

Exploring the Traumatic Experiences of Transgenders in *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*

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Abstract: Gender is not actually something one is born with, and not something one possesses in the life, but it is something one do and something one perform in the life. Gender builds on biological sex, but it exaggerates the biological difference, and carries this biological difference into domains where it is wholly immaterial. Even though it is said that sex is biological and gender is social, this distinction is not absolutely clear. Generally, it is accepted as gender to be the result of nurture, which is social while sex to be the result of nature, simply given by biology. Thus gender can be placed as a signification.

This paper titled “Exploring the Traumatic Experiences of Transgenders and Its Psychoanalytic Influences on Readers in *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*” explores the extraordinary, courageous and traumatic journey of a transgender to define her identity and set new standards of achievements. It emphasizes on the perplexed journey from Somnath, the boy born in Bandyopadhyay family to Manobi, the ‘quintessential’ female.

Key Words: Gender, sex, transgender, quintessential female, traumatic experience

1. INTRODUCTION:

Gender and sex seemed to be identical, but gender and sexuality are socially constructed while sex is biological. The society acknowledges only two genders or sexes on the basis of genitalia at birth they are female and male, and neglects the third gender or transgender and its identity. Those who act differently against the expectations of the gender roles constructed by the society according to their biological sex, they are considered to be subhuman or abnormal. Gender identity is usually termed as the consciousness of individuals as male or female and constitutes the sexual difference as well as social construction of the gender, which is enforced thoroughly through institutions, actions, beliefs and desires that appears to be natural.

At any point of time in the long running life of a human being, might experience trauma, derived from the Greek word for a physical injury. It is said to be an aftermath or the emotional reaction of a person produced due to a tremendously defeatist occasion or incident. Thus, trauma is the reaction to an enormously tormenting or troubling experience that swamps a person’s capability to subsist, create feelings of helplessness, decreases their sensation of self and ability to sense the complete span of emotions and experiences. In short, Trauma is referred to a state of mind which is created as a result of an injury that can be either single or multiple, physical or mental involving painful events.

The term ‘Transgender’ describes the individuals whose gender identity or gender expression takes place contrary to the sex attributed to them at the time of birth. The conceptualization of the problems and concerns of transgenders has evolved to a much more enlightened slant of gender identity from the gender pathology. Thus, this Gender Identity Disorder, at times, has produced discrimination, bias, prejudice, stigma and disgrace against the gender-variant individuals that resulted in the restriction of the personal, civil and human rights. This stigma-associated prejudice and inequity experiences have a chance of extremely destructive impacts on the well-being of transgenders and leads to trauma or minority stress.

Trauma experiences are considered to be the responds of a person to an extremely distressing and harassing situation occurred to oneself that makes the person loss their capacity to resist to the situation with a feeling of victimization. Due to the gender-variance as well as unfollowing the system of gender binary constructed by the society, transgenders become the victims of discrimination, verbal attack, rejection, internalized transphobia or homophobia and are even threatened with physical harm. Moreover, the socio-economic stature was strongly related to discrimination consisting of lesser educational accomplishment and low income, and access to and utilize existing facilities, was often reported as a notable issue of transgender people that may lead to internalized trauma.

Manobi Bandyopadhyay’s *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* is a confession of the humiliation that she faced and how she is considered to be a subhuman, pushing her to the brink of her life from which she discovered her inner strength and fought her way back to life. In this way the book is a great inspiration to those like her. Being selected as

India's first openly transgender college principal purely on merit, Manobi Bandyopadhyay's message to her community for their upliftment is 'Education: If we learn, all our problems will be solved.' (Bandyopadhyay i)

Dr. Manobi Bandyopadhyay, the professor and first transgender person in India who has completed Doctor of Philosophy in '3rd Gender/ Transgender in Bengali Literature and Society' in 2005, was an Associate professor in Bengali at Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya in Jhargram. She became India's first third-gender Principal who took charge at Krishnagar Women's College in Nadia district in West Bengal on 9 June 2015. She started the first Bengali transgender magazine, Abomanob (Subhuman) in the year 1995. She has carved her name with two works: Ontohin Ontorin Prositovortika (Endless Bondage), which is a bestseller, and Third Gender in Bengali Literature. In 2003, she changed her sex and name. Currently, she is the first chairperson of the West Bengal Transgender Development Board, Government of West Bengal, and Executive council member of Kalyani University.

