

The Suno India Show

Pride & Prejudice: From being a homeless teen to changing politics, a trans woman's journey

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It was the Virar railway station, on the outskirts of Mumbai that shaped and changed Priya Patil's life. It was her home when she was homeless. She begged travellers for food when she was hungry. It was also where she saw her friend die amidst an altercation with the police.

Priya: Meri ek dost thi jo train me begging krti thi toh train me begging karte samay vo galti se mtlab train choot gaya aur vo train me hi reh gai toh jab vo train se utri toh kuch police wale uske peeche lag gae. toh vo apne aap ko bachane ke liye udhar se nikalne ki koshish kar rahi thi toh vo bhag rahi thi police se aur police se chupne ke liye yard hota hai yard me mal dabbe ke upar chup gai toh jab vo mal dabbe ke upar khadi hui toh uska sari ka pallu gir gaya toh jab vo sari ka pallu uthane lagi toh sari ka pallu overhead wire ko ja ke chipak gaya tha aur vo poori tarha jal gai toh jal jaane ke bad jab usko hospital me admit kiya toh hum log dekhne gae they uski vo halat mujhse dekhi nhi ja rahi thi aur vo sab cheeze mere dimag me ghoom rahi thi aur 8 din ke bad vo mar gai

Translation: I had a friend who used to beg on a train and was caught by the police for doing so. To save herself, she started running away and reached a yard where she hid on top of shipment containers. As she was climbing the end of her sari caught on to an overhead wire and she got from severe burns from it. When we went to visit her at the hospital, I couldn't stand to see her in pain. 8 days after being admitted to a hospital she passed away.

This was when Priya's whole life changed. With her friend's passing, Priya could no longer continue living like she was. It brought up a series of questions for her. And she was determined to find answers.

Priya: Vo marne ke bad mere dimag me khayal ana shuru hua ki ye uske sath kyu hua? Vo aisi thi ye uski pehchaan thi, iski wajha se vo ye suffer usne kiya ya fir uske maa baap ne usko accept nhi kiya isliye uske sath aisa hua ya fir ye samajh ne usko accept nhi kiya isliye uske sath aisa hua? Ya uske pas rozgar ke koi sadhan nhi they sarkaar ne kuch kiya nhi tha isliye uske sath hua? Ye sab cheeze mere dimag me ghoom rahi thi fir maine bola nahi ab aisa kisi ke sath nahi hona chahiye aur mai apni life is tareeke se waste nhi kar sakti hu.

Translation: After she died, I started thinking about why something like that happened to her. This was who she was, so was it her identity that led to her suffering or the lack of acceptance from her parents or was it the lack of acceptance from society that led to this? I wondered if it was because she didn't have any alternative means of earning. All of this

made me decide that I cannot waste my life. I must stop something like this from happening to others. *It sparked a new beginning for the woman who now heads India's first LGBT cell, under the Nationalist Congress Party in Maharashtra. Priya Patil's story is not one we hear often, but it is not as rare as you may think.*

Shabnam Bano: Khushiya unki awedh ho jati hai. Unke ghar mein ek matam sa phail jata hai. Kyuki waha nar bhi paida nahi hua, nari bhi paida nahi hua. Kinnar paida ho gaya. Agar kisi ke ghar mein bhi Kinnar janam le le toh mera anurodh hai. Manav Jati se anurodh hai ki uska tiraskar na karein. Usko apne ghar ka gharowar samajh ke unka bhi wohi maan sammaan kare jo aur baccho ka kiya jata hai.

Translation: They don't get happiness, their families go into mourning because they didn't have either a girl or a boy but rather a kinnar (intersex) has been born. If a kinnar is born in a family, I request you all to not ill-treat the child. Treat the child as you would any other family member.

This is Shabnam Bano, also known as Shabnam Mausī. She is the first intersex Indian person to become an MLA. She was elected member of the Madhya Pradesh State Legislative Assembly from 1998 till 2003. There is even a film based on her life, titled Shabnam Mausī, with actor Ashutosh Rana playing her. An intersex child born into a brahmin family, she was given away by her father to the kinnar community to protect family honour.

