



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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MAJEED: This is Rushda Majeed on 15th August 2014. I am in Patna, Bihar and I'm speaking to the Honorable Chief Minister Mr. Nitish Kumar about his administration. So Mr. Kumar, if you could explain, what was your electoral platform or agenda for your 2005 electoral victory?

KUMAR: *In 2005, we had not just one, but many kinds of challenges. At first there were mostly governance challenges, and law and order and restoring peace were very important. Along with that, government had to develop infrastructure and the social sector. But the very first need was to instill people's confidence in government. And that happens with law and order and peace. The environment (conditions) in Bihar was not good. People were scared. In the evenings, all the shops closed. Girls continued to face more problems going out. There was fear. It's not like incidents were occurring at all times, but there was an environment of fear.*

For that, the biggest challenge was to correct this atmosphere of fear. So we started the trials for the accused. The criminals. They were accused, there would be a police case, trial, and they would go to jail, and then bail. But the basic thing is that if anyone commits a crime, he/she is only fearful of one thing—if he/she starts getting convicted. Trials should happen and should conclude. Only then will they have impact.

So you can say that the first thing that happened and was most effective was that we selected what kinds of cases should we focus on that will ensure that criminals get convicted. Like the Arms Act cases. In Arms Act cases, the witness is a police witness, government witness. And it can happen in time. Earlier what happened was that dates were postponed. So what we did was make a databank of all the police and government witnesses and record who was where. In between all of this, Bihar had also been reorganized in 2000. So are they in the Bihar cadre or Jharkhand cadre? If they are in the Bihar cadre then where are they? This we determined and completed. And then we said to them, "You have to come on the due date. If you cannot come because of any reason, then you will get one exemption." We started this from the administration's side.

The benefit was that the Arms Act cases started being concluded. And people were convicted for 1 to 3 years. So convictions started happening and an atmosphere was created. Then people started coming forward for other bigger cases with larger penalties. Bribery, murder and so on. Earlier family-oriented people were scared and were scared of coming forward as witnesses, they started offering themselves. So because of this trials became speedy.

Trials started happening. The most important thing was that the judiciary, police, prosecution, administration from chief justices of the high court to district and session judges. They all came. All DMs (district magistrates) and SPs. I was also there as CM. And together we made a strategy. All my chief secretaries and home secretaries. All of us together sat down together for 2 days and made a list of the problems we faced, and then the high court also started monitoring. And police HQs started monitoring. So the overall effect was that convictions started happening. So people started thinking that after committing a crime they would not get away scot free. So criminals were not only getting caught but they were put to trial. So because of all this we created a positive atmosphere and we removed fear from the public's heart.

I told you about the Arms Act as an example. What used to happen here is that people would be driving in their cars with a rifle. They would roll down the

windows and keep the tip of the rifle out. So everywhere there was an atmosphere of fear that they are carrying weapons. So in public places people stopped carrying weapons. This is was due to the Arms Act.

You are interested in innovation. So in Bihar the public would be fearful because of these weapons in public places. But then, cases began happening with the Arms Act. Speedy trials started happening as well as quick convictions. The atmosphere completely changed. And that continues until today. Then other reforms happened...this was one thing.

In society, there are other things, but the most visible is infrastructure, roads. So we focused aggressively on roads. We started seeing people on the roads. Work happened.

Then schools. Going to villages, it was hard to even figure out where the schools were. So we fixed all schools, primary schools, middle schools, etc. We brought not one, but many schemes. From making buildings to ... Buildings weren't being made. We started giving money to the education committee to build schools at the local level. So the work that happened like this started becoming visible.

In every sector, we started working for all levels of society. So an atmosphere was created, on the one side, of peace and social amity, and on the other, of development. So momentum picked up. And in development you have to focus on resources and make proper plans. So we did all of that.

We also cleared pending issues with the central government. We mobilized our own resources and stopped leakages. There was leakage at all levels. So by stopping it, our own resources increased, and in that—what you said about administrative reforms—no project was cleared. So we created an administrative reforms commission at the state level. And gave them a mandate. And after that, we did a lot of delegation of power to the bureaucracy and different departments. Before, for small programs one had to go to the cabinet. So delegation of power for what is budgeted and what is sanctioned meant the different departments could do it. Only past a certain a limit, approvals would go through the cabinet. At the minister level and secretary level and below, they would get administrative sanctions.

