

Binayak Sen is himself against sedition: Amartya

Nobel Laureate releases book on human rights activist

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At a time when human rights activists are speaking up against the sentence of life imprisonment meted out to Dr Binayak Sen, comes a book that offers a peep into his life and work.

"Binayak Sen dedicated his life for a cause that was exemplary, extraordinary and unfortunately rather rare, but certainly not a matter that commits sedition," said Professor Amartya Sen, at the book release function of "A Doctor to Defend: The Binayak Sen Story."

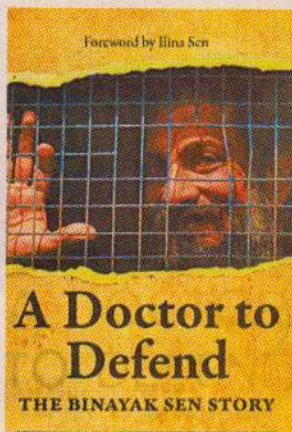
Written by former journalist and documentary filmmaker, Minnie Vaid, the book is a collection of what people have to say about Dr Binayak Sen. People such as Bhukan,

from Bagrumnala in Chhatisgarh, whose son was treated by Dr Sen. Or others like those who are still working in the villages and are clearly future Binayak Sens.

"What has happened to our life has happened, but Binayak Sen must come back for the future of our children," said Bhukan to Minnie. People from all the 247 villages where Dr Sen worked, are waiting for him to come back, says Minnie.

Recipient of the prestigious Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights in 2008, paediatrician and human rights activist, Dr Binayak Sen has been convicted of sedition by a district court in Chhatisgarh.

Along with Naxal ideologue Narayan Sanyal and Kolkata businessman Piyush Guha, Dr



Binayak Sen has been sentenced to life imprisonment for conspiring with Maoists against the State. Human rights defenders, including lawyers, Amnesty International

and activists have expressed outrage over the unfair verdict. "The basis of the charges are weak and one hopes justice will prevail in the higher courts of the country," said Nobel Laureate, Prof Amartya Sen.

"The verdict comes as a surprise and I believe Binayak has been unjustly convicted. He was a doctor who gave up the possibilities of earning lots of money to work for the underdog population, and was himself against what we would call sedition. I am not committing sedition myself but it tells us a lot about our legal systems. Minnie's work is timely and I hope brings support for Dr Sen, a man of great compassion. Minnie's work will act as an interlude in this entire set of very surprising events," said Prof Amartya Sen. He added

that Dr Binayak Sen served a great cause and there was no doubt in Prof Amartya Sen's mind that he would continue to do so.

"For all those people who call Binayak Sen a Naxal-sympathiser, I want to tell them to please go to Chhatisgarh and see the work he has done," said Minnie, who went there several times to find out about Dr Binayak Sen's work.

Researching for the book was the easiest thing to do, she says, as "The name Binayak Sen was like a magic mantra, the moment I uttered it, people opened their hearts and homes to me," said Minnie. Published by Rajpal & Sons, the book has a foreword by Dr Sen's wife, Iliana Sen.

Minnie is currently editing a documentary film on the same.