

## Jayatu Netaji



Pic Courtesy: Debaditya Chatterji  
Born : 23 January 1897  
Died (disputed) : August 18, 1945

### Azad Hind Fauj and the popular upsurges before Independence

The story of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's death in an aircraft accident at Taihoku airport is a widely disputed fact now. The popular belief that he was alive after that has given birth to so many legends. Overriding any intent to probe in the authenticity of those legends remain the fact that like Bhagat Singh, the great martyr, name of Netaji carries magical inspiration for the youth in this country.

In fact, the magic of the name of Netaji and his Azad Hind Fauj was seen just after a few months after the announcement of his 'death' or disappearance.

Most crucial and decisive battle of Second World War was fought against the Nazi Army of Germany by Red Army of erstwhile USSR. Politics of war and exploitation was defeated by politics of peace and socialism. That was reflected

in the most unbelievable result of the elections in Britain in 1945. In spite of Churchill's wartime popularity, the Conservatives were defeated, and Labour Party led by Clement Attlee with a manifesto containing promises of nationalisation, economic planning, full employment, a National Health Service, and a system of social security got landslide victory.

This changed the situation for India as well. But the expectation for change simmering underneath was not known to the national leadership even. As the civil liberties were restored, bans etc. were lifted and elections were declared at the centre and in the provinces, the political parties began campaign for elections. But unexpectedly for the national leaders, "Election meetings soon became huge arenas of political mobilisation", describes a Study Material for IGNOU titled, 'Post-War National Upsurges, 1945-47' (Resource person: Sucheta Mahajan). Adding, "The issues taken up were very emotive ones; the excesses by officials while repressing the Quit India movement and the fate of the prisoners belonging to the Indian National Army (INA)."[Emphasis added]

The Study further notes, "The INA campaign had a wide sweep, both in terms of social groups and political parties covered as well as geographically. ...What was striking about the mobilisation was that it was not confined to the cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras but extended to distant places such as Assam, Baluchistan and Coorg. Participation in the campaign was extremely diverse. Donations came in from Indians abroad, Gurdwara committees,

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### Scientist pleads for science in regional languages

Newsdesk - Everyone knows Venki Ramakrishnan. To quote from Wikipedia, "Venkatraman "Venki" Ramakrishnan (born 1952) is an American and British structural biologist of Indian origin. He was elected President of the Royal Society in November 2015; in 2009 he shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry with Thomas A. Steitz and Ada Yonath, ...Ramakrishnan was born in Chidambaram in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu, India." Recently, at The Hindu Lit for Life discussion on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2019, while speaking on 'What ails Indian science and what can be done about it' he said, "When you are young it is much easier to absorb concepts in your native language."

He called for developing science textbooks and education in regional languages for the 95% of population that has no knowledge of English. As The Hindu reported, "Language makes science inclusive and equalizing" said the renowned scientist. He emphasized, "You have to be rooted to your language through culture. You cannot learn something which is disconnected and be anything but imitators" adding that there are exceptional people however, who have overcome the barriers. Supplementing the tone of the argument K. Vijay Raghavan, principal scientific advisor to the Indian government, said, "Science, unlike music - Hindustani and Carnatic - is not appreciated nationally. Unless people at large want science as a quest for knowledge, this disconnect will persist."

### Migrations and homecoming

Newsdesk - Chinmay Tumble is an economics faculty member at IIM-Ahmedabad and the author of a book titled 'India Moving: A History of Migration'. In an article published in livemint.com on 16th January 2019 he has shared the perspective and some experiences of his study. One aspect of his study is that, "Migration for work within India is highly circular, with migrants working in multiple destinations during their lifetimes, and retiring in their native places."

Referring to Economic Survey of India 2016-17, he says, "there are over a hundred million migrant workers in India, of which most are circular migrants. The durations can be as short as a day or a week, in which case they are referred to as commuters, numbering in the tens of millions, who frequently board trains and buses bound toward a nearby town or city.

"A few more tens of millions migrate seasonally for work—for a few months of the year, drawn disproportionately from the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and from particular clusters in central India. They work in precarious worksites in sectors ranging from construction and brick kilns to rural harvesting operations." In his book he has argued that the great Indian migration wave of semi-permanent, male-dominated, and remittance-based migration is the world's largest and longest voluntary stream of migration ... primarily including the Bhojpuri speaking belt in the Gangetic plains, 60% of the regions along coastal India, the Himalayan region and a few other clusters. These regions have witnessed persistent mass migrations, often for more than a hundred years.

