

### How Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Left His Mark on India

One of the key figures of India's renaissance in the nineteenth century, the social reformer, philanthropist and anti-colonial activist made more than one contribution that have made the annals of our history richer.

- Nita Kumar

His portrait is famous: a dome-like forehead bordered with a crown of dark hair, a wide mouth that typically remains unsmiling, a short body clad in a dhoti, a shawl around his shoulder. There are no overt signs of assertive Brahmanhood – the sacred thread, the bare torso – and few might know that his title is actually Bandopadhyaya. But there is a blazing confidence. He is an “awakened Brahman,” one who can challenge Brahmanical practices without fear. Ishwar Chandra's eyes in his portraits are direct and piercing.

There are two wonderful things about the man. We could call him more reverentially, the guru, except that we should make friends with fellow-writers and philosophers in our country, not merely revere them. These two things, to my mind, emphasise the importance of Ishwar Chandra in our history.

#### What do women want?

The first is the needs of women. We know that the career of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) was partly made because of his interest in women. He agitated for their education, their rights to a normal life after widowhood, and against the malevolence of various oppressions still late nineteenth century Bengal. We could be intrigued by this importance of Chandra. But there had been a half already, social reformers active for at least. They had their master's eyes themselves that and had striven to together as a lecturing, haranguing, these peers, if not fellow-given the colonial times) who they actually were. And it succeeded. The efforts of Rammohan Roy (1772-1830) two generations earlier, Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890) at the same time, and of Mahadev Govind Ranade (1848-1901) and Dhondu Keshav Karve (1858-1960) in the generation to come, as well as so many others, seem idealistic and over-ambitious at first reading. Decades seem to slowly pass, until first one woman, then another, ceases to be identified with property that can be owned and disposed of by their menfolk; decades go by until they can complete school, get a university degree, work, even become a lawyer, then a doctor.



weighing on them in century Bengal.

intrigued by this women for Ishwar had been a half already, social two generations at seen reflected in a picture of was not pleasing, pull themselves society. Through sermonising, leaders taught their citizens (subjects,

The marriage age for girls inches up bit by bit, starting with the sheer right to life. In 1829, widow immolation (sati daha) is made illegal. In 1856, widow remarriage is legalised. 1870 sees the ban on female infanticide, and 1891 the raising of the age of consent from ten years to 12. In 1929 is the triumph of the Child Marriage Restraint Act which defines the child and the minor in relatively liberal ways, as under eighteen for boys and fourteen for girls.

By now, this should be familiar story, particularly as the research of historians such as Ishita Pande, Tanika Sarkar and Mrinalini Sinha,

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### Chandrayan 2 Expanding the boundaries of human knowledge

#### Inching towards the edge of discovery

#### Are you ready for the unknown?

Chandrayaan 2 is an Indian lunar mission that will boldly go where no country has ever gone before — the Moon's south polar region. Through this effort, the aim is to improve our understanding of the Moon — discoveries that will benefit India and humanity as a whole. These insights and experiences aim at a paradigm shift in how lunar expeditions are approached for years to come — propelling further voyages into the farthest frontiers.

#### Why are we going to the Moon?

The Moon is the closest cosmic body at which space discovery can be attempted and documented. It is also a promising test bed to demonstrate technologies required for deep-space missions. Chandrayaan 2 attempts to foster a new age of discovery, increase our understanding of space, stimulate the advancement of technology, promote global alliances, and inspire a future generation of explorers and scientists.

#### What are the scientific objectives of Chandrayaan 2? Why explore the Lunar South Pole?

Moon provides the best linkage to Earth's early history. It offers an undisturbed historical record of the inner Solar system environment. Though there are a few mature

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### GSLV MkIII-M1 Successfully Launches Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft

India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV MkIII-M1, successfully launched the 3840 kg Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft into an earth orbit today (July 22, 2019). The spacecraft is now revolving round the earth with a perigee (nearest point to Earth) of 169.7 km and an apogee (farthest point to Earth) of 45,475 km. Today's flight marks the first operational flight of the GSLV Mk III.

After a smooth countdown lasting 20 hours, GSLV MkIII-M1 vehicle majestically lifted off from the Second Launch Pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR (SDSC SHAR), Sriharikota at the scheduled launch time of 1443Hrs (2:43 pm) Indian Standard Time (IST) with the ignition of its two S200 solid strap-on motors. All the subsequent flight events occurred as scheduled.

About 16 minutes 14 seconds after lift-off, the vehicle injected Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft into an elliptical earth orbit. Immediately after spacecraft separation from the vehicle, the solar array of the spacecraft automatically got deployed and ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC), Bengaluru successfully took control of the spacecraft.

ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan congratulated the launch vehicle and satellite teams involved in this challenging mission. “Today is a historical day for Space Science and Technology in India. I am extremely happy to announce that GSLV MkIII-M1 successfully injected Chandrayaan-2 into an orbit of 6000 Km more than the intended orbit and is better.”

“Today is the beginning of the historical journey of India towards Moon and to land at a place near south pole to carry out scientific experiments to explore the unexplored. On July 15, 2019 ISRO intelligently observed a technical snag, Team ISRO worked out, fixed and corrected the snag within 24 hours. For the next one and a half day, the required tests were

conducted to ensure that corrections made were proper and in right direction. Today ISRO bounced back with flying colours.” Dr. Sivan said.