Dr. Manobi Bandyopadhyay was born on 23 September 1964 in maternal parents' house in Hooghly's Chandernagore to Chittaranjan Bandyopadhyay and Rekha, as Somnath, a boy, who had been born after two girl children in the Bandyopadhyay family all of them rejoiced. Ultimately, the conservative family got a chance to boast of having sired a son. Constantly, something made him uncomfortable and feels abnormal in his skin. It was not long before the little boy feel inadequate in his own body and started to question his own identity about his sensation of being a girl even when he had male parts, the reason for his attraction towards boys in a way that girls are and the means to stop feeling so incomplete. It was a cruel joke of destiny which the Bandyopadhyay family refused to acknowledge. But, hidden to them, he had already started to search for his identity which leads to the transformation of Somnath to Manobi, as nature had meant her to be.

Somnath completed his masters in Bengali Literature in 1987 and then M.Phil with a distinction in the year 1991 from Jadavpur University. It was during the year 2003, after being deserted by his partner due to the fear of social stigma that Somnath decided to undergo gender reassignment surgery. So, at a very early age itself, Manobi was firm in her idea to undertake a sex-exchange operation, since she did not want to be marginalized as homosexual. When she began the hormone treatment in 1999, her desires began to take shape. She underwent the scalpel in 2003 and the years during these operations and treatments were just as tumultuous as any other. Thus, after a series of surgeries and treatments that lasted for almost a year that Somnath turned into Manobi.

Born as Somnath Bandyopadhyay, Manobi's childhood was filled with premonitions of her constant struggle with identity. Well-wishers pointing out to the increasing prosperities of the family comments at her birth as a boy Lakshmi, become an early instance. She recalls growing up as Somnath, feeling girlish at a very early age. From Somnath's teen onwards he started to expose his mannerisms and habits that his family anguished about his future. As a matter of fact, in his search for love, tenderness and affection, he often gets trapped in a culture of abuse. Thus her adolescence was anything but easy.

After Manobi moved from her native town, Rishi Bankim Chandra College in Naihati to Jadavpur University to learn Bengali Literature, her world view expanded under the tutelage of Shankha Ghosh and Pabitra Sarkar and in the company of her equally intellectually stimulating fellow students. During her service as the Principal of Krishnagar Women's College in West Bengal, she undertook to give the best possible education to over 1,600 students. Still, the social disgrace has consistently kept her on her toes to make a battle for her thought, her voice and her existence. Theatre, dance and writing contributed artistic outlet to her abiding state of physical and mental chaos.

After the first session of her lecture at Jhargram and subsequent enrolment in a PhD programme, she initiated in the publication of India's first transgender magazine (Abomanob meaning subhuman), which served as a gateway of dialogue between the transgender community and the rest of society. The magazine handles the subjects such as health, hygiene, living conditions, language, sex, interviews, castrations, conventions, stigma and definitely the way ahead. The magazine also helps them to open up their ideas and opinions on the relevant social issues. This established a space and scope for the third-gendered people like Manobi in the public sphere.

In the Hindustan times dated 29 April 2017, it was reported that:

Till then, hijras belonged to a community that clapped and begged at traffic signals or extorted money when new-borns 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.

Her appointment as the Principal in 2015 aided her to vindicate stand against each and everyone who believed and bracketed her with the opinion that she did not deserve any social standing. Even after being isolated by the people of the society and turn down to accept her as one among them, her ability to extend a compassionate understanding to even those who are inconsiderate is profoundly touching. Nothing could stop her; no amounts of sneers, giggles, taunts or lack of empathy discouraged her from making her place in the world and the relentless narrative of her success and achievements.

The author uses a language that is bold and often natural. Even then she is sincere about her obsession with love, benevolence and romance, scripting her composition with self-confidence as well as self-pity. She openly confesses that much of the love she saw was 'animal', but she did not totally hate it. Yet, her creation quickly develops

into a sentimental one, heavy with heartbeats, goosebumps and tears. Since the canon lacks in humour and irony, it throws the reader squirming with impatience.

The book in other respects is wordy and emotional which reveals weakness of thought that the writer sounds to be entirely unaware of. She speaks of being more educated and gifted compared to her transgender friends. But she displays minute evidence of real superiority in thought. Only at the time she embarks on her M.Phil, finally feels that it is the time to develop intellectually. When she earns, she is more interested in buying cosmetics and clothes rather than to gain independence. Despite this creepy beginning Somnath does get a lecturer's post, becomes self-supporting, self-reliant and stabilizes enough to transition toward bodily femininity through hormone therapy and operation. Manobi mainly indulge in becoming more female, elegant, flirting modestly, being glamorous, stunning, gorgeous and attractive to men. A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi is a raw record of her personal relationships and family's persistent negation of her trans identity. The numerous trials of her romantic commitments and steady longing for an intense connection fix the reader marvel at her hopeful character.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Exploring the Traumatic Experiences of Transgenders in *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*

The first transgender ever to become the Principal of a college proclaimed that hurt and anger are the two main emotions she learnt to suppress, and she feels that no one cared about her success as they think her to be sexless which is her only identity.

