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## Unpacking the “Bihariness” — Reflections on Indian Predator: The Butcher of Delhi

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### ABSTRACT

Netflix’s true crime documentary *Indian Predator: The Butcher of Delhi* (2022) follows the story of serial killer Chandrakant Jha, a Bihari migrant worker in Delhi. The documentary sensationally portrays his spine-chilling crimes, while superficially discussing pressing issues of police brutality and the dysfunctionality of the criminal justice system. The interplay of socio-economic conditions, the indifferent justice system, and its effects on one’s degrading mental health is what we seem to get out of this three-part series through visual and textual analysis. The backdrop of the migrants as a pathological problem vis-à-vis its interaction with the criminal justice system is emphasized by highlighting the “Bihariness” of Chandrakant Jha. The documentary refers to this “Bihariness” albeit tangentially, though fails to discuss the caste and class locations of these prejudices and chauvinism that is directed against the figure of the working-class Bihari migrant. In this paper, we attempt to unpack this popular narrative as a casteist and classist commonsensical social and cultural reproduction to understand the figure of the Bihari migrant as depicted in the documentary. We contend that highlighting the “Bihariness” of migrant workers is a form of othering that mainly plays out through their conspicuous laboring bodies, language, and their association with criminality. In doing so, we also intend to explore the dimensions of mental health and socio-economic and institutional interactions of poor migrant workers in urban areas.

### KEYWORDS

Bihari, migrant worker, true crime, mental health, Bihariness, criminality, urban area

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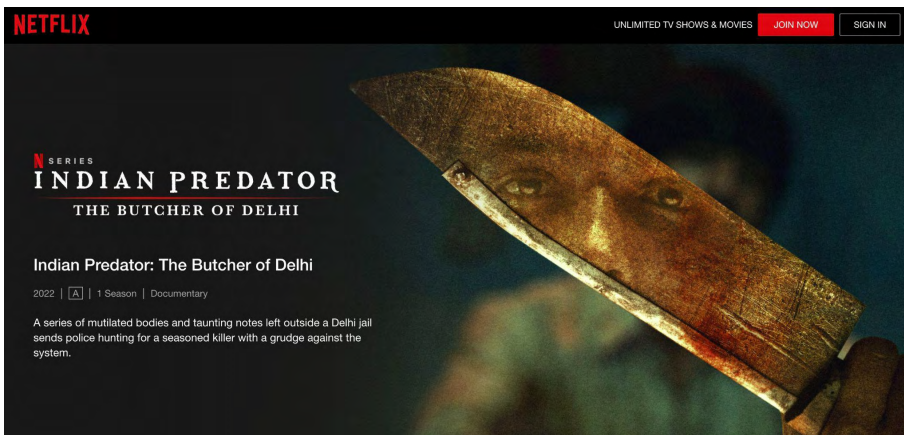
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## Introduction

In July 2022, Netflix<sup>1</sup> released the first edition of its true crime documentary series called *Indian Predator: The Butcher of Delhi*. The docuseries shows the story of a serial killer named Chandrakant Jha, a Bihari migrant worker in Delhi. The documentary portrays his spine-chilling crimes in a manner that is not just sensational but also overly dramatic by having actors enact the gruesome scenes. However, the discussion of issues on the surface without truly exploring the pressing areas of the Indian criminal justice system makes it like most other shows that are interested in showing the viewers an unexplored reality but not brave enough to delve deeper into it. For this paper, we are not touching upon the technicalities and the craft of cinema per se; instead, we are focusing on the figure of the Bihari migrant, which is referred to in the docuseries by several participants alongside focusing on the socio-economic interactions of poor Bihari migrant workers in urban areas. We contend that the backdrop of the migrants as a pathological problem vis-à-vis its interaction with the criminal justice system is emphasized by highlighting the “Bihariness” of the criminal. Despite being well-intentioned, the documentary ends up making the representation of Bihari’s identity a criminogenic one.

### Figure 1

*Title Image of the Docuseries Indian Predator: The Butcher of Delhi*



Note. Source: <https://www.netflix.com/in/title/81252894>.