The writer has further argued that whereas migration wave was east-bound in the nineteenth century towards Bengal, Burma, and southeast Asia, it was west-

bound in the twentieth century towards the arc between Punjab and Maharashtra, and now in the twenty-first century it appears to be south-bound.

However, the fact that this journeying humanity tends to come back home finally, appears to have two reasons - first related to uneven development (most of the wage-earners from backward region cannot even dream to settle near those high-cost metropolises) and second related to multi-national character of this country.

One another aspect of the study of the writer is about Bengalees, proverbially most homesick among Indians. The writer states, "Of all the linguistic and regional communities of India, it is the migration of Bengalis that merits the closest attention. Historically, they were not a part of the migration wave. On the contrary, Bengal was a major recipient of migrants since the late nineteenth century. ... Over the past two decades, however, with the relative stagnation in the economy of Kolkata, Bengalis have crisscrossed the length and breadth of the country to find new destinations. And it is not just economics departments that have absorbed their valuable skills. Artisanal work in the gold sector draws in hundreds of thousands of migrants from southern West Bengal to cities ranging from Surat to Kochi and even remote rural locations. This specialized migrant network in one sector is the latest addition to the great Indian migration wave.... But Bengali labour migration is slightly different because there are several migration streams and a greater diversification in occupations, ranging from construction to cultivation, and in regions as diverse as Gujarat and Kerala.

Inputs from : <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/8WPPsZyqR7Mu6e3Fgy55N/A-million-migrations-Journeys-in-search-of-jobs.html>

## News & comments

### DD Science and India Science

Newsdesk - In a joint initiative of Vigyan Prasar (autonomous organization under Dept. of Science & Technology) and Doordarshan, two new science communication platforms, DD Science and India Science has been launched. DD Science is a one-hour slot on DD National channel, which will be telecast from Monday to Saturday from 5 pm to 6 pm, as The Hindu reported. India Science is an online channel available on all internet-enabled devices offering live, scheduled play and video-on-demand programs.

Further, the daily reported, the two channels will have science-based documentaries, studio-based discussions, virtual walkthroughs of scientific institutions, interviews and short films and will be free to access. Speaking on the occasion the central minister for science and technology said, "developing scientific temperament is a critical

necessity in a country of 1.3 billion and these two science channels will drive that national objective, both through DTH as well as the internet. It would help people understand the benefits of science and integrate it in their daily lives." He further stressed that the programs on the channels will "tap the demographic dividend [the large population of youngsters] represent for the social and economic progress of the country". He also expressed hope that in future these will be 24x7 channels.

Wow. But gaining knowledge from Venki Ramakrishnan the scientist's opinion Sir, quoted just above, is there any project in the pipeline to produce the programs, dub the documentaries, interviews, videos, walkthroughs and short films in all the regional languages which represent India?

Oh, again, sorry for disturbing you sir, will head transplant of Ganesh also feature in the short films? Or, being pregnant of the peahen by the tears of male peacock?

### ASER Report 2018

Newsdesk - Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) is based on a survey done every year since 2007 by ASER Centre run by NGO named Pratham. The report is also published by them. Basically, it provides annual status of improvement in the implementation of Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009. The press release by ASER Centre states, "Since the implementation of the RTE Act in 2010, school visits in ASER have included indicators of compliance with those norms and standards specified in the Right to Education Act that are easy to measure. In 2018, ASER visited 15,998 government schools across rural India." Report for 2018 is based on a survey of 596 districts in rural India. A total of 3,54,944 households and 546,527 children in the age group 3 to 16 were surveyed.

It found that overall enrollment of children for the age group 6 to 14 years has been above 95%. The proportion of children (age 6-14) who are not enrolled in school has fallen below 3% for the first time

and stands at 2.8% in 2018.

In 2006, the all India proportion of girls in the age group 11 to 14 who were out of school stood at 10.3%. In 2018, the overall proportion of girls in the 11 to 14 age group out of school has fallen to 4.1%. Further, ten years ago in 2008, nationally, more than 20% of girls in the 15 to 16 age group were not enrolled in school. In 2018, this figure has decreased to 13.5%.