Intersex people are born with sex characteristics that cannot be categorised as either male or female. Hijra and kinnar communities welcome people whose gender is not accepted by mainstream society. So they include both transgender as well as intersex people.

Hi, this is Suryatapa Mukherjee, your host on this episode of Pride & Prejudice, a series on all things LGBTQIA. LGBTQIA stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual. We use 'Queer' as an umbrella term for all these identities. Today we are exploring the growth of Queer politics in India, in conversation with Priya Patil. Priya joined the NCP in 2019 and started the LGBT cell in 2020. She had contested the civic body elections in Mumbai before this as an independent too.

Priya did not suddenly decide to join politics. These developments have happened after she fought for them all her life. Like Shabnam Mausī, she too was rejected by her family for being queer.

Priya: 12 sal ki umar se mujhe aisa lagne laga tha ki mere andar kuch changes ho rahe hain because bahar ke jo log hain ya mere friends hain vo mujhe chidate they alag alag naamo se aur fir mujhe tease kiya jata tha toh vo sab cheeze us time pe itna samajh nhi aati thi ki kyuki hum alag LGBT sunte hain toh aaj se kariban 20 sal pehle in sab cheezo ke bare me koi bat bhi nhi karna chahta tha aur na hi in sab cheezo ke bare me koi awareness tha, toh iski wajha se mujhe in sab cheezo ke bare me pata nhi tha but itna pata chal raha tha ki han baba mera andar kuch changes hai toh un sab cheezo ko dheere dheere dheere dheere mere andar aur badne lag gai vo sab cheeze aur mujhe ehsaas hote gaya ki mai, mera shareer kuch alag hai

aur mera jo soul hai atma hai vo mujhe alag pehchaan deti hai. Toh aise hi kuch sal beet gae uske bad meri padhai par un sab cheezo ka asar hone lag gaya mere koi bhai behan nhi they toh mai kisi se ye sab baat bhi nhi kar pati thi aur na hi mai mere ghar me ye sab cheeze kisi ko bta sakti thi because vo thoda hum bol sakte hain ki pichli soch wale log they toh vo ye sab cheeze accept nhi kar sakte they aur mai jab 14 sal ki hui toh mere ghar me pata chal gaya meri meri sexuality ke bare me aur mere ghar se mujhe fir nikal diya gaya

Translation: I started experiencing changes within me when I turned 12. My friends used to tease me by different names. I didn't understand anything because at the time people didn't want to talk about the LGBT. I didn't have any understanding of what was happening but I did know I was experiencing changes and these changes were growing. I started feeling like my body is different from my soul. I spent some years keeping it all to myself, it started affecting my studies. I didn't have any siblings so I couldn't share this with anyone and my family because they were not forward thinking. When I was 14 my family found out about my sexuality and they threw me out of the house.

This was how Priya first became familiar with the train station. Forget continuing with her education, her new goal as a teenager was fighting off hunger and finding safety.

Priya: Mere pas koi aur option nhi tha toh mai platform pe hi rehti thi Virar me aur jo bhi kuch raste pe pada hua hota tha utha ke kha leti thi ya kisi se kuch mang liya usi se kuch kha liye ya toh kabhi kabhi 3-4 din bhookha bhi rehna pad jata tha toh ye sab cheeze ho rahi thi toh dheere dheere ye jo transgenders hote hain toh in logo se meri mulakaat ho gai in logo se dosti badh gai usi period me aur fir usme se ek transgender n mujhe poocha mere zindagi ki bare me jo aaj tak koi bhi nahi poocha tha toh usne poocha usko maine sab cheeze btai toh usne poocha tum humare sath rahoge kya toh maine usko kaha mujhe khane ke liye mil raha hai, mujhe rehne ke liye chat milega toh mai kyu nhi rahunga mujhe aage kya hone wala tha mujhe nhi pta tha but mujhe un logo ke sath rehna acha lagta tha because sab mere jaise they mtlab vo atmosphere aur vo cheeze mujhe acha lagta tha toh mai un logo ke sath chali gai fir udhar rehna shuru kiya maine

Translation: I had no opinions so I stayed at the platform in Virar. I would eat whatever I found on the streets or I would beg for food, some days I had to go spend 3-4 days without eating as this was happening I started to interact with more and more transgender people and became friends with them. One of them asked me about my life and no one had ever asked me about my life before so I told them everything, then they asked me if I wanted to live with them. I gladly agreed.