In the coming days, a series of orbit manoeuvres will be carried out using Chandrayaan-2's onboard propulsion system. This will raise the spacecraft orbit in steps and then place it in the Lunar Transfer Trajectory to enable the spacecraft to travel to the vicinity of the Moon.

GSLV Mk III is a three-stage launch vehicle developed by ISRO. The vehicle has two solid strap-ons, a core liquid booster and a cryogenic upper stage. The vehicle is designed to carry 4 ton class of satellites into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) or about 10 tons to Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

Chandrayaan-2 is India's second mission to the moon. It comprises a fully indigenous Orbiter, Lander (Vikram) and Rover (Pragyan). The Rover Pragyan is housed inside Vikram lander.

The mission objective of Chandrayaan-2 is to develop and demonstrate the key technologies for end-to-end lunar mission capability, including soft-landing and roving on the lunar surface. On the science front, this mission aims to further expand our knowledge about the Moon through a detailed study of its topography, mineralogy, surface chemical composition, thermo-physical characteristics and atmosphere leading to a better understanding of the origin and evolution of the Moon.

After leaving earth orbit and on entering Moon's sphere of influence, the on-board propulsion system of Chandrayaan-2 will be fired to slow down the spacecraft. This will enable it to be captured into a preliminary orbit around the Moon. Later, through a set of manoeuvres, the orbit of Chandrayaan-2 around the moon will be circularised at 100 km height from the lunar surface.

Subsequently, the lander will

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## India suffers because women eat the last and the least

Typically, men rule the roost while women rule the roast. With women coming out of the home into the workspace in India since the 1950s, that balance has been shifting. But even today, in most households, women are still in charge of the kitchen. And, so of the family nutrition.

Starting from keeping a track of the pantry-stock to planning the daily menu to filling up the dishes—it's the woman whose decision matters the most. But when it comes to the intake of proper diet, there is a stark difference between men and women of the same household: women end up eating the last and the least. Decades of undernutrition in Indian women, due to lack of access or awareness, haunt us today.

With every second woman anaemic, every third woman with low body mass index (BMI) and every fourth child born with low birth weight, the malnutrition situation in India is staggering. While India was one of the first nations to identify high malnutrition in children and introduced the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in 1975, followed by many policies and schemes, women's nutrition continues to be a grey area till today.

#### Why women?

Many studies and researches have conclusively proven that healthier women are more likely to give birth to healthy babies with high cognitive abilities, who are more likely to grow into

**When it comes to food, there is a stark difference between men and women in the same household. Women end up eating the last and the least. The much-needed nutrition revolution can come about only if India takes up women's nutrition as an agenda**

- Sharmistha Chakraborty

healthy and productive adults. The burden of women's chronic undernutrition across generations, is shifting the global scientific focus on women's food habits, now seen as the key to breaking the vicious cycle.

The status of women's health and nutrition is central to the quality of their lives. It is also the key determinant to the survival of a country's future generations. The implications of direct nutrition interventions on women's nutrition status, child-birth outcome and stunting rates in children are indisputable today. And such interventions have to start from adolescence. Healthy diet and access to health services are crucial for addressing multiple micronutrient deficiencies that bring on poor health and diseases.

#### Toxic masculinity

But is it just diet and nutrition? Researchers are taking a look at social indices to figure out their impact on women's nutrition and health. Despite social progress, women largely continue to navigate through systems that are

defined by masculinity. Class and caste hierarchies further sharpen the patriarchal grip, making it difficult for women to escape discrimination.

Girls are often viewed as a transit element and nurtured to become eligible for wifehood and motherhood, restricting their access to education and livelihood opportunities. Numerous studies have established strong correlations between female education and reduction in undernutrition amongst pre-school children. Progress on the challenges from lack of education can lead to reduced malnutrition. Substantial differences, however, are seen in urban and rural settings.

#### Early marriage

Early marriage and teenage pregnancy is still a threat, especially for women living in rural areas. Over 47 per cent girls are married off before age 18, and most of them become mothers at a very young age, shows a 2007 report by the Indian Institute of Population Sciences. Undernutrition, coupled with pregnancy in adolescent years, has serious consequences on the overall health, nutrition status and mental health of young girls.

#### Violence on women

Recent researchers are opening up new angles on how violence against women can shift the entire trajectory of

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## In Memoriam

### Dwijendralal Roy

Born: 19 July 1863, Krishnanagar, Nadia District, West Bengal

Died: 17 May 1913 (aged 49), Calcutta,

## So, Bengali included, but ...

By a special digital application, or, 'using artificial intelligence', the judgments of the Supreme Court of India will be translated and made available in all vernacular languages, which means even more than all Indian languages under the 8th Schedule of the Constitution. This is the pious decision of the Court's administration itself, at the behest of present Chief Justice of India. No doubt, it is a much-awaited initiative and is found possible only due to development of technology. (One may wonder however, whether it was considered to be made possible by anyone else earlier with a department staffed with human translators!)

