

UNSPOKEN

September 2020

"आत्मानं विद्धि"

Know yourself.

**DR.MANOBI
BANDYOPADHYAY**

Centre for Regional Research and Sustainability Studies

1

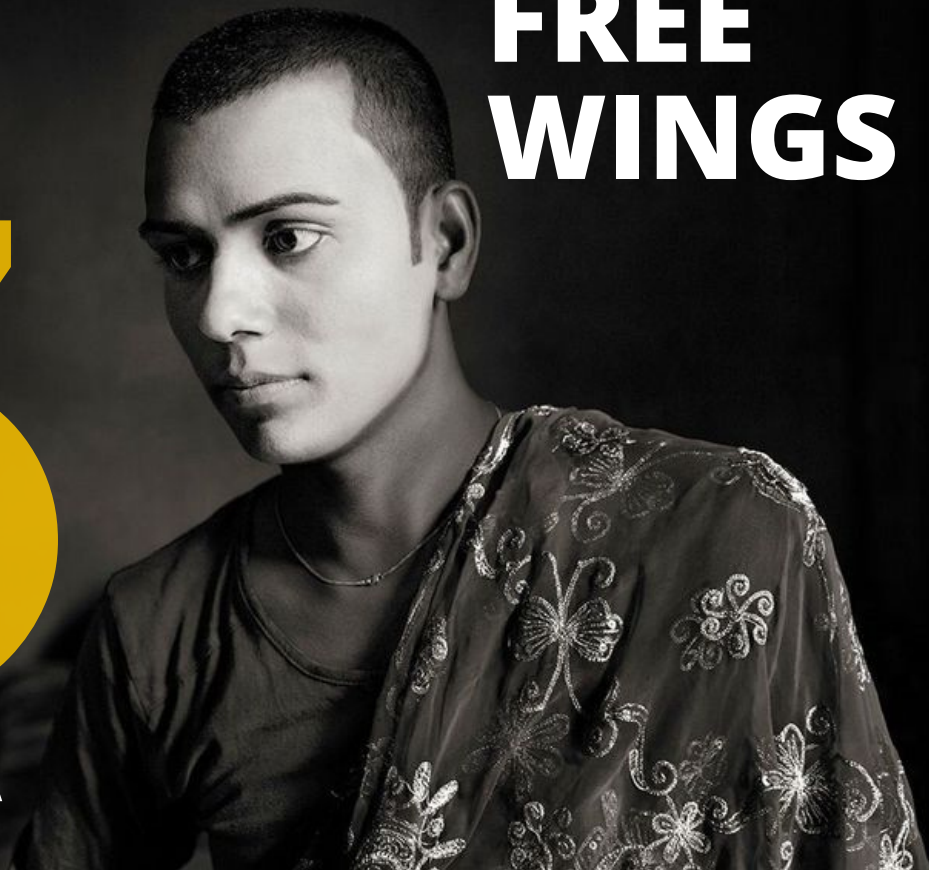
THE VOICE



**FREE
WINGS**

3

CELESTA



PICTURES: NEW YORK TIMES



**EXPLAINED
BY
UNSPOKEN**

4

**RHYME
AND
RHYTHM**



INBOX



PICTURES: THE HINDU

THE VOICE FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

THE JOURNEY OF DR. MANOBI BANDYOPADHYAY

Our bodies are intrinsically linked to our identities from our birth. The Obstetricians' ringing cry of "It's a girl!" or "It's a boy!" immediately subjects the newborn to a list of cultural and societal gender stereotypes that invariably shapes the child's likes and dislike their behaviours, what they become in future. In most cases, there is little scope for the child to actively pursue their interests, even in adulthood, free of the stereotypes deeply embedded within themselves; to unlearn what their families and societies have collectively taught them to think about themselves. In a cishet-male dominated society (primarily patriarchal) all identities tend to be subverted explicitly or implicitly, the foremost being that of a transperson. As unfortunate as it is, it comes off as no surprise that trans people are not treated at par with their cis counterparts lacking opportunities, support, even basic human rights that are meant to be extended to them by the virtue of them being humans. Central to this argument of subverting trans people and their interests again brings us to the question of their identity, one marred with constant questioning and mockery. The societal prejudices created about trans people automatically sets them behind their cis counterparts in terms of education, vocational training, and job opportunities leaving them to either beg or take to prostitution as a means to sustain themselves.