The period 2006 to 2014 saw a year-on-year increase in the proportion of children (age 6-14) enrolled in private schools. In 2014, this figure stood at 30.8%. Since then private school enrollment appears to have plateaued for this age group. The percentage of children (age 6-14) enrolled in private school was 30.6% in 2016 and is almost unchanged at 30.9% in 2018. (Bihar saw an increase of 2%) But the concern lies somewhere else. As, The Hindu in its story

observed, "In 2008, 84.8% of Class VIII students could read a text meant for Class II; by 2014, only 74.6% could do so, and by 2018, that percentage had fallen further to 72.8%."

"Four years ago, 44.1% of students at Class VIII could correctly divide a three-digit number by a single-digit number; in 2018, that figure has fallen slightly to 43.9%." Just curious - do we need along with the Right to Education Act one 'Duty to Educate Act'?

### Opposition to farm-loan waiver

Newsdesk - last couple of years saw a change in the mood of farmers in various states of India. Amidst concerns of the people with continuing farmers' suicides since last 15 years, due to inability to repay loans, a new face of the farmer appeared in the states of

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## Wealth & castes

Recently a report, a Master Thesis Report by Nitin Kumar Bharati titled "Wealth Inequality, Class and Caste in India, 1951-2012" created headlines in the media. Reasons are the credentials of the report. It is from Ecole D'economie De Paris; the supervisor is Professor Thomas Piketty and referee, Professor Abhijit Banerjee. Increasing inequality and rising concentration of wealth is a well-known global phenomenon in the era of neo-liberalism. Oxfam report published a week before rather points one more thing – faster concentration of wealth and faster impoverishment after 2008, i.e. during the years after a huge worldwide crisis. India is part of the trend.

**EDITORIAL** Importance of the report by Nitin Kumar Bharati is its studies in the caste-based patterns of wealth inequality. What it succinctly puts in the Introduction is that, "The rate of growth of forward/upper castes in terms of acquiring wealth or consumption is higher than the lower castes." There are other conclusions as well. Conclusions regarding consumption inequality, increasing inequality within castes etc.

However, interesting were the headlines in the media. One was, "Study throws light on rising wealth & consumption inequality". Other was, "Top 10% upper caste households own 60%". Yet another was "Vast income inequality within castes". Then again, "Scheduled caste wealth share worse than tribals". But there was no headline on rising difference in wealth acquiring among forward than among backward castes, and among both the clusters taken together than among scheduled castes. Because, as Nitin Kumar Bharati puts it, "In a situation of positive affirmation policies of the government, one would have expected the opposite. It hints towards the harsh reality of ongoing caste-based discrimination in the society".

And that's true. "Some may wonder if caste has any relevance today. Unfortunately, past unequal distribution of wealth along caste lines has never been corrected."

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## Azad Hind Fauj ...

municipalities, film stars, tongawallas and the Cambridge Majlis. Students were most active, holding meetings and boycotting classes in protest. Shopkeepers downed shutters, especially on the day the trial began at the Red Fort, namely 5 November. The demand was taken up at Kisan conferences and women's conferences. Diwali was not celebrated in some places. All parties came out in support of the cause ... Perhaps the most important aspect of the INA campaign was that it included social groups that had not been within the nationalist fold till then. These included government officials and men from the armed forces as well as loyalists."

The wave of protests demanding release of INA prisoners also led to popular upsurges at various urban centres. In Kolkata, on 21 November 1945 began a procession of students belonging to various student organisations. They occupied Dalhousie Square. The police lathi-charged them, but they refused to disperse. Then the police fired on the squatting students in which two students died and fifty-two were injured. In protest, People in the city of Kolkata went on strike. The city was paralysed. In the pitched battles with the police shops owned by Europeans were targeted.

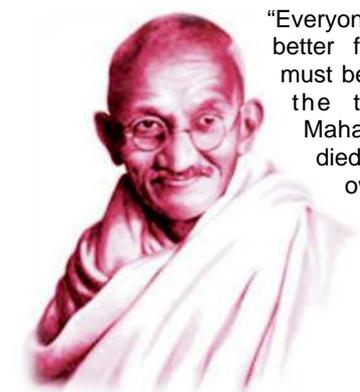
Again, on 11 February 1946 in Kolkata, masses in general and students proceeded in a procession to protest against the trial of Rashid Ali, an INA prisoner. At Dharmtala Street in Kolkata Section 144 was imposed. There the procession clashed with the police. Police lathi-charged the procession and arrests were made. In a wave of solidarity, meetings were held across the country and often these meetings escalated into attacks on government and European property.