And we increased the power of those on the technical side. For small things, the chief engineer would have to be consulted. So we delegated that also on the tech and admin side. Because of this, work started happening.

And then we brought about many reforms in the tender process. E-tendering all over Bihar. There must be other states but in Bihar it is probably on a larger scale than anywhere else.

There are 'n' number of—even if it is tax collection. You have to promote. We gave a lot of concessions. There were a lot of people outside the tax net who were worried, so we interacted with the business community. And we took up several of their concerns. Then we started the work for tax collection.

Then you will hear that liquor is big here. People drank alcohol for sure. But in 20 years, even when Jharkhand wasn't formed and even after it was formed, it was the same revenue. 250 crore revenue. So then I called a meeting and an idea about this personally. But after understanding it ... there was only one reform I did. What we had in the liquor supply was that manufacturer, retailer and

wholesaler – all 3 were doing the same work. So we just broke the chain. I don't know anything about it and I have no connection to liquor. That's why I said clearly that I don't know anything about it. I kept hearing for one day, 2 days and after that I said, break the chain. And I made a corporation that could do wholesale business, and it started jumping. [24-2500 crore]. Although there was uproar, revenues increased. It's not that the number of people drinking alcohol increased, so then we restricted it in stores.

The point of all that I'm saying is, in everything we would have to do a course correction and mid-term review. It is a continuous process. If you relax even a little bit, and you don't pay attention, then things can go bad anywhere. In the beginning, we focused on these.

There are only 3 main sectors for state revenues. The rest are central resources. And every state gets its share based on the recommendation of the Finance Ministry. But the state resources primary – commercial taxes, excise duty, and land registration. And fourth is transport.

Transport was also in bad state. Here they had put an exorbitant tax rate. The fee was huge. And people used to buy cars from Jharkhand and bring them here. They didn't buy cars here. Either they bought from them Calcutta or Jharkhand. So I reduced taxes. I didn't increase it but fixed its network. We moved the taxes far outside the tax net and increased taxes. So everyone benefited and our resources increased too.

See the plan size of ours. When I came into office, in 2005-06, the plan size was 4-5,000 crores. We started from there, and now this year, the plan size is 41,000 crores. And because the central government has changed and some more money will come in, there will be a new component. But if you take the same base, then it went from 5,000 to 41,000 in 8 years. So it increased 8-fold in 8 years. Used to spend 4,000 crores now will spend 41,000 crores.

Plan size means more development, more roads, education, electricity, hospitals, social sector schemes. In everything. Infrastructure, social sector. So today, Bihar has activity. As soon as law and order improved, people started putting in savings. Earlier, businessmen were running from here. Now all running stopped and people started coming back. And people from outside also started coming in. What item is there that you won't get here? Bihar was in such a state that no one went to a restaurant. Very few. Today, the situation is that many restaurants are opening that people have to wait in line to get a spot. Activity is such that people who were in their homes when it got dark are now out till 9pm or so. The shops will be open. You will see families come and go. So this is the situation. People took their own money, savings...people didn't buy a car even if they had money. With difficulty you would find Maruti 800, and now there are showrooms full of cars. [interruption]. So much activity increased that there was boom. In the construction sector also. And in time the property valuation increased from not even a lakh to crore.

So this atmosphere that changed – one in which one could do business and live. Most importantly, an atmosphere worthy of living in. That's where everything started and the government also spent money. People used to leave Bihar but now less people do so. They still go, a lot. Even now they go. A lot of them go. But the numbers have reduced of the migrant workers. People are returning and doing different activities.

MAJEED: When you came into office in November 2005, you and a many other people have said that the state of the office was such that there were Remington typewriters there?

KUMAR: Yes *it was a government office.*

MAJEED: So my question is, how did you organize your own office such that you could deliver on these reform priorities?

KUMAR: *Nothing was organized. There was no work culture. And work culture doesn't come by just saying so. You will have to lead by your actions. If you start working then everyone else will start working. I didn't give speeches to anyone. You should know that I didn't ask anyone to sit down, not officers nor anybody, and give them speeches. I only talked about work. When I started implementing, they did too. Officers from here went to Delhi and said were said to be very good. And here people when they came, they would start relaxing. There was no concept of PowerPoint presentation. When a government comes into office, within a week you have to get the ministers in and take oath. There would be Q&A sessions. So the material that would come to me (briefing) was on very, very thin paper and typed. It was very difficult. So we started with that Remington. Changing that. [Remington coming back in Germany.]*

Here people didn't even think of these things. I did a review of each and every dept. to see what challenges they had. And which act do these departments administer? Every department has an act. Then the other thing was to see what the programs were in the department. And what projects can be done in them. In Bihar governance meant that the government machinery was administering. Transfer and posting. All this.