Equality of gender plays as a key role in the effective progress or development of a society. Generally, Gender is always considered as binary, that is, male and female. Each gender is supposed to perform specific roles assigned to them by the society and marginalize those people who function contrary to their gender. Therefore, the transgender or the third gender is always treated as an outcaste in the society. As a result of this marginalization, discrimination and alienation, transgenders face intense experiences of trauma both external and internal at different points of life. The current paper, studies the traumatic experiences undergone by Manobi Bandyopadhyay, the first transgender Principal in India, throughout her life till the very moment as presented in her biography *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*.

Manobi, who took birth as Somnath has also experienced a great deal of psychological trauma, from that particular moment when she began to realize her gender and exclaims her change to be 'metamorphosis'. She recalls her transformation that emerged with her interest and love for her elder sisters' printed frocks. From then, she began to wear sisters' dresses, kohl and lipstick from her mother's make-up kit as she yearned to be same as them, and admire her looks by standing hours in front of the mirror and roam about in the entire house. At first, the family laughed at her being dressed up as a girl considering it as childish deeds, but soon her mother and sisters realized this as an aberration and attempt to counsel her, however, she argues about her ability to use make-up better than girls. Manobi continued it with joy and seemed happy for mistaking her to be girl by any one.

On her first day of the school, when she was about six years old, was called a girl by the boys in the classroom and thought of her as a girl in boys' dress, due to which she was made to sit near the girls that she silently enjoyed. But, when they realized her actually to be a boy, began to tease her behaviour and appearance of extremely delicate and physically weak boy. Furthermore, they used to harm her by pinching her, pulling her hair, boxing her ears and punching her face. She even remembers how they used to trouble and insult her, and had fun by harassing her, which created a deep scar on her mind. This was the point she began to realize that she was not received by most in the world. Gradually, she began to develop a dislike for her genitals.

I hid these incidents from her, like I hid the fact that I was developing a distaste for my genitals. I just couldn't accept my balls and my penis. I wanted to have my sisters' genitals. It was not that I did not like the male organ. I actually loved it, but in others (Bandyopadhyay 8).

While she was in class V, she was physically seduced by her twenty one year old cousin. Even though, she was unaware of what was happening, screamed out of pain which was suppressed by his hands and slowly, this became a routine which she secretly enjoyed that started to awaken the woman in her. She began to be dressed in her sisters' attires at home when she was in class VIII, which stunned everyone and because of this behaviour her mother tried in vain to make her realize by explaining that her behaviour had been bringing shame to the family. She responded to her mother by revealing her identity of womanhood to which she listened horrified.

My mother, who was my greatest confidante, would try in vain to make me understand that my behaviour was bringing shame to the family. 'But Ma, I am a woman . . . don't you believe that? Can I not dress up better than any of you? Let me be a girl, Ma . . .' I would tell her and she would listen to me, horrified. She never told me so, but I can imagine her pain now. (Bandyopadhyay 10)

The criticisms, discrimination and alienation had great impacts on both Manobi and her parents. They too had confronted deep trauma as a result of Manobi's behaviour, and were relentlessly blamed and criticized by their neighbours. For instance, due to her behaviour like a girl, all the people began to criticize and accuse her mother for

her inability to raise and control Manobi according to the constructed societal norms, for which her mother blamed herself for giving birth to a 'hijra'.

The whole world had started blaming her for not being able to control me. Poor woman, they didn't know how she battled with herself all the time and blamed herself for giving birth to a hijra! Yes, that is what the world had started calling me (Bandyopadhyay 10).

Even her father was not spared by the society and the entire vicinity started to shun them for her mannerisms that depressed them, for which she was to be blamed. Due to this, her father took out all his frustration emerged as a result of her attitude by blaming her mother and two elder sisters for not keeping a strict eye on her.