## Design of the Study

This paper utilizes the methodology of visual analysis for analyzing the three episodes of the documentary series. The first episode named “Tohfe” [Gifts] is of 42 minutes, the second episode named “Tasveer” [Pictures] is of 43 minutes, and the third episode named “Tukre” [Pieces] is of 40 minutes. Visuality refers to how vision is constructed in various ways: “how we see, how we are able, allowed or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein” (Foster, 1988, p. ix). In other words, what is seen

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and how it is seen are culturally constructed. While analyzing the different scenes in the docuseries, we have deployed a critical visual methodology along two lines of inquiry. The first deals with the site of circulation: In what forms does the image (the figure of the Bihari migrant) circulate? The second deals with the site of the audience: How do the audience and participants engage with the image? The paper uses textual analysis as a method to analyze the representation of a Bihari man as an identity and the Bihari man as the central character in the docuseries. We have used aspects like identity, language, mannerisms, and other aspects including criminality in which the Bihari identity especially of male migrant workers is often othered.

The majority of Bihari migrants, as suggested by the International Growth Centre's (IGC) study are cyclical laborers from vulnerable groups who are often accused of taking over urban areas and jobs (Samaddar, 2020). In the popular imagination, Bihar has come to represent a cultural symbol of backwardness, "dirtiness," and trouble, which is almost impervious to "development" (A. Kumar, 2009). The docuseries refers to this "Bihariness" understood as a menace, albeit tangentially. However, it fails to discuss the caste and class locations of these prejudices and chauvinism that are directed against the figure of the working-class Bihari migrant. In this article, we attempt to unpack the popular narrative of the Bihari menace or "Bihariness" as a casteist and classist commonsensical social and cultural reproduction. We are analyzing the social identity of the working-class Bihari migrants, which is constructed by the twin processes of migration and exclusion. Internal migration plays an important role in conflating economic, social, and criminal harm to the Biharis. Their social identity, or Bihariness, leads to their othering in urban spaces, as they are conspicuous laboring bodies with language being a prominent marker of their identity. Their othering and exclusion also get structured through criminality as often, including in the documentary, the terms Bihari and criminal are used interchangeably. This is why we have tried to problematize the portrayal of the Bihari migrant figure in mainstream media before presenting our analysis of "Bihari" as the Indian Predator. Subsequently, we have tried to explore the dimensions of mental health including a psychological analysis. We have also tried to highlight the synonymy of Bihariness and criminality as depicted in the documentary apart from reflecting on the caste privilege of the criminal.

### **"Bihariness"—Migration and Exclusion**

Migration from their native place or home to various centers of economic activity that eventually become their house or place of residence and work is a reality for a sizable population of Bihar. In most anthropological works on migration, the "home" and the "house" are the two loci that stand in contrast: one being the migrants' most natural abode, and the other, their adopted place, one to which they remain aliens (Fazal, 2016). For a large number of Biharis, their mode of being is defined by migration from their "home" or native place and the exclusion that they face in their "house" or the current place of work and residence. While staying in their adopted place for years, they are made to feel like they do not belong there. In other words, "Bihariness" as an immigrant social reality is routinely shaped by the processes of migration from the homeland and social exclusion faced in the adopted land.

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At any rate, for some time the Bihari population has certainly been the most mobile one in the country (Karan, 2007, as cited in Tripathy & Verma, 2013). As per a study by the International Institute for Population Sciences, more than half of the households in Bihar are exposed to migration to more developed places within and outside the country and the majority of households depend on remittances for their livelihood (Roy et. al., 2021). Bihar is a major source of migrant laborers who are engaged in the agricultural and industrial sectors in several states of India. The overwhelming majority of the migrant Bihari population does not come from the landed and privileged classes. A significant proportion of the Bihari migrants belong to lower castes and Muslim communities. The feudal structures are so deeply entrenched in Bihari society that most forms of occupational mobility for the lower castes (even in rural non-farm employment) remain out of the question (A. Kumar, 2009). Therefore, historically, the alternative of migration to other areas has been the only way for the lower peasantry to attain upward mobility, both in social and economic terms (A. Kumar, 2009). According to Deshingkar and Farington (2009), out of the many factors that force migrant workers to leave their native land and go somewhere else is the harsh reality of the chance of moving beyond caste-based discrimination that they experience in their land. However, the endless covert and overt forms of caste-based discrimination continue no matter the place they migrate to and the upper castes individuals will always have exclusionary practices to not just exert their power over them but also make it a point to explicitly make them understand how they do not “belong” there (Kundu & Mohanan, 2017).