In the beginning, I gave chances to a lot of people, whoever wanted to come meet me and give me ideas, I let them. If I had not listened, people would have said that he doesn't listen. So I listened a lot. First, I listened to people from my departments and then later anyone else who wanted to discuss. I saw that the mindset here was that of only government machinery, administration, management. Nothing else.

How will growth happen? How will plans be made? Nothing about these issues. But yes, everyone was concerned about law and order. That concern was addressed. That atmosphere improved so people started listening to me.

The day our results were announced, I remember, 22 Nov 2005, results came in and we had majority. So that evening people asked me what is your priority. I said governance. They asked what was my second priority, I said governance. They asked what was my third priority, I said governance. I said everything is included in this.

And what I promised in the election campaign, one thing I had said was that I would establish the rule of law and second "development with justice," that is, it would be inclusive, everyone would benefit from it. All layers of society would participate in it. And keeping that in mind, we made all the programs. We also took along the government machinery.

I knew it was a weak machinery and system. So if you just had to tell them to work, that is not administration. You have to motivate them. I fixed law and order. On the first day, I reviewed the police and home department, and I asked the

question, "What is the average age of the police force?" The answer was 38. Can you imagine? 38 was the average age of a policeman in Bihar. Criminals used new cars. And in our police stations, cars would be old, run down and noisy cars. You had to sometimes push the car. That was the kind of car we had. When you drive that car, it is making a lot of noise, so criminals understand that it is a police car. The criminals have all the latest brands of cars. So I started with all of this. That all police stations should have cars. If you want to talk of police reform, let me tell you what concept the British established. Here, if anyone had to lodge an FIR, then the policeperson in charge at the station would say, "Please bring paper and pen." I said this shouldn't happen. When I would say this in speeches, people would clap loudly. Because it was the truth.

I got the police stations categorized into 3 grades and kept money with them- Rs. 25000, 15000, 10000. I told them, "You use it for whatever you need." If they needed stationery or had to produce someone in court... before that, what did they tend to do? They would catch hold of a local vehicle, 3-wheeler, they would stop them, and say, "Take us!" They did so by force. And they went and ate somewhere. This all shouldn't be happening. Therefore, so that they didn't have to do all of this, I gave them a revolving fund, and said, "It will be recouped. You spend." So by focusing on these small little details, the atmosphere changed. And begins to understand what needs to be done. And this addressed the problem.

In Bihar, in the police I have made a 35% reservation for women. These people are asking repeatedly, "What model are you using, what model are you using?" It is the Bihar model. 35% reservation. You have to create infrastructure also based on the needs. This is the thing ... in every sector.

Because you're interested in innovations, I'm describing the process of fixing up the police stations. Fix the communication system, provide vehicle, provide money to them—if they don't have money, then they'll have to go to a gas station and coerce the owners, but it's important that police officers have the tools they need for transporting accused persons to the courthouses—these things weren't there before. We fixed that. To tackle basic issues of governance. And 38 was the average age. So we established rule of law. We enforced the power of the law without any discrimination. The law was equal and would apply to all, we didn't forcibly incriminate anyone or unduly protect anyone. The results were clear.

MAJEED: In order to execute all of this, you must have needed a team. They say you brought officers in from outside so that they--

KUMAR: No, no. There was no need to call officers from outside. People from here did it.

In the beginning I said, don't give anyone lectures, because that won't help. You will have to lead by example.

Our office time changed. We decided to start at 9:30am. Normally, the Chief Minister doesn't need to go anywhere. Wherever he is, is where the office is. Wherever he lives is also the office. His ministry is also the office. He also has an office in the state government secretariat. But I didn't do any of that. I would reach at 9:25 and I did it for a week. So 9:30 start times were implemented.

For the first 2 or 3 days it became a media story. People running to the office. People coming in at 9:45. Then, after that, there was no story. In 2 days, the media lost interest. The office started from 9:30. So that's what I did.

I talked to the railways about time. The commuters didn't have a problem. All the trains came according to that time that the office would start. So this is how it happened.