Ironically the profession they are forced to take only aggravates existing prejudices amplifying their identities as people who do not 'fit in'. For our first edition, we are privileged to have with us, as our cover story, the tale of the enigmatic Dr. Manobi Bandopadhyay. The struggles she has faced on all fronts physically, mentally, and emotionally yet refusing to bend to the odds life has put before her and remaining optimistic in her outlook is both commendable and inspiring. To simply state that Dr. Manobi Bandopadhyay has had a difficult journey undermines the extremities of hardships she has had to face both within her family and out of it in her journey of self-discovery. Her tell-all biography 'A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi' as penned by journalist Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey, stands testimony of her immense grit determination, and belief in herself to transcend from a misfit to becoming India's first transgender principal. Born Somnath Bandopadhyay, Manobi's childhood has been marked with extraordinary difficulties as she grappled with her identity. Her surroundings did not make it easy either when she was raped by her cousin in the fifth grade and physically assaulted by her school mates. She was sure about becoming a woman rather than living as a homosexual.

She started her hormone treatment in 1999 and finally underwent sex-change surgery in 2003, a particularly testing period for her. She eventually moved out of her hometown to study Bengali Literature at Jadavpur University. She flourished in the company of her intellectual equals. Theatre, dance, and writing provided her with an outlet from her otherwise dredging environment. After her first stint as a lecturer in Jhargram and enrolling herself into a PhD programme, Manobi started Abomanob (Subhuman)- India's first transgender magazine which was meant to bridge the existing societal gaps created by heteronormative prejudices and engage its readers to initiate a conversation encompassing a wide spectrum of topics including health, hygiene, castration, and stigmas. In her own words, Dr Bandopadhyay states, "Till then, hijras belonged to a community that clapped and begged at traffic signals or extorted money when newborns were brought from the hospital. The fact that there could be a whole magazine dedicated to their cause so they could fight for their rights was unthinkable". Dr Bandopadhyay's transition to womanhood has been the first step in her tumultuous journey of self-discovery. She was an unfortunate recipient of abuse at the hands of her extended family and fellow schoolmates from an early age with little respite from her own family, who never really accepted her as she is. Dr Bandopadhyay feels that although she is physically a female after her sex reassignment surgery, she continues to face hardships because of the third position tag associated to her. Many people continue to associate their (trans people) identity and profession only to that of the Hijra community. Unless the people of the country are not enlightened enough the development of trans people is impossible. She doesn't want her country and society to be engulfed in the darkness of ignorance and strives to do something every day for their collective liberation.

To deal with such apathy in personal sphere combined with societal prejudices, for her to come out to Kolkata to study in one of the most prestigious institutions in the country to establish herself as an academic and competent professional is beyond simple hard work. It is her blood, sweat, tears and immense faith in her capability that has helped her see and reach out to her goal. Dr Bandopadhyay is very resolute in her response to trans people in academia where she specifies that the mainstream needs to be adequately educated not orienting itself to the only certification for employment purposes. Dr Bandopadhyay's acquisition of a PhD and her subsequent induction as the Principal of the Krishnagar Women's College making her the first transgender Principal in India is a testimony of how merit transcends any prejudicial border that society creates for oneself. Today her identity has moved beyond that of a trans person to a competent educator who serves as an inspiration not only to her community but any individual grappling with difficulties at any level. Dr Bandopadhyay has become a living example of how one is in charge of their destiny, whatever the hurdles are thrown at them maybe.

PICTURE:THE INDIAN EXPRESS



**Edited By
Tanistha Bhagawati**

FREE WINGS

FROM LONELINESS TO SOLIDARITY

T.W. Transphobia, Self-harm, Self-hatred

The year is 2011, and a little girl is alone in an empty room. There's no one at home, and the little girl just came out of the bath. There's a mirror in front of her, but when she looks at it, she doesn't see herself; she sees a boy. The little girl wonders why she can't recognise the person in the mirror. She is confused, but she moves on. Reaching into the closet, she grabs a skirt. 'This is so pretty', she thinks, and she puts it on. She twirls around and wonders if she looks as pretty as she feels, so she peeks into the mirror. But all she sees is an awkward-looking boy in a skirt. A sudden feeling of shame rushed in like a tsunami. It came out of nowhere, and the girl felt the darkness swallowing her; she didn't even fight it. months, and soon, years passed.



PICTURE : NEW YORK TIMES



PICTURE : NEW YORK TIMES

After all, what did she have worth fighting for? She was alone. 'I'm not supposed to feel like this. There is something wrong with me. I'm a boy.' He swore never to think of it again. He moved on. Days, The little boy grew up with very few friends. He never could understand nor relate to the other boys his age, yet he tried very hard to fit in. When he failed, he felt rejected, and so he built a wall and put on an air of nonchalance. But then something unexpected happened, he found a little gang of weirdos and outcasts, each unique and different in their way but together they challenged the normative. With them, he learned to explore himself a little bit.