On 18 February 1946, the scene changed its location. In Mumbai, 1100 naval ratings of HMIS Talwar went on strike protesting the treatment – including racial humiliation and unpalatable food

– meted out to them. The ratings from Talwar were joined by those from Castle and Fort Barracks when the rumour spread that ratings had been fired upon. A big part of Mumbai was in siege due to barricades raised by the working people in solidarity with the mariners. As the Study Material quoted above notes, "In Bombay city alone, thirty shops were destroyed, as were ten post offices, ten police posts and sixty-four stores selling food-grains. The workers went on strike in response to the call given by the Communists while shopkeepers shut their shops, making the paralysis of the city complete. Streets were sometimes barricaded, trains halted by crowds lying down on the tracks and police and military lorries were set on fire. When word spread across the country, ratings revolted in other naval centres too. The ratings of the HMIS Hindustan took the lead in Karachi and another ship and three shore establishments joined in. Soon establishments in Aden, the Andamans, Bahrain, Calcutta, Cochin, Delhi, Jamnagar, Madras and Visakhapatnam were on strike. In all, 20,000 ratings, from 78 ships and 20 shore establishments, had taken part in the protest. Men from the other armed forces also came out in sympathetic support. In Bombay men from the Royal Indian Air Force struck work in Marine Drive, Andheri and Sion areas. Strikes by RIAF men were reported from Poona, Calcutta, Jessore and Ambala units. Army men were far behind in showing sympathy as reports from Jabalpur and Colaba showed."

It is a fact that the popular response to the upsurges, in spite of their spread, could never really take an all India character. Centres of protests were more or less urban. So, revisiting the past to dream about the possibility of these upsurges developing - in which unity of Hindus and Muslims were exemplary – to prevent the communal riots six months later and eventual partition, will be absurd perhaps. But then, it remains the dream till today that Netaji and the spirit of his Azad Hind Fauj could have prevented

## Remembering martyrdom of Gandhiji



"Everyone concerned in the better future of mankind must be deeply moved by the tragic death of Mahatma Gandhi. He died as the victim of his own principles, the principle of nonviolence. He died because in time of disorder and general irritation in his country, he refused armed

protection for himself. It was his unshakable belief that the use of force is an evil in itself, that therefore it must be avoided by those who are striving for supreme justice to his belief. With his belief in his heart and mind, he has led a great nation on to its liberation. He has demonstrated that a powerful human following can be assembled not only through the cunning game of the usual political manoeuvres and trickeries but through the cogent example of morally superior conduct of life. The admiration for Mahatma Gandhi in all countries of the world rests on recognition, mostly subconscious, recognition of the fact that in our time of utter moral decadence, he was the only statesman to stand for a higher level of human relationship in political sphere. This level we must, with all our forces, attempt to reach. We must learn the difficult lesson that an enduring future of humanity will be possible only if, also in international relations, decisions are based on law and justice and not on self-righteous power, as they have been up to now." - Albert Einstein

the partition of this country and saved the lives of lakhs of people who were massacred in the process. Inspiration of Netaji and Azad Hind Fauj still gives us the spirit of battle against subjugation, struggles against casteism and communalism and for equality of women in every walk of life. Legacy of the Fauj also inspires us to strengthen the friendship between the people of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Netaji's name lives in resurgence of Indian subcontinent.

– Bidyut Pal

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## News & Comments

### Opposition to farm ...

Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu etc. With bleeding yet farm feet they marched to the capitals of respective states and the Union, blocked the Mandis and took to numerous other forms of struggle to demand loan waiver and raising other relevant issues. Till then the so-called think-tanks were silent because they were confident that no one is going to take care of these demands. But the struggles played a key role in the assembly elections and effected a change of the governments in some states. The new incumbents to the government announced their intention to waiver farm-loans. Suddenly the think-tanks became active. Surveys were managed overnight to prove that it is going to be bad. Bankers were seen saying, "It is a deadly poison. It's a wrong way of addressing the real issue", "It is not good for the country's credit culture" and "Clearly, a frightening challenge for Indian banks!" NITI Ayog said that it is futile, because it is going to benefit just 10-15% of farmers! But, notwithstanding these alarms, those states also followed cue in announcing loan and other waivers for farmers where there was no change in governments e.g., Gujrat and Assam.