Even after living in a place for a long period and offering valuable services through their labor, Bihari migrant workers are treated as the “other” and the “outsider.” Basic recognition and respect for their existence and their work, as well as being treated as other respectable citizens of the country, is difficult to achieve (R. Kumar, 2020). The migration from Bihar to Delhi is particularly worth noting because the Indian capital is a hub of migratory activities. Delhi, like many other cities, has been witnessing a rapid surge of internal migration. It has evolved into a developed area of informal occupations and livelihood for many in the secondary and tertiary sectors of its economy (Datta, 2018). Thus, an overwhelming population of Bihar has to contend with the twin processes of migration (from the native land) and exclusion (in the place of work and residence), which serve to shape their Bihariness or Bihari identity in the metropolis of Delhi. Embedded in both processes, such factors as social exclusion, assimilation difficulties, denial of citizenship rights, exploitation, and everyday violence become critical components of their Bihariness.

### **Bihariness and Othering—Laboring Bodies, Language, and Criminality**

Workers from different regional backgrounds in Delhi are heavily dependent on their regional networks. However, their strong regional bonds do not have much relevance in achieving upward income mobility although it does affect the occupational choices of the workers (Jha & Singh, 2014). Studies have shown that incomes mainly obtained in the informal sector are exploitative, as workers do not receive their remuneration on time and face many hardships through the involvement of multiple intermediaries

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(Mosse et al., 2005). This indicates that most of the Biharis outside Bihar are already having a precarious and vulnerable existence. A. de Haan (1997) uses the term “unsettled settlers” for such a class of migrant workers. While their social and cultural visibility is largely muted in rural areas, the sheer population density and shared spaces make their presence conspicuous in urban areas. Due to this, they are often loathed outside Bihar as representatives of a sordid cultural milieu (A. Kumar, 2009). Migrants from Bihar are often accused of taking over urban areas and jobs from the “locals.” In reality, most Bihari migrant workers are laboring bodies having precarious existences in urban spaces. Most of them are in low-paying informal and precarious jobs and reside in informal settlements. Despite their valuable contribution to the urban economy, unfortunately, they have to face discrimination in the social and cultural life of the cities. Urban middle-class residents are often quick to blame the Biharis for anything and everything that is wrong with their city ranging from the proliferation of slums to traffic snarls, overcrowding in public spaces, and higher crime rates.

As per various estimates, Biharis comprise about a quarter of the total population of Delhi (Kapur, 2013). While many Biharis are in white-collar jobs and own businesses, most of them work as informal workers in different economic sectors of the city. According to a study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), workers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh constitute about 70% of Delhi’s migrant workers earning less than 250 dollars in a month. Additionally, in slum clusters and parts of unauthorized settlements in Delhi, eight out of ten people are from three states, which are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal (Joshi, 2023). Although they live and work on the margins of urban life, the nature of their work makes them stand out in the urban populace of Delhi. They experience loneliness, as well as social rejection and shame in hostile urban conditions (Datta, 2022). Despite providing crucial services to the economic and social life of Delhi through their labor, the Bihari migrant workers are looked at with disdain by the large middle class of Delhi. To them, Bihar has come to represent a cultural symbol of backwardness, “dirtiness,” and trouble, which is almost impervious to “development” (A. Kumar, 2009). Bihari society remains an object of disgust and shame for them. In fact, any working-class person irrespective of their state of origin is termed a Bihari. Thus, in the worldview of the middle class, the term Bihari acquires a new meaning. It is used as a slur towards a working-class person while simultaneously “othering” them. This is clearly seen in the poor and inhumane treatment of them for their socio-economic position in society, making them vulnerable citizens in their own country (Agarwal, 2022).

Language is considered as a signifier of Bihariness and Bihari identity in many locales. However, it also serves as the reason for discrimination against Biharis in Delhi. Bihari as a geographical identity is often mistaken as a linguistic identity. For this, partly, the blame lies on British colonial rule. An Irishman named George Abraham Grierson, while doing the first “modern” linguistic survey of India, grouped all the languages of Bihar into a single category called Bihari languages (Pandey, 2021). This is how the languages spoken in that particular geography came to be known as Bihari language(s). Speakers of Bihari languages like Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithili, Angika, Bajjika, etc. are often mocked for their accents and pronunciation of Hindi and

English words. They are also deemed as rustic and culturally less sophisticated (Abbi, 2013). In subsequent years, the government of India officially used the term Bihari dialect(s) in several censuses to enumerate dialects under Hindi (Pandey, 2021). This relates to the postcolonial process of establishing Hindi not only as the lingua franca but also as the official language at least in the North Indian states by subsuming other mother tongues to the hegemony of the Hindi language (Abbi, 2013). Consequently, the various native languages in North India, including Bihar, came to be recognized as dialects of the Hindi language being inferior to it as such (Abbi, 2013). Working-class speakers of different Bihari languages have to go through everyday ignominy in Delhi as they are derided for their accents and pronunciation. Through everyday insults such as these, not only do they get relegated to the margins of the social and cultural life of Delhi, but they also get labelled as the “other.”