He discovered his love for research and his attraction towards people irrespective of their sex. Despite this cathartic realisation, something was still amiss. A void remained in the little boy's heart, but he could never understand what it was. The chasm stayed there no matter what he tried. Feeding on his joy until all that was left was a feeling of emptiness and self-hatred.

Out of options, the little boy resorted to the most straightforward escape: run away. 'I'm no one; why should my feelings matter? Why would anyone care? I'll just ignore it', he thought. Things got busy. He kept himself busy. He shoved his feelings away and worked so hard to get where we wanted to be in life. It wasn't easy, and there was only so much running away he could handle. Sometimes, those bottled feelings would rush out, and the little boy would lose all control over his actions. He would blame himself for everything wrong around him. He would 'punish' himself for being such a terrible person.

Even when he finally got into his dream college, the joy he felt was transient. 'I don't deserve it.' Life in college opened a new door. He finally had some freedom, a sense of autonomy. He was in a new place, a new city, a new world where he could spread his wings. With his newfound freedom of expression, he made new friends, friends who he cared for, friends who cared for him, but he still could not find it in his heart to love himself, the abyss invariably feeding on everything good that happened to him, growing deeper and deeper. The world kept moving around him, but he felt stuck. Until one day, he was sitting with one of his closest friends, and in the middle of a random conversation, she said, 'You know, I've always seen you as a girl.' His heart skipped a beat. The conversation drifted, but the words kept ringing in his head.

Something moved, deep inside him. And there was no ignoring it. Days passed, but his friend's words kept coming back to him, the more he thought of it, the more it made sense. Around the same time, he made his first transgender friend. Before this, the word 'trans' was so alien to him: a word he had only found in memes and online forums. But the more he talked with this friend, the more he felt like his whole world had turned upside down. His worldview was smashed into smithereens. Virtual spaces on the internet became his refuge. He spent more time on his own, and he started reading. Deep within the chasm in his heart, he could feel a soft repeating pulse, almost like the sound of a heart, reverberating through the abyss. With every story he read, tears welled up in his eyes.

Every sentence made the sound of the beat from his heart resonating louder and louder with his heartbeat until they became one, and suddenly, it hit him. He was not alone. She was not alone. The little girl emerged from the void finally free. Her eyes were red with tears. Sitting in that tiny room, she could not stop crying, but these were not tears of sorrow, they were of joy. 'I am not alone.'



PICTURE : MEDIUM

That little girl is me. After years of being stuck in that void, I had finally emerged, but my challenges had just begun. The boy I have had a whole different life; he had friends and people who loved and cared for him. What if they don't like me? What if they don't accept me? My life had just begun, and I had no idea how I was going to go ahead with it. But I had to take a leap of faith. I couldn't lie to myself anymore. The first people I told the truth were a few of my closest friends. I had no idea how it would go, but I took the jump, and I'm glad I did. They hugged me tight as I cried and said they loved me no matter what.

"I AM NOT ALONE"



At first, I was hesitant to let the world see the real me, but I decided to take that step anyway. I started buying more feminine clothes and bought my first makeup with my friends. More and more people began to notice it. Strangers gave me odd looks. It would be a lie to say that I didn't care, but I had my friends with me, and they never let me feel out of place. We started working together to build an inclusive space for LGBTQIA+ on our campus. I became a part of a community of transgender academicians. Even the few professors I came out to were incredibly supportive.

No matter how hard it got trying to deal with trying to live a woman's life in a man's body, my friends didn't let me face my demons alone. I had a community. 'I am not alone.' I decided to transition; I chose my preferred name, my preferred pronouns. And now I had to come out to my parents. I was worried because I had heard stories about how difficult it was for some others. But I needed to do it. Even if they didn't accept it straight away, I had to tell them. My friends promised to be there for me, irrespective of how it went. My mind running all over the place, I sat my parents down and told them that that the little girl inside was the real me, it always had been. They tried their best to understand and said they are here to support me. 'I am not alone; I never was.' In my experience, the hardest thing about being a transgender person is learning to accept yourself. You are real. You are valid. Be true to who you are. You deserve to be happy. Each person's journey is unique, but no matter what happens, remember you are not alone.

PICTURE : NEW YORK TIMES



By Rishika

Rishika (She/her) identifies as a panromantic transgender woman and is an active researcher in the field of neuroscience and a student at IISER Pune. She is an aspiring queer/trans activist and an intersectional feminist. Find out more about her on Twitter @NeuroRishika.