It was her friend's death that made her determined to study further, get into social work and later join politics. Before we continue, let's pause for a minute and consider this. Do we really need queer people in politics? Is it not enough for our politicians to simply listen to the queer community and work for their rights?

A recent example that can illustrate this point is the Transgender Persons (Protection of

Rights) Act 2019. Despite how the act is named, some of its provisions seem to violate rather than protect the community. For example, now transgender people will have to be certified as transgender by the District Magistrate. Now if the district magistrate refuses certification, they do not need to provide a reason for the refusal. Moreover there is no recourse available to the trans person whose certification is refused.

Transgender people across the country came together to protest against the act before it was passed and even after it was passed. Earlier versions of the Bill were even more harmful and were changed because of these widespread protests by the community. A provision that was changed was criminalisation of begging by transgender people. That would have meant more casualties like that of Priya's friend, who died trying to escape the police for begging. While this was redacted, other problems remain.

Priya: Trans act bilkul bhi acha nahi hai aapko toh pta hai ki uske upar bahut sare protest hue they bahut sare cheeze hui thi trans bill bhi jab represent kiya ja raha tha us samay bhi bahut sari cheeze hui thi bahut sare changes usme hue lekin vo us hadh tak changes nahi ho pae bahut sara changes humne socha tha ki discrimination kam hone ke liye vo sab cheeze kam hone ke liye bahut sara madad hoga trans act se lekin vo us trans act me dikha nahi because vo kya hai ki maine aapko bola ki ministers me unme utna sara awareness itna sensitize nahi hai vo log ki us tareeke ka vo trans act le aa sakte they trans act ke liye unhone community ko involve karna bahut zaroori tha because kya hai ki alag alag rajya ke jo trans hai aapko toh pata hai ki hijda parampara jo hai vo parampara alag alag rajyo me alag alag tareeko se nibhai jaati hai toh sabhi rajyo ke apne alag alag parampara hai alag alag rituals hain un sab ko follow karte hue alag alag unke problems hain rural ke problem alag hain aur urban ke community ke problem alag hain toh un sabko madde nazar rakhte hue trans act banana chahiye tha toh vo us tareeke se hua nahi lekin kya hai ki jab koi act banta hai toh us act me amendment ke bhi clauses hote hain toh har act ko hi perfect humesha nahi banta hai toh abhi ye trans act ban na hai usme hum amedment lane ki zaroor koshish karenge aur vo honi hi chahiye.

Translation: The trans act is not good in the slightest, I'm sure you already know that it was heavily protested against. When it was being presented we hoped for a lot of changes, like ways to curb discrimination and increased social assistance to trans people but none of it was reflected in the act. The ministers don't have the awareness to know the issues of trans people. What they needed to do was to bring more people of the community into the discussions surrounding the act, the Hijra tradition of different states in India is different and even the problems of trans people in rural and urban India are different. These should have been kept in mind when the bill was tabled but it didn't happen. When you make an act it also has clauses for amendments and we will try to bring amendments into the trans act as well.

As Priya explains, there are many variations of the Indian traditional hijra communities. And hijra is only one part of the transgender and intersex communities, which again lie within a bigger spectrum of the entire queer community. So to reflect the diverse needs of these communities is not easy especially if none of them are actually in the room when laws are being made.