Any good initiative makes a humble start. So, it was announced that in the first phase the translations will be available in six Indian languages other than English and including Hindi. Here the foul play began. From among the six languages, Bengali was excluded though it comes next to Hindi by the size of speakers\*. Why? No one knows. No explanations were given even after protests from several quarters..

Was it deliberately done to humiliate the Bengalees who are vociferous in expressing their solidarity with their distressed brothers and sisters of Assam? However, after passage of three weeks, the matter was clarified by none other than Union Law Minister. On 24th July, he said during Question Hour in the Parliament, "At present, judgements in nine vernacular languages are being translated and uploaded on the website of the Supreme Court of India. The nine languages are: Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Odiya, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu".

That put the confusion to end.

But who began it? And why? The question remains.

As The Hindu published the PTI newsfeed, Union Law Minister has also clarified that, the translation of judgements relates to cases arising under appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in relation to labour matters, Rent Act matters, land acquisition and requisition matters, service matters, compensation matters, criminal matters, family law matters, ordinary civil matters, personal law matters, religious and charitable endowments matters, simple money and mortgage matters, eviction under the Public Premises (Eviction) Act matters, land laws and agriculture tenancies and matters relating to consumer protection.

A good start, finally.

\*The related news was published in Behar Herald dated 15th July 2019.

## GB of Patliputra Br. of BAB

Newsdesk -

Pataliputra branch of Bengalee Association, Bihar held its General Body meeting on 28th July 2019. The meeting felt that the Banglabhashis in the state are being denied their linguistic minority rights. The meeting felt the urgent need to raise the issues to the government of Bihar and also to arouse the fellow banglabhashis about that need.

The meeting unanimously elected the office bearers and committee members of the branch for the years 2019 - 2021. Amit Mukherji was elected president and



Swapan Choudhary was elected working president. Dr. Krishna Sinha, Sib Sankar Guha, Chameli Pal and Swapan Sengupta were elected vice presidents. Bibhas Dutta was elected general secretary whereas Sobhana Das, Ranjana Sinha, Subhash Mukherji and Rupen Kumar Deb were elected joint secretaries.



## Reunion

Amit Mukherji and Rupen Kumar Deb were childhood friends at school. Both lived at Patna in different localities but never met even once during last 52 years! They met on 28th July 2019 in the general body meeting of Pataliputra branch of BAB. It was a grand reunion!

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## Guru Charan Samanta

Charanda labored for all the publications. He contacted the writers, persuaded the Publication Sub Committee to accord recommendation to the manuscript, contacted the artist for cover design and then arranged agreement with some press in Kolkata to get the book printed. And most important - since there was no market for Bengali books in Bihar, arranged single handedly the sale of the books from Kolkata."

(Continued).

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## India suffers because ...

growth: how mental or physical violence affect the mental health of mothers and in turn affect their physical health and nutrition, prenatal care, foetal growth, pregnancy and child-birth outcomes. Children of maltreated mothers end up malnourished.

### Kindle a spark

In recent years, political discourse about the challenge of under-nutrition has increased substantially at national and international levels. In India, this has accelerated the launch of the long-standing POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) in 2018, with a vision to address malnutrition, with improved data collection, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Malnutrition has secured its place in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections manifesto of several political parties—a reflection of popular demand and political will.

Women's empowerment is the priority of the national government and multiple initiatives have been introduced to improve their participation in education, social and livelihood sectors. Ticket to livelihood opportunities and economic freedom has been identified as a proven tool of progress, and the key to gender equity and overall wellbeing of the family.

### Together we stand

The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) of 2011, reportedly world's largest poverty alleviation programme, is working to mobilise rural marginalised women into self-managed self-help groups (SHG) at the grassroots level. Since inception, SHGs have come a long way to prove that they not just empower women with access to

resources within the households, but also work as a vehicle to deliver effective behaviour change around health and nutrition.

Programmes like JEEViKA in Bihar, Kudumashree in Kerala and Swabhimaan in Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Odisha hold glaring examples of successful layering of nutrition interventions through the SHG platforms. With the expanding scope, it is important to tap the estimated 54,94,554 functional SHGs in the country. Successful interventions need to be scaled up to reach out to marginalised women in need of information, awareness and support for a sustained behaviour change.

### Seeking solutions

Similar approach could be undertaken to engage with women's cooperatives, such as, Women Dairy Cooperative, Women's Industrial Cooperative Society Limited, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) cooperatives, Simridhi Mahila Cooperative Society, to sensitive them on the complexities of undernutrition and educate them for better nutrition practices. An estimated 61.5 per cent of Indian population is dependent on agriculture (Census, 2011). According to 2018 OXFAM data, agriculture sector employs 80 per cent of economically active women in India and they comprise 33 per cent of the agriculture labour force. Such platforms provide a unique opportunity to continuously pump in messages around nutrition rich food, cropping patterns, dietary diversity, kitchen gardening and so on.

The control over farmland would allow women to take right decisions around the nutrition requirement of families,

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## GSLV MkIII-M1 Successfully ...

separate from the Orbiter and enters into a 100 km X 30 km orbit around the Moon. Then, it will perform a series of complex braking maneuvers to soft land in the South polar region of the Moon on September 7, 2019.