Strangely, the thinking of the think-tanks could not engage the media attention some time earlier when

## Medium of Instruction – The Mother Tongue

Our language is the reflection of ourselves, and if you tell me that our languages are too poor to express the best thought, then I say that the sooner we are wiped out of existence the better for us. Is there a man who dreams that English can ever become the national language of India? (Cries of "Never".) Why this handicap on the nation? Just consider for one moment what an unequal race our lads have to run with every English lad. I had the privilege of a close conversation with some Poona professors. They assured me that every Indian youth, because he reached his knowledge through the English language, lost at least six precious years of life. Multiply that by the number of students turned out by our schools and colleges and find out for yourselves how many thousand years have been lost to the nation. The charge against us is, that we have no initiative. How can we have any if we are to devote the precious years of our life to the mastery of a foreign tongue? We fail in this attempt also... I have heard it said that after all it is English-educated India which is leading and which is doing everything for the nation. It would be monstrous if it were otherwise. The only education we receive is English education. Surely, we must show something for it. But suppose that we had been receiving during the past fifty years education through our vernaculars, what should we have today? We should have today a free India, we should have our educated men, not as if they were foreigners in their own land but speaking to the heart of the nation; they would be working amongst the poorest of the poor, and whatever they would have gained during the past fifty years would be a heritage for the nation (Applause). Today even our wives are not sharers in our best thought. Look at Professor Bose and Professor Ray and their brilliant researches. Is it not a shame that their researches are not the common property of the masses?

(Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, p.p. 318-20; 4-2-1916)  
Courtesy: [https://www.mkgandhi.org/towrds\\_edu/chap14.htm](https://www.mkgandhi.org/towrds_edu/chap14.htm)

## NBBUSS raises concern about NRC

Newsdesk – Nikhil Bharat Bangali Udbastu Samanway Samiti has raised concerns about the fate of 15 million Bengalee refugees settled in India. Dainik Jagran reported on 2nd January 2019 that there 15 million Bengalee refugees living in Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar and Andaman. Even after 70 years of independence these people are struggling for their existence. The news mentioned that NBBUSS has shared a report about Bengalee refugees and the office bearers of the organization has said that due to NRC these people are on the verge of losing their citizenship. Their statistics say that 35,000 refugees are in Karnataka whereas 5,00,000 refugees are in Chhattisgarh; 1,00,000 refugees are settled only in the Bastar area. 25 lakhs are there in UP and Uttarakhand, 30 lakhs in Odisha, 11 lakhs in MP, 5 lakhs in Jharkhand whereas 20,000 refugees live in Jhalwar-Baranev of Rajasthan. President of NBBUSS Subodh Biswas said that these settled refugees are compelled to lead their lives in critical political situations, without basic rights and problems of language etc. He also narrated his own experience of movement in Assam, in which he was jailed and was released on bail after one and a half years.

## 'Bahirbanga' & 'Bhasha andolan' in PG syllabus

Newsdesk – For the first time, Bidyasagar University has introduced a paper for 50 marks on 'Bahirbanga Bangla Sahityacharcha and Bhasha andolan' (Bengali literary activities and Language movement out of Bengal), to be studied in 4th semester, in its Post Graduate course on Bengali. Bengalee Association, Bihar has welcomed this modest beginning.