Priya: Jab maine party me kam karna shuru kiya tha toh dheere dheere maine logo ko jan na shuru kiya tha logo ka response logo ka mere prati kya bahvna hai vo log mujhse kaise bat karte hai toh in sab cheezo se mujhe bahut kuch seekhne ko mila aur kya hai ki bahut sare logo ko jo politics me hain bahut bade bade ministers inko LGBTQI ke bare me itni sari jankari nahi hai L ka apna ek personal identity hai G ka apna ek personal identity hai B ka apna ek personal identity hai toh ye jo sexual and gender hai in sab cheezo ka unko maloomaat hona zaroori hai ye maloomat unko tab hogi jab ye log unke beech me honge toh iski wajha se hume unke beech me ja ke unko sensitize karke unko aware kar ke apne liye bahut kuch sarna zaroori hai toh isi liye ye inclusion zaroori hai toh jab bhi mai kabhi community se milti hu community ke alag alag sexuality ke logo se milti hu toh mai unko zaroor approach karti hu ki agar aap me vo potential hai aap me vo capability hai aur aapko politics me interest hai toh aapko zaroor politics ka hissa banana chahiye

Translation: When I started working in the party, I gradually began learning more about people and their responses towards me. This helped me learn a lot and you know, people in politics the popular ministers, they don't know much about LGBTQI. Each of the groups has their own personal identity which the politicians need to know about. The only way for them to learn is if people from the community are working alongside them. This is why whenever I meet someone from the community I always encourage them to join politics if they are interested in it.

Already through their presence, the LGBT cell is educating other politicians about the queer community and its needs, especially in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

Priya: Abhi tak humne alag ministers se meeting kiya hai unko humne LGBT ke bare me sensitize karna shuru kiya hai fir humare party ke andar bhi jo neta ya ministers hain ya karyakarta log hain hum unhe bhi sensitize karne ka vo kar rahe hain fir hum LGBTQ ke jo Maharashtra me log hain jo alag alag sanstha se jude hain jo individuals hain jinko politics me interest hain unko humare sath jodne ki koshish kar rahe hain fir corona pandemic me hum unko kis tareeke se madad kar sakte hain un se charcha karke hum unko kis tareeke ki madad ki zaroorat hai ye sab cheeze hum kar rahe hai toh filhaal toh humara focus policymaking aur sensitization aur awareness ke upar hi hai.

Translation: We have now started meeting ministers to talk to them about the LGBT community. We are trying to sensitize the leaders within the party and are also trying to work with different LGBTQ groups in Maharashtra and are trying to encourage people to join politics. We have also been working with the groups to discuss ways to help the community tackle the pandemic. Our primary focus right now is on policy making, sensitization and awareness.

After witnessing her friend die, Priya decided to take charge of her life and re-start her education. She was already a matriculate. She gave her 12th standard exam through an open university in Maharashtra and started working in NGOs. She is currently working, and finishing her degree course in social work.

Priya: Vo jaise mai social field me kam kar rahi thi toh mai NGO ke sath judi thi NGO ke sath jud ke mai transgenders ke human rights ke liye kam kar rahi thi aur ye sab kam krte waqt mujhe aisa laga ki itna hi kafi nahi hai aur ye jo policymaking ye sab cheeze hoti hain ye sab politics me hota hai toh hum kyu na politics ka hissa ban ke ye sab cheeze apni community ke liye kar pae?

Translation: When I joined the field of social work and started working with NGOs, I realized that policymaking comes under the purview of politicians and I decided why not join politics and try to advocate for the rights of the community?

In 2017, Priya was the first ever transgender candidate to stand for the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation election. She was contesting independently.

Priya: Toh fir maine 2017 me BMC ke elections contest kiye tabhi mai independent lad rahi thi mai koi party me nahi thi aur fir maine election contest karne ke bad mai har gai lekin ek experience mila kafi acha experience tha vo logo ke beech me jana unko samjhana unse baate karna aur vo sab cheeze karna mere liye bahut acha experience tha vo election aur mere me BMC me first mtlab BMC ke itihis me first transgender hu jisne 2017 me election on law contest kiye they fir vo election contest karne ke bad dheere dheere politics me meri ruchi aur badh gai aur fir maine jo single women hoti hai vo policy ko le kar maine Supriya Sule ji ke sath kam karna shuru kiya fir Supriya Sule ji ke sath kam karte karte fir maine 2018 me maine party join kiya Rashtriyawadi Congress Party aur fir udhar se maine kam karna shuru kiya toh is tareeke se mera bachpan se le kar politics join karne tak ka safar raha.

