

Sweety Fatima-the freedom to be myself

It All Starts Early with A Revelation

When Sweety Fatima today 27 years of age, discovered that, though she had been born a boy she felt psychologically akin to girls, she asked herself, 'Why should I live like a boy? I feel happier being a girl.' But her family was livid with her thinking and ordered her not to reveal her desired gender identity and to continue with her pretence, lest they lose the respect and dignity of the others in the community. Sweety Fatima decided to leave home and reached Bhubaneswar in search of her new identity. She was convinced from day one that being a transgender was a blessing and not a shame or a curse.



Emerging as a Transgender Activist

Sweety now lives in the Omkar basti in Bhubaneswar city. As an empowered sex worker, she realized soon enough that she could play an important role in bringing transgender needs to the forefront and today she is not just one of the many



transgenders but someone who takes up the cudgel to defend the rights of other transgender. Along with Meghna and Rani Kinnar

with the support of CFAR, Sweety has taken on the mantle of leadership. She takes the lead in sensitizing the transgender community on the importance of WaSH, the Rights of Transgender as well as their role and position in society.

Isolated and Shunned Initially

When she started as a transgender activist, she was blamed by the others in her community. They misunderstood her often, she was regularly reprimanded and even called an imposter and a fraud, who was hell-bent on destroying the lives of other TGs. Very often the other members of her community in the initial days of her work would boycott her, isolate her and refuse to have anything to do with her. But with time, persistence and patience she changed their thinking.

Her role as a Covid Sachetak

Not to be cowed down by any circumstances, with the advent of the pandemic she sensitized the transgender community on the importance of vaccination against Covid 19. She also dispelled rumors against vaccination and made a list of the TG names to be vaccinated against Covid and handed it over to CFAR. In addition, she prepared a list of transgender entitled to relief during Covid-19. She ensured that no one was left out.

Her dreams and ambitions

Though Sweety Fatima's family is yet to accept her back, but her TG community has now acknowledged her seminal role in their development and progress. She wants to be a social worker fighting for the rights and economic up-liftment of the transgender community.