Following this, the Rover will roll out from the lander and carries out experiments on the lunar surface for a period of 1 lunar day, which is equal to 14 Earth days. The mission life of the lander is also 1 lunar day. The Orbiter will continue its mission for a duration of one year.

The orbiter had a lift-off weight of about 2,369 kg, while the lander and rover weighed 1,477 kg and 26 kg

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## Chandrayan 2

models, the origin of Moon still needs further explanations. Extensive mapping of lunar surface to study variations in lunar surface composition is essential to trace back the origin and evolution of the Moon. Evidence for water molecules discovered by Chandrayaan-1, requires further studies on the extent of water molecule distribution on the surface, below the surface and in the tenuous lunar exosphere to address the origin of water on Moon.

The lunar South Pole is especially interesting because of the lunar surface area here that remains in shadow is much larger than that at the North Pole. There is a possibility of the presence of water in permanently shadowed areas around it. In addition, South Pole region has craters that are cold traps and contain a fossil record of the early Solar System. Chandrayaan-2 will attempt to soft land the lander -Vikram and rover-

respectively. The rover can travel up to 500 m (half a kilometre) and relies on electric power generated by its solar panel for functioning. Chandrayaan-2 has several science payloads to facilitate a more detailed understanding of the origin and evolution of the Moon. The Orbiter carries eight payloads, the lander carries three, and the rover carries two. Besides, a passive experiment is included on the lander. The Orbiter payloads will conduct remote-sensing observations from a 100 km orbit while the Lander and Rover payloads will perform in-situ measurements near the landing site.

The ground facilities constitute the third vital element of Chandrayaan-

Pragyan in a high plain between two craters, Manzinus C and Simpelius N, at a latitude of about 70° south.

### Launcher

The GSLV Mk-III has been completely designed and fabricated from within the country. The GSLV Mk-III will carry Chandrayaan 2 to its designated orbit. This three-stage vehicle is India's most powerful launcher to date, and is capable of launching 4-ton class of satellites to the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

### Orbiter

At the time of launch, the Chandrayaan 2 Orbiter will be capable of communicating with Indian Deep Space Network (IDSN) at Byalalu as well as the Vikram Lander. The mission life of the Orbiter is one year and it will be placed in a 100X100 km lunar polar orbit. The Orbiter will observe the lunar surface and relay communication between Earth and Chandrayaan 2's Lander—Vikram.

### Vikram Lander

The Lander of Chandrayaan 2 is named Vikram after Dr Vikram A Sarabhai, the Father of the Indian

consumption pattern and would help them in addressing the gaps. Agricultural policies that have historically targeted men, need to be altered, to target women and let them flourish in with improved access to key assets—information, resources, markets, and decision-making.

### Constitutional promise

The constitutional promise of reserving one-third of posts of chairpersons for women needs to be delivered. The right information and training of women can bring upfront programmes related to women's and family nutrition. With an estimated number of 2,55,529 panchayat raj institutions, the country has a huge scope to convert a large number of women panchayat members into "Nutrition Change Leaders".

India needs to strategically utilise the large cohorts of women's collectives, to transform women into "good nutrition" practitioners. Here's hoping, India will manage to put the women's nutrition agenda into an auto-pilot mode. And allow those who hold up half the nation's sky to bring about much-needed change.

(Sharmistha Chakraborty is a public health advocacy professional and currently works as Senior Program Manager -Knowledge Management, Advocacy and Communication, at Project Concern International/India) Published on Jul 10, 2019

Courtesy:

[https://poshan.outlookindia.com/story/poshan-news-the-game-changer/333941?fbclid=IwAR1g\\_m4TEpAB3xrO9OMi3V\\_xqgcJSdJoiIY6M6UDBmtFbjw6x9KH8JmYI40](https://poshan.outlookindia.com/story/poshan-news-the-game-changer/333941?fbclid=IwAR1g_m4TEpAB3xrO9OMi3V_xqgcJSdJoiIY6M6UDBmtFbjw6x9KH8JmYI40)

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2 mission. They perform the important task of receiving the health information as well as the scientific data from the spacecraft. They also transmit the radio commands to the spacecraft. The Ground Segment of Chandrayaan-2 consists of Indian Deep Space Network, Spacecraft Control Centre and Indian Space Science Data Centre.

Today's successful launch of Chandrayaan-2 is a significant milestone in this challenging mission. A total number of 7500 visitors witnessed the launch live from the Viewer's Gallery at Sriharikota.

Jul 22, 2019

<https://www.isro.gov.in/update/22-jul-2019/gslv-mkiii-m1-successfully-launches-chandrayaan-2-spacecraft>

Space Programme. It is designed to function for one lunar day, which is equivalent to about 14 Earth days. Vikram has the capability to communicate with IDSN at Byalalu near Bangalore, as well as with the Orbiter and Rover. The Lander is designed to execute a soft landing on the lunar surface.

### Pragyan Rover

Chandrayaan 2's Rover is a 6-wheeled robotic vehicle named Pragyan, which translates to 'wisdom' in Sanskrit. It can travel up to 500 m (½-a-km) and leverages solar energy for its functioning. It can only communicate with the Lander.