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**In Memoriam**

Michael Madhusudan Dutta



Michael Madhusudan Datta (1824–73 c.e.), exceptional as poet and playwright in both English and Bangla (also known as Bengali), in many ways typified educated Bengalis of his day when East and West met constantly in Calcutta, the administrative capital of Britain's East Indian colony. His name itself, one part Christian-European (Michael) and two parts Hindu-Indian (Madhusudan Datta),<sup>1</sup> calls attention to the clash as well as the accommodation of cultures that took place in South Asia at the height of the two hundred years of her colonial period, a period that would end upon the stroke of midnight dividing the 14th from the 15th of August 1947, with the concomitant partitioning of British India into the independent nation-states of India and Pakistan. Datta's magnum opus, Meghanadavadha kavya (The slaying of Meghanada) (1861), needs be seen, very much like its author, as simultaneously extraordinary and representative. It is an extraordinary piece of literature, a sophisticated verse narrative in nine cantos; it is utterly representative of the cosmopolitan culture of mid-nineteenth-century India. Bengali literary historians even today mark with his text and its year of publication the divide between the so-called premodern and modern eras in Bangla literature. From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, it may seem strange to refer to a time in the nineteenth century as modern. It remains, however, the way that moment is viewed from within Bangla cultural history, and justifiably so, particularly today, when "modern" can imply 'passee' in a here-and-now world self-characterized as postmodern. But modern contrasts with traditional, and it is this meaning of modern that pertains to Datta's poem. His narrative does not deny, negate, or ignore the traditional. It does, though, contrast with what preceded it. Datta's Meghnada marks a major shift in imaginative writing, a shift in the Bangla literary sensibilities of its day. Bengal during the nineteenth century and on into the beginnings of the twentieth century took the lead on many fronts. It was said then that what Bengal thinks today, the rest of India thinks tomorrow. Similarly, what happened in Bengal as exemplified in the works of Datta would happen later throughout India. Modernity in the literatures of South Asia began in 1861, and began with Michael Madhusudan Datta.

[From Introduction, Slaying of Meghnada, by Clinton B. Seely]

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**Women of Ramnagar**



Pic courtesy: Dainik Jagran

Newsdesk – The Bengalee women of Ramnagar (W. Champaran) who were earning a living by making 'bidi's have changed their occupation. Now they are farming mushrooms and earning better. Dainik Jagran reported on 12th January 2019 that the groups of women have been trained by Jeevika, an NGO sponsored by the state government. Earlier in the trade of making 'bidi's they were given Rs. 35 to Rs. 40 by the contractors after working hard for a day. They could not even purchase vegetables by that money. Making 'bidi's also brought health related hazards. Gastric, disease of the eyes and ulcers troubled them. Dainik Jagran mentions one elderly woman. Saraswati Devi. She came in contact with Jeevika and then convinced other women. Now all of the women are producing mushrooms and that has changed their lives. The colony of Ramnagar has changed. Children are going to school. Arti Dutta, Shipra Dutt, Kanan Dutt, Soneka Mandal, Vasana Mandal, Rekha Devi, Anita Dutt, Bishakha Dutt, Renuka Mandal, Shanti Devi (names mentioned in the news) and other women are prospering in this trade. Jeevika provides them seeds and logistic support for the farming.

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I vowed to punish ...  
 as I cannot afford any more legal fees, and neither do I trust other lawyers.  
 We are fortunate that my parents have given their blessings to what we know will be a long and hard battle for justice. It is not possible, in these parts, to do such a thing without your parents' permission. Their support has also helped us in the eyes of the villagers, most of whom have been on good terms with my parents for years. In fact, before the wedding, the entire panchayat came out in support of my decision to take up my wife's fight for justice.  
 At my suggestion, my wife is now also studying law. I have made plans to move our family soon to Chandigarh, where we will practice law together and provide women from rural India access to the legal machinery. We also have a two-year-old son, who we will enrol in a private school in Chandigarh, away from Haryana's vicious patriarchy and rape culture, which continues to destroy the lives of women. But we have hope that one day, soon, there will be a huge shift in the situation. Like urban India



'Adarsha Raktadan Utsav' at Bhagalpur on Netaji Jayanti



Blood Donation Camp at Muzaffarpur on Netaji Jayanti



Netaji Jayanti celebrated at Barari



Swami Vivekanand Jayanti at Barari Branch



Netaji Jayanti at Patna



has got its #MeToo movement, we hope that things will start changing for women in the villages too. My wife and I are doing our best. We hope we can bring change. Jitender Chatter features in the upcoming documentary 'SON RISE' — a film by National Award winning filmmaker Vibha Bakshi. First Published: Jan 14, 2019 08:51 IST Courtesy: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/i-vowed-to-punish-my-wife-s-rapists-says-husband-of-rape-survivor/story-PYgAian71kgQvGaKjTY8bN.html>



With best compliments from -  
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## The divide that threatens to tear us apart

Newsdesk – The headline above is taken from a part of the summary of Oxfam report 2019. It warns that, "inequality is contributing to a poisoning of our politics. In recent years, we have seen crackdowns on freedom of speech and democracy by governments worldwide. The Council on Foreign Relations has highlighted the evidence that the gap between rich and poor is helping to fuel authoritarianism. Rather than working to heal the divide between rich and poor, some leaders are instead seeking to vilify immigrants, other ethnic groups, other nations, women and people in poverty."