PICTURES : NEW YORK TIMES



PICTURE: MEDIUM



Celesta

Jonaki Porua: Fireflies

“The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why”, Mark Twain’s poignant words resonate with the central truth of our existence, our journey of self-discovery. As individuals, we set out on a journey to find out “who are we?”, a question almost always persistent in our lives. As toddlers, children, teenagers, and adults we are time and again asked to explain who we are and what we want from life. For some of us, the question is far simpler to answer where we have been able to gauge our identity with considerable ease. We know what we want out of our lives, we have ambitions and goals, we understand ourselves and if fortunate enough are surrounded by individuals who would support us in our endeavours. However, the journey is not a path of roses for all who grapple with the constraints they are surrounded within almost every breathing second of their life whether it is with their socio-economic constraints or a dysfunctional family, for that matter their own identity. The Trans community, over the years, have been severely under-represented and the public opinion surrounding them, have heavily stereotyped in the absence of adequate education and sensitisation towards the community. Amid an existing negative mindset in the public, to be able to embrace one’s identity and progress is a herculean but not an impossible task.

BOOK NOW: www.moviesaints.com/movie/jonaki-porua



Prakash Deka’s first directorial venture “Jonaki Porua” (fireflies) is a testimony of the journey of a trans woman belonging to an interior Assamese Village. Produced by Milin Dutta starring the fresh-faced Benjamin Diamary in the lead, the title of the film “Fireflies” becomes a metaphor for its protagonist who navigates her life in her light.

Jahnu (Benjamin Diamary) lives with her sister Jumu (Bitopi Dutta) and elder brother Baba in a remote village by the banks of the river Brahmaputra in Assam, Northeast India. Jahnu, who was assigned a male at birth, discovers herself as a woman from within as she grows up and dreams of starting her life once again. Frightened of being outcasted from the village and their revelation would bring dishonour to the family Jumu, decided to never disclose her identity as a queer woman to her parents and feels Jahnu would also have to live a painful life.

Baba, their elder brother is also not happy with their gender non-conformist siblings and believes that they have brought dishonour to the family. Discovery of Jahnu’s relationship with Palash by the villagers brought more trouble to her life.

With Palash refusing to continue the relationship, Jahnu had then to decide what she would do with her life. Whether she would remain silent of her identity and accept the social norms or proudly live with the truth.

The movie is straightforward and honest in its portrayal of a trans woman's journey in accepting her identity and overcoming the barriers that the conventional social construct has put before her. It is raw yet poignant in its portrayal, something almost rare in cinemas these days without adding superfluous dance sequences or dramatics to glamorise or commercialise a rather sensitive subject, one that has been handled with maturity, love, and sensitivity.

Jonaki Porua, as mentioned earlier, is not just Prakash Deka's directorial debut but a first for its producer Milin Dutta, as well, united in their passion to bring about a positive change in the Trans community specifically in the North East, given the negligence it faces in mainstream media. A first for its protagonist Benjamin Diamary, Benjamin can depict the ordeal of being a trans woman in a backward society with a sparkling innocence that can attract the audience almost immediately. The audience is gravitated towards her, sympathise and empathise with her as she treads on to make a life of her own. The sheer portrayal of the derogation and mockery by the villagers lashed out at the protagonist depicted the true society in which we live.

Milin Dutta in his interview at the Twin Cities Film Festival said that he is an accidental producer and his sheer interest in the project made him a producer. He said that he went to the Kamakhya Temple in Assam and met a trans woman belonging to the "Hijra" community. He could experience their struggles as he talked with them and that night sitting at a cocktail party Prakash Deka brought the topic to him and told him that he was always interested in the topic and wanted to create a movie (a piece of art) on this topic. After discussing with him about the film and the topic Milin couldn't hold his enthusiasm and they jumped into making it a success. Milin always stresses on the fact that he wanted to create a form of art which is very real and not superficial. Indeed, the film appears very real and not artificial.

The film has been received with immense love and outpouring support from within the community and shown at various film festivals across the world. The film is a must-watch and as Milin said: "When the society will become inclusive then only their film will be meaningful".



Milin Dutta
Producer of the Film

By
Tanistha Bhagawati
Debarati Ganguly

PICTURE : ONGLOBALSCREENS







UNSPUN

Explained by

Makers of the video
Manish Dutta
Sayantan Mondal

PICTURE : NEW YORK TIMES



PICTURE : NEW YORK TIMES

LET'S CHECK YOUR FACTS!

By Debarati Ganguly

After watching the video, you must have gained experience in the variant perceptions of the word “Transgender”. Many people have used inclusive terms but still, confusion exists about the various terms and the main “Transgender” term. Therefore, here in our first issue, we have given a breakdown of the different terms through this write-up. So, let's begin!