### Timeline of the mission

18th September, 2008 - Prime Minister Manmohan Singh approves the Chandrayaan2 lunar mission

### Mission Planning

Launch Date - July 22, 2019  
Landing on Moon - Sep 7, 2019  
Scientific Experiment on Moon - 1 Lunar day (14 earth days)  
Orbital Experiment - Will be operational for 1 year (Inputs from ISRO)



## The destiny of Assam's millions rests on documents that fade, fray, go missing in the floods

**In a country which defines citizenship by blood, NRC shows bloodlines are hard to trace on paper.**

- Ipsita Chakravarty

As the floodwaters engulfed Assam this year, residents of the state reached for their valued possessions before they were destroyed. For many, these were the documents they needed for the National Register of Citizens. Without them, they could be wiped out in the eyes of the state.

The register, being updated for the first time since 1951, is meant to sift citizens from undocumented migrants who may have found their way into the state. To be included in the list, applicants must provide documentary proof that they or their ancestors entered the country before midnight on March 24, 1971, the eve of the Bangladesh War.

Since many applicants were born after the cut off date, this involved showing two sets of documents. List A, or legacy documents to prove their ancestors lived in India before 1971 and List B, or link documents to prove they were related to the legacy person.

The 14 different kinds of documents accepted as legacy proof, including the 1951 NRC and pre-1971 electoral rolls in Assam. These two were digitised and uploaded by the office of the NRC, which scanned 6.6 crore documents and digitised old records that covered two crore names, making it the largest database of pre-1971 documents in the country.

Applicants could run a search by typing in their legacy person's name or hometown. Once they found the name in the database, they were issued a "legacy data code". It acted as a kind of "PNR code" for the application, explained Prateek Hajela, state coordinator for the NRC.

For establishing a relationship with the legacy person, the website lists eight kinds of documents that may be accepted, such as birth certificates, land documents, school board of university certificates, electoral rolls, ration cards. Married women were initially told that they could submit certificates issued by gram panchayats attesting to their parentage.

Once the documents were received, they were sent off for verification to the original issuing authorities, some of which were in other states. Meanwhile, NRC officials fanned out across Assam for field level verification.

In effect, the office of the NRC had to establish the identity and about five decades of family history of over three crore applicants.

### Life and files

But documents turned out to be unstable markers of identity and history.

For thousands in Assam, citizenship depended on a fading name in a frayed, yellowing document. Generations of family history could be wiped off the records if the electoral rolls had crucial pages missing.

Besides, names mutated over time in documents that were decades apart. For instance, one woman had trouble proving that "Altab Kha" in the 1951 NRC was the same person as "Altab Hussain Khan" in the 2015 voter list – her father. Spellings altered from birth certificate to matriculation

certificate to voter identity card. Women married and changed their surnames, men came back from the Hajj and acquired the prefix "Haji".

A person's age could also be inconsistent across documents. The registration of births and deaths had only been made mandatory in Assam from 1978 and, even then, patchily enforced. For many of Assam's rural poor, who did not have birth certificates or had never celebrated a birthday, age was a matter of surmise.

Then there were documents lost in the various dislocations of a turbulent state – lands and houses washed by floods and erosion, communal violence which forced thousands to flee overnight, taking nothing with them.

As the citizenship count progressed, the flaws in the process became evident.

### Rule changes

Over the last four years, there were sudden, sometimes covert, changes in what documents could be admitted or where paper trails could be supplemented with oral evidence. As a result, some of Assam's most marginalised groups risk exclusion from the NRC.

The first case in point was the back and forth over gram panchayat certificates, which left thousands of poor married women from rural Assam in the lurch. These are certificates signed by the panchayat secretary, giving details of the person's parentage, place of birth, marriage and where they had moved after marriage. About 48 lakh women, many of whom had never been to school and so had no matriculation certificates or other documents to show, used such certificates as a link document.

Then in 2017, when the initial applications had already been submitted, the Gauhati High Court ruled that the documents invalid. Later that year, the Supreme Court overturned this judgment, saying panchayat certificates could be used, provided they were properly verified.

But for many women, these documents had been used as a last resort. Reports from Assam suggest a large number of married women were left out of the draft published in July last year because they had used panchayat certificates. NRC officials said they were to treat them as non-legally admissible documents, acceptable only if submitted with additional documentary evidence.

Indeed, an internal memo from the NRC coordinator to district registrars, dated May 1, 2018, suggested that the counting authority operated under an internal set of rules not explicitly stated in the website. Refugee registration certificates, submitted as legacy documents, immunisation certificates and ration cards, used as link documents, needed to be viewed with "extra caution". Records of the 1951 NRC and pre-electoral rolls not available with deputy commissioners would not be recognised. Birth certificates issued more than a year after birth would also not be accepted.

As applicants made fresh claims to citizenship after July 2018, the NRC stipulated that no newly made documents would be admitted. Among the worst sufferers were the women who had relied on gram panchayat certificates, poor families who had shown refugee registration certificates and children under 14, who were the other large group of rejects from the July 2018 draft.

Most children depended on error-riddled school and birth

certificates. The office of the NRC had assured parents that such children would be included in the register if their identity could be established through oral family tree verifications. In reality, reports suggest, no such allowances were made.