Translation: I contested for BMC elections in 2017 as an independent candidate. I lost but I gained invaluable experience. I was the first trans candidate to contest for BMC's elections. After this election my interest in politics grew and I started working with Supriya Sule. I joined Rashtriyawadi Congress Party in 2018 and began working. This was my journey from childhood to joining politics.

Supriya Sule is the NCP Member of Parliament, and NCP leader Sharad Pawar's daughter. Priya wanted her party to pay attention to the issues related to the queer community and helped them start the party's LGBT cell for the state.

Priya: Jab mai politics me kaam kar rahi thi toh as a Maharashtra secretary karke maine mujhe post mila tha nationalist congress party me aur mai kaam kar rahi thi kam karte waqt mujhe aisa lagta tha ki bahut sare cell hai aise jo apne apne samaj ke liye kam kar rahe hain abhi jaise rashtrawadi me doctors cell hai, yuwak cell hai fir uske alpasankhyan ke logo ka minorities ka cell hai toh maine kaha ki jab itne sare cell hain jo alag alag apne apne logo ko represent kar rahe hain samooho ko represent kar rahe hain groups ko represent kar rahe hain toh hum kyu ki kar sakte aur LGBT ko sangathit karna is samay bahut zaroori hai

Translation: When I began working in politics I began working at the post of Maharashtra

secretary. When I started working I noticed that there were a lot of cells within the party, for doctors, for the youth, for minorities and I thought if there are so many cells representing various sections of society we should do the same for the LGBT.

The devastation wreaked by the pandemic made it quite clear how vulnerable the Queer community is. As the nation shut down, transgender people who somehow made ends meet before, were now completely helpless. It showed Priya that there was a need to mobilise the community's political strength.

Priya: Vo already alag alag NGOs se jude hai alag alag cheezo se jude hai but politically judna bahut zaroori hai jo maine corona ki pandemic me situation dekhi community ki kai logo ko jobs chale gae fir kai log jo transgenders they jo train me begging krte hai ya sex work karte hain vo logo ka kam choot gaya tha toh bahut log bahut sara suffer kar rahe they bahut logo ne bahut madad bhi ki lekin vo sab karte hue mujhe aisa laga ki agar hum is tareeke ka cell karte hai hain toh is cell ke zariye hum LGBTQ community ke liye bahut sara kam kar sakte hain aur unko inclusive kar sakte hain har cheez mein.

Translation: Many members of the community are connected to various NGOs but connecting politically is also important. During the pandemic I noticed how many members of the community lost their job, for instance, the trans people who relied on begging and sex work were suffering a lot. A lot of people did reach out and help them but I felt like if we made a dedicated cell for the community we could do a lot of work to include the community into various parts of society.

There can be many reasons for political failings in one's electoral career. But for the transgender community, sometimes it can be something as simple as the gender you are contesting as. In 1999, Kamla Jaan and three other trans women ran independently in the Madhya Pradesh Municipal election. They won with overwhelming majorities, stunning Congress and BJP heavyweights. Kamla made history as the first transgender mayor of India, for the city of Katni. She had won a seat reserved for women, and this became the basis of a petition by those defeated by her. Alka Jain, the defeated BJP candidate who took her to court said, and I quote, "Everyone knows that a eunuch is more close to a man than a woman. The [chief election official of the area] had made a mistake by accepting Kamla Jaan's nomination paper." End quote. Shockingly in 2003, an additional Sessions judge of a Court in Katni ruled that Kamla was a man. And declared her win null and void.

This was only the start of a trend. Asha Devi won the post of mayor in Gorakhpur, in Uttar Pradesh, in 2000. The candidate who came second, Anju Chowdhary from Samajwadi Party, filed a petition on the grounds that the post is reserved for a female, and won. So, Asha too was ousted despite winning the election.

In 2009, this trend hit Kamala Kinnar. Winning as mayor of Sagar in Madhya Pradesh she too was challenged for contesting on a seat reserved for women and then ousted. But nobody bothered to say which category transgender people should contest in. While still actively working for people, Kamala left politics after her win was dismissed. Here she is on Sagar TV News explaining how it affected her mental health and led to her quitting politics.