The word “Transgender” is an umbrella term for “people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is culturally typically associated with the gender/sex they were assigned at birth.” A “Trans Woman” is a woman who was assigned male at birth and a “Trans Man” is a man who was assigned female at birth. However, they may not identify themselves as trans or be identified by others.

**THEREFORE,
THE SPACE
BETWEEN TRANS
AND MAN/WOMAN IS
GRAMMATICALLY
AND DEFINITIONALLY
CORRECT**

“Trans*” is a word which is used by some non-binary and gender non-conforming people to indicate that they are not cis, but does not identify themselves as trans man/woman either. However, Trans* is perceived by some as a broad umbrella of inclusivity, however, some find it to be unnecessary because of the existing umbrella term “Transgender”. Some people have changed or seek to change their bodies through gender reassignment surgery are known as “Transsexual”. Unlike Transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify themselves as transsexual and many transsexual people do not identify themselves as trans. “Intersex” is defined as the variant sex characteristics which doesn’t align with male or female and all intersex people do not identify as transgender and all transgender people are not intersex people. Therefore, it depends on the person to choose their own gender identity.

However, gender identity should not be confused with sexual orientation. Gender Identity refers to your internal sense of being a girl, a boy, a woman, a man, both of these, none of these or another gender.

Sexual orientation is a person’s enduring physical,

emotional
and/or
spiritual
attraction

to
others.

A trans
person
can be
homosexual or
heterosexual or both
or pansexual.

Fear, discomfort, hatred
and distrust addressed
towards trans people
or trans concepts is
known

as “Transphobia”. Many
factors contribute to
transphobes like religious
ideologies, reproductive
capacity, naturalness,

realness and misconceptions around scientific fact or biology. “Transmisogyny” is a combination of misogyny with transphobia where trans women are objectified and violent and domineering treatment is meted out them. The result of this is stigma, discrimination and violence at much higher rates than women in general. A person may identify themselves as trans from a young age, however many do not even know the meaning until at a later age. Transgender people are called by different names in different places of the world. In most countries of South Asia, they are called ‘Hijra’ or ‘Kinnar’. However, these names are often called as a derogatory remark to look down upon them. Stigma, discrimination and violence lead them down on the streets begging or engaging oneself with sex work because “no one employs them despite being skilled”. Transgender people often have to go through forceful castration mainly in South Asian countries to be fit for sex work. Transgender people's rights and identification are still a controversial topic in South Asia and other parts of the world, but we can never stop being allies to them to create an inclusive society. Pronouns such as “hir”

instead of
and “ze”

him/her
instead of
“they/them”
can be used to
address
transgender
and other
non-
binary people.

Their history
and struggles
should be
taught from a
very early age in
schools and a
t homes to
end
discrimination

A small step
towards reformation
will create a better and
equal society.



You see me in a moon-dress gown and smirk at me, yelling "f*ggot".
The word morphs into a question mark, burnt on
my forehead like a childhood tattoo.
The remark, the smirk, the laugh,
the giggle become a cacophony of white noise blurring my eyesight.
You see, the first time I was called a f*ggot was by my teacher in second grade,
engraving the words in my head, translating to- "half-human".
My father raped me when I was 12, for I wasn't "man enough".
But he was right, I am not a man.
The cops don't protect me because I wear lipstick,
which contradicts the norms of what's dangling between my legs.
The government strategically kills me for my existence is rebellion.
The healthcare aborts me because my genetics spell- " R-E-V-O-L-U-T-I-O-N"
The pastor in the church curses me because he always knew it's "Adam or Eve".
The school bullies me because I "encourage sin".
So, here it is.
I tattoo the phrase "fearlessly faggot" on my forehead,
and spray paint 'God is Gay' on the church walls
because my mamma didn't raise a woman from the ribs of a man either.
And scream "fuck the police" whenever I see a criminal in uniform.
My existence is the resistance against-corrective rape ,
police brutality, transphobia, conversion therapy,
the suicide of trans-kids, misgendering, systematic murder of
my sisters and brothers who don't conform to your
heteronormative framework of gender binary.
My birth is paved by riots, blood, songs, guns and violence.
My birth is a riot against the world. My birth is my right to riot in Stonewall.
My birth is what you fear.
My birth is an emergency call to the world to wake up,
for Marsha didn't "drown" in the Hudson River.
She re-incarnated as my brothers and sisters and
witches and gorgeous dykes. O
ur history is smeared with blood and rainbows,
and it took several deaths to build my spine.
The world is ours, we demand equal rights,
or historically speaking,
we very well know how to topple over your shrine.