### Uncertain ancestors

Tying a whole family tree's fortunes to one legacy name in an unreliable old document also led to mass exclusions.

The 1951 NRC, mined by many for legacy data, was compiled in the chaotic days after Partition, based on the independent India's first Census. It is an ad hoc, incomplete and sometimes bizarre document. Names were left out or spelt wrong, nicknames or monikers were entered. People's professions could pass for first names. One bureaucrat spoke of several "Postmans", "Hawildars" and "Patwaris" who crop up in the 1951 register.

In the 1951 register as well as in other old records, people with the same name show up several times, creating confusion. Take Isaruddin, a farmer from Lower Assam's Goalpara district. Twenty two members of his family had applied with the legacy of his father, Muslimuddin, whose name appeared in the 1951 NRC. But they had linked it to the wrong Muslimuddin. None of them had made it to the July 2018 draft. The problem became intractable at the claims stage because families were not allowed to change their legacy person.

The gaps in legacy data has led to strange situations. In some cases, the legacy persons themselves were alive but the NRC had rejected proof of their presence in India before 1971 - Abdul Hussain, for instance, the headman of his village in Chirang district.

Then there were the relatives of India's fifth President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, who said they could not find any of their ancestors, in the 1951 NRC or any of the pre-1971 electoral rolls. That included the President himself and his brother, who was thought to be the first person in Assam to get a medical degree and retired as a colonel in the Indian army. The family did not apply because they could not find their legacy data.

### Clerical errors?

In some cases, mistakes were introduced as the documents passed through the offices of the NRC.

In the early stages, there were language problems. Forms submitted in Assamese had been returned in English, with spelling errors creeping in through the process. Another family complained their wrongly spelt surname was a word of abuse in Assamese.

Were these mistakes deliberate, as some families have claimed from the start? Were they merely the result of callousness? Did they happen because a bureaucratic system with limited capacities tried to carry out one of the most ambitious exercises in documentary verification that the country has ever seen?

Whatever the reason, millions of people could be casualties of a process which seeks to define citizenship by blood but finds that bloodlines are hard to trace on paper.

**On July 31, Assam will release the final National Register of Citizens, a list of Indian citizens living in the state. Possibly the largest citizenship screening drive in the world, it has put millions of people on edge. In a month-long reporting project called The Final Count, Arunabh Saikia and Ipsita Chakravarty look at how the list was drawn up, who was left out, and what lies ahead.**

Published on: Jul 20, 2019

Courtesy: <https://scroll.in/article/931000/the-destiny-of-assams-millions-rests-on-documents-which-fade-fray-go-missing-in-the-floods>

## Continued from Page-1 How Ishwar Chandra...

focused on the recognition of the 'woman' as child, and of the child/woman as in possession of rights, has trickled down to popular consciousness. We should all know the work of Sudhir Chandra, Geraldine Forbes, Radha Kumar and Madhu Kishwar; the brilliant theorisation of Lata Mani which opens up our imagination a further necessary bit, and all the evocative, useful work on goddesses, Aryan women, bhakti saints and popular worship, by scholars too numerous to be named. The fraught path towards small victories for women's equality is certainly well researched, and, hopefully, known by everyone to different degrees.

### What women already have

But there is another part to the story of women which is exemplified in Ishwar Chandra's life. Women were the grandmothers, mothers, sisters, other senior relatives or fictive relatives, and then wives and daughters, of the men of any period, including of the educated, reforming men such as Ranade, Karve, Phule and everyone else. We may not be able to build a vivid picture for each person, but for Ishwar Chandra, we know this: his paternal grandmother, Durga Devi, and his mother Bhagvati Devi's mother, were both powerful women who survived through destitution through their own planned labour. His honorary dadi in Calcutta, Rajmani, and a female shopkeeper in his father's time, helped selflessly to have the men survive, and succeed. Ishwar Chandra says for the shopkeeper:

"When I heard this heart-rending story from my father it kindled an unbearable blaze of sorrow in my heart, matched in intensity only by the profound respect for women it engendered in me."

And for his dadi:

"Many say that I am an advocate for women. I suppose they are right. Anyone who could witness Rajmani's love, compassion and goodness, and enjoy the fruits of her virtues, and not become an advocate for women would have to be the most vile and ungrateful person on this earth."

Both quotations are from Brian Hatcher's "The Shakuntala

Paradigm," in The Journal of Hindu Studies (Vol 3 No. 6), Hatcher being the premier biographer and commentator on Ishwar Chandra.

Shakuntala is well known to us as the heroine forgotten, then recognised, by her paramour. Hatcher rightfully stresses the man, in this case, Vidyasagar's (as he addresses him) sensitivity and imagination, and response to the call to recognise. However, we should also consider another obvious fact, this one about women. They made the recognition of themselves possible. They knew they were oppressed and in need of succour.

As Geetanjali Shree's novel Mai tells in its story of a mother and two reformer-children, a woman is not an object of pity, simply raw data, as it were, to act upon. She is a subject in her own right, one who knows who she is, processed data. Just as Vidyasagar recognised the women he encountered, and we know this from his writings, the women in his life recognised themselves, for which we unfortunately have no written data. But we have beautiful writing such as the novel Mai to reveal to us this hidden and forgotten fact about women – they are cognisant of themselves, including their problems, and the men in their family are often the vehicle for change because the women reveal themselves in various ways to the men.