The exclusions of Bihari migrant workers, along with registers of poverty and social space, language and ethnicity (Redclift, 2016), are structured through perceived criminality. This is another dimension that is ascribed to the Bihari identity by the urban middle class in order to do the “othering” of Bihari migrant workers. In Delhi, most of the petty crimes are attributed to Biharis even when they are not part of it. Criminalization of their ethnic identity has grave implications for their livelihoods, housing, access to services, and interactions with the state and non-state actors. In many ways, the assertion of cultural superiority against the Bihari migrants and the display of aversion towards them is only a particular form, in which the deep caste prejudices of these urban, upper caste, and middle classes are exercised against the lower castes and classes in general (A. Kumar, 2009).

In the post-liberalization era, Indian cities have seen the emergence of the new middle class. Their acquired consciousness of a gated community has always been suspicious of the dangerous and dirty “others.” Migrant Biharis, given their class and caste locations, stand in opposition to these “better” classes, hence the gravity of the trouble and othering suffered by them (A. Kumar, 2009). For this reason, many Bihari migrant workers shy away from embracing and enacting their Bihari identity, particularly in urban spaces. It is critical to know and understand how a land of rich culture, science, and literature becomes synonymous with stigma and shame to the extent that individuals shy away from identifying themselves with this place lest others look down upon them (R. Kumar, 2020). It is crucial to realize that dehumanizing experiences are an everyday reality for this group of people, whose identity and invisibility go hand in hand (Agarwal, 2022).

### “Bihari” Identity in the Mainstream Media

The limitations and restrictive nature of understanding Bihar as a geographical space, the language spoken there, their culture, and the comparative notion of migrant workers is a huge grey area (R. Kumar, 2020), which thrives in misrepresentation and inaccurate representation in the mainstream media. Over the years, the Bihari identity has been portrayed in a stereotypical way. In most instances, such a portrayal has been extremely problematic. Bihar as a geographical place is stereotyped as the criminal

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underbelly of the country where lawlessness is a norm. There is the widespread use of acronymic puns like BIMARU and terms like Cow Belt State as identity markers for Bihar in the print and online media. The entertainment media, which has a more unfettered imagination, dwells on Bihar's economic backwardness and criminality (Sathya Prakash, 2009). Films and TV serials as an art form have widespread reach into the mindscapes of the people. While taking refuge under "artistic freedom," they can perpetuate harmful and negative stereotypes. The stereotypical imagining in the media over a period of time becomes shared public opinion (Sathya Prakash, 2009). Due to this, even those people who have never been to Bihar can be quite vocal about such real or imagined negative aspects. Thus, the shared public opinion about Bihar gets produced and consumed in the wider society, without much correspondence with the actual lived experience.

There is another reason why we are seeing such a stereotypical portrayal of Biharis in the mainstream media. In recent years, vulgar and titillating songs seem to have become the chief cultural export of the Bhojpuri cinema and music industry. This has much to do with the ownership of the industry in the hands of the private capital, which uses this export for profit-making in addition to creating demand for the same in the cultural space of the Bihari migrants. Most such songs through their lyrics and visual representations sexualize women's bodies and are full of sexual innuendos. The objectification and sexualizing of women's bodies for the pleasure of the male gaze and the existence of women simply to "satisfy" the male figure is highlighted in the music videos. One cannot emphasize enough the patriarchal transactions that are evident through the music and dance representations of what we know and understand of Bhojpuri music, as well as the fact that this further gets permeated and normalized as not just the overall patriarchal society that we live in but also equates the values and culture of that community with what is represented on screen (Chakraborty & Nain, 2020). Thus, Bihari culture gets essentialized as one in which Biharis revel in obscene songs signaling cultural degradation. The fact that Biharis represent a diverse and rich culture with a wide range of cultural artefacts and traditions gets undermined in the process.