RHYME AN
FAG



**By
Abira Das**

Abira Das is an 18 years old young disabled, queer feminist activist, journalist and writer from Kolkata. She is currently studying in grade 12 and is a member of AWID (Association for Women's Rights in Development) and All India Queer Association and a writer at Feminism in India.

D RHYTHM GOT



PICTURE : THE HINDU



RHYME AND
RHYTHM

THE QUEST FOR TRANSFORMATIVE TRANSGENDER JUSTICE

SVD CHANDRASEKHAR

Chand is a research scholar pursuing MPhil in women's studies from Jadavpur University. They are interested in looking at the intersection of trans lives and development paradigms.

The newspapers on 7 September 2018 were filled with advertisements from major corporate brands and houses celebrating the Supreme Court verdict reading Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, effectively decriminalising same-sex activity (and homosexuality broadly as understood by the general public). However, this exuberant reaction was not seen when the Supreme Court in its landmark NALSA verdict spoke emphatically in favour of trans rights, granting trans persons the right to self-determination of gender identity, reservations in higher education and employment, and directions to the state to provide healthcare facilities.

It was confined to a corner in the newspaper. This comparison is drawn not to diminish the struggles of queer and indeed many trans folx against Section 377 or pit one community against the other. Rather, it seeks to highlight how trans folx are systematically marginalised in all spheres of society, polity, and economy. This can be seen to such an extent that their victory does not merit celebration in the public sphere. In this article, I seek to understand what would transgender justice mean in our contemporary times in the backdrop of long struggles by gender and sexual minority communities. I draw on Iris Marion Young and Nancy Fraser to frame a notion of transformative justice that centres trans persons and seeks to provide conditions for the full development of their capabilities and enjoyment of their freedoms. It is crucial, to begin with, to contribute a theory of change. A theory of change has two components. The first component is a theory of what causes the problem or violation that one seeks to address and the second is a theory of what will cause changes in these causal factors that are creating the violation. If either of these components is incorrect, the intended intervention will not be effective.

Fraser describes injustice in a simple manner. She says that inequalities and oppression when experienced at a structural level become injustice. She theorises injustice as being that of maldistribution and non-recognition. The first deals with structural socio-economic injustice and the second with socio-cultural injustice where one is invisibilized in the eyes of society. She writes that they are not binaries but rather feed into each other. One injustice cannot exist without the other. Thus, it is rather a spectrum of injustice.

It depends on the particular marginalised community/individual where they lie on this spectrum. In the case of trans persons, we see how they are invisibilised in the public sphere wherein their voices are not taken into account when shaping public policy, face brutal oppression in the form of multiple forms of violence, and are also denied employment forcing many trans persons to take up sex work and begging. The third form of injustice that Fraser adds later in her theory is that of lack of political representation, thereby covering the realms of economy, society, and polity. Thus, injustice fundamentally deals with structural institutional arrangements that are wired in a way that disadvantages individuals from certain marginalised communities.

PICTURE : THE HINDU



Any discussion from hereon on seeking transformative justice for trans persons will necessitate a discussion on the concept of citizenship. Citizenship refers to the compact between the citizen and the state wherein the former gives their allegiance to the state in return for the latter's protection and conferment of certain rights, which differ from state to state. In this context, it is crucial to ask two important questions.

- **Are trans persons considered citizens by the state?**
- **What is the nature of their relationship with the state and what is the subsequent role of their position in society?**

As we will see, the answers to these questions will help us understand transformative justice. Jessica Hinchy writes about the colonial governmentality that was shaped by Victorian ideas of gender binaries and sexual deviance that framed the Hijra (derogatorily referred to as 'eunuch') as a 'problem' that had to be kept in check. In the North-West Frontier province, in particular, the government engaged in a campaign to exterminate them. This was given shape through the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871 which granted the police increasing surveillance powers such as keeping registers of the personal details, "prohibited registered people from wearing female clothing and 'adornments' or performing in public; provided for the removal of children in registered people's households, and included provisions that interfered with Hijra discipleship and succession patterns". Given that the colonial period marks a transition period when Indian people begin moving from being 'subjects' to 'citizens', the history of trans 'citizenship' is marked by systemic violence and oppression.

Project Pehchaan in its study reported that there were several challenges to economic inclusion for transwomen such as sexual and gender nonconformity, poor health care conditions and difficult legislative environment. An average monthly income of 6,394 rupees underlines extreme poverty Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties, Karnataka (PUCL - K, 2003) in its groundbreaking report wrote in detail about the all-encompassing nature of violence faced by trans persons at the hands of the state, society and media. I system through its various laws contributes massively to an inequitable system which is openly hostile to an atmosphere that facilitates the full realization of rights and the full development of the capacities of trans persons. While a full critique of the legal developments in the realm of legal rights is beyond the scope of this article, I will attempt a brief summary.