We should remember Vidyasagar on his birthday for all his various accomplishments, as Sanskrit professor, inspector of schools, self-sacrificing philanthropist, anti-colonial Indian. He would be proud, however, that we understood, as he must have done, that women's agency and power extended to their consistent working, through men like him, for their uplift.

### The Bengali alphabet

Then we come to the second important contribution of Vidyasagar as I have selected it. He wrote down the Bengali alphabet as we know it today. His original publication on the subject is called Barna Parichay, literally, An Introduction to the Alphabet. We think, What? There was no alphabet before? Of course there was. Just as

there was writing, there were stories, there was education, there were children. But everything has a date and a beginning because from there starts the categorisation and the classification. Vidyasagar made it uniform by removing some letters, adding others, confirming how many there must be and what the exact shape and sound of each was. He further made a rhyme to introduce each to the child-learner. He published the alphabet accompanied by beautiful wood-cut illustrations.

In the history of modern India, there have been few who have matched this. What we have needed for a long time is more resources for children, more writing and the arts, more rhymes and pictures, all based on observation of how children learn. This can only come if we immerse ourselves in our everyday world and are intimate with our shapes, sounds, images and symbols. More and more of us are turning to this, hopefully, and we will soon match our rich history with an equally rich present.

But Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar did this over a century and a half ago.

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With best compliments from -

**Dr. Supriyo Mukherjee**

Secretary

Samastipur Branch, Bengalee Association, Bihar



# Guru Charan Samanta

- Bidyut Pal

(Continued from last issue)

Bihar Bangla Academy

A brief pre-history is needed here. In 1971, before the general elections, the government of Bihar announced the formation of 'Art & Literature Fund'. Bengali remained excluded from it. At that time the Bengalee Association was hot in the discourse about origination Bengali language. In the pages of Sanchita Guru Charan Samanta had already emphasized the strong case for Bengali being a language of Bihar quoting Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay's thesis about the later language forms of Magadhi Prakrit – split in Purvi and Pashchim Magadhi; Bengali, Oriya and Assamiya being of Purvi Magdhi family (Magahi, Maithili and Bhojpuri belongs to Pashchimi Magadhi family). Hence, Dr. Sharadindu Ghoshal, D. N. Sircar and Guru Charan Samanta met the then Governor of Bihar. He denied any possibility of including Bengali as the Fund was created as per Central government directions.

Keeping in abeyance the discussions about the possibility of creating an Academy for Bengali it was decided that political efforts must be made to get Bengali included in that 'Art & Literature Fund'. Finally after a long struggle Bengali could be included during United Front government formed in 1977.

Then the persuasion for formation of a Bangla Academy like Magahi, Maithili and Bhojpuri academies gained force. It was advised by some quarters in the government to launch a private-level Bangla Academy which the government would take over. That was also done and Bengalee Association, Bihar was instrumental behind it, Association also funded it. Association was regularly raising its demand for government level formation of Bangla Academy through resolutions in its general body meetings. After much persuasion the then Chief Minister announced formation of Bihar Bangla Academy in one general body meeting of the Association held at Purnea and subsequently it was inaugurated at Bharatiya Nritya Kala Mandir, Patna on 12th May 1983 in the presence of many dignitaries including Pranab Mukherjee and Chief Minister of Bihar. Appointed by the government its First chairman was Bibhuti Bhushan Mukhopadhyay, the famed litterateur of Bengali from Darbhanga and first Director-cum-Secretary was Pranab Shankar Mukhopadhyay, an IAS officer, then working in Bihar.

Let us listen from Pranab Shankar Mukhopadhyay, the first director of the Academy, "Joint Secretary of the Academy, Guru Charan babu became my nearest colleague....Academy was not financially comfortable during those days. So we had to be choosy. Yet, two excellent programmes could be made successful in the first year. The first one was a seminar on 'Rabindranath and national integration' (the subject was chosen by the vice chairman of the Academy, Gopal Haldar. The second one was celebration of 90th birth anniversary of Bibhuti Bhushan Mukhopadhyay. In both the programmes, along with eminent persons of the state, many from West Bengal also participated. After three decades, names of the persons remaining bright in my memory are, Bhabatosh Dutta, Somendra Nath Basu (both



Guru Charan Samanta speaking in the meeting of Bihar Bangla Academy. Pic. Unknown (Received from Purnendu Mukherjee)

dead) and Nirendra Nath Chakrabarty. Both the programmes earned wide acclaim. Reason was not only the presence of honourable speakers. Rather the programmes impressed many due to the reception given to and care taken of the esteemed guests, good communication with the masses, neat management etc. Lion's share of all these responsibilities was with Guru Charan babu.

