blue by their husbands, and had lost their memory and been left to suffer. (Revathi 95)

Revathi also gave a few references of some transgender persons' happy conjugal life, but those are exceptions, and extremely rare incidents. The majority of the community still live in the dark alley with the least ray of hope in their lives.



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