PICTURE : NEW YORK TIMES



The NALSA verdict as mentioned earlier gave self-determination of gender identity, which means that trans persons would be free to determine the gender that they identified with, based on Argentina's model. This is crucial because they would be free from the humiliating process and the invasive gaze of screening committees that would inevitably violate their bodily integrity and right to self identify.



PICTURE : NEW YORK TIMES

It would not be necessary to go through surgeries or Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). I have mentioned the other benefits above. The government brought out the Transgender (Protection of Rights) Act 2019 that went against the ruling of the Supreme Court by instituting a two-tier process, To identify as trans you need to submit an application to the District Magistrate along with a report of the psychologist of a government hospital. To identify as male or female, you need to attach a certificate from the Medical Superintendent or the Chief Medical Officer that you have undergone a surgery. There are several problems with this. Given the extreme poverty that exists among many trans persons, how many can afford expensive surgeries? Moreover in a country where trained doctors and psychologists have been caught making sexist comments and prescribe conversion therapy to queer folk, expecting them to understand transphobia is far fetched a farce. Most importantly, it goes against the principle of self-determination of gender identity guaranteed by the Supreme Court.

Details on protective social security infrastructure remain vague. It also does away with reservations that were granted by the Supreme Court. How do we expect change then? One might recall how quickly (in a matter of months) and without any notice, the EWS reservation was provided. Then the question arises, why the refusal to give trans people their basic rights? The key to transformative justice for trans persons lies in Iris Marion Young's Differentiated Citizenship. Differentiated citizenship recognizes the inherent power dynamics between different social groups and the state and the need for representation of marginalised communities. Applied in this case, it would necessitate a renegotiation of the compact between trans persons and the state, wherein the state recognises the power dynamics at play and centres trans persons in the development process. It is their voices that need to be heard while drafting legislation and designing welfare programmes for their development. Otherwise, it all remains a farce.



INBOX

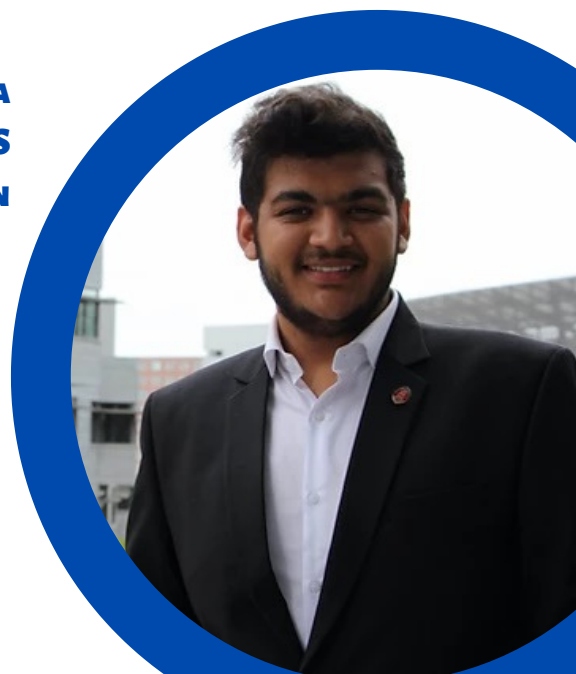
WHAT MOTIVATED US TO LAUNCH UNSPOKEN

C.R.R.S.S is a think tank but we treasure creativity and thinking out of the box. The sense of activism and leadership in me echoes around all teams in the organisation makes us different from what is traditionally known as activities a think tank does and pushes us to do something more. Along with this, we are brought together by the inclusivity and diversity in the topics or the kind of work that we do. I think there is a particular knowledge gap that gets generated with regards to scholarly work since few people read it and fewer have access to it. We have been doing a lot of scholarly work but with respect to issues regarding the trans community, it needs more content to be focused by the public. With the magazine, our goal is to reach every single person both from within the community and outside the community. I think with the magazine we will not only be able to talk about trans persons in a positive light but also break the stereotypes and the discriminatory dominant narrative in the public sphere.

The magazine will be providing a platform to the trans community for sharing their stories of success, stories of failure, and events of everyday life. The magazine will give the freedom that traditional research does not provide us. The magazine was not possible without the constant encouragement from the senior advisors. The leadership and the worldview they possess have constantly encouraged us to push ourselves to achieve objectives which can change the way we look at the world. Srijani Roy, who is the project head of this magazine has worked hard and provided her leadership which eventually made it possible to complete the magazine in time. At a time where the world is torn by a pandemic and economic crisis, I think my vision for a more inclusive and equal world will resonate with many who strive for collective liberation.