'Asal mein ye jo mansik tanav hai jo jisko tension kehte hain, toh ye tension mujhe bilkul sagarwasiyon ne nahi diya, mere voter ne nahi diya, ye tension upar se aya aur aa ke dimag me baith gaya ki court jao kachehri jao aur bhai ek jab aap sune, jab maine parcha bhara tha aur maine sab kuch acha kar liya tha aur itne mato se jeetne ke bad, fir kin logo ke dil me dard ho gaya jo petition pe petition chalu kar diye aur char char cheh cheh ath ath petition roz ek kahi is court me kahi us court me ye btau aap ki main nigam mein reh ke janta ka kam kr du ya court ke chakkar lagau'

Translation: *'The mental pressure that I felt was not because of my voters but the petitioners who sent me running from one court to the other. Should I do my job at the nigam or should I run around in courts?'*

In 2015, Madhu Kinnar won the position of Mayor in Chhattisgarh. And as it was not reserved for women, her win hasn't been challenged. Madhu is now known as India's first transgender mayor.

Gender interferes not only when contesting elections but also when casting a vote. Several transgender people face problems in polling booths due to identification documents. While sometimes they are harassed for the gender on their ID, sometimes they cannot secure any document at all. Priya explains.

Priya: Actually kaisa hai ki bahut sare voting IDs jo logo ne banae hai 2014 se pehle mtlab Nalsa judgement aane se pehle jo logo ne voter ids banae unke upar gender me unhone male ya female dala hua hai lekin jab 2014 ke nalsa judgement aane ke bad me jo voting ID bane hain unke under me transgender karke likha hai, dekho vote na ye har nagrik ka adhikar hai fir koi bhi gender ka ho koi bhi sexuality ka ho koi bhi ho lekin vo insaan hai vo is desh ka nagrik hai usko vote dene ka poora poora adhikar hai, actually bahut sare documentation vo log ghar chor ke aate hain unko ghar se nikala jata hai toh bahut sara documentation unke pas nahi hota hai toh bahut sare logo ke pas voting ids nahi hai jiske liye NGOs ki taraf se government ki taraf se voter camp aur vo sab cheeze arrange karne ki koshish karte hain lekin bahut sare logo ke male aur female ids bhi bane hai toh uski wajha se bhi unka voting vohi gender pe count kiya jata hai na ki transgender toh transgender likha hua jo hai vo bahut sare kam id hai toh un sab cheezo ko bhi hum dheere dheere sahi karne ki koshish kar rahe hai.

Translation: A lot of people got their voter IDs made before the Nalsa judgment in 2014 and thus have male or female mentioned as their genders of the ID. Since the judgment trans people are not recognized as the third gender. See the right to vote is the basic right of any citizen of the country, a lot of the members of the community leave their homes in such tough circumstances that they have to leave their documentation there itself which is why NGOs and government bodies organize voter camps. However, there are a lot of people who have male and female voter IDs as well, so we are trying to sort these issues out over time.

Sorting out the community's documents and educating poll officers ahead of elections is part of Priya's work. She says that this will become much easier as more queer people are included in the process.

Priya: Abhi political jaise jaise inclusion hota hai jaega aur ye awareness aur sensitization alag alag jagha pe hota jaega us tareeke se har jagha pe ye cheeze thodi asan ho jaengi aur zaroor ye sab cheeze dheere dheere line me aana shuru ho jaengi toh voter camps wagara toh hum aarange kar hi rahe hai toh usme hum community ko bhi sensitize karte hain aur jo adhikari officers hote hai election commissioners and all unko bhi hum sensitize karne ki koshish karte hain in sab baare me aur vote har ek ko dena chahiye fir vo koi bhi community ka ho koi bhi gender ka ho koi bhi sexuality ka ho.

Translation: As the inclusion increases things will become a little easier for the community. We are organizing voter camps and trying to sensitize the officers and election commissioners who are involved in the voting process. I feel like everyone should have the right to vote irrespective of their sexuality.

