

About Nadika Nadja

Nadika Nadja is a writer, translator, and teacher who has been published in several major newspapers and magazines in India and internationally. Nadika combines her passion for **history** and **Tamil** with her education in **archeology** to write stories that provide a fresh language for people to think about **contemporary cultural issues**. Her widely-read essay, ***The Smartphone Freed Me: Dating as a Trans Woman***, was published in the **Penguin anthology *Eleven Ways to Love*** in 2018. Nadika's essays, analyses, and film reviews have been published in **Huffpost, Vogue, Frontline, The Hindu, The New Indian Express, Deccan Herald, The News Minute, Deep Dives, Neelam, GenderIT.org, Silverscreen, Feminism in India**, among others.

Nadika has been writing in different formats for over 25 years. Her early career was spent in the creative departments of **advertising agencies** like J Walter Thompson, Ogilvy & Mather, Euro RSCG, Publicis Ambiance, among others. As a copywriter, and later a **creative director**, Nadika wrote engaging copy in English and Tamil, and built brands both at a regional and national level. She also became a manager of the creative process, helping younger writers find their voice.

Later, she wrote for **Tamil television shows** including the legal procedural ***Dharmayuddham***, and went on to edit **Maiam — a cultural magazine published by actor Kamal Haasan**. She also researched and worked on the sets of the blockbuster film ***Viswaroopam***, and was a researcher, translator, and editor for ***Kodeeswari***, the Tamil version of the popular *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* game show.

An early **Photowalker**, Nadika created the **Chennai PhotoWalk group** in November 2007. As the leader of the PhotoWalk movement, she **led amateur and professional photographers** on many routes across Chennai (and Bangalore, Hyderabad) capturing the city, its monuments, its people and its streetscape. The Chennai PhotoWalk, over time became a huge network of photography enthusiasts in Chennai, and a largely open, accessible and community-led fixture in the city's calendar.

Nadika was a contributor to the **LGBTQIA+ community-made glossary in Tamil**, which was adopted by the Tamil Nadu government and published in the **state gazette**. She has been a strong voice in the community for the **rights of trans and queer persons** who do not fit stereotypes. Nadika has also advocated for transgender rights with **Parliamentarians**, deposing before the **Standing Committee for Social Welfare** while they were looking at the Rights of Transgender Persons Bill. She was a co-director of the **Bangalore Queer Film Festival** between 2017 and 2021.

Born in Chennai that is Madras, Nadika grew up in the city which is her first love and continues to inspire her in everything she does. Currently, she **teaches English and Journalism** at **St Joseph's University** in Bengaluru, and is **mentoring unpublished writers** to tell their stories authentically, away from the noise of social media and hot takes.

She can be reached at nadika.penpol@gmail.com