



Dr Amitabh Singh, associate professor, JNU

# Cracking the code

## Dr Amitabh Singh Unlocks The Fine Secrets Of Social Systems

### INTERVIEW

**Yashi Sharma, AIS Noida, XII J & Ritika Yadav, AIS MV, XII D**

As an academican and a scholar, Dr Amitabh Singh's name is one of a kind. With extensive teaching experience at prestigious universities in India, he currently serves as an associate professor of Theories of International Relations, Russia's Foreign Policy and State & Society at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Dr Singh has presented over 30 academic papers at national and international conferences and is also a published au-

thor. As he graced Youth Power 2022-23 as a jury member, GT reporters got a chance to delve deeper into his unique outlook on things. Here are a few excerpts!

#### The new world order

I was the only one interested in studying social sciences amongst all my six siblings. My father supported my choice because he recognised the zeal in me for research and academics. When I was growing up in the 80s, old socio-political ideas of socialism were disintegrating and liberalisation was on the rise. The complexities

of social functioning amidst this new world order interested me then and continues to excite me even now.

#### The way forward

To be really developed and modern, we should stop aping the west. Modernisation has become synonymous with westernisation and yet it is not. Modernity means generating and following ideas that lead to the betterment of the entire society. If we observe the Chinese or the Korean, we will find that they have a modernised economy but they continue to celebrate their heritage and culture in all aspects of life. According to me, happiness and contentment should be the criteria for calling oneself modern.

#### The real empowerment

As a student, empowerment may mean to you the access to money, power, or fame. However, empowerment, in its truest sense, is when an individual is in control of their actions without the pressure of societal norms and obligations. It also means that one must question existing societal norms and take



Dr Singh in conversation with GT reporter

Pic: Ravinder Gusain, GT Network

action to change things. To achieve this, we should unlearn the rigid rules of patriarchy, build tolerance for all social groups and identities, and promote the well-being of all communities. We need to move forward as a society with respect for all members of the social strata. I believe equity, sustainability, social justice, and redistribution of resources should be prioritised to strengthen the foundations of our nation and society.

#### The inspiring diplomat

A good diplomat or an international relations expert has to be extremely careful about their choice of words and need to have

a thorough understanding of world issues. At the same time, they have to be focused and grounded while being open to improvisation. This is why I admire Shashi Tharoor who is also a great academican. I also am inspired by Henry Kissinger and, of course, Jawaharlal Nehru, for his vision that built the new independent India.

#### Message for Amitians

Observe the world around you and learn from it. Identify the causes of social injustice and do your best to mitigate its effects. The world is in your hand and you need to create an identity of your own and take ownership of your own life. [GT](#)

# Book Review

## A twisted journey

**Book:** Last Night In Twisted River

**Author:** John Irving

**Published in:** 2009

**Genre:** Fiction, mystery

**Synopsis:** John Irving's Last Night In Twisted River chronicles, over the course of five decades, the tale of Daniel and his father Dominic who must escape a terrible event that occurs in a logging camp near Twisted River, New Hampshire. The lives of the people, their relationships, and the circumstances of life on the run are all explored throughout the book. The novel is set in a variety of American and Canadian cities such as Toronto, Boston, and Vermont with an aim to represent the protagonists' shift-

ing personal environments.

**Why it is worth reading:** Last Night In Twisted River alludes to a recurrent subject in which the characters are frequently faced with pivotal choices or transformations. Along with examining how the lives of the protagonists intertwine with historical events, the book also delves into topics of identity, loss, and the complexity of human relationships. Irving's distinctive narrative style, which blends deep characters, complex plotting, and a healthy dose of humour and tragedy, is evident throughout the book. The novel is a multi-layered and multi-decade story that brilliantly portrays the spirit of the American experience by emphasising the intricacies of life, the capriciousness of fate, and the lasting influence of life's turn-

ing points. Also, the characters created by John Irving are always memorable and complicated, and this novel is no exception to that phenomenon. Readers will find the characters in this novel to be interesting and relatable due to their variety of traits, weaknesses, and talents. The book was also included in Time's 2009 Most Anticipated list.

**Iconic quote:** "We don't always have a choice how we get to know one another. Sometimes, people fall into our lives cleanly – as if out of the sky, or as if there were a direct flight from Heaven to Earth – the same sudden way we lose people, who once seemed they would always be part of our lives"

**Rating:** 5/5

**Review by:** Yoshita Chug  
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