Even my father was not spared. The whole locality started shunning us for my wayward behaviour. 'How can you let your son turn into a hijra right in front of your eyes?' was something he had to listen to, day in, day out. I could see the helplessness in his eyes. We were a depressed lot and I was to be blamed for it. My father took out his frustration on my mother and two older sisters for not keeping a stern eye on me. (Bandyopadhyay 10)

Anyhow, her excellence in studies made some mouths shut, since her parents would proudly bring her scholarship and marks over her unusual mannerism, whenever they are accosted by the people for not being stern enough to 'bring her back', and add that a boy of such genius bounds to be quite 'different'. Even though, they knew that this was not a justification, they had none other means to deal with this situation. This made Manobi to realize that education and being at the top in studies "was the only way by which I could win this unequal fight" (Bandyopadhyay 11), due to which she never allowed her rousing sexuality and inner trauma affect her intellect. Therefore, she always hard worked to attain the topmost position in each and every exam. It is only because of this hard work she reached in the prestigious position as the first Transgender Principal of India, which she achieved purely on 'merit'.

During the wedding occasion in their joint family, Manobi would dream of being a bride, and while, the other girls got the attention of the groom's friends in the function, she also tried to seek attention that they thought her to be weird but others chose to ignore her. When the teacher of her sisters' dance school complimented her for dancing beautifully as a girl during the rehearsal for the cultural show in which she was chosen to play the role of farmer's wife for her excellence in dance, she "yearned to tell them that I was not trying to be a girl, I was actually one!" (Bandyopadhyay 14) Even her father admitted her to be perfect in the role of the farmer's wife after watching the show. Thus, she always craved to scream out her identity and had undergone trauma when people always addressed her as a boy instead of a girl was truly excruciating.

Manobi throughout her life had always confronted an inner struggle, conflict and internalized trauma in order to understand her own sexuality.

I was very confused; my life seemed like a never-ending maze—each time I arrived at the same bend. Who was I? Why was my body different from my soul or was I mistaking my identity? Why was I born this way? Was it some past karma for which I was being made to pay so dearly? What could I do to escape this trap? (Bandyopadhyay 31)

Most of the people she knew concluded that she was a homosexual and classified her to be a 'girlish boy' preparing to be a 'hijra'. She was convinced that she was a girl and certainly not a homosexual because of her attraction towards men. "But the heterosexual world had denied me entry! It only exploited me and made fun of my status" (Bandyopadhyay 32). The term 'transgender' was strange then and neither she was certain of its presence in dictionaries nor anyone she knew suggested to her that she belonged to the third category. When they were young, they used to have fun question of being male, female or a camel between each other, through which she realized her being one among the category of camel and there was a lifetime of misfortune ahead of her.

The ridicule that she was experiencing both at home and in the neighbourhood went on unabated as she began wearing her sisters' nighties as clothes and petticoats as skirts. This attitude, actively seeking her identity that she boldly took invited nothing more than insults. As a result the hypocrisy surrounding hurt her, and the people seized every opportunity to address her as a hijra, to ridicule her identity and yet seduced her when found alone. For example, her older cousin, who abused her parents after being drunken, taunted her father for siring a hijra as a heir and signals her to meet him in order to exploit her sexually when he was sober. Gradually, she was emerging as a sex toy to many in the neighbourhood who wished to have fun with her, while some have the courage to physically explore her whereas others satisfied their urges by laughing and mocking at her when she passed by, who suggested her sexual guidance so that they are able to 'cure' her 'awkwardness', when found alone.

When she got admission in the college in Bengali literature, even there she had to fight for her identity and respect that she briefly explained in her work, how students stood and gaped at her for wearing woman's clothes when she entered in the college. This shocked her and created an insecure feeling, though she had not any inhibition to reveal her sexual orientation to the world, still she faced it without displaying any signs of weakness.

I sent shocked waves across the college on the first day. Students simply stood and gaped at this good-looking youth, in a long kurta and salwar, who, with a woman's gait and disposition, was headed towards the Bengali department. I definitely defied definition. Word had gone out that a hijra had entered the college in the garb of

a student! Many had gathered to see me. Some started clapping their hands in glee when they saw me, some just whistled and catcalled and soon taunts filled the air. (Bandyopadhyay 40)

Even when her father came to know the entire story happened in the college, he just ignored it by proclaiming her to be a womanizer seeking the attention of the girls, which made her to realize that her father was still in denial of her sexuality. When some of her fellow students declared their query about her being a cross-dresser or a transvestite, she vehemently denied it and said “I was a woman trapped inside a man’s body, not knowing the term ‘transgender’” (Bandyopadhyay 41). When she joined for post graduation in Jadavpur University, her parents thought her to be safe in the hands of Saroj Bandyopadhyay and Satyajith Chaudhari, two of the best teachers of Bengali literature at that time, who taught at the college, as they were known to her parents. But the thought of safety was just only an illusion and as earlier, she became the butt of ragging in the initial days, even in her class who thought her to be a punching bag to be attacked.