Before doing anything, consider once, "What are the requirements?" Think for once and sensitize people. And the biggest thing is that if you have a plan or an idea, then you must share that idea and involve people. That has been my approach. I have shared ideas and involved people. I have shared it with the bureaucracy and involved them and had them implement it. Now if I work, they also work.

MAJEED: You had said one other thing, which was that you have to keep monitoring very strong. So how did you communicate with your officers? Regular meetings, cabinet meetings, etc.? Weekly? Monthly?

KUMAR: *Regular visits, field visits. For me, from 2009, I did so many field visits. Even before, I went for field visits with one scheme or another, but after that, the whole of Bihar was socialized. At night, I would sleep on a Swiss cot. It was my "vikas yatra" or development journey. I started it in 19 January 2009. And that went on. Then parliamentary elections were announced and I stopped. But I traveled for 3 months.*

I lived on a Swiss cot. Everyone started doing the same.

And in Bihar. So you have to do all this for implementation and for involving people. So if you have to go anywhere, it is like a regular tour. When you go there everything there will be fine because all officers have to go there. My approach was ... from the beginning it was in my head that nothing improves by giving lectures. This is has its limits. If your machinery is effective then lectures have an effect for some time. But if the machinery is not strong, and if you have to strengthen it, then no use lecturing. In Bihar, that is what I did. I build up with my actions. There was a virtual collapse. That collapse... people didn't have expectations. But now look around. Now you see there is expectation and more expectation.

And that's the other thing, that in Bihar, people have started having expectations. People did not previously expect or desire anything. This is also a part of governance. If you are effectively implementing something on the one hand, then on the other hand, you are actively seeking the cooperation of the people. So people's involvement and their awareness is important and you need to keep working on it. And it isn't that it will happen in 8 or 10 years. In every era, new things come and you must involve everyone. In 2005, what the situation was, it isn't the same anymore.

MAJEED: Actually, one of my questions is, when your administration came again in 2010, what reform priorities changed, what did you think--?

KUMAR: *2009? We worked according to the problems that we saw in 5 years. After 2010, the first and most important thing I did was the Right to Public Services Act (RtPs). People go to lower offices to get income certificates, caste certificates, land possession certificates, character certificates. They need all these things.*

So with RtPs, we made it the citizens' right to get various services. They have to get them within a certain timeframe. And since we applied it, more than 7 crore people have taken advantage of it. We initiated it on August 15, 2011. So in 3 years, more than 7 crore people benefitted. And you have to keep at it. During the last tour I took, "sewa yatra" or service tour, I would go straight to the RtPs counter. We started a new scheme. How was it implemented? When we started looking into it, we saw that there were many glitches. Like the format and form. I went to that extent. And to make sure that no middleman takes advantage of the public's ignorance—that no middleman comes in between—I did much innovation. I asked collectors to go stand in line without identifying themselves and see what happens. I involved a lot of people.

Schools have no attendance, which is something I saw on my service trip. Average was lower than 50%. So how to increase attendance? And I saw that the average was the same for schools with mid-day meals. I started health guarantees for kids and saw the cards. But no improvement. So we had to include uniforms and cycles for girls and boys and scholarships for all. Lots of schemes so that you go to school. But the attendance was still low. So I linked these benefits to attendance. Because going to school in itself is an education. To get used to going to school. Quality should be better; we focused on that also.

No one had any faith in the public health system. It didn't work at all. It was non-functional. In February 2006, I had a survey done to see how many people go to primary health centers. The primary centers were, let's say, for a population of 3-4 lakhs. We saw that in one whole month 39 patients on an average were going. You can see ... it means that it was 1 patient per day. It was non-functional. In 2006, we started an innovation. Later it was started by the BJP government in Rajasthan. We started it in 2006. We started giving out free medicine, generic medicine. Aamir Khan encouraged that in a TV show, remember? We started that in 2006.

But the work that happened here has not been publicized outside too much. For women, when we gave a 50% reservation, people heard about that after a long time and said that you've done reservation for 50% women; that's an innovation. Our government came in 2006 of February, the actual elections were in November. We did 50% reservation and ran the (panchayat) elections after it. And all the teachers recruited were decentralized via the Panchayati Raj Institutions (village leadership) and the urban local bodies. There was a 50% women reservation. Then for police, afterwards, we put in place a 35% reservation.

