



Xenophobia, Climate, Child Labour Worried Authors in 2015

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(Top) Ashwin Sanghi, Amit Chaudhuri (Bottom Left) and (Bottom Right) Roswitha Joshi.

NEW DELHI: Writers may have returned their awards protesting "growing intolerance" in the country but some leading authors also were concerned by religious extremism globally, visionless development of cities, general decline in intellectual content of ordinary life besides climate change and child labour.

Amit Chaudhuri, Tabish Khair, Ashwin Sanghi and Roswitha Joshi share their views on the three issues that were of concern to them as authors during 2015.

According to Chaudhuri, one of the issues was the "lack, even as of today, of robust and active citizens' organisations that have a thorough knowledge of, and clarity on, the legal and constitutional frameworks for the freedom of expression, which could begin countering the suppression of dissent and of our civil liberties on the basis of this knowledge".

Considered his generation's best chronicler of acutely observed life, Chaudhuri, who has authored six novels, the latest being "Odysseus Abroad" released last year, was also worried about visionless development of cities.

"The decimation of what's most architecturally important about our modern cities, and the pursuit of 'development' without a vision. The outcome and untenability of this pursuit, in Mumbai and more recently in Chennai, are now very apparent," the Kolkata-born author told PTI.

He was also concerned about a "system of education which ultimately privileges a passage abroad, putting our children, roughly from the age six to 17, in transit, so putting the onus of crucial change and reform not on ourselves - since we're not

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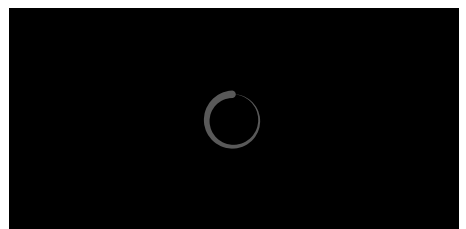
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going to be here if we're successful - but solely on government".

One of the issues that were of primary concern in 2015 to Khair was xenophobia.

The Denmark-based and Bihar-born author explores this subject in his new book "The New Xenophobia" and to which he also relates war, the treatment of refugees, religious extremism, and many aspects of neoliberalism).

In "The New Xenophobia", Khair studies this fear of strangers in a historical, philosophical, and socio-economic context and examines the unexplored relationship of xenophobia with power and capitalism and shows how changes in capitalism have altered the image

During the year of economic disparity, intellectual content, different matters

on intellectuals, religious fundamentalism, lack of environmental awareness, shallow literary circles and the 'market' trimming of universities, especially in the humanities".

For Sanghi, author of best-selling novels "The Rozabal Line", "Chanakya's Chant" and "The Krishna Key", the three big issues in his mind were religious extremism globally, climate change impact and food and water resources.

The three issues that moved most in Joshi's head as a writer and from head to page were child labour, the role of the electronic media and what constitutes rape. The German writer, who is based in Delhi, is the author of books like "Life is Peculiar", "On the Rocks and Other Stories", "Once More!", "Fool's Paradise" and "Indian Dreams".

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