The Oxfam report reveals that:

- Indian billionaires saw their fortunes swell by Rs 2,200 crore a day last year, with the top 1 per cent of the country's richest getting richer by 39 per cent as against just 3 per cent increase in wealth for the bottom-half of the population.
- 13.6 crore Indians, who make up the poorest 10 per cent of the country, continued to remain in debt since 2004.
- India added 18 new billionaires last year, raising the total number of billionaires to 119, while their wealth crossed the USD 400 billion (Rs 28 lakh crore) mark for the first time.
- It rose from USD 325.5 billion in 2017 to USD 440.1 billion in 2018, making it the single largest annual increase since the 2008 global financial crisis.
- Getting India's richest 1 per cent pay just 0.5 per cent extra tax on their wealth could raise enough money enough to increase the government spending on health by 50 per cent.

- While billionaire wealth soars, public services are suffering from chronic underfunding or being outsourced to private companies that exclude the poorest people,
  - In many countries including India, a decent education or quality healthcare has become a luxury only the rich can afford.
  - India's top 10 per cent of the population holds 77.4 per cent of the total national wealth. The contrast is even sharper for the top 1 per cent that holds 51.53 per cent of the national wealth.
  - The bottom 60 per cent, the majority of the population, own merely 4.8 per cent of the national wealth. Wealth of top 9 billionaires is equivalent to the wealth of the bottom 50 per cent of the population.
  - Women and girls are hardest hit by rising economic inequality.
- Oxfam International Executive Director Winnie Byanyima, one of the key participants at the WEF summit held at Davos, said that it is "morally outrageous" that a few wealthy individuals are amassing a growing share of India's wealth, while the poor are struggling to eat their next meal or pay for their child's medicines.
- "If this obscene inequality between the top 1 percent and the rest of India continues then it will lead to a complete collapse of the social and democratic structure of this country," she added.
- Oxfam India CEO Amitabh Behar said, "It (the survey) reveals how governments are exacerbating inequality by underfunding public services, such as healthcare and education, on the one hand, while under-taxing corporations and the wealthy, and failing to clamp down on tax dodging on the other".

## We and our police

We, the common people get scared whenever something happens which require us to go to the police. Their experiences give them reasons to be scared. Even the police department knows about it and they try to be friendly and easily approachable to the people in need. But we need to know about this civil security force as well. Behar Herald is serializing the question and answers in its issues to get the readers informed and also aware of their rights as citizen. The material being published here are available at the website of Maharashtra Police.

(Continued from last issue)

### 46. Do I have to answer all the questions the police officer asks?

Yes. It is always better to answer questions honestly in a straightforward manner and inform the police of any facts you may know. If you do not know something, then the police officer cannot force you to make any statement, or put words in your mouth. It is always better to make sure that someone else is there with you when you are being questioned.

### 47. Does the police officer have a duty to help me when I am in distress?

Yes. In 1985, guidelines for the code of conduct for the police were issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs and communicated to all chief secretaries of all states/union territories and heads of central police organisations. This requires the police to give any assistance to all without regard to wealth and social standing.

According to the code their general duty to provide security to all without fear or favour includes keeping the welfare of people in mind, being sympathetic and considerate toward them, being ready to offer individual service and friendship.

### 48. Can I ask the police to help me out with family problems?

It depends on the problem. If what is happening is a crime like violence in the family, badly beating a woman or a child, or incest, or trespass, of course the police must help you and cannot turn you away and say it is a private affair. But if adult children are disobedient, say they run away to get married, then it is no business of the police to chase after them or force them to return. That is purely a family matter.

### 49. If a police officer will not help or there is no police officer around, can the public catch a thief or wrongdoer and punish him there and then?

Yes and no. You can make what is called a "citizen's arrest" and catch the wrongdoer and take him to the nearest police station. That is all. But you cannot beat up the wrong-doer or join a crowd that is doing that. Members of the public only have a right to act to protect themselves which is called the right to defence but that too has to be reasonably used. It cannot turn into a one-sided beating or horrible humiliation and a police officer who allows that or joins in is likely to face disciplinary or criminal charges.