So in the beginning, all the innovative work we did...and we had two elections... for panchayat institutions (village leadership) and urban local bodies. These things changed society. Bicycles for girls. In Patna girls didn't used to ride bikes. Now even in villages they do. In Bihar, we saw social change. And I focused on self-help groups. Women are being empowered, people are becoming aware. This is a silent revolution and not many people know of it. Girls are getting educated, women are leaving the house to go out and work in block and district headquarters, working to help others. These are changes for the weaker sections, reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Within backward classes, there are extremely backward classes and we gave reservation for them, along with the SCSTs.

MAJEED: In your administration, you also dealt with IT and ICT—

KUMAR: *Yes. So we had Remington typewriters at first, and in 2008 the Government of India gave Bihar the E-Governance Award. Within 3 years we changed the state of affairs internally. Now people keep using new things every day. And now the situation is such that—I am not exaggerating—that the papers that Bihar prepares to send to the central government are the best in the nation. And in many places people learn from Bihar’s example in terms of the papers we send. There are many developed states that had all of these things beforehand. I’m not talking about those. I’m talking about here, where we didn’t have it already. And it all started.*

Let’s talk about transparency and administration. Bihar was the first state where we said, “Every person has to declare income, liability and assets.” From CM to each minister, and on January 1st each year, this will become public. And now the council and the assembly here do this also. As many as were in Group C, from chief secretary to class 3, all of these people had to submit their income statements at the end of February and in the beginning of March. This is the election commission’s format. I was reading recently that the central government is going to adopt it too.

So all these things were reformed here. RtPs Act people took from here. For what we started here, we also did lots of course correction.

MAJEED: In the last 8 or 9 years, when you achieved your tenure as CM, what were your top three achievements?

KUMAR: *Well, which ones are the top three is something you should tell me. But I can tell you what the basic issues were. We had a focus on governance, law and order in society, and peace and amity. And if there’s something that made me happiest, that is seeing girls biking to school. Because that changed people’s mindset. People couldn’t tolerate that girls would ride bikes. But the government put everyone on bikes and the mindset changed. This is social change – changing thinking and viewpoints. Now no one has any qualms about it when they see a girl going to school on a bicycle. Before, when a girl rode a bicycle in a rural village, the whole village would say to her family, “This girl of yours is out of your control! Look she’s riding a bicycle.” All these things used to be thought of as only for boys and not for girls. So now, that view of girls riding bicycles is one worth seeing. It’s a testimony of Bihar’s progress.*

And our viewpoint has been focused on growth. Growth and development will happen with justice. But nothing will happen without education. Always, whether it’s a public government event or a political meeting, I’ve always talked about education.

And Bihar was the first state to give the BPL (below poverty line) families help obtaining toilets. It was extended for APL (above poverty line) families as well. The scheme is named after (Rammanohar) Lohia. This is our labor of love. Later the central government also did this a year ago. They extended to the APL’s.

So we worked in every area. We were late in self-help groups but our model was the best. In the green revolution, we fell behind. But we advanced in agriculture through the rainbow revolution for agriculture.

I remember we were in a meeting at the PM’s office about agriculture and the experts were talking about indicators and they were looking at me repeatedly because Bihar was lowest in all parameters. And I smiled and said that this

situation would not remain for long. Bihar farmers then broke records for paddy production—surpassed China— broke the world record. With wheat, we broke the country record, and with potatoes, we broke the world record. There was so much enthusiasm.

There is no sector in which we didn't work. To implement anything, roll it out and then have an impact on the ground, it takes time. And we had a lack of machinery. So we had to slowly get it ready and fix it.

MAJEED: The flipside of that question, now, is in the last 8 or 9 years, what were some shortcomings? After this experience, what do you think could have gone better?

KUMAR: *There is always room for improvement. It is the first principle of management that there is always room for improvement. So in governance, should keep improving. One should not close one's mind.*

Why did I go to meet people? Because one could only get an idea after meeting them. I don't know anything. I only listened to people and then implemented suggestions. It proved effective. It can always be improved. It is a continuous process. It is not that the car stops at one place and you wonder what you passed up. It is a continuous process. In every sphere and field there is room for improvement. So I don't believe in what one didn't do well. We did well in every field.

But if you talk about what's been done in Bihar—see, today's world is about marketing. The world is about marketing. But I never paid attention to marketing. For the bicycle scheme, we didn't need to advertise, and we got bicycles to every home. In terms of some of those basic issues, for women, we put in place a 50% reservation and women became heads in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (village leadership) and urban local bodies, I don't know what the need is for advertisement. There are some things like this that just get spread. But if yes you say how it creates impact, to create hype for advertisements was missing and that I cannot do. You do and then you talk about it everyday isn't right.

