

Parents, Islamic Extremists Beat Young Woman in India

A young woman was thrown out of her home this month for daring to give thanks for **healing** in Christ's name in a predominantly Muslim village in India's West Bengal state, and then her parents helped **Islamic extremists** to beat her nearly unconscious.

The attack on Rekha Khatoon, 22, took place on March 9 in Nutangram, Murshidabad.

"I boldly told those who beat me up that I may leave my parents, but that I will not leave Jesus," Khatoon said. "Jesus has healed me, and I cannot forget Him."

In a village where **hardline Muslims** have threatened to kill the 25 families who initially showed interest in Christ, leaving only five frightened Christian families, Khatoon was returning from worship with Believers Church at Al Hamdulillah Hall when her parents and Muslim extremists attacked her, she said. They called her a pagan, among other verbal abuse.

The mob also harassed the Christian woman who encouraged Khatoon to trust Christ as Lord, Aimazan Bibi, said Bashir Pal, pastor and founder of the village Believers Church.

"On the same night, Rekha Khatoon's father, Nistar Shaike, and about 20 Muslim radicals surrounded Aimazan's house, shouted anti-Christian slogans, threatened to harm her and her family and falsely accused her of 'luring' Rekha to **convert to Christianity**," Pastor Pal told Compass.

After finding herself alone on a road after the beating, Khatoon had taken refuge in Aimazan Bibi's home.

Khatoon had met Amaizan Bibi last year and told her about a

reproductive ailment that caused her to bleed heavily, and the older woman had shared both the gospel of Christ and His healing power with her, Pastor Pal said.

“After Rekha Khatoon came to know about her ailment, she met one of our church members, Aimazan Bibi, and she shared her physical problem with her and told her that her illness was getting worse as she was not able to purchase medicines anymore,” he said.

Aimazan Bibi also invited Khatoon to attend church. On Dec. 23, Khatoon came to the worship center, where Christian women laid hands on her, he said. The pastor and congregation prayed for God’s healing touch in Jesus’ name.

“She received healing from Christ, and thereafter she attended the worship services whenever she could,” Pastor Pal said. “On Jan. 17, Khatoon attended one house church meeting in her village and once again testified that Jesus has healed her, and that she had not taken any medicine since Dec. 23.”

He said the **Muslim extremists** warned Khatoon not to have contact with Christians. West Bengal is 25.2 percent Muslim, with Hindus in the predominantly Hindu country making up 72.5 percent of the population in the state, according to *Operation World*. The state, which borders Muslim-majority Bangladesh, is only 0.6 percent Christian.

Upon learning that she was attending Christian worship meetings, her parents had strictly warned her not to have any relationships with Christians and not to attend their fellowship, Aimazan Bibi said.

“However, she told them that she cannot forget Jesus and His love for her,” she said.

Pastor Pal’s wife, nurse Anasea Pal, added that at another house church meeting, Khatoon brought her sister and talked about the healing she had received from Christ.

Khatoon has since relocated to another area, where she lives largely confined for her own protection.

Khatoon and her mother had attended worship services at the church previously; they began there in 2009 until area Muslims, furious to hear that several women were attending worship services, warned them to cease all contact with Christians or else they would face harm. The local mosque then offered Khatoon's mother a job carrying food for the local Islamic leader to ensure she stopped all contact with Christians.

She also stopped Khatoon from attending Christian meetings.

Tensions prevail in the area, with enraged Muslim radicals threatening to hurt the five Christian families on the slightest pretext. In addition to harassing Aimazan Bibi, **Islamic extremists** have ruined her son Sirajul Shaike's business, throwing away all his vegetables and chasing him out of the village market.

"It is very difficult for them now, since selling vegetables was the main source of income for the family," Pastor Pal said.

Christians in the village have endured all manner of physical torture and social boycotts at the hand of Muslim extremists, Pastor Pal said. He added that the extremists are not allowing Christians to enter the village.