"Guru Charan babu always tried to take fast decision and avoid any blockade to the works of the Academy due to red-tapism. Discipline and courteousness was the ingrained qualities of the man"

Let us listen from another person, Dipak Goswami, who was then the librarian of British Library, Patna and helpful to Bihar Bangla Academy in many ways. "After that, one by one the publications began – 'Bihare Bangla Sahitya by Nanda Dulal Roy, Kedar Rachanabali (altogether three volumes) by Kedar Nath Bandopadhyay, 'Ashalata Singha rachanabali', 'Biharer sampratik bangle kobita', 'Bangla o Bangalee' by Shailesh Kumar Bandopadhyay, 'Rabindra Prabaha' by Ram Bahal Tewary....Books were being written at some place, recommendation and editing work were being done at Patna whereas printing and distribution had to be arranged at Kolkata. Day after day I have seen, how untiringly Guru

Continued on Page-2

## Remembering on 138th Birth Anniversary

### Premchand

A short story

#### Guru Mantra

Domestic squabbles and a dearth of invitations led Pandit Chintamani to consider renouncing the world and when he vowed to become a wandering ascetic his best friend, Pandit Moteram Shastri, gave him this advice.

'Friend, I've been intimately acquainted with a good many first-class mahatmas. Now, when they arrive at some well-to-do citizen's door they don't fall in a heap and hold out their hands and call down hypocritical blessings such as "God keep you in body and soul, may you always be happy." Such is the way of beggars. As soon as a holy man reaches the door

he lets out his war-cry in a regular yell so that everybody inside the house is astonished and comes running to see what's happened. I know two or three of these slogans--you can use any you like. Gudri Baba used to say, "If anybody dies five will die!" When they heard this battle-cry people would fall right at his feet. Siddh Bhagat had a fine slogan: "Eat, drink and be merry but watch out for the holy man's stick." Nanga Baba would say, "Give to me, feed me, let me drink, let me sleep. "Just remember, your prestige depends a good deal on your slogan. What else can I tell you! Don't forget, you and I have been friends for a long time, we've enjoyed the same free dinners hundreds of times. Whenever we were at the same banquet we used to compete to eat up one dish more than the other. I'm going to miss you!

May God give you a happy life. Chintamani wasn't pleased with any of the slogans. He said, 'Think up some special cry for me.

'All right--how's this one: "If you don't give to me I'll run you into the ground."

'Yes, I like that one, but if you'll allow me, I'll shorten it.'

'Go right ahead.'

'Then how about this: "Give or I'll run you into the ground." Moteram leaped up. 'By the Lord above, that's absolutely unique! Devotion has illuminated you. Splendid! Now try it out just once and we'll see how you do it.' Chintamani stuck his fingers in his ears and yelled with all his might. 'Give or I'll run you into the ground! 'The noise was so thunderous that even

Moteram was startled. The bats flew out of the trees in dismay and dogs began to bark.

Moteram said, 'Friend, your cry was like the roar of a lion. Now your slogan has been decided, I have a few other things to tell you, so pay attention. The language of holy men is quite different from our ordinary way of speaking.

We say "Sir," for example, to some people, and just "you" to others. But the holy man says "thou" to everybody, important or insignificant, rich or



Born : July 31, 1880, Lamhi

Died : October 8, 1936, India

poor, old or young; however, go on treating old people with respect. Also remember never to talk plain Hindi. Otherwise the secret will be out that you're an ordinary Brahman and not a real holy man. Make your language fancy. To say, for example, "My good woman, give me something to eat" is not the style of the holy man. A genuine mahatma will say it like this: "Woman, spread a feast before me, and you will be waking in the paths of righteousness.

'Friend: Chintamani said, 'how can I praise you enough? You've helped me beyond measure.

Having given this advice, Moteram took his leave. Chintamani set out and what should he see right away but a crowd of holy men sitting in front of a bhang and hashish shop smoking hashish. When they saw Chintamani one of the holy men pronounced his slogan:

'Move along, move along,

Otherwise, I'll prove you wrong.

Another holy man proclaimed:

'Fee fi fo fum

We holy men have finally come,

From now on only fun.

While these syllables were still echoing in the skies a third mahatma roared out:

'Here and there

down and up

Hurry up and fill my cup.'

Chintamani could not restrain himself. He burst out with 'Give or I'll run you into the ground!'

As soon as they heard this the holy men greeted him. The bowl of the hookah was refilled at once and the task of lighting it was assigned to Pandit Chintamani. He thought, if I don't accept the pipe my secret will be out.

Nervously he took it. Now anyone who has never smoked hashish can try and try without being able to make the pipe draw. Closing his eyes Chintamani inhaled with all his might. The pipe fell from his hands, his eyes popped, he foamed at the mouth but not the least bit of smoke came from his lips nor was there any sign that the pipe was kindled. This lack of know-how was quite enough to ruin his standing in the society of holy men. A couple of them advanced angrily and roughly catching him by the hands, pulled him up.

'A curse on you: one said, and another, 'Aren't you ashamed of pretending to be a mahatma!'

Humiliated, Panditji went and sat down near a sweets shop and the holy men, striking tambourines, began to sing this hymn:

'Illusion is the world, beloved, the world is an illusion.

Both sin and holiness are lies--there's the philosophical solution.

The world is all illusion.

A curse on those who forbid us bhang and hashish, Krishna, lover, all the world's illusion. ■

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