



Akkai Padmashali Social Activist

Dr. Akkai Padmashali is a male to female Transwoman, social activist. Her journey is one of courage and determination. From begging on the streets and participating in sex work for two square meals a day, she is now an activist that has inspired many. Born a male in a middle-class family, she discontinued her studies after 10th grade due to gender discrimination. She took up sex work to make ends meet.

In 2012, Padmashali was invited by the President of India to attend the swearing in ceremony of the Hon'ble Chief Justice Shri Altamas Kabir, Supreme Court of India, and was invited by His Excellency Governor of Kerala to attend the swearing in ceremony of the Hon'ble Chief Justice Smt Manjula Chellur of the Kerala High Court. In the same year, she became the first male to female transgender in Karnataka to complete her sex reassignment surgery counseling process and underwent a sex change surgery.

In 2014, she co-founded Ondede, an organization of feminists, activists, thinkers, and academics who recognized the need to converge the interests of three movements in the country – children's rights, women's rights, and the rights of sexual minorities. The organization is called Ondede, which means "convergence" in Kannada, the regional language in Karnataka. By recognizing the existing movements as distinct but interrelated, Ondede endeavors to link these groups to various media platforms to foster productive community discourses, conduct research, and instigate action on dignity-voice-sexuality.

At Ondede, Padmashali has conducted many workshops on sexuality and gender at colleges across Karnataka and few parts of the country and she has held seminars on sexual minorities for government workers and officials. She has worked closely with community members, politicians, bureaucrats, and judges to advocate for policy supporting gender equality, sex worker rights, and the empowerment of the transgender and sexual minority community. Padmashali is a

member of the Karnataka Sex Worker Status Committee- Government of Karnataka, and she was the member of the drafting committee to bring policy for Transgender through planning board of Karnataka,

In October 2014, Padmashali was the only one person from India to be invited by the International Bar Association to address the social and legal status of sexual minorities at the national conference in Tokyo, Japan. A full year later, Padmashali became the first transgender awarded the Karnataka Rajyotsava Award, the second highest civilian honor presented by the Karnataka state government for her work in Social Sector.

Invited by US Government for International Visitor Leadership Program for Gender Based Violence across globe in 2016 and visited to White House to raise issues about Transgender and Sexual Minorities. Received Honorary Doctorate by the Indian Virtual University for Peace and Education, Switzerland, Indian Branch on May 31st2016 for her social work. In her free time, Akkai practices singing and has recorded "Lakshmi Stuti- Bhagyada Lakshmi Baramma" for the album, *Songs of Caravan* which has received **Limca Award**.

Padmashali, the first Transwoman in the world who received **Ashoka Global Fellowship** to fight for the rights of Transgender and Sexual Minorities

Padmashali, who also stepped into married life with Mr Vasudev who is from Magadi and belongs to the lower caste, Madiwala community on the 20th January 2017 which was an inter religious marriage performed first time globally for a Transwoman and now adopted a baby and becomes icon to many society

The prestigious '**Changemaker of the year**' category in the **Business Line Changemaker Awards 2019** was conferred by Honourable Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on March 2019 for her fight against 377 IPC as the petitioner.