### 50. What can I do if the police officer does not help me?

Wilful breach or neglect of duty by a police officer is punishable with imprisonment. If the police officer is not helpful and you have been harmed, then you can complain about it to his senior. In such a case he may be found guilty. For dereliction of duty.

## 'I vowed to punish my wife's rapists'

- Jitender Chhattar

[Jitender Chhattar, a farmer from Haryana's Jind district, is married to a gang rape survivor. In pursuit of justice, both of them are studying law. They have sold prime property to hire lawyers and is now fighting a long battle for justice despite threats from the accused.]

Let me begin with the part that's the most uncomfortable to write or read about. Some years ago, my wife was gang-raped by eight men. They took photos and videos of her during and after the rape and used the recorded material to blackmail her. She was shot naked and they used the pictures to rape her for a year-and-a-half.

We were not married when this was happening. I heard about it from her soon after we were engaged in September 2015, when I met her for the first time. Our parents had arranged the wedding. I visited her home with my parents, who approved the match, and I was not to see her again until the marriage ceremony four months later. That is the tradition in rural Haryana.

We stayed in touch via the odd phone call to each other; me from Chhattar village and her from Jind, about 30km apart. One day, she said she had something important to tell me, and asked if I could visit once more with my parents. When we made the trip later that week, she told us she was a rape survivor and said she didn't want to start a relationship with a lie. With tears in her eyes, she looked into mine and said, "I am not worthy of this relationship, please do not marry me." My conscience started haunting me and I thought to myself, "God will not forgive me if I don't marry her." I told her, "I will not only marry you, I will also ensure that you get justice."

The pursuit of justice started before our wedding. Haryana has a huge rape problem. In the state — whose name means the abode of Hari, or God — the number of gang rapes also outnumber that in any other Indian state. Yet, this crime is discussed in hushed tones. Our society places the blame entirely on the women.

Most men in the situation I found myself would have immediately withdrawn the marriage proposal — a woman who has been raped is considered to have no honour. Parents constantly fear for their daughters' safety in the abode of Hari.

I remember that in Chhattar village, men would hang around the girls' school and harass the older female students, who would never complain to their parents as it could mean no longer being allowed to go to school to study.

Another place where women would get routinely harassed was on the Haryana Roadways bus from Chhattar to Jind, which was used daily by college students. Because of the harassment, many Chhattar families had forced their girls to drop out of college.

When I was a student travelling to Jind on the same bus in 2004, I wrote about the issue to the district general manager of Haryana Roadways, and campaigned for a separate, women-only bus for female students. I wanted them to be able to continue their education without fear. Within a couple of months, a new vehicle on the Chhattar-Jind route was reserved only for female students. Then in 2013, I worked with the local Thua khap panchayat to help prevent sex selection and female foeticide in 24 villages in Jind.

I learnt as I grew. There was a time when I believed that

alcohol, drugs and fast food were responsible for increasing rapes. For a while, I was known as a khap leader who said eating chowmein leads to rape. Contrary to what the media has made me out to be in the past, I have always believed in furthering the cause of women. I had also told journalists that men need to be educated about the issue, and that our children need to be taught traditional values, which include respecting women, but those bits were somehow left out.

Two weeks after my visit to my fiancée's home, I vowed to get her rapists punished. I helped her file an FIR against the eight men, hired lawyers, and initiated legal proceedings. We got married in December 2015 despite several threats being made to her family and mine.

The men were wealthy young men from politically connected families, with their main business being poultry, which is extremely lucrative in these parts. Thugs were sent to our house to threaten us, evidence that we had placed before the police was kept out of court, and three fraudulent FIRs were filed against me (all of which were found to be fabricated on investigation).

My parents stood by me and my wife, but that battle was difficult. I was threatened against pursuing the case and also offered money to withdraw my complaint.

The district court acquitted the accused. I have now taken it to the high court and have had to sell some land to pay for fighting the case. We sold two plots of land in Chhattar to raise about Rs 14 lakh in legal fees. We also have to live in Jind, instead of the village, as it is closer to the courts.

We have lost our peace of mind. Only bringing the perpetrators to book will assuage my wife's pain. She has frequent nightmares.

Women in Haryana have little agency of their own. After marriage, I quit my family farming business in Chhattar and moved to Jind so my wife can be closer to her parents. I am also pursuing a degree in law, after which I will fight my wife's case myself

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