

TITLE

Gladys Chatterjee entry for Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

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VERSIONS

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Chatterjee, Lady Gladys Mary (nee Broughton) (1883-1969), barrister, O.B.E., M.A., D.Sc., was born in Ujjain, India, on 30 October 1883, the daughter of Captain William Broughton. Chatterjee attended the High School, Bedford and in 1911 obtained a B.A. in Philosophy at University College, London (she was also the holder of numerous scholarships: Gilchrist, John Stuart Mills, Joseph Hume and Ricardo). After her degree she attended Bedford College and obtained a diploma in teaching, followed by a D.Sc. at the London School of Economics where she wrote her thesis on "Women and Children in Indian Industry".

After this she returned to India and was appointed Inspector of Schools in the Central Provinces of India (an area covering parts of what is now known as Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra). With the advent of First World War Chatterjee was sent to Delhi as welfare officer in the Ministry of Munitions in National and Controlled Factories. She was awarded an OBE in 1917 for her war work as organiser of Women's Welfare in National Shell and National Projectile Factories. She was one of the first to be awarded such a medal as the Order of the British Empire was designed to reward individuals for their war service. Munition work was vital to the Allies' war success. It was through the dangerous munition work of women such as Chatterjee and the women who worked in the factories that kept the front line supplied with weapons and ammunition. This work also broke down traditional Victorian stereotypes of women and paved the way for women's participation in the public sphere.

After the war Chatterjee held other such official roles such as Investigator to the Industrial Fatigue Research Board and adviser to the Government of India on labour questions affecting women and children. In 1921 with Edith Allen and Ethel May Newbold she published *A Statistical Study of the Turnover in Munitions and Other Factories (Reports of the Industrial Fatigue Research Board No. 13)*.

On 30 April 1924, in Kensington Registry Office, she married widower Lord Atul Chandra Chatterjee (1874-1955), an Indian civil servant, a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in charge of the Department of Industries and Labour. In 1925 they settled in England following Sir Atul's appointment as the High Commissioner for India in the UK, a position he would remain in for six years. He was responsible for the erection of India House, Aldwych.

Although Chatterjee was a renowned hostess she continued to hold an individual and professional life. This is shown through her Call to the Bar in 1933 at Lincoln's Inn. Despite third class passes in many of her Bar exams she worked in Common Law and Privy Council chambers, practising in the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Courts. She appeared before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in some Indian and Ceylon appeals and was Counsel for the Legal Aid Committee for Poor Persons. During the Second World War she acted as counsel for the Service Department of the Law Society in divorce cases.

In 1955 Sir Atul died. She revised his work on *A Short History of India* and continued as an active participant in the work of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, of which she was Vice-President. She represented the Federation at conferences of the United Nations on the Prevention of Crime and the treatment of Offenders at Geneva in 1955 and the commission of the Status of Women in 1966.

She was a member of the Marriage Guidance Council and in 1956 gave written and oral evidence before the Royal Commission on marriage and divorce under the chairmanship of Lord Morton of Henryton.

Chatterjee died from cerebral thrombosis and cerebral atehasma on 7 May 1969 in Bexley, Kent, leaving £7906.