PRATEEK RAJ SRIVASTAVA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR C.R.R.S.S
SENIOR CONSULTING ADVISOR - UNSPOKEN

Prateek Srivastava is the Executive Director of C.R.R.S.S. and the Senior Advisor for the Reducing Inequality Program. Currently completing Msc in International Politics at KU Leuven and is on his way to attain an Advanced MSc in Development (CADES). He completed his undergraduate studies from University of Cincinnati. His research interests include politics, religion, migration, and feminism in South Asia.





PICTURE : THE HINDU

My first tryst with knowing about the LGBTQIA+ community, in general, started with a school project which examined what homophobia is. My teacher at school, Madam Moumita Gupta always encouraged me to keep learning and re-learning new things. I slowly began to read and learn various things. Ever since the beginning of my first year at Jadavpur University, I wanted to do something for the Trans persons. I just did not know what I wanted to do. When I began my journey with C.R.R.S.S, Director and Senior Advisor Prateek Srivastava and the entire team of Advisors at C.R.R.S.S, it encouraged me to take my ideas forward. With their support and constant encouragement and my parent's blessings, I started working towards launching a magazine for trans persons under C.R.R.S.S.

The name of the magazine is Unspoken because despite trans persons being present in our society, their voices are always silenced. We refuse to give them an opportunity to speak. The magazine gives all those unspoken voices a platform to share their stories with the world. It aims to inspire each and every one of us to never give up hope. The stories that we will be bringing out through this magazine inspires us to not only unlearn our perception towards the trans community but also makes us more inclusive. This magazine was a dream that I had but it would have remained a dream if my entire team of enthusiastic interns comprising Manish Dutta, Debarati Ganguly, Tansitha Bhagwati, Sai Tanshika, Piuli Basu and Ayesha Shanghavi had not worked so hard towards making it a reality.

SRIJANI ROY
ADVISOR GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAM HEAD
OF OUTREACH AT C.R.R.S.S
PROJECT HEAD - UNSPOKEN

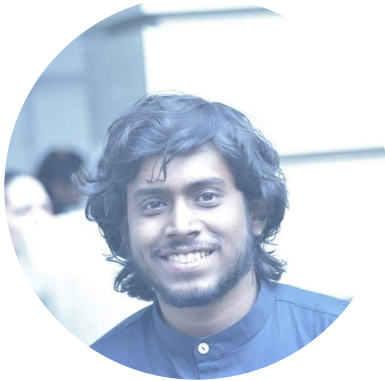
Srijani Roy is currently pursuing her Masters in Sociology from Jadavpur University. She has graduated from the same university with a degree in sociology in 2019. She is an Advisor under the Gender Equality program and also the Head of Outreach at C.R.R.S.S. She is also the head of the magazine "UNSPOKEN".





Tanistha Bhagawati **Visiting Assistant**

She is currently pursuing her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the Department of International Relations at Jadavpur University.



Manish Dutta **Intern**

Manish is an undergraduate student of Political Science at Presidency University, Kolkata. He is particularly interested in international migration, democracy, globalization, citizenship, gender politics, peace and conflict studies and critical security studies.



Debarati Ganguly **Intern**

Debarati Ganguly is an undergraduate student of Economics at Basanti Devi College, University of Calcutta. She is enthusiastic about gender, international relations, political economy, diplomacy and globalisation



Piuli Intern

Piuli is currently pursuing their Masters at the School of Gender Studies, TISS Hyderabad. They are an enthusiastic researcher keen on working with Queer Theory and Cultural Studies and have completed a BA in Sociology, from Jadavpur University.



Ayesha Shanghavi Public Relations and Marketing Associate

She has an undergraduate degree from Flame University, Pune in Digital Marketing. She is currently pursuing a Diploma in Digital Marketing with specialisation in Marketing PR and Social media from MICA, Ahmedabad. She aspires to create a positive change in society through her work.



Sai Tanishka Intern

Sai Tanishka is an Undergraduate student of mathematics at Miranda House, Delhi. She is a voracious reader with a special interest in economics, marketing and creative work.



Sayantan Mondal Video Editor

Sayantan Mondal is currently pursuing his masters in Media and International Conflict at Clinton Institute for American Studies, University College Dublin. His interest lies in war, media and documentary photography. He possesses the skills and experience of practising ethical journalism in fast-paced media outlets.



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**FEET, WHAT DO I NEED YOU FOR
WHEN I HAVE WINGS TO FLY?**

- Frida Kahlo

