

Dhananjay Chatterjee did not rape, kill Hetal Parekh: Book

SHOCKING Authors say that it may have been a case of honour killing

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KOLKATA: Who killed Hetal Parekh? This should no longer be a question because Dhananjay Chatterjee was hanged for the rape and murder of the 18-year-old in her central Kolkata apartment in 1990.

But two professors of Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), along with a retired engineer, have penned a book claiming Chatterjee was erroneously convicted.

They suggested that it may be a case of honour killing – with the aim of getting the murder case reopened and the real culprits punished.

Probal Chaudhury, a professor at the statistics department, and Debasis Sengupta, a professor at the applied statistics department, had published a paper last year with their primary findings. The third author, Paramesh Goswami, is a retired engineer.

A detailed account of their findings will be released in the shape of a Bengali book next week and an English edition will be published shortly.

Chatterjee was hanged on August 14, 2004, at the Alipore central correctional home. His execution had always been a matter of controversy and debate because he was convicted entirely on the basis of circumstantial evidences.

In March this year, Chhatra Nagarik Samiti submitted a deputation to the chief minister demanding re-investigation into the case. The authors were associated with that initiative as well.

“The question that needs to be answered is how a system can be so flawed that a completely innocent person was convicted by three courts, denied mercy



petition at multiple stages, have multiple review petitions rejected by courts over a period of 10 years and eventually executed,” the authors have asked.

In this book, the writers have claimed that Chatterjee was made a scapegoat and suggested the alleged rape was most likely a case of consensual sex with someone else. Titled Adalat, Media, Somaj Ebong Dhananjay er Phansi, and published by Guruchandali, it will be released in the evening of August 11 at the Bharat Sabha Hall in presence of Chatterjee's acquaintances from Chhatra in Bankura district.

Chatterjee was convicted mainly on the basis of the

accounts of three witnesses who apparently saw him in the vicinity of the crime scene and three articles missing from the Parekhs' home and seized from Chatterjee. The writers, however, pointed out the accounts of the ‘witnesses’ were unreliable and alleged that the materials ‘seized’ were actually ‘planted at the site to secure the conviction of the accused.’

The writers argued that section 173 (8) of the CrPC allows re-investigation of closed cases. There is precedence of re-investigation after the accused have been convicted but re-investigation has possibly never been order after the convict has been executed.

“This does not mean it should

never happen. The case of Chatterjee is a classic example where re-investigation is absolutely necessary to punish the real perpetrators of the crime, even though we can do no justice to Chatterjee anymore,” Sengupta told HT.

They plan to first approach the state government and if they fail to get a nod, they are prepared to approach the high court and the Supreme Court.

“We have reexamined court documents and media reports of 1990 (including those based on press briefs by the police), visited the area of the crime, and interviewed neighbours, acquaintances, police officers, autopsy doctors, forensic expert,



EVENTS LEADING TO HIS DEATH

- **Date of murder:** March 5, 1990
- **Accused arrested:** May 12, 1990
- **Convicted by Supreme Court:** January 11, 1994
- **President rejects mercy plea:** August 4, 2004
- **Convict executed:** August 14, 2004

THE BOOK CLAIMS:

Dhananjay Chatterjee did not commit the crime

Evidences against him were planted

Accounts of the witnesses were unreliable

Hetal Parekh was not raped

Her family may be involved in the murder

witnesses and others connected with the case.

The information we put together show that a perfectly logical alternative, consistent with all the facts and with Dhananjay's innocence, have been overlooked by all the courts. This possibility had been neither investigated nor presented by anyone before the courts. We intend to establish in this book that the alternative hypothesis is much more likely than the official story established by prosecution,” they wrote.