Through all these incidents, she understood the situation that her parents went through, the insecurities, anxieties and trauma they endured because of her. When she joined in Patulia Boys’ School as a Bengali teacher, her transgender dress and feminine disposition evoked much curiosity in the neighbourhood near the school. In addition, in the initial few months, the people would gather around the school to have a look at her and found it to be funny that a person like her whom they loved to call a hijra had managed to be a teacher at a reputed school. During her teaching in the school, she came across many boys who approached her confessing their transgender identity which they hid out of fear, which underlines the identity crisis and trauma faced by most people by concealing their transgender identity due to societal fear.

Though I was nowhere close to openly declaring my sexual status, and was still ‘male’ in the public’s consciousness, people around me were not blind to my definite feminine traits. I was stunned at how, one by one, boys would come to me and confess that they were transgender but tried their best to hide this identity for fear of parental and societal backlash. (Bandyopadhyay 67)

Many a time she was exploited physically and mentally in the name of love. Most of the people approached her in order to use her for the satisfaction of their urges, even when they openly abused her for her behaviour, both in the neighbourhood and colleges. Even then, a few genuinely wanted her as a partner or wife, but left her due to the fear of the society even after she was interested for a sex change surgery. This deeply shattered her several times, especially when her fellow teacher in Patulia Boys’ School, with whom she had a serious relationship, left her out of fear after a counsel by the psychiatrist whom they met for guidance to decide their future life. As a result of this, she was greatly traumatized and felt “I was enveloped in depression and life seemed to have ended all over again” (Bandyopadhyay 70).

Those who travelled with her, including her parents, family and neighbours faced insults everywhere. There were incidents of her father been insulted severely for accompanying a hijra. One such situation was on her first day to join as a lecturer at the Vivekananda Satavarshiki College in Jhargram for which her father accompanied her to make her feel comfort with his presence as it was the first time she was leaving home to a faraway place, but it was a terrible experience for both Manobi and her father in the college. Manobi managed to concern only about her affairs while in the city unhindered within her known circle in a rural setting, where she was totally a novelty and the community was shocked with awe writ largely on their face. Some people started catcalling against the expected decorum within the college, as “‘Arre dekho, dekho! Beta na beti, e ke go bote? [Look, look! Who’s this, a man or a woman?]” (Bandyopadhyay 91) She heard people commenting and giggling at her throughout her road to the college from the exact moment she stepped out of the bus with her father, such that “the teasing sounded like the lashes of a whip to my ears” (Bandyopadhyay 91). All the students and teachers began peeping from every corner with a gleeful laughter, due to which she felt to run away from the college and finally, her father left her to her fate without any other choice.

Soon my father became the butt of their jokes. ‘Why has this old man come with you? Are you a schoolboy . . . er . . . girl?’ a lady teacher sniggered. My father was stunned. He was used to facing insults whenever he was out with me and hence avoided it as much as he could. He had agreed to come only because this was a remote place, far away from home. But he had not bargained for this! (Bandyopadhyay 92)

Manobi had to face deep trauma to realize her sexuality and adapt with it, but the most important thing she wanted in her life was “to undergo a sex change operation and that the biggest aim of my life was to establish my sexual identity” (Bandyopadhyay 56). Each and every transgender pass through this phase in their life where they subsequently experience intensive internal trauma.

There were times in my life when I doubted myself and the path I took. In such instances, my mind would go into a state of flux and the turmoil would sear me from within. Am I really a woman trapped in a male body or are these just delirious thoughts? Why is it that the whole world thinks of me as a man who is nothing more than a sissy . . . I felt like tearing away and escaping from the man’s body in which I was born. (Bandyopadhyay 109)

Later, at the time she was renting a house 'Kalpataru Bhavan' in Jhargram, she was harassed by one among other tenants in the bhavan. When she successfully avoided him, he started plotting against her with the help of his brother-in-law who approached her in the name of love in which she was trapped, but his effort to evict her from the bhavan did not work which made him angry and acquired her parents' residential number thereby harassed them calling late at nights.

