

# Rituparna Neog Addresses on Gender Equity and Safety: Between The Queer Body and Public Politics

**Date: Guwahati, April 23, 2025**

Cotton University hosted a compelling and intellectually engaging session titled “Gender Equity and Safety: Between the Queer Body and Public Politics” on Tuesday, fostering critical dialogue around gender justice, queer theory, and the socio-political realities of non-normative identities. Organized by the Centre for Women’s Studies in collaboration with the National Service Scheme (NSS), the event featured noted queer rights activist and policy advocate Rituparna Neog as the keynote speaker.

The session, held at MCB Room 311 at 1:00 PM, commenced with introductory remarks by Dr. Prasanta Sarma and Dr. Rakhee Kalita Moral, who underscored the need for intersectional approaches to gender equity and the role of inclusive educational spaces in shaping transformative social change. The discussion opened with an exploration of lived experiences, positioning personal narratives as epistemic tools central to feminist and queer pedagogies.

Neog, who is The Associate Vice Chairperson of the State Transgender Welfare Board and Founder Director of the Akam Foundation, delivered a powerful critique of cisheteronormativity and the structural marginalization of queer and trans individuals. Rejecting traditional presentation formats, she opted for an interactive conversation model, encouraging active participation and reflexivity among attendees.

Drawing on legal milestones such as the NALSA v. Union of India (2014) judgment, Neog highlighted the significance of juridical recognition of gender self-determination while simultaneously critiquing the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 for its medicalized and bureaucratic framing of gender identity. She also referenced the 2018 Supreme Court verdict on Section 377, noting its partial decriminalization of queer sexualities while pointing to the ongoing socio-legal precarity faced by LGBTQIA+ communities even today.

Throughout her address, Neog foregrounded the material and affective dimensions of queer life, emphasizing how queer and trans bodies are not only politicized but also subjected to constant surveillance, regulation, and epistemic erasure. “The queer body is not just political, it is made political by punishment and incarceration,” she stated, challenging the audience to reflect on the deeply embedded structures of normativity in everyday life.

The event further showcased Cotton University’s commitment to gender inclusion, including recent gender audits, curriculum reforms, and academic initiatives that align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020’s emphasis on equity and social justice. Professor Rakhee Kalita Moral, Professor Pooja Chetry and Guest Faculty, Anamitra Bora reiterated the need for institutional accountability and student-led engagement with feminist and queer epistemologies.

The open-floor discussion saw enthusiastic participation from students, who raised questions on pronoun usage, representational politics, and the ethics of allyship. The session concluded with a vote of thanks, where Neog expressed optimism that such platforms would continue to challenge systemic biases and foster critical consciousness.

This dialogue marked a significant step in the university's broader project of cultivating a campus culture rooted in gender equity, intersectionality, and transformative pedagogy.



**Rituparna Neog shares her journey of resilience and growth**



In Conversation with Guest Lecturer Anamitra Bora and PhD Scholar Sikha Sengupta



Students engage with Rituparna Neog on Queer Theory



**Rituparna Neog honored by The Head of English Department and Centre for Women's Studies, Professor Rakhee Kalita Moral and Director of Students Welfare, Dr. Prasanta Sarma**