Another way to understand the portrayal of Bihariness in media and consequent othering is by looking at the changes in power relations in the socio-political landscape of Bihar in the past few decades. According to Sathya Prakash (2009), the negative depiction of Bihari identity in popular media coincides with backward classes occupying political power by displacing the powerful upper castes in Bihar. Therefore, this "imagining" of Bihariness can also be read as a reprisal by the media, which is full of upper castes and reactionary elements (Sathya Prakash, 2009). According to Awanish Kumar (2009), instances of "unruly Bihar," now and then, in media only reinforce its reactionary class foundations by giving an ethnic and cultural form to what is essentially a class and caste issue (A. Kumar, 2009). However, instances of cultural degradation due to sexist and misogynist music culture and criminalization of politics are cited as the prime manifestation of anything and everything that is wrong with Bihar. Consequently, it gets inscribed as an essential feature of the Bihariness of the working-class migrants from Bihar.

## “Bihari” as the Indian Predator

Consciously or unconsciously, the documentary presents a particular Bihari identity to the audience. Also, the discussion of issues lies on the surface without exploring pressing issues such as police brutality and the functioning of the criminal justice system. Hence, this makes it similar to most other shows that are interested in presenting an unexplored reality to the viewers but are not brave enough to delve deeper into it. Unlike most true-crime accounts, the killer and the victims represent the poorest sections of society. Most victims, in this case, were extremely poor with little access to food, shelter, or support, which is what the killer preyed on. The interplay of socio-economic conditions, the indifferent justice system and its effects on one’s degrading mental health is what we seem to get out of this three-part series. The perpetrator’s background leading to his actions and behavior should have been the discussion point of mental health and the consequences of poor mental health. Another important theme that runs through the series is the portrayal of migrants as a pathological problem through their interaction with the criminal justice system, which is emphasized by Chandrakant Jha’s Bihari background. In this section, we seek to present some of these discussions under the three sub-themes of psychological analysis of the Indian Predator, synonymy of Bihari and criminality, and caste location of Chandrakant Jha.

### Figure 2

*Picture of the Victim Clicked by Chandrakant Jha*



Note. Source: <https://www.netflix.com/in/title/81252894>.

### **Psychological Analysis of the Indian Predator**

In the docuseries, there is a moving depiction of how the serial killer and his victims were daily wage laborers-migrants, whose existence is acknowledged neither in life nor in death. This has always been the case with this group who are conveniently invisibilized by the very society in which they live and work. While sensationalizing and



romanticizing horrific events is a trademark of the many shows that we are exposed to today, the bait becomes easier when the target group in question is of no concern to society (Datta, 2018). The show does not delve deeper into the need to question and discuss police reforms, even after Jha clearly mentions being unduly tortured inside the jail (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 27:29). Such oppressive structures have the potential to further damage the psychosocial development of a person (Marcia, 2002). One knows that this particular section of society which is the most vulnerable in every way possible is dealing with this inhumane treatment across systems. One is directed to think about why there is no detailed acknowledgement and mention of systemic torture and injustice from the Indian judiciary. It is important to note the evident class-caste divide between the groups of people who are narrating their experiences of the investigative case and the criminal in question. It is interestingly noted by Jha that Bihar has been a focus of study for scholars from multiple fields except psychology (Verma, 2019). However, this may most definitely see a shift in the current times of heightened local and global crises. While the definition of “health” enshrined in the constitution of the World Health Organization (1948) was in place for a long time, the lack of systemic and structural changes has made matters worse (World Health Organization, n.d.).

In the context of the docuseries, it is unfortunate that not many mental health experts have actually weighed in and discussed Jha’s case in detail except one clinical forensic expert, Dr S. L. Vaya (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 25:00). Vaya rightly states that deteriorating mental health is a highly possible consequence of underprivileged children owing to their poor socio-economic background (Arroyo-Borrell et al., 2017). She further explains that the antisocial behavior observed in Chandrakant’s case stems from his innate need to experience a sense of power in order to feel valued and respected (Gaik et al., 2010). This is an important aspect that has been missing in his life, irrespective of the space he has ever been a part of. This ranges from his family environment to his life in Azadpur Mandi and even inside the prison by jail officials. Development Economist, Alak Sharma shared his views on Jha’s case after saying, “I am not a mental health expert, but using common sense I can say that overworking and the cramped living situation hurts mental health” (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 8:38; Trans. by Anup Tripathi & Moitrayee Das—A. T. & M. D.). Studies have shown how one’s life experiences about their work and living conditions have an impact on mental health (Hodgkinson et al., 2017). It is important to note that in a country dominated by myths rather than facts, constant stigma and taboos lead to information inaccuracies and consequences that affect lives. It is always a good decision to let mental health experts take the lead when it comes to sharing information in this field.

