

## KRISHNA TRUST

### (ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025)

The Krishna Trust in collaboration with the Calcutta Research Group (CRG) and with the support of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna organised the Annual Programme for the Twelfth Krishna Memorial Awards for Women Educationists, Students and Caregivers and the Twelfth Krishna Memorial Lecture 2025 at the Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata on 28 February 2025. The Trust, over the years, have been working relentlessly to bring to the forefront and give recognition to the contribution and active participation of urban caregivers and grassroots activists in bringing forth welfare through the introduction of pioneering practices in urban, social and economic development, and fostering not only opportunities of educational growth, but also restructuring educational infrastructure, healthcare provisions, especially working through health crises, as well as fostering cultural growth and dissemination.

The programme began with the inaugural songs by Shikha Ganguly and Madhurilata Basu. Sibaji Pratim Basu delivered the welcome address and presided over the session, opening the ceremony with a brief introduction to the Krishna Trust. Amina Khatoon, past recipient of the Krishna Trust Award, presented the Twelfth Krishna Memorial Award. The first Award was given to Aradhya Mandal and Rina Mandal, students at the Bali Dhanamani Model High School, Balideep, Sundarban. The Headmaster of the school, Sahadeb Mondol, received the Award on behalf of the students, and spoke briefly about the difficulties of daily life that girl children face in the ecologically fragile Sundarban. Teachers continuously work to encourage academically excellent performers and young scholars in the school and thanked Krishna Trust for the Award that would continue to inspire students to achieve their dreams, and the support and facilitation of furniture was another step in improving the school educational infrastructure. The second Award was conferred to Avik Ghosh of Children's Theatre Academy, Santiniketan, West Bengal, for the relentless efforts and inspiring work in helping children from marginal areas with educational support. Young students of the theatre academy performed skits, recitation and songs at the Award ceremony. The recipient of the third Award was Ashina Gramin Library, Falta for facilitation of free tuition classes, books and reading resources to students in rural areas.



Left to right: Amina Khatoon presenting the Krishna Trust Award to Sahadeb Mondol, Bali Dhanimoni Model High School; seated V.Ramaswamy, Sibaji Pratim Basu and Ranabir Samaddar.



Avik Ghosh recipient of the Krishna Memorial Award performing at the event



Amina Khatoon presenting the Krishna Award to Ashina Gramin Library

The Twelfth Krishna Memorial Lecture was delivered by the eminent social and gender right activist Sarmistha Dutta Gupta and the session was chaired by V. Ramaswamy, litterateur, translator, and Member of CRG. The lecture titled *Abhayader Jibon, Rashtriyo Hingsha o Koekti Naribadi Jignasha* discussed the role of the state in safeguarding women's safety and understanding gender assertiveness beyond its binary usage. Whether it was the Roop Kanwar case, or recent incidents of civil protests on the death of medical professional, does it require death to be the ultimate ignition of cognition to consciously seek for a better world and working space for the humanity—what happens then when the daily struggles of ASHA workers, marginally represented LGBTQIA+ community or women engaged in profession who work under dire situation does not call for being acknowledged as *Abhaya*? It is the failure of the state to safeguard the basic constitutional rights least the freedom guaranteed to women and marginal people transpires into everyday slow violence that goes unnoticed and remains invisible. Does it then require the penultimate hostility and brutality of death to conjure civic consciousness of the failure of the role of the state in preserving life and dignity in general? Does the momentum of irreversibility of injustice or harm done calls for public attention to everyday politics of marginality and injustices that are operational? *Abhaya* is not one single individual tagged to one single incident, it is the failure of the state vis-à-vis the civil society to recognise and provide for the required space, infrastructure, commitment towards a progressive future. The failure of the state recognition does not always filter down to lack of recognition of sexual identities and safer workplaces, lack of basic amenities like gender segregated toilets, changing rooms, lack of transport in rural areas, etc., transpires into percolative violences that creates everyday obstacles for women and marginally represented sexualities. Legal jurisprudence in safeguarding women's dignity has stemmed from cases like Bhawanri Devi, Nirbhaya and thereby had limited itself from understanding the struggles and challenges posed by patriarchal norms and casteist society leading to gendered forms of harassment and except for certain ombudsmen committees and elitist dialogues, in common parlance it is still a novelty. Women labour in care economy is naturalised as a gendered responsibility. ASHA workers are considered as honorary volunteers and thereby takes away their basic right to demand for wage equality. Even to be enrolled as an ASHA worker, a woman has to be married or widowed or separated. Such terms of gendered recruitment is unheard for any profession applicable for male candidates. Such dystopian recruitment policies posits women as a vulnerably dangerous class, especially single unmarried women not marked by patriarchy. The valorisation of women in service sector as a hopeful path to progress fails systematically to acknowledge that gendered forms of harassment does not come only with physical or verbal abuse, the sheer lack of understanding their necessity or absence of basic services can also lead to harassment. In this ambit, the marginally represented trans people are even more invisible although in the name of development, the slogan is of equal opportunity. One reasons for this lack of recognition or

failure to assert a cumulative demand for justice was due to the absence of civil society organisation spearheaded by women for their own cause. Over the last two decades this has been a pan-India scenario. Women collectives has remained limited in number and operation has been mostly reactive and commemorative rather than being proactive and percolative to identify and balance or remove the gender negative attitudes of the society and policies of the nation. Even if today, one reads *Towards Equality*, one would not see much progress has not been made today especially in the rural areas. It is necessary to understand safety beyond the notions of cctvization and securitisation of premises and look for remedial solutions in alleviating everyday forms gender gap that even a woman fails to realise thereby holding them in an eternal cycle backwardness and amplifies harassment in everyday livelihood and governance. The lecture will be published as *Twelfth Krishna Memorial Lecture* by CRG.



Sharmistha Dutta Gupta delivering the Twelfth Annual Krishna Memorial Lecture



Guests and Invitees at the Twelfth Annual Krishna Memorial Event 2025

A report on the event has been published by [Hindustan Times Bangla](#). Guests, previous years' Krishna Memorial Award recipients and Members of CRG encouraged the Trust's work by participating in the event. The programme ended with a formal vote of thanks by Sucharita Sengupta. This year like others, there was generous contribution to the Trust for its continued involvement with education and welfare, by Arup Kumar Sen, Ranabir Samaddar, Paula Banerjee and Subhas Ganguly. The [Trust's web portal](#) hosted by the CRG as part of its [website](#) continues functioning with new material being added. The Trust acknowledges the generous help of Calcutta Research Group, the collaboration and support of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, as well as the help and support of CRG staff members, in organising the Annual Krishna Trust Programme 2024-2025.