Twitter Thread by Dr Soumitra Pathare

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Thread: This is a long thread about my wife's grand-father: Vinayak Apte. Born, brought up & lived in Pune. Aptewada, Sadashiv Peth. Qualified as an engineer in 1920s or so. Married around same time.
I promise you this is worth reading, so settle down with your cup of tea....1/n

Around 1921, young Vinayak writes to Mahatma Gandhi expressing his desire to join Bapu & work for freedom struggle. Bapu writes back saying sending money for the ticket (■5) & get your backside up here (not exactly these words, but you know what I mean!).
Bapu adds a PS...2/n

"If you change your mind, please return the ■5 by money order to Sabarmati Ashram" Typical Bapu, you might say! Careful with money.
Vinayak quits his job & decides to go to Sabarmati. Entire extended Apte clan is horrified. Joining that fakir? Giving up your job? Ostracised.

Vinayak goes to Sabarmati with young wife & 2-3 yr old daughter. Wifey not impressed at all, bcoz on arriving there they are assigned to separate living quarters (men & women), celibacy & every1 (incl her, a Brahmin woman) was expected to clean toilets! Horror of horrors..3/n

Wife never forgave Vinayak & Bapu. She had married a engineer & was looking forward to a prosperous life. Life on other hand, was full of austerity. Everyone had to work & was paid a pittance. 5 am wake up.Cook. Clean. Khadi sarees (which btw weigh a ton!) & evening prayers...4/n

Through her life she wrote letters to Bapu (in Marathi) complaining about everything incl the weight of the sarees. Bapu always replied in Gujarati, emphasizing the need to maintain celibacy! My father-in-law, her youngest son (4th child) was born in 1930s. So much for Bapu!..5/n

Vinayak was a dedicated Gandhian & took to ashram life like fish to water.
In 1930, he was chosen as one of the 78 satyagrahis to accompany Bapu on Dandi March. After return from Dandi, Bapu had decided to disband the Ashram. Vinayak was asked to return to Pune & spread...6/n

the word about Khadi. That's what he did the rest of his life. Travelling interiors of Maharashtra & setting up Khadi stores.
In 1940s my fa-in-law remembers his father taking him to meet Bapu who was in Pune
Bapu asks young kid how they had travelled. Kid says by horse cart 6/n

My fa-in-law remembers Bapu replying in his broken Marathi - the horse must have been troumbled having to carry your weight! Bapu had a sense of humour!
Vinayak's father died in 1940s. Vinayak was travelling doing his Khadi prachar & refused to leave the work, so missed...7/n

the funeral. Said Bapu would not have approved of it. Extended family ostracized him even more.
But..but..you have to hear this. My father in law tells me the day Bapu was murdered in Delhi, his father Vinyak cried like he had never ever done. Vinayak mourned the death..8/n

of his father, Bapu.
Post independence, he never got any awards. He never contested any elections.
All the politicians who became Chief Ministers & Minsters were his friends, but he never asked for any favours.

..9/n

After independence, freedom fighters got a pension. But Vinayak never got a pension. Bcoz the jail records (where he was jailed as part of freedom struggle) got burnt down. So the Indian government had no proof to say he was a freedom fighter.
Kamalnayan Bajaj (his friend)..10/n

wrote letters on his behalf to the Indian Government to no avail. Vinayak never received a freedom fighter's pension & died in relative penury.
Post independence, he spent his life doing 2 things: helping freedom fighters get their pension & spreading Khadi..11/n

I never knew Vinayak bcoz he died in early 1980s, before I met my wife. She remembers her grandfather as a simple warm man, always cheerful, wearing Khadi dhoti. He always travelled by train. 2nd class. Bapu had drilled it into him..12/n

Today, it is important to remember it was due to such selfless people who joined in protests & demonstrations, gave up their careers, that you enjoy this freedom to abuse Bapu & his followers. They were true Desh bhakts (Patriots).
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