He asked him whether his youngest child was male or female . . . sometimes my mother picked up and was forced to listen to his abusive language. She stayed quiet though, fearing a tirade from the tormentor. She tried her best to shield my father from these calls, lest he fell ill. I can imagine the torture that my poor parents underwent. (Bandyopadhyay 140)

Manobi had to fight a lot as the tenant with his brother-in-law filed a complaint against her inculcating her of sexual harassment through which they attempted to portray her as a sex maniac and was accused of cheating, for which she registered a counter case against them. There were plenty of stories about her in the newspapers, and she is always grateful to all those reporters for covering her life at each and every step, bringing her fight for justice, equality and the right to live in the public forum. But, her parents were the more affected rather than her by all the incidents that happened to her. Both her parents and sisters feared for life and were scared that she may be killed or drive her to suicide by the tenants and the society. They were aghast by knowing about her Sex Reassignment Surgery or sex change surgery and people began to make their life difficult and terrible.

My parents were already in a state of shock over what was happening to me. Not only would they get threatening calls and abusive letters, strangers who would often ring the bell at night and then disappear, just to terrify them (Bandyopadhyay 167).

Manobi also experienced intense trauma as a result of the indifferent treatment of the society but she was fortunate enough to get the support of her parents. Even though they never encouraged her choice, they never rejected her and cared her very much at every time she needed them, due to which they too were victims of a lot of trauma and pain. She mentioned about her mother's death in March 2011 by describing the sufferings and depression her mother underwent during her transformation from a 'male' to a 'female'.

I feel sad every time I remember how my poor mother suffered all her life, pining for the safety of her youngest child. She loved me when I was her son and continued to love me when I became her daughter. She didn't have the courage to stand up against the world and take up my cause, but I knew that in her quiet, meek way she was always with me, never questioning my choice and silently suffering it. (Bandyopadhyay 179)

Thus, Manobi along with her parents and family underwent intense trauma and depression due to the marginalization and torture from the society. Even then she fought a lot to stick on to her identity when she realized to be a 'female', which had a great impact on her and her family. Many a time, she was exploited physically and mentally and along with her family she was severely insulted by the society. People in her neighbourhood and colleges abused her publicly for her mannerisms and wanted to exploit her privately when she was found alone. Even then, she never gave up, struggled for the acceptance of her identity and fought for her right to live. Ultimately, she rose like a 'Phoenix' through her education and became the first transgender Principal of India in a reputed college inspiring all other transgenders.

3. CONCLUSION:

The book *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*, a candid biography of Manobi Bandyopadhyay, written by Jhimli Mukherjee presents the story of Manobi's life, from 1964 to 2015 which is opened to show the readers how a transgender, only because she do not perform according to the socially constructed gender roles is being marginalized by the society inducing intense trauma internally and externally, and the struggles to gain acceptance of her identity in the society, from which she reached to the position of India's First Transgender Principal purely on merit. It narrates the story of her transformation from a man to a woman with deep understanding and unflinching honesty, and also emphasis on how she pursued academics in spite of many upheavals that helped her to lead better life compared to other transgenders. Throughout Manobi's life people called her hijra, khoja, launda, and so on. She lived all the years with the realization that she is seen as an outcast by the society. She always felt an existential crisis and craved for the acceptance in the society.

Manobi Bandyopadhyay, born as Somnath Bandyopadhyay on 23 September 1964, is a male born who later became a woman by changing her gender through Sex Reassignment Surgery. She faced a lot of challenges throughout her journey to become Manobi from Somnath without affecting any of those painful experiences in her studies. She underwent intense trauma both internal, which is the psychological trauma, and external due to her struggle and fight for the space and acceptance in the society during her transformation to Manobi. Not only Manobi, but her family also endured trauma and depression along with her as she chosen to be a female instead of male, her socially assigned gender at birth. After, due to her hard work and through education, she marked her success and become a part of Indian

history by being placed herself as the first transgender Principal at Women's College, with the authorship of two works as well as being the founder of a magazine called Abomanob meaning subhuman.

Manobi Bandyopadhyay's biography delineates her struggle and fights for the space in the society for gender-variant people like her, who are considered as outcast for performing contrary to the assigned gender role at birth, and portrays how she emerged to be the India's First Transgender Principal at Krishnagar Women's College in Nadia district West Bengal purely on merit, despite all the stigma, discrimination, abuses and all. She also holds a PhD in Bengali literature and works for the upliftment of other people in her community. It is an exceptional, determined and heroic expedition of a transgender individual with aim of defining her identity from the point she started to realize her sexuality through troublesome circumstances and emphasis her achievements in the face of all the traumatic experiences undergone by her with the help of education. Through this, she defined her identity and at the same time inspired the entire community.

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