Research has shown how maternal mental health and socio-economic status, particularly the educational level of the mother play a significant role in determining the mental health of their children (Cabrera et al., 2011; Goodman, 2007; Kahn et al., 2004; Sonogo et al., 2013). Poor socio-economic status including lack of education significantly increases the risk of their children developing behavioral problems, being hyperactive and antisocial (Arroyo-Borrell et al., 2017). This information is crucial because it is exactly what is shown in the docuseries regarding Jha’s background. As for his relationship with his mother and his family, in Chandrakant’

words, “he hated them”, and did not want to live with them (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 38:44; Trans. by A. T. & M. D.). His mother was a schoolteacher and his father worked in the irrigation department. According to Chandrakant, his parents did not have time for him and did not care for his education or overall well-being (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 38:52). That is precisely when his emotional disconnect and lack of attachment to his family began taking shape.

The circumstances, in which children grow up, are crucial determinants of the later years of their lives (Cabrera et al., 2011). Research has also argued that maternal influence in children’s lives plays a huge role in the negative outcomes that are experienced in the child’s life (Olson et al, 2002). Through the documentary, it is clear that Jha’s mother was not an active and present figure in his life. Thus, he never received the care or attention that a child is expected to receive from their primary caregivers. Akhilesh, a resident of Ghosai village, has detailed how Chandrakant and his siblings were left to fend for themselves and many times even starved as they did not have food to eat (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 21:50). Their mother would be constantly busy with other activities.

If we look at the documentary and its mention of Chandrakant Jha as a criminal committing serial murder, the starting point to analyze would be his childhood (Allely et al., 2014; Heide & Solomon, 2006; Mitchell & Aamodt, 2005). To understand the intricate nuances of one’s life, factors such as socio-economic status, the mental health of the primary caregivers, and the relationship between the parents and child and the overall family environment need to be well understood (Bernard-Bonnin et al., 2004; Conger et al., 2010; Lyons-Ruth et al., 1990; Moes, 1991). It is easy to label a “poor migrant Bihari worker” as a criminal, but difficult to look into the structure that perpetuates and reinforces the birth of such “criminals” (Blau & Blau 1982; Sampson, 1987; Shaw & McKay, 1942).

### ***Synonymy of Bihari and Criminality***

The docuseries does hint towards a positive correlation between the Bihari identity and the possibility of their criminal engagement. As Verma (2019) mentions, the Bihari identity is about understanding how identities get socially restructured and evolve whether for better or worse. In the docuseries, prominent development economist, Alakh Sharma says, “The Bihari migrant can be considered as the lowest category of people” (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 7:39; Trans. by A. T. & M. D.). He goes further to explain that their lack of skills and expertise coupled with poor socio-economic status is the reason for the inhumane treatment of the police towards them. It is so ironic that the police get a “pass” to treat the Chandrakants of the country in a particular way. However, there is no acknowledgement of the fact that even when outrageous and illogical demands are made for motorcycles among other things from the police, no actions are taken. This is about what happens in a country where the word “Bihari” is used as a slur, where othering and outcasting a certain group marked by their socio-economic status (Sholder, 2011) is a norm. Very often, their very existence in certain locales makes them criminals in the eyes of the wider society. In the third episode of the series, Vijay Mandal, son of Anil Mandal (one of Jha’s victims) shares that after

several years his family got to know about his father's death (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 11:21). There was no information about it whatsoever from the police even after constantly paying bribes and keeping in contact with the police. The son asks, "We are also humans, right?", and we wonder the same.

Utkarsh Anand, the legal journalist, talks about "apathy" when it comes to certain segments of society (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 7:47). He mentions an automatic shut-eye response to their problems. He further adds that in many cases even when there is weak evidence or lack thereof, it is usually believed that

they could have done it or have done it, and face consequences. The fact that these poor migrant workers are taken for granted and their problems never receive any attention they deserve is an everyday fact. Scholars have said it is primarily because this section of people was never accepted or treated as respectable citizens of the country from the very beginning. (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 7:47; Trans. by A. T. & M. D.)