MAJEED: Our program shares lessons learned with leaders in other countries and policy practitioners. So if you were asked what lessons you learned, what advice would you offer them?

KUMAR: *Education is a field everyone should focus on. It's the most important thing.*

MAJEED: In the area of reform, if they want to further a reform in their country, how—

KUMAR: *Empower people. Delegate power. That's the biggest reform. You cannot centralize power. The reform of governance is decentralization of power.*

These days, it is the era of centralization again. But without decentralization there is no governance. It can be hype with the help of media, advertisement power. But that is not effective governance. Effective governance happens with decentralization. In the beginning, it will be difficult to decentralize because they don't know how to do it. We went through that phase. Bihar has many problems. One man will say you give me the right and the other will say you gave it to me. That era will happen. It is a phase of transition. But after 5-7 years, if this work continues and is effective and keeps moving with course correction, then I believe people will see the benefit.

In everything there are two paths: one is a conservative mindset. And what can you say about people? And society is varied and people think differently. They want everything to be fine. But they want to reap the fruits of development only for themselves, not for others. That is not possible. Some people are angry with me about that. That wasn't quite what your question asked, but I just mentioned that.

This will always happen. When you decentralize, then people who are at the bottom will get power, but the people whom you are empowering don't know what power is. And he/she will have his/her own concept about power. But ultimately – there is a saying – “sheher sikhave kautwal” or a city teaches the police inspector what to do – slowly they will work and get experience.

MAJEED: One last question

KUMAR: *Is there still one last one remaining?*

MAJEED: Yes, just one more. Personally—we also ask leaders this question—why was this so important for you personally? To bring about this revolution in Bihar, why was it important to you?

KUMAR: *I am in politics so I have certain commitments. I don't consider governing a business enterprise. That you do this thing and you will benefit and you do this thing and you will face a loss. Today I hear from critics, “Why did you do this? It is a loss.” But I didn't do anything for benefit or loss. There were certain ideological commitments that I had in me since childhood. And inculcated. And that feeling I am applying now. I had the opportunity to apply it and I did. CM now and central minister in 1998 and briefly in 1990. But my experience is from working among people. One question that is always important to me, is, “Why did I enter politics?” I didn't come to become MLA or MP. I didn't enter politics so that when I become powerful, people surround me and follow orders. I came with a commitment to uplift society. Upliftment is my viewpoint. I see everything through this viewpoint. And that is why I do this.*

You asked why this is important. I'll tell you two examples. Both are constituents of my parliament. I was MP and I was travelling in one region in its interior. An 11-year-old young boy came in front of me. Without a doubt his age was 11 or 12. We were returning from the last village and we used to meet people like this, sometimes here, sometimes there. So this boy came to me. Kids here address men as 'sir' so he said to me, “Sir, am I not going to study” I just looked at him and couldn't turn away. I asked, “why?” and he said, “There's no school. There's no teacher.” Now if an 11 year old boy is asking his MP is he won't ever get an education, I really thought I had an opportunity to help. 12.5% of kids were out of school. Getting them all to school was my first task. So the first goal was attendance, and now the second phase is quality. So the effect is still continued on schools.

The other example, now, is this. I was sitting in a meeting with my constituents. The general meeting was ongoing. One man, hardly clothed and clearly poor, slowly walked towards me. He said, “Fix the hospitals. Where are we poor people to go? Hospitals don't work here.” Given the chance, the people of Bihar spoke. About schools and hospitals. Now no one will ask where the hospitals are or whether or not they'll go to school. Even medicines are free. If someone has money, they can get private treatment or put kids in private schools, but they don't have to. I saw a report from the World Bank—lots of reports tend to float

around but this one found its way into my hands—and this report had case studies in it about the percentage of spending that daily wage earners dedicate to different resources. I saw that 30 to 40 percent of earnings were used on medicine and treatments. I think 70 or 80 rupees was the minimum wage at the time. I thought if this much of their money is just paying medical costs, I figured I needed to do something. You asked why this is all so important. There are two reasons.

One is ideological—my own commitment and viewpoint. And the second—experience with people I will never forget. I am happy that I will never forget those scenes. One man asking me to fix the hospitals and a kid asking if he'll never get an education. I never forget. That is why I did the work.

MAJEED: Thank you. Thank you so much.