Again and again she returns to the importance of queer people joining politics. She says that there is no limit to what anyone can achieve, irrespective of gender. And she practices what she preaches. When asked about her dreams, she lays no limit on herself and says she sees herself up high like everyone else starting out in politics.

Priya: Sabse pehle toh mujhe community ko inclusive karna hai politics me ye sabse mera pehla uddeshya hai uske bad mujhse aisa chahiye ki jin jin cheezo me baki log involved hai ya inclusive hain un sab LGBTQI+ ke logo ko inclusive hona chahiye matlab vo jobs ho rajneeti ho ya aur koi field ho sabse sab jagha LGBT community ko saman daraja equality honi chahiye. Uske baad agar aap mera personal agenda poochoge toh obviously rajneeti me aap agar kisi ko poocho ge toh vo aapko bolenge ki mujhe prime minster banana hai ya mujhe bahut badi post pe jana hai ya vo sab cheeze toh mera bhi waise hi hai mera personal agenda hai but vo community ke liye hi hai because community ne jo itne salo se discrimination saha hai jo unke sath bahut sare atyachar hue hain bahut sare buri cheeze hui hai un cheezo ko mujhe parliament tak leke jana hai Vidhan Sabha tak Vidhan Parishad tak leke jana hai toh mujhe vo mauka milta hai MLC hote ya MLA hoke ya fir aage ja ke sansaad hote ke bhi mujhe vo mauka milta hai toh vo bahut matlab mai use apni khushkismati samjhungi aur zaroor meri matlab vo hai ki mai state minster toh zaroor banu aur parliament me parliament me bhi minister banna bahut acha samjhungi because policymaking hota hai mai us policymaking hai hissa banna humesha pasand karungi.

Translation: My first objective is to include the community into politics. Then I want to ease LGBTQI+ people's access to every field in which other people are involved. After these are met, my personal agenda is to take the issues of the community to the parliament, to Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Parishad. If I have the opportunity to become an MLC or MLA I would consider it a blessing. I would definitely want to be a state minister or a parliamentary minister because I want to be a part of policymaking.

I asked her to see this as an opportunity to send out a message to everyone out there who is like Priya from her life before. Homeless and hungry, perhaps in a railway station, unsure of how to survive to the next day. What would Priya say to her?

Priya: Sabse pehle toh hume mentally strong hona bahut zaroori hai, theek hai humare sath humari identity ki wajha se kuch bhi hua lekin focused hona bahut zaroori hai kisi bhi cheez ko le kar fir vo aapka career ho aapki life ho ya baki aur cheeze ho toh kuch bhi hasil karne ke pehle hume focused hona bahut zaroori hota hai mentally, mentally strong hona aur prepared hona bahut zaroori hota hai toh maine apne aap ko us tareeke se mentally strong kiya prepare kiya aur mai humesha focused rehti hu ki mujhe kya karna hai aage aur mai us cheez ko kis tareeke se hasil kar sakti hu aur hasil karne ke bad mai us cheez ko kitna acha kar sakti hu aur kitna acha karke usse kitna aage badh sakti hu ye karti hu toh mai baaki logo se bhi yehi kahungi ki aap mentally prepared raho apne aapko kabhi kisi se kam mat samjho aapme bhi vo potential hai bas aapko usko nikharne ki zaroorat hai aur humare identity humari identity hai usme hume kisi se sharmane ki zaroorat nahi hai koi gunha nahi kiya hai hume hum ek insaan hai aur humari ye identity hai aur hume ye kaam karna hai bas. Ye agar dil me rahe toh koi bhi insaan koi bhi makaam hasil kar sakta hai.

Translation: First of all we must be mentally strong, while our identity might make our life difficult we should be focused towards something. Be it our careers or life or anything else but to achieve any of our goals we must be mentally strong. I prepared myself to face the challenges I might have in achieving my goal and thought about how good a decision is and how it can benefit me in the long run. This is the same advice I have for others. We shouldn't be ashamed of our identity, we haven't committed a crime, we should keep ourselves focused on whatever goal we wish to achieve.

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