Anand says, "Chandrakant is currently on parole, doing everything that any other human does, but he is still an invisible man" (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 5:36; Trans. by A. T. & M. D.).

The status of ethnic minorities or vulnerable groups has never been optimal in the Indian context. It is not unusual for them to be treated unfairly in every space they find themselves in, to physical harassment against them through multiple formal and informal institutions (Rafi, 2005). Sunder Singh, the Sub-inspector who was handling Jha's case along with his team says that these migrant workers are poor with no social support (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 9:10). Their lack of the necessary "networks" and "connections" make their already difficult lives worse. They are treated unfairly and they go unnoticed just because they are migrants. However, he is quick to add that was not the case with Chandrakant Jha's case (the case he was handling). However, it happens in many cases in the Indian Judiciary system.

The subject of Bihari identity and one's association with the Bihari culture is desperately looking to unpack answers. To truly understand what it means to be a Bihari and whether all there is to associate with this identity starts and ends with backwardness, casteism, crudeness and primitiveness, and being a criminal? Verma (2019) shares that this subject has to be dealt with utmost and sincere knowledge, information, and a balance of the complex nuances of the development and identity formation of the land of Bihar (Verma, 2019).

### ***Jha's Caste Privilege***

India's caste hierarchy is one of the longest-standing rigid, social, oppressive structures. It has stood still through centuries and does not seem to see the end of time (Gadgil & Malhotra, 2016). The complex interplay of conflict in the name of caste and the ongoing struggle for power makes it quite evident that caste systems seem to operate in the village context in different forms or structures. This does not withstand our holistic understanding of an overall caste hierarchy (Sahay, 2004). The association

between caste dominance and violence has been long established in the study of the caste system. Wherein people from the upper caste exert their power through violence on the lower caste group (Nandan & Santhosh, 2019). The caste structure that determines the value of one's existence in India has a very obvious role to play. The associations of ideas of "untouchability" and "rejected group" come straight from the fact that they come from a lower caste (Srivastava & Sutradhar, 2016).

In reference to the docuseries, one can see that Chandrakant Jha is an upper-caste male from the Maithil Gaud Brahmin caste from Ghosai village who shifted to Madhapur, Delhi for work. The dominance of the Brahmin caste (Nandan & Santhosh, 2019) and being on top of the hierarchy chain have given Jha a lot of benefits even after committing heinous crimes as a serial killer. His victims whom he befriended and later murdered were mostly individuals who came from a lower caste. He had gotten a certain number of paroles and was finally on life imprisonment without remission and not a death sentence. It is not just something to ponder but also to question the system.

### Figure 3

*The Accused Chandrakant Jha Talking to the Media*



Note. Source: <https://www.netflix.com/in/title/81252894>.

### Conclusion

This article has tried to show the multiple systems of socio-economic inequalities. The complex interplay of caste, class, and gender, has a direct impact on the existence of an individual. It is crucial to understand the dominant discourse in the economic sphere. The discussions of policy-making in migration studies primarily focus on their lives' financial and monetary aspects. However, it ignores their challenges and stories which account for their subjective experiences. This encompasses a holistic understanding of their overall well-being as human beings (Datta, 2018). There is an urgent need

to analyze the role of internal migration in conflating economic, social, and criminal harms. The interplay between violence and the caste system has been long discussed in academic and non-academic literature. The association between Bihari identity and their likelihood of future criminality has been a prime area of the Bihari migrant discourse. It ends up creating the stereotype of Bihari identity as a criminogenic one. In addition to the systemic oppression that the documentary in question forces us to address, we should also consider the neglected and under-discussed aspect of the psychological state and well-being of these people, which is either maintained or further degraded by their daily experiences with formal and informal institutions.

The article has tried to outline the exclusionary and discriminatory practices against the Bihari migrant workers, as well as the explicit and implicit ways of the exhibition across formal and informal institutions. Human development and growth are influenced by several critical factors throughout a person's life. It all starts at an early age with the relationship with their parents, family environment, and general surroundings. These help them to form a view of themselves, as well as the world around them. When the family environment as well as the surroundings they find themselves in later in life are not conducive to a child's development, it becomes a breeding ground for a number of problematic actions and behaviors (Mallers et al., 2010). This is coupled with the fact that a segment of the population is treated as social rejects and not even